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### Support of GWU Faculty Prepared Alumna for Success in Dental School

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# Support of GWU Faculty Prepared Alumna for Success in Dental School

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Office of University  
Communications

March 5, 2018

## *Rutherford County, N.C., Native Comes Back Home to Practice*

Dr. Ashley Lowery, a dentist in Spindale, N.C., could have earned prerequisites for dental school most anywhere, but Gardner-

Dr. Ashley Lowery

Webb University offered her something other schools didn't. "Gardner-Webb is like a family if you will allow it to be," she reflected. "While the educational and religious side of GWU is extremely important, it is really more than that to me. It's a place of happy memories and a time in life where I felt completely supported. The staff and professors will be there for you from your freshman days until graduation."

She received a Bachelor of Science Degree in Biology with a chemistry minor from GWU in 2007. Then, Lowery earned her Doctor of Dental Surgery (DDS) from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill School of Dentistry. In 2011, she came back home to Rutherford County, N.C., to work as a dentist and in 2015, bought her practice, Rutherford County Family and Children's Dentistry.

One of the reasons Lowery chose to attend Gardner-Webb was because her mother graduated from the GWU Hunt School of Nursing. She thought she might follow in her mother's footsteps, but one day as she watched her mom work on a dental case, she realized her interest in dentistry. "The best part about my job is seeing the smile on someone's face when you are able to get them out of pain or improve the aesthetics and function of something that has been bothering them," she revealed.

Dr. Ashley Lowery and her staff at Rutherford County Family and Children's Dentistry in Spindale, N.C., enjoy dressing up on Halloween.

Lowery pursued her dream with the academic foundation and confidence she received at GWU. "The science department definitely holds a special place in my heart," she observed. "Dr. Benjamin Brooks came back to campus to help us study for sections and tests. He has stayed in touch over the years and been so encouraging. Dr. Tim Zehnder made sure he had various ways to express information for the different types of learners. My anatomy and physiology classes in dental school were easy to build onto with the background I had from

his classes. Dr. Tom Jones was so enthusiastic. His classes were tough, but his love for his subject matter was infectious and you wanted to learn. Professor Susan Manahan was my advisor for my research project. She was a plethora of knowledge and assistance during the months of culturing bacteria and putting together data.”

Her project focused on the microbial contamination of toothbrushes. She presented a poster of her research at the Collegiate Academy North Carolina Academy of Science conference and was awarded a Derieux Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Research. “The purpose was to determine how different storage methods affected bacterial counts on toothbrushes—open in bathroom, closed medicine cabinet or ultraviolet sanitizer. I learned a lot about the research process, about microbes that live in our mouths and on our toothbrushes, and of course, about plating samples.”

Apart from her GWU science classes, Lowery benefited from studying religion. “Having the opportunity to take various religious study courses allowed me to understand my beliefs more thoroughly,” she affirmed. “It also allowed me to understand the beliefs of other religions. Evaluating other cultures and their beliefs lends to understanding and acceptance of differences. It is important to have that understanding when working with the public.”