

Gardner-Webb University

Digital Commons @ Gardner-Webb University

Gardner-Webb NewsCenter Archive

Gardner-Webb Publications

5-1-2020

Gardner-Webb Alumna Adjusts to First Principalship During Coronavirus Crisis

Office of University Communications

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.gardner-webb.edu/gardner-webb-newscenter-archive>

Gardner-Webb Alumna Adjusts to First Principalship During Coronavirus Crisis

webpublish.gardner-webb.edu/newscenter/laura-carter-new-principal-during-covid-19/

Office of University
Communications

May 1, 2020

Laura Carter, '17, Changed Careers to Serve Others and Help Children

The annual celebration of School Principals' Day on May 1st usually recognizes the work principals do on a regular basis. But this year, it's especially important to note how principals have led their fellow educators during the challenges of COVID-19. Gardner-Webb University's School of Education has trained thousands of principals who are serving across the nation.

One of those alumni is Laura Watlington Carter, who received her master's degree in executive leadership studies from Gardner-Webb in 2017. After graduating from GWU, she held jobs as an instructional coach and assistant principal. Then, less than three months before N.C. Schools closed in response to the Coronavirus outbreak, Carter was named to her first principalship at Leaksville Spray Elementary School in Eden, N.C.



Suddenly, not only was she adjusting to her first assignment as principal, but she had the added difficulty of educating—and feeding—elementary school children from a distance.

Carter shares how she is navigating the crisis and what she learned as a student in the master's program at Gardner-Webb.

Q: What has been the biggest challenge for you during this time of distance education?

Carter: The greatest challenge is trying to level the playing field in regards to access to instruction, meeting the social and emotional needs of our students and families as well as continuing to care for and support my staff through these difficult times with the new challenges they are enduring as well.

Q: What have been the bright spots for you during this time?

Carter: The bright spots have been seeing the selfless acts of kindness and a redirection of focus on God, family and community.

Q: In 1993, you were a telecommunicator, answering emergency and non-emergency for the N.C.. Highway Patrol, why did you decide you wanted to get into teaching, and then why did you want to become a principal?

Carter: I decided I wanted to teach, because I occasionally filled in as a substitute teacher on my days off when I worked for the Highway Patrol. I saw such a need to help children, and I have always known that I wanted to dedicate my life to a career of service to others, so I decided to change career paths. I decided to become an administrator because working as an instructional coach allowed me to have a greater impact on teaching and learning, therefore I knew that becoming an administrator would further expand the sphere of influence and impact.

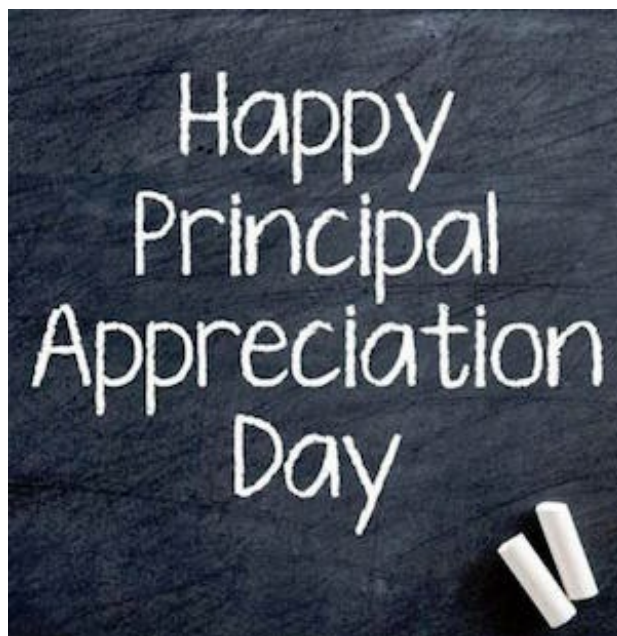
Q: What did you like about your classes at Gardner-Webb and how did they prepare you for your transition to an administrative role?

Carter: I enjoyed studying the content, but the instructors and their willingness to help and compassion and unders

tanding was the best part about my experience. My classes prepared me to transition to my administrative role, because the learning process was authentic and very relevant to the role of principalship.

Q: What words of encouragement do you have for other educators?

Carter: There will be many things to distract, discourage and even make you question the reason you became an educator. Always remember that every aspect of your work is an opportunity to make a difference in the lives of others. Stay focused, steadfast, and true to your purpose, because the work you do really matters.



[Learn more about the GWU School of Education.](#)

