To Our Alumni and Friends

My roots are in academic research. While I have been around long enough to have developed a healthy skepticism about some of the popular studies of generational characteristics, I will be the first to acknowledge that university students today are, in many ways, quite different from students of previous eras. An array of external factors shapes their habits and expectations, presenting significant challenges to those who would educate them.

Consider for a moment something that is as true of Georgia Southern as it is of universities the world over: Most faculty members were educated to be experts in their fields, yet very few of them were developed as teachers. So it is a demanding task for our student-centered university to maintain the level of teaching excellence and engagement to which 21st-century students respond and that is such a key part of our culture.

One important way in which we address the need to develop and maintain the high standards we set for our faculty is through Georgia Southern’s Center for Excellence in Teaching (http://academics.georgiasouthern.edu/cet/index.htm). Through the Center and its variety of training activities, our faculty members have access to new tools and techniques that make teaching more effective and learning more engaging.

The Center is also bringing greater renown to the University as the source of the International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching & Learning. It is a peer-reviewed, international electronic journal published twice a year. Its articles, essays, and discussions are fast becoming a respected resource for university educators around the world.

This focus on how current students learn—which is often different from how their parents and grandparents learned—is critical to our mission as an emergent research university strongly rooted in its teaching heritage.

Another important issue confronting the University at the start of its second century is one that faces universities throughout the nation. How can we encourage more students to follow through on their university education? Too many students, for family, financial, or other reasons, leave school before graduation—before they can know the empowering feeling of having a diploma in their hands. It has been my privilege to investigate possible solutions to this phenomenon as the chair of a special task force on retention and graduation rates for the University System of Georgia.

Among the steps we are considering are enhancing some of the measures employed here at Georgia Southern, including the First Year Experience, in which we require a course that orients new students to the rigors of university life. We are also looking at ways to expand the intrusive advising practices we have been using here at the University.

As I consider the cover story in this issue of Georgia Southern Magazine, I can’t help but think back to my own student days. Did parents, educators, and anyone over 30 have some serious bouts of puzzlement over students in the 1960s? You bet they did!

If we have learned anything over time it is this: Our students today are living some of the best days of their lives, and it is a pleasure for all of us at the University to play our parts in those experiences. The students who lead us into our second century will undoubtedly set new high marks in achievement and contributions to their communities as Georgia Southern alumni.

Bruce Grube
President
22 The Second Century Student

Wired to the max. Calling home daily. Wanting to serve humanity. How is the University responding to the Millennial Generation as it begins Georgia Southern’s next hundred years?

COVER SHOT  We’ve given our take on the cover to the Beatles’ Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band a decidedly Georgia Southern feel. How many of the people and items featured do you know by name?

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Georgia Southern Professor Sarah Higdon leads students on search for galaxies trillions of miles in space at the world-renowned Arecibo Observatory in Puerto Rico.

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Healthier people residing in healthier communities is the goal of Georgia Southern’s newest doctoral-level degree, the Doctor of Public Health (Dr.P.H.).

The degree was approved in January by the University System’s Board of Regents and includes areas of specialization in biostatistics, community health behavior and education, and public health leadership.

The Dr.P.H. is offered through the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health and complements its Master of Public Health (M.P.H.) Degrees in the five aspects of public health: biostatistics, community health behavior, environmental health sciences, epidemiology, and health services policy and management.

“I commend the exceptional faculty of the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health for developing a program that will allow us to expand our focus on public health throughout the state while continuing to meet our mission of assisting rural and underserved populations in Georgia,” said Charles Hardy, founding dean of the College.

“Through education, research and service, we will meet our goal of healthier communities filled with healthier people.”

“Approval of this doctoral degree is a major step in the growth of the still-young Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health,” said Provost Linda Bleicken. “In addition to attracting more and higher quality students, this terminal degree moves us closer to our goal of national accreditation in the minimum five-year period. It also encourages the growth of research funding at Georgia Southern.”

Each of the three Dr.P.H. degrees requires community-based practice activities, a field-based practicum, advanced courses in a program concentration, and field and/or laboratory research opportunities designed to give students a comprehensive, real-world curriculum. The program serves full-time students preparing for a career in public health, and public health professionals seeking more advanced education.

Georgia Southern designed its Dr.P.H. degree to align with the criteria articulated by the Council on Education for Public Health.

For more information about the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health and the Dr.P.H. program, visit http://jphcohp.georgiasouthern.edu.

“In addition to attracting more and higher quality students, this terminal degree moves us closer to our goal of national accreditation in the minimum five-year period.”

Linda Bleicken, provost
Every student who takes a physics course at Georgia Southern gets to conduct experiments in a lab.

At the same time, students who enroll in a particular introductory course are also the subjects of an ongoing experiment that is changing the way physics is taught at the University.

Studio Physics is a relatively new method of teaching that seamlessly integrates the lecture and laboratory parts of the course in a specially equipped classroom where students work together in three-person teams.

Now in its second year at Georgia Southern, the format allows most of the time in class to be devoted to active, inquiry-based learning.

"In the traditional introductory course, lecture and lab are taught as separate classes with separate instructors," said Mark Edwards, chair of the Department of Physics. "With Studio Physics, students have the same teacher for lecture and lab, and most importantly, they are taught in the same room.

"To the students, the distinction between lecture and lab disappears because the two are fused into a single experience, and the lab portion of the class makes the theory part that much more understandable.

"Meanwhile, our faculty members are excited by the fact that they have ownership of the complete educational process of lecture and lab for each student," Edwards said.

According to a study of a similar program at another institution, Studio Physics students were better at problem solving than students in classes that have separate lectures and labs. In addition, Studio Physics students had a better conceptual understanding than their counterparts in traditional courses.

"The material delivered to the students by the Studio Physics method is essentially the same as in the traditional lecture/lab method," Edwards said. "However, the learning outcomes for the class are enhanced over the traditional method because of the team structure, the problem-solving class environment and the integrated laboratory activities."

In the Studio Physics method of instruction, each team of students has its own work station, which consists of a computer and lab equipment. During a typical class, the lead teacher and two student assistants make a short presentation to the class and then present the teams with a problem to solve.

"Solving a particular problem usually requires performing an experiment, data acquisition and data analysis where the concept just presented by the instructor must be used," Edwards said. "The students become engaged, active learners in an environment where technology plays an important part."

ON THE WEB: Get the latest news, features and schedules online at www.georgiasouthern.edu

A new teaching concept adopted by Georgia Southern’s Department of Physics links students’ labwork and lecture in a unique way. The format allows most of the time in class to be devoted to active, inquiry-based learning.

‘Studio Physics’ joins lecture and labwork
Online kinesiology degree begins in May

“The great thing about this online program is that it lets the coaches do the course work whenever they want to. They can access the work at any time of the day or night, seven days a week.”

Dan Czech
director of graduate programs, Department of Health and Kinesiology

Time is a precious commodity for coaches at all levels. In-season practice and off-season training leave very little to spare for coaches who want to further their own educations.

One solution to this problem is the Department of Health and Kinesiology’s new online Master of Science Degree in Kinesiology with an Emphasis in Coaching program. Courses in the new program begin in May, but applicants are invited to seek admission year around.

The coaching emphasis is designed for experienced coaches who want to improve their knowledge and skill base and for individuals who are preparing to enter the coaching profession.

One of only two online master’s degree programs for coaches in the U.S., the program allows participants to earn the degree in just four semesters.

“Considering the number of hours they spend coaching, it is extremely difficult for many of these men and women to find the time to drive to a university campus and take classes,” said Dan Czech, the director of graduate programs in the Department. “This is especially true for coaches who live and work in rural areas.

“The great thing about this online program is that it lets the coaches do the course work whenever they want to. They can access the work at any time of the day or night, seven days a week.”

The program curriculum follows National Coaching Standards for Level 5 Coaching status. The courses include athletic training, coaching administration, coaching effectiveness and performance enhancement.

As a capstone experience, each participant is expected to prepare a supervised coaching practicum project.

For regular admission to the program, participants must have a bachelor’s degree from an accredited institution of higher education and a grade point average of at least 2.75 and GRE scores. Provisional admission is available with an undergraduate GPA of 2.5 and GRE scores.

Applicants must submit a cover letter and resume which includes contact information for three references, education, coaching and playing experiences, work history and future coaching objectives.

A phone, Internet or in-person interview also is required.

For more information, visit http://chhs.georgiasouthern.edu/health/m_coaching.html or contact coaching education program director Drew Zwald at dzwald@georgiasouthern.edu or (912)681-0091.

Business programs lauded by Princeton Review

Graduate students speak highly of both the MBA and the Master of Accounting program at Georgia Southern, according to The Princeton Review.


Best 282 Business Schools has two-page profiles of the included schools with descriptions of their academics, student life, admissions and career placement services.

In a “Survey Says...” sidebar, Review lists topics that College of Business Administration (COBA) students surveyed for the book were most in agreement about. “The administration at Georgia Southern has been very helpful,” said one student. “My schedule has been hectic, but they have worked with me to graduate in a timely manner.”

Many of the full-timers are students who earned their undergraduate degrees and stayed to pursue graduate work. One student explained, “I completed my undergraduate degree at Georgia Southern, and when the MBA program started a concentration in Information Systems, I took the opportunity to continue my education in a field that I am very interested in.”

Georgia Southern’s MBA program boasts “a highly diverse” student body. Students “vary widely in terms of race, sex and culture. Most are working in a related business field, but there are also students who have recently completed their undergraduate degrees. They range in ages between 23 and 53.” More than 10 percent of the student body is international.

The Princeton Review does not rank the schools in the book from one to 282, or name one business school best overall.

“We chose schools for this book based on our high regard for their academic programs and offerings, institutional data we collect from the schools, and the candid opinions of students attending them,” said Robert Franek of The Princeton Review. “We are pleased to recommend the College of Business Administration at Georgia Southern University to readers of our book and users of our Web site as one of the best institutions they could attend to earn an MBA or an M.Acc.”
Center for Excellence in Teaching launches global journal for instruction, learning

How, when, where and why people learn and how best to create optimal learning opportunities are the focus of a new resource being spearheaded by Georgia Southern’s Center for Excellence in Teaching (CET).

The International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (IJ-SoTL) came online at the beginning of 2007. Since then, more than 10,000 readers have visited its Web site. A double-blind, peer-reviewed academic journal, the IJ-SoTL was created to strengthen the teaching and learning process globally.

“Our vision is to have IJ-SoTL serve as a nexus for creating contacts, conversations, contemplation and collaborations in connection with the scholarship of teaching and learning,” said Alan Altany, CET director. “We want to be a ‘pathmaker’ in areas not yet explored.”

The journal boasts a review board of faculty from 30 countries on six continents.

For the first issue, the board reviewed manuscripts from Australia, England, United Arab Emirates, New Zealand, South Africa, Sweden, Mexico, Canada, Turkey, Nigeria, Greece, Bulgaria, Russia and the U.S. About 15 percent of manuscripts were accepted, with authors for the first issue representing Australia, Hungary, Scotland and the U.S.

Kudos for the new electronic journal came from as far away as Palestine and New Zealand. Altany even received congratulations from the vice president for the Carnegie Advancement for Teaching for this scholarly resource.

The journal is free and is available at http://www.georgiasouthern.edu/ijsotl/current.htm.

The CET promotes faculty development for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL), Faculty Learning Communities, and other new models for working for and with faculty.

The Center was established largely to revitalize a computer literacy program that was created in the 1980s. As faculty and students became more proficient in computer technology and less dependent on technology training, the CET began to rethink its vision and mission. It no longer supports primary technology training, but focuses on the effective use of the technology in teaching and learning.

The Center’s mission includes promoting programs, services and resources that will foster and facilitate evidence-based teaching through the scholarship of teaching and learning; open interdisciplinary exchange of ideas and innovations among faculty; peer-based formation, application, and dissemination of research and teaching practices and outcomes; significant student learning through course design, assessment, and teaching for understanding and higher-order thinking in classroom, hybrid, and online formats; and wise pedagogical uses of technologies.

CIT getting students’ attention via Internet

Today’s information overload makes communicating with today’s tech-savvy college students a challenge.

To break through the clutter, the College of Information Technology is talking to its students with a new Web-based application from Evoca, a Savannah-based podcast-hosting site.

“Students entering college now have grown up bombarded by messages, whether it’s from television, e-mail or cell phones,” says James Bradford, dean of the College. “It’s no longer enough to try to inform students, but you have to provide them information that they will pay attention to on their terms.”

Using Evoca, subscribers can create audio files hosted via the Internet, sign up for the site’s RSS feed to receive new content.

Making a recording is as easy as using a telephone, according to Diego Orjuela, the company’s co-founder and chief operating officer. He said subscribers can call an Evoca phone number to create audio input that is converted into an MP3 format, or users can record messages via a computer microphone and upload them to the Evoca Web site.

“Is there a better way to alert students, faculty and staff to what’s going on in classes and around campus?” asks Bradford. “We don’t know. Research indicates that e-mail is not the most effective way to reach students, so we are exploring the potential for using recorded verbal messages as an alternative.”

Evoca’s Web site is similar to other social networking sites like Facebook. Subscribers are able to establish and join groups to listen to others’ public recordings.

However, groups can be limited to memberships decided by the administrator. CIT professors will be able to establish groups for their classes and post recordings for students. Students will be able to respond to messages and create posting for classmates.

“It has the capability to extend discussion beyond the classroom,” said Bradford.

Other potential applications include oral history projects, for which Evoca can provide written transcripts; distance learning classes, to provide students a sense of classroom interaction; and as a recruitment tool on a college’s admissions Web site, to allow college administrators to provide audio messages to prospective students or for future applicants to provide verbal feedback.
Fulbright professor strengthens China ties

Georgia Southern’s significant international ties were made even stronger this year with the arrival of Chinese professor Meng Deng.

Deng, professor and associate dean of the College of Education at Central China Normal University, is funded by a Fulbright grant to study and conduct research at Georgia Southern.

He, his wife and son are spending the year in Statesboro working with faculty in the College of Education and lecturing at universities throughout the United States.

“The focus of my research is inclusive special education,” said Deng. “The momentum for inclusive special education is strongest right now in the United States, so this is a great opportunity for me to learn.” For his Fulbright year, Deng holds an appointment as an adjunct professor in the Department of Teaching and Learning in the College of Education.

This is Deng’s third visit to the U.S., and he is comfortable in the culture and environment. Conditions for study are good, he says, and people are kind. He brought his wife and 7-year-old son along this time because he wanted them to have the intercultural experience of living outside of China.

“China is more open now, and many Chinese go for two-week tours to Europe and the U.S.,” he said. “I have the privilege of traveling, and I enjoy each new place.”

Deng pointed out that education in China has been strongly influenced by the United States, especially in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. John Dewey, an American philosopher, psychologist and educational reformer, spent two years in China following World War I, and his visit resulted in a continuing influence of his ideas on modern Chinese education. Missionaries in the early 20th century created many schools in China, and even Deng’s own institution, Central China Normal University, has historical evidence of being influenced by Yale University.

Prior to this Fulbright year, Deng’s research focused on the adaptations necessary to bring special education into the regular classroom. For his Fulbright research project, “Meeting Special Education Needs in Mainstream Classrooms in the United States and China: A Cross-Cultural Study on Instructional Adaptations,” he will visit a variety of Georgia classrooms to observe inclusive teaching practices, gathering classroom data to be compared with teaching techniques used in China. Working with him on the project is Kymberly Harris, assistant professor in the Department of Teaching and Learning at Georgia Southern.

As part of his Fulbright responsibilities, Deng will travel to other colleges and universities in the U.S. to share insights on his research and on life in China. He already has invitations from SUNY New Paltz and Rowan University, both near New York City, and he hopes to offer many seminars and talks during his year here.

Henderson Library hosts Japanese researchers

It was more than just aruhi toshokan de — a day at the library — for three Japanese researchers on campus last fall.

While the visitors from Japan enjoyed their tour of Georgia Southern’s Henderson Library, they were also working — looking for ways to improve their own services back home.

The three-person team visited a number of American colleges and universities to study the trends that are leading to the academic library of the future.

“Here at Georgia Southern, they focused on information literacy as well as our plan for a learning commons,” said W. Bede Mitchell, dean of the Library.

The Japanese team was led by Naruki Nagata, a professor in the Graduate School of Library, Information and Media Studies at the University of Tsukuba. He was accompanied by Tayo Nagasawa, an assistant professor at Nagasaki University, and Shigetake Kai, manager of the library at Kyushu University.

“Their specific interests include coping with and managing rapidly changing circumstances, such as innovations in libraries,” Mitchell said. “They are also interested in how libraries should prepare for and meet accreditation requirements.”
Student chemistry group judged ‘Outstanding’

The Georgia Southern chapter of the American Chemical Society (ACS) Student Affiliates program has been recognized for its activities with an “Outstanding” award, the highest honor bestowed by the program.

The ACS Committee on Education selects the top chapters for recognition as either Outstanding, Commendable or Honorable Mention. This marks the fifth year in a row that the Georgia Southern chapter has been recognized.

The chapter received “Outstanding” awards for the 2002-03 and 2003-04 academic years, and “Commendable” awards for the 2001-02 and 2004-05 academic years.

To earn the award, the University chapter organized successful programs, including free tutoring sessions for Georgia Southern students and after-school demonstrations for Bulloch County school children.

The chapter was also involved in a number of Bulloch County community service events, including Adopt-a-Mile, Habitat for Humanity and the Relay for Life.

Finally, the chapter attended national and regional ACS meetings and hosted a number of guest speakers on campus.

Student affiliation allows networking with top professionals, attend scientific meetings and directly access research.

Math professor earns state award

For Susie Lanier, hard work plus perseverance add up to success.

Lanier is the 2006 recipient of the John Neff Award, presented annually by the Georgia Council of Teachers of Mathematics (GCTM).

It is the second consecutive year a Department of Mathematical Sciences professor has been honored by the organization.

The Neff Award is presented to a GCTM member who demonstrates excellence as a full-time postsecondary instructor. The recipient must inspire her students and serve as a mentor and advocate of mathematics and mathematics education.

Lanier is a 23-year faculty member. She teaches math content courses for future math educators, and serves as chairperson of Georgia Southern’s Mathematics Tournament, an annual event attracting hundreds of middle and high school students to campus.

Georgia Southern professor David Stone earned the Neff Award in 2005.
Keeping it clean

University students turn biology course into real-world action for cleaner environment

Be curious, ask questions, search for answers.

Biology professors Lissa Leege and Michelle Cawthorn are always encouraging students to take active roles in the learning process.

Even so, one group of 270 students taught by Leege and Cawthorn went above and beyond the call of duty last fall.

Required by their instructors to take part in an environmental service project, the students attacked the assignment with surprising enthusiasm. They helped to clean up the Ogeechee River, encouraged tailgaters at Paulson Stadium to recycle, picked up litter at a local apartment complex, and other acts that displayed a genuine concern for nature.

“Dr. Cawthorn and I were flabbergasted at the positive response,” Leege said. “We expected some resentment from the students for being required to do something out of class time and out of their comfort zone.

“Many of them admitted that they weren’t too thrilled when they first heard about the assignment, but once they were out there doing it, they enjoyed it so much that they would gladly do it again.”

Wanting to add a new wrinkle to their Environmental Biology course, Leege and Cawthorn required the students to complete an environmental service assignment.

“Often, lecture is not enough,” Leege said. “We wanted to give the students an opportunity to experience first-hand what we were discussing in class. Getting involved brings the concepts across in a way that they are much less likely to forget.”

To that end, Leege and Cawthorn gave their students the option of choosing from an established list of environmental service activities, or coming up with their own projects.

Some students volunteered for Rivers Alive, a statewide effort to clean up Georgia’s streams, rivers and coastline. Working with Keep Bulloch Beautiful, the students spent a day on the Ogeechee River, picking up litter from the water and the shore. Over 3,500 pounds of trash and debris were removed from the river and its banks.

Some students patrolled Paulson Stadium’s parking lot during several home football games. Working with the Keep Bulloch Beautiful organization, they distributed trash and recycling bags to tailgaters and informed them what types of items were appropriate for each bag. Over 3,400 pounds of beverage containers were diverted from the landfill and recycled.

Other students participated in activities at the University’s Botanical Garden, assisting with the annual Farm and Forest Festival, helping to prepare the children’s garden for a new season, inventorying plant species in the longleaf pine area, and working with endangered pitcher plants in a bog area.

Finally, some students volunteered at the Bulloch County Animal Control Shelter and the University’s Center for Wildlife Education, initiated a litter pickup at a local apartment complex, started recycling campaigns in a residence hall and a sorority house, and helped to initiate and publicize a new recycling program at a hospital in a neighboring county.

“We were all extremely proud of the effort we were making,” said Connie Thrift, a junior from Nahunta, Ga., who participated in the Ogeechee River cleanup. “The fact that it was a class assignment no longer mattered. We had a purpose.”

“Before this project, I had never gotten out and done something for the environment,” said Whitney Blackburn, a sophomore from Martinez, Ga., who also participated in the river cleanup. “But when I was kayaking down the river and saw so much trash and how it is ultimately hurting nature, I was disturbed.

“The Rivers Alive cleanup opened my eyes. I now want to get out and do more service projects and help better our environment.”

Altogether, the students performed almost 900 hours of community service.
Hemchand Gossai took a journey – and now takes readers – back to his Guyana home, with the ultimate destination being a deeper understanding of self.

Gossai, a University literature professor of East Indian heritage, has authored a book, River Crossings: Memories of a Journey, which is a personal exploration of family, faith and home.

Gossai lived his early life in Guyana. The last of 10 children, he was born late in his parents’ lives and lost his father at the age of nine.

Gossai’s family was devoutly Hindu. According to his mother’s wishes, he was formally educated in the English system. At age 16, while still in Guyana, he experienced a conversion of faith, accepting Christianity and moving away from his family’s Hindu tradition.

He came to the U.S. in 1976 to attend Concordia College, earning degrees in religion, English and Spanish, then earned a Master of Divinity degree from Luther Seminary. He spent three years in Scotland researching and completing a Ph.D. in the Hebrew Bible.

“In his engaging memoir, Hemchand Gossai invites the reader to accompany him on a journey toward home, self-realization, a life’s vocation, and – most importantly – a faith by which to live,” said David Dudley, author of the award-winning The Bicycle Man and one of Gossai’s colleagues at Georgia Southern.

“My goal in Albania was to bring attention to pressing public health issues and to share some of the programs that have been successful in the United States to prevent, promote and protect Americans,” said Hardy. “Having experience with public health education in rural Georgia made it easier for me to relate to Albania’s public health issues, which have a direct impact on the country’s economic development.”

Albania is a developing country, said Hardy, and is being confronted with many public health issues – access to and affordability of primary care, prevention and control of infectious diseases, health promotion education for lifestyle diseases, and protecting the environment so that people can live healthy and productive lives.

“Public health research in Albania is developing,” he said. “In our discussions, I encouraged the public health leaders to develop an evidenced-based decision model to gather empirical data that would guide their public health practice, and we discussed the development of collaborations between the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health and the Department of Public Health at the University of Tirana.”

Hardy’s trip was sponsored by the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of International Programs. Enver Roshi, head of the Public Health Department at the Faculty of Medicine, University of Tirana, was instrumental in Hardy’s participation in the program. Roshi served as a visiting scholar in the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health during spring semester 2006.

Professor recounts journey within a journey

Hemchand Gossai took a journey – and now takes readers – back to his Guyana home, with the ultimate destination being a deeper understanding of self.

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Athletic success is built on speed, strength and skill, but preparing for sports in today's world involves one more part of the puzzle: the mental aspect.

“There are two approaches to viewing sport psychology,” said health and kinesiology professor Daniel R. Czech. “Our students not only examine the mental aspects of optimally consistent sport and exercise performances but also look at how sport and exercise performances can affect mental well-being. Our lab is set up to work with anyone who wants to improve performance – not only athletes, but also actors, musicians, military officers. We really want to try to help as many people's performances as possible from a mental perspective.”

Czech, who is certified by the Association for Applied Sport Psychology (AASP), directs Georgia Southern’s graduate program in sport psychology, a part of the Department of Health and Kinesiology in the College of Health and Human Sciences.

The sport psychology laboratory feels more like a comfortable living room – except for the scientific equipment: a stabilometer for testing balance, an anticipation timer for measuring a subject's perception of motion, dexterity stars, reaction timer and the accompanying computer systems. An adjacent room has a “relaxation egg” – an ovoid cocoon equipped with a sound system that offers quiet relaxation. Another room has a 42-inch plasma TV screen for one-on-one performance enhancement counseling.

“We use a variety of psychological techniques...
for both team education and one-on-one consultations,” said Czech. “For teams, we offer workshops and interventions that build team chemistry and increase psychological skills to improve consistency. For individuals, we teach exercises that improve mental well being, and we use one-on-one counseling to help with performance issues. Learning these psychological skills can make a tremendous difference for student athletes not only on the field, but in their lives.”

“Our vision is to offer supervised, applied experiences that are unparalleled at the master’s level,” said professor Jonathan Metzler, Czech’s sport psychology colleague and program co-coordinator. Together they oversee the work of graduate students pursuing master’s degrees in kinesiology with a specialization in sport psychology.

The program is a two-year immersion in the field and requires each student to work with one of Georgia Southern’s athletics teams or an individual team member on psychological skill development. First-year students shadow the more experienced second-year students, and in the second year, students are assigned responsibilities for their own team.

“To get applied experience at the NCAA Division I level as a master’s degree student makes this program a very unique and highly desirable graduate environment.” said Sam Whalen, a graduate student and associate director of the sport psychology lab.

The graduate program in sport psychology includes three important professional opportunities: a trip to New York City to train athletes for the NFL Combine; a summer course in Key West, Fla., that teaches health behavior change to incorporate a healthy lifestyle into everyday activities; and an international trip to England, where the students will view sport psychology from a transcultural perspective.

“The experience of New York City, Key West and GSU women’s soccer was amazing and very helpful in my development as a sport psychology consultant,” said graduate student Lacey Sorenson. “Not only did I enjoy the different cultural environments, but the applied experiences of working with elite and collegiate athletes from a performance enhancement perspective, and with sedentary individuals who wanted to change their behavior, were opportunities that have shaped my approach to sport psychology.”

This year, Metzler and Czech took 12 graduate students to the International AASP conference in Miami, where Metzler and Czech gave four different research presentations. All second-year graduate students presented their research at the Georgia State Conference on Health and Physical Education in Jekyll Island, Ga.

Some graduates move into careers with professional and amateur sports teams, while some choose to pursue a doctorate in sport psychology. Certification, available through the Association for Applied Sport Psychology, can lead graduates to consulting with professional and collegiate sports teams or individual athletes. With appropriate training and direction, sport psychology consultants can also become life skills directors at major universities.

“We are finding that life skills such as communication, time management, study skills, and conflict resolution skills are often neglected in the athletic university setting,” said Czech. “We are trying to incorporate this side of life development as well to all of the students who come to the laboratory.”
By studying a certain type of fish protein, a professor in Georgia Southern’s Department of Biology is hoping to gain a better understanding of what causes a variety of significant health problems in human beings.

James B. Claiborne has been awarded a grant worth $652,391 from the National Science Foundation (NSF) to conduct the project, which includes research at a marine laboratory in Maine and collaboration with scientists at Johns Hopkins University.

The grant represents a new high for basic research funding by the NSF to a Georgia Southern research team. The University’s biology department has received $1.5 million in NSF funding over the last five years.

“In this project, we are using molecular biology and comparative approaches to solve physiological problems,” Claiborne said. “Our specific interest concerns the function of a family of cell proteins that are called sodium-hydrogen exchangers, or NHE. They are responsible for the regulation of acid and salt levels in our kidneys, intestines and other essential organs.”

According to the biologist, defects in the regulation or expression of these proteins can lead to problems in the cardiovascular, renal and digestive systems. In addition, alterations of the proteins have been implicated in some deadly types of brain tumors.

“We are examining the similarities and differences in the function of NHE proteins between fishes and mammals to understand how they have been modified through evolutionary time,” Claiborne said. “As fish are our early vertebrate ancestors, the sequence and function of these molecules in fish can reveal much about the same homologous proteins found in all of us.”

Funded by the NSF Division of Integrative Organismal Biology, the four-year project is officially titled “Functional characterization of Na+/H+ exchangers in marine and freshwater fishes.”

The grant will continue support of the Claiborne lab team’s research during the academic year at Georgia Southern. It will also fund the team’s summer research at the Mount Desert Island Biological Laboratory in Salisbury Cove, Maine.

In addition, the grant will support master’s degree and undergraduate students in the biology department at Georgia Southern who train under the mentorship of Claiborne and research associate Andrew Diamanduros.

Finally, the grant will fund a new collaboration with scientists at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in Baltimore, Md.

“Our work at Mount Desert Island, as well as our continuing collaborations with scientists in Norway and Japan, will allow our students to work with some of the most advanced laboratories and research teams in the world,” Claiborne said.

“The new partnership with Johns Hopkins will allow us to form a bridge between our basic research approaches and biomedical scientists interested in human diseases which involve the sodium-hydrogen exchanger.”

According to Claiborne, the NSF Integrative Organismal Biology program agrees to fund less than 10 percent of the proposals submitted each year by colleges and universities from across the nation.

“This puts us in good company,” he said. “While serving on NSF review panels in Washington, D.C., I’ve learned just how tight the budgets have become. Because of science-funding cutbacks, there are many excellent and important research projects that still do not receive support.”

With 80 peer-reviewed publications, Claiborne is an internationally known authority on fish physiology and NHE proteins.

During his 24-year career at Georgia Southern, Claiborne has garnered $3 million in funding from the NSF to support research and student training at the University and at Mount Desert Island. Seventeen students, ranging from high school to the post-doctoral level, were supported by NSF funds to train in his laboratory between 2001 and 2005.

In 2003, Claiborne became the most recent recipient of Georgia Southern’s John Olin Eidson Presidential Award. The $5,000 prize recognizes general excellence over a sustained career of teaching, scholarship and service at the University.
Unearthing the past

Professor Jonathan Geisler looks for fossils in Mongolia

By Casey Altman

Jonathan Geisler is a man who’s not afraid of getting his hands dirty.

Geisler, a geology professor and museum curator at Georgia Southern, has been busy digging up the past in the world’s second-largest desert, the Gobi.

Covering the southern part of Mongolia, the arid Gobi is often not what many people expect. “Sometimes people picture gigantic sand dunes, and there are some of them, but generally it’s just really dry and scrubby,” Geisler said.

Geisler has been on four expeditions to the former Soviet Union satellite nation, in 1997 and 1998 as a graduate student, and again in the summers of 2005 and 2006 as a University professor.

For him, these research trips are a family affair. Geisler’s wife, Bolortsetseg, and his father-in-law are Mongolian geologists. Bolortsetseg is a graduate student in the U.S., and she and Geisler joined her father to do collaborative fieldwork.

“My wife and I work with her father, who teaches at the Mongolian Institute of Science and Technology,” Geisler said, “and all the fossils belong to his institute. Basically, we get the opportunity to do research and collaborate on these fossils, but they still belong to Mongolia.”

In 2005, Geisler and eight other scientists traveled into remote areas of the desert where they slept in tents and had a limited supply of water. The extremely hot and dry weather was a constant concern for the team. “If you don’t keep hydrated, you can get sick out there,” Geisler said.

His primary research interest is the origin and evolution of Cetacea, the scientific order that includes whales, porpoises and dolphins. He was drawn to the Gobi by fossils he believed could be land-dwelling relatives of living whales and dolphins. “This was very far back in time, but if you want to understand that transition, going from land to water, it sounded like a good thing to try to find more fossils,” Geisler said.

But he didn’t find exactly what he was looking for. “You can have a focus, ‘I want to go find this fossil,’ but in reality, once you get out there (the Gobi Desert) … more often you’re going to find something equally exciting but different, and you have to be flexible and work on that instead,” said Geisler.

Many of the fossils they found were relatives of rodents, rabbits and insect-eating mammals. Some appear to be a new species. In 2006, the big discovery for the team was a new locality – a place no other team had scoured. There they did find some jaws of small mammals and several turtles, but according to Geisler, the exact identity of several of the fossils will have to wait until they are prepared in his lab.

Ultimately, Geisler and his collaborators are trying to determine the ages of the fossils and to test ideas about what caused the species to go extinct – was it climate change or the immigration of new species?

To answer these and other questions, Geisler hopes to continue his research this summer.
Quad/Graphics provides $250,000 boost to Graphic Communications Management

By Casey Altman

Georgia Southern’s Graphic Communications Management (GCM) program has received a donation of $250,000 from Quad/Graphics who has a facility in The Rock, Ga.

Quad/Graphics is the third-largest printer in the western hemisphere with sales that reach $2 billion annually and has 14,000 employees.

Quad/Graphics has close ties to the University, said Carole Smith of Georgia Southern University Advancement, and employs 10 to 15 Georgia Southern graduates.

The company recruits from Georgia Southern because of the GCM program, said Quad/Graphics Plant Manager Barbara Tyson. “Because we’re a large commercial printer, we thought the money would be well spent there,” she said.

“By giving this gift, they are helping us to enhance our program and they are benefiting themselves, because there will be more graduates ready to work for them,” said Smith.

Graphic Communications Management professor and program coordinator Don Armel said the program is the only one of its kind in Georgia, and its 40 students will have hands-on knowledge that will prepare them for management positions when they graduate.

GCM students are instructed in the processes of developing and producing images for multimedia, the Web and for print. In order for the GCM program to keep up with the changes in the marketplace, they needed to keep their equipment current.

“The industry is changing from traditional print into a blend of marketing, information technology and print technology, so we use marketing and information technology to make print technology go,” said Armel.

Quad/Graphics’ contribution will be used to support and enhance labs. It also goes toward scholarships and toward marketing the program to high school students.

Last year 10 scholarships worth $2,500 each were awarded to students in the GCM program.

“Any scholarship is a relief of financial burden, but it is also a way to excite students to come into the field,” said Armel.

GCM will also use the money to raise high school students’ awareness of the opportunities available in the industry.

The program also hosts a camp for high school juniors and seniors to expose them to a variety of technologies and equipment.

“It is an excellent opportunity for students,” said Armel.

Georgia Southern’s VISION: Become a TOP-TIER university and the FIRST CHOICE of an increasing number of HIGHLY QUALIFIED students. Because other colleges WANT those same students, the COMPETITION is fierce. You can HELP.

When a student volunteer asks for your SUPPORT during Georgia Southern Foundation’s annual ALUMNI PHONATHON, look to the FUTURE and please say YES. With your GENEROSITY, the POSSIBILITIES are endless.
Coca-Cola Foundation grant prepares students for the global marketplace

Students at Georgia Southern and a major Chinese university now have an opportunity to trade places for a semester.

With support from the Coca-Cola Foundation, the two universities have created a faculty and student exchange program designed to prepare students from both nations to work successfully together in the global marketplace.

The $200,000 grant funds 10 $4,500 scholarships a year from 2007 to 2010. Each year, five students from Georgia Southern will spend a semester at Huazhong Normal University and five students from Huazhong Normal will reciprocate at Georgia Southern. The grant also includes $5,000 a year for faculty members from each university to participate in the program.

“We are enormously grateful to the Coca-Cola Foundation for their $200,000 grant to implement this exchange,” said Nancy Shumaker, director of the Center for International Studies. “Coca-Cola is recognized by both China and the U.S. as a leader in corporate social responsibility, and this gift demonstrates that leadership in the area of higher education.”

“Our goal is to build increasingly effective bridges for international communication and intercultural cooperation,” said President Bruce Grube.

This semester, Georgia Southern is hosting Meng Deng, a Fulbright Scholar and professor of education at Huazhong University; Liu Yan, a Chinese language instructor; Gaohua Gui, a graduate student in the College of Education; and several Chinese undergraduates.

The Coca-Cola Foundation’s $200,000 grant funds 10 international scholarships for the next four years. Pictured are, l-r, Georgia Southern President Bruce Grube, Coca-Cola United Coastal Division Vice President Rick Terrell, Statesboro Sales Center Manager Dennis Key and Nancy Shumaker, director of the Center for International Studies.

New Endowments

Christopher K. Peace Scholarship in Political Science
Duke Kramer MBA Graduate Assistantship
Earle D. Cummings Memorial Scholarship
Eddie Ivie Scholarship for Study in Ireland
Edward A. Abercrombie Memorial Scholarship
Emily Joan Peace Scholarship in Nutritional Science
Fred W. Hodges, Jr. Memorial Scholarship
Joseph Eugene (Gene), Sr. and Peggy Marsh Weatherford Education Scholarship
Joseph Eugene (Gene), Sr. and Peggy Marsh Weatherford Scholarship

Lawrence M. Reilley University Honors Program Scholarship
Leonard and Betty Blount Scholarship for Entrepreneurship Students
Mary and Duncan James Memorial Education Scholarship
Mitchell E. Peace Scholarship in Journalism
Neville-Rogers Scholarship
Paul and Ivey Beardslee Scholarship
Rose Mae Bogan Scholarship for Science or Math Education Majors
Stafford Scholars University Honors Program Scholarship
Terrell T. Reddick Rotary Honors Scholarship
The Richter Honors Study Abroad Scholarship
More than 700 University alumni, friends and state officials attended the centennial edition of Georgia Southern’s Wild Game Supper, co-hosted by Statesboro-Bulloch County Chamber of Commerce, City of Statesboro and Bulloch County.

Guests included members of the Georgia General Assembly, Gov. Sonny Perdue and alumni, including Lt. Gov. Casey Cagle, who met and mingled at the old Railroad Depot at Underground Atlanta. Centennial decor, including artifacts from the Georgia Southern Museum, captured the spirit of the event.

The Wild Game Supper came three weeks after the University’s most successful turnout to date for its admissions recruitment events in Atlanta. More than 370 prospective students, plus their parents, flocked to the evening reception and information sessions at Cobb Galleria.
ON THE WEB: Find out more about your giving options at http://welcome.georgiasouthern.edu/foundation/givingoptions/plannedgifts.shtml


Bulloch County Commissioner Walter Gibson, State Rep. Butch Parrish of Swainsboro, Ga., and Caroline Harless of Swainsboro

Alumni Association Board Treasurer Derrick Brown of Lilburn, Ga., Graduate Studies Dean Saundra Nettles and History professor Ronald Bailey


Joe McGlamery of Statesboro, Pat Blanchard of Augusta, Ga., State Sen. Jim Whitehead of Evans, Ga., and Georgia Commissioner of Agriculture Tommy Irvin

Bulloch County Commissioner Jan Tankersley, Bulloch County Manager Tom Couch and Jerry Griffin, executive director of the Association of County Commissioners of Georgia
To hear Heather Reynolds tell it, earning a college degree and maintaining a nearly perfect grade point average while playing a varsity sport is as easy as putting away a soft lob at the net.

It took the women’s tennis player just three years to earn a bachelor’s in sport management. In the process, the native of Fredericksburg, Va., compiled a 3.97 GPA and earned the University’s Female Student-Athlete of the Year Award for the 2005-06 academic year.

After finishing the requirements for her degree last summer, Reynolds has enrolled in graduate school to pursue a master’s degree in business administration with an eye toward law school.

Meanwhile, she is completing her final year of eligibility on the tennis team, playing No. 3 singles and No. 1 doubles for the Lady Eagles.

“It really hasn’t been that hard,” Reynolds said of her ability to balance academics and athletics. “I took some AP courses in high school, and once I got here, I took some classes during the summer.

“If you manage your time wisely, you can study, practice tennis and still be able to hang out with your friends.”

Reynolds began taking private tennis lessons at age 10 and was the top player on her team at Massaponax High School. She was considering scholarship offers from New Hampshire and West Virginia until she received a call from Georgia Southern.

“To tell you the truth, I had never heard of Georgia Southern, but when I came down for a visit, I really liked it,” Reynolds said. “It was big, but not too big, and the weather was really nice. It was a lot warmer than Virginia.”

Since arriving at the University, she has become a favorite of women’s tennis coach Amy Bartlett-Bonner. Reynolds is the only senior on this year’s 10-player roster, which includes three freshmen and five sophomores.

“We have a young team, and Heather has been a great leader for us,” said. “Her dedication to tennis and to Georgia Southern is admirable. She is a great role model for her teammates, both on and off the court.”
By Mark Holland

In a lot of ways, Chris Hollis is a typical Georgia Southern University student.

He found his way to Statesboro from metro Atlanta, like 40 percent of the current student body, and he was attracted in part by the University’s burgeoning reputation as a hub for high-tech education.

There are, however, two big differences between Hollis and most of his peers:

First, he is a varsity athlete, and second, he was home-schooled.

In fact, the senior outfielder for the baseball team is the only home-schooled student on an athletic scholarship at the University.

“I guess it is a little unique,” said Hollis, a computer science major from Loganville.

Hollis attended public schools through the seventh grade. That’s when his mother decided that home schooling was a better option.

As a single parent who worked full time, Debbie Hollis found it difficult to meet her son’s academic needs, so the family turned to Faith Academy, a unique institution that allows its students to do most of their school work on their own.

Hollis visited the school once a week to pick up his assignments. He completed the work and returned it the following week, which is when he received new assignments. One-on-one tutoring sessions were available at his request, and he took exams on a regular basis.

Meanwhile, even though he didn’t have a traditional high school team to play for, Hollis found a way to develop his baseball skills with the Greater Gwinnett Christian Barons, one of several organizations in metro Atlanta that provide athletic opportunities for home-school students.

Hollis was a three-year starter for the Barons, who won back-to-back Homeschool World Series Association national championships during his junior and senior seasons in 2001 and 2002. Although he was named team MVP, Hollis received no scholarship offers, so he enrolled at Georgia Perimeter College, a two-year institution with six campuses throughout metro Atlanta.

For the first time in several years, Hollis found himself in a classroom with other students, but the transition from home-schooled student to regular college student was very easy.

“It really was,” he said. “I had friends in the neighborhood where we lived, and baseball had given me an opportunity to interact with other kids, too, so I had always been around people my own age, even though it didn’t happen at a regular school.”

Hollis made Georgia Perimeter’s baseball team as a walk-on and excelled for two seasons, earning All-Region XVII second-team honors and a scholarship offer from Georgia Southern.

After redshirting during the 2005 season, Hollis became a starter last season. He played all three outfield positions and batted .324, scored 47 runs and stole a team-high 17 bases.

“I was very excited to get the chance to play Division I baseball,” he said. “The school has a great baseball tradition, and they were in the processing of renovating the stadium. Plus, I was very interested in the computer science department, which is located in a really nice facility.”

From home-school to home plate

Hollis assumes leadership role for Eagle baseball team

By Frank Fortune

In a lot of ways, Chris Hollis is a typical Georgia Southern University student.

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“I guess it is a little unique,” said Hollis, a computer science major from Loganville.

Hollis attended public schools through the seventh grade. That’s when his mother decided that home schooling was a better option.
Concluding a year-long saga with more plot twists than an Agatha Christie novel, Chris Hatcher was named Georgia Southern’s head football coach last January before a capacity crowd in Bishop Field House.

“This is a tremendous program,” Hatcher said. “I plan, and we will, add to the six flags, 16 playoff appearances and eight Southern Conference championships. And, make no mistake about it, we will do that early.”

Hatcher, the sixth head coach in modern Eagle football history, takes over the Georgia Southern program following seven successful years at Valdosta State. He replaces 14-month head coach Brian VanGorder, who was 3-8 in his first and only season after replacing Mike Sewak. VanGorder resigned on Jan. 16 to take a job with the Atlanta Falcons.

Hatcher inherits a squad with 46 letter winners. Six of the Eagles’ losses last year were by a combined 21 points, including two in overtime.

Hatcher’s first order of business was to ink a recruiting class – not an easy task as a newly named head coach with only 10 days before National Signing Day. By all accounts, that mission was successful with 16 signees, including several highly touted prospects who had been courted by SEC, ACC and other Football Bowl Championship Series teams.

“We were trying to get the best football players we could, and I feel we were able to do just that. Time will tell with our signing class, but I thought our coaching staff did a great job. I am really excited about the potential of these recruits,” said Hatcher.

While the 33-year-old Hatcher’s hiring signaled that there was to be no return to the Eagles’ traditional triple option offense, he does plan to restore many of the traditions that were abandoned by VanGorder, drawing cheers from fans who attended the news conference.

In particular, Hatcher plans to bring back the aging yellow school buses used to take the team to Paulson Stadium on game days.

“As long as those old buses are operational, we’ll use them,” Hatcher said. “We’ll load up two buses and the ‘Hatch Attack’ will come down that road to play West Georgia on Sept. 8.”

“The timing of Brian VanGorder’s resignation, we had to move quickly to find a replacement. There were a lot of qualified candidates, but Chris Hatcher was someone who I felt embodied all we were looking for,” said Athletics Director Sam Baker. “Chris has a proven track record as a head coach. I looked for a coach who knows how to win, and I believe Coach Hatcher can do that at the Division I level. I also wanted to hire a coach with strong recruiting ties in Georgia and Florida.”

A 1995 graduate of Valdosta State, Hatcher compiled a 76-12 record in seven seasons at his alma mater, making him the winningest coach in school history. The Blazers were 4-7 in the season prior to his arrival as head coach, but under his direction, they made six trips to the NCAA Division II playoffs and earned two berths in the national championship game, including a championship in 2004.

Hatcher his wife, Lori, also a graduate of Valdosta State, are the parents of a son, Ty.
Annual Southern Boosters support tops $1 million

Most Georgia Southern sports fans remember 1981 as the year in which the school’s administration made the decision to re-start the football program following a 40-year absence.

However, another significant event related to the Georgia Southern athletics program also took place in 1981: Southern Boosters Inc. was created.

Twenty-six years later, the non-profit organization has raised millions of dollars to fund scholarships for student-athletes and pay for facilities and equipment that are necessary to compete at the NCAA Division I level.

“Georgia Southern President Bruce Grube has referred to the athletics program as the ‘front porch’ of the University,” said Dan O’Dowd, the director of giving for Southern Boosters. “He was referring to the fact that many people develop their perceptions of an institution through the exposure garnered by its student-athletes.

“Expanding upon that analogy, Southern Boosters provides the extras that have taken our front porch from a basic concrete slab, roof and railing to a focal point of which the institution can be proud.”

Southern Boosters has provided more than $1 million of direct support to the athletic department in each of the last four years. About half of that money was used for scholarships, and the other half went for a variety of capital and operating improvements.

During the 2005-06 academic year, the projects included the Bennett-Ramsey Golf Center on Pulaski Highway, the Michael and Katrina Curry Basketball Locker Room in Hanner Fieldhouse, and the purchase of new uniforms for the baseball team.

More recently, Southern Boosters funded the spectacular new Gene Bishop Field House at Paulson Stadium and, through participating members, assisted with the golf team’s September trip to Scotland for the International Collegiate Tournament. In addition, Southern Boosters helped to fund a trip to Hawaii in February for the baseball team, which spent a week in the island paradise and opened its season with three games against the University of Hawaii.

Upcoming projects include the renovation of the football practice fields on Fair Road, as well as the football locker room and softball complex. Eventually, Southern Boosters would like to fully fund every scholarship opportunity allowed by the NCAA for Georgia Southern’s 15 varsity sports – a lofty goal that would require $2 million for the upcoming fiscal year.

Southern Boosters is always on the lookout for new members. Alumni and supporters of the University can join at one of six membership levels, which range from True Blue (for a donation of $120) to Gold Eagle (for a donation of $6,000).

In an effort to attract the support of the University’s most recent alumni, Southern Boosters has established a New Graduates Program. This initiative grants free membership to alumni in the first year after their graduation. The program also allows many alumni who earned their degrees in the last three years to become True Blue members at a discounted rate.

“When you join Southern Boosters, you receive numerous benefits that really enhance your experience as an Eagle fan,” O’Dowd said. “Even more importantly, you get the pleasure of knowing that you have helped to provide much needed scholarship funding and an improved experience for more than 370 hard-working student-athletes.”

For more information on Southern Boosters, visit http://www.georgiasouthern eagles.com/boosters/home.aspx, email O’Dowd at dodowd@georgiasouthern.edu, or call (912) 681-5520.

Sam Says… Centennial year saw major steps

We observed two important moments in Georgia Southern history on Dec. 1, 2006.

First, the Campaign for National Distinction announced final totals for the Capital Campaign. Due to the generosity of alumni and friends of the institution, the Campaign netted $53,051,156, far exceeding the original goal of $40 million.

Of this $53 million, the athletics department was a recipient of $11,894,069 in contributions – funds which have been designated for scholarships and facility improvements. Indeed, much of our progress in facility upgrades over the last three years – the renovation of J.I. Clements Stadium, the creation of the track/soccer stadium, the construction of the Gene Bishop Field House, and the development of the Ramsey-Bennett Golf Facility and Howard House – can be directly attributed to the capital campaign.

On behalf of the student-athletes who will benefit from these gifts, I thank everyone who played a role in making this campaign so successful for athletics.

The second memorable moment occurred with the official start of the year-long celebration of Georgia Southern’s centennial.

When you look back over Georgia Southern history, athletics have played an indisputably integral part in fostering an identity for this institution. The success of any university is built upon the hard work and vision of committed leaders.

In athletics, this has meant a successive line of outstanding coaches like Erk Russell, Paul Johnson, J.I. Clements, J.B. Scearce, and Jack Stallings to name a few. And certainly Georgia Southern athletics have touched the lives of thousands of young men and women who have participated as student-athletes, to say nothing of the countless numbers of students who have cheered the Eagles on at Paulson Stadium, Hanner Fieldhouse, or J.I. Clements Stadium.

Our charge here in athletics is to build upon this tradition and success as we look to the next 100 years.

Go Eagles!
Technology and world events have shaped the generation of Georgia Southern’s second-century undergraduate. They are raised as multi-taskers, challenging educators to adapt to their learning style. They are hyper-connected, yet use their gadgetry to stay closer than ever to home.

And they possess a burning desire to connect with community and change their world.

By Stephen P. Ward

Photos by Frank Fortune
It’s a problem that’s only getting worse for Frank Fortune. For the University’s chief photographer since 1981, capturing candid shots of students on campus these days is a major challenge. “It’s the cell phones,” Fortune says. “As soon as class ends, out come the phones. I can’t see their faces. They’re talking on their phones and not so much to their classmates walking right next to them.”

Senior political science major Larry Cloud (right), of Calhoun, Ga., is ready for some football on Sweetheart Circle, although he says he and his friends are into a diverse array of sports, including rugby, ultimate Frisbee, and lacrosse. In a simpler time, resourceful student Candler Rogers took a break in 1925 to restitch his baseball on the porch of West Hall, today’s Deal Hall.

So goes one of the strongest distinguishing characteristics of today’s undergraduate, Georgia Southern’s second-century student. Omnipresent communication technology is central to the lives of millennials, the generation entering college in these first years of the century.

Millennials often use their technology in ways that would seem counterintuitive to generations who once only dreamed of global access at their fingertips. Mobile phones loaded with features have combined with the Internet and its social networks like Myspace and Facebook not to enlarge the student world, but first and foremost to create avenues of interaction in a virtual circle of friends. Ironically, too, the second-century student uses communication technology to help reattach tethers where cutting cords was once central to college life.

“Students are in contact with their parents five, ten times a day,” said Cindi Chance, dean of the College of Education. “Once recently a student told me she had talked to her mother six times that day and her mother lived in Atlanta,” Chance recalled. “She talked to her six times because she had a flat tire here, and she ended up a calling service station near campus to fix the tire, after six calls to her mother.”

A Georgia Southern Magazine survey of student members of the Georgia Southern community on Facebook.com revealed that 98 percent of students carry cell phones. Fifty percent of those surveyed said they call home daily; 20 percent said they call home more than five times a day.

Chance said her experience with the flat-tire student was an eye-opener, spurring her to think hard about what her faculty, along with the others on the professional side of the University, like nursing and business, is doing to develop problem solvers. “When we’re going to put our graduates in charge of somebody else’s children, somebody else’s finances, somebody’s...”
patients, then it’s critical that we recognize the level at which our students can problem solve,” Chance said. “They’re not only going be in charge of solving their own problems, but their clients’, or those of the students who are in their charge.”

She said several majors have taken steps to better equip and prepare their students, starting with a close look at each student’s capacity for devising solutions.

“Do you have those skills to problem solve for yourself and for somebody else?” Chance said. “Teaching is a lonely profession. You’re in the classroom by yourself. If something goes wrong, you’ve got to make a decision. So independent problem solving skills are very, very important.”

Although the second-century student has grown up with the Internet and cell phones, their Boomer and GenX parents—all those soccer moms in minivans, planners at the ready to track their children’s structured schedules—have had a strong hand in shaping lives quite different from their own.

“When I was young, the playing we did was at best in a semi-structured way,” said Han Reichgeldt, professor and associate dean in the College of Information Technology. “You went out in the street, you met your friends, and you played,” Reichgeldt said. “These kids today have been dragged around from soccer game to baseball game to cheerleading practice by their parents from when they were three or four years old.”

The result of all that planned activity, Reichgeldt said, is “a certain ease about working in groups. They’re very good at multi-tasking as well.”

Reichgeldt has been leading an ongoing study of millennials in the hope of developing more effective means of connecting with potential students and then teaching them better once they’re enrolled.

“Let’s face it, we haven’t changed much as an institution,” Reichgeldt noted. “If you took a guy who went to the University of Bologna in 1276 and brought him to the University now, he’d recognize a lot of the activities that go on, perhaps even the administrative structure, some of the rules and processes, and so on.

“To me the jury is still out a little, but these kids today are far more familiar with new technology than we were,” Reichgeldt said. “Whether it has led to a significant change in the way they learn, I don’t know, but you talk to them and they’ll tell you that lectures are pretty boring. They don’t want some old guy yacking at them. It’s a challenge.”

Reichgeldt’s probe into the characteristics and behaviors of the second-century student is producing findings in line with most major studies on millennials. The Kaiser Family Foundation, for instance, recently reported on the media multitasking habits of this generation.

When young people are doing their homework on a computer, the study found, they’re also doing something else 65 percent of the time. Further, 50 percent of the time they spend doing homework on the computer also involves using other media, such as sending instant messages, listening to music, or watching television.

So it’s not just that a traditional lecture might be boring to a young person today—that’s a decades-old complaint. It’s that the lecture appears to be incongruent with the environment in which students prefer to absorb knowledge. More than ever, they’re using other media while studying.

Cindi Chance says the important point there is that, more often, students don’t use extra media to study, but while studying.

And when they do apply technology’s tools to their schoolwork, “they’re not applying all that’s available through the Internet, for instance,” Chance explained. “Young people tend to be surfing in areas that are of interest to them. They will go to the wall getting more information on things they’re
interested in, but with things that they happen not to be interested in, it is kind of a surface-level, ‘tell me what you want me to know, and I can regurgitate it back.’

“We see a lot of that as we look at a student’s standardized test scores,” Chance said. “They can regurgitate the information back, but when it comes to writing a paper, doing a research project, it’s something with which they’re unfamiliar. And many of them don’t know how to take that information and be creative.”

The prescriptive lives of today’s kids—which Reichgeldt credits for better socialization and multi-tasking among millennials—Chance conversely connects to a loss of intellectual creativity she often sees among students today versus previous generations. Does this mean that parents of millennials are doing something wrong? Chance says no—it’s just the way it is today.

“I think that’s a national philosophy: as parents, we were indoctrinated to believe that, the more we are involved in the child’s life, the better it is for the child,” Chance said. “And that’s happening from preschool, all the way through. Parents sign up their children now for a certain preschool before the kids are born. They’re so involved in children’s lives that in some cases the children don’t have lives. It happens all the way through school.”

The level of parental involvement in the lives of second-century students goes well beyond those daily phone calls and text messages. Many a faculty member at Georgia Southern, like their colleagues across America, can tell stories of personal contacts from moms and dads in the wake of negative events, like a bad grade. It’s the phenomenon of the “helicopter parent”: parents who seem to hover over the daily lives of their children, even when those children are young adults.

“To me the jury is still out a little, but these kids today are far more familiar with new technology than we were. Whether it has led to a significant change in the way they learn, I don’t know, but you talk to them and they’ll tell you that lectures are pretty boring. They don’t want some old guy yacking at them. It’s a challenge.”

Han Reichgeldt, professor and associate dean in the College of Information Technology

Typewriters, adding machines and dictation devices once were staples of business classes, but now information technology is omnipresent across campus. Information Technology Professor Han Reichgeldt says the things he can learn from his students help make him, in turn, a better teacher.
“The typical parent in our association is the typical college parent,” Boyle said. “They want to be supportive of their child’s education and are looking for a roadmap to do that.

“T o some extent, that map is provided by the universities themselves, but early on in the college experience, there is a cacophony of information directed at the student, so our intent is to help parents calm down and be supporters of their children.”

Georgia Southern is an institutional member of College Parents of America and since 2002 has had its own parents’ association, currently numbering 394 members who assist in activities with other current parents and share their stories with prospective Georgia Southern parents at student recruitment events.

“I thought colleges probably didn’t want parental involvement, they didn’t want parents sticking their noses in the university,” said parent Charles Enzor. “I don’t feel that way at Georgia Southern. They make you feel welcome.”

His daughter Kristin is a freshman looking at a career in music education. A boomer, Charles Enzor retired after 30 years in law enforcement in DeKalb County. He said he joined the Parents Association as a way to help support Georgia Southern. In January, he attended his first event as an official volunteer, a Cobb Galleria Center reception for prospective students and their parents from greater Atlanta.

“Forget about the size of different maps and how we can tell them to make the right decisions about their children and the things they want to do,” said Enzor. “The key is to lead the parents in the right direction. That’s what we’re trying to do.”

“T o me, you’ve got three different types of parents, Enzor observed. “Parents who have been involved all their lives, but they let their kids do what they’re supposed to. And you’ve got the ones who call the university and complain, and then you’ve got the ones who send them to school and don’t really get involved.”

Enzor describes himself as “somewhat” involved in his daughter’s college life, but he leaves big decisions to her.

“If she has a problem, I’m there for her,” he said. “If she needs help, I’m there for her. But if she’s working on something, I don’t get involved in that.”

In addition to calling and texting family members on a regular basis, 65 percent of Georgia Southern students surveyed said they similarly communicate with their on-campus friends up to 20 times per day, and 32 percent said they use their phones to interact with friends more than 20 times daily.

The explosion of on-board cell-phone gadgetry, way beyond cameras, is targeted at millennials. Nearly 30 percent of survey respondents at Georgia Southern said they now have global positioning capabilities on their phones. Nearly 60 percent have access to their Internet social networks.

Student advisors say those online networks remain a huge concern: 32 percent of Georgia Southern students surveyed said that, yes, their Facebook and Myspace pages contain material that would embarrass them in the eyes of future employers. However, most of them indicated that the information is only accessible to their designated online friends.

In Millennials Go to College, authors Neil Howe and William Strauss, the groundbreaking historians who have written about the characteristics of American generations, note that millennials are optimistic about the future, resilient and hard-working, and focused on
setting and meeting goals. And with those traits comes a commitment to building community and a high awareness of social causes.

At Georgia Southern, many prospective students tell of undertaking life-changing community service projects during their high school years, ranging from Habitat for Humanity to mission trips abroad. The University has developed several ways to help build on this millennial interest and to inspire it in those in whom it may not yet have surfaced.

“We have more than a thousand students registered in our volunteer programs, beyond class-based service learning,” said Kellie Pickett, who heads the Office of Student Leadership. “There are many more, too, who don’t register through our office, but who are still out serving in the community.”

Pickett observes that world events are a driving force behind the strong desire among students to give back.

“These are students who have lived through 9/11, the tsunami, and they see Darfur. They understand and know they’ll benefit greatly as people from this sense of returning some of what they’ve been given in this world,” she said.

In addition to volunteerism, students arrive on campus driven to lead.

“It’s a national trend. Young people look at their local and national leaders and want to know what it takes to bring about change,” Pickett noted. “There are many high school leadership programs now. Gwinnett County has one, for instance, so when students arrive at Georgia Southern, they’re seeking the next step,” she said.

In addition to extracurricular leadership programs, the University recently developed a for-credit course on principles of leadership.

While the influence of today’s technology creates challenges for the teaching and learning process, Pickett says the University is well equipped to meet them.

“We as educators need to continue to lead our students to think beyond quick, technology-based ways of interacting with others, and continue to focus on experiential learning. The feedback we receive on our efforts at Georgia Southern tells us we’re doing it very well,” she said.

Cindi Chance says she remains optimistic about the students who have ushered in Georgia Southern’s new century. She’s pleased with the continued caliber in her own college, especially, which has produced three of the past four Georgia Teachers of the Year, as well as the academic talent of incoming students across the campus, which has never been higher.

As Han Reichgeldt continues to look at trends in student technology use, he says he doubts, for the time being, that virtual learning will take over the university experience at the undergraduate level, despite the worldwide rise of online degree programs aimed at adults and nontraditional students.

“There are still two reasons kids come to college,” he said. “One is to learn, the other is to have fun, to get away from their parents for the first time, and do that in a relatively safe environment.

“The social side of the university I don’t think will disappear. With technology, our students actually have more opportunities to connect with peers,” Reichgeldt added, noting that all those connections still lead to as much, if not more, personal interaction than ever.

And, in his leadership role in one of America’s first fully accredited colleges of information technology, Reichgeldt sees perhaps better than most that the learning process is two-way.

“I’ve been teaching a course where, in part, we work in virtual teams, where we use IM and chat as effective teaching tools,” he noted. “In many cases, my students know more about the technology and how to use it better than I do. So it’s a great learning experience for me.”
How do you find something that is not only invisible to the human eye, but also located trillions of miles from earth?

Well, it helps to have the world’s largest radio telescope at your disposal.

A professor in Georgia Southern’s Department of Physics and two of her students recently returned from a visit to the world-renowned Arecibo Observatory in Puerto Rico.

Professor Sarah Higdon and physics majors Josh Davidson and Daniel Richey are members of the Arecibo Legacy Fast ALFA survey (ALF ALF A). Using the observatory’s radio telescope – which features a dish that measures 1,000 feet in diameter – the survey is searching for dark galaxies.

“The ALF ALF A survey will take about six years to complete, and this trip was the first step in our students becoming regular participants,” Higdon said. “Few undergraduate students ever get the chance to participate in an astronomical observing run at a world-class facility. This opportunity is usually only available to Ph.D. students.

“The direct involvement of undergraduate students in research projects within a legacy survey will enhance their education, and involvement in interesting, exciting research projects encourages students to consider careers in science,” she said. “The Arecibo program will extend research opportunities to undergraduates who otherwise would not participate. This is especially important as we see a declining number of domestic students continuing in science.”

Dark galaxies consist mainly of dark matter and hydrogen gas, with very few stars, Higdon explained. “The lack of starlight means the galaxies are invisible and will remain undetected unless we can detect their hydrogen gas using radio observations.

“The survey is also looking for larger gaseous features known as tidal tails. These are formed when galaxies collide and can be 500,000 light years in length, which is five times longer than the diameter of our own galaxy, the Milky Way.

“The detection of both dark galaxies and tidal tails will help astronomers understand how galaxies form and evolve in the universe.”

The Arecibo Observatory is part of the National Astronomy and Ionosphere Center, a research facility operated by Cornell University under a cooperative agreement with the National Science Foundation. Additional support is provided by NASA.

Operating 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, the Arecibo Observatory is considered one of the most important centers for research in radio astronomy, planetary radar and terrestrial astronomy.

According to Higdon, radio telescopes are crucial instruments in the study of the heavens because they can detect things that are invisible to optical telescopes.

Light, she noted, consists of electromagnetic waves, and different colors of light are electromagnetic waves of different lengths. But visible light covers only a small part of the range of wavelengths in which electromagnetic waves can be produced.

Radio waves are electromagnetic waves of significantly greater wavelength than those of light. In 1932, scientists learned that astronomical objects such as planets, stars and gases emit radio waves, and astronomers have since figured out how to make pictures from these waves.

A radio telescope is comprised of numerous intricate parts, but the most striking feature of the one at the Arecibo Observatory is its dish. Looking somewhat like a TV satellite receiver on steroids, the dish covers almost 20 acres and is 167 feet deep. The surface of the dish is made up of almost 40,000 aluminum panels, each one measuring about three feet by six feet.

A platform that contains antennas, radio receivers and other highly sensitive equipment is suspended 450 feet above the dish. The 900-
Students Joshua Davidson, a sophomore from Byron, Ga., and Daniel Richey, a junior from Claxton, Ga., with physics professor Sarah Higdon at the Arecibo Observatory.

The massive observatory in Puerto Rico scans the heavens 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, its 20-acre dish feeding information to receivers suspended 450 feet above its center. Below, Georgia Southern student Joshua Davidson mans a computer console and student Daniel Richey assists an Arecibo scientist with the placement of a protective cover on one of the receiver systems.

The platform is supported by 18 cables that are strung from three reinforced concrete towers that are positioned around the dish.

Thanks to the Arecibo Observatory’s mammoth radio telescope, the ALFALFA survey expects to locate and study 20,000 galaxies – some of which are a billion light years away from earth.

A single light year, by the way, is six trillion miles.

“Radio observations are often used to see the ‘stuff’ between the stars, which is called the interstellar medium,” Higdon said. “The ALFALFA survey is detecting atomic hydrogen gas in the interstellar medium. A typical timescale for the emission of a photon from a single hydrogen atom is around 11 million years. That’s a long time to wait to see something!

“However, there is such a vast amount of hydrogen in these atomic clouds that we can detect them in a matter of minutes using the Arecibo telescope.”

Use of the radio telescope is available on an equal, competitive basis to scientists throughout the world. Through their relationship with the ALFALFA survey, which is led by Cornell professors Riccardo Giovanelli and Martha Haynes, the Georgia Southern group was able to work at the Arecibo Observatory for five days in January. During the first four nights, Higdon and her students labored from midnight until 6 a.m., pointing the telescope to specific coordinates and monitoring the flow of data that was collected by the system’s computers.

On the fifth night, the telescope was used for radar observations of Saturn, so Higdon, Davidson and Richey ascended the platform that hangs 45 stories above the dish. Once there, they helped to put a protective cover on the Arecibo L-band Feed Array (ALFA), a sophisticated seven-receiver system that allows large-scale surveys of the sky to be conducted with unprecedented sensitivity. The cover protects ALFA from the potentially destructive radar waves.

Davidson is a sophomore from Byron, Ga., and Richey is a junior from Claxton, Ga. In addition to visiting the Arecibo Observatory, these and other Georgia Southern students will be trained as remote observers who can control the radio telescope from offices within the University’s physics department. They will analyze the data as part of their research projects and present their findings at a conference in Puerto Rico this fall.

“Faculty and peer mentoring, which is an important part of this program, is a proven method for facilitating the next generation of astronomers,” said Higdon.
A first-ever presidential visit to Georgia Southern was big news locally, but graduate student Masanori Isaka helped make it an international event.

Isaka, who earned a bachelor’s degree in broadcasting from the University last spring, contacted the Washington, D.C., bureau of NHK Japan Broadcasting Corp. and offered to cover President Bush’s visit.

“I interned with NHK during the summer, so I still have a good relationship with them,” Isaka said. “Because I worked with them, they knew that I had experience interviewing people and assisting cameramen, so they didn’t have to send a correspondent.”

According to Isaka, NHK is Japan’s sole public broadcaster. It has 29 international news bureaus, including four in the U.S.: Los Angeles, New York, Seattle and Washington, D.C. Because NHK has a limited presence in America, it does not cover all of the president’s U.S. trips, but the timing of the president’s visit influenced their decision to film it.

“The upcoming election was a very important topic in Japan,” said Isaka. “The Republican Party was having a hard time and faced losing seats to the Democrats. Also, NHK was interested in whether the president would say anything important about Iraqi policy or anything related to Japan.”

In addition to covering President Bush’s speech, Isaka and cameraman Mark Rabin interviewed several groups of people to get their reaction to the president’s comments.

While he enjoyed his summer internship with NHK, Isaka is focusing on completing his master’s degree in political science. Currently, Isaka is conducting an independent study for Darin Van Tassell that has him researching Japanese, Chinese and South Korean foreign policy.

“I’m also learning how to be a good professor,” Isaka stated. “I attend Dr. Van Tassell’s Introduction to International Studies class to observe his teaching style.”

As an undergraduate, Isaka took the same class with Van Tassell as the instructor. He said Van Tassell’s personality and teaching style influenced his decision to become a college professor when he returns to Japan.

“I want to take everything I’ve learned here at Georgia Southern and apply it at a university in Japan,” said Isaka. He anticipates completing his graduate degree in spring 2008.

Before coming to the United States, the 27-year-old Isaka earned an undergraduate degree in economics from Teikyo University in Tokyo. He grew up in the Ibaraki Prefecture city of Tsuchiura. Ibaraki Prefecture is east of Tokyo and has a population of around 3 million.

“Ibaraki is only about one to two hours from Tokyo, but people in Japan still consider it to be in the countryside,” Isaka said. “My city of Tsuchiura is in the middle of Ibaraki. Japan’s second-largest lake, Kasumigaura, is in Ibaraki Prefecture. So is Mount Tsukuba, a beautiful mountain.”

Isaka’s parents, grandparents, sister and two brothers still live in Ibaraki.

Coming to the United States has been a very positive experience for Isaka. It is one he said he would recommend to other Japanese students.

“Georgia Southern has a great English language program and great facilities,” stated Isaka. “People here are very nice to international students. They are really friendly and willing to help. This is a great university.”

Isaka’s decision to attend college in Georgia resulted from the influence of his English teacher Kenichiro Takahashi, who attended college in Tennessee. According to Isaka, Takahashi originally wanted to come to Georgia, but at the time, Georgia was considered “really conservative, and there were not many foreigners in the state.”

When it was time for Isaka to begin applying for college in the United States, Takahashi said enough time had passed for Georgia to be an option for study.

“Mr. Takahashi said that times have changed, but that Georgia still maintains its Southern culture and history. He told me that I would be able to see different things from a big city like New York,” said Isaka. “I really like history, and Georgia has a deep history, like the Civil War. I thought I could see a real old America that is not mixed with other cultures.”
Georgia Southern junior Jason McLeod plays lead in football movie

Jason McLeod was a high school senior, a football player and a popular guy. But a movie star? No way.
That is, until “Facing the Giants.”

McLeod, a junior communication arts major, played the role of Brock Kelley in last fall’s film “Facing the Giants.” “Brock is the team leader and defensive captain,” McLeod said. “He’s apathetic and half-hearted in what he’s doing. Throughout the movie the coach tries to get through to him to step up to be a leader his teammates can follow.”

The movie was written, produced and cast by Alex and Stephen Kendrick, brothers and pastors at McLeod’s home church in Albany, Ga., Sherwood Baptist. “The cast was an all-volunteer cast from the church,” McLeod said. “When it was first announced, I was excited. I went home and told my mom that I was going to try out just so I could put some pads on and knock somebody over. I also thought it would be a cool way to spend my summer before coming to Georgia Southern.

“At tryouts I sat in the back thinking to myself, ‘just put my name down and suit me up,’” he continued. “When Alex came to me to ask if I’d read for a part yet, I told him to just put me where he needed me. He asked me to come read a few lines, and I did.”

Days later McLeod received the call that he’d received the part of Brock. Filming began with about two weeks left before his high school graduation, but he didn’t mind. “When I got the script, I went home and read it to become familiar with my character and the storyline,” he said. “I remember sitting on my bed, reading and getting caught up in the story and its emotions.”

McLeod found many parallels between himself and his character. “I felt like Brock and I were so alike in the way we were living and how we both came to be convicted by God. I could also relate to how he felt being on a losing team. My high school team won seven games out of 40 when I played,” he said.

Weeks after filming wrapped, McLeod moved to Statesboro to begin practicing with the Eagles football team. He was a redshirt freshman, but participated in all of the workouts, practices and team meetings. “My sophomore year I played second-string and got to play a good bit,” he said. “I got to travel the country and play college football. It was a dream come true.”

Prior to the start of the fall 2006 football season, McLeod decided it was time for a change. “It wasn’t because of the new coach, but I knew I was supposed to quit playing football,” he said. “I still love it, it’s in my blood. The more focused I became on God, the less focused I became about football. My time on the team taught me a lot about perseverance and character.”

The movie was released last September in 441 theaters nationwide and was in the top five for several weeks. “Since its release, we’ve received phone calls and e-mails from people saying they were touched by its message,” McLeod said. “Receiving the messages gives me a sense of hope and encouragement.

“We also started getting requests from people to come speak. I dropped to nine hours last semester so I would be available to travel for speaking engagements. We travel almost every weekend to speak all over the country.”

Though he enjoyed his first acting role, McLeod is not planning to star in another movie. “If I had the opportunity to act again, I’d love to, but I’m okay if I don’t.”
Close to home

Former student recalls Depression-era life at Georgia Teacher’s College

As the crow flies, Metter and Statesboro are not far apart, but there were times the distance between home and college seemed vast for students Kathryn Simmons Lovett and her sister, Lillian.

They arrived at Georgia Teacher’s College in 1932. “For the first six weeks, women were not allowed to sign out and leave campus, but after three weeks we were so homesick Daddy got special permission for us to go home for Sunday dinner,” Kathryn Lovett said.

At the time, there were no entrance exams for the college, she said. “The determining factor for attendance was whether or not your father had enough money to send you, or whether you had a job or an assistantship.

“Mother and Dad went to the campus and chose our rooms in East Hall,” she said. “We were fortunate to share a room in a suite, and Miss Veazy was the hall director.”

The library and academic classrooms were in the Administration Building, and the dining hall was in old Anderson Hall, which was roughly where the Herty Building is situated today. “We also had assigned tables in the dining hall, and a senior boy was appointed to sit at the head of the table.

“We were children of the Great Depression,” Lovett pointed out, “and Lil and I had an allowance of $1 each week. Many Saturdays we walked downtown to the Dixie Theatre, where we saw a movie for 25 cents. We might have a burger for 10 cents, a Coke for 5 cents, or go to the drug store and get ice cream for 5 or 10 cents. We spent the rest on pencils and paper!”

There were no sororities on campus in the early ’30s, but there was a social club that organized dances. Lovett loved to dance and could “sling a wicked leg,” whether dancing to the on-campus orchestra or music from a record player.

She excelled in chemistry, and she eventually transferred to the University of Georgia so she could be licensed to teach home economics. She came back to Georgia Southern at the beginning of World War II and took the Medical Aptitude Test, which she passed with flying colors. She was one of the first five women ever admitted to Emory Medical School, graduating 11th in her class.

Lovett chose to pursue a specialty in psychiatry, and, after completing her medical residency returned to practice in her hometown. She eventually married fellow physician Lindsay Franklin Lovett, and was instrumental in developing the mental health agencies in Bulloch, Candler, Evans, Tattnall, Toombs, Appling, Wayne and Jeff Davis counties.

Now retired, Lovett continues to be active with family and friends and recently had a Statesboro street named in her honor.
1940s

Annabelle Simms Foures ('49) lives in Callahan, Fla.

1960s

Jean Dwelle Cowart ('62) teaches fourth grade at Bulloch Academy in Statesboro. She was listed in the 2005-06 edition of Who’s Who Among America’s Teachers. She and her husband, Phil, live in Millen, Ga. They have two children, Jeana and Laura, and can be reached at jcowart@bullochacademy.com.

Larry Hembree ('64) lives in Clearwater, Fla.

1970s

Greg Colson ('70) is managing partner of the Atlanta-based accounting firm Moore Colson. He was named one of America’s Top 100 Most Influential Practitioners of 2006 by CPA Magazine. Under his leadership, Moore Colson has continuously been ranked among Atlanta’s Top 20 accounting firms by Inside Public Accounting Magazine. He also serves as a member of the board of trustees for the Georgia Southern Foundation.

Jim Moore ('73) has joined the DeKalb Community Service Board (CSB) as chief financial officer. The CSB is a public, not-for-profit organization that helps children, adolescents, adults and seniors who suffer from mental health problems, developmental disabilities and other challenges to living full and productive lives.

Paul C. Reviere ('73) is a third-grade teacher at Lincoln County Elementary School. He was elected to serve as chair of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (CASI) at the SACS CASI annual conference last December. He has been involved with SACS for more than 25 years, serving in leadership roles at both the state and regional levels. He and his wife, Ann, live in Lincolnton, Ga.

Karen Usina Thompson Danao ('75) and her daughter co-own The Cotton Patch gift shop in Sylvania, Ga., where she and her husband, Norman, reside.

1980s

David McKnight ('80) has been promoted to principal of North Broward Academy of Excellence. He recently received his specialist degree in educational leadership from Florida Atlantic University.

Guy D. Foulkes ('84) and his wife, Lesley, live in Macon, Ga. He has been appointed legislative chair of the board of directors of the Georgia Orthopaedic Society for 2007.

Greg Clay ('85) was recently promoted to director of claims for Georgia Farm Bureau Insurance Companies.

Laird Culver ('85) has accepted the position of Brigade, UH60 Standardization Officer with the U.S. Army in Fort Rucker, Ala. “I recently visited Georgia Southern as a parent of a prospective student,” he writes. “It was nice to be back on campus.”

Bob Mackessy ('85) teaches special education resource math at Cass Middle School in Cartersville, Ga. He is pursuing a master’s degree in technology in education from Lesley University. Mackessy can be reached at bob.mackessy@bartow.k12.ga.us.

Joycelyn Dorsey ('87) is a brand manager of the Coca-Cola Company’s Hispanic Marketing Team. She resides in Mableton, Ga., and would enjoy hearing from friends at dorseyj1@aol.com.

Nancy Hendrix Hollenbeck ('87) is a physician partner with Spartanburg OB-GYN. She will begin a three-year fellowship in maternal-fetal medicine at Thomas Jefferson University in July. She and her husband, Stephen, live in Spartanburg, S.C., and have two children, Teagan and Tori.

Michael Johnston ('88) is chief financial officer at Haven Trust Bank in Duluth, Ga. He and his wife, Ginger (Wheatley ‘90), have

EAGLE EXPERTISE

Several Georgia Southern alumni were presenters at the 2006 U.S. Army Integrated Training Area Management (ITAM) Workshop hosted by Kansas State University. The workshop brought together professionals from wide-ranging backgrounds tasked with maintaining and sustaining the Army’s training lands and live fire ranges worldwide. Alumni presenters included Richard Weatherford ('98), ITAM program manager at Fort Stewart, Ga.; Peter A. Dolan ('02), senior land rehabilitation and maintenance coordinator with the ITAM program at the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif; Jonathan L. English ('04), a graphic information systems analyst at Fort Stewart; Beth-Anee Johnson ('99), coordinator of the Range Training and Assessment Program at Fort Jackson, S.C.; and Lee Barber ('89), ITAM program manager for the Army National Guard Bureau in Arlington, Va. Pictured, l-r, are Dolan, Johnson, English and Weatherford.
A passion to protect
Kicklighter guards his homeland as a border protection officer

By Loretta Brandon

For Jeffrey Kicklighter (’00), it was, in the words of baseball’s Yogi Berra, “déjà vu all over again.”

As a recruiter for U.S. Customs and Border Protection – formerly the Border Patrol – he returned to campus recently to enlist employees for the same organization that recruited him from Georgia Southern in 1999.

Kicklighter, a native of Bryan County, Ga., followed his older brother to Georgia Southern and considered a career in mechanical engineering. At a career fair, his brother introduced him to other opportunities, including criminal justice, where Kicklighter found his passion and his future.

“When I met the Border Patrol recruiter in 1999, I was impressed by the range and breadth of opportunities they offered,” said Kicklighter. “The variety is exciting, and the options are up to you.”

When the agency joined the Department of Homeland Security after 9/11, preventing terrorism became the Border Patrol’s No. 1 priority, but that change in focus only strengthened his desire to continue and grow in the field of law enforcement.

Stationed in the Rio Grande Valley, Kicklighter chose to join BORSTAR, a unit responsible for border search, trauma and rescue, in 2004. He was trained as an emergency medical technician, a skill that has served him well.

He was also one of the hundreds of border protection agents sent to New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina.

“We flew over New Orleans in a Blackhawk helicopter on search and rescue missions,” he said. “I was part of a team that rescued 50 people from a nursing home that was being fired on. As the only armed search and rescue team, we were sent in to bring out elderly people who had had no food or water for a week. It was undoubtedly the most worthwhile thing I’ve done so far.”

Jeffrey Kicklighter (’00)
Sylia Cooper Littlejohn (’97) and her husband, Derek (’95) welcomed twin daughters Reagan and Savannah in August. They join brother Harrison.

Brandon Vaughan (’97) is a manager with Deloitte Consulting. He lives in Scottsdale, Ga., and can be reached at vaughan_brandon@yahoo.com.

Jimmie Eric Villines (’97) is vice president of The GCI Group, a public relations consulting firm. He lives in Smyrna, Ga., and would enjoy hearing from friends at lftw8s@gmail.com.

Heather Merten Hodges (’98) and her husband, Justin (’01) welcomed their first child, Lawton, in March 2006. Heather is a stay-at-home mom. Justin graduated from dental school in May 2006 at the Medical College of Georgia and joined Hodges & Hodges Comprehensive Dentistry. The family lives in Leicester, N.C., and would enjoy hearing from friends at hmerten1@yahoo.com.

Landra Jeffries (’98) and Michael French were married in October and reside in Stone Mountain, Ga.

Juanita Jones (’98) and LeRoy Kennedy celebrated their birth of their daughter, Christina Alexis, in July.

Johnathan Carthon (’99) received top honors as the winner of the annual Miller Brewing Urban Entrepreneur Series for his newly established company, Beauty Genesis International.

Jonathon Grissom (’99) and Evangelia Kinigakis (’03) were married in July. They reside in Dallas, Ga.

Joseph Millican (’99) is a surgical resident at the Spartanburg Regional Medical Center. He lives in Spartanburg, S.C., and can be reached at drjmillican@yahoo.com.

2000s

Michelle Glaze (’00) is a financial analyst with the Walt Disney Company in Orlando, Fla. “I am living my dream!” she writes. “I am working for Disney, doing what I love.”

Amber Webb Lutz (’00) and her husband, Jeffrey (’98), welcomed their son, Carson Lee, in November. He joins a brother, Cooper. Amber is a stay-at-home mom and Jeffrey is a construction litigator with Epstein, Becker

>> ALUMNI PROFILE

Wells helps keep Scottsdale booming

By Michelle Groover

Early days and late nights are routine for Suzanne Walden-Wells.

For Wells (’83), executive vice president and chief operating officer of the Scottsdale, Ariz., Area Chamber of Commerce, it’s part of the job.

“Most of my days begin at 7:30 a.m., with a breakfast event, committee or board of directors meeting,” she said. “And frequently, my day ends with an after-hours commitment or networking event.”

The Chamber represents more than 2,100 member firms. “In addition to providing services that help our members achieve a higher degree of success, our work in the areas of economic development and advocacy ensures that Scottsdale remains a great place to work,” said Walden-Wells.

“One of the great things about working in the non-profit sector – especially for a member-driven organization – is that seldom are two days exactly the same. Our organization is dynamic, energetic, creative and fluid, which creates a really fast-paced, exciting work environment,” she said.

As chief operating officer, she is responsible for the internal infrastructure of the organization.

“This includes our physical office, equipment and resources. I am also responsible for our relationships with ‘affinity partners,’ companies that provide a unique opportunity, service or product price point to our members,” Walden-Wells said. “Aside from those direct responsibilities, I have my hands in just about everything that goes on, including strategy and development for new programs and major events.

“With a staff of only 14, we all roll up our sleeves and do what’s necessary to deliver. It’s really like running a small business and every staff member feels a sense of ownership in the end result.”

Last year Walden-Wells fulfilled a lifelong dream by visiting South Africa.

“I traveled with the Foundation for Global Leadership (FGL), an organization that works to strengthen leadership worldwide by introducing people to societal challenges in developing countries,” she said. “My trip was eye-opening on every level.

“Because of the relationships of FGL, we were exposed to people and places that most travelers never have access to. We talked to community leaders that are making headway in healing the scars of apartheid. We also met with young men and women who have launched a grassroots effort within their township to address the issues of rape, incest and the AIDS epidemic,” she continued.

“I went for inspiration, insight and wonder. I came back motivated by everything I saw.”

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Chloe Evert is most at home working with wildlife

By Michelle Groover

How do you measure a rattlesnake?
Very carefully.

It’s all in a day’s work for Dawn Wilson (’87), director of the Southwestern Research Station in Portal, Ariz.

“I study them by tubing them with see-through plastic tubes,” she explained. “They crawl into the tube and cannot turn around. Then I can mark and measure them.”

Her research station is surrounded by the Coronado National Forest and its inhabitants – bats, snakes, birds, frogs, spiders, turtles, squirrels, chipmunks and mountain lions. Wilson’s specialty is studying the nesting ecology of desert box turtles and the effects of tail loss in striped plateau lizards.

“When I was a student at Georgia Southern, I worked with (biology professor) Bill Lovejoy on a tortoise research project and have been working with them ever since,” she said. “That research project helped me get a research assistantship at University of South Florida working on gopher tortoises for my master’s degree.”

The station is a year-round field site under the direction of the Center for Biodiversity and Conservation (CBC) at the American Museum of Natural History.

“I work directly under the CBC which helps the station raise money,” Wilson said. “They work closely with me on developing new educational workshops.”

Along with six employees, they host scientists and workshop participants who come from across the country to conduct research. “Most of the researchers who come to the station work on or near it on the plants and animals of the Chiricahua Mountains and surrounding areas,” she said.

“I love the area and working with a great group of employees,” Wilson said. “I like improving the station infrastructure so visitors and researchers have the accommodations and research facilities they need to conduct their projects.”

& Green. The family resides in Dunwoody, Ga., and can be reached at amber_lutz@hotmail.com.

Matthew Boone (’01) teaches American history and advanced placement world history at Northside High School in Warner Robins, Ga.

Mike Davis (’01) has joined the JR Motorsports team as director of communications. In addition to overseeing the company-wide media request and public relations efforts, Davis will handle scheduling for team owner and Nextel Cup Series driver Dale Earnhardt Jr., as well as communications for the organization’s NASCAR Busch Series, USAR Hooters Pro Cup Series and late-model stock car programs.

Angie Greene (’01) and Mike Castleberry were married in December 2005. They live in Cordele, Ga., with their children, Luke, Leah and Will.

Caroline Philips (’01) lives in Orlando, Fla.

Alicia Holmes (’02) is a business analyst with VeriSign Inc. She lives in Colorado Springs, Colo., and can be reached at arholmes@hotmail.com.

Amanda Thomas Price (’02) and her husband, Shawn, celebrated the birth of their daughter, Erin Ryleigh, in May.

Melissa Wilson (’02) and Christopher Cook were married in November and reside in Folkston, Ga.

Stephanie Arends (’03) and Bryan Neal were married in September. They live in Roswell, Ga.

Stephanie Burkhart (’03) and Heath Burch (’03) were married in June and reside in Warner Robins, Ga.

Patricia Craw (’03) and Stephen Johnson were married in May and are living in Savannah.

Craig Elrod (’03) is a senior agent with Best Insurance Group. He lives in McDonough, Ga., and can be reached at elrodcm@yahoo.com.

Emily Bessonette Leccese (’03) and her husband, Eric (’03), welcomed a daughter, Isabella, in November. Emily is a product analyst with Geico. Eric is a project manager/ estimator with SOA Construction. The family...
makes its home in Macon, and would enjoy hearing from friends at emily_a_bessonette@yahoo.com or eric_e_leccesse@yahoo.com.

Tobias Mathis ('03) is a human resources representative with Ryder Systems Inc. “I support strategic HR functions for locations throughout six states: California, Oregon, Illinois, Georgia, Florida and New Jersey,” he writes. “My job is very challenging and allows me to utilize my problem-solving skills to the fullest.”

Kelly Peterson Canseco ('04) works for eCompany Store, an online company which sells promotional products to Fortune 500 companies. She and her husband, Keith, live in Alpharetta, Ga., and can be reached at mrscesco@yahoo.com.

Lori Derf ('04) was a recipient of the 2007 American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA) Foundation Educator Award. The honor was presented to seven AIAA pre-college teachers who demonstrated exemplary efforts in facilitating the continued study of mathematics, science and related technical studies among America's youth. She teaches at Sol C. Johnson High School in Savannah.

Brittany Gates ('04) is a membership specialist with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Georgia. “I am still writing and plan to publish a book by 2008,” Brittany wrote.

Amanda Ramsey Pritchett ('04) is an assistant manager at David's Bridal. Her husband, David ('04), is a case manager with the Walton County Department of Family and Children Services. The couple lives in Bogart, Ga.

Lauren Williams ('04) teaches science, is the Science Olympiad coach and cheerleading coach at Langston Chapel Middle School in Statesboro. “I recently completed my master's degree in education and am currently working on my educational specialist degree at Georgia Southern,” she writes.

Jacob Barnes ('05) and Courtney Bell ('04) were married in October 2005. They reside in Atlanta.

Andrew Massey ('05) is a traffic manager with Wilkins Media Company. He is also pursuing a music career and invites everyone to visit his Web site at http://www.myspace.com/drewmassey.

Amanda Brown ('06) is a community manager with the American Cancer Society. She

Success by design

Knight's career taking off after 'Project Runway'

By Michelle Groover

Perhaps best known for his involvement in season three of Bravo TV’s “Project Runway” reality series, Michael Knight is making a name for himself. Though Knight didn’t win the competition, he won the hearts of the public who voted him the “fan favorite,” earning him a $10,000 check.

Since the season finale of the show, Knight ('02) has kept busy. Liking what they saw on “Project Runway,” Starbucks contacted him to design customizable T-shirts. “They saw me on the show, liked me and liked my work and designs. They said that I represent everything they represent, which is being young, fresh and individual,” he said. “For the T-shirt campaign, which shows drink specializations, I took the drink options Starbucks offers and developed my own interpretation of them. The words create a template of the Starbucks white cup.”

Now that the Starbucks campaign has concluded, Knight can focus on other projects that are waiting in the wings. “I’m still constantly working on my clothing line,” he said. “I’m also working on a fragrance for women and a high-end jewelry line that will use diamonds, rubies and emeralds. I have plenty on my plate to keep me busy.”

For his own line, his design inspiration is women. “I like for a woman to feel sexy, beautiful, confident and enjoying what they’re wearing,” Knight said. “I like to do things that are a little different, a little out there, but still wearable. Ideas for my designs just pop into my head. Artwork, a movie, anything might spark something.”

Though he hasn’t had the opportunity to visit his alma mater since graduation, the University still has a spot in Knight’s mind and heart. “The instructors and professors I had prepared me with a lot of one-on-one time. They always encouraged me and pushed me to do more on my own. They gave me a great education,” he said.

During his senior year, Knight pulled together his own exit show to showcase his burgeoning talent. “I casted all the models and created 30 pieces for the show, my first collection,” he said. “That was one of the best memories ever for me because I did it all myself.”

Now living in Atlanta, Knight has embraced his newfound celebrity status knowing that “Project Runway” gave him a foot in the door. His designs have been worn by celebrities such as Jagged Edge, Ciara and Queen Latifah. “The show has been a great career catalyst,” he said.
ALUMNI PROFILE

You gotta have art

Kennedy Center internship leads to life in arts education

By Loretta Brandon

Every evening at six o’clock, about 400 or so people stop by the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C., to see a free performance on the Millennium Stage.

Whether it’s one performer or a whole ensemble, the daily presentation is just one of the center’s programs overseen by Darrell M. Ayers (’87), the Kennedy Center’s vice president for education.

Ayers is responsible for one of the largest arts education programs in the U.S. Overseeing 44 full-time staff members and an annual education budget of more than $18 million, his work covers music, dance, theater, and, more recently, the Internet. Millennium Stage performances are broadcast live on the Web each evening and archived for future use.

Ayers’ wife, Mary Jane, holds her doctorate in musical arts, and he completed his degree as an adult student while she taught music at Georgia Southern. As a communication arts major, he knew that he’d be required to serve an internship, so when he saw a newsletter promoting internships at the Kennedy Center, he applied.

“I interned at the Kennedy Center in the winter and spring of 1987, then went back to Statesboro,” Ayers recalled. “I was surprised about a month later when they called and invited me to apply for a job. I started out writing press releases and doing marketing for some programs in the education department and moved up gradually. This will be my 20th year at the Center.”

Over the years, he’s watched the center’s educational program grow exponentially, and his work has covered a lot of interesting ground.

“When Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf and his wife visited the U.S. in September 2006, Mrs. Musharraf and Mrs. Laura Bush attended the launch of a new Web site we developed on the arts and culture of Pakistan,” Ayers said, “and during the holiday season we took the Kennedy Center’s musical production of Roald Dahl’s ‘Willie Wonka’ – seven actors and 19 puppets – to the East Room of the White House.

“I never would have dreamed I’d be in this position,” said Ayers, “but I was here at the right time and with the right skill set.”

In their spare time, Ayers and his wife are renovating their home, a 1905 Victorian duplex just two miles from the Kennedy Center. “The house was originally built as a summer home,” said Ayers. “In 1905, it was a long way out of town.” He’s also a member of the Professional Disc Golf Association and plays periodically in tournaments in his area.

In Memoriam

ALUMNI

Thomas Adams, Statesboro
Daniel Ansley, ’96, Martinez, Ga.
Janie Durrence Bounds, ’36, Claxton
Dolan E. Brown Jr., ’50, Twin City, Ga.
Ron Chambers, ’94, Statesboro
Harry Clarkson III, Claxton, Ga.

Carol Ann Craven (’06) and Jeremy Fordham (’05) were married in October and live in Statesboro.

Kerry Fitzpatrick (’06) is an account manager with Advantage Dealer Services Inc. She lives in Atlanta and can be reached at kerry_fitzpatrick@hotmail.com.

Marie Collins Franklin, Metter, Ga.
Norman W. “Skeeter” Griffin Jr., ’58, Augusta, Ga.
Naomi Hendrix, Statesboro
Harold Hodges, ’65, Statesboro
Nathan Jones, Atlanta
Seth Josey, ’94, Duluth, Ga.
Herbert Kernaghan, ’60, Augusta, Ga.
Irina Lee, ’61, Stilson, Ga.
Janice K. Wright Niles, ’96, Evans, Ga.
Charles W. Norwood, ’64, Evans, Ga.
Richard W. Silvey, ’72, Dunwoody, Ga.
Charles Sims, ’56, Fort Valley, Ga.
Debbie Smith, ’91, Statesboro

FACULTY & STAFF

Barbara W. Bitter, English
Andrew S. Edwards, Education
Kemp Mabry, Education
Edwin T. Hibbs, Biology
Stephanie Routman, Theatre

Charles Norwood, 1941-2007
U.S. Congressman Charles W. “Charlie” Norwood, (’64), of Evans, Ga., died in January in hospice care. Norwood earned a doctorate in dental surgery from Georgetown University Dental School in 1967. He was a veteran of the Vietnam War, and upon leaving service opened a dental practice in Augusta. He also founded Northwoods Nursery in Evans and Augusta Dental Laboratory. Norwood was first elected to Congress in 1995 and served seven terms, being re-elected last November with a 68 percent margin. He was instrumental in health care reform for military retirees and veterans as well as patients-at-large. He achieved national recognition when he introduced the first comprehensive managed health care reform legislation to Congress in 1995, which subsequently passed the House of Representatives in both 1999 and 2001. Norwood’s Patient’s Bill of Rights legislation became a key issue in the 2000 Presidential election. He also succeeded in passing reforms across a broad range of public policy areas spanning education, private property rights, telecommunications and environmental regulations. Norwood is recognized as the father of the nation’s current Class A broadcast television service, by authoring and passing into law the Community Broadcasting Protection Act in 1998. He and his wife, Gloria, were long-time active members of Trinity-on-the-Hill United Methodist Church in Augusta. He was a past board member of the Augusta Opera Society and a member of the Augusta Symphony Guild. Congressman Norwood is survived by his wife, sons Charles and Carlton, and four grandchildren.

will be accountable for four Georgia counties: Jenkins, Emanuel, Screven and Candler.
Andrew Edwards, 1929-2007
Andrew S. “Andy” Edwards, 78, of Statesboro, died in February in hospice care. The Georgia Southern professor emeritus of educational foundations and curriculum served on the University faculty from 1963-1991. Edwards was a veteran of the U.S. Army, having served during the Korean Conflict. Edwards held bachelor’s and master’s degrees from Mercer University and a doctorate in education from the University of Georgia. He taught and was principal of schools in Cook, Berrien and Chatham Counties. He was active in volunteer services in the community including the Bulloch County Food Bank and the Board for the Homeless. He was a volunteer for the HCARE Program of Elderly Rights, and a strong supporter of Concerted Services. Edwards was a member of the First Baptist Church of Statesboro. Survivors include his wife, Anne M. Edwards; one son and daughter-in-law, Mark Edwards and Kathleen Comerford; a grandson and a nephew. Contributions honoring Edwards may be made to Ogeechee Area Hospice, P.O. Box 531, Statesboro, Ga., 30460; The Georgia Southern Planetarium or The Andrew S. Edwards Scholarship, c/o the Georgia Southern Foundation, P.O. Box 8053, Statesboro, Ga., 30460.

Norris Kemp Mabry, 1926-2007
Norris Kemp Mabry, 81, (’63) died in March. He retired from the University in 1988 as a professor emeritus of education. A veteran of WW II, Mabry held an A.B. degree from Mercer University, an M.Ed from Georgia Southern and Ph.D. from Florida State University. He was a member of the Bulloch County Historical Society, the Bulloch Retired Educators Association, Scottish Heritage Society, the American Legion Post 90, being named Legionnaire of the Year in 2000, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 10825. He served on the board of directors of Georgia Southern’s Center for Irish Studies, Hender- son Library and the Georgia Southern Muse- um. Mabry was also an active Boy Scout who had attained the rank of Eagle Scout. He was named the Rotary Club’s Citizen of the Year in 2002 and received two Deen Day Smith Awards, a 1990 Service to Mankind Award and 1999 Lifetime Achievement Award. Survivors include his wife, Evelyn Darley Mabry of Statesboro; sisters-in-law Carolyn Cannon Gay of Millen and June Darley of Orlando; a niece, Pam Smith of Statesboro; nephews Ray Darley Jr. of Savannah, Bryan Darley of Statesboro, and Hugh E. Darley, Mike Darley and John Darley, all of Orlando; several great-nieces and great-nephews, several great-great-nieces and great-great-nephews and his caregiver, Connie Robinson.

Halfway around the world
Teacher gets once-in-a-lifetime trip to Japan

By Casey Altman

Years ago, a bright-eyed girl sat behind her desk, while her third-grade mind stretched to wrap itself around a video about students, just like her, on the other side of the planet.

In the video they were learning math with an abacus and the child thought it would be great to see this in person.

But Patia Rountree was from a rural community in South Georgia, and she doubted that she would ever get to go.

“When I was a little girl I never thought I would just hop on an airplane and go to the other side of the world. I just didn't think it was in the realm of things I could do,” said Rountree (’95).

Rountree graduated from Georgia Southern with a doctorate in education and teaches math to sixth-graders in Bulloch County.

“I teach in Brooklet, which is really rural, and the kids either think that is all there is to the world or that they could never do something like that,” Rountree recognized their methods as those she uses to teach her students.

Although Rountree saw visiting Japan as fulfillment of a life-long dream, she had another reason for going.

Her students.

“I teach in Brooklet, which is really rural, and the kids either think that is all there is to the world or that they could never do something like that.”

Rountree hopes to inspire them to chase after their own dreams.

“As I have grown up I’ve realized that there’s nothing I can’t do if I want to do it, and that’s what I try to teach my students. If I can get on a plane to Japan, so can you. Because I was just like you,” she said.
Full-time funny

Kington turns knack for humor into comedic career

By Michelle Groover

Would you buy shoplifting prevention equipment from this man?
A lot of people did before Kington left his sales job with Checkpoint, a Fortune 500 company, to become a professional comedian.

Kington ('86) found himself using humor in his sales presentations, which led to speaking engagements.

"Over about a three-year span I had to make a decision – either I was going to give it up or try it out and make it happen," he said. "It wasn't a hard decision. I gave it a go, and three years later I was able to do comedy full time - that was 14 years ago."

With his business administration degree and experience, Kington is able to make it work in part due to his business savvy.

"The hardest part of comedy is developing the business side – developing initial opportunities," he said. "I've met some really funny guys that can't make a living at it because they don't do the business side of it. They don't develop the relationships and the networks and create opportunities.

"Once I was able to develop the momentum, it's really hard to stop it, but it does take time to start it."

Kington's tours take him from coast to coast. With each location he customizes the set for his audience and keeps a log of which material he used. "I have notebooks that tell me when I was in particular city and what material I did. That way every set is a new set for that city or group," he said. "It's fun to work and develop new stuff. Inevitably there are those in the audience who will come up to me and ask if I'm going to do a particular bit, and I will if they ask. Even if they know it, they still laugh."

As cliched as it might sound, Kington's material comes from real life. He advises other comedians to always have paper and pen close by because something is going to happen that is not "normal."

"Not all of the material that I write down is going to be able to be used on stage, but there's a good chance that out of a week's worth of material, there's going to be a minute's worth of good material you can get every week," he said. "If you do that, then you've got a new hour's worth of material every year. Material comes from life – it's just a matter of capturing it and writing it down."

A staple of his routine is a segment called "isms," which are mixed up phrases. "This started when my wife mixed up phrases and said something that doesn't exist, but she'll say them as if they're normal," Kington said. "For example, we have a swimming pool in our neighborhood and the pool committee was saying how people were coming in that didn't live in the neighborhood and how we needed to put up a sign that said 'Residents Only.' My wife piped up and said, 'I tell you what you need to put on it is, trespassers will be violated.' She was oblivious to the fact that she said it wrong."

The "isms" segment has been such a success that audience members have shared their "isms" with Kington – so many that he compiled them into a recent book, ISMS: 100 of the Stupid, Funniest and Most Outrageous Things People Have Actually Said.

"Laughter really is a medicine, and to get people to laugh is by far the best part of my job," he said. "My favorite comment is usually from women, I had to put my hands over my ears because I couldn't breathe. It's just nice to see people really let go and have a great time."

Kington and his wife, Jennifer, who live in Kennesaw, Ga., have two sons and a daughter and they're in the process of adopting a girl from Kazakhstan. "That will be a completion of our family and we are very excited about it," Kington said.
While early spring temperatures outside were still chilly, students took advantage of the indoor aquatic facilities in the newly expanded Recreation Activity Center (RAC). The $31.8 million expansion boosted the RAC to more than 200,000 square feet and includes both indoor and outdoor pools. The Aquatics Program offers swimming, diving, aqua aerobics or simply relaxing in spa-resort comfort, like these students.
Dell Merritt and Mary-Thomas King were a little bit nervous about getting together for the first time in 66 years. “After all these years, we didn’t know what to expect,” said Merritt, “but we took up right where we left off!” The two enjoyed lunch and a campus tour then explored their dormitory, East Hall – now Anderson Hall – and took a good look at the room they occupied as roommates. “I’m impressed by the new buildings,” said King. “Everything seems large compared to the buildings I remember. And I think it’s more beautiful today than when we were here.” Merritt, from Fitzgerald, Ga., is a retired teacher. King, also a retired teacher, lives in Sylvania, Ga.