

Front Page News Story Archive

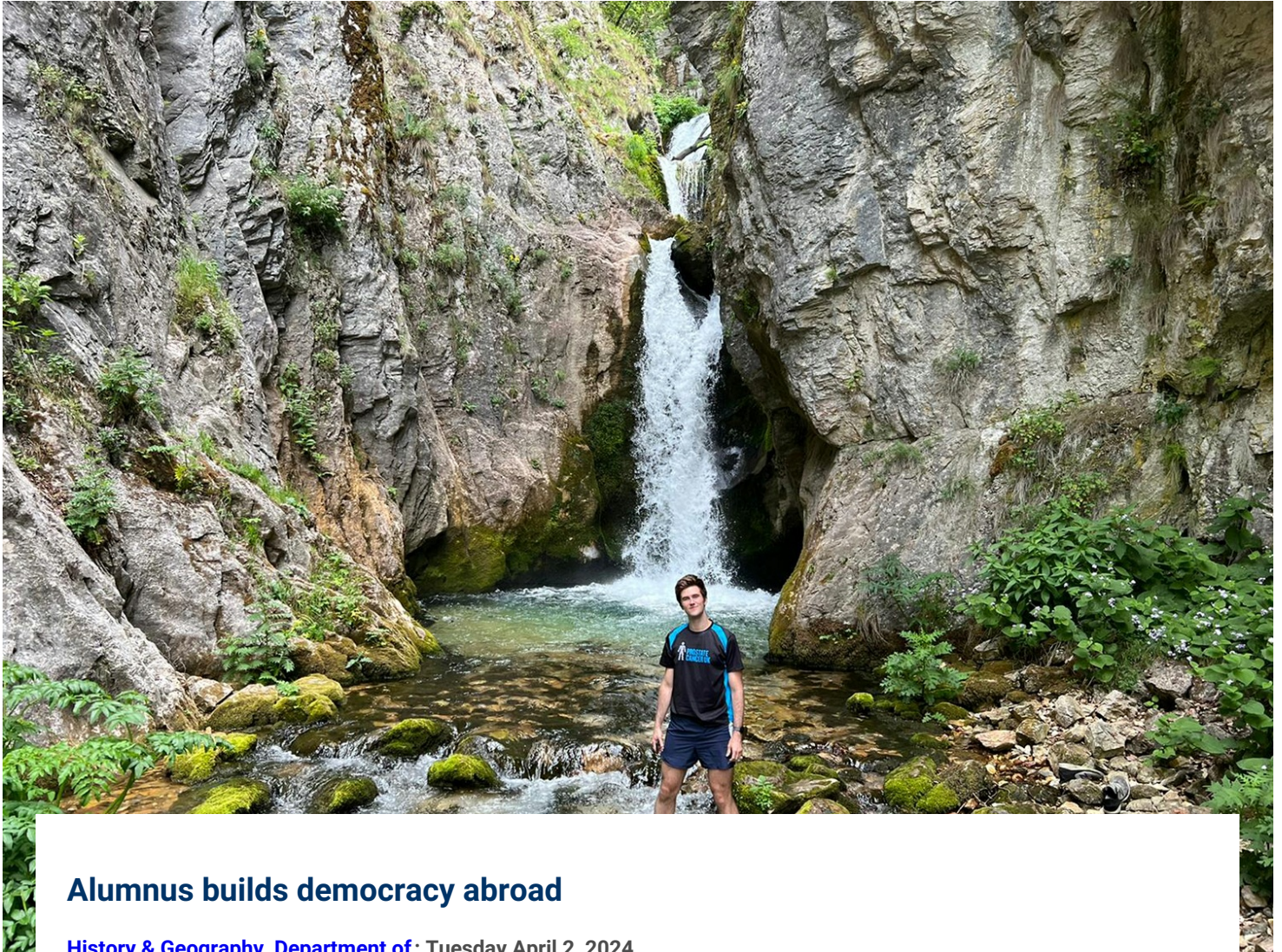
April 2024



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News Stories Posted Tuesday April 2, 2024



Alumnus builds democracy abroad

[History & Geography, Department of](#): Tuesday April 2, 2024

To say that Kevin Morris, '17, is globally connected is an understatement.

As a Fulbright Scholar in North Macedonia and a Marshall Scholar, Morris obtained two master's degrees in London. With so many accolades and assignments in international relations, Morris has been busy abroad since he was a student at Georgia College & State University.

Also, as one of two individuals selected as Honors College Young Alumni of the Year, he recently spoke with John E. Sallstrom Honors College students, encouraging them to take advantage of these kinds of opportunities and how doing this got him where he is today.

Morris is a program associate for the [Carter Center's Democracy Program](#)—a non-governmental organization founded by President Jimmy and his wife, Rosalynn, after his presidency. The program is a unit of Emory University, working globally to support democratic elections and strengthen participatory democracy for all, especially groups that have been historically marginalized or that face political, cultural or socioeconomic barriers.

His portfolio focuses on the Citizen Observation Program in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This is where he organizes, coordinates and plans operational facets of the Democracy Program's projects. Morris coordinates resources for trainings to support the citizens by providing the skill sets they need to attain true democracy.



Kevin Morris

"We have a great program for supporting citizen observation work in the Democratic Republic of Congo," Morris said. "We partner with local communities to empower them to monitor their elections, so they know how to watch for election irregularities and hold elections with integrity."

While studying for dual degrees in [economics](#) and [history](#) at Georgia College, Morris was always interested in empowering local communities to work for free elections. As a Marshall Scholar and through the Carter Center, he discovered that people in the Balkans and Congo are innovative and resilient communities in the process of democratic capacity building. They're the key driving force behind it. Morris has attended many barbecues, long dinners and coffee shop meetings, talking with residents about democracy.

"It's important to have experts and people who've developed relationships, who guide the work they do in partnership with this community," Morris said. "Then you have local people feel comfortable telling you, 'These are our priorities. We know what we need to do. We just need the resources.'"

When he was younger, Morris was inspired to do this type of work by his grandparents. He recalls them volunteering to establish medical clinics in the Nicaraguan mountains and other countries for underserved communities. Many of the residents never had medical treatment before, as they are extremely isolated. Seeing their passion strongly influenced him.

"If you're going to do this work, you need to do it with integrity," Morris said. "A big challenge in international relations and development is not just having a broad understanding of many things, but also a deep understanding of a very particular region, people group or problem."

“

I have been confronted with just how much democracy problems abroad affect people's daily lives. That was a sobering reminder that this work is not an abstract. It's not theoretical. These are real issues that have a daily impact on the wellbeing of these residents.

- Kevin Morris

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The National Scholarship Office and the Georgia College Honors College walked Morris through the application process for a Fulbright Scholarship, which he received in 2017. It funded his year in the Republic of North Macedonia.

That experience was a culmination of all the work he accomplished at Georgia College. This included extra projects, internships, classes and presenting at conferences. Everything he learned helped Morris understand the challenges the people of North Macedonia had in securing their democratic future.

"It was so neat to go to North Macedonia and immerse myself in what I'd studied and seen," he said. "Living among people and places that I've literally written papers on really drove home how real the challenges are and how important it is that we collaborate with local communities on solutions."

Morris often thinks about how his work in fighting for democracy in other countries parallels similar situations all over the world. He feels the insights he's learned in North Macedonia can be applied to other regions like Central Africa, Southeast Asia and Central and South America. Conducting field research in Southeast Europe as a Marshall scholar



Kevin Morris' office in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Kevin Morris leads a youth development project at the American Corner in Stip, North Macedonia.

was interesting too.

"It was great to do this research and converse with Macedonians, Albanians and other communities in north Macedonia like proposing ideas, then having them explain to me very kindly, 'This won't work, or you are very much approaching this issue from an American perspective, and you must realize there are so many other ways of looking at this that are more relevant,'" Morris said. "Working with these communities was an eye-opening process for me because they know the situation so much better than I do."



Kevin Morris (top right) and his students at the final day of classes at Goce Delčev University in Štip, North Macedonia.

Morris thanks the International Education Center and John E. Sallstrom Honors College staff for helping him take advantage of these opportunities.

"They supported me to go to Croatia and North Macedonia to spend all those months learning the language, meeting people and having those conversations," he said. "It changed my life."

Morris also credits Georgia College for empowering him to be a bit audacious.

"I got a fantastic education at Georgia College," he said. "I would not be able to do this work had I not taken advantage of the liberal arts education model. I studied history and economics, which gave me a good understanding of what I wanted to do in international relations, national development and democracy development."

He had some "standout" economic professors at Georgia College including Drs. J.J. Arias, Chris Clark and Brooke Conaway. The department was "like a little family," and the group of economic students he knew have all gone on "to do amazing things," Morris said.

"I must also give a shout out to Drs. Stephanie Opperman and William Risch in the history department, who were fantastic," he said. "Dr. Risch shared my passion for the Balkan region. That was so encouraging."

"Professor Opperman is incredible too," Morris said. "She got me thinking in terms of about how we study history from the non-majority perspective."

Morris was surprised to learn the textbooks he read in Colonial African History with Dr. Aran MacKinnon, department chair and professor of history, were the same books recommended to him when he started working at the Carter Center.

"His class was amazing and great preparation for the work I do now, especially with the focus on civil society," Morris said.

The collective efforts of many faculty and staff at Georgia College helped him take advantage of so many amazing experiences and programs, which, in turn, put him on track to finding his niche in the world.

"I have been confronted with just how much democracy problems abroad affect people's daily lives," Morris said. "That was a sobering reminder that this work is not an abstract. It's not theoretical. These are real issues that have a daily impact on the wellbeing of these residents."

News Stories Posted Thursday April 4, 2024



GCSU International student saves the day at state science fair

[Science Education Center](#) : Thursday April 4, 2024



Sosuke Nishimiya, a fifth grader

Every now and then you come across a situation that really warms the heart.

But few people—let alone an international student continents away from home—get to directly affect another person’s life, altering their path to greatness.

Rihito Uda was privileged to be that person recently for a little boy from Japan.

“

I never want language to be a barrier for students to succeed in science.

- Dr. Catrena Lisse

”

Sosuke Nishimiya, a fifth grader from Springdale Elementary School in Macon, almost pulled out of the recent K-5 State Science and Engineering Fair at Georgia College & State University.

He was afraid he wouldn’t be able to effectively explain his science project to

from Springdale Elementary School, won a medallion for Grand First Place in the elementary division at GCSU's recent K-5 State Science Fair.

judges.

With Uda's last-minute help as an interpreter, however, Sosuke did participate. In doing so, he won two prizes in the elementary division: a medallion for "Grand First Place" and trophy for "Best of Chemical and Materials Sciences."

That's quite an accomplishment—considering this was the biggest K-5 fair ever. Sosuke was one of more than 450 elementary students at the competition from across Georgia. His experiment on acid rain was chosen among 327 other projects.

"I am proud of Sosuke and each student who presented projects this year," said Dr. Catrena Lisse, director of Georgia College's Science Education Center. "The students work hard to make it to the state competition, and they left a lasting impression on our judges."

"I was particularly excited to have Rihito help us interpret Sosuke's project," Lisse said. "I never want language to be a barrier for students to succeed in science."

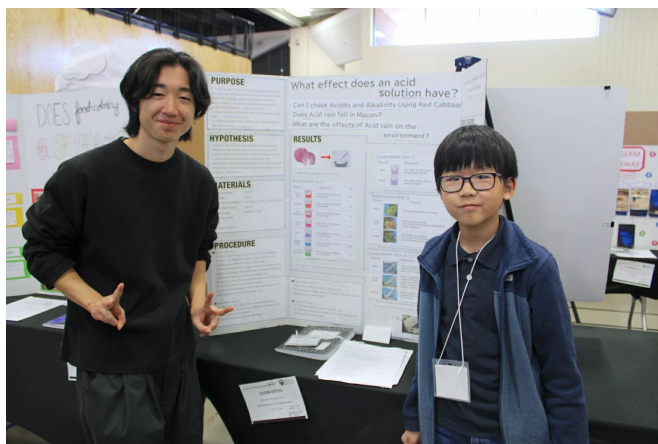
Georgia College organizes the only K-5 science fair in the state. Lisse has run into many snags and obstacles in her seven years coordinating the event—like when entire school districts show up without notice.

But this was her first request for an interpreter.

Uda is a junior business major from Kobe, located in the Kansai region of Southern Japan. He's been studying abroad at Georgia College & State University since fall 2023.

Uda received an email from Lisse asking if he would act as interpreter. He immediately said yes.

Still, he was a little apprehensive.



Rihito Uda was a perfect role model, as well as interpreter, for young Sosuke Nishimiya. The team attracted local media attention. (Photo credit: Gil Pound, Union Recorder)

When the two met at the science fair—Sosuke didn't say much, but his face lit up as the two bowed during introductions.

"He looked nervous at first," Uda said. "I tried to ask him several simple questions to help relieve his tension. Then, he looked like he was getting relaxed gradually. We enjoyed talking to each other, and we were preparing for interviews for his project at the same time."

The boy moved to Central Georgia with his family from Indonesia nearly two years ago. Originally from Suginami, Japan, his father, Yusuke Nishimiya, took a job at YKK, a manufacturing company in Macon that makes zippers and other fastening products.

Sosuke's English is still coming along, and he's very quiet in school. His mother, Shoko Nishimiya, said her son is shy by nature and doesn't say much when speaking to other Japanese children either.

She marveled at how quickly her son bonded with the college student. Uda was the perfect role model for Sosuke.

Plus, he understands what it's like to leave home and live in a strange country.

It can be a struggle to achieve in this setting. At first, Uda found it hard to learn in a different language, especially in courses that required class discussions. Sometimes the conversation went too fast for him to quickly comprehend and give responses.

This made him sympathize with Sosuke.

"In my case, it was so hard to get used to a new life," Uda said. "He must've had the same situation. However, he seems to put his effort no matter where he is, and it led him to conduct his excellent project."

Even as a translator, Uda had on-the-spot learning to do.

Majoring in business at Ritsumeikan University in Kyoto, Japan, Uda doesn't come across many science words, especially in English. Little Sosuke patiently taught Uda, explaining his project over and over again—so the two would be ready for the judge's interview.

"There are a few science words that I did not understand in English," Uda said, "but he taught me how to say them in Japanese at that time. It was honestly difficult to act as an interpreter, but I tried to explain his project as accurately as I could."

For his topic, Sosuke explored whether acid rain was falling in Macon, Georgia. He conducted four tests using different solutions on red cabbage: vinegar, citric acid, salt water, soap and baking soda. Adding red cabbage caused liquids to change colors, depending on the acidity.

Next, Sosuke used leaves to conclude acid rain was not falling in Macon.

When accepting his prizes, Sosuke turned to Uda with a big smile and said "Arigato," the Japanese word for "Thank you."

"I was so grateful that he got a trophy," Uda said. "It felt like it happened to me."

Sosuke's parents were overjoyed, as well. They expressed their appreciation many times to Uda and treated him to lunch.



Sosuke and Uda with judge and chemistry assistant professor, Dr. Ronald Okoth.

“

I was so grateful that he got a trophy. It felt like it happened to me.

- International student Rihito Uda

”

Speaking Japanese with the Nishimiya family made Uda nostalgic for home.

In May, he returns to Japan, But he wishes he could stay longer, make additional American friends and collect more special experiences. He fondly recalls a presentation he gave about Japan at Georgia College's International Festival that was well received.

Perhaps no memory from the U.S., however, will top his time at the science fair.

"Regarding this experience," Uda said, "I'd like to thank all those who supported me as a Japanese interpreter. I was lucky to have such a precious chance. I'm sure this experience led me to grow up and contributed to my future."

"I am still progressing in learning English. I want to keep putting my effort into it," he said. "Finally, I appreciate Sosuke and his family for accepting me so nicely. I couldn't have done without their support."



Alternate Text

News Stories Posted Friday April 5, 2024



Writing award finalists share creative works, gain recognition

[English, Department of](#) : Friday April 5, 2024

[The 2024 Margaret Harvin Wilson Writing Award Ceremony](#)

The 15th annual Margaret Harvin Wilson Writing Awards ceremony took place March 28 at Georgia College & State University. Out of 63 submissions, five finalists were selected from different writing categories including poetry and short story.

In the first year and sophomore category, sophomore Kennedy Welker of Peachtree City placed first and third for her poems "The Last Sheep" and "December 2016," respectively. Placing second, is sophomore Alexia Schauer of Johns Creek for her short story "The Pearls of Majorca."

In the junior and senior group, junior Charlotte Aexel from Wind Lake, Wisconsin, won first place with her poem "Psalm for Bachman's Warbler." In second place is junior McKenzie Weathers-Skinner of Statham for her poem "Natures Prison." Placing third is senior Lauren Macer of Cumming for her poem "Grow me Towards the Sun."



Featured in the front row (left to right) are: Mckenzie Weathers-Skinner of Statham, Georgia; GCSU President Cathy Cox; Charlotte Axel of Wind Lake, Wisconsin. Pictured in the back row (left to right) are: Kennedy Welker, Peachtree City, Georgia; Alexia Schauer of Johns Creek, Georgia; and Lauren Macer of Cumming, Georgia.

During the ceremony, finalists read excerpts of their written works, and each was awarded a certificate and cash prize. First-place winners received \$1,000.

Welker's topic of a shepherd who only had one sheep came to her in a dream.

"I wrote about this because I write a lot of stuff that deals with grief and overcoming loss," she said. "I thought it would be cool to write a story where both subjects didn't ever have to go through these things. It was a welcome concept."

Welker put many hours into her works. She submitted two poems and one creative, non-fiction short story.

She didn't expect to win the award.

"The writing was fun. I enjoyed every minute of it," Welker said. "Placing first means the world to me."

“

Knowing how to write is important because there's great value in words and how we use them. It's incredible to discover what you can do with words if you're given the opportunity.

- Kennedy Welker



Kennedy Welker

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This recognition for her writing gives her confidence, pushing her one step closer toward accomplishing her goal.

"I've always aspired to become a full-time author," Welker said. "I can see myself writing from a small cottage somewhere and sharing stories with the world."

"Knowing how to write is important because there's great value in words and how we use them," she said. "It's incredible to discover what you can do with words if you're given the opportunity."

Although Aexel submitted a few poems and a short story, she was most inspired to write her winning poem "Psalm for Bachman's Warbler." After scrolling through her Instagram feed, she discovered a post about all the animal species that have gone extinct this past year.

"This made me really upset," she said. "So, I picked one of them and decided to give it my own wake."

Aexel also draws her inspiration from the work of other writers.

"This ceremony is so exciting," she said. "I think it's just a huge confidence boost to keep writing. It's also fun to hear other people's work. We get to celebrate their writing, and that's special."

"Every time I read something new, I come away with an idea for a poem," Aexel said. "I'm also inspired by nature and my family—I think anything can be turned into a poem."

She feels writing is a great way to explore emotions and things that you don't get to experience yourself.

"I like to write about things I don't know anything about," Aexel said. "That way can learn about them without being there."

Georgia College is one of the biggest influences in her creativity.



Charlotte Aexel

“

Attending the ceremony is super fun. It's nice to have an opportunity to read your work and be celebrated. There's nothing to lose.

- Charlotte Aexel

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Being at Georgia College was really the first time I got to feel like I was in a community of writers," she said. "I work on the College Board Journal, as well. I feel like I'm surrounded by other amazing writers. That's very inspirational."

Aexel plans to spend her winnings on books and hopes to travel to conferences to do research and present it.

She encourages her peers to enter the Margaret Harvin Wilson Writing Award.

"Attending the ceremony is super fun," Aexel said. "It's nice to have an opportunity to read your work and be celebrated. There's nothing to lose."

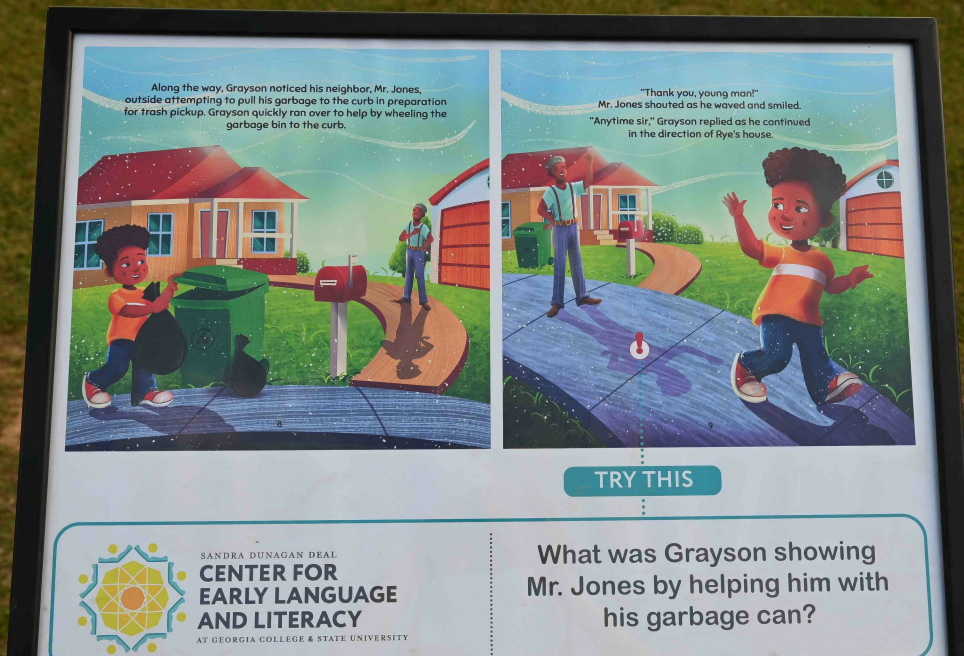
The award was established in memory of Margaret Harvin Wilson, '34. She was the first in her family to attend college, since her father provided her with a small trust. Wilson finished Georgia College in three years. While majoring in English and minoring in French, Wilson waited tables in the dining hall, so she could have discounted tuition while living in a free dormitory. As a senior, a teacher encouraged her to enter a short story contest. Winning first prize in 1933 for "Sympathy Speaks" gave her confidence to pursue a teaching career.

She married Leland Wilson in 1938. Their three daughters pursued careers in medicine, law and higher education.

The writing award exemplifies Wilson's drive for students to build their confidence and explore new worlds through creative writing.

[Learn more about the Margaret Harvin Wilson Writing Award.](#)

News Stories Posted Wednesday April 10, 2024



Georgia College's Deal Center opens Tale Trail for Baldwin County families

[Deal Center](#) : Wednesday April 10, 2024

Growing up all her life in Baldwin County, Ruby Zachary has seen a lot of changes.

The latest makes her especially proud.

"Pride and happy, pride and happy, yes," Ruby said. "It's real nice. I have no words for it. It's really special. I'm real proud."

[Video](#)

She's talking about a new feature on a walking path at Collins P. Lee Community Center in Milledgeville.

A dozen storyboards now sporadically dot the sidewalk path—enticing families to enjoy the outside together while reading the children's book, "Grayson's Play Date," written by Ruby's son, Steve J. Zachary Jr.

It's all part of [Tale Trail](#), a newly installed, shared storybook project funded by the [Sandra Dunagan Deal Center for Early Language and Literacy](#) at Georgia College & State University.

Even more emotional for Ruby—the trail resides where her old elementary school used to be.

The Harrisburg Elementary School has long since been torn down. Only a small portion remains, housing the neighborhood's Collins P. Lee Community Center in Milledgeville.

“

This is major for the kids.

- Steve J. Zachary Jr.

”

The area has drastically improved, thanks to devoted management by a vibrant civic group that cares strongly about the people living there. They hold food and clothing drives, free health screenings with Georgia College's School of Nursing and maintain the community's vegetable garden.

With Tale Trail, the community center is now also a place where families enjoy reading. The quarter-mile trail meanders through sun and shade passing a picnic pavilion, garden and rolling forest.

Each storyboard includes questions and activities to increase engagement and understanding. The first storyboard has a QR code for visitors to scan and hear a recording of the author reading his book out loud. Another QR code at the end pulls up a survey, so participants can share their thoughts.



Author Steve J. Zachary Jr. holds the ceremonial ribbon with Deal Center Executive Director Dr. Lindee Morgan, as Joseph Ward Jr. does the cutting.

A ribbon cutting was held in early April to officially open Tale Trail at the Collins Center. Members of the [Milledgeville-Baldwin County Chamber of Commerce](#) provided the ceremonial ribbon and scissors.

Former District 2 County Commissioner Tommy French was there to unveil a bench in honor of the late Deacon Joseph Ward Sr., who started the community garden. Ward's wife, Gladys, and their son and daughter spoke in his memory.

The author was present, as well, with his son, Grayson, the book's main character. Grayson just turned 8 years old.

"To me, the trail is for kids to not only be able to get out there and exercise their bodies but also to be able to exercise their minds," Zachary said. "But they also push toward a goal. The goal is to make it to the end of the trail, read the book and give your perspective on the story by answering questions and doing the activities. This is major for the kids."

Tale Trail is only the first of many literacy ventures to come for Baldwin County, according to Dr. Lindee Morgan, executive director of the Deal Center.

"Although the Deal Center is a statewide entity, we are part of Georgia College and part of this community," Morgan said. "Every year, we want to do a few projects that contribute to the local community. The idea for Tale Trail is rooted in our mission to facilitate language and communication development and get children on the path to reading proficiently."



Cynthia Ward-Edwards, executive director of Baldwin County Family Connection and daughter of the late Deacon Joseph Ward Sr., introduced the author and his son.

"The more parents interact and talk with their children in those early years," she said, "the better prepared they are going to be for formal reading instruction later on. As they read the pages on this trail, it gives families something to talk about."

An impressive takeaway from the ribbon cutting is the number of university and community groups that came together to make Tale Trail possible.

The idea was originally Kimberly Scott's. As administrative office manager for the Deal Center, she turned to co-worker and early language professional development specialist Jamie Thomas, who then shared the idea with Janet Cavin, who heads Georgia College's [Communities in Schools](#) program.

Cavin suggested they contact Harrisburg residents at the Collins Center. They "enthusiastically accepted the idea and paved the way for what we're celebrating today," Morgan said. The group even suggested a few local authors.

That led to Zachary giving permission to use his book and for its pages to be enlarged by Georgia College's [Creative Services](#) with vibrant colors.

To install storyboards, Thomas turned to Ashley Copeland, director of [Community Engagement and Service](#) at Georgia College. Copeland arranged for 15 members of Pi Kappa Alpha Fraternity to spend an afternoon digging 12-inch holes, quick-cementing posts into the ground and bolting Plexiglas® storyboards onto stands.

President and junior finance major Riley Kerstine of Marietta, Georgia, said his fraternity "loves to give back." It's important to be seen in the community doing acts of service, he said, because Baldwin County surrounds the university and, therefore, is a home away from home.

Freshman Jake Caren of Kennesaw, Georgia, is majoring in business management. As the fraternity's community service chairman, he was happy their muscle work resulted in families reading and spending time together.

"We want to make a good impression and leave our footprint in the community, so they can remember us," Caren said. "We love doing manual labor and building stuff, and it's a wonderful day out. It'll be nice for people to walk, stop and read about the story."

The book follows Grayson, who's off to meet a friend.

On his way, he has many adventures, doing good deeds for his neighbors. Written in 2017, the book has become part of a series on obedience, respect, charity and dignity.

Zachary has given hundreds of his books to schools in Tampa, Florida, where he now lives. A graduate of Baldwin County High School, he also donated 150 books to the Early Learning Center in Milledgeville.

He stopped to talk with a mother, Chandra Kilpatrick, who was on the trail reading the book to her four children. The author took her hand in his and promised the county hadn't seen the last of him.

He intends to dedicate his time, more books and "love" to the community.



Members of Pi Kappa Alpha Fraternity helped install Tale Trail storyboards.



Freshman business management major Jake Caren, right, installing a storyboard.



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“It still hasn’t settled yet. I’m still in disbelief. What a great honor,” Zachary said. “At the end of the day, I’m blessed to be able to have ‘Grayson’s Play Date’ here and to show kids another way of learning, another way of caring for yourself and another way of respecting yourself.”

He credits his mother, Ruby, for setting him on the right path.

“Don’t just run around outside,” she’d tell him. “Come in and read a book.”

Now, Ruby will bring her two great-grandsons to the trail and read her son’s book to them.

This is the purpose of Tale Trail.

Passing the love of reading down from generation to generation.

“

As we prepare to embark on a shining journey through the Tale Trail, I’m filled with hope and I’m filled with anticipation for the impact it will have on this community.

When adults engage young children in conversations and interaction and it’s connected to a book, we lay the foundation for future reading success, and we foster a lifelong love for literacy.

- Dr. Lindee Morgan

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News Stories Posted Friday April 12, 2024



Axel Hawkins named GCSU's second-straight Truman Scholar

[National Scholarships Office at Georgia College](#) : Friday April 12, 2024

Axel Hawkins, a [history](#) major from McDonough, Georgia, is [Georgia College & State University](#)'s second Truman Scholar in as many years.

Established in 1975, the [Truman Scholarship](#) serves as a living memorial to Harry S. Truman. The foundation awards scholarships to exceptional college juniors who demonstrate outstanding leadership potential, a commitment to public service and academic excellence.

Hawkins' receipt of the scholarship makes back-to-back winners and four Truman finalists in the last five years from Georgia College.

"We are thrilled that Axel has been named a Truman Scholar. She represents Georgia College & State University so well as a student leader and has already shown such commitment to public service. This will be a tremendous opportunity for her continuing journey on that path," said [GCSU President](#) Cathy Cox.

"Her selection makes two consecutive years that Georgia College students have been named Truman Scholars—a truly amazing feat for our university," Cox said. "Congratulations to Axel and the amazing support team she had from our Sallstrom Honors College guiding her in every step of the nomination process."



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Her selection makes two consecutive years that Georgia College students have been named Truman Scholars—a truly amazing feat for our university.

- President Cathy Cox

This year, the 60 new Truman Scholars were selected from 709 candidates. Hawkins was also the only student with Georgia as their home state, making her Georgia's 2024 Truman Scholar.

Last year, senior Colin Hall, a political science major from Jones County, was named the [first Truman Scholar](#) in Georgia College history.

"I think this is a good demonstration of our ability to produce strong leaders," said GCSU [National Scholarships Office](#) Coordinator Anna Whiteside. "This really speaks to our ability to produce students who adhere to our value of the pursuit of knowledge and truth for the public good."

Ready to engage her first year at Georgia College, Hawkins joined the [Student Government Association](#) as soon as she started classes and began the work to improve life for her fellow students. Now elected as the upcoming SGA President, Hawkins will continue enacting changes to their benefit.

Off campus, Hawkins believes in solving labor issues and is passionate about worker's rights. Like her experience on campus, she's actively involved and travels back and forth from the capitol to lobby for this cause.



Junior history major Axel Hawkins reacts to news she is Georgia College's second Truman scholar in two years.

"Georgia College really invested in me, and I'm very thankful for everybody," Hawkins said. "I'm just overwhelmed by the people in my life who have supported me the whole way, and I'm very honored that I was selected."

Truman Scholars receive up to \$30,000 for graduate school and participate in leadership development activities, including the [Truman Scholars Leadership Week](#) in Liberty, Missouri.

Truman Scholars also have special opportunities for internships and employment with the federal government, including the [Truman Summer institute](#), which places scholars in internships in Washington D.C. the summer following their senior year.

"This is very emotional for me," Hawkins said. "I'm a first-generation college student, and my father couldn't afford to pay the difference of his undergraduate scholarship, so this is a very full-circle moment for my entire family."



GCSU Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr. Costas Spirou announces the news during one of Axel Hawkins' classes.

News Stories Posted Saturday April 13, 2024



GCSU's newest science building is renamed to honor beloved biology professor

[General Institution](#) : Saturday April 13, 2024

The [Integrated Science Complex](#) at Georgia College & State University is now the Dr. Kenneth S. Saladin Integrated Science Complex—named after the distinguished professor emeritus of [biology](#) for the lasting impact he has made on

science and students.

On Friday—under a glorious, if windy, blue-sky day—about 150 people gathered to honor Saladin and witness the unveiling of the building's new sign.

Saladin was an outstanding and dedicated educator at Georgia College. He began publishing a textbook in 1997 that's now in its 10th edition and has become the single largest selling [textbook](#) in the history of McGraw-Hill Education. He generously contributed royalties earned from his publishing successes that benefit the university and students in numerous ways.

This has made Saladin the university's largest philanthropic donor.

His first major gift was an endowment to the William Wall [Museum of Natural History](#) recognizing Saladin's colleague and former department chair who created the museum.

He endowed the university's Honors College, choosing to name it for his friend and former colleague, Dr. John E. Sallstrom. He also provided scholarships to support study abroad and research ventures for honor students.



From left: Provost Dr. Costas Spirou, Dr. Kenneth Saladin with his grandson, President Cathy Cox and Vice President of University Advancement Seth Walker.

“

This day is truly the capstone of my career.

- Dr. Kenneth Saladin

”

“Naming the Integrated Science Center for Dr. Kenneth Saladin is a fitting and appropriate tribute to a person who provided and continues to provide extraordinary service and support to the university, spanning more than 40 years,” said Georgia College [President](#) Cathy Cox.

At the reception Cox said, “It is our pleasure to honor you today Dr. Saladin and to name a facility that will demonstrate to generations of Georgia College students the transformative impact of the best student instruction, mentorship and guidance.”

“

We are grateful for your incredible generosity. We are grateful that you chose to deploy your intellectual capital on our campus and among our students, and we are grateful to have attracted a faculty member with such compassion, commitment and vision to [Georgia College & State University](#).

- President Cathy Cox

”

Saladin and his family were present at the ceremony, including his young grandson. Saladin accepted the honor graciously, saying it's “unimaginable” a “beautiful building” would bear his name “for the next century or more.”

He said he felt “indebted to so many people.”

“An honor of such a magnitude gives me paradoxical feelings of pride and humility, and that's a tricky emotional balancing act,” Saladin said. “This is the first time in 52 years that Georgia College has named a new building for someone—that was the Maxwell Student Union. This day is truly the capstone of my career.”

“Dr. Saladin's amazing generosity supports both undergraduate and graduate research within the department,” said Dr. Indiren Pillay, professor of biology and chair of the department of [biological and environmental sciences](#).



Dr. Kenneth S. Saladin.

Saladin continues to be instrumental in the sciences at Georgia College.

More than a decade ago, he devised a pre-medical program where he mentored biology students interested in medicine. The [Pre-Med Mentorship](#) Program at Georgia College—through Saladin’s endowment of a chair position—ensured mentorship would endure following his retirement.

Students studying under Saladin and his successor, Dr. Ashok Hegde, have earned a 100% successful admissions rate to medical schools for more than 14 years.

More recently, Saladin has remained a faithful supporter of a variety of programs. He is especially dedicated to promoting biology and environmental science students, who engage in undergraduate research.

“This consistent means of support helps us purchase research supplies and instrumentation for students,” Pillay said, “as well as provide travel support for professional journal publications and conferences, so students can disseminate their work.”

Junior Heather Vincent of Talking Rock, Georgia, is majoring in biology with double minors in chemistry and global health studies. She received a Saladin Scholarship through the Honors College. As student in the Pre-Med Mentorship Program, Vincent has met and spoken with Saladin many times.

She said his generosity helped her “gain firsthand insight” on what it means to be a biologist and researcher.

“I learned how to deal with hurdles, as my experiments have failed and gained vital knowledge on how to adapt, as my project changed over time,” Vincent said. “Having this opportunity to be so involved in research on-and-off campus has been the largest factor in the shaping of my own leadership style, as well as my own academic development.”



Alternative Text

Vincent said the science complex has become “a vital place to foster student curiosity, creativity and development.”

Saladin is deserving of his name on the building because of his commitment to advance students, who “will continue to have a legacy of excellence,” she said.

The Integrated Science Complex [officially opened](#) in September 2021—a \$22.1 million building with 43,000 sq. ft. of teaching and research labs for [chemistry](#) and biology.

Now bearing Saladin’s name, the science building has common Georgia College hallmarks, such as a rocking chair front porch and ample brickwork. It also boasts modern architectural features, which include floor-to-ceiling windows and interior glass walls that put science on display.

The building was a necessity. Georgia College has seen a 107% increase in bio-science majors during the past 12 years. Space was cramped for labs, classes and faculty offices in the university’s aging Herty Hall, built in 1954, located across Montgomery Street.

In the next two years, Herty Hall will undergo extensive renovations with support from the Georgia General Assembly and University System of Georgia Board of Regents.

Saladin doesn’t consider the renaming to be like “a ski lift,” as high as one can possibly go. He said he has more work to do to “fully earn” the building being renamed in his honor.

He’s currently building an endowment to support the cost of student research, especially in the sciences.

Its generous efforts like these, as well as Saladin’s educational philosophy and vision—integrating research into the learning process—that makes him a perfect example of Georgia College’s teacher-scholar model.



Alternative Text

“The Integrated Science Complex will have a lasting impact on our quest to advance the academic mission of our university through teaching, learning, research and scholarship, all of which focuses on serving our students,” said Dr. Costas Spirou, provost and vice president for [Academic Affairs](#).

“
It will be an integral part of Georgia College & State University and a reminder of the many contributions of Dr. Kenneth S. Saladin during his decades long service in-and-out of the classroom.
- Dr. Costas Spirou



Alternate Text

News Stories Posted Sunday April 14, 2024



The 13-year Cicadas are here—and, yes, they will be in Central Georgia

[Biology & Environmental Sciences, Department of](#): Sunday April 14, 2024

They don't sting, and they don't bite. They don't suck blood. They won't make you itch.

And your garden is safe.

But miniature exoskeletons might be attached to your house. You might see flickers of red-and-black buzz by. Over the weekend, you might've heard a monotonous droning begin.

No, your eyes are not deceiving you, and your ears are just fine.

They are cicadas, part of the [Great Southern Brood XIX](#) that reemerge every 13 years.

And, despite some [maps](#) showing their arrival only in North Georgia—the cicadas ARE here. Yes, right here in Central Georgia.

How do we know? Signs of molting—empty skeletal shells are starting to be seen.

"I just found my first cicada molt. Temperatures are almost at the critical point," said Georgia College & State University expert Dr. Bruce Snyder, associate professor of [biological and environmental sciences](#).

Cicadas stay beneath the ground as wingless nymphs, but they aren't hibernating. They feed off sap in tree roots and tunnel about.

When the year is right, they start burrowing up, waiting inside a hole near the surface of the ground—for just the right temperature, a process Snyder called "staging." When soil 8 inches deep reaches 64 degrees—they come out.

That began in Middle Georgia last weekend and will continue throughout this week and next. They'll be around for about



Adobe Stock Image 440748286

a month.

Snyder didn't expect the cicadas until early May.

The spring was wet and chilly. Pollen and blooms were a week late. Then, temperatures turned warm.

"They have been staging underground for weeks," Snyder said. "Based on the weather, I expect to see them coming up now in larger numbers."



A nymph lies next to its staging hole. Photo credit: Dr. Bruce Snyder.

The Great Southern Brood is thought to be the largest geographically of all periodical cicadas—seen in Maryland along the coast to Georgia and in parts of the Midwest.

“

They have no interest in you. You just happen to be in their space.

- Dr. Bruce Snyder

”

In 2011, according to the Journal of Entomological Science, areas in Georgia with the [densest periodical cicada populations](#) included Augusta, Columbus, Rome, Macon and Milledgeville.

Their appearance this year is particularly interesting.

For the [first time since Thomas Jefferson was the U.S. President](#) in 1803, the arrival of the 13-year Southern Brood coincides with the appearance of the 17-year Northern Illinois Brood XIII. Together, they're expected to total [a trillion](#) periodical cicadas in 16 states.

This happens only every 221 years.

"It's a pretty rare opportunity," Snyder said. "To have one happen where you're living is a good opportunity to learn. It's something people shouldn't miss."

You could almost say they're 'adorable' with black bodies, red eyes and red-orange-veined wings.

They tend to congregate in areas with hardwood trees like oaks, maples and hickories.

A few "stragglers" come early, Snyder said, but most crawl out around the same time.

They shed their exoskeletons and noisily look for mates. They don't eat much. They just group together in trees in a loud chorus for one big reproductive party.

They're clumsy flyers. So, a couple are bound to smack into you. Or your windshield. You may crunch them underfoot. And your ears may ring from continuous buzzing.

"These cicada emergences are really incredible," Snyder said "They can be overwhelming. They're very loud."

"But I wouldn't be worried about cicadas," he said. "They're harmless. They have no interest in you. You just happen to be in their space."

In 2015, Snyder co-authored [a paper](#) in the journal Ecosphere on periodical cicadas in Kansas.

Now, he's working with Evan Lampert at the University of North Georgia and Mac Callahan with the U.S. Forest Service to learn more about periodical cicadas during this emergence.

People can help by becoming community science data collectors. Citizens can record numbers and cicada locations using one of two apps: [iNaturalist](#) and [Cicada Safari](#).

Snyder's eager to learn more about:

- **Timing**, how cicadas know when to emerge and if other triggers besides temperature factor in.
- **Distribution**, where cicadas numbers grow or shrink over time and why.
- **Predator satiation**, when there's a sudden abundance of insects to eat. Birds, animals, snakes, lizards and other vertebrates become engorged. They stop eating, scientists theorize, leaving plenty of cicadas to finish mating and lay eggs, ensuring survival of the species.
- **Overdevelopment**, how environmental damage can eliminate entire cicada populations from one emergence to the next.



Dr. Bruce Snyder with his collection of annual and periodical cicada specimens.

“

The amount of development that has happened since the last emergence in 2011 is pretty staggering. If you go back and look at satellite photos over the last 13 years, there's been pretty big changes.

That's one reason why national forests and parks and those in our state and locally are so important. There's actually a lot of biodiversity that we're keeping safe, even if we don't see it most of the time.

- Dr. Bruce Snyder



Photo credit: Dr. Bruce Snyder

”

Cicada broods have been known to go extinct—like the “Floridian” Brood XXI, last seen [according to Wikipedia](#) in 1870. Snyder estimates about 12 broods have been lost in the United States.

The Great Southern Brood XIX is one of only three 13-year periodical cicadas left. The “Baton Rouge” Brood XXII and “Mississippi Valley” Brood XXIII are not expected to reemerge until 2027 and 2028.

"They're like everything in the ecosystem. They're an important part of that system," Snyder said. "As you lose pieces, it's like losing rivets on an airplane. The more you lose the worse it becomes."

"A lot of people don't realize when you remove trees," he said, "you're also affecting the things that rely on those trees for survival."

So, now's the time to see these marvelous creatures.

Don't confuse them with cicadas that show up every year in mid-summer. Those are brownish green and bigger, about 2 to 3 inches long. And they appear in fewer numbers.

Periodical cicadas are only about 1½ inches long. They come out less frequently, in the spring, but in TENS of MILLIONS.

So, yeah, they'll be everywhere. And that might be a nuisance.

It'll be louder. And it might not be the song you want to hear.

But they're only here a short time.

They'll mate, lay eggs and disappear.

For another 13 years.



Alternate Text

News Stories Posted Thursday April 18, 2024



GCSU MVP Liz Speelman honored with Collaboration Award

[Outdoor Center](#) : Thursday April 18, 2024

“

If I did this, what else can I do?

- is Liz Speelman's mantra.

”

It's what has gotten her across North America and over the Atlantic Ocean to become Georgia College & State University's Outdoor Center director and senior lecturer of outdoor education.

Speelman, '07, has been a faculty and staff MVP at Georgia College for the last 15 years and plays a part in many areas across campus.

From teaching classes in the Outdoor Center to serving our Leadership Programs and supporting our current strategic plan—it's hard to find a place where she hasn't made her mark.

"I like being here, I love teaching our students, and I love who we get to work with," Liz said. "That's never changed."

That's why she was honored with the School of Continuing and Professional Studies' inaugural Collaboration Award. The award honors those who have opened the door to collaboration with the school.

"Liz has worked closely with our High Achievers Program, provided support for retreats in Historic Museums, and serves as one of our valued instructors in the Leadership & Management Academy in Continuing & Professional Education,"

said Angela Criscoe, executive director of the SoCPS.

"Her interpersonal skills, flexibility and willingness to share the responsibilities of providing a quality program are reasons we value our partnership with her and chose her as this year's internal partner awardee for the SoCPS Collaboration Award.," Criscoe said.

As a youth in Toronto, Canada, Liz's fascination with the outdoors was fostered by family camping trips and activities outdoors. Continuing that adventurous tradition, Liz later crossed the Atlantic to study abroad at the University of Stirling in Scotland.



Angela Criscoe, left, congratulates Liz with a hug.

While studying environmental science there, Liz developed a 'If I could do this, what else can I do?' mentality.

That ethos eventually led to her dream job at Georgia College. But before that, she formed her passion for teaching in the schools of Ghana in West Africa.

After graduating university, Liz worked with Voluntary Service Overseas, a nonprofit international development charity. For those two years she taught high school math and physics, with and without electricity.

She taught with creativity, and the experience transformed her idea of what didactic teaching could be.

"That experience showed me that every class was different and each year class was different," Liz said. "Trying to make learning connect for each student was what started my love of teaching."

After that kind of world bounding, Liz couldn't stay in one place. She worked for the Youth Learning Institute at Clemson University and taught environmental education to school groups. When she wanted to pursue an advance degree, she found Georgia College.

She studied outdoor education administration as a graduate assistant under the tutelage of faculty like Professor Emeritus Dr. Jude Hirsch and Professor of Psychology Dr. Lee Gillis.

"As educators, we encourage folks up to and right outside their comfort zone," Gillis said. "That's what Liz does as a facilitator of groups on both the challenge course and in the classroom."

For Liz, her faculty mentors helped shape her career, challenging her to go beyond what she thought was possible. Now she leads groups of students and clients to challenge their communication and leadership potential.



Liz was surprised with the Collaboration Award in a meeting.

"Sometimes I think my entire career can be bottled down to two things: teaching people how to build relationships and communicate with one another," Liz said. "If we can help build teams, then they're going to be more successful, and I've seen the power of having some intentional fun together."

As the only full-time staff member at the Outdoor Center, Liz leads successful team-building programs. As a recognized expert in the U.S. and Canada for challenge course teamwork effectiveness, she's a model to her students and a community collaborator.

From Canada to Ghana to Clemson, Liz brought energy, perseverance and loyalty to everything she does. Luckily for Georgia College, she would rather

be here than anywhere else.

"I don't know where else I could do what I get to do here," Liz said. "Number one for me is the interaction with the students. I love what we get to do with our clients, and now I get to mentor students who are working with clients."

"I'm beside them and sometimes the facilitator for them, but it's that mentorship of our students that motivates me," she said. "I absolutely do what I do for our students—number one, hands down."



PILLAR II

DISTINGUISH

(verb): 1. To make noteworthy or remarkable: to give prominence or distinction, 2. To mark as separate or different



[Learn more about the Distinguish Pillar in our Imagine 2030 Strategic Plan](#)

News Stories Posted Friday April 19, 2024



GC Miracle: So Kids Can

[Student Engagement, Office of](#) : Friday April 19, 2024

by Kylie Rowe, University Communications Practicum Student

GC Miracle, the largest student organization on the Georgia College campus, held their annual ThunderThon event April 7, 2024. Approximately 300 people attended the event, and GC Miracle raised \$70,550 for the Beverly Knight Olson Children's Hospital in Macon.

ThunderThon is a 12-hour event where students and the community pledge to spend a Saturday standing on their feet for the kids who cannot. FTK – for the kids – is a rallying slogan for the organization.

“

My favorite part about GC Miracle is seeing the passion that so many have for helping children live a better life.

”

“It’s about reinforcing that it is a privilege to be able to do what we are doing,” said Sarah Brown, a senior middle grades education major and the current Executive Director of GC Miracle.

This year, “space” was the theme of the event so that GC Miracle could encourage people to “shoot for the stars” when it came to helping the kids. This theme is a nod to 2020, the last pre-COVID ThunderThon where the organization raised a record amount of money and crossed \$100,000.

“My favorite part about ThunderThon is getting to see all that all our hard work makes such a huge difference,” said Brenna McGloin, a senior management major.

ThunderThon is GC Miracle's largest event. They hold a choreographed dance lesson, booths to buy shirts, a letter-writing station, a photo booth, scavenger hunts and more.

"I love being a part of Miracle, and I want everyone to know how amazing it is," said McGloin.

GC Miracle is constantly promoting other events and smaller fundraisers to raise money for the children's hospital and encourage student involvement. They have events throughout the year like Miracle Man and Miracle Mile, all of which are united by the goal of raising money for the kids.

The slogan for this year was "So Kids Can," which stems from the hope that the money GC Miracle raises can help kids see more birthdays.



2024 ThunderThon participants.

"My favorite part about GC Miracle is seeing the passion that so many have for helping children live a better life," said Zoie Glenn, a senior management and economics major.

"I have a really big tie to this cause because one of my brothers has cancer, and so coming to this college became like my little cancer community," said Brown.

Brown encourages everyone to get involved in GC Miracle. Anyone can be a general attendee, a committee member or a board member. All play an important role in helping children get the healthcare they need.

GC Miracle is an organization that teaches students not only how to work together, plan events, and raise money, but is also known to give students a new outlook on life. In GC Miracle, students truly have the opportunity to be a part of something bigger than themselves and to see the work they do make real differences in the lives of so many families and children that live in our community.



Activity tables for ThunderThon participants.



Alternate Text



PILLAR IV

ENGAGE

(verb): 1. To occupy, attract, or involve (someone's interest or attention), 2. To participate or become involved

[Learn more about the Engage Pillar in our Imagine 2030 Strategic Plan](#)



News Stories Posted Monday April 22, 2024



Graphic art student’s winning logo design used by North Georgia business

[Art, Department of](#) : Monday April 22, 2024



Alternate Text

When city officials in Hiawassee, Georgia, needed to boost one of their local businesses with a new logo—they did something ingenious.

Rather than hire a graphic design company, which could cost up to \$25,000 for a single creation, they held a competition for [graphic art](#) students enrolled at any of Georgia’s public and private colleges and universities. By doing so, they lowered their own costs while giving students a real-world experience: an opportunity to design a logo used by an actual business.

Many took up the challenge. But only one was chosen.

Georgia College & State University junior [art](#) major Maryellen Hagberg of Dalton, Georgia, won the grand prize of \$1,000.

Her logo—a circular design with a yellow, lightbulb sun coming up over rolling green mountains—was chosen by the [Paris Business Center](#) in Hiawassee. It’s a business “incubator” that helps other businesses get off the ground.

The lightbulb signifies ideas, while green hills represent the rural mountains in northeast Towns County. Hagberg’s logo neatly complements the town’s own logo of a sun peeking ’round a blue mountain over green valleys.

“Your design stood out among many impressive entries for its creativity, elegance and strong representation of the Paris Business Center’s brand identity,” wrote Tyler Osborn, co-chair of the [Hiawassee Downtown Development Authority](#), when congratulating Hagberg.

“We were particularly impressed by the unique use of incorporating the lightbulb into the sun and the creativity of

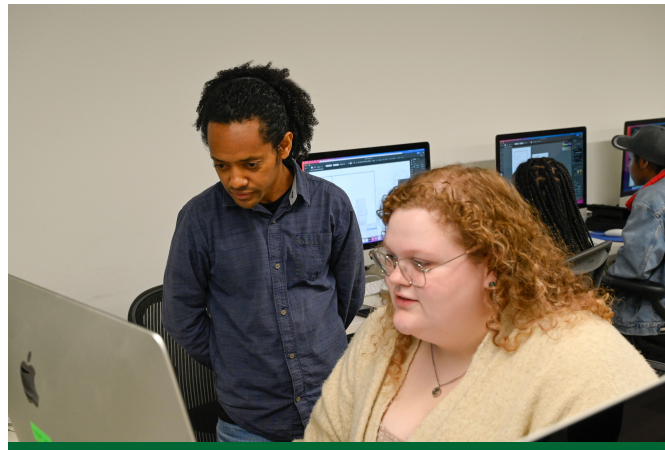
designing the mountains,” he continued. “Your contribution will play a significant role in shaping the visual identity of the Paris Business Center, and we are excited to begin incorporating your design into our branding materials.”

“

This is real, real-world experience. Her win can be used as a motivation. Because now, when there is another opportunity, students will be encouraged to participate, knowing a fellow student has won one.

- Abraham Abebe

”



Junior Maryellen Hagberg, right, works on her logo, as art professor Abraham Abebe watches.

For her degree, Hagberg is concentrating in graphic design. She was in Abraham Abebe’s graphic design course when assigned the task of creating a fictional logo for a hypothetical client.

As an alternative, students could enter the Hiawassee competition to deal with the problems of a real company and design a logo that would be publicly displayed.

Hagberg was one of three students in the class to enter the competition.

“This opportunity came up at the same time,” Abebe said, “which is good. This is real, real-world experience. Her win can be used as a motivation. Because now, when there is another opportunity, students will be encouraged to participate, knowing a fellow student has won one.”

An associate professor of art, Abebe has provided students with real-life opportunities in the past. His graphic art students designed a postcard for [University Advancement](#) and a logo for the Milledgeville Museum Association. He’s always looking to collaborate with companies and organizations, hoping they’ll take advantage of the talent within his classrooms.

“

A logo should be simple, recognizable but at the same time carry uniqueness into it.

- Abebe

”

All three students submitted strong logos to the Paris Business Center, he said. Hagberg’s was particularly good, because she referenced the historical, geographical and cultural significance of the region. People living in Hiawassee want to preserve the area’s charm and values, Abebe said, while looking to the future.

Hagberg was able to accumulate all that into one, simple but powerful design.

“A logo has to be simple,” Abebe said, “because when you see it, you have to recognize it. That’s the reason they chose this one. A logo should be simple, recognizable but at the same time carry uniqueness into it.”

Abebe gave the class guidelines to follow.

Then, Hagberg delved into researching her very real client. Her simple logo is deceptive. It took weeks of finding information, contemplating what her clients wanted and turning their needs into something lasting and rememberable.

She wanted to understand the social and economic impact of the business, what it was trying to accomplish and its value to the community. It was difficult expressing all those in one design.

Primary Logo



Primary Logo Measurement



A page from Maryellen's logo portfolio for the Paris Business Center in Hiawassee, Georgia.

Plus, there were shapes, colors and size to consider; multiple sketches to crumple up and throw away before finally deciding on one. Then, there was the math—calculating measurements, the ratios of circles and fractions.

It's a pretty intricate process to give simple-looking results.

"The research I did showed me they really valued nature," Hagberg said. "You have certain guidelines students have to follow when they design a logo, mandatory elements. But you can add in optional elements, as well. We can add our imagination into the design."

When Hagberg felt stuck, she turned to Abebe. He asked questions, encouraging her to explore different ways and ideas. He never did the work for her. So, at the end, Hagberg could be especially pleased she earned first-place herself.

“

In many graphic design classes, it's easy for the professor to just show you how it's done. Particularly in Abebe's classes, he's really good at helping us foster ideas and development from scribble into something that looks professional. That will really be helpful in my future.

- Junior Maryellen Hagberg

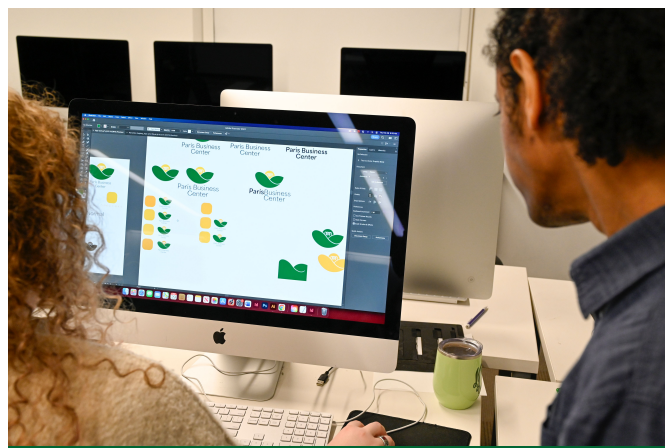
”

Abebe also teaches career-related knowhow—like negotiating a contract and how students should interact with clients. He gets into legalities, copyrights and intellectual property.

Because of this, Hagberg feels ready for a job doing freelance graphic design or branding work.

"My job is just guiding them," Abebe said, "They have to process the design. Otherwise, they will be dependent on me. I want to be able to say, 'This is completely yours.'"

"I try to help them solve problems without dictating the idea of it. The idea shouldn't be mine," he said. "My support is going to be how to execute their ideas, how to push their ideas further by using certain design techniques and methodologies."



Alternate Text

Every line, however thick or fine, was purposely placed in Hagberg's logo.

She can explain each step, each change and the reasons behind them. She considered how weighty the logo should appear. She wanted it to be like "infinity," showing a shape that gives the impression of "coming back around."

Her mountains seem like a bowl, holding the company's ideas.

“When you design something like this, you want the eye to lead you through the curves,” she said. “I wanted it to be seamless and natural. There are no kinks or funky edges.”

Once she had the logo, Hagberg built in options for the company to use, while remaining true to her design. These includes various colors, shapes and sizes, so the logo can be used on small items like stationery, cups and clothing to enormously big billboards.

“

This is the first logo I ever did. I've never actually had anything commercial reproduced. The fact that it's going to be used by a real company—yeah, it's pretty exciting.

- Hagberg

”

When she learned she won the competition, Hagberg said she was surprised.

“It was a little weird,” she said. “I wasn’t sure it was real. This is the first logo I ever did. I’ve never actually had anything commercial reproduced. The fact that it’s going to be used by a real company—yeah, it’s pretty exciting.”

When Hagberg chose to major in art, she broke the mold so-to-speak. Her family has a few chemists in it. People always ask what she’ll do with an art degree.

After taking Abebe’s graphic design classes and winning the Paris Business Center logo contest, Hagberg knows she has a working future in art. She plans to pursue a masters in graphic design.

For research this year, Hagberg also designed an app that helps people reduce food waste by keeping track of what’s in their pantry and fridge.

She credits Abebe and his wonderful training for her successes.

As for Abebe, he was always confident a student of his would win the logo contest.

“Definitely, I was confident,” Abebe said, “because my students work really hard. This will give Maryellen a step up. Not many students have the experience of making a real logo for a real company before they graduate.”

“

This is great recognition for her—hands-on, professional experience that has real-world value.

- Abraham Abebe

”

Update: Professor Abebe recently earned a major accolade of his own. The graphic design professor is a 2024 winner of the TDC competition. Established in 1953, the Type Directors Club Awards is the longest running, most prestigious global typography and type design competition. The awards are all about how letterforms are used and drawn, recognizing typographic excellence and celebrating new typeface designs in all global languages. Abebe's winning typeface - November Ethiopic - can be seen [here](#).



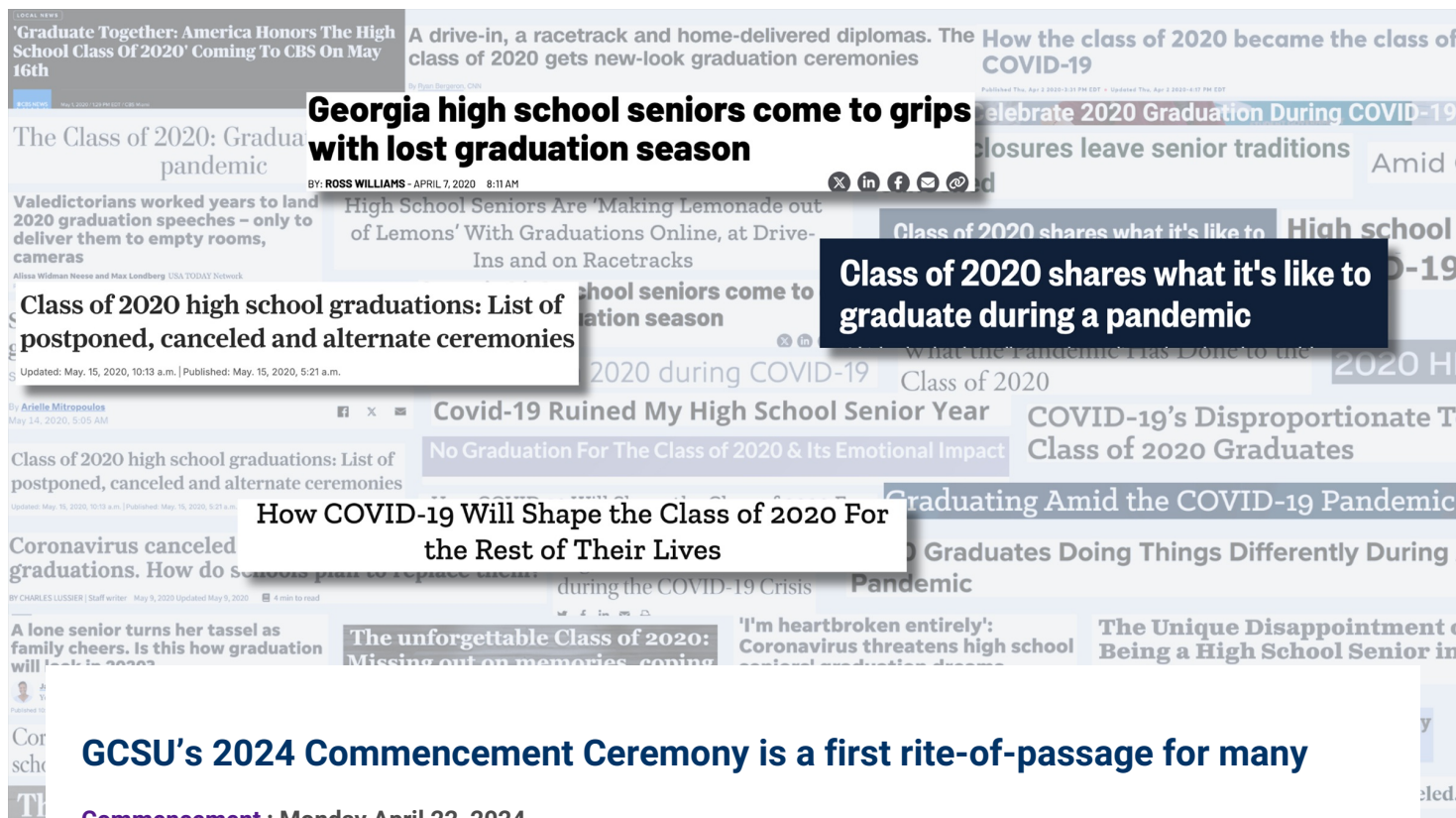
PILLAR II

DISTINGUISH

(verb): 1. To make noteworthy or remarkable: to give prominence or distinction, 2. To mark as separate or different



[Learn more about the Distinguish Pillar in our Imagine 2030 Strategic Plan](#)



GCSU's 2024 Commencement Ceremony is a first rite-of-passage for many

Commencement : Monday April 22, 2024

Story by Liz Newlin

As Georgia College & State University gears up for its 2024 [spring commencement](#) ceremonies, the significance of the event reverberates beyond the campus. For many graduating seniors, this ceremony marks more than just the end of their academic journey; it represents a chance to reclaim a rite of passage denied to them in 2020.

COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the lives of high school graduates worldwide, robbing them of the traditional pomp and circumstance. There was no turning of the tassels, shaking of hands or getting handed their diplomas. With ceremonies canceled or moved to virtual platforms, socially distanced ceremonies or other creative solutions, many graduates missed the opportunity to walk across the stage and celebrate with family and friends.

Josh Finnerty, a senior [business management](#) major, had a drive-in graduation at Alpharetta High school.

"They sent out a lot of emails and videos for the seniors but, it was pretty anticlimactic," he said.

Finnerty and his family are particularly excited for the spring commencement "because of having an abnormal senior year in high school and missing out on major milestones due to the pandemic."

Commencement ceremonies are rich in symbolism. They represent transitions and new beginnings. Without a ceremony to signify the completion of one chapter and commencement of another, students in 2020 felt off-balance and without closure.

As the class of 2024 prepares to bid farewell to their alma mater at Georgia College, the importance of the ceremony for many students cannot be overstated. It serves as a symbol of hope and resilience for a generation that faced unprecedented challenges.

Grace Ann Dixon, a senior [mass communication](#) major from Valdosta, Georgia, described her experience at Lowndes High School.

"I attended my high school graduation [Lowndes High School] where students were in small groups with masks on for our distanced graduation ceremony," she said. "My family and I are very excited to have a normal graduation to celebrate



Josh Finnerty

my accomplishments here at GCSU, walk across the stage and have everyone in my family there to support me.”

The significance commencement ceremonies extends beyond the academic realm. They provide an opportunity for graduates to reflect on their achievements and express gratitude to those who supported them. It helps to pause for a moment and take a congratulatory breath, before looking with optimism to the future. As the countdown to graduation continues, anticipation builds among students, faculty and staff.

There wasn't any graduation at Mill Creek High School, where senior [mass communication](#) major, Liz Newlin, attended in Hoschton, Georgia.

“We had a slideshow with pictures of the seniors,” Newlin said, “which is why this is such a huge deal for me and my family.”

“This ceremony is so exciting for me to be able to show my family and myself that my hard work has not gone unnoticed,” she said. “To be able to walk across the stage in a cap and gown for the first and last time ever is so exciting.”

In the midst of uncertainty and change, the 2024 commencement ceremony at Georgia College stands as a reminder that—even in the face of adversity—you can prevail.

As graduates prepare to take their next steps into the world, they do so with the knowledge they were first given a commencement ceremony to celebrate the challenges and academic achievements they have completed.

Georgia College & State University's Spring Commencement Ceremonies on May 3, 2024. The [College of Health Sciences](#) ceremony will be at 2 p.m., the [John H. Lounsbury College](#) of Education ceremony will be at 7 p.m. On Saturday, May 4, 2024 the [J. Whitney Bunting College of Business and Technology](#) ceremony will be at 9 a.m. and the [College of Arts & Sciences](#) ceremony will be at 2 p.m. Graduation will be held in the GCSU Centennial Center. Commencement will be broadcasted live over the internet via web cast. The link can be found from the [Georgia College graduation page](#).



Grace Ann Dixon



Liz Newlin



PILLAR III

EMPOWER

(verb): 1. To give (someone) the authority or power to do something,
2. To make (someone) stronger and more confident, especially in controlling their life and claiming their rights

[Learn more about the Empower Pillar in our Imagine 2030 Strategic Plan](#)



News Stories Posted Wednesday April 24, 2024



Class of 2024: Meet chemist Cole Smith

Commencement : Wednesday April 24, 2024

It all began with a library book for kids' experiments for Cole Smith, Georgia College & State University graduating chemistry senior. The book, filled with bookmarks and \$60 in library fines, was his pride and joy.

He couldn't imagine life without it. The book inspired him to seek opportunities for biotechnology research at Jasper County High School and led him to Georgia College's Young Scientist Program—a six-week program for high schoolers to explore university-level research.

"I took it in the summer and discovered that chemistry is what I want to do," Smith said. "I decided I was only going to come to Georgia College. I applied to one college, and that was Georgia College. I put all my eggs into one basket, and I got in."

He played rugby, held leadership positions in the Chemistry Club and volunteered at the Science Education Center since starting his college career. Along the way, Smith also managed to develop a working advanced adhesive.

From the start, Smith worked with Dr. Catrena Lisse, professor of chemistry, in her analytical chemistry lab. Tasked with creating a hydrogel that could work as a bandage and be photo-titratable—meaning it turns into a liquid when exposed to ultraviolet light—he did it.

"The worst part about Band-Aids™ is pulling them off, especially for people with traumatic injuries like burns," Smith said. "Being able to titrate it back into a solution with UV light, or turn the adhesive into a liquid, and dab it off could be really helpful."

Students coming after him will carry the project forward. Smith hopes they can make other contributions toward creating an anti-microbial advanced bandage.

Smith enjoys paying forward science exploration opportunities to the local students of tomorrow. He did this by supporting countless science fairs, magic shows and outreach events organized by Georgia College's Science Education

Center.

"Otherwise, either science is scary, or science feels too foreign for them to think they could do it," Smith said. "We want to inspire them and show them it's cool. It's really fun, and you can get up there and do it, even being from a small town or a low-income household."

“

**We want to inspire them and show them it's cool.
It's really fun, and you can get up there and do it.**
- Cole Smith

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"I was them at one point, so I wanted to keep spreading that message," he said.

Smith is the only member of his immediate family to graduate high school. He's also a first-generation college student. This motivates him to support the development of his nieces and nephews. With a blended family of 17 siblings, there's a lot to accomplish.

He'll start by taking a year off to pay off his student loans. During that off year, he's hoping to work in the kaolin industry of Georgia. After that, for Smith, the sky's the limit.

Schools like UNC Chapel Hill, Vanderbilt and Duke University are at the top of his list for doctoral programs, and he knows he can get there.

"At this point I could walk into any faculty members' office and ask them questions about life, resumes, chemistry—anything—and they're always right there to help," Smith said. "The fact that we get to do independent research here and use all these sophisticated instruments—it was just fabulous. I knew I wanted to do that for my undergrad career."



Cole Smith helped develop a gel for advanced bandages.



Cole in the Science Education Center's trademark tie-dye lab coat.



PILLAR I

INNOVATE

(verb): 1. To make changes in something established, especially by introducing new methods, ideas, or products



[Learn more about the Innovate Pillar in our Imagine 2030 Strategic Plan](#)



Axel Hawkins named to 2024 ALL IN Student Voting Honor Roll

[President, Office of the](#) : Wednesday April 24, 2024

The ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge announced today that Georgia College student Axel Hawkins, a history major from McDonough, Georgia, is one of 137 college students nation-wide selected for the third annual ALL IN Student Voting Honor Roll.

The [ALL IN Student Voting Honor Roll](#) recognizes college students at participating campuses who have “gone above and beyond to advance nonpartisan student voter registration, education and turnout efforts in their communities.” Georgia College President Cathy Cox nominated Hawkins for the award.





Axel Hawkins

"I was raised to vote in every election, even if you didn't love the candidates, because using your voice in a democracy is the most impactful way to make change," Hawkins said.

Hawkins added, "While I have my own candidates who I support and campaign for, it is even more important to me that every eligible voter turns out and votes, which is why I made voter registration one of my priorities."

Hawkins is president-elect of the Georgia College Student Government Association and was just recently awarded a Harry S. Truman Scholarship; she is Georgia College's second [Truman Scholar](#) in as many years.

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I was raised to vote in every election, even if you didn't love the candidates, because using your voice in a democracy is the most impactful way to make change.

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According to a release from ALL IN, students were a driving force in getting their campuses registered and to the ballot

box in 2023. The ALL IN Student Voting Honor Roll “highlights students who played a key role in driving voter registration, education and turnout on their campuses.”

Georgia College began their partnership with [Civic Nation](#) and the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge in 2016, according to Dr. Jan Hoffmann, professor of Rhetoric. Hoffmann coordinates nonpartisan voter registration efforts on the GCSU campus by organizations like Civic Nation and the [American Democracy Project](#)

“Ms. Hawkins is continuing our institution’s tradition of sustained voter registration efforts,” Hoffmann said. “ALL IN recognized Georgia College with the GOLD Seal award in 2020 for having the highest voter registration rate of all public 4-year institutions.”

[The National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement](#) (NSLVE) verified Georgia College had a campus voting rate of 41.2 percent in the 2018 midterm election cycle and a 76.1 percent voting rate in the 2020 presidential election cycle – both well above the national average voting rates for college students.

The 2024 ALL IN Student Voting Honor Roll includes honorees from 36 states, representing 20 community colleges, 20 Hispanic-Serving Institutions, eight Historically Black Colleges & Universities, and seven Asian American Native American Pacific Island Serving Institutions. The full list of student honorees is [available here](#).

Cover Photo by Anna Gay Leavitt. 2024 SGA Officers, from left: President Axel Hawkins, Vice President Leah Kelly, Secretary Charlotte Middlebrooks and Treasurer Serena Myrvold.



[Learn more about the Advance Pillar in our Imagine 2030 Strategic Plan](#)



“A night about Louis” based on his relatives’ fond memories

Andalusia : Wednesday April 24, 2024

Louis Cline, Mary “Flannery” O’Connor’s uncle, loved people. He longed to learn about others through his travels across Georgia as a salesman for King Hardware’s Wholesale Division.

Louis lived both at [Andalusia](#) and in Atlanta. At Andalusia, he shared the farm with his sister, Regina Cline O’Connor, and his niece, Flannery O’Connor. In Atlanta, he lived first with his brother Dr. Bernard Cline and later with his sister Cleo Cline Tarleton.

Upon Louis’ return from any trip, whether it be to Atlanta or Milledgeville, he liberally shared his back-road adventures with family members.

One can only imagine what Flannery’s sharp ears garnered from Louis’ curious tales when he returned to Andalusia.

“Mary Flannery planned to dedicate her next novel to her Uncle Louis. Unfortunately, that never came about. But that just shows in what high regard she held him,” said Mark Cline, Louis’ great nephew, whose family lived in Atlanta when the great Southern author lived in Milledgeville.

Frances Florencourt, Louis’ niece, said, “Flannery frequently included Louis in her letters. I could see this relationship building from Flannery becoming a writer into her years of success. It was a quiet relationship that built slowly, and you can see that in her writing.”



Louis Cline relaxes at Andalusia. Photo credit: Andalusia: The home of Flannery O'Connor. A gift of Louise Florencourt. 2019.1.249

At periodic stops while traveling, Louis picked up tidbits of information and other Georgia gems along the way. He kept fresh fruits and vegetables in wooden-slat baskets in his trunk that captivated his family every time he visited Atlanta or [Andalusia](#). When Louis opened his trunk, his nieces and nephews couldn't wait to see the latest treasures of fresh produce and trinkets.

"Whether it was Friday, Saturday or Sunday evening, there was always a place set at our table," said Mark. "We never knew when he would show up for dinner, as he was coming from Milledgeville. He loved checking in on everyone and was always a calm and polite gentleman."

Louis' extended family was a huge part of his friendship circle.

"Uncle Louis was the mailman for the family," Mark said. "He delivered packages while keeping up to date with everyone and brought the news to all of us."

For many years, when it was a dairy farm, Louis managed Andalusia for his older brother, Dr. Bernard Cline. When Bernard passed away in 1947, Louis and Regina inherited 550 acres, and they ran Andalusia as 50-50 partners during that time.

Louis was working at King Hardware too, where he was recognized as its outstanding salesman in the Wholesale Division. His district covered stores from Milledgeville to Atlanta. Later, he led a division of the company. Louis delivered messages in person because his customers knew he would travel to see them, so they wouldn't have to make a long-distance call.

"If you needed something, he could find it for you," said Jack Tarleton, another nephew of Louis. "He sold by telephone or written correspondence and was known for his ability to find something for anyone who needed a special item. He pursued it with determination and always succeeded in getting these hard-to-find hardware items."

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We had a very loving family. Not to say there wasn't contention within the family, but everybody got along, or they found a way to get along. And everyone had a different sense of humor. Louis was the glue to all of this.

- Mark Cline

"To ride in his car was an experience for those who accompanied him, as it was filled to the brim with hardware," said Mary Ann Murray, Louis' niece.

Before that, Louis had a used car lot behind the Capital City Club in Atlanta.

"My father would take the trolley downtown to have lunch with Bernard and Louis," said Mark. "He would stop on Peachtree Street in front of the Capitol City Club and pick up Louis. Then, they would walk down to Bernard's office to pick him up for lunch."

At the age of seven, Jack recalls his mother taking him to live at Andalusia for a month to recover from an ailment.

"That's where I first remember knowing him personally," Jack said. "Uncle Louis put me on a horse, and I rode that horse all day long."

"Uncle Louis made a large impact on my life," he said.

Louis always knew what the boys wanted to do at [Andalusia](#), so he let them.

"The great aunts would have one idea, and Louis would have another," Mark said. "And his idea always won out, which was fishing, horseback riding and getting dirty."

Jack and Mary Ann sometimes rode with Louis from Atlanta to Andalusia, normally a two-hour drive turned into four-to-five hours because of the number of stops he made.

"The car smelled wonderful," Mary Ann said. "And usually, his customers gave him a loaf of bread or cookies or fresh jam. He'd always have a chuckle because he would think about a good story or something as we drove down the road. Those were great memories."

"Uncle Louis made so many stops every time we rode with him," Mark said. "It was never the same route. But he looked after us. It was just such a wonderful experience."

At times, Louis stayed at [the Bell House](#)—a Victorian mansion located in Atlanta nearly a block north of the Fox Theater. He served as an officer for the boarding house's management team. Louis' brother, Dr. Bernard Cline and Flannery's father, Edward O'Connor, also stayed there.

For years, Andalusia's front porch was decorated with the Adirondack chairs from the Bell House after it closed. In the kitchen were the plates, cups and saucers, which are now housed at Andalusia's Interpretive Center.

His favorite place at [Andalusia](#) was the front porch. When Louis wasn't sitting there whittling or relaxing, he was horseback riding through the woods or fishing in the pond located in the back 40 acres of the farm.

"He always made sure that pond was stocked with fish," said Jack. "When I was a boy, he would send me down there with his friend, Jack Hill, to fish. Jack would put me in the boat, bait the hook and throw it in the water. I immediately caught fish."

"I can't stress this enough—he really kept the place running and made sure everything was working," Jack said.

Later, they turned [Andalusia](#) into a beef cattle farm.

Louis was the source of most funding for maintaining Andalusia. He used his earnings from his sales career.



Regina Cline and her brother, Louis Cline. Photo credit: Andalusia: The home of Flannery O'Connor. A gift of Louise Florencourt. 2019.1.348

"Louis was just a wonderful, loving and generous person," Frances said.

"When I look back on Louis, I see this person who brought not just his willpower to keep Andalusia running but brought a lot of the world to Andalusia through his travels," Mark said. "There's no telling how much of this ended up in Mary Flannery's typewriter."

Louis was old fashioned in the way he did business and the way he dressed. He was famous for wearing white socks.

"Uncle Louis was known for having a soft touch with anybody who needed something badly," Jack said. "He loaned money to anyone without question. And the only record of it was an entry he made in his little pocketbook he would carry around with him."

Louis was charitable and cheerful. As a practicing Catholic, he, Regina and Flannery went to church every Sunday. He lived his faith, and it showed. He took care of the Hills who lived at [Andalusia](#), his family and others he met along the way.

"Louis could take a joke," Mark said. "One trip to Milledgeville, Jack's mother, my Great Aunt Cleo, sat in the backseat with my brother and me. She brought along paper lunch bags. And I asked, 'Why did you bring those bags?' She said, 'Just wait.' So, we were riding down the road and she blows one up and slapped a bag. It made a loud 'pop.' Then Lewis jumped, and the car jerked. She fell back, laughing, and Louis laughed as well."

"We had a very loving family," he said. "Not to say there wasn't contention within the family, but everybody got along, or they found a way to get along. And everyone had a different sense of humor. Louis was the glue to all of this."

Matt Davis, director of Historic Museums at Georgia College & State University, thanks the family for participating in Andalusia's observance of Flannery O'Connor's 99th birthday.

"The insights, love and fond memories they shared of Louis will aid us in our understanding of life on the farm," Davis said, "and gives us new insights as we continue to grow our interpretation of [Andalusia](#)."



PILLAR IV

ENGAGE

(verb): 1. To occupy, attract, or involve (someone's interest or attention), 2. To participate or become involved

[Learn more about the Engage Pillar in our Imagine 2030 Strategic Plan](#)



News Stories Posted Thursday April 25, 2024



Class of 2024: Meet Gavin Incrocci, undergraduate researcher and entrepreneur

Commencement : Thursday April 25, 2024

Story by J. Cale Strickland

Many business students dream of becoming entrepreneurs and opening a business of their own; senior management major Gavin Incrocci has started 14.

In February, Incrocci sold Alphack Studios, a company behind two video games, both of which feature cryptocurrency-earning systems. They also developed software solutions that allowed other indie games to implement these systems. Incrocci currently owns A.I.M. Solutions, which sells women's beauty and fashion products, and the IronClad Group, which works to fill federal defense contracts.

His resume doesn't stop there. He's been published six times, twice in Newsweek and twice in ABDC-listed journals. His writing and research focuses on artificial intelligence and cryptocurrency.

"The crypto space as a whole sounded like the Wild West," Incrocci said. "A few years ago, it sounded like craziness. And I was just intrigued by it, so I went down the rabbit hole, just trying to learn anything I could find on it. And that's what got me into starting a few different businesses, meeting like-minded people, trying different things."

His research led him to the conclusion that serves as the foundation of his writing and entrepreneurship: crypto is the future of the financial world. His publications focus on individual countries' approaches to regulating the currency – the good, the bad and the things that can be improved upon.

"I started researching even more and learning about which countries are regulating it, which countries are not, and which countries are looking to very forcefully add regulation," Incrocci said. "I see that as the future of finance, of digital payments, so it's frustrating to see—possibly—the United States trying to completely shove it out the door when it has such a use case here, and it could truly revolutionize the way we do finance."

Incrocci is also interested in AI, which he sees as the modern-day assembly line.

"With AI developments, it's very interesting how things are getting streamlined so much faster," Incrocci said. "It's similar to when, years ago, they first added the assembly line. It started streamlining the processes of manufacturing absolutely significantly. It's going to take jobs, and it's also going to give jobs, so it's very exciting to see how we're adapting."

“

That's what got me into starting a few different businesses, meeting like-minded people, trying different things.



Management Major Gavin
Incrocci

Dr. Nicholas Creel, an assistant professor of business law and co-director of the Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, has co-authored several articles with Incrocci.

He says ABDC-listed journals are what business colleges use to establish and maintain a standard for peer-reviewed publications within the discipline and that it isn't normal for graduate students, let alone undergraduate students, to be featured.

"That's absolutely massive," Creel said. "My first peer review wasn't until I was in my Ph.D. program, and I already had two law degrees and everything. It's not typical for undergraduates to do that."

In fact, Creel says professors in the College of Business and Technology need two or three published, peer-reviewed articles every five years in order to get tenure, putting Incrocci's achievement in even greater perspective.

Additionally, Incrocci is a MURACE Summer Research Award recipient and two-time winner of GCSU's Venture Capital Challenge.

He plans to continue working with crypto and AI, centering his career around them.

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Failure will happen...Give it a try, and if it does not work, cut your losses and move on to the next.

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"I'll definitely stay within those two realms because I see those as the future," Incrocci said.

His advice to other students: be cognizant of when something isn't working.

"You need to learn that when trying something new, you need to fail quickly," Incrocci said. "Failure will happen. There's no point in droning on if it's not going to work. Give it a try, and if it does not work, cut your losses and move on to the next."

However, he also says you shouldn't let the possibility of failure discourage you from trying new things.

"Life's short. You're here one time," he said. "You have one shot at this. If there's something you want to do or try, who cares if you fail? If you stumble and fall, just get back up, go again."

Cover photo by Anna Gay Leavitt. Gavin Incrocci presents during the 2024 Venture Capital Challenge at the J. Whitney Bunting College of Business and Technology on March 27, 2024.



PILLAR I

INNOVATE

(verb): 1. To make changes in something established, especially by introducing new methods, ideas, or products



[Learn more about the Innovate Pillar in our Imagine 2030 Strategic Plan](#)

Newell Scholar lecture-performance “Cultural Diplomacy and Music”

[Music, Department of](#) : Thursday April 25, 2024

By J. Cale Strickland

Dr. Evren Kutlay, this semester's Martha Daniel Newell Visiting Scholar, gave a lecture-performance on the intersection between the arts and geopolitics, "Cultural Diplomacy and Music," earlier this month.

Kutlay performed 12 pieces in total, seven solo and five alongside students, staff and faculty from the Department of Music.

She says the lecture-performance, which focused on the relationship between Eastern music and international relations, was the result of months of preparation.

"It took me several months because it was not only practicing them on the piano but researching, finding the related pieces from different libraries and archives across Europe, for some, reading manuscripts and doing translations, and coming up with a chronological story to present," Kutlay said.

"So, it required the process of writing an article and performing in concert. Moreover, at GCSU, with music faculty and students, we conducted a series of rehearsals for the chamber music pieces, some of which had their debut after about a hundred years."

The night was a collective effort by the Department of Music, as Kutlay was joined by the GCSU orchestra; Dr. Dana Gorzelany-Mostak, a percussionist; Dr. Youngmi Kim, a soprano; the Max Noah Singers Select Ensemble; and Dr. Bryan E. Hall, a violinist.

"It was a wonderful experience," Kutlay said. "I enjoyed working together with them all. It has been such an excellent opportunity for me to bring an archival repertoire live by collaborating with them. As I mentioned, some of those pieces made their debut. Other than working together toward the presentation of the significance of the pieces, I assume our collaboration served for an interdisciplinary and cross-cultural experience that is promoted in a liberal arts university."

In addition to serving as a crossroads between music, politics, language and history, the Max Noah Singers Select Ensemble sang in Turkish.

Of course many students, staff, faculty and members of the local community aren't familiar with Eastern music. This is a challenge for Kutlay, whose work lies in the history of the art and its connections to, and implications in, other disciplines, but it is one she embraces wholeheartedly.

"Throughout my career, it has been a challenge to work in an area that is not familiar to large audiences," Kutlay said. "But this challenge is meaningful because it includes the joy of exploration, the fascination of discovery and sharing the long-forgotten or unknown to us today."

The Ottoman Empire's Imperial Music School, which combined a plethora of musical approaches and styles, both Eastern and Western, was a focal point of Kutlay's lecture-performance.

"The Imperial Music School acted like a music laboratory, experimenting with combining the Eastern and Western elements in the music, and musical ensembles, and came out with a unique musical language of Western music specific to Ottomans, which was highly appreciated in the Western music world back then."

Though the school's contributions to the music world are centuries-old, Kutlay believes the perspectives of its artists are timeless.

"To me, such an approach embraces the applications of ideas and strategies we appreciate and focus on today: diversity, equity and inclusion and thinking globally but acting locally," Kutlay said.

News Stories Posted Monday April 29, 2024



Class of 2024: History valedictorian headed back to the U.K.

Commencement : Monday April 29, 2024

You won't find a senior more involved with Georgia College & State University museums than Caroline Cole, a graduating history major and English minor.

Introduced to Matthew Davis, director of historic museums, at the Presidential Scholarship Competition in 2019, she's worked at the museums since her second day of college.

"I love getting to meet all different kinds of people," Cole said. "We get people from all over the world and all over the country. So, I just get different types of people as well, people of all types of beliefs and types of cultures—that's been a really rewarding thing."

She started at the Sallie Ellis Davis House and worked her way up to being a docent for Georgia's Old Governor's Mansion. After working with the best of the best in museums and thousands of guests over her college career, Cole is more than ready to pursue her dream of curating museum exhibits.

"Museums are a gateway for the public to look into what's going on in historical research," she said. "And I really like helping adults learn and discover new things—that's part of why I enjoy doing this job."

But Cole isn't just an expert on Georgia College museums. One of the university's graduating valedictorians, she's also an active member of the Honors College and studied most of her English minor at the University of Oxford last year.

As a visiting student at Oxford for a spring semester, or hilary term, she studied the global Middle Ages and Victorian literature. Regent's Park College, the



Cole will attend the University of St. Andrews in Scotland for graduate school.

University of Oxford college that Cole was a part of, invited her back to complete two more terms after her impressive academic prowess.

That year she wrote 36 essays for Oxford.

"It was hard moving to a whole other country with all these new people who I'd never met before," Cole said. "I'd never done something like that before, but I made the active decision to put myself out there."



Caroline Cole is a model for rigorous academic involvement.

"I made some really good friends, and I had a good time—it was such a good experience," she said.

Dr. Brian Newsome, dean of the John E. Sallstrom Honors College, and the International Education Center were instrumental in getting Cole to Oxford. She credits them and a laundry list of incredible faculty for her positive experience at Georgia College.

"I'm sure I'm leaving out a bunch of people, because the professors have been my favorite part," Cole said. "The professors have been so amazing, and that's part of the reason I came to Georgia College. I wouldn't have been Dr. Scott Buchanan's personal research assistant, even though I'm a history major."

"Those kinds of things are why I just love Georgia College," she said.

From humble beginnings in Buford, Georgia, to Georgia College, Cole is now on her way back to the United Kingdom. Soon, she'll start a 12-month Master of Letters program in museum and heritage studies at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland.

"It's been really rewarding, and it's funny, because I have grown a lot academically, but I feel like I've grown more socially and as a person more than anything," Cole said. "In college, you learn so much about yourself and other people."



PILLAR II

DISTINGUISH

(verb): 1. To make noteworthy or remarkable; to give prominence or distinction, 2. To mark as separate or different



[Learn more about the Distinguish Pillar in our Imagine 2030 Strategic Plan](#)

