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December 2023

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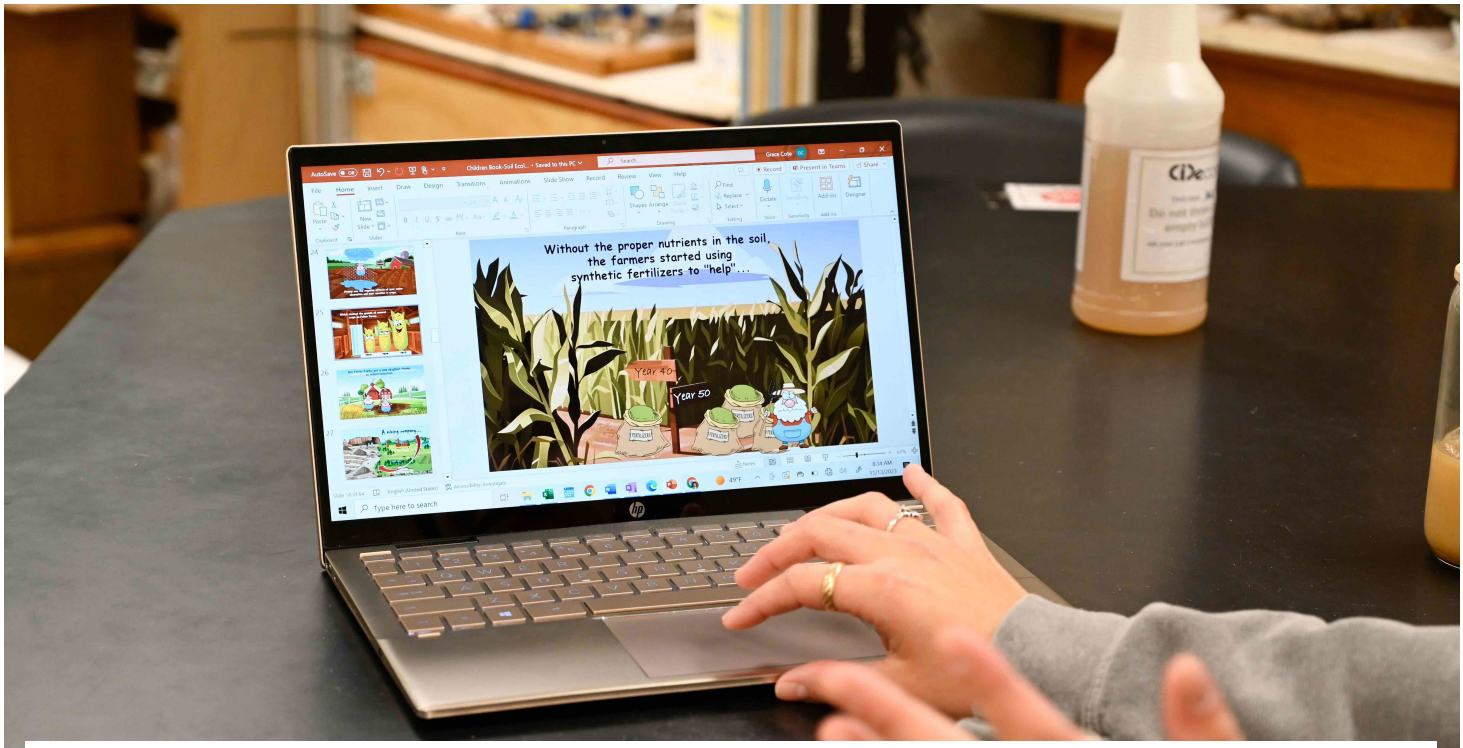


Just in time for World Soil Day: Students create children's books for ecology class

Biology & Environmental Sciences, Department of: Friday December 1, 2023

Since 2014, the United Nations has set aside the 5th of December to educate people about the importance of healthy soil.

In time for this year's international World Soil Day celebration, students in Dr. Bruce Snyder's soil ecology class finished their final project for the semester—children's books about dirt and critters of this unseen underworld that help nourish the Earth's soil, water, forests and air.

For the UN, it's a day to focus attention on the ground beneath our feet, while promoting sustainable management.

For Snyder's class—it's a way to help students break down complicated science and communicate what they've learned. They created books to educate kids as young as preschool or as old as 12, using appropriate and scientifically correct text

and images.

Students could choose any topic, as long as it pertained to soil. Books could be fiction or nonfiction, simple or complex, online or bound. They were graded on appropriateness, story flow, technical precision, ease of reading, creativity and grammar.

Dr. Bruce Snyder consults with students Sarah West and William Wittstock.

"Just as you would for a term paper," Snyder said, "you still have to find the primary literature; you still have to write something that's scientifically accurate and flows. It has to have good grammar and all the same writing skills."

"You still have to make it clear to your audience," he said. "With kids, it can be more challenging, so it's the same amount of work. It's just a different format and audience. Plus, it's more fun."

Human activity can put "excessive pressure on our water resources," disrupting the natural balance of soil, causing erosion and reducing water infiltration for all life forms, according to the UN's World Soil Day website.

Grace Cote of Dahlonega, Georgia, notes this in her children's book, geared toward 7- to 10-year-olds. Cote is a biology major with minors in environmental science and Spanish. Her book centers around agriculture and a farmer who needs to learn sustainable practices. His soil is unhealthy, producing stunted corn.

Grace Cote talks about her children's book.

Cote's main characters are twin sisters, Endo and Ectomycorrhiza. They're part of a family of fungi that is hard-to-pronounce, "arbuscular mycorrhiza." To make the name easier for children, she broke it into phonetical segments.

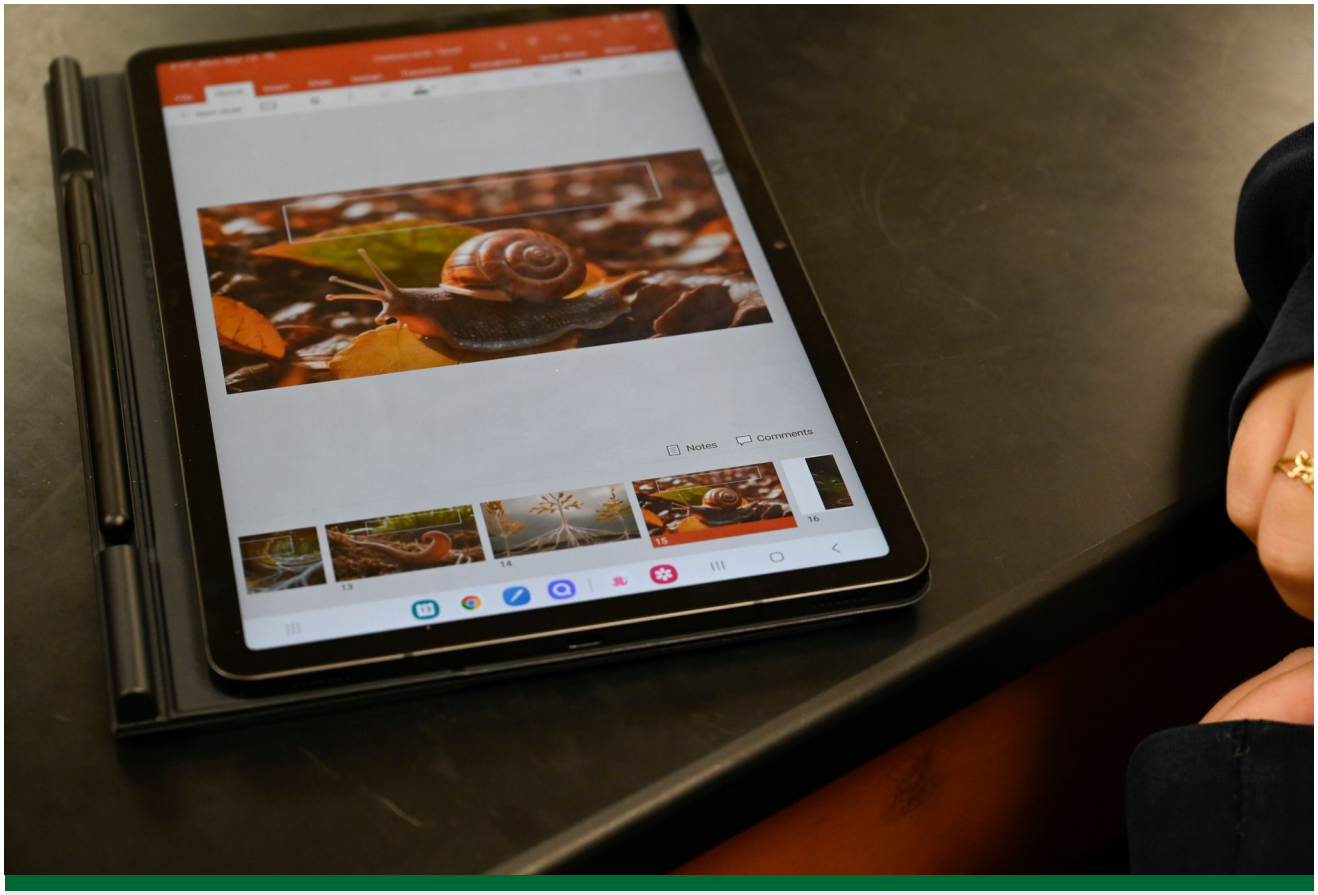
The fungus lays unseen beneath the ground, feeding on tree and plant roots. While it obtains nutrients from roots, however, it also provides vital minerals for the host

plant.

Cote's book is about 80 pages and introduces other critters essential for soil healthy too, like termites and worms. She used clipart she found online to populate areas of her pictures. The book has a cartoonlike farmer, tractor, cornfield, bags of oats and diagrams of the fungi.

"The farmer has been doing a lot of unsustainable practices, like tillage, which compact the soil and lower bulk density," Cote said. "They were lacking nutrients and in water stress. Therefore, they introduced synthetic fertilizer."

> **My characters come in and are able to form a symbiotic relationship and replenish all these missing nutrients and remove metals from the soil. This fungus is a little superhero, for sure.**
>
> **- Grace Cote**



A page from Tori Morgan's book.

First-year biology graduate student Tori Morgan of Carrollton, Georgia, used

artificial intelligence to create fun characters and realistically surreal environments in her 20-page book, aimed at 10-year-olds.

The main character is a snail called “Tia,” short for “helix pomatia.” During her journey through a forest, Tia learns about decomposition and how her body heat adds to the pace of that breakdown. She’s joined by “Terre,” an earthworm, who tells her about mushrooms and other helpful organisms.

Senior environmental science major Wiley Bundy of Savannah mixes science and sports in her book for 5- to 7-year-olds. It’s about Mike, a “mesostigmata” or mite, who wants to join the Micro Arthropod Football League (AFL).

While learning about mini-arthropods who play different positions in football, Mike eventually decides to become a cheering fan.

“I love bugs, but I don’t like memorizing facts about them,” Bundy said. “So I thought I should do something that would help me remember. It’s a really good way for me to list traits and organize them in my brain.”

Senior Wiley Bundy works on her children's book.

Each page in her 27-page book has simple caricatures with realistic images of arthropods in the corners. Bundy drew the characters herself, then Photoshopped them into the text.

Senior environmental science major Laura Griffin of Washington County, Georgia, did her book about an earthworm who’s “chilling” out, not doing much, until other worms start educating him about his role in soil. It’s called, “An Earthworm’s Purpose.” They talk about “leaf litter and pH—all the big bio indicators.”

Page from Bundy's book.

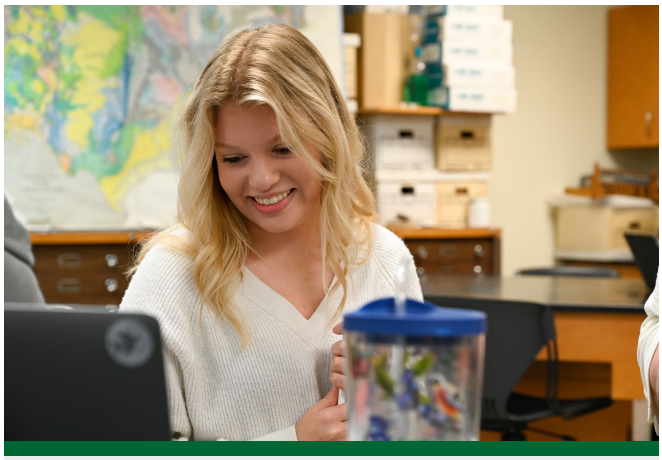
“I’ve really enjoyed this,” Griffin said. “I’ve always loved drawing, so this has been fun.”

Second-year graduate student William Wittstock of Alpharetta, Georgia, is getting his masters in biology. He chose a younger audience for his 30-page book on millipedes. At first, he was anxious about the assignment. But as he settled into rhyming the text and drawing, he said it was fun.

The book's called, "Milo the Millipede and Guardians of the Garden." Wittstock wrote to resemble the flow of a Dr. Suess book and drew the characters himself.

It's about a variety of insects and arthropods who educate the humans around them about using nutrient-rich garden soil. Milo learns about the different jobs millipedes do to create healthy soil.

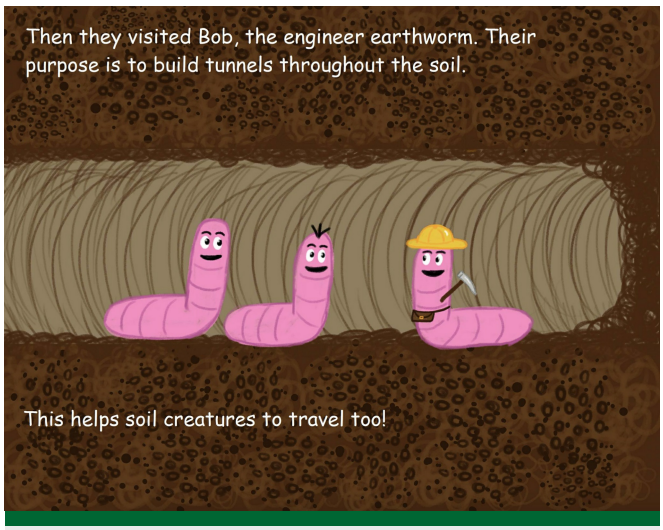
A few lines from the book: "Meet Milo, a millipede so small in a backyard with a garden. He stands tall. Colors so bright, creatures having a ball. A magical place for Milo and all."



Laura Griffin reviews her book online.

Wittstock's aunt helped him identify words that needed simplifying. Then, he tested the story on his niece and nephew, Ross and Zacky. They gave the book a big 'thumbs up.'

"The anxiety comes when you've got to draw something four or five times before you're ready to print," Wittstock said. "My biggest challenge was taking it too seriously and just overthinking."



A page from Griffin's book.

"I liked the assignment, because we need to know how to communicate what we learn in class," he said. "It's not just about having it in your head if you can't put it out there for people. Children become adults. They have to learn this stuff too, eventually, right? Might as well make it fun for them."

Elena Cruz, a first-year graduate student from Douglasville, Georgia, chose the ugly grub for her topic. Cruz does her research on millipedes, so she wanted learn something new for this assignment.

In her story, children learn about the importance of grubs for soil. Her grub is smaller than the others and doesn't quite fit in. He has a "coming-of-age journey,"

emerging from his cocoon a pretty, yellow beetle.

“Basically, he becomes a cool little beetle,” Cruz said. “There has to be a happy ending.”

News Stories Posted Tuesday December 5, 2023

‘This might be my greatest achievement’ GCSU astrophysicist's idea among top for next NASA telescope

Chemistry, Physics, & Astronomy, Department of: Tuesday December 5, 2023

Some professors at Georgia College & State University go national with their research.

A few get global attention.

Others? They reach for the stars.

Like Georgia College’s astrophysicist Dr. Arash Bodaghee.

He first suggested what eventually became—after improvements from his science team—one of the winning proposals for using NASA’s next-generation space telescope.

That’s quite a mouthful. Let’s put it more simply:

Dr. Arash Bodaghee.

His idea emerged among the top contenders.

On how to use the next telescope.

To be built by NASA.

And put into space.

> **From a little astrophysics group here at Georgia College, you know, competing against Harvard, MIT, Stanford, Berkeley—and who knows where else around the world—our little telescope, or at least our approach on how to program the project, has become one of the key scientific drivers of this mission.**
>
> **- Dr. Arash Bodaghee**

It's the latest stellar achievement of Bodaghee's 10-year career at Georgia College—a body of work you might call *out of this world*:

- Bodaghee helped educate hundreds of local families on open-house nights at Herty Hall's Pohl Observatory.
- One of his students discovered a previously unknown luminous object, a quasar "a billion times the size of our sun"—with the short name "IGR-12-346."
- In 2021, Bodaghee and this student created an interactive map—the first-of-its-kind—showing where neutron stars and black holes were born and how far they've moved.
- More recently, that same team measured the strength of a neutron star's magnetic field for the first time. It joins a list of only 50 neutron stars with magnetic fields that have been measured. Bodaghee has now measured two of those, the other in 2016.

A picture of space.

To explain his latest accomplishment, Bodaghee starts from the beginning. So we will too.

Two years ago, he signed up to be part of developing a “mission concept” for a new telescope, called Advanced X-ray Imaging Satellite (AXIS).

One of the first and largest telescopes into space wasHubble, which launched in 1990. On Christmas day 2021, the James Webb Space Telescope went up. It was three times larger, designed to view objects too distant or faint for Hubble to detect.

The newly-proposed AXIS will be 46 feet long with solar panels that extend 52 feet. Unlike the James Webb, which cost $10 billion, AXIS will “only” cost $500 million to $1 billion, Bodaghee said. But comparing the two telescopes is “not fair,” he added, because they operate on different wavelengths of light.

AXIS is the next version of theChandra X-ray Observatory, a smaller telescope receiving data from space since 1999 and sending it to Earth. Chandra transformed mankind’s understanding of the evolution of supermassive black holes.

AXIS will be for Chandra what James Webb was for Hubble.

The James Webb propelled science forward in the area of infrared astronomy.

Alternate Text

AXIS will be a breakthrough for X-ray optics that are lightweight and able to produce even-higher resolution

pictures from space. Its large optic mirrors and detectors will allow astronomists to see further with better clarity.

“It’s the next leap forward in X-ray astronomy,” Bodaghee said. “This is why AXIS is so amazing—because it’s a high-resolution X-ray telescope that’s going to see things current telescopes can’t see.”

As part of the original team of collaborators—about 200 scientists worldwide—Bodaghee submitted his idea on how to use the telescope and what its contribution to science should be.

> **It’s the next leap forward in X-ray astronomy. This is why AXIS is so amazing—because it’s a high-resolution X-ray telescope that’s going to see things current telescopes can’t see.**
>
> **- Dr. Bodaghee**

He participated in three separate telescope proposals submitted to NASA in November.

AXIS is Bodaghee’s favorite, “because it’s an amazing telescope if it ever gets built.” The other telescope proposals are designed for spectral and timing science, not high-resolution imaging.

Bodaghee has already given presentations on his proposal at the European Space Astronomy Centre in Madrid and Howard University in Washington, D.C.

As a member of the AXIS Science Team focusing on compact objects and supernova remnants, Bodaghee will help create the first, large-scale, high-resolution X-ray map of the inner Milky Way. This is known as a Galactic Plane Survey (GPS). It requires a telescope with a wide field-of-view, since the galactic plane covers a large fraction of the sky. It also needs high resolution, since the galactic plane is the most crowded region.

In support of the GPS proposal, Bodaghee ran simulations of what the telescope might see by assuming a range of exposure times for different regions of the sky. These simulations relied on scripts written by the AXIS instruments and software team. In one example, he simulated a typical exposure for a crowded region of the galactic bulge. Detailed analysis of the image showed that all currently-known X-ray sources would be detected within a reasonably short exposure time. In addition, an equal number of faint X-ray sources would also be revealed for the first time.

The idea of a GPS was well received among the science team. With their suggestions and improvements, it became one of the leading proposals for AXIS and raised Bodaghee's status from one of hundreds of collaborators to one of 40 co-investigators.

AXIS mission management approved the team's proposal, awarding it "6 million seconds of exposure time." That's about 20% of the telescope's available time during its first year.

> **Working on this might be my greatest achievement.**
>
> **- Dr. Bodaghee**

"Because the GPS would deliver important science across different topics," Bodaghee said, "it basically became the common theme for the entire program from our group, focusing on supernovae and compact objects."

"Working on this might be my greatest achievement," he said.

This also makes Georgia College the only university in the state with a co-investigator involved in the project.

"Not Georgia Tech, not UGA. It's hard to believe," Bodaghee said. "If the telescope launches, what it maps in the Milky Way—roughly 20% of all its available time—will be dedicated to my proposal. Wow. It's big. It's crazy. I guess our idea was a really good one. We're in the big leagues."

NASA will make its final decision for funding in October 2024.

As co-investigator, Bodaghee would act as a consultant as the telescope is being built at NASA, led by the University of Maryland. It would launch from "somewhere in the North Pacific" in about five years.

NASA would also fund Bodaghee's research and any students who work with him on this project through 2030-'40.

> **It's gonna be something wonderful. It's something gigantic. It'll be a dramatic improvement in performance—a leap ahead in science.**

- Dr. Arash Bodaghee

AXIS would serve as a “transient alert module” allowing “real-time discovery” of explosive X-rays. These occur when objects like white dwarf and neutron stars form or collide.

It would also be able to alert the astronomical community within 10 minutes of detecting an explosion.

Existing X-ray telescopes don’t have the resolving power to pinpoint objects when they are faint or crowded too close together. Their images come out blurry, making it difficult to make scientific determinations.

A picture of deep space with little light.

Looking at a picture of the Milky Way today, there are some spots of light showing where Chandra charted. But much of space still looks very dark. There are a lot of gaps.

“Look how much is missing,” Bodaghee said. “We really haven’t adequately observed the region around the center of the Milky Way. We’ve barely observed the galactic plane. The telescope we currently have has a restricted field-of-view, so you can only see a small piece of sky at a time.”

“Our telescope will have a bigger field-of-view,” he said. “We can then map a large fraction of the Milky Way with better resolution, sharper images and higher sensitivity. We’ll be able to find objects that are too faint for our current instruments to detect.”

AXIS will be able to distinguish objects as separate points, detecting even the lowest light with precision.

Humanity will go from knowing about 100,000 points of light in space to several million.

“Imagine the science that can be done with a factor 10-100 increase,” Bodaghee said. “This would be a groundbreaking observatory for the X-ray community, the equivalent of what James Webb was for the optical/infrared community.”

With AXIS, we’re gonna see with almost-perfect clarity. Things we’ve never seen before.

- Dr. Arash Bodaghee

News Stories Posted Friday December 8, 2023

Nursing grad more than a translator for Canadian patient

Commencement : Friday December 8, 2023

A native French speaker from Quebec wasn't responding well to care at a medical center in Madison, Georgia this fall.

She was confused, unreceptive to treatment and not receiving the best care she could. But when graduating nursing senior, Claire Halloran, entered the room with a cheerful, "bonjour madame," everything changed.

"She just lit up," Halloran said, "it was like night and day. I figured it would help, but I just had no idea how big of an impact it would make."

Immediately Halloran's patient relaxed with a much softer, receptive disposition. And though Halloran isn't qualified to speak medical French, her friendly greetings and casual chat made a real difference in her patient's comfort.

“That was one of my favorite nursing days ever,” Halloran said. “It was so clear that she felt so much more seen and understood. It was just so special, because I really wasn’t sure if that was something I’d ever get to live out.”

> **I want to be a knowledgeable nurse, I want to be a capable nurse. But above all, I want to be an empathetic nurse.**
>
> **- Claire Halloran**

When she graduates from her nursing cohort in December, Halloran will have also completed two minors: French and women and gender studies.

Originally, she pursued French after taking it at Lassiter High School. As she explored the language at Georgia College & State University, however, she learned the value of embracing world cultures, and the impact it can make on your perspective.

“I want to encourage anybody, especially nursing students, to pursue a language even if it’s just a few courses,” Halloran said. “I think being able to communicate with patients in their first language, making that additional effort to make them feel comfortable and heard, can make such a difference in a patients’ care.”

“Anywhere that you're going to work, you're going to encounter a variety of languages and a variety of cultures,” she said. “Being well versed in how to receive those cultures, and how to approach them and appreciate them, is going to improve the level of compassion and empathy you can give those patients.”

Truly living the liberal arts experience, Halloran wanted to understand the social background of women and approach her new career with a background in social science.

Initially intending to work in women's health, Halloran thought the minor would help her understand the complexity of issues faced by people of other genders. Even though she's changed course to progressive care, Halloran's unique experience will improve her understanding of the people she'll care for—ultimately giving them a better experience.

Claire chose courses that fit her interests and made a unique program of study.

Her mentor, Dr. Marcia Henry, lecturer of nursing, modeled true patient compassion for Halloran.

"It's just so incredible to watch somebody become so educated and retain such compassion and empathy," Halloran said. "She walked alongside me to set that example, encouraged me and make me feel like I had an outlet—somebody who was specifically looking after me to make sure I had the resources I needed."

In addition to pointers and guidance, Henry has been an advocate for Halloran and all nursing students, actively trying to always improve the nursing program.

"Mentorship means so much to me; I love working with each student and helping them navigate their path to becoming a nurse," Henry said. "Claire made a distinct impression on me the first day I met her in the hospital. I was delighted to be her mentor for her final clinical course and I'm so happy to hear her talk about her career plans."

"Her positivity just shines through everything she does," Henry said. "Claire has excelled in nursing school, and I know she's going to do the same at the bedside."

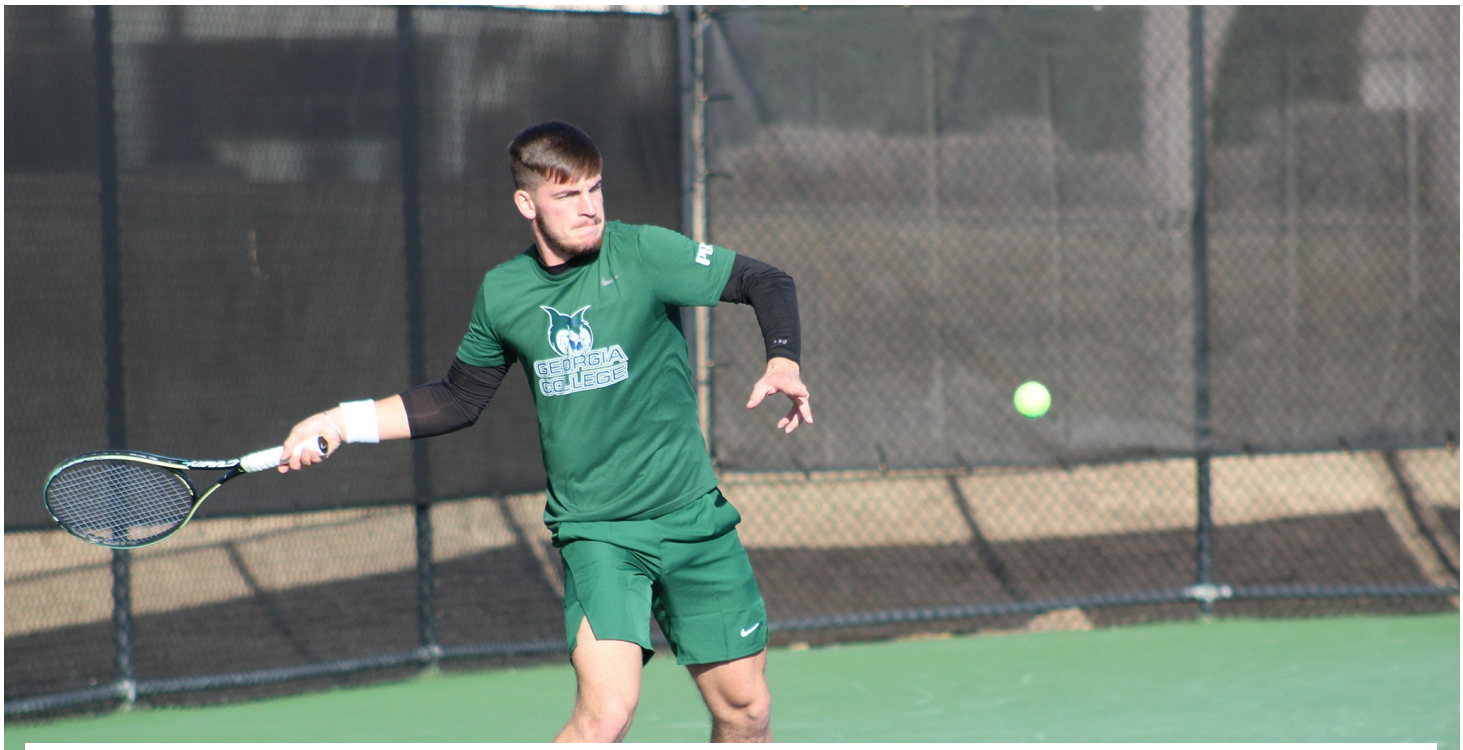
After graduation, Halloran will begin working as a progressive care unit nurse at Northside Hospital Gwinnett. There, she'll spend time and attention with patients who need extra care—a challenge she's happy to accept.

"As I got into the nursing cohort, I really found my niche," Halloran said. "Seeing all

this effort I've put in come together and impact my patients has really taught me the value of hard work, the value of a diverse and well-rounded education and given me the courage to pursue my education in a way that's unique to me."

"It's just given me a really great appreciation for a lifetime of learning," she said.

News Stories Posted Monday December 11, 2023



Class of 2023: French tennis player scores top notch at GCSU

Commencement : Monday December 11, 2023

Management major Aurelien Arlot of Paris, France, is a member of the Bobcat Men's Tennis Team at Georgia College & State University, typically playing on the fifth line in singles. Prior to transferring, he was the No. 2 singles player for Riverside City College in Riverside, California, in his freshman season.

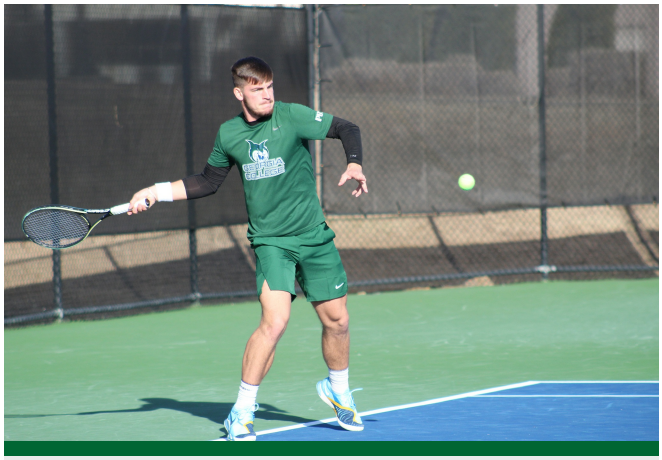
"We have a very good tennis team at Georgia College," he said. "It's better than the one in California. I've had to work hard to get to a better position on the team."

Arlot was glad to get recruited to Georgia College. He wanted to see more of the United States than just California. He's met new people here and learned how to make better use of his playing time in tennis. Working on a schedule was challenging at first, but now he's thriving.

"As a student-athlete, I needed to make my own schedule, choosing morning and

early afternoon classes, so I could practice tennis," he said.

Arlot dedicates three hours a day toward practice and one hour for conditioning. During fall, the team practices more to get ready for matches in the spring.



Aurelien Arlot plays a tennis match at GCSU.

Arlot made friends with several international players on the GCSU tennis team. They're from Argentina, Germany, Japan, Switzerland and other countries. He enjoys learning some of the different languages.

> **I'm glad I did it. I'm going to miss my teammates the most and the others I met at Georgia College. It's been an amazing experience.**
>
> **- Aurelien Arlot**

"I'm at Georgia College, but I feel like I'm still traveling," Arlot said. "When I talk to my teammates, it's very interesting to communicate with them and compare their cultures."

Playing tennis is a way for Arlot to relax and relieve stress.

"When I walk on the court and play tennis, I forget about everything else and just have fun," he said.

The professor who made the greatest impact on Arlot was Dr. Ward Risvold, lecturer of business communications.

Aurelien Arlot

“He’s very nice to me,” Arlot said. “And I know from my teammates that he’s also eager to help them. Dr. Risvold assisted us during class and outside of class. He even asked me if I needed help finding a job.”

Steve Barsby, assistant athletic director and head Men’s and Women’s Tennis coach taught Arlot to be more independent.

“He let us practice by ourselves, teaching us to figure things out on our own,” Arlot said, which is very important in life to be able to handle every situation by yourself.”

Once Arlot graduates, he’s going back to Paris to enjoy some time with family for a few months.

“After being away four years, I need to go back home and reconnect with them,” he said.

“Then, I may work as a tennis coach while working for a management company or maybe in international communication since I speak two languages.”

Arlot’s experience at Georgia College helped shape him into the person he is today.

“All this experience I've got and the people I've met in America have helped me be

more outgoing," he said. "I was a shy person. So, coming to the U.S. at 17 years old was something that helped me become an adult pretty quickly."

Arlot's experience at Georgia College helped put him on this path and instilled some priceless qualities in him.

"I'm glad I did it," Arlot said. "I'm going to miss my teammates the most and the others I met at Georgia College. It's been an amazing experience."

News Stories Posted Wednesday December 13, 2023

GCSU students present premier cancer research to national audience

Health & Human Performance, School of: Wednesday December 13, 2023

Recent research by two students will help address inequalities in treatment and survivorship for cancer patients.

Graduate student, Kaitlin Van Voorhis, ’23, and senior public health major, Walker Brennan Rae, presented their abstract at the 16th annual American Association for Cancer Research meeting in October. They were the only non-doctoral presenters.

This conference is a flagship of the cancer research community where scientists, professionals, patients and advocates share new developments in research worldwide. This year, the meeting was hosted by the Walt Disney World Resort, and presenters spoke at the Grand Floridian.

Undergraduates and graduate students are not usually represented at the meeting; doctoral students and professional researchers are the typical presenters.

(From left to right) Brennan, Ernie and Kaitlin present their research inside the Grand Floridian.

"It was very rewarding to have our abstract accepted," Rae said. "Even though I already felt like my work had paid off, because I learned so much throughout the whole process, it was like an extra pat on the back."

The experiences after a cancer diagnosis are not the same for everyone, and some people experience a harder journey or worse outcomes than others.

This is true for black men when it comes to prostate cancer, but it can impact that broad category of people differently. It's especially true for Sub-Saharan African men who are immigrants. They are an understudied group who often have poor experiences during and after treatment.

Van Voorhis and Rae wanted to find out why.

"The research as a whole is super important. It's research that hasn't been published before," Rae said. "There's been a lot of research into prostate cancer in general but never subpopulations like ours."

The research by Van Voorhis and Rae, with Dr. Ernie Kaninjing, associate professor of public health, identified changes in sexual and emotional health among prostate cancer survivors in their subgroup. Their research also reported changes in diet and physical abilities felt by patients being treated for prostate cancer.

"This research is looking at those disparities and the impact they have on these patients," Van Voorhis said. "Hopefully, we'll learn what we can do to mitigate that impact and get rid of those disparities."

With the information they've studied, Van Voorhis and Rae will add knowledge to the body of cancer research. Ultimately, their work will help inform interventions for cancer patients, bettering outcomes for survivors and positively influencing patients' behavior.

Throughout their research experience, Van Voorhis and Rae worked closely with Kaninjing to learn sophisticated software, clearly communicate their ideas and prepare for speaking at the conference. It was as much a mentorship opportunity as it was for research.

"Words cannot describe how grateful I am—it's mind-blowing every day," Van

Voorhis said. “Dr. Kaninjing is someone that I respect and admire so much.”

“As hard as Brennan and I worked as undergrads to get this abstract published, we could not have done it without Dr. Kaninjing backing us,” she said.

Rae will graduate in the spring. Van Voorhis has begun a graduate assistant position with Kaninjing where she’ll continue the work they’ve started. Now a Master of Health Promotion student, Van Voorhis’ experience with research techniques will prove invaluable.

“I definitely feel more prepared, even though I’m still learning things,” Van Voorhis said. “It’s been a while since I got to hone soft skills like communication with a team. I’m really thankful for that.”

“It makes me giddy, how amazing this opportunity is,” she said. “I’m going to get my master’s while helping with this groundbreaking research—that’s insane.”

Class of 2023: Focused on success - Valedictorian Katherine Crouse

Commencement : Wednesday December 13, 2023

One of the constant elements in Katherine Crouse's collegiate career has been change. A defensive back on the Georgia College & State University soccer team, she attended two different schools and had three different coaches in her four seasons.

Crouse hasn't let any distractions interfere as she finishes with a 4.0 GPA in business management, earning a spot as one of Georgia College's valedictorians at winter commencement. That makes her the ninth student-athlete to achieve that status in the past nine years.

Crouse began her college journey in her home state at Central Connecticut State University. After a year she was looking to transfer as she felt the life of a Division I student-athlete didn't allow enough time to focus on her studies. Crouse went looking for the balance that comes in the NCAA Division II and found the perfect fit at GCSU.

She made the 15-hour trip to Milledgeville to play for then-head coach Tinna Gallagher. Her campus visit made a huge impact and helped make the switch easier.

“I got in contact with Tinna and toured in July, immediately falling in love with the campus,” Crouse said. “As soon as I left campus that day I had decided—I’m coming here, I’m transferring.”

After the 2021 season, Coach Gallagher’s family moved to Nashville, Tennessee, bringing more change for Crouse, as Bobcat Athletics hired a new head coach in Jack Marchant.

“When we found out Tinna was leaving it was a big shock,” Crouse said. “I had just changed coaches by coming here, but I felt as though I love this school and I’m not going anywhere. The team all loves Jack, he brings a little something different. He’s made it a lot of fun. These last two years have probably been my favorite in all of college.”

Crouse flourished in the past two seasons, logging 27 starts and playing in all 32 matches. This season, she was a crucial part in the biggest win in program history, taking down then-No. 1 Catawba College on Oct. 25, 2-1. Crouse got the start in that match, playing 59 minutes on a defensive line that held Catawba scoreless the entire second half.

A management graduate, Katherine is pursuing a career in human resources.

“This year was awesome, and I think next year they’re going to see a lot of success,” she said. “I love the coaching staff here, so that made it a lot of fun. We had a really big win that will definitely be my biggest memory of college—I’m excited to see what they do going forward.

Crouse is pursuing a career in human resources, a field that sparked her interest early in her college career.

Crouse has taken her next step by accepting a job with Travelers’ Insurance back home in Hartford, Connecticut, and will start in June after some time for travel.

“I’m going there to join their human resource development program,” Crouse said. “It’s a three-year rotation and after that I’ll get placed in a different HR area. I knew I wanted to do business when I came to college, but when I transferred here I was kind of unsure of what path. Then I discovered the HR concentration and when I took Ken Hendry’s class last year I knew it was the right fit. All of my HR classes have been my favorite throughout college.”

“I know I made the right decision,” she said. “I had such a great experience here. Coming 15 hours from home was hard at first, but this has been the best place for me. I absolutely loved it here.”

News Stories Posted Thursday December 14, 2023

Class of 2023: Graduating math major tells others—bad can lead to better times

Commencement : Thursday December 14, 2023

There was a dark moment in Monica Lichtenwalner's college years when things seemed bleak.

In fall of her sophomore year, 2021, she got COVID-19 the first week of class and felt "very sick" for two weeks. A month and a half later, she still didn't feel fully recovered and dropped half her classes, because she was falling behind.

She knew this would delay her senior capstone project and cause her to graduate later than she planned.

It was disheartening at the time. But Lichtenwalner soon realized it was a gift in disguise.

Prior to her illness, she didn't know which area of math she wanted to work in or

who to choose as a mentor.

The additional semester allowed Lichtenwalner to take “Abstract Algebra” before starting a capstone. She enjoyed the course so much she chose that professor, Dr. Marcela Chiorescu, as her capstone advisor.

That class also led to what Lichtenwalner calls her “biggest achievement” in college.

Monica Lichtenwalner does math equations at the chalkboard.

Chiorescu encouraged Lichtenwalner to apply for a Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU), funded by the National Science Foundation.

Lichtenwalner got one last summer with Virginia Commonwealth University—and used what she learned in class to research ways for simplifying complex Lie algebras.

> **That delay also established my desire to study math, specifically abstract algebra, at the graduate level. So, the advice I would give incoming students is focus on doing what you can, and everything else will work itself out. You never know what the future holds, and something that might seem bad at the time could eventually result in something good.**
>
> **- Monica Lichtenwalner**

During the REU, her group was able to prove a few results relating to the sequence of Lie algebras associated with graphs. They presented their findings at a research symposium and have a paper in progress.

Before this experience, the idea of mathematical research seemed intimidating. But the REU gave Lichtenwalner a boost of confidence. She now plans to pursue a Ph.D. in math and a career in academia.

“I found this to be a valuable experience,” Lichtenwalner said. “It gave me more insight into what mathematical research is like.”

“I’ve changed a lot in the years I’ve been at Georgia College & State University,” she

added. “I’ve grown more confident, my mental health has gotten significantly better, and I feel like I know what direction I want my life to go in after I graduate.”

Monica Lichtenwalner was a member of the winning Math Jeopardy team last spring. (Pictured second to left.)

Dr. Rachel Epstein also made a big impact on the Cumming, Georgia, resident. Epstein was the first math professor Lichtenwalner had in college and advised the Math Club, which Lichtenwalner served as vice president and president. Lichtenwalner was also a Supplemental Instructor (SI) in Epstein’s precalculus class this semester.

Epstein led a group of Math Club members toMath Jeopardy victory last semester at the 2023 Mathematical Association of America (MAA) Southeastern Section Conference in South Carolina.

> **I really enjoy helping other people understand and appreciate math.**
>
> **- Lichtenwalner**

It was the first time Georgia College won this grueling, three-day competition. And it was “the most fun” Lichtenwalner had in college. She was one of a four-member team competing against 15 schools in the Southeast.

Lichtenwalner credits the Georgia College Math Department for presenting opportunities like Math Jeopardy and the REU. Faculty also helped ensure her success.

“The mathematics department at Georgia College is full of really amazing and helpful professors who definitely had a lot of influence and impact on my goal to pursue a Ph.D.,” she said. “My experience as an employee for the Learning Center also helped me realize that—in addition to my enjoyment of learning math—I really enjoy helping other people understand and appreciate math.”

News Stories Posted Friday December 15, 2023

Class of 2023: GCSU opportunities will pay off big for future lawyer

Government & Sociology, Department of: Friday December 15, 2023

Vivian Cassaniti applied herself 110% at Georgia College & State University. She'll graduate in December with a degree in both political science and philosophy.

In addition, she's graduating with a concentration in pre-law, several accolades and priceless experiences.

"My two majors complemented each other nicely," Cassaniti said. "Now, I plan to apply to several colleges for my master's degree while also applying to law school."

Cassaniti is a recent recipient of the Pajari Best Undergraduate Research Paper Award at the Georgia Political Science Association Annual Meeting. She was also named the 2022 Newman Civic Fellow, is a member of the John E. Sallstrom Honors College and an alumna of the Leadership Certificate Program.

That certificate program included a study abroad program to Strasbourg, France.

Additionally, she's a member of the Georgia Education Mentorship Program and served as a student ambassador, during which she gave tours to prospective students and led new students as an orientation leader.

Vivian Cassaniti

An undergraduate research paper she spearheaded delved into the systematic examination of gender differences in attitudes toward public policy issues and their profound impact on American politics.

"Her work offers invaluable insights into the intricate patterns of gendered public opinion in the United States, elucidating the driving factors behind these patterns and exploring how gender intersects with other identities to shape political attitudes," said Dr. Min Kim, professor of public administration and Cassaniti's mentor.

The 40-plus page paper took Cassaniti nearly a year to write. It examines the influence of partisanship and different identities on gender disparities in attitudes toward social welfare policies. She's always been interested in the concepts of justice and equality and what peoples' roles are regarding government programs.

"Dr. Kim was incredibly supportive and encouraging," Cassaniti said. "I learned a lot, attending the conference and presenting my research. It was super helpful to have my mentor there for support and guidance."

"This paper was a great introduction to empirical research and research in political science," she said. "It provided a great avenue for me to explore some of the questions I had. Now, I'm interested in researching more."

> **I'm ready to use everything I've learned at Georgia College in my studies and career. I’m especially excited about continuing my research. All of my involvement was well worth it.**
>
> **- Vivian Cassaniti**

Cassaniti met many successful people at Georgia College. She’s grateful to count on them as role models, including Kim, Stanford “Stan” Wilson, ’77, her attorney mentor through the GEM program who serves as a Georgia College Foundation trustee and Dr. Harold Mock, director of Leadership Programs and assistant professor of history.

“They've helped me step out of my comfort zone,” Cassaniti said. “I've gotten really comfortable with public speaking and networking with people. Dr. Mock and the leadership programs have given me so many opportunities.”

“I enjoyed listening to their experiences, and how they've overcome challenges they’ve faced. It's helpful to have somebody to learn from and emulate,” she said. “I'm ready to use everything I've learned at Georgia College in my studies and career. I’m especially excited about continuing my research. All of my involvement was well worth it.”

News Stories Posted Monday December 18, 2023

Marine scientist plays vital role in oceanic fish population

Biology & Environmental Sciences, Department of: Monday December 18, 2023

Scientist Annsli Hilton, ’22, has been fascinated by the ocean and its wildlife for as long as she can remember. Her earliest memory of exploring ocean wildlife is a project she made in kindergarten on great white sharks.

In her current role as a research associate with the University of Miami’s Cooperative Institute of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences, she’s contracted with The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries Southeast Science Center.

Annsli Hilton measures a black nose shark in the Gulf of Mexico aboard the NOAA Oregon II Ship.

Hilton was a first-generation college student who began her journey learning about marine biology and oceanography at Georgia College & State University.

“The most valuable things I learned from Georgia College were how to ask important thought-provoking questions, but also how to take a scientific paper and be able to read it,” she said. “It can have a lot of information that can overwhelm you. So, just learning how to read through a paper, understand it and take away meaning from it helps me in my job every day.”

Now, Hilton works with the fishery assessment, technology and engineering support (FATES) branch of NOAA Fisheries. She works with grey triggerfish and red snapper there.

In September, she spent two weeks on a large ship in the middle of the Gulf of Mexico conducting the shark and red snapper bottom long-line survey. The survey provides information for various research projects, as well as regional stock assessments. The elongated fishing line that’s used has 100 attached hooks, and it

sits on the ocean floor for an hour, collecting sea life.

Annsli Hilton at port in Galveston, Texas.

It takes over two months to conduct the survey.
Different NOAA Fisheries scientists go out on the project for two weeks at a time.

“I went to a bunch of different stations,” Hilton said. “We started in Galveston, Texas, and ended up outside of Tampa, Florida, and then returned to port in Mississippi.”

> **If it weren't for our research and policymakers putting different restrictions in place these species would be overfished, and we wouldn't see them anymore. So, it's really important to make sure that the fisheries stay healthy.**
>
> **- Annsli Hilton**

In the field, Hilton and her colleagues document all their tasks and findings. They use conductivity, temperature and depth (CTD) to examine the water’s physical properties, like depth and turbidity. Once the ocean organisms are caught, Hilton’s team documents everything they catch, even non-targeted species.

“We take three different measurements on each organism,” she said. “We also take samples, like fin clips from sharks and otoliths from fish.”

Last year, she interned for the shark population and assessment group, working on various surveys. They studied how sharks use the Gulf of Mexico as a nursery and pupping ground in the GULFSPAN (Gulf of Mexico Shark Pupping and Nursing) survey.

“It was really easy to catch fish for that survey,” Hilton said. “We put out a 500-foot gill net. And depending on where we were, many sharks would hit that net. It was really easy to catch them. But, doing the sawfish abundance survey is quite difficult, because they are a critically endangered species, making them much harder to find.”

Last November, Hilton and her colleagues were in the Florida Everglades for two weeks searching for smalltooth sawfish. It wasn’t until their second to last day that they caught one.

“Its umbilical scar was still present, so it was most likely born about one or two months prior to us catching it,” Hilton said.

While the crew worked the Everglades, crocodiles lingered nearby.

“At one point, my fellow intern and lead scientist were in the water,” Hilton said. “I quietly asked the lead scientist, ‘Isn’t that a crocodile over there?’ Unfortunately, my fellow intern heard me and got a little nervous. A crocodile was about 15 feet away from us just watching.”

“I was more nervous to be in the water with bull sharks,” she said.

Annsli Hilton holds a bull shark in the Florida Everglades.

“Some of the coolest species I've gotten to help tag and take samples from are some larger shark species, like tiger sharks and the critically endangered species like the small tooth sawfish,” Hilton said. “It's crazy to see a species that we have so few of left.”

When Hilton’s not in the field, she spends half her time working alongside a biologist in the lab with red snapper. She’s responsible for imaging red snapper histology slides.

The other half of Hilton’s time in the lab is spent researching the age and growth of grey triggerfish with another biologist. Traditionally, fish are aged with their otoliths.

“Triggerfish have very small and fragile otoliths,” she said. “Therefore, triggerfish are aged using their spines which deposit annual rings similarly to otoliths.”

“We can look at them under a microscope and count their spine’s rings, similar to a tree, to age them,” Hilton said.

From the time Hilton was a sophomore at Georgia College, until she became a senior, Dr. Kristine White had the biggest impact on her education. An assistant professor in the Department of Biological and Environmental Sciences, White focuses on marine organisms.

“When I was a senior in her oceanography class, she gave my class the opportunity to go on a field trip to the University of Tampa and go on one of their oceanography vessels to work on the boat for a day trawling the bottom for different organisms,” Hilton said. “That moment solidified my decision that this is what I want to do.”

Annsli Hilton and her dog, Koavr, pose for a graduation picture.

Ultimately, Hilton and her colleagues produce stock assessments for different marine fishes—making sure there’s enough abundance for commercial fisheries to keep catching fish 30 years from now.

“If it weren't for our research and policymakers putting different restrictions in place,” she said, “these species would be overfished, and we wouldn't see them anymore. So, it's really important to make sure that the fisheries stay healthy.”

“There are a lot of great parts about my job that excite me. One of them is I get to work with my favorite animal—sharks,” Hilton said. “But the best part is that I get to bring my dog, Koavr, whose name represents an ocean cove, to work with me. I got my dog when I was a freshman at Georgia College. He’s my best friend. So, it’s important that he gets to hang out with me for eight to nine hours a day instead of being left alone.”

During the workdays, Hilton enjoys taking quick walks by the water with Koavr to watch the dolphins.

“There’s a study that shows working by the water makes you happier,” she said. “I honestly believe this is true.”

GCSU alumna answers call to satisfy great community need

Psychological Science, Department of : Monday December 18, 2023

Ayoung mother struggling to make ends meet, cried when she received newborn diapers and wipes.

One young father stated that he could now purchase the tummy time toy that he desperately wanted for his baby.

Many young parents struggle financially. Being able to access free diapers allows them to purchase food or pay a bill that they weren't sure they'd be able to get to that month.

According to the National Diaper Bank Network, one in two U.S. families are in need of diapers. This means a family cannot afford enough diapers on hand to change their babies at healthy intervals, leading to skin irritation, infections or allergies.

When growing up, Michelle Waters McMullan, ’12, remembers going to Junior League of Savannah meetings with her mom. So, volunteering for the Junior League has always been a big part of her life.

Today, McMullan is president of the volunteer-run organization.

“We were not looking to change from a diaper bank, because we recognize there’s still a need for diapers, she said. “We had to reframe what we do and partner with different community organizations to provide diapers to at-risk families because we work with so many different populations.”

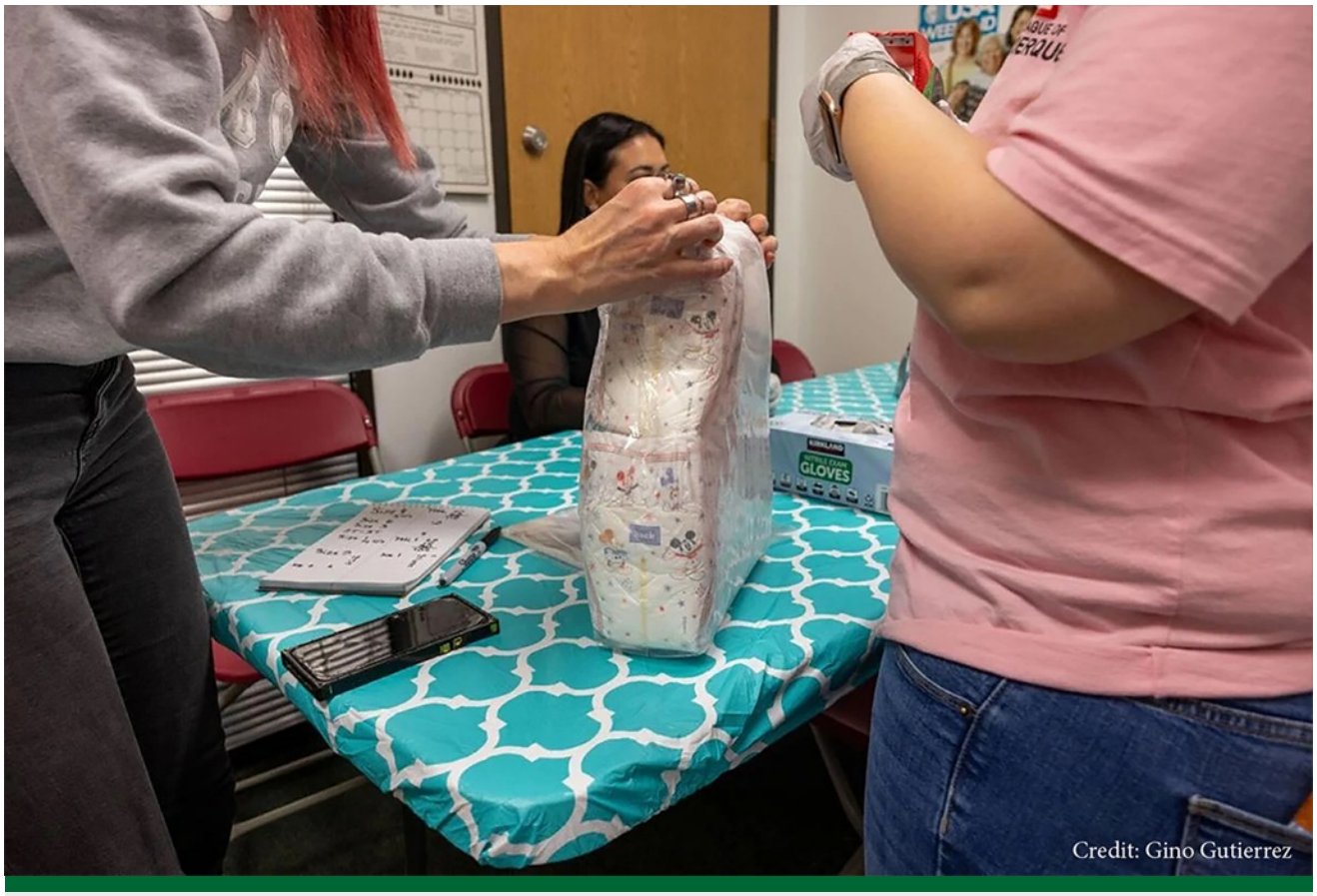
Some organizations they partner with are: Children, Youth and Families Department; Crossroads for Women; Albuquerque Hope Works; Albuquerque Mutual Aid; and United Way.

In 2016, McMullan began her role as director of Care Services with ALS New Mexico—the only non-profit in the state, providing programs and services to people living with ALS (Lou Gehrig’s Disease). After a year into her career, she felt something was missing in her life.

Michelle McMullan at the Annual Conference representing the Junior League of Albuquerque.

“I knew the layout of the city. I had great work friends. And I was making a difference through my profession. But I felt like it was time for me to be a part of something else,” McMullan said. “Then, it was just like the lightbulb went off. I immediately signed up for the Junior League of Albuquerque in fall 2016, and it's worked out perfectly.”

When she joined the Junior League, it had just formed its Community Impact Committee. It was tasked with pinpointing the local community’s greatest need. The committee concluded that local youth, phasing out of Albuquerque’s foster program and having children of their own, needed additional support. Namely, diapers—and a lot of them.



Michelle McMullan packs diapers with a Junior League of Albuquerque member.

The Junior League gets frequent feedback from recipients of the diaper program.

“We can't get better if we don't know what's wrong, or what we are doing is good,” McMullan said. “Our clients have relayed positive comments to us through our partners. So, we know we’re making a difference now.”

“When signing up for daycare, the daycares require parents to provide their own diapers for their children,” McMullan said. “If they can't afford diapers, they can't take them to daycare, which means you have to find someone to watch your child.”

“But if you can't afford diapers, your ability to pay for a babysitter is probably also non-existent,” she said. “So, now you're taking time off of work and missing pay. And the cycle continues.”

> **If you're going to complain about something in your community, and you want to see change, then volunteer—be that change.**
>
> **- Michelle McMullan**

Every day McMullan is presented with challenges. She consistently applies concepts learned from her psychology classes at Georgia College & State University, like counseling theories, abnormal psychology and neuroscience. She especially applies the different types of counseling theories in her role at ALS, where she also functions as a social worker.

McMullan credits Dr. Lee Gillis, chair, psychological science; Dr. J. Noland White, professor of psychology; and Dr. Diana Young, associate professor of psychology for providing her with this valuable knowledge.

Michelle McMullan in the stockroom that houses diapers.

McMullan knows the importance of staying committed to a cause.

“We get donations during the holiday season, because everyone's got that good feeling in their heart,” she said. “But that means in June, we’ll be in the same position—turning away diaper requests, because we don't have what we need.”

McMullan’s hope is for her to uplift others.

“If you're going to complain about something in your community,” McMullan said, “and you want to see change, then volunteer—be that change.”

Others inspire McMullan to be a better person every day.

“The joys of being so passionate about what you do is that it hits you like this,” she said while tearing up. “I just want what's best for people and seeing others work for those things is inspirational to me. It just gets me every time.”

GCSU professor’s words carried out: Alumna lives a colorful, fun life

College of Arts & Sciences : Monday December 18, 2023

Patti Perry Zimmermann, ’78, dared to venture across the professional spectrum from teaching music to become a senior analyst in technology and finance at Macy’s Technology, a division of Macy’s, Inc.

After graduating from Georgia College & State University with a degree in instrumental education, Zimmermann taught music in the classroom a few years to approximately 1,000 elementary students each week and gave private woodwind lessons.

Patti Zimmermann

“I couldn't get a job as a band director as a woman, where I wanted to teach,” Zimmermann said. “Some people didn't believe that women should be high school band directors. That was crushing to me.”

She saw each class once a week for 30 minutes. Often, she would sit on the floor with students playing the guitar and singing with them.

“They looked forward to that time,” Zimmermann said. “Every child should be able to sing as a way to express themselves. Singing is something you carry with you no matter what instrument you play.”

Zimmerman started singing in a church choir when she was 5 years old and participated in other choral groups throughout her life.

“In addition to all the research on what music does for your brain, it's just something that’s uniting, beautiful and joyful,” Zimmermann said. “I wanted those students to walk away with that same feeling.”

Through the years, teaching music to students put stress on her voice. She took what she had learned in Professor Dr. Jim Willoughby's classes—to have the ability to research and learn how to do anything—and transitioned to a senior analyst in technology and finance at Macy’s. She’s been in this field 26 years and participates in the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade.

Patti Zimmermann (third row from top on right in red) waves on the Singing Christmas Tree float before lining up for the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.

“My IT job is never boring, because it changes every year,” Zimmermann said. “My manager tells me I'm this fixer of broken things, because I can bridge the gap between nontechnical people and technical people.”

“I still stay in touch with Dr. Willoughby today, after all these years,” she said. “He's dear to all of us. He has a huge sense of humor. One of the things that I took away from him is that you can do anything you put your mind to.”

“Being able to be flexible and think for yourself are the things I love about Georgia College,” Zimmermann said. “I love that we’re teaching students to think and analyze concepts to develop real thought processes.”

Zimmermann served on the GCSU Alumni Association Board of Directors for six years. It gave her insight into how the university functions.

“I became fascinated with learning about the inner workings of Georgia College,” Zimmerman said. “I discovered things I never thought about and got to see behind the curtain of how things work and what it takes to run a university.”

When she served as chair of the Alumni Association’s Scholarship Committee, she urged students to give back to the university as alumni by volunteering and providing financial support. She and her team also continually asked themselves, “How can we serve the students better?”

“Each year, we looked at how we could improve the scholarship application review process,” Zimmermann said. “We wanted to make sure we were doing a diligent job for the university and students to spend those dollars wisely. The stories that came through on those applications about their financial need were often heartbreaking. That gave the scholarship process even more purpose.”

Patti Zimmermann at the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.

Zimmermann just wrapped up her fifth year in the 2023 Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade aboard the Singing Christmas Tree.

“I auditioned and made it,” she said. “There's nothing like it.”

Zimmermann thinks the best part of being in the parade are the people in New York City lining the parade route.

“They are so excited to be there,” she said. “People sing with us along the parade route and up in the apartment buildings, condos and hotels—they are so happy when we look up to see them. They wave at us, and we wave back to acknowledge that connection.”

> **Being able to be flexible and think for yourself are the things I love about Georgia College. I love that we’re teaching students to think and analyze concepts to develop real thought processes.**
>
> **- Patti Zimmermann**

“The Macy’s Thanksgiving Parade, by far, is the most magical thing I've ever done,” Zimmermann said. “It was such a part of my life growing up. We watched the parade every year, and you didn’t eat your Thanksgiving meal until you saw Santa Claus at the end of it.”

For the first time, the “bigs” and “littles” from the Big Brothers Big Sisters organization joined Macy’s colleagues performing on the tree. In previous years, the Macy’s Singing Christmas Tree has been the last float before the Santa Claus float. This year, Cher performed after the tree before Santa reached Herald Square.

Patti Zimmermann holds a quilt she made.

“The caliber of people that we get to work with is phenomenal,” she said. “Judith Clurman, our conductor, teaches at the Manhattan School of Music, and our rehearsal pianist was a student of Judith’s who works in musical theatre. Our music arrangers are nationally known. The entire team are graduates of some of the best music schools in the country.”

“Judith has a different approach to pulling music out of people and getting them production ready,” Zimmermann said. “She's just a treasure. Macy's gives us this wonderful opportunity to use our talent and give back to the community and nation.”

In her spare time, Zimmermann quilts, is a family historian and tends to her family’s pets which include an African Grey parrot, alpacas, cats, chickens, a cow, dogs, donkeys, guineafowl, horses, llamas, peacocks and pigs—many of which she and her husband rescued. They even get visitors to their farm.

“It's so fun being around our pets,” she said. “We’re a colorful crew.”

Zimmermann enjoys staying busy with her career, hobbies, pets and Georgia College. She still visits campus regularly for alumni events and lives out her advice to students by volunteering and donating to her alma mater. She wouldn’t have it

any other way.

Making Connections: Jane Kidd returns to the university her great-grandfather started

Leadership Programs : Monday December 18, 2023

It'd be hard to find someone more connected to Georgia College & State University than Jane Kidd, the university's current Alex Gregory Distinguished Fellow and Leader in Residence.

Jane Kidd

She points to numerous places where she and her family have, in some way or another, left their mark on campus—starting with her great-grandfather, Richard B. Russell, Sr., who as a state legislator introduced the 1889 legislation establishing the Georgia Normal and Industrial College for women.

That's right: Russell. As in 'Russell Auditorium,' named after the statesman, and 'Ina Dillard Russell Library,' named after his

wife, Kidd's great-grandmother.

But the connections—to Georgia College and high state political affairs—don't stop there.

Her great-grandfather was also on the university's board of directors many years. The only son of six children, he became a lawyer and, later, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court in Georgia. His family lived in Winder. Kidd's grandfather lived next door. She has fond memories of visiting most of her great-aunts and -uncles there.

Russell had six daughters, Kidd's great-aunts. Five were educated at Georgia State College for Women in the late 1920s and several lived in Terrell Hall, when it was a dormitory.

Russell had 13 children. One of his sons—Kidd's great-uncle, Senator Richard B. Russell, Jr.—was a U.S. Senator for more than 40 years. Prior to that, he was a state legislator and governor of Georgia for four years. Kidd's grandfather, another one of Russell's sons, was a federal judge. And her father, S. Ernest Vandiver, Jr., was adjutant general and lieutenant governor, before becoming the state's 73rd governor.

It doesn't end there.

Hugh Peterson, on Georgia College's Board of Trustees many years, was first cousin to Kidd's mother. His mother was Pat Peterson, as in the library's 'Pat Peterson Museum Education Room.'

"I was really fortunate to be exposed to a lot of family and many, many connections," Kidd said.

Kidd has an impressive background too, which includes being a member of the university's Foundation Board since 2009. It was Cousin Peterson who told Kidd she needed to be on it, because "it's really important we keep some Russells on the board."

Her career spans more than 30 years in public service and higher education.

This fall, Kidd accepted the Alex Gregory Distinguished Fellowship and will continue in that role in the spring. Part of Georgia College's Leadership Program, fellows are expected to share their leadership expertise with students and faculty.

"Jane is so gracious and thoughtful in her leadership and an exceptional role model for our students at Georgia College," said Harold Mock, director of Leadership Programs and assistant professor of history.

Alternate Text

“She brings to her role the experiences and expertise she has cultivated over decades of leadership and public service,” he said. “She has a unique ability to bring people together in service of big ideas. We are so fortunate to have her as our Alex Gregory Distinguished Fellow and Leader-in-Residence.”

Kidd studied at Queens College, now Queens University, in Charlotte, North Carolina. She transferred to the University of Georgia (UGA) to become a journalist, graduating with honors in 1975. She also has a master’s in instructional technology from Piedmont University in Athens.

> **Jane is so gracious and thoughtful in her leadership and an exceptional role model for our students at Georgia College.**
>
> **- Dr. Harold Mock**

While in college, Kidd assisted her father’s campaign run for the U.S. Senate in 1972. She worked in the UGA public information office, started her own education consulting firm and managed the congressional campaign of Congressman Don Johnson.

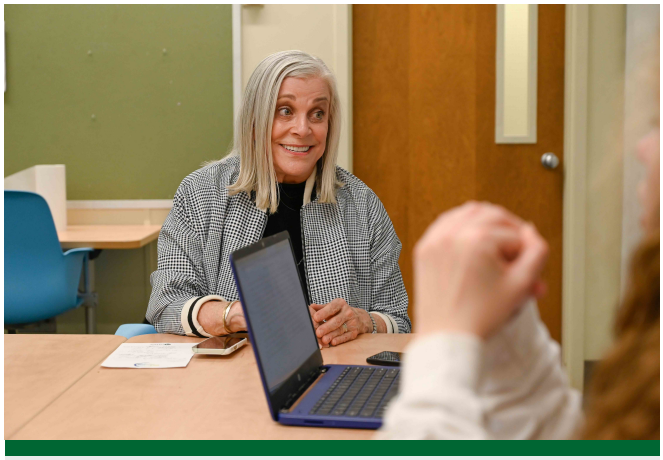
Kidd was alumni director of UGA’s Grady School of Journalism in the early 2000s and elected to represent the 115th district in the Georgia House of Representatives in 2004. She chaired the Georgia State Democratic Party from 2007 to 2011.

Kidd also served three terms on Lavonia’s City Council and in executive leadership roles at Clemson and Piedmont universities. She was vice president for the public relations firm, Gehrung Associates in Keene, New Hampshire, and director of development for the State Botanical Garden of Georgia at UGA.

Kidd now lives in Crawford, Georgia, with her husband, David and their three dogs. They have a daughter, Elizabeth, and son, Alex, and they love getting visits from their two grandchildren.

In October, Kidd spoke at Georgia College's Usery Forum on Leadership. This semester, she guest taught two sessions of the course, "Principals of Leadership: How to Change the World." In these classes, Kidd explained the principles for effective leadership to students and how to bridge the divide between theory and practice.

She'll teach this course in the spring, as well.



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Kidd also participates in the Georgia Education Mentorship (GEM) Program, a partnership between Georgia College's Leadership Programs and the Georgia Chamber of Commerce. She went on a recent field trip to Tifton, Georgia, with students from the GEM Program. The group explored the Chamber's connection with the Georgia Center for Rural Prosperity.

In the spring, Kidd will help present another Usery Forum on Leadership. She'll be part of the Research and Public Service Summit in February and the Georgia College Leadership Ideas Festival in April.

In May and June, Kidd will represent Georgia College at the Intercultural Leadership Program at the European Parliament in Strasbourg, France.

Until then, Kidd will continue to mentor and inspire leadership qualities in students.

> **Leadership is having a vision and communicating it in a compelling way so that people want to engage and participate in the endeavor.**
>
> **- Jane Kidd**

She laughs, recalling the name given to her as a child, "Miss Precocious." People would come to visit the governor's mansion where they lived from 1959 – 1963 in Atlanta. Kidd would greet guests at the door and charge 50 cents per tour.

Kidd still displays that same tenacity today and tells students "to be brave and

make bold moves in the direction of their dreams.”

“Forced solutions don't work. I believe in letting ‘time take time.’” Kidd said. “Things mostly work out for the best when you choose not to push too hard. Leadership is having a vision and communicating it in a compelling way so that people want to engage and participate in the endeavor.”

“Empathy with individuals is the key to discovering the strengths and weaknesses of your team,” she added. “With empathy and understanding, you can encourage all team members toward their personal best.”

Seth Walker named VP of University Advancement and executive director of GCSU Foundation

University Advancement : Monday December 18, 2023

Georgia College & State University welcomes Seth Walker as the new vice president for University Advancement and executive director of the GCSU Foundation Inc. He began his position Dec. 1, 2023.

Walker oversees the Foundation and leads all University Advancement professionals including Alumni Relations and Advancement Services.

He chose Georgia College because he's impressed with its history and the excitement around the Imagine 2030 Strategic Plan.

"Georgia College has a unique story within the University System of Georgia," he said. "We have a great advancement and alumni team that will be able to maximize our collective impact toward gaining more resources for GCSU's students, faculty and staff."

Walker most recently served as vice chancellor for Advancement and CEO of the Foundation at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (SIUE). There, he doubled the fundraising output, resulting in the highest-fundraising year in the university's history.

“We engaged the entire campus community around fundraising,” Walker said. “It’s important to also invest in our advancement team, so they’re empowered to work with donors to create new philanthropic opportunities.”

Seth Walker

The qualitative and quantitative metric system he used with development officers, deans and department chairs was effective in raising private funds. This system enables individuals to know how they're tracking and shows them how to work strategically toward their goals.

Walker’s experience working at the Georgia Aquarium and United Way also gave him insight into corporate fundraising. It helped him understand what corporate leaders look for when they're making a philanthropic investment.

“It taught me how we can tailor our investment to match that of a corporation,” Walker said. “Also, corporations are really just made up of people. So, the importance of individual relationships with people in corporations are what matter. This is what we’re trying to do at Georgia College.”

Walker also already has experience within the University System of Georgia. At Kennesaw State University, he was senior director of Development over the College of Business, College of Continuing Education, the Graduate College and Global Affairs.

“My role prepared me to understand the depths of the University System of Georgia and how we operate within the system,” he said. “We also focused on non-alumni donors and had a young alumni base.”

At Georgia Southern University, Walker served as director of Corporate Relations for the Atlanta region, leading its corporate efforts.

“I developed an understanding of the importance of career services to the corporate development model, and how fundraising and career services interact to support students,” he said.

> **Georgia College has a unique story within the University System of Georgia. We**

have a great advancement and alumni team that will be able to maximize our collective impact toward gaining more resources for GCSU's students, faculty and staff.

- Seth Walker

Walker earned his undergraduate degree in health services administration and his master's degree in business administration both from Georgia Southern University. He's pursuing his Ed.D. in higher education administration from Georgia Southern University too, which he expects to be awarded in December 2024.

In his spare time, Walker enjoys being involved in the community, fishing, playing golf, gardening and doing activities with his six-year-old son, Andy, who is especially happy about the move.

"He's looking forward to being back," Walker said, "close to his friends and happy to be in the Milledgeville area."

Walker and his wife, Anna, just welcomed a new baby on Dec. 10, 2023. Both are Georgia natives. Walker is originally from Savannah but graduated from high school in Newnan, and his wife from Duluth. His family is enthusiastic about being back in Georgia near relatives.

"Seth Walker is prepared to move University Advancement in a strategic direction using our Imagine 2030 Strategic Plan as a strong, guiding force," said Georgia College & State University President Cathy Cox. "His fully staffed advancement team is capable of and ready to follow his ambitious lead, which will take GCSU to new heights in the years to come."

News Stories Posted Wednesday December 20, 2023

Class of 2023: Recent graduate wants to repair criminal justice system

Government & Sociology, Department of: Wednesday December 20, 2023

Montavious Taylor Sr.

For people to respect law enforcement, the criminal justice system must be fair and reasonable—creating policies that make citizens of all classes and races feel safe.

These are the words and hope of Montavious Taylor Sr., a Marine veteran, who earned his master's in criminal justice at Georgia College & State University in December.

He wants to be part of the change that makes justice equitable for all people.

"I grew up witnessing the good and bad of the

criminal justice system," Taylor said, "from seeing it save families from abusive and negative situations to innocently ripping families apart, and I could never understand the why's of the situation. So, I took my grandfather's advice. He always told me, 'If you don't like what you see—be the change you want to see.'"

Taylor lives in Perry, Georgia, with his wife and three children: his daughter Kamari is 7 years old, and his sons, Montavious Jr., and Anthony are 4 and 1.

Taylor feels his biggest achievement at Georgia College was not becoming overwhelmed, while getting his master's and working full time. Balancing work, school and family was tricky, but he did it without going below a B or having to take any course twice.

> **'If you don't like what you see—be the change you want to see.'**
>
> **- Taylor**

"This experience changed me, because it made me realize no matter how many things you have going on in your life, there's no reason not to continue your goals and aspirations," Taylor said. "For me, it was to pursue a higher education. I thought at first it would be an impossible task to manage work, family and school, but this experience showed me I indeed can do it. Just took hard work and dedication."

Taylor served five years in the Marine Corps as a legal administrator at Camp Johnson, a satellite base for Camp Lejeune in Jacksonville, North Carolina. He handled legal proceedings for the base, in particular Non-Judicial Punishments (NJPs) which are like criminal trials but without juries. Taylor coordinated and managed cases for the commanding officer, transcribed hearings and made sure punishments were carried out properly.

Taylor from his days in the Marines, holding his daughter.

While working on his master's, Taylor also worked as a veteran's disability consultant. He helped vets get higher disability ratings for injuries suffered on active duty. In his new job, Taylor will be an officer for the Georgia Department of Community Supervision.

He wanted a master's to build upon his undergraduate degree in criminal justice

from Middle Georgia State University.

“I knew I was enrolling right back into school,” Taylor said, “so I instantly searched for the best schools in Georgia for graduate programs in my study and applied for multiple schools to see what options I held.”

“Georgia College just made the process much easier than other schools,” he said. “Georgia College made the process easy and smooth, even with incorporating my veterans benefits to pay for school.”

During the online master’s, Taylor was able to work at his own pace. Assignments weren’t “jammed up on top of each other.” He had time to thoroughly grasp each concept before moving on.

The professors were also easy to work with and ready to assist.

Each “had their own spark.” But Taylor’s favorite faculty were associate professor Dr. Sara Doude and assistant professor Adam Lamparello.

Alternate Text

“Dr. Doude was one of the most down-to-earth professors, who had no problem helping a student out in need and always made herself available without any judgement or idea of ‘Oh, this student should know this’ attitude,” Taylor said.

“Professor Lamparello was great at challenging your thinking process and getting his students out of their personal mindsets and thinking about the bigger picture.”

Lamparello helped Taylor see that “just because you may feel something is wrong does not mean that it is wrong, and if something is wrong, how could it be made right without making someone else’s right a wrong.”

In one project, Taylor was asked to create a hypothetical research assignment. He used academic resource and real data to analyze and examine the relationship between law enforcement agencies and the Black community.

Results revealed animosity between the two sides, mostly due to each side pointing the finger at the other for blame.

“I see good validation points from both sides,” he said, “but concluded the relationship is in its current state due to the Black community being victims of bias police tactics that are used to disproportionately target them.”

> **One side cannot stand on its own, because it will tip the balance of the criminal justice system and cause it to fail.**
>
> **- Taylor**

Taylor wants to be an element changing the situation. He feels he can attack the problem with resiliency, honor and a ‘won’t give up’ attitude.

“The primary element I learned about criminal justice, that stood out to me, is that it’s two-sided and requires the cooperation of the community and the criminal justice system to function properly,” Taylor said. “One side cannot stand on its own, because it will tip the balance of the criminal justice system and cause it to fail.”

Being at Georgia College also helped Taylor see “the bigger picture in life.” Getting his master’s taught him to look beyond himself and personal feelings, assess other people’s views and find ground for compromise.

He might “dabble” in law in the future. But, for now, Taylor wants to get his Ph.D. and start his own security/investigation company with the hope of reshaping a positive relationship between law enforcement and the community.

His advice for anyone hesitant about pursuing a higher education degree is this:

> **The task in front of you is never greater than the strength in you, and if you ever want to give up, just remember the reason you started and persevere.**
>
> **- Montavious Taylor Sr.**