

ATHLETICS

Gardner-Webb Officials and Supporters Break Ground on Masters-Melton Indoor Baseball Facility

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New Building Offers Place Where Team Can Practice in Any Weather

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—While celebrating Gardner-Webb’s rich past, Homecoming festivities also looked ahead to the University’s bright future. The groundbreaking ceremony for the Masters-Melton Indoor Baseball Facility accomplished both.

The new facility recognizes a longtime university supporter and at the same time improves the GWU Baseball Program for future student-athletes. The building is named in part for Bill Masters, who passed away on June 25, 2022. Masters not only gave the lead gift for this facility, but his legacy of giving spanned several decades and energized the men’s baseball program. With his gift, Masters also wanted the building named in honor of his longtime special friend, Patsy Melton Willis.

The remaining funds to complete the project were donated by generous friends, alumni and parents on Double Dawg Day and in recent weeks. The facility offers space where Gardner-Webb’s baseball players can continue to practice in any weather with a weight room, multi-functional turf area that allows for hitting, pitching and fielding practice, nutrition center, player lounge, and office.



Vice President for Advancement Nate Evans began the ceremony by welcoming everyone and recognizing special guests. “We’re so excited for this monumental day,” Evans stated. “This facility will enhance and improve our baseball program for future student-athletes and will be ready for the spring season.”

Evans also acknowledged GWU Board of Trustees member, Dr. Phil Turner and his family for providing the funds for a covered bullpen in the baseball stadium.

Gardner-Webb President Dr. William Downs added his appreciation and excitement for everyone who supports GWU Baseball and made the Masters-Melton Indoor Baseball Facility a reality. “This new facility is going to improve the competitiveness of our baseball program, it’s going to be an asset to our coaches as they recruit new student-athletes, and it’s going to be an asset as we work to keep our players here for four years. Ultimately, it’s about our players and the guys who will follow them. They’ll be better baseball players as a result of this new building, and when they graduate from GWU they’ll be better men because of this coaching staff and this special community.”

The ceremony also recognized GWU baseball alumnus, Brook Collins, who contributed funds for the weight room in the new facility. Collins named the room in memory of his former coach, Clyde Miller. Miller was head coach of the Gardner-Webb baseball program for 13 seasons, from 1990 through 2002. Miller also served as an assistant director of Athletics until his passing in 2005.

Head Baseball Coach Jim Chester remarked, “Today is a historic day for Gardner-Webb Baseball! This facility is a game-changer for our program. This was a team effort by many members of our campus, alumni, friends, and family of Gardner-Webb Baseball. I know Bill Masters is smiling down on us knowing that he continues to make an impact in our student-athletes’ lives.”

Associate Vice President for Advancement Aaron Hinton gave the prayer of dedication before the actual groundbreaking. Participating in the historic event were Evans, Patsy Melton Willis, Coach Chester, Board of Trustees Chair Gary Smith, President Downs, and Vice President and Director of Athletics Dr. Andrew Goodrich.

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.



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