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Office of University
Communications

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Tayuanee Dewberry '97, '09, Encourages Students and Others to Pursue Their Dreams

In North Carolina, several community organizations focus their efforts on helping high school students

Photo of Tayuanee Dewberry

graduate. One such group serves 1,800 adolescents in Charlotte and is led by an alumna of Gardner-Webb University. Tayuanee Dewberry is the executive director of Right Moves for Youth (RMFY), a non-profit dropout prevention and youth development program.

For nearly three decades, RMFY has provided support to over 30,000 Charlotte-Mecklenburg students. The graduation rate for students involved in the program is over 98 percent, and Dewberry reports that 82 percent of the participants enroll in post-secondary education. She has been with the program for 14 years and has served as director for 10.

“The best part of my job is having the opportunity to help develop people as they pursue their dreams— beginning with my staff and extending to our constituents,” she reflected. “I consider each individual a gift and I’m humbled to be a part of the journey. It is my desire that every person, whether student, staff, donor or volunteer, who comes into contact with this organization is better off for having done so.”

Dewberry is also principal owner of Reconciliation Counseling & Consulting. She started the firm to address the needs of both clergy and lay persons from a more holistic perspective. A Nationally Certified Counselor (NCC) and Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC), she consults with clergy members to provide effective leadership strategies and pastoral care. She also offers group and community training options, and traditional counseling services for individuals, couples and families.

A native of Forest City, N.C., Dewberry grew up listening to her mother share her memories of GWU.

Photo of Tayuanee Dewberry

Also like her mother, Dewberry received a scholarship to play basketball. “It was an

opportunity to break some of my mom's athletic records—a little healthy competition,” Dewberry teased. “Ultimately, attending Gardner-Webb was the best decision for me. A small campus with a huge heart, Gardner-Webb offers a close-knit environment that fosters a strong sense of community yet promotes individualized thinking and personal development.”

Dewberry graduated from GWU in 1997 with a bachelor's degree in business. She returned to Gardner-Webb in 2006 to earn a Master of Arts in Counseling with an education specialist certification. “As executive director in a not-for-profit that provides group-based services to adolescent students, I wanted to understand better how the organization could deliver high-quality programming more effectively,” she related. “The School of Psychology provided just that.”

An active community volunteer, Dewberry has received various awards recognizing her leadership abilities. In 2017, was named to the GWU Gallery of Distinguished Alumni. She believes the skills she learned at Gardner-Webb help her to motivate and inspire people.

“The most valuable aspect of my graduate studies is the way in which they enhanced and strengthened my leadership skills,” Dewberry affirmed. “The combination of my business and counseling training prepared me to be a more well-rounded, effective, stronger community leader and advocate for social change. Psychology transformed how I managed and engaged my work environment; thereby, improving the culture and efficiency of the organization on multiple levels. I am a more dynamic, entrepreneurial leader and coach who motivates others to challenge the status quo and promote social justice.”