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### GWU Celebrates 20th Anniversary of Event Showcasing Student Research

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# GWU Celebrates 20th Anniversary of Event Showcasing Student Research

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Office of University  
Communications

## *Drs. Les and Joyce Brown Honored as Founders of Annual Conference*

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—Describing his vision for the Life of the Scholar Multidisciplinary Conference (LOTS-MC) at Gardner-Webb University, Dr. Les Brown, GWU Professor Emeritus in Biology, quoted Nobel laureate and physicist Richard Feynman. The famous scientist once stated, “Study hard what interests you the most in the most undisciplined, irreverent and original manner possible.”

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Dr. Les Brown, GWU Professor Emeritus in Biology, and Dr. Joyce Compton Brown, GWU Professor Emerita in English, were honored for their contributions in starting the Life of the Scholar Multidisciplinary Conference 20 years ago. Photo courtesy of Hannah Anders

Brown and his wife, Dr. Joyce Compton Brown, GWU Professor Emerita in English, are considered the founders of the conference, established in 1997. “Feynman’s statement is a pretty good summation of what I hoped LOTS would become—an array of student-centered activity and programs,” Brown told an audience of faculty, students and guests at this year’s event on March 25. “A process that would expand the search for truth outside the formal classroom to the entire campus and beyond and would be a catalyst for life-long learning.”

To honor their contributions to the conference, the Browns were presented an award created for them, the Wellspring Award. In addition, friends of the Browns also gave a donation to the Joyce Compton Brown Lecture Fund in the couple’s honor. During his remarks, however, Brown gave credit to all those who supported his idea. “I am not the reason that LOTS came into existence and has survived these remarkable 20 years,” Brown observed. “I simply had an idea and called together a group of a few faculty members and some students who saw the value of what I dreamed about.”

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Best presentation prizes were presented to, from left, Mariah Q. Richardson, David Cole, Hannah Ray, Chris Beguhl, Josiah Parke, Madison-Ashley Wait, Christopher Jessup and Andrew Linzie. Not pictured is Christopher Lile. Photo courtesy of Hannah Anders

Many of those faculty members are still involved today and were on hand to help showcase original research conducted by more than 40 GWU students across a variety of disciplines. The event also featured presentations by students who participated in the GWU Undergraduate Summer Research Scholars program. The conference steering committee includes Dr. June Hobbs, Dr. Nancy Bottoms, Dr. Don Caudill, Dr. Tom Legrand, Dr. Bruce Moser, and Dr. Shea Stuart.

Undergraduate and graduate students presented research on such topics as small mammals, the Bible, music composition, human trafficking, gender parity and other subjects in social sciences, culture and language. Junior Sarah Grace Moxley illustrated her research on the book, “Exile According to Julia,” by creating a painting during her presentation. She was a little nervous about dripping paint, but was pleased with the questions people asked afterward. “I’m an education major, and I think it is really important to be able to make information accessible to people who might not have a lot of knowledge on a particular topic,” she offered. “It was encouraging that people wanted to learn more about human trafficking. I was glad that in some way this presentation was able to raise awareness.”

Moxley is one of 14 LOTS participants who will also present their research at the Alpha Chi Conference in Louisville, Ky., April 6-9. Alpha Chi is a national honor society for undergraduate juniors and seniors in all academic disciplines. Also presenting at LOTS were five students from the University’s Honors Program who discussed their research again at the Southern Regional Honors Council March 30-April 1 in Asheville, N.C.

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Sarah Grace Moxley, left, Mallory Moore, center, and Hannah Ray take questions from the audience after their presentation. Photo courtesy of Hannah Anders

The experience of conducting and presenting research opens doors for GWU students, whether they seek more education or a job in their field. “Opportunities to work with a professional mentor or collaborator through the Summer Undergraduate Research Scholars program and in other ways during the fall and spring semesters allow students to have the kind of professional guidance most young professionals would do anything for—and all of it before they even enter the professional world,” Dr. Hobbs asserted. “Our Summer Scholars and others are getting top graduate school placements and the opportunities for exciting and fulfilling careers.”

Best presentation prizes were presented to Christopher Lile, Christian Jessup, Hannah Ray, David Cole, Madison-Ashley Wait, Josiah Parke, Chris Beguhl and Andrew Linzie. Mariah Q. Richardson was presented the best presentation award for graduate research.

*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.*