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### **Carolina Face Jugs Exhibit Curated by GWU Students in Museum Studies Program**

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# Carolina Face Jugs Exhibit Curated by GWU Students in Museum Studies Program

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Office of University  
Communications

October 15, 2019

*Collection on Display in Ali Pouryousefi Gallery in Tucker Student Center Through Nov. 5*

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—An exhibit featuring the art and heritage of Carolina Face Jugs will be displayed through Nov. 5 in the Ali Pouryousefi Art Gallery in Tucker Student Center at Gardner-Webb University. The exhibition has been curated by students who are minoring in the museum studies program.

Instructor Annmarie Reiley said the students worked together to design, research, write and collect artifacts from locals for the exhibit.

Both functional and decorative, face jugs are a cultural phenomenon that date back as early as the 14th century. In the United States, these somewhat macabre pieces were made and inspired by enslaved Africans from Edgefield, South Carolina, who created them to serve as grave markers. “They believed the gruesome facial expressions on the jugs would protect the soul from evil spirits on its journey to heaven,” Reiley informed. “This practice merged parts of their own spiritual heritage with their newfound Christian faith. The jugs also became a popular way for plantation owners to store alcohol—the frightening faces kept curious children from discovering the contents.”

Hand thrown and dipped in a wood ash glaze, the jugs were fragile; only a few original examples remain today, but the story of their origins has survived through oral retellings among the descendants of the enslaved. With an abundance of rich clay, the Carolinas have played a significant role in the artform’s development. Known as the first enslaved potter to sign his work, Edgefield’s Dave Drake created over 100 pieces between the 1820s and 1860s.

Catawba Valley pottery was produced in the 1830s by Daniel Seagle who pioneered the North Carolina pottery industry. The popularity of face jugs waned during World War II due to changing tastes in art, the drafting of soldiers and rationing of resources. With his



unique take on face jugs, Burlon Craig is credited with saving the artform which has a deep-rooted identity and home in Carolina culture.

Gallery hours are 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Friday, 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Saturday, and 1 to 9 p.m. on Sunday.

***Auxiliary aids will be made available to persons with disabilities upon request 48 hours prior to the event. Please call 704.406.4264 or email [servicerequests@gardner-webb.edu](mailto:servicerequests@gardner-webb.edu) with your request.***

*Located in the North Carolina foothills, Gardner-Webb University is a private, Christian, liberal arts university. Gardner-Webb emphasizes a strong student-centered experience and rigorous academics to prepare students to become effective leaders within the global community. Ignite your future at Gardner-Webb.edu.*



Janus Head Face Jug on loan from Doug Knotts