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Office of University Communications

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Chandler Durham ('13) Hopes to Return to Alma Mater to Teach History

As he contemplates the future, Chandler Durham ('13) of Shelby, N.C., can see himself returning to Gardner-Webb. This time, as a professor of history. "In five years, maybe I will be sitting in my office in the history department preparing lectures or standing before a class presenting those lectures," he surmised.

The University has been a special place for him since he was a child, because his father graduated from the divinity school and the family lived just a few miles from campus. "I



quickly became immersed in GWU's culture," Durham reflected. "We regularly attended University-sponsored events and athletic games. This initial introduction influenced my later decision to attend GWU."

His father also influenced his choice about a field of study. "I have always been a lover of history. I was that kid who deeply loved visiting museums and national parks versus playing video games," Durham explained. "As the son of a Baptist minister, I was naturally drawn to religious studies. Therefore, I decided to major in religious studies and declare history as a minor."

While working on his degree at GWU, Durham officiated high school and men's college basketball. He inquired about becoming a referee after learning about the process from an NCAA basketball official. He still officiates games as he attends graduate school at UNC Charlotte and works two part-time jobs. He was ready to tackle the responsibilities of work and school because of his classes at Gardner-Webb.

"My undergraduate experience in the religious studies and history departments cultivated an academic foundation worth building upon at the graduate level," Durham observed. "I was more than prepared upon entering the Master of Arts program at UNC Charlotte, because I was already accustomed to critical thinking and research. The overall liberal arts curriculum (at GWU) also developed depth and versatility, which I have used to thrive in a highly competitive world."



He was also ahead of others in graduate school because of a course he took with GWU Assistant Professor of History Dr. Joseph Moore. "In Dr. Moore's course covering the trans-Atlantic slave trade, we were expected to find an original research topic and produce a subsequent term paper," Durham related. "This paper eventually evolved into a prospective thesis topic for graduate school. As my fellow graduate school colleagues struggled to find thesis topics during their first year, I was fortunate to already have mine thanks to Dr. Moore's course. My specialization examines the connection between the French Caribbean and Early America."

Since leaving GWU, he has a better appreciation for the University's close-knit community and Christian influence. "A student at GWU is more than a statistic," he affirmed. "The smaller atmosphere of the university influences the cultivation of strong relationships between students and professors. I formed some of my closest friendships on campus and I

regularly keep in touch with my professors. I was also able to find biblical perspectives within each course I encountered. This Christian view in the modern classroom offered constant reminders of God's nature and character.”