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Books Inspire Gardner-Webb Alumna to Rise Above Poverty, Earn Doctorate

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GRADUATE PROGRAMS

Books Inspire Gardner-Webb Alumna to Rise Above Poverty, Earn Doctorate

BY OFFICE OF UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS ON JANUARY 12, 2022



▲ Dr. Mabel E. Lamprea receives the Darlene J. Gravett Citizen Scholar Award from GWU President Dr. William Downs.

A Role Model for her Students, Dr. Mabel E. Lamprea, '20, Wins Gravett Award for Research

A native of Colombia, South America, Dr. Mabel Eliana Lamprea grew up with extended family—the oldest of 23 grandchildren. Her parents barely finished elementary school but gave her a love for reading and learning. She began a journey that years later brought her to Gardner-Webb University, where she earned a Doctor of Education in Curriculum and Instruction and received the Darlene J. Gravett Citizen Scholar Award. The award is given to a graduate student for scholarly research that has the potential to make an improvement to society. It is named in honor of Dr. Darlene J. Gravett, long-time dean of the GWU Graduate School and Associate Provost Emerita.

She chose Gardner-Webb's doctoral program because the curriculum was rigorous and varied. "I loved the chance to design projects for my school community and district while I was taking classes," she noted. "I gained the language and knowledge necessary to talk about diverse topics and face different situations in education."

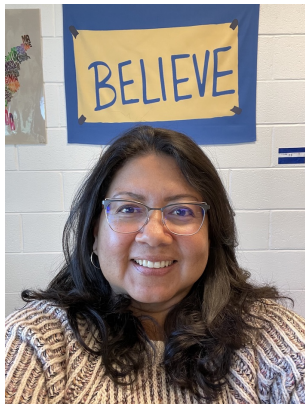


▲ Dr. Mabel Lamprea receives her hood at the GWU Commencement Ceremony.

Lamprea's first introduction to teaching was helping her younger brothers and cousins with their homework. She learned to read at age 4 and when she was older became responsible for household chores and taking care of the younger ones. "My father has always been an avid reader, and he collected lots of different kinds of books while I was little," she reflected. "I saw him reading all night long too many times, and I was curious about what he found in those books. Thus, my maternal grandmother decided to teach me to read, although she never finished second grade."

The books opened new worlds to her and allowed her to dream of a better life. She is the first child in her family to go to college, earning her bachelor's degree in language teaching at the Universidad Industrial de Santander (UIS) in her hometown, Bucaramanga. She also did a specialization in English teaching there before she started working for the UIS Languages Institute and the Universidad de Santander (UDES).

In 2005, she decided to participate in a yearlong exchange program that allowed her to teach and earn her graduate degree in the United States. The cohort of international teachers completed their master's degrees in educational leadership at Virginia Commonwealth University. She taught Spanish and English as a Second Language (ESL) in an inner-city middle school. At the end of the year, the principal and ESL/World Languages Director were so impressed with her ability and technological skills, they asked her to stay. Until that moment, she had planned to return to Colombia.



After deciding to stay in America, she and her daughter started working to obtain citizenship. One barrier has been the cost of the application, but the money she received from the Gravett award helped with that. She applied and waits to receive information about taking the citizenship test and other requirements. In the meantime, Lamprea and her daughter have U.S. residency (also known as Green Cards).

Her experiences in Colombia and as an immigrant in America help her relate to her students' circumstances. After seeing so many multilingual/English learners struggle in school or drop out, Lamprea searched for ways to motivate them to stay engaged at school. In her [dissertation research \(https://digitalcommons.gardner-webb.edu/education-dissertations/12/\)](https://digitalcommons.gardner-webb.edu/education-dissertations/12/) for Gardner-Webb, Lamprea studied English learner instruction and teacher preparation to identify missing elements that promoted academic resilience. She discovered that a crucial missing piece was educating students and teachers in emotional intelligence. Lamprea found that people who learn to recognize and regulate their emotions have better health and stronger relationships. They are better learners, more effective decision-makers, and more efficient and productive workers and citizens.



▲ Dr. Mabel Lamprea, left, poses with the Latino Club at her school.

Lamprea presented her research at the Beyond Boundaries conference at Indiana University, and she is preparing her work for publication. She is an English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) teacher at Charles J. Colgan Sr. High School in Manassas, Va. Lamprea leads the school's Equity Committee and

is training to become a Culturally Aware and Responsive Educator (C.A.R.E.) Lead Facilitator for the school district.

While teaching ESOL, her overall goal is to set an example for the next generation. “I am a child of poverty who lived through sexual abuse, domestic violence, breast cancer, and racism as a Latina; but above all, I am a proud single mother, a dreamer and a survivor, and a woman of color who understands the value of education, honest hard work, and focused goal setting,” she avowed. “I want to demonstrate to my children and students that we can dream big and change our lives and our families’ futures if we are willing to give our 99 percent of perspiration in search of that 1 percent of inspiration. We just need to tirelessly and intentionally explore our potential, work on our weaknesses, and believe in ourselves.”

Gardner-Webb University is North Carolina’s recognized leader in private, Christian higher education. A Carnegie-Classified Doctoral/Professional University, GWU is home to six professional schools, 14 academic departments, more than 80 undergraduate and graduate majors, and a world-class faculty. Located on a beautiful 225-acre campus in Boiling Springs, N.C., Gardner-Webb prepares graduates to impact their chosen professions, equips them with the skills to advance the frontiers of knowledge, and inspires them to make a positive and lasting difference in the lives of others. Ignite your future at Gardner-Webb.edu.