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### **Gardner-Webb Offered Music Graduate Full Scale of Opportunities**

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# Gardner-Webb Offered Music Graduate Full Scale of Opportunities

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Office of University  
Communications

February 2, 2016

## *Bonnie Scruggs Feels GWU Faculty's Ongoing Support as she Teaches Music*

A band of musicians and instruments filled Bonnie Scruggs' childhood home near Gardner-Webb University. Her father, Johnny, was a high school drum major, and her mother, Pam, played piano and wrote songs. Earl Scruggs, the late legendary banjo musician from Cleveland County, N.C., was her third cousin. At the age of two, Bonnie started playing the piano herself.

"The instruments we had were my toys as a kid," she recalled. "I didn't play video games. We didn't have TV. My mom and dad knew instantly that I was a music kid."

When it came time to choose a home for her college education, Scruggs picked Gardner-Webb. From all of the colleges she explored, GWU and Professor of Music Dr. Patricia Sparti were the only music department that told her she could major with four concentrations. She planned to study piano and cello with emphases on education and performance with both instruments, which she teaches to young students, in addition to guitar.

While offering classes to children in her home, serving in music and youth ministries in her local church and joining with a variety of ensembles for performances in the surrounding community and beyond, Scruggs studied full time at Gardner-Webb. And she graduated with more than 200 hours of undergraduate coursework in three major concentrations.

"In all of my classes at Gardner-Webb, in and out of the music department, I had the opportunity to ask questions and be recognized as a curious learner," Scruggs shared. "I'm grateful for that freedom."

After completing her bachelor's degree, Scruggs became band director at Crest High School in Boiling Springs, where she leads the marching, concert and jazz bands, offers piano and guitar classes and assists with the Crest Middle School band program. She continues to direct her church choirs and give music lessons in a private studio.

"I do what I do in music because it's a God-given talent," Scruggs reflected. "I play at church on Sundays, and it's the way I worship and connect with God. Music is my 'me'

time. It's my spiritual time.”

Scruggs said the time she spent at Gardner-Webb offered her unique opportunities to learn and grow, as a musician, an educator and a person. “My experiences at the University helped prepare me for building strong relationships with my administration, colleagues and students,” she explained. “Gardner-Webb’s faculty and staff were great role models for how to inspire, support and care for students and, because of their influences, I have also been able to inspire my students to do great things.”

Among achievements she’s already reached with her many students, Scruggs performed with the Shelby High School orchestra at the renowned Strathmore Music Center in Maryland. And her Crest marching band has garnered numerous awards at competitions in western North Carolina. Through that success, she continues to feel the encouragement and guidance of her mentors from the GWU faculty.

“Many of my professors at Gardner-Webb have come to my classroom to work with my students and to concerts to show their support for me and my new program,” Scruggs shared. “For a fresh-out-of-college employee, it helps to have a support system to call upon when you do not know how to word a paper for a supervisor, need a reference for a master’s program, or have a question about life in general.

“That is what makes the Gardner-Webb music program so unique in comparison to other schools, because it is a lifetime of friends and family who will support you and help you reach the next level in your career. The music professors make sure each graduate has a plan, knows how to write a great resume and how to get back in touch if we need anything. Gardner-Webb does not shut the door behind you when you leave. It opens the doors to help you for the rest of your life.”