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ALUMNI

GWU Will Rededicate Hamrick Hall During Its First Memorial Day Service on May 28

BY OFFICE OF UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS ON MAY 25, 2021



Public Invited to Remember Those From the GWU Community Who Died in Military Service

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—Gardner-Webb University will hold its first Memorial Day Prayer Service on Friday, May 28, in front of E.B. Hamrick Memorial Hall to remember those from the GWU community and others who have died in military service to their country. Tracy Jessup, vice president for Christian Life and Service and senior minister to the University, will lead the event, which begins at 11:30 a.m.

“As we were planning the Memorial Day prayer service, we started researching which Gardner-Webb alumni paid the ultimate sacrifice,” shared Nate Evans, vice president of Advancement. “We found out that Hamrick Memorial Hall was previously dedicated to those Gardner Webb students/alumni who died in World War I. We decided to rededicate the space to them and to all of those from the Gardner-Webb community who have died in service to their country.”

In 1925, the building was named Memorial Hall and dedicated to honor individuals from Cleveland and Rutherford Counties who died while serving in World War I, 1914-1918. The three who had been students at Boiling Springs High School, now GWU, were Ira Alberto Crabtree, William Norwood Huggins and Copher Meade Ewing.



In 1943, the Gardner-Webb Board of Trustees voted to name the building E.B. Hamrick Memorial Hall in honor of Elijah Bly Hamrick. He was a local merchant, who gave financial help, encouragement and advice to Gardner-Webb officials through the years. He was the college's first financial administrator, served as a trustee and gave land for the development of campus. He also served on numerous committees of the school.

During the service on May 28, E.B. Hamrick Memorial Hall will be rededicated to honor the memory of the three men recognized in 1925 along with the following alumni:

- Lt. Col. William Barkley Jr., class of 1975, who gave his life, along with his co-pilot and crew, while test flying a helicopter near the Marine Corps Air Station, Quantico, Va., on May 19, 1993. Barkley was commissioned as an officer in the Marine Corps after graduation and went to the Naval Flight School in Pensacola, Fla., where he trained in fixed wing and rotary wing aircraft. After flight school, he was assigned to the Second Marine Airwing where he primarily flew a CH-53 Sea Stallion Transport/Cargo Helicopter. His last assignment was with HMX-1, the Marine Corps Presidential Squadron. He was one of a select few pilots who flew the President of the United States, and he flew both President George H. W. Bush and President William J. Clinton aboard Marine One.
- US Army Green Beret, Staff Sgt. Jerry Gass, class of 2003, who served his country as a member of Company C, 1st Battalion, 3rd Special Forces Group and was stationed at Fort Bragg in Fayetteville, N.C. He passed away on Aug. 3, 2014, following a non-combat incident while on patrol, according to the U.S. Department of Defense. He was posthumously awarded his second Bronze Star Medal and the Meritorious Service Medal.

To commemorate the occasion, a plaque will be placed at the entrance to E.B. Hamrick Memorial Hall.

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.

