GEORGE LEWIS joined Armstrong in September as the university’s new vice president for student affairs. Lewis will provide leadership to housing and residence life, Student Union and activities, career services, disability services, multicultural affairs, the student judicial system, and others. Lewis has nearly twenty years in higher education and holds a Doctor of Education degree from Georgia Southern University.

JAMIE RAYNOR is the Office of Advancement’s new director of annual giving. At Armstrong, Raynor will streamline and grow the annual giving program, including campaigns for faculty and staff, alumni, community friends, businesses, parents, and senior students. She holds an M.Ed. in Educational Technology from USC Aiken and is currently completing her Ph.D. in Higher Education Administration at USC.
IN MEMORIAM: Mark Finlay

The Armstrong community mourns the loss of assistant dean and history professor Mark Finlay, who was killed in a car accident in South Carolina on October 6.

“Mark was a valued colleague with a true love of research and a strong commitment to interdisciplinary learning,” says Laura Barrett, dean of Armstrong’s College of Liberal Arts. “He was a passionate scholar and a devoted professor who shared his knowledge with his students, fellow historians, and the Savannah community. He will be deeply missed.”

Finlay joined the faculty at Armstrong in 1992 and was the recipient of many awards, including the university’s Alumni Award for Distinguished Faculty Service to the Academic Discipline and the Georgia Board of Regents’ Teaching Excellence Award.

An accomplished scholar, he was the author of Growing American Rubber: Strategic Plants and the Politics of National Security (Rutgers University Press, 2009), the winner of the Theodore Saloutos Memorial Prize for best book published in the field of agricultural history. He also served as the founding director of the university’s Honors Program and as a consultant for the renovation of Thomas Edison’s laboratory in Fort Myers, Florida.

The Mark R. Finlay Visiting Lecture Series has been created to honor Mark’s passion for learning. Donations can be made to the Armstrong Foundation in honor of Mark Finlay. To contribute, call 912.344.2710 or visit armstrong.edu/give.

CAMPUS News

Political Science Professor at U.S. War College

JOSE DE ARIMATÉIA da CRUZ ’12, professor of political science, is spending the 2013-14 academic year representing Armstrong at the U.S. War College’s Strategic Studies Institute with a Visiting Research Professorship. While there, da Cruz will research HIV/AIDS as a national security issue and global cyber security in the Americas.

Davies Inducted into Hall of Fame

GEORGE DAVIES, professor of rehabilitation sciences, was inducted into the American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine (AOSSM) Hall of Fame, one of the highest honors in the field of sports medicine. Davies is the first individual who is not an orthopaedic surgeon to be inducted into the AOSSM Hall of Fame.

Lane Library Earns NEH Grant

Armstrong’s Lane Library has received two grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). The first grant, “Bridging Cultures: Muslim Journeys Bookshelf,” provided Armstrong’s Lane Library with 25 books and 3 films that offer new and diverse perspectives on the Muslim culture both in the United States and around the world. The second grant funded the “Let’s Talk About It: Muslim Journeys” program, a reading and discussion series led by Armstrong faculty and other local scholars. Visit armstrong.edu/bridging_cultures for a schedule of events.

Armstrong Supports Its Veterans

President Bleicken, along with Armstrong Student Veterans of America (SVA) chapter president Hakim Robertson; Laura Pallini-Bolton ’13, Armstrong veteran affairs coordinator; and Col. Peter Hoffman, U.S. Army, Ret., director of Armstrong Liberty Center, signed the Got Your 6 Education Pillar Pledge to show Armstrong’s support of student veterans. Got Your 6 is a campaign that unites the entertainment industry with top veteran-focused nonprofit organizations. The goal of the campaign is to bridge the civilian-military divide by creating a new conversation in America, so that veterans and military families are perceived as the leaders and civic assets that they are. To achieve this goal, the Got Your 6 campaign focuses on six key pillars of veteran reintegration: jobs, education, health, housing, family, and leadership.
Armstrong’s College of Science and Technology and College of Education collaborative education program kicked off this fall. Four undergraduates and eight Master of Arts in Teaching students were selected as Noyce Scholars as part of the $1.2 million Robert Noyce Teacher Scholarship grant Armstrong received from the National Science Foundation. This unique scholarship program supports students who wish to become K-12 teachers in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM).

“IF YOU ARE LUCKY ENOUGH TO HAVE LIVED IN PARIS AS A YOUNG MAN, THEN WHEREVER YOU GO FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE, IT STAYS WITH YOU, FOR PARIS IS A MOVEABLE FEAST.”
— Ernest Hemingway

A Moveable Feast

11/14/13 · 6 p.m.
THE BEACH INSTITUTE
502 E. Harris Street
Lauren Mason, Assistant Professor of Literature and African-American Studies
“To Be Beautiful in Light: The Role of Photography in Shaping the Modern Black Identity”

2/25/14 · 6 p.m.
TEMPLE MICKVE ISRAEL
20 East Gordon Street
KEYNOTE ADDRESS
Andrew Delbanco, Mendelson Family Chair of American Studies and Julian Clarence Levi, Professor in the Humanities at Columbia University
“What is College For? The Future of American Education”

3/27/14 · 6 p.m.
GEORGIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
501 Whitaker Street
Ella Howard, Assistant Professor of History
“Homeless: Poverty and Place in Urban America”

4/24/14 · 7 p.m.
FINE ARTS AUDITORIUM
Science Drive on the Armstrong campus
Emily Grundstad-Hall, Assistant Professor of Music
“Letters from Composers: Musicians Speak”

For more information, call 912.344.2523.
Celebrating 50 years of desegregation

In March 1961, 27-year-old Alfred Owens became the first African American to apply for admission to Armstrong College. That April, he was rejected on the basis of a 1959 age law.

Owens’ story was quickly forgotten until retired Armstrong associate professor of History Janet Stone uncovered it in her book, From the Mansion to the University: A History of Armstrong Atlantic State University. Owens later returned to Armstrong and graduated in 1981. In 1984, he became Armstrong’s first Minority Recruitment Officer and in 1986, became the first director of the newly created Minority Affairs Office.

In June of 1963, Otis Johnson transferred from Savannah State College and became the first African American to be admitted to Armstrong. He graduated in June of 1964. By 1969, Armstrong employed one minority faculty member and had enrolled 78 minority students. By 1970, 85 minority students were enrolled, and throughout the 1970s, recruitment of minority students took a major leap.

The arrival of more and more African-American students began to shift the makeup of the campus and in 1972, Margaret Davis became the first African American to be crowned Homecoming Queen. Celebration of black culture was later built through the founding of the Black American Movement and the observance of Black Awareness Week.

Today Armstrong is a much different place, with 37 percent of our total student population made up of African Americans, Hispanics, Asian and Pacific Islanders, Native Americans, and multiracial students. We are a university that not only values and respects diversity, but celebrates it with our various organizations, initiatives, and more than 30 annual events, including Black History Month, the Asian Heritage Celebration, and Latino Heritage week, which engaged more than 3,500 participants last year. As we look back to honor the anniversary of Armstrong’s desegregation, we are proud to be able to celebrate 50 years of inclusion.

Pictured above:
1. Armstrong College’s 1964 graduating class featuring Otis Johnson, who served as mayor of Savannah from 2004 to 2012.
2. Margaret Davis was voted Armstrong’s first African-American Homecoming Queen. This photograph appeared in the 1972 Geechee.
3. Alfred Owens in his Armstrong office during the 1980s.
4. Otis Johnson is pictured fourth from the left on the front row in this 1973 Geechee photo of the Black America Movement.
5. Armstrong’s Collegiate 100 chapter took a top national honor in 2012 when they were named the 100 Black Men of America’s Chapter of the Year. The organization’s core mission is to provide mentoring to young African Americans in the region, maintain academic excellence in the classroom, and support the region through community service projects. Like its parent body, the 100 Black Men of Savannah, the Armstrong chapter concentrates its efforts to provide mentorship, health and wellness awareness, academic excellence, and economic empowerment.
6. On August 24 and 25, Armstrong celebrated its 50th anniversary of desegregation with an event that featured an uplifting performance by Anointed Voices, Armstrong’s gospel choir.

Photos courtesy of the Lane Library Archives
Eric Koonce ‘13
Camden County, Georgia
Middle Grades Education

For Eric Koonce, Armstrong is not just a college; it’s an opportunity. As a freshman, he immersed himself into the Pirate culture. He became secretary for Armstrong’s Collegiate 100, joined the gospel choir, and worked diligently on the Student Union Board. Emerging quickly as a leader, Koonce led student government efforts to successfully implement recycling and a tobacco-free environment on campus. While it became clear that Koonce was most happy when helping others, he wasn’t exactly sure how to turn that into a career. Initially he studied nursing, following his mother’s path. However, after leading a group of incoming freshmen through orientation, he realized that his life’s passion was teaching. Since that moment, Koonce has worked two internships as a seventh grade science teacher and will soon begin his full-time student teaching program. Koonce is now confident that teaching is his destiny; he just needed a little nudge in the right direction.
Music is in Byron Hatcher’s blood. His father was a musician, and from an early age it was something that just came very naturally to him. One of his first songs, “How I Feel,” was finished when he was just 14 and is featured on his debut, self-titled album, Byron Hatcher Band, which was released in 2011 while he attended Armstrong. However, despite his musical ambitions and a travel schedule to promote his album, he knew he needed to put school first.

“An education will always be there; it’s something my dad always said,” commented Hatcher.

Being an outstanding student in the midst of juggling his dream of making it as a professional musician has caused many of his professors to take notice. He feels that they have pushed him and guided him to become the student he has always wanted to be.

“A college education basically allows me stability; it’s a foundation,” said Hatcher. “Music can be very temporary, but that degree is constant.”
Helen Yates knew she wanted to study nursing while she was a military medic and LPN at Winn Army Hospital in Hinesville, Ga. Conveniently, she was able to attend Armstrong Liberty Center in Hinesville, then made the transition to the main campus in Savannah, joining the advanced placement track for nursing.

While attending Armstrong, Yates moved from the Army to the Army Reserve, but sometimes she had to leave town for several weeks at a time to provide medical support to military units across the country.

“My professors were really mindful of my situation,” she said. “They really worked with me. I appreciated how flexible they were.”

As part of her nursing clinical, Yates signed up for a practicum at Liberty Regional Medical Center. That experience led directly to her being hired full-time at Liberty Regional immediately upon graduation.

“I thought it was very important to further my education both for me and for my daughter,” she explained. “I knew Armstrong would help me advance my career.”

Helen Yates ’13
Tacoma, Washington and Fayetteville, North Carolina
NURSING
Being a Pirate has always been in Cecilia Hernandez’s blood. Her father, grandmother, aunt, and uncle all attended Armstrong, so naturally, when it came time to choose a college, she chose Armstrong because it simply felt like home. “My dad’s picture is in the yearbook in the library,” said Hernandez. “It’s a big deal for me that he went to Armstrong.”

Since coming to Armstrong in 2011, Hernandez has achieved so much. She’s a member of the Alpha Sigma Tau Sorority, a Residential Assistant for Armstrong Housing and Residence Life, president of the College Panhellenic Board where she leads sorority recruitment, and a member of the Armstrong Honors Program. In January of 2012, she was awarded the prestigious Honors Presidential Scholarship. “There are only four people on campus at one time that get this scholarship,” said Hernandez.

Aside from attending medical school for ophthalmology or graduate school for microbiology or biochemistry after she graduates, Hernandez plans to immediately become part of Armstrong’s alumni association and stay involved with Greek life as it grows on campus. For her, Armstrong isn’t just a school, it’s part of her family.
With so many different areas of study and a strong student support network, Armstrong has served as a vital incubator for a number of successful area entrepreneurs. The university provides students with experiences inside and outside the classroom that enable graduates to launch companies, expand their bottom line, and ensure a positive return on investment.

Whether they own outdoor adventure companies or popular restaurants, these Armstrong alumni share a visionary approach to business. Please meet a few ambitious alumni who are making a positive impact on today’s business world.

MARY GITHENS ’09 and MARTIN RUIZ ’11
Co-owners, Latin Chicks
B.A. in Economics (Githens) and B.A. in Economics (Ruiz)

Armstrong alumni Mary Githens and Martin Ruiz joined forces in 2009 to launch Latin Chicks, a tasty franchise restaurant combining the flavors of South America and the Caribbean in a fast food-style setting.

Latin Chicks offers a delicious mix of Latin American dishes, including Brazilian-style Churrasco, Cuban-style Ropa Vieja, and Peruvian-style coal-fired chicken. Githens, a native of Lima, Peru, and Ruiz, who originally hails from Mexico, share a passion for food, business, and hard work.

Both Armstrong alumni credit their Economics of Entrepreneurship class, taught by former professor Robert Lee, with giving them the knowledge and confidence to launch a new business. “I can say that Latin Chicks was born thanks to that class,” Ruiz said.

Githens added, “Armstrong gave me a foundation to enter and welcome the real world. The professors are great, realistic, encouraging, and, at the same time, demanding.”

Githens and Ruiz currently have nine employees at their flagship location at Oglethorpe Mall in Savannah, but they have big plans for the future. They’re currently expanding, making Latin Chicks a franchise restaurant and opening new locations across the country.

“I am currently working on developing all our handbooks and manuals to make it easy to replicate our business anywhere,” Ruiz explained. “We’re excited about the future.”

This hard-working duo enjoys encouraging other entrepreneurs, especially fellow Armstrong graduates. “When you own your own company, the sky is the limit,” said Ruiz. “You work harder, but you see the rewards sooner. The potential to grow professionally is unlimited.”
After working as a tour guide and boat captain for more than ten years, Eric Burns founded Marshgrass Adventures in 2006, offering popular kayaking, stand-up paddling, and fishing charters on Hilton Head Island, S.C.

“I noticed a hole in the market emerging and took the opportunity to start a new business,” he said. “I've chosen to keep my company small, no more than a couple of dedicated employees. This allows me to provide a personable service, and my clients get to develop an intimate relationship with the guides over time.”

Originally from High Point, N.C., Burns earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts at Armstrong. He says he applies lessons learned as an undergraduate to his business nearly every day.

“Armstrong provided a good foundation to the marketing aspect of the business,” he explained. “Advertising is expensive, and having the ability to create my own ads and marketing was crucial to my start-up. I have also used positive critiquing skills I learned at Armstrong to encourage clients and employees to strive for higher results.”

Burns credits Armstrong art professors John and Linda Jensen with encouraging him to reach “beyond what I thought was possible” in art and life.

This outdoor adventure enthusiast enjoys owning his own business and being a successful Lowcountry entrepreneur.

“Working for myself is very rewarding,” he explained. “I love seeing the decisions I make take shape within the business, and I love the independence and freedom to make those decisions.”

After earning a master’s degree in physical therapy at Armstrong in 2001, Craig Weyer completed his orthopedic manual therapy certification and Doctorate in Physical Therapy at the University of St. Augustine. In 2005, he founded Horizon Rehabilitation and Sports Medicine, a successful company with three bustling offices in the Hilton Head Island/Bluffton area of South Carolina, and one busy orthopedic foot and ankle clinic in Savannah.

“We took a big risk, but it has really paid off,” he said of the company’s founding. “We grew quickly in the first few years. Rather than expand our facilities, we're currently focusing on expanding our programs.”

Today, the company has eight therapists and four physical therapy assistants on staff. Weyer, who is a Certified Orthopedic Manual Therapist and a Certified Athletic Trainer, especially enjoys the opportunity to train Armstrong students, many of whom have completed clinicals at Horizon. He also lectures on manual therapy for Armstrong's physical therapy department each year.

Originally from East London, South Africa, Weyer enjoys an active lifestyle, which includes competing in Ironman distance triathlons, traveling internationally, and playing golf. This former captain in the South African Airborne Services says he was deeply inspired by his Armstrong professors.

“The faculty at Armstrong, particularly Anne Thompson, displayed a great mix of compassion and work ethic,” he said. “The small group format with intense one-on-one instruction was a great model, which thoroughly prepared me for the profession.”

“Armstrong gave me a foundation to enter and welcome the real world. The professors are great, realistic, encouraging, and, at the same time, demanding.”

— Mary Githens
Karen Anderson Browne was part of the first class at Armstrong to receive HOPE scholarship funding. She graduated magna cum laude with a degree in psychology and was open to a variety of new career experiences.

“My first job in my field was as a research assistant at New York Zoological Society working with endangered species,” she said. “My second was a financial analyst with the FBI forfeiture and seizure unit. You never know how your experience can be applied, but I always tried to keep an open mind about what I wanted to do.”

Browne helped her husband Rusty triple his business at Savannah Pedicab, which inspired her to branch out and to launch Georgia Oyster Knife in 2010, followed by Seafood Hardware soon after. The couple’s popular wholesale and retail companies sell handmade oyster knives and shucking mats which were recently featuring in the Martha Stewart “American Made” contest.

“We have two assistant blacksmiths who help us make the knives in our forge and seasonal help to meet the demands of the busy holiday and oyster roast season,” she explained. “Plus, Savannah Pedicab has more than 50 drivers.”

Browne plans to expand the current product line by working with regional craftspeople who produce quality coastal-related products. “We are all about helping other craftspeople become successful and promoting their work,” she said. “Upcoming products include custom oyster cookers hand-crafted in Georgia.”

She and her husband also launched Savannah Blacksmith, which provides restoration and commissioned creation of ornamental ironwork.

Browne is a visionary business owner and creative multi-tasker who previously worked at a museum and a pharmaceutical research facility. “I love being able to apply that same commitment to my own company and see my success benefit my family more directly,” she said. “I love having companies that benefit other craftspeople and entrepreneurs and make our clients happy.”
LIBBY GREEN MUENCKLER ’09
Owner, Adlib Photography
B.F.A. in Photography

Libby Green Muenckler launched Adlib Photography the day after she graduated from Armstrong.

“I started with family shoots and babies and, through word of mouth, I progressed into shooting weddings, fashion, and everything in between,” she explained. “I always knew I wanted to have my own company, so I just stuck with it and kept trying to improve my qualities behind the lens.”

This Savannah native credits Armstrong with providing a solid foundation for success. “Armstrong really taught me the fundamentals of being a great photographer and utilizing my talents to make an original path for myself,” she said. “My professors taught me to follow my artistic abilities and never to give up on being an artist.”

Now 28, Muenckler’s photography has taken her around the globe. Since she founded her company, she has shot on location in Jamaica, Costa Rica, and across the United States. She usually works solo, but she hires assistants on larger photo shoots.

“I love owning my company because I get to capture people’s happiest moments during their life,” she said. “It’s gratifying to know people appreciate the work that goes into freezing memories within a photograph.

Muenckler considers herself to be a laid-back photographer with a casual style. “Nothing is forced or too posed,” she said, “and that helps to make my client comfortable and that means better photos.”

She encourages other Armstrong grads to pursue their own dreams long after graduation. “Don’t ever give up on what you believe in,” she advised. “Keep a positive outlook and put your goals into action.”

Photo by Kala Minko
After adopting her son Teketel from Ethiopia in 2008, Kate Blair was inspired to pursue a career in the nonprofit sector. That same year, she started at Armstrong as an English communications major.

“I wanted to do something that had a little more purpose,” said Blair.

In spring of 2013, she began taking Christy Mroczek’s Writing for the Nonprofit Sector class.

“We began offering the class in 2008,” said Mroczek. “We had a lot of students in the program who had an interest in working for nonprofits, so we were trying to meet that need.”

The class includes a unique grant-writing component where Mroczek pairs each student with a nonprofit organization of their choice. Blair chose to work with the Savannah Classical Academy, a new up-and-coming K-12 public charter school that opened in fall 2013.

Blair was no stranger to the Savannah Classical Academy. It was a project near and dear to her heart because not only was her son to attend, but it was also the brainchild of her friend Barbara Grimm.

“Barbara had been talking about the school for five years,” said Blair.

Grimm, who is also a fifth grade teacher at Pulaski Elementary School in Savannah, began dreaming of the Savannah Classical Academy in the summer of 2008. When Blair informed her that she would need to work with a local nonprofit for one of her classes, Grimm immediately seized the opportunity.

In January 2013, Blair began writing the Georgia Charter School Federal Planning and Implementation Grant for Application and Instruction. The grant was crucial for the success of the Savannah Classical Academy, because the school would not receive any additional funding for its first year of operation.

“It was very challenging to purchase things such as technology and furniture within the guidelines of per pupil funding,” said Grimm.

This grant would afford the school the opportunity to outfit itself with essential supplies such as computers, a library, and classroom materials that they would otherwise not have without the grant.

“It was really going to give us a way to start the school and function this first year well,” said Grimm. “We knew this was going to make a difference in the quality of education that was delivered.”

Of the 80-page document required to procure grant funding, Blair had to write a total of 28 pages. At the same time, she had to keep up with her other classes, work her full-time job, and focus on being a wife and mother.

Despite the fact that it was her very first grant, Blair’s proposal brought in a total of $575,000 from the Georgia Charter School Division of the Georgia Department of Education.

“When she first told me she got the grant, I wasn’t surprised because I knew it was a strong proposal, but even so, the statistics were against her,” said Mroczek.

According to Mroczek, 93 percent of proposals that are submitted to grant makers don’t get funded.

“Kate’s proposal is in that 7 percent,” said Mroczek. “Needless to say, I was really, really proud of her.”

Thanks to the experience with Writing for the Nonprofit Sector, Blair already has a half-a-million dollar grant under her belt, along with real-world experience gained through the work she completed with community and state-level partners—all this before even completing her bachelor’s degree.

“I wouldn’t have written this grant if I didn’t go to Armstrong,” said Blair.

In addition to her academic gain, Blair has also built a very valuable community partnership between Armstrong and the Savannah Classical Academy.

“I hope to continue this partnership,” said Grimm. “We’re only going to transform things if we partner with the community.”
Pirate's Treasure

Armstrong athletic teams continue their winning ways—and their winning studies. For the second year in a row, the university earned the Peach Belt Conference (PBC) Commissioner’s Cup for topping its conference in wins. No less important, Armstrong also received the PBC Presidents’ Cup, recognizing excellence in academics among all Armstrong student-athletes.

The women’s tennis team won a record eighth national NCAA Division II championship and a second national title in a row. Men’s tennis finished second in the nation at the NCAA Division II national championship.

Pirates softball advanced to its first NCAA Division II national championship.

Overall, 2012-13 saw a record eight teams with NCAA Championship berths.

Off the field, 26 student-athletes earned All-America honors, breaking another school record. Armstrong also placed a record 91 student-athletes on the PBC Honor Roll, which requires a year-long 3.0 GPA.
In the College of Health Professions, Armstrong students learn not just to become healthcare professionals, but to become wellness professionals as well. Janet Buelow’s new Patient Advocates program not only gives students the opportunity to educate others about health and wellness, but it also serves a growing need in the community.

After hearing about it at a TED Talk, Buelow reached out to the national nonprofit, Health Leads, which created the Health Leads Advocates college program. The program works with universities to get college-level health professions students into the community to help families access the resources they need to be healthy. Currently, Health Leads Advocates exist in only major markets, like Boston and New York, but Buelow was able to adapt the program to the Savannah area.

Armstrong’s Patient Advocates course has attracted many students from a variety of disciplines, creating the true interprofessional model that Buelow was hoping for. Pre-med and pre-pharmacy students work alongside students from respiratory therapy, physical therapy, health administration, and more to work with local community groups and provide their constituents with critical resources, from advising on nutrition and weight loss to helping families apply for food stamps.

“We want our students to learn what being patient-centered is all about,” said Buelow. “They learn that by working together, they can help each other.”

Patient Advocates initially worked with St. Joseph’s/Candler’s St. Mary’s Health Clinic, and the partners have expanded to include Community Health Mission, Good Samaritan, and St. Mary’s Community Center.

The program has been extremely popular and has already put more than 60 Armstrong Patient Advocates into the community. Fortunately for Buelow, Armstrong alumna and current emergency room nurse, Megan Bell, has joined the program as an adjunct faculty. The latest organization that the program will benefit is the Chatham County Safety Net Planning Council, which has requested students to help them assure the area’s uninsured population that they have a medical home and access to healthcare.
Brent Feske’s biocatalysis group likes to say that they make drugs from bugs. And they do. Bugs, to a scientist, are microorganisms. And at Armstrong, Feske and his student researchers are synthesizing active pharmaceutical ingredients—known in the industry as APIs. In the lab, the Armstrong Biocatalysis Group engineers powerful E. coli, which can be manipulated to produce a specific enzyme of their choice. Those enzymes can then be used to make APIs or pharmaceuticals.

“I am essentially trying to develop new processes, not new drugs,” explained Feske.

The process itself is also what sets the biocatalysis research apart. There are no toxic solvents used in the experiments, which is a trend more and more drug companies are following in an effort to become more sustainable and environmentally friendly.

“It’s a green process,” Feske added. “It is also an improved process, because there is a special purity that is achieved, which is very important for pharmaceutical ingredients.”

To keep the biocatalysis work going, Feske has nine undergraduate student researchers. Thanks to funding from Complete College Georgia, three of those student researchers are paid upperclassmen who can help mentor the other six. This research, in collaboration with associate professor of biology Scott Mateer and associate professor of chemistry Clifford Padgett, has also been supported by two National Science Foundation grants totaling nearly a half a million dollars.

The work of the Armstrong Biocatalysis Group not only contributes to the greater knowledge of green pharmaceutical processes, but also allows these student researchers to present findings at major conferences in cities such as San Diego, Anaheim, Raleigh, and San Juan, Puerto Rico.
Regina Rahimi taught at an inner city middle school for 15 years before she became a professor. During that time, she witnessed the challenges that many young women face in their early teens.

“I saw firsthand just how much poverty can devastate lives and just how difficult it is, especially for young girls,” she said.

Rahimi’s academic research has since focused largely on female students and how their education can suffer and derail because of systemic problems and outside forces. This fall, Rahimi, in collaboration with professor Delores Liston from Georgia Southern University, is embarking on a new research project, the goal of which is to interview female high school dropouts in Georgia and attempt to get to the root of why they dropped out and what programs could be developed to help them get back to school.

“It’s a qualitative study; we want to gauge their experiences firsthand,” Rahimi explained. “We really want to hear their stories. After we gather those experiences, we can work with community members to see what we can do about getting some resources and developing some programs for them.”

Rahimi added that Georgia has the highest percentage of female high school dropouts in the nation, and that all studies thus far have been quantitative, focusing more on statistics than personal stories. She is hopeful that the results of the study will allow them to determine solutions for middle and secondary education that can help prevent the dropouts. Interested participants are welcome to contact Rahimi directly.

“What I hope to do for my classes is to use that information to educate my students in the teacher education program,” Rahimi added. “I want my work to have a purpose.”
Much has been written through the years about America’s long, conflicted relationship with poverty. History professor Ella Howard, however, is the first urban historian to publish a book examining that troubled relationship through the lens of New York’s famous Bowery, from the late nineteenth century to the early 1980s. Homeless: Poverty and Place in Urban America, published by the University of Pennsylvania Press, tracks the modern history of the Bowery and raises questions about the treatment of homelessness in public spaces. Through the process of writing the book, Howard also found a new perspective on the topic, not just as it relates to New York City, but to the United States in general.

“It was useful in a lot of ways to think not just about New York, but how New York serves as a lens to understand homelessness throughout the country,” Howard explained.

Howard recently brought this history to life, amid the contrast of a now-gentrified Bowery, during a visit to the city with K-12 teachers from the Savannah-Chatham County Public School System. She has been working with Savannah’s Massie Heritage Center for the past three years on a Teaching American History grant that has allowed Howard and others to take elementary and high school teachers on history tours throughout the East Coast.

Howard is now turning her urban history lens to focus on places closer to home and is working on research related to historic preservation, tourism, and race. She’ll present some of her preliminary findings at the 2014 Organization of American Historians conference.
For an adult student intent on launching a second career, Armstrong was but one necessary stop on a journey that needed to be finished quickly. Only 10 months of the 16-month medical laboratory science program are spent in the classroom. The last six are spent at a clinical site while completing online coursework.

I arrived at Armstrong in August 2012 as a not-so-fresh-faced college junior. I think most students are excited by the start of a new term, and I was no different. The message that first day from the cadre of professors who would guide us through our program was that this is no place to take it easy. The College of Health Professions has a strong reputation throughout the state and the region, and that reputation is built on producing students who are prepared to step into a hospital setting the day after they graduate. But professors and instructors only can do so much. University life is a microcosm of life in general: It’s what you make of it.

Savannah’s beauty and history are known up and down the East Coast. A charming downtown, River Street, and Atlantic beaches are a few minutes away. It’s a good thing our university is not in the middle of all that! Higher education is tough enough without so many distractions. What we do have is what I like to think of as a gem of a campus. It’s small enough so that everything is in walking distance, yet there’s plenty to do. I found services provided to students to be exceptional. I never had to wait too long to meet with someone in the Registrar’s office. Nor did I spend time twiddling my thumbs while waiting for two minutes with a professor. Everything, and everyone, is accessible. And they are surprisingly tolerant!

Every classroom and office should have a Completely Out of Context Quote Wall, a place to immortalize some of the outrageously funny stuff we say when we’re trying to wrap our brains around pieces of complex information. My classmates and I did this, eventually taking up half a white board over the course of a semester. It was a source of camaraderie and humor for students, and no one—professors included—had immunity.

Armstrong is a launching pad, a place where lifelong friendships begin, careers are born, and intellectual pursuit is encouraged. It’s a place for you to enjoy, to grow, and to gain the confidence that comes from conquering what sometimes appears to be an academic mountain. It’s all there for you. Reach out, take it, and make something good happen.

We welcome Point of View stories from Armstrong alumni. If you are interested in submitting, please contact the editor at Brenda.Forbis@armstrong.edu.
CLA Full Frame of North Carolina. The film made real estate management 30 years.

Jameis “Butch” Cummings ’75 is a retired FBI Special Agent. His assignments included Tampa, Fla., New York City and Atlanta, Ga. He currently operates his own private investigations company in Savannah.

Gregory Gorman ’75 is currently an associate professor, vice chair, and director of research in the McWhorter School of Pharmacy at Samford University. He and Armstrong alumna Nancey have two daughters: Kristen, who attends the University of Alabama majoring in event planning and Sara Anne, who attends Auburn University majoring in veterinary medicine.

Phil Hope ’73, ’75 attended Young Harris College, in the class of ’64. He was a college cheerleader. He was a member of the United States Air Force from October 12, 1965 until October 11, 1969.

Tom Maddox ’79 graduated from St. Francis Seminary in Dallas, Texas, on March 5, 2011, with a Doctor of Divinity degree. He graduated from New Covenant International Bible College in Columbia, S.C., with a Doctor of Sacred Literature degree on June 3, 2011.

Jim Muller ’76 has been named the RESTORE Act Coordinator for Bay County, Florida. RESTORE, which stands for Resources and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunity and Revived Economics, provides funds for Gulf Coast communities impacted by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. Muller’s job is to secure RESTORE funds for use by Bay County.

William W. Scarborough ’75, ’77 has recently been accepted and will attend the Columbus School of Law in the fall of 2013. He will attend the evening program and work full-time during the day at the United States Securities and Exchange Commission, where he has been employed for the last 20 years. He is an associate chief accountant in the enforcement division and specializes in financial fraud investigations.

Carolyn Graham Smith ’71 ’75 and Ralph Smith Jr. ’68 are proud that their daughter, Amanda Christina Smith, graduated from Armstrong with a BS in Radiologic Sciences on May 4, 2013.

Anthony Amos ’87 is working for StaffCo. He is interested in continuing education and is also pursuing a songwriting career.

Robin Robinson Bassett ’88 married David Bassett in 1990 and they traveled across the country with the U.S. Army. She worked as an RN in various states in critical care, home health, and long-term care. They have two teenage children. They fell in love with Alaska and returned there in 2002. Her husband retired from the Army and now works as a dog handler for the Transportation Safety Administration (bomb sniffing dog!). She went back to school, at the University of Alaska Anchorage and graduated with a Master’s in Nursing. She received Family Nurse Practitioner certification and has been working since then in Nephrology.

Victoria Callaway ’86 and husband Bobby celebrated their 27th anniversary on June 21. They have two children and a grandson, whom they adore. She has had a successful career selling commercial insurance to the hospitality, construction, educational, and manufacturing sectors.

Tammie Gimenez ’89 and her spouse Greg have two children, daughter Katherine and son Harrison. Both were born in Savannah. They moved back to their hometown in Arkansas after their parents became less mobile physically. Tammie has worked in the medical industry as a registered dietitian since she received her master’s degree at Armstrong. Greg is employed in sales at Nighthawk, with its parent company located in Berryville, Ark.

Timothy Haessler ’83 shares that his wife of ten years and Savannah native, Lisa Simons Haessler, age 30, passed away in February 2013.

Bill Kelso ’88 has been named the Vice President for Advancement at Armstrong after serving in the role as an interim for the previous year.

Ronald Martin ’84 reports that he is a life member of the Georgia Salzburger Society and Phi Alpha Theta International Honor Society in History. He has almost 30 years’ teaching experience. He was the Effingham County School System Teacher of the Year in 1999 and STAR Teacher in 2002. He has traveled extensively in Europe, Southeast Asia, and South Asia. He is married to Maria Liza Fernando Quintos Martin, formerly of The Philippines, a recently naturalized citizen. They have two sons, Zafra Urbano Enrique Martin and Zander Keith Quintos Martin. They are active members of the Springfield United Methodist Church, where they participate in the music, children’s, and teaching ministries.

Thomas Nail ’86 reports that, after working for the World Bank in Romania for over three years, remediating refineries destroyed in WWII, he founded an environmental laboratory in Rio de Janeiro in 1998. Today it is the fifth largest private environmental lab in the state. He also did a term as the vice secretary of environment for the largest county in the state (only foreigner to do so). He worked six years for Petrobras, the government petroleum company, as an auditor/leader performing over 300 environmental, health, and safety audits in Brazil, Bolivia, and Argentina.

Karen Tatum Terens ’81 had her first career as a petroleum landman in Texas and various states in the southeast. Her second was as a stay-at-home mother in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, and in Littleton, Colo. Her third was as a Montessori elementary teacher in Littleton. Currently she is enjoying (mostly) living as an ex-pat in Saudi Arabia and traveling quite a bit. She and her family get back to the U.S. each summer and always go to Savannah. Her husband Dave works for the national oil company in Saudi Arabia. They have three daughters and the second is heading to American University in D.C. this fall.

Submit your class notes online at www.armstrong.edu, email alumni@armstrong.edu or call 912.344.3081.
'90s

Jermaine Bigham '94 has returned to Savannah as the basketball coach at Beach High School.

Heather Cathcart '99 completed a Ph.D. in biomedical science at the Medical College of Georgia in 2010. She completed a two-year post-doctoral research fellowship at Vanderbilt University Medical Center in 2012. She is an assistant professor at Abraham Baldwin College.

Clay Chappell '97 was profiled in an article in the July 10 issue of The Oconee (Ga.) Enterprise for his work as a golf instructor and television film producer. He has appeared in "A Lesson Before Dying" and is cast in the films "Savannah" and "Jayne Mansfield's Car," among other projects.

Allen Cox '95 is the director of transportation for the Bryan County Board of Education. His wife Kristi Fillers Cox '93 is the director of the United Way Coastal Empire in Bryan County.

Kevin Fitzmaurice '99, '02 was recently promoted to lead product engineer of lighting services for Georgia Power, Alabama Power, Mississippi Power, and Gulf Power.

Cathy Huffman '96 won an Arizona Author's Award and a Moonbeam Children's Book Award for her book, "The Legend of Painted Pony and the Western Wind."

Andrea Graff Madison '96, '00 completed her Ph.D. in 2009. She is the Social Studies Department Chair at the Garrison School of Visual and Performing Arts in Savannah.

Marion Mann '90, '97 received a Doctor of Nursing Practice from the University of North Florida on December 17, 2012. Her dissertation, "Improving Quit Rates for Tobacco-Dependent Hospitalized Patients," was the culmination of her work as the Principal Investigator of a grant from the State of Florida, Department of Health, to implement a tobacco cessation program in a hospital setting. She was accepted to present this work in a podium presentation at the 24th International Sigma Theta Tau Research Congress in Prague, Russia, July 26, 2013. Mann is a member of the local Rho Psi Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International. She currently lives in Fernandina Beach, Fla., with her husband, Jim Johnson.

Kotriona Smith O'Neal '94 worked as a nurse in various settings for five years before being accepted to Regent University School of Law and graduated with a Juris Doctor in 2002. Later that year, she and her husband Brad O'Neal had a daughter Taylor. She began working at Bon Secours Health System in 2003 as a risk manager in their long-term care division in the Hampton Roads area of Virginia. Over the years she was promoted to senior risk manager overseeing the risk management program in hospitals and a variety of post-acute settings in the Hampton Roads market. In 2003, she was promoted to the role of chief privacy officer for the Bon Secours Health System.

Sherr Smith O'Toole '94 obtained an M.Ed. in counselor education from Georgia Southern University. She is a Licensed Professional Counselor and Certified Addictions Counselor II. She has worked in the addictions field since 1998. She worked for the State of South Carolina alcohol and drug system for 12 years, before going to work for the Army in 2010 as a substance abuse counselor. She moved back to Savannah in May 2016 after being gone for 16 years.

Michael Rundbaken '95 was named a partner with Hancock Askew & Co. in Savannah. He serves individuals, corporations (both public and private), and partnerships, specializing in the financial institution, construction, manufacturing, retail, and service industries and manages the relationships with some of the firm's largest clients.

Lt. Col. Ron Speir '91 has been named commander of the 117th Air Control Squadron of the Georgia Air National Guard at Hunter Army Airfield.

Susan Thompson '98, '06 and her partner Steve live in Florence, in Liberty County, Ga. She has two children: daughter Sara Knight and son Bryan Thompson, who is married to Christa. Her one granddaughter Susanne Knight began her sophomore year at Armstrong this fall.

Theta Tau Research Congress in Prague, Russia, July 26, 2013. Mann is a member of the local Rho Psi Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International. She currently lives in Fernandina Beach, Fla., with her husband, Jim Johnson.

'00s

William Agyemang '01, '08 is the director of patient services at Coastal State Prison.

Brad Bohannon '07 is the new baseball coach at Huntsville High School in his hometown of Huntsville, Tex. His father is the coach at the cross-town rival school.

Guysen Cho '06 moved to Kentucky and completed a Ph.D. from the University of Louisville. He likes his job as a computer application integration analyst with the Jefferson County Public Schools.

Erin Christian '08 received her MFA in Creative Writing from the University of Georgia in 2010, where she interned with The Georgia Review and the UGA Press. In 2009, she was accepted into the Southern Women Writer's Conference fiction workshop, and in 2010 and 2012 she served as a fiction panelist at the South Atlantic Modern Language Association Conference and the Southern Women Writer's Conference, respectively. She currently works as a Writing Consultant; teacher with the Deep Center and Horizons Savannah; and a freelance writer, tutor, and editor in Savannah. Her fiction was nominated for a 2013 Pushcart Prize, and she has had short stories published in several journals.

Hai Dang '08, '12 recently became a member of the Savannah Stage Company, a theatre company that is in its inaugural season. Its goal is to help bring theatre to the community while helping to educate the community as well.

Gwendolyn Amanda Dixon '07 was married to Larry Henderson on November 8, 2008. Their first child, Larry D. Henderson, III, was born on February 20, 2012.

Samantha Floyd '09 coached at two colleges and is now head softball and basketball coach at Hawkinsville High School in Pulaski County.

Ellis Garvin '05 was profiled in the April 10th issue of The Savannah Tribune for his book, "A Guide to Our Two Savannahs."

Andrew Harry '07 joined the Marine Corps to be a professional musician. She was stationed at the Naval Support Activity Base in New Orleans and was assigned to the Marine Forces Reserve Band in early 2008. She has performed for former President George H.W. Bush, former Commandant of the Marine Corps General James T. Conway, and various commanding generals throughout the Marine Forces Reserve. She now works for Tulane University as an accountant for facilities services. She is engaged to Brian Pesses of New Orleans and their wedding is set for July 13, 2014.

Jonathan Iler '09 and the rest of the team on WTCO's The News at Daybreak have won the 2013 Southeast Emmy Award for Television News Gathering Excellence in Breaking News. Iler is a former videojournalist.

DaVena Jordan '03 was profiled in the March 27 issue of The Savannah Tribune as part of its Women’s History Month celebration for her work with AWOL, a nonprofit organization she co-founded with her husband, that is devoted to arts and technology education in at-risk student populations.

Ember Kemmerer '05 received a master's degree in September 2012. She did an internship at the local Youth Detention Center. She lives in Centerville, Ga., with her eight-year-old daughter Aniston.

Joel Lecoeuvre '03 is the new boys basketball associate head coach at Archer High School in Lawrenceville, Ga. He was formerly the boys basketball coach at Windsor Forest High School in Savannah.

Meredith L. Nesmith Ledbetter '06 transferred to the University of West Georgia in January 2007 and graduated in May 2009 with a BBA in Management. She became Coordinator of Alumni Relations at University of West Georgia in June 2012.

Ryan Moore '04 has been named as the director of the new Economic Development Department for Athens-Clarke County. Moore has served as the project manager for the Effingham County Industrial Development Authority since 2006.

Dianne Miller Pearson '04 lives in Nassau, Bahamas. She has two sons who went to Windsor Forest High School and has two grandchildren. She is employed at the MedCenter lab in the laboratory. It is a new and improved Primary Health Care Facility. She returns to Savannah every year.
Scott Scheidt ’03 took command of the Georgia Garrison Training Center at Fort Stewart, Ga., on April 7, 2013. He is currently a major in the Georgia Army National Guard and will be in command for the next 18 months of the 750-acre facility. He also has an MBA and is currently in the dissertation phase of his PhD program with Trident University.

Elizabeth Hilderbrand vonWaldner ’05 and her husband William have four children: three sons (13, 12, and 1) and one daughter (4).

Dale White ’05 has been named head coach of the men’s and women’s tennis teams for the Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College (ABAC) Stallions. He will also serve as an academic support counselor. White has served as the ABAC assistant coach for the men’s and women’s tennis teams and physical education instructor since 2008.

Kyndal Schaaf ’12 is the new soccer coach at Spencer High School in Columbus, Ga.

Kimberly Thompson ’10 has earned many honors, including speaking at the Joint Mathematics Meeting in New Orleans, La., in January 2011; teaching high school mathematics since August 2011 (completing the GAATPP program to earn a teaching certificate); being voted Math Department Teacher of the Year by her students in her first year of teaching and participating in their graduation ceremony; working with a research team to produce two math papers that were published August 2011 and November 2012; winning the National Association for Alternative Certification (NAAC) Scholarship in March 2013 and being asked to present at the NAAC annual conference held in Los Angeles, Calif.; receiving the Outstanding Teacher Award from the Wayne County Retired Educators Association in April 2013; being selected as one of 13 GAATPP Ambassadors for 2013-2014 school year, which will enable her to travel and speak at educational conferences advocating alternative certification programs; and serving as the Wayne County High School Math Team coach.

Winifred Walsh ’10 is writing a historical novel, “Senator for a Day,” based on the life of Georgian Rebecca Felton, the first woman to sit in the U.S. Senate some 90 years ago. She hopes the book inspires qualified women to represent Georgia at the national level.

Kayley Dalton ’10, ’13 has been named an assistant coach for Armstrong women’s soccer.

in memoriam

Frederick P. Bower ’54 October 25, 2012
Joseph John Burke ’55 July 30, 2013
James W. “Wally” Campbell ’86, July 16, 2013
Terry George Chiotellis ’08, March 22, 2013
Tiffany Gilder Consos ’01 May 19, 2013
Anna D. Dellinger ’94 May 3, 2013
Rex Allen Demers ’97, former math instructor, April 10, 2012
Annette Hunter Ford May 29, 2013
Margaret Mitchell Hagan ’78 September 8, 2013
Brooks L. Hamm, Jr. ’80 June 1, 2013
Jerry O. Hayes ’72 December 5, 2011
Ilenna Cox Hester ’52 March 30, 2013
Jerry Coleman Jarriel, Sr. ’58 March 4, 2013
Nathan Karnibaba ’37 January 5, 2008
John Patrick Laves ’77 March 10, 2013
Alva Burley Lines ’37 May 4, 2013
Michael Wade Mayes ’94 May 18, 2013
Mary Ann Sudath McDowell ’43, ’71, April 1, 2013
Anne Bailey DuBois Oliver ’93 May 18, 2013
Sadie B. Patrick ’72 January 21, 2013
Wade Edwin Roach ’60 March 13, 2013
Kenneth E. Roberts ’73 March 23, 2013
Robert W. Scoggin ’58 February 1, 2013
John Ely Simpson ’39 April 1, 2013
Patricia Groover Smiley ’77 December 5, 2012
Margaret Jean Powers Sparks ’64 April 2, 2013
Benito Taruffi ’99, ’04 June 12, 2013
Karen L. Tornoe ’83 March 7, 2013
Audrey Patterson Williby ’92, ’03 July 21, 2013
Annette Lasky Yesner ’41 April 1, 2013
Margaret Linda Zealy May 25, 2013

10s

Kevyn Arnott ’10 was hired by Apple Inc. and now consults with large companies and school systems in technology decisions. He builds custom solutions for all sorts of industries, working closely with Apple and its subsidiaries.

Jessica Bacon ’13 is the mission coordinator at Susan G. Komen Coastal Georgia.

Elaine Burnett ’11 and her Armstrong Pirate husband Tony celebrated their 20th wedding anniversary on May 15, 2013.

Brandy Chandler ’11 is pursuing a Master of Science in Clinical Counseling Psychology at Brenau University. Her ultimate goal is to become an art therapist.

Whitney Maxwell Eubank ’12 is a first grade teacher at Savannah Christian Preparatory School.

Charles Heino ’11 graduated from South University in May 2013 with a master’s degree in public administration, and he was accepted in the doctoral program at Valdosta State University for public administration beginning fall 2013.

Josiah Kimbal ’10 completed a Master of Arts in international relations at The Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies with a dual concentration in strategic studies and international economics on May 23, 2013.

Robert Nix ’12 was recently selected to be an operations coordinator for Turner Broadcasting System, Inc.

Roger Pacheco ’12 writes, “I have three beautiful children who have been my motivation throughout my military career, my time at Armstrong, and now in my teaching career. They kept me going my first year teaching at Bartlett Middle where I started halfway through the year, which any teacher can tell you is a difficult task. I kept my mind mentally tough and took on the challenge. Because of my hard work I was offered a position at Godley Station K-8 where I will be educating for 2013-2014 school year. I am excited and ready for the task.”

Kevin Pinion ’13 is at North Carolina State working on an MA in film studies and later applying to doctoral programs in either film studies or English.

Dante Rocca-Noutash ’12 and Shiva Rocca-Noutash ’12 were married in a beautiful ceremony on December 5, 2012. Dante was accepted to the Master’s of Business Administration Program at Missouri State University.

Matt Trull ’12 married Brittany Polk on September 14, 2013. He is employed at Gulfstream.

Charlie Heino ’11 and wife Kelly welcomed a son, Hudson Edward Heino, on Aug. 14. Their daughter Riley is two.

Amanda Morse ’06 and Cray Morse ’00 welcomed a daughter, Adeline Dorothy Morse, on July 8, 2012.

Achim Roth ’04 and his wife, Tugce Tari-Roth welcomed a new daughter, Selin, on June 14. The family lives in Loning, Germany, where Achim is the head of controlling at Remmers Baustofftechnik GmbH.

Tyrone Avery Acker ’04, ’11 and Erica Acker ’04 welcomed their first child, daughter Elise Amerie, on Sept. 6, 2013.

marriages

Laura Morris Clark ’10 and Ryan Clark ’11 were married on September 28, 2012.

Meredith L. Nesmith Ledbetter ’06 married Allen Ledbetter on October 20, 2012, in Clayton, Ga. They have made their home in Carrollton, Ga.

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Let’s Paint the Town with Pirate Pride!

THURSDAY APRIL 3, 2014 | Johnson Square

Save the date and plan to join us in a show of school pride like no other! Wear your Armstrong maroon all day and gather with alumni, students and community members to thank our donors for their gracious support and build excitement for a record finish to our fundraising year. It’s a pep rally, picnic and sea of maroon that’s sure to make every Pirate proud.