

GEORGIA COLLEGE

# CONNECTION

THE MAGAZINE FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS | FALL 2020



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FALL 2020 | CONNECTION



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Welcome to the  
Class of 2024

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## Georgia College welcomes new dean of the J. Whitney Bunting College of Business

Georgia College welcomed Dr. Michael T. Stratton as the new dean of the J. Whitney Bunting College of Business in July.

"I am a fervent believer in the public liberal arts and the critical role that collaboration plays in the teaching and learning journey," said Stratton.

Through multi- and interdisciplinary approaches, Stratton plans to build on the exceptional student experience in the College of Business (COB) by enhancing undergraduate research, formalizing mentorship programs, and engaging students in economic development.

Stratton also looks to build upon a culture of inclusivity within the College of Business. For that, he's working with partners across the COB community including students, faculty, staff, and the Advisory Board.

"Integrative to all of this will be forming relationships with alumni, parents, employers, foundations, and experts who wish to support access and affordability, which are central to a public liberal arts education," he remarked.

Since beginning his new role, Stratton has worked to connect with faculty and students. He's spent his first few months "listening and observing to understand the history, decision context, and opportunities ahead."

"I have been so appreciative of the faculty and staff across campus who have offered advice, been open to new ideas, and who have shared with me the many reasons why students come first in all that we do at Georgia College," he said.

Stratton previously was professor of management at the University of North Carolina Asheville. He served as the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) unit head and chair of the department of management and accountancy since 2014. He served on the faculty since 2010.

He received his master's in public administration and Ph.D. in public administration and policy from the Nelson A. Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy at the University at Albany, State University of New York. He has an undergraduate degree in integrated liberal studies from Western New England University.

## MUSIC EDUCATION MAJOR HELPS PROVIDE FREE TESTING FOR CORONAVIRUS

As students were staying home and juggling last-minute coursework online last spring, senior music education major William Refuss of Fayetteville, Georgia, went a little further. He signed up to help test others for COVID-19.

Refuss joined Community Organized Relief Effort (CORE), a nonprofit providing free coronavirus testing in the greater Atlanta area. Donned in full PPE — personal protective equipment — he helped test thousands of people in Alpharetta — which had the highest volume of county-led testing in the country.

“Working with the organization and helping people get free coronavirus tests definitely gives me a sense of purpose in this unpredictable time, and I’ve gotten to interact with so many people from different backgrounds,” said Refuss.

His experience in public health has opened new possibilities for the future. He enjoyed helping others and now has greater interest in community work.

But the tug of music remains powerful too. Since high school, Refuss has learned from “exceptional” music teachers and that legacy has carried into college. He plays trombone and some



euphonium, a brass instrument with a tenor sound.

Refuss came to Georgia College, following in the footsteps of multiple relatives — most notably his mother and grandmother. The small campus and city appealed to him, because he felt he could find “a sense of greater authenticity” here.

The most important thing he’s learned is “everyone has a unique voice and perspective that must be heard.”

## Georgia College bids farewell to Ginkgo tree

For many Georgia College campus community members, the great Ginkgo tree outside of Russell Auditorium was a sight to behold. Its striking transformation in the fall from green, supple leaves to bellowing bright yellow leaves marked the beginning of the season for decades.

Unfortunately, the Ginkgo tree had been struggling for more than five years due to a root disease that overtook its underground roots long before the tree began to show symptoms above ground. Smaller and fewer leaves began to spark from the tree. More limbs died, and it was evident that the whole crown and central trunk was infected.

Several attempts were made from the Grounds Department in Facilities Management to save the tree, including sampling and testing for insects, alleviating stress on the tree by no longer planting flowers near it, and sending disease samples from twigs, leaves, and roots to a lab at the University of Georgia.



Lab results confirmed it was Phytophthora, a root rot disease, caused by the Ginkgo tree’s intolerance to an over-abundance of water that had occurred over a six-year period of excessive rains in Milledgeville.

In June 2020, the Grounds Department began to remove the tree, starting with the brittle center. There are plans to re-plant another Ginkgo tree near the vicinity of Russell Auditorium by late fall 2020.

## Prehistoric shark named after retired Georgia College professor

Dr. Dennis Parmley's close encounter with a shark didn't happen at a crowded beach or the ocean — but in a kaolin mine in Wilkinson County.

The shark — or rather some fossils of its teeth — recently earned Parmley the rare honor of having a prehistoric and previously unknown species named after him.

"This is an honor. It's prestige for the college too, and that's a good thing," said Parmley. "It shows students who like this kind of work that it's still being done. It's not archaic. Some people think paleontology's a dying science. It's not, at all."

For 17 of his 30 years at Georgia College, the vertebrate paleontologist dug fossils from sediment at Hardie Mine in Gordon. Faculty and hundreds of students joined him there over the years.

The teeth were dug up years ago at the Middle Georgia mine but remained in collections among other shark fossils.

After isolating hundreds of teeth and comparing them to contemporary sharks — the species was named "*Mennerotodus parmleyi*" after Parmley to honor his contributions to vertebrate paleontology in Central Georgia.



"It's an important discovery," Parmley said, "because it's part of our national treasure in this state. It gives us a little window into the past — not only about the kinds of animals and diversity of animals back then, but also the ecology and what habitats there were."

Parmley retired in 2018, but not from science. He still has a paleontology lab in the basement of Herty Hall and keeps busy categorizing relics of 'boney fish.' He also identifies snakes for the public when they're found in yards and gardens.

## Music therapy program rejoins music department

Some things are simply meant to go together — like salt and pepper, pencil and paper, lock and key. In July, after 23 years in the health sciences, Georgia College's music therapy program returned to the music department.

"All the various dominoes that were needed for this unification to happen were starting to fall, in regard to supporting reconnection between the two areas," said Dr. Don Parker, chair of music. "By having both programs together, we avoid a lot of redundancy."

The reunion allows for greater access to shared materials and gives music therapy students a better sense of community with other music majors. The move also allows Georgia College to promote its music department as the only program in the state with a Master of Music Therapy (MMT).

"It's more strategically cohesive for the future," Parker said. "We're stronger together than we are separate, in terms of the way we function. We're prepared for future opportunities and growth."



For about 65 music therapy majors and five graduate students, there are no changes in their degree. Being in the music department will make things less confusing, according to Parker. Students will access music resources with greater ease. They'll be able to apply for music scholarships, and they won't need academic approvals from two separate departments for courses.

The message to prospective students will be more consistent, as well, and the music therapy clinic that services the local community will be continued.

# Study abroads go virtual during the pandemic



Dozens of Georgia College students take advantage of study abroad opportunities each summer. They usually learn, explore, conduct research, provide health care, and engage in communities around the world.

The COVID-19 pandemic changed that for the summer of 2020. All in-country study abroads were cancelled or postponed until 2021. However, the outside-the-box thinking of several Georgia College faculty members allowed study abroads to continue in creative forms.

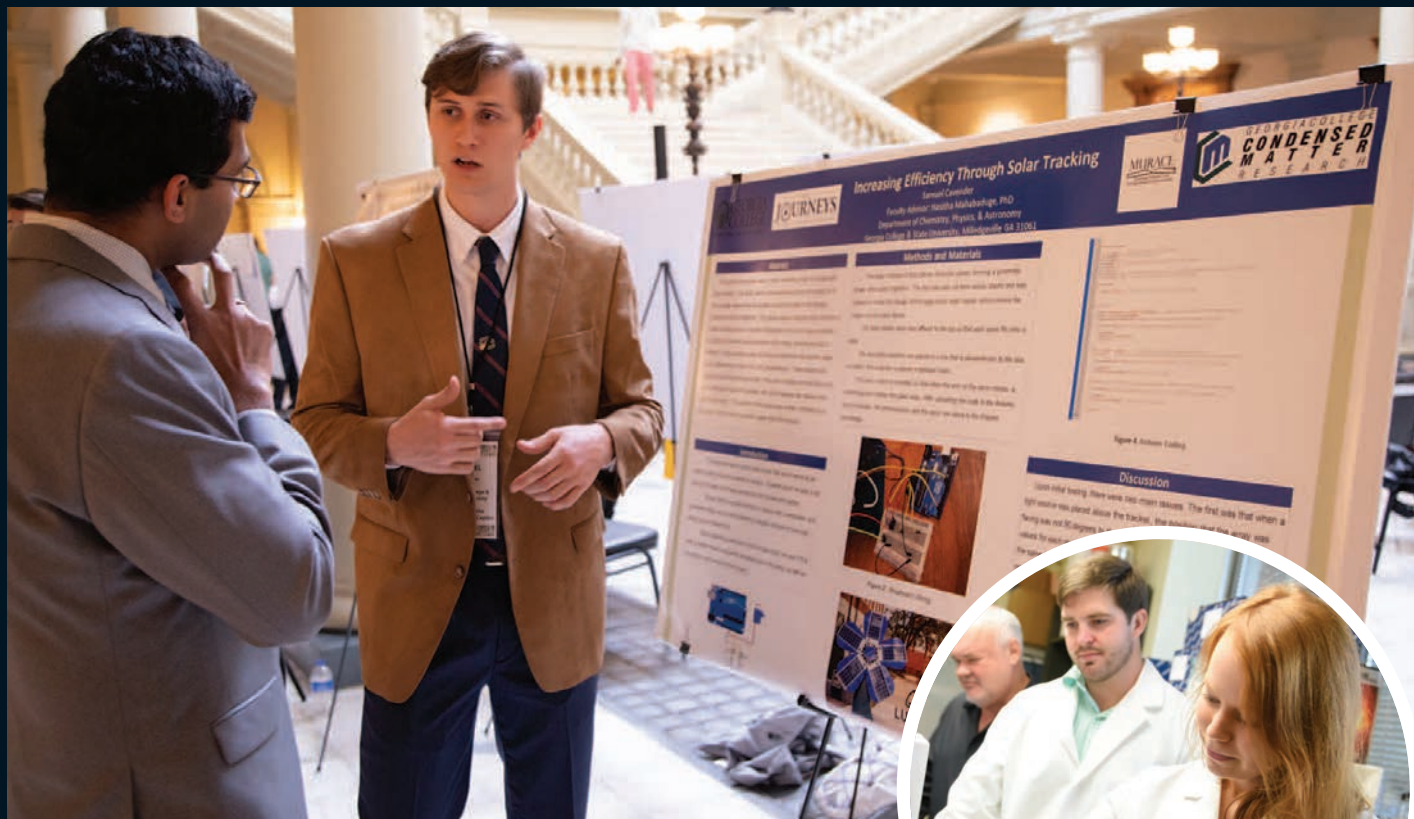
- Prior to the pandemic, plans were laid out for 23 Georgia College students to study abroad in Paris, France. They would've visited delectable eateries and museums, toured migrant neighborhoods, and seen two of the most beautiful castles in the region. But, Dr. Sunita Manian, chair of the Department of Philosophy, Religion, and Liberal Studies, and Dr. James Winchester, professor of philosophy, had to quickly shift gears this summer and find a way to provide a study abroad experience for students without actually going abroad.

"One of the best things we did was assign French films for our students to watch," said Winchester. "These films and the French texts we read (Camus, Sartre, De Beauvoir, Césaire) gave the students a good look at how the French think and, in particular, how the French think about what makes a good life."

Manian and Winchester also collaborated with organizations and organized exciting interactions between the students and local individuals, like migrants and refugees.

- Dr. Brantley Nicholson's 2020 summer study abroad students explored Chile virtually this year. Although they didn't visit the country in person, participants immersed themselves in a thorough study of the Chilean culture and garnered significant insight from the experience. The impact of the program was so strong that two students of this year's online Chile study abroad program have already decided to register for the 2021 Chile study abroad offering. They learned much about Chilean culture and Latin American history, which put them into the context of the country's recent turmoil. Considering a large part of the in-country program would have been based around face-to-face research and interactions, the class instead delved deep into the literature, media, and resources to regain those details through an online format.
- In May — with the coronavirus still raging throughout the world and people confined to home — one Georgia College class found a temporary reprieve through writing. Unable to physically travel to Ireland, Dr. Kerry Neville's creative writing class learned they could explore in unexpected ways — traveling from memory or imagination, viewing their surroundings through fresh lenses. One of Neville's writing prompts became: "Journey Around Your Bedroom." Other prompts asked students to sit outside and simply listen for 15 minutes or look out a window and see something they never noticed before. Students revisited past trips, created fantasy worlds, and turned ordinary sites, like backyards and kitchens, into portholes of discovery.
- Twelve GC students were scheduled to go with Dr. Joy Godin to the Netherlands, Germany, and France. They were given the option to complete the course this year in a digital format or try to go on the study abroad next year, if possible. Three GC students chose the online class this summer. The students got much of the same experience originally planned, just in a virtual setting. They partnered with students from the University of Muenster in Germany and the University of West Georgia to solve a business case problem for a German business. Students from all three universities held video conference meetings with the German company Cronos, an IT consulting company that is a SAP consulting partner. Cronos described four issues related to electronic cars that many of their customers' face. The students were then put in international teams and asked to brainstorm and compare how the issues impact both the U.S. and German citizens.

# Georgia College named finalist for national undergraduate research award



Georgia College makes undergraduate research opportunities for students a priority. Over the years, undergraduate research has grown from a small, faculty-driven initiative into a campuswide “transformative experience” in which the university purposefully encourages all students to take advantage of during their time here.

Now, Georgia College has garnered national attention for its work in promoting and engaging students in undergraduate research. The university was recently named a finalist for the Council on Undergraduate Research Campus-Wide Award for Undergraduate Research Accomplishments (AURA).

“The award is essentially for the top undergraduate research programs in the nation,” said Dr. Jordan Cofer, associate provost for transformative learning experiences.

“The Council on Undergraduate Research (CUR) is well-known when it comes to undergraduate research. That’s the major organization everyone looks to, so this sort of national recognition is important,” he said.

According to the CUR website, this award recognizes higher education institutions that have successfully implemented the characteristics of excellence, have devised exemplary programs to provide high-quality research experiences to undergraduates, and have evaluated the success of these programs.

“Last year, at least 2,325 of our students participated in an undergraduate research experience. That’s about 40 percent of our student body,” said Cofer.

Georgia College provides those high-quality experiences for students across every major and department, ensuring all students have the opportunity to take part in undergraduate research.

The finalist application was due to CUR by mid-September. The winners of the award will be announced in late 2020.

# Walker garners Black Caucus American Library Association award

Dr. Shaundra Walker has a mission to make information discoverable through the power of the library. She's the Interim Director and Associate Director of Instruction and Research Services at the Ina Dillard Russell Library.

She's spent nearly 20 years in library systems in both academic and public spheres, and recently won the Black Caucus American Library Association (BCALA) 2020 Demco Award for her work in promoting African-Americans and other people of color in the library profession.

As part of BCALA for 20 years, she learned best practices in bringing communities into the library to both share and discover information.

In 2019, the Russell Library was granted a \$12,000 National Endowment for the Humanities Common Heritage Program. Walker said the grant has started to fill a shortage in local African-American history in the Georgia College library collection.

"Based on conversations with my colleague, Nancy Davis Bray, I became aware that there was an absence of information about



the local African-American community," Walker said. "I just want to have a truer, more accurate history of Milledgeville in our collection. I hope that it's through this project that we can develop a template that we can use with other underrepresented communities."

Walker has been at Georgia College for almost nine years. She's made a place for herself in the profession by applying critical race theory to the field of librarianship. Her work examines libraries as they relate to aspects such as race, class, and power.

## ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE STUDENT NAMED NOAA HOLLINGS SCHOLAR

A Georgia College environmental science major is one of only two students in the state to win a distinguished national science scholarship named after the late Senator Ernest F. Hollings, who supported ocean policy and conservation.

Junior Nadya Gutierrez of Johns Creek was selected as a National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Hollings Scholar. This honor includes a two-year academic award of \$9,500, a 10-week paid summer internship at a NOAA facility, and funding to present her NOAA research at two national scientific conferences.

"It's very competitive — only 123 scholarships were awarded across the country this year," said Anna Whiteside, assistant director of Georgia College's Honors College and coordinator of its National Scholarships Office.

"Nadya has an excellent academic record and has shown a

commitment to NOAA-related fields," Whiteside said. "This award will give Nadya the unique opportunity to get hands-on experience as an intern at NOAA, as well as the opportunity to join an esteemed network of scholars."



The scholarship was established in 2005. To be considered, college sophomores must major in a NOAA mission field such as oceanic, environmental, biological and atmospheric sciences, math, engineering, remote sensing technology, physical sciences, social sciences, or teacher education.

"It's such an honor to be selected for this scholarship," Gutierrez said. "I am very humbled and grateful for such an amazing opportunity. It will help me in so many ways by giving me experience in conducting and presenting research."

The internship could open the door for Gutierrez to work with other governmental agencies in the future.

# INTO THE UNKNOWN

## The university adapts, adjusts to the COVID-19 pandemic

Jonesha Johnson dressed in her flowing black graduation regalia, gingerly placed her deep green valedictorian sash around her shoulders, and donned her cap as she joined her parents in the living room of their Albany, Georgia, home.

They sat and waited, looking at a laptop resting on a table — thousands of miles away, her brother in the military was tuning into the same livestream. They were all waiting for Jonesha's virtual graduation ceremony to begin.

"I was definitely looking forward to walking across that stage," Johnson, who was a senior English and Liberal Studies major in May 2020, said. "I was the first person in my immediate family to graduate from a four-year college."

Johnson grappled with the reality of not having an in-person graduation ceremony in May, as did the rest of the more than 1,500 students in the graduating class. The traditional pomp and circumstance of the spring commencement ceremonies moved to an online streaming format. The virtual ceremony capped a spring semester that had been upended by the effects of COVID-19.

"Me and a lot of my classmates weren't worried about it in January or even February," Johnson said. "I remember going to a store in Milledgeville a week before spring break and all the Clorox products were gone. That was when I thought things may change for the worst."

Weeks before the start of the spring semester, rumblings of the novel coronavirus became louder and more imminent. On March 14, the World Health Organization officially declared COVID-19 a pandemic.



AY SAFE



WEAR A MASK



WASH HANDS WITH  
WATER AND  
SOAP/SANITIZER,  
AT LEAST 20 SECONDS



GEORGIA COLLEGE

Georgia's Public Liberal Arts University

LEGE & STATE UNIVERSITY

Established 1889

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“It became more evident that this was going to become a challenge by the beginning of the New Year. We were hearing more about the virus and saw pockets of it pop up in places like New York City,” said Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr. Costas Spirou. “It was clear the situation was heightening, and higher education would have to find ways to adapt.”

Spring break was scheduled for the week of March 16. Spirou said it came at a perfect time for GC administration to work with the University System of Georgia (USG) to assess the situation as it was unfolding in the state. On March 12, the USG issued a directive to temporarily suspend instruction for all institutions. But then, on March 16, the USG issued a directive for all 26 of its institutions to move to remote instruction.

“We were very fortunate to have spring break, which allowed us time to plan,” said Spirou. “The shift came quickly, but we worked very hard to have our courses delivered remotely by March 30. We were committed to

moving forward and our faculty worked intensely during an extremely challenging time.”

The Center for Teaching and Learning was integral in the transition from face-to-face to remote learning. Director Dr. Jim Berger and his staff had to quickly pivot to find ways to guide faculty on how to utilize systems like the university’s learning management system GeorgiaVIEW and virtual conferencing platforms like WebEx and Zoom.

“We had a lot of communication going out at that time,” Berger said. “We wanted to ensure that faculty maintained communication and established a sense of community with their classes. But also, guide them in how to deal with the anxiety of students and how to deal with their own anxiety during a pandemic.”

The work that went into making sure students and faculty transitioned to remote learning with as few hitches as possible leaned on the support of Information Technology and the

library. SERVE was widely available to handle technology tickets, and the library acted quickly to retrieve class materials and have them accessible for students online.

“Faculty and staff answered the call in what I believe to be in the spirit of Georgia College,” said Spirou. “They served and supported students to a great extent, and that’s what gives us that special connectiveness that the university is known for.”

While some parts of campus dealt with the aftershocks of moving so swiftly to remote learning, other parts of campus were banding together in light of the pandemic. Georgia College provided medical supplies to aid in the fight against COVID-19 across the state at the end of March. Departments and offices around Georgia College aided in providing the supplies, including the Departments of Biology, Chemistry, the Schools of Nursing and Health and Human Performance, the Student Health Center, and Facilities Operations.

“We had a request come from our system office to assess the supplies we had and start conducting inventory,” said Director of Public Safety and Chief of Police Brett Stanelle. “We started in our Emergency Management team, and we branched out into other units around campus to see what aid we could provide.”

Among the supplies provided was hand sanitizer, face shields, shoe covers, safety gloves, and two medical ventilators.

Costume Supervisor Cathleen O’Neal started using her sewing skills to create masks for hospitals in Atlanta and for Navicent Health in Baldwin County.

By late spring, O’Neal had constructed 140 masks — donating 110 surgical and N-95 face covers for Atlanta area hospitals and also 30 N-95 face masks to meet critical need



at the Eatonton Health and Rehabilitation nursing home.

“Just sitting around the house, watching the news — it’s very daunting, especially if you’re helping by staying home and want to do something more,” she said. “This really spoke to me. It’s a great way for the community and those of us in the theatre and costume world to help out in our way. It warms my heart that I can do something.”

In late March, GC United, a website aimed at uniting the campus community far and wide, made its debut. It featured news and updates from campus like recaps of virtual class reunions and recordings of student jazz performances.

While efforts to strengthen an online community thrived, the GC administration and the USG began

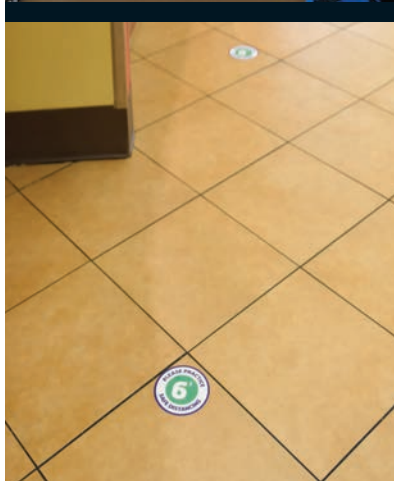
to look toward the future. Georgia College, under the directives of the USG, decided to begin classes earlier in August. The adjusted academic calendar allows students to stay home after Thanksgiving break. During the summer, Facilities Operations and Information Technology worked to outfit campus with alternatives that would enable students, faculty, and staff to return to campus safely. These efforts included plexiglass barriers, larger classroom settings, social distancing floor stickers, installing web cameras in classrooms, ordering face shields, and changing air filters. The USG-issued mask mandate on campuses also helped in the mitigation efforts.

“It’s taken a tremendous amount of time and effort, and we’ve taken a collaborative approach to get to this point,” said Spirou. “There are going

to be things that come up that you can’t anticipate, but we are following the science — we have that on our side.”

Essential to ensuring students, faculty, and staff returned to campus safely was creating a streamlined process to notify several departments of positive cases as they arise on campus.

“Our top priority is the safety and



GEORGIA COLLEGE RESPONDS



well-being of our students,” said Dean of Students Dr. Tom Miles. “That had to be at the top of our concerns when we were developing this process.”

The communication process had to be rapid for it to be truly effective, Miles remarked. In the newly-implemented process, once Student Health Services is notified of a positive case, communication is set to go out to offices from Student Life to Facilities Operations to Academic Advising — all triggering their immediate, unique actions on the case.

“There is not a soul on this campus that hasn’t been impacted by this pandemic,” said Miles. “We can project and anticipate what will unfold — but we have to remain flexible, and that’s what we’ve done.”

Part of the Office of Student Life’s response has also been the creation of the COVID CARE Response Team. The team

consists of 45 staff members from across campus that help students after they have tested positive for COVID-19.

“These team members reach out by both text message and phone calls to check in with the student,” said Vice President for Student Life Dr. Shawn Brooks. “The staff also provide their contact information to the student, so that if the student encounters any problems related to their illness or isolation, the student has someone to turn to for assistance.”

Journeying through uncharted territory is one of the hallmarks of a liberal arts education, and Spirou said this time in our university history is a challenge — but one it’s primed to rise to.

“The challenges that we are facing really test our sense of flexibility in dealing with ambiguity,” said Spirou. “Georgia College is a liberal arts institution. We teach students about that same

flexibility, willingness to shift, and the importance of it all. It’s difficult. It’s intense. But it is integral to success.”

Johnson, now a recent alumna, is back home with her family in Albany. She’s looking optimistically toward a future now, one that she was slightly frightened of when the pandemic began. She’s recently started a storytelling YouTube channel, ToMyPeople, that’s dedicated to telling the stories of rural Georgians.

“You know, nothing that happened changed the fact that I graduated. I had the exact same degree as if it was handed to me in person,” she said. “I’m optimistic about the future, and I’m calm when I think about it. If anything, the pandemic has shown me what I can control and has assured me that what’s for you is for you, regardless of circumstances. There’s a certain peace in that.”

# Q&A

## NURSING ALUMNI AFFINITY GROUP LEADERS

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**Casey Wood Black, '99,**  
certified family nurse  
practitioner (FNP-C) at Ortho  
Sport and Spine Physicians  
and president, Georgia  
College Nursing Alumni  
Affinity Group

**How has your work changed during COVID-19?**

My patients and I are required to wear a mask. Each patient is screened the day before the visit with a questionnaire and then again screened at the door with temperature checks. Thankfully, we've been able to perform televisits for those patients who are at high risk for getting out.

**What are your hopes for the remainder of 2020?**

I hope the health care profession is able to lessen the curve with people being compliant by wearing masks and social distancing. I feel with these measures, we can help stop the spread and get some sort of control to what's going on. This can help the professionals working in the hospitals to not get overloaded, and we would have beds available for those in need. At some point, I hope we can get back to our normal lives without having to say the 'new normal.'

**What advice do you have for nursing students?**

Take this year or two and embrace this new learning experience. I encourage you to stay safe and practice every measure that has been taught to you concerning hand hygiene, proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE), and self-care. It's vital that you take care of yourself with proper rest and in learning to find an outlet to destress. I completely understand how nursing school is filled with things that could monopolize your entire day. Not taking time for yourself can lower your immune system and lead to fatigue. Please remember to take time for yourself. I am proud of each one of you.



**Sondi Traylor Fiegel, '01,**  
director, Patient Care for the  
Methodist Medical Group and  
vice president, Georgia  
College Nursing Alumni  
Affinity Group

**How has your work changed during COVID-19?**

The team and I have had to adapt to change at an accelerated pace. We've implemented six COVID-19 testing sites for the community, increased our telehealth presence, and set up a virtual clinic

while being more mindful of the precious PPE commodity. PPE has been very difficult to obtain, as well as the Sani Professional™ Wipes. I've also been on the system-wide task force during this pandemic and have been instrumental in creating a return-to-work process for hospital employees. In addition, I've helped set up a COVID hotline for the organization.

**What are your hopes for the remainder of 2020?**

My hope is to find some sort of new normal during this time — especially with the flu season upon us and the shortage of nurses.

**What advice do you have for nursing students?**

Be flexible. Nursing changes on a dime, and we have to always be ready to change. We also need to be resourceful, so we can lean on each other. Nursing is the most rewarding job ever but can be stressful — we need to help each other. One other piece of advice is to be proud of being a nurse.



**Sarah Parker Tarr, '05,**

Full-time lecturer of nursing, including lab and clinical, at Belmont University and secretary, Georgia College Nursing Alumni Affinity Group

**How has your work changed during COVID-19?**

Our approaches to teaching look different given the precautions we must take to protect our students, faculty, and patients we encounter. Yet, the goal of what we do remains unchanged. We will continue to live out our vision to “promote health, improve care, and impact cost through excellence in teaching, practice, service, and scholarship.” Preparing our students to enter the nursing field during this pandemic is more important than ever before. As an educator, I take that challenge and responsibility seriously.

**What are your hopes for the remainder of 2020?**

As health care professionals, I hope we continue to unite to provide the best possible holistic care for our COVID-19 patients and their families. We also have a responsibility to educate the public regarding COVID-19, which is challenging given the dynamic nature of the pandemic. I also hope the impact health care professionals have had on the lives of COVID-19 patients and their families will continue to be recognized and appreciated.

**What advice do you have for nursing students?** You are preparing to enter the nursing workforce at such a unique time. Your presence will be a breath of fresh air

to many. As you join other nurses and health care professionals who have been on the front lines of battling the pandemic, remember that nurses are at the heart of healthcare. Seek to educate yourselves, strive to provide the safest and highest quality nursing care, and care for yourselves.



**Theresa “Abigail” McElhaney, '18,**

registered nurse (RN) at Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt and event coordinator, Georgia College Nursing Alumni Affinity Group

**How has your work changed during COVID-19?**

In addition to my position as a floor nurse, I'm the co-chair of some councils and a member of many committees. All of our meetings have been moved to Zoom, even in continuing education. I've noticed meetings seem to be more productive but have less engagement. Unfortunately, I've seen events canceled, because there's a lot of gray area around how to address celebrations and other fun activities. This is definitely a time of learning and adjusting. Our visitor policy has also changed. We only allow one parent at their child's bedside at a time, which has been very challenging. The PPE shortage was a bit of a scare, but I'm very thankful to work for a hospital that was prepared. I think we can all agree there are very few ways this pandemic hasn't touched our lives in one way or another.

**What are your hopes for the remainder of 2020?**

I hope that as we adjust more to this new way of life that we continue to address each other with empathy and respect. I also hope for great research to make big strides in finding an effective vaccine and treatment plan. Lastly, I hope that we continue learning how to find fun and enjoyment during uncertainty.

**What advice do you have for nursing students?**

First, if you love what you're learning, you're in the right place. Rest easy knowing that. Second, take care of yourself. This is very important. Eat well, sleep, hydrate, and exercise. Finally, take advantage of the program you're in. You should feel very special knowing you're in the best nursing program in the state. I've met students and colleagues from nursing programs all over the country and can assure you that Georgia College prepares you in ways that most universities don't. I felt prepared for the NCLEX (National Council Licensure Examination) and in starting my first day of work. However, don't let this give you a false sense of security. You need to put in the work, but I promise if you do, it'll be so incredibly worth it.



## AN HONORABLE OCCASION

50TH ANNIVERSARY FOR HONORS  
PROGRAM COINCIDES WITH NEW  
HONORS COLLEGE DESIGNATION

Since 1970, Georgia College has been nurturing and developing bright minds through its honors program. Now, in time for its 50th Anniversary celebration, the program is transforming into an Honors College — complete with its own dean and plans to make the honors experience even more dynamic for students.

“Moving to an Honors College adds prestige. It’ll position Georgia College to compete in an ever-tighter marketplace for honors students in the region, the state, the nation, and even in the world, because we have something really special here at Georgia College,” said Dr. Brian Newsome, inaugural dean of the Honors College.

While there are no specific criteria to meet when forming an honors college, the National College Honors Council recommends best practices for such units — the key practice being the appointment of a dean. This raises the honors program as an equal among colleges at the university. Newsome is a member of the Council of Deans meetings and reports directly to Dr. Costas Spirou, provost and vice president for Academic Affairs.





Another distinguishing feature of an honors college is “robust financial support,” Newsome remarked. A recent \$1,000,000 donation by Dr. Ken Saladin will provide resources to enrich the honors education and provide broader support for transformative experiences. This will take honors beyond research — which has long received such funding — to include internships, study abroad, and community-based learning.

and he has solicited input from honors alumni.

The goal of these conversations is to ensure the needs of students, faculty, and alumni are met.

“From my perspective, honors isn’t about doing more. It’s not about piling on work for the sake of piling on work. Rather, it’s about

It’s about raising the profile of honors at Georgia College. An honors college means having the resources for transformative experiences.

Students interested in honors typically seek a higher level of engagement with critical texts and tough questions. They “want to be engaged enthusiastically in the pursuit of ideas,” he commented. The gift makes these intellectual adventures possible.

“It’s about raising the profile of honors at Georgia College,” Newsome said. “An honors college means having the resources for transformative experiences. When I interviewed here, I found a deep appreciation for that type of honors community, and that appealed to me.”

The Augusta, Georgia, native comes armed with lots of honors experience and plenty of ideas. He has a background in modern European history and international relations and was dean for curriculum and honors at Elizabethtown College in South Central Pennsylvania.

doing things differently — tackling tough questions, engaging students with challenging material, and doing it as part of a special community of peers and faculty members,” Newsome said.

His plans are multi-faceted. New honors students will be grouped in cohorts for icebreaking and teambuilding activities during orientation and beyond. They’ll be encouraged to live at Bell Hall into their sophomore year for additional bonding. The Humber-White House has been renovated into “a vibrant hub” for honors activities. Space includes a kitchen for food receptions, lounge and study areas, and a conference room for “dynamic conversations.” The program’s longstanding, popular book discussions and presenters series will be held there. Students will be encouraged to do more community service, as well, and round out their Honors experience with dynamic new course offerings.

Newsome hopes the Honors College will help boost recruitment and retention rates. He plans to develop an honors pathway from two-year colleges to transfer to Georgia College, and he’s working on establishing an admissions pathway for first-generation and ESL (English as Second Language) students.

His ideas seem endless. And it all begins with the celebration during Alumni Week in November.

“The 50th Anniversary serves as a wonderful jumping off point to the future,” Newsome said, “and gives us a way to honor the work of my predecessors and the wonderful programs they’ve led over the years and use them as a springboard to the next 50 years of honors.”



**Dr. Brian Newsome,**  
inaugural dean of the  
Honors College

Newsome praised the work of his predecessors: Dr. John Sallstrom, Dr. Doris Moody, and Dr. Steve Elliott-Gower. Gower, especially, spent many weeks helping Newsome transition into the job.

Recently, Newsome talked with Admissions, Advancement, the Honors Faculty Council, Registrar’s Office, Advising, University Housing, Outdoor Center, the Leadership Program, and GIVE Center, as well as other stakeholders, to share ideas and obtain feedback as he sets strategic priorities for the Honors College. He held Zoom listening sessions with honors students,

## ATHLETICS

Countless youngsters grow up with the dream of putting on the uniform of a Major League Baseball team, and Georgia College Baseball alumnus Walker McKinven, '12, was no different. What is different, however, is the path that led McKinven to achieving that dream.

Walker McKinven is the Manager of Major League Strategy for the Milwaukee Brewers. Every game, he dons his No. 60 jersey, joining Manager Craig Counsell, Bench Coach Pat Murphy, and Pitching Coach Chris Hook in the dugout to create a blueprint for what McKinven refers to as “run prevention.”

It's McKinven's job to work “as a bridge from analytics to baseball,” taking the numbers put together by the analytics team and turning it into baseball decisions — lining up the Brewer pitchers' strengths with opposing hitters' weaknesses. McKinven works closest with the staff of catchers for Milwaukee, planning out the approach to each hitter.

“We have an analytics team that would blow me out of the water,” said McKinven. “These are seriously smart people. We've got graduates from MIT and Harvard, incredible math minds. I take all that data and funnel it into information relatable to our players.”

The path to working with those major league players was a long and winding one for McKinven.

He spent the first three years of his college career at Division I Binghamton University in New York. After a redshirt year and then two seasons of action and Tommy John surgery, the hard-throwing righty thought he still “had a chance” at playing at the next level, and knew a top-level Division II school could help him along that path.

In his two seasons as a Bobcat, he saw action in 26 games, picking up a save against Philadelphia University and a win against Lenoir-Rhyne University — both as a junior.

After graduation, he spent one season with the Worcester Tornadoes, an independent professional team in Massachusetts. It was here where he made the “adult decision to jump over to the other side,” trying to crack a roster as a coach.







His first job came as an intern in minor league video for the Chicago Cubs. A native of Lake Bluff, Illinois, McKinven was a Cubs fan growing up, so it was thrilling to start with his favorite team. Although now with the rival Brewers, he's quick to toe the company line.

"I would have gone to any of the 30 teams if they offered, but having the one that gave me the chance be the

team I rooted for growing up was great," he revealed. "At the time it was huge, but looking back now, seeing as they're our closest rivals and we're in direct competition for our livelihood, it's easy to no longer be a fan."

Two seasons with the Cubs and then a move came, this time to the Lone Star State as an advanced scouting intern for the Texas Rangers. The very next season came his initial position with the Brewers in advance scouting. He worked his way up the ladder for the Brew Crew, and is now in his second season in the dugout.

"It's hard to break in," said McKinven. "I had plenty of doubts. I redshirted a year in college and played a year of indy ball, so I'm a little bit older. I'm playing from behind, seeing my friends getting full-time jobs while I'm taking low-paying internships to try and get into

a highly-competitive industry. Once I landed with the Brewers, I began to really believe. I began to see I was better than others at certain things in the field."

From humble beginnings as an intern to getting the chance to put on a big-league jersey, McKinven is very appreciative of the opportunities Milwaukee's organization and Manager Craig Counsell have provided.

"I got to a team with really strong leaders that allow you to do things and learn," he said. "It's not totally structured, in that if you show you're good at something they give you more responsibility. You earn what you get. I'm with 'Counse' all game as he hired me to the staff, as I'm happy to throw in suggestions when he asks. He empowers me; it's taken me five years to fully earn that trust, and it means a lot."

# Walker McKinven Career Timeline



**Milwaukee Brewers Coordinator - Advance Scouting**  
Nov. 2016 – Jan. 2019  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin  
2 years, 3 months

**Elite Baseball Academy Coach/Instructor**  
Nov. 2015 – Feb. 2016  
Chicago, Illinois  
4 months

**Chicago Cubs Minor League Video**  
Feb. 2013 – Oct. 2014  
Des Moines, Iowa and  
Daytona Beach, Florida  
1 year, 9 months

**Professional Baseball Player**  
Worcester Tornadoes  
May 2012 – Sep 2012  
5 months

**Milwaukee Brewers Manager - Major League Strategy**  
Jan. 2019 – Present  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

**Milwaukee Brewers Advance Scouting/Video**  
Feb. 2016 – Nov. 2016  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin  
10 months

**Texas Rangers Advance Scouting/Video**  
Feb. 2015 – Nov. 2015  
Arlington, Tx  
10 months

**Chicago Cubs Front Office Intern**  
Sep. 2013 – Feb. 2014  
Chicago, IL  
6 months

# Altruistic deeds done daily for the greater good

**D**r. Kristen Chapman, '07, public health advisor for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) continually addresses the needs of individuals nationwide. It comes naturally.

"Growing up, I was one of those individuals who had a village help raise me," she said.

Her parents and their friends taught Chapman the importance of community.

"I really believe that you are your brother's or sister's keeper and have a responsibility to provide care and grace to others," she said.

Chapman's journey to her profession began at Georgia College, when she was enrolled as a nursing major. However, a difficult first year of nursing school led her to discussions with Professors Drs. Barbara Funke and Kendra Russell. Both encouraged Chapman to explore her interests in health education, so she made a pivotal switch to public health.

"This field gives me the opportunity to take care of others from a place of love and community," Chapman said. "That's the driving force behind how I fell into public health."

Chapman has worked at the county, district, and federal public health levels investigating local disease outbreaks and supporting national public health emergencies. Each presented an opportunity to apply measures she learned from her public health classes.

"At Georgia College, we discussed the importance of prevention from a community perspective and understanding the implications for individuals, as well as the economy," Chapman said. "We also talked about looking at the data and best practices that could be tailored to meet the needs of communities."

Today, Chapman's work is centered in her studies of public health at the system level and the impact those systems have on the health of a population.

"Working at a system level requires getting everyone involved, from governors to state legislators to health departments, the private sector, and community-based organizations. They all have great resources that can be leveraged to improve population health," she said.

Every day, Chapman analyzes systems that play a huge role in the health of others.

"We think about the public health system and how entities are interconnected," she said. "I like to see where we can leverage partnerships and resources to improve health disparities to ensure people are safe and healthy in their communities."

Chapman also oversees activities that provide training and technical assistance to professionals who address needs within communities nationwide.

"It's really inspiring to speak to some of these professionals about

how their work has been furthered because of the activities that we've been engaged in," said Chapman.

At Georgia College, Chapman was a senator in the Student Government Association, as well as a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., the Georgia Education Mentorship program, the Emerging Leader program, and more.

She continues to be involved at the university by serving as an Alumni Board member.

"I want to stay connected with the university and serve as a bridge for students," she said.

She credits Georgia College for helping her establish a career in public health.

"The beauty of a liberal arts university is that it encouraged me to become a critical thinker," Chapman said. "And, that has been critical in my public health career to make sure I'm doing a deeper analysis to understand the data and science and then translate it to public health practice."

Whether she's in touch with students or the overall population, she continually thinks about the legacy she wants to leave behind.

"I care about how I've touched lives," Chapman said. "I want to make an impact each time I interact with someone. I hope I can inspire and empower them the way others have me."



“I REALLY BELIEVE THAT YOU ARE YOUR BROTHER’S OR SISTER’S KEEPER AND HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO PROVIDE CARE AND GRACE TO OTHERS,”



## STUDENT PROFILE



# Leading through the storm

SGA PRESIDENT NATHAN GRAHAM TAKES THE REINS

Senior Nathan Graham always preferred history books when it came to perusing the library during summer break. He wanted hard facts, loved the news, and even tried to wedge his way into his parent's political discussions as a child.

"I was fascinated by watching the news," said the Student Government Association (SGA) president. "As I got older, I loved social studies and learning about systems of government and how ours compares to other countries."

The Dublin, Georgia, native never stepped foot on Georgia College's campus before his first-year orientation the summer before he was set to begin his freshman year. Graham picked up a political science and economics double major, and he knew he wanted to get involved with the Student Government Association.

"I campaigned and spoke wherever I could," he said. "I remember once I was campaigning out at the fountain and a nearby organization was selling donuts. I bought a box, cut them in half, and just started handing them out."

This type of can-do attitude got Graham his first SGA Senate seat. Since then, he's served on Senate, on the Senate Rules and Oversight Committee, helped plan the Hanging of the Greens ceremony, and served as Chief of Staff his sophomore year.

"When I was working as Chief of Staff, I was working in the interest of the president and wanted to change things up," he said. "We got a lot done. I worked on getting a glass recycling machine and adding different cabinet members that included underrepresented students. It was work that I was passionate about and that I believed in."

It was a fateful meeting with former SGA President Amelia Lord that took Graham to the next level of his interest and inevitable career in politics.

"We always had a standing meeting and she looked at me and said 'Today, we're talking about you — not SGA,'" he said. "It was then that she asked me if I ever thought about doing something in Washington, D.C."

Graham professed he hadn't. In fact, he had always lived in Georgia and never imagined living in a

bustling city like D.C. But, that's where the Georgia College in Washington (GC in DC) program took him his first semester of his junior year. The program draws from an extensive network of public and private sector contacts to provide internships in some of the most engaging professional settings in the nation.

"I worked as an intern in the U.S. Senate and had the opportunity to work in economic and trade policy," he said. "I made friends in D.C. and got a sense of what my life would look like in a fast-paced city."

Graham came back from D.C. with a newfound passion for politics. He was voted SGA president-elect in the beginning of the spring 2020 semester. Just as he was settling into that role, campus and the world began to shift as COVID-19 was declared a pandemic.

"It was a lot of uncertainty," he said. "I sat in on meetings during the summer about how to reopen campus safely and listened to students' concerns about coming back to campus."

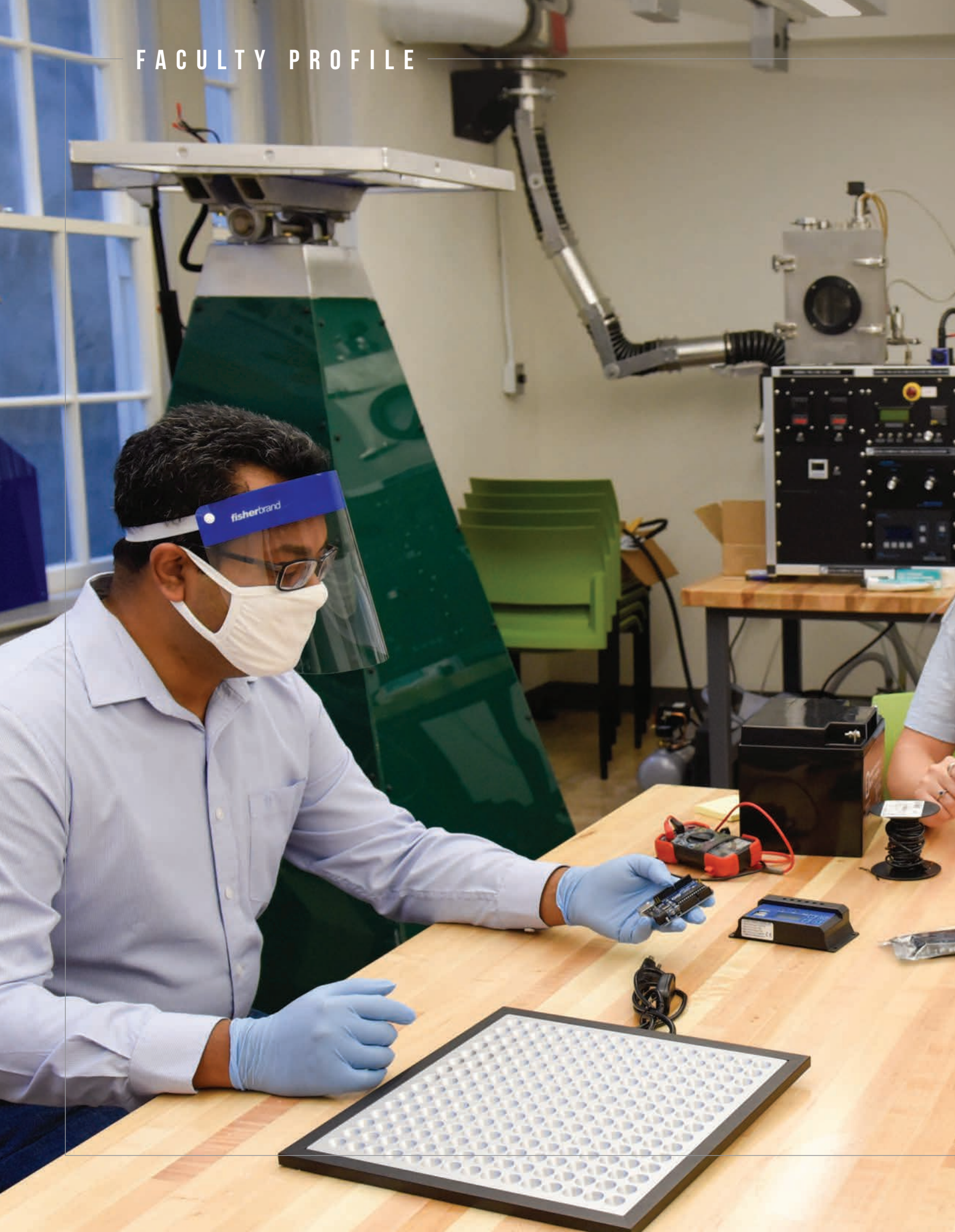
Despite having his priorities shift, Graham says that now more than ever, he's committed to amplifying others' voices. Part of his initiatives as SGA president is encouraging others to be active in practicing democracy, adding Politics and Society Supplemental Instructors at the Learning Center and finding ways to fund unpaid internships for students.

"I've been able to use politics and economics to understand how our systems fail and work against people," he said. "I want to work towards developing systems that move away from that and help communities that have been historically disadvantaged."

Looking to the future, Graham knows he wants to end up in Washington, D.C. With him, he knows he'll take valuable knowledge he's learned at Georgia College, but also new lessons gained from serving others while in the midst of a pandemic.

"I'm definitely going to appreciate being with people more," he said. "But I'm also going to put people at the heart of the decisions I make."

# FACULTY PROFILE





# Physics professor reacts to law of physics by giving back

**D**uring the COVID-19 crisis, one Georgia College instructor decided it was better to use physics, rather than force, to teach the importance of mask wearing.

Isaac Newton's Third Law of Motion states every action has an equal and opposite reaction. In other words, as Assistant Professor Dr. Hasitha Mahabaduge told his students the first week of class, "Respect each other the same way you want to be respected."

"Not targeting a particular student, but making it about physics," he said. "This is what I like to do — bring stories into my lectures connecting things to real life. These are lessons they will remember."

This is typical of the professor, who's beloved by his students and believes in giving back.

Years ago, in Sri Lanka, people joked that Mahabaduge was a precocious little boy who should not be given a microphone, because he'd never let it go. Today, Mahabaduge still likes to talk. And joke, too, about physics students being a captive audience.

"I enjoy teaching. It's not only about sharing knowledge and getting feedback from the students. But every time," he said laughing, "I feel like I'm performing, and they're obligated to at least wait until I'm done."

Repetition can be boring. But teaching never gets old for Mahabaduge. The content may be the same year-after-year. But his audience is always different. Their reaction new and exciting.



“THIS IS WHAT I LIKE TO DO — BRING STORIES INTO MY LECTURES CONNECTING THINGS TO REAL LIFE. THESE ARE LESSONS THEY WILL REMEMBER.”

Students notice Mahabaduge's attempts to ensure everyone understands. Whenever he sees a troubled or uncomprehending expression, he slows down and repeats information in a different way. If Mahabaduge sees disinterest, he stops and tells a joke or relates physics to life.

"He has a clear desire to reach out to all students, evident from his almost-stubborn attempts to ensure students have a clear understanding of each concept," one former student wrote in his nomination of Mahabaduge for the 2020 University System of Georgia (USG) Board of Regents Felton Jenkins, Jr. Hall of Fame Faculty Award.

Mahabaduge is the third Georgia College professor in three years to earn this prestigious recognition — bestowed for "a strong commitment to teaching and student success."

It wasn't the Sri Lankan's first award or recognition. He's earned five fellowships at the university and university system levels, as well as state, national, and international acknowledgment. Mahabaduge was also the 2019 recipient of Georgia College's Excellence in Teaching Award. He won these honors for showing commitment to new ideas. Since coming to Georgia College four years ago, Mahabaduge's been unafraid to veer off the path of traditional lectures and engage students in exciting ways. This includes outfitting campus golf carts with solar panels and holding annual renewable energy workshops for local children. He also developed new courses that put the university's physics curriculum on par with the rest of the nation.

In 2016, a former student, James Dillon Vogt, '16,

approached Mahabaduge for a favor. He'd heard of Mahabaduge's doctoral research at the University of Toledo in Ohio and post-doctoral research at the Colorado National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL).

Mahabaduge's group set a world record at NREL — one he still holds — for the most efficiency in a solar cell. Vogt asked the young instructor if he'd teach a course on renewable energy outside of class, one-on-one.

Mahabaduge didn't hesitate. It required extra time and voluntary course overload, while organizing a new research lab. But he agreed to teach Vogt, and word spread. Soon, 11 physics seniors were taking the special-topic course.

"I have given several presentations at Teaching and Learning conferences, where I say 'Every good love story starts with a yes,'" Mahabaduge said. "My love story with teaching started with saying yes to that student."

The extra class resulted in the university's first solar-powered golf cart. Since then, Mahabaduge's students have installed solar panels at a local school and participated in virtual lessons with a Sri Lankan professor at the University of Sri Jayawardenepura. Mahabaduge spent summer 2018 teaching electromagnetism to Tibetan monks in India, as part of the Emory-Tibet Science Initiative. And, last winter, he took a student to the Institute of Electrical Engineering Chinese Academy of Science in Beijing to conduct graduate-level solar research.

Mahabaduge gives online talks about his life and career to students in Sri Lanka. He's establishing a study abroad exchange program between Georgia College and the

University of Sri Jayawardenapura. He also serves on a committee for the Colombo University Faculty of Science Alumni group, CUFSAA-NA, which promotes science among Sri Lankan youth.

At Georgia College this year, Mahabaduge's working on a new collaborative research project using flexible glass developed by Corning Glass, Inc. Students plan to build a machine that can strike glass 25,000 times, testing its strength for use with solar cells. Because of COVID-19, this research will be conducted with only one student in the lab at a time. This eliminates student interaction but, in physics, scientists must adapt.

When students are regulated to multiple small faces in online boxes — nonverbal cues are hard to detect. Another COVID impediment is seeing facial expressions under masks. This makes it difficult for Mahabaduge to identify students who are puzzled, bored, or completely lost during instruction.

"That part I miss," Mahabaduge said. "You can't catch the subtle nuances of their expressions."

But whether in-person or online, Mahabaduge won't quit teaching. He wanted to be a professor since he was nine-years-old and realized the word 'professor' in Sanskrit began with 'maha,' like his name. Maha means 'big.'

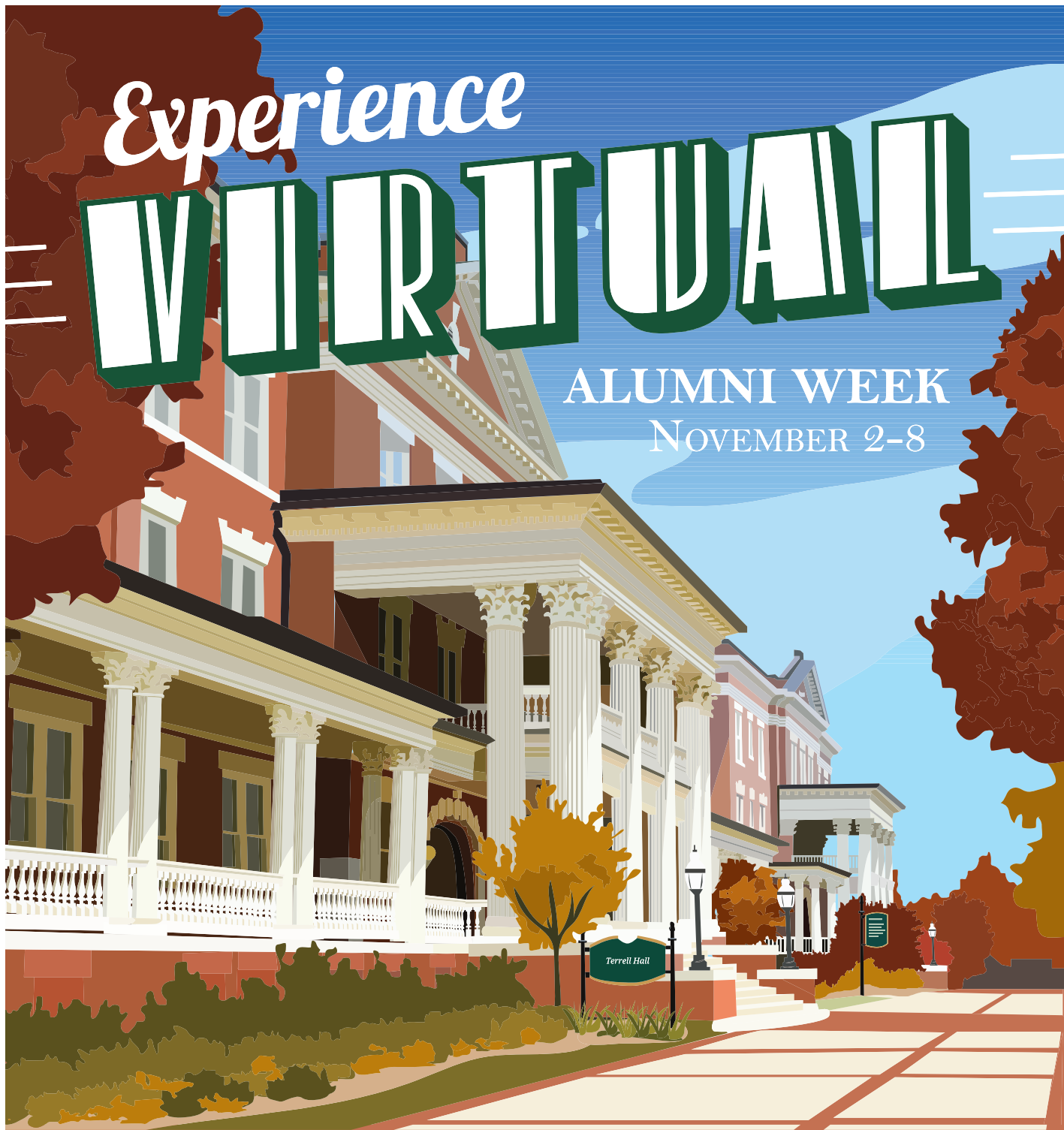
Perhaps that's why Mahabaduge's made such a big difference.

It all comes back to Newton's Third Law. "In physics, every action has a reaction," he said. "Others have taught and mentored me. Now it's my turn to give back and give my students the same experience."

*Experience*

# VIRTUAL

ALUMNI WEEK  
NOVEMBER 2-8



*Georgia College Alumni Association*  
GCALUMNIWEEK.COM

# Class Notes

## 1970s

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**Donald E. Gillespie, Jr., JD, '71**, retired from the North Carolina Judicial Department April 1, 2020.

**Rev. Don Thrasher, '76**, retired Sept. 1, 2020, from the North Georgia Conference of the United Methodist Church after serving over 30 years as a member of the clergy and 10 years as a diaconal minister. Thrasher was ordained in the first class of deacons in full connection with the history of the North Georgia Conference in 1997. Also, Sept. 1, 2020, he began a new part-time position as the deacon for Senior Adult Ministries at Windsor Hills United Methodist Church in Roanoke, Virginia.

## 1980s

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**Lisa Ragsdale, '86**, retired in July 2019 after spending more than 30 years working primarily in higher education, with 25 of those years as a human-resources professional.

## 2000s

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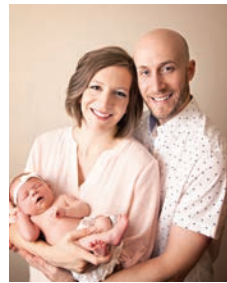


**Jay Davis, '00**, was inducted into the Phi Beta Mu International Bandmasters' Fraternity in March 2020. Phi Beta Mu International Bandmasters' Fraternity is designed to honor outstanding band directors at the state level with only one chapter per state. There are 35 active chapters in the United States and

Canada. Davis is the director of Bands at Houston County High School in Warner Robins and is married to Dr. Tina Holmes-Davis, assistant professor of music at Georgia College.

**Celeste Baggarly Orr, '03, '20**, published her first book in July 2020: "Togetherness Redefined: Finding a Different Kind of Family Togetherness," where she shares ideas for parents who want more time, a bigger adventure, and deeper connection with their kids. After traveling full-time with her family for seven years and visiting 49 states in the United States, Orr finished her Master of Public Administration at Georgia College this year and settled in Maine. She and her family enjoy adventuring in Acadia National Park. Orr also consults for nonprofit organizations, homeschools her two boys, and writes for moms at [togethernessredefined.com](http://togethernessredefined.com).

**Lucas "Luke" Hopkins, '08**, received his MBA at Georgia College. He is the assistant chair of the department of marketing, an associate lecturer, and has been named the new director of the Florida State University's highly-competitive and prestigious James M. Seneff Honors Program in the College of Business.

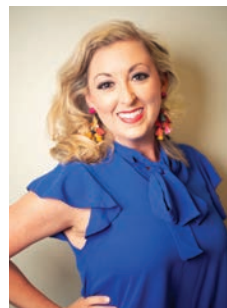


**Jamie Grant Austin, '08, '12**, and her husband Ashton welcomed their first child, Eliza Kate, May 28, 2020. After graduating from Georgia College, she received her Doctorate of Dental Medicine at the Dental College of Georgia at Augusta University and practices in Atlanta.  
*Photo by Sara J. Williams Photography.*

**Sarah Ellis Felix, '09**, earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Middle Grades Education. She has dedicated 10 years teaching seventh grade at Haymon-Morris Middle School, where she was recognized as "Teacher of the Year" for the 2018-2019 school year. Felix was then chosen by the county to advance to the next level of competition, being named as a district semi-finalist for the Barrow County School System. She and her husband, **Chris Felix, '07**, reside in Oconee County with their two children — Carter (age eight) and Caroline (age five).

## 2010s

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**Allison Brown Wilkinson, '10**, of the Lambda Pi Chapter and director of Payroll Services at Georgia College has been nationally recognized as one of Delta Zeta's "35 Under 35" for 2020. She was honored for her demonstrated leadership, initiative, and dedication to her career, as well as her motivation through challenges, volunteer service in her community, and for serving as a role model.



**Will Gaissert, '12**, married Kelli Cantrell in Newnan, Georgia, Aug. 4, 2018. Included in the wedding party, from left, are: **Curtis Hardwick, '15**, **Derrick Ward, '06**, **Will Harrison, '13**, and **Hanson Powell, '14**. Pictured, far right, is: **Kalyn Cardell Ward, '07**. The Gaisserts reside in Summerville, South Carolina.



**Nathan Anisko, '15**, is a doctor of osteopathic medicine. He graduated this year from the Georgia Campus of the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine. Anisko began his family residency in June 2020 with Piedmont Healthcare System in Columbus, Georgia.

**Ashley Miller, '15**, and **Amanda Morris Miller, '15**, celebrated their one-year wedding anniversary. Both majored in mass communication. The couple eloped Aug. 23, 2019, in Birmingham, Alabama. They reside in Sylvester, Georgia, with two cats and a rabbit.



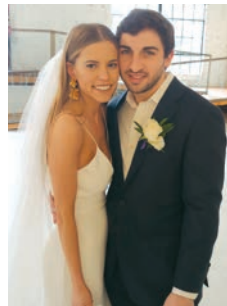
**Juawn Jackson, '16**, was recently elected to serve a four-year term on the Bibb County School Board starting January 2021. He wants to help create a robust economy and stronger community.

"We must focus on retaining current businesses and industries and creating opportunities for new economic development, while

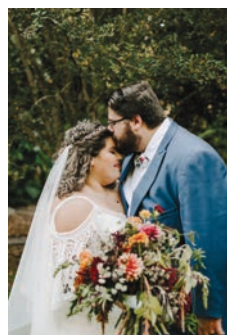
addressing poverty by ensuring we continue to provide a high-quality public education that assures our students are college and career ready," Jackson said. "We can do this by expanding industry partnerships, championing entrepreneurship, and recruiting and retaining quality educators."



**Annsley Boulineau, '17**, and **McKenzie Beech, '17**, met in 2013 as first-year students at Georgia College and started dating as seniors. They married July 25, 2020, after rescheduling their wedding twice and changing venues because of COVID-19. Members of the wedding party, from left to right, include: **Laurel Thomas, '17**, **Stephanie Tallent Smith, '18**, **Brooke Hinton Cobb, '17**, **Kylie Barber Kirch, '18**, **Anna Thomas Smith, '18**, **Christal Reincher, '17**, **McKenna Carlile Murray, '17**, **Annsley Boulineau Beech, '17**, **McKenzie Beech, '17**, **Nicholas Buchanan, '17**, **Tyler Potts, '19**, **Mark Elliott, '18**, and **Nolan Boulineau, '20**. The couple included a Georgia College towel as a tribute to the life-long friendships they made while they attended the university.



**Rachel Robinson, '17**, married Nicholas Aloisio Feb. 22, 2019. Rachel earned her BBA in marketing, and Nicholas served four years in the Marine Corps and will graduate with a Bachelor of Business Administration in computer information systems from Georgia State University.



**Maralyn Quinones Stead, '18**, married her high school sweetheart, Lindsay Stead. The couple moved to Mamaroneck, New York, to start their careers. Maralyn works as a freelance stage manager and sound technician for off-Broadway Theatres.

"Since being here, we've had a great time enjoying holidays together and traveling the northeast in our spare time," said Maralyn.



**Vanessa Rodriguez, '19**, started working in her new profession Aug. 17, 2020, as a shelter advocate for Partnership Against Domestic Violence. Some of her duties include: answering crisis hotline calls, monitoring daily activities of residents, conducting residential intakes, conducting exit interviews, planning safety and security of the shelter, and more. She is pursuing

her master's degree in criminal justice at Georgia College and is expected to graduate in 2021.



**Brittany Massey Bryan, '19**, married Spencer Bryan Dec. 14, 2019, at Vinewood Stables in Newnan, Georgia.

Please submit your news for Class Notes at:  
[gcsu.edu/alumniclassnotes](https://gcsu.edu/alumniclassnotes)

## *In Memoriam*

Dottie A. Haslam\*  
 Martha McKenney Pittman, '35  
 Jimmie Brown Bird, '37  
 Margaret Sanders Forbes, '38  
 Agnes Gibson Orrin, '38  
 Mary Dawes Bishop, '41  
 Emma Hagan Irwin, '42  
 Mary Langford, '46  
 Theresa Dowd Rheney, '48  
 Hilda Washburn Sheffield, '48  
 Olivia Starr Berger, '49  
 Ann Flemming Cone, '51  
 Irene Sanders Davis, '52  
 Edna Atwood Smith, '53  
 Elaine Burch Bowman, '55  
 Phoebe Deen Haskins, '56  
 Dallas Patterson Janowski, '56  
 Patricia Blalock Mathis, '56  
 Mary Clare Daniel Anderson, '60\*  
 Carol Carpenter Milner, '60  
 Lillian Rivenbark Baird, '63

Eleanor Streetman Giles, '64  
 Elizabeth Thomas Green, '65  
 Sandra Miles Maze, '66  
 Benjamin Couey, '72  
 Mary Atchison Garner, '72  
 Mary Churchwell Morris, '73  
 Flora Calcote Byrd, '74  
 Cada Kilgore, '75  
 Mary Ward Robertson, '76  
 Richard Stetzler, '76  
 Dorothy Crespi Marr, '77  
 Pearlle Perkins Watkins, '77  
 Patty McCormick Hendrix, '78  
 Kay Newsome, '78  
 Elizabeth Knepper-Muller, '82  
 George Steele, '85  
 Thomas Conner, '93  
 Roger McKinney, '95  
 Susan Pittman Necci, '99  
 Derek Dawkins, '12  
 Dailey Miller, '18

\*Denotes alumni of Peabody School.

This list recognizes deceased alumni that the university has been made aware of as of Sept. 2, 2020.

**University Communications**

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## First-generation student, former professor provides opportunities for others like her



Dr. Marcia Perry, '61, began her love affair with mathematics at an early age. She would count and roll the coins her father brought home, after a week of selling peaches. As Perry grew older, she pursued her passion at Georgia College (GC), which helped prepare her for a journey in exciting professions.

Besides teaching mathematics at GC and Oxford College, Perry developed math tests for the Georgia Board of Regents and later K-12 math tests for the Georgia Assessment Project, Educational Testing Service, Measured Progress, California Testing Bureau, and the Virginia Department of Education's Division of Assessment.

"I wanted to develop tests to assure students had good skills in mathematics," Perry said. "I viewed the development of statewide tests as a way to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum."

When Perry attended GC, there were approximately 650 students on campus, making it feel like one big family.

"Georgia College President Dr. Robert E. 'Buzz' Lee knew every student by name, and the faculty took special interest in their students," she said. "We had personal access to top-notch faculty with small class sizes and lots of activities to stretch our horizons."

Today, Perry offers a professorship in memory of her parents as a tribute to her professors, like Drs. Sarah Nelson and Isabel "Izzie" Wood Rogers, for providing the background and confidence she needed for her later studies. She hopes the recipient will teach others the basis of math and its many different applications in everyday life.

Perry also offers a scholarship for first-generation, underrepresented students. As a first-generation college student who received a scholarship at the beginning of her college career, she knows there are many teenagers who are talented, but lack the means to go to college. She wants to offer them a similar opportunity to the one she had.

"It's a disgrace that so many skills and talents go undeveloped due to lack of funds for college," Perry said. "Many doors are closed to those without a college degree. I want to pay it forward. I hope my scholarship will not only benefit the students who receive it, but will also benefit their classmates who would otherwise never have known this unique person and the wider community, where what has been learned will be used."

To learn how you can leave a gift in your estate plan, contact Dan Lavery at 478-445-1236 or [dan.lavery@gcsu.edu](mailto:dan.lavery@gcsu.edu).