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Gardner-Webb Hosts Memorial Day Prayer Service on May 27

BY OFFICE OF UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS ON MAY 17, 2022



N.C. Senator Ted Alexander is Guest Speaker for Event to Remember Fallen Soldiers

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—Gardner-Webb University will observe Memorial Day on Friday, May 27, at 11:30 a.m. with a prayer service in front of E.B. Hamrick Memorial Hall on Quinn Circle. The guest speaker for the program is N.C. District 44 Senator Ted Alexander, of Shelby, N.C. The public is welcome to attend this event to remember those who lost their lives in service to the country.

Gardner-Webb President Dr. William Downs, who grew up in a family of military historians, initiated the University's annual celebration in 2021. "Sacrifice, honor, and heroism are all words that I think about each Memorial Day," reflected Downs. "Our gratitude to America's lost patriots is profound, our memory of them is enduring, and our debt to them is forever. I am proud that Gardner-Webb for a second year in a row will embrace the solemn responsibility of paying tribute to those who died so that we might live."



▲ Gardner-Webb President Dr. William Downs initiated the University's annual Memorial Day observance in 2021.

Downs will introduce Alexander, who was elected to the N.C. Senate in 2019. The program includes the presentation of colors, a welcome by Vice President for Advancement Nate Evans, and the invocation by Vice President for Christian Life and Service and Senior Minister to the University Tracy Jessup. Associate Vice President of Marketing Wilson Brooks, who has played the trumpet for 42 years, will begin the service by playing the National Anthem.

Jessup will lead a responsive reading that features passages from the Psalms. "The responsive reading calls us to affirm that our ultimate hope is in the Lord and we take great comfort in God's strength in us and his presence with us," Jessup remarked. "It is important for us as a University to observe Memorial Day as it pays tribute to the sacrifice of those who gave their lives to protect the ideals on which our country was founded."



▲ N.C. Senator Ted Alexander

After the responsive reading, Alexander will bring remarks. A native North Carolinian, born and raised in Morganton, Alexander also served as mayor of Shelby, N.C., from 2003 to 2011 and previously served for nearly 14 years as the executive director for the Uptown Shelby Association's Main Street

revitalization program. He has been married for 30 years to Patti, and they have two children: Will, who lives and works in Asheville, and Christina, who is an alumna of Gardner-Webb.

Alexander graduated from UNC-Charlotte with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science. He received his master's degree in historic preservation from Cornell University. He has served on the UNCC Alumni Association and currently sits on the UNC-Charlotte Foundation Board. In 2006, he was selected as a Distinguished Alumni of UNC-Charlotte.

Following Alexander, Associate Dean of the Library and University Archivist Dr. Natalie Bishop will lead a remembrance of the fallen. Silence will be observed as the bell tolls 21 times, the highest military honor to those who died defending freedom and democracy.

The program will conclude with Brooks playing Taps, closing remarks from Downs, and the benediction by Director of Alumni Relations Leah Clevenger.

In case of inclement weather, the service will be held in Dover Chapel.

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.