

Gardner-Webb University

Digital Commons @ Gardner-Webb University

Gardner-Webb NewsCenter Archive

Gardner-Webb Publications

10-18-2017

Gardner-Webb University Honors Distinguished Alumni

Office of University Communications

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.gardner-webb.edu/gardner-webb-newscenter-archive>

Gardner-Webb University Honors Distinguished Alumni

webpublish.gardner-webb.edu/newscenter/gardner-webb-university-honors-distinguished-alumni-2/

Office of University
Communications

October 18, 2017

Eight Receive Recognition for Contributions in Their Fields of Service

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—Gardner-Webb honored outstanding members of the University family with induction into the GWU Gallery of Distinguished Alumni during 2017 Homecoming activities Oct. 6-7. Eight alumni were recognized as new members of the prestigious gallery, including Paul Christopher Gash of Kingstown, N.C., Julian “Doc” Crocker Davis of Spartanburg, S.C., the late Justin Scot Alston, the Rev. Dr. Melissa Browning of Atlanta, Ga., Tayuane L. Dewberry of Charlotte, N.C., Todd Anthony Picou of Inman, S.C., Ali Pouryousefi of Atlanta; and the late Daniel Calhoun Johnson Jr.

Paul Christopher
“Chris” Gash

Paul Christopher “Chris” Gash graduated from GWU in 2007 with a bachelor’s degree in psychology and in 2016 with a Master of Divinity. As an undergrad, he played on the men’s basketball team. He currently operates Christover Athletics and serves as chaplain for the GWU Men’s Basketball Team. He was the youngest politician elected in Cleveland County, N.C., serving as mayor pro tem in Kingstown from 2013-2016. Gash currently serves on the Cleveland County Schools Diversity Committee and the GWU Alumni Board. He is community coordinator for the Cleveland Strong Project, a long-term health improvement initiative supported by Cleveland County Schools, Partners Behavioral Health Management, and Cleveland County government. He is the pastor of New Zion Baptist Church in Spindale, N.C.

Julian “Doc” Crocker Davis is a 1975 graduate of GWU with a Bachelor of Science degree in Health and Physical Education. He was a four-year letterman in football from 1971 to 1974. He was starting quarterback for the Runnin’ Bulldogs in 1973, which was the first winning season in senior college history. Davis coached high school football in South Carolina for 35 years, 25 of which were head coaching positions. His teams won a total of 222 games together, including five state championships. He was named State Coach of the Year six times and is a member of the Boone High School Hall of Fame, The South Carolina Athletic Coaches Association Hall of Fame, and the South Carolina Football Coaches Association Hall of Fame.

Julian “Doc” Crocker
Davis

Justin Scot Alston graduated from GWU in 2003 with a degree in sports management and physical education. He served on the Student Alumni Council, was the Commuter Committee chairman, coached and refereed intramural games, and was involved in many

other GWU clubs and activities. He enrolled at High Point (N.C.) University to obtain a master’s degree with hopes of coaching basketball at the Division I level. He was an active member of Southeast Baptist Church in Greensboro, N.C., and was serving as a volunteer coach at UNC-Greensboro when he passed away on Jan. 17, 2004.

Justin Scot Alston

The Rev. Dr. Melissa Browning is a theologian, ethicist, and activist who studies community-based responses to injustice. A 1999 graduate of GWU, Browning teaches seminary students at McAfee School of Theology at Mercer University in Atlanta. As an assistant professor of contextual ministry, she teaches courses in practical ministry, community development, and community organizing. For 17 years, her study and fieldwork has been tied to East Africa. Her book, “Risky Marriage: HIV and Intimate Relationships in Tanzania,” builds on fieldwork completed in Mwanza, Tanzania. Closer to home, she has been active in death penalty abolitionist work in Georgia. She is working on her second book, called “Navigating Dystopia.”

Rev. Dr. Melissa Browning

Tayuanee L. Dewberry has two degrees from Gardner-Webb. She earned her bachelor’s in business administration in 1997 and her master’s in counseling with an education specialist certification in 2009. She is a Nationally Certified Counselor (NCC) and Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) in North Carolina. As executive director of Right Moves for Youth, a non-profit dropout prevention and youth development program in Charlotte, N.C., she works to develop the potential in today’s youth. With that same passion, she also serves as a business mentor and consultant to teach, build, and empower other professionals across various disciplines. She is a 2016 recipient of the Z. Smith Reynold’s Sabbatical, a prestigious honor awarded to non-profit executives with a track record of phenomenal leadership, strategic planning and non-profit vision, and organizational growth.

Tayuanee L. Dewberry

Todd Anthony Picou earned his Master of Business Administration from Gardner-Webb in 2003. He grew up in South Louisiana and earned his Bachelor of Arts in Accounting from Louisiana State University in 1988. In 1997, Picou co-founded Hospice Care of South Carolina, LLC, the largest hospice provider in the state of South Carolina. In 2000, he co-founded the Hospice and Palliative Care Foundation, a 501(c)(3) organization that has provided over \$100,000 to help those with special needs at the end of their lives. In 2014, the company expanded to the state of Georgia creating Hospice Care of Georgia, LLC. He currently serves on the Public Policy Committee for the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization.

Todd Picou

Ali Pouryousefi graduated from Gardner-Webb in 1966 with an associate's degree. He came to GWU in 1959, but left to study petroleum engineering at Louisiana State University. After several years in this field, though, Pouryousefi decided this was not to be his life's work. He returned to Gardner-Webb to finish his degree and to determine his next step in education. After graduation, he began his studies in pharmacy at the University of Georgia. He worked 43 years in retail pharmacies, retiring in 2012.

Ali Pouryousefi

Daniel Calhoun Johnson Jr. didn't let his deafness prevent him from following God's call to serve in ministry. He completed his Bachelor of Arts at Gardner-Webb in 1982, after learning about the University's new deaf program. He went on to New Orleans Theological Seminary for his Master of Divinity, completing his degree in 1985. He was awarded his Doctor of Ministry degree in 2008 at Samford University's Beeson School of Divinity in Homewood, Ala. He served as pastor for the Deaf and as a strategic church planter. Additionally, he operated as a field worker and missionary for the Baptist Association of Greater New Orleans and the Louisiana Baptist Convention. He passed away Jan. 16, 2011.

Daniel Calhoun Johnson Jr.

Since 1957, Gardner-Webb has recognized and honored more than 400 alumni and friends who have made significant contributions in their fields of service and in the communities in which they serve. The University established the Gallery of Distinguished Alumni in 1988.

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.