

## Georgia College students called to active duty for inauguration

For most students, the first week of the semester involves locating your new classes, meeting with your professors and planning your schedule for the next few months.

Mickensy Carter and Michael Lawson had different duties though. They were in Washington D.C. serving with the Georgia Army National Guard—called to active duty in the days leading up to President Joe Biden's inauguration.

The Bleckley County natives have been friends since the sixth grade. Both always had a strong desire to serve in the military and joined the National Guard as soon as they could.

"I was planning pretty much since my junior year of high school to join the military," said Carter. "Then he (Lawson) just went ahead with it, so I did too."

Lawson signed up when he was 17. The pair have served in National Guard for about five years. During that time, they've been called to active duty multiple times on top of their regularly scheduled trainings—all while also attending college.

"It is difficult a lot of the time trying to balance both school and my National Guard duties," said Lawson.

In early January, the friends were preparing to start their spring semester classes at Georgia College, until Carter—an accounting major—and Lawson—an exercise science major—received orders they would be called to active duty for the inauguration.

"I emailed my professors on my way to D.C. on the bus," said Carter.

"They worked with me, and they were emailing me parts of the syllabus and reading materials to help me stay ahead," said Carter. "We didn't really have a lot of time to get on the internet, but the professors were very considerate considering the situation was just thrown at us last minute."

While in Washington D.C., they primarily focused on guarding check-points set up around the Capitol.

"They had fences up, and we guarded those to make sure people didn't try to get through," said Carter. "They had so many checkpoints. We were mainly just there, I guess, as a show of force so people didn't try anything."

They worked alongside servicemen from across the country, while also witnessing history first-hand.

"That's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to be that close to the Inauguration of the President of the United States," said Carter.

"It wasn't a big deal to get called up, besides the timing of missing the first few days of school, but it was worth it because we got to be right there for the inauguration while everything happened," he said.



Carter and Lawson's unit at the inauguration.

This marks the second time in the last year the pair has been called to active duty. In spring 2020, they responded during the initial surge of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I had 12-hour night shifts at Phoebe Putney Hospital in Albany, Georgia, helping out the nurses in the ER wherever they needed extra hands," said Lawson. "We would do temperature checks at the doors so that would free up some people and help in any other way we could. After I was there for about three months, I was on a decon team going into nursing homes and decontaminating them."

"I was in Cordele running the supply chain for our battalion from our headquarters unit to all the southern part of Georgia," Carter said. "I would decide how the COVID-19 tests were dropped off and received as well as all the equipment."

They also served in Kabul, Afghanistan, for seven months in 2019.

"I was in charge of all communications and tracking for the FOB (Forward Operating Base)," said Carter. "I also taught other countries (Georgia, Nepal, Denmark) how to use the radio equipment to effectively communicate with the American forces."

"I was a team leader in an infantry platoon, and it was my first time actually being a leader in charge of a few guys," said Lawson. "We had various missions as an infantry platoon out there, but there was mainly a focus in keeping the Air Force safe while they conducted their responsibilities working with the Afghan population."

Both have about one more year of active duty, then two years of inactive duty—where they'll be called up as needed. They're proud of their time in the service but ready to get settled in their lives and careers.

As an exercise science major, Lawson plans to go into physical therapy—specifically to work with athletes or retired military. Carter hopes to use his accounting major to help him work for the FBI as a forensic accountant.



Lawson (right) works at an Albany hospital.



Carter (right) and Lawson (left) in Afghanistan.

## Virtual event next week hosted by Rural Studies Institute

The Rural Studies Institute (RSI) at Georgia College will host a virtual event focusing on rural America and its regions.

The discussion will concentrate on the rural Southern region of the Black Belt Tuesday, Feb. 23, from noon to 1 p.m.

This collaborative dialogue will include the Black Belt Community Foundation, the WK. Kellogg Foundation, the Washington University Center for Social Development and the GC Ina Dillard Russell Library.

Contact Veronica Womack at [veronica.womack@gcsu.edu](mailto:veronica.womack@gcsu.edu) or Kimberly Moore at [kimberly.moore@gcsu.edu](mailto:kimberly.moore@gcsu.edu) for information about registration.

RSI at Georgia College officially launched on Jan. 1, 2020, and serves as an important strategic endeavor to assist the university in carrying out its public mission.

The mission of RSI is to assist in developing sustainable rural communities that are equipped to address the unique challenges of the 21st century. Specifically, the institute will lead efforts to develop best practices in building sustainable rural communities with a focus on four areas of rural disparity: Health, Education, Economic Opportunity and the Environment (HEEE).

More information on RSI is available at [gcsu.edu/ruralstudies](http://gcsu.edu/ruralstudies).

## Upcoming virtual concert showcases women composers

An online evening of music, "Anonymous Was a Woman," will be Monday, Feb. 22, at 7:30 p.m.

This faculty recital showcases music from women composers of Italian, French, German and English descent.

Women composers have long been left out of standard repertoire and appear less in programming.

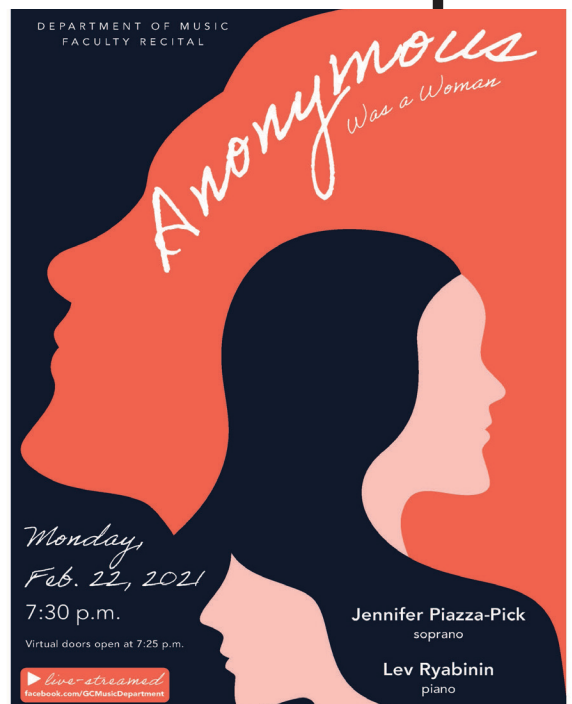
One piece, "Sentiment" by Julianna Hall, is a monodrama for an unaccompanied soprano.

Prior to the recital, Hall will give a talk for voice and composition students about her compositional techniques. Performing faculty members are soprano Jennifer Piazza-Pick and pianist Lev Ryabinin.

Please follow us on [facebook.com/GCMusicDepartment](https://www.facebook.com/GCMusicDepartment) to view this live-streamed concert.

A \$5 donation is encouraged. Online donations can be made at [alumni.gcsu.edu/music](http://alumni.gcsu.edu/music). Mail-in donations for music scholarships can be made out to GCSU Foundations, Inc. and sent to GC Music Department, CBX 66, Milledgeville, GA 31061. All proceeds benefit music scholarships or the GC Department of Music through GCSU Foundation, Inc.

For more information, email [music@gcsu.edu](mailto:music@gcsu.edu) or call 478-445-8289.



## Georgia College alumna filmmaker and director works to be a positive change

Watching movies was something Shelly "Starr" Jarrard, '12, grew up doing. Yet, she always wondered what it would be like to work behind the scenes. She had a passion for filmmaking.

This past spring, after working long hours before and after work, she finished directing her first documentary, "The Flaws of Copyright Infringement Laws," which placed as a semi-finalist in the Festigious Los Angeles Film Festival. It's also been featured on the Independent Film Channel (L.A.) and accepted into the Georgia Documentary Film Festival, Montreal Independent Film Festival, Newmarket, International Film Festival and Venice Shorts Film Festival.

The documentary exposes how copyright laws allow corporations to bully independent filmmakers. It also highlights how the justice system can change this path.

Jarrard fell in love with film and radio broadcasting at Georgia College, where she was a mass communication major and Spanish minor. Jarrard was also an anchor, entertainment and field reporter with GCTV—the news station for students. She joined the station, because she had a strong passion for working behind-the-scenes.

"It taught me the processes of what on-screen talents go through while on camera," she said. "It was so great, because I had already been behind the camera. So, it was cool to see what went on in front of the camera."

Jarrard was also on the morning and afternoon shows at WGUR—Georgia College's radio station.

"I joined WGUR, because I loved broadcasting and creating



Starr Jarrard on a movie set.

fresh new content for the morning show, as well as adding in humor," she said. "It was such a cool feeling to see what I created and the types of responses that would come from the audience."

Her favorite memory of working on the morning show was her first call from a listener. She enjoyed interacting with him.

"We received positive feedback from our listeners," Jarrard said. "I think that's such a great memory, because it was the first time I was able to see what we created come to life."

After graduating, Jarrard interned on the morning comedy show, Star 94 in Atlanta.

After her internship, she later used those skills by helping develop podcasts and radio shows for legal professionals in the area.

"It was such a great and inspiring internship," she said. "My role was to help the morning crew (Cindy and Ray) with the show, including sharing ideas, brainstorming, editing and other tasks. It ended up being pretty interactive, and I was able to implement many of my comedy ideas into the show, which was really neat."

Jarrard credits her success with Star 94 to on-air experience at WGUR. It was there she learned the steps a morning broadcaster uses daily and what each hour of a show consists of. College shows were similar to reality, so Jarrard was well prepared for an internship.

Six months into the job, Jarrard needed a full-time position. However, there weren't any available in the area, so she took a

hiatus from broadcasting and film and began working a sales job during the day. She also pursued her love of film by screenwriting at night and on weekends. Her mass communication skills were instrumental, at this time.

Jarrard's professors provided a solid foundation to draw from when writing screenplays, directing films and creating podcasts. Angela Criscoe pushed Jarrard to follow her dreams in radio broadcasting and directing films. Stephen Price taught her how to sharpen her writing skills with editorials for his class. And Pate McMichael helped Jarrard polish those writing skills, which she would later use in travel blogging and screen plays.

"My professors gave me that extra boost and inspiration where, if I was on the verge of pushing my project a little further or expanding on it, they always encouraged me to do so," she said. "They challenged me in a way that pushed me to do better."

A few years ago, Jarrard embarked on her biggest adventure yet, moving to the West Coast. She's now director of legal sales for Huseby in Los Angeles, where she sells deposition services, promotes legal services and does branding for law firms across Southern California. This requires considerable networking.

"My professors taught me the power of connecting and having leadership skills," Jarrard said. "I use these skills daily in my job, as well as with marketing and branding. This helps me in my profession and in all aspects of life."

Her professors also instilled a strong sense of ambition in her, while pushing her to be her best. Now, she wants to inspire others through film or conversations to help them achieve their dreams.

"I just want to continue making films that create good change," Jarrard said. "I think that's what I am really looking forward to. And, since I work in the legal field, I want to create films that stress justice, as well."