

**BULLDOG PROFILES**

## Gardner-Webb Senior, First in her Family to Attend College, Pursues Exercise Science Degree

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- ▲ Makenzie B. Wright, left, poses with some of the staff in the Acute Care Therapy Department at UNC Blue Ridge in Morganton, where she completed her internship and service project.

### Makenzie Beasley Wright Thankful for Donors who Helped Provide her Scholarships

In 2017, before Makenzie Beasley Wright even considered attending Gardner-Webb University, she was in a head-on automobile collision with a cement truck. Through no fault of her own, the crash caused multiple fractures in her femur, pelvis and knee cap, a broken wrist and a collapsed lung. She spent nearly three months in the hospital learning how to walk again. During the times of discouragement, Wright's physical therapy assistant (PTA) refused to let her quit.

"My therapist pushed me when I felt like I couldn't do or go anymore," Wright described. "I thought my life was over, and that I could not continue. She helped me see the future again and helped me achieve my goals. She advocated for me when no one else would."

Before the wreck, Wright was undecided about her future career. Because of the key role her PTA played in her healing, she decided to pursue a degree that would allow her to inspire others in the same way. Wright graduates in May from GWU with a bachelor's in exercise science and will begin her master's in strength and conditioning.

Wright, who has two associate degrees in science and art from Catawba Valley Community College, chose to transfer to the undergraduate program at Gardner-Webb. She liked the smaller class sizes and

close-knit Christian community as well as the opportunities for one-on-one time with professors and mentors in her field of study.



- ▲ Makenzie B. Wright, right, and her mentor celebrate receiving the grant, which was used to purchase a special walker for the Acute Care Therapy Department at UNC Blue Ridge in Morganton, N.C.

After deciding that GWU was the best place for her, she received scholarships provided by the Annual Fund to help with her tuition. “I am extremely grateful to those who donated to make those funds available to me,” Wright asserted. “My internship, along with my GWU experience, have allowed me to learn and grow more than I could imagine was possible.”

On Double Dawg Day, April 20, donors can give to the Annual Fund to support more students like Wright. Along with each gift on this special day, supporters can take advantage of matching opportunities that could double the impact of their giving.

“The Gardner-Webb community is exactly where I need to be,” Wright stated. “Being the first person in my family to pursue and obtain a college degree, I feel joyful and blessed to be able to be a student of GWU.”



▲ EVA support walker from  
activeforever.com

She is already making a difference for patients in rehabilitation. During her internship in the Acute Care Therapy Department at UNC Blue Ridge in Morganton, N.C., she completed a Granting HOPE Application. Her mentor, Physical Therapist Shea Rhoney, helped her write the application for an EVA Support Walker, which was approved. “These walkers can be beneficial to patients who have difficulty standing in an upright positioning, which can hinder their overall gait,” Wright explained. “The EVA can provide more support to patients by providing places for forearm and elbow support compared to regular walkers that rely on tactile support.”

Additionally, Wright was energized and inspired by the experience of working directly with patients. “I was able to interact and help others jump start their recovery, ranging from orthopedics to neurological issues, while expanding the knowledge I gained from my courses at GWU,” Wright affirmed. “This internship provided me with more affirmation that my pursuit in a career in Physical Therapy is where I am supposed to be. Especially, as I have personally experienced how much one person can change your life completely.”

## Double Dawg Day



In addition to supporting scholarships through the Annual Fund, donors can also choose the people, programs and causes they want to support across the GWU campus. Some other options include:

- University Priority Fund, which supports the greatest needs of the University.
- School/College Priority Fund, which provides the dean with the ability to respond quickly to emerging opportunities, transform the student experience and strengthen operational capacity.
- The University’s 22 athletic teams.

Individuals can also sign up to be a Social Media Ambassadors and share their love for Gardner-Webb on all of their social media channels. Register [here \(https://doubledawgday.gardner-webb.edu/giving-day/66935\)](https://doubledawgday.gardner-webb.edu/giving-day/66935) by March 30 to be an ambassador and receive an ambassador kit in the mail. By using #DoubleDawgDay, individuals can show their support and promote the day of giving. For more information, visit the [FAQ \(https://doubledawgday.gardner-webb.edu/giving-day/66935/faq\)](https://doubledawgday.gardner-webb.edu/giving-day/66935/faq) page.

**Learn more about the Department of Exercise Science.**



