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Office of University
Communications

October 20, 2016

Six 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 2016 Homecoming activities Oct. 14-15. Six alums were recognized as new members of the prestigious gallery, including David McHam of Houston, Texas; Joseph DePriest of Cramerton, N.C.; Dr. Darlene Panvini, of Nashville, Tenn.; Jacqueline St. Clair of Haymarket, Va.; Verhonda Crawford of Chesnee, S.C.; and Virginia “Ginny” Moorefield of Raleigh, N.C., who was also chosen as the GWU Alumna of the Year.

Gardner-Webb honored outstanding members of the University family with induction into the GWU Gallery of Distinguished Alumni during 2016 Homecoming activities Oct. 14-15. The recipients were, from left, Joseph DePriest, Jacqueline St. Clair, Darlene Panvini, Verhonda Crawford, Ginny Moorefield (Alumna of the Year) and David McHam.

David McHam graduated from GWU in 1953 and served in the Marine Corps for three years. He completed his undergraduate work at Baylor University in Waco, Texas, and received his master’s degree from the Graduate School of Journalism at Columbia University in New York. After Columbia, he went to work at The Houston Post in 1961 and began a 54-year career of teaching at Texas colleges: Baylor, Southern Methodist University, the University of Texas at Arlington and the University of Houston.

Joseph DePriest is a 1965 GWU graduate with an Associate of Arts degree. He graduated from the journalism school at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1967 and went to work at The Shelby (N.C.) Star for six months before joining the U.S. Army. When he returned to The Star, he worked 20 years, covering communities in Cleveland and Gaston (N.C.) counties. He was hired at The Charlotte Observer and worked there for 30 years before he retired.

Dr. Darlene Panvini graduated in 1984 from GWU with a bachelor’s degree in biology. She earned her Ph.D. in 1991 from Vanderbilt University in Nashville. For 12 years, she was assistant director for the Center for Teaching at Vanderbilt University. In 2003, she joined the faculty at Belmont University in Nashville and has taught courses in Costa Rica, supervised over 40 undergraduate research projects and served as chair of the Department of Biology.

Jacqueline St. Clair completed her degree in May 2001 at GWU. She majored in psychology and minored in Spanish and religious education. She earned her Master of Social Work degree from Baylor University in Waco, Texas, and served as an adjunct professor at Liberty University in Lynchburg, Va., for eight years. She and her husband are co-owners of a franchise of Home Instead Senior Care, employing over 300 caregivers who provide over 22,000 hours of care monthly. Their passion is helping senior adults age in place.

Verhonda Crawford received her undergraduate degree in public relations from GWU in 2012 and is currently an MBA student at GWU. She is the youngest elected government official in the state of South Carolina, serving in her sixth year as councilwoman of her hometown of Chesnee. She has served her state by helping develop an Economic Development and Growth Grant and also helped the City of Chesnee receive a grant for city planning services. Crawford also works with a national non-profit organization to promote career mentorship and personal development for high school students. A former Miss South Carolina US International, she coaches cheerleading and pageant contestants, who have placed and won titles in multiple pageant systems.

Ginny Moorefield graduated in 2001 from GWU with a bachelor's degree in American Sign Language (ASL). She was a freelance ASL teacher for two years, before being told she could no longer teach because North Carolina did not have a teaching license for ASL. She joined members of the Deaf community and other stakeholders to write a bill that would recognize ASL as meeting graduation requirements for high school students entering college in the North Carolina University system. The bill was signed into law by Gov. Mike Easley in June 2007. She is a teacher at East Wake Academy in Zebulon and has presented seminars through the North Carolina American Sign Language Teacher's Association. She is also working with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction to create workshops for ASL teachers.

Since 1957, Gardner-Webb has recognized and honored 457 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 Boiling Springs, N.C., Gardner-Webb University's purpose is to advance the Kingdom of God through Christian higher education by preparing graduates for professional and personal success, instilling in them a deep commitment to service and leadership, and equipping them for well-rounded lives of lasting impact, Pro Deo et Humanitate (For God and Humanity).