

JOHN H. LOUNSBURY COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

# NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2020



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JOHN H. LOUNSBURY  
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

**NEWSLETTER**

Summer 2020

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# Dean's Message

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Friends of the COE,

These are exciting times for us in the John H. Lounsbury College of Education, especially in the areas of new programs, new faculty and staff, and accolades for our work.

## **New Programs**

This past summer, the inaugural class of the education doctorate in Curriculum and Instruction began their studies. The "Fab Five" are all doing well in their courses and are already looking forward to dissertation work (see page 6 for additional information). We also saw the culmination of Dr. Rob Sumowski's work in Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports with the approval of a university certificate and accompanying state endorsement in PBIS. This endorsement is a first not only for Georgia, but nationwide. Along the lines of new programs, our partnership with the Southern Regional Education Board led to a U.S. Department of Education grant to prepare three cohorts of middle grades math and science teachers. The program pays the candidates a regular salary and benefits for their first year of participation while they complete the degree and provides mentoring for an additional two years as they transition into being a full-time teacher in the sponsoring district. Our Director of Graduate Programs in Education, Ms. Shanda Brand, can provide additional details on programs and applications (Shanda.Brand@GCSU.edu, 478-445-1383).

## **New Faculty and Staff**

This academic year we also welcomed our Director of Assessment and Accreditation, Dr. Mike Newton. Dr. Newton brings a lot of expertise in accreditation and he will guide us through a successful CAEP accreditation in 2021. Another new face in the COE is LTC Frank Adkinson, USA, Retired, our Donor Engagement Officer. Mr. Adkinson recently retired from the military and will be helping us reach our goals in providing support for our students in the areas of scholarships, technology, awards, and attending conferences to present their research. Mr. Adkinson is always looking for members to join the College of Education Advisory Board so feel free to contact him to recommend Board Members or volunteer. Frank can be reached at frank.adkinson@gcsu.edu or 478-445-8548. We also welcome some new faculty. Dr. Lu Wang joined our Middle Grades Education program, Dr. Rachel Bray joined the Secondary Education program, Dr. Sandra Smith and Ms. Hiller Crook joined the Special Education program, and Dr. Natalie Toomey joined us in the Instructional Technology area.

## **Accolades for our Work in the COE**

We received great news from the Professional Standards Commission that our programs were ranked in the highest category of "exemplary." This rating is based on a number of factors such as an assessment of teaching skills, content knowledge, teacher observations, employer surveys, and first year teacher surveys (see: <https://www.gapsc.com/EducatorPreparation/ppems.aspx>). Our Middle Grades Education program was recognized nationally as an "Outstanding Middle Level Teacher Education Program" and "Outstanding Collegiate Middle Level Association (CMLA) Chapter." For other highlights, please see pages 4-5 in this newsletter and our webpage at the [www.gcsu.edu/education](http://www.gcsu.edu/education) link.

Best wishes,

*Joseph Peters*

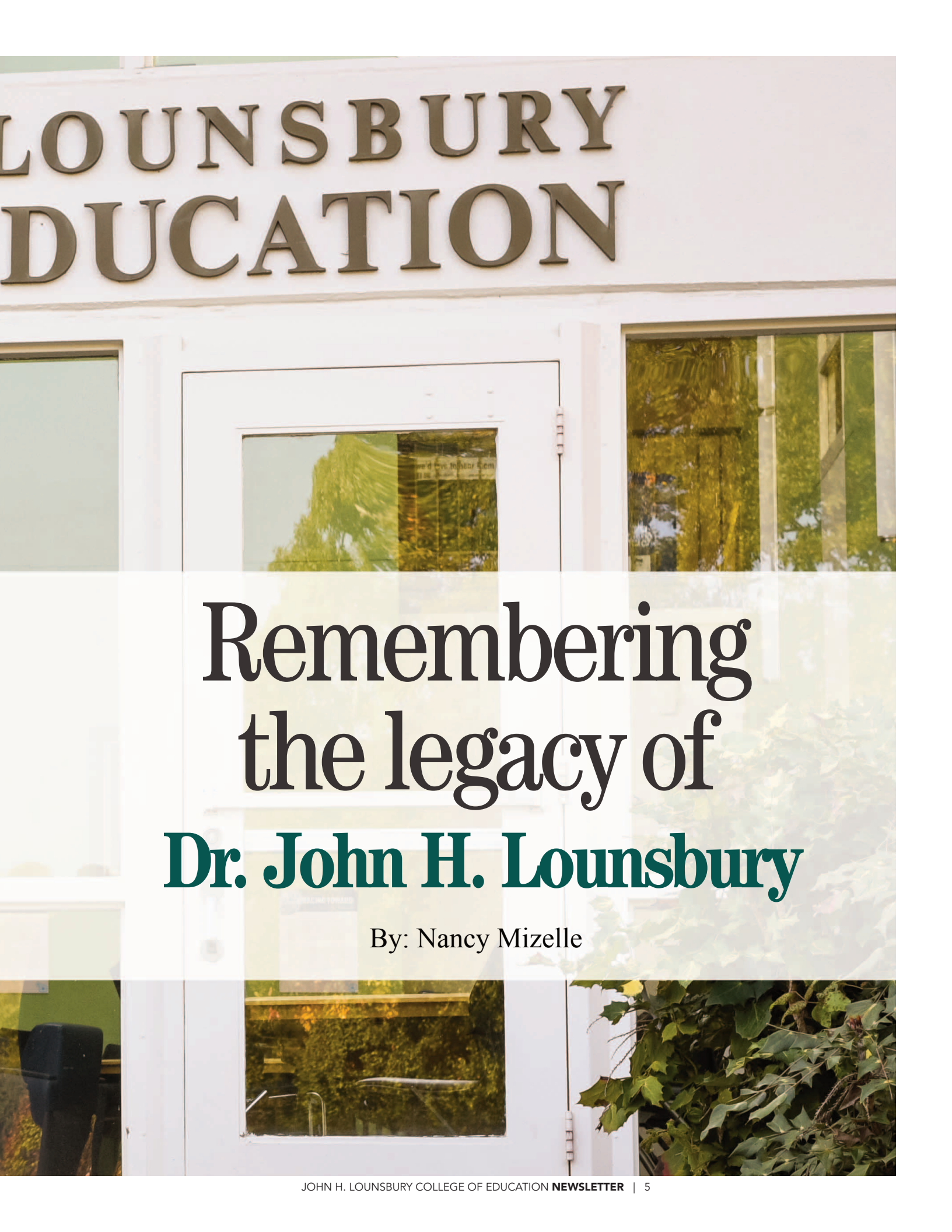
Joe Peters

Dean of Education

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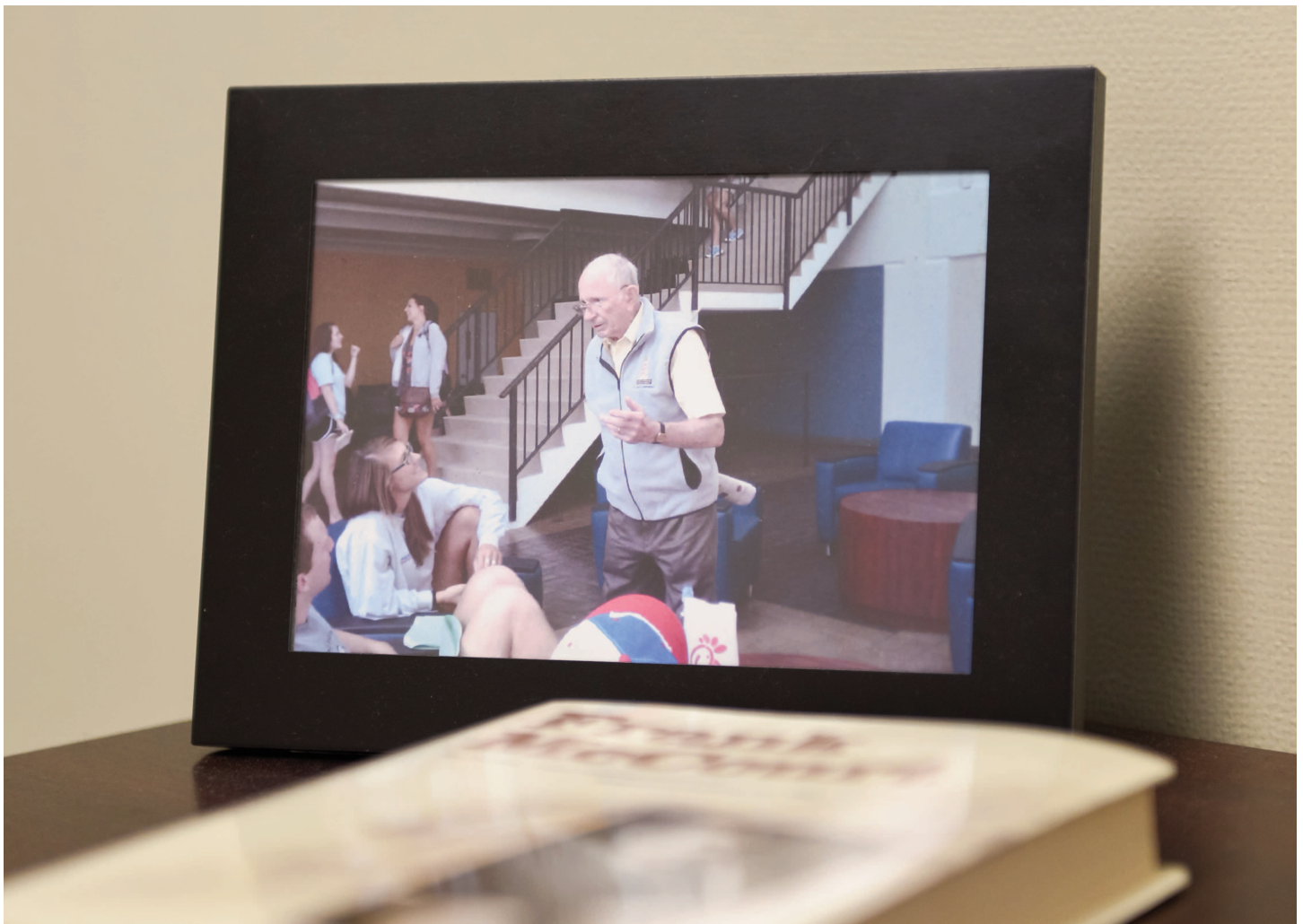




LOUNSBURY  
EDUCATION

# Remembering the legacy of **Dr. John H. Lounsbury**

By: Nancy Mizelle



With the death of Dr. John H. Lounsbury on April 2, 2020, the world lost a treasure. Known internationally for his work in Middle Level Education, Dr. Lounsbury influences our lives daily in the ideals we hold for our profession; in the education we pursue for the young adolescents we love; and in our ongoing work and relationships as middle level educators and teacher educators. But I would be remiss if I left you to believe that his influence was limited to Middle Level Education. Even a short conversation would alert you to Dr. Lounsbury's deep passion for and commitment to public education. Often, he referenced Jefferson's assertion that education of the "masses" was the only way to preserve our freedom -- our government as we know it. And equally important, colleagues in Early Childhood, Secondary, and Special Education always commented about the

way Dr. Lounsbury inspired and challenged them when they heard him speak. So, please do not forget his deep passion and concern for the public education system.

Still, the world will remember Dr. Lounsbury as a Legacy Leader and one of the five Founding Fathers of the Middle Level movement; as the "conscience of middle level education;" and as the vision and impetus for the National Association of Professors of Middle Level Education. We will remember him as an influential editor and writer. During a more than 40-year association with the National Middle School Association (now Association for Middle Level Education) Dr. Lounsbury was instrumental in writing and editing countless columns, journals, and manuscripts for publication. Just as one example, he was a leader on the writing team for the, to date, four editions



of *This We Believe* (NMSA, 1980, 1995, 2003, 2010), the foundational framework and guide for educators, policymakers and others involved in creating successful schools for young adolescents. At the same time, Dr. Lounsbury created an extensive and timeless body of his own publications with articles, columns, speeches and position pieces -- many of which were written in the 1970s and 1980s but are as relevant today in topic and idea as they were when written.

On the state level, Dr. Lounsbury leaves an impressive legacy of Middle Grades teacher preparation programs. In the early 1970s he and Dr. Mary Compton, a colleague at the University of Georgia, lobbied tirelessly with the State Department of Education and the State Legislature for Middle Grades certification to ensure that teachers working with young adolescents in Georgia would be uniquely prepared to do so. Their efforts were successful and Middle Grades teacher preparation programs developed quickly across the state. Today, the impact of Dr. Lounsbury's work continues as Middle Grades teacher preparation programs are found in 30 colleges and universities statewide and Georgia has a national, long-standing reputation among middle level educators for high-quality work in Middle Level Education. Dr. Lounsbury also helped to bring exemplary middle schools to Georgia through the National Forum to Accelerate Middle Grades Reform's *Schools to Watch®* program. And it is because of his influence that we have a vibrant, nationally recognized middle grades program here at Georgia College.

Finally, we have rich memories of Dr. Lounsbury, personally. He was a valued

colleague and dear, dear friend. He was a mentor and an advocate -- always quick to support and uplift. He looked for the good in people, even those with whom he did not agree, and worked to build relationships with all. Dr. Lounsbury saw no hierarchy among his acquaintances and would stop just as quickly to speak to a student as he would to the University President. He was a man of vision, but he never left it to others to enact his ideas. He would work beside you, helping until the project was accomplished.

Dr. Lounsbury was a man of family and a wonderful model of a balanced life. He might carry a manuscript home at night to edit, but never a laptop. He loved his family dearly and he and Miss Libby were a team. They did church together, they cooked together, they did crafts together. Doing for others was the way they lived life.

Often, Dr. Lounsbury reminded us, as Middle Grades educators, that "We teach more by who we are than by what we teach." (J. Lounsbury). The life that Dr. John H. Lounsbury lived and the lessons he taught are a gift as well as a challenge. We encourage you to get to know him, his life, and his legacy better through his own writing and the writings of others about him.

Gloer, S. R. (2019). *John H. Lounsbury: Middle school mentor to all*. Westbury, OH: Association for Middle Level Education.

Lounsbury, J. H. (1991). *As I see it*. Columbus, OH: National Middle School Association.

Smith, T. W. & McEwin, C. K. (2011). *The legacy of middle school leaders in their own words*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.

# Highlights



**1. Dr. Joanne Previts**, previously awarded Fall 2016 Outstanding Professor of Middle Level Education by the National Professions of Middle Level Education, has been promoted to the rank of Professor. Her diligence as a mentor and educator of middle grades teacher candidates since arriving at Georgia College in 2009 has led to this outstanding accomplishment.



**2. Dr. Emmanuel Little**, Director of Call Me MiSTER and AAMI, received his doctoral degree Fall 2018 from University of Georgia.



**3.** At the Faculty and Staff Celebration of Excellence at the close of Spring 2019, **Dr. Steve Wills** won the Excellence in University Service Award and **Dr. Diane Gregg** won the Excellence in Online Teaching Award!

The Excellence in University Service Award is presented by Georgia College to recognize extraordinary service and contributions to the Georgia College community by a full-time, tenured faculty member.

The Excellence in Online Teaching Award recognizes excellence in online teaching. The award recipient is the university's nominee for the Regent's Teaching Excellence for Online Teaching Award.

**4.** Two grants have been awarded to **Drs. Nicole DeClouette** and **Rob Sumowski** by the Georgia Inclusive Postsecondary Education Consortium (GAIPSEC) based at Georgia State

University's Center for Leadership in Disability. The Transition and Postsecondary Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (TPSID) grants provided the opportunity to explore the possibility of beginning an Inclusive Post-Secondary Education (IPSE) program at Georgia College. If ultimately established, the IPSE program would afford adults with intellectual disabilities the opportunity to attend Georgia College. The initial Exploration Grant of \$10,000, awarded in January 2019, preceded a \$25,000 Implementation Grant, awarded in 2020. The latter grant allows Drs. DeClouette and Sumowski to continue to examine the feasibility of adding an IPSE program at Georgia College.

**5. Alumna Emmie Meadows** was awarded Bleckley County High School Teacher of the Year in 2019.

**6. The student organization Collegiate Middle Level Association (CMLA)** received a grant to help pay for 16 students to attend the Association for Middle Level Education (AMLE) 46th Annual Conference in Nashville in November 2019.

Juniors Madison England, Morgan Harris, and Emily Nicoletti applied for the grant and will present at the conference. Other students have also applied to present.



**7. Georgia College's Middle Grades Education program** earned two awards at the National Association of Professors of Middle Level Education's 46th Annual Conference in Nashville, Tennessee.

The program won for "Outstanding Middle Level Teacher Education Program" and "Outstanding Collegiate Middle Level Association (CMLA) Chapter." Nine middle grades teacher candidates presented at the conference. In addition, three middle grades teacher candidates received CMLA travel grants and were recognized. They are: Madi England, Morgan Harris and Emily Nicoletti.



# GC COLLEGE OF EDUCATION PROGRAM RANKINGS

**National Council on Teacher Quality** (NCTQ; nctq.org) has released its first-ever guide book for aspiring teachers, urging them to take initiative in their own preparation. In its aim to provide practical information needed to select high-quality prep programs, NCTQ listed Georgia College and State University among the nation's top teacher prep programs. It's an honor to be listed in the debut book by NCTQ, but it's an even greater accomplishment to be the only college or university listed from the state of Georgia.

*Link for above information:*

<https://www.nctq.org/publications/First--Ever-Guidebook-for-Aspiring-Teachers-Now-Available,-Urging-Future-Teachers-to-Take-the-Drivers-Seat-on-their-Own-Preparation>

(The actual guidebook is available for review in the College Education; see Holley Roberts.)

**Georgia College earned a Level 4 rating** on the 2019 Teacher Preparation Program Effectiveness Measures (PPEMs) published by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC). This level is above the expected level of performance for effectively preparing future teachers and is the highest rating awarded.

"Georgia College has a long history of excellence in teacher preparation dating back to its establishment as Georgia Normal and Industrial College in the late 1800s," said Dean Joe Peters, John H. Lounsbury College of Education. "The exemplary rating of our programs is confirmation that the tradition of providing excellent teacher education continues to this day."

**SR Education Group** released its 2019 Most Affordable Rankings on OnlineU.org. The Most Affordable rankings represent online schools across the nation that are committed to providing affordable, economical options for students. The tuition rates of every accredited college offering fully online degrees are manually researched and collected each year to determine and rank the most affordable options.

■ Georgia College ranked in three categories for the 2019 Most Affordable Online Colleges, in which no more than 25 colleges were listed in each category.

■ Georgia College's Special Education program ranked No. 12 where its program annual tuition rate falls under \$5,300 per year.

■ Georgia College's Educational Leadership program ranked No. 14 where its program annual tuition rate falls within an average range of \$5,495 per year with all 24 colleges listed.

■ Georgia College's Master's in Teaching degree program ranked No. 17 where its program annual tuition rate falls under \$5,952 per year.

**Online Masters** (onlinemaster.com) ranked Georgia College's Early Childhood Education program at #35 in Best Online Master's Early Childhood Education Programs, stating that the program has the Most Collaborative Studies.

*Link for above information:* <https://www.onlinemasters.com/best-degree-programs/education/early-childhood-education/>



◀ **Emmanuel Little** received the J. Douglas Toma Excellence in Scholarship and Service award for his academic achievements and institutional engagement at The University of Georgia. The Toma

award is presented to a doctoral student who combines a strong record of academic achievement with commitment to the field of higher education.

The award is named in honor and memory of J. Douglas Toma, professor of higher education and founder of the Institute of

Higher Education's Executive Doctoral Program in Higher Education Management. Professor Toma was committed to developing scholars and leaders in American and International Higher Education.

Little is the director of the state's first and only Call Me MiSTER (Mentors Instructing Students Toward Effective Role models) program at Georgia College. The program strives to increase the pool of available teachers from diverse backgrounds, particularly for low-performing elementary schools. He also directs Georgia College's African-American Male Initiative, where he has assisted in procuring over \$200,000

for retention, progression, and graduation efforts of Black male undergraduate students.

In his remarks, Little said, "I have grown exponentially as a scholar throughout my time at the Institute of Higher Education. I appreciate the opportunities to interact with professors who are current leaders in the field, as well as my peers who will undoubtedly help shape the future of higher education. I am thankful to receive the Toma award and hope to continue upholding the transformational commitment to research and service exhibited by its namesake."

# College of Education premieres second doctoral program at GC

**IN** the College of Education, the cohort to enter into the college's first doctoral program has garnered an endearing collective nickname: The Fab Five.

Starting in Summer 2019, the John H. Lounsbury College of Education accepted the first cohort of students into the new Doctoral degree program in Curriculum and Instruction. This marks the second doctoral degree to ever be offered at Georgia College, following the Doctorate of Nursing Practitioner degree that launched in 2013.

"The College of Education chose to offer the Ed.D in middle Georgia because of the need in this region for a doctorate from one of the universities in the state system," said Dr. Joseph Peters, dean of the College of Education. Peters cited that the closest option, the University of Georgia, was 80 miles away with the furthest being Valdosta State.

"It's certainly something that middle Georgia has been waiting on," affirmed Dr. Barbara Roquemore, doctoral program director. "I've been asked about a program offering like this for years."

April Braswell, principal of Whitehead Elementary, is one of those students. She completed the educational specialist program in 2016 at Georgia College. Since then, she's checked back routinely

to see when the College of Education would begin offering a doctoral program.

"Pursuing an advanced degree has been in my plan a long time. I come from a line of educators. I think we totaled it up once and there were 40 educators in all in my family," Braswell, who is one of the five students in the program, said. "It was always a desire and personal goal of mine to receive my doctorate. We don't have anyone in my family that has achieved that level. I want to make space within my family so that they can see the level of success that is for us in education."

The program offers advanced coursework for personnel in PreK-12 schools and higher education. It consists of 10-course core and 8-course specialization tracks.

Marya Ray, who has spent 24 years teaching in the public school system, said this program is more than just an opportunity for her to advance her knowledge—but an opportunity for the entire middle Georgia region.

"It will take the reputation of the college to a different level. By offering more advanced degrees, the university is making the middle Georgia region more competitive," she expressed. "It's making a mark on the quality of education you can receive in this area. And hopefully, the better prepared teachers are in this region, the better the

education will be."

The cohort of five students was accepted toward the end of spring 2019 semester and started the program with a three-course load summer. They'll have a little more than two year's worth of courses followed by their research and dissertation. Dr. Linda Bradley, interim chair of the department, said having these new scholars within the college is a large benefit to the College of Education and the university.

"This program not only launches the scholarship of these candidates, it will renew and energize many of the faculty and committee members working with them," she said. "It will be exciting for candidates to connect with faculty members who have similar research interests."

Bradley also said it's a time of growth within the College of Education, with increasing graduate enrollment and the addition of the doctoral program. Keeping the cohort to five was in effort to ensure College of Education faculty would be available for dissertation committees, mentorship, and research opportunities.

"It's a really exciting time. With anything new, there's also a learning curve," she said. "Faculty are supportive, enthusiastic, and excited for the opportunities they will have with individuals when they begin to work on the dissertation committees."





April Dockery, Coffee County; Daymond Ray, Baldwin County; Marya Ray, Washington County; Tracy Clark, Baldwin County; April Braswell, Clarke County

"I think we're going to see so many ways this will impact the College of Education over time," Bradley expressed. "Most exciting is that we will have these budding scholars who are truly interested in curriculum and instruction. They are the ones who will be leading and forging new paths in the field in ways that serve children, youth, and adults within learning communities."

The program is a blended instruction format with two to three face-to-face classroom sessions per semester, with the remainder of the content online. Offering an online format gives students the ability to advance in their school system and not leave their current positions.

"For higher education faculty, it will allow

faculty to be qualified to teach graduate courses in their field. This is especially important in areas such as nursing where there is a shortage of doctoral faculty," Peters mentioned.

Braswell said finding that balance is key. She has a comprehensive background in teaching and administration in school systems with her sights set on becoming a superintendent one day. This year, she's taking on her first role as principal of an elementary school.

"Having the doctoral program offered at Georgia College has just opened so many doors for me," said Braswell. "I like the online component and I've really enjoyed being able to come on campus and meet with my peers. It's valuable to

have that time to make connections. I also knew that a small, intimate atmosphere like Georgia College would meet my needs as I pursued an advanced degree."

Ray, who teaches Algebra I and Geometry at Washington County High School, doesn't see herself leaving the classroom any time soon, but what she'll gain from the program is an opportunity to make more of an impact.

"Ultimately, I want to become a better teacher," said Ray. "I want to either be better in my own classroom or be able to help teachers be more effective in theirs. I went into education to make a difference in someone's life. The better I am, the better chance I have."

# Middle grades education students use iPads to teach and learn

Today, children learn to use technology, in many cases, as soon as they learn to walk and talk. They have access to smartphones, tablets and the Internet in ways previous generations did not.

The same is true for today's classrooms, the use of technology marks a vital piece to the educational puzzle. Teachers must be ready and able to use technology to both engage and relate to students.

Georgia College teacher education candidates now have a resource in hand to help provide technologically-driven education for both themselves and their future students.

All 16 of the fall 2018 juniors that entered the middle grades education program received iPads, which they used as a learning aid in their education and a resource to help educate their students.

"The world around us is constantly changing, and technology has become more and more prominent. I think since technology is such a big part of our students lives, it should be part of the classroom too," said Christina Saraiva, a senior middle grades education student.

It's about using apps to enhance teaching and learning, as well as fostering creativity,

according to Middle Grades Professor Dr. Joanne Previts, and teacher candidates are doing just that.



"There are tons of ways to use iPads in your classroom, from taking notes, making projects, using Geoboard, finding math apps and games, researching ideas, to watching YouTube videos," said Saraiva. "There is even an Apple app available called Classroom, where the teacher can create a class and watch what their students are working on, check their battery percentage, see their screen, or lock their iPad remotely."

The idea for bringing this technology into the classrooms for education students had been in the works for more than a year.

"Apple came to campus in Spring 2018 and

presented on ways to use technology in education," said Previts.

Administration in the John H. Lounsbury College of Education decided this was a worthwhile pursuit. The goal is to eventually have all undergraduate education majors equipped with an iPad, but for the initial launch, they knew they needed to start small. The middle grades cohort was the perfect size.

Then, when the challenge of purchasing the equipment came up, an alumna and her husband were quick to step in.

"I'm a 1961 graduate of Georgia College and have always tried to stay involved," said Rosemary Strickland, '61.

Rosemary and her husband, Dr. Wade Strickland provided the funding to purchase iPads for all 16 students in the cohort.

"We own a telephone company in Brantley County, so we see the impact of technology and how it's changing," she said. "I was also given a scholarship to help with my education at Georgia College, and we just want to give back in any way we can."

If you are interested in supporting this initiative, please contact Dr. Joseph Peters.

## GC Awarded two scholarships by Georgia Department of Education and Georgia Foundation for Public Education



(L-R) Justin Hill, GA DOE Director of Curriculum; Jason Byars, GA DOE PBIS Director; Dr. Kimberly Harris of Georgia Southern University; and Dr. Rob Sumowski of Georgia College after addressing the PSC in Atlanta on January 10, 2019.

On Jan. 10, 2019, the Georgia Professional Standards Commission announced the adoption of the first teaching certificate endorsement in Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) in the United States. As one of the early advocates and leaders in the creation of the endorsement, Georgia College's Dr. Rob Sumowski was invited to address the PSC in Atlanta about the origins of the work he did with colleagues at the Georgia Department of Education and Georgia Southern University, which began in Fall 2015. A key member of the PSC's 2018 PBIS Task Force and the Georgia Department of Education's state Leadership team since 2012, Sumowski co-authored both the PSC's peer-reviewed State Standards for the endorsement as well as its new PBIS Endorsement Guidance Document, both of which are firsts in the nation.

As a thank you for spearheading this initiative, Georgia College was awarded two scholarships coordinated by the Georgia Department of Education and administered through the Georgia Foundation for Public Education. These scholarships, named for Sumowski's former GA DOE colleague Jean Ramirez, have been awarded to GC students Rachel Dixon and Jessica Harris. The scholarships cover tuition so that these two individuals will be among the first four teachers in the country to possess teaching certificate endorsements in Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports.

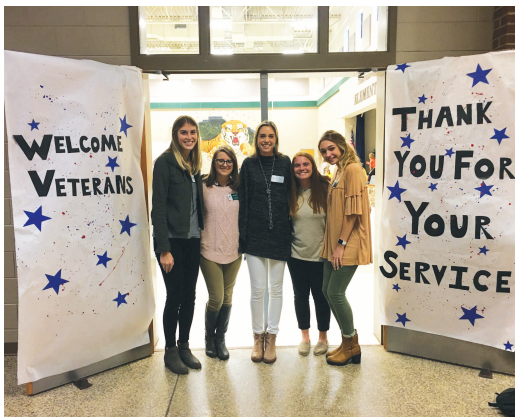




# #TEACHER2BTUESDAY







## Turner Woods Elementary School: Veteran's Day

Ragan Smoak, Andrea Strubberg, Madison Tate, Alexandra Taylor, and Courtney Utberg were asked to help with the Veteran's Day event that was held Monday, November 12, 2018. During this school-wide event, veterans were recognized and honored for their service. Students performed various songs, dances, and speeches. The teacher candidates' responsibilities included creating a backdrop for the gymnasium and designing two door banners for the entrance to the gymnasium, where the event would be held. Over the course of two weeks, prior to this event, the five student teachers collaborated in designing the artwork that would be displayed. Turner Woods provided the materials needed, such as paper, paint, paintbrushes, tape, and scissors. During their planning periods, Smoak, Strubberg, Tate, Taylor, and Utberg worked diligently in the Art room. In order to give the students a role in this activity, the student teachers partnered with them. Students throughout the school were able to place their handprints on the backdrop. The teacher candidates felt that students needed to feel represented and show their love for those who sacrificed their lives and time for them.

Overall, Smoak, Strubberg, Tate, Taylor, and Utberg thoroughly enjoyed contributing to Turner Woods Elementary School's Veteran's Day. They felt that this gave them an opportunity to build deeper relationships with both the faculty and the students.

# Breaking Cultural Boundaries

## GC STUDENT'S PURSUIT OF CULTURAL UNITY

Ariana Fernandez, a May 2019 graduate of the Early Childhood Education program, was born in Venezuela and learned to speak Spanish and English at an early age. Because of her background and the past experiences that led her to study education, she decided to pursue a unique teaching career. Upon graduating from GC, she will be teaching a Spanish immersion classroom. Her students will have the opportunity to benefit from a teacher who will not only bring a wealth of knowledge in educational theory and field based learning but who will do so in a language that can serve to reshape their future.

From her childhood in Venezuela and other influences from family members in Spain, Fernandez was able to learn two of the world's most used languages in the most formative years of her life.

"My family and I attend many gatherings with people from different countries who speak Spanish...." says Fernandez, "Along with speaking the language at home, we also eat Spanish and Venezuelan food, listen to Latin music, and celebrate holidays in Spanish tradition."

With the immersion in both Spanish and American culture, Fernandez noticed a gap that needed to be bridged and was inspired to be a part of that bridge at a young age.

"When I was in 7th grade, an English Language Learner was placed in my math class. He did not speak any English, so I sat next to him and translated everything the teacher said," Fernandez explained. "I



loved this experience because not only did it allow me to help someone who really needed guidance, but also allowed me to put my knowledge to use."

Because of that experience, she decided to use her experiences as her passion by teaching 2nd graders math, social studies, and reading in Spanish.

Learning Spanish as a child has proven to be extremely beneficial to the intellectual development of children, and Fernandez sees this as a benefit that needs to be applied in more schools around the country.

"Learning Spanish is very beneficial for children to learn at a very young age because it is easier to retain information as a child," says Fernandez. "Not only will they be able to communicate with millions of other Spanish speakers but being bilingual has also been shown to improve standardized test scores, help students become quicker readers, be more creative, and solve more complex problems."

By bringing her multicultural background and experiences into the field of education, she hopes to not only improve her students' cognitive abilities, but also unite cultures and bring awareness to the world that lies outside of our country.

Fernandez teaches 2nd grade at Lake Forest Elementary School in Sandy Springs, Georgia. Teaching students in Spanish is giving her the opportunity to share her cultural and linguistic knowledge.





## Passed down: An education major shares GC generational ties



**BY ASHLEY YATES**

Spring 2019 graduate and Middle Grades Education major Ashley Yates has a long line of educators in her family, several of whom attended Georgia College. She took some time to share a little bit about her family's history at Georgia College and the impact it has had in her decision to become an educator.

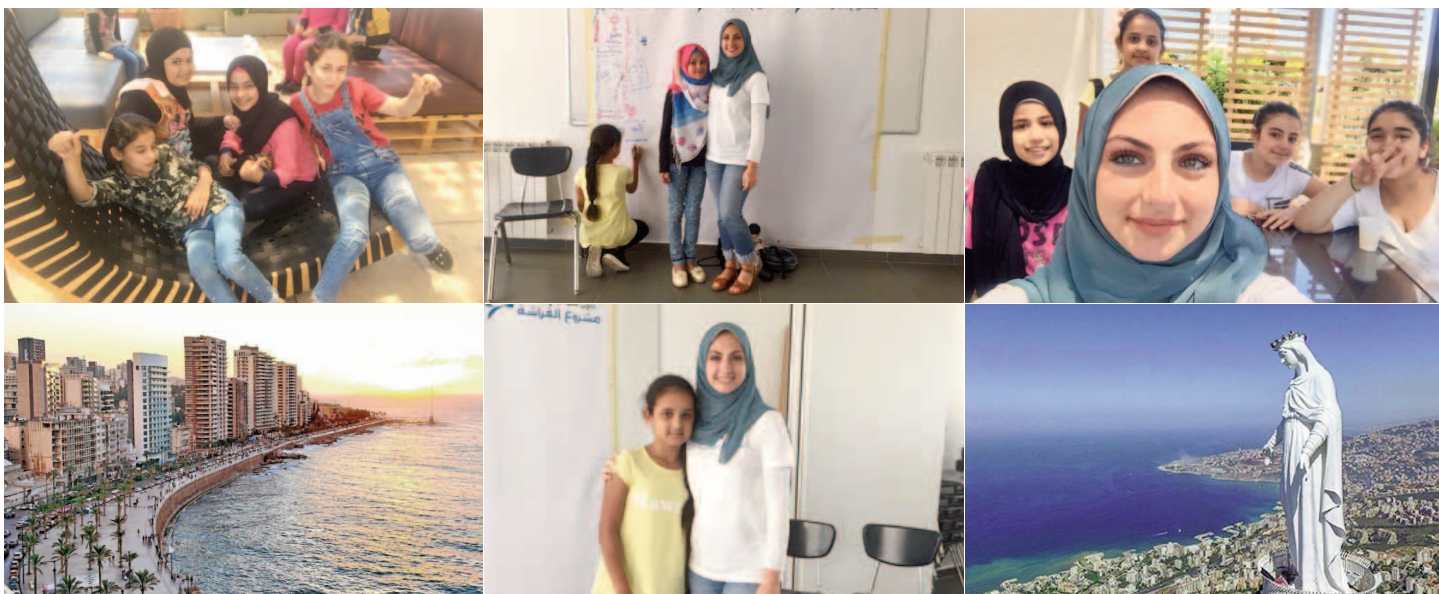
"I am originally from Milledgeville. I grew up here and attended John Milledge Academy from Pre-K to high school graduation. I was a dual enrollment student at GC when I was a senior in high school. I then went off to Georgia Southern. I dabbled around in a few majors. I went in undeclared, changed to Criminal Justice, tried Chemistry, Early Childhood Education, and ended with nursing," she said. "None of those majors ever felt right to me. I've known since I was young that I wanted to be a teacher, but unfortunately many people were trying to talk me out of it. After two years spent at Georgia Southern, I came home to Milledgeville and I was ready to settle down and choose my career. Never in a million years did I think Middle Grades

Education would be where I wanted to be, but low and behold here I am. I loved every second of it, even the stressful assignments and the hormonal students. I have always had a passion for teaching but there is something special about young adolescents that really inspires me."

When asked about the educators in her family who attended Georgia College, Ashley commented, "Vicki Yates, my paternal grandmother, graduated in 1972 with a Bachelors of Science in Home Economics and minor in Child Development. She then got her master's in Education in 1974. In 1976 she received her Science certification allowing her to teach 1-8 grades. Bettye Clark McDaniels, my paternal great-grandmother attended Georgia College for Women from 1940-1943, and Mabel Hitchcock, my paternal great-great-grandmother, graduated from Georgia Normal and Industrial College on June 6, 1916. She was from Sparta, Georgia."

Because of this legacy, Ashley was also inspired to attend Georgia College to pursue Middle Grades Education. In her own career path, Ashley's biggest goal is to be a principal one day.

"I have always considered myself a natural leader and I believe I will thrive as a principal. However, first I aspire to be the best teacher I can be. Not for myself, but for the many students I will impact." She currently teaches at Oak Hill Middle School in the Baldwin County School District and is pursuing her master's in middle grades education at Georgia College.



# A SUMMER IN LEBANON

**BY SERENA ODEH**

Lebanon at 4,036 mi<sup>2</sup>, is my home. Located in the Middle East, it has such a unique culture. As it was colonized by France, Lebanon's spoken languages include Arabic, English, and French. In fact, Lebanese citizens will use all three languages in one sentence. Schools deliver instruction in all three languages as well, molding children to speak all three fluently. Being the most liberal country in the Middle East, it is very welcoming and accepting of all. 52% of its population are Muslim, and 44% are Christian. 23% of the Christians are Maronite Catholic, 5% Melkite Catholic, 8% Greek Orthodox, and 2% identify as other Christian denomination. Both communities, Muslims and Christians, co-exist peacefully. Mosques and churches are built next to each other, as individuals uphold great respect for one another.

The total population of Lebanon is approximately 6 million as of 2017. Of that 6 million, 1.5 million are refugees. Being that Lebanon borders Syria and Palestine, the majority of the refugees are from these countries. Lebanon has open borders to welcome refugees. However, being that the country is so small, (Georgia is 15 times bigger!), the refugee population has overpopulated the country. One in four people in Lebanon are currently refugees.

Over the summer, I went to Beirut, Lebanon, the capital. As I was spending time with family, I felt the urge to help. I wanted to make a difference, and impact the lives of the refugees. After research, I found an organization, The BetterFly Camp. The BetterFly Camp is a summer program for adolescent refugee girls

from Palestine and Syria. The camp lasted for two months during the summer, and hosted at the American Community School (ACS) of Beirut. 30 girls between the ages of 10-15 were selected for the program. The girls would be transported from their camps to ACS via school buses. The goal of the program is to educate and empower young girls about social issues, including their rights as refugees in Lebanon, equality, gender-based violence, sexual assault, consent, discrimination, reproductive health, etc. We hope to mold a generation of girls into active advocates for change and equality in their communities. Being that the girls currently live in refugee camps in Beirut, they are vulnerable to many dangerous incidents. We aim to raise awareness about such environments, and teach them how to stand up for themselves promoting confidence and self-worth.

I will never forget these girls. They are more than just my students, but my sisters. I have developed such close relationships with the girls, as tears were shed during emotional conversations, and laughs were shared during uplifting activities. We danced, we sang, and we bonded. These girls have been through so much, and have seen so much. War, destruction, and loss filled their eyes. With this, their spirits remained high. Every day, the girls just wanted to sing and dance. Positivity and love; this is what they want. I have learned so much from them. There is no better cure than love and happiness, and we must continue to promote this even at the worst times. As a special education student, I wish to incorporate this idea in my classroom, promoting a sense of community and equity. I thank the girls for changing my perspective on life, and hope that they continue to fight.



# INSPIRED BY EDUCATORS



For the 2018-2019 school year, the John H. Lounsbury College of Education's social media accounts did a weekly post titled #Teacher2BTuesday where a different education student was featured each week with a quote about their inspiration to become an educator. Below is a submission about Christina Saraiva, a graduate of the middle grades education cohort, and her inspiration in becoming a future educator.

"My favorite teacher growing up was Mrs. Tedesco. She was my seventh grade homeroom teacher, as well as my science teacher throughout 6th and 7th grade. (That picture is Mrs. Tedesco and I in seventh grade) I went to a private school in New York at the time. She was my favorite teacher because she was always authentic and real with her students. She made learning interesting through experiments and hands on activities. She always had an open door, so if you ever needed someone to talk to she was there for you. I often came before and stayed late after school to help her. When I was struggling in school, she pulled me aside and tutored me one-on-one. When I got my next report card back, she pulled

me into the hall to show me my grades and to personally congratulate me on my success. Mrs. Tedesco was so personable, and created such a collaborative and healthy classroom environment.

We all had jobs each week to help keep the classroom organized which taught us responsibility. Every student had a voice in her classroom. We even had gerbils for class pets. Mrs. Tedesco also planned and directed our school shows, and drama has always had a special place in my heart. The school shows were always so much fun, because she was so enthusiastic. No matter what kind of day she was having, she always had a smile on her face. She made such an impression on me and my want to become a teacher grew more. I was heartbroken when I found out the summer after 7th grade that she had passed away from a sudden heart attack. It was a shock to everyone. She was so young and such a memorable teacher. Since then, I have always wanted to be a teacher because I want to impact young adolescents the way she impacted me.

I never had any family members that were educators. However, when my family found out I wanted to be a teacher everyone supported my decision. I have always loved kids. I come from a huge family, I am one of six kids, and I have babysat all my life. I used to play "school" with my siblings for fun, which is funny to look back on now that I have my own class where I'm student teaching with real students. You could say I was always the teacher's pet, if it wasn't clear already. Overall, I chose to go into education because I want to be the teacher that Mrs. Tedesco was for me for someone else. Students spend 8 hours a day, 5 days a week in school. For some students, school is their only safe place, where they can be themselves and enjoy being a "kid." I want to have a student centered classroom where all students feel they are part of a community. I want to inspire students to always follow their dreams despite obstacles."

## ALUMNI NEWS

### TWIGGS COUNTY TEACHER OF THE YEAR: JENNIFER SMITH, '15



Alumna Jennifer Smith provides an exemplary model for educators of young children. A kindergarten teacher at Jeffersonville Elementary School, Smith was selected as the school's Teacher of the Year last fall, and in December she was named the Twiggs County Teacher of the Year. Smith has taught 13 years, and she is in her fourth year at Jeffersonville. Over the past school year, Smith's classroom has served as a model for videotaping during instruction.

These videos have been utilized by Principal Jamie Paulk as an example for the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES), a statewide common teacher evaluation system. The hope is that other teachers can see and understand the evaluation tool and how administrators provide feedback.

Smith shares great pride in supporting students' academic skills and also their social-emotional skills. She serves on Jeffersonville's Literacy and Leadership teams, and she also leads a new Social Emotional Engagement – Knowledge and Skills (SEE-KS) team. She is also one of six teachers in Middle Georgia selected for the Classroom Literacy Alive Mission (CLAM) from Middle Georgia RESA. This work provides books and materials for the classroom and a tuition free Reading Endorsement grant.

Smith has recently been inducted into Delta Kappa Gamma, a professional learning and leadership international honor society of key women educators. She engages in a range of professional learning and leadership opportunities to inform her practice in the classroom. Smith is an exemplar kindergarten teacher who positively impacts her kindergarten students, their families, her colleagues, and the profession of education. We are so very proud of our alumna Mrs. Jennifer Smith.





# LEARNING FROM THE BEST

Finding affirmation, best practices in Finland

Finland stands as one of the regularly top performing countries in the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), an exam given to 15-year-olds in 72 countries every three years. In the latest ranking in 2015, the country landed a top 10 score in averages of math, reading, and science.

In an effort to understand how the Finnish system reaches such high academic achievement, many of the John H. Lounsbury faculty members read, "The Smartest Kids in the World and How they Got that Way," by

Amanda Ripley, which explores three different educational systems, including the Finnish educational system. So, when the opportunity presented itself to witness Finnish educators in action, College of Education faculty took advantage of the opportunity through a partnership with SMART Education Exchange.

"President Dorman and Dean Peters visited universities in Finland through SMART Education Exchange in 2018 and Dr. Peters suggested that we explore ways in which Finnish universities implement teacher and leader

preparation programs to better inform our work," said Dr. Holley Roberts, interim associate dean of the John H. Lounsbury College of Education.

The College of Education split the selected members to go in two trips: the first would be focused on teacher education and the second would focus on educational leadership, literacy, and diversity. The first trip was in fall 2018 followed by the second during the spring semester 2019.

"Everywhere we went in Finland, there was an obvious

respect for childhood and children," said Roberts. "Whether we were on a train, at a restaurant, or in a public space there was always a place for a child to be a child."

A special reverence for children and childhood throughout the Finnish culture can be seen in many ways. There are ample playgrounds, play spaces in restaurants, training toilets in restrooms, and even a separate commuter train car devoted for children and play. In schools, after every 45 minutes of instruction, students are given 15 minutes





*It gave me a deeper appreciation of why we do things the way we do - **Holley Roberts***

of play where they break to go outside. Kindergartners are given developmentally-appropriate roles like serving themselves in a buffet line during lunch.

"We talked to teachers and teacher educators and what we learned affirmed what we know – children should be given the opportunity to explore learning rather than being taught by rote memorization. Teachers act as facilitators and students and teachers take responsibility for the learning that occurs," said Roberts. "The learning process is treated with great respect. The school buildings are built with learning in mind."

Katherine Hunt, who received her undergraduate and masters in early childhood education from Georgia

College, attended the experience in Finland. One of the overwhelming aspects of that experience was seeing how the Finnish respected the teaching profession.

"People have cautioned me before about going into education or even warned me not to," said Hunt. "So, it was so affirming to go to Finland and witness the overall respect they have for the profession. In their culture, it's a highly-respected career."

Like Hunt, Roberts also said the way in which Finland prepares their teachers affirmed some of the principles and methods that guide how the College of Education prepares students today.

"It gave me a deeper appreciation of why we do

things the way we do," said Roberts. "We have a significant field-based component to our teacher education program. It gives students that time to develop in practice along with what they learn in the classroom. That was reaffirmed in Finland."

Roberts acknowledged that of course societal, political, and economic circumstances in the U.S. and Finland differ. What works for one cannot be simply transferred over to another country seamlessly. But, she's hopeful that the educational landscape of the U.S. is moving in the right direction.

"I do see a shift happening where teachers are speaking out and feeling more like they are being acknowledged for their knowledge and skills,"

said Roberts. "I think the momentum in reducing the amount of standardized testing that is happening is one solid indicator of that."

"I was so fortunate to go on this trip. Even if I had gone on my own, I wouldn't have had the same experience I did with the College of Education," said Hunt. "Being able to go with professors in the college and seeing that they are still doing research, still learning and growing in their profession— that's powerful."

As the College of Education continues the partnership with SMART Education Exchange, there are many collaborative options such as joint research projects, co-teaching courses, and student, teacher, and faculty exchanges.





JOHN H. LOUNSBURY COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

# NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2020

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