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### Contributions of Dr. Roger Gaddis Remembered by the Gardner-Webb Community

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FAITH & SERVICE

# Contributions of Dr. Roger Gaddis Remembered by the Gardner-Webb Community

BY OFFICE OF UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS ON AUGUST 18, 2020

## Gaddis, Praised for his Dedication to Students and Colleagues, Passed Away on Aug. 14, 2020

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—Dr. Roger Gaddis, professor emeritus of psychology, who served Gardner-Webb University from 1974 to 2011, passed away Aug. 14, 2020, in Snellville, Ga. Gaddis was chair of the Department of Psychology for 17 years and managed the development of graduate programs in psychology. He was also instrumental in the creation of GOAL (Greater Opportunities for Adult Learners—now known as the Degree Completion Program).

At his retirement in 2011, his colleague Dr. Frieda Brown said he was “the architect” of Gardner-Webb’s School of Psychology and Counseling. Brown also stated that Gaddis was leaving behind “students who are making a difference in others’ lives, colleagues who are grateful that his value system defined them, a school that is better for his having served it, and friends who remember his loving support and commitment to excellence.”

Gaddis was instrumental in hiring Dr. David M. Carscaddon, current dean of the GWU School of Psychology and Counseling. “A man of grace and dignity, Roger was a gentleman in the highest sense of the word and made everyone who worked for him feel included and vital to the mission of the department,” noted Carscaddon, who worked with Gaddis for 21 years. “I know that I am a better person to have known and worked with Dr. Roger Gaddis. I was blessed to know him and I will miss him greatly.”

Carscaddon added that Gaddis promoted a strong collaborative view of education and would team up with members of other departments to create thought-provoking courses and lectures. He was also a vital resource for other departments on campus. “For example, he was an important committee member of the first accreditation cycle for the College of Education, helping that school write a comprehensive and coherent model of program delivery and pedagogy,” Carscaddon asserted. “He was referred to by his colleagues as a ‘wordsmith’ for his wonderful ability to create written documents that excelled in polished phrases and nuanced meaning.”

Gaddis earned his bachelor’s degree in English from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, his master’s degree in English from the University of Tennessee at Knoxville, and his Ph.D. in educational psychology from the University of South Carolina in Columbia. Prior to joining the faculty at Gardner-Webb, he worked as an instructor of English at both the University of Tennessee and Winthrop University, as well as an instructor of psychology at both the University of South Carolina and Gaston College.



▲ Roger Gaddis poses with his wife and daughter in 2011 when he retired from Gardner-Webb.

Among his proudest accomplishments at Gardner-Webb was participating in the planning stages, the implementation, and the administration of the GOAL program. The program, developed and implemented in the late 1970s, made it possible for many adult learners to complete their degrees. He enjoyed teaching GOAL classes, because many of the students demonstrated a firm dedication to their educational aspirations. Further, GOAL alumni would often express their appreciation to Gaddis for his guidance and his commitment to the program. Gaddis also coordinated the Human Services program until 2010.

In a Facebook page for Gardner-Webb alumni and friends, former students shared their memories. They described Gaddis as a “wonderful person,” “beautiful person,” “one of the best,” and “one of my favorites.” One student remembered that Gaddis always took a picture of his classes, saying that when they became famous, he would have the picture to prove that he taught them. “He was a great teacher and friend,” he said. “Heaven has a wonderful citizen and I’m looking forward to seeing him again one day.”

Beyond the classroom, Gaddis was proud to have achieved three separate fellowships from the National Science Foundation Endowment. He was among 10 professors chosen each year out of multiple applicants nationwide to study together during the summer months. He also traveled the country as a Gardner-Webb ambassador, and he presented professional papers at various conferences and colleges.

In addition to his educational achievements, he served on the board of directors for Broughton Hospital in Morganton, N.C., and Cleveland County Mental Health and Pathways in Shelby, N.C. When he retired from Gardner-Webb, Gaddis said he wanted to be remembered by the Gardner-Webb community as one who embodies the University’s commitment to Christian faith in the forms of selfless service, moral action, and treatment of all people with respect and dignity.

As a lifelong learner, Gaddis sought to instill in his students an enthusiasm for knowledge and experience that could positively impact the ever-changing world. He fostered intellectual growth within classrooms, and he modeled for students the importance of serving others through his advocacy efforts on behalf of the mental health community. For his work on campus and in the community, he received The President’s Award for Community Engagement in 2006-07.

Gaddis was also known by many to be a formidable opponent on the Gardner-Webb racquetball courts, and defeated many unsuspecting college students throughout the years. With each win, he always shared his trademark smile and thanked the opponent for the joy of competition. “Besides being a hardworking colleague, Gaddis also taught me the importance of play,” Carscaddon related. “He loved playing all manner of games and played hard and with great enjoyment. He taught me and few other colleagues how to play racquetball and would invite us to play in early hours of the day. If in the course of playing a few games someone asked what time it was, Roger would always reply, ‘Oh it’s early,’ and he would often be heard saying, ‘Let’s play one more.’”

Gaddis and his wife, Susan Avery Woodall, were married in 1968. Susan earned her Master of Arts in Education at Gardner-Webb. The couple have two children, Dr. David B. Gaddis and the Rev. Deborah Gaddis Reeves, who earned her Master of Arts in Divinity at Gardner-Webb. The family is planning a celebration of life service in Boiling Springs once the coronavirus is better controlled and it is safe to gather.

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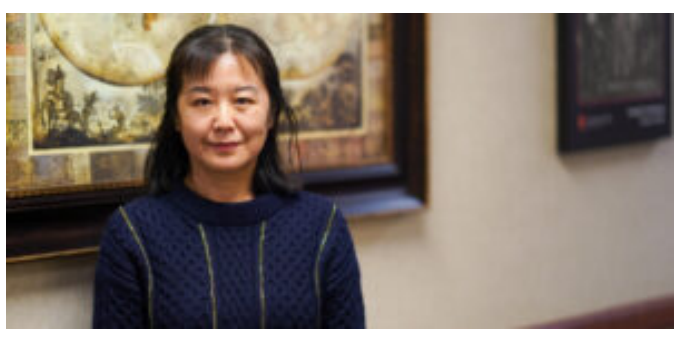
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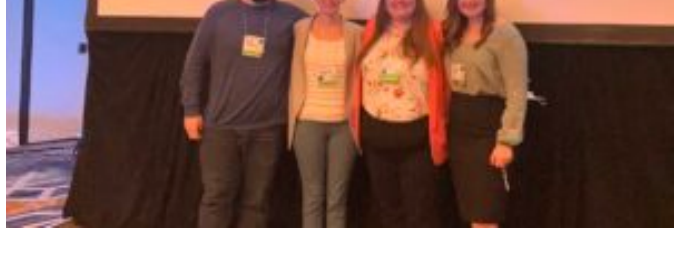


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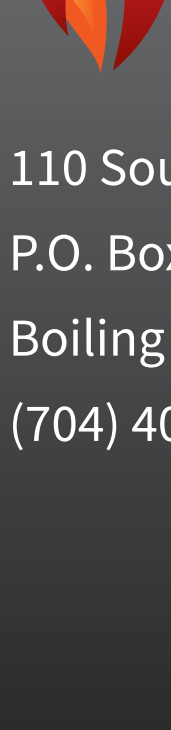
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