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### Homecoming Queen Elections Drawing to a Close

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# Homecoming queen elections drawing to a close



Photo by Chelsea Sydnor

By: Chelsea Sydnor

Homecoming is a chance for Gardner-Webb to honor and build upon traditions. One of these many rich traditions is Homecoming Court.

"It's great to see people that are nominated by their class, and see them supported by other students," explained Emily DeVries, chair of special events for the GWU Student Government Association.

Four senior girls have been nominated by their class, and the entire student body has the opportunity participate in the election process by logging into WebbConnect to vote.

"The Homecoming candidates are people that represent the Gardner-Webb Community and change it for the better," added DeVries. "The queen should ultimately reflect that."

The nomination for Homecoming Queen by her roommate came as quite a surprise for Lydia Hill of Durham, NC.

"I wasn't sure if I should run," Hill recalled. "But once people told me 'you should do it, you should do it!' I got really excited."

Ultimately, Hill chose to run because of the encouragement of others and it was something much different than she had ever done before.



Lydia Hill.  
Photo by Anna Hulsey.

Hill is active in a variety of organizations around campus, including Focus, Campus Ministries United and Honors Student Association. "I have a really well-rounded Gardner-Webb experience," she shared. "I've gotten to do so many things here that I never would have had the opportunity to do if I hadn't gone to a school like this."

She loves Gardner-Webb because of how genuine everyone on campus is, especially faculty and staff. "They are really invested in us, and want to help us succeed," Hill explained.

Once she graduates in May, Hill plans to get married and search for a job that utilizes the skills she has gained through her Marketing major.

Katie Smith of Concord, NC is both thrilled and honored to be nominated for Homecoming Queen. She had hoped for the opportunity to run after a difficult time in her family.

"In August my grandmother passed, followed by my brother's friend as well as a lady that I cared for as a CNA," Smith recalled. "This is an opportunity for my family to focus on something happier for a little while."

Smith is confident that any of the candidates this year will be a good choice.

"They're all awesome," Smith explained. "Whenever I tell people to vote, I don't mean just for me. Anyone that is running would be great."

However, Smith does feel that her Nursing major and career choice make her unique. "The work that I do and the interactions that I have on a daily basis are very different," she admitted. "They will be life and death situations."

Smith's favorite part about Gardner-Webb is the people that she gets to spend time with. "I love the people who cook, the people who clean, the people that teach me things and the people I get to live with that have become my best friends," she shared.

After graduation, Smith plans to work for a few years to gain experience and attend UNC Chapel Hill to get her Doctor of Nursing Program (DNP), which will allow her to work under the supervision of a doctor.

"We can open a practice together," she added. "It can be a family practice so that I will be able to treat patients of all ages."

Merideth Byl of Tucson, AZ was very flattered by her nomination.



Katie Smith.  
Photo by Anna Hulsey.





Meredith Byl.  
Photo by Anna Hulsey.

"It was an honor that someone thought I was worthy of being a representative," Byl shared. "I really wanted to respect that."

Byl feels she's among friends with the other nominees. "We are all really different," she explained. "We each bring something valuable to the table."

Her favorite part of Gardner-Webb is the small-school atmosphere. "We're part of a community of people that genuinely wants you to be a better person both inside and outside of the classroom," she shared. "You don't find that everywhere."

While she will continue to "bleed runnin' bulldog red" after graduation, Byl plans to carry her Biology major forward by eventually attending medical school.

Katie Loftin was ecstatic to be nominated for Homecoming Queen, as well. The support of others around her also encouraged her.

"Everyone was really excited for me," she recalled.

Loftin also feels that the nomination has given her an exciting opportunity before she graduates in December.

"It's something fun for my last semester," she explained. "I never really get to go to football games because I play volleyball, but this will be our Parent Weekend and my parents will be here, so it works out really well."

Loftin is part of many different organizations, including Alpha Chi, Tri Beta, Sigma Zeta, Gamma Sigma Epsilon and is the secretary of the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee.

She loves Gardner-Webb because it feels like a family. "Everyone is so close and willing to help you, and see you succeed," she shared.

After graduation, Loftin plans to get married and hopes to have a career as either a wedding planner, a florist or a Vet Tech. "We're going to move around a lot, so it's hard to decide right now," she explained. "I'll be more sure once we're settled."

Vote for one of the candidates by 5:00 PM October 8th and see the winner crowned at Saturday evening's football game against Liberty University.



Katie Loftin.  
Photo by Anna Hulsey.