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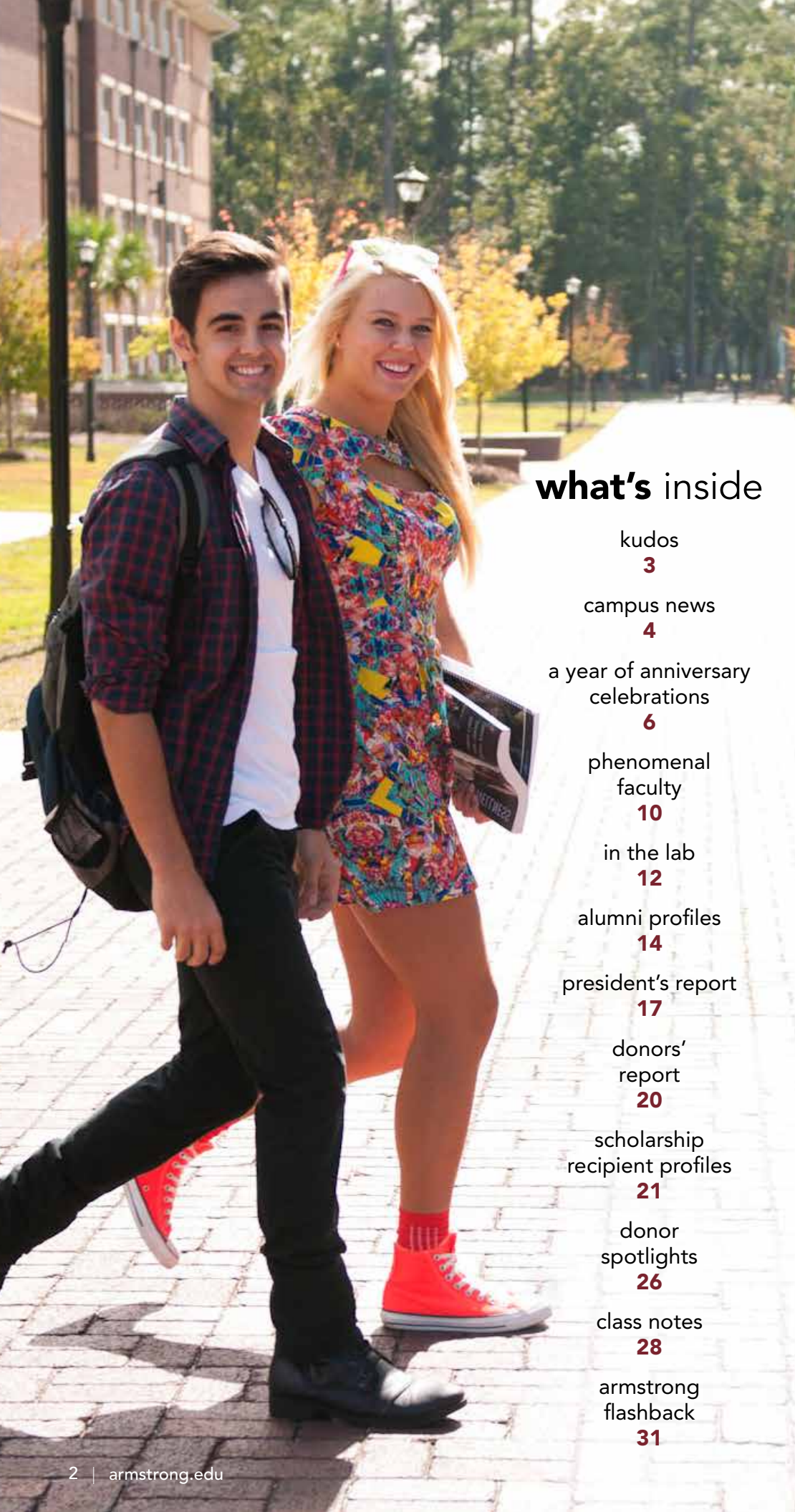
A MAGAZINE OF ARMSTRONG STATE UNIVERSITY

# Armstrong

FALL 2015



ARMSTRONG'S ANNIVERSARY ISSUE



# Armstrong

## EDITOR

Melanie Simón

## DESIGNER

Joan Lehon '92

## PRINCIPAL PHOTOGRAPHER

Katherine Arntzen

## COPY EDITOR

Karen Cooper '11

## CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Brittany McClure '15

Polly Powers Stramm

*Armstrong* magazine is produced by the university's Marketing & Communications department, with support from the Armstrong State University Foundation.

## LET US HEAR FROM YOU!

We'd love your feedback on this issue, as well as what you'd like to see in upcoming issues of *Armstrong*.

Please email [melanie.simon@armstrong.edu](mailto:melanie.simon@armstrong.edu) or call 912.344.2904.

To change your mailing address, call 912.344.2541 or email [alumni@armstrong.edu](mailto:alumni@armstrong.edu).



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## ABOUT THE COVER

Armstrong students Jonathan Powell, Breonna Magee and Taylor Alvarez (l-r) joined the university's 80th anniversary celebration. Cake by Back in the Day Bakery. Cover photography by Katherine Arntzen.

## what's inside

kudos

**3**

campus news

**4**

a year of anniversary celebrations

**6**

phenomenal faculty

**10**

in the lab

**12**

alumni profiles

**14**

president's report

**17**

donors' report

**20**

scholarship recipient profiles

**21**

donor spotlights

**26**

class notes

**28**

armstrong flashback

**31**



Felix Hamza-Lup

José da Cruz

### Armstrong Professors Selected as Fulbright and Governor's Teaching Fellows

Felix Hamza-Lup, associate professor of computer science and information technology, has been selected as a Fulbright Scholar by the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board. He is teaching and conducting research at Bangkok University, the oldest and largest private university in Thailand, during the fall 2015 semester.

Hamza-Lup is teaching a Web-based 3-D Visual and Haptic User Interfaces course, employing technology that interfaces with the user through the sense of touch. Coursework covers a range of topics, including principles of the human visual system, visual perception, tactile perception, static and dynamic 3-D worlds and basic animation. He is also collaborating with Bangkok University scholars to research energy efficiency via thermal modeling for residential and commercial buildings and assisting with the development of a graduate Computer Science curriculum.

In addition, International Relations and Comparative Politics Professor José de Arimatéia da Cruz was selected as a Governor's Teaching Fellow for 2015-2016. The prestigious program is run by the University of Georgia's Institute of Higher Education, which is committed to advancing higher education policy, management and leadership through research, graduate education and outreach.

### Robert T. Smith Joins Armstrong as Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Robert T. Smith, a veteran academic administrator, recently joined Armstrong as provost and vice president for academic affairs. In his new position, Smith oversees all academic divisions, faculty, instruction and research affairs at the university.

Before joining Armstrong, Smith served as the dean of the School of Science and Mathematics at Millersville University of Pennsylvania. Also a mathematics professor since 1982, Smith has enjoyed teaching and research appointments at Millersville University of Pennsylvania, Virginia Tech and the U.S. Army Ballistic Research Laboratory. Over the years, he has earned several honors and awards for teaching and has published a number of mathematics textbooks.



### Janet A. Buckenmeyer Named as Dean of College of Education

Janet A. Buckenmeyer recently joined Armstrong as the new dean of the College of Education. In this role, she supervises overall operations for the college and provides leadership and vision, while supporting faculty in teaching, professional development, service and scholarship.

Prior to joining Armstrong, Buckenmeyer served as associate dean of the Spadoni College of Education at Coastal Carolina University. She was also program chair and associate professor for the Master of Instructional Technology Program at Purdue University-Calumet, where she mentored and evaluated faculty, led accreditation efforts and was instrumental in creating hybrid and online learning courses.

### Andrew J. Dies Hired as Assistant Dean of Student Integrity

Andrew J. Dies is Armstrong's new assistant dean of student integrity. He is responsible for administering the student conduct system and serves on the university's behavioral assessment team, working with students in crisis.

Previously, Dies was the associate dean of students and director of student conduct and outreach at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, administering to more than 26,000 students. He also chaired the pre-admission safety review committee and served as case manager for the campus behavioral intervention team.





## Women's Tennis Team Wins Ninth NCAA Division II National Championship

The top-ranked and undefeated Armstrong State University women's tennis team captured its ninth NCAA Division II National Championship with a 5-2 victory over No. 2 Barry University on May 16 at the Surprise Racquet & Tennis Complex in Surprise, Ariz.

The Pirates extended their NCAA DII record for the most national championships, handing the Bucs (24-2) the loss in a rematch of the 2014 National Championship match won by Barry. Armstrong now has won three of the last four NCAA Division II national championships and six of the last eight. The men's tennis team finished the season at No. 3 ITA Division II National Rankings.

## Online B.A. in French Now Available Through eMajor Program

Armstrong began offering a fully online B.A. in French, as well as a French minor, in the fall of 2015. The new program is available through eMajor, a consortium of University System of Georgia schools that partner with one another to deliver high-quality, online bachelor's degree programs.

The French track emphasizes knowledge of modern foreign cultures and enables students to focus on one modern language, while achieving speaking facility in one or two others. When combined with business economics courses, the degree can open international opportunities in business, government, education, media, travel and social services.

## Armstrong Celebrates Second Annual Paint the Town Maroon Event

Pirate pride took center stage at Johnson Square in historic downtown Savannah as Armstrong celebrated the second annual Paint the Town Maroon event on March 27. This community-wide pep rally honored the university's connection to Savannah and its commitment to providing scholarship support for students in need.

In addition to supporting student scholarships, the event also served as a celebration of Armstrong spirit, with the square's fountains dyed maroon for the first time. In addition, Leopold's—which is owned and operated by '64 alum Stratton Leopold—served free Pirate's Treasure ice cream as students and alumni played games of cornhole in Johnson Square.

Mark your calendar for the 2016 Paint the Town event, which will be held on April 8. To learn more about how you can get involved, please contact Armstrong's Office of Advancement at 912.344.2541 or visit [paintthetownmaroon.com](http://paintthetownmaroon.com).





## Biology Department Secures National Science Foundation Grant

The National Science Foundation, a federal agency that supports research and education in science and engineering through grants and cooperative agreements, recently awarded \$144,777 to Armstrong's Biology department.

The two-year grant, which began in June and runs through May 2017, will allow the Department of Biology to fund the operation of a Next-Generation Genetic Sequencer, which gives scientists the ability to analyze an organism's genetic code. This technology is rapidly becoming a game-changer in the medical world, solving complex patient issues. The Biology department will also purchase 3-D technology, a flow tank and advanced computer software to enhance student understanding of evolution.

## University Hosts 2015 Engineering Design Challenge

In April, Armstrong's Engineering Studies program hosted the 2015 Engineering Design Challenge, which showcased the ingenuity and creativity of students from Johnson High School, Beach High School, Savannah High School, Savannah Early College, Savannah Christian Preparatory School, Richmond Hill High School, Savannah Arts Academy and Jenkins High School.

Each team, comprised of four to six students, designed and built a battery-powered, multiterrain wheelchair with the assistance of a project mentor and Armstrong Engineering students. The final competition included a 40-meter race, a timed maneuver course, a demonstration of safety features and a design poster presentation with an evaluation by engineers from Gulfstream Aerospace and other local companies.





# A YEAR OF ARMSTRONG *Anniversaries*

Celebrating 80 Years of Educating, 50 Years on Savannah's Southside

BY MELANIE SIMÓN





“Armstrong offered an exhilarating learning experience. It was the best education of my life.”

— Dr. Irving Victor, former chief of staff for all three of Savannah’s hospitals and co-founder of the Chatham County Emergency Medical Service



ARMSTRONG JUNIOR COLLEGE

Armstrong State University rings in 80 years since its founding and 50 years on the southside campus during the 2015-16 academic year, celebrating its evolution from a junior college in a small, Southern town to its current status as a leading state university in one of the region’s most important cities.

Since its inception, Armstrong has been a Savannah beacon. Armstrong Junior College, a city-funded, two-year institution founded by Mayor Thomas Gamble and housed in the elegant Armstrong House at Bull and Gaston Streets, defied the Depression era by opening its doors on Sept. 17, 1935, with 175 students. Gifted to the city by the family of shipping magnate George F. Armstrong, the college was headed by President Ernest A. Lowe in its earliest days.

The college was a bright light for many, allowing students to earn a college degree in fields ranging from English and math to biology and government. Without a formal gym, downtown venues like Forsyth Park, the YMCA and the old Desoto Hotel hosted physical education classes, as well as tennis, basketball and swimming.

“The price was right,” remembers Dr. Irving Victor, a Savannah native who served as Armstrong’s class valedictorian in 1941. Awarded a four-year scholarship to Johns Hopkins

University, he was assured by his father that Baltimore living was unaffordable. “Armstrong was the key to me being able to go into medicine. If it had not been for Armstrong, I wouldn’t have been able to go to college.”

Victor says the education he received at Armstrong launched his future successes, which included serving as chief of staff for all three of Savannah’s hospitals and as co-founder of the Chatham County Emergency Medical Service.

“Armstrong offered an exhilarating learning experience,” says Victor. “It was the best education of my life.”

Soon after, World War II transformed Armstrong’s curriculum with a new science building fitted with state-of-the-art equipment and coursework that included navigation, map reading, aerodynamics, military technology, nautical astronomy and wartime French. In 1943, the mass exodus of male students left Armstrong with an almost all-female base.

After the war, G.I. Bills funded college degrees for returning soldiers, who set up a veterans’ program on campus. A decade later, Korean War veterans jump-started Armstrong’s new Evening College program, as well as Armstrong’s legacy of providing continuing education, skills and enrichment to military members, working professionals and other nontraditional students.



The fall term of 1957 got underway with a record enrollment of 1,267 students attending classes in six buildings located throughout downtown Savannah. Additional programs continued to stretch into the community with the establishment of a Technical Institute, providing off-campus courses.

## Changing Times

In 1963, Otis S. Johnson became the first African-American student admitted to Armstrong. State troopers were posted on-site to keep the peace on his first day of class. For the first few weeks, Savannah NAACP president W.W. Law arranged for a taxi to shuttle Johnson to and from the Armstrong House to ensure his safety.

Candid about the difficulties he faced from the community at large in the 1960s, this future Savannah mayor was quietly determined to earn his degree from Armstrong and to focus on his liberal arts studies. He credits two Armstrong professors, Bill Coyle and Orson Beecher, with changing his philosophical and political views and paving the way for his future role as a community leader.

"Bill Coyle really set me on a path in terms of political ideology," says Johnson of the political science professor. "It was so exciting. I give him credit for setting me on the path to become a history major. He was very inspiring."

Orson Beecher, a beloved figure at Armstrong who taught French, Spanish and history for 40 years, also welcomed Johnson in his introductory philosophy course. He challenged the young honors student to reach in new directions.

"Those two professors set a climate there for me in terms of intellectual growth," explains Johnson, who graduated with an associate's degree in June 1964. As for his own legacy, Johnson, who was presented an Armstrong Distinguished Alumnus Award in 2005, says, "I'm extremely proud to have been the first African-American to attend and graduate from Armstrong. I opened up the doors for other African-Americans to attend that institution."

As Johnson's enrollment marked a historic shift, Armstrong's soon-to-be new campus, located on 250 wooded acres on Savannah's southside, would too. Situated on a tract of land gifted by the Mills B. Lane Foundation and Donald Livingston in 1962, the newly anointed four-year Armstrong State College permanently relocated to the southside in December 1965.

## A New Era on Savannah's Southside

The expansive campus was anchored by a central quadrangle and eight new buildings offering a range of educational programs. Armstrong officially began a new era in January 1966, welcoming students to the new southside campus.

Further progress came in 1968, as the first baccalaureate degrees were awarded and Armstrong received notice of accreditation as a senior institution by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

By the 1970s, bell bottoms and miniskirts replaced the formal attire of previous decades, and school spirit was thriving with the



addition of a basketball team. Fully incorporated into Savannah's southside identity by then, the grounds bloomed with lush landscaping, and a fountain served as a popular gathering spot.

"I always felt that Armstrong was a really good fit for me," says Janet D. Stone, who entered Armstrong as a professor of European history in 1975 and remained until her retirement in 2007. "There was a strong emphasis on teaching and liberal arts. It was a good place."

Stone also authored *From the Mansion to the University: A History of Armstrong Atlantic State University*, a book tracing Armstrong's development through the years. Although Stone never taught at the original downtown campus, she worked with faculty who shared vivid stories from that time. And when the last of that generation retired and newer faculty members were unaware of the previous campus's life and times, Stone was in a position to bridge the gap.

"I felt fortunate to be in the middle generation," she notes. "I felt like I had a foot on both sides of the college's history."

For 10 years, Stone spent summers sifting and organizing Armstrong archival materials, much of which is now housed in an impressive Lane Library collection, unearthing Savannah's past to weave a tale of the university's rich history.

"Armstrong reflects the history of the community," she notes. "It's a strong feature of the university. The close relationship between the college and the community was very much a part of my thinking in writing the book."

## DID YOU KNOW?

Armstrong has approximately 35,000 alumni, including community leaders, scientists, physicians, nurses, teachers, computer programmers, editors, actors, film producers and entrepreneurs.



## Treasure Savannah Celebrates Five Years of Giving Back

President Linda M. Bleicken's inauguration in 2010 also marked another important university induction: the launch of Armstrong's biannual Treasure Savannah day of service.

Marking its fifth anniversary this year, Treasure Savannah has become a pillar of the university and an important way to give back to the community. Over the past five years, the event has contributed more than 8,000 volunteer hours to help local organizations and individuals in need.

"Faculty, staff, students and alumni have all contributed to the success of Treasure Savannah," says Bleicken. "Armstrong has an illustrious 80-year history of giving back to our community. Treasure Savannah continues that legacy."

Treasure Savannah is held each fall and spring, with volunteers donating their time to organizations across the region. Armstrong students, faculty and staff have volunteered at dozens of nonprofit organizations, including the Savannah Chatham Animal Shelter, American Cancer Society, America's Second Harvest Food Bank, Southside Fire Department, Union Mission Grace House Kitchen and West Broad Street YMCA. They have also cleaned up trash at Forsyth Park, a Girl Scout camp and local homeless encampments.

Area nonprofits look forward to Treasure Savannah each semester and appreciate receiving so much support from the university. Karrie Henry, founder of the therapeutic equestrian nonprofit Hoofs for Healing, has enjoyed having Armstrong students volunteer on her ranch for the past two years.

"It's just wonderful to have all of these hands here to help us," she said. "I'm so thankful for Armstrong."

Michelle Ramos, a junior majoring in history, also anticipates Armstrong's citywide day of service each semester.

"Treasure Savannah is a day where we show the city that the students in the area care," she said. "It's good for morale and it's good for the community. It's important for all of us to give back."

*"The work that occurs on Saturday mornings through Treasure Savannah helps local agencies and makes a real difference for people right here in our community. We are going to so many places that really can use our help."*

— Armstrong President Linda M. Bleicken

## Moving Forward

Throughout the '80s and '90s, fiber optic cable spread across campus, and private telephones and personal desktop computers filled faculty offices. Other important introductions included student housing; a major academic building, University Hall; new graduate programs in health professions, history and criminal justice; a 5,000-seat sports Alumni Arena and the Armstrong Athletic Hall of Fame.

In 1996, the college gained university status and a new name: Armstrong Atlantic State University. The core curriculum also changed shape, replacing the academic quarter rotation with a semester system, which staggered classes more effectively. Campus grounds also continued to flourish with the establishment of an arboretum.

Armstrong expanded to Hinesville in 1998, with the addition of the Liberty Center, which offered classes to Fort Stewart military personnel and their families. Deeply embedded in the Liberty County community, the Armstrong Liberty Center today offers associate degree tracks in liberal studies, criminal justice, business and a variety of health profession areas, as well as bachelor's degrees in liberal studies and criminal justice. Fees for all active-duty military are waived, and a new 21,000 square-foot facility will open this December to meet the needs of rising enrollment in Liberty County.

Leading Armstrong into the 21st century was President Thomas Z. Jones, who fostered community relations and oversaw a number of dramatic changes to the campus, including expansion to a neighboring shopping center with a state-of-the-art conference center for academic and community activities.

The Hispanic Outreach and Leadership at Armstrong (HOLA) initiative, which provides student support services and cultural awareness programs, was founded with a grant from the Goizueta Foundation to support Latino student recruitment and retention. Smart classrooms in the new Science Center, fitted with chemistry, biology and physics labs, also opened, as did a new student-housing complex, Compass Point and the Student Recreation Center.

The Peach Belt Conference awarded Armstrong its inaugural President's Academic Award for the 2006-07 academic year, and in 2009, the men's and women's tennis teams won the NCAA Division II national championships for the second year in a row.

That same year, Jones retired and Armstrong's new president prepared to usher in a new era of success.

*continued on page 16 >*

### ARMSTRONG QUICK FACTS

**Student-professor ratio: 19:1**

**Full-time faculty: 263**

**Students receiving financial aid: 85%**

**Minority representation: 38.5%**

**States represented: 45**

**Countries represented: 72**

### ATHLETICS

**National Championships: 12**

**Peach Belt Championships: 91**

**Mascot: Pirate**

**Colors: Maroon and gold**

# phenomenal faculty

## Robert Terry, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of English  
Director, Professional Communication and  
Leadership Program

Teaching at Armstrong since: 2013

**Best part of my job:** "The connection I'm able to make with a smaller campus population in a highly connected city."

**L**ike many Armstrong faculty members, Assistant Professor of English Robert Terry wears two hats. He's an enthusiastic instructor, as well as the dedicated director of Armstrong's innovative Professional Communication and Leadership (PCL) graduate program.

"I'm passionate about the PCL program," Terry says. "This program responds to communication challenges in the 21st century workplace."

Designed for both traditional and nontraditional students, the interdisciplinary program appeals to those who seek professional training and education to advance their careers.

With his impressive background, Terry is perfectly suited to direct the program. He earned an M.A. in English and a Ph.D. in Rhetoric and Composition from the University of Louisville. Additionally, from 1995 to 2005, he worked in the information technology field, writing a number of technical manuals.

Terry's real-world experience, coupled with his academic credentials, reinforces his belief in the value of writing in the workplace. One particular aspect of the PCL program that invigorates this popular professor is Armstrong's diverse student body.

"The students are all ages and come from all types of industries and businesses," he explains. "It's an exciting time in class when you see that expertise merging."

Terry is a strong proponent of interacting with students, refusing to simply stand in front of the classroom and lecture. Rather, he incorporates simulations and builds assignments on one another. As a result, his students give him rave reviews and often write thank-you notes, which he displays in his office as proud reminders.

"If the brick and mortar classroom is going to continue to have validity, it can't just be an information server site," he explains. "It has to be about relationships."

Among the courses in Armstrong's PCL curriculum that focus on writing and management are Professional Communication Strategies, Technical Editing and Organizational Communication in Diverse Contexts, which includes theories and principles founded on working in ethnically diverse organizations and in international contexts.

Terry's favorite part about belonging to the Armstrong family is the connection he makes with students on campus and the strong, historic relationship the college has with the city.

"Armstrong is part of Savannah's intellectual ecosystem," he raves. "Being a part of that is really exciting."



## **Nandi A. Marshall, DrPH, MPH, CHES**

**Assistant Professor of Health Sciences**

Teaching at Armstrong since: 2013

**Best part of my job:** "At Armstrong, I feel like I am part of a family. I absolutely love that I have the opportunity to help this family grow and have a positive impact on our campus community and the community at large."

**T**o use the words "busy," "involved" and "committed" to describe the life of Health Sciences Assistant Professor Nandi Marshall would be an understatement.

In addition to teaching several courses at Armstrong, mentoring students and serving as an advisor to several campus groups, Marshall is working on a Plan4Health grant, in conjunction with Armstrong, to promote access to healthy food in Chatham County, and serves on the Science Board of the prestigious American Public Health Association (APHA), the largest public health organization in the world.

"I am extremely excited and honored to have been appointed to the APHA Science Board this year," says Marshall, who is responsible for reviewing proposed policy statements for scientific merit. "APHA represents the core values of public health, for which I hold the utmost respect and continue to share with my students."

Marshall, who earned a Master of Public Health from East Stroudsburg University and a DrPH in Community Health Behavior and Education from Georgia Southern University, teaches a variety of courses in both the undergraduate and graduate public health programs. She particularly enjoys teaching Social Impact on Health, a course she developed which explores the social determinants of health. She also serves as the department's practicum coordinator for the MPH program, which allows her the opportunity to advise master's students on their practicum experiences and to provide varying levels of support.

In addition, Marshall is a co-advisor for the Student African-American Sisterhood (SAAS), a faculty advisor to the Tau Alpha Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. and a member of Armstrong's Strategic Planning and Resource Council II. She also sits on the university's Institutional Review Board and participates as a Parliamentarian for Armstrong's Caucus for Equality and Progress.

Although she is deeply involved with academic advisement and various campus organizations, student exchanges are what matter most to this accomplished faculty member.

"I have the privilege of students dropping by to check in with me," she says. "These are students whom I have had the pleasure of teaching or meeting over the past three years. They value my opinion, and I am honored to serve as their mentor."



**"Armstrong offers an amazing opportunity for undergraduate research and a remarkable science program."**

— Thomas Ludwig,  
Biology major



# IN THE LAB

## STUDENT RESEARCH EXPLORES NEW FERN SPECIES

BY POLLY POWERS STRAMM  
AND BRITTANY McCLURE

Assistant Professor of Biology Melanie Link-Pérez and her student assistants are making impressive strides in the lab that will likely have an impact on plant conservation, as well as science education.

The research that Link-Pérez and her students are conducting at Armstrong will make it easier for primary and secondary school teachers to bring living plants into the classroom.

"Students love to grow plants, but teachers face logistical challenges like space, light and water," explains Link-Pérez, who earned her Ph.D. in botany from Miami University of Ohio. "We're trying to remedy this and make people aware of how important plants are to their lives and the world."

In addition, several new fern species in the genus *Adiantopsis* have been discovered by the Link-Pérez lab. Both areas of research are detailed in soon-to-be published articles prepared by this Biology professor and her hard-working students.

Link-Pérez is quick to point out that the discoveries in her lab wouldn't have progressed without the excellent work of several undergraduate researchers, many of whom were introduced to the lab in their first year at Armstrong.

"If students get research experience early on, they have the opportunity to develop as both scientists and scholars," she explains. "It's really exciting when you see students become collaborators in the lab."

Ashley Catron, a senior from Warner Robins, Ga., majoring in biology, couldn't agree more.

"Research is a wonderful chance for students to explore and narrow down their options," she explains. "It provides students with a close relationship with professors for questions, learning material and hands-on experience you might not obtain elsewhere."

Catron is contributing to the lab's investigation into the role of hybridization in the diversification of *Adiantopsis*.

"We basically take plant DNA and break it down, then compare it side by side, nucleotide by nucleotide, until we can confirm or reject certain maternal or paternal influences on the plant," she explains. "We then use this information to redesign the phylogenetic tree. It's kind of like trying to put together your family tree with very little knowledge of who your ancestors were, and then trying to piece your tree together one test at a time."

Catron describes working with Link-Pérez as "a blessing."

"Dr. Link-Pérez is a brilliant professor," she raves. "She is always five steps ahead of us and has been there for every question or period of frustration to guide us through. This experience has provided me with the tools, insight and knowledge to decipher how to get to the next step in my career."

Thomas Ludwig, a senior from Roswell, Ga., also majoring in biology, appreciates the opportunities for hands-on scientific research at Armstrong. Although he initially planned to pursue a career in forensic science after college, he is now considering opportunities in the research field.

"Armstrong offers an amazing opportunity for undergraduate research and a remarkable science program," he says. "I'm grateful for the learning experiences I've enjoyed in the lab at Armstrong."

# amazing ALUMNI



## AUDREY GREGORY '01

CEO

*Placentia-Linda Hospital*

B.S. in Nursing, M.S. in Nursing and  
M.S. in Healthcare Administration

Audrey Gregory, an Armstrong graduate who serves as CEO of Placentia-Linda Hospital in Orange County, Calif., takes great pride in the education she received from her alma mater.

Gregory earned a bachelor's in nursing, as well as master's degrees in nursing and healthcare administration. Today, she oversees an acclaimed 114-bed hospital and advanced healthcare facility that includes multiple locations in southern California.

"Armstrong prepared me both at the undergrad and the graduate level," she says. "The programs in which I was enrolled were robust in their content and prepared me for my current role leading a complex healthcare network."

Today, her experience is vast. Gregory has more than 20 years of healthcare experience and previously served as COO of St. Francis Hospital, a 519-bed facility in Memphis, Tenn., as well as the director of emergency services and chief nursing officer for Delray Medical Center, a 493-bed facility in Delray Beach, Fla. She also went on to earn a Ph.D. in global leadership, concentrating in corporate and organizational management.

This accomplished healthcare leader credits Armstrong with setting the stage for her success.

Notably, classes were designed for working students, which allowed for manageable scheduling. Through her studies, she enjoyed professional nursing and leadership training, as well as a solid grasp of the organizational, financial, legal and managerial components of health services as they relate to a dynamic and evolving healthcare delivery system.

Enrolled as a nontraditional, commuter student who treasured the ability to be able to participate in traditional college experiences, Gregory greatly appreciated Armstrong's professors and the lasting relationships she formed during her time in Savannah.

"The faculty was able to expound on real-life experiences that I continue to apply today," she notes. "My professors were truly invested in my personal success. I value the personal and professional ties that I formed during my time at Armstrong."



## TRAVIS JONES '12

*Assignment Editor*

*WJCL-TV*

*BFA in Photography*

In 2013, Armstrong photography grad Travis Jones walked into Savannah television station WJCL, hoping to fill a production assistant position. Today, he serves as an assignment editor, producing and managing editorial decisions for the local news source.

"I had every intention of working my way up the ladder," Jones says. "My degree at Armstrong helped with that opportunity. After all, in the news industry, a local with a related degree from a major college also in the area is an attractive prospect."

Raised in Savannah, Armstrong was a natural choice for Jones, as he was eager to enroll in a solid photography program, minus the high cost often associated with his preferred area of study in private university settings.

"I knew I could go to Armstrong, get a good education and not be buried up to my ears in student loan debt," he notes. "Furthermore, the campus seemed more open and welcome. I had been looking at other schools, but Armstrong seemed to embrace its new students with a warmer reception."

Armstrong's Fine Arts department cushions its students with small classes and regional opportunities for internships, as well as exhibitions and outreach with other student artists. He enjoyed taking core classes in tandem with visual art foundations like design, painting, drawing and art history. For Jones, the university's professors created lasting impressions.

"Many of the professors I had at Armstrong left an indelible mark on the man I've become today," he notes. "I think the simplest, most relevant takeaway is that they taught me how to be an adult."

His experiences as a student at Armstrong provided solid framework for his current role at WJCL.

"As an art major, you've got to find creative ways to use the tools you're given, no matter how limited your resources," he says. "You have to develop a product that will captivate your audience and leave them both satisfied and wanting more."



continued from page 9

## Armstrong Flourishes

On Sept. 17, 2010, on the anniversary of Armstrong's founding day, Linda M. Bleicken was inaugurated as Armstrong's seventh president and first female leader.

According to Dr. Irving Victor, Armstrong's current president continues to push the university to new heights.

"I admire her greatly," he says. "I think she's the best thing to ever happen to Armstrong. She's knowledgeable and has enormous vision for the future."

Otis Johnson agrees, adding: "I think she is a godsend to my alma mater. She wants to have diversity and inclusion. I think Armstrong has taken a big step forward in her presidency."

A 2013 report released by the University System of Georgia's Selig Center estimated Armstrong's economic impact on the region at \$214 million and 2,276 jobs. Today the tobacco-free campus, renamed Armstrong State University in 2014, is home to acclaimed programs, talented faculty members and hard-working students.

"Armstrong is building on its legacy as a strong academic institution," notes Robert Smith, Armstrong's provost and vice president for academic affairs. "We have exceptional faculty and staff who are dedicated to the success of our students."

On point with global trends, Armstrong promotes interdisciplinary learning, with recent approval for \$1.8 million in design funding for a new College of Health Professions facility, which will foster interprofessional healthcare education.

With a College Union Board; more than 100 clubs and organizations; an active campus hosting dozens of plays, concerts, art exhibits, lectures, films and other presentations each year; four residential housing complexes that are home to more than 1,400 students; and a state-of-the-art Student Union outfitted with a lecture hall, movie theater, food court, ballroom, bookstore



and coffee shop, campus life is livelier than ever.

A new \$1.5 million state-of-the-art tennis complex is currently under construction on campus, offering another boost to the student body, which is comprised of more than 7,000 students. A recent \$1.1 million TRIO Student Support Services grant from the U.S. Department of Education will assist low-income, first-generation and disabled student participants with a host of academic services.

Ranked 12th on the prestigious Best for Vets: Colleges 2015 List by *Military Times*, Armstrong advances its long-term commitment to the region with a new Military Resource and Veterans Services Center that offers internal and external services to make support more accessible to current and prospective military-affiliated students. Earlier this year, President Bleicken also signed a Landings Military Family Relief Fund with Savannah Technical College to establish a scholarship fund designed to support local military spouses and to enable them to complete college.

Reflective of the times, Armstrong has an active and diverse student population who come from 45 states, the District of Columbia and 72 countries around the world. Armstrong's 100 Black Men of Savannah's Collegiate 100 Chapter garners national accolades, based on community service and mentoring, and the campus extends its reach to the international community as well. Armstrong received a \$600,000 grant from Lumina Foundation for Education and serves as one of 12 institutions nationally that leads regional partnerships that promote Latino student success.

Offering more than 100 academic degrees and programs, from associate to doctoral degrees, Armstrong nurtures a new generation of leaders in fields ranging from business economics to cyber security.

"By any measure, Armstrong's future is bright," says Bleicken. "I'm grateful for our students, faculty and staff, who make the university such a vibrant community. I'm delighted to celebrate our year of anniversaries together."

**LEARN MORE:** Visit [armstrong.edu/convocation](http://armstrong.edu/convocation) to watch a video about Armstrong's 80-year history.



# president's report

**W**elcome to the latest President's Report, which offers a look back at some of Armstrong's most notable accomplishments over the past year.

Armstrong was originally founded in 1935, in response to a need for expanded higher education opportunities in our community. While much has grown and changed over the years, the university remains dedicated to student success and to being a strong community partner.

Today, we are known for our academic excellence, community service and extraordinary faculty, who offer our students transformative learning experiences and rigorous undergraduate research opportunities that many institutions reserve for graduate-level students.

We're also known for our impressive legacy in NCAA Division II athletics. Over the years, Armstrong has won 12 national championships and brought home 91 Peach Belt Conference titles.

As we celebrate the 80th anniversary of Armstrong's founding, we look back upon our rich history and look ahead to our bright future. From this vantage point, it's easy to see that the Armstrong community is working hard to cultivate the next generation of leaders.

I'm honored to be part of this proud tradition and am confident that we will continue to support student success for many years to come.

Warmest regards,

Linda M. Bleicken  
President

# president's report



## \$1.8 Million in Design Funding Approved for New College of Health Professions Facility

The University System of Georgia's Board of Regents and the Georgia General Assembly approved \$1.8 million in design funding for a new College of Health Professions center at Armstrong's main campus in Savannah. The new facility will be part of a vibrant complex of two structures, combining a renovated Ashmore Hall with a new state-of-the-art facility designed to encourage interprofessional healthcare education.

## Armstrong Awarded \$1.1 Million TRIO Student Support Services Grant

Armstrong was recently awarded a \$1.1 million TRIO Student Support Services grant from the U.S. Department of Education. This five-year grant will assist 140 eligible low-income, first-generation and disabled student participants with academic advising, an individual academic success plan with an academic coach, financial planning and tutoring. Students will receive assistance applying to graduate and professional schools, career counseling, peer and faculty mentoring, study skill development, direct financial support and exposure to cultural activities in Savannah.

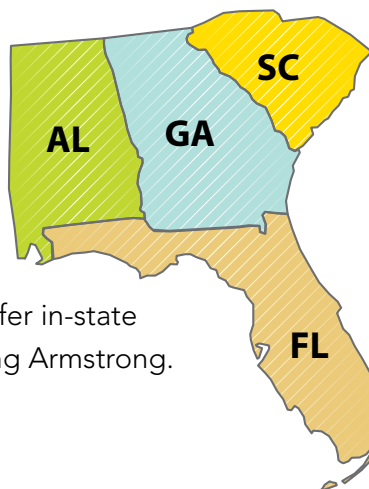
## \$1.5 Million Tennis Taking Shape on Armstrong Campus

The University System of Georgia Board of Regents approved the construction of a new \$1.5 million tennis complex, bringing the university's 12-time NCAA Division II National Champions back on campus to play home matches for the first time since 2009. The complex will be located along Compass Point Drive and will feature 12 hard courts, seating and scoreboards.





## In-State Tuition Now Offered to Fla., S.C. and Ala. Residents

Armstrong now offers in-state tuition to undergraduate residents of Florida, South Carolina and Alabama. In March, the University System of Georgia's Board of Regents voted to offer in-state tuition at 10 public universities, including Armstrong.



Armstrong enjoys unprecedented levels of social media engagement:

-  15,132 followers on Facebook
-  1,749 followers on Twitter
-  1,229 followers on Instagram
-  15,192 followers on LinkedIn



## Armstrong Signs Memorandum of Understanding with China's Yichun University

In August, Armstrong officials signed a memorandum of understanding with Yichun University, located in Yichun City, China, allowing faculty and students to exchange teaching and learning opportunities. Each university will aim for the exchange of students and faculty for program development, researching and teaching.

## Second Annual Moveable Feast Lecture Series

The second annual Moveable Feast Lecture Series, presented by the College of Liberal Arts, kicked off on Sept. 24 with History professor, Michael Hall, addressing an eager audience at the American Legion Ballroom. This popular lecture series, held in venues throughout Savannah, celebrates the vital role the liberal arts play in keeping the ideal of democratic education alive.



## TOP 10 UNDERGRADUATE MAJORS AT ARMSTRONG

1. NURSING/PRE-NURSING
2. BIOLOGY
3. REHABILITATION SCIENCES
4. PSYCHOLOGY
5. RADIOLOGIC SCIENCES/ PRE-RADIOLOGIC SCIENCES
6. HEALTH SCIENCE
7. CRIMINAL JUSTICE
8. LIBERAL STUDIES
9. COMPUTER SCIENCE
10. ENGLISH

## Savannah Graduates Initiative Launches

Savannah Graduates, a new initiative designed to create a more educated workforce in Savannah-Chatham County, officially kicked off on Feb. 6 at the Armstrong Center.

More than 100 community leaders, including Armstrong President Linda M. Bleicken, joined forces to launch this special collaboration between area businesses, universities and nonprofit organizations to increase college completion and post-high school credentials in Chatham County. The goal is to increase the percentage of the local workforce with post-high school credentials from 38 percent to 48 percent — or 85,000 individuals — by 2025.



# donors' report



As Armstrong celebrates 80 years in Savannah and 50 years on the southside campus, we all can look back and marvel at the changes this university has experienced.

From our early days as a downtown junior college to our current status as a renowned state university, Armstrong continues to impact the lives of students, our local community and the region in meaningful ways. Thanks to the generosity of Foundation Trustees, corporate donors, alumni, faculty and staff, we are able to make higher education accessible to more students than ever before.

During the last fiscal year, Armstrong's Office of Advancement worked closely with the Armstrong Foundation Trustees, The Alumni Association and friends of the university, raising more than \$1.1 million in private support. Most importantly, the university realized a significant increase in the number of overall donors, which jumped by more than 700 since FY13.

Armstrong is and will always be focused on student success. Donors have the power to change lives every day by offering not only financial assistance, but hope.

Thank you for your support. Thank you for your generosity and for helping us transform lives. Thank you for your commitment to Armstrong.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William Kelso '88".

William Kelso '88  
Vice President for Advancement

## THE POWER OF GIVING

Want to learn more about how you can support Armstrong?

Visit [armstrong.edu/give](http://armstrong.edu/give).



# CARLEIGH BUCK '17

Hinesville, Georgia  
*PSYCHOLOGY*

Recipient of a General  
Armstrong Scholarship

For Carleigh Buck, a second-generation Armstrong student, Pirate pride runs deep.

"Seeing my mother excel at Armstrong and then feeling so welcome when I came myself really cemented Armstrong as my number-one choice," she says. "I felt the warmth at Armstrong's campus more than at any other campus I visited."

Buck's positive experiences created the inspiration to pursue a degree in Psychology, a major she had never before considered.

"At Armstrong, I found the perfect balance," she explains. "The university environment is defined by support and devotion to knowledge."

During her first year, Buck took classes at Armstrong's Savannah campus and at the Liberty Center in Hinesville, earning a 4.0 GPA, as well as entrance into the Armstrong Honors Program.

"Whether I needed help, a quiet place to study, a new perspective on a difficult course or support from the faculty, Armstrong provided me with more than I could've ever asked for from my college," she says. "I know Armstrong will be a driving force in achieving all of my new goals for the future."

**ERIK LEON '16****Hilton Head Island,  
South Carolina  
COMPUTER SCIENCE****Recipient of a Goizueta  
Foundation Scholarship**

With financial assistance from a Goizueta Foundation Scholarship at Armstrong, attending college became a reality for Erik Leon, a Computer Science major who has dedicated many hours to volunteering with various campus organizations like CAMINO, Hispanic Outreach & Leadership at Armstrong (HOLA) and TechFest.

"The Goizueta scholarship has made it possible for my family to afford my college education," he says. "Not only that, the community of Goizueta Scholars is a wonderful support system. These are students who know exactly what I am going through, and whose life stories sound very similar to mine. Having this group of people who share an experience is like having a second family."

Leon has maintained a 3.8 GPA at Armstrong and hopes to work in software engineering or web application and development after graduation.

"I plan to stay local and own a business that provides IT services," he says. "I want to be my own boss and lead a team of people."

Leon is proud to start strong and says he knew Armstrong was the perfect fit the moment he set foot on campus.

"When I visited Armstrong, I didn't have the same overwhelming feeling I got when visiting the big schools," he recalls. "I really loved the small size and student-to-teacher ratio. It felt close-knit and comfortable."

# TAYLOR ALVAREZ '15

Mesa, Arizona

*POLITICAL SCIENCE*

Recipient of the Mary Ann & J.B. McDowell Honors Leadership Scholarship, the Steve Rhee Scholarship and the José de Arimatéia da Cruz Scholarship

Presidential Honors Scholar Taylor Alvarez doesn't mince words when she talks about her future. The soon-to-be graduate's dream job is to become a foreign service officer for the U.S. State Department, and she's well on her way to achieving her goal.

An Arizona native who attended high school in metro Atlanta, she once considered studying aerospace, but altered her course after enrolling at Armstrong and discovering the field of political science.

"Armstrong has opened up so many opportunities and brought great insight into my future," she says. "My interest in continuing on to graduate school for global security and intelligence has only grown over the past year due to the amazing faculty."

Alvarez excels in her classes while maintaining a 4.0 GPA, working as a resident assistant and holding a position on Student Court. This aspiring diplomat is currently applying for graduate programs and federal internships with the State Department and similar institutions.

"I wake up every day thankful that I am one step closer to reaching my goal of helping repay the generosity of my family and donors," she says. "I look forward to being a productive member of this inspiring world we live in."



# GRACE AGONSI '15

Imo State, Nigeria  
NURSING

Recipient of a  
Kaye Kole Scholarship

International student Grace Agonsi knew Armstrong would be the perfect environment to prepare her for a successful career in nursing.

"The fact that Armstrong is in every sector or business within the community was enough proof that Armstrong was the college I needed," she says. "I saw results everywhere."

A recipient of the Kaye Kole Scholarship, Agonsi appreciates Armstrong's top-notch nursing program and commitment to interprofessional healthcare. The university's high standards of performance have fueled her own commitment to excellence, as she serves on organizations like the board for the Armstrong Association of Nursing Students, a chapter of the National Student Nurses Association.

Receiving a scholarship, she says, has been instrumental in her success on campus. The financial support she receives is helping this talented student reach her goals.





"Nursing is a profession where you can wear many hats," she explains. "You can be a teacher, an advocate and a counselor. I look forward to joining other amazing nurses in our life-saving journey. I started strong, and now I am finishing strong, thanks to Armstrong."

# FISCAL YEAR 2015 BY THE NUMBERS

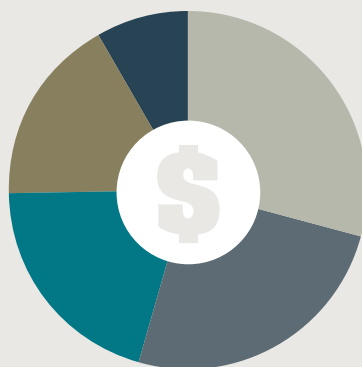
From July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015

**2,853**  
DONORS   
CONTRIBUTED GIFTS AND  
PLEDGES TOTALING  
**\$1,162,795**






## Breakdown by total to fund type

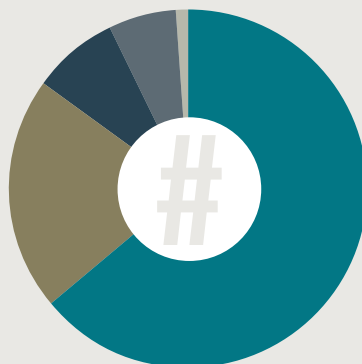
	Scholarships	\$612,619	52.7%
	Programs	\$335,370	28.8%
	Annual Fund	\$120,440	10.4%
	Athletics	\$54,509	4.7%
	Armstrong Commitment	\$39,856	3.4%

## OUR DONORS





### By Dollars Given

	Foundation	29%
	Business/Organization	25%
	Alumni	20%
	Friend	17%
	Faculty/Staff	8%



### By Number of Donors

	Alumni	64%
	Friend	21%
	Faculty/Staff	8%
	Business/Organization	6%
	Foundation	1%

## THANKS TO YOU

**ALUMNI  
GIVING  
increased  
22.7%**

**827**  
new donors gave  
**\$222,393**  
in gifts.

**106**  
ARMSTRONG SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS  
**303** students received an average  
scholarship of \$1,460 from  
the Armstrong Foundation.

**57%** of  
faculty and staff  
participated in the  
Campus Campaign,  
beating the national  
average of 25%!

## NEW FUNDS

Sheldon Kanis Music Scholarship • Margaret F. Perryman Scholarship Fund • Robert E. Lee Morgan Scholarship  
Kaye Kole Scholarship Fund • Lorrie and Kevin Hoffman Mathematics Faculty Research Award • The Landings Military  
Spouse Academic Assistance Fund • Georgia Power STEM Initiatives • Faye Kirschner Scholarship • Cynthia Howard  
Scholarship • William Donovan Perkins and Lalia Callaway Perkins Memorial Study Abroad Program Endowment

# Donor SPOTLIGHTS



## ROBERT & CASEY HOWARD

When Robert Howard arrived at Armstrong in 2012 to accept a position as chief information officer, he was coming home.

Howard was born and raised in Savannah and was thrilled to return to the area with his young family in tow and to spend quality time with his parents. Being able to once again live in the same city as his parents was “like a dream,” he explains. “It was the pinnacle of joy watching my parents with my kids. It was an unbelievable time.”

Just a few years prior, his mother, Cynthia Howard—affectionately known as “Grandci” to her grandchildren—was diagnosed with serious pulmonary issues, but was responding well to treatment. In May 2012, however, Cynthia’s symptoms returned with a vengeance.

When hospitalization became necessary, Cynthia felt better when respiratory therapists called in on the case treated her with a double dose of expertise and kindness.

“They gave her hope when hope was appropriate and comfort when hope ran out,” Howard recalls. The experience also taught this seasoned CIO that “behind every hospital chart is a person and a family.”

Sadly, Cynthia Howard died on May 20, 2012, at the age of 59. But Robert Howard says he won’t ever forget the care given to his mother by the respiratory therapists.

To honor his mother, he and his wife, Casey, established The Cynthia Howard Scholarship Fund at Armstrong. The award will be given annually to a respiratory therapy student who has an interest in autoimmune lung diseases.

As the parents of three young children, the Howards knew that funding the scholarship wouldn’t be easy, but it would be well worth the investment.

“We could have put that money in other places, but we wanted to honor my mom and keep her memory alive,” Howard says. At the same time, he adds:

“For anyone in our community,

this type of giving is not beyond the realm of possibility. Large or small gifts make a very real difference to the lives of students working hard to fulfill the dream of college. It feels good to help, and I know my mom would be proud of that.”

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“Large or small gifts make a very real difference to the lives of students working hard to fulfill the dream of college.”

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— Robert Howard

## THE ROBERT E. LEE "BOB" MORGAN ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP



Bob Morgan, a retired associate professor of Business Administration who taught at Armstrong in the late '60s and throughout the '70s, quickly became a figure beloved by many.

Former students love to share his stories, particularly his emphasis on the realities of the workplace, accountability and responsibility. Morgan left such a remarkable impression on previous students, in fact, that several anonymous alumni set up an endowed scholarship at Armstrong in his name to assist today's business economics students.

When informed of the Robert E. Lee Morgan Endowed scholarship, Morgan was greatly surprised and deeply honored by the gesture.

Please join the "Friends of Bob Morgan" in supporting this worthy scholarship. Each gift of \$100 or more to the Robert E. Lee Morgan Endowed Scholarship will be matched by a generous alumnus, up to \$25,000.

For more information, please contact Julie Gerbsch at [julie.gerbsch@armstrong.edu](mailto:julie.gerbsch@armstrong.edu) or visit [armstrong.edu/give](http://armstrong.edu/give) online. Please designate your gift by selecting "other" and then choosing the Robert E. Lee Morgan Endowed Scholarship.

## THA GROUP

Ellen Bolch, a healthcare pioneer and Armstrong State University Foundation board member, recognizes the value of Armstrong's scholarship opportunities.

That's why her in-home healthcare company, THA Group, served as a corporate sponsor for Armstrong's 2015 Paint the Town Maroon event, which raises scholarship money to support students with financial need and academic merit.

"I felt a strong sense of responsibility to make this corporate event a success," says Bolch, who holds a B.S. in Nursing and a graduate degree in Advance Practice Nursing and Healthcare Administration. "On the other hand, it's important to me personally to help find solutions because I am in the healthcare field."

As CEO of THA Group, a nationally recognized family of companies providing Medicare-certified home healthcare, nonprofit hospice care, private home care, telehealth, chronic disease management and population health delivery

services, Bolch has won Honeywell HomMed's National Lifetime Achievement Award in Telehealth and the AWWIN Monica LaRue Award, a regional honor given to a woman who motivates and inspires other women to pursue their dreams.

"I believe in getting more scholarship money out there," she explains. "We have to prepare this community for a 'silver tsunami' as Baby Boomers are retiring at the rate of 10,000 per day."

With 78 million Baby Boomers in the United States, there simply aren't enough healthcare workers to meet the growing demand. Every year, Armstrong produces more undergraduate health professionals than any public university in Georgia, connecting graduates with key healthcare jobs throughout the region.

"I would pit Savannah's healthcare system up against any community," she says. "I am so excited about Armstrong's growth and its leadership role in providing state-of-the-art healthcare education."



Ellen Bolch, CEO of THA Group

# CLASS NOTES

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## 1940s

**Herbie Griffin '42** was honored by St. Vincent's Academy in Savannah on Aug. 18, when the school named its gym floor after him. He coached basketball there for 22 years.

## 1970s

**Drew Ernst '74** was recognized as a Leader in the Field of Environmental Law by *Chambers USA Guide 2015*. He is a partner at HunterMaclean, which earned a spot on the guide's exclusive annual listing of the top law firms in the U.S.

**Randall Exley '71**, U.S. Army Auditor General, received the 2014 Distinguished Executive Presidential Rank Award in June.

**J. Thomas Maddox '79** published a book, *Following The Mist*, which discusses life-after-death experiences, grief, divorce and learning to let go.

**William Scarborough '75, '77** received the Securities and Exchange Commission Director's Award on March 9, in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the enforcement of federal securities law. He is an associate chief accountant in the SEC's enforcement division.

**Karen Watts '77, '80** was appointed executive vice president and chief nursing officer at Parkland Health and Hospital System in Dallas, Texas, on May 11.

## 1980s

**Sara Plaspohl '89, '92** received the Outstanding Faculty Award at the Women's Empowerment Awards on March 24 at Armstrong, where she is an assistant professor of health sciences.

**Kevin Stafford '86** has a new job as an executive specialty sales professional at healthcare giant, Sanofi US.

## 1990s

**Anne Bennett '93** completed a Doctor of Practical Nursing degree at Georgia Southern University on May 8.

**Christopher Boyce '99** and his wife, Gillian, live in York, Penn., where he is a corporal with the York Area Regional Police Department.

**Steve Bradshaw '96** was recently appointed business development manager of Delta Global Staffing, a subsidiary of Delta Air Lines.

**Melissa Hunt '99** is a clinical resource nurse in the Gwinnett Hospital System. She is married to fellow alum **Ben Hunt '00**.

**Paula Millhouse '96** has written a fantasy romance novel, *Chalvaren Rising*, which was recently published by Boroughs Publishing Group.

**Maggie Puccini '95** was installed as secretary of the Savannah Bar Association. She is a partner with the law firm of Bouhan Falligant.

**Helen Dunn Schandolph '91** has been recognized as a Clinical Social Work Association "Social Worker of the Year" and currently serves as an Armstrong counselor. She is enrolled in the Doctor of Education program at Valdosta State University.

**Heath Schroyer '95** was a finalist for the 2015 Hugh Durham National Coach of the Year Award during his first season as head basketball coach at University of Tennessee at Martin.

**Roger Smith '90** has been named president of the Savannah Council on World Affairs.

## 2000s

**Erica Acker '04** is an adjunct instructor of sales skills and marketing at Virginia College.

**Amber Montgomery '06** has been named senior manager of business analytics with The Coca-Cola Co. in Atlanta.

**Jennifer Brian '09** was featured in a *New York Times* article about siblings of the women on the U.S. World's Cup Soccer team. Her sister, Morgan Brian, is a midfielder.

**Carla Jennings MacDonald '02** is an online teacher with the State of Virginia Department of Education. She and husband, Logan, live in Louisiana.

**Brooke Palmer Ciolino '08** is the secretary for the Division of Business, head cheerleading coach and football sports photographer at Northwestern Oklahoma State University. Brooke also serves as a freelance writer for the sports section of the *Alva, Okla.*, newspaper.

**Tamara Combs '07** received the Janean Meigs Memorial Award from The University of Kansas School of Law, where she recently completed her Juris Doctor degree. The award recognizes her service to fellow students and the community.

**George Covington Jr. '02** is a kindergarten teacher in Dekalb County Schools.

**Chris Epperson '05** earned his first eGolf Gateway Tour title, winning the Palmetto Hall Championship and a \$14,000 cash prize on Hilton Head Island, S.C., on March 1.

**Tara Gergacs '07, '14** was inducted into the Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi in February.

**Leslie Freeman Harrison '02, '07, '10** has been appointed Epic Ambulatory principal trainer with the Casso Group, based in Baton Rouge, La.

**Michael Kaplan '08** published a new book, *Rise of the American Entrepreneur: The Greatest Generation V2.0*, as well as several articles on LinkedIn's Pulse. His company, Phase 2 Advantage, has partnered with the American Public University system to offer print and digital textbooks and podcasts for its Entrepreneurship Program.

**Joy Lane '06** was profiled by *Salt Lake City Weekly* in March about her career as a comedian.

**Patrick McClure '05** is a teacher at South Effingham High School. He is married to Emily Dudley McClure '06.

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**Shelby Reed '06** was promoted to director of financial aid at Briar Cliff University in Sioux City, Iowa, where she previously served as student accounts and Perkins Loan coordinator for two years.

**Jan Stevenson '00**, is the education program specialist and Section 619 coordinator for the Georgia Department of Education's Division for Special Education Services and Supports. She serves on the governing board of the National Association for the Education of Young Children and resides in Lithonia.

**LaSaundra Wade '04** was profiled by EdPrepMatters.net for her work with Armstrong student teacher Brianna Plachy at A.E. Beach High School in Savannah.

**Laiken Williams '00** has been named Local Musician of the Year in Savannah by Sponsors of New and Talented Artists.

## 2010s

**Kevyn Arnott '10** has a new position as product designer with Dropbox in the San Francisco Bay area.

**Olivia Singleton Bass '13** has been promoted to recruiting operations coordinator at TMX Finance.

**Lacy Brooks MA '14** received a 2015 Individual of Excellence Award from the Coastal Museums Association for her graduate thesis, "Savannah Municipal Slavery Research Project," which she completed during an internship with Savannah Research Library & Municipal Archives. Last year, her work on this project earned her the Graduate Level Award for Excellence in Student Research Using Historical Records from the Georgia Historical Records Advisory Council.

**Andrew Carnes '11** is the new director of economic development for the Gwinnett County Chamber of Commerce.

**Charles M. Smith Sr. '15** is a radiation therapist at Roper St. Francis Healthcare in Charleston, S.C. He is nationally certified and registered with the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists and licensed by the South Carolina Radiation Quality Standards Association.

**Anne Cordeiro MA '10** has been inducted as president of the Southside Rotary Club in Savannah.

**Zach Corliss '13, '15** has been elevated to assistant coach for the Armstrong men's basketball team. He previously served as the team's graduate assistant coach.

**R.J. Dennard '15** was drafted by the St. Louis Cardinals. He played first base for Armstrong and is the 26th Pirate to be selected in Major League Baseball's First-Year Player Draft.

**Tito Dixon '12** is working as a stage hand and technical assistant with the traveling dance competition, Encore DCS. He is also continuing his work as a hip hop dance instructor at Coastal Performing Arts Academy in Savannah.

**Aleksandra Filipovski '14** is the coordinator of business and finance for athletics at Wagner College in Staten Island, N.Y.

**Nick Godfrey '13** is the content coordinator for the office of public relations and marketing at Georgia Highlands College in Rome, Ga.

**Phil Gore '12** is the military education coordinator at Armstrong.

**Berkley Griffin '15** is currently in graduate school at North Carolina State University.

**Stephen Grotto '15** works as a tutor at Royce Learning Center/Chatham Academy in Savannah.

**Thomas Gunn '15** is a software engineer II at Navient and living in Lake City, Fla.

**Dee Hayward '15** has been signed to play professional basketball with the Leicester Riders of the Women's British Basketball League this season. She played four years for the Armstrong Pirates.

**Kathleen Henry '12** has been promoted to manager of trade services and research at World Trade Center Savannah.

**Brandon Hills '14** is currently serving in the U.S. Army.

**Nicholas Jackson '15** is a radiation therapist at Ashland Bellefonte Cancer Center in Ashland, Ky.

**Courtnee Pettus Macias '13** worked as a quality lab technician for Aerotek's plant in Pooler and then for Kerry Ingredients and Flavors, where she was promoted to microbiologist in March 2015.

**Dee Marira '15** is a sales associate at Build-a-Bear Workshop in Savannah.

**Maggie Petty Miller '14** has been accepted into Armstrong's Doctor of Physical Therapy program.

**Rachael Mitchell '12** lives in Moreno Valley, Calif., where she is a Doctor of Public Health student at Loma Linda University School of Public Health. She also serves as a peer health advisor at University of California Riverside Preventive Care Clinic.

**Emily Murphy '11** is the new engagement marketing manager for Martha Stewart Living in New York City.

**Ezenwanyi Onwuzuruoha '12, '15** has been appointed a speech pathologist with Marietta City Schools.

**Caroline Parrish '14** is a new sales representative at Vector Security in Savannah.

**Kendra Pickren '14** is a mental health technician at Coastal Harbor Treatment Center in Savannah.

# CLASS NOTES

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**Kenneth Thomas Pinion '13**, received his M.A. in English and Film Studies at North Carolina State University in May and began the Ph.D. program in Cultural Studies at Stony Brook University (SUNY) in August.

**Sherril Rawlinson MPH '15** is a U.S. Army second lieutenant in the Adjutant General Office at Schofield Barracks in Hawaii. She is married to John Rawlinson.

**Charles Smith Sr. '15** works as a radiation therapist at Roper St. Francis Healthcare in Charleston, S.C., and is licensed by the South Carolina Radiation Quality Standards Association.

**Katherine Soule '12 MA '14** has been accepted into the Ph.D. history program at Georgia State University.

**Jermaine Whirl '10** earned a Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership from Valdosta State University, graduating with high distinction and a 4.0 GPA. He is also one of 40 individuals selected to participate in Leadership Gwinnett's Class of 2016 program.

**Jodi Wilson '10, '14** is a science teacher at Effingham County High School. She earned a B.S. in Biology and a

Master of Arts in Teaching Secondary Science through the Noyce Scholars program at Armstrong.

**Juli Windsor '10** completed the Boston Marathon and is the subject of the documentary, *Little Person: Boston Strong*, which premiered on Discovery Life in April.

## MARRIAGES & ENGAGEMENTS

**Bruce Carr '10** is engaged to Jasmin Evans.

**Rene Clark IV '13** is engaged to Maran Irwin.

**Tara Gergacs Fisher '07, '14** married Troy Fisher on May 5 at Walt Disney World.

**Berkley Griffin '15** is engaged to **Brandon Hills '14**.

**Shanice King '12** married Antonio Solomon on June 27 in Savannah.

**Courtnee Pettus Macias '13** married **Steven Macias**, a current Armstrong student.

**Maggie Petty Miller '14** married Joshua Miller on Dec. 28.

**Rachael Mitchell '12** married Derek Reed on Aug. 8 in New Orleans, La.

**Robert Nix '12** married Andrea Marie Martucci on June 27 in Roswell, Ga.

**Taylor Rowland '14** is engaged to Tyler Barnett, a graduate student in Armstrong's Master of Health Services Administration program.

**Clifford Sanders III '94 '07** is engaged to Kristie Shaw.

**Desmond Wells '11** married Danielle Jones on Aug. 18.

## BIRTHS

**Kirk Barber '13** and **Katie Joyner '09** welcomed their son, Samuel Tyson Barber, on April 28.

**Amber Fordham '02, '08** and **Bryan Fordham '07** completed the adoption of their daughter, Kathleen, in December and their son, Presley, in July.

**Heather Orange Howard '07** and husband, Alex, welcomed a daughter on July 7. She joins big sister Bralynn.

**Desmond Wells '11** and Danielle Jones welcomed Desmond Jr. on April 22.

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## IN MEMORIAM

Virginia Cornell Aldrich '43, April 22, 2015

Jeffrey Roderick Beasley '68, May 13, 2015

Sarvan Bhatia, Professor of Business Administration, 1960-1980, Aug. 26, 2015

Beverly Lemmond Blackstone '99, May 3, 2015

Howard P. Blatner '80, June 16, 2015

Sheryl Ward Buttmer '83, July 12, 2015

Anita Pierce Campbell '72, '84, June 8, 2015

Ralph L. Dolgoff '52, Jan. 28, 2015

William J. Gordon '79, June 3, 2015

Edith Altman Green '92, June 13, 2015

Christine Anne Lawler '70, May 10, 2015

Frederick Lowe Lindsay Jr. '76, Aug. 6, 2015

Lisa V. McAllister '94, March 29, 2015

Alfred M. Owens '81, June 3, 2015

Ernestine Fleming Pace '75, May 15, 2015

Robert L. Patterson, Professor of History Emeritus, 1966-1998, March 22, 2015

Mary McPeters Price '40, May 20, 2015

Sandra E. Roberson '00, '03, '04, '08, March 9, 2015

Barbara Carter Shaw '67, May 22, 2015

Daniel R. Sims '68, June 11, 2015

Charles Michael Wentz '93, May 19, 2015

# armstrong flashback



Photo:  
1967  
'Geechee

## FAST FACT

In 1968, the first graduates at Armstrong's southside campus showcased the official new college mascot, the Armstrong Pirate, on their class rings.





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