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Office of University Communications

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UltraForce Staffing Services Matches Individuals and Employers

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—A business with five locations in the Piedmont region of North Carolina has several connections to Gardner-Webb University. Organized in 2010 by GWU Trustee Frank Stewart and his wife, Michele, UltraForce Staffing Services employs 20 people

and five are Gardner-Webb graduates. These alumni value their GWU education and seek to serve individuals and employers in the community.

“Employing people is our number one goal, and I can’t think of a better goal to have,” emphasized Payroll Specialist Bryton Mitchell, a 2017 GWU graduate with a bachelor’s in English. “We also want GWU students and alumni to know that we want to work with them, because we know their education is the best of the best. Gardner-Webb will always have a special connection to UltraForce.”

UltraForce opened seven years ago in Gastonia with John Finger, an expert in the staffing industry, as vice president. Bryton’s father, Neal Mitchell, owner of Mitchell Advisory Co., oversaw the accounting and managed payroll. In March 2017, the Stewarts decided to sell the business, which had expanded to Lincolnton and Shelby. Under new ownership, Finger was named president, and Mitchell accepted the role of chief executive officer. Now, Gastonia is the operations center and offices have opened in Hickory and Statesville.

Neal earned his Master of Accountancy in 2007 from Gardner-Webb. Taking online classes while running a business and raising a family wasn’t easy, but the faculty was available. “When I had trouble, the professors would respond quickly and when I needed face-to-face time they accommodated me, often outside of their office hours,” he explained. “I know the education that I received was top notch, so it is easy for me to consider employing fellow GWU alumni. I especially like helping those who are just starting out.”



photo of Ellen Laws

Ellen Laws graduated from GWU in 2016 with a degree in communication studies.

Neal’s oldest son, Cameron, graduated from Gardner-Webb twice and is employed as the operations manager at UltraForce. He makes sure the day-to-day operations at all the branches run smoothly. Cameron received a fine arts degree in 2012 and a Master of Divinity in 2015. “There are so many things that I studied or was a part of that relates to the work I do now,” Cameron explained. “For example, going through weekly art critiques helped me see things through different perspectives and learn how to handle constructive criticism. During my hospital chaplain internship, I learned how to handle adversity within myself and with fellow co-workers.”

While the Mitchells work for the same company, Neal’s sons don’t report directly to him and they work in different offices. “John Finger and others in the company are experts in areas where I am not,” Neal offered. “I want both my sons to fully understand this industry, so that if they choose to stay, they will be successful.”

Neal desires the same outcome for the company's other GWU graduates—human resource specialists Ellen Laws and Mason Kellar. They both graduated in 2016, Laws with a degree in communication studies, and Kellar, a degree in English. Laws is committed to helping job seekers find lasting career opportunities. “Our company truly invests in the happiness of our applicants and clients,” she affirmed. “We really seek to understand what applicants do and what they want to do. Also, we want to find them the best fit and help them to find the best opportunities.”



photo of Mason Kellar

Mason Kellar is a 2016 graduate of GWU with a degree in English.

Kellar feels his liberal arts education helps him thoughtfully examine resumes and communicate clearly in emails to clients. He enjoys his job, because it's about helping people. “I get to speak with a wide variety of individuals each day,” Kellar elaborated. “Some folks seek out our company looking for a spring board to a key professional placement while others need help drafting their first resume. They have come to us in order to put their best foot forward in seeking employment. I think I can speak for my colleagues here when I say that we want to be the force behind that step.”

Located in the North Carolina foothills, Gardner-Webb University is a private, Christian, liberal arts university that prepares students to become critical thinkers, effective leaders and compassionate servants in the global community. Emphasizing a strong student-centered experience and rigorous academics, Gardner-Webb ignites learning and service opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students. Ignite your future at Gardner-Webb.edu.