

Atlanta Braves World Series Trophy Tour to stop at Georgia College

Georgia College invites the campus and Milledgeville community to celebrate the Atlanta Braves historic 2021 season. As part of the World Championship Trophy Tour, the university is hosting an open to the public event from 3 to 6 p.m. Thursday, March 24 at Georgia College's West Campus Pavilion—near the baseball and softball fields.

Come see the World Series Trophy in person and get your photo taken. Refreshments will be available. Fans can also meet the Georgia College Baseball and Softball teams, as well as Thunder the Bobcat. Admission is free.

Guests are encouraged to enter West Campus from the 441-bypass entrance. To include as many people as possible before the 6 p.m. cutoff, each group will have a limited amount of time to view the trophy.

The Georgia College event is part of a 151-stop tour commemorating the Atlanta Braves 2021 World Series Trophy and 151 years of Braves baseball.

To learn more about the Georgia College tour stop and to join the Facebook event, visit gcsu.edu/trophytour.

More information on the Braves Trophy Tour is available at Braves.com/TrophyTour.



Basketball standout leads on the court and in the classroom

As senior Wesley Simpson walks across campus, he can strike up a conversation with anyone he passes. Whether he knows them through classes or sports, with his friendly demeanor he never meets a stranger.

The economics major and standout basketball player credits growing up in a military family and moving around for his outgoing personality.

"I was able to develop my ability to get to know people fast," Simpson said. "I am able to make connections and make friends easily. I've also become very good at small talk."

It's those skills and his capabilities on the basketball court that helped as he moved from Florida to New York then to Germany, Washington and finally to Georgia while growing up.

"I would say basketball is a passion," Simpson said. "Sports was kind of one thing that helped me make friends as we moved to each different location. You're trying to come and fit in, going from playing recess to rec sports in the community. Basketball really helped me get to know people and make friends."

As his skills grew on the court, Simpson saw how basketball could open doors for his future through collegiate play. Since joining the Bobcat Basketball team, he's been a leader and major contributor to the team's success.

"I am extremely proud of Wes and all of his accomplishments on and off the court," said Head Basketball Coach Mark Gainous. "He exemplifies what a student-athlete should be. What sets Wes apart is his positive attitude, relentless work ethic and outgoing personality. I could coach another 20 years and not have another young man that is as well-rounded as Wes Simpson."

Among his many accolades on the court, some of the most important to him are those tied to academics. He's been named twice to the CoSIDA (College Sports Information Directors of America) Academic All-District team and a two-time D2ADA (Division 2 Athletics Directors Association) Academic Achievement Award winner.

"Those are big awards for me, because they show that I'm doing both athletics and academics at a high level. I take pride in that, and it's something that I work towards all the time," he said. "I would definitely say that we have an athletic program that puts a lot of emphasis on student athletes being students first."

He's intentional about giving 100% both in his sport and his classes.

"Watching Wes play basketball is a clear indication of how he approaches everything in life. Even when the game is not going well, even when there's so much work to be done, even when he's playing hurt, he does not quit. He does not reduce his effort; instead, he somehow finds more to give during those times,"



said Dr. Brooke Conaway, associate professor of economics.

An economics major came naturally for Simpson. Since he was a kid, he's always been money conscious. When he took a test in high school to help guide his career path, it clearly pointed to the economics

and finance field.

"I would say that we have the best department as far as professors go on campus. They have been super supportive, super understanding of my schedule with basketball and that's just allowed me to want to give them the most that I can when I am in the classroom and make them proud with my assignments."

According to his professor, his senior research project "covers the important topic of civilians, primarily people of color, experiencing fatal interactions with police."

"He hand-collected data on the value of military surplus equipment filtered to police departments, as well as various state police protocols, to explore the factors affecting civilian deaths during police interactions," Conaway said. "He is currently working through the preliminary empirical results, but his early findings show that states with younger populations, lower per capita incomes, and stand-your-ground laws are associated with more civilian fatalities during police interactions."

As for his future, Simpson plans to pursue graduate school. Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, he also has one more year of eligibility for basketball. He's not quite sure what next year will look like for him, but through his faith, he trusts it will all work out—just like it did for him to end up at Georgia College in the first place.

"I really do believe this is the spot that I was destined to be at this point in my life," Simpson said. "I honestly didn't know what Georgia College was coming out of high school. But coming on visits and just seeing the family atmosphere here in the athletic department and in the econ department, it has truly been a great experience in all aspects."



Did you know?

Georgia College's intramural men's basketball team finished second at the Georgia Southern Regional basketball tournament last weekend. They earned a chance to compete at the National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association (NIRSA) National Basketball Tournament in Kansas on April 8-10. The Georgia College team finished higher than D1 schools including Florida State, Clemson, Georgia Tech, University of Central Florida, Mississippi State and the University of South Florida. Austin Sloan and Jackson Baylark were named to the All-Region Team - the top five players at the tournament.

Georgia College's intramural women's basketball team finished 4th. Team member DeLanye Rotolo was also named to the All-Region Team.



Guest music artist performance next Monday

On Monday, March 21, Guest artist and mezzo-soprano, Dr. Tana Field, will perform at Georgia College at 7:30 p.m. in Max Noah Recital Hall.

Accompanied by faculty pianist Dr. Owen Lovell, Field's performance will reflect human experience and hope, spanning all shades of mood from serious and melancholy to triumphant and humorous.

Pieces range from 17th-century opera aria to 21st-century cabaret. They reflect a longing for freedom from isolation, the closure of old chapters and new beginnings. Dr. Field serves as professor of music at Murray State University in Kentucky.

A \$10 donation is encouraged.

All proceeds benefit music scholarships or the GC Department of Music through GCSU Foundation, Inc.



Outdoor education students complete extreme aerial tour



Earlier this month, students in Dr. Liz Speelman's Challenge Course class (ODED 3550) along with several staff members of the Outdoor Center visited Historic Banning Mills in Whitesburg, Georgia, to participate in their canopy zip tours.

The trip came together from a partnership between alumna Lauren Bice Ellis, '16, who works at Historic Banning Mills, and Dr. Jeff Turner, associate professor of Outdoor Education. Turner provided an American Canoe Association (ACA) training for some of Ellis' staff last year, and in turn, negotiated the opportunity for GC students to participate in their zip canopy tours to experience and learn more about the recreational side of the industry.

"This was such a great experience for our students. I saw many of them step well outside of their comfort zones. Even more importantly, I heard them making connections and comparisons between the work we do in class and what they were experiencing," Speelman said.

"From the safety briefing to how the guides interacted with all of us, the students got to see the difference between a recreational experience and the interpersonal experiences we focus on in our program. One focuses on the activity and the other focuses on the people who are doing the activity," she said.

The students completed their 4-hour, Level 4 "Extreme Tour," which included traversing several unique suspension bridges, a 600-foot-long suspension bridge 100 feet above a creek, a 1,000-foot-long zip line back across the creek and a 2,500-foot-long zip line that goes 70-75 mph.

"Soaring among the treetops was an exhilarating way to connect with friends and have fun in the outdoors! Big thanks to Dr. Speelman and GC Outdoor Education for the great day" said student Madison Green.

