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CAMPUS NEWS

Gardner-Webb Community Remembers the Lives of Rollins Tita and Dr. Sharon Creed-Hall

BY OFFICE OF UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS ON FEBRUARY 24, 2021



Service of Prayer and Remembrance will be Held Wednesday, Feb. 24

The Gardner-Webb University community lost two of its own this week—Freshman Student-Athlete Rollins Tita and Assistant Professor of Nursing Dr. Sharon Creed-Hall. We pause to remember and celebrate their lives and contributions to the campus family.

On Wednesday, Feb. 24 at 4:30 p.m., a brief Service of Prayer and Remembrance for Tita and Creed-Hall will take place on the lawn beside the Tucker Student Center (between the Carillon/Bell Tower and the Mauney parking lot). Face coverings/masks are required and attendees are asked to observe social distancing.

Tracy Jessup, vice president for Christian Life and Service and senior minister to the University offers these words of encouragement: "It is difficult to put into words the deep sense of loss our University has experienced in the passing of Rollins and Dr. Hall, and our prayers for their loved ones continue. True to our Christian mission and identity, we draw strength from the hope that is ours in Christ, who conquered death. Gardner-Webb University is a close-knit community of faith and learning. We rejoice together and we weep together. And, by God's grace, we will get through this together."

William Downs, president of Gardner-Webb University, expressed condolences on behalf of GWU's faculty, staff, and students: "We are all so profoundly saddened by these two deaths, and our hearts break for the family members, friends, teammates, and colleagues who grieve. We should now dedicate ourselves to making the memories of Rollins and Sharon lasting ones, and we will offer our thanks to God for the positive legacies they both leave behind."

Rollins Tita



(Center photo and photo at right courtesy of Jeff Hurndon Photography, McDonough, Ga.)

Rollins Tita, a freshman exercise science major who was a member of the developmental basketball team, was killed in an automobile accident on Sunday, Feb. 21. Tita was from McDonough, Ga., where he graduated from Eagle's Landing Christian Academy in 2020. According to an article by Will Hammock in the [Henry Herald](#) newspaper, the 6-foot-1 guard, who moved to the U.S. from Cameroon, played at Creekside Christian before finishing his career at Eagle's Landing.

Burton Uwarow was Tita's basketball coach and principal at Creekside Christian. Tita played on Creekside Christian's 2015 state championship team and 2016 state runner-up team. Uwarow said his program's philosophy was "how you do small things is how you do all things."

"Rollins grew into a young man that bought into that philosophy; he was a bright, conscientious student and became an extremely hard worker on the basketball court," Uwarow said in the article. "His work ethic was evident to everyone in both the classroom and the gym. We used to talk about the unseen hours and doing the unrequired work and he became the embodiment of that philosophy. Rollins was extremely well-mannered and respectful and loved by all who knew him."

Dr. Shea Stuart, professor of English, had Tita in her English Composition class. She said he was an interesting writer, who worked hard, "helped his classmates, and clearly thought about the world and what he wanted his place in it to be. "The pieces he turned in for comp often demonstrated his inquisitiveness and his excitement to experience the world and his future," she said. "This quote is from an adventure report he wrote after visiting the Broad River: 'Now that I've seen with my own eyes I have a new urge to explore the world at the right time. I want to explore different ecosystems, wildlife and etc. There's so much more to the world than what we know, so why not find out and see for ourselves. There is no better artist than God, why not experience his Gallery?'"

Head Men's Basketball Coach Tim Craft thanked the University family on behalf of the team. "We are deeply saddened by the death of Rollins," he shared. "We ask for your prayers for his family and friends as they grieve. We are doing our best to comfort our players on both of our teams. Many of them were very close to Rollins, and they are shocked and saddened by this tragedy. We would like to thank Tracy Jessup, Leslie Villarose (Dean of Students) and the many others on our campus who have shown great care and concern for our student-athletes during this time."

Dr. Sharon Creed-Hall, DNP, RN



Dr. Sharon Creed-Hall received her Doctor of Nursing Practice from Gardner-Webb in 2017.

Dr. Sharon Creed-Hall, assistant professor in nursing and simulation coordinator, passed away Monday, Feb. 22, from complications due to COVID-19.

She received her ADN from Patrick Henry Community College, her BSN from Gardner-Webb University, her MSN from Indiana Wesleyan University and her DNP from Gardner-Webb.

Creed-Hall has been an integral part of the Hunt School of Nursing (HSON) family for a decade. She led her students with a joy and passion that is unmatched. She was always available to students, going above and beyond what was required of her. She progressed the simulation labs with her enthusiasm for training future nurses in a hands-on setting. She was a member of the Society for Simulation in Healthcare, International Nursing Association for Clinical Simulation and Learning (INASL) and North Carolina Nursing Association.

Members of the HSON faculty collaborated to share the following thoughts about their friend and colleague. "Sharon was the definition of a 'shining light'—she was always smiling, laughing, and leading our students toward Christ. She had a great deal of enthusiasm and passion for the success of our simulation lab experiences. The lab is the place where students can learn, receive feedback, and improve their nursing care in preparation for the clinical setting. It was Sharon's desire for all students to be compassionate, caring, and courageous. Her legacy is evident in all of the nurses she trained and touched. This is not only a loss for the HSON, but for Gardner-Webb University, and the nursing profession as a whole."

The HSON family appreciates all of the calls, texts, cards, and social media posts as they navigate this difficult loss. Director Tracy Arnold, speaking on behalf of the entire faculty and staff, said, "We covet your continued prayers of comfort and peace. Although we are saddened and grieving, Sharon would want us to celebrate her life well-lived by continuing to impact and improve our healthcare system through the education of compassionate and caring #bulldognurses."

Dr. Nicole Waters, associate provost for the College of Health Sciences, said Creed-Hall possessed and displayed the core values of caring, integrity, and excellence in her role daily. Waters also noted that the sign by Creed-Hall's office door reflects her heart: "Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will." (Romans 12:1-2)

"We all have received her support, unconditional love, and prayers; our lives are better because we knew and journeyed life alongside her," she asserted. "She encouraged others to look at the little things and to do all that they could to help as many as possible with the abilities God had given them. Her servant heart, joyous personality, infectious smile, and love for the Lord will forever be stamped on the Hunt School of Nursing. May God be the Glory for Her Joy Story!"

Creed-Hall loved gardening and plants and shared her love with several of the HSON faculty and staff. They hope to incorporate some new flowers into the courtyard at the College of Health Sciences in her memory.

Creed-Hall's family has established the Dr. Sharon Creed-Hall Hunt School of Nursing Memorial Scholarship at GWU. Donations can be mailed directly to Office of Advancement, PO Box 997, Boiling Springs NC 28017 ATTN: Dr. Hall Scholarship or simply text the key word "Sharon" to (864) 529-9781 and follow the link to give online. The online giving link is through her church, Eden Wesleyan, where her husband, Richard is the pastor, but all funds will go directly to the scholarship.

The GWU Counseling Center and the Office of Christian Life and Service are available to students needing assistance. Office hours are Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. At other times, please note the On-Call number for the Counseling Center is 704-406-2599.

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