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Exercise Science Degree is Foundation for GWU Alumna's Career and Hobby

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Office of University
Communications

January 24, 2018

Taylor Pridgen '15 Has Found Calling as a Nurse and Enjoys Sport of Bodybuilding

Taylor Pridgen of Thomasville, N.C., ended her college search after one visit to Gardner-Webb University. The school had everything she wanted: a quality education, the chance to play softball and a close-knit community. "Once I visited the small campus and met the individuals there, I knew that it was home," Pridgen affirmed. "I made some amazing friends and mentors and some even better memories."

Photo of Taylor Pridgen

She majored in exercise science, because the curriculum combined her passion for fitness with her interest in studying human anatomy. After graduating in 2015, she began working in a gym. She loved using her degree, but seeing the dedication of the bodybuilders made her realize she missed competing in sports. "I felt that bodybuilding could be my new sport, my new drive and something to work for outside of work," Pridgen reflected. "I have a healthier lifestyle and great friends. The bodybuilding community is growing, but it's also a very tight one. We all respect each other and we don't judge one another because we all have the same goal—to better ourselves."

She's training to obtain a "pro card" from the International Federation of Bodybuilding and Fitness (IFBB). Earning the card qualifies her to participate in national bodybuilding competitions. "I thoroughly enjoy the gym and the peace of mind it brings me," she offered. "I love to bring my exercise science knowledge to the table for this sport, by doing body fat percentages on myself and others. Oftentimes, we have to burn off fat quickly, and we also have to maintain muscle mass."

While Pridgen enjoys the sport, she wanted something more from her career and decided to pursue nursing school. The field gives her more opportunities to serve people. "I wanted to be the person who helps them through some of their most difficult times," she shared. She will be working as a nurse in the intensive care unit at Moses Cone Hospital in Greensboro, N.C., and plans to obtain an advanced nursing degree.