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### **Alumna Opens Successful Fitness Training Business During Pandemic**

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BLACK HISTORY MONTH

# Alumna Opens Successful Fitness Training Business During Pandemic

BY OFFICE OF UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS ON FEBRUARY 19, 2021



## Gardner-Webb Prepared Tia Howell, '19, with Knowledge and Professional Skills



*To our readers: In celebration of Black History Month during February, Gardner-Webb University will introduce you to alumni who are making a difference in the world around them. Through their jobs and creative passions, these alumni are inspiring others to achieve their dreams.*

After graduating from Gardner-Webb University in 2019 with a degree in exercise science, Tia Howell felt empowered to open her own business, Lift with Tia, in Gastonia, N.C. She incorporated everything she learned from the health and wellness topics in her major to the career readiness lessons provided by the GWU Center for Personal and Professional Development.

"I started this business and opened in January 2020, because I wanted to have a real impact on others and their health," stated Howell, who lives in Mount Holly, N.C. "I am so passionate about health and wellness, and studying exercise science allowed me to set myself apart in my field, so I can make a difference while being equipped with the right tools. Personal training felt like the perfect thing to do after college, because I've always leaned towards entrepreneurship, and I could impact others in a manner that fully aligned with my values and belief system."

Shortly after she opened, COVID-19 came to America, and businesses were asked to close and modify. Howell changed her focus to private online coaching, offering online programs and other wellness resources. She also created an online challenge group for women. Personal, one-on-one training was conducted in a private room, wearing masks and practicing social distancing.



Tia Howell, photo by Shaded Media LLC

No matter the format, Howell maintained her integrated approach to fitness. "So many people neglect their wellness—I'm talking mind, body, and soul," Howell observed. "My coaching style in my business takes a holistic, evidence-based approach to helping everyone I work with truly elevate their bodies from the inside out with real methods and education."

Howell believes the comprehensive education she received at Gardner-Webb equipped her to adapt to the changes caused by the pandemic. "There were numerous career development opportunities and assignments given by the school and the Exercise Science Department," she affirmed. "These opportunities made a real difference in how well I've operated in professional settings after graduating."

Further, Gardner-Webb's small class sizes and community atmosphere encouraged her success. "The professors are more involved, know everyone's name, and can spread their energy around to make sure every student succeeds," Howell related. "The Exercise Science Department was truly amazing for pushing each and every student to do nothing less than their best and to prepare as much as possible for life after undergrad."

She concluded, "The research, organizational, and professional skills I have now are thanks to my time as a Gardner-Webb student. Commitment to education, professionalism, and service to others are all traits I'll carry with me as a Gardner-Webb alumna."

*Located in the North Carolina foothills, Gardner-Webb University is a private, Christian, liberal arts university. Gardner-Webb emphasizes a strong student-centered experience and rigorous academics to prepare students to become effective leaders within the global community. Ignite your future at Gardner-Webb.edu.*

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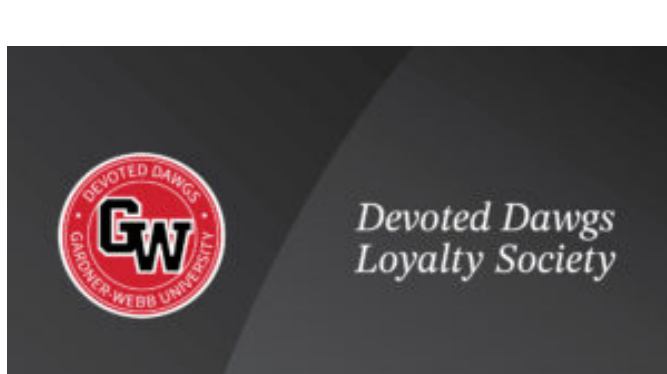
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