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Office of University
Communications

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Lori Miller '19 Learns Concepts Directly Applicable to Her Job



Lt. Lori Miller was unable to attend graduation and received her academic award at the Hickory Police Department. Attending the presentation were, from left, Deputy Chief of Police Reed Baer, Chief of Police Thurman Whisnant, Lt. Miller, Elizabeth Pack, dean of Adult and Distance Education, and Homer Craig, GWU criminal justice coordinator and instructor. Photo Courtesy of the Hickory Police Department

Lt. Lori Miller, of Taylorsville, N.C., has served the Hickory Police Department for nearly 13 years. She's the second female in the history of the department to achieve the rank of lieutenant. She also teaches students in the BLET (Basic Law Enforcement Training) and DOCC (Department of Community Corrections) programs. A 2019 graduate of Gardner-Webb University, Miller's goal is to be a captain, a position no female has ever held in her department.

Obtaining her Bachelor of Science Degree in criminal justice and human services moves her toward her goal. In her classes, she developed leadership skills and a better understanding of all aspects of the criminal justice field. At graduation, she was honored to receive the Academic Award from GOAL – The Degree Completion Program.

“I was first introduced to Gardner-Webb by Homer Craig,” Miller shared. “I liked that he was a former police officer and that he would be one of my instructors. It was important to me to be taught by someone who had actually done the job. What is in the textbooks is not always real life, and Mr. Craig realized this.”

Miller became a police officer because she desired to do something with her life that had meaning. “I wanted my work to be about something bigger than myself,” she observed. “And of course, I wanted to help people.”

The concepts she learned in her classes at Gardner-Webb applied to her leadership position in the Patrol Division. Miller directly supervises 12 people, but when she is on shift, she is the watch commander and in charge of everyone in the Patrol Division. “I am ultimately responsible for the actions of all the officers and sergeants on duty,” she explained. “All people are unique, and you will never have a team made up of the same personality types. People need different things to succeed, and I learned ways to motivate all these very different, unique people.”



Lt. Lori Miller, right, poses with approximately 160 bags of school supplies that were given to children at an event hosted by the Hickory Police Department and members of the Hickory Leadership Academy. Photo Courtesy of Hickory Police Department

Miller also appreciated the Gardner-Webb Christian community and the support given to students who requested prayer. She benefited from studying the Old and New Testaments. “These courses were hard and required a lot of work,” she offered. “I think I spent more time doing homework in these classes than another other class, but I learned so much from them.”

The online classes fit her busy work schedule, and she was pleased with the format. “If you want to go to a school where you will actually learn something, GWU is the place for you,” she affirmed. “The admission process is easy, the professors are knowledgeable, and the Christian Community is something special.”

[Learn more about the Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice through GOAL-The Degree Completion Program.](#)