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### **Alumna Strives to be Like the Model Educators Who Influenced Her Life**

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# Alumna Strives to be Like the Model Educators Who Influenced Her Life

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Office of University  
Communications

June 26, 2017

## *Leslea Everett '17 Prepared to Teach Fourth Grade Science and Social Studies*

Leslea Everett '17 aspires to be the kind of teacher like the ones she had throughout school. "I firmly believe that good teachers encourage students to love learning," she affirmed. "I want to give students what I had growing up: great role models, someone who cares, and someone who believes in them."

The Laurel Hill, N.C., native found that the professors at Gardner-Webb University had similar values. "They knew my name and were willing to help me when I was confused, stuck, or unsure of my own ability," explained Everett, a fourth-grade science and social studies teacher in Hamlet, N.C. "Having small class sizes gave me the ability to ask questions and have them answered immediately."

The professors discussed techniques and strategies and the program gives plenty of opportunities for practice. "Each class was well thought out and geared toward a specific aspect of teaching," Everett reflected, "But nothing could have prepared me more than the clinical hours I spent each semester observing veteran teachers and having the opportunity to teach their students."

During student teaching, her favorite moments were seeing the students get excited about learning. She described a time that stood out above the rest: "As we were learning about fractions, I created a scavenger hunt for students to uncover fractions in the real world," Everett said. "Students were focused and on task throughout the class period and even went home and looked up more fractional facts to tell me the next day."

The most memorable and influential professor in her educational journey was Dr. Jason Parker, associate dean of the school of education and assistant professor. "Dr. Parker pushed us to be the best teachers and people we could be," Everett observed. "Every question posed to Dr. Parker was returned with a question. At first this drove me crazy, but I soon realized it was his way of letting me come to my own answer or opinion without him forcing his own thoughts on me. Dr. Parker consistently modeled excellent teaching."

Leslea Everett with her students

While professors like Parker contribute to Gardner-Webb's community atmosphere, the campus is a special place for many reasons, Everett affirmed. "What you will find at GWU is a place to call home," she concluded. "When you leave you will miss the one stoplight in town. You will miss the close group of friends that you form and chicken tender Saturdays in the cafe. You will miss talking with your professors about life after class, or talking to Dr. Frank Bonner (GWU President) while in line for ice cream in the cafe. Gardner-Webb will not just be your school, it will become your home and every time you are away, you will miss it."