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Spring 2018

## Georgia Southern Magazine

Georgia Southern University

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# GEORGIA SOUTHERN

MAGAZINE

SPRING 2018

ONE UNIVERSITY.  
THREE CAMPUSES.



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14



44



26



56

## FEATURES

### **ARMSTRONG: A POWERFUL LEGACY / 11**

Armstrong Campus history features rich stories

### **FORWARD TOGETHER / 14**

SGA presidents share connections

### **STUDENT AFFAIRS / 16**

Georj Lewis' journey to Georgia Southern leadership

### **KEY CHANGE / 18**

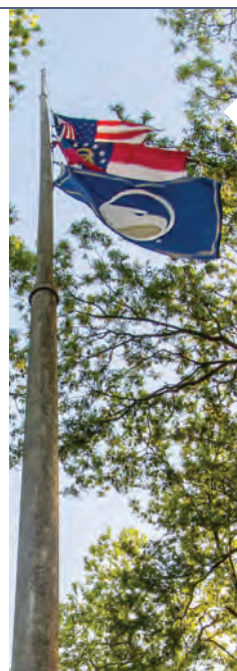
Alumna Becky Case enjoys success at Birchbox

### **CYBER DEFENSE / 20**

Scott Scheidt expands cyber education at Armstrong

### **GROWING A LEGACY / 22**

Alumnus John Shuman replants a family business



SPRING 2018, VOLUME 20

### **UP FIRST**

The New Georgia Southern / 6  
One University. Three Campuses. / 8

### **NEWS / 25**

### **RESEARCH / 36**

### **ATHLETICS / 42**

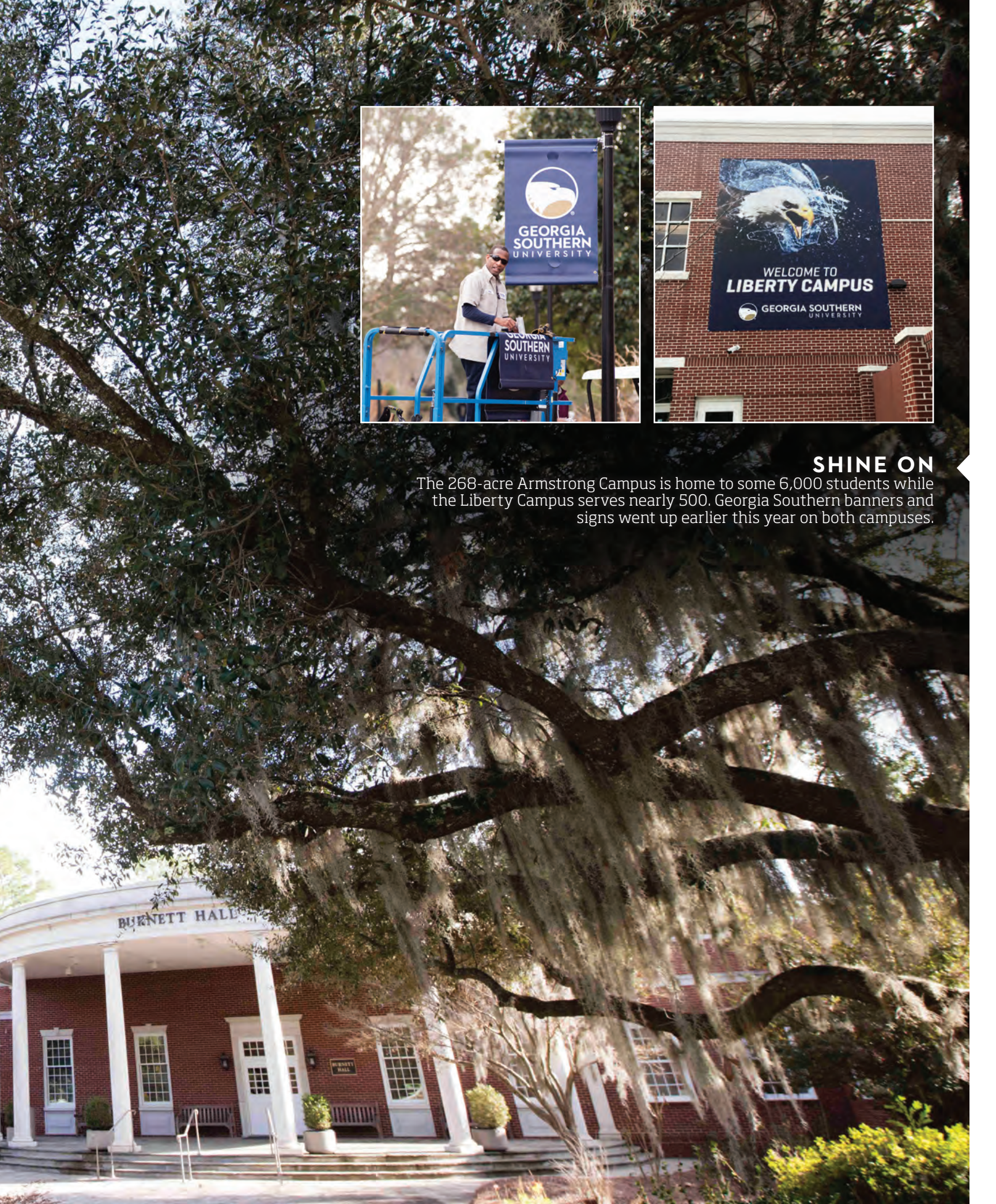
### **ALUMNI / 48**

### **SUPPORT / 56**

### **IN MEMORIAM / 60**



GEORGIA  
SOUTHERN  
UNIVERSITY



## SHINE ON

The 268-acre Armstrong Campus is home to some 6,000 students while the Liberty Campus serves nearly 500. Georgia Southern banners and signs went up earlier this year on both campuses.



## TRUE BLUE SPOTLIGHT

*"I've wanted to work [at Children's Hospital of Atlanta] since I was three."*

— Amelia Ballard

### Amelia Ballard continues her fight against cancer

In 1994, when she was only 17 months old, Amelia Ballard ('15) was admitted into the Children's Hospital of Atlanta, where she would spend most of the next four years in two grueling battles with cancer. In 2015, after graduating with a nursing degree from Georgia Southern, she returned to the hospital as a nurse, helping other kids win the same fight.

A cancer survivor for more than 22 years, Ballard can't recall everything about her bouts with acute lymphoblastic leukemia, but she remembers that the experiences led her to a very specific dream as early as three years old — to be a nurse at Children's Hospital of Atlanta (CHOA). And even though the hospital was the source of years of aggressive treatment, including intense radiation and a painful bone marrow transplant, she says it was the close relationships with her nurses she remembers most.

"Nursing is much more than the pokes, you know," she said. "You develop those relationships with your patients, and the nurses spent a lot of time with

me, and when I was having a good moment or a good day they respected that. And they really became more like a family when we were there than anything else."

Ballard says even though getting her nursing degree often seemed like an impossible task, she enjoyed her time at Georgia Southern. In the classroom, she learned from professors like Crystal Edds-McAfee, DNP, RN, who had also worked at CHOA and taught pediatrics. Outside the classroom, Ballard worked at Camp Twin Lakes, a year-round camp for children with serious illnesses, disabilities, and other life challenges, which only reinforced her desire to pursue pediatric care.

All of her hard work came to fruition in 2015. While she was still finishing her clinicals, she found an opening at CHOA for a patient care technician in the ER. She applied, and was called back for an interview soon after. The same day of her interview, only hours after she'd returned home, she received the call telling her she'd gotten the job. In 2016, she accepted a position as an

RN in the emergency department.

"I've wanted to work there since I was three," she said. "I definitely cried because that was a huge milestone in my life, a huge goal that was almost a dream that I didn't know was attainable until it happened.... So that was a big, big moment for me and my family."

When asked if she feels like the ordeal was worth it, Ballard doesn't see it like that. She doesn't focus on the painful procedures that marked her years of treatment. She remembers her parents playing games with the gloves and masks that were required to interact with her, and the nurses who let her push the plunger to flush her I.V. and bandage the boo-boos on her stuffed animals. And it's that perspective that she wants to bring to her patients.

"I like to stand on the positive side of things and kind of see how far my family and I have come through it....," she said. "I want to make sure to try and instill some hope into these kiddos and their parents while I'm taking care of them."

Taking care of them — not only like a nurse, but also like family. — DOY CAVE



**1941** This student reporter for the *Inkwell*—Armstrong's student newspaper—works the phone lines for a story.



**1988** Long distance calls to home meant a common hall payphone and often a roll of quarters—or better yet a calling card or calling collect.

**2018** Voice, video and texts connect any student to anybody at any time.







# THE NEW GEORGIA SOUTHERN

**2018 MARKED A HISTORIC CHANGE** for higher education in southeastern Georgia. The New Georgia Southern — combining 82 years of Armstrong State University with 111 years of Georgia Southern University — was officially launched on January 1, 2018. The new institution is the state's largest and most comprehensive center of higher education south of Atlanta.



## A WORD FROM PRESIDENT HEBERT

This year marks the true start to weaving the traditions and values of two storied institutions into one strong community — an even stronger Eagle Nation. Together, we will make the new Georgia Southern truly great.

The rigorous process of the consolidation of Armstrong State and Georgia Southern included four heavily-attended town hall meetings, 15-plus consolidation implementation committee (CIC) meetings, numerous public speaking engagements and Q&A sessions, and countless faculty, staff and student meetings. All told, more than 500 recommendations from our 95 operational working groups including hundreds of faculty, staff and students from all corners of each university were submitted and approved in 2017. And the first few months of 2018 have seen all that planning play out as web pages have been updated, application processes have meshed, degree programs have been adjusted and emails have been switched — thousands of changes big and small with much more to come.

I want to thank all of those students, faculty, staff, alumni and business and community members who worked diligently outside of their regular duties to create these foundational plans. In addition, the entire university community in Statesboro, Savannah and Hinesville contributed to this consolidation in numerous ways, and we are so grateful for the commitment and the hard work you all have given and will continue to provide.

*Jaimie Hebert*

With 141 degree programs at the bachelor's, master's and doctoral levels, Georgia Southern now serves more than 27,000 students from all 50 states, Washington D.C., and Puerto Rico as well as 102 nations. While the new Georgia Southern draws the vast majority of its students from Georgia, it includes a growing proportion from coastal South Carolina and northern Florida making it a true regional leader in education.

Georgia Southern University remains accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges — the regional body for the accreditation of degree-granting higher education institutions in the Southern states. The commission approved the consolidation prospectus in early December 2017. The Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia then granted final approval for the creation of the new Georgia Southern University in a December vote.

Now a multi-campus university with the Statesboro Campus, the Armstrong Campus in Savannah and the Liberty Campus in Hinesville, the new Georgia Southern offers undergraduate and graduate degrees through nine colleges:

- the Allen E. Paulson College of Engineering and Computing,
- the College of Arts and Humanities,
- the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences,
- the College of Business,
- the College of Education,
- the Jack N. Averitt College of Graduate Studies,
- the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health,
- the College of Science and Mathematics,
- and the Waters College of Health Professions.

# ONE UNIVERSITY. THREE CAMPUSES.

*The campuses of Georgia Southern*

ARMSTRONG



LIBERTY



STATESBORO





## **Statesboro Campus**

Georgia Southern's oldest and largest campus spans 900 acres in Statesboro, and features both Georgia-style, red-brick buildings and state-of-the-art modern facilities amid beautiful oaks and pines. The campus is home to more than 20,000 students.



## **Armstrong Campus in Savannah**

A 268-acre arboretum campus just minutes away from historic downtown Savannah and a short drive from the sunny beaches of Tybee Island houses more than 100 degree programs and some 6,000 students.



## **Liberty Campus in Hinesville**

This modern, state-of-the-art facility in Hinesville is located just a stone's throw from Fort Stewart, the largest U.S. Army installation east of the Mississippi River, and is equipped to serve local and military-affiliated students.



# GEORGIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY *is*

a **PUBLIC COMPREHENSIVE** and **CARNEGIE DOCTORAL/RESEARCH** university offering associate, bachelors, masters, and doctoral degrees in nationally accredited programs in the liberal arts, sciences, and professional disciplines.

## **THE UNIVERSITY** *provides*

**TRANSFORMATIVE** learning opportunities to meet the needs of a **DIVERSE** student population through its **LEGACY** of commitment to **ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE** and **PERSONAL ATTENTION**.

Through the shared resources of its **MULTIPLE LOCATIONS**, the University *creates*

**VIBRANT** learning environments that foster an **INCLUSIVE, STUDENT-CENTERED** culture of **ENGAGEMENT** designed to prepare students for **LIFELONG SERVICE** as scholars, leaders, and responsible **STEWARDS** of their communities.

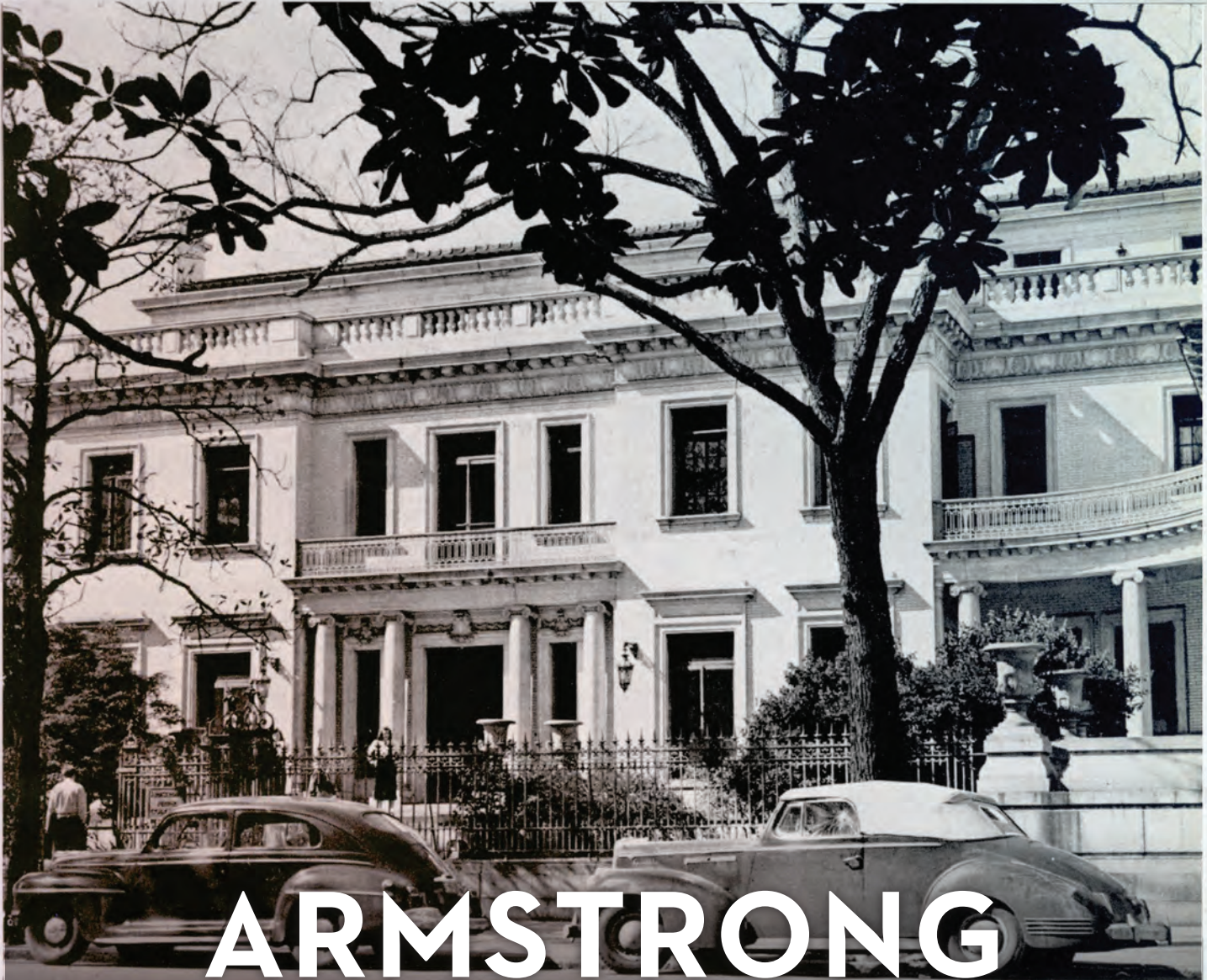
## **THE UNIVERSITY** *enhances*

the **QUALITY OF LIFE** and drives **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT** in the Coastal Georgia region, the State of Georgia, and **BEYOND** by supporting **COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS** in technological **INNOVATION**, scientific advancement, education, health services, artistic creativity, and **CULTURAL ENRICHMENT**.

**FACULTY, STAFF, AND STUDENTS EMBRACE THE VALUES OF INTEGRITY, CIVILITY, KINDNESS, RESPECT, SUSTAINABILITY, CITIZENSHIP, AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN EVERY FACET OF THE UNIVERSITY.**

## **STRATEGIC THINKING**

The new Georgia Southern University is developing a new strategic plan—a process that involves the entire University community. Leadership and governance groups—including faculty senates, staff councils, student government associations as well as the vice presidents and deans—have presented SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analyses over the past months. And an eight-member Strategic Planning Committee is busy creating a plan to have in place this summer, based on input from stakeholders from across the University community and on Georgia Southern's new mission statement (at left) approved last year.



# ARMSTRONG

## *A Powerful Legacy*

**FROM ITS START AS A JUNIOR COLLEGE** in the historic Armstrong House, located alongside Savannah's Forsyth Park, to the vibrant Savannah and Liberty campuses of today, Armstrong has a range of impressive accomplishments. For those that are new to this fantastic heritage, here's a quick trip down Armstrong's memory lane.

Savannah Mayor Thomas Gamble founded Armstrong Junior College during the height of the Great Depression, and opened its doors in 1935 with 175 students. The original goal was to help stimulate Savannah's economy and advance opportunities for local youth. Later, as World War II grew nearer, war preparation, military and aviation courses were added.

## FEATURES



### SERIOUS ABOUT PLAY

In 1937, actor Stacy Keach Sr. formed the university playhouse. This group was the forerunner to the Masquers student theatre troupe, which now features more than 12 student-produced plays annually.



**SOLDIERS** Armstrong's Aviation Club prepared students for World War II deployment in 1940.



**DUE SOUTH** Campus markers point to new Southside campus in 1965.

### Building the Academic and Physical Foundation

In 1940, Armstrong received its first accreditation from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), and in 1959 became a two-year unit of the University System of Georgia (USG). Major changes occurred in the 1960s. Former Savannah Mayor Otis Johnson entered as the first African-American student in 1963. In 1964, the USG Board of Regents conferred four-year status on Armstrong State College, and in 1968, SACS granted Armstrong accreditation as a senior institution. This change in status enabled the college to award its first baccalaureate degrees. Advancement continued. In 1971, the Board of Regents authorized Armstrong and Savannah State to offer joint graduate programs leading to the MBA and the M.S. in Education. Most importantly, in 1996, the institution gained state university status.

While they were building the academic foundation, Armstrong was expanding its physical foundation as well. Donald Livingston and the Mills B. Lane Foundation donated a new campus site of 250 acres in southside Savannah in 1962. Four years later, in 1966, the college moved to the current location of the Armstrong Campus leaving the Armstrong House behind. Eight original buildings, known as the campus quad, were constructed. The beautiful Armstrong Campus is renowned for its

abundant flowers, ferns, magnolias and Spanish moss-draped oak trees scattered throughout the arboretum-style campus.

### Military Advancement and Cybersecurity

Armstrong has long been considered a pioneer in educational services for the military and national security-related programs. In 1998, Armstrong collaborated with other USG institutions to create the Liberty Center, to offer degree programs in Liberty County, serving Fort Stewart and surrounding areas. In 2012, Armstrong was named a Military Friendly School by *G.I. Jobs Magazine* and opened the campus Military Outreach Center. During 2014, groundbreaking took place for the new and expanded Liberty Center, a 21,000-square-foot, leading-edge facility which opened its doors in 2016. The facility serves Liberty County's growing student population, with special services for military affiliates and dual-enrollment options for local high school students. That same year, *Military Times* honored Armstrong, ranking the institution fourth in the nation among four-year schools on its Best for Vets Colleges list, and *Military Spouse* named Armstrong a Top 100 Military Spouse Friendly School.

Another major milestone was achieved in 2015 when the National Security Agency (NSA) and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security recognized Armstrong as a National



**LIFELONG FRIENDS**

Residential life on campus in the 80s included shared rooms.

Center for Academic Excellence in Cyber Defense Education. This was followed in September 2017 with the Department of Defense Cyber Crime Center (DC3), designating Armstrong as a Center of Digital Forensics Academic Excellence. Armstrong became one of only 14 schools in the nation that have both the NSA and DC3 designations.

**Achievement for Latinos and Other Underrepresented Minorities**

Latinos are one of the fastest-growing student populations in America and in southeast Georgia. Consequently, in 2003, the Hispanic Outreach and Leadership at Armstrong (HOLA) program was established under a generous grant from the Goizueta Foundation. In 2011, Armstrong earned a \$600,000 grant from the Lumina Foundation for Education, and was one of only 12 institutions nationally selected to serve as the lead in developing regional partnerships to promote Latino student enrollment in college. Additionally, in 2015, the Education Trust, a Washington, D.C., organization that shapes and influences national and state policy, named Armstrong a top performing school for underrepresented minority students.

**Focus on Health Care Professions**

Health care professions have been in high demand for years. To fill the educational need for health care training in southeast Georgia, beginning in 1978, the Board of Regents designated Armstrong as a Regional Health Professions Education Center. Armstrong gained approval to offer a Doctor of Physical Therapy degree in 2009. After

only two years Armstrong's Doctorate of Physical Therapy was ranked in the top third in the nation by *U.S. News and World Report*.

Health care grants soon followed. In 2013, the College of Health Professions received a \$1.5 million grant to implement an interprofessional care model at St. Mary's Health Center in Savannah, allowing students to provide care to the underserved. In October 2017, Associate Provost for Academic Affairs and Graduate Studies Donna Brooks, Ph.D., received a four-year U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration's Scholarships for Disadvantaged Students Program Grant valued at \$5.2 million. The program provides grants to universities who use the funding for scholarships for students from disadvantaged backgrounds enrolled in health professions programs.

To accommodate the resulting planned growth, in 2017, Armstrong broke ground on a 63,000-square-foot state-of-the-art facility to house the Waters College of Health Professions.

**Consolidation and Future**

A landmark event occurred in 2017 when the USG Board of Regents voted to consolidate Armstrong State University and Georgia Southern University. The consolidation brings two noteworthy institutions together, combining the best of both into a powerful new unit. From expertise with military-friendly and cyber-security programs, to accomplishments in health care professions, serving the underrepresented student population and more, Armstrong's credentials are noteworthy. This history of impressive accomplishments will continue on the Armstrong Campus. — LIZ WALKER

**2018 IS HERE**  
Students gather on the Student Union porch on the Armstrong campus.





# FORWARD TOGETHER

## SGA presidents share surprising connections

**IT'S RARE** that two students from rival high schools in Sri Lanka would earn the same scholarships to study in the southeastern United States; rarer still they both end up presidents of Student Government Associations (SGA) at nearby universities, and even more incredible that those two universities would become one University.

Both leaders in their respective high schools, Georgia Southern students Dylan John and Nipuna Ambanpola came to America to pursue an education through the Georgia Rotary Student Program (GRSP). The GRSP provides international students the opportunity to spend one year at a university in Georgia while living with a host family. John arrived on the scholarship in 2011, and Ambanpola followed suit in 2015 after meeting with John to learn more about the program.

John began school at Georgia Southern and Ambanpola at Armstrong State University. The pride these two men felt for their universities was unparalleled,

***“The story about Nipuna and me ascending to SGA Presidents is the ultimate story of connecting to campus.” –Dylan John***

and allowed their friendly rivalry to continue in the U.S.

John found success early on in his academic career, quickly adapting to his course load and leadership positions in SGA, mock mediation and the Model African Union. He became SGA president of Georgia Southern University in fall 2016 and led the Vision 20/20 Initiative, bringing Georgia Southern to the forefront of leadership conversations across the state. For his many leadership and academic efforts, John received the William A. Watt Memorial Award in 2011,

an honor which recognizes the top GRSP Scholar of the Year.

Ambanpola too, adapted well to life in Georgia. He founded a nonprofit, IVolunteer International, which connects volunteers with service opportunities around the world, and discussed the organization's opportunity at TEDxSavannah. Ambanpola was awarded the Barbara M. and Donald L. Thomas Memorial Peace Award from the Rotary Club of Roswell, Georgia, in 2015, just months after arriving in the U.S. It wasn't long before he called home and told his parents he planned to finish his education in Georgia.

“I've fallen in love with Savannah,” he said. “The culture of acceptance and hospitality here is so wonderful. It reminds me of Sri Lanka. The natural beauty, the opportunities, the people. It's all so great.”

Like John, Ambanpola quickly became involved with SGA when he arrived at Armstrong. John appreciated his friend's ambition and wanted to collaborate, so much so that he desperately tried to convince Ambanpola to transfer to Georgia Southern in the fall of 2016. Despite John's best attempts at persuasion, Ambanpola couldn't bring himself to leave the life he'd built on the Armstrong Campus.

One night, just a few months after his appeal to Ambanpola to come to Georgia Southern, John received a call.

“Dylan, I've changed my mind, and I'm coming to Georgia Southern,” said Ambanpola. “But I'm not coming alone. I'm bringing the entire University with me.”



## FINDING UNITY

From left to right, Dylan John and Nipuna Ambanpola hail from rival high schools in Sri Lanka.

John got a great laugh from Ambanpola's call, and though both still had great pride in their universities, they were thrilled about the prospect of working together to represent a new institution.

"We realize the opportunities this consolidation has afforded everyone," said Ambanpola. "We're combining the strengths of three campuses. There will never be again such an opportunity to go back to the roots of both universities and focus on bringing these amazing strengths together."

Now the two SGA presidents are putting their leadership skills, influence and passion together to create a legacy for the new institution.

"I think the story about Nipuna and me ascending to SGA Presidents is the ultimate story of connecting to campus," said John. "You don't feel like you're just another number, another person on campus."

Both Ambanpola and John plan to use their stories to encourage other international students to take advantage of the opportunities at Georgia Southern.

"I try to go back once a year," said Ambanpola. "We want to let students know studying abroad is possible. There is a misconception in Sri Lanka that it's difficult for international students to get scholarships in the United States; that it's expensive, hard to move away from home and difficult to adapt. We want to break that barrier."

Though the two have worked hard to come together and bring unity between two student bodies, going home always brings out the old friendly competition that drove them in high school.

"Our hometown friends can't believe this 'Thomian' hangs out with a 'Royalist,' [John and Ambanpola's rival high schools]," said John. "Here in Georgia, it's great to have a hometown friend nearby, but when we go back to Sri Lanka together, we have a lot of explaining to do." — AUBREY TREVATHAN HALL



# STUDENT AFFAIRS

**WHILE THE DYNAMICS** of Georgia Southern's multi-campus university may be new, Georj Lewis' return to the institution as the University's Vice President for Student Affairs feels like a homecoming.

A 23-year veteran of higher education, Lewis spent almost 11 years on the Statesboro campus. First joining as the director of the Multicultural Student Center in 2002, he led diversity efforts until he was offered the role of dean of students a year-and-a-half later. Catapulting his career timeline goals, Lewis entered the leadership team that oversaw a 15,000-plus student body at that time.

"It was very exciting, and it was a significant jump," said Lewis. "It was a challenge, but Georgia Southern is an easy place to work. People want you to be successful. The job wasn't easy, but people were very helpful during my growth process. Over time, I really became connected to the campus, to the community and definitely to the students. It was a family."

During his nine-year tenure as dean, he earned an Ed.D., and a strong strategic planning skill set while directing multiple departments during the unchartered Facebook-era in which the campus experienced consistent growth. Yet, Lewis stayed focused on what inspires him most: students and their success.

"I love seeing the difference you can make," noted Lewis. "As the dean of students for several years, I was able to see several classes go through. What's exciting is seeing the students' transformation over four years. You feel extremely fortunate when you have direct interaction with the students and you can see the impact you may have had on them. When you have a breakthrough with a student, it's something that you can't put a price or a title on."

Lewis was also active in Statesboro, sitting on the board of directors of the Hearts and Hands Clinic, Inc., which offers free primary health services to uninsured Bulloch County citizens, and the Boys and Girls Club. He was also a member of Rotary Club and NAACP and volunteered as a Bulloch County football and baseball coach.

In 2009, Lewis was honored with the Deen Day Smith Service to Mankind Award, and in 2012, when he accepted the role of vice chancellor for student affairs at Indiana University Northwest, the Dr. Georj L. Lewis Leadership Scholarship was established on his behalf. Citing his stewardship and innovation in the Office of the Dean of Students, the naming was also a nod to his support of "the

***"The diversity that we have between all of our campuses only makes us stronger." – Georj Lewis***



**“I love seeing the difference you can make.”**

**—Georj Lewis**

Steel City. But two or three years into the program, crunching numbers felt static. Lewis craved interaction with colleagues who would exchange ideas and inspire others. Still, he dutifully completed his four-year undergraduate program, an internship and a yearlong finance job. But when an admissions position at his college alma mater opened up, he leapt and landed the job. From day one it was a fit.

“I knew something was right,” remembered Lewis. “I really enjoyed working with students and helping people connect to their dreams. That’s what I liked most about it. I wasn’t selling anything. It was an opportunity for me to help students move closer to their goals.”

Lewis stayed in place for five years while also earning a master’s in counseling.

“I kind of stumbled into it all,” said Lewis. “I come from a family of educators so this was a natural transition to where I should have been in the first place.”

### **A New Opportunity with Georgia Southern**

By the time a colleague who worked at Georgia Southern invited Lewis to apply for the Multicultural Student Center directorship in 2001, he was a family man with three young children. The interview was in December and there were 30 inches of snow on the ground in western Pennsylvania. The job offer on the Statesboro campus was a no-brainer, he joked, with Georgia’s sub-tropical weather. In reality, he and his wife, Anchelle, were excited about moving South for the new opportunity.

After more than a decade at Georgia Southern and two years as vice chancellor for student affairs at Indiana University Northwest, Lewis was persuaded to return South in 2013 when he accepted the position as Armstrong State University’s vice president for student affairs, where he remained until the consolidation with Georgia Southern.

Realigning with Georgia Southern peers is a boost for Lewis, who has kept in touch with many of them over the years, and he is appreciative of their support and talent.

“They have been very welcoming,” he said. “I’m excited to come together with an established division of some strong, strong people who have expertise in their functional areas.”

Educating a larger and highly diverse body of traditional and first-generation college students, who range in age from 15 to 90 and include a solid base of military members and their families, inspires Lewis.

“The diversity that we have between all of our campuses only makes us stronger,” he noted. “Both campuses have done some great things, particularly with Student Affairs, and I’m excited about that.”

“And there’s football,” he said, with a grin. — MELANIE SIMÓN

development of the University’s diverse student population and assisting with the advancement of one of the most successful and influential Student Government Associations in Georgia Southern’s history.”

Lewis’ growing list of accomplishments added another block to his family’s legacy in education.

### **A Family of Educators**

Lewis’ mother and grandmother were teachers and his father was an elementary school principal. Currently, his brother is the principal of The American School in Mexico City. Yet, growing up among the coal mines and steel mills of Connellsville, Pennsylvania, where football is king, Lewis dreamed of scaling corporate ladders among the skylines of nearby Pittsburgh.

He played football in high school and on scholarship at Edinboro University of Pennsylvania, where he earned an accounting degree that would lead him, he thought, to an executive oak desk with a prestigious accounting firm in



## Switch from singing to coding proves E-ssential for Becky Case

# KEY CHANGE

**HOW DOES A STUDENT** with dreams of singing on Broadway fall in love with computer programming? For Georgia Southern alumna Becky Case ('04) it was easy.

"I started as a vocal performance major, but after the first year I was a little worried about future career prospects," she said. "I didn't want to teach voice and the idea of making it as a professional singer seemed unlikely. I decided to take a computer class that fit into my schedule. It ended up being Intro to Programming (Visual Basic). I loved it and changed my major at the end of the semester."

### Climbing the Ranks

Since graduating, the singer-turned-computer scientist has climbed the ranks through software engineering opportunities at Zappos, Bonobos and OpenSky. Today, Case is the vice president of engineering at Birchbox, a leading online beauty subscription retailer. The company's technology infrastructure allows subscribers to pay monthly for five beauty products based on their individual beauty profile, which is created on an easy-to-use website. Case oversees all engineering for the e-commerce company.

"Birchbox is global in six different markets with three offices in Europe in addition to our New York headquarters," she said. "My team is responsible for any tech that needs to be built to support our sites, apps, subscription services, retail locations and internal tools that are needed for business operations."

Although her days are filled with projects, Case said, "I still try to make time for coding when I can, as it's something I very much enjoy." With all that she has accomplished since leaving Georgia Southern, Case is equally excited about the mentoring relationships she has established with the people she supervises.

## Coding is like songwriting..

Computer Science Professor Jim Harris explains.

"Being a manager means much of your time and energy is invested in your team," she said. "I love watching them stretch to meet a challenge and succeed. I also love the organizational aspect of my job. I enjoy planning and putting things in order, so coordinating project deployments, company initiatives and employee work is something I find soothing."

### Why Internships are Important

Case credits Georgia Southern for igniting her passion in computer programming and says what she learned here has been invaluable in her career.

"While I learned a lot that I don't use every day—the different types of sorting algorithms for instance—the basics are key to understanding more advanced computer science concepts," she explained. "In addition, when I do need to know about an algorithm, I can implement it because I learned which one was the right tool for the job at hand. Furthermore, college taught me how to think critically and learn on my own. Self-learning is the key to being a good engineer as tech evolves constantly."

The Statesboro native also advises students to pursue internships, saying she would never hire a new graduate who didn't have work experience as an intern or from a part-time job.

"Students with internships are more prepared for the challenges of working in an office environment," she said. "Also, they make better engineers in the long run as they've already had valuable real world experience—putting them ahead of their non-interning counterparts."

### True Blue Memories

In reflecting on her years at Georgia Southern, Case's favorite memories include homecoming and the sing-along for Handel's "Messiah" every year. And she can't forget fighting for parking before class, saying she "took it as a personal challenge to get a good spot."

Case is also passionate about painting, yoga, SoulCycle and her 9-year-old Siberian cat, Nikola Tesla. Living in New York City has been challenging but she admits she loves her job and a work environment that allows her to perform at her very best.

"It took quite a while for me to become adjusted to the city," she said. "I decided for the first two years to live within walking distance of my office. That allowed me to get used to New York without having to deal with the subway. But even then it can be overwhelming with the noise and all the people. However, I've always wanted to live here—so adjusting was just par for the course." — SANDRA BENNETT



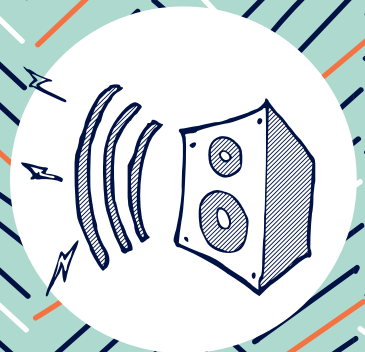
Data is like raw words and notes.



Coding is like songwriting.



Data processing is like singing.



Computational results are like the song.



## Combating cyber attacks with first-class instruction and real-world scenarios

# CYBER DEFENSE

### THE CENTER FOR APPLIED CYBER EDUCATION (CACE)

Director Scott C. Scheidt is a 20-plus year veteran of business, military combat, intelligence operations, cyber warfare and academia, and not one to shy away from a challenge. Yet, uniting with Georgia Southern University has been nothing but an enhancement for the department located on the Armstrong Campus.

“The consolidation is a great boost for all cyber education-related programs,” said Scheidt. “And CACE programs, I believe, will be a boost for cyber concepts being incorporated into more university academic programs. It opens up our ability to provide training and academic support resources to a larger body of students, staff and faculty. It also allows us to bring unique partnerships to the Georgia Southern family and increase capability offerings back out to those larger resources.”

Joining the Armstrong Campus in 2016, Scheidt was charged with expanding CACE while leading an interdisciplinary team of faculty and staff to offer state-of-the-art cyber education. Within his first year, CACE was designated as a National Center of Academic Excellence in Cyber Defense Education by the National Security Agency and the Department of Homeland Security.

Last fall, the U.S. Department of Defense’s Cyber Crime Center recognized CACE as a Center of Digital Forensics Academic Excellence for university academic programs related to cyber crime and operational forensics capabilities. Georgia Southern is now one of only 14 institutions in the country to hold the two esteemed federal designations.

“Our students receive first-class instruction that prepares them to prevent and investigate cyber attacks, monitor and secure networks, and integrate best systems practices throughout the world,” noted Scheidt. “Our diverse cyber education programs are uniquely suited to help fill the gaps in the national cyber workforce needed to meet the demands of the 21st century.”

Each spring, Scheidt has contributed directly to cyber academic offerings by teaching a special topics class in Cyber Warfare, and has previously taught Computer Concepts and Applications and Criminal Justice Graduate Special Topics in Cyber Crime. Within the Center, he also shepherds the largest university digital forensics lab in the Southeast. As of consolidation, the lab has processed more than 600 criminal digital forensic cases that include child abductions, white collar crimes, and international drug trafficking activity for the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Secret Service, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Georgia Bureau of Investigation and a host of regional law enforcement partners.

With a plan for continued growth and opportunity for faculty, students and staff, Scheidt continues to support and advise on the development of new curricula and academic training capabilities with equipment like the Forensic Recovery of Evidence Device aka FRED, a sophisticated digital intelligence

**“The consolidation is a great boost for all cyber education-related programs.” –Scott C. Scheidt**

workstation commonplace in government agencies. CACE has also recently increased its data analytics lab capabilities and is now able to support students, faculty and staff with Social Media Analytic services and academic support to the data analytics needs of the University’s nine colleges.

The Center is an academic partner with the U.S. Army Cyber Center of Excellence and Air Force Cyber Command as well and is an invited academic advisory member to the National Defense Transportation Association. For several years, CACE has also been the academic lead for the Pentagon Cyber Integration Division for its multinational partner exercise known as Bold Quest.

Last fall, CACE, in partnership with the Coastal Regional Commission in Darien, Georgia, participated in a weeklong exercise, Bold Quest 17.2. In this exercise, military cybersecurity experts from Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, Finland and the Texas Army National Guard operating as a Multinational Assessment Team conducted penetration testing and vulnerability analysis on the Commission’s facility systems. The goal was to expose weaknesses in the Commission’s industrial control systems so that parties involved would know how to better secure similar networks in the event of a cyber attack by threat actors, a natural disaster or a global crisis such as war.

At week’s end, the multi-national cyber operations team, and university students in the cyber program, provided reports on their discoveries and how to correct any systemic issues.

“We have a strong partner in the Department of Defense, and it’s a blessing that our students can be involved in real-world activities,” said Scheidt. “They are able to gain relevant skills, practice and knowledge before graduation. Many of them will graduate this spring with Department of Defense certifications.”

The event also provided key networking opportunities. “This exercise was promising for further collaboration between the Defense Department and academia,” Scheidt explained. “A number of our Bold Quest partners asked if we can help them in similar capacities in their own countries. So it may be an opportunity for our faculty and staff to go with this Pentagon partnership to other countries in the near future.”

— MELANIE SIMÓN





# GROWING A LEGACY

*John Shuman replants his family business*



PHOTO BY ALLISON COBB

**IN 1993**, John Shuman, who was just two classes away from a business degree at Georgia Southern, left school to go to work on his family farm in south Georgia.

When he arrived, however, he found a business that was in trouble. Shuman Farms and Shuman Fertilizer, both staples of Toombs and Tattnall counties for more than two decades, had been struggling to survive the lingering effects of the '80s Farm Crisis, which sent interest rates skyrocketing and saddled farmers with sometimes insurmountable debt.

"It just really impacted farmers all over the country, and my dad got caught up in that on both sides of the fence," said Shuman. "From the farm supply dealerships that he owned, he was selling to all the local farmers on credit. Well, when they couldn't pay, he was hung with the debt. And, of course, he was a farmer himself, so he got hung on that side, too.

"After that business, Shuman Fertilizer and Shuman Farms were pretty much over."

By 1994, just as Shuman was commuting back and forth to Georgia Southern to finish his degree, his family businesses were officially closed, and his future prospects quickly reduced.

"When you're coming out of college and your parents are broke, you're broke in the worst way," he said. "You're starting from scratch."

He could have followed his siblings into other, more lucrative careers, but after graduating from Georgia Southern with a Bachelor of Business Administration, Shuman chose to start from scratch, and rebuild his family business instead.

Beginning with a \$15,000 business loan, which he was only able to acquire with the help of his grandmother, the young graduate decided to use his business smarts to organize several growers to create greater volume and marketing awareness under a new company, Shuman Produce, and a new brand, RealSweet. It took a lot of trust to create the business, which operated

**RealSweet  
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its feet.**

much like a co-op, and Shuman says without it, the business might never have made it.

"Being able to depend mutually on each other – them on me and me on them – it was a catalyst," he said. "Really, it was the foundation of us getting the business off the ground."

RealSweet was not an overnight sensation, and Shuman says it took 10 years of hard work and a lot of personal sacrifice to get the business on its feet. Those years were especially hard for his wife, Lana, whom he met at Georgia Southern and married just as the business was getting off the ground.

"We were living very lean, my wife and I," he said. "Everything we could make we put back into the business. We were trying to be very disciplined about it.

Looking back on it, it was very painful, but it was the right thing to do."

The struggle eventually paid off. RealSweet began with just a few hundred acres in Toombs and Tattnall counties. Today, the company has more than 2,300 acres in Vidalia and almost as much land in Peru, where they can grow onions during Georgia's off-season.

"We'll ship north of 100 million pounds of sweet onions annually," said Shuman. "That's a lot of sweet onions!"

In the past few years, Shuman Produce has continued its expansion, and recently purchased 620 additional acres in Vidalia, and a 94,000-square-foot packing facility in Cobbtown, Georgia. In addition, they've begun growing other vegetables such as broccoli and sweet potatoes in order to diversify their products.

Shuman said he's never pushed his children into the family business – a family business he worked so hard to save – but is proud that some of them have taken an interest, especially now that it's successful.

"I can see my oldest sons, Luke and Jake, are very interested," he said. "I'm hopeful that when they go off to college and come back home, maybe this time we'll have something for them to do when they get back." — *DOY CAVE*

# ALUMNA FINDS HER PURPOSE INSPIRING YOUTH

Armstrong alumna and Miss South Carolina USA 2017, Megan Gordon ('16), entered her first pageant more than a decade ago with humble hopes of earning academic scholarships. Today, armed with a nursing degree and credits like Top 5 placement in last year's Miss USA competition, she utilizes her expanded platforms to inspire young people across the country.

From the small town of North Augusta, South Carolina, Gordon was raised in a supportive environment, but pageant life was new to her family and friends. She was largely on her own as she waded into unfamiliar territory.

"No one in my family had ever done it," Gordon remembered. "As an African-American, I didn't know anyone doing it who looked like me. I couldn't identify with anyone, but it's something in your heart. You just step out on faith. And that's what I did."

Gordon won several local titles and earned enough money to assist with university studies. She had fallen in love with Savannah several years prior and knew of the stellar nursing program at Armstrong. Matriculating to campus in the fall of 2012, Gordon stayed focused on her studies and continued in the pageant circuit, picking up titles like the 2012 Distinguished Young Woman of Aiken County and Miss Southeast 2014.

During her sophomore year she set her sights on the Miss Collegiate America title in 2014, which would award a \$10,000 academic scholarship with the crown. She won, and shortly thereafter she learned that she was accepted into the nursing program.

"The nursing program was very challenging," she said. "To be accepted into it was a huge honor and big deal for me."

Once in, her local clinical rotations revolved around children and women's health. She also completed an externship at the Children's Hospital of Georgia in Augusta, Georgia, and became an advocate for children with cancer and blood disorders. At the same time, modeling jobs rolled in and she traveled to speak to youth groups.

"Maybe the fact that I got through a rigorous nursing program and have won pageants, I can inspire other young girls," she said. "Maybe I can reach an African-American girl, or girls of other ethnicities, who limit themselves. Maybe I can reach the person who says, 'I'm from this small town in Georgia or South Carolina and there's no way that I can do that.' I know that my purpose is to show them that 100 percent they can. I'm a normal girl. If I can do it, they can too."

In November, Gordon handed the Miss South Carolina USA 2018 crown to the new titleholder. In a surprise, the mayor of Charleston, South Carolina, named February 26 as 'Megan Gordon Day'.

Her heart full, Gordon is focused on new business and modeling opportunities, but she remains committed to inspiring young people with her message of hard work and hope.

"I personally want to use my platform to advocate for other people and inspire them," said Gordon. "I personally want to use my voice to uplift other people. Whether I am nursing at a hospital or modeling for a photo shoot, I know my purpose is to bring out the best in others. I want to inspire the people who are around me." — MELANIE SIMÓN



# BUILDING A LEGACY

## *Latina chapter is one of a kind*

Leadership. Mentorship. Education. Community Service. These are some of the goals of MANA de Savannah at Armstrong. It has the distinction of being the first collegiate chapter of MANA, a national grassroots organization for Latina women. MANA focuses on the interests of Latina women and families in areas of education, health, financial literacy, civil rights and immigration reform.

Alejandra Gonzalez-Galan is the president of the new chapter on the Armstrong Campus. The sophomore was born in Mexico City, Mexico, grew up in Atlanta and considers the Armstrong Campus her home away from home. As a first-year student, she joined the initial group looking to establish a mentoring program for Latinas on campus. Through meetings and research, they found MANA.

### **Learning to Lead**

"Being the first college chapter in the United States is a tremendous honor and I view it as an amazing opportunity to continue striving toward the involvement of Latinas in our society," said Gonzalez-Galan. "It means we can provide a vision for other colleges around the nation and expand this initiative in the future."

The chapter aims to increase the retention of Latinas on the Georgia Southern campus through empowerment sessions, study halls, membership meetings and volunteering. Lucero Aradillas is the associate director of the Office of Multicultural Affairs on the Armstrong Campus. She noted the mission of the office is to create a sense of family and ensure that students feel supported through their collegiate career.

"This organization is one avenue to accomplish that," she explained. "MANA builds



the ladies' leadership and networking skills, while paying close attention to their academics to ensure they are progressing toward eventual graduation."

Aradillas hopes chapter members will inspire others. "Latinos need more representation in the nation, state and community," she said. "These young ladies will go into the world one day and provide that support to others, thus continuing the cycle of success for our Latino student community."

"Within this chapter, we are hermanas (sisters) who help each other in both our successes and failures," added Gonzalez-Galan, a cell and molecular biology major who plans to become a dentist.

"We always support each other and have a close bond to every one of our members."

### **True Blessing**

For Gonzalez-Galan, MANA de Savannah at Armstrong has been "a true blessing" and has motivated her to improve as an individual and a leader.

"I have learned that on a day-to-day basis, everything is a learning experience," she said. "On my first day at Armstrong, I would have never believed that MANA de Savannah at Armstrong would be the first collegiate chapter in the nation. I wouldn't have seen myself as the president of the organization, either."

— SANDRA BENNETT



## WILDLIFE CENTER CELEBRATES MILESTONE ANNIVERSARY

The Center for Wildlife Education and Lamar Q Ball, Jr. Raptor Center is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year. Located on the Statesboro Campus, the wildlife center supports Georgia Southern University's environmental education programs. Since opening two decades ago, the Center for Wildlife Education has expanded from four-and-a-half acres to 18 acres as a showcase for reptiles, amphibians, mammals and birds of prey including eagles, hawks and falcons. The Center is also home to a waterfowl pond, cypress swamp and other displays. The latest highlight is the invasive species exhibit, "Under Attack," which features species that are not native to Georgia. The exhibit examines their impact on native species, the economy and the quality of life in the region. Species in the exhibit include a Burmese python, the feral hog, mosquitoes, lion fish and many others.

### CRITTER NATION

Several Wildlife Center residents visited with guests at the facility's celebration event in February.



# SOLVING PROBLEMS

## McMurry named Georgian of the Year for leadership during Interstate 85 bridge collapse in 2017

Georgia Southern alumnus Russell McMurry is a problem solver. He graduated in 1991 with a degree in civil engineering technology and today he is the Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT).

He became the public face of GDOT after a fire caused the I-85 bridge collapse in Atlanta last spring. The commissioner received many accolades for his handling of that disaster, including his recent naming as *Georgia Trend's* 2018 Georgian of the Year. He credits his educational and business background for his leadership efforts.

Professor Junan Shen, Ph.D., teaches most of the transportation engineering classes at Georgia Southern. According to the Department of Civil Engineering and Construction (CEC) professor, there are numerous best practices in disaster response for an incident such as the I-85 bridge collapse. But he considers the most important, with a disaster as large as this one, to be problem solving. "Most people know our program is focused on engineering and technology, and there is a lot of that. You learn to design any kind of structure and material in civil engineering. However, in the lab, many of my students will make mistakes, and I allow them to make mistakes. Most importantly, we want students to find the solutions to their mistakes on their own. Because when you go to work, you don't always have easy solutions. But you always have problems."

During the I-85 fire and bridge collapse, there were numerous problems. Chief among them was that a major Atlanta transportation artery was out of commission. That fact was compounded because the old bridge plans couldn't be used. The original beams from the 1980s bridge were no longer made. The GDOT team started working the Thursday night of the fire and had to work around the clock to redesign 700 feet of bridge, a monumental problem-solving task.



CEC Associate Professor Peter D. Rogers, Ph.D., said, "The overriding theme in all our courses is problem solving, because the good managers are the ones that can think on their feet. They solve problems and 'put out fires' as people might say. And I think Russell's job is all about putting out fires. Figuratively and literally, in this case."

Early in the crisis, McMurry decided that his department needed to communicate with the media and keep the public informed. He found it important to communicate regularly about the traffic issues and the rebuilding progress.

Engineering students at Georgia Southern are required to learn about communication skills, too. In fact, Gustavo Maldonado, Ph.D., also an associate professor in the CEC, was a member of the investigative team for a soon-to-be-published communications research project for GDOT.

"People will see your work through what you speak and write," said Maldonado. "So, if you excel in communicating immediately, the public will see they are in front of someone knowledgeable they can trust."

Jennifer Kowalewski, Ph.D., associate professor in the Department of Communications Arts, was the co-principal investigator for that same GDOT communications research project.

"GDOT did a good job communicating with the public overall. I think one of the biggest things in a crisis is to get information out to the public immediately. You had members of GDOT going on local news stations and radio programs to try to get information out about what was going on, and how they were trying to move traffic through that area," said Kowalewski. "Unfortunately, with breaking news, things can change so quickly. GDOT would have to say, 'Okay, we don't know exactly what's happening at this moment in time, but we can tell you all of our latest information.' I think they really tried to get out in front of the news story, and let people know about alternative routes."

McMurry did an outstanding job of marshalling different regional and state partnerships to rebuild the I-85 bridge in record time. Problem solving and communicating went a long way toward that successful outcome. Rodgers said, "So he uses his engineering problem-solving background and education from Georgia Southern. You combine that with his business expertise, and he's got quite a few talents in terms of dealing with the public."

McMurry, the problem solver, has stayed connected with Georgia Southern and supported the Allen E. Paulson College of Engineering and Computing through his work serving on the Corporate Advisory Committee. He was named the CEC 2017 Alumnus of the Year.

— LIZ WALKER

# STITCH FIX

## A peek inside a shop that teaches



### OCTOROON

Faculty and students created the costumes for their fall 2017 production of "The Octoroon."



### LOVE AND CHANCE

"A Game of Love and Chance" was a main stage production at the Center for Art and Theatre in spring 2016.

Only a few people know about the magical treasure that fills an ordinary room in the Central Warehouse Building on the Statesboro Campus. The treasure trove is Georgia Southern University's very own costume shop. It features a collection of costumes from years of student productions. For most actors, costumes help them transform into the characters they play on stage.

"You can work on a character for months but you never fully have the movement or personality down until you have the clothes on," said Tyra Wilson, a senior theatre major who has been cast in five main stage productions at Georgia Southern. "As an actor, it fully throws you into the world to wear the characters clothes, shoes and in some cases jewelry. Getting to see the character shine through on your own body helps the actor disappear and commit."

"We have all kinds of garments and accessories," said Professor Sarah McCarroll, Ph.D., who teaches theatre history, script analysis and costume design. "They range from the support garments required for specific kinds of plays or productions — women's corsets for when we do period plays — to men's and women's clothing representing a full range of historical periods from Classical Greek through the 18th century right up to today."

McCarroll and her staff of student workers manage the shop, which supports the University's Theatre and Performance program. At least four shows are performed each academic year. Last spring's production of "Chicago, The Musical," had upward of 60 costumes. Many were store bought, but the professor and her staff built a number of daywear pieces, since

the production is set in the 1920s. For the recent production of "The Octoroon," faculty and students created costumes for the 19th century period piece.

"You can't run to the mall for a dress from 1895," McCarroll said. "We also build clothing if there is a specific need for a show — if a costume has to be able to work in a certain way, or the text requires a very specific look — or if a designer wants a specific look for a piece of contemporary clothing, and it cannot be found for purchase. In general, we don't make much contemporary clothing. It's actually much cheaper for me to buy garments from today, especially if I have good luck at Goodwill."

### Learning by Doing

No formal classes are taught in the shop, but it does serve as an informal training program for students in the Theatre and Performance program.

"We want students who want to be designers and technicians learning by doing in the same way that our actors are learning by doing in the production program," explained McCarroll. "All student employees are hired as stitchers, which means they spend a lot of time in front of sewing machines. As their skill sets increase, they may do some cutting of garments. We all do crafts work when it comes time to make or decorate accessories, and most shop staff work on some or all of the wardrobe crews for shows, so they get experience with hair and makeup."

The costume shop is filled with sewing machines, sergers, irons, steamers, dress forms, all kinds of sewing supplies and notions (like scissors, pins, thread, snaps, zippers, elastic, bias tape, belt

buckles, beeswax, and — most importantly — seam rippers to undo mistakes), washers and dryers, an industrial steam kettle used for dyeing fabric, craft supplies, fabric and trim of all kinds. The hanging stock includes pants, shirts, vests, breeches, capes, suits, blouses, hoop skirts, waistcoats, day and formal dresses, men's and women's period garments from the classical period to the 1890s, and fantasy wear. There are all kinds of accessories — purses, aprons, shoes, jewelry, armor and wigs.

In addition to helping student actors learn how to work with designers and technicians when they have costume fittings, the shop allows staff to maintain control of the artistic product. They work closely with the director and other designers for a "unified product in the end or something that looks like it all fits intentionally and goes together really well."

"Fittings are always a fun experience for me," said Wilson, who has worked as a stitcher and an assistant and is planning for a career in artistic management. "Seeing what my designer, in most cases Professor Sarah McCarroll, has in mind for my clothes tends to give me ideas about traits my character may or may not have. I always come in with questions regarding my blocking or movement on stage, to see if the costume can do what I want my body to be able to do to tell my piece of the story."

After each show, costumes and accessories are stored in the shop. Some may be reused in future productions. McCarroll estimates there could be as many as 15,000 pieces in the facility.

— SANDRA BENNETT

## THE ELITE

Thanks to encouragement from her ROTC support system, Destinee Wesley is now a senior nursing student.

# GEORGIA SOUTHERN ROTC NURSING PROGRAM LEADS THE NATION

It takes a special kind of person to become an Army nurse.

The demands upon the ROTC nursing student are relentless. In addition to nursing classes, medical training, clinicals and exams, they're also required to learn Army doctrine, perform rigorous physical training and field exercises, and participate in leadership training and competitions during coveted summer breaks. For many who enter the program, they decide it's too much.

"There's an attrition," said ROTC Scholarship and Enrollment Officer George Fredrick. "If I bring in 10 freshman nurse cadets ... four years later, I probably have four who stick with nursing. The other cadets change majors. Everybody can't do that. They learn early in the pre-nursing phase. We're aware of those numbers, and we're aware of what it takes."

Despite the challenges for students and recruiters, however, Georgia Southern University — for the fifth year in a row — leads the nation in producing Army nurses. It's a formidable accomplishment Fredrick says is built on an essential partnership between ROTC and the School of Nursing.

"We have a longstanding great relationship with nursing," he said. "We cannot do this without their partnership. We cannot sustain this without them."

Now in its 20th year, the ROTC nursing program initially struggled to find the right students and help them get through to graduation and pinning. As the program continued to develop, the Army, too, was struggling to produce enough nurses each year. And after several U.S. military conflicts in the early 2000s, the call went out to all ROTC nursing programs around the country to produce more Army nurses ... and quickly.

In response, ROTC and the School of Nursing came together and developed a model to help students succeed. In this new model, on the nursing side, each class reserves five spots for ROTC nurses who meet the minimum requirements of the nursing program; and on the ROTC side, the program is rearranged to allow nursing students to get leadership training earlier in order to avoid the difficult overlap with clinicals.



It's a successful partnership that has brought the University national acclaim.

"It's a good opportunity for us," said Melissa Garno, Ed.D., RN, professor and director of the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program. "We've got a quality program, and we're helping educate the people that defend and serve our country."

The program has been good for students, too.

Destinee Wesley, a senior ROTC nursing student from Hephzibah, Georgia, says there have been many times she thought she couldn't do it, but always found the encouragement to keep going.

"I didn't think I was going to make it through my first semester of nursing school," she said. "Everybody in ROTC — when I would come in the building with a gray cloud over my head and bags under my eyes — they would say, 'You're going to be fine,' and they would be smiling."

"I had a good support system."

Wesley says she has now grown accustomed to waking up at 5 a.m., doing physical training, studying and then doing 12-hour clinical shifts at Memorial Medical Center in Savannah. It's a schedule not everyone wants to adopt.

"The other nursing students always say, 'I don't know how you do it,'" she said.

Fredrick says he knows ROTC nursing students are special. In order for him to find a new batch of these elite students, he has to find them in high school or early in their freshman year of college. He says the future looks especially bright now that our nursing program has expanded to the Armstrong Campus in Savannah, and he hopes to form strong partnerships there as well.

ROTC nurses are a rare breed, and it takes hard work to fill those seats — even harder to maintain the top spot in the nation with larger universities nipping at his heels.

"Excellence can only be sustained if everybody agrees to work hard," said Fredrick. "Other schools would love to have this title. I'm selfish. This is Georgia Southern!" — *DOY CAVE*



## AWARD OF EXCELLENCE RECIPIENTS

Six faculty members are the recipients of the 2017-18 Georgia Southern University Awards for Excellence. They were honored for outstanding contributions in the classroom, in the community and for research/creative scholarly activity.

### THE WINNERS OF THE AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN CONTRIBUTIONS TO INSTRUCTION ARE:

College of Education Professor Wendy Chambers, Ph.D., and College of Science and Mathematics Professor Christine Whitlock, Ph.D. The award is not for the best teacher or the most popular teacher, but recognizes a professor's contribution to the teaching-learning process at the institutional level. The award is administered through the Centers for Teaching and Technology.

**Chambers** is a professor of developmental psychology for the College of Education. She has taught more than 200 courses and roughly 6,000 students at Georgia Southern, from first-year to doctoral level. Her courses are known for being reading and writing intensive. Chambers has also been involved with course and curriculum development at all levels of the institution.

**Whitlock** is a professor and assistant chair in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry. She has involved at least 40 undergraduates in her research. With their help, a number of projects in organic synthesis and chemical education have been undertaken at Georgia Southern.

### THE WINNERS OF THE AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN SERVICE ARE:

College of Science and Mathematics Professor Michele McGibony, Ph.D., and College of Education Professor Cordelia Zinskie, Ed.D. The award honors and rewards faculty who use their academic disciplines to provide non-compensated assistance to the community, region and the academic arena. This award is administered through the Provost's Office.

**McGibony** is a 1993 Georgia Southern alumna and teaches biochemistry. She maintains an active undergraduate research group, and her students regularly present their work at local, regional and national scientific meetings. She is also the adviser to the Student Affiliates of the American Chemical Society of Georgia Southern University, which has earned



### TEACHER SCHOLARS

Award winners pose with their medals during Fall Convocation 2017. Posing from left to right are Michele McGibony, Cordelia Zinskie, Wendy Chambers, Christine Whitlock, Chad Posick and Hani Samawi.

outstanding chapter awards for the past two years.

**Zinskie** has been a professor at Georgia Southern for 24 years. She served as chair of the Department of Curriculum, Foundations and Reading for seven years (2006-13) before returning to the faculty. Currently, she is the program coordinator for the new master's in evaluation, assessment, research and learning degree program. Zinskie is also recognized for service beyond the institution in her roles as editor of the National Youth-At-Risk Journal and president of the Georgia Educational Research Association.

### THE EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH/ CREATIVE SCHOLARLY ACTIVITY AWARD WINNERS ARE:

Chad Posick, Ph.D., assistant professor in the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Hani Samawi, Ph.D., a professor of biostatistics in the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health. Administered through the Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs, this award goes to professors who excel in research while teaching full time.

**Posick** teaches criminal behavior, victimology, graduate statistics and the inside-out prison exchange program. His research is focused on violence prevention.

"I study the victimization of children and adolescents and how to best prevent harm," he said. "I also work on studying community violence in Savannah. Part of this includes an initiative funded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) called Smart Prosecution."

He wants his research to help real people facing the devastating effects of violence.

As for winning the Research/Creative Scholarly Activity Excellence Award, Posick calls it a tremendous honor.

"It means a lot to me because I know how productive and hardworking my friends and colleagues are all around the University," he said. "It feels great to be a small part of all the research going on in this University."

**Samawi** has been with the College of Public Health since 2006. Early in his career, he realized his primary purpose was to promote health and social justice, to eliminate health disparities within communities and to increase access to services and decisive life-changing knowledge.

He focuses on solving statistical and biostatistics problems in the areas of data analysis, medical diagnostics, statistical modeling, mediation analysis and simulation and Monte Carlo methods, among other areas.

Samawi called the Research/Creative Scholarly Activity Excellence Award the "crowning achievement" of his work in the College of Public Health.

"Receiving this award has left me with a bit of an inexplicable feeling of contentment. To be honored and respected by my colleagues and superiors, and a source of pride to my family, has resonated with a feeling of achievement that goes well beyond the award."

All six professors were honored during Convocation in August.

## ARMSTRONG LEADERSHIP AWARDS

Armstrong's annual leadership awards — held last spring — recognized and honored a number of faculty members for their academic excellence and service to the University Community:



**Michael Toma**, Ph.D., the Fuller E. Callaway Professor of Economics, received the Alumni Award for Distinguished Faculty Service to the Academic Discipline. Since joining the University 20 years ago, Toma has consistently applied his scholarly work to community issues. He also has mentored dozens of undergraduate student competitors and is the co-founder of the Academy of Economics and Finance Undergraduate Research Competition.



**Jason Beck**, Ph.D., associate professor of economics, received the Award for Distinguished Faculty Service to the Community. He was recognized for his directorship of the Coastal Georgia Center for Economic Education, a nonprofit dedicated to helping K-12 teachers teach economics and personal finance. He received no compensation for this work in which he managed to instruct 50-100 teachers, meet with them and provide them with classroom content and lesson plans each year for the past five years, all while teaching a full faculty load.



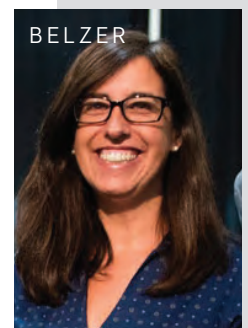
**Wendy Wolfe**, Ph.D., associate professor and psychology department internship coordinator, received the Award for Distinguished Faculty Service to the University. In addition to serving on the faculty senate and various senate committees, Wolfe has placed student interns in workplace settings across the Savannah area, thereby providing transformative opportunities that help students achieve their educational and professional goals.



**Glenda Ogletree**, Ph.D., associate professor of childhood and exceptional student education, received the H. Dean Propst Award for active involvement in the student life of the campus. This award winner is chosen by the Student Government Association. One student described Ogletree as "the kindest, most understanding, most loving teacher I have encountered since I entered the College of Education."



**Anne Katz**, Ph.D., assistant professor of childhood and exceptional student education, received the Brockmeier Faculty Award for lasting interest in the faculty and the students of Armstrong. This award honors a junior faculty member. Katz has authored numerous articles and book chapters, which focus on literacy instruction in urban schools. She serves as a liaison for a teens for literacy program in local schools and is a collaborator in undergraduate research grants.



**Allison Belzer**, Ph.D., associate professor of history, is the first recipient of the Judge Ron Ginsberg Faculty Excellence Award for outstanding teaching. Her department chair said, "She routinely accepts independent studies and directed readings, working one-on-one with students in addition to her regular teaching load. She flourishes in honors courses, constructing exciting, creative learning environments. She also directs the student research program and is tireless in promoting faculty/student engagement."

UNDER CONSTRUCTION



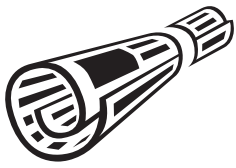
**INTERDISCIPLINARY ACADEMIC BUILDING**

Paving the way to ensure academic excellence for generations of future students, the new Interdisciplinary Academic Building on the Statesboro Campus will open for fall 2018. The multi-purpose, multi-storied building just off the pedestrian north of the IT Building will provide 110,000 square feet of flexible space, classroom technology and labs.



**WATERS COLLEGE OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS BUILDING**

Slated to open in 2019, the Armstrong Campus' newest building will be headquarters for the Waters College of Health Professions. With \$22 million from the state's FY18 budget signed by Gov. Nathan Deal, the construction of the new facility as well as renovation of Ashmore Hall will include a Simulation Suite as well as hands-on, team-oriented learning spaces. Don and Cindy Waters provided a \$2 million donation to the college that will bear their name. Waters College of Health Professions. "A transformational gift that is truly monumental," stated Gov. Deal.



## STUDENT NEWSPAPER GOES WEEKLY

A new era for *The George-Anne*. The Georgia Southern University student newspaper has reduced the number of days it publishes a print edition each week. Instead of the customary Tuesdays and Thursdays, the newspaper is now published only on Thursdays. The Student Media Board said it made the decision based on monetary and advertising realities. The *George-Anne* is expanding its social media and online content. *The Inkwell*, the Armstrong Campus newspaper, will continue to publish on a weekly basis during the fall and spring terms.

## MARKER HONORS FIRST AFRICAN-AMERICAN STUDENTS AT STATESBORO CAMPUS

In 1965, seven black men and women made history as the first African-Americans to enroll on the Georgia Southern Statesboro Campus. Today, a historical marker is prominently displayed on Sweetheart Circle in front of the Marvin Pittman Administration Building to recognize those trailblazers.

John Bradley, a high school teacher in Statesboro, enrolled as a graduate student in January 1965. That fall, six undergraduates joined him. They were Clavelia Love Brinson, Arlene Daughtry, Ulysee Mosley, Shirley Woodall, Jesse Zeigler Carter and Catherine Davis, a sophomore transfer student who would become the first black student to earn a degree at Georgia Southern.

**“Our passion to succeed was not an easy task.” –Ulysee Mosley**

Carter and Mosley were among many black alumni who returned to campus for the public unveiling last spring. Mosley, a retired principal who lives in Indianapolis, said the ceremony was an emotional experience. “Our passion to succeed was not an easy task, and it was by sheer amount of will that we manifested that which we visualized,” he added.

Carter, also a retired educator, said she was proud to be one of “the brave warriors who paved the way for the many students who followed.”

Mosley grew up in Albany, Georgia, and was Georgia Southern’s second black graduate. He was thrilled to be back on campus to reunite with college friends he hadn’t seen in decades.

“I take pride in saying that racial inclusion at Georgia Southern did not come from my own efforts, but with the help of my colleagues who stood with me during those trying times of racial integration,” he said. “Reuniting with pioneers that I hadn’t seen in 50 years was exciting. I saw Carolyn Milton\* who had a sway in her walk and an infectious laugh; Jessie Zeigler, who exuded a strong attitude of pride; and there was John Lawrence.\* I ate many meals at John and Barbara’s table in Swainsboro, Georgia.”

In his remarks, Georgia Southern University President Jaimie Hebert, Ph.D., said the marker “will serve as a constant reminder of the bravery and perseverance of our first African-American students, and the community they built.”

*\*Carolyn Milton and John Lawrence entered in fall 1966.*



### BRAVE WARRIORS

Ulysee Mosley and Jesse Zeigler Carter were on hand for unveiling of marker recognizing Georgia Southern’s first African-American students.

### THE UNVEILING

Ulysee Mosley and President Hebert unveil the historical marker while Director of Annual Giving, Gloria Goosby, looks on.

# COLLEGE NEWS



*Allen E. Paulson*  
*College of Engineering and Computing*

## NEW DEGREE PROGRAMS

The College of Engineering and Computing is offering six new degree programs. They include undergraduate degrees in both computer and construction engineering, and graduate degrees in civil, electrical and mechanical engineering, and information technology. Dean Mohammad Davoud explained the programs not only will expand the College's offerings but also will produce students qualified to fill in-demand engineering jobs. Projections show more than 1,000 jobs created in Georgia over the next three years will require people with computer engineering backgrounds. In proposing the new programs, the College also cited projections showing more than 17,000 jobs will open for construction engineers during the 12-year period from 2012-2024. Davoud said employers are starving for these types of graduates and his college intends to be at the forefront of graduating students who will be able to fill these highly specialized industry positions.

*College of Arts and Humanities*

## WINNING PERFORMANCE

The Theatre and Performance program's production of "She Kills Monsters" won nine national awards from the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival, Region IV hosted by Georgia Southern last year. The University received an outstanding award for Ensemble of a Play, which recognizes the top cast, and eight distinguished awards for Production of a Play, Director of Play (Nicholas Newell), Choreography (Jake Guinn), Costume Design (Sarah McCarroll), Lighting Design (Spencer Collins), Performance by an



Actress in a Play (Kelsey Alexandria and Sadie Thomas), and Performance by an Actor in a Play (Will Cox).

*College of Behavioral and Social Sciences*

## JOHN KRAFT FIRST DEAN

John Kraft, Ph.D., was named interim and the first dean of the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences. Kraft will serve in the position until a national search for the permanent dean has been completed. He has served as the department head for psychology at Armstrong State University and previously served as interim assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs. Kraft has been a member of the faculty on the Armstrong Campus since receiving his doctorate in psychology from the University of New Hampshire in 1999.

*College of Education*

## EAGLE ACADEMY OPENS

Last fall, EAGLE Academy welcomed its first two students as fully enrolled Georgia Southern University undergraduates. An inclusive post-secondary education (IPSE) program, the Academy offers Equal Access to Gainful Learning and Employment (EAGLE) for those with mild intellectual disabilities. EAGLE Academy is currently a third- and fourth-year program, allowing students to transfer after completing an initial two-year IPSE program, such as CHOICE at East Georgia State College. Unique to most programs of their kind, Georgia Southern EAGLE Academy students are given a custom-built academic program based on their interests, giving the students the same opportunity that others on campus have to take courses for credit and work towards their career goals. Students also live on campus, allowing them to



become fully immersed in campus life and have easy access to all campus amenities. Finally, students enrolled in the program are also trained for employment through internships or paid jobs which are secured with the assistance of the Academy's team. Current team members of the EAGLE Academy include Founding Executive Director Shelley Woodward, Program Director Karen Phipps and Graduate Assistant Emily Lewis.

#### College of Business

## MEASURING BUSINESS CONDITIONS

The College of Business has partnered with *Georgia CEO*, through the Bureau of Business Research and Economic Development (BBRED), for the second year, to conduct quarterly surveys of *Georgia CEO* newsletter readers. The survey measures the impact of current and future business conditions in Georgia. It is emailed to subscribers in each of the nine *Georgia CEO* daily newsletters which includes Albany, Athens, Atlanta, Augusta, Columbus, Middle Georgia, Newnan, Savannah and Valdosta. To participate in the quarterly Business Index Survey, visit [GeorgiaCEO.com](http://GeorgiaCEO.com) and subscribe to your local *Georgia CEO* newsletter.

#### College of Science and Mathematics

## STUDENT WINS FELLOWSHIP

Department of Biology graduate student Jose Sanchez won a highly competitive National Science Foundation (NSF) fellowship to conduct ecological research in South America. Sanchez is one of only three students selected to participate from a competitive, nationwide search. The fellowship is funded by a NSF International Research Experience for Students grant.

The grant allowed Sanchez to travel to the Cape Horn Biosphere Reserve in southern Chile in December for a two-month research expedition. This was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to work with international collaborators to conduct cutting-edge research in a unique setting. Sanchez conducted independent research on the ecology of freshwater streams and the importance of these aquatic ecosystems to local people.

"I'm proud to represent Georgia Southern University as part of this program," said Sanchez, adding that he had the chance to apply his research to the conservation of an important ecosystem and the local culture that depends on this system.

"Being awarded this prestigious fellowship will contribute to Sanchez's development as a scientist," said Checo Colon-Gaud, Ph.D., director of the Department of Biology graduate program. "I'm proud of him for pursuing this opportunity and thrilled that he is representing not only the Biology Graduate Program, but the University as a whole."



#### Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health

## NEW PUBLIC HEALTH TRACK

The Master of Public Health (MPH) program within the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health (JPHCOPH) will be expanding to include a new generalist track as a result of the consolidation between Georgia Southern and Armstrong State. The new concentration will join the existing five specialty tracks available to MPH students. This track provides students with the opportunity to complete a more broad-based program of study, along with the flexibility to tailor their individual focus with more guided elective options. Once completed, they will have the applied skills and knowledge required for the front-line public health practitioner. In addition, the Bachelor of Science in Public Health (BSPH) program currently offered by JPHCOPH will be available on the Armstrong and Statesboro campuses in the near future.

#### Waters College of Health Professions

## \$5.2 MILLION GRANT FOR STUDENTS

Donna Brooks, Ph.D., associate provost for Academic Affairs and Graduate Studies and associate professor in the Department of Rehabilitation Sciences, has received a Health Resources and Services Administration grant for \$5.2 million. The funds are for the Scholarships for Disadvantaged Students grant program, which supports scholarships for students from disadvantaged backgrounds who are enrolled in health profession programs. Brooks, along with co-investigators Sara Plaspohl, Dr.P.H., assistant professor in the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health and Douglas Masini, Ed.D., department head and associate professor in the Department of Diagnostic and Therapeutic Sciences, designed the grant for eligible students seeking a Master of Public Health or a Bachelor of Science in medical laboratory science at Georgia Southern University. Each degree program was awarded \$650,000 over the next four years, totaling \$5.2 million.





# A MINDFUL APPROACH

## *Counselor Educator Brings Federal-level Training to Statesboro-Bulloch County Law Enforcement*

While completing his undergraduate degree, counselor education professor Richard Cleveland, Ph.D., worked as a campus officer to help pay for school. “I remember one of my first calls was a response of an elderly woman who fell down a flight of stairs and cracked her head open,” he recalled. Cleveland said he was the first one on the scene, and his first response was fear. He froze at the sight.

“It felt like forever, but looking back on police logs it was maybe a minute,” he explained. “But for me, I felt so ashamed — like I wasted so much time.” Thinking back, Cleveland used this experience to explain how the body reacts in stressful situations.

“The more stressed we get, the more we lose fine motor skills,” he explained. “Firing a weapon safely and effectively requires a large amount of cognitive processing and fine motor skills.”

That is part of the basis of Cleveland’s new research. Receiving a seed grant from the College of Education (COE), Cleveland’s pilot project, “Mindfulness-Based Tactical Instruction,” explores how mindfulness practices or attention to thoughts and feelings

will help officers mitigate the psychological effects of high stress when engaged in tactical situations. The project is a collaboration with the College’s counselor education program, Georgia Southern University’s Public Safety Department, Statesboro Police Department, Bulloch County Sheriff’s Office, and the United States Pentagon Force Protection Agency. COE’s Jonathan Hilpert, Ph.D., associate professor in the Department of Curriculum, Foundations and Reading is contributing his expertise in data analysis.

Currently participating in a national work group, Hilpert is looking at stress levels for students taking exams. This, Cleveland explained, is a great link to the mindfulness research he is completing, as they can use similar strategies and methodologies for students in high-stress situations that they are using for the tactical practices for the officers.

“We are already thinking about how in the future to apply this to Georgia Southern students and, specifically, counselor education students as they are navigating intense counseling sessions and choosing their words and reactions,” said Cleveland.

## APPREHENDING STRESS

Richard Cleveland, Ph.D. (pictured on left) explaining the process of the training and wrist sensor technology with Captain Todd Masburn, Senior POST Instructor for the Bulloch County Sheriff's Office.



### The Training: How Does it Work?

The training includes pre- and post-tests with officers wearing a wrist sensor that takes several measurements including heart rate and electrodermal activity (EDA). EDA measures the involuntary changes in the electrical properties of the skin such as sweat glands, which are thought to be an effective measure of stress in the body.

The Pentagon Force Protection Agency's involvement initially began through informal conversation about helping trainees manage stress.

The Agency's interest grew, however, as Cleveland's project developed to include data looking at stress levels from EDA measurements, as currently federal trainings monitor stress primarily with the use of heart rate.

Tests are conducted in the Statesboro Police Department's simulator, a fully-interactive, computer-based training that can change based on participants' reactions. Cleveland and Hilpert look for data such as proper response to a situation; how long it takes for the officer to draw their weapon; length of time to pull the trigger; how many shots are fired; whether the target is hit and how many times; and stress level throughout the exercise. This provides a baseline for officers prior to entering training.

After the baseline data, officers receive one or a combination of trainings including standard department training, stress inoculation and/or mindfulness training.

Stress inoculation includes a safety briefing and five-day field-range experience that expose officers to drills and live-fire scenarios that place stress on the mind and body.

***“Firing a weapon safely and effectively requires a large amount of cognitive processing and fine motor skills.” –Richard Cleveland***

“It's exercise after exercise to help them draw their weapon out, discharge that weapon safely and effectively so that when they arrive at that moment they decide to use lethal force, however long it takes them to wade through the stress, then they can engage,” said Cleveland. “That's the stress inoculation training.”

There is yelling, movement and introductions of safety malfunctions such as misfires or jammed guns. Even though officers train for these situations, they often do not know how they will react until such incidents occur. Ensuring that they can react properly over and over again is vital.

“Think about the neurons in the brain,” explained Cleveland. “What gets fired, gets wired. Repetition trains the brain.”

Mindfulness training has officers practicing present moment awareness and how to attend to all the incoming stimuli they face in a high-stress situation.

“My hope,” Cleveland said, “is to give them tools to navigate that stressful environment, to use the best skills that they have for making decisions on safety for themselves and for everyone that they are serving and protecting. If they do have to use lethal force, that decision has been arrived at through all their cognitive abilities available rather than just a knee-jerk reaction.”

Cleveland says this training cannot teach officers how to avoid stress. No one can. It is about fielding that stress and returning to a state in which you can use all cognitive and fine motor abilities to make a decision and react.

“It doesn't help the stress magically go away,” he said. “They can't cheat the body. The hope is that the skills help them get back to functioning faster. It's more streamlined because they know what to expect.”

Mindfulness training includes combat breathing which focuses on regular, measured breathing as oxygen deprivation and lack of blood flow can cause negative physical effects on the body. Other examples of mindfulness skills include present moment and non-judgmental awareness whereby officers can attend to a situation without jumping to conclusions or using preconceived notions or responses.

After officers participate in training, they complete a post-test in the simulator to compare with the original scores of their pre-test data. The pilot has 10 participants from the partnering law enforcement agencies that are training with Cleveland, Hilpert and trainers from the Pentagon Force Protection Agency who complete trainings similar to these annually for federal agents.

Materials from the training, including curriculum and protocols, will be shared so that local law enforcement can continue this type of training when possible. “I want to see that the project can serve as a resource,” Cleveland said. “To be able to bring this type of training down to local, rural law enforcement is very rare.”

Training for Cleveland's pilot project is ongoing during spring 2018. — CINNAMON DOWD



# AVERITT AWARD WINNERS 2017



## JOHN DAVID CURLIS

### *Animals Speak in Color*

Growing up, John David Curlis ('17) had a number of pets, yet frogs intrigued him the most. As a Georgia Southern graduate student, he turned his attention to the ground snake. His research focused on the evolution of multiple color patterns in this harmless snake species that mimics deadly coral snakes.

"I have always been interested in how and why animals signal to one another, including signaling between males and females, between competitors, and between prey and their predators," he said. "I am particularly interested in the use of coloration as a means of signaling. Why would an animal be brightly colored rather than blend in with its surroundings? Why do some animals mimic the coloration of others?"

The biology major said he has sought answers to those questions since the beginning of his scientific career. "The ground snake, which I studied for my thesis research, exhibits an enormous amount of variation in color, some of which is used to deceitfully signal to predators that it is deadly," he said. "My research on this species was prompted by a fascination with the colors of this species, as well as a desire to find an evolutionary explanation for their maintenance."

Curlis is the recipient of the 2017 Averitt Award of Excellence in Graduate Research. The award, along with the Averitt Award of Excellence in Graduate Instruction, are the two highest honors bestowed within the Jack N. Averitt College of Graduate Studies.



## RAY DELVA

### *Excellence in Teaching*

"Ray Delva ('15, '17) is exactly what we expect out of our Double Eagles," said his faculty advisor, Professor Dustin Anderson, Ph.D. The Department of Literature and Philosophy graduate was honored with the Averitt Award for Excellence in Graduate Instruction. Delva's tenure as a teaching assistant led to his role as a recitation leader for a pilot program in World Literature. He worked with smaller sections of 25-30 students from the larger 300-student section of the course. Professor Anderson told *Georgia Southern* magazine that Delva's comments were insightful, directive, and helped the students to become both better readers and better writers.

"Ray not only moved onto teaching his own literature courses, but became an active leader in our pedagogy workshop as a guest speaker, and regularly met with other graduate students aspiring to teach their own courses," Anderson added. "He is going to make an incredible professor one day, and he will be a model we point back to as a high point of teaching in our program. He is one of those rare students who was able to completely integrate his research into his teaching."

# HELPING SOLDIERS

Nancy Henderson, an assistant professor in the Doctor of Physical Therapy program who has also worked with soldiers as a part-time federal employee for 12 years, compares active duty soldiers to professional athletes who push physical limits every day.

In correlation, there are roughly 300,000 musculoskeletal injuries — which may include ankle sprains, knee injuries and shoulder dislocations — reported by U.S. Army soldiers annually. In 2014 alone, more than 10 million duty days were lost due to injuries.

As such, Henderson launched a program, “Soldier Athlete Human Performance Optimization,” last year, in which students are assigned to their own company of 3rd Infantry Division soldiers at Fort Stewart or Hunter Army Airfield for six-week time frames each semester. Students present different injury prevention topics and then help soldiers in the company implement the information.

“This program provides the students with an opportunity to not only learn more about injury prevention, but also to build confidence and public speaking skills,” said Henderson. “Additionally, the students really enjoy the opportunity to work with high-level tactical athletes and aid in keeping our soldiers healthy and functioning at peak performance.”

According to Lt. Col. Kevin Kelly, the 3rd Infantry’s Division surgeon, there has been an estimated 20 percent drop in duty-limiting injuries among the soldiers as a result of the physical therapy students’ participation in spring and fall semesters in 2017.

“The command team and students are very excited,” said Henderson. “Students who are chosen to participate receive course credit and soldiers receive a certificate of completion for the project.”

Henderson also secured a memorandum of agreement with the commanding general at Ft. Stewart last summer, which allows students



to provide various educational opportunities to soldiers and provides faculty and students permission to conduct research with soldiers. In addition, a three-year Cooperative Research and Development Agreement was signed with the U.S. Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine in 2016. The University’s Department of Physical Therapy works with the research institute to refine military screening and assessment tools used to determine readiness and deployability of soldiers. The two institutions expect to jointly publish conference papers and manuscripts as a result of the project.

“Both the ongoing research endeavors, as well as the Soldier Athlete Human Performance Optimization Program, will continue through 2018, and hopefully for many more years,” noted Henderson. “There are many more opportunities to work with local tactical athletes and I have plans to involve other departments within the college as we move forward. Overall, we have developed a wonderful little triad between the University, the 3rd Infantry Division and the U.S. Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine.”

— MELANIE SIMÓN

“Winning the Averitt Award was obviously very exciting, but also quite surprising,” said Curlis, who graduated in December. “While I know that I work very hard on my research and do the best that I can, I have met and spent time with so many graduate students at Georgia Southern that put in hours upon hours of work and produce fascinating, meaningful research. I am beyond honored and grateful to be considered a top graduate researcher among these students.”

The new graduate is planning to enroll in a doctoral program, become a college professor and continue studying signaling among animals.

Delva worked with Professor David Dudley, Ph.D., on his thesis. It focused on the ideas of African-American scholars Calvin Warren and Cornel West that appeared in works from authors like George Jackson and LeRoi Jones (Amiri Baraka) in their epistles and poems written during their time in prison.

The Master of Arts in English major graduated last May and accepted a challenging position teaching within the state prison system with Southeastern Technical College.

# RESEARCH NOTES

*College of Science and Mathematics*

## CAMPUS WILDLIFE CATALOG

Department of Biology faculty and students have completed a two-year study to document all vertebrate species on the Statesboro Campus. The study, organized by Professors Michelle Cawthorn, Ph.D., Ray Chandler, Ph.D., Lance McBrayer, Ph.D., and Jamie Roberts, Ph.D., was funded by the University's Center for Sustainability. With the help of dozens of students, the scientists observed, live-trapped, netted, audio-recorded or photographed 207 species of vertebrates (fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals) on the campus. This impressive diversity includes 19 species of fish, 19 amphibians, 24 reptiles, 126 birds and 19 mammals. Because the study mapped the location of every animal found, future construction and other development can be done in a way that minimizes impacts on biodiversity. There are educational benefits as well, because a biodiverse campus is a living laboratory that students and faculty can use just by walking outside their building.

*College of Arts and Humanities*

## BAPTIST HISTORY

Professor Timothy Whelan, Ph.D., has continued his groundbreaking research in British Baptist history, women's studies, and literary history. He published his ninth article in the *Baptist Quarterly*, the official voice of the Baptist Historical Society. The article is a detailed history of the life and successive generations of Thomas Mullett (1745-1814), a previously unknown Baptist layman who became a friend and correspondent of several significant political, religious and literary figures in England and America. At the same time, Whelan's essay, "No Sanctuary for Philistines': Baptists and Culture in the Eighteenth Century," appeared in *Challenge and Change: English Baptist Life in the Eighteenth Century*, another publication of the Baptist Historical Society.

Last August, Whelan conducted a daylong symposium for doctoral students in history at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. His presentation focused on his work in uncovering manuscript collections in England and America pertaining to Baptist history, and how these previously unknown collections are transforming long-held paradigms about English Baptist history in the 18th and early 19th centuries. Since 2000, Whelan has published 10 books and 26 articles on Baptist history and life in England between 1750 and 1850, and is now one of the foremost Baptist historians in the world for that period.

Whelan is also nearing the completion of a new online edition of the "Correspondence of Mary Hays," the radical 1790s novelist. It will include some 470 letters to and from Hays (1759-1843), along with biographical notices of all the correspondents and individuals



named in the letters as well as the first extensive genealogy on the Hays family to be compiled by any scholar. He has worked with the original manuscripts of these letters, now belonging to collections in London, Oxford, New York City and Philadelphia.

*Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health*

## SOCIOCULTURAL FACTORS IN MAMMOGRAPHY

Associate Professor of Epidemiology Yelena Tarasenko, Dr.P.H., co-authored a study that investigated the sociocultural factors associated with breast cancer screening within the past two years among Latina immigrants. Barriers to breast cancer screening for the Latina women include lack of health insurance, income inequality, documentation status or how the women receive cancer education. The study included 82 women between 40 to 64 years of age. The findings provide evidence for the importance of sociocultural factors in Latina immigrant women's timely mammography screening. As an indirect study outcome, the study team developed Spanish language informational resources about affordable breast and cervical cancer screening options to distribute to study participants.

*Allen E. Paulson College of Engineering and Computing*

## STUDENT RESEARCH TEAM

An Engine Combustion Laboratory research team of undergraduate and graduate students were invited to present research papers at the Society of Automotive Engineers World Congress in Detroit. The team, led by Professor Valentin Soloiu, Ph.D, received seven awards for their research. Their research



covered topics that ranged from advanced combustion modes, noise and vibrations studies in automotive engines to intelligent/autonomous vehicles technologies. The students included Martin Muinos, Aliyah Knowles, Remi Gaubert, Jose Moncada, Bernard Ibru and Thomas Beyerl.

*Waters College of Health Professions*

## **\$1.6 M GRANT FOR CONCUSSION AWARENESS**

A research team associated with a Department of Health Sciences and Kinesiology professor has been awarded a \$1.6 million Centers for Disease Control and Prevention grant to develop One Team, a program to address safety and concussion awareness in youth sports. Assistant Professor Tamerah Hunt, Ph.D., is collaborating with Seattle Pediatric Concussion Research Collaboration, and Seattle Children's Center for Childhood Health, Behavior and Development members, Sara Chrisman, M.D., and Emily Kroshus, Ph.D.

The One Team program will focus on children ages 9 to 13 in youth football and soccer leagues in the Puget Sound region and in southern Georgia. The goal is to decrease concussion risk in youth sports athletes. One Team will initiate safety huddles prior to the start of games to address sportsmanship and concussion reporting with coaches, officials, parents and athletes. During the safety huddles, athletes will be encouraged not to engage in illegal and dangerous collisions that could lead to concussions, and report concussive symptoms. Researchers will spend the first year refining the program followed by a yearlong randomized controlled trial evaluating outcomes in sportsmanship and reporting concussive symptoms.

*College of Behavioral and Social Sciences*

## **UNCOVERING THE PAST**

Professor Heidi Altman, Ph.D., is working on a collaborative project that connects the methods of zooarchaeology with ethnography and ethnohistory. The associate professor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology and her Florida State co-author, Tanya Peres, are looking to connect archaeologically known peoples to their contemporary descendants by focusing on traditions related to the use of animals that persist through time. In a recently published article, Altman examined beliefs and practices related to deer, aside from their use as venison. The research focuses on the use of deer antlers as hunting amulets and charms. The researchers connect these archaeological pieces to what is known about the cosmology, medicine and hunting practices of historically known and contemporary peoples in the same region. This expands the field of zooarchaeology to encompass interpretations of animal remains to be something aside from food remains. By expanding these contexts, researchers have better success at interpreting archaeological sites, and are able to make connections across the proto-historic or "Contact Period" in which many cultural practices did or did not change.



*College of Business*

## **SOCIAL JUSTICE AND COMIC BOOKS**

Department of Management faculty, John Harris, Ph.D., assistant professor of management, David Jiang, Ph.D., assistant professor of entrepreneurship, Curtis Sproul, Ph.D., assistant professor of management, and Stan Suboleski, Ph.D., clinical professor of hospitality management, are working on a project that follows the themes in comic book superhero titles/franchises. They are looking to see how various approaches to social justice issues, which are often embedded in comic themes, affect the overall sales performance of these comics.

*College of Education*

## **EMOTIONAL LEARNING**

Associate Professor of Instructional Technology Charles Hodges, Ph.D., is participating in a cross-college collaborative research project that recently received nearly \$10,000 in internal seed grant funding from Georgia Southern University's Faculty Research Committee (FRC). The University's FRC provides internal funding to promote faculty research and scholarship projects that will lead to future external funding. College of Engineering and Computing faculty Pradipta De, Ph.D., assistant professor of computer sciences principal investigator (PI) and Aniruddha Mitra, Ph.D., professor of mechanical engineering (co-PI) paired with Hodges (co-PI) to examine the influence of student affect in the learning process. The project, titled "Modeling Student Affect in the Classroom Teaching Environment," proposes that learning complex ideas in science, math, engineering and technology requires cognitive skills but is also impacted by the emotional responses of learning. Students who show a positive affect, such as attentiveness or curiosity, have a higher possibility of learning a concept compared to students showing a negative affect, like frustration, boredom or confusion. Data collection began fall 2017 in Mitra's mechanical engineering courses.



## A NATURAL FIT

*Former Armstrong athletics director finds ‘a really good fit’ at Georgia Southern*

Lisa Sweany, former director of athletics at Armstrong State University, joined the Georgia Southern athletics staff as deputy athletics director in June. Though the consolidation and transition process has been a “whirlwind,” she says she couldn’t pass up the great opportunity.

“When TK [Athletics Director Tom Kleinlein] talked to me about coming over as the deputy athletics director, I told him I’d think about it,” she said. “The more I thought about it, the more I thought, ‘This could be a really good fit for me....’ I really liked his vision and aligned with what he was trying to accomplish here, which were the same things that were important to me throughout my entire career.... So this, to me, was a natural fit.”

In Sweany, Georgia Southern gained an award-winning

athletics director with a history of success. Before joining the University, Sweany was named a 2017 Under Armour Athletics Director of the Year for NCAA Division II — one of only four Division II honorees in the nation. During her six years with Armstrong, the Pirates earned five NCAA Division II National Championships, 23 Peach Belt Conference regular-season titles, 15 Peach Belt tournament titles, 43 NCAA Championships appearances, 86 All-American athletes, 12 College Sports Information Directors of America Academic All-American athletes and 214 All-Peach Belt Conference honorees.

“We had good coaches that recruited tremendous student-athletes and then coached them up once they got there,” she said, “so I was fortunate we had a lot of success there due to some great work with coaches and student-athletes that

***“I mean, people love this institution. They are True Blue. They love everything about it.”***

***—Lisa Sweany***

were successful both academically and athletically. Every semester there we had a 3.0 as a department.”

As deputy athletics director, Sweany oversees the day-to-day operations in Eagle athletics, working directly with coaches and the administrative staff. She says her role frees up Kleinlein to focus more attention on external development of donors and fundraising, a crucial part of the athletics program. To be successful in her role, Sweany says she hopes to continue the philosophy that brought her here — coaching the student-athletes in sports, academics and life.

“A lot hinges on the ability of the coaches to recruit quality student-athletes,” she said, “and then once they’re here, it’s our responsibility to coach them up not just to be athletes, but also to help them be successful academically, and then teach them life skills and how to survive once they leave here and be leaders in their field.”

Sweany’s first few months have certainly been eventful. She arrived just as Eagles football was having one of its worst seasons in history. However, she said she was impressed and inspired by the players and their dedication to keep working hard and keep trying to get better despite the adversity.

Even more impressive to Sweany, however, is the dedication of Georgia Southern fans.

“I think the one thing that has impressed me, and I tell recruits this, too — ‘If you’re Georgia Southern, you’re Georgia Southern,’” she said. “I mean, people love this institution. They are True Blue. They love everything about it. People who work here, a lot of them have gone to school here. They’ve never left. The community supports it. That’s really special. You don’t always see that in other institutions or in other communities.” — *DOY CAVE*



## **GEORGIA SOUTHERN HIRES TWO STANDOUT COACHES FROM ARMSTRONG**

Former Armstrong State University Head Softball Coach Kim Dean and Head Men’s and Women’s Tennis Coach Sean McCaffrey — both of whom had outstanding seasons with the Pirates — have joined the Georgia Southern athletics staff.



DEAN

Dean was named Georgia Southern’s head softball coach last summer and made an immediate impact on the program in her first season, leading the Eagles to a top 50 RPI nationally and several big Sun Belt victories. McCaffrey took the helm as head women’s tennis coach and led the Eagles to a successful campaign this past season, picking up his 400th career victory along the way.



McCAFFREY

“I think Kim and Sean came in and did phenomenal jobs in their first season at Georgia Southern,” said Lisa Sweany, deputy athletics director. “We saw both teams progress and move forward under their leadership and we’re excited about the future of their programs.”

Dean is the former head softball coach at Armstrong, where in one year of coaching she led the Pirates to a third place finish at the 2017 NCAA Division II National Championships and a 38-14 overall record. For her efforts, Dean and her coaching staff were named the 2017 National Fastpitch Coaches Association Division II Southeast Region Coaching Staff of the Year.

McCaffrey oversaw three stellar years of men’s and women’s tennis at Armstrong. In his three years, he led the women’s team to two consecutive NCAA Division II National Championships, the first of which they tallied a perfect 33-0 record. He led the men’s team to two consecutive NCAA Division II semifinals and a No. 3 national ranking both years.





## ADRIAN PETERSON GOES INTO THE HALL OF FAME

Former Georgia Southern star Adrian Peterson added another honor to his already sparkling résumé when he was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame at the 60th National Football Foundation Annual Awards Dinner Dec. 5 at the landmark Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York City.

Peterson's No. 3 jersey is retired at Georgia Southern and he still stands as the NCAA's Division I all-time leading rusher with 6,559 yards in regular-season contests. The Alachua, Florida, native was the first sophomore to win the Walter Payton Award, given to the top player in the FCS.

"What an amazing honor to be recognized for such a prestigious award," Peterson said. "I am grateful for the chance to represent my hometown of Alachua, Florida, and my parents, Porter and Reatha Peterson, who set me up for success from the very start. Thank you, Georgia Southern University, for the opportunity to further my education and receive a college degree while playing the game of football. Lastly, sincere thanks to the committee for considering me worthy and allowing me to join such an elite class of men."

The class, which includes Peyton Manning, Marshall Faulk, Steve Spurrier and more, will be permanently enshrined at the new College Football Hall of Fame in Atlanta.

This spring Peterson was named director of student-athlete development, serving as a mentor to the current Eagles players and updating the coaching staff about the athlete's academic progress. He will also help with on-campus recruiting.



## CHAD LUNSFORD NAMED HEAD FOOTBALL COACH

Georgia Southern President Jaimie Hebert, Director of Athletics Tom Kleinlein and the Georgia Southern Board of Regents announced on Nov. 27, 2017, the hiring of Chad Lunsford as its head football coach.

"This is just so humbling, and I'm honored to be able to take over as the head coach of Georgia Southern football," Lunsford said. "I want to thank the Lord for this opportunity. I'm very blessed to be in this position because Georgia Southern is a very special place to my family and me. I'm looking forward to carrying on the great tradition of Eagle Football."

The 2017 campaign marked the ninth season overall for Lunsford, who has worn many hats in his time in Statesboro. Lunsford was promoted from assistant head coach to interim head coach on Oct. 22, 2017, and his team showed marked improvement each week, culminating with a 52-0 win over South Alabama and a 34-24 win over Louisiana on the road.

In 2016, Lunsford was named a Broyles Award nominee, given to the nation's top assistant coach, and on the recruiting side, he was named the Sun Belt Conference's Best Recruiter in 2016 by Scout.

He and his wife, Tippy, have a son, Rhett, and two daughters, Sophie and Josie.



## TRYOUTS NAMED FOR EDWIN JACKSON

Earlier this year, the walk-on tryouts for Georgia Southern football were named in honor of former player and NFL starter Edwin Jackson. Jackson was killed on Feb. 4, along with Uber driver Jeffrey Monroe, when they were struck along the side of Interstate 70 in Indiana by a suspected drunken driver.

"In memory of Edwin Jackson, we wanted to take the first step in honoring him by naming our walk-on tryouts after him," Georgia Southern head coach Chad Lunsford said. "Edwin went down the hardest path possible here at Southern to earn some unbelievable results. He went from a walk-on tryout participant, to a spot on the team, to playing time, to a starter and leader and finally, a captain and Sun Belt champion."

Jackson was a star athlete at Westlake High School in Atlanta and earned his spot on the Georgia Southern roster his freshman year as walk-on. He led the team in tackles his final two years, and was named First-Team All-Sun Belt his senior season. In 48 career games, Jackson tallied 218 tackles.

He went unselected in the 2015 NFL Draft, but was picked up by the Indianapolis Colts, won a spot on the roster for the 2016 season, was a starting inside linebacker for the last half of the season, finishing the year with 66 tackles.

# 2018 SCHEDULE



vs. SC STATE

SAT. SEP 1



vs. UMASS

SAT. SEP 8

AT CLEMSON

SAT. SEP 15



vs. ARKANSAS STATE

SAT. SEP 29 |



vs. SOUTH ALABAMA

SAT. OCT 6 |



AT TEXAS STATE

THUR. OCT 11 |



AT NEW MEXICO STATE

SAT. OCT 20



vs. APP STATE

THUR. OCT 25 |



AT ULM

SAT. NOV 3 |



vs. TROY

SAT. NOV 10 |



AT COASTAL CAROLINA

SAT. NOV 17 |



AT GEORGIA STATE

SAT. NOV 24 |



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[Tickets@GeorgiaSouthern.edu](mailto:Tickets@GeorgiaSouthern.edu) / 1(800)GSU-WINS

All sales are final; no refunds, no exchanges. Times, dates and locations are subject to change.







# SIDELINES



## MEN'S BASKETBALL POSTS ANOTHER 20-WIN SEASON

The men's basketball squad opened up its 2017-18 season in a big way, topping Wake Forest 85-83 in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Ike Smith's 3-pointer from the corner tied the game with 59.6 seconds left and then the junior calmly sank two free throws for the lead with 3.6 seconds to go. It was the Eagles' first win over an ACC opponent since an 83-78 victory at Virginia Tech in 2013.

The team went on to win 20 games on the year and placed third in the Sun Belt Regular season standings.

Georgia Southern guard Tookie Brown was named first-team All-Sun Belt for the third consecutive season. He becomes the first Eagle to accomplish the feat in Georgia Southern history.



## WOMEN'S RIFLE SCORES WELL IN SEASON WRAP-UP

The women's rifle team closed out its 2017-18 season with an outstanding performance at the 2018 Southern Conference Rifle Championships. Rosemary Kramer scored First-Team All-SoCon honors and the Air Rifle Athlete of the Year award by placing second in the medal round. Courtney Weekley led the league with a 590 in the preliminary round which included a pair of perfect 100 series. Lydia Odlin earned Second Team All-SoCon honors.

"The Southern Conference Championships were a huge validation of the hard work the team has been doing," said first-year head coach Sandra Worman. "We look forward to applying everything we learned in the coming season."



## GOLFER FIRES 60, SETS SCHOOL RECORD

Steven Fisk of the men's golf team fired a 12-under 60 in the second round at the Warrior Princeville Makai Invitational in Hawaii to become the 13th college golfer to post that magic 60 number. The 60 was a school record as well as a course record.



## ELLISON A RHINO

Former Georgia Southern quarterback Kevin Ellison is the season-opening starter for the Milano Rhinos of the Italian Football League. The Rhinos dominated the league in 2016, winning the 2016 title and reaching the 2017 final. He's playing under first-year coach Roberto D'Ambrosio, who was previously a linebacker for the Rhinos.

He joins several other Eagles who played professionally this year, including Matt Breida (49ers), Jerick McKinnon (Vikings), J.J. Wilcox (Steelers), Younghoe Koo (Chargers) and Ukeme Eligwe (Chiefs). Edwin Jackson (Colts) spent the season on the injured reserve while Montay Crockett (Jaguars) and Antwione Williams (Vikings) were on the practice squad.



## SAVANNAH'S FIRST FAN FEST

Hundreds of fans attended the first Fan Fest in Savannah last September. Following an Eagles football team practice, the Fan Fest featured inflatable slides for kids, face painting and free swag. Eagle players signed autographs and handed out schedules. President Hebert joined the Georgia Southern band, the cheerleaders and mascots GUS and Freedom. **Savannah is the Eagle Nation.**



# LEADING THE WAY WITH CARE

## *Nurse Educator Makes a Difference*

"Nursing is the best profession ever," says Helen Taggart, Ph.D., RN, and a professor of nursing at Georgia Southern University Armstrong Campus. After 50 years in the nursing field, her devotion is as strong as ever for what she calls "the most respected of all professions in the United States."

Her nursing education began in a program at St. Joseph's Hospital in Savannah. She was a student in the first class at St. Joseph's to attend nursing classes at Armstrong State College.

"We would walk through downtown Savannah from the dormitory on Habersham Street to the classes at Armstrong," she remembers.

Taggart earned a bachelor's in nursing from Armstrong and a Master of Science from Georgia Southern in Statesboro. She started her career working in areas such as labor and delivery, newborn nursery, pediatrics, orthopedics and in community-based health promotion. In those early years, she recalls nurses wore white uniforms, caps, white hosiery and technology barely existed.

"Everything was handwritten," she says. "There were no electronic records, blood pressure cuffs were manual and we sterilized and reused needles and syringes."

She began teaching part time at the suggestion of one of her professors. And for the last 29 years, Taggart's home has been on the Armstrong Campus as a School of Nursing faculty member.

"I love the interactions with the students," she says. "Being a part of their move from new student, through the lab coat ceremony, recognition ceremony, graduation, then work as a registered nurse is very rewarding. It is thrilling to see our graduates serving as preceptors for students, clinical instructors, nursing faculty and in the myriad of roles that nurses fill. Several nursing faculty at the Armstrong and Statesboro campuses are my former students."

As an alumna and professor, Taggart sees the consolidation "as an opportunity for greater coordination and use of resources for faculty, students and residents of the region." She notes it was difficult for many to accept the Armstrong Campus move from downtown to the current Southside campus, but the move was necessary for growth.

"Change is inevitable," she says. "It is difficult to erase history. The administration at this point seems to value keeping the name of Armstrong Campus. This will help in the transition to the new Georgia Southern University. Many of the buildings on the Armstrong Campus retain the names of the people who played important roles in the history of the University."

Forty-nine years ago, she married Thomas Taggart, an attorney, who is also an Armstrong alumnus. They are generous givers to the University and the professor says that support will continue "through my active participation in teaching, service and scholarship. My support will include donations to the University Foundation and doing the best that I can in teaching students and working with the rest of the greatly enlarged community."

Taggart has seen a lot of technological advances in nursing and medicine since starting her professional journey decades ago. The things that haven't changed are her compassion for others, and her commitment to nursing and her students.

"Recently, my guest lecturer, an Armstrong nursing graduate, described her current role and the fact is that this role did not exist when she graduated 10 years ago," says Taggart. "This is an exciting time for the nursing profession. I am delighted to be a part of preparing students for participation in the ever-changing health care system."

When asked about retirement, she laughs and says, "I'm working on it."

— SANDRA BENNETT

*"Several nursing faculty at the Armstrong and Statesboro campuses are my former students."*

— Helen Taggart



## ALUMNI SNAPSHOT



## THE DRIVE TO SUCCEED

### *Alumna Reflects on University Connections*

Ann Levett's distinguished career has come full circle, thanks to her new job as superintendent of the Savannah-Chatham County Public School System (SCCPSS). It's where she grew up as a student and where she began her teaching career four decades ago.

"It just seems, someday, like it was destined to happen," Levett said. "As a proud product of the public schools and lifelong educator, I have a strong sense of knowing what the needs are. I have connections to the community and a vested interest in the success of our community. By me being in this position, I have a view that someone else may not have who comes from the outside."

*"I was maybe six or seven when I decided to be a teacher."*

— Ann Levett

The graduate of Savannah's Beach High School also has strong connections to the newly consolidated Georgia Southern University. Levett earned a Bachelor of Science in speech and language pathology from Armstrong, and a master's in special education and a master's in public administration from Georgia Southern. Her doctoral degree in educational administration came from the University of Georgia. The superintendent discovered her passion for education at an early age.

"I was maybe six or seven when I decided that I wanted to be a teacher," the alumna said. "I think it's because I am the oldest in my family and I always enjoyed playing the role of the teacher. I enjoyed seeing my sisters and brothers learn and I think that's what got me going."

Levett's rise up the education ranks has been remarkable. Her many titles include special education teacher, high school principal, deputy superintendent, and higher education positions at Antioch University, Yale University School of Medicine and Macon State College/Middle Georgia State College.

"The power to work with others and make a positive difference in the lives of kids and families. That is what I have enjoyed the most," she said. "The fact that through my daily work I can be encouraging, create opportunities and empower people. I think anytime that you can help people realize their own potential, then that's what you ought to do."

Levett was the dean of teacher education at Macon State College when it consolidated with Middle Georgia College. In her current position as SCCPSS superintendent, she is hopeful the new Georgia Southern will create greater opportunities for her students, teachers and staff.

"We enjoyed a good relationship with Armstrong and with Georgia Southern and we are looking forward to strengthening that partnership," she said. "Anytime you merge or consolidate, people will ask 'what difference is it going to make?' As a person who is concerned about future learning opportunities for students, that's what I am looking for. The plan sounds promising so I am hoping we will see those plans and enhancements come to fruition."

Levett still cherishes the close relationships she developed with some of her college classmates. They have stayed in touch and fondly recall their time on campus, "whether it was crying over something, celebrating our achievements, or being irritated by something that didn't work as well as we wanted it to work," said Levett, who attends Eagle football games. "I also have reached out to some of my former professors who are not necessarily on the campus anymore to remind them of the positive difference they made in my life. As to Georgia Southern, I still have a little bit of blue running through my veins. You can't go through an institution and be involved in its life and not have some affinity for it or some feeling about it. An institution is an institution. It's the people that make a difference." — SANDRA BENNETT



## ALUMNI SNAPSHOT

### A DESIGN LIFE

*“This little dream of mine just keeps getting sweeter” –Karli Buxton*

Karli Buxton leads a busy life. From designing original jewelry pieces, to selling to retailers nationwide or traveling the world on buying trips for materials, this alumna is indeed hustling. But her dream, inspired by the fashion program at Georgia Southern University, paved the way.

“I wanted to create a jewelry line focused on bold, one-of-a-kind jewels that could take a plain T-shirt to the next level,” explained Buxton, a 2011 graduate of the Fashion Merchandising and Apparel Design program.

Near the end of her studies, she moved to New York to complete the required three-month internship. Buxton worked under the tutelage of evening wear and bridal gown designer Don O’Neill of THEIA.

“There I gained much-needed knowledge in the fashion industry”, said Buxton.

In 2012, she first sold her jewelry design collection to a local boutique in her hometown of Macon, Georgia. After her business became known in the social media world, she was contacted by more retail stores. Buxton’s retail presence has grown to more than 400 stores across the country in a little over five years.

Buxton concentrated on selling directly to retailers from the start. “It was very neat, at the time, to think I could have my designs sold in retail stores across the country,” said the alumna. Her minor in business helped prepare her for the financial demands of the wholesale designer jewelry trade.

She had a great time at Georgia Southern. One instructor that made an impact was Amy Scarborough, Ph.D. She took Buxton and a group of students to New York City for a fashion study program, exploring all things fashion for a week. They toured various fashion high spots including designer studios and even had meetings with designers Tommy Hilfiger and Cynthia Rowley. “I met some of the best people I know to this day while at Georgia Southern, and will cherish those friendships for a lifetime.”

For the past two years she has participated in New York Fashion Week under the platform, “A Cosmo Life.” That platform includes the movements Fashion Against Bullying and Homelessness in New York City and London. “I am honored to be a part of something that makes a difference in the world,” said Buxton.

Her popularity continues to grow. *Vogue India* has used her jewelry designs in several fashion editorials, and actresses Shay Mitchell and Vanessa Hudgens are fans of the line. She has also designed jewelry for Florida Georgia Line’s Brian Kelley and his wife Brittney’s clothing brand, Tribe Kelley.

Buxton said “I love that the Karli Buxton line gives me the freedom of being able to create a life based on hard work and dedication. The challenge of coming up with new and innovative ideas keeps it fun. Seeing people love my work is so rewarding.” — LIZ WALKER



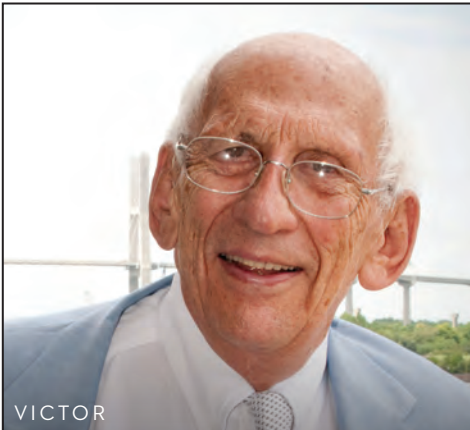
#### BOLD JEWELS

Buxton travels all over the world to buy materials for her unique jewelry designs.



## ARMSTRONG ALUMNI AWARDS

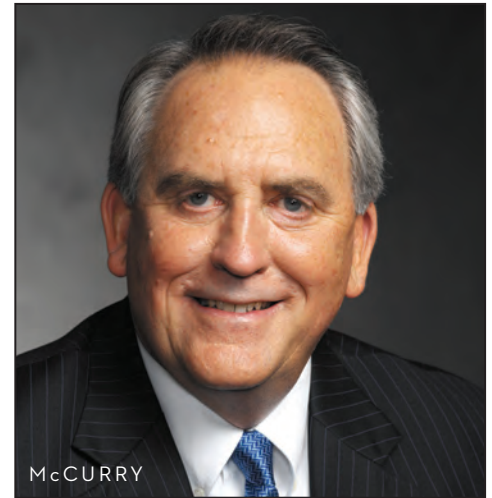
The Armstrong Campus in Savannah presented its second ever Eminent Alumni Award to Dr. Irving Victor at its Fourth Annual Alumni Awards Gala on Oct. 20, 2017. The Eminent Alumni Award is only presented occasionally and in cases of extraordinary merit.



Victor was recognized for his service to Armstrong, to his profession and to the community. He served on the Armstrong College Commission before the school became part of the University System of Georgia. He is a past president of the Armstrong Alumni Association and is a member of Armstrong's Board of Trustees. He is a retired urologist, who established one of the nation's first emergency medical systems in Savannah. He has been active with all of Savannah's hospitals, the United Way, the Savannah Area Chamber of Commerce and the Coastal Area Planning and Development

Commission. Today, he is a successful restaurateur with Vic's on the River and, at age 95, he remains active in Savannah's civic and business communities.

The Distinguished Alumni Award for career achievement was presented to Sterling Seacrest executive Cliff McCurry, who attended Armstrong in the late 1960s. The Outstanding Alumni Award for service to the University was presented to HunterMaclean partner Drew Ernst ('74). Thirteen other alumni received the Notable Alumni Award.



*The Georgia Southern University Alumni Association Alumni Awards were featured in the Spring 2017 issue of Georgia Southern magazine. Visit [GeorgiaSouthern.edu/magazine](http://GeorgiaSouthern.edu/magazine).*



DANELLO

**NOTABLE ALUMNI HONOREES**

Sherry Danello ('79), Vice President of Patient Care Services at St. Joseph's/ Candler

Joseph Ferraro ('93), Senior Manager of Quality Control Services at GAF Materials Corporation

Kevin Fitzmaurice ('02), Outdoor Lighting Lead Product Engineer for Southern Company

Dorothy Kempson ('00, '02, '06, '14), Director of Georgia Southern University Liberty Campus in Hinesville

Lamar Kirkley ('75), Advancement Associate and Head Boys Tennis Coach at Savannah Country Day School

Ginger Masingill ('68), Retired Educator

Daniel Massey ('76), Clerk of Chatham County Superior Court

Krista Mincey ('07), Assistant Professor of Public Health at Xavier University of Louisiana

Patrick O'Neil ('01), Savannah Market President for Bank of America

Pamela Parker (deceased) ('84), formerly Senior Vice President of Ameris Bank

David Plaspohl ('77), Product Manager of North America Estate Management for Verifone

Henry Precht ('51), Former Country Director of the U.S. Embassy in Iran (1978-1980)

Patti Victor ('76), President and CEO of The Matthew Reardon Center for Autism



MASSEY



FERRARO



FITZMAURICE



MINCEY



O'NEIL



KEMPSON



PARKER



KIRKLEY



MASINGILL



VICTOR



PLASPOHL



PRECHT





# SECOND ANNUAL ALUMNI NATIONAL DAY OF SERVICE

October 7, 2017

24 PROJECTS

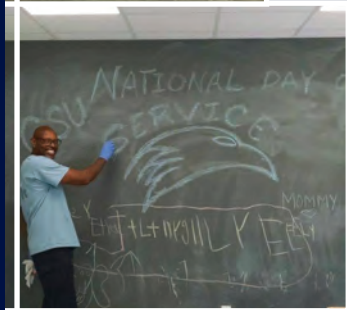
★ ★ 4 STATES ★ ★

Florida, Georgia,  
Tennessee, California

368 PARTICIPANTS  
alumni, faculty and students

IN COLLABORATION WITH THE OFFICE OF STUDENT  
LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT!

EAGLE OUTREACH



# CHRONICLES

**David Darden** ('80), a state judge in Cobb County, Georgia, received the Adams Justice Award from the Cobb County Bar Association.

**Richard Rogers** ('81) has been inducted into the Southeast Emmy Awards Silver Circle. He is a news anchor for WRDW-TV in Augusta, Georgia. The National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences established the Silver Circle to recognize individuals who have at least 25 years of experience in the television industry.

**Rob Fowler** ('82) has been inducted into the Southeast Emmy Awards Silver Circle. He is the chief meteorologist for WCBD-TV in Charleston, South Carolina. The National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences established the Silver Circle to recognize individuals who have at least 25 years of experience in the television industry.

**Nick Wiley** ('83) has taken a new position as the chief conservation officer for Ducks Unlimited, a national organization dedicated to conserving North America's waterfowl habitats. Previously, he was the executive director of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

**Julie Turner Davis** ('84) received the June 2017 Chapter Champion Award for her contributions to the Georgia Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America. The award recognizes members who have gone the extra mile in service to the PRSA Georgia Chapter.

**Steve Lawler** ('91) was named president of the North Carolina Hospital Association.

**Nichole Krieger** ('94) has been appointed executive director of the NASCAR Foundation. The Foundation has raised millions of dollars to improve the lives of children.

**Ranee' Bragg** ('96) joined the Savannah firm, Coastal Consulting Management Group, as a senior accountant.



**Jonathan McCollar** ('03) was sworn in on Jan. 2, 2018, as mayor of Statesboro. He is the Georgia city's first African-American mayor and received 53 percent of the vote in the Nov. 7, 2017, election. McCollar is also the assistant director at Georgia Southern University's Liberty Campus.

**Anna Swenson** ('97), a travel consultant, earned distinction as a 2017 Top 25 All Star Travel Agent by *Travel Agent* magazine. Swenson specializes in all Disney Destinations.

**Lori Joiner** ('98, '10) was named the 2017 National Distinguished Middle Level Principal of the Year by the National Association of Elementary School Principals. She is principal of Risley Middle School in Brunswick, Georgia.

**Demetrius Johnson** ('99) earned the Chartered Property Casualty Underwriter (CPCU) premier designation.

**Russ Taulbee** ('04) has been named a principal at the Statesboro insurance agency Lee, Hill & Johnston Insurers.

**Brannon Parks** ('05, '07) is serving a one-year term as president of the Georgia Association of School Psychologists. He is a school psychologist at Chattahoochee-Flint RESA.

**Heath Vickers** ('06) has joined Carr Allison, a civil litigation firm in Jacksonville, Florida.

**Bob Mikell** ('07), an attorney in Statesboro, was chosen as one of *Georgia Trend* magazine's 40 Under 40 for 2017.

**Joe Tillman** ('08) was recognized as a 2017 Pro to Know award winner by *Supply & Demand Chain Executive* magazine.

**Ashley Norris** ('08) has been hired as branch manager of Ameris Bank's Rincon, Georgia, location.

**Amy Pierce** ('08, '10) was recognized as the 2016-2017 School Psychologist of the Year by the Georgia Association of School Psychologists. She is the school psychologist for the Banks County School System in Homer, Georgia.

**Talia Davis** ('14) has joined the General Commercial Litigation practice group at the Burr & Forman firm in Atlanta.

**Meghan Rosser** ('17) was recognized as the 2017 Special Education Paraprofessional of the Year by the Georgia Council for Exceptional Children. The former autism paraprofessional is now a special education teacher.

**Charley Johnson** ('17) was chosen as one of *Georgia Trend* magazine's 40 Under 40 for 2017. He manages the utilities department of Rayonier Advanced Materials in Jesup, Georgia.

**Donovan Thompson**, Ph.D., ('10) won the Early Career Scientist Award at AkzoNobel, a global paints and coatings company. The award recognizes outstanding performance of early career individuals in the area of research excellence.

# CONSOLIDATED HEARTS

## *Spence and Sheila Hoynes Pay it Forward*

Spence and Sheila Hoynes, who have been married for more than 45 years, are united by a desire to help current and future students thrive at Georgia Southern University's campuses in Statesboro, Savannah and Hinesville.

Sheila, a Statesboro native who earned a B.S.Ed. from Georgia Southern in 1971 and an M.Ed. from Armstrong State College in 1975, enjoyed a 30-year career as a beloved first-grade teacher in Conyers, Georgia. Over the years, she served as president of the Georgia Southern Alumni Association, a charter member of the College of Education's Board of Advisors, a member of the Athletic Foundation Board of Directors and the founder and president of the Eagle Club in Conyers.

Like a flame, Sheila's passion for Georgia Southern burns bright, undimmed by the passage of time. "The years I was at Georgia Southern were the best years of my life," she raves. "I studied, went to classes and was active in my sorority. I had a great life."

A dedicated member of Zeta Tau Alpha sorority at Georgia Southern, Sheila was "very involved socially on campus," in addition to developing her skills as an educator and working at the library. She fondly remembers her first date with Spence, who was a recent graduate of Armstrong State College, when he took her to a Georgia Southern-Armstrong basketball game in Savannah.

Spence, who completed a B.B.A. in Management and Marketing at Armstrong in 1970, retired after serving as the assistant commissioner of the Georgia Department of Labor in Atlanta. During his tenure with the Department of Labor, he served on several joint federal and state committees within the Bureau of Labor

Statistics and Employment and Training Administration.

At Armstrong, Spence was involved with the Phi Kappa Theta fraternity, the Armstrong Masquers theater troupe and the Student Government Association. He credits Armstrong with giving him the tools to succeed in his career long after graduation and has continued to support the university over the years, including service as president of the Armstrong Alumni Association Board of Directors.

"I feel like I was very fortunate to have the education and the opportunities I had at Armstrong," he says. "My education served me very well. I feel a responsibility to give back."

During Sheila's tenure as president of the Georgia Southern University Alumni Association, Spence drove her to and from alumni events across Georgia and beyond. His devotion to Sheila even caught the attention of former Georgia Southern President Bruce Grube, who named Spence an honorary Georgia Southern alumnus in 2002 in recognition of his support.

"To be able to represent alumni, I went to as many events as possible and visited Eagle Clubs across the region and in Washington, D.C.," Sheila recalls. "President Grube was so impressed by Spence's support of me and of Georgia Southern."

Sheila and Spence, who currently divide their time between Lake Oconee and Savannah, are hopeful that the recent consolidation will benefit students.

"The important thing is that the students at all three campuses get a positive academic and social experience in order for the consolidation to be successful," Spence explains. "I believe students at the new Georgia Southern have an exciting future ahead."

In addition to contributing to Georgia

Southern and Armstrong through their leadership and service, Sheila and Spence are proud to offer financial support as well. Together, they made annual gifts to both universities for many years, but this committed couple wanted to do more. Ultimately, they chose deferred giving, including their alma maters in their wills. A planned gift to Georgia Southern will establish the Spence and Sheila Garvin Hoynes Endowed Scholarships, supporting education majors as well as student-athletes.

These dedicated alumni, who have season tickets to Georgia Southern football and basketball games, were thrilled when their son, Jason, graduated from Georgia Southern and hope their granddaughter, Annabelle, will continue the family tradition.

Sheila and Spence share a powerful commitment to helping students enjoy the exceptional education and leadership opportunities they experienced at Georgia Southern and Armstrong. They also know that learning doesn't stop at the classroom door.

"We want every student to experience that college is more than an education," says Sheila. "It's about learning about who you are. We want to support students and hope they will want to give back as well."

For Spence and Sheila, the opportunity to help today's students succeed is extremely rewarding. They particularly enjoy the opportunity to meet scholarship recipients in person and to learn how scholarships are impacting their lives and helping to make their dreams come true.

"By supporting Georgia Southern," Sheila explains, "we're helping young people get an education and become tomorrow's world leaders."

**EVERYONE IS A WINNER**

Spence Hoynes took Sheila to a Georgia Southern-Armstrong basketball game in Savannah for their first date more than 40 years ago.



UNIVERSITY FOUNDATION NEWS

## 1906 Society Event

The Georgia Southern University Foundation hosted the annual 1906 Society Event outside under the stars at the Bruce & Kathryn Grube Recreation Activity Center Nov. 3, 2017, honoring the University's annual supporters. Georgia Southern President Jaimie Hebert, Ph.D., welcomed guests to the event which included Caribbean cuisine



and entertainment by the Swingin' Medallions.

Membership into the 1906 Annual Giving Society is based on annual gifts of \$1,200 or more made during the

fiscal accounting period July 1 - June 30. These gifts support varying needs on campus ranging from student scholarships to cultural activities to centers and support services.



## Foundation Hosts Scholarship Brunch

More than 100 donors and student scholarship recipients gathered the morning of Oct. 14, 2017, for brunch at the Nessmith-Lane Center ballroom. Scholarship donors were invited to meet their recipients and they enjoyed hearing how their gifts have impacted the lives of the students.

Fleming D. Roach Scholarship Donor and Recipients (left to right) student recipient Steven Buckeridge, donor Hal Roach, student recipient Daniel Streetman

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GEORGIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY

# LEADERSHIP SYMPOSIUM

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## 1930s

**Rebecca Fay Foy**

**Smith** ('38) of Statesboro died March 8, 2017. The 99-year-old lifelong resident of Bulloch County was an active member of the Statesboro community.

**Julia Miller Trapnell**

**Kenan** ('38) died June 5, 2017, at age 99, in Evans, Georgia. The retired elementary school teacher lived in Statesboro for 60 years.

## 1940s

**Donnie Regan Swain**

('46, '74) of Metter, Georgia, died March 6, 2017, at age 90, at a hospital in Augusta, Georgia. She had a 40-year career in south Georgia public schools as a teacher and guidance counselor.

**Edna Brockett**

**Hinstorff** ('40) died April 2, 2017, in Madison, Wisconsin, at age 97. She was a retired middle school librarian.

**Cordelia Elizabeth**

**McLemore** ('41), a longtime resident of Sandy Springs, Georgia, died May 27, 2017. During World War II, she enlisted in the WAVES (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service) of the U.S. Navy. She served as a pilot instructor at various naval air stations and after the war had a career as a high school teacher.

**Ruth Hart Edwards**

('46) died July 28, 2017, at age 95, at home in Athens, Georgia. She spent 34 years as an educator in the Savannah-Chatham County Public School System.

**Melba Huggins Chiles**

('46) a longtime resident of Savannah, died Aug. 31, 2017, at age 92. She was an educator in the Wayne County school system.

## 1950s

**Lyndon Carey**

('56) died Jan. 11, 2017, at his home in Wagener, South Carolina. He was a retired Aiken County Public Schools educator and administrator.

**Sanford Reid**

('52) of Columbus, Georgia, died Feb. 2, 2017, at age 85. He retired after 34 years as an educator.

**Kate Purvis Martin**

('50) died in Statesboro Feb. 6, 2017, at age 90. In 1950, she was selected as the only married May Queen in Georgia Southern history. The retired science teacher was also a gifted seamstress, cook and gardener.

**Eugene Baston**

('58) of Augusta, Georgia, died Feb. 14, 2017, at age 79. The National Guard veteran and business executive managed and oversaw the construction and development of numerous golf courses.

**Carrie Brannen**

**Holmes** ('54) died at age 84 in her home in Brunswick, Georgia, March 19, 2017. She left her career in education to become a stay-at-home mother of five children.

**Margaret Hale**

**Parker** ('56) died at age 83 on April 20, 2017, in Marietta, Georgia, after a long fight with Type 1 Diabetes. She had a 43-

year teaching career in the Savannah-Chatham County area.

**Marcia (Punky) Allen**

**Hancock** ('58) passed May 5, 2017, in hospice care. She was a lifelong resident of Brunswick, Georgia.

**Clarence Preston**

**Sizemore** ('59, '64) of Augusta, Georgia, died at his home May 14, 2017. He was an educator, coach and the head of a family-owned security, staffing solutions and janitorial company.

**Albert Murray**

('56) of Hartwell, Georgia, died May 18, 2017, after a long illness. He was a teacher at Statesboro High School for 30 years.

**Betty Reagan**

**Parsons** ('51) of Vidalia, Georgia, died May 19, 2017, following an extended illness. She retired as an educator in Vidalia.

**Martin Vanover**

('57) of Augusta, Georgia, died May 19, 2017. During his long career with Augusta College, he served as the athletic director, chair of the physical education department and coached basketball, golf, tennis and cross country. He was inducted into the inaugural Peach Belt Conference Hall of Fame class in 2016.

**Reita Clifton Waters**

('54) of Millen, Georgia, died June 25, 2017, at Ogeechee Area Hospice. She finished her 43-year teaching career in Jenkins County.

**Ralph Spurlock**

('57), a native of Harlan,

Kentucky, and a longtime resident of Alpharetta, Georgia, died July 7, 2017. He was a player for the Professors basketball team at Georgia Southern.

**John Brannen**

('50) of Memphis, Tennessee, died Nov. 16, 2017, at age 88. The Korean War veteran was a retiree of International Harvester Corp., and Mid-America International Trucks.

**Lowell Dasher**

('52) of Rincon, Georgia, died at his home Nov. 29, 2017. The Korean War veteran was a retired Effingham County educator.

**Allen Webb** ('58) died Dec. 9, 2017, in hospice care in Statesboro.

He was a high school teacher, furniture maker, builder and a devoted volunteer with Habitat for Humanity.

**Carroll Edwards**

('50), a native of Claxton, Georgia, died Feb. 5, 2018, at his home. He was 93. The U.S. Navy World War II veteran retired from Union Camp Corporation after 30 years of service.

**Sarah Ann Jordan**

**Fennell** ('57) died Feb. 7, 2018, in her hometown of Bartow, Georgia. She was a teacher for 37 years in Georgia public schools.

**Ralph Walton**

('57, '72) died Feb. 13, 2018, at his home in Orlando, Florida. During his 51-year educational career, he served as a high school science teacher, principal, headmaster and positions in higher education including professor.

## 1960s

**Jolane Rawl Guske**

('63) of Tifton, Georgia, died Oct. 19, 2016, in Albany, Georgia. She had a teaching career of more than 25 years, and was awarded teacher of the year for Worth County in 1984.

**Myles Golden**

('63) of Greenville, South Carolina, died Feb. 8, 2017, of non-Hodgkin lymphoma. He had a long career with the Ivan Allen Company and was the founder of a career transition/development consulting firm.

**Carlton Walton**

('61) of Vidalia, Georgia, died Feb. 21, 2017. He retired after 36 years in public and private education as a coach, teacher and principal.

**Paul McClure**

('62) of Dahlonga, Georgia, died Feb. 28, 2017. He is remembered for his tenure as an English professor at the University of North Georgia and his love of bluegrass music.

**Mary Cantrell**

**Trusdell** ('65) of Richmond, Virginia, died March 26, 2017. An educational administrator, she was a recognized expert in the treatment of dyslexia and other reading disabilities.

**Anne Tootle Browning**

('68) died April 15, 2017, in hospice care in Statesboro. She was a retiree of Savannah-Chatham County Public School System and Mental Health Management of Vienna, Virginia. She was also an artist and musician.

**Joe Kieve** ('66) of Newnan, Georgia, died April 19, 2017. A gifted woodworker, he taught industrial arts, and he retired from Delta Air Lines carpenter shop.

**Arthur "Lee" Hill**

('64) of Toledo, Ohio, lost his fight to cancer on April 21, 2017. He served eight years in the U.S. Air Force and later became a high school teacher and coach.

**Randall "Randy"**

**Woods** ('68) died May 26, 2017, in hospice care in Statesboro. He was a veteran of the U.S. Air Force, and had a private accounting practice in Statesboro for many years.

**Ronnie Braziel**

('67) of Lawrenceville, Georgia, passed June 18, 2017. The Vietnam War veteran was a retired engineer for the Georgia Department of Transportation

**John Dekle**

('65) of St. Simons Island, Georgia, died June 23, 2017, in hospice care. He was retired from Rich Products.

**Dan Stiles**

('68, '72), of Thomaston, Georgia, died July 7, 2017 at his residence. The veteran of the U.S. Air Force was a teacher for Savannah-Chatham County Public School System for more than 30 years. An avid tennis player, he was a three-year letterman in tennis at Georgia Southern.

**Barbara Driver**

**Kennedy** ('69) of Claxton, Georgia, died July 22, 2017, at Evans Memorial Hospital.

The retired music and English teacher taught for 35 years in the Georgia towns of Collins, Jesup and Claxton.

**Margaret Lie-Nielsen** ('66) of Broxton, Georgia, died July 22, 2017, after a courageous battle with cancer. She was a retired teacher and school administrator.

**Frances Bird** ('66) died in hospice care in Statesboro July 29, 2017, after a long battle with cancer. She was a retired mathematics teacher, having taught throughout the U.S. and Europe.

**James Askew** ('65) of Columbus, Georgia, died Aug. 7, 2017. He was the purchasing director for the Muscogee County School District when he retired in 2007.

**Ronnie Hayslip** ('68) of Grovetown, Georgia, died Aug. 31, 2017. He was a teacher, coach and athletic director at several Georgia high schools. He also had a career in the insurance profession.

**Patricia Smoak White** ('64) of Inverness, Florida, died in hospice care Oct. 21, 2017. She taught school early in life, and later touched the lives of young people through her work at Step N Time dance studio.

**Judy Murray** ('66, '74, '78) of Statesboro died Oct. 22, 2017, in hospice care. She was a teacher at Diamond Elementary School at Fort Stewart.

**Ralph Cook** ('61) of Albany, Georgia, died Oct. 28, 2017, in hospice

care. He served in the U.S. Army during the Korean Conflict, served as a high school coach, and was employed in the agribusiness industry until his retirement.

**Charles McDonald** ('67) of Gainesville, Georgia, died Nov. 9, 2017. He served as a teacher, coach, principal and administrator in the Gainesville City School System.

**Richard Lifsey** ('62) of Lancaster, South Carolina, died Nov. 16, 2017, in hospice care. The Vietnam War veteran was an educator and administrator in Georgia and in South Carolina.

**Paul Inglett** ('66) of Augusta, Georgia, died in the hospital Dec. 9, 2017. He was a talented football player, and in 1962, *Sports Illustrated* named him a preseason All-American. He was a high school coach in the Augusta area until his retirement.

**Elizabeth Greene** ('64) passed away Dec. 11, 2017, in hospice care in South Georgia. She was a retired educator with the Wayne County and Long County school systems, and a three-time recipient of the STAR Teacher Award.

**Donald Adler** ('67) of Eastman, Georgia, died Dec. 14, 2017. He was a basketball player while at Georgia Southern, and a retired teacher and coach in the Dodge County School System.

**Ralph Turner** ('60) of Hiawassee, Georgia, died Dec. 15, 2017. He played baseball for

Georgia Southern, and retired as a manager of Georgia state parks.

**Ruby Gay Lane** ('65) of Millen, Georgia, died Jan. 19, 2018 at age 94, in hospice care in Statesboro. She began her teaching career after her first year in college when she was issued an emergency teacher certificate due to World War II.

**John "Johnny" Shumans** ('68) was surrounded by family when he passed away Feb. 9, 2018, at Hospice Savannah. He was a retired band director and music teacher.

**Dr. Curtis Hames Jr.** ('68) of Claxton, Georgia, died Feb. 20, 2018, following a battle with leukemia. He earned a pharmacy degree, medical degree and served as a family practice physician for 30 years. In 2009, he retired as the chief of the medical staff at Georgia Southern Health Services.

### 1970s

**Lt. Frank Roach** ('75) of Statesboro died Feb. 11, 2017, after a brief illness. He was a Vietnam War veteran and worked in law enforcement with the Statesboro Police Department for 27 years until his retirement in 2010. He was employed as the certification manager for Georgia Southern University police.

**Steve Chester** ('70, '72, '73) of Statesboro died Feb. 15, 2017, at his residence. He worked as a school psychologist for

First District Regional Educational Service Agency and had his own private practice. Chester was a gifted musician and writer who produced three CDs of his original music.

**Gloria Strickland Pope** ('71) of Morganton, North Carolina, died Feb. 17, 2017. She was Miss Georgia Southern 1967.

**Frances Westberry Reddish** ('70) of Jesup, Georgia, passed March 7, 2017. She was a retired high school English teacher, and was named Wayne County High School Teacher of the Year.

**Carey Rountree** ('74) of Marietta, Georgia, lost his battle with cancer March 21, 2017. He had a long career in the hospitality industry and retired from the Georgia Aquarium in 2016.

**William (Bill) Mendoza** ('74) died March 16, 2017, surrounded by family in suburban Atlanta. He owned and operated ServiceMaster of Roswell for 35 years.

**Ron Marshall** ('76, '82) of Atlanta died April 13, 2017, after a brief illness with strep pneumonia.

**Jean Henderson** ('72) died May 3, 2017, at age 96 in Half Moon Bay, California. The longtime Augusta, Georgia, resident had a career as a vocational counselor for the state of Georgia.

**Janet Waters Hunton** ('76) died peacefully May 17, 2017, at Hospice House in Savannah. She had a

long career as a staff member for Museum homes in Savannah.

**Rachel Mitchell Archer** ('74), a longtime resident of Atlanta, died June 7, 2017, in Abingdon, Virginia, at age 91. She was a retired banker and music teacher.

**John Collins** ('73) died May 20, 2017, in Brisbane, Australia. The U.S. Air Force veteran owned Savannah Coffee Roasters.

**Linda Kea** ('76, '81) of Vidalia, Georgia, died in hospice care July 7, 2017. She is remembered for her many years of service as the social studies teacher and leader of the high school chorus at Montgomery High School.

**Roy Ammann** ('72) of Marietta, Georgia, died July 31, 2017. He was a gifted athlete and a charter member of the Phi Delta Theta fraternity chapter at Georgia Southern.

**Elaine Gowen Gaughf-Smith** ('75, '90) of Brunswick, Georgia, died July 14, 2017, after a courageous fight against cancer. During her career, she was a teacher, instructional technology specialist and founder of the Brunswick Summer Arts camp.

**Col. Donald Hancock** ('74) of Saluda, South Carolina, died Aug. 2, 2017, in hospice care. The Marine Corps member retired as the Commanding Officer of the 4<sup>th</sup> FSSG Forward East in 2005,

completing 30 years of military service.

**James (Jimmy) Darsey** ('71) of Hinesville, Georgia, died Aug. 19, 2017. An advocate for children, he served as a high school teacher, counselor and social worker. He held executive positions in agencies supporting children and was a writer with the *Coastal Courier*.

**Broadus Marshall Jr.** ('74) of Macon, Georgia, died Aug. 28, 2017. He was the owner of an independent insurance agency and was a volunteer with Vine-Ingle Little League and the Middle Georgia Soccer Association.

**Ronald Casey** ('72) of Simpsonville, South Carolina, died Sept. 9, 2017. After serving in the U.S. Navy, he spent more than 30 years as a business leader in Birmingham, Alabama.

**Wallace "Rowe" Brogdon Jr.** ('75) of Statesboro passed Oct. 20, 2017, at Ogeechee Area Hospice. He had a long career as an attorney in Savannah, Claxton and Statesboro.

**Brooks Sorrier III** ('73, '77) died at his Statesboro home Oct. 21, 2017. He retired as a teacher from the Effingham County Board of Education in 2011.

**Vera Vollenweider** ('77) of Hazlehurst, Georgia, died Nov. 28, 2017, after a short illness. She was a Special Education teacher.



**Albert Hopkins**

Jr. ('72) died at his Forsyth, Georgia, home Dec. 11, 2017. He was 72. The Vietnam War veteran was an ordained minister and a professional accountant.

**Cynthia Crane Doyle**

('74) of Savannah died Dec. 20, 2017, after battling cancer. She had a long career in the travel industry.

**Cynthia (Ann) Bell Smith**

('75) of Eastman, Georgia, died Dec. 25, 2017, in hospice care in Anderson, South Carolina. She was 64.

**Randy Turner**

('75) of Portal, Georgia, died Dec. 27, 2017, in hospice care. He retired as the assistant director of Bulloch County Emergency Medical Service after nearly 42 years of service.

**Monte Tillman**

('78) of Pulaski, Georgia, died Jan. 7, 2018, at a hospital in Augusta. He was the mayor of Pulaski and a retired Candler County Schools educator and high school football coach.

**Dr. James Buckler**

('71) of Johns Creek, Georgia, died Jan. 8, 2018. He finished his basketball career at Georgia Southern as the seventh-leading all-time scorer and was a founding member of the Kappa Alpha Order Fraternity. He had a dental practice in the Atlanta area.

**Terry Welborn Sr.**

('70) died Feb. 21, 2018, at his home in Folly Beach, South Carolina. He was a Vietnam War

veteran, earning a Purple Heart and many other commendations. He later worked in the real estate industry.

**Jamie Patterson** ('76), an educator for more than 30 years, died Feb. 23, 2018. She was a teacher in the Atlanta area.

**1980s**

**Gaynell Purvis**

**Anderson** ('89) of Glennville, Georgia, died in hospice care at home Feb. 26, 2017, at age 78. She was a retired teacher.

**Guy Kirby**

('80) died of pancreatic cancer at his home in Bakersville, North Carolina, March 17, 2017. He had a 36-year career with Motion Industries.

**Kathryn Richardson**

**Jones** ('84, '89, '92, '01) of Charleston, South Carolina, died April 5, 2017, at age 54. She was a college professor at The Citadel Zucker Family School of Education.

**Claire Kirby Hughes**

('82) died of ovarian cancer at her home in Pittsboro, North Carolina, April 25, 2017. She had a career in medical sales.

**David Olson**

('88) of Statesboro died May 2, 2017, after battling radiation-induced heart disease. He financed his way through college restoring vintage Jaguars and opened University Imports, an import auto repair shop.

**Robert Kicklighter Jr.**

('86) of Claxton, Georgia, died June 5, 2017. He was employed at Zach S. Henderson Library at Georgia Southern University.

**John Hall** ('82) of Charlotte, North Carolina, died suddenly July 13, 2017. He spent over 30 years in the financial printing industry.

**Randall Hearn** ('84) of Claxton, Georgia, died July 18, 2017, at age 63. He served in the U.S. Navy and worked with the Department of Agriculture.

**Joseph Fouts**

('86) of Atlanta died July 20, 2017, after a brief illness. He had a career as a restaurant manager.

**Stephanie Godwin**

('89) of Canton, Texas, died July 31, 2017, in Dallas. She was a consultant to preserve Katy Trail in Dallas and was the executive secretary for Relocation Appraisers and Consultants.

**Jane Prince**

**Seckinger** ('83) of Lake Harding, Alabama, died Aug. 4, 2017. She was president and CEO of Goodwill Industries of the Southern Rivers and CEO of affiliate PowerWorks Industries headquartered in Columbus, Georgia.

**James Parris**

('81) of Greenville, South Carolina, died at his home Nov. 16, 2017. He worked in the insurance industry and in social services for many years.

**Lucille Pace Lee**

('84) passed away Dec. 4, 2017, at her residence in Sylvania, Georgia. She was a retired teacher.

**Julia Bass**

('84) passed away Dec. 17, 2017, in Helena, Georgia, after battling breast cancer.

She was a teacher at Telfair County High School in McRae, Georgia, for nearly 30 years.

**Brunetta Bacon-Couch** ('83) of Durham, North Carolina, was surrounded by her family when she died at home Jan. 12, 2018.

**Cinda Ortiz-Robledo**

('86) of Macon, Georgia, passed Jan. 15, 2018. She was a teacher in the Henry County School System.

**1990s**

**Barbara Bragg Kindle**

('98) of Rutherfordton, North Carolina, died Feb. 6, 2017, after a short battle with cancer. She had a career as a nurse.

**James Wynn Jr.**

('95) died in hospice care in Statesboro on March 29, 2017. He was a self-employed electrician and plumber for over 40 years.

**Mary Ida Driggers**

**Cowart** ('94) died March 29, 2017, at a hospital in Savannah. She was a retired educator and school counselor.

**Chris Calhoun**

('95) of Vidalia, Georgia, died in a vehicle accident July 23, 2017. He was an educator and soccer coach in the Jeff Davis County School System.

**Daniel Bernard**

('96, '99) of Irwin, Pennsylvania, died at his residence Sept. 2, 2017. He was an educator in the Pittsburgh Public School System.

**Gary Cochran**

('96) of Fernandina Beach, Florida, died Sept. 19,



**Mychael Knight** ('02) of Atlanta died Oct. 17, 2017, at age 39. The fashion designer was a contestant on the reality television shows, "Project Runway," and "Project Runway All-Stars." He earned a bachelor's in Georgia Southern's apparel design and merchandising program. In 2017, Knight was honored with the College of Health and Human Sciences Alumni Award, which recognizes outstanding achievement in his industry. The 39-year-old fashion star launched his own clothing and lingerie labels and designed a line of custom T-shirts for Starbucks.

2017, in Jacksonville. During his career, he held positions with the Cancer Society, the Georgia Department of Human Services and the Ritz Carlton.

**Donald Moore Jr.**

('90) of Brevard, North Carolina, died Oct. 16, 2017. Before retiring to Brevard, he was the owner of a real estate development and construction company for 37 years in Savannah.

**Anthony Lee** ('91), a lifelong resident of Bryan County, Georgia, died Dec. 3, 2017. He owned and operated a glass supply company near Savannah.

**Reggie Eakin**

('92) died in hospice care at his home in Metter, Georgia, Feb. 23, 2018. During his career, he worked as a purchasing agent and logistics manager, but singing was the joy of his life.

**2000s**

**Philip Eyrich** ('15) of Statesboro died March 16, 2017, from automobile accident injuries. He was employed by University Hospital in Augusta.

**Ricky Lee Frawley** ('09) of Jesup, Georgia, died June 11, 2017, at his home following a short illness. He held various jobs over the years, until finding his true passion as a nurse.

**William "Rusty" Beasley** ('00) of Metter, Georgia, died June 11, 2017, at East Georgia Regional Medical Center in Statesboro. He was a teacher and coach at Toombs County High School.

**Jessica (Jessi) Jenkins Pennington** ('03), a lifelong resident of Bulloch County, Georgia, passed on July 5, 2017. She worked for her family business in Statesboro as operations manager and co-owner.

**Michael Cole Dasinger** ('15) of Fortson, Georgia, and Scaly Mountain, North Carolina, passed on Aug. 6, 2017. He was the project manager for a construction company.

**Lucy Hanks Gabriel** ('06) of Morven, Georgia, died Sept. 13, 2017, at a hospital in Valdosta, Georgia. She was a retired teacher.

**Lauren Moran Pike** ('08) of Smyrna, Georgia, died suddenly

Oct. 20, 2017. She was an elementary school music teacher.

**Kirstie Bailey** ('09) of Brunswick, Georgia, died peacefully Nov. 14, 2017.

**Hannah Butsch** ('17) from the Atlanta area died Dec. 17, 2017, of injuries she sustained in a car accident in San Diego.

**Nathan Tingen** ('08) of Grovetown, Georgia, died Jan. 17, 2018. He played tennis at Georgia Southern and worked as a registered nurse in the intensive care unit in the Augusta, Georgia, area.

**John Jones** ('02) of Marietta, Georgia, died Jan. 30, 2018. He was an Eagle Scout and was employed with ParkingSoft in Norcross, Georgia.

**Heidi Kirby Akins** ('10) of Marietta, Georgia, passed away Feb. 21, 2018. She returned to college after raising four children and worked as a hospitality manager.

**EAGLE NATION**

**Ebenezer Chinedum Ugorji, Ph.D.**, of Statesboro died March 12, 2017. He was a professor of American government at Georgia Southern.

**Walter Fraser Jr.**, a professor emeritus and chair emeritus in the Department of History at Georgia Southern, died March 24, 2017, after a long battle with pancreatic cancer. He was a scholar of the American South. In his books, he often

examined the social and racial inequities that influenced the history of the complex region that he loved deeply.

**Sarah Fain** ('98), a valued colleague within Georgia Southern's Student

Affairs and Enrollment Management Division, died in hospice care in Statesboro April 3, 2017. She was the intramural sports director for Campus Recreation and Intramurals for 15 years.



Avid Eagle football fan, **Morris Lee Lupton** of Greensboro, Georgia, died Feb. 20, 2018, in Athens, Georgia. The former Statesboro resident was instrumental in the drive to revive Georgia Southern's football program in 1981. Lupton helped in the recruitment and subsequent hiring of Erk Russell, was active in a caravan tour of south Georgia to drum up support for the fledgling program and gave considerable time, labor and funds for site preparation of Paulson Stadium and construction of the Lupton Building in the west end zone. Lupton was inducted into the Georgia Southern Hall of Fame in 2000 and into the Georgia Sports Hall of Fame in Macon, Georgia, in 2016, where he and former University President Dale Lick were recognized with the Erk Russell Spirit Award.

**Saul Laskin**, a professor emeritus of mechanical engineering technology, died at his Statesboro home May 20, 2017. He retired in 1997, but a few years before his death, Laskin reconnected with students from the Class of 1982. They went out to eat, went to Eagle football games and walked around campus together, reminiscing and visiting the Carruth Building, where all their classes were held 35 years ago.

**James Donald Hawk, Ed.D.**, died at his Statesboro home Sept. 15, 2017. He was a professor emeritus and chair emeritus in the Department of Educational Foundations and Curriculum at Georgia Southern.

**Lewis Randolph Selvidge Jr.**, a professor emeritus in industrial technology, died Sept. 17, 2017, in Columbus, Georgia. He was the author of two textbooks and a master woodworker, building many Colonial Williamsburg reproductions in addition to his own custom designs.

**James Pugh, Ph.D.**, a former psychology professor, died Oct. 24, 2017, in Atlanta after a long illness. Former students may remember seeing him walking his two enormous Anatolian Shepherds on the Statesboro campus.

**Robert Martin**, a professor emeritus in school psychology, died

at his Statesboro home Oct. 21, 2017. He was a member of the Georgia Southern faculty for 34 years until he retired in 2006.

**Candy Schille, Ph.D.**, died Nov. 19, 2017, in Statesboro. The English literature professor taught at Georgia Southern University for more than 30 years. Schille was an active member of the faculty senate, a writer, artist and poet who loved animals and a longtime supporter of the Bulloch County Humane Society.

**John Karrh**, a professor emeritus of civil engineering technology, died Dec. 5, 2017, in hospice care in Statesboro.

**David Mathew III**, a professor emeritus of music and chair emeritus of the Department of Music, died at his Statesboro home Jan. 15. The professor composed the music for the Georgia Southern University alma mater.

*This listing is only Georgia Southern alumni. Future issues will have listings for both Georgia Southern and Armstrong alumni.*



## CONTACT US

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR** and other submissions are encouraged.  
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## DISCOVER MORE. CONNECT MORE. BE MORE.

Georgia Southern students volunteer for photoshoots—both still and video—like this one on the Statesboro Campus Pedestrium. The photography and video are used in advertising, publications, the website, social media and a myriad of outreach efforts. Students gain experience in front of the cameras and behind the scenes. They use the materials for their portfolios—and often hear “I’ve seen you...” from other students.

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The DOUBLE EAGLE Society is a joint initiative between the Jack N. Averitt College of Graduate Studies and the Georgia Southern University Alumni Association. This initiative was created to recognize our alumni who have earned two or more degrees – one undergraduate and one graduate or two graduate – from Georgia Southern.

Double Eagles enjoy:

- Career advancement opportunities that come with earning a graduate degree
- Recognition at commencement ceremonies
- A recognition pin to display your achievement and loyalty
- Invitations to elite alumni networking and entertainment events

