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Office of University
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Stacey Ferguson '04 Honored to Provide Interpreting Services for Deaf Individuals

When Stacey Ferguson '04 started her college search, she had two criteria that were non-negotiable. If she could also play soccer, that would

Stacey Ferguson '04

be a bonus. Gardner-Webb University exceeded her expectations. "I wanted to find a four-year program at a faith-based institution where I could study American Sign Language (ASL) and interpreting," Ferguson shared. "After researching GWU's reputation for the ASL department and being impressed, I knew it was where I needed to go, even though it was thousands of miles away from my family in Minneapolis, Minn."

Ferguson's church had a deaf ministry, which fueled her desire to learn the language. She took ASL classes in high school and at the local community college. "I was drawn to the culture, community, and rich language," she offered. "Providing interpreting services between Deaf and hearing individuals/communities is an honor. It's a role that I do not take lightly. You are invited into people's lives—even if just for one doctor's appointment, one funeral service or one phone call—to be a conduit for communication. It is a powerful and humbling role."

Besides honing her ASL skills and playing soccer, Ferguson also participated in opportunities at GWU to grow and share her faith, such as the student-led worship services and Bible study groups. She was also a member of FOCUS (Fellowship of Christians United in Service), a campus ministry that involves teams of GWU students visiting local churches to provide programs for youth groups.

After earning her degree, Ferguson was prepared to begin her career and further her education. Dr. Mary High, associate professor of ASL, and Keith Cagle, former associate professor, motivated students by their dedication to the field, she said. "I graduated with a strong foundation, and practice, in Deaf culture and linguistics, and an understanding of the profession and how to conduct myself as an ethical professional," Ferguson praised.

As the director of interpreting for Sorenson Video Relay Service (VRS) in Charlotte, N.C., she is responsible for oversight and day-to-day management of the VRS center. She also recruits, hires, and trains new video interpreters, and works with local post-secondary schools to provide training opportunities for new interpreters. She's also worked as a

professional interpreter in various capacities and was co-owner of a company dedicated to training, developing and mentoring interpreters across the country. She earned her master's degree in psychology with a focus on leadership development and coaching. Ferguson also received her Certified Professional Project Manager credentials and served as a project manager in the research division of the largest healthcare organization in Minnesota.

“I foresee myself being a lifetime interpreter,” Ferguson stated. “In five years, I also hope to be in a position where I am cultivating leaders, coaching and mentoring them be their best selves and aligning their values with their work and life goals.”