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## Gardner-Webb, The Magazine 2015 Spring (Volume 50 No. 1)

Noel T. Manning II  
*Gardner-Webb University*

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# GARDNER-WEBB

VOL. 50, NO. 1, 2015

THE MAGAZINE

## A DECADE OF PURPOSE

*GWU, BONNER MARK TEN YEARS OF PROGRESS*

### ***INSIDE THIS ISSUE:***

*NUMEROUS AWARDS HONOR GWU EXCELLENCE*

*STUDENTS FIND CALLING THROUGH EXPERIENCES*

*REMEMBERING THE GENESIS OF GWU SOFTBALL*

*REFLECTING ON THE CAREERS OF OUTSTANDING LEADERS*

*DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI, ATHLETIC HALL OF FAME NAMED*



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## FEATURES

# A DECADE OF PURPOSE

REFLECTING ON THE FIRST 10 YEARS OF FRANK BONNER'S PRESIDENCY

By Matt Reddy and Matthew Trimmer

Gardner-Webb's recent history has not come without its share of unique challenges and a multitude of questions about the future. How does a higher education institution stay afloat in the wake of 2020's crippling recession? How does a university stand out among its competitors? How does a Christian institution hold true to its Christ-centered identity as it experiences continued change, growth and success? These questions and more have defined the University's latest chapter, and history shows that it takes a certain quality of leadership to overcome challenging obstacles. "I think Dr. Bonner was the right president for Gardner-Webb at the right time," said GWU Board of Trustees Member Neal Alexander. That moment was 10 years ago, beginning with a search for a president possessing the qualities needed to lead the University in a positive direction.

2005 Dr. Frank Bonner selected as 12th president of Gardner-Webb by Governor Frank Campbell

2006 March opened team into Atlantic Sun Conference tournament and conference in the University's first-ever NCAA Division I postseason championship tournament

2007 March basketball team gains national notoriety with win at Kentucky Wildcats

2008 GWU selected to President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll, the first of seven straight years the University has received the recognition

University names Goddard School of Business for distinguished business entrepreneur John Goddard and his wife Linda

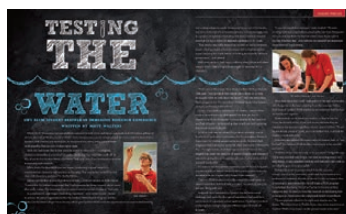
New GWU marching band program begins

School of Psychology and Counseling launches

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# THE GREAT ADVENTURE THAT IS GARDNER-WEBB UNIVERSITY

Dear Gardner-Webb University family,

On June 30, 2015 I will complete ten years as President of Gardner-Webb University. There are times when it seems I have been doing this for a long time but more times when it seems I have only just begun. I find myself looking back and also looking ahead. As I look back, one emotion dominates, and that is gratitude. More than anything else, I am grateful for the opportunity to be a part of this truly great University that I love so much. It is great for several reasons and by several measures. The most important reason is the people—a truly world-class faculty, a dedicated staff, and students who are some of the finest and most delightful young people to be found anywhere, as well as many wonderful alumni, friends, and supporters. There are two measures that make Gardner-Webb stand out—the strength of our commitment to advancing the Kingdom of God through Christian higher education, and our commitment to our students, to their well-being and real success. We are quite serious when we stress that we “partner” with our students in this endeavor.

As I look ahead, I cannot ignore serious challenges to institutions like ours and to the very nature of higher education in our country. I believe, however, that the greater the challenge the greater the opportunity, and there are many opportunities ahead of us. Gardner-Webb University has never been stronger, its potential greater, or its future brighter. Our Strategic Plan is being revised and will be presented to the Board of Trustees in May. That plan will be prefaced by a letter from me describing our vision for the future. That vision will include continuing commitment to our purpose, our mission, and our students. It will address projections for carefully managed growth in enrollment, programs, campus and facilities. It will commit us to continue to enhance quality in academics and student life, and to take care of the people of Gardner-Webb. It will include a pledge to stay in tune with developments in higher education and respond effectively, and to innovate without jumping into passing fads or “disruptive innovation.” Further, the strategic plan will address affordability, access, and “return on investment” in the best sense. Finally, it will recommit to the true educational purpose and value of intercollegiate athletics and to the genuine ideal of the student athlete.

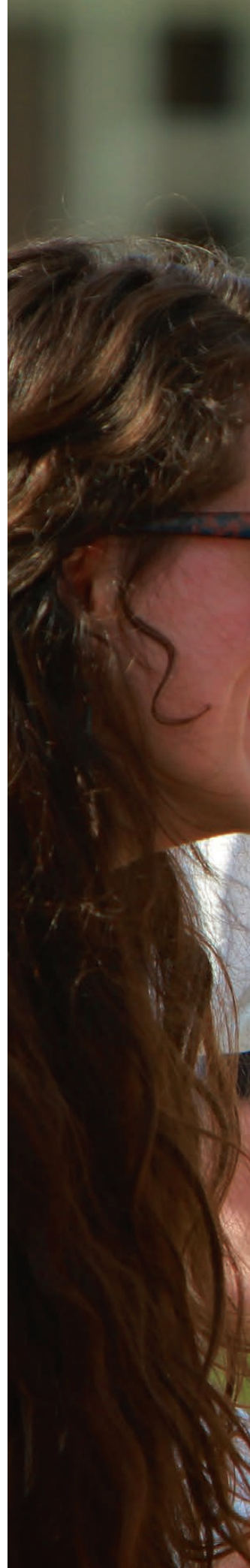
I close this letter with a personal note of gratitude, much as it began. To the entire family that is Gardner-Webb University, thank you for allowing me to join with you in the great adventure that is Gardner-Webb.

Sincerely,



Dr. Frank Bonner

President, Gardner-Webb University









# Gardner-Webb Establishes Partnership with Virginia Baptists

Gardner-Webb University signed a partnership mission covenant with the Baptist General Association of Virginia (BGAV), becoming the first school outside the state of Virginia to do so. According to the BGAV, the purpose of the partnership is to help “fulfill the Great



Dr. Tracy Jessup

Commission through shared commitments and cooperative ministry, while at the same time maintaining the independence and distinct character of each.”

“Gardner-Webb University exists to advance the Kingdom of God through Christian higher education,” said Dr. Tracy Jessup, vice president for Christian life and service and senior minister to the university. “We pursue this mission with the same mandates of the BGAV—the Great Commission and the Great Commandment. It is with great joy that we look forward to seeing how God will use the development of this partnership for his glory.”

The BGAV is a cooperative missions and ministry organization that consists of over 1,400 autonomous churches in the Commonwealth of Virginia, as well as churches from Seoul, South Korea, the District of Columbia, and the states of California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Indiana, Maryland, Minnesota, New York, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Washington, and West Virginia.

## Southern Appalachian Culture Series Returns

The heritage, literature, and traditions of the Southern textile mill culture were showcased as part of the Southern Appalachian Culture Series, held last fall at Gardner-Webb University.

The weekend focused on the exploration of many facets of Southern Appalachian culture. The theme for the event was “Threads that Count: Cotton Mill Culture,” and was the third in a series of conferences, once again held in conjunction with the Appalachian Writer’s Association (AWA) annual meeting and awards dinner.



Guest speaker Ron Rash

Through the event, organizers hoped to educate and inform the conference participants while celebrating the history of Southern industrialism that emerged in the late 19th century. “The ‘New South’ that emerged after the Civil War was partly characterized by the rise of Southern industrialists who worked to diversify the economy away from an overdependence on agriculture,” said Dr. Tim Vanderburg, professor of history at GWU and an organizer of the conference. “The ‘Cotton Mill Campaign’



spread all over the Southern Piedmont and people flocked to mill villages for employment.”

The Southern Appalachian Culture Series embraces and showcases the culture, literature, and traditions of Southern Appalachia. Organizers are dedicated to finding literary gems and scholars from all over the Southern Appalachian region. Every two years a conference focusing on a theme or featuring a nationally renowned writer is held at Gardner-Webb University in celebration of Southern Appalachian culture.

# University Joins Webster International Network of Schools

Gardner-Webb University formally affiliated with Webster University by joining the Webster International Network of Schools (WINS) consortium.

Joining the growing consortium of 35 affiliates allows Gardner-Webb to expand its study-abroad opportunities. Students may now study at any of Webster University's international campuses in locations including Vienna, Thailand, Beijing, and Accra.

Currently, about 100 Gardner-Webb students participate annually in international experiences in countries such as England, Hong Kong, Costa Rica, Italy, Germany, Russia, Switzerland, Greece, and Strasbourg. WINS will provide six additional study-abroad locations for students and give college credits to any student who spends a semester or summer session overseas.

"We hope this new affiliation will open up opportunities for GWU students to spend a semester or go to summer school in different countries overseas," said Dr. Helen Tichenor, director of International Programs. "There is a lot of interest, and I am looking forward to working with our students, Webster University and our partners overseas."

# Harvard Awards Travel Grant to GWU Professor

When Gardner-Webb University Assistant Professor of History Dr. Joseph Moore first began writing the manuscript for his new book, he had no idea that the subject would offer him an opportunity to travel halfway around the world to search historic archives in Belfast, Edinburgh, and London, or that the experience would extend to him a rare, full-circle moment in his own unique history.



Dr. Joseph Moore

While working on his dissertation, Moore became interested in the Scottish "Covenanters," a group of fundamentalist Presbyterians who vowed to maintain the Presbyterian doctrine and policy as the sole form of religion of their country. While the Covenanters were successful in establishing their form of Christianity in Scotland in the 1600s, their efforts to replicate those foundations in the newly formed United States were unsuccessful. Moore's book, "Founding Sins: How a Group of Antislavery Radicals Fought to Put Christ into the Constitution," traces the Covenanters' political roots from Scotland to the New World.

He applied for a travel grant from Harvard University's International Seminar on the History of the Atlantic World, and was awarded funds to travel to the United Kingdom to do research in archives in London, England and Edinburgh, Scotland. Gardner-Webb also assisted with funds to extend his visit to Belfast, Northern Ireland, where he presented some of his research at a conference. The visit to Northern Ireland was especially meaningful to Moore, who had served in 2010 as a visiting research associate at Queens University Belfast prior to his appointment as assistant professor at Gardner-Webb.

Since his trip, he has completed the book, which is being published by Oxford University Press later this fall. He believes the project—and his previous visits to archives in London, Edinburgh, Belfast, Vermont, New York, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia—has also helped his students in both classroom and research opportunities.

"I learn from my students all the time when they go to archives or pull microfilm," he shared. "They come to me with things I didn't know existed, and it becomes a feedback loop between professors and students when it's done right. You can do that at Gardner-Webb because there's a small enough classroom size that students cease to be learners and they start to become junior scholars. That's our goal, which makes for a great learning environment and sends them on to great things."



# Gardner-Webb Receives Numerous Honors and Awards

By Jill Blank and GWU Communications Staff

*Gardner-Webb University has received numerous honors and awards during the 2014-15 academic year. Recognition for community service, military commitment, a stellar core curriculum, online degree options, and various academic programs highlight a year of growth, excitement, and new university initiatives.*

## Community Service Commitment Recognized Again at GWU

For the seventh consecutive year, Gardner-Webb University was named to the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll, sponsored by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) and the U.S. Department of Education. Less than 100 institutions across the nation received the honor in 2014, and GWU was one of just 38 schools to be recognized "With Distinction."



Launched in 2006, the Honor Roll recognizes those institutions that reflect the values of exemplary community service and achieve meaningful outcomes in their communities. Gardner-Webb has continued as an Honor Roll mainstay because of students' commitment to a wide variety of service initiatives. Dr. Ben Leslie, GWU Provost and Executive Vice President, said the recognition is an affirmation of the University's overall mission.

"Service, volunteerism and community engagement are deeply rooted in the fabric of a Gardner-Webb education and have been for many years," Leslie shared. "But it is encouraging to see this external confirmation that we are indeed carrying out something that is so central to our mission. At Gardner-Webb, we believe that service is an essential part of a well-rounded education. It builds character, and for us character formation is really the necessary partner of intellectual development. Our students are encouraged to find ways to apply their learning through service in courses throughout the curriculum. And we find that through service, they gain a better understanding of the world around them."

In the past year alone, 905 Gardner-Webb students engaged in academic service-learning initiatives, while 1,006 students participated in community service opportunities outside of class. Through a wide range of projects, students logged a total of 34,174 hours of intentional community service.

"Our students, faculty, and staff members participated in many meaningful hours of service to help meet the needs of people in the community—both locally and globally," said Dr. Susan Manahan, assistant professor of biology and GWU Director of Service Learning. "I am confident we will continue to see our students serving in many great future projects."

## GWU Among Nation's Best for Liberal Arts Core and Academic Reputation

GWU ranked in the top two percent of over 1,000 universities across the United States for its core curriculum requirements and is the only school in the Carolinas to earn an "A" in this annual study conducted by the American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA). The ranking places GWU alongside schools such as Pepperdine University (Malibu, Calif.) and the United States Air Force Academy (Colorado Springs, Colo.).

"This national recognition of our curriculum, something we neither sought nor applied for, stands as a significant affirmation of our academic program," shared Dr. Ben Leslie, provost and executive vice president for Gardner-Webb.

Gardner-Webb has also been ranked as one of the best colleges in the South by two accredited lists. According to an assessment released by U.S. News & World Report, GWU ranks 34th in a nationwide report on more than 600 regional colleges, which the organization defined as higher-education institutions that offer a full range of undergrad programs, select master's programs and a few doctoral programs. *College Choice* also named the University a top 50 Southern University in its first annual "best of" list. *College Choice's* rankings were based on equally-weighted factors that freshmen indicated were most important to their college decision, including academic reputation, financial aid offerings, and success of graduates in the post-college job market.

## Godbold School of Business Honored

Gardner-Webb University's Godbold School of Business has received several awards for its graduate and online degree programs.

Top Management Degrees recently ranked GWU No. 7 among all institutions nationwide for its online Master's in Business Administration (MBA) Program that offers a concentration in human resources management and No. 16 nationwide for online graduate degrees in healthcare management. This rating places the university ahead of national institutions such as Penn State (State College, Pa.) and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (Chapel Hill, N.C.).

Online MBA Report (OMBAR) also gave Gardner-Webb recognition in its recent study of more than 300 universities. OMBAR ranked Gardner-Webb at No. 33 overall nationwide for MBA programs, and places GWU No. 5 among private schools and No. 11 in the South. Criteria for determining the rankings include, academic reputation, tuition value, and enrollment numbers.

"We are again truly honored to be recognized as one of the top business schools in the country," shared Dr. Anthony Negbenebor, dean of the GWU Godbold School of Business. "The consistent national and world recognition of our business school is an affirmation of our relentless pursuit of excellence in business education. We are grateful to our students, faculty, staff, administration and alumni for their contributions."

The online graduate business program achieved a No. 37 ranking in U.S. News & World Report's 2015 rankings. Each year, U.S. News surveys institutions and compiles statistical information to score online graduate programs of colleges and universities across the country. With a score of 62 points this year, GWU received a higher rating than in 2014.

Online Accounting Degree Programs (OADP) gave Gardner-Webb's online master's accounting program a rating of No. 16 among 30 top universities in the nation. According to OADP, Gardner-Webb's online master's in accounting is designed to help students become indispensable leaders even while expectations of the profession increase annually in a changing global market.

## GWU Recognized for Commitment to Serving Military Personnel

Gardner-Webb University is committed to helping members of the military and their dependents achieve their educational goals. Military Advanced Education (MAE) recently recognized those efforts as the University was designated as a "Top School" in the 2015 MAE Guide to Colleges & Universities. The guide measures the best practices in military and veteran education.

David Hawsey, GWU Vice President for

Enrollment Management, said there are typically around 100 students with ties to the military who attend the University. "We offer personalized services, including admission, academic credit and military experience credit evaluation, financial planning, personal counseling, and many other services geared to active duty, veterans and their families," Hawsey shared. "Our offices are staffed with VE certified officials and include veterans who have 'been there' and understand the needs of transitioning service members and their families."

The MAE Guide presents results of a questionnaire of the military-supportive policies enacted at more than 600 institutions including private, public, for-profit, not-for-profit, four-year, and two-year colleges.



## Hunt School of Nursing Earns Ranking

In the 2015 U.S. News & World Report survey, Gardner-Webb's online graduate nursing program garnered a No. 41 ranking with a score of 75 points. Scores are determined based on factors that include student engagement, admissions selectivity and faculty credentials and training.

*College Choice*, an independent online publication, has also ranked Gardner-Webb's online Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) programs at No. 42 in the country. According to College Choice, the list was compiled based upon a variety of important factors from an array of sources to ensure the accuracy and credibility of the information.

GWU Hunt School of Nursing Dean Dr. Sharon Starr understands that earning an MSN degree can help expand one's opportunities in the healthcare field. "Obtaining the MSN empowers nurses to become nursing leaders," Starr explained. "These roles allow our graduates to be catalysts for positive change in the healthcare environment and also help them to have a positive effect on those who require care from the healthcare system."

## Gardner-Webb Named Purple Heart University for Military and Veteran Support

Gardner-Webb University was designated a Purple Heart University for its military and veteran support, the first such honor for a higher education institution in the state of North Carolina.

The Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH) Chapter 634 and the University marked the honor in a ceremony on Jan. 28. The program included a salute to veterans, a proclamation and plaque for the University and a presentation on the Purple Heart, which is bestowed on U.S. military members who are wounded by adversaries in combat.

Members of the local MOPH chapter seek to recognize businesses, government entities and other organizations that demonstrate outstanding support for all active-duty and veteran military personnel. The Citadel in Charleston, S.C., is the only other Purple Heart college or university in the Carolinas, shared Stephen Zenes, junior vice commander for MOPH Chapter 634.

"Gardner-Webb is exceptionally friendly to the military, and that's why we pushed to honor the University. We like to see a university that welcomes and supports its veterans. The designation as a Purple Heart University honors that support," said Zenes.





# Diamond Dawgs Taking the Field Against Cancer

Throughout the past three years, Gardner-Webb University's baseball team has raised thousands of dollars to help children fight cancer. Players experienced first hand how that support impacts lives during a recent visit to Levine Children's Hospital in Charlotte, N.C.

Ten GWU baseball players and coaches toured the hospital, learned about its services and interacted with children on a day that helped foster an appreciation for the challenges

cancer patients face, said GWU Head Baseball Coach Rusty Stroupe. "I hope our team left the hospital with a deeper appreciation of how fortunate they are to be healthy, talented college baseball players," Stroupe offered, "and I hope they came away realizing the difference they can make in the lives of others."

The team's support of children battling cancer began several years ago when



GWU Baseball players at Levine Children's Hospital

players and coaches developed a friendship with a local girl, Carey Heavner, who later lost her life to the disease at 11 years old. "It hit us really hard," Stroupe reflected. "I wanted to make sure we remembered her and tried to do our part to help other children fight cancer."

As a result, the baseball program has raised money for the Vs. Cancer Foundation, a nonprofit organization that has helped more than 40,000 children in their fight against the disease. Student-athletes and coaches shaved their heads for the St. Baldrick's Foundation and grew beards during "No-Shave November," generating more than \$12,000 in donations.

"I realize that kids with cancer don't have the opportunity to play baseball the way I do," said pitcher Jeremy Walker. "What we can do is reach out, spend some time with these kids, write them a letter, get to know them and make their day. We need to realize that God has given us so much and we need to give to others."



## GWU Offers New, Shorter Semester Option

Some students decide they'd like to enroll in a course after an academic semester has started and realize it's too late. A new option from Gardner-Webb University's Degree Completion Program (DCP) is allowing students to begin select courses in the middle of a traditional term.



GARDNER-WEBB  
UNIVERSITY

DEGREE COMPLETION PROGRAM

The DCP launched a Minimester, an eight-week term that provides the same coursework as a full 16-week period, said Dr. Bobbie Cox, GWU Associate Provost for Adult and Distance Education. "In the past, we had three different times students could enter Gardner-Webb for degree completion," Cox offered. "Now, we have five starting periods with these two new semesters that are designed to help students start their education without having to wait until the next full semester."

For more information, call 704-406-4484 or visit [gardner-webb.edu/dcp](http://gardner-webb.edu/dcp).

# WGWG Radio Releases Mobile App, Expands Digital Presence



Gardner-Webb University's radio station WGWG expanded its digital presence with the release of an original app for mobile devices. Both Apple and Android users can download the application from their stores to listen in live to the station and access on-demand programming, along with other mobile-exclusive features, free of charge.

"By adding the app, we make tuning in much easier and specialize it to work with mobile devices—whether it's a tablet or a smartphone," said Jeff Powell, WGWG operations manager. "This is specifically designed for that small medium so that it works really well."

The release of the mobile app became another milestone in the station's efforts to reach audiences using a variety of digital formats. In early 2014, WGWG sold its longtime radio frequency, 88.3, as it transitioned to an Internet-only model of distribution. The station now utilizes multiple platforms to reach its audience by using WGWG.org to live stream over the Internet in combination with on-demand programming through SoundCloud.com, videos on YouTube.com, along with regular updates pushed through the station's Facebook and Twitter pages.

"The App brings everything together—it brings the live stream together with the website, access to all our different programming—whether it's music, on-demand talk programming, Gardner-Webb athletics, or videos on our YouTube channel—along with several ways to contact the station," Powell said.

The WGWG app is available as a free download on the Apple store and Google Android store for smartphone and tablet devices.



# GWU Educator Receives North Carolina's Highest Civil Honor

Dr. John Karriker, a Gardner-Webb University educator for 35 years, was honored with the State of North Carolina's highest civilian honor, The Order of the Long Leaf Pine. Presented by N.C. House Rep. Rena Turner at a gathering of the Statesville (N.C.) Rotary Club, the Long Leaf Pine recognizes exceptional service to the state.



Dr. Bobbie Cox and  
Dr. John Karriker

In addition to his educational career, Karriker has actively served the Civitan and Rotary civic club organizations and the Lutheran Church. He joins Dr. Bobbie Cox and Dr. Jim Thomas as Gardner-Webb educators who have received the honor. "I'm very humbled when I look over the list of people who've already received this honor," he shared. "Honorees include people like Andy Griffith, Charles Kuralt, Billy Graham and Maya Angelou. The highlight of my life has been serving other people and being an educator."

Karriker joined Gardner-Webb as an adjunct professor for environmental science in the early days of the Greater Opportunities for Adult Learners (GOAL) Program, now known as the Degree Completion Program (DCP). He is now associate dean and regional manager for 12 Gardner-Webb campus centers.

Dr. Bobbie Cox, associate provost for the College of Adult and Distance Education, recommended Karriker for the Long Leaf Pine award. "Dr. Karriker has an exemplary record of service for the State of North Carolina," Cox said. "He has been an educator, outstanding citizen, community contributor, and has given over 30 years of service to the State of North Carolina."





# Over 250 Graduate from GWU During Fall Commencement Ceremonies

Gardner-Webb University hosted Fall Commencement on Monday, Dec. 15 in the Lutz-Yelton Convocation Center. More than 250 graduates were honored for their achievements during the ceremony.

Many graduates participated in the ceremony through prayer, scripture reading, and commencement speeches. Benjamin Payne (Boiling Springs, N.C.) offered the invocation, while Zachary Parker (Boiling Springs, N.C.) shared passages from the Old and New Testaments. Four awards were given to exceptional graduates. Jaclyn Hudson Jenkins (Lincolnton, N.C.) received the Degree Completion Program Academic Award; Andrea Thomas (Shelby, N.C.) was honored as the recipient of the Senior Scholastic Achievement Award; Payne was named the recipient of the Outstanding Male Graduate Medal, and Thomas received the Outstanding Female Graduate Medal.

Commencement speakers were Thomas, who earned a Bachelor of Science in Psychology, and Jesse Roberts (Charlotte, N.C.), who received a Master of Arts/Education Specialist in Mental Health Counseling degree.



During her studies at Gardner-Webb, Thomas was inducted into Alpha Chi and Theta Alpha Kappa honor societies. In addition to many other activities, she worked for the Abuse Prevention Council's battered women's shelter in Shelby. She wants to continue her work with the women's shelter, and plans to attend graduate school in the near future for psychology and religion. She believes commencement offers a natural opportunity to look toward one's future—but she encouraged each graduate to be settled in the present.

"At graduation, we are at a crossroads," Thomas shared. "Three-and-a-half years ago, I would have known exactly what to do at this crossroads, but my education here has taught me to strive for something bigger, to discover how to make a difference. Some of you probably have a plan for a job or grad school, and some of you are still trying to figure everything out. But today, I want to ask you not what you are going to do in the future, but who you are going to be in this moment."

Roberts, originally from Rutherfordton, N.C., graduated from GWU in 2011 with a bachelor's degree in psychology and was named the Most Outstanding Male Graduate that year. He said his years at Gardner-Webb have taught him many lessons that were not the result of time in the classroom. "I was reminded time and time again that you do not have to be blood-related to be family," Roberts reflected. "Gardner-Webb has been my family for the past seven-and-a-half years, and I cannot imagine a better group of individuals to claim as my own. We have learned together and we have grown together. We have loved each other, we have hurt together, and we have survived together, and now, we have succeeded together."







# Alone Yet Not Alone

*Joni Eareckson Tada Shares*

*Truth and Testimony*

*Written by Niki Bliss-Carroll*

The depth of meaning conveyed in Joni Eareckson Tada's soul-stirring vocal "Alone Yet Not Alone" is difficult to articulate. Yet, as she told students and area community members during a visit to Gardner-Webb University, timely wisdom and relevant truth offered by a caring friend can sustain even the weariest of individuals.

Paralyzed from the shoulders down at age 17 after a diving accident in 1967, Tada has been confined to a wheelchair for more than 47 years. In the beginning, when she faced her future with trepidation, a friend spoke words of truth that helped change everything.

"Sometimes short, pithy sayings can sound trite and overused," she declared. "This particular phrase that a Christian friend shared with me when I was depressed, despairing, looking at a future of total paralysis for the rest of my life was so wise: 'Joni, God permits what he hates to accomplish that which he loves.' He hates spinal cord injury; he hates suffering, and heartaches, and disappointments. But he loves the way you can be changed in it and encourage others through it."

Tada shared the relevance of that moment. "That one phrase really turned my thinking around because I realized, 'Oh my goodness... God permits all sorts of things in this world that he does not approve of.' He





takes no delight in the isolated incident of suffering," she explained. "But he does take delight in how that suffering can fit into a bigger, broader mosaic that gives him glory, that changes us, and ultimately changes the world."

After two years of rehabilitation, she emerged with new skills and a determination to help others in similar situations. Nearly five decades

later, she is an accomplished author, an artist, singer, radio host, the founder of Joni and Friends, and an international advocate for people with disabilities. She travels around the globe with her husband of over 30 years, Ken Tada, to offer sacrificial service and encouragement to those who need it most.

"God allows hardship in our life just for that very purpose... to drive us up against His will," she reflected. "And it's a painful thing sometimes to be wedged in the middle of His will. It's a biting, difficult thing. But oh! The peace, the joy, the sweet intimacy and nearness and tenderness with the Savior! He's ecstasy beyond compare and it's worth anything to be His friend. Even if it means quadriplegia."

Tada encouraged Gardner-Webb students and other interested members of the community to get connected to the Joni and Friends office in Charlotte and commit to a service opportunity.

"You'll go there thinking that you're going to be a blessing, but you go away receiving the biggest blessing," she offered. "You think you're going to help these poor people,



special needs families who need help... oh my goodness. When you end up giving the love of Jesus and imparting hope and infusing a bright perspective, it changes your heart. You come away blessed big-time."

"To really serve... and I mean serve like practicing Christianity with its sleeves rolled up, is never convenient. It's never on your time schedule. It doesn't fit within your comfort zone. It's always sacrificial—but that's normal Christian service. It'll tax you, it'll require much of you, but Jesus will be on your side and that is the best part of serving him."



To see Joni's testimony, visit:  
[gardnerwebb.edu/joni-tada](http://gardnerwebb.edu/joni-tada)



## UNIVERSITY MILESTONES DURING DR. FRANK BONNER'S FIRST DECADE AS PRESIDENT

**2005**

Dr. Frank Bonner selected as 12th president of Gardner-Webb to succeed Dr. Frank Campbell



.....

**2006**

Bonner inaugurated as 12th president of Gardner-Webb

Men's soccer team wins Atlantic Sun Conference tournament and competes in the University's first-ever NCAA Division I postseason championship tournament





# A DECADE OF PURPOSE

REFLECTING ON THE FIRST 10 YEARS OF FRANK BONNER'S PRESIDENCY

*By Matt Renfer and Matthew Tessnear*

Gardner-Webb's recent history has not come without its share of unique challenges and a multitude of questions about the future. How does a higher education institution stay afloat in the wake of 2008's crippling recession? How does a university stand out among its competitors? How does a Christian institution hold true to its Christ-centered identity as it experiences continued change, growth and success? These questions and more have defined the University's latest chapter, and history shows that it takes a certain quality of leadership to overcome challenging obstacles. "I think Dr. Bonner was the right president for Gardner-Webb at the right time," said GWU Board of Trustees Member Neal Alexander. That moment was 10 years ago, beginning with a search for a president possessing the qualities needed to lead the University in a positive direction.

Men's basketball team gains national notoriety with win against the Kentucky Wildcats

... **2007**



New GWU marching band program launches

GWU selected to President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll, the first of seven straight years the University has received the recognition

..... **2008**

— University names Godbold School of Business for distinguished business entrepreneur John Godbold and his wife Linda

School of Psychology and Counseling launches



## THE SEARCH FOR GARDNER-WEBB'S 12TH PRESIDENT

In late 2004, a presidential selection committee formed to seek out a candidate for the office of president at Gardner-Webb. Foremost on the list of criteria were leadership, experience in higher education, vision, communication skills, and Christian values. Rather than looking outward for such a person, the committee recognized a potential candidate who had already established himself in the University and surrounding community for nearly two decades. The search for someone experienced in the field of higher education, as well as Gardner-Webb itself, was fulfilled in Dr. A. Frank Bonner, who had joined the University in 1987 as Vice President for Academic Affairs. His role later evolved into Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs and then Provost and Senior Vice President.

"Dr. Bonner excelled in each of the requirements," said Alexander, who served on the selection committee.

Bonner's prior experience at Anderson University in South Carolina was a contributing factor during the selection process. Holding a Ph.D. in English, he had served as a professor of literature before becoming faculty chair, assistant to the president, interim registrar, and associate dean for special programs.

Also determined to see Bonner become president was Dr. Darlene Gravett, a professor of English at the time, who recommended Bonner for his "knowledge of the University after having served in two crucial positions—Academic Dean and Provost and Senior Vice President; his vision for the University; his ability to represent the school well in local, regional, and national organizations; and his strong Christian character."

GWU Trustee Rance Henderson, who also served on the selection committee, remembered observing Bonner as his family entered the room during a speech to trustees who had just selected him as president. "He just absolutely beamed," Henderson said. "When I saw him, I thought to myself: we have got a good person and a good president."



## THE VISION

With the selection process complete, Bonner was named the 12th president of Gardner-Webb in May 2005 and took office on July 1 of that year. His early vision for a higher education institution was a fusion of academic excellence and church affiliation—values his father instilled in him through his model of teacher, academic leader, and university administrator.

"My dad was a proponent of academic freedom and thought it could happen within a Christian college," Bonner reported. "He wrote a number of essays about academic freedom. I saw some of his frustration with all that, and I really wondered whether academic excellence and a true

## UNIVERSITY MILESTONES DURING DR. FRANK BONNER'S FIRST DECADE AS PRESIDENT

GWU joins Big South Conference as a full member for athletics

..... **2008**

Frank Nanney Hall, named for longtime GWU supporter, opens to house Noel Program and other campus programs



..... **2009**

At the time the largest-ever number of residential students enrolled (1,200) as new suite-style residence hall opens





church affiliation could go together. I think maybe that's what forced me to really think about it in depth and then my thinking really evolved to the point that I came to realize that, yes, academic excellence and a true Christian character of a university could definitely not only coexist but could support each other."

In his 2006 inaugural address, Bonner defined a vision for the University—a vision that would become a continual theme throughout his presidency. Bonner's vision of student outcomes as the measure for success has been a trademark of the past decade. He identified several overarching goals for the University, including improving academic quality, committing to a Christian foundation, striving to be student-centered, strengthening athletic programs, and continuing to foster campus life and community.

"I envision Gardner-Webb as a highly respected leader in Christian higher education and even widely regarded as one of the very finest Christian universities in the nation," Bonner said in an address to a crowd of students, faculty, staff, alumni, community and invited guests. "It will be the graduates of Gardner-Webb who bring about that reputation through their character, their accomplishments, and their service."

Shortly after taking office, Bonner found himself busy laying the groundwork for what would become known as the Higher Ground Campaign. Officially launched in 2006, the goal was to raise \$45 million to fund students, facilities, faculty, and the spirit of Gardner-Webb (such as campus ministries and service learning).

"Dr. Bonner is probably one of the more visionary presidents and leaders I've had the opportunity to work with. He's done great with his vision, with converting that to a strategic plan and the strategic plan into action plans. He's good at planning, seeing what needs to be done and putting things in motion to make that occur," Alexander reflected.

With the understanding that Christian character and

academic excellence support each other, Bonner also envisioned that a university's ultimate purpose journeys far beyond earthly goals.

"Everyone has a mission and a mission statement, but a university needs to think about its reason for existence," Bonner offered. "I've tried to enunciate that 'to advance the Kingdom of God is the ultimate purpose of a Christian university.'"

*"I envision Gardner-Webb as a highly respected leader in Christian higher education and even widely regarded as one of the very finest Christian universities in the nation."*

With visionary leadership and a solid Christian foundation upon which to build, Bonner began his presidency.

## **STRONGER CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY**

Bonner and Gardner-Webb embarked on a decade that further strengthened the University's connection between the Kingdom mission and the community's people.

Through the establishment of new offices like the Center for Christian Ethics and Social Responsibility, the Office of Christian Life and Service, and the Office of Community Engagement, Gardner-Webb developed a focused effort to connect people with more academic and spiritual resources.

Doctor of Nursing Practice degree program begins

..... **2010**



New School of Performing and Visual Arts launches

..... **2011**



University marks reconstruction and naming of John Henry Moss baseball stadium



Women's basketball team wins Big South Conference tournament and appears in the program's first-ever NCAA Tournament



"Dr. Bonner works hard on the Christian mission, and there are so many different things where you can see that's a high priority," Henderson said. "His vision was to grow in bricks and mortar, in quality and performance of teaching, and always to be a strong Christian university."

*"He is a good visionary about what needs to be done, but he is also participative."*



In name and in achievement, the Higher Ground Campaign served as one of the primary evidences of the mission during the first 10 years of Bonner's presidency. The University's largest-ever capital campaign, Higher Ground raised more than \$46 million

in contributions for Gardner-Webb, surpassing its goal. The successful effort produced support for scholarships, faculty development, campus buildings and other university needs.

With Bonner's leadership and to meet the educational needs of its students, the University added new schools and programs to offer increased educational opportunities to students. The School of Psychology and Counseling and the School of Performing and Visual Arts launched in recent years, and university gifts helped name the Hunt School of Nursing and the Godbold School of Business. GWU also started new doctorate programs in education and nursing, and launched a physician assistant studies program.

To further provide an increased quality in services to students and the community at large, the institution has reconstructed and added facilities to the campus, including the Tucker Student Center, the College of Health Sciences center (transformed from the former Crawley Hospital), the Science Laboratory Center, the revamped John Henry Moss baseball stadium and the Brinkley Softball Stadium.

All of that successful growth came at a price, but not one that compromised the financial footing of the University. Actually, Gardner-Webb stands on firmer ground now than it did a decade ago, and its endowment reached new heights.

"Dr. Bonner has kept us in the black," Henderson noted. "As you pick up newspapers and different universities are struggling financially, it's very comforting to know that Dr. Bonner has kept us in good shape."

University leaders attribute a strong financial report to Bonner's calculated planning and long-range scope of what Gardner-Webb will be and need, not just now, but years into the future.

"He is a good visionary about what needs to be done, but he is also participative, making sure he gets input from people around him when making a decision that will impact the University and its community," Alexander reported. "He has such a strong leadership style and presence about himself that he's able to represent what Gardner-Webb stands for in Christian higher education because it aligns with his own ideals and integrity."

## SUCCESS IN THE FUTURE

As Gardner-Webb marks 10 years of Bonner's leadership, the president continues to seek ways to improve the University's service to God and humanity.

## UNIVERSITY MILESTONES DURING DR. FRANK BONNER'S FIRST DECADE AS PRESIDENT

.... **2011**

Charlotte Center created in 25,000-square-foot building off Interstate 77 to provide space for classroom and advancement operations



..... **2012**

110,000-square-foot Tucker Student Center opens



New Science Laboratory Center opens



Record enrollment reaches nearly **5,000** total students

American Council of Trustees and Alumni ranks Gardner-Webb's core curriculum in top two percent in the country among colleges and universities



Gardner-Webb's purchase of the former Crawley property on the western portion of the campus offers 26 acres for further facility and program expansion in health sciences. The University's sustained strong enrollment has produced conversation about new options for student housing. Runnin' Bulldog athletics continue to grow, evidenced by the women's lacrosse program's launch this spring. And facility improvements continue to have a place on plans for the near future, including ongoing strategies for creating a new complex to house GWU's vibrant fine arts programs.

## *"Dr. Bonner has proven himself to be exactly the kind of president Gardner-Webb needed."*

Trustees and other campus leaders add that Bonner's commitment to students, the community and to enhancing the institution's Christian higher education goals have served as a decade-long foundation of excellence for God and humanity.

Frank Beam, a GWU trustee who also chaired the presidential search committee that selected Bonner, said, "It is clear from his overwhelming success that the decision of the board of trustees to hire Dr. Frank Bonner was not only a blessing to the University but for the entire community as well."

Gravett, who voiced her staunch support of Bonner a decade ago during the University's search for a leader, resoundingly agreed with that assessment. She noted the

institution's vast array of advancements during Bonner's tenure.

"Dr. Bonner has proven himself to be exactly the kind of president Gardner-Webb needed," she affirmed. "The University has grown in reputation regionally and nationally. In my opinion, Dr. Bonner's first decade of service as president will go down in the University's history as one of the greatest."

Bonner said he believes Gardner-Webb "gets it right" in striving for excellence in Christian higher education in the 21st century, but he quickly added that he's just one part of Gardner-Webb's success, in the past decade and in the University's overall history.

Students — Bonner asserted — are the true indicator of a university's performance. "I think most of all a university or college is judged by its graduates and by their personal success," he offered. "If we can see that our students and alumni have really gone on to meaningful and fulfilling lives and see that Gardner-Webb has played a lead role in that, that's a good definition of success."

Bonner's first decade as president has been a purpose-filled dedication to the foundational pillars of this century-old institution, yet he feels the best is yet to come for the University.

"We must strive to really reach the full potential of this institution," Bonner added. "Although we have made some great progress, we're not there yet. This University has unlimited potential. It's got all the right ingredients. It's got all the right people, the right purpose, the right mission, all the right programs, a beautiful campus and infrastructure, facilities and so forth. We will never stop improving and growing. It will take commitment from everyone who loves Gardner-Webb to ensure that we live up to our potential."

A high of 1,726 total degrees are awarded in the calendar year  
Family Nurse Practitioner program begins

..... **2013**



University completes Higher Ground, its largest-ever capital campaign, with more than \$46 million in contributions

Ground broken on new Brinkley Softball Stadium complex  
GWU announces purchase of former Crawley Hospital facility and 26 acres of property for use for health sciences education

..... **2014**

Hunt School of Nursing established with gift from community leaders Dr. Jack and Mrs. Ruby Hunt

Physician's Assistant Studies program begins  
Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership degree program begins

..... **2015**

GWU becomes first Purple Heart University in the state of North Carolina for its commitment to supporting and educating military members

Women's lacrosse team competes in first intercollegiate season





A scenic view of a university campus. In the foreground, three students are sitting on a lush green lawn. A young man in a red polo shirt is holding a book, while two young women, one in a white cardigan and one in a grey shirt, are looking at a large blue document. A black backpack and a striped bag are on the grass next to them. In the middle ground, a paved path winds through the lawn, with a young man and woman walking together. In the background, there are large, leafy trees and a red brick building with a central entrance. The sky is blue with some clouds.

## *Scenic Impressions*

Alone we can do so little;  
together we can do so much.”

– Helen Keller









# SERVICE CENTERED

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES ENCOURAGE LIFE OF SERVICE AT GWU

WRITTEN BY MATT RENFER

Written into the University's curriculum through the Service Learning Program, community service is a top academic priority at Gardner-Webb. Classes often partner with local organizations and initiatives like the Red Cross, the Salvation Army or the Cleveland County Potato Project, enabling students to discover connections between their work in the classroom and in the community.

Micah Martin, director of Student Leadership Development and Community Engagement, says the purpose of volunteer opportunities at Gardner-Webb is to develop in students a service-oriented lifestyle.





Micah Martin

“We’re trying to move students beyond volunteerism—the ‘one and done’ service event—toward a lifestyle of service by helping them develop an awareness lens for legitimate needs,” he said. “They’re learning to identify needs and use their talents and gifts to meet these. Everybody wins when we can find ways for our students to serve doing the things they are designed for and enjoy.”

Service project days at Gardner-Webb helps instill in students a continuing desire to serve others. Projects range from writing notes of appreciation to key university staff members (cafeteria workers, maintenance crews, and custodians), to assembling food-pantry backpacks for local school children in need, to putting together thousands of meal packages for hungry people all over the world. Participants gather up trash and overgrown brush at the Broad River Greenway, while other students get their hands dirty by harvesting sweet potatoes for the Cleveland County Potato Project and working in the community garden, and more.

“Gardner-Webb does a lot to make sure that our students have a chance to actually impact folks,” said Collin Helms, a Gardner-Webb senior and student recruitment ambassador coordinator.

Through these efforts and more, Gardner-Webb students leave a lasting impact on the University community and beyond. In 2014, 905 Gardner-Webb students engaged in academic service-learning initiatives, while 1,006 students participated in community service opportunities outside of class. Through a wide range of projects, students logged a total of 34,174 hours of intentional community service.

“Many of our students have grown up with a mindset both in church and their communities that there’s something innate in their behavior that they have to serve others. We believe it’s spiritual. We believe it’s something that flows out of their following of Christ,” Martin shared. “For a lot of our students they’re discovering that while they’re here. We don’t take that for granted—we’re developing them spiritually, and a big part of that is service.”

The tangible results of service efforts do not go unnoticed. For seven straight years, Gardner-Webb was selected for the 2014 President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll. The Honor Roll recognizes those institutions that reflect the values of exemplary community service and achieve meaningful outcomes in their communities. Gardner-Webb has become an Honor Roll mainstay because of students’ commitment to a wide variety of service initiatives.

“A lot of schools talk about their commitment to service,” said Dr. Ben Leslie, provost and executive vice president. “Our inclusion on the Honor Roll is just one indication that a Gardner-Webb education really does deliver the kind of character-transforming experience that comes with a high level of service and volunteerism integrated with the learning experience.”

*For information on student service at Gardner-Webb, contact Micah Martin at [mmartin8@gardner-webb.edu](mailto:mmartin8@gardner-webb.edu) or (704) 406-2135. For more on volunteer opportunities, visit [gardner-webb.edu/volunteer](http://gardner-webb.edu/volunteer).*



See our students embrace service learning:  
[gardnerwebb.edu/student-service](http://gardnerwebb.edu/student-service)





# SPORTING SERVICE


MARY TOOHEY CARVES PATH AT GWU THROUGH COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

WRITTEN BY MATT RENFER

Gardner-Webb junior Mary Toohey enrolled at the University in 2012 on a soccer scholarship, but suffered a concussion shortly after the start of her freshman year. With soccer out of the picture, she found herself at a crossroad. Transferring to another school became a real possibility.

“Then God just said ‘no.’ So I stayed here,” Toohey said. “I got involved with Relay for Life and a couple other things and really formed roots.”





Relay for Life is the signature fundraising event network of the American Cancer Society. International 24-hour events bring together communities to pay homage to lost loved ones, celebrate survivors and raise funds and awareness toward cancer research.

“A great thing about Gardner-Webb is that it’s small enough that you can be involved and it actually matter,” Toohey shared. “At other schools, in order to be involved, you have to know people. Gardner-Webb is on a smaller scale, so you can get a variety of experiences, and the chances of you knowing someone else participating is pretty good.”

For Toohey, a native of Winston-Salem, N.C., joining Relay for Life was personal. While she was a young teenager in high school, her grandmother, who lived with her at the time, passed away from colon cancer.

“I watched it completely destroy her body,” Toohey recalled. “Everybody knows someone who’s had cancer, and for me, I saw that as a really great opportunity to help, having never been a part of a huge fundraiser like Relay for Life.”

Initially joining the organization her freshman year, Toohey amped up her involvement throughout her college career. Last year, she was the team development committee chair—the one in charge of fundraising and sign-ups.

“It was a lot of time and energy, but it was definitely worth it,” Toohey said. “It was a really good experience because I got to speak to a lot of people about Relay. I enjoy helping and doing anything that people need me to do in order to be successful.”

This year, Toohey will be head chair for Gardner-Webb’s Relay for Life chapter, which entails delegating tasks to multiple committees.

Now a biology major, Toohey says her college experience has worked out for the better as she continues to explore a variety of interests through campus life and volunteer efforts. Not the least of those efforts is her leadership in Release, a university human trafficking awareness club, where she has flourished in similar fashion to Relay for Life. She plugged in initially during her freshman year, becoming vice president as a sophomore before assuming presidency of the club this year.

“This entails running meetings, organizing leadership for social media, and planning events with the members and other groups on campus, among other tasks” she said. “I communicate with outside sources we work with, but this is also left to other members of my team on occasion.” The club’s goal is to educate, inform and spread awareness to students, faculty members, and the community about the global issue involving human trafficking.

Though her original plans to play soccer were ultimately thwarted, Toohey has made service her sport. True to form, she now also serves the Gardner-Webb soccer team as a manager, assisting in the needs of players and their equipment.

“It’s great when people get involved, and I think a lot of students are willing to,” Toohey said. “We never have too many hands. The community wants you to be involved—they want to invite you into their homes, to be a part of their lives and to invest in Boiling Springs. It makes you feel like a better person when you help other people.” 🔥



# TESTING THE

# WATER

**GWU ALUM, STUDENT PARTNER IN IMMERSIVE RESEARCH EXPERIENCE**

**WRITTEN BY MATT WALTERS**

When the BP Deepwater Horizon platform exploded in April 2010, spilling an unprecedented 210 million gallons of oil into the Gulf of Mexico, Gardner-Webb's Josh Johnson was a junior in high school. As he watched the chaos from a distance with concern and fascination, he wondered how safety crews and scientists could possibly clean up such a catastrophic mess.

Little did Josh know that in four years he would be selected for a prestigious chemistry internship at a national laboratory analyzing that very same crude oil. In fact, if not for his Gardner-Webb experience, Josh may never have developed an interest in pursuing such research.

When Josh's Gardner-Webb journey began, conducting original research in environmental chemistry was nowhere on his radar. That was before he took his first class with chemistry professor Dr. Stefka Eddins.

Eddins was the first of several professors to take a personal interest in Josh's future. "I remember Dr. Eddins recognizing that I had a passion for doing research about issues that really matter. She encouraged me to explore environmental chemistry," Josh said.

As a sophomore, Josh began researching important—even controversial—issues in science. He joined organizations like the Gardner-Webb Honors Program and the Alpha Chi National College Honor Society, which give Gardner-Webb students opportunities for experiential learning



Josh Johnson



and undergraduate research. Encouraged by several of his faculty mentors, Josh even led an interdisciplinary student research team in a project on hydraulic fracturing that won a national research award at the 2014 Alpha Chi national conference in St. Louis.

“That project was really interesting because we had a chemistry major, a biology major, a business major and a religious studies major assessing the implications of fracking from totally different perspectives,” Josh shared.

With every project, Josh began realizing what Eddins and others already knew—that a bright future might be awaiting him in chemistry.

“That’s one of the things I love about Gardner-Webb professors,” Josh said. “They go out of their way to get to know us, to help us imagine what we want from our future. That’s not something that’s unique to me. I’ve seen those mentorships develop between so many professors and students.”

In fact, it was Eddins’ mentorship of another Gardner-Webb student several years ago that opened the door for Josh’s encounter with the Deepwater Horizon disaster he had watched as a high schooler—an internship that would test Josh’s growing hypothesis about his future.

In 2014, Josh was one of only 29 students selected—out of hundreds of applicants nationwide—for the prestigious Research Experience for Undergraduates program at the National High Magnetic Field Laboratory at Florida State University (Tallahassee, Fla.). For eight weeks, Josh lived and worked full-time at the Magnet Lab under the direction of expert chemists and laboratory scientists, giving him an immersive glimpse of what professional research has to offer.

His mentor for the summer experience was Dr. David Podgorski, another of Eddins’ former students who is now a research faculty member with the Magnet Lab’s Future Fuels Institute.

“Gardner-Webb students are really competitive applicants, so when I heard that Josh had been accepted, I insisted on being his mentor,” Podgorski said.

Podgorski then handcrafted a project that he knew would challenge Josh and offer the type of experience that could be a cornerstone of a graduate school application. The project involved analyzing how sunlight degrades different types of crude oil in water.

“It was an incredible experience,” Josh recalled. “We were working with real samples from actual spills, one from Deepwater Horizon and one from the marine vessel Cosco Busan spill in the San Francisco Bay.” Josh believes the research has important environmental implications.



Dr. Stefka Eddins and Josh Johnson

More than the project itself, Josh points to his new relationship with Podgorski as the best takeaway from the summer. Eddins, their mutual Gardner-Webb mentor, is not surprised that the two worked so well together.

“Josh reminds me of David as a student, in that he has the focus, intellectual ability, drive, and resourcefulness that are mandatory for success in graduate school,” shares Eddins. “We are tremendously proud of David, and I am thrilled that Josh had the chance to work with him.”

Podgorski also relished the opportunity to mentor Josh, to “pay forward” the Gardner-Webb faculty’s investment in his own life and career.

“Josh has all the tools he needs to be successful,” Podgorski says. “He is very talented, very bright, but even more important, he’s very driven. It was a pleasure working with him and I can’t wait to see what he goes on to accomplish.”

Perhaps the most important result from the summer, though, was that the internship confirmed Josh’s desire to be a professional analytical chemist, to devote his life to research that is meaningful and worthwhile. He will begin a Ph.D. program in analytical chemistry this fall at Purdue University in West Lafayette, Ind. He plans to focus his research on developing new techniques to characterize the compounds found in petroleum.

“I know graduate school is the right next step for me,” he shares. “This experience at Florida State—my entire experience at Gardner-Webb—has shown me the person I want to become.”



# HerStory

*comes alive through History*

*GWU Student Sarah Lynch Explores a Career in Public History*

*Written by Niki Bliss-Carroll*

*She carefully pulls the object from the protective wrapping. Gently, she inspects the item, reviewing the range of its qualities and logging her findings. During two recent internships at two North Carolina museums, Sarah Lynch has been able to envision a career that offers an intersection of her knowledge of history and her interest in artifacts. As a third-year history major at Gardner-Webb, she is focusing her energy on a relatively new offering known as museum studies/public history.*



Sarah Lynch

"I knew I wanted to be a history major when I arrived at GWU," the Niceville, Fla., native shared. "But I didn't know what I wanted to do with that. In an introduction to historical studies class my freshman year, I realized that one can work in the museum world in the area of public history. That's when I knew how I wanted to apply my degree."

Although not yet an official concentration, GWU students with interest in museum studies/public history are being exposed to some new curriculum that will allow them to function effectively post graduation in the world of museum work. Students learn how to interpret collections and their historical meaning and significance, and then make those items accessible to as many members of the public as possible.

"Currently, Museum Studies is in a pilot, exploratory phase at GWU, in which we are seeking to understand if the student interest and career opportunities exist for us to productively pursue such a program long term," explained Dr. Joseph Moore, assistant professor of history. "Sarah has a passion for local history that is truly unique. Whereas most people look for the big, broad brush-strokes of history, she excels at finding meaning in the small, local stories that make up life in towns and communities throughout the nation."

During the spring semester of Lynch's sophomore year, she worked as an intern at the Kings Mountain Historical Museum (Kings Mountain, N.C.). Immediately, she began seeing direct connections between the museum collections and her class on North Carolina history.

"While I was there, the museum was hosting a North Carolina textile show that featured the work of Kings Mountain area mills, most of which are now closed down," she shared. "At the same time, I was taking Dr. [Tim] Vanderburg's class on North Carolina history, and we specifically discussed the impact of textiles in the state."

For Lynch, the internship experience added a new layer to her love for history. "One thing we got to do was meet local mill owners and we had a chance to talk to them and learn about the local history and culture of the mills in Kings Mountain," she recalled. "It was a way to look back through their eyes at what the mills were like in their heyday. Some would come in and recognize a photo of a family member and share a story about a memory they had."







Lynch is spending the spring semester of her junior year in an internship at the Earl Scruggs Center in Shelby, N.C. She has already enjoyed hands-on learning experiences that will prepare her for the next steps in her education and professional endeavors. “In the top floor of the center, they have a rotating exhibit,” she explained. “My first day there, I got to help set up a new traveling exhibit, and that was really neat.”

She is hoping that another internship at a larger, more metropolitan museum will be an option. “I applied to work at what will hopefully be a paid internship with the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History. That would be my dream-come-true internship!”

GWU history professors are also excited about the option for students to focus their historical studies toward museum work. “Dr. Moore is talking about having some sort of project that would involve me setting up and organizing an entire exhibit,” Lynch said. “Right now the idea would be to work with local folks in town and engineer an entire exhibit on my own. So the experience I’m getting in the other local museums is definitely exposing me to the skills and knowledge to take on a project like that.”

As a student immersed in a somewhat unconventional pursuit, Lynch said she has felt tremendously supported by the faculty and staff at Gardner-Webb. “All of my professors in the history department have been encouraging and my advisor, Dr. Moore, has been extremely proactive in both helping me find internships and working with the University to plan this future public history concentration.

“It’s so important for a community to remember their past in order to unite them together,” she reflected. “Understanding where we’ve come and things we have done are all ways we can learn and find unity.”









## **“Paws Awhile” Program Provides Animal Therapy for GWU Students**

***Written by Jonelle Bobak / The Star (Shelby, N.C.)***

Gardner-Webb students are embracing regular therapy sessions—from four-legged friends.

Therapy Dogs International brings highly trained dogs to the Tucker Student Center each week for interaction with students, from freshmen to seniors, in the “Paws Awhile” program. “We might be able to make a difference in 15 minutes to a student,” said Dr. Helen Tichenor, director of International Programs at Gardner-Webb University.



The idea came about when Tichenor read a study by Kent State University, where she served for 32 years. The study concluded that dogs help to relieve stress among nursing students. “If it reduces stress in Ohio and Pennsylvania, it can reduce stress at Gardner-Webb,” Tichenor said.

She said groups of students at Gardner-Webb embrace the therapy dogs.

“You hear comments like, ‘Oh, I miss my dogs so much,’ or ‘I miss my family,’ and they just come and play with the dogs,” she said.

“I love having the therapy dogs here because they remind me that I will get to go home soon to see my dog Bailey,” shared junior Michaela Glover. “Having them here takes away the stress of the everyday and replaces it with so much joy.”

For many students, spending time with the dogs is a welcome addition to college life. “I have a dog back home and it’s just nice to be able to pet the ones here,” freshman Alice Byrd said, adding that students’ lives are filled with “homework, homework, homework,” and many students visit with the therapy dogs to take a break from their academic workload. “It is a brief distraction from a chemistry test,” Tichenor said.

The dogs also visit hospitals, nursing homes, schools and colleges, and each must pass a 13-point test in order to be an official therapy dog of Therapy Dogs International (TDI). Tina Whisnant, a trainer for TDI, has been training dogs for many years. “They have to pass all the elements of the test in order to be a potential therapy dog,” said Whisnant.

The therapy dogs have to learn how to refuse food lying on the floor and walk politely on a leash. Tichenor added: “They have to be



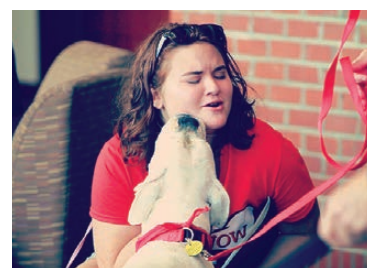
comfortable with people touching their head and tail.”

Founded in 1976 in New Jersey, TDI is a volunteer organization dedicated to regulating, testing and registration

of therapy dogs and their volunteer handlers for the purpose of visiting nursing homes, hospitals, other institutions and wherever else therapy dogs are needed.

GWU junior Travis Archie said students need and appreciate the visits from the therapy dogs. “I enjoy walking into the Tucker Center and being able to play with the dogs, especially when I have had a stressful day. They just ease all my worries so I can finish the day on a good note.”

*Jonelle Bobak is a Gardner-Webb student and served as a reporting intern at The Star newspaper in Shelby, N.C. She also writes for the University’s online newspaper, GWU Today.*







# E HOLBRO COU





# Hardwood HIGHLIGHT

**GWU Honors Eddie Holbrook's Stellar Career with Name on Basketball Court**

*Written by Matthew Tessnear*

Eddie Holbrook coached Gardner-Webb men's basketball teams to more than 300 wins in the 1960s and 1970s. He patrolled the sideline as the Runnin' Bulldogs started a streak of 82 straight victories in Bost Gym. Five of his athletes went on to play in the professional National Basketball Association (NBA).

Now the basketball court on the Paul Porter Arena floor inside Gardner-Webb's Lutz-Yelton Convocation Center bears his name to mark his success and commitment to excellence at the University and in the surrounding community. The name Eddie Holbrook Court first appeared on the hardwood for the 2014-15 GWU basketball season, cementing the former coach's impact on the University's athletic programs and campus.

"The court naming is a tribute to all the players and the team of administration and community that got Gardner-Webb's basketball and athletic programs going," Holbrook shared. "For the University, it's a measure to what can be achieved when you work as a team to improve. It's a personal honor with my name, yes, but I'm proud and tickled to death because it means I was part of the team."





Holbrook's friends and former players gathered in February to celebrate the honor. "This is the ultimate compliment that an institution can pay a coach," said Neill McGeachy, who played basketball with Holbrook in the 1960s at what was then Lenoir-Rhyne College. "One definition of success is the masterful application of the fundamentals on a daily basis, and he epitomizes that, as a player in attention to detail and at the interscholastic and intercollegiate levels. He took Gardner-Webb to a regional and now national identity and power."

Holbrook first came to Gardner-Webb in 1964 as a 25-year-old basketball coach. He went on to lead GWU to 20-win seasons 11 times, four appearances in the NAIA national tournament and a transition from junior college to senior college basketball. His 1971-72 team averaged a remarkable 104.3 points per game.

Few college basketball coaches have impacted the game and its players like Eddie Holbrook, shared GWU Vice President for Athletics Chuck Burch. "Coach Holbrook's winning percentage



is very impressive, but his impact on the lives of so many young men during his tenure with our school speaks volumes as well,” Burch said. “I was a student here during Coach Holbrook’s heyday and can tell you it was a lot of fun to be in Bost Gym and watch those teams play. They played fast and we made sure that we did our part in helping provide the team a home-court advantage. The community fell in love with those teams and their style of play. The 82-game win streak in that gym was a point of pride for everyone. It was a special time.”



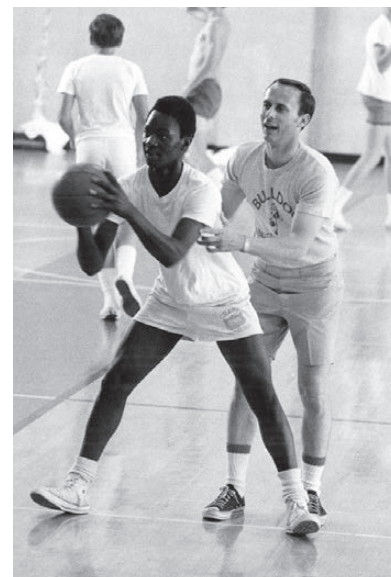
In addition to his basketball duties, Holbrook served as athletic director throughout most of the 1970s, and he returned as vice president for athletics in the 1990s. In 1991, Holbrook was one of the first inductees into the Gardner-Webb Athletics Hall of Fame. He was selected in 1992 as Gardner-Webb’s Bulldog of the Year.

Holbrook set daily examples for others to put God first, love family and work hard, said Bill Ellis, a 1975 GWU alumnus and basketball team co-captain. “Coach Holbrook modeled those points to me,” Ellis said. “After four years at Gardner-Webb, I learned what it would take to be successful in life.”

The coach’s name on GWU’s basketball court now marks his success as a coach and provides a continuing testament to the role Gardner-Webb plays in the lives of the many people it serves. “He put a characteristic trait in me to never quit,” shared Kevin Cantwell, who played for Holbrook in the 1960s when Gardner-Webb was a junior college. Cantwell later coached college basketball for nearly three decades

himself. “In his coaching career, Coach Holbrook taught caretaking and teaching. Everything he did was excellent.”

After his Gardner-Webb career, Holbrook has continued to be successful and to secure wins for the community that surrounds the University. As a Cleveland County (N.C.) commissioner, Holbrook has helped attract new jobs and businesses through his government and industry relations work. He has also co-captained a continuous effort that made nearby Shelby (N.C.) the home of the American Legion Baseball World Series.



Holbrook said his time at Gardner-Webb taught him lessons in discipline, mental toughness and teamwork. “It taught me to believe that working together you can achieve what no one person can achieve alone,” he offered.

“It’s gratifying to see this campus now, as it has grown from what it looked like in 1965. When I came here and Gardner-Webb was a junior college, players who lettered in a sport got \$50 and there were no scholarships. All the years in between have been building blocks for the University to reach this level. It took a team to make it happen. It’s satisfying to be part of that team.”







# THE FIRST INNING

**AS NEW BRINKLEY STADIUM RISES, GWU SOFTBALL PIONEERS REFLECT ON PROGRAM'S BEGINNINGS**

**WRITTEN BY MATTHEW TESSNEAR**

"I wish Gardner-Webb would launch a softball program."

Krista Colle Gibson still remembers having those thoughts as a freshman in the early 1980s, while walking to her dorm after watching fellow female students compete for the school's women's basketball and volleyball teams.

Gibson shined as an all-conference softball player at her Florida high school. A college fair persuaded her to move north to continue her education at Gardner-Webb, but in those days the school had yet to field an intercollegiate softball team that would allow her to continue competing in the sport she loved.

"I thought my softball playing days were over," she recalled. "I looked at my academics, said I'd get scholarships, and I saw that as my only college focus."

Along with many other faces and places at Gardner-Webb, however, that changed throughout the decade of the 1980s, as the school asserted that it wanted to field, support and grow a softball program for female college student-athletes who wanted a chance to play their sport. And it took the right team of people to make it happen.



## **'We Had to Find Our Own Way'**

Sallie Black completed a master's degree in 1980 and was hired that summer to coach women's basketball at Gardner-Webb.

"There were enough girls at the school who played softball in high school and wanted to start a softball team at Gardner-Webb," Black recalled. "We worked with the school's administration at the time to allow them to do that and first started a club softball team."

The team received no scholarships. The budget was minimal, yet it included funding for team T-shirts. Players walked across Main Street to the old Boiling Springs Elementary School property to drag a field for practice. Games were played at a recreation field in nearby Shelby, N.C. Other colleges in the region, schools like Catawba College in Salisbury, N.C., served as opponents.







“We had to find our own way,” Black asserted. “It was a commitment on the part of the

girls and, because they loved the sport, they were willing to make the commitment. When it first started, there wasn’t much

pressure for a player or a coach. In those days it was always just a bunch of girls who wanted to work hard and play softball.”

### ***‘A Logical Next Step’***

Interest in softball was growing across the state of North Carolina in the 1970s and 1980s, remembers Craven Williams, Gardner-Webb’s president at the time.

“We were increasingly having students talking to us about having played high school softball and asking if we had a team,” Williams shared.

“We saw fielding a softball program as a logical next step for us in developing the athletic program. We got the message clearly from several sources on campus that a softball team was wanted, and I am sure the students presented me with

a list of named supporters as well.”

As many colleges, universities and school systems sought ways to also provide equal opportunities for all student-athletes as a response to Federal Title IX education rights mandates, Gardner-Webb softball blossomed. By the mid-1980s, GWU’s softball team had begun its transition from a club team into an intercollegiate sport. That development led to the

need for new equipment and a permanent stadium. Williams recalls the program’s first campus games being played in the area of what is now the astronomy observatory, which bears his name and sits off Stadium Drive.

Sure, Gardner-Webb students gained from the creation and development of a softball team, but so did the school, Williams said.

“If you look at the newspaper, you can’t find an English or a mathematics section,” Williams declared, “but you find the sports section. Sports like softball gave us visibility for a different group of people than did academics.”

### ***‘We Wanted to Play so Badly’***

Academics were no longer the only thing on the schedule for students like Gibson, who recollected traveling home to Florida to retrieve her high school softball cleats once she learned Gardner-Webb would field a squad.

“I think administration was a little taken aback that we wanted to play so badly,” Gibson said, adding that she and other female students gathered a positive petition of support from 100-plus students on campus. “But I think that helped us. I think we proved to them we were going to get the people behind us.”



Fans, even in small numbers, got behind the team, too, especially once the team moved games to campus several years after the club team first took the field.

“It was a little scary at first, thinking we’d play teams that were established, so we needed the support,” Gibson shared. “It was daunting going





into places with nice fields. But I remember going to one college and dropping a ball in the outfield because I stepped in a huge hole. We played on some of those kinds of fields as well. And we had T-shirts, so we didn't look like some of the teams in their uniforms in the beginning. It was still a lot of fun."

### **'Still Gardner-Webb Softball'**

Dr. Dee Hunt remembers the fun but also the busy schedule of coaching softball at Gardner-Webb during the days when half of the team also played volleyball because the sports were scheduled in different semesters. Hunt, now vice president of student development at Gardner-Webb, also coached both sports during the 1980s.



"I prepared the field for practice and competition — dragging the field with my VW Camper Van, believe it or not. I also drove the travel van," she offered. "Coaching softball was one of the most enjoyable coaching experiences I have been fortunate

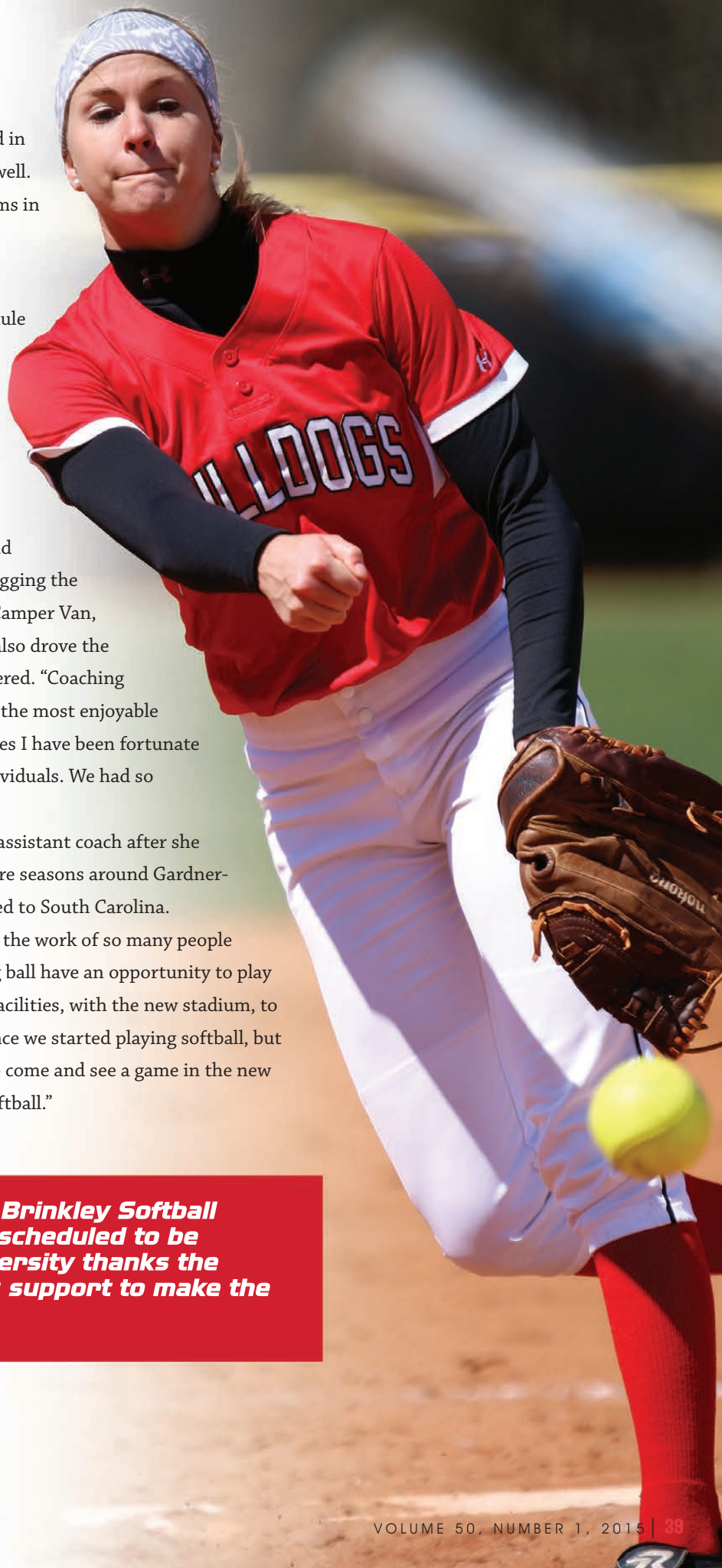
enough to participate in. I had great athletes and great individuals. We had so much fun."

Gibson's fun as a player led her to work with Black as an assistant coach after she graduated from Gardner-Webb in 1984. It gave her two more seasons around Gardner-Webb's softball program in the early years, before she moved to South Carolina.

"I love that the program is still around and thriving after the work of so many people all these years," Gibson said. "These girls coming up playing ball have an opportunity to play really good softball. And now the University will have the facilities, with the new stadium, to attract the top talent. The campus has changed so much since we started playing softball, but it still has that family flavor I always loved. I'll be excited to come and see a game in the new stadium. With all that's changed, it's still Gardner-Webb softball."

*\*Photos contributed by Krista Colle Gibson.*

***Construction on Gardner-Webb's new Brinkley Softball Stadium, which began in fall 2014, is scheduled to be completed in summer 2015. The University thanks the David Brinkley family for its generous support to make the new facility a reality.***





# Stroke of Success

*GWU Swimming Achievements a Team Championship Effort*

*By Matthew Tessnear*

A Gardner-Webb swimmer emerged from the pool, glanced at her parents in the stands and then peered with wide eyes at a scoreboard that revealed the results of her race. The senior, who had faced challenges for four years as a college swimmer, looked shocked. She swam her best time in the event in eight years.



Mike Simpson

That fantastic finish provided a lasting snapshot for GWU Swimming Head Coach Mike Simpson to describe his team's 2015 Coastal Collegiate Swimming Association (CCSA) Championships and the GWU swimming program's 2014-15 season. "Our success came from everybody, top to bottom, swimming well at the end. The entire team," Simpson praised. "It wasn't just the kids who

received attention with awards. The group collectively worked hard all year long, trusted it would pay off and left the results up to God."

Those results turned out to be stellar in the end at the championships—including 193 lifetime-best swimming times in various events, 18 male and 18 female finalists, 23 school records, 16 all-conference athletes, five conference champions and 35 all-academic all-conference honorees. The results didn't completely surprise Simpson, who for the first time was named CCSA Men's Coach of the Year and has built GWU's swimming program from the ground up in the past 16 years. "I just had this feeling this was going to be a special year," Simpson shared. "A lot of that has to do with leadership. Our captains bought into our program. My honor is a staff and team award."

The team included 18 total freshmen, which forced upperclassmen to take on leadership roles and assistant coaches to provide organization and focus, said junior Nathan Lile, who was named the conference's most outstanding male swimmer and GWU's first male scholar athlete of the year. "(Simpson) led us to a better finish than ever before as a team," Lile added. "Our success is a statement about the team, not just the award winners. I push my teammates, but they push back. You can't swim like we did without having people united with the same goal."

Gardner-Webb's veteran swimmers believe Coach Simpson's long-term goals helped them trust in his plans for the team's season. "The first conversation I ever had with Coach Mike was as a senior in high school," offered senior Charity Byrum. "He told me this swimming program is not just a job for him. It's a mission opportunity and his ministry for students. When I got to Gardner-Webb, that's what I found. Everyone on our team is so genuine and cares about each other. We had great camaraderie on the girls team this year, and Coach Simpson instilled that in us."

Simpson shared that God gave him a clear vision to come to Gardner-Webb in the late 1990s. Now, after relishing a strong season, he is eyeing ways to make an annually successful swimming program even better. "We've got to replace some phenomenal seniors, as much for their leadership as their speed in the pool. We want to win championships and get swimmers back to nationals," he explained. "Smiles like the ones we saw on our kids' faces at (CCSA) are what make this season and program so special."





# CHAMPIONSHIPS BEGIN WITH SCHOLARSHIPS

22

*NCAA Division I Intercollegiate Sports*

480 total

*Student Athletes*

95

*Student Athletes on Full Athletic Scholarships*

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*Student Athletes receiving partial Athletic Scholarships*

85

*Student Athletes have no Athletic Scholarships*

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Estimated numbers provided by the GWU Compliance Office as of August 2014.



# A Higher (Ed) Calling

*Longtime GWU Senior Staffer Reflects on University 'Home' as he Retires*

***Written by Niki Bliss-Carroll***

After a quarter century of graciously stepping into any position requested of him by leadership at Gardner-Webb University, Ralph “Scoot” Dixon has acquired a new title—“retired.”

He joined Gardner-Webb in 1989 as vice president for college relations, a position that combined fundraising, community relations, and the responsibilities of managing people and processes. Raised in Cleveland County, he married his high school and college sweetheart, Roberta “Robbie” Warlick, and spent nearly a decade working for the State of North Carolina in Raleigh, N.C., as Director of Personnel Management. An opportunity to offer his skills in business administration at his cousin’s growing business brought the young family back home. He and Robbie had two children (Chris and Heather) and were celebrating the

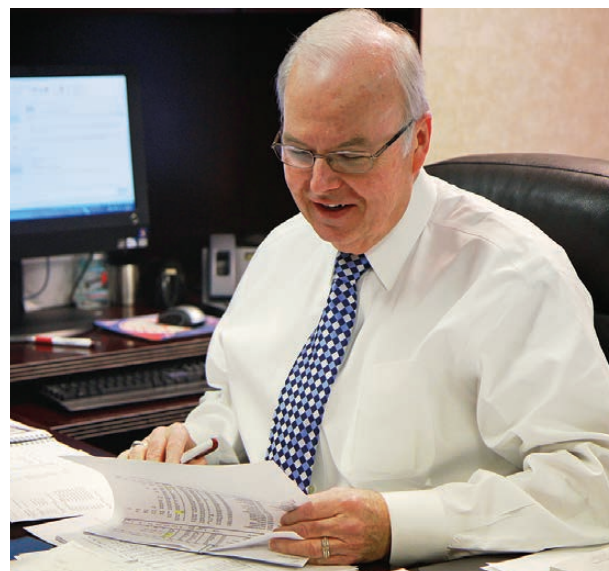
remission of the cancer that threatened Robbie just two years before. For Scoot, returning to his home county was a bit of an unexpected and pleasant surprise.

“I went to college thinking I would never return home other than to visit,” he reflected. “Not because I didn’t want to, I just thought my career would take me elsewhere.” The Dixon family attended church in Shelby at First Baptist, where they became acquainted with Gardner-Webb faculty members, administrators, and trustees. When a key position at the college became available, several people encouraged him to apply. He was offered the job, but wanted to be sure the administration knew some of the challenges his family may be required to face.









“Before I accepted, I told Dr. (Chris) White (then GWU President) that we had just been through two years of fighting Robbie’s cancer, and she was in remission, but I wanted them to know what they might be getting if they hired me,” Dixon recalled. He shared that White told him they were well aware of those challenges, and that they had no hesitation about the appointment.

Not long after he began at GWU, Robbie’s illness returned with a vengeance. “She fought for six years. Our kids were eight and 11 when she was first diagnosed,” he shared. She passed away on Nov. 20, 1992. Chris was a senior in high school, while Heather was a freshman.

“I was blessed in so many ways because I had church, I had the community, I had my family, and I had the University,” he said. “I’ve often said I can never come close to repaying the kindnesses that were extended to me through those groups.”

He knows firsthand the devastation and loneliness that one can feel when walking through the valley of tremendous loss. “I’m not sure how people can get through those times unless they have a strong faith,” he offered. “In the times that are most challenging and difficult, in the times when no one else is around, that’s when our faith in God carries us.”

Dixon remembers several friends also experiencing the pain of loss and difficulty. “I would tell them, ‘I know you may think this is crazy, but this is a good time to explore your relationship with the Father.’”

Dixon spent the next four years focusing on his children and his job at GWU. The thought of meeting someone new was not

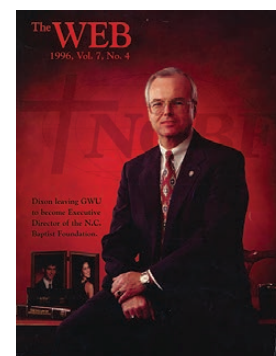
a priority, at least not to him. He had no idea that in a nearby community, a lovely woman named Myra had just endured a very similar situation, having lost her husband, Alex, to pancreatic cancer. A mutual friend encouraged Scoot to get in touch with Myra. She thought the two would be able to encourage one another and that they might even hit it off.

“So I called her up,” he grinned. “She said she didn’t want to talk, and we ended up hanging up almost an hour later.” Scoot and Myra started spending more time together and before long realized something special beginning to develop. They were married in 1997.

“God blessed me twice, there is no question about that,” Scoot declared.

As he began a new chapter personally, his professional life had also taken an unexpected turn. Given an opportunity to become the new executive director for the North Carolina Baptist Foundation (NCBF), Scoot left his post at Gardner-Webb and he and Myra moved to Raleigh. “I used to joke and say that after seven or eight years of raising money, I thought giving money away would be easier,” he smiled. “But I found out that’s not necessarily true.”

He fondly recalls the year he spent at NCBF. Just two months into the appointment, he remembers receiving calls from two different college presidents who predicted that he wouldn’t be able



Scoot on the cover of The Web in 1996





to stay away from higher education. Not one to argue or force his point, he just listened. “At the time, I thought it was an interesting perspective, but I don’t think I necessarily agreed with them,” Scoot recalled. “I just said ‘You may be right’ and left it at that.”

That conversation eventually made its way back to White, who conveyed to Scoot that if those sentiments were accurate, he

**“There’s still absolutely no way that I could pay back all of the kindnesses that occurred through this university community.”**

wanted Dixon to consider Gardner-Webb first. “At that point, I knew I truly felt called to Christian higher education,” he reflected.

After just over a year in Raleigh, in 1997, he transitioned back into a senior staff position at Gardner-Webb, this time as vice president for enrollment management. He has since served in a variety of posts with a range of roles and responsibilities and has been a loyal administrator through the terms of three university presidents. He has administered offices managing fundraising efforts, alumni relations, public relations, human resources, church relations, enrollment management and so much more. With every change, with each university need, Dixon showcased an admirable ability to adapt to various management styles and a philosophies, all because of his heart for serving Gardner-Webb.

“You respect that the president or CEO of any organization has

a responsibility to establish an organization in the way they think is best,” he shared. “I enjoy managing people and processes. In any role I’ve been asked to take on, I’ve understood that the leadership has a specific goal that needs to be accomplished and that it has importance.”

Following his 25 years of employment with the University, Dixon is enjoying setting his own schedule for the day. “So many times I found myself checking my calendar in the morning—after checking it two or three times the night before—just to see what is on the agenda for the day,” he explained. “To be able to wake up and say, ‘This day belongs to me and to whomever I want to share it with,’ is such a blessing. But I’m not going to disappear completely, I’ll still be around!”

Through his various roles at Gardner-Webb and as an active member of the community, he has volunteered his leadership skills for organizations as board member or chair with the Charlotte Regional Partnership, Young Life of Cleveland County, Cleveland County Arts Council, Cleveland County Economic Development Commission, the Ruby C. Hunt YMCA, and the United Way of Cleveland County. He remains enthusiastically involved as a board member or volunteer with the Cleveland County Family YMCA, the Cleveland County Chamber, the Cleveland County Economic Development Partnership, and Destination Cleveland County.

“If I lived to be 120, there’s still absolutely no way that I could pay back all of the kindnesses that occurred through this university community,” he declared. “No matter what we end up doing, we’ll have a place in this area because this is home. This is home.”







# THE TSUNAMI OF GRIEF

## DR. DON BERRY EXPLORES LIFE AFTER LOSS

### WRITTEN BY ANNA KULLMAR

Her name was Carolyn Berry. She had originally gone to college to study zoology but ultimately earned a degree in religion. She loved God, her family, friends, and students. She was a devoted mother of two, an exemplary elementary school teacher, the love of Dr. Donald Berry's life, and for 31 years the two embraced the experience of living as husband and wife. Theirs was a life of serving God, others, and each other. The future was clear, bright, and the forecast called for "mostly sunny" conditions... until the unthinkable happened.

Today, Don is still shaken by Carolyn's sudden death just over a year ago.

"I would have never earned my doctorate without her believing in me. She taught me how to love," Berry contemplated. "She was genuine with no pretense. Charming, but with a feisty side."

Their beginnings were quite humble as they navigated the first years of marriage and ministry. "Our first date was to see 'On Golden Pond' in a theater," Berry explains fondly. "We met in March of 1982 and were married in August."

While married, Berry pursued his terminal degree. "It's by the grace of God I have a Ph.D. It was nothing I originally considered," he reflected.

Following graduation, a teaching opportunity arose in Florida. Their next step was to serve as missionaries in the Czech Republic for four years. Then, they returned to the States where Berry began his teaching career at Samford University in Birmingham, Ala. In 1999, they made their way to Boiling Springs, N.C., where Don began teaching religious studies at Gardner-Webb University.

In Boiling Springs, Carolyn began working as an elementary school teacher. "She was so happy. She loved her students and they loved her," he recalled. "She was like a surrogate mother to them."


By 2009, Carolyn was having health issues, which resulted in multiple surgeries. Life improved for the Berry family; however, in 2011 things took a turn for the worst. They found out Carolyn had stage three stomach cancer. She endured three surgeries in less than a month. Still, the prognosis was grim. The family prepared for what was to come.

"There are so many different levels of grieving," Berry shared. "I thought I knew what it was like to grieve. But I didn't know how debilitating it could be. Nothing I had experienced prepared me for it. You never know what is going to trigger it. You could be standing in calm water, and then all of the sudden you look up and it is a tsunami."

A common response to an unexpected loss is to be angry with God. "Call this cliché," he said unashamedly, "but I believe God is not the causer of every storm, but the author of every rainbow."

He now understands the significance of offering comfort without having all of the answers. "When someone is grieving and asking that 'why?' question, the last thing they need is an answer. Don't feel like you have to fix it. You can't," he shared.

Through the grieving process, he has found great comfort and therapy in teaching and pastoring. Yet he still struggles with his new identity. "Before, I was a son to my parents. For 31 years, I was Carolyn's husband," he said. "Rediscovering who I am—that is the scariest part."

Looking toward the future, Berry has realized that things don't always turn out the way one expects. "It is like losing your legs, then getting a whole new pair and having to learn how to walk all over again. But you have to decide if you even want to walk," Berry explained. "You don't get over it. You learn to live with it. I would say I am standing and have taken a few steps. I wouldn't say I am walking again." 





# DANCING OUTSIDE YOUR COMFORT ZONE

BECKY WRIGHT MAKES MOVES AGAINST PARKINSON'S DISEASE

WRITTEN BY JACKIE BRIDGES / THE STAR (SHELBY, N.C.)



On her lunch break in the Gardner-Webb provost's office, Becky Wright turned on her radio and danced.

Since being diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease two years ago, Wright has discovered the simple joy of dancing. The exercise not only improves her mood, but it helps her deal with the symptoms of Parkinson's. And medical research has proven the benefits of movement for patients with Parkinson's, arthritis and other disabilities.



Becky Wright leading the Dance for Parkinson's class  
Photo courtesy of Brittany Randolph

"Rest is rust and motion is lotion," said Wright, who serves as administrative assistant to GWU Provost and Executive Vice President Dr. Ben Leslie. "That is true for everybody. A lot of people don't like to exercise, but if we are having fun and dancing, it's not a hard thing to do."

Wright wanted to share what she learned with people - and even though she said she doesn't like getting up in front of a group - she is teaching the Dance for Parkinson's class at the Neal Senior Center in Shelby, N.C.

Her doctor, Danielle Englert with the Department of Neurology at Carolinas Medical Center, introduced her to the benefits of dance. Because there were no dance classes offered locally, Wright learned from a DVD by the Mark Morris Dance Group of Brooklyn.

"I had been doing it by myself and I got tired of

the classical music," Wright said with a smile. "I'm a 60s child — Beatles and Motown — nobody can sit still to that music."

Wright added some of her own movements, and her grandchildren, Hunter and Kyndall Winecoff also taught her some dance moves, she said.

Her family noticed that the dancing was improving her mood, and she began to think about sharing what she had learned with others. She knew there was a Parkinson's Support Group that met at the Neal Senior Center (Shelby, N.C.) led by Doug Murphy.

"The Lord told me this is what I need to do," she said. "This is so far out of my comfort zone to be up in front of a group dancing. But it isn't about getting it right. I can't do it perfect, but we just need to move."

Five showed up to the first class, and Wright led them through the moves like she had been teaching the class for several weeks. They danced to Frank Sinatra singing "Come Fly with Me," Rod Stewart's "Under My Skin" and other songs.

Designed with slower and more controlled movements for Parkinson's patients or anyone who has some limitations, the class is also open to anyone who wants to dance with a group. "I hope this class will fit a lot of people who don't feel like they fit anywhere else," she said. "I want everyone to feel comfortable."

Wright encourages others to reach beyond their comfort zones, challenge themselves to do more, and be more, and to refuse to let disease keep them from trying to make a better life for themselves ... and for others.





# BEYOND THE TEXTBOOK

*Business Professor Retires Again After Career Takes Him,  
Students Around the World*

Written by Matt Renfer

Oscar Zamora, international business professor at Gardner-Webb, will retire this spring at the age of 71. What some may not know is that this will be his second retirement. Zamora brought to a close a 35-year career in manufacturing 14 years before he started teaching as an adjunct professor at Gardner-Webb.

Born in Mexico and raised in South Texas, Zamora pursued an academic life early on after earning a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering from the University of Texas in Austin. He went back to school for his MBA after beginning work at PPG Industries, a Fortune 200 international manufacturer of glass, paints, and optical products.



Zamora wore many hats at PPG—most requiring him to travel both domestically and overseas. He first travelled to Puerto Rico, where he spent three years launching a chemical plant before moving to Texas. After five years there, he was on to Louisiana for another eight years. A two-year stint in West Virginia followed before receiving an assignment as vice president of operations in Taiwan for two years. He was transferred from Taiwan to Montreal as operations manager for another two years. Finally, he ended up in Shelby, N.C., as global director of manufacturing for a joint venture between PPG and General Electric, where he stayed put until his retirement in 2001, at 57 years old.

“When I retired the first time, I realized you could only watch so many reruns of *Magnum, P.I.*,” Zamora recalled, laughing. “If you’ve been working since you were 12 years old—and now I’m 71—you can’t just stop working. You don’t know what to do with yourself.”

Then, an unexpected opportunity came his way. A financial officer he knew from PPG was getting her MBA at Gardner-Webb University. Knowing Zamora had experience traveling internationally, she mentioned to him that Dr. Anthony Negbenebor, dean of the school of business for Gardner-Webb, is always seeking guest speakers. Zamora spoke in several of Negbenebor’s classes before the subject of his retirement came up. It was at that point when Negbenebor asked him if he’d like to teach international business at Gardner-Webb.



“Professor Oscar Zamora is one of our most prolific practical professors,” Dr. Negbenebor shared. “He brings to the classroom a rich and aggregate global experience that can turn a boring subject into a life-long learning experience. His students love him and they crave for extended time for his lectures. He is truly a maverick teacher and one that seeks the best for his students and colleagues. I am honored to have worked with him. His contributions to the success of our Godbold School of Business will always be remembered. He will be missed.”

Zamora started his teaching career at Gardner-Webb as an adjunct for seven years before he taught full time. His range of experiences meant he could take on a variety of different courses, including operations management, leadership, and multiculturalism, to name a few.

“At one time I was teaching six different classes,” Zamora recalled. “For a while I couldn’t remember which class I was going to.”

His vast experience in business and leadership roles at home and abroad influenced his teaching style, which focused on the students’ preparation for the job market.

“Students told me they really appreciated that I not only knew the textbook version, but the real-life version on how things were applied,” Zamora shared. “One of my favorite sayings is ‘It’s not what you know, it’s what you do with what you know.’ It’s very, very true. In my classes, if they can make good grades on their exams but then don’t know how to apply it, it’s not very effective.”

Zamora believes a business leader should be involved in numerous community organizations. He has served with the United Way for six years, as well as chairman of the board of directors of Life Enrichment for two terms. He and his wife—who holds a Ph. D in English—share interests in volunteering for educational organizations. Zamora has volunteered at the Cleveland County (N.C.) Schools Educational Foundation and for Communities in Schools, while participating in various projects for schools.

Zamora’s plans after retirement include a great deal of traveling, which includes trips to China, Canada, and river cruises in Europe. He also looks forward to spending extensive time with family.

“We have a good group of students here, and the people I work with in the school of business—you couldn’t ask for a better group,” Zamora reflected. “We’re all different—a very diverse faculty. And we have our discussions and disagreements, but that’s life. I will miss the students most of all, and the friends that I’ve had coffee with to ask questions about our classes and discuss. But you can count on it that I’ll appear at the coffeeshop across the street after I’m retired and meet with some of my friends to keep in touch. It’s been a privilege and a pleasure to be associated with this school.”



# BOOKMARKS

*\*In each issue of the Gardner-Webb Magazine we will publish notes focusing on books written by Gardner-Webb authors in this section.*



## REV. TERRY BARNES '75

recently published "Joe and Booger Odom, a Christian Novel of Brotherly Reconciliation," the story of two sets of brothers who struggled with reconciliation, but with different outcomes, and the difference faith played in their lives. Barnes serves as the Minister of Education at Crest View Baptist

Church in Lenoir, N.C., and he has been the volunteer chaplain for the Lenoir Police Department since 1994, where he also served almost 10 years as an active reserve officer. He is a Master Chaplain with the N.C. Sheriff's Chaplains Association, serves as feeding coordinator for the Region 7 Baptist Men's Disaster Relief and as co-pilot for the N.C. Baptist Men's Aviation Ministry. Terry and his wife, Virginia, have two grown children.



## MIRIAM EZELL '80

recently published her second book, "Listen to Your Heart and Rewrite Your Story." It is a book about transforming and empowering people through life coaching. She lives in Madison, Ala., with her husband, Tim, a NASA engineer.



## JIMI RAY '87

released "I Wish it Would Rain" in early 2015. After graduating from Gardner-Webb, he formed a band called Age of Faith, which signed two major record label deals and produced five nationally released recordings. At the beginning of 2000, the band ended and Ray experienced a struggle



## ERIN BAGWELL '03 '08

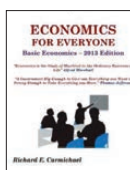
with depression and a six-year addiction to prescription pain medication. The book is the graphic story of his addiction, depression and redemption.

recently wrote a self-help book about setting and achieving goals. It is titled "Here Today, Gone Tomorrow: How to Make Your New Year's Resolutions Finally Stick."



## DR. KENT BLEVINS, PROFESSOR OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

published a book, "How to Read the Bible Without Losing Your Mind: A Truth-Seeker's Guide to Making Sense of Scripture." The book was published by Wipf and Stock, of Eugene, Ore.



## DR. RICHARD CARMICHAEL, PROFESSOR OF BUSINESS, COLLEGE OF DISTANCE LEARNING AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

released a new book, "Economics for Everyone 2014 Edition." The book examines the evolution of economic thought and the historical events that

have affected the economic growth of the world's industrialized countries. The book includes a variety of economic and political theory, from Karl Marx on communism to Ronald Reagan on supply side economics. Carmichael received an outstanding scholar award from Gardner-Webb for the book and another work, "American Economic History 2014 Edition."



## DR. JOSEPH WEBB, PROFESSOR OF COMMUNICATION STUDIES

published three books during the summer of 2014. His new books are "Home to Tunnel Hill: The True Story of One Family's Historic Odyssey Into and Out of Mormonism, 1775-2010," and "The Memos and the Meetings: Evidence for a Great

American Watergate Hoax." He has worked on both books for several years. The third book is a new edition of a work about contemporary hermeneutics, titled "Postmodern Bible Study: A Brief Introduction to New Methods for Interpreting the Bible."



## DR. DOUG BRYAN, ASSOCIATE PROVOST OF ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT

released a new book, "What the Willows Know," through publisher Nurturing Faith. The book is the story of a college professor's return to his hometown, where he seeks to help a dying friend who has been accused of murder.

If you would like to submit your information to Bookmarks, please email Matthew Tessnear at [mtessnear@gardner-webb.edu](mailto:mtessnear@gardner-webb.edu) or click on the Submit a Class Act link at [gardner-webb.edu/magazine](http://gardner-webb.edu/magazine)





GWU  
#GWUPRIDE



# Class Acts

## The 1950s

### JACK ALLISON '55

has been named to the GWU Gallery of Distinguished Alumni and was honored as Junior College Alumnus of the Year. Now retired, he served as a judge in Cherokee County, S.C. As a judge, he completed more than 800 hours of judicial education at the University of Virginia and the University of Nevada. In 1999, his civil service was recognized when he received the S.C. Order of the Silver Crescent, the second-highest award given to a citizen in South Carolina. He lives in Gaffney, S.C., where he has attended Cherokee Avenue Baptist Church since 1938 and lived in the same house since 1952. He writes a regular column, "Scrapbook," in the Gaffney Ledger, and his book, "From the Millhouse to the Courthouse," details his time working in the mills and his elected role as chief magistrate and municipal judge.

## The 1960s

### ED LOHR '60

was inducted into the Gardner-Webb Athletics Hall of Fame in the Class of 2014. Lohr (1958-1960) earned multiple letters during Gardner-Webb's junior college era, starring under Hall of Fame Coach Norman Harris in football and baseball. Lohr's success on the gridiron came at tackle, where he played at a high level in both 1958 and 1959. Lohr earned All-Western Carolina Junior College Conference honors in each of his seasons with the Bulldogs and served as team captain in 1959. Lohr was also part of an undefeated 1958 Gardner-Webb baseball squad.

## The 1970s



### LARRY THOMAS '74

displayed his first-ever art exhibit of his woodworking in the Tucker Student Center gallery on Gardner-Webb's campus. Thomas has served in various roles at GWU, but

has been a campus police officer for over three and a half decades. The Shelby native lives in Boiling Springs.

### DALE KING '75

recently retired from Spartanburg District #2 Schools after teaching for 35 years.

### RICK TREXLER '76

retired July 31, 2014, from the campus ministry team of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. He had served in the position since June 2001. Trexler also worked in campus ministries at Gardner-Webb, at Memorial Baptist Church in Buies Creek, N.C., and at Eastern Kentucky University. His wife, Joy, is a middle school guidance counselor in Wake County, N.C.



### LINDY GLENNON '79

has been named to the GWU Gallery of Distinguished Alumni. She obtained a degree in religious education at Gardner-Webb. Lindy

serves as a dedicated leader in social work, family development, and community action. She is currently the executive director of Cortland County Community Action Program in Cortland County, N.Y., where she has served since 2006. She leads more than 200 employees who provide Head Start programs, Weatherization programs, women and infant children services, and family development services for at-risk families.

She worked with Cornell University to develop the curriculum and training program for the family development model that serves as the professional certification for social workers working with at-risk families. Lindy lives with her husband, GWU alum Dr. Fred Glennon '80 BA, in Liverpool, N.Y.

## The 1980s

### CHRIS NORMAN '84

was selected for induction into the N.C. High School Athletic Association Hall of Fame. Born in Shelby, Norman attended Shelby (N.C.) High School, where he later served as head football coach from 1998 to 2010. He posted a 147-39-1 career coaching record, with three NCHSAA championships, 10 conference titles and five regional crowns. He also served as Shelby High's athletic director for six years, coached men's and women's track and field, president of the N.C. Coaches Association in 2011-12 and four-year terms on both the NCCA Board of Directors and the NCHSAA Board of Directors. Although he is no longer coaching from the sidelines, he does spend his Friday nights in the fall as a color commentator for Cleveland County high school football games on [shelbyinforadio.com](http://shelbyinforadio.com), something he first began in 2011 on [WGWG.org](http://WGWG.org).

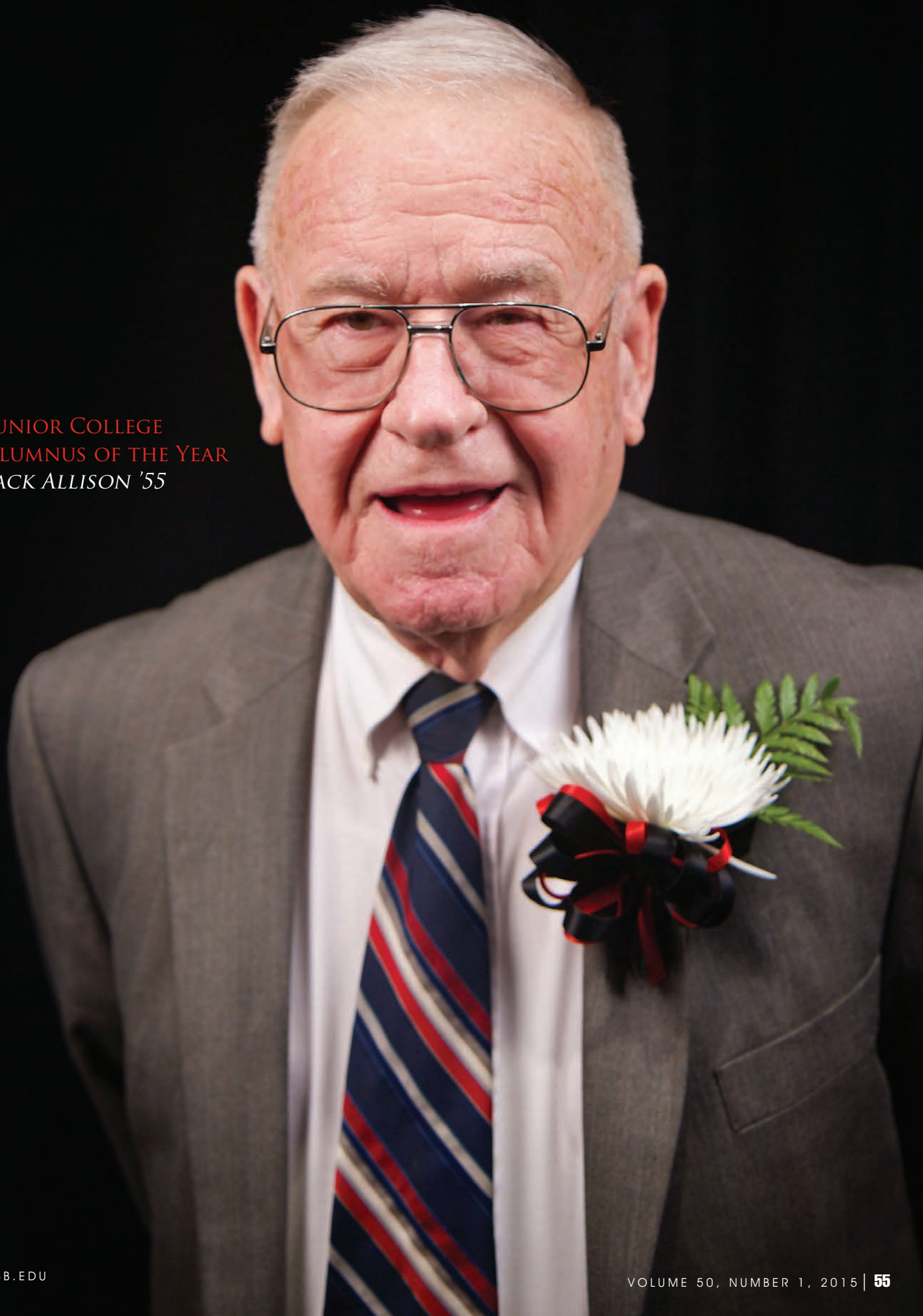
### JOHN BYRON SHELTON '84

was named assistant principal at West Montgomery High School in Mt. Gilead, N.C. He has worked 29 years in education, in both North and South Carolina, serving as a teacher, coach and athletic director. He earned a Master of Arts degree at Gardner-Webb in 2009. He and his wife, Carmen Evans Shelton, who also earned a Master of Arts degree in 2009, have two daughters.





JUNIOR COLLEGE  
ALUMNUS OF THE YEAR  
*JACK ALLISON '55*







# RE-IGNITE THE *experience*

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Every time you share your successful Gardner-Webb experiences, you serve your alma mater by recruiting prospective students who will write the University's next chapter. Thousands of Gardner-Webb alumni network with potential students every day, in the workplace, in church, in school, and in neighborhoods. It takes just a few minutes to show how GWU can be the "right fit" for those students' college choice. Help extend the Gardner-Webb message into your community, and connect college-seeking high school students with the GWU Admissions Office.

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**TIM DEARMAN '85**

was named publisher of the Hickory (N.C.) Daily Record and also serves as vice president of the North Carolina Community Group for BH Media Group, a Berkshire Hathaway Company. Dearman served a longtime stint as publisher of the Statesville Record & Landmark, where his career moved him from paperboy up to the top-ranking employee. He and his wife, Nancy, have four children and six grandchildren.

## The 1990s

**SCOTT RHODES '92**

was named 2015 Wells Fargo Principal of the Year for Henderson County (N.C.) Public Schools. He was selected by his peers for his commitment and dedication to the students and leadership at East Henderson High School. Rhodes has worked in Henderson County schools since 1992 and became principal of East Henderson High in July 2013. He earned a Master of Arts degree from Gardner-Webb in 2006.

**MARTHA THREATT '92**

was selected as an honored member of Covington Who's Who, an executive and professional registry with members worldwide. She is the deputy director of communications, outreach and legislative affairs for Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, a government agency that oversees pension plans for corporations across the country. She manages the Public Affairs Division of the department and assists in the oversight for the Communications and Legislative Affairs divisions.

**JON H. HOPKINS '93**

has been named to the GWU Gallery of Distinguished Alumni. He played football at Gardner-Webb from 1990-1993 prior to enlisting in the U.S. Navy in 1994 via the Delayed Entry Program. He participated in the operation that rescued Air Force Pilot Scott O'Grady, who was shot down over Bosnia. He was commissioned

as an officer in 2004 and reported to the Chief of Naval Operations Staff at the Pentagon in 2009. He became executive assistant for officer placement at NIOO Maryland in 2011, where he was selected for promotion to lieutenant commander. He currently serves as N3D Directorate Head for the Operations Department at NIOO Maryland and coordinates worldwide deployments for more than 140 sailors in support of the global war on terrorism. His personal awards include the Navy Commendation Medal, Navy Achievement Medal, and the Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal. He and his wife, Angela, reside in Riva, Md., with their two children.

**JACQUELINE LYON '93**

has been named to the GWU Gallery of Distinguished Alumni. She majored in accounting and business administration and played on the women's basketball team at Gardner-Webb. She has held a number of professional positions as an accountant, including service as controller for C.L. McIntosh and Associates, East Coast Director of Accounting and Finance at Expedior Inc., and Chief Financial Officer for AMS Systems. In 2003, she began her career with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, where she currently serves as a special agent. She has served as a member of the Economic Crimes Unit and the Corporate Fraud Response Team. Jacqueline has been recognized with the National Law Enforcement Award, as well as the Merit Award from the FBI for outstanding investigative work. Jacqueline resides in Miramar, Fla.

**TERRY MCGOWAN '93**

was inducted into the Gardner-Webb Athletics Hall of Fame in the Class of 2014. McGowan started his career with Gardner-Webb on offense but later moved to the defensive side. McGowan wrapped up his career as one of the finest safeties to ever play for the Runnin' Bulldogs, earning NAIA All-America honors in 1992

while leading one of the most dominant defensive units in school history. That team finished the season with a South Atlantic Conference title, won 12 games and advanced to the NAIA National Championship Bowl. McGowan still ranks No. 7 in school history with 28 career pass break-ups.

**RODERICK JETER '94**

has been named to the GWU Gallery of Distinguished Alumni. He studied business administration, and he played football at Gardner-Webb as a member of the 1992 SAC-8 Conference Championship and NAIA National Championship finalist team. Roderick was inducted into the Union County, S.C., High School Hall of Fame in 2009. He has worked for more than 20 years with FedEx Freight, where he currently serves in management in the Charlotte Service Center. He regularly partners with Second Harvest Food Bank, coaches football for the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Activities League, and serves as a mentor. He lives with his wife, Crystal, in Charlotte, N.C.

**JANET BRIDGES ANTHONY '97**

was named Cleveland County Schools' 2014 Principal of the Year, while serving as principal of Grover Elementary School. She served as a classroom teacher for 20 years before going into school administration, first as an assistant principal. She earned a Master of Arts degree in 1997 and a Doctorate of Education degree in 2008, both at Gardner-Webb.

**BASHAWN HARRIS '97**

became principal at Porter Ridge High School in Indian Trail, N.C. He previously served as principal at Porter Ridge Middle School. He also recently earned a doctorate in education from Wingate University in Wingate, N.C. In 2006, he earned a Master of Arts degree at Gardner-Webb.





YOUNG ALUMNUS  
OF THE YEAR  
WALTER MILLER '01, '05



**ROBERT HELTON '97**

was named chief of the Gastonia Police Department in October 2014. He succeeded Stacy Conley, who retired as chief. A Gastonia native, Helton has nearly 30 years of experience in the city's police department. He began his career as a patrol officer in 1987, was promoted to sergeant in 1998, captain in 2006 and assistant chief in 2011. He has served as a leader in field operations, criminal and juvenile investigations, community and problem-oriented policing, crisis response and community relations. He graduated summa cum laude from Gardner-Webb.

**WES BARKLEY '99**

was elected in November 2014 as a judge for the 25th Judicial District in North Carolina, which includes Burke, Caldwell and Catawba counties. Prior to joining the court, Barkley was an attorney with the firm Sigmon, Isenhower and Barkley in Newton, N.C. Barkley's term is set to continue through 2018.

**DIANE CANIPE '99**

retired after 27 years in Lincoln County (N.C.) Schools, including 15 years as a principal and administrator at Love Memorial Elementary in Lincolnton, N.C. The road in front of the school was named in her honor by the Lincoln County (N.C.) School Board.

**ABBEY COOLER '99**

was hired by Homelife, a Lifeway publication, as a writer. Her work can be found quarterly in the publication.

**LARRY DURHAM '99**

and his wife, Melissa Welsch Durham '98, welcomed their fourth child, Lily, on Sept. 23, 2014. The Durham family lives in Johnson City, Tenn. In addition to his undergraduate degree, Durham earned a Master of Business Administration degree at Gardner-Webb in 2001.



**MATT HAMRICK '99** has been named to the GWU Gallery of Distinguished Alumni. He majored in religious studies and played men's tennis at Gardner-Webb. He

completed his Master of Divinity degree at Gardner-Webb in 2005.

He began his U.S. Army career as battalion chaplain in 2006 and has been based in South Carolina, Colorado, Texas and Germany in the years since. He has received the Bronze Star Award, Gold Combat Spurs for Combat Service, Army Commendation Medals and Army Achievement Medals. In September 2014, Matt was promoted to major in the U.S. Army. In addition to his bachelor's degree, he earned a Master of Divinity degree in 2005. Matt and his wife, Jennifer '00 BS, reside in Fort Hood, Texas, with their four children.

**CORIE LEWIS WEATHERS '99**

has been named to the GWU Gallery of Distinguished Alumni. She majored in psychology and ran

cross country at Gardner-Webb. She now serves as a licensed professional counselor, a Gallup Strengths Advisor and Coach, and she is a certified instructor of Franklin Covey's "7 Habits of Highly Effective Military Families." She also carries a certification in Prolonged Exposure Therapy through the Department of Defense's Center for Deployment Psychology and has served as the 4th Infantry Division's spokesperson for Associated Press press conferences after mass casualties were sustained in Afghanistan. She has also founded and developed Insight Care and Connection, where she serves as a consultant to businesses and churches. During her professional career, Corie has received the "Order of St. Joan D'Arc Medallion," the top volunteerism award given by the Armor Association of the U.S. Army, and the "Honorable Order of Molly Pitcher," the top volunteerism award given by the U.S. Army Field Artillery Association. She

was recently named National Armed Forces Insurance (AFI) Army Spouse of the Year Branch Winner for the Army. She is married to Army Chaplain Capt. Matthew Weathers, also a 1999 Gardner-Webb graduate. They reside in Grovetown, Ga., with their two children.

## The 2000s

**JENNIFER JOLLY HUSKEY '00**

welcomed a baby boy, Kamden Steele Huskey, on Oct. 13, 2014. He weighed 6 pounds, 13 ounces and was welcomed by two older sisters and an older brother. Following her associate's degree in nursing, Jennifer earned a Bachelor of Science degree in nursing in 2004.

**WALTER MILLER '01**

has been named to the GWU Gallery of Distinguished Alumni and was honored as Young Alumnus of the Year. He explored religious studies as an undergraduate and later completed his Master of Divinity degree. During his master's work, he served as assistant to the president. After completing his graduate studies, he accepted the role of financial analyst with the University of North Carolina Dental School and later the interim position of Assistant Dean of Financial Affairs. His professional development and education have helped him advance to the position of Vice President for Finance and Administration for the Council of Christian Colleges and Universities, based in Washington, D.C. Following his 2001 bachelor's degree, Walter earned a Master of Divinity degree at Gardner-Webb in 2005. He and his wife, Heather, reside in Falls Church, Va.



# When all Signs Point to Love

GWU's Noel Center Prepared Student and Interpreter for Career, Life & Love

Written by Matt Renfer

The Gardner-Webb University campus has served as the backdrop to hundreds of student love stories. The same is true for Robert and Janet McDaniel ('82), whose early romance is intertwined with the history of Gardner-Webb's Noel Center for Disability Resources.

Robert and Janet first met in a freshman biology course. During class one day, Robert—affectionately called “Mac”—was having trouble adjusting his stool when Janet assisted him. At the time, he was beginning to lose both his eyesight and hearing due to a progressive condition known as Ushers Syndrome Type II. Soon after that incident, they accidentally bumped into each other in the school cafeteria and made plans to study together in the library. The two quickly began talking and getting to know each other. The rest, they say, is history. Mac soon taught Janet sign language, and the couple dated throughout their college career.

“She learned sign language very quickly and became a student interpreter,” Mac said, proudly. Looking at Mac, Janet chimed in, laughing, “I had great motivation.”

Though she had never met a deaf person or seen sign language before Gardner-Webb, with Mac's encouragement, Janet became more involved with the Noel program during her college years. She recalls serving as a notetaker for the program in a variety of classes.

The Noel program was in its infancy then, having launched in 1977—becoming one of only two liberal arts colleges for the deaf in the country. Notably, Mac was one of the first three deaf students to graduate from the University as part of the class of 1982. The three of them—

Robert McDaniel, William Stricklen, and Daniel C. Johnson—came to Gardner-Webb together as friends from the same private Baptist high school in Tennessee. “We always wanted to go to a Christian university,” Mac said.

After more than 30 years of marriage, the McDaniels reflect fondly on their time at Gardner-Webb, noting their participation in the science club, Big Brothers, Big Sisters, and, of course, the Noel program. “We did a lot here at Gardner-Webb,” Janet shared. “The professors here were excellent. I can't tell you how

many of them invited us to their house for lunch or dinner. We were given many home-cooked meals at professors' homes, which was extraordinarily generous.”

“All of the professors were my favorite—they knew us by name,” Mac said. “And Mac was their favorite, too,” Janet shared.

After graduation, the couple served in education. Mac worked with developmentally disabled adults, while Janet taught science and math for middle and high school students in the Burke County N.C. Public Schools before becoming principal and school director for the N.C. School for the Deaf. Today, the McDaniels plan to enjoy retirement by travelling, keeping in touch with Gardner-Webb friends, volunteering for church and local charities, and visiting their two grown children. Their son manages a restaurant full time, while their daughter is a high school math teacher. “Gardner-Webb has had a large impact on us,” Janet said. “We'll never forget the memories and connections we made there.”



Robert and Janet McDaniel in 1982 and now



*The GWU Noel Center for Disability Resources believes in the equality of all people and in the ability of each person to contribute in a meaningful way to the global society. The Noel Center will provide reasonable accommodations in order for qualified students with disabilities to receive equal access to a higher education, while striving to assist students to obtain knowledge, skills and confidence to become effective self-advocates. The*

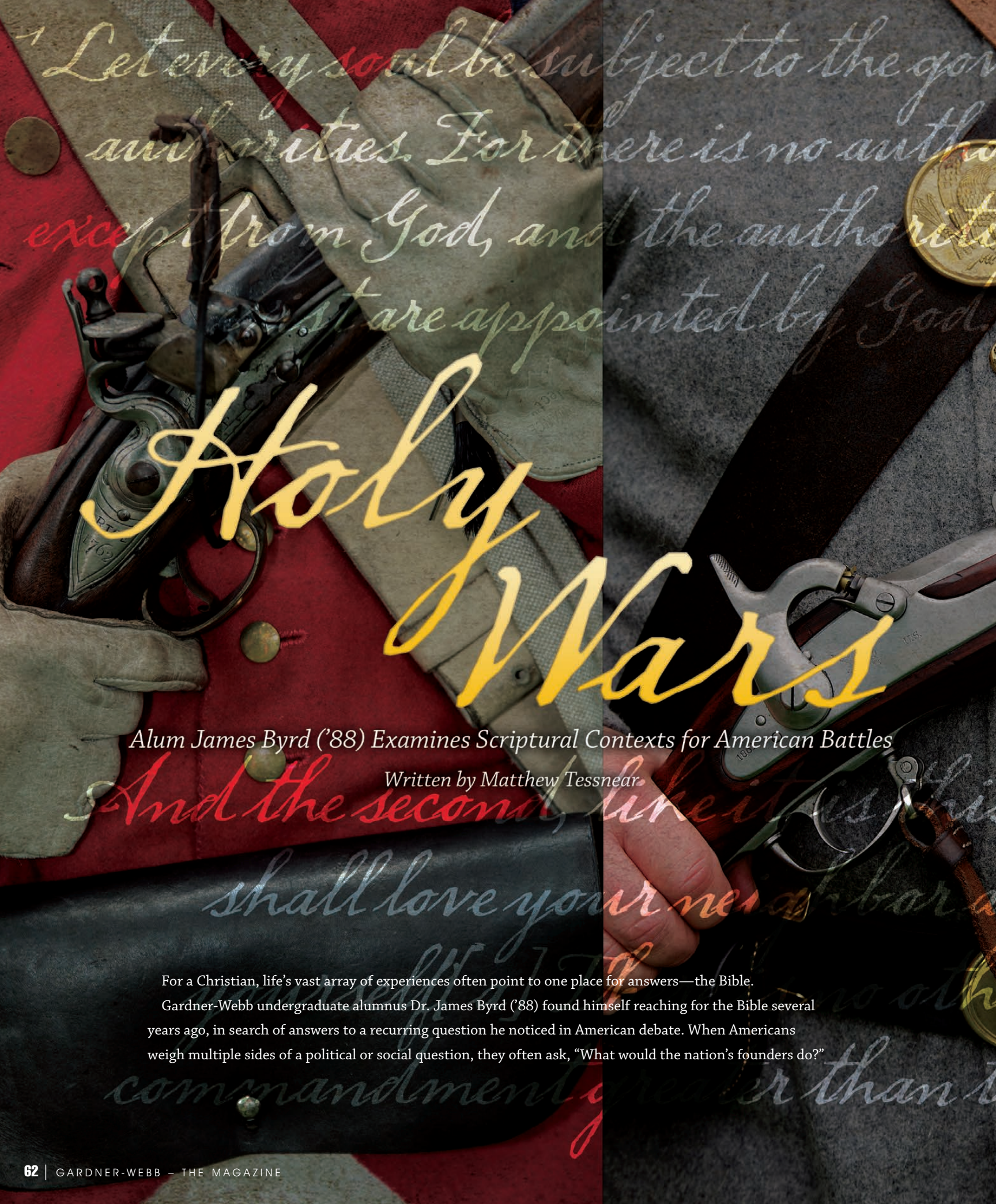
*Noel Center believes in the importance of a collaborative process in the determination of accommodations and services.*

*For more information on the Noel Center call 704-406-4270.*









Alum James Byrd ('88) Examines Scriptural Contexts for American Battles

Written by Matthew Tessnear

For a Christian, life's vast array of experiences often point to one place for answers—the Bible. Gardner-Webb undergraduate alumnus Dr. James Byrd ('88) found himself reaching for the Bible several years ago, in search of answers to a recurring question he noticed in American debate. When Americans weigh multiple sides of a political or social question, they often ask, "What would the nation's founders do?"



Byrd's interest in the founders and his experience in American religious history led him to conduct research on the role the Bible played in the country's revolution against Britain and in subsequent wars.

"Most historians of the American Revolution don't say much at all about the Bible or religion in the revolution," he shared. "They see it primarily as a political movement. So I thought I would do a little exploring to see what the Bible had to say."

Colonists didn't omit the Bible the way historians often do, Byrd observed, finding that the nation's early leaders believed that God condones war when it is for a just cause. He also discovered that many colonists believed that they were unfaithful if they refused a righteous call to arms against Britain.

Byrd—who has served as a lecturer and professor of American Religious History at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tenn., for the past 15 years—entered the Bible to view perspectives on war. What he found was a mixture of scriptures that appeared to give some orders to fight and other orders to obey higher powers.



Dr. James Byrd  
Photo Anne Rayner Vanderbilt University

"Some of the almost 'holy war' texts say it's your obligation and divine duty to go kill," he pointed out. "Those texts seemed to command us to go to war against Britain. And some of these texts are very graphic. Jeremiah 48:10, for example, reads, 'Cursed be he that keepeth back his sword from blood.'"

Other texts commanded loyalty and could be viewed as popular for supporters of Britain during the revolutionary time period. Romans 13:1, for example, instructs, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers."

Byrd's research also led him to a variety of sermons and works like Thomas Paine's "Common Sense," which was written to inspire colonists to declare a fight against Britain in 1776.

"Paine quotes the Bible like a revival preacher," Byrd assessed. "He quoted the Bible like Billy Graham. He knew the Bible was critical and saw its persuasiveness."

America's founders realized the importance and influence of Christianity, Byrd confirmed, adding that George Washington believed the nation needed God on its side to succeed and survive.

Byrd's research produced a book, "Sacred Scripture, Sacred War," and it led him to begin research on the Bible's role in another American conflict—the Civil War. The nineteenth century offered more preaching and a topic with more published sources, he said.

"By that point, people are so in tune with the idea that the United States is a religious nation," Byrd offered. "The overall issue is slavery. The South could quote scripture where the Bible talks about slavery, doesn't condemn slavery and gives rules for slavery. The North could turn to 'love thy neighbor as thyself,' from Mark 12:31.



"At these points in American history, Christianity was very much a part of the spectrum of ideas, and the Bible was very important."

"Sacred Scripture, Sacred War: The Bible and the American Revolution" is available at [amazon.com](http://amazon.com).



Listen to Jimmy Byrd discuss his research on scriptures and American wars:  
[gardnerwebb.edu/holywars](http://gardnerwebb.edu/holywars)





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**KATHY SUSHEREBA '01**

recently retired from Wake Forest Baptist Health – Lexington Medical Center, where she served for more than 21 years. Her duties included branding and general marketing, speech writing, preparation of audio/visuals for public presentations, maintenance of the internal employee website, as well as media relations, crisis communications, public relations, spokeswoman and photographer.

**JANET CRITZ '02**

recently became economic development director in Rockingham County, N.C. Critz previously served as economic developer and existing industry specialist with the N.C. Department of Commerce B&I Division. She was also president and vice president of the Surry County Economic Development Partnership Inc. in Dobson, N.C. Critz earned her Master of Business Administration degree at Gardner-Webb in 2009.

**JEREMY MARTIN '02**

was inducted into the Gardner-Webb Athletics Hall of Fame in the Class of 2014. Martin (1999-2002) wrapped up a stellar career at Gardner-

Webb as one of the all-time greats at the quarterback position. The 2002 Big South Conference Offensive Player of the Year directed Gardner-Webb to a 9-1 mark and a national top-25 ranking in both final polls as a senior, passing for 2,166 yards, 17 touchdowns and only four interceptions. GWU also won its first Big South Conference title that season. Martin ranks No. 2 in school history with 8,025 passing yards and 60 touchdowns and is the winningest quarterback in program history – forging a 22-9 mark as a starter. Martin earned honorable mention Division I-AA All-America honors three times and became the first quarterback in school history to pass for at least 2,000 yards in three consecutive seasons. During his final three seasons under center, Martin led Gardner-Webb to a 13-2 record in Ernest W. Spangler Stadium, and closed his career with nine consecutive home wins.

**JOSEPH RAMEY '02**

graduated Sept. 19, 2014, from the 257th session of the FBI National Academy. The FBI National Academy is a program held in Quantico, Va., offering 10 weeks of advanced investigative, management and fitness training for selected officers with proven records as professionals with their agencies. Ramey serves as assistant police chief in the Gaston County (N.C.) Police Department. He joined the department in 1994 and was promoted to assistant chief in 2011.

**ANGELA WILLIAMS '02**

was assigned as principal at Bandys High School in Catawba County, N.C. Williams previously served as principal at Arndt Middle School in Hickory, N.C., and principal at Liberty Middle School in Burke County, N.C.

**NATILEE DAWKINS '03**

was inducted into the Gardner-Webb Athletics Hall of Fame in the Class of 2014. Dawkins (1999-2003) played a major role in establishing the

foundation for Gardner-Webb's Track & Field program during her time in Boiling Springs. Dawkins earned NCAA Division II All-America honors in three events in her first season. Her versatile efforts helped Gardner-Webb finish in the top five nationally at both the NCAA indoor and outdoor national championship meets in 2000. When Gardner-Webb started its transition to NCAA Division I, Dawkins continued to thrive. She finished fourth at the 2001 ECAC Championships with a school-record mark in the triple jump and earned All-ECAC honors in 2002 in both the 60-meter hurdles and 100-meter hurdles. Dawkins was named All-Atlantic Sun Conference in 2003. A standout in training as well, Dawkins was twice named to the NSCA Strength & Conditioning All-America Team. She earned an International Master of Business Administration degree at Gardner-Webb in 2006.

**JERRY GASS '03**

has been named to the GWU Gallery of Distinguished Alumni and was honored as Alumnus of the Year. He served his country as a member of Company C, 1st Battalion, 3rd Special Forces Group and was stationed at Fort Bragg in Fayetteville, N.C. He passed away in 2014 following a non-combat incident while on patrol and was posthumously awarded his second Bronze Star Medal and the Meritorious Service Medal. He was a highly decorated serviceman who graduated from Gardner-Webb with a degree in business administration and a minor in management information systems. He played 32 football games at Gardner-Webb during one of the program's most successful stretches in which GWU Division I teams won 30 games in four seasons. That success included back-to-back Big South Conference championships in 2002 and 2003. He was a preseason All-Big South Conference selection heading into his senior season.

**JULIE HAMILTON '04**

was named assistant superintendent of human resources for Davidson County (N.C.) Schools. Hamilton joined the central office in 2008 as human resources director. Five years later, she became the executive director of human resources.

**HEATHER CARTER '05**

recently joined the Primary Care and Hope Clinic, located in Murfreesboro, Tenn., as doctor of osteopathy. She is responsible for general patient care, including healthcare for chronic and acute illnesses, annual physical exams, immunizations, care for minor injuries and women's health. She is board certified in Family Medicine, and is a member of the American Academy of Family Physicians and the American Osteopathic Association.



**CARRIE KIBLER '05**

won the women's 25-29 age group in the Rambling Rose Triathlon on Aug. 17, 2014, in Winston-Salem (N.C.) A four-year swimmer at Gardner-Webb for head coach Mike Simpson, Kibler finished eighth overall in the field of 397 and had the third fastest time in the swimming portion of the triathlon.

**BILLY HUNT JR. '06**

was named principal at West Davidson High School in Lexington, N.C. Hunt has been in education since 1990, serving as a teacher, coach, assistant principal and principal.

**RITA JOSIAH '06**

married Frederick Handy Gray III on May 31, 2014.

**KATY PETERSON '06**

was honored by the Kentucky Association for Psychology in the Schools. She received a state-level Best Practices Award for her work with students with behavioral issues (leadership, consultation and counseling). She also earned the honor for the Central Kentucky region. Peterson works with Arlington and Russell Cave elementary schools in the Fayette County (Ky.) Public Schools. After graduating from Gardner-Webb, she earned a specialist degree in school psychology from Eastern Kentucky University.

**KIM VAGUE '06**

became principal at Wolfe School in Monroe, N.C., in June. Wolfe School serves mostly middle and high school

students with moderate to severe cognitive impairments or multiple disabilities. It is the first head principal position for Vague, who previously served as assistant principal for East Union and Parkwood middle schools and South Providence School.

**KEVIN WILSON '06**

was named athletic director at Mooresville High School in Mooresville, N.C. He previously served as athletic director and dean of students at North Mecklenburg High School, where he was named Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools' district Family and Consumer Science Teacher of the Year in 2003 and North Mecklenburg High's Teacher of the Year in 2006.

**TRACY GRIT '07**

was named principal of the year for Avery County (N.C.) Schools. During his 13-year tenure with the school system, he has coached several athletic teams and served as a home-based counselor, physical education teacher, assistant principal and principal.

**LAURA HASTINGS '07**

married Derek Keith Allen Aug. 2, 2014. Laura is employed by CLECO of Upper Cleveland as a Family Nurse Practitioner. Derek is employed at Shelby Middle School in Cleveland County (N.C.) Schools. The couple resides in Shelby, N.C. Following an associate's degree in 2007, Laura earned her Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree in 2009.

**MATTHEW TESSNEAR '07 and MOLLY PHIPPS '12**

married Jan. 24, 2015. Molly works as an administrative assistant for the West Lincoln

Charge of the United Methodist Church, and as a freelance writer and editor. Matthew works in the Office of University Communications and Media Relations at Gardner-Webb. The couple resides in Shelby, N.C.

**JASON WHISNANT '07**

was recently promoted to the rank of captain in the Morganton Department of Public Safety. He began his law enforcement career in 1995, and he joined the Morganton public safety department in 1997. He was previously promoted to sergeant in January 2008. During his time with the department, he has served in Special Operations, community policing, hazardous material technician, and as a member of the Special Emergency Response Team. Additionally, he is licensed by the North Carolina Board of Licensed Professional Counselors, and he is a therapist diagnosing/treating child, adolescent and adult mental health disorders. He also recently graduated from the Administrative Officers Management Program, offered through the Public Safety Leadership Initiative of the School of Public and International Affairs at North Carolina State University's College of Humanities and Social Sciences. Whisnant earned his master's degree at Gardner-Webb in 2011.



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ALUMNUS OF THE YEAR  
*JERRY GASS '03*







# The Call of the Wild

*What Happens When Your Dream Job is Not the Reality God Wants for You?*

*Written by Niki Bliss-Carroll*

He was sitting on the porch watching the sun set across shimmering waters and had just completed his boat patrol shift as a park ranger with the Corps of Engineers at Lake Hartwell, Ga. But something was wrong. A nagging feeling caused him to take a deep breath. He had just asked his girlfriend, Christin, to be his wife. He had successfully earned a bachelor's degree in natural resources management from Western Carolina University in Cullowhee, N.C. He was a blessed man. Every detail in his life was falling into place just exactly as he always hoped it would. He had landed his dream job. But a voice inside of him silently pleaded, "God, if this isn't what you want me to do, what is it?"

"How about Baptist campus ministry in the mountains of Western North Carolina," the gentle voice answered, more as a fleeting thought than a thunderous revelation.

"That's when I laughed," GWU Master of Divinity alumnus David Stone admitted. "I don't think I laughed so much out of doubt or disbelief, but because it sounded too good to be true. I wrestled with whether it really was God calling me or me wishing I was back in college far away from the real world."

The moments spent with the Lord that day in the waning afternoon sun revealed some things for which he wasn't fully prepared. "Though it was the job I always wanted, I hated it," Stone reflected on his position at Lake Hartwell. "That's when I started processing my call to ministry."

Stone sought Godly counsel from those in whom he trusted, reaching out to the pastor in the church where he grew up, the pastor of the church he attended in college, and his campus minister. He talked to his future wife's family who had served a lifetime in ministry. "Her parents struggled with the decision," he recollected. "They knew what we were being led into and that it would not be easy." Everyone he talked to shared their concern and also their encouragement.

"When I started applying to divinity schools, I finally settled that I did believe God was calling me, but I still wasn't certain if it was really to serve as a campus minister," he shared. "I felt it would be nice if it were for something like that, but those jobs just aren't out there to have, especially when you consider a specific geographic area."





David Stone talking to students at UNC-A

Amidst his career shake-up, Stone felt led to the Gardner-Webb University School of Divinity. He noted with interest that the University offered an internship opportunity as a campus minister for students (now a full-time position at GWU). Not long after starting his first classes, he began working with Dr. Tracy Jessup in the Office of Christian Life and Service as the campus ministries intern.

His connection with Jessup proved to have kingdom purpose following graduation in 1999. The Baptist State Convention was searching for a campus minister to serve at the University of North Carolina in Asheville and Jessup encouraged Stone to apply. “I couldn’t believe it. I applied for the job in 2002, and was promptly hired in 2004,” he laughed. “Maybe I stuck it out the longest

and that’s why they hired me.” Looking back, Stone understands it was all part of the way God worked in the situation to build his faith.

For nine years, he worked with students, churches, and other members of the community, providing meals, ministry opportunities, Bible studies, and worship times. Then, in April of 2013, upsetting news came. The Baptist State Convention that had funded Baptist campus ministry for decades had voted to dissolve their affiliation with—and withdraw their funding of—ministry on college campuses. The action, in many ways, served as a pink slip for campus ministers across the state.

“What I didn’t understand was how it would play out. For me, it was a time of reprocessing my call.”

He continued, “I had felt the calling on that porch in Hartwell. So I had to have a long sit-down with God on a mountain behind our house. I said, ‘God, what are we doing here? Did you call me to this for just a season? Is this work now complete and you want me to shift somewhere else?’ I never got peace that we were done. It was just, ‘Stay the course.’ And that’s what we’ve done.”

In the year since the funding source shifted, Stone said not much has changed for students. He worked with several Baptist pastors to establish the Western North Carolina Baptist Collegiate Ministries, a 501(c)3 non-profit that is as inclusive as possible. “We have stayed true to our Baptist heritage, but we welcome opportunities to work with a wide range of denominations,” Stone reported. “For me, it’s a continuing process of asking, ‘How do we build from here?’”

“Last year, when we did not have the student center at UNC-Asheville, we moved our weekly fellowship meal up onto campus, along with our worship service,” Stone explained. Weekly meals are now served to college students in a program called “Cooperative Campus Ministries Lunch,” provided by local Methodist, Episcopalian, Catholic, Baptist, and non-denominational bodies. “In addition, we appreciate that the Gardner-Webb School of Divinity continues to sponsor lunch meals for our students once a year,” he pointed out. The local ministry chapter, now called the Baptist Student Fellowship, works with any Baptist church or entity who wants to partner in discipling students.

Stone continues to keep his focus centered on God as he makes plans for the coming years. “In five years, I’d like to see this program fully-funded. Currently, I am serving at Western Carolina University and UNC Asheville, but I’d like to see our program fund a full-time campus minister at each school. I’d also like to connect with MDiv students at area institutions, like Gardner-Webb, and provide them with internship opportunities in campus ministries.”

He loves the picture of Christian harmony that effective campus ministry can reveal to students. “Faith development is a one-step-at-a-time thing,” he said. “Our central common background is Jesus Christ. I know that sounds like the Sunday School answer, but it is. When I was a student at Western, I noticed that the campus ministers from different denominations got along. It’s the same here. We love Jesus and just want to convey the message of Christ to college students who need to hear it. Discipling them is the part of the calling that I really love.”







# ONE BIG FAMILY.

Gardner-Webb University offers a warm and welcoming environment, a Christian community, and personal relationships between faculty, staff, and students.

The family environment is also present, for many, in the literal sense. Generations of Gardner-Webb students have followed in the footsteps of their grandparents, parents and siblings, choosing to attend the University that educated and nurtured other members of their families. Those next-generation students help strengthen GWU's family history, earning them a place in Gardner-Webb's Legacy Society.

Now, the University plans to strengthen the family ties for new students whose parents, siblings, or grandparents graduated from Gardner-Webb.

Gardner-Webb University is offering a **\$500 Legacy Grant** to all new, full-time traditional students whose family members graduated from any GWU degree program. The grant will be available to all freshman and transfer students, and the aid benefit will be renewable for four years of study.



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For more information about the Gardner-Webb Legacy Grant, contact the University's undergraduate admissions office via email at [admissions@gardner-webb.edu](mailto:admissions@gardner-webb.edu), by phone at 800-253-6472, or on Twitter @FutureDawgs.





**AARON WILKINSON '07**

and his wife, Abby, recently welcomed their second son, Micah Aaron Allyn Wilkinson, on Aug. 8, 2014.

**LYNN AUSTIN '08**

married Robert Alan Hawks on Sept. 20, 2014. The couple resides in Columbia, S.C.

**JAMES STEPHEN CORNWELL JR. '08**

married Jessica Lauren Tate on May 24, 2014. James is a senior accountant at Allscripts in Raleigh, N.C. Jessica is a graphic designer at Expion in Raleigh, N.C. The couple resides in Raleigh, N.C.

**RENEE DYER '08**

became a full-time business program instructor at Catawba Valley Community College in Hickory, N.C., in the fall semester of 2014. She and her husband, Robin, live in Shelby, N.C., and they have three grown children, T.J. Wray, Laura Beth Sullins, and Nathan Wray.

**MELISSA IRENE CASEY '09**

married Kevin Hunter Jackson on June 21, 2014. Melissa is employed by Baldor Electric Company in Greenville, S.C. Kevin is employed by Advance America in Spartanburg, S.C. The couple resides in Greer, S.C.

**JESSICA JONES MITCHELL '09**

and her husband Brett welcomed newborn daughter Alice Catherine Mitchell on Dec. 12, 2014.

## The 2010s

**KATHRYN FARMER '10**

married Josiah Paul Fernandez on Oct. 12, 2013. Kathryn is employed by Alliance Bank and Trust in Gastonia, N.C. Josiah is employed by Wells Fargo Bank in Gastonia, N.C. The couple resides in Gastonia, N.C.

**BRANDON LYON '10**

was recently named the 2014 N.C. Wildlife Officer of the Year by the N.C. National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf). He received the award at the NWTf's annual

awards banquet in Concord in December 2014. He has been employed with the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission since 2012 and is stationed in Craven County, N.C. Brandon's dedication to enforcing laws related to conservation and fair harvest of the state's natural resources, particularly wild turkeys, was recognized when he was presented the award.

**DANIELLE MAYS '10**

married Bryan Lackey on June 21, 2014. Danielle is employed by Corning Optical Communications. Bryan is employed by Martin Starnes and Associates. The couple resides in Hickory, N.C.

**MARGARET COURTENAY NIXON '10**

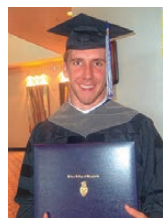
married Gavin Lewis McFarlin Aug. 9, 2014. Courtenay is a student at Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary, pursuing a Master of Arts in Christian Counseling. Gavin is assistant sports information director at Davidson College. The couple resides in Huntersville, N.C.

**EVAN RHODES '10**

married Anna Burgess on May 3, 2014. Evan is an account executive with Tandus-Centiva Company in Charlotte and earned his Master of Business Administration degree at Gardner-Webb in 2012. Anna is a teacher in Gaston County (N.C.) Schools. The couple resides in Gastonia, N.C.

**HEATHER WALTERS '10**

joined the tax and accounting practice of Moore Beauston & Woodham as a senior accountant in the firm's Hartsville, S.C., office. She has more than six years of experience in public accounting and is a member of the S.C. Association of Certified Public Accountants.



**TRENT KOZMAN '11** earned his doctorate in chiropractic medicine from the Palmer College of Chiropractic in Port Orange, Fla. He began a private practice in Port Orange in January 2015.

**ERICA MOORE '11 BA**

married Matthew Joseph Tucker on July 19, 2014. Erica is currently employed at Northbrook Baptist Church as the director of children's ministries in Cullman, Ala. Matthew serves as an officer with the Cullman City Police Department. The couple resides in Cullman, Ala.

**HANNAH STANLEY '11**

was promoted to senior associate at Butler + Burke LLP in Winston-Salem. Stanley joined the firm in August 2012 as a tax accountant. Stanley was a

staff accountant at Greene & Company, PLLC in Clemmons prior to joining Butler + Burke. Earlier in her career, Stanley was a staff accountant for Larco Construction in Winston-Salem.

**JASON ISRAEL '12**

was named assistant principal of West Davidson High School in Lexington, N.C.

**ADRIANNE MCGEE '14**

married Jonathan Brooks Knight June 14, 2014. McGee is a teacher at South Pointe High School in Rock Hill, S.C. Knight owns JBK Tile Co. in Fort Mill, S.C. The couple resides in Fort Mill.

## 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 news to  
[gardner-webb.edu/class-acts](http://gardner-webb.edu/class-acts).



# GW-YOU

*"I believe college is what you make it, just as in life. If you invest in this place, it will invest in you exponentially. Going to school is a blessing in itself, but the fact that I get to go to here—Gardner-Webb—makes me humbled and thankful. The first time I visited, I met with a professor here, Dr. David Carscaddon, and in that conversation he told me, 'Anna, I believe if you choose Gardner-Webb, you will thrive.' He was right. I have thrived here academically, spiritually, and personally! I am challenged...I am believed in... I am known. I am a better person—a better Anna Grace Kullmar—because of this place. This is home."*

## **ANNA KULLMAR**

Gardner-Webb University  
Student Government Association President







# The Race for Change

*Katie Axelson ('11) Completes Multi-National Mission Trip*

*Written by Matt Renfer*



Katie Axelson

Eleven nations in 11 months. That is the experience of the World Race, an international, long-term mission trip aimed at feeding the hungry, building houses, teaching English, preaching, praying, and other service.

Katie Axelson, a 2011 grad who earned a bachelor's degree in English and Spanish, completed the nearly yearlong trek in December 2014 after visiting several countries in Central and South America.

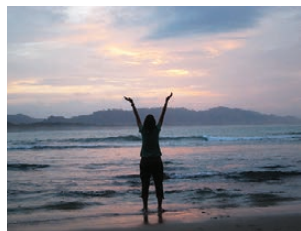
Axelson concluded the World Race in Guatemala, the same place she discovered her passion for missions five years earlier during her sophomore year at Gardner-Webb. "It's now fun, five years later, to be wrapping up my time in Latin America, in Guatemala, the very same place it all started," she said.

"It's super rewarding to be part of what God is doing around the world," Axelson

shared, adding that the experience also had its fair share of significant challenges. "It was a mind-blowing and humbling year where every day my teammates and I came face to face with both extreme poverty and extreme joy."

Knowing a nearly yearlong mission would come with myriad difficulties and rewards, Axelson said her decision to enter the World Race took prayer and a calling from God. Poverty and gang-related activity were a daily reality for the team. For Axelson, though, the most difficult aspect of the journey was month-to-month transitions. In addition to saying goodbye to the natives with whom they had formed new relationships, each move brought with it a variety of changes in lifestyle. During some months, missionaries went without running water or a kitchen, while other times, they had Internet access and beds.

"More than each month being different, each day was different," Axelson added. "For 11 months, you never knew what the next day would bring, but you learned very quickly that God would show up in it."



Axelson and her team focused most of their efforts on sharing the Gospel with the youth through teaching, preaching, as well as simply being present and forming positive and healthy relationships with them.

"We learned to look for Him and expected to find Him. We weren't 'taking'

God to 11 different countries," she said. "We were merely participating in what He's already doing and seeing lives—both our own and those of the locals—be changed because of it."

*The World Race is organized by Adventures in Missions, an interdenominational missions organization based in Gainesville, Ga., that focuses on discipleship. Since its establishment in 1989, the organization has taken more than 100,000 people into the mission field, some for as short as a week and others for a year or longer. For more information, visit [adventures.org](http://adventures.org) or [theworldrace.org](http://theworldrace.org). To learn more about Gardner-Webb's participation in the World Race, visit [gardner-webb.edu/world-race](http://gardner-webb.edu/world-race).*



Watch Katie's World Race video at:  
[gardnerwebb.edu/katie-axelson-world-race](http://gardnerwebb.edu/katie-axelson-world-race)





# Spiraling Into Control

GWU Offered Path for Alumna to Overcome Neurological Disorder

Written by Matt Renfer



When Danielle London's ('12) mother was diagnosed with essential tremor (ET)—a neurological disorder similar to Parkinson's disease—she didn't know what life changes would come her way. She planned to support her mother throughout the medical process, but she was not prepared to be diagnosed with the hereditary disorder herself.



Danielle London

London's goal was to graduate from Gardner-Webb University with a degree in criminal justice. Before enrolling in Gardner-Webb's Degree Completion Program, London also had separated from her husband, aggravating ET symptoms with mental stress. As a single mom with a progressive nervous system disorder, she began to navigate the difficult path to

earning a bachelor's degree.

ET symptoms include uncontrollable shaking of the body, prohibiting those affected from performing everyday tasks such as writing, reading and speaking.

During London's time as a student, the ET symptoms progressed and became unmanageable, visibly affecting her arms, torso, legs, and head. The rhythmic shaking was a constant exhaustion on London's physical energy.

"I couldn't live with it. I had no quality of life whatsoever. I felt like I was exhausted for two years," she recalled.

In class, one of her professors contacted the NOEL Center, and soon after, London was assigned a caseworker. Through the NOEL Center, she qualified for a number of services including note takers, extra time for tests, and a text-to-speech computer program called Kurtzweil.

"If I hadn't had the help from the NOEL Program, I would have had to quit and come back after I got better," London said. "Without the program reading my books and the notetakers there's no doubt that I wouldn't have been able to graduate. I'm very thankful for the NOEL Program and Gardner-Webb professors."

During her time in school, the symptoms of ET continued to progress, prompting London to opt for the only remedy available to stop the shaking: brain surgery.

While striving to stay on track for graduation, London prepared for her surgery. The process was neither quick nor easy. She started early preparations for a year in 2011 with psychological and physical testing. It was during her final year at GWU, in March 2012, when she received two surgeries that would finally end the uncontrollable shaking. She spent the next six weeks in recovery.

"They asked me to draw a spiral, write my name and draw a straight line, and I couldn't do it. After the surgeries, they had me draw a spiral, write my name and draw a straight line, and I could do it. I remember saying, 'I wish my mama could see this.'"


Since her recovery, London carries a pin with her as a reminder. Those with tremors cannot physically draw the shape of a spiral. During a session with her neurologist after her surgeries, London was elated to be able to draw a spiral—a milestone marking the end of her physical condition.

London graduated in December 2012 thanks in no small part to the surgeries and the help she received from the NOEL Center. More than earning her degree, London was especially touched by the care and kindness of her caseworker, Sandy Hammett, a disability specialist and interpreter for the NOEL Center for Disability Resources.

"She was there for me," London shared. "She wanted to get the ball rolling to get me healthy so I could continue my classes. She would contact my teachers. She was such a compassionate, caring, kind and genuine person."

"Danielle was a pleasure to work with during the time she was here," Hammett recalled.

"She was what I would term the ideal student because she had big obstacles to overcome and was proactive in seeking and utilizing resources to help her be a successful student. Danielle pushed through semesters when it would have been a much easier decision to take a break from school. That just mirrored the strength and determination that existed within her to complete her degree."

Today, London and Hammett continue to keep in contact. "Her caring and kindness didn't stop after I got better," London said. "And it didn't stop after I graduated." 



Sandy Hammett and London



# In Memoriam

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## *The 1940s*

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### **JULIA CRAWLEY '41**

passed away July 5, 2014. She worked for the Department of the Army in Washington, D.C., during World War II. She was also employed by Wachovia Bank and Trust for 22 years. She was survived by five children, seven grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

### **ANNE BAUGHMAN '42**

passed away Dec. 6, 2014. She earned a business degree at Gardner-Webb and worked during World War II as a relief manager across a multi-county area for Western Union. She later worked at the Old Fort (N.C.) Finishing Plant, where she learned to program and run one of the five largest IBM computers of that time. She finished her career with 10 years at PPG in Shelby, N.C. Her large extended family and many others knew her as "Aunt Anne."

### **MARTHA KIRK '42**

passed away Nov. 12, 2014. She was an active member of Mount Pleasant (N.C.) United Methodist Church for 55 years. She was a member of the women's basketball team at Gardner-Webb, and she taught for more than 45 years in Mount Pleasant schools. She served four years as president of the Retired School Personnel Association and served on the board of directors at CMC-Northeast hospital for many years. She was survived by two children, five grandchildren, four great-grandchildren, and four great-great-grandchildren.

### **DOROTHY SUMMEY '48**

passed away Sept. 28, 2014. She worked in medical records at Gaston Memorial Hospital and then as an administrative assistant at Smyre Mills. She was a member of First Baptist Church in Gastonia, N.C. She was survived by three children, two step-sons, 14 grandchildren, and 12 great-grandchildren.

### **JOHN HIOTT '49**

passed away Dec. 3, 2014. He served in the U.S. Army after high school, processing the correspondence paperwork for other soldiers. He later served as pastor of several churches in several states and in college administration, including time at Gardner-Webb. He served his church in many capacities, worked as a scoutmaster and was active in the Civitan Club and other community organizations. He was survived by his wife, Carmen, five children and five grandchildren.

### **ROBERT HOFFMAN '49**

passed away Oct. 1, 2014. He was associate sports editor of the High Point (N.C.) Enterprise, founder and publisher of the Southern MotorSports Journal, and former vice president of the Southern MotorSports Press Association, member and president of the Lions Club of Opp (Ala.), and a rural mail carrier at the Opp Post Office. He was survived by his wife, Marjorie, two sons, one grandchild, and two great-grandchildren.



# Former GWU Professor, Radio Manager Passes Away

Written by Niki Bliss-Carroll



Manuel "Allen" Setzer

A man who was instrumental as a faculty member at Gardner-Webb and responsible for the significant growth of the University's radio station, WGWG 88.3 FM, died on Dec. 30, 2014, at Wendover Hospice in Shelby, N.C., at the age of 84.

Manuel "Allen" Setzer served as an associate professor of Spanish in the GWU Department of Foreign Language and Literature for nearly three decades and as station manager of WGWG for over 25 years.

Born Dec. 24, 1930, in Caldwell County, N.C., Setzer graduated from Hudson High School. He continued his education at Lenoir-Rhyne College where he took part in the drama program. Later, he earned a master's degree at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (1965), and also attended La Universidad Interamericana, located in Saltillo, Mexico (1957), University of New Mexico in Albuquerque, N.M. (1963-64), and the Universidad de Salamanca in Salamanca, Spain (1974).

Serving in the United States Army, Setzer was stationed in New Mexico. A longtime drama enthusiast, he also acted frequently and played the part of a soldier in "Unto These Hills" in Cherokee, N.C.

He began working at Gardner-Webb in September of 1965 as an instructor of Spanish, a post he maintained for 28 years. During his time at GWU, Setzer became heavily involved in the radio station, and as general manager, oversaw several significant expansions.

"Allen Setzer was a pioneer and ushered WGWG through times of incredible transition," reflected Noel Manning, associate vice president for University Communications and Marketing and current WGWG general manager. "He was there when WGWG went from roughly 5,000 to 50,000 Watts, and also launched the first Internet stream of WGWG.org at a time when very few were considering the digital radio landscape. He was dedicated to the service of Gardner-Webb University and WGWG, and his efforts at WGWG were monumental. Mr. Setzer's commitment to the success of the station was inspirational."

Jeff Powell, who serves as operations manager at WGWG, said he first met Setzer as an undergraduate student at Gardner-Webb. "His work ethic was amazing," Powell shared. "He seemed to always be at the station, keeping an eye on the equipment and the students. I worked for him as a student beginning in 1984 and then as a part-time worker until 1999. In large part, it is because of Mr. Setzer that I do what I do now. He instilled in me a love of radio. I am honored to be here now trying in some small way to honor his legacy as the station continues to evolve yet carry forward the voice of GWU."



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# WGWG

Gardner-Webb University Radio



# MLB Pitcher, GWU Alum, Navy Veteran Passes Away

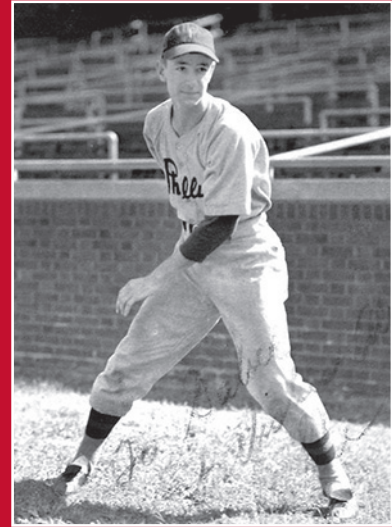
*Information contributed by The Star (Shelby, N.C.)*

Roger Hornsby McKee served his country, his community, and his university. The 1966 Gardner-Webb University alumnus — remembered as a Navy serviceman and former Major League Baseball player — passed away Sept. 1, 2014.

In his military service days, he participated in the funeral for U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt. As an athlete, McKee signed a Major League Baseball contract at 16 years old and led Shelby (N.C.) Post 82 to its first American Legion Baseball state title. He also worked for the U.S. Postal Service for 30 years and served on the Gardner-Webb University Bulldog Club Board of Advisors.

The local sports legend, who would have turned 88 on Sept. 16, is perhaps most widely remembered for his pitching success in the 1940s, reaching the Major Leagues with the Philadelphia Phillies, and for his longtime service with the Shelby (N.C.) High School and Post 82 baseball programs. As a 16-year-old Major League rookie in 1943, McKee became the youngest player in the 20th century to throw a nine-inning complete-game victory. McKee was also the ace pitcher of Post 82's first state championship squad in 1942. He earned a 3-2 win in the final game in Wilson, N.C., to clinch the title.

In 2009, the Philadelphia Phillies honored him during Phillies Alumni Weekend. McKee was a 1977 Cleveland County (N.C.) Sports Hall of Fame inductee.



Roger McKee  
Photo courtesy of The Star (Shelby, N.C.)

## The 1950s

### EUGENE ALLEN '50

passed away Oct. 10, 2014. He was a U.S. Army veteran who served in the Korean Conflict. He was a teacher, coach and administrator in Cleveland County (N.C.) Schools. He was also a member of First Baptist Church in Shelby, N.C., and he was a major blood donor for the American Red Cross. He was survived by two daughters, a twin sister, four grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

### JOHN W. PERKINS '52

passed away Sept. 16, 2014. He served in the U.S. Navy from 1945-1949 and was stationed on Guam for 21 months. In 1966, he went to work with First Federal Savings and Loan Association of Forest City, where he served for 33 years. He was first vice president of the association and later served as president. When First Federal became a part of RBC/Centura Bank, he continued to serve as president and retired from that post in 1998. He was a member of Florence Baptist Church, a former deacon, Sunday school teacher, choir member, and served on several committees. He was survived by his wife of 64 years, Geraldine Hall Perkins, a daughter, five grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.

### JAMES EDWIN MESSICK JR. '54

passed away July 31, 2014. He spent 42 years working for the family business as a wholesale grocery buyer for J.G. Messick & Sons, parent company of Food Fair of NC. He was a longtime and active member of several churches. He was survived by his wife, Jean, three children, and two grandchildren.



### NORRIS CAMP '58

passed away Dec. 21, 2014. He served in the U.S. Army for two years during the Korean Conflict and was in the reserves for four years. He was named to the Blacksburg (S.C.) Football Hall of Fame in 2013, served as a Mason, and retired after 20 years as an X-ray equipment salesman. He was survived by his wife, three children, seven grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.

## *The 1960s*

### WILLIAM WORTH BRIDGES JR. '60

passed away Dec. 14, 2014. He was employed by Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College (ABAC), where he served in a number of capacities over the years. He retired in 1995 as vice president and dean of student affairs. He had celebrated his 65th wedding anniversary with his late wife, Hazel Marie Greene Bridges, who passed away earlier in 2014. William was survived by two children, five grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

### RONALD DAVIS '67

passed away Sept. 30, 2014. He retired as a color lab tech for Standard Products after 17 years of service. He was a member of Shandon Baptist Church in Columbia, S.C., and he served in the S.C. National Guard.



We are seeking military stories and photos from the Gardner-Webb family of alumni, students, faculty and staff to be displayed as part of a new location on the GWU main campus where we will honor those who have served—or are currently serving—the U.S.A.

If you or a member of your immediate family (mom, dad, sister, brother or child) is currently serving in active duty or is a veteran, please consider sending us a photo that represents your (or your loved one's) service!



Fill out the following form and mail us your photo, or visit [gardner-webb.edu/military-stories](http://gardner-webb.edu/military-stories) and send us the information digitally. A formal announcement on this exciting project will be made soon.

Name of Submitter: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Military Member: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to Military Member \_\_\_\_ self \_\_\_\_ parent \_\_\_\_ sibling \_\_\_\_ child

Military Branch and Years of Service: \_\_\_\_\_

Current City/State (if living): \_\_\_\_\_

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**ANDREW DARRELL HARRIS '63**

passed away Aug. 8, 2014. He was the founder and CEO of Furniture-land South, now the world's largest furniture store. In 2010, he was inducted into the American Furniture Hall of Fame. His company was one of the top 50 furniture retailers for more than 25 years. He served his country in the U.S. Navy during the Vietnam Conflict. He was survived by his wife, Stella, two children, and eight grandchildren.

## *The 1970s*

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**JAMES EUGENE BLANTON '74**

passed away Sept. 11, 2014. He was the pastor of Parkwood Baptist Church, a counselor for Anderson Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission, a tennis pro at Cardinal Racquet Club, and he retired as a counselor with South Carolina Mental Health. After retirement, he was a courtesy driver for Ralph Hayes Toyota. He was survived by his wife, Martha Price Blanton, three children, four grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

**RUTH DESTAFFNO '74**

passed away July 12, 2014. She retired from Upstate Carolina Hospital with 34 years of service. She was one of the oldest members of Cherokee Avenue Baptist Church, where she was a member of the Amazing Grace Singers. She was survived by two children, eight grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

**DAVID COX '77**

passed away Sept. 28, 2014, after a battle with cancer. He loved the ocean and marine biology, playing harmonica and stage acting. He was a prize-winning photographer, sang tenor with various groups, coached his son's soccer team and was a character impersonator. He was survived by his wife, children and grandchildren.

## *The 1980s*

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**SANDRA HUMPHRIES '84**

passed away Nov. 26, 2014. She was a fifth-grade teacher at Cliffside (N.C.) Elementary School. She was survived by her husband, two sons, her mother and father, two brothers, and her granddaughter.

**BRENDA EDWARDS '86**

passed away July 23, 2014, at Kings Mountain (N.C.) Hospice House. She worked as a licensed psychological associate, a certified drug and alcohol counselor and an EAP associate, providing employee assistance to local industries and hospitals. She also enjoyed being active in her church, Putnam Baptist Church. She was survived by one daughter and two grandchildren.

**SANDRA HILL '88**

passed away Nov. 26, 2014. She taught fifth grade for 29 years at Hendersonville (N.C.) Middle Grade School and was an active member of the Delta Kappa Gamma teaching sorority. She and her husband, Henry, enjoyed retirement on Lake Hartwell in Westminster, S.C. She was survived by her husband, daughter and grandson.

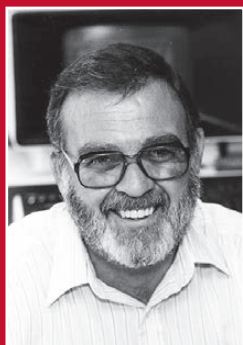
**RONETTA LACKEY '88**

passed away June 24, 2014. She was an elementary school teacher in Cleveland County (N.C.) for 26 years. She also earned a Master of Arts degree at Gardner-Webb in 1995. She was survived by two children.



# Dr. Dan Proctor Remembered for Multiple Service Roles

*Written by Matthew Tessnear*



Dr. Dan Proctor

Dr. Dan Proctor, remembered for serving GWU for 25-plus years in numerous roles, passed away Oct. 5, 2014, at the age of 81.

He completed a bachelor's degree at Howard Payne University in Brownwood, Texas, and a bachelor's degree and doctorates in theology and philosophy at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. He and his wife, Gardner-Webb Professor Emerita Dr. Lonnie Proctor, met at a Sunday night church service in Kansas City, Mo., and married in 1955.

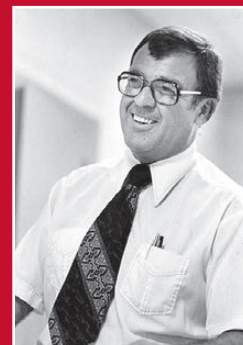
After teaching several years at North Greenville College in South Carolina, the Proctors arrived at Gardner-Webb in 1969 and both served the University for a quarter of a century. He retired in 1995 after success in a number of jobs.

Starting as director of guidance and counseling, Proctor became an assistant dean and GWU registrar. He later served as director of records and research, director of data processing and computers, and assistant academic vice president for administration. He also taught Biblical languages and literature.

"His role changed on an annual basis depending on the needs of the institution," said Dr. Jeff Tubbs, GWU vice president for planning and institutional effectiveness. "He was the one who brought the computer age to Gardner-Webb when he started entering and printing grade reports and class rolls. He was an innovator, and he pushed hard to make computers a part of campus life."

Tubbs remembers Proctor as a serious, on-task worker who put in long hours, while also exhibiting a soft-spoken friendliness to everyone around him. He served Gardner-Webb, but he was also a devoted family man to Lonnie and their four children.

"They were a close-knit family who came in the late 60s and stuck with the University to the end," Tubbs reflected. "Their kids attended Gardner-Webb. Once Dan retired from the University, he served as Lonnie's manager. She was a successful senior athlete, and he would drive her all over the country as her coach. He was always there for his family, and he was totally committed to Gardner-Webb."



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# Physical Education Professor Emerita Passes Away

*Written by Matthew Tessnear*



Dr. Lonnie Proctor

GWU Professor Emerita Dr. Lonnie Proctor, remembered as a driving force for Special Olympics and as an educator dedicated to her students, passed away Nov. 16, 2014. She was 85.

Proctor began teaching health and physical education at Gardner-Webb in 1969, and she spent 24 years as an educator for the University. She was selected Faculty Emerita of Physical Education in 1992.

Proctor will forever be remembered and valued for her impact on the lives of students, said Dr. Dee Hunt, a longtime GWU faculty member and administrator, and now GWU Vice President and Dean of Student Enrollment. "As a professor, she was demanding, gracious, and fair, and the students would scramble to enroll in her classes," Hunt shared. "Dr. Proctor was a model of grace, service to others, a compassionate educator, my friend, and certainly a legacy for all who knew her."

While teaching at Gardner-Webb, Proctor worked with her students to organize a local Special Olympics program for the mentally disabled. Approximately 35 of her students forged careers working with the disabled due to the program, which she managed for 20 years. Awarded and recognized nationally for her work with the Special Olympics, she was also one of the first women

inducted into the Shelby (N.C.) Athletics Hall of Fame.

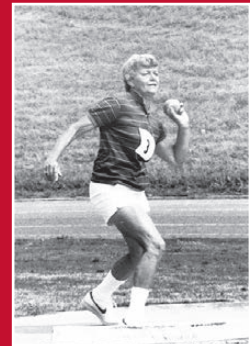
"She was perhaps best known for her work with and leadership in Special Olympics," Hunt remembered. "She made the event a tradition on campus, and alumni continue to talk about the impact the Olympics had on their appreciation for service and compassion."

Noel Manning, now GWU Associate Vice President for Communications and Marketing, was one of Proctor's students. He recalled her kind and calming spirit.

"She cared for her students and for their success, inside and outside the classroom, even beyond graduation," Manning offered. "I can attest to her dedication to the University and to the population she taught. She was one of the most genuine people I have ever met, and her legendary contributions to Gardner-Webb and Cleveland County have established a foundation worthy of recognition and honor."

A physical education professor, she was also an athlete, attending numerous state and national Senior Games competitions. She participated in the National Senior Games in 1996, winning gold medals in high jump, shot put, and doubles badminton; a silver medal in singles badminton; and a bronze medal in horseshoes.

"She rarely lost any competitive encounter," Hunt remembered. "She was an athlete, she loved to compete, and she was a gracious winner."



## *The 1990s*

### **MILLICENT WADDELL '92**

passed away Aug. 9, 2014. She served many years as a bank teller and waitress, and she attended Temple Baptist Church in Kings Mountain, N.C., and Bethel Baptist Church in Shelby, N.C. Survivors include her husband, Scott, three children, and one grandchild.

### **DEBRA BALLARD '95**

passed away Nov. 16, 2014. She was a program supervisor with the N.C. Department of Correction. She was survived by four sisters, two children, two grandchildren, and a great-grandchild.



## The 2000s

### JOSEPH CLAYTON '05

passed away Oct. 6, 2014. He was a retired master sergeant from the U.S. Army military intelligence department after 20 years of service. He served in Operation Desert Storm. After his military career, he became a professor at Wilkes Community College. He was survived by two children and one grandson.

### HARRY YOUNGER '06

passed away Sept. 9, 2014. He spent his professional career in the textile industry, primarily with Cross Creek Apparel and its successor companies. After his retirement from Fruit of the Loom, he received a Master of Science degree in accounting at Gardner-Webb and practiced briefly as a CPA. He was a member of Grace Moravian Church. He was survived by his wife of 42 years, Joyce Samuel Younger; and his mother, Pauline Atkins Younger.

## The 2010s

### KATE BARNETT '14

passed away Nov. 23, 2014. She was an ROTC cadet and an undergraduate student in the Degree Completion Program and Hunt School of Nursing. She was survived by her parents, two sisters, and two brothers.

## GWU Mourns Loss of Longtime Staffer Mike Roebuck



Mike Roebuck

The Gardner-Webb University community mourned the loss of longtime athletics department administrator Mike Roebuck, who passed away in March 4, 2015 at the age of 65. Roebuck was in his 14th season as assistant athletics director for academic services, and he previously served six years as the University's director of financial aid.

"His enthusiasm and genuine care for all of our student-athletes, no matter what sport or background, left a positive impression on scores of young people over the past two decades," said GWU Vice President for Athletics Chuck Burch. "His love for Gardner-Webb as an institution was always front and center. Mike's dedication to our department, our students and to doing his job with the highest level of detail and integrity was exemplary."

Under his supervision, Gardner-Webb student-athletes made tremendous strides in the classroom—earning numerous accolades. More than 30 student-athletes earned CoSIDA Academic All-District honors under Roebuck's watch, and 10 earned Academic All-America or FCS ADA Academic All-Star honors. Since 2008, five Gardner-Webb student-athletes have earned the Big South Conference's George A.

Christenberry Award—the highest academic honor awarded by the league.

Gardner-Webb teams were consistently recognized—both regionally and nationally—for their outstanding grade point averages, and the departmental GPA improved steadily over the past decade.

Roebuck graduated from Wofford College in 1972. He played football and ran track from 1967-1972. Roebuck played football for the Terriers under head coach Jim Brakefield and former assistant coach—and College Football Hall of Famer—Fisher DeBerry. Roebuck was a lineman on the 1970 Wofford team that went 11-1, earned a No. 1 national ranking and played in the NAIA Championship Bowl.

Roebuck starred at Shelby (N.C.) High on the gridiron as well while playing for legendary head coach Gerald "Pearly" Allen in the 1960s. He was honored with the Paris Yelton Memorial Award in 2010 by the Cleveland County Sports Hall of Fame. The award recognizes individuals not involved in competition who have given distinguished service in other ways to the sports life of the community.



# Stage Right

*GWU Theatre Founder Replays Experiences in Discipline He Savors*

*Written by Matthew Tessnear*

Where  
are they  
Now?

C. Robert Jones has mentored Miss America finalists, singers, actors and dancers in his education career of more than 50 years. And he says if he could mandate it, he would require all teachers, preachers and lawyers to take courses in his specialty subject—theatre.



In 1979, C. Robert Jones directed Broadway legend Stephen Douglass in the Southern Appalachian Repertory Theatre's production of "Shenandoah." Also in the photo above is Christine Yates, Douglass' wife in real life, who also worked with Julie Andrews in the London production of "My Fair Lady."

Jones, a former Gardner-Webb University faculty member who started the theater arts degree program in 1966, chronicles his lifetime experiences surrounding the stage in his recent book titled

*"I Like It Here! Adventures in the Wild and Wonderful World of Theatre."* It includes anecdotes

from an opening night of the show "Breath of Life" with Judi Dench and Maggie Smith in London, to experiencing Laurence Olivier and Vivien Leigh in "Macbeth" at Stratford-upon-Avon, to world-premiere productions he's directed.

"It's a collection of memories. It's a book about theatre adventures," Jones said. "It's some of the stories from my life in theater over the years, people I've met, places I've been, places I've seen, pieces I've worked on."

Jones—a Mars Hill, N.C., resident and South Carolina native—still travels and gleans ideas for his plays from his journeys.

Like many who venture into unexpected careers, Jones' foray into the theater world was not planned. An English major in college, he anticipated he'd teach that subject in high school or college. But during a visit to Washington, D.C., he met a summer theater program director who pulled him into a production.

While in D.C., Jones decided to attend Catholic University to study theater. "The school had one of the best theater programs in

the country," Jones reflected. "So I thought, 'Why not do a degree while I'm right here?' So that's what I did."

Jones, who started going by C. Robert to avoid being confused with the late legendary American golfer Bobby Jones, said his theater influences were professors at the University, as well as music composers like Irving Berlin, Cole Porter and Richard Rogers. Those composers fueled an interest in musical theater, and that led to his development of a degree program in the subject at Mars Hill College, north of Asheville, N.C, in the 1970s. He built that program by weaving together the college's existing music and theater programs.

Jones still maintains deep connections to Gardner-Webb, through relationships with people like associate provost Dr. Earl Leininger and Jim Thomas, dean of the School of Performing and Visual Arts. His book mostly includes experiences that follow his time at Gardner-Webb. Former Gardner-Webb President Dr. Eugene Poston hired him in 1966 to begin the theater arts program during the school's transition to senior college status.

The early years required hard work, of both Jones and his students, to get the theater degree program off the ground. In its infancy, the theater program found housing in parts of Hamrick Hall and a spot on the site of the current Dover Chapel.

"During the move to senior college status, it was important to have the theater program in place. My job was to build it," he shared. "In 1971, with the first four-year graduating class at Gardner-Webb, there were five young women with degrees in theater arts. I'm still in touch with those five women. They've gone on to do remarkable things."

Jones, who has lived in Mars Hill for more than 40 years, is still very much in touch with his love of writing for the stage and other formats. He said he always has a current project, either a play or narrative fiction work, in progress. He recently released

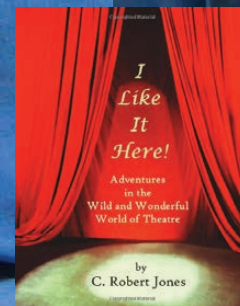


the first volume of a book, "Lanky Tales: The Absolutely Remarkable Adventures of Lanky Lonagan," which is designed for children and chronicles the adventures and follies of a 13-year-old boy in a tiny mountain town.

Although he enjoys musicals, Jones writes more plays without music because of the time investment required to compose the score, pen the music, and write the lyrics and dialogue.

His decades of investment in theatre have propelled him to advocate for its usefulness for students of all disciplines. Among other careers, his former students now pursue careers as health care public relations directors, magazine editors, and college alumni relations professionals.

"All of those people are using the kind of discipline training that actors use," Jones said. "A theatre degree can prepare you to get up in front of the public and be calm to talk with some sense of authority, to meet people well, to be able to handle unusual and unexpected circumstances, to be polished and feel comfortable and to look sophisticated. Theatre is preparation for more successful ways to approach life."



#### **WANT THE BOOKS?**

"I Like It Here! Adventures in the Wild and Wonderful World of Theatre" and "Lanky Tales: The Absolutely Remarkable Adventures of Lanky Lonagan" are available at [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) and via publisher Pisgah Press.



Listen to C. Robert Jones talk about his theatre experiences at: [gardnerwebb.edu/robert-jones](https://gardnerwebb.edu/robert-jones)





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# HOMECOMING 10/10/15

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