

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.
-THE FIRST AMENDMENT, UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION

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EDITORIAL

Perea and Linder are joined by community members LaTrina Howell, John Cotten and Luke Opperman on The Union-Recorder editorial board. Our editorials are formed weekly by the board.

Remembering 9/11

Twenty-five years have passed. A generation of young people has come of age in a world vastly different from the one we knew just moments before the first plane struck the North Tower.

Our nation has changed. Our world has changed. Our outlook has changed.

Flight 11, a hijacked commercial jetliner, struck the North Tower of the World Trade Center at 8:46 a.m., searing the collective conscience of the civilized world. Seventeen minutes later, at 9:03, Flight 175 struck the South Tower. Miles away, a third plane hit the Pentagon, then Flight 93 was downed in a Pennsylvania field.

In the aftermath, the World Trade Center towers lay in tragic ruin.

So much has changed since that day — our outlook on the world, how we view our national security.

Those of us who are old enough can all still vividly recall where and where we were when we each first learned of the events of that day. For many of us, the memories, our reactions are still clear. Whether we knew someone in New York, Washington or Pennsylvania on the day of the attacks, or had never visited either city at all, we know the time. We still know the place. We are still moved by our recollections of that moment.

The stories and the lives of those who perished in the attacks and in the Global War on Terror aren't partisan or political. Their stories are human stories. Ones we shouldn't forget.

Reflecting on these events is also a reflection on the human experience. How we grieve. How we cope. How we carry on. It's all a part of the story. Our story as individuals.

Our story as a nation.

This column represents the opinion of The Union-Recorder and its Editorial Board. Contact Editor Natalie Davis Linder, 478-453-1462, or email Natalie.Linder@UnionRecorder.com with questions or comments.

When Baldwin beat Dublin

NOTE: I was glad to see that Baldwin played Dublin this season for the first time since 2005. It's a great rivalry that should be played every year. Here's a look at the first time Baldwin beat Dublin. I was on that team.

Neil Armstrong was walking on the moon, and half-a-million hippies were attending the Woodstock Music Festival.

Members of the Baldwin High Braves football team — I was one of them — were sweating in the brutal Milledgeville heat, trying to get in shape for the upcoming season.

It was the summer of 1969.

Baldwin had a first-year coach, Curt Douglas, who brought in a new offense, a different blocking scheme and comprehensive scouting reports on upcoming opponents.

We had a small core of seniors: Jim Harper, Mike Wood, Mike Culberson, Baxter Whitaker Charles Middlebrooks,

Monty Kennedy, Hector Mendez, Gordon Dickens and me.

We combined with a large and talented group of juniors to form a team with high expectations.

We could always beat those northeast Georgia schools, such as Hart, Elbert, Stephens and Franklin counties. But the real question was: Could we finally beat Dublin for the first time in school history?

Baldwin had endured an 0-10 drought against the Irish. Dublin's Beasley brothers were our biggest nemesis. Willie was the latest Beasley, and he played quarterback like he was Johnny Manziel, running and passing.

We finally beat them, and it was front-page news in town.



Rick Millians
Columnist

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OPINION POLL

POLL RESULTS

Have you decided who you're voting for in the November general election?

Yes - 82%

No - 18%

POLL: Are you cutting back on travel due to gas prices?

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Never forget — Sept. 11, 2001

Twenty-five years ago, America experienced a day we must never forget.

I was at my family funeral home business making funeral arrangements when my office manager came in and told me what was happening. My staff and I were stunned. I closed the business so everyone could go home, be with their families, and watch as the tragedy unfolded.

At the time, I was also running for Mayor of Milledgeville. I immediately suspended my campaign for two weeks.

Some moments are bigger than politics. September 11 was one of them.

Nearly 3,000 innocent lives were lost. First responders ran toward danger. And in the days that followed,

Americans came together—not as Democrats or Republicans, but as Americans.

Twenty-five years later, we must tell the next generation what happened, honor those we lost, remember those who served, and never take our freedom for granted.

May God continue to bless the families who carry the memories of that terrible day, and may God bless the United States of America.

Remember the lives. Honor the sacrifice. Stand together as Americans. Never Forget.

State Rep. Floyd Griffin
D-Milledgeville

Liberal arts still matter to students and are valuable for Georgia's workforce

EDITOR'S NOTE: Georgia College & State University President Cathy Cox explores how the institution's current period of record-breaking enrollment growth illustrates the enduring value of a high-quality liberal arts education to current students and employers alike, in a guest essay originally published in the Atlanta Journal-Constitution and provided below.



Cathy Cox
Columnist

Georgia College & State University adopted its current liberal arts mission 30 years ago and continues to innovate in the AI era. Thirty years after Georgia made a landmark

commitment to public liberal arts education, students are affirming the wisdom of that decision in record numbers.

This fall, Georgia College & State University welcomed its largest-ever incoming class of 1,849 students from a record pool of 10,060 applicants, some 95% of whom are Georgia residents. That will bring GCSU's overall enrollment this fall to an all-time high of nearly 7,500 undergraduate and graduate students. Our fourth consecutive

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Cox

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year of unprecedented demand, this growth serves as powerful evidence that, as markets move and student expectations rise, a high-quality liberal arts education remains more relevant than ever.

The reason is adaptability.

Regardless of field, mastering the skills central to the liberal arts — critical thinking, communication, teamwork, problem-solving — serves graduates well. Those competencies adjust to emerging technologies and roll with the tides of industry shifts.

Workforce data reinforces the point.

According to the American Association of Colleges and Universities, employers are up to 81% more likely to hire graduates who have participated in experiences such as undergraduate research, internships, study abroad, leadership programs and community-engaged

learning because it is through experiences like these that students learn broader analytical and interpersonal skills. At Georgia College, 93% of students report taking part in experiences like these — beginning in their first year.

Opportunities to learn by doing as a freshman or sophomore are not typical at larger universities. By keeping classes small, though — 75% of courses at Georgia College have fewer than 30 students — scholars get unparalleled access to their professors and to hands-on learning experiences inside and outside of the classroom.

Our recent Research Day offered a snapshot of these benefits. The largest event of its kind in GCSU history, this event showcased nearly 300 student-researchers who, guided by faculty mentors, learned through their work how to investigate, collaborate, test ideas, respond to feedback and explain their conclusions. Those are liberal arts — and workforce-ready — skills.

The emphasis on experiential learning is also reflected in the GCSU curriculum, which is offered exclusively in-person during the regular fall and spring semesters. Our students want to be face-to-face with their professors and classmates for robust discussions on course topics.

Our new Master of Science in AI Strategy degree makes a similar case.

It's not a degree that teaches students how to develop AI programs. Pairing software fluency with ethical decision-making and responsible AI practices, the program takes a holistic view of a technology that is fundamentally changing the way we work. And again, demand has been staggering.

Only two months after announcing the program, we enrolled more than 400% of our first-term goal — a target of eight students set by the University System of Georgia. By combining broad liberal arts perspectives with AI tools, this degree will empower graduates to

leverage AI effectively in any sector.

Before the Board of Regents designated Georgia College as the state's public liberal arts university in 1996, Georgia had no public institution dedicated to this learning model, which meant that students seeking such an education often had to leave the state — if they could afford to do so. The Regents saw a public need and entrusted Georgia College to meet it.

Three decades later, that trust has yielded remarkable results.

The student profile at GCSU has strengthened significantly as it became one of the three selective admission universities in the state (along with UGA and Georgia Tech). The economic impact the university generates in Middle Georgia has more than doubled, exceeding \$360 million today. We also now rank among the top five public colleges and universities in the 12-state South region by U.S. News & World Report.

The state's decision 30 years ago to entrust

Georgia College with this noble mission created an affordable pathway to an ever-changing world. Here at GCSU, we like to say that "it's different here" — because a liberal arts education is different. Here, students learn to be leaders. They develop the skills they need to do more, learn more and seize more opportunities to make a

positive difference in their communities.

Georgia students have responded enthusiastically, and we look forward to carrying out this mission for decades to come, while providing the launching pad needed to propel future generations toward passionate and purposeful lives.