

Gardner-Webb University

## Digital Commons @ Gardner-Webb University

---

Gardner-Webb NewsCenter Archive

Gardner-Webb Publications

---

8-7-2012

### GWU Graduate Surprised by Military Sons During Ceremony

Office of University Communications

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.gardner-webb.edu/gardner-webb-newscenter-archive>

---

#### Recommended Citation

Office of University Communications, "GWU Graduate Surprised by Military Sons During Ceremony" (2012). *Gardner-Webb NewsCenter Archive*. 1816.  
<https://digitalcommons.gardner-webb.edu/gardner-webb-newscenter-archive/1816>

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Gardner-Webb Publications at Digital Commons @ Gardner-Webb University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Gardner-Webb NewsCenter Archive by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Gardner-Webb University. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@gardner-webb.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@gardner-webb.edu).

# GWU Graduate Surprised by Military Sons During Ceremony

 [webpublish.gardner-webb.edu/newscenter/gwu-graduate-surprised-by-military-sons-during-ceremony/](http://webpublish.gardner-webb.edu/newscenter/gwu-graduate-surprised-by-military-sons-during-ceremony/)

Office of University Communications

August 7, 2012

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C. – Dolly Wilson is accustomed to a long-distance relationship with her two adult sons. Both men have served in the U.S. Air Force for a combined 23 years (and most recently overseas). Wilson had already made peace with the fact that her sons would not be able to attend her graduation ceremony, held Monday afternoon on the campus of Gardner-Webb University.

Except that they did.

“I just don’t know if my feet will ever come back down to the ground,” said a beaming Wilson, who earned her Master of Science in Nursing. “It was one of the best moments of my life.”

Joshua Wilson, 36 and his younger brother Jeremiah Wilson, 29, arrived on campus in the early afternoon hours on Monday. Joshua flew in from Alaska, where he is stationed at Elmendorf Air Force Base in Anchorage. Jeremiah took a few days leave from his base at Davis-Monthan in Arizona. Both brothers brought their full military regalia and were whisked away to an office far away from the graduates.

University officials helped orchestrate the moment that would become forever etched in the memory of the woman who had raised four children as a single mom and adopted a fifth child. The men stepped onto the stage as their mother’s name was read. Her shoulders heaved with emotion as she saw them for the first time, dressed in their military dress blues, holding flowers and waiting for the moment they would embrace. The audience stood and cheered.

The Wilson brothers each recently returned from active tours of duty in Afghanistan and Iraq. Their sisters Sarah, 34, Rebecca, 32, and Makayla, 7, each live in North Carolina, but it has been more than three years since the entire family has been together in one place. This week is a chance to celebrate their mother’s accomplishments and a rare opportunity to simply spend time together.

Dolly was eight and a half months pregnant with Jeremiah when she graduated with her Associate of Nursing degree from Western Piedmont Community College in 1984. Her career has spanned from a float nurse at Valdese General Hospital to collaborating in the creation of Frye Infusion Care. She now works for Blue Ridge Health Care where she developed the Patient Navigator Program, which guides and educates breast cancer patients from diagnosis through various services.

“My mom sacrificed for us, and we never went without,” said Joshua. “She is an amazing woman, an amazing mother, and today, she accomplishes one more thing, her Master of Science in Nursing. There’s none greater.”



Watch Video At: <https://youtu.be/KmZKPAt5io>