FOOTBALL TEAM WINS SUN BELT CONFERENCE IN FIRST SEASON

5 YEARS OF SUCCESSFUL LEADERSHIP UNDER PRESIDENT KEEL

FIRST 40 UNDER 40 NAMED BY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION
FEATURE STORIES

6 COVER STORY BLINK OF AN EYE It’s already been five years since Brooks A. Keel, Ph.D., returned to his home state of Georgia and arrived on campus to become the 12th president of Georgia Southern University. Since then, the University has experienced tremendous accomplishments and growth. President Keel invites you to celebrate them all with him.

12 FIRST CLASS Meet the first-ever Georgia Southern University Alumni Association’s 40 Under 40 and find out how these Eagles have excelled since graduation. Engineers, educators and artists, the 40 Under 40 honorees were chosen for their commitment to integrity, civility, kindness, learning, wellness, and social responsibility.

16 DOUBLE MAJOR The College of Engineering and Information Technology recently received two accolades that stand to benefit the College for years to come. ABET accreditation reinforces overall educational quality, while having the first undergraduate manufacturing engineering degree program in Georgia will only solidify the College’s reputation.

18 THE RIDE Cory Wilson was a junior business major when he collapsed during class and died of fatal cardiac arrhythmia. Learn the Wilson Family story, their struggle to find a new normal amid the tragedy and their passionate cause to promote AED awareness.
School of Nursing students don white coats during the University’s inaugural White Coat Ceremony on Friday, Sept. 19 at the Performing Arts Center. Chosen as one of only 100 colleges to participate, the White Coat Ceremony was initially designed by The Arnold P. Gold Foundation to emphasize the commitment of patient-centered care for those entering medical school. More than 20 years later, nurses are now part of the tradition.
It’s easy to look back at my parents’ generation and chuckle at their technophobia. But the further I get into adulthood, the more I realize that we all have areas of our lives where we’re like my parents with the new VCR. Today, we have DVD and Blu-ray and iPods instead, and digital apps for banking and photo sharing. I sit and stare and shake my head and say, “But why?” Then I remember, it’s as simple as doing it, pushing the right buttons—being the first to try.

Google the word “first” and you’ll find everything from a definition to nonprofit organizations to a list of banks and credit unions. Again, firsts can mean many things to many people.

Here at Georgia Southern, we mark firsts as milestones. In this issue, there happen to be a number of firsts—a season of firsts, you might call their collective. Whether it’s academic firsts, such as the first undergraduate Manufacturing Engineering Program awarded in Georgia and our historic AMET accreditation to our first BSN to DNP nursing pathway to our first 40 Under 40 recognitions. Or celebrating and catching up with alumni who have achieved firsts: Hala Moddelmog (’79) becoming the first female president & CEO of the Metro Atlanta Chamber and Tim Willis (’84), the first blind track and field runner in NCAA Div. I sports history. And then there’s our Athletics firsts. From the University’s first Women’s Golf Team and head coach to our first football championship in the Sun Belt Conference. And January marks Dr. Kent’s first five years as president of the “Greatest University in America.”

As you continue reading, I hope it inspires you to set out on a journey to be the first or become a first. After all, as pages in Georgia Southern University history, we all have a unique role in trying to find the right buttons—technology or otherwise—that lead to what our next “first” will be.

Go Eagles!

Michael J. Soloway
Editor
ON JANUARY 4, 2010, GEORGIA NATIVE BROOKS KEEL CAME HOME.

He remembers arriving on campus. He remembers his first walk around Sweetheart Circle, where so many memories had been made and friendships forged—the winding paths and tree-lined street. “In the faces of our faculty, staff and students, I could see where Georgia Southern University had come,” said Brooks A. Keel, Ph.D., the University’s twelfth president. “And I had a vision of where we were headed. Deep-rooted in history, I could see the passage of time.”

Five years since his arrival, President Keel has watched his own time tick by and is proud of what’s been accomplished. “Of course, I always want to make a difference, but I like to think that it’s the people around me who are the ones making a real difference,” said Keel. “I wanted to be at a place that makes a difference and I feel like Georgia Southern students, faculty and staff have.”

Every day, Keel told me he hears about what a special place Georgia Southern University truly is. From faculty who have taught at the school for 30 years to new students who are taking their first tour of campus, there’s a certain magic at Georgia Southern. “You can feel it,” said Keel. “You can’t pick it up from a website. You can’t read it in a pamphlet. You have to be here to feel it. Everybody will tell you about that magic and it’s real, and it’s allowed us to grow.” Traditions remain a large part of that magic. “There’s just something special here,” he said. “It’s not just Athletics. It’s our annual watermelon cutting. The Pedestrium. Lighting around Sweetheart Circle. Sweetheart Circle itself. So many people will tell you that. When you hear about all those traditions people say, ‘don’t change it; don’t mess with it.’ And I’ve heard loud and clear.”

MILESTONES
During President Keel’s current five-year tenure, he helped establish the first Bachelor of General Studies major offered completely online. The University launched the Allen E. Paulson College of Engineering and Information Technology (CEIT), and a new asphalt research lab within CEIT (the only one of its kind at a university in Georgia). There is also the Institute for Interdisciplinary STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) Education (i²STEM) that supports thematic grant writing, research and outreach in K-20 teaching and learning, with a focus on rural, diverse, low socioeconomic status and underrepresented populations. In addition, the state of Georgia also transferred management of the Herty Advanced Materials Development Center—a world leader in materials research and product development—to Georgia Southern.

Some of the other planned and/or completed building projects under President Keel’s leadership include the following:

• Biological Sciences building
• Dining Commons and Lakeside Dining Commons
• Sanford Hall renovation
• Ted Smith Family Football Center and additional seating at Allen E. Paulson Stadium
• University Golf Course
• Military Science building*
• Health facility*
• Shooting Sports Education Center*

* Future projects underway.
Keel believes being born, raised and educated in Augusta, Georgia, has made it easier for him to know what the role, scope and mission of Georgia Southern should be throughout the state and beyond. He is a product of the entire Georgia education system, from elementary through graduate school. “I speak southern-English very fluently,” Keel joked. “I think it makes a difference in interacting with students as well as people in the community. To have that perspective puts me in a unique position to see where we can go from here.”

If you look at what the University has accomplished under Keel over the past five years, you’ll find an unprecedented list that encompasses Academics, Athletics, research activities and campus expansion—some of which are 30 years in the making.

For example, Keel said, “offering engineering degrees is a huge accomplishment and one that has taken decades to realize. Our new manufacturing engineering degree is going to have far-reaching implications for years down the road.”

Another key to Keel’s success is completion of several desperately needed building projects. “We’re not trying to build a dynasty or Taj Mahal, but you have to have the right facilities to educate the students and so faculty have a place to do the wonderful things they do,” said Keel. “We’ve got a fantastic group here who promote Georgia Southern in Atlanta, where many of the decisions are made. They’ve done a great job telling the Georgia Southern story and expressing what we need to be even better. We don’t have to convince them of who we are, but more of what we need. To look at Sanford Hall and see how we managed to maintain the wonder of Sweetheart Circle but completely convert the inside of the building into a state-of-the-art communication arts program is absolutely fantastic.”

But President Keel is quick to remind me that it’s students, and the faculty who mentor them, who will put Georgia Southern on the map with regards to national distinction. He acknowledged balance is key as Georgia Southern continues to grow in quality and scope. “It means keeping the right number of faculty in place to give our students the kind of personal attention they need, deserve and came here for,” said Keel. “We can grow this university in many types of ways and still maintain the ‘small-feel’ culture... that the magical Georgia Southern atmosphere stays true to its past. I have every expectation we’ll meet that challenge. It’s my goal and our obligation.”

Like engineering, the recent Athletics move to the Sun Belt Conference has been more than 30 years in the making. “Athletics is something I’ve been proud of but also how we’ve been able to marry Athletics to Academics in order to move the whole University forward. I recognized early on that we could use Athletics as a vehicle to put Georgia Southern on a national stage.”

Keel often calls Athletics the ‘front porch’ of the University. “If you can get people up on the front porch using Athletics and get people to look in through the picture window,” Keel said, “then they can see all the wonderful other things you have going on inside the house. If you’re looking for a house the first thing you might notice is how well the yard is kept up. Well, we’ve got a pretty nice front yard I hear. We just have to get people when they drive by, or find us on the Web, to stop and notice what we offer. We have to continue to increase our curb appeal.”
President Keel mentions the numerous commercials aired this past football season during ESPN-broadcast games as an example. The 30-second spots touted Eagle research and academic programs, and focused on student and faculty achievements. He’s confident high schoolers sitting in their living rooms around the nation watching Thursday night contests will see those ads, get on their iPads and check us out. “The national exposure it provides is tremendous,” said Keel. “We’ve had South Georgia distinction for 100-plus years. What we want now is that national distinction.”

Over the past five years, Georgia Southern has done exceptionally well in differentiating itself. One of President Keel’s main goals is to blur the demarcations between the old Vo-Tech school and the liberal arts university. “I get criticized sometimes by folks that think university presidents are supposed to lead institutions to provide high quality liberal arts education and that’s all that we should be doing,” said Keel. “That’s not our responsibility to get our kids jobs when they graduate.”

When asked if he’d had any disappointments over the past five years, President Keel said he’d hoped research would be even further along. Keel added that a lot of it had to do with the economy. “To move this University from one of primarily teaching to one of teaching and research is heavy lifting. It takes a tremendous amount of resources to provide the faculty with the appropriate amount of money and lab space necessary and we just haven’t been able to come up with the resources to do everything I want yet. The research we are doing here is phenomenal, so I do want to emphasize that.”

Even after five years, President Keel calls every day a “surprise.” But he calls all the surprises pleasant ones. “I never realized how special a place the South is, but especially the state of Georgia,” said Keel. “Coming back, I was surprised at how much it meant to me. When Tammie (the first lady) and I came here we knew we could make a difference… the University could make a difference. I felt that all the building blocks had been put in place for Georgia Southern to reach the national stage.”

Keel admits he never truly realized the University’s potential until he arrived on campus that first day. “Now, having been here for five years,” said Keel, “the opportunities we have to become leaders in every arena are absolutely spectacular.” Five years seems like a long time on the one hand and a blink of an eye on another, added Keel. “I’ve seen from afar Georgia Southern progress from a school that people had as their second or third choice to a University of first choice for so many.” President Keel said he had hoped research would be further along, but noted, “What you will find is that when you travel across this country more people will notice that Eagle lapel pin or tie and you travel across this country more people will see us move from trying to tell other people about Athletics, post selfies, or tell people what the next five years will look like… you’ll see us move from trying to tell other people about Georgia Southern University to a place where people will begin to tell others about us. And that’s where we want to be.”

For Web extras of Dr. Keel, including a behind the scenes video, visit GeorgiaSouthern.edu/magazine.
First-Ever 40 Under 40 Named

Given out by the Georgia Southern University Alumni Association, the 40 Under 40 designation recognizes young alumni that are leading the way in business, leadership, community, educational and/or philanthropic endeavors. The 40 were chosen by a selection committee based on their professional expertise and achievements, as well as dedication to charitable and community initiatives.

Out of our roughly 75,000 living alumni, more than 30,000 are under 40-years-old. Honorees not only represent the excellence of the University's young alumni, but also demonstrate the positive contributions and remarkable achievements for which Georgia Southern graduates are known.

They also aspire to uphold the core values of Georgia Southern University: integrity, civility, kindness, collaboration, and a commitment to lifelong learning, wellness, and social responsibility.
TRIP ADDISON (108, 109)
Trip Addison is the deputy director for the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget (OPB), where he leads the Governor’s budget and oversees the state budget. Before joining OPB, he served as Governor Deal’s policy advisor for economic development.

SCOTT BEAN (11)
Scott Bean is the field, cost and scheduling engineer for The Indiana Company/Kiewit Corporation. While attending Georgia Southern University, Bean was instrumental in starting the Student Eagles Club and was its first president.

LINDSEY BLOM (99, 101)
Lindsey Blom is an associate professor in Sport Management and was the vice director for the Center for Peace and Conflict Studies at Ball State University. She has spent years using sport as a vehicle for peace and conflict resolution from the local to the international level.

PHIL BOLT (104)
In 2006, Phil Bolt decided to tryout, where he served as a platoon leader until 2007. Bolt is the executive officer for the Military Surface Deployment and Distribution Command GT for the United States Army.

SALUA BRANNEN (98)
Sala Brannen was the first student to graduate from Georgia Southern with an International Studies major. She is currently working for the University of Connecticut as an associate director for the Center for International Partnership.

KATE CHANNELL (11)
Kate Channell is the director of marketing and media for the College of Business Administration at Georgia Southern. She previously served as director of development for the School of Dentistry at MCG, where she raised more than $200,000 for a special fundraising campaign.

JORDAN CHESTER (108)
After graduating from law school in New Orleans in 2011, Jordan Chester worked as an assistant state attorney in Jacksonville, Florida. He is now the fourth member of the legal team at the Georgia Southern Corporate Division for the Georgia Southern University Foundation.

JEMIELLE COES (108)
Jemielle Coes is the 2004 Georgia Teacher of the Year and is currently working on her doctorate in special education.

MARIO CRUZ (105)
In 2013, Mario Cruz achieved the honor of becoming a Board Certified Sports Specialist. He is currently the physical therapist for Tennessee Tech University.

AMY DIETRICH (11)
In 2012, Amy Dietrich launched the Alumni Association Network, “Bagel Outreach,” alongside other Atlanta-based Georgia Southern alumni who have volunteered more than 600 hours. She is currently the director of communications and continuing education at the Georgia Psychological Association.

REBECCA ELLIOTT (97, 103)
Rebecca Elliott is currently the director of the Final Phase Operations at the Gulfstream Aerospace Corporation. While attending Georgia Southern, she was awarded a Master of Technology in Industrial Management.

JASON EPPS (99)
At the start of 2014, Jason Epps was appointed to the Kraft Foods Powerhouse Leadership Program. He is currently the senior customer business leader for the Division Challenge winning Walmart.

RYAN FOLEY (103, 105)
Ryan Foley is a professional student affairs at Oglethorpe Technical College (OTC). He began his OTC career as an intern in 2010, as he was completing his undergraduate degree at Georgia Southern.

LEA ANNE FOSTER (96)
Lea Anne Foster is vice president for communications for the National Association of Manufacturers. She formerly served as the federal affairs director for the State of Georgia.

JOHN FULFORD (107)
John Fulford is a project manager for Bradford & Gorrie, LLC. He has helped complete two successful construction projects on the Georgia Southern University campus—new baseball and Paulson Stadium expansion.

SHANNON HALSTAD (108)
Shannon Halstead is a Sergeant for the St. Petersburg Police Department—Uniformed Services Bureau. She is a 2012 graduate of Leadership St. Petersburg Street Crimes Unit at the St. Petersburg Police Department.

KIM HARTSOCK (99, 101)
In 2013, Kim Hartsock became a partner at Warren, Averett, LLC, becoming one of the youngest women to be promoted to that level at the firm. During the same year, she became president of Susan G. Komen of Greater Atlanta.

SUSAN HERRING (103, 101)
Susan Herring is the director of initial phase operations finance for Gulfstream Aerospace. For the past eight years, she has been a mentor for aspiring leaders at Gulfstream.

TORRI JACKSON (99, 102)
Torri Jackson is the senior counselor, and the counseling and guidance department director at Bradwell Institute in Hinesville, Georgia. She has developed a comprehensive counseling program, which was recognized as a Recognized American School Counseling Association Model Program in 2013.

RUSSELL KEEN (99, 104)
Russell Keen is currently president for government relations and community engagement at Georgia Southern. He has previously secured support for local community affairs projects and Georgia Southern building projects.

JAMES KICKLIGHTER (10)
James Kicklighter is a writer/director for James Works Entertainment. He is currently working on the film “Erik” based on the life of legendary football coach Erik Russell.

JOHN KILE (10)
Currently a Captain in the United States Army, John Kile was the lead of the first Afghanistan Police Mission in Afghanistan.

MYCHAEL KNIGHT (99)
Mychael Knight was a finalist and “Fan Favorite” winner on Season 3 of “Project Runway,” a reality TV show on Lifetime, previously on the Bravo Network. Focused on fashion design, Knight is currently fashion designer and owner of his own fashion company, Mychael Knight Inc.

JASON LAWRENCE (106, 107)
Jason Lawrence is the deputy chief of staff for Congressman Tom Price in Washington DC. In 2011, he was a U.S. House of Representatives Agriculture Committee Staff Representative.

MALCOLM LEE (99)
Malcolm Lee is a 2012 graduate of the AAU Girls Basketball Program “Georgia Jugend” and has been a member of the Olympic Basketball Program since 2010.

MARIO CRUZ (109)
He is currently the organization’s head coach as well as a music executive with the URMIS Music Group.

TERESA MACCARTNEY (99, 101)
Since starting at the Governor’s Office of Planning and Budget (OPB) in 2001, Teresa Maccartney has been the state leader for the Federal Stabilization and Education Jobs program, and is currently Georgia’s Chief Financial Officer and director of the OPB.

KAMEELAH MARTIN (100)
Kameelah Martin is an assistant professor of African American Literature at Savannah State University. She was a member of the Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program while attending Georgia Southern and was the first McNair scholar to receive a PhD.

ROBERT MIKELL (107)
Robert Mikell is currently an attorney at Brown Routine PC and serves on several Boards, including the Board of Directors of the Georgia Southern University Alumni Association, the Statesboro Kiwanis Club and the Statesboro-Bulloch Chamber of Commerce.

JENNIFER MOOK (104)
Jennifer Mook is an officer in the State Bar of Georgia’s Young Lawyer Division and has volunteered with Georgia Legal Services and the Georgia High School Marching Band. She currently owns an attorney and partner for The Mock Firm, LLC.

THOMAS MULLIS (99)
Thomas Mullis, P.ED., is currently a physician at Dublin ENT Associates. He was a member of the Bell Honor’s Program while attending Georgia Southern and graduated summa cum laude in chemistry in 1995.

BECKY OWEN (99)
Becky Owen was a member of the Bell Honor’s Program while attending Georgia Southern. She is currently a supervisory chemist at the FDA.

LIZ STEPHENS (99)
Liz Stephens is executive director of MedBlank Foundation, Inc. Under her leadership, the organization has been able to amplify more than $4 million of medication provided from $250,000 to $300,000 in annual costs and spread their reach geographically.

DENNETTE THORNTON (101)
Dennette Thornton is senior manager of the Atlanta Braves Group and Premium Sales Department. In 2013, she was no. 1 in the Department in all of Major League Baseball. She is also Chair of the Football Alumni Association board member.

JACOB WARREN (102, 103)
Jacob Warren is the first Georgia Southern University Honors College student to receive a PhD. He has received more than $16 million in funding to improve health within rural communities. He is currently an associate professor of Community Medicine at Mercer University.

JUSTIN WRIGHT (102, 103)
After two years on staff at Great Southern Wood Preserving, Justin Wright became the youngest general manager at one of only 15 plants. He is currently the company’s director of independent sales.

NICK PEARSON (10)
Nick Pearson is the director of the federal government relations for the Tennessee Valley Authority. He also serves as the Tennessee House of Representatives in 2007 and was elected in 2010 to serve as the Majority Party Whip in the State House. Pearson is currently an attorney at Warren, Hooper, and Ramsey, Attorneys at Law and a state representative.

BLAINE RHODES (10)
Blaine Rhodes began his career in the music business working as the merchandise manager for country singer and songwriter Luke Bryan. Rhodes is currently the manager of Adel for Warner/Chappell Music.

BRAD SHEFFIELD (101, 103)
Brad Sheffield is the senior vice president and retail lead for Seabank Bank. In 2014, he was awarded the Sea Island Bank CEO Award, which is one of few that have ever been given.
If accreditation is value, then the Allen E. Paulson College of Engineering and Information Technology (CEIT) has recently become invaluable, as it celebrates ABET accreditation for its civil, electrical and mechanical engineering programs. The ABET accreditation is a remarkable milestone for the University’s engineering Bachelor of Science programs instituted in 2011 that prepare students for challenging and rewarding opportunities in a variety of industries or government agencies locally, regionally and nationally.

“Engineering drives innovation, which in turn drives the economy,” said Mohammad Davoud, dean of the College of Engineering and Information Technology. “Georgia Southern is trying to address the needs and support the economic development of South Georgia and beyond.”

According to Davoud, earning a degree from an ABET-accredited program verifies that the quality of the educational experience meets the international standards of the profession.

“We have great engineering programs—small classes taught by faculty who hold doctoral degrees in their field and have substantial industrial experience,” Davoud said. “Georgia Southern has invested in establishing excellent teaching and research labs, and each course includes plenty of laboratory experience. Our students are very successful in going to graduate schools and landing very good jobs.”

CEIT has double reason to celebrate the strides it has made since its formation in 2012. In August, the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia authorized the University to offer the first undergraduate manufacturing engineering degree program in the state of Georgia, and the only one in the Southeast.

During much of the 80s and 90s, thousands of American jobs were lost when U.S. companies moved production to China and other low-wage countries; however, companies are beginning to return production to the U.S., especially to Georgia and the Southeast. Most industries need manufacturing engineers who focus on “designing facilities, equipment, processes and methods necessary for the efficient, economical and safe production of a product.”

Davoud acknowledged there is a shortage of manufacturing engineers and noted the current educational infrastructure is inadequate to meet the demands and challenges of 21st-century manufacturing. The new Manufacturing Engineering program will address those issues, and will enable Georgia Southern to prepare practice-ready engineers to meet the growing demand for highly skilled professionals and industrialists.

The University’s Manufacturing Engineering is a good choice for students who have strong mathematics and science backgrounds and a deep interest in building things. “Our graduates, while theoretically inclined, will be applied problem solvers,” Davoud said. “They will have knowledge of design, materials, processing, facility layout, safety, quality and automation. The curriculum will be practice-oriented, laboratory intensive and application-based.”

CEIT also plans to establish a state-of-the-art Southeastern Applied Materials, Manufacturing, and Engineering Research Center to enhance both the academic and scholastic experiences associated with the program, as well as to promote outreach and support to regional manufacturers.

In addition to basic engineering and manufacturing courses, the core curriculum includes five technical tracks for elective courses: SAP Certificate track, Lean and Six Sigma Green Belt Certificate track, Materials Processing track, Occupational Health and Safety track, and Automation track.

Graduates will leave Georgia Southern with a solid foundation for careers in product and process design, industrial automation, sales, safety and quality management and be ready to work in a team environment with other engineers and technicians. The Manufacturing Engineering program will accept its first students in fall 2015. – Sandra Bennett
I met the Wilson Family in print before I met them in person.

Their news was tragic. Cory Wilson, a 21-year-old Georgia Southern business major, seemingly healthy and fit, collapsed in class without warning, without reason. He never regained consciousness.

“There’s no way to describe him,” said Cory’s little sister, Morgan, a junior business management major at Georgia Southern. “He was a character. He was just so goofy.” Morgan admitted in high school she didn’t want to be known as “Cory’s little sister.” “I was Morgan. That’s my name. Then, as we got older, it actually became an honor. Everybody loved Cory so much.” She’s never talked about ‘that day’ until now, but wanted to share Cory’s story to help raise AED awareness, hoping it can save lives and spare other families the grief they’ve endured. “I never want anyone to experience this again,” Morgan said.

Cory died of fatal cardiac arrhythmia. Although a courageous classmate, Edwin Garcia, performed CPR on Cory until professional help arrived, use of an AED (Automated External Defibrillator) would have offered Cory his only chance of survival. “An AED is the only effective treatment for restoring normal heart rhythm during a sudden cardiac arrest,” said Dr. Brian DeLoach, medical director, staff physician and AED Committee member at Georgia Southern. “For each minute that passes during this abnormal rhythm, damage occurs, and the likelihood of recovery decreases.” According to the American Red Cross, for each minute use of an AED is delayed, the chance of survival decreases by 10 percent.

Ironically, Cory’s mom, Lisa Wilson, is a registered nurse with the Chatham County Board of Education and a 1986 Georgia Southern nursing graduate. She also is a CPR instructor with the American Heart Association. Lisa was even one of many who worked on Cory in the ER, stepping in line to perform CPR on her own son. “He’s just somewhere… he’s still alive but they can’t reach him because they don’t know him,” Lisa remembers thinking. “If I do CPR, he’s going to know it’s his mom. He’s going to come back because I’m his mom.”

But Cory’s condition didn’t change. Lisa went around again. And again. It had been more than an hour since Cory collapsed and he was still unresponsive. When she was told it was time to stop, Lisa remembers saying, “But I’m not tired. I don’t want to stop.” Even during our interview, she asked herself, “Should I have just done one more round?”

I never want anyone to experience this again.”

- Morgan Wilson

Lessons from a Life Cut Short

I met the Wilson Family in print before I met them in person.

Their news was tragic. Cory Wilson, a 21-year-old Georgia Southern business major, seemingly healthy and fit, collapsed in class without warning, without reason. He never regained consciousness.

“There’s no way to describe him,” said Cory’s little sister, Morgan, a junior business management major at Georgia Southern. “He was a character. He was just so goofy.” Morgan admitted in high school she didn’t want to be known as “Cory’s little sister.” “I was Morgan. That’s my name. Then, as we got older, it actually became an honor. Everybody loved Cory so much.” She’s never talked about ‘that day’ until now, but wanted to share Cory’s story to help raise AED awareness, hoping it can save lives and spare other families the grief they’ve endured. “I never want anyone to experience this again,” Morgan said.

Cory died of fatal cardiac arrhythmia. Although a courageous classmate, Edwin Garcia, performed CPR on Cory until professional help arrived, use of an AED (Automated External Defibrillator) would have offered Cory his only chance of survival. “An AED is the only effective treatment for restoring normal heart rhythm during a sudden cardiac arrest,” said Dr. Brian DeLoach, medical director, staff physician and AED Committee member at Georgia Southern. “For each minute that passes during this abnormal rhythm, damage occurs, and the likelihood of recovery decreases.” According to the American Red Cross, for each minute use of an AED is delayed, the chance of survival decreases by 10 percent.

Morgan admitted that before that day—January 17, 2013—she felt AEDs were “for somebody else.” “Now that I see how it’s affected my family, it’s become an important cause to us,” said Morgan. “You don’t really think too much about something until it happens to you.” Today, she urges everyone to take note of nearby AEDs and to take them seriously. After all, AEDs are easy to use, and safe for both user and victim. “The units will not deliver a shock unless it detects an abnormal rhythm,” added DeLoach. “Our units on campus are designed so that even a person with no training can open them, power them on, and then follow the prompts to use them correctly.”

That day was a Thursday. Morgan was in history class—only her second day of classes after the winter break. “I had my phone tucked away in my book bag,” said Morgan. “When class was over I noticed I had around 20 texts and more than that in missed calls. I knew something was wrong.” When she learned Cory had “fainted” in class, Morgan thought, “He’s probably fine. You all can deal with it. I have to go to class.” But before she knew it, Morgan was in the East Georgia Regional Medical Center waiting room, and a nurse was whisking her away to the back of the hospital to a small room with a single chair. “I thought I was going to get to see Cory,” Morgan said. “I was so confused. I made some jokes. Tried to laugh it off.” Morgan said her perception of time was warped that day—every moment feeling like a split second or forever. She remembers her
tend to me. I didn’t know how to handle a mourning mother or mourning
mom coming into the room and the words, “Morgan, your brother didn’t make it.” She remembers screaming. I couldn’t stop
screeching in that little room. My mom started crying. The nurse
started crying. I wondered what we were having for dinner.
Random stuff. It hadn’t hit me yet. I thought, Cory will walk
through the door. It’ll be okay.”

After that, Morgan never returned to the waiting room. She
remembers: a hallway, her friend Ashley holding her hand, her
dad crying. She’d never seen her dad cry before, ever. Morgan
knew this would change the life she knew—vacations, holidays. “I
don’t have any siblings now,” she said. “I’m an only child.” Mother
and daughter had to drive Cory’s truck back to the family home
when I became the person whose brother passed away. That was
my new identity… I went back and forth between sobbing and
making jokes. I didn’t really know how to act. I guess everybody’s
dad crying. She’d never seen her dad cry before, ever. Morgan
never returned to the waiting room. She
remembers: a hallway, her friend Ashley holding her hand, her
dad crying. She’d never seen her dad cry before, ever. Morgan
knew this would change the life she knew—vacations, holidays. “I
don’t have any siblings now,” she said. “I’m an only child.” Mother
and daughter had to drive Cory’s truck back to the family home
when I became the person whose brother passed away. That was
my new identity… I went back and forth between sobbing and
making jokes. I didn’t really know how to act. I guess everybody’s
dad crying. She’d never seen her dad cry before, ever. Morgan
never returned to the waiting room. She
remembers: a hallway, her friend Ashley holding her hand, her
dad crying. She’d never seen her dad cry before, ever. Morgan
knew this would change the life she knew—vacations, holidays. “I
don’t have any siblings now,” she said. “I’m an only child.” Mother
and daughter had to drive Cory’s truck back to the family home
when I became the person whose brother passed away. That was
my new identity… I went back and forth between sobbing and
making jokes. I didn’t really know how to act. I guess everybody’s
dad crying. She’d never seen her dad cry before, ever. Morgan
never returned to the waiting room. She
remembers: a hallway, her friend Ashley holding her hand, her
dad crying. She’d never seen her dad cry before, ever. Morgan
knew this would change the life she knew—vacations, holidays. “I
don’t have any siblings now,” she said. “I’m an only child.” Mother
and daughter had to drive Cory’s truck back to the family home
when I became the person whose brother passed away. That was
my new identity… I went back and forth between sobbing and
making jokes. I didn’t really know how to act. I guess everybody’s
dad crying. She’d never seen her dad cry before, ever. Morgan
never returned to the waiting room. She
remembers: a hallway, her friend Ashley holding her hand, her
dad crying. She’d never seen her dad cry before, ever. Morgan
knew this would change the life she knew—vacations, holidays. “I
don’t have any siblings now,” she said. “I’m an only child.” Mother
and daughter had to drive Cory’s truck back to the family home
when I became the person whose brother passed away. That was
my new identity… I went back and forth between sobbing and
making jokes. I didn’t really know how to act. I guess everybody’s
dad crying. She’d never seen her dad cry before, ever. Morgan
never returned to the waiting room. She
remembers: a hallway, her friend Ashley holding her hand, her
dad crying. She’d never seen her dad cry before, ever. Morgan
knew this would change the life she knew—vacations, holidays. “I
don’t have any siblings now,” she said. “I’m an only child.” Mother
and daughter had to drive Cory’s truck back to the family home
when I became the person whose brother passed away. That was
my new identity… I went back and forth between sobbing and
making jokes. I didn’t really know how to act. I guess everybody’s
dad crying. She’d never seen her dad cry before, ever. Morgan
never returned to the waiting room. She
remembers: a hallway, her friend Ashley holding her hand, her
dad crying. She’d never seen her dad cry before, ever. Morgan
knew this would change the life she knew—vacations, holidays. “I
don’t have any siblings now,” she said. “I’m an only child.” Mother
and daughter had to drive Cory’s truck back to the family home
when I became the person whose brother passed away. That was
my new identity… I went back and forth between sobbing and
making jokes. I didn’t really know how to act. I guess everybody’s
dad crying. She’d never seen her dad cry before, ever. Morgan
never returned to the waiting room. She
remembers: a hallway, her friend Ashley holding her hand, her
dad crying. She’d never seen her dad cry before, ever. Morgan
knew this would change the life she knew—vacations, holidays. “I
don’t have any siblings now,” she said. “I’m an only child.” Mother
and daughter had to drive Cory’s truck back to the family home
when I became the person whose brother passed away. That was
my new identity… I went back and forth between sobbing and
making jokes. I didn’t really know how to act. I guess everybody’s
dad crying. She’d never seen her dad cry before, ever. Morgan
never returned to the waiting room. She
remembers: a hallway, her friend Ashley holding her hand, her
dad crying. She’d never seen her dad cry before, ever. Morgan
knew this would change the life she knew—vacations, holidays. “I
don’t have any siblings now,” she said. “I’m an only child.” Mother
and daughter had to drive Cory’s truck back to the family home
when I became the person whose brother passed away. That was
my new identity… I went back and forth between sobbing and
making jokes. I didn’t really know how to act. I guess everybody’s
dad crying. She’d never seen her dad cry before, ever. Morgan
never returned to the waiting room. She
remembers: a hallway, her friend Ashley holding her hand, her
dad crying. She’d never seen her dad cry before, ever. Morgan
knew this would change the life she knew—vacations, holidays. “I
don’t have any siblings now,” she said. “I’m an only child.” Mother
and daughter had to drive Cory’s truck back to the family home
when I became the person whose brother passed away. That was
my new identity… I went back and forth between sobbing and
making jokes. I didn’t really know how to act. I guess everybody’s
dad crying. She’d never seen her dad cry before, ever. Morgan
never returned to the waiting room. She
remembers: a hallway, her friend Ashley holding her hand, her
dad crying. She’d never seen her dad cry before, ever. Morgan
knew this would change the life she knew—vacations, holidays. “I
don’t have any siblings now,” she said. “I’m an only child.” Mother
and daughter had to drive Cory’s truck back to the family home
when I became the person whose brother passed away. That was
my new identity… I went back and forth between sobbing and
making jokes. I didn’t really know how to act. I guess everybody’s
dad crying. She’d never seen her dad cry before, ever. Morgan
never returned to the waiting room. She
remembers: a hallway, her friend Ashley holding her hand, her
dad crying. She’d never seen her dad cry before, ever. Morgan
knew this would change the life she knew—vacations, holidays. “I
don’t have any siblings now,” she said. “I’m an only child.” Mother
and daughter had to drive Cory’s truck back to the family home
when I became the person whose brother passed away. That was
my new identity… I went back and forth between sobbing and
making jokes. I didn’t really know how to act. I guess everybody’s
dad crying. She’d never seen her dad cry before, ever. Morgan
never returned to the waiting room. She
remembers: a hallway, her friend Ashley holding her hand, her
dad crying. She’d never seen her dad cry before, ever. Morgan
knew this would change the life she knew—vacations, holidays. “I
don’t have any siblings now,” she said. “I’m an only child.” Mother
and daughter had to drive Cory’s truck back to the family home
when I became the person whose brother passed away. That was
my new identity… I went back and forth between sobbing and
making jokes. I didn’t really know how to act. I guess everybody’s
dad crying. She’d never seen her dad cry before, ever. Morgan
never returned to the waiting room. She
remembers: a hallway, her friend Ashley holding her hand, her
dad crying. She’d never seen her dad cry before, ever. Morgan
knew this would change the life she knew—vacations, holidays. “I
don’t have any siblings now,” she said. “I’m an only child.” Mother
and daughter had to drive Cory’s truck back to the family home
when I became the person whose brother passed away. That was
my new identity… I went back and forth between sobbing and
making jokes. I didn’t really know how to act. I guess everybody’s
dad crying. She’d never seen her dad cry before, ever. Morgan
never returned to the waiting room. She
remembers: a hallway, her friend Ashley holding her hand, her
dad crying. She’d never seen her dad cry before, ever. Morgan
knew this would change the life she knew—vacations, holidays. “I
don’t have any siblings now,” she said. “I’m an only child.” Mother
and daughter had to drive Cory’s truck back to the family home
when I became the person whose brother passed away. That was
my new identity… I went back and forth between sobbing and
making jokes. I didn’t really know how to act. I guess everybody’s

I think things should be. There are four of us again. He’s goofy an only child at all… When he’s with us it evens out to the way I hope you’re prepared to have 30 kids because I don’t like being was empty. It was hard to travel that way. I always tell Andrew, was three. So the seat on the airplane for Cory was empty. It was hard to travel that way. I always tell Andrew, “Christmas morning has just been so hard to deal with. I see the AED on the wall.” For a while I was walking campus almost a celebrity, but one nobody wanted to run into. I felt like everyone knew who I was. I thought about transferring. I thought about dropping out. Morgan credited her boyfriend Andrew with keeping her going. She found enormous comfort in RUF (Reformed University Fellowship) as well and said her parents were very supportive. Morgan said they told her, “you’re still living. Life is about the living. You still need to experience life.” “Gradually, I realized I was looking for ways to escape what happened but I didn’t want to escape Cory,” she said. “After a while, running into people became a comfort thing… I saw little bits of Cory in them — in the way they talked and dressed. — little bits of Cory in them — in the way they talked and dressed. Life is about the living. You still need to experience life.” “Gradually, I realized I was looking for ways to escape what happened but I didn’t want to escape Cory,” she said. “After a while, running into people became a comfort thing… I saw little bits of Cory in them — in the way they talked and dressed.

The most difficult time of year Morgan has had to deal with is Christmas because of the family traditions. “On Christmas live, me and Cory would play Mario Cart on Nintendo 64,” said Morgan. “Christmas morning has just been so hard to deal with. I think my parents are still struggling with family vacations, too. The resort didn’t have an AED,” said Morgan. “That was one of the first times I asked myself, ‘how do you not have an AED?’ I’m so used to looking for them now. You don’t even have to be certificated. It hurts to know I didn’t know this before… I guess I would tell readers that it’s simple. An AED is so simple to use.

To say the Wilsons were flat-footed and stunned by Cory’s death would be an understatement. “You just never saw this coming,” said Lisa. “There’s no words anybody can tell you that’s going to make you feel like it’s all better.” And their entire support system was in shock. Grandparents were grieving for their children who were in turn grieving for their child. “I prayed for healthy children. Everything else was extra,” said Lisa. “If I could have been given a paper to write down the things I wanted in a son or daughter, I wouldn’t have chosen anything different for either of them. Cory’s dream was to be like his dad. He admired Kenny so much. And he was well on his way. For me, being his mother made me a better person, just as being Morgan’s mom makes me a better person. Live, laugh, love, Mom,” Cory always said. He taught us so much about living. How is it that a mother holds her baby’s birth certificate and death certificate in the same hand? I suppose there’s peace in knowing he lived life to the fullest and he was where he wanted to be, with the people he wanted to be with, on the day he died.”

An athlete growing up, Cory loved going to Georgia Southern football games, but especially watching “Freedom.” When the bald eagle flew, everything stopped. During Commencement, in which Lisa and Kenny accepted Cory’s degree posthumously, his red bandana was attached to one of Freedom’s wings. “What an honor and tribute to Cory,” said Lisa. Georgia Southern held a candlelight vigil for Cory and students organized a balloon lift in Cory’s memory. And when musician Darius Rucker was in town, KA and Phi Mu recorded a video singing “Wagon Wheel,” which was to be Cory and his girlfriend Olivia’s wedding song. “Everyone has been wonderful to all of us,” said Lisa. “The University also wants to do something in the spring to spotlight cardiac awareness. We’re so grateful.”

The Wilson family wants Cory’s story shared so people understand the importance of CPR and using an AED. “It’s like a fire extinguisher,” said Lisa. “It doesn’t do any good if it stays on the wall. Our purpose in sharing is to hopefully allow someone else to understand that saving a life is really within anyone’s potential. We want that part of our tragedy to be turned into something positive… We don’t want sympathy. We want action. Don’t feel sorry for us. Just get busy. What happened was tragic and it hasn’t gotten easier, but we hope people read this and want to help or become informed. Do whatever they can. Nothing will make it easier, but someone else’s life will be touched.

From my time with Morgan, Lisa and Kenny, I know I have been. To Cory, who I only know through the words of others, I wish you a safe ride ‘gliding along the highway.’ Thank you for taking us all along for the ride.

Feature Story

I think things should be. There are four of us again. He’s goofy an only child at all… When he’s with us it evens out to the way

Feature Story

I think things should be. There are four of us again. He’s goofy an only child at all… When he’s with us it evens out to the way

Feature Story

I think things should be. There are four of us again. He’s goofy an only child at all… When he’s with us it evens out to the way
WEEKS of WELCOME

THE EAGLE NATION WELCOMES NEW STUDENTS TO CAMPUS BY ORGANIZING A VARIETY OF EVENTS DURING THE FIRST SIX WEEKS OF THE FALL SEMESTER.

Georgia Southern welcomed new students to the Eagle Nation this fall with its annual “Weeks of Welcome” (WOW). Held over the first six weeks of class, WOW helps prepare students for success during their time on campus, empowers them with a variety of events and activities, and assists first-year, transfer and returning students in forming friendships, connecting with University resources, and getting involved in campus life. Whether it’s attending an athletics event, joining classmates at Eagles Night Out or attending a show in the Russell Union, the idea behind WOW is to connect new Eagles to the campus and neighboring community. Through WOW, students can identify resources and services provided; make strong connections with faculty, staff and other students; embrace diversity by broadening cultural views; learn and understand the values and expectations of the University; and build pride and passion for all of the Eagle Nation.

OFFICIAL WELCOME

At the RAC (Recreation Activity Center), President Brooks Keel and first lady Tammy Schalue, Ph.D. (at right) were on hand to welcome this year’s freshmen.

EAGLES NEST

During Operation Move-In, hundreds of University faculty, staff and student volunteers turn out to help newcomers unload and move their belongings into their home away from home on campus.

WOW!

Over the first six weeks of school, WOW (Weeks of Welcome) hosts numerous events to help new students feel at home as they get acquainted with the University. The annual Day One celebration gives freshmen the chance to learn about Georgia Southern customs and traditions, such as the history behind the campus watermelon cutting.
Why go tobacco-free? The purpose of the policy (University System of Georgia’s policy 9.1.7) is to create a health-supporting community for everyone, tobacco-users and non-users alike. The new policy also supports the right of all people and students to come to campus to breathe smoke-free air. The simple reason for our policy is respect for each other and the environment. We hope that smokers who choose to continue smoking will respect our smoke-free environment out of consideration, and consultation with the University System of Georgia, and the Board of Regents made the decision for our campuses to go smoke-free.

Board of Regents made the decision for our campuses to go smoke-free. The simple reason for our policy is respect for each other and the environment. We hope that smokers who choose to continue smoking will respect our smoke-free environment out of consideration, and consultation with the University System of Georgia, and the Board of Regents made the decision for our campuses to go smoke-free.

The Georgia Board of Regents made the decision for our campuses to go smoke-free. The simple reason for our policy is respect for each other and the environment. We hope that smokers who choose to continue smoking will respect our smoke-free environment out of consideration, and consultation with the University System of Georgia, and the Board of Regents made the decision for our campuses to go smoke-free.

Statewide College Tobacco Ban

Georgia Southern Embraces Statewide College Tobacco Ban

Lighting up a cigarette on campus, or any other Georgia Southern property, has been banned in order to comply with the Tobacco-Free Policy mandated by the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia (USG). Smoking is now prohibited both indoors and outside. This includes all University buildings, facilities, stadiums, arenas, parking lots, greenways, the golf course, and even inside personal vehicles located on campus.

"Georgia Southern University is one of the most beautiful campuses in all of higher education. We pride ourselves on being a progressive institution that’s rich in tradition and welcoming and comfortable for our students, faculty, staff and guests," said University President Brooks A. Keel, Ph.D. "After careful consideration, and consultation with the University System of Georgia, as of August 1, 2014, Georgia Southern University is a tobacco-free campus. The commitment to a tobacco-free campus is one we all share together, whether you are a tobacco user or not."

"As medical professionals, the staff at Health Services recognizes that nicotine is a highly addictive substance for most people, which makes quitting smoking or other forms of tobacco very difficult," says DeLoach. "We want students who have trouble quitting to know that we are available to provide medical assistance with quitting, if desired."

What areas of campus are prohibited? The use of tobacco is prohibited in any area of the campus including the following:

- All Georgia Southern Campus Buildings and Grounds
- All Georgia Southern Parking Lots
- Administration Building
- All Georgia Southern Residence Halls and Apartments
- Campus Pedestrian
- Campus Bus Stops
- Allen E. Paulson Stadium and Surrounding Grounds
- Georgia Southern Golf Course
- Coastal Georgia Center (Savannah)
- Herty (Savannah)

"We all know that change is not always easy," said Keel. "But this change in policy at Georgia Southern reinforces our commitment to preserving and improving the health and comfort of our students, faculty, staff, and guests. This is an even better environment for learning, working and recreation by adhering to a new tobacco-free campus."

If you have any questions or comments regarding the new Tobacco-Free campus initiative, please send email to tobaccofree@georgiasouthern.edu.

Visit GeorgiaSouthern.edu/magazine to view President Keel’s entire video message and link to a copy of the official University System of Georgia Tobacco-Free Policy 9.1.7.

Georgia Southern Supports Hazing Prevention Week

Georgia Southern Supports Hazing Prevention Week

What is Hazing? Many would answer this question with stereotypical horror stories they’ve heard or read about Greek life on college campuses. But hazing is much broader in scope than that. Hazing affects many more people than it does those who are actually hazed. The first step to prevention is informing the public about what hazing is and what it is not, and how everyone can help prevent it.

Here at Georgia Southern University, Hazing Prevention Week is a time to increase hazing awareness among faculty and students alike. During Hazing Prevention Week 2014, several events helped enlighten faculty and students, as members of Georgia Southern Life and information sessions and hosted exhibit tables. Attendees were able to sign a pledge against hazing, while Georgia Southern expressed its overall dedication to the cause.

In order to effectively prevent hazing we must first define it. Most people are unaware of how broad the definition of hazing is, or that the fact that hazing is actually illegal. Officially, hazing is "any action or situation created intentionally that is humiliating, embarrassing, or ridiculing and/or risks emotional or physical harm regardless of a person’s willingness to participate." One of the biggest issues with hazing is identifying it once it’s occurred. Most people who have been subjected to hazing do not even consider it that. For example, many organizations force new members into performing menial or demeaning tasks, working harder, or are considered “beneath” current members of the group or organization. On the surface these acts are just a big deal, but there are often long-term effects that run much deeper and can have lasting negative consequences.

Although the University has always been staunchly against hazing, this was the first year Hazing Prevention Week was conducting on such a large scale. Tracy Maxwell, founder of HazingPrevention.org, and one of the most well-known and influential campaigns within the hazing prevention movement, supported Georgia Southern for Hazing Prevention Week to share her own hazing experience. During her speech, Maxwell told a story about being a camp counselor and how she was hazed the first week as a new member of the staff.

Everyone’s perception of an activity varies depending on his or her psychological disposition. Hazing is commonly overlooked, and even downplayed. Hazing can be overwhelming and often goes unreported, which is why Georgia Southern University and prevention experts work hard to prevent hazing from occurring on campus or in the local community. The art of hazing is often Downplayed as “traditions” or customs. Quite often alcohol is used as a tool to “initiate” freshmen or new members of Greek organizations and also sports clubs. A common misconception is the idea that Greeks are the leading group who use such tactics, when this distinction actually belongs to athletes, athletics teams and other sports organizations. In fact, theater and band groups are the second most likely to haze new members or potential members. In November, a former Florida A&M University band member was convicted in the 2011 beating death of a bandmate. Since 1970, at least one person each year has died as a result of hazing—45 percent of which were alcohol related. Georgia Southern is already taking steps to outlaw underage drinking, and alcohol abuse by students.

Education is only the beginning. Action must be taken to prevent hazing. Maxwell explained the fear factor involved in hazing. She said: “In the human brain people need to feel included just as much as they need air. The idea of being left out can often alter someone’s decision making in favor of the crowd rather than themselves.”

Georgia Southern University is definitely leading the effort to prevent hazing. Each campus organization must sign a pledge not to haze, or allow themselves to be hazed. This is a commitment Georgia Southern insists all of its students uphold as Eagles. During Hazing Prevention Week, USDA President Amerl Francis said, “This is not something that’s going to fade, this is really important because it relates to the safety of our students here at Georgia Southern University.”

Georgia Southern University has already had two hazing incidents in the past four years. In 2014, a former Florida A&M University band member was convicted in the 2011 death of a bandmate. Since 1970, at least one person each year has died as a result of hazing—45 percent of which were alcohol related. Georgia Southern is already taking steps to outlaw underage drinking, and alcohol abuse by students.

As students, administrators, faculty, and parents get involved, there is hope that hazing practices can end. The Office of Security and Faternity Life is determined to make the safety and well-being of Georgia Southern students a top priority. Hazing education and prevention is not limited to Hazing Prevention Week, and anyone who is encouraged to speak up to faculty if they see signs of hazing or feel they are being hazed. No one has to stand alone. Hazing Prevention Weeks will go on each year here at Georgia Southern where the hope is that more people will join the cause and keep all Eagles safe.

A list of hazing prevention resource links is available at GeorgiaSouthern.edu/magazine.
**STEMFEST SUCCESS**

Georgia Southern hosted its 3rd Annual STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) Festival on Saturday, Sept. 20. Featuring presentations by the Institute for Interdisciplinary STEM Education, NASA and the U.S. Army, more than 2,000 guests were able to design tabletop hovercraft, learn about solar cell robotics, create liquid nitrogen ice cream, and have their photo taken as astronauts during a “virtual” rocket launch. STEM Fest is a result of the increased interest from the National Science Foundation and the Department of Education to fund efforts to improve the number of students going into STEM fields.

**STRENGTH IN NUMBERS**

**University Named ‘Military Friendly’ Fourth Year in a Row**

For the fourth year in a row, Georgia Southern University has been named a Military Friendly School® by G.I. Jobs magazine for its efforts to provide educational opportunities to America’s veterans, active-duty troops and their families. The complete 2014 Military Friendly Schools list can be found at militaryfriendlyschools.com.

“It is a great honor for our University to serve our military men and women who have given so much of their time and made so many sacrifices for our country,” said President Brooks A. Keel, Ph.D. “We are reaching out to veterans, active-duty military and their dependents to give them the service and attention they deserve so they succeed in earning their degrees online or on campus.”

Georgia Southern takes great pride in being ranked among the top 15 percent of schools nationwide in a survey conducted by Victory Media, a veteran-owned business and publisher of G.I. Jobs and “The Guide to Military Friendly Schools.” In a survey of more than 12,000 schools, researchers examined policies to recruit and retain military and veteran students—students such as business major and Marine Corps veteran Staff Sergeant John L. Kitchens. (To read his full story in our online summer edition, visit GeorgiaSouthern.edu/magazine.)

There is a proud tradition on campus to welcome the military and their families. Last year, Military Times named the College of Business Administration (COBA) one of the best business schools for veterans in the United States for its online and part-time MBA program and for having staff dedicated to veterans issues.

In 2011, Georgia Southern established the Military Resource Center in the Nessmith-Lane Conference Center. It is a one-stop location providing services to help military service members achieve academic success. While at the Center, military students can relax, study and talk with other servicemembers and veterans. In addition, a brand new multi-million dollar ROTC Military Science Building is being constructed on campus.

**CRIMINAL JUSTICE 4639**

Each Friday morning they ride. The bus makes its way some 50 miles to Smith State Prison in Glennville, Georgia. The trip allows Eagle students time to share ideas and opinions about crime, criminals, the criminal justice system, and the effects incarceration has on families and communities.

“When Georgia Southern students drive up and see the high fences and sharp-edged wire, it really hits them that this is something different,” said Chad Posick, Ph.D., who teaches the Inside-Out Prison Exchange class to Georgia Southern students. On Fridays, students actually go behind the walls of a maximum-security correctional facility to attend class with incarcerated residents. “They go in scared because they do not know what to expect,” said Posick. “However, once they meet the inmates and start talking to them, they realize the incarcerated students are smart, and they can’t wait for Fridays because this experience is so different for them.”

Every now and then, students need to take a break from classes like English 101 and General Biology to enroll in a course that is a bit, well, unusual. The criminal justice class called “Incarceration, Family and Communities,” has 15 “outside” students and 15 “inside” students. It counts as an upper-level elective and Georgia Southern students earn three credits for the semester-long course. Inmates who pass the class receive a letter to share with the Georgia State Board of Pardons and Paroles, to show that they have successfully completed a college-level course.

“Many are looking to turn their lives around, and it is interesting to hear their stories because you gain a better understanding of their background,” said Posick. “The course gives them work to do so that they are ‘doing their time’ productively and challenging their minds, which are often subjected to the redundancy of prison life. The prisoners don’t see many people from the ‘outside,’ so this is a refreshing change for them.”

The course also provides University students with invaluable lessons as they gain a deeper understanding of how the criminal justice system works. “Their view of prison life, which they usually get from movies and television shows, is drastically changed and more realistic,” added Posick. “Many say it has changed what they want to do when they graduate or had given them new tools for the jobs they still intend to pursue.”

**REMARKABLE STUDIES**

“…”

- Janna Galbreath, Junior criminal justice major

**DEPT. OF CORRECTION**

- Janna Galbreath, Junior criminal justice major

Cumming, Ga.

“I had no idea what to expect, I just had crazy thoughts running through my head of how horrible these men were going to be… But once I was into the classroom and began interacting with the other classmates all my butterflies went away.”

- Janna Galbreath, Junior criminal justice major

Cumming, Ga.
McMillan. “We now have 46 faculty and four staff, more competitive with other regional kinesiology programs. Chair, says the change also indicates that the School has become aligned with its academic partner and has become more specialized in its focus on the academic unit and its focus on the Undergraduate and graduate programs.”


Named One of Safest Colleges in South

Georgia Southern University has been named one of the safest colleges in the South by the Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network (RAINN). The award is based on the number of sexual assault and rape reports made to the University’s Title IX office and the number of crimes reported to the University’s police department. The University was one of only 18 schools in the South to receive the award.


The Rosenwald Building

Most of the buildings on Georgia Southern’s campus are named in honor of a man or woman who has had a direct association with the University, but the Rosenwald Building is one of the rare exceptions. Originally built as a library in 1938, when the school was still called South Georgia Teachers College, the building is a tribute to the illustrious retailer and philanthropist—Julius Rosenwald. The college library was located in Rosenwald Building until 1975, but today is home to the University Museum and the Offices of the Registrar and Financial Aid, among others.

Born in Springfield, Illinois, Rosenwald was part owner of what was America’s leading mail-order business—Sears, Roebuck and Company. Under Rosenwald’s leadership, Sears evolved into a popular brick-and-mortar merchandise store and one of the largest retail chains in America. He served as its vice president and treasurer from 1895 to 1910, as president from 1910 to 1924, and as chairman of the board of directors from 1924, until his death in 1932.

The business luminary is equally known for his extraordinary philanthropy efforts, which far outpaced the work of his contemporaries. Established in 1917, the Julius Rosenwald Fund raised millions of dollars for rural and minority schools and colleges throughout the United States. Thanks to Rosenwald’s generosity and dedication to education initiatives, more than 5,000 “Rosenwald Schools” were built in the rural South to help educate African-American youths. In addition, roughly 4,000 libraries were added to existing schools.

Because of our own role as a leader in rural education, Georgia Teachers College was able to secure grants from the Rosenwald Fund in order to raise the educational level of teachers in rural public schools as well as establish scholarships for future teachers who wished to work in rural schools. In his book, Georgia Southern: Seventy-Five Years of Progress and Service, historian T. Ray Shurburt wrote that the Rosenwald Fund provided $175,000 in grants and scholarships from the Rosenwald Fund, when Marvin Pittman was president. As a tribute to Rosenwald’s devotion and generosity, the new library was dedicated to his memory when it opened in 1938.

Director of Georgia Southern University Museum Brent Tharp says the Rosenwald name is integral to understanding the extraordinary story of Georgia Southern. “It is a testament to the progressive vision for the role of education in the community shared by the school and Julius Rosenwald. It represents, too, the perseverance that has been a hallmark of this institution.”

In the midst of the crushing effects of the Great Depression, Marvin Pittman and the faculty and staff of Georgia Teachers College not only kept the school going, but actually expanded the campus and operations, including a new library thanks in part to the Rosenwald Fund.”

According to Shurburt, the original building was constructed for $31,466. According to Shurburt, the original building was constructed for $31,466. Even today, the Rosenwald building is still one of the most eye-catching buildings on campus—and an architectural landmark that admirably connects our glorious past and present, and reminds us all of what the hope of Georgia Southern University’s future can be, when just one person takes the time to care. - Sandra Bennett


SAFETY TIPS

In rural education, Georgia Teachers College received $75,000 in grants and scholarships from the Rosenwald Fund, when Marvin Pittman was president. As a tribute to Rosenwald’s devotion and generosity, the new library was dedicated to his memory when it opened in 1938.

Director of Georgia Southern University Museum Brent Tharp says the Rosenwald name is integral to understanding the extraordinary story of Georgia Southern. “It is a testament to the progressive vision for the role of education in the community shared by the school and Julius Rosenwald. It represents, too, the perseverance that has been a hallmark of this institution.”

In the midst of the crushing effects of the Great Depression, Marvin Pittman and the faculty and staff of Georgia Teachers College not only kept the school going, but actually expanded the campus and operations, including a new library thanks in part to the Rosenwald Fund.”

According to Shurburt, the original building was constructed for $31,466. According to Shurburt, the original building was constructed for $31,466. Even today, the Rosenwald building is still one of the most eye-catching buildings on campus—and an architectural landmark that admirably connects our glorious past and present, and reminds us all of what the hope of Georgia Southern University’s future can be, when just one person takes the time to care. - Sandra Bennett
MEET AZELL FRANCIS (’13)

Georgia Southern’s SGA President

Student Government Association (SGA) President and Master of Science in Applied Engineering student Azell Francis (’13) recently spoke about the importance of providing scholarship opportunities during a press conference to celebrate the University’s renewed partnership with The Coca-Cola Company. As an international student from Trinidad and Tobago, Azell is fulfilling her college aspirations because of generous donors and the monies earmarked for those who need it most.

“I think scholarships allow recipients to think bigger,” said Azell. “For most, we think ‘how can I make whatever dream I have a reality?’ Unfortunately, financial barriers oftentimes make you think within a particular box. But when someone who doesn’t even know you, or your story, is willing to invest in you through scholarships, then that box expands and your dream can become a reality. You can tell yourself, ‘I no longer think within this box because I don’t have the money as much – instead you’re thinking, ‘what do I really want? What is my definition of success?’ And when you have that freedom to think that way, you make the correct steps to achieving it.”

The idea of giving back is near and dear to Azell’s heart. As an international student from Tobago, Azell is fulfilling her college aspirations because of generous donors and the monies earmarked for those who need it most. Azell’s heart is further honed by her own experiences as an international student in the U.S. Azell is one of five children. Most of her family is still in Trinidad, and she has one sister in Atlanta and another sister in London. Her ultimate goal is to one day become an United Nations ambassador, but until that day comes, Azell would like to work for a global company so she can exercise her passions for language and diplomacy.

“I encourage everyone to journey with me to the future,” says Azell. “I encourage people I meet to always remember their purpose. Embrace your journey. You are the author of your story and what greater purpose is there than that of sincere gratitude.”

Together, as Eagles, we are grateful for Azell as well as the generous donors who continue to make dreams and journeys come true.
GENERAL CONFIRMATION
Alumna Sandra Alvey (’89) Named Brigadier General

GSM: You are the first female Army medical entomologist to be nominated and confirmed by the U.S. Senate for promotion to Brigadier General. What does that mean to you?

B.G. AL VEY: There has never been a male or female active component or Reserve component medical entomologist selected for Brigadier General. Being selected after only two promotions to Brigadier General? What does that mean to you?

GSM: What are the greatest challenges you face?

B.G. AL VEY: The greatest challenge I face is balancing the civilian and military careers without losing focus on family and friends. Most people don’t realize the personal sacrifice that Reservists make to serve their country in a “part-time” basis, knowing that their duty is never part time. “One weekend a month” is never a weekend a month. It is an evening and weekend work outside of your normal workday.

GSM: You’ve lived and/or been stationed in multiple locations all across the world. Is it difficult?

B.G. AL VEY: My family has moved several times while I’ve been on active duty. With small children we’ve lived in Georgia, Arizona and Maryland, as well as in foreign countries such as Honduras, Germany and Japan. My husband was enlisted and an officer in the U.S. Army and my son Douglas is now a LIE in the U.S. Marine Corps. That said, we’ve also traveled the world on family vacations because I value the cultural exposure and understanding of other cultures, their unique customs and courtesies, as well as their economic, political, and public issues.

GSM: How does an entomologist become a Brigadier General?

B.G. AL VEY: I earned my Master of Science in Medical Entomology from Georgia Southern University under Dr. Dan Hagar, who introduced me to the military entomology community in 1989. In 1990, I transferred from the Ordnance Corps to the Medical Service Corps. Since there has never been an entomologist selected for Brigadier General, I created my own path by diversifying my assignments and education.

B.G. AL VEY: Georgia Southern University cannot have me the advanced education in medical entomology at the graduate level to conduct the required disease vector surveillance, identification and control operations for insect borne diseases. The coursework I received gave me the tools to assess any medically important insect-borne disease and operations around the world, as well as an understanding of chemical, biological, mechanical, environmental and cultural control methods that reduce pest populations as well as protect those exposed. I couldn’t do my job in the Army without those skills.

B.G. AL VEY: Football! Football always comes to mind as my favorite sport. I thoroughly enjoyed attending the GSU football games under the coaching of Erk Russell.

GSM: To alumnae reading this, what would be your advice to them as they pursue their passions and careers, especially in traditionally male-dominated fields?

B.G. AL VEY: When I advise young officers and civilians I always emphasize the need to diversify your career potential. After you master the basics of your career field, reach outside of your comfort zone and take on more challenging, unpredictable assignments. This can be uncomfortable, intimidating or even risky but doing so provides the catalyst that is essential to grow, learn and become more confident at higher levels of responsibility and leadership. As far as my male-dominated fields, I have always been in male-dominated fields, and while organizations are getting better at tempering the issues we all hear about, such as sexual harassment, determination, perseverance, and fairness are the key to overcoming the perceptions in the workplace.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP
Wang, University mathematicians receive research grant

Xiaodong Wang, a Georgia Southern University assistant professor of mathematics, is part of the research team receiving a grant for their work in developing new mathematical models for solving real-world problems.

Wang is a recipient of a $30,000 grant from the National Science Foundation’s Division of Mathematical Sciences to purchase equipment and fund the implementation of a new research program. The grant is the first that Wang has received from the NSF.

His research programs examine the behavior of growing networks and the properties of networks that grow over time. In particular, his work examines the best practices for different types of networks in order to make them more resilient and to solve real-world problems.

The research team includes Georgia Southern mathematics faculty members, Colton Magnant, Ph.D, and Hernando Ugalde, who will work with mathematicians from Swarthmore College, Bryn Mawr College, and the University of Delaware on this research.

Wang, who has been at Georgia Southern for 11 years, is particularly interested in the application of graph theory to computer science. He and his research team have published several papers in the area of graph theory and its applications. He has also received a grant from the National Science Foundation to study the development of new methods for the solution of partial differential equations.

As the grant recipient, the University police department must participate in a regional traffic network as well as providing police services to Georgia Southern’s students and faculty. This grant will help the department continue its efforts to provide a safe environment to the university, faculty, staff, students and visitors on our campus.

BREATHING EASIER
Campus Police Receive Grant to Keep Community Safe

The City of Statesboro and its surrounding communities, can breathe easier now that the Georgia Southern University Police Department has received a $50,000 grant from the Governor’s Office of Highway Safety to purchase a CMI Intoxilyzer 9000, which will replace the current Intoxilyzer 5000. The grant was secured by Maj. Laura McCullough, assistant director of Public Safety, and is used to obtain the implied consent state-administered breath test for Georgia Southern University and surrounding communities. By law, law enforcement agencies must replace older testing units over time.

“The Georgia Southern University Police Department is proud to partner with the Governor’s Office of Highway Safety to keep everyone safe on our roadways,” said McCullough. “We are extremely grateful to receive this grant because it enhances our continued efforts to provide a safe environment to the university, staff, students and visitors on our campus.”

As a grant recipient, the University police department must participate in a regional traffic network as well as providing police services to Georgia Southern’s students and faculty. This grant will help the department continue its efforts to provide a safe environment to the university, faculty, staff, students and visitors on the campus.

As the grant recipient, the University police department must participate in a regional traffic network as well as providing police services to Georgia Southern’s students and faculty. This grant will help the department continue its efforts to provide a safe environment to the university, faculty, staff, students and visitors on our campus. This grant will help the department continue its efforts to provide a safe environment to the university, faculty, staff, students and visitors on our campus.

The City of Statesboro, and its surrounding communities, can breathe easier now that the Georgia Southern University Police Department has received a $50,000 grant from the Governor’s Office of Highway Safety to purchase a CMI Intoxilyzer 9000, which will replace the current Intoxilyzer 5000. The grant was secured by Maj. Laura McCullough, assistant director of Public Safety, and is used to obtain the implied consent state-administered breath test for Georgia Southern University and surrounding communities. By law, law enforcement agencies must replace older testing units over time.

“The Georgia Southern University Police Department is proud to partner with the Governor’s Office of Highway Safety to keep everyone safe on our roadways,” said McCullough. “We are extremely grateful to receive this grant because it enhances our continued efforts to provide a safe environment to the university, staff, students and visitors on our campus.”

As a grant recipient, the University police department must participate in a regional traffic network as well as providing police services to Georgia Southern’s students and faculty. This grant will help the department continue its efforts to provide a safe environment to the university, staff, students and visitors on our campus.
A FEW MILES OUTSIDE THE CITY LIMITS OF PORTAL, GEORGIA, HIDDEN JUST OFF THE MAIN ROAD, SITS AN UNASSUMING SCHOOL WITH A HISTORY THAT SPANS NEARLY A CENTURY AND A HALF.
“Prior to and just after the Civil War, Georgia gave little-to-no value to the idea of public education. Yet, in 1874, the recently freed slaves of the Willow Hill community were determined to see their children in school, creating the longest serving school in Bulloch County.” - Brent Tharp, Georgia Southern Museum Director

For generations, Willow Hill School was at the heart of education for many African-American elementary and middle school children in the town of Willow Hill in Bulloch County. Founded by former slaves in 1874, with integrated students in 1971, Willow Hill is one of the longest serving schools in Georgia. Willow Hill School was at the forefront of a wave of freed slaves of the Willow Hill community were determined to see their children in school, creating the longest serving school in Bulloch County.

The Colleges of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, Education, Public Health, and Health and Human Sciences are all working with the WHHRC to do exactly that, in a community where ties still run deep. Public History Professor Michael Van Wagenen, Ph.D., said the Center provides a unique opportunity for Georgia Southern faculty and students to participate in efforts to preserve its legacy. Both Van Wagenen and Brent Tharp, Ph.D., director of the Georgia Southern Museum, have collaborated with Dr. Alvin Jackson, president of the WHHRC, and his wife, Gayle Jackson, Ph.D., the Center’s development director, on exhibits and collections.

Van Wagenen is spearheading the initiative to transcribe and digitize dozens of interviews with former Willow Hill students and teachers that Jackson has conducted over the past 30 years. “Dr. Jackson’s oral history collection represents a priceless cultural and historical resource that needs to be preserved and shared,” said Van Wagenen. “Local histories are the building blocks of our larger national narrative. The experiences of the people living in Willow Hill are a perfect example of this. Through their lives, we can better understand the history of race, class and gender in the United States.”

With the help of a graduate student, some of the interviews are available online as both audio and text files, and the oral histories will be a part of the special collections in the Zach S. Henderson Library.

For alumna Patricia Willis, her involvement in the Willow Hill project is a way of giving back to the school that was her first experience in formal education, and where she met her first playmates and friends, many of them lifelong.

“I find the story of the Willow Hill community so compelling because of their inspiring perseverance and dedication to education in general,” said Tharp. “Prior to and just after the Civil War, Georgia gave little to no value to the idea of public education. Yet, in 1874, the recently freed slaves of the Willow Hill community were determined to see their children in school, creating the longest serving school in Bulloch County, black or white. Their story is an example for us all and deserves to be preserved and celebrated.”

The work of the WHHRC has captured the interest of faculty and students alike, and spawned partnerships with the organization on at least eight different projects, including saving Bennett Grove School. Details are at GeorgiaSouthern.edu/magazine.

“Something of what I experienced and learned at this school (Willow Hill) helped make me the person that I am today,” she said. “I am so proud of this institution and wanted to participate in ensuring that its legacy lasts forever.”

Although the current building was constructed in 1954, the school is celebrating the 140th anniversary of its founding this year. Board members are hopeful this historic milestone will be a significant moment within the community and helps engage people of all ages. Donations, grants and sponsorships are crucial if the WHHRC is to become a fully functioning museum and community center. Each Labor Day weekend, a fundraiser attracts hundreds of alumni to the school.

“It is our goal to create a network of alumni, friends, volunteers, researchers and corporations to support and sustain the long-term efforts of the Willow Hill Heritage and Renaissance Center,” said Jackson.

Arlene Daughtery Hendrix (’71), one of the first black undergraduates at Georgia Southern University, serves on the Willow Hill advisory board. “Someone once said, ‘There is something in the water at Portal that makes those who come out of there very different in an excellent kind of way,’” said Hendrix, who entered into a law enforcement career in New York after she graduated from Georgia Southern. “The legacy and impact of Willow Hill should be preserved, not only on the walls of the school, but in the hearts, ideas and dreams of any school, for this makes us eternal.”
Three faculty members in the Jian-Ping Hsu College of Public Health were featured in Pediatrics, the journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics for a collaborative study that studied parents’ perceptions of their children’s weight. Andrew Hansen, Dr.P.H., Yelena Taranenko, Dr.P.H., and Jian Zhang, M.D., Dr.P.H., examined height and weight data of about 3,000 children, ages six to 11, between 1988 and 1994, and a similar cohort from 2005 to 2010. In the 2005-10 survey, 78 percent of parents perceived their overweight daughter as “about the right weight” and 89 percent of parents said the same about their overweight boys. Earlier, in the 1988-94 survey, 61 percent of parents perceived their overweight girl to be “about the right weight,” while 78 percent of parents said the same for their overweight boys. The surveys’ results signal a generational shift of parental perceptions about children’s weight. The researchers noted that parents’ failure to recognize their child as overweight might account for the poor results of pediatric obesity prevention and control.

Department of Biology Professor Subhrajit Saha presented his agroecological research before an international symposium hosted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in Rome, Italy. With the threat of global warming, agroecology is being recognized more and more as a climate-smart method of producing high quality food. Saha’s participation in the symposium also exposed Georgia Southern’s research initiatives to a global community of researchers, policymakers and international agencies and organizations.

Professor honored

Chad Posick, Ph.D., professor in the Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology, is the recipient of the “New Scholars Award” in the Victimization Section of the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences. The award recognizes the achievements of scholars who show outstanding merit early in their career. Posick is currently in his second year at Georgia Southern and his research has been published in Psychology of Violence, Justice Quarterly, Journal of Interpersonal Violence, and the Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice. His primary research interests include the intersection of victimization and offending, the role of emotions in human behavior, and measurement issues in criminology and criminal justice.

RESEARCH NOTES

SHIFTING PARENTAL PERCEPTIONS OF CHILDREN’S WEIGHT

Three faculty members in the Jian-Ping Hsu College of Public Health were featured in Pediatrics, the journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics for a collaborative study that studied parents’ perceptions of their children’s weight. Andrew Hansen, Dr.P.H., Yelena Taranenko, Dr.P.H., and Jian Zhang, M.D., Dr.P.H., examined height and weight data of about 3,000 children, ages six to 11, between 1988 and 1994, and a similar cohort from 2005 to 2010. In the 2005-10 survey, 78 percent of parents perceived their overweight daughter as “about the right weight” and 89 percent of parents said the same about their overweight boys. Earlier, in the 1988-94 survey, 61 percent of parents perceived their overweight girl to be “about the right weight,” while 78 percent of parents said the same for their overweight boys. The surveys’ results signal a generational shift of parental perceptions about children’s weight. The researchers noted that parents’ failure to recognize their child as overweight might account for the poor results of pediatric obesity prevention and control.

Department of Biology Professor Subhrajit Saha presented his agroecological research before an international symposium hosted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in Rome, Italy. With the threat of global warming, agroecology is being recognized more and more as a climate-smart method of producing high quality food. Saha’s participation in the symposium also exposed Georgia Southern’s research initiatives to a global community of researchers, policymakers and international agencies and organizations.

Professor honored

Chad Posick, Ph.D., professor in the Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology, is the recipient of the “New Scholars Award” in the Victimization Section of the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences. The award recognizes the achievements of scholars who show outstanding merit early in their career. Posick is currently in his second year at Georgia Southern and his research has been published in Psychology of Violence, Justice Quarterly, Journal of Interpersonal Violence, and the Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice. His primary research interests include the intersection of victimization and offending, the role of emotions in human behavior, and measurement issues in criminology and criminal justice.
You are Georgia Southern University’s first woman golf coach. What does that mean to you? When I got the call and they offered me the job, I felt like it was the opportunity of a lifetime. I’ve always wanted that challenge to be the very first somewhere and to be able to create my vision from scratch. Georgia Southern has everything in place for this program to take off. So, it was just the right fit on so many levels. The opportunity to be the first women’s golf coach made it stand out from other job offers I’d had. Not many coaches in their career have the opportunity to say they were the first somewhere. I really like that about this opportunity.

How do you think being female will help you lead the team? All my coaching experiences have been with females. I’ve never had that other side. My college coach was a female and I worked for a female in my last job. It might be a little easier for the players to relate to me on a personal level. I know there are great male coaches at this level, too, but I definitely look at it as an advantage when recruiting. Maybe initially the players will feel a little bit more comfortable with me and my smaller stature. I hope they feel more comfortable with me off the bat. At five-foot-two, I was usually the shortest one on the team.

What would you say the biggest difference is in the way guys and girls play the game? Both can learn a lot from each other. Typically, men are way more creative around the green than women — from 100 yards in. They have more shots. I think when guys practice, they’re more open to trying new shots, whereas girls sometimes actually a tennis pro. For me, golf and tennis were neck and neck growing up. I was an athletic kid. I wanted to play every sport. My dad was definitely Jack Nicklaus. I met him once at Ohio State. That was awesome. Bobby Jones is definitely from a different era, but I really admire his career. His golf swing was really beautiful. On the women’s side, Juli Inkster. She’s raised a family of three kids and has a successful marriage, and is still on tour competing. How she’s done that and still been able to play for 20 odd years, that’s pretty impressive.

What is your greatest goal as a coach? It’s very rewarding. I enjoy watching the players grow and get better. Not just the tournament you’ve attended or played in? I played in the U.S. Girls Junior Championship in Maryland when I was 17. I’ve also been to the U.S. Open at Pinehurst in North Carolina, and I’ve attended the Masters Golf Tournament in Augusta, Georgia before.

What do you enjoy most about coaching? The relationships are great. The competition is a lot of fun for me. I enjoy watching the players grow and get better. Not just when they have a great round, but as people, it’s really fun to watch them grow and mature over the four years. I have really great relationships with my players that I’ve coached in the past. It’s very rewarding.

Who are your golf heroes? Definitely Jack Nicklaus. I met him once at Ohio State. That was awesome. Bobby Jones is definitely from a different era, but I really admire his career. His golf swing was really beautiful. On the women’s side, Juli Inkster. She’s raised a family of three kids and has a successful marriage, and is still on tour competing. How she’s done that and still been able to play for 20 odd years, that’s pretty impressive.

What are your goals for the 2015-16 season? I want the best team I can possibly get. I want to start a great program here. I think my players would say, We want to go to conference, we want to go to Nationals, etc. but my greatest goal is to start something really special here that new recruits want to be a part of, to start a successful program and establish the building blocks for that. Then, I want to help my players get better every single day. I can do those two things, everything else will definitely follow.

What do you think of Statesboro and the Georgia Southern family so far? I really like it here already. When I’m recruiting out in California somewhere, I find myself thinking, I’m ready to get back there! I’m looking forward to getting a team together. Once that happens, I can slow down a little bit and really enjoy the area.

“My greatest goal is to start something really special here that new recruits want to be a part of... then, help my players get better every single day.”

-Coach Emily Kuhfeld
BEST UNDER THE SUN

Eagles Win Sun Belt Championship First Year in Conference

28-6 / @ SOUTH ALABAMA 9.20

36-28 / @ NEW MEXICO STATE 10.4

34-14 / vs. APPALACHIAN STATE 9.25

28-25 / @ TEXAS STATE 11.6

22-16 / vs. UL MONROE 11.29

47-24 / vs. IDAHO 10.11

69-31 / @ GEORGIA STATE 10.25

42-10 / vs. TROY 10.30

For more photos of the Eagles’ championship season, visit GeorgiaSouthern.edu/magazine.

WILLIE FRITZ NAMED SUN BELT COACH OF THE YEAR

Georgia Southern’s Willie Fritz was voted the Sun Belt Conference Coach of the Year by his coaching peers and members of the media as the Eagles’ Football team claimed the 2014 conference crown, going a perfect 8-0 in its first year in the league.

“Everyone contributed to our success in this championship season and... what we accomplished as a team,” said Head Coach Fritz. “I couldn’t be prouder of our players and our coaching staff for their commitment and effort as we started our journey this year.”

For Fritz, it is his second conference Coach of the Year honor after his 2011 Sam Houston State team went undefeated in Southland Conference play with a 7-0 record and advanced to the national championship game. With the nine wins against only three losses in 2014, his career record improves to 185-70.

The Sun Belt Conference also announced selections for its all-conference team with 11 Eagle student-athletes recognized for honors following this historic inaugural year.

For a full list of Georgia Southern All-Sun Belt Conference player honors, visit GeorgiaSouthern.edu/magazine.

SIX FOR FRITZ

Catching Up with Head Football Coach Willie Fritz

In honor of Georgia Southern’s six FCS national championships (and the number of points awarded for scoring a touchdown), the editors of Georgia Southern Magazine caught up with Coach Willie Fritz to ask him six post-season questions.

1. What was your biggest surprise this season? How well our team gelled and how quickly it came together.

2. What was your greatest teaching moment? I think it might have happened before the season began. When we talked about what kind of team we were going to be and the effort we had to give in order to be successful at the FBS level—we going to be the team that went 4 and 4 in the Southern Conference last year or the team that beat Florida. I told them that was the kind of effort that we were going to have to give week in and week out.

3. What was your biggest disappointment? Probably the Navy game. I felt like we had a good plan but they had a better one. We didn’t play as well as we were capable of playing. A lot of the credit for that goes to Navy.

4. You win the Sun Belt in your first season. How do you top that? Win it in our second season, go to a bowl game and finish in the top 25.

5. Who gets this season’s game ball? I think that would be split evenly amongst the seniors.

6. In one word, sum up this season. Fantastic.
Whatever happened to:

TIM WILLIS
Cross Country and Track & Field

Now that Tim Willis ('94) has accomplished so many of his personal and professional life goals, he wants to make sure other people realize the same chance to live their dreams and experience the satisfaction of attaining goals that sometimes feel just out of reach.

Although Willis lost his eyesight at age 10, he gradually gained a quiet confidence that helped him succeed in cross country and track and field. “When I got involved in cross country and track and field, I continued to improve,” Willis said. “That gave me the motivation and drive to continue down those roads with those two sports.”

And down those roads he ran, winning five Paralympic medals. As well as setting 12 national and two world records during his career as a competitive runner, before reaching such lofty heights, Willis was the first blind athlete to ever represent the United States Olympic Committee’s (USOC) Athletic Technical Support Program. He represented athletes’ interests as a member of the USOC’s Board of Directors, and he did all this here at Georgia Southern. In addition, he earned a Bachelor of Science in Political Science in 1994.

Since graduating, Willis has helped aid others across several different career tracks. Since he was 8 or 9 years old, he’d always wanted to be an attorney. So Willis enrolled in law school at Mercer University, while he continued to train for the 2000 Paralympics. Willis won the bronze medal in the 10,000 meters and later found out that he had passed the Georgia Bar Exam on his first try. “Being a runner in cross country and track and field takes a lot of self discipline,” he said. “It’s the same for law school.”

Law degree in hand, Willis started his own law practice that focused on four branches of law: personal injury cases, disability work rights, wills and estates, and small business litigation. Being a relatively new attorney, Willis relished in the opportunity to gain advice and ideas from his peers. In addition to managing the time and rigors of running his own private practice, Willis served as a contract attorney for Disability Law and Policy Center of Georgia, Inc., where he would eventually become interim director.

Meanwhile, Willis maintained his ties to athletics even after he had retired as a competitive runner. He represented athletes’ interests as a member of the United States Olympic Committee’s (USOC) Paralympic Committee and as an athlete, Georgia Southern provided Willis with the opportunity to help athletes achieve the goals he had attained. Willis moved to Colorado six years ago to take a position as a U.S. Olympic Committee management development trainer. It was starting at square one, Willis admitted, as an administrator instead of an athlete. “It was great to be a part of the Olympic and Paralympic movement in that way,” he said. “I have been an athlete, which I enjoyed, but it was great to have an opportunity as an administrator. Willis’ path to becoming an administrator included time as a trainee before he became a manager of grants and contracts for the USOC in 2006. “I was in charge of managing grants that the USOC gave to other organizations,” Willis said. “I was in charge of those grantees. It was rewarding because I knew the work we did was important to athletes around the country. We got a lot of thank you notes and emails and that kind of stuff.”

Before the records and medals, Willis was a high school student in Tucker, Georgia, who took a stab at cross country, track and field and wrestling. One of his guide tethers was put on display at Planet Hollywood. He even had the opportunity to jog with President Bill Clinton and appear in advertisements for a handful of various corporations. His 1996 Paralympic medals and racing spikes are in the Georgia Sports Hall of Fame, and the Georgia Southern University Athletics Hall of Fame inducted Willis as a member in 2006. Willis also served as the athlete ombudsman for the 2008 U.S. Paralympic Team.

Today, he lives in Colorado Springs and still runs regularly, just for fun and to stay in shape. A big part of Willis’ journey from Georgia to Colorado took shape in Statesboro, where Willis was a Southern Conference All-Academic athlete, and won the Georgia Southern Outstanding Political Science Student Award and received the University President’s Award. In addition to the efforts of his family and friends, Georgia Southern has played a part in helping Willis share his successes with school kids, law clients and up-and-coming athletes. “My academic and athletic background from GSU… those opportunities have helped me throughout my life and career,” he said. Willis says the communication skills he learned at Georgia Southern have served him well when he’s been invited to speak at school graduations, conferences and other events. “I love speaking.
**SIDELINES**

**BASKETBALL**

Two Named to Preseason All-Sun Belt Team

Georgia Southern senior Anna Claire Knight and junior Briana Jones were named second-team Preseason All-Sun Belt by College Sports Madness.

It was Knight’s fourth individual collegiate win and 12th top-five finish. The senior has finished in the top-20 in 27 of his 39 collegiate starts, and six of his 12 rounds this season have been 70 or under. The Eagles wrapped up their fall schedule with three top-5 team finishes and a match-play win in Scotland.

**GOLF**

Well Tested, Well Traveled

The Georgia Southern women’s rifle team competed in the small bore discipline for the first time in program history and shot a 4136 at SEARC #2. The Eagles finished in sixth place ahead of The Citadel and Furman, who shot 4220.

The Georgia Southern women’s rifle team competed in the small bore discipline for the first time in program history and shot a 4136 at SEARC #2. The Eagles finished in sixth place ahead of The Citadel and Furman, who shot 4220.

**SOCCER**

Reaching Lofty Goals

Three Georgia Southern Eagles were named to the All-Sun Belt Teams during the Women’s Soccer Conference Championship Banquet. Nora El-Shami and Katie Merson were selected as First-Team members, while Melinda Lukas was chosen as a Second-Team member. The Eagles leading goal scorer with seven on the year, El-Shami also leads the team in assists (6) and is ranked seventh in the Sun Belt Conference in points with 20.

“Over the course of her career, Nora has proven that she is one of the most talented players to ever come through our program,” said Head Coach Brian Dunleavy. Teammate Merson joins El-Shami on the First Team, as decided by the league’s coaches and sports information directors. The fifth-year senior set the career shooout record this season, tallying 18 total as an Eagle. All told, she collected 91 saves in her senior campaign, while playing every minute of every match.

Lukas, in just her sophomore season, has been tabbed to the Second-Team All-Sun Belt. The second leading scorer on the team overall, Lukas leads the team in game-winning goals with four. The Eagles finished the 2014 season with an overall record of 11-6-2 (5-3-1), after falling to the No. 1 seed in the Sun Belt Conference Tournament. It is their best regular season mark since 2002.

**RIFLE**

Small Bore Debut

You led the team with a score of 4136 at SEARC #2. The Eagles finished in sixth place ahead of The Citadel and Furman, who shot 4220.

The Georgia Southern women’s rifle team competed in the small bore discipline for the first time in program history and shot a 4136 at SEARC #2. The Eagles finished in sixth place ahead of The Citadel and Furman, who shot 4220.

The Georgia Southern women’s rifle team competed in the small bore discipline for the first time in program history and shot a 4136 at SEARC #2. The Eagles finished in sixth place ahead of The Citadel and Furman, who shot 4220.

The Georgia Southern women’s rifle team competed in the small bore discipline for the first time in program history and shot a 4136 at SEARC #2. The Eagles finished in sixth place ahead of The Citadel and Furman, who shot 4220.

**TRACK AND FIELD**

New Assistants Named

Franz Holmes has joined the Georgia Southern Track and Field and Cross Country program after spending five years as an assistant at Tennessee State and this past year at Middle Tennessee State (MTSU). Holmes, a former sprinter at Tennessee State, will coach the Eagles in distance events. “Coach Holmes brings considerable knowledge to our distance program as a USA Track and Field Level III certified endurance coach,” said Head Coach Carter. “Franz understands the approach it takes to build a team atmosphere.”

Brittany Cox, an NCAA All-American in the Shot Put and Sun Belt Conference champion in both the Shot Put and Weight Throw, will coach the Georgia Southern throwers. She became MTSU’s first female thrower to earn All-American accolades and still owns two indoor and two outdoor MTSU records.

“Coach Cox will infuse energy and enthusiasm into our throws program,” said Carter. “With her experience as an NCAA All-American, she has firsthand knowledge of what it takes to compete at the highest levels of our sport.” Cox joins Georgia Southern after serving the last three years as a recreational leader at Naper Community Center and Hadley Regional Center, both in Nashville, Tennessee.
GOING HOLLYWOOD FOR HOMECOMING

When cool autumn breezes are brushed aside by warm Eagle spirit, it can only mean one thing: Homecoming! This week-long celebration plays host to thousands of Georgia Southern alumni, current students and area community members. Homecoming includes a variety of special activities, events, live music, reunions and an annual parade. This year’s theme was, “Welcome to Hollywood: Southern Walk of Fame.” The week culminated with the Eagles Homecoming game at Paulson Stadium, a 47-24 victory over the Idaho Vandals, and the announcement of the Homecoming King and Queen, Errol Spence and Brooklyn Smith (at left).
Metro Atlanta Chamber’s Historic Hire

Hala Moddelmog and I have something in common. Neither of us has watched a single episode of “The Walking Dead.” But Georgia Southern alumna Moddelmog (‘79) is familiar with the popular AMC TV show based on the zombie apocalypse comic book series of the same name. “People will literally stop me,” says Moddelmog, “and say, ‘oh, you live where ‘The Walking Dead’ is shot.’” Known for Coke, CNN, Gone with the Wind, and now, “The Walking Dead,” Moddelmog is attempting to change many of these common perceptions, and misperceptions, about Atlanta. Moddelmog is President & CEO of the Metro Atlanta Chamber (MAC) and the first female leader in the Chamber’s 154-year history. “We have to disrupt the way Atlanta is viewed by the outside world,” says Moddelmog. “But we also have to disrupt the way we see Atlanta.”

The concept of change, or disruption, has never been foreign to Moddelmog. After all, she attended Georgia Southern at a time when it wasn’t exactly the “popular” choice. Moddelmog grew up Hartwell, Georgia, a small town located about an hour and a half northeast of Atlanta. It’s a place that helped shape and mold her early personal values and interests. “My father had exceedingly high expectations,” says Moddelmog. “There was no difference between what he expected of me versus my brother. I learned how to change the oil in the cars at 14 and cut grass as soon as I weighed 97 pounds. He also thought I should know how to bake pound cake because in the south that was ‘important.’ I made maybe one or two and that was the end of my cooking career. And it hasn’t started back yet,” jokes Moddelmog. She says her father believed that if you had the energy and brains it was your responsibility to be engaged in life and really live. The Moddelmogs didn’t have a TV for many years. Her father thought kids needed to be reading, playing, and being involved in the world. “When I was young I used to think I’d like to be the president of something, but I didn’t know of what,” says Moddelmog. At 17, Moddelmog faced a personal disruption. A senior in high school, her mother died. “My mother had unconditional love for me,” says Moddelmog. “I was very stubborn,” she says. “I was like my mother just died. I’m just going to go down there by myself.” It was almost a rebellious act to go to Georgia Southern. I really just wanted to be independent, but I’m so happy I did.”

At Georgia Southern, Moddelmog majored in English because she “loved it.” She calls the Georgia Southern English department “top-notch” and “energizing.” “I would put my English professors at Georgia Southern up against anyone,” says Moddelmog. “They opened up a whole new world for me in terms of literature and studying human behavior.” In addition, she appreciated the diverse student population. “You might think back in the 70s, small college in the south, that there was only one type of student but I really didn’t find that,” she says. “I was surprised at some of the diversity of thought and interests.”

Once Moddelmog left Statesboro, mentors became a larger part of her life. She decided to go to journalism school because she still loved the written word. Her goal at the time was to just get through the program and get a job so she could eat. Within the first few weeks, Moddelmog’s major professor had her start her thesis. Ironically, her research paper would be on cable TV, a luxury she never had growing up. It examined consumer behavior. Afterward, Moddelmog went to Atlanta to interview at Arby’s for a sales analysis job. “Here I was an English and journalism major but the guy in the marketing department who hired me knew that if I’d done a research paper then I could do the math,” Moddelmog remembers the man asking, “do you know why I’m hiring you for this job?” I said, ‘no,’” Moddelmog laughs now. “He said that so many people they hire can’t write, so if I was an English major then he knew I could. At the end of the day,
we need people who can communicate and who can write.

In 1995, Moddelmog became the first woman to lead an international Quick-Service Restaurant brand when she was named president of Church’s Chicken. Since then she has led the Arby’s Restaurant Group as well as Susan G. Komen for the Cure, and now the Chamber. “I think it’s an important milestone for the organization (MAC) because Atlanta has been a lot of other cities, with primarily male leaders. Nineteen ninety-five doesn’t sound long ago, but it does when you’ve come. But I think for this organization to put its trust in a female leader is a good symbol for the region.”

Moddelmog wants to inspire other women to dream, overcome fears and reach their own goals. “I feel I have an obligation to make sure that women are taking the risk that they need to take in order to set higher goals,” she says. “It’s not part of the job description, but if Atlanta is going to be all it can be then we should include everyone in the mix and that certainly means giving women opportunities.” As a CEO 19 years ago, her other advice: “Try to find something you love to do and do something that you love; feel like that you will be engaged in your role. Be eager, enthusiastic and passionate about solving a problem. Those are the people others want to hang out with. And just be authentic. Also, don’t forget about balance. If you’re not disrupting yourself or disrupting something in your business then the balance is out of whack there that you or your business or nonprofit will become irrelevant. I truly want to disrupt myself so I’m learning all the time. It’s no fun to stop learning.”

In fact, one of the aspects that Moddelmog enjoys about MAC is their commitment to make sure people are engaged. “One of the wonderful things about the state, and this includes Georgia Southern, is that we have a tremendous amount of superior universities that are turning out smart people who will be engaged in your role. Be eager, enthusiastic and passionate about solving a problem. Those are the people others want to hang out with. And just be authentic. Also, don’t forget about balance. If you’re not disrupting yourself or disrupting something in your business then the balance is out of whack there that you or your business or nonprofit will become irrelevant. I truly want to disrupt myself so I’m learning all the time. It’s no fun to stop learning.”

We are definitely giving. We have something called the Atlanta Way, which is our way of getting together and trying to solve a problem.”

Telling stories is vital. One of the things MAC is charged with is the marketing of the region and getting to the roots of who we are, says Moddelmog. “Today, there are so many ways to deliver the message to the person the way that person likes to get their information,” says Moddelmog. “At an English major will take and get different messages delivered to them to motivate them to move to Atlanta than an engineering major,” she says, “but it still enunciates the storytelling and the ethos and the purpose of why we’re here and what makes us special.”

The University strives for this mission as well. In 2001, Moddelmog was selected to oversee the University’s own “Campaign for National Distinction,” which went on to surpass its fundraising goal by $13 million. “When I went to Georgia Southern it was a sleepy little college. Maybe 6,000 people. No football team… Then I went out into the world, got married, had kids and got to be president of Church’s. When I got involved in the Campaign, I had a chance to look back at what the College had done… It was awed by the progress and growth. I was really interested in helping the students. It was important to me that Georgia Southern be involved on a global level and not isolated. It could have stayed a sleepy little college if somebody hadn’t had the foresight and get up and go to make it a University and make it what it is today.”

This is what makes being a part of the Eagle Nation unique. The University is focused not only on superior education, but securing jobs for graduates as they enter today’s real world. Georgia Southern is spearheading workforce development, along with organizations such as the Metro Atlanta Chamber. “We talk to companies, find out what they need, share that with colleges and try to do some pairing up,” says Moddelmog. Georgia Southern then makes sure the degrees that they’re turning out match. Moddelmog believes that “getting great professors that fill specific jobs will help raise our national distinction.” She says the University is positioned to fill particular skill sets—the construction management piece is just one. “What I’ve learned is a great professor will attract the great students,” says Moddelmog.

In the midst of years of professional success, came another personal disruption with the potential to take the life she loved—her own—when Moddelmog was diagnosed with breast cancer. “I was very fortunate because I discovered it early,” she recalls Moddelmog. “I was already loving my life. It was so full. So it (cancer) didn’t make me want to change my life at all. But it made me want to really be present every day. You realize every day is precious.” Moddelmog says being at Komen and in the chemo room and seeing what other people experienced, that was the hard part. “I had the means and power to try to make sure I got the best care. But I realized that there are many people who didn’t have an advocate in the fight… and there’s something about the term breast cancer survivor I don’t like. We’re really all breast cancer thrivers.”

Through it all, her family has been alongside her every step of the way. “I’m extraordinarily fortunate,” says Moddelmog. “I’ve been married for 29 years and my husband is very loving, giving and just so accepting of all the things I want to do and try to get done in the world. And he’s an incredible father.”

As far as their children, her son is 28 and her daughter is now 26. She says kids keep you grounded. “If something were to be wrong with my kids that is the only thing that could stop me in my tracks. Right now, her son is getting his MBA at the Wharton School. “He’s going to come back to Atlanta,” says Moddelmog. “The joke around the Chamber is if I can’t get my two Millennials to come back to Atlanta, then we’re not going to achieve that disruption we’re trying to accomplish.” Her daughter is in Chicago pursuing her Ph.D., working with children on the autism spectrum. “I hope to get her back here as well. I’m just so fortunate with my family… If I have to pick anybody to spend time with, it’s the three of them.”

Moddelmog credits Georgia Southern for giving her her start. She remains proud of having a hand in the University’s growth and admires the special place it’s become in higher education throughout Georgia and beyond. “I’ve been a friend in a nearly state whose daughter wants to go to Georgia Southern,” says Moddelmog. “It’s her number-one choice and that was refreshing to hear.”

Without a doubt, Moddelmog wants to have an impact, not only on the people of Atlanta but within the entire region and beyond, and knows she can do it in her role as MAC president. “I believe wholeheartedly in that diversity of thought I first experienced at Georgia Southern,” she says. “I always want to be engaged. Speaking to young people, I tell them to just do what they want at the time and do it the best way they can and other doors will open… that’s the business model everyone should aspire to.”

“I have an obligation to make sure that women are taking the risk that they need to take in order to set higher goals.”

-Hala Moddelmog

We’re really all breast cancer thrivers.

“"Georgia Southern is the only thing that could stop me in my tracks. Right now, her son is getting his MBA at the Wharton School. "He’s going to come back to Atlanta," says Moddelmog. "The joke around the Chamber is if I can’t get my two Millennials to come back to Atlanta, then we’re not going to achieve that disruption we’re trying to accomplish." Her daughter is in Chicago pursuing her Ph.D., working with children on the autism spectrum. "I hope to get her back here as well. I’m just so fortunate with my family... If I have to pick anybody to spend time with, it’s the three of them." Moddelmog credits Georgia Southern for giving her her start. She remains proud of having a hand in the University’s growth and admires the special place it’s become in higher education throughout Georgia and beyond. "I’ve been a friend in a nearly state whose daughter wants to go to Georgia Southern," says Moddelmog. "It’s her number-one choice and that was refreshing to hear." Without a doubt, Moddelmog wants to have an impact, not only on the people of Atlanta but within the entire region and beyond, and knows she can do it in her role as MAC president. “I believe wholeheartedly in that diversity of thought I first experienced at Georgia Southern," she says. “I always want to be engaged. Speaking to young people, I tell them to just do what they want at the time and do it the best way they can and other doors will open... that’s the business model everyone should aspire to.”

"I have an obligation to make sure that women are taking the risk that they need to take in order to set higher goals." -Hala Moddelmog
Alumna Having Fun with Fashion

MADE IN GEORGIA

Outgoing, brilliant and witty. A woman who knows what she wants, how she wants it, and how to get there. She is the true definition of leadership and poise—a peacemaker, creative thinker, and an intellectual at heart. And that is exactly how Emily describes her own Mamie Ruth.

“She taught me that I could do anything if I believed in myself,” says Emily. “She was an entrepreneur when women primarily stayed at home with the kids. She had her own flower shop and worked non-stop, while being a mother, a wife, and an amazing southern lady. She set the bar high and continues to inspire me every day.”

Although she majored in fashion design at Georgia Southern, Emily didn’t leap into her career. She describes it more as “a wading process,” where she eventually found herself in the right place at the right time. “I eventually added clothing into the mix, making each garment by hand,” says Emily. “I didn’t take long before I had to hire additional sewing help and find local models to assist in the growth.”

Trunk shows are a staple of the fashion world, and it’s no different for Emily and Mamie Ruth. The term originated from the common practice of merchandising literally being carried to events in trunks. Today, trunk shows allow customers and potential customers, the chance to meet Emily and shop designs from the latest or past collections. “I had an awesome couple of days vending at the Barenbo Music Festival in Tennessee,” says Emily. “We were surrounded by smiles and music and thousands of girls who just loved our clothes. That’s the feeling I’m talking about.”

To date, Mamie Ruth has been featured in national magazines, such as Lucky and Cosmopolitan, and dressed celebrities for award shows including Britney Cole Kelley, wife of Georgia Line’s Brian Kelley. Mamie Ruth products are being sold in more than 50 stores across the country and Emily just opened a retail store in Savannah this past fall. “I feel so fortunate to be doing what I love for a living every day,” says Emily. “The fashion business is a hard and tricky puzzle to crack and every day I’m still in the game is another notch on any given day and there’ll be music playing and women working in every inch of space—from sewing tables to vintage sofas. Besides Emily, the Mamie Ruth team is a single graphic designer and four interns. Emily says they bounce from trade shows to music fests to photo shoots, and then design a new collection and do it all over again. "We always have at least two collections going at one time," says Emily. "I think that there is beauty in chaos." Trunk shows are a staple of the fashion world, and no different for Emily and Mamie Ruth. The term originated from the common practice of merchandising literally being carried to events in trunks. Today, trunk shows allow customers and potential customers, the chance to meet Emily and shop designs from the latest or past collections. “I had an awesome couple of days vending at the Barenbo Music Festival in Tennessee,” says Emily. “We were surrounded by smiles and music and thousands of girls who just loved our clothes. That’s the feeling I’m talking about.”

To date, Mamie Ruth has been featured in national magazines, such as Lucky and Cosmopolitan, and dressed celebrities for award shows including Britney Cole Kelley, wife of Georgia Line’s Brian Kelley. Mamie Ruth products are being sold in more than 50 stores across the country and Emily just opened a retail store in Savannah this past fall. “I feel so fortunate to be doing what I love for a living every day,” says Emily. “The fashion business is a hard and tricky puzzle to crack and every day I’m still in the game is another notch on any given day and there’ll be music playing and women working in every inch of space—from sewing tables to vintage sofas. Besides Emily, the Mamie Ruth team is a single graphic designer and four interns. Emily says they bounce from trade shows to music fests to photo shoots, and then design a new collection and do it all over again. "We always have at least two collections going at one time," says Emily. "I think that there is beauty in chaos." Trunk shows are a staple of the fashion world, and no different for Emily and Mamie Ruth. The term originated from the common practice of merchandising literally being carried to events in trunks. Today, trunk shows allow customers and potential customers, the chance to meet Emily and shop designs from the latest or past collections. “I had an awesome couple of days vending at the Barenbo Music Festival in Tennessee,” says Emily. “We were surrounded by smiles and music and thousands of girls who just loved our clothes. That’s the feeling I’m talking about.”

To date, Mamie Ruth has been featured in national magazines, such as Lucky and Cosmopolitan, and dressed celebrities for award shows including Britney Cole Kelley, wife of Georgia Line’s Brian Kelley. Mamie Ruth products are being sold in more than 50 stores across the country and Emily just opened a retail store in Savannah this past fall. “I feel so fortunate to be doing what I love for a living every day,” says Emily. “The fashion business is a hard and tricky puzzle to crack and every day I’m still in the game is another notch on any given day and there’ll be music playing and women working in every inch of space—from sewing tables to vintage sofas. Besides Emily, the Mamie Ruth team is a single graphic designer and four interns. Emily says they bounce from trade shows to music fests to photo shoots, and then design a new collection and do it all over again. "We always have at least two collections going at one time," says Emily. "I think that there is beauty in chaos."
Justine S. Mann

Justine S. Mann, a lifelong educator who taught all grade levels at Griffin House in Claxton, Georgia. She served on the Duval County Public School Board for 35 years and retired as a member of the board due to illness. She served in the education field for 35 years. She died at age 92.

Mike Hurst

Mike Hurst (’70) of Lawrenceville, Georgia, died on July 29 following a three-year struggle with cancer. His death was confirmed July 30.

Crystal Rahn

Crystal Rahn (’69) of Atlanta, Georgia, died May 30 at age 88. She spent 40 years as a teacher in the Cherokee County School system for more than 40 years. She was also a member of the American Federation of Teachers and a member of the Cherokee County School Board.

Ouida Ingram Franklin

Ouida Ingram Franklin (’44) of Savannah, Georgia, died May 27 at age 92. She was a prominent figure in the education community in Savannah, serving in various roles including as a teacher and administrator. She was involved in numerous community organizations and volunteered extensively.

Jean Dickerson Pye

Jean Dickerson Pye (’78) of Madison Regional High School in Vidalia, Georgia, died May 26 after suffering a stroke. She was a beloved member of the community and a dedicated educator.

Eugene “Gene” Crawford

Eugene “Gene” Crawford (’60) of Tifton, Georgia, died May 26 at age 80. He was a prominent figure in the education community in Tifton, having served in various roles including as a teacher and administrator. He was involved in numerous community organizations and volunteered extensively.

Thelva Horton Sharpe

Thelva Horton Sharpe (’70) of Tifton, Georgia, died May 28 at age 96. She was a prominent figure in the education community in Tifton, having served in various roles including as a teacher and administrator. She was involved in numerous community organizations and volunteered extensively.

William “Buck” Maxwell

William “Buck” Maxwell (’87) of Sylvania, Georgia, died May 29 at age 59 after a battle with pancreatic cancer. He was an active community member and a beloved member of the community.

Deanne Hildebrandt

Deanne Hildebrandt (’75) of Statesboro, Georgia, died May 29 at age 73 after a battle with cancer. She was a prominent figure in the education community in Statesboro, having served in various roles including as a teacher and administrator. She was involved in numerous community organizations and volunteered extensively.

Lorraine Bradshaw

Lorraine Bradshaw (’55) of Savannah, Georgia, died May 29 at age 83. She was a prominent figure in the education community in Savannah, having served in various roles including as a teacher and administrator. She was involved in numerous community organizations and volunteered extensively.

Karl “Van” Zeigler

Karl “Van” Zeigler (’50) of McColl, South Carolina, died May 28 at age 88. He was a veteran of World War II and fought in the European Theater of Operations. He was a decorated veteran with numerous awards and a dedicated community member.

Jamie Hendrix

Jamie Hendrix retired Army Lt. Col. Jamie Hendrix (’79) of Tybee Island, Georgia, died May 27 after a battle with cancer. He was a decorated veteran with numerous awards and a dedicated community member.

Reba Wood Barnes

Reba Wood Barnes (’71, ’73) of Valdosta, Georgia, died May 27 at age 71. She was a decorated veteran with numerous awards and a dedicated community member.

Jeanie Hendrix

Jeanie Hendrix (’71) of Valdosta, Georgia, died May 26 at age 70. She was a decorated veteran with numerous awards and a dedicated community member.

Larry English

Larry English (’56) of Savannah, Georgia, died May 28 at age 76. He was a decorated veteran with numerous awards and a dedicated community member.

Bill Ramsey

Bill Ramsey (’58) of Savannah, Georgia, died May 26 at age 78. He was a decorated veteran with numerous awards and a dedicated community member.

Ira Hozey Jr.

Ira Hozey Jr. (’80) of Sylvania, Georgia, passed away on July 29 at age 84. He was a decorated veteran with numerous awards and a dedicated community member.

Karl “Van” Zeigler

Karl “Van” Zeigler (’50) of McColl, South Carolina, died May 28 at age 88. He was a veteran of World War II and fought in the European Theater of Operations. He was a decorated veteran with numerous awards and a dedicated community member.

Jamie Hendrix

Jamie Hendrix (’79) of Tybee Island, Georgia, died May 27 after a battle with cancer. He was a decorated veteran with numerous awards and a dedicated community member.

Reba Wood Barnes

Reba Wood Barnes (’71, ’73) of Valdosta, Georgia, died May 27 at age 71. She was a decorated veteran with numerous awards and a dedicated community member.

Jeanie Hendrix

Jeanie Hendrix (’71) of Valdosta, Georgia, died May 26 at age 70. She was a decorated veteran with numerous awards and a dedicated community member.

Larry English

Larry English (’56) of Savannah, Georgia, died May 28 at age 76. He was a decorated veteran with numerous awards and a dedicated community member.

Bill Ramsey

Bill Ramsey (’58) of Savannah, Georgia, died May 26 at age 78. He was a decorated veteran with numerous awards and a dedicated community member.

Ira Hozey Jr.

Ira Hozey Jr. (’80) of Sylvania, Georgia, passed away on July 29 at age 84. He was a decorated veteran with numerous awards and a dedicated community member.

Karl “Van” Zeigler

Karl “Van” Zeigler (’50) of McColl, South Carolina, died May 28 at age 88. He was a veteran of World War II and fought in the European Theater of Operations. He was a decorated veteran with numerous awards and a dedicated community member.

Jamie Hendrix

Jamie Hendrix (’79) of Tybee Island, Georgia, died May 27 after a battle with cancer. He was a decorated veteran with numerous awards and a dedicated community member.

Reba Wood Barnes

Reba Wood Barnes (’71, ’73) of Valdosta, Georgia, died May 27 at age 71. She was a decorated veteran with numerous awards and a dedicated community member.

Jeanie Hendrix

Jeanie Hendrix (’71) of Valdosta, Georgia, died May 26 at age 70. She was a decorated veteran with numerous awards and a dedicated community member.
REFRESHING DEAL
Historic Partnership with Coca-Cola Largest in School History

Georgia Southern University and The Coca-Cola Company sealed a multi-year deal allowing the world’s number one beverage company to continue to be the exclusive beverage provider for the University and Georgia Southern Athletics.

In addition to keeping Georgia Southern students, faculty and staff refreshed, Coca-Cola will also fund new scholarships ranging from $500 to $6,000, support academic and athletics programs and collaborate with the University on sustainability initiatives.

"Providing students the ability to receive a solid education at Georgia Southern University is of the utmost importance for our University," said President Brooks A. Keel, Ph.D. "Coca-Cola also has a strong commitment to education. The company’s support of scholarships at Georgia Southern will make a critical impact on current and future Eagles."

"In addition to merit and leadership scholarships, this funding will allow Georgia Southern to provide a double-match for the Governor’s REACH scholarship program. Providing expanded scholarship opportunities is extremely important to Georgia Southern," said Keel. "With this support from Coca-Cola, we’re building a stronger academic future for our students. The REACH Scholarship program is a needs-based mentoring and scholarship program developed by Georgia Governor Nathan Deal, to ensure Georgia’s low-income students have the academic, social and financial support needed to access college and achieve post-secondary success."

"Georgia Southern has more than 20,500 students on campus purchasing products at athletic events, in vending machines and dining services, and the campus continues to grow," said Robert Whitaker, vice president for Business and Finance. "This, among other attributes, has opened the door for this partnership with Coca-Cola, allowing the University to sign the largest sponsorship deal in the University’s history."

"Georgia Southern has earned increased national exposure for its academic and athletics achievements, including the move to the Football Bowl Subdivision and Sun Belt Conference," said Keel. "As a result, the value of our brand has increased exponentially. The deal with Coca-Cola is an example of the strength of Georgia Southern."

Coca-Cola will also work with Georgia Southern on sustainability and green initiatives by providing environmentally sensitive programming, including recycling options. Georgia Southern students recently voted to increase student fees by $10 to cover sustainability efforts across campus, which makes Coca-Cola’s support even more timely.

"The Coca-Cola Company has an unwavering commitment to education—a key element for socioeconomic development," said Pamela Stewart, vice president, East Region Sales Foodservice & On Premise, Coca-Cola Refreshments. "Coca-Cola joins Georgia Southern University to further opportunities for students while on campus and in their futures. We also will collaborate on implementing sustainability initiatives at Georgia Southern that will benefit us all."

Additionally, Coca-Cola will develop customized marketing initiatives to further expand the University’s brand recognition in the Savannah and Atlanta markets as part of Coca-Cola’s regional football marketing campaign.

CHIPPING IN
The Georgia Southern University Foundation hosted its second annual Southern Classic Golf Tournament on Monday, Oct. 13 at the historic Peachtree Golf Club in Atlanta. Nearly $45,000 were raised thanks to contributions collected during the special fundraising event. Proceeds from the tournament will benefit student scholarships.

RECORD ‘DAY FOR SOUTHERN’
The 41st annual “A Day for Southern” fundraising campaign set a new record this year, raising more than $2.2 million, topping last year’s record of $2.1 million. The Campaign relies on donations from Georgia Southern faculty, staff, students, alumni, friends and supporters in the Statesboro community. A Day for Southern funds support academics, scholarships, athletics, faculty and staff development, and community resources including Georgia Southern Museum, the Garden of the Coastal Plain and the Performing Arts Center. Pictured left to right are Multicultural Student Center Assistant Christopher Pugh, Director of Athletics Tom Kleinlein, Georgia Southern University Foundation Chair and A Day for Southern Community Chair Barbara Christmas Golden, University President Brooks Keel, Vice President for University Advancement and President of the University Foundation Salinda Arthur, Director of Annual Giving Gloria Goosby and Director of First-Year Experience Chris Caplinger..
Every year, the Georgia Southern University Foundation welcomes alumni and friends to its annual 1906 Society Event to recognize the men and women who help make the University a success. In addition to honoring annual supporters, this year’s gathering on Sept. 26, at the Eugene M. Bishop Alumni Center, recognized the honorees in the 40 Under 40 Class of 2014. Throughout the evening, guests enjoyed tasty hors d’oeuvres and a rousing night of dueling pianos, which provided opportunities to sing and dance along to favorite songs. Membership in the 1906 Society is extended to contributors who make annual gifts of $1,200 or more to support the University. The donations may be designated to specific funds or used for scholarships or initiatives that enhance teaching, research, cultural activities and economic development.

BIRDS OF A FEATHER
President Brooks A. Keel, Ph.D., welcomes guests to the annual 1906 Society Event, which included food, friends, photo booths and laughter. The feather “chandeliers” (below) were a gorgeous touch inspired by the Roaring 20s and our own Assistant Director of Donor Relations Samantha Nesmith.

For Abby, who received her B.B.A. in Management in 2006 and an MBA four years later, being a Georgia Southern alumnus is a family affair. Both of her parents graduated from Georgia Southern in the early 70s, while her sister earned her degree right before she did. Abby estimates they have 10 Georgia Southern degrees just within her immediate family alone. As a result, Abby’s parents have been strong University supporters over the years as well. Her dad was even on the Alumni Board of Directors and in the meeting when they all got the call announcing Erk Russell as football coach.

Today, Abby is a technical assistant at Trinity Underwriting Managers, Inc. in her hometown of Savannah and participates on the Southern Women Advisory Board and in the local Eagle Outreach by volunteering for the Second Harvest Food Bank alongside other Eagle alumni. “It’s great to give back in some way. The University keeps growing and getting better, which makes our degrees even more valuable.” - MICHAEL J. SOLOWA Y

Abby Lynes’ first memory of Georgia Southern is of cardboard. She remembers using it to slide down the hills at Paulson Stadium during football games when she was just 4 years old. Years later, Abby (’06, ’10) would make new memories at Georgia Southern as a business major and honors student. “The scholarships I received as a freshman had qualifications that centered around service and I have fond memories of that,” Abby says the main reason she gives back is because she hopes to help other Eagles, “be in the same position I was in… I knew it’d be the right fit for me. Honestly, I don’t believe I would have had the same college experience or felt as comfortable as I did if not for Georgia Southern.”

We are committed to advance the educational interests of Georgia Southern University. Each semester we allocate funds and donate merchandise to registered University organizations and departments to help with programs and events for the direct benefit of students, faculty and staff.

YOU SHOP. WE GIVE.

$10 MILLION GIVEN BACK TO GEORGIA SOUTHERN SINCE 2000.

To make your annual gift visit GeorgiaSouthern.edu/donate
WINNING THE BELT!

Of the schools that began their first year of FBS play with a conference affiliation, Georgia Southern became just the third to earn a league title in its inaugural season, joining Nevada (1992) and Marshall (1997). And only one other team posted a better record in its first year in the FBS, with Marshall going 10-3 in 1997. Coach Willie Fritz became the third coach in Georgia Southern history to record nine wins in the regular season in his first year as head coach. Georgia Southern also improved to 26-4 in Senior Day games.
WIN FOR GSU — AND SAVE WITH GNG

Together, we’re a winning team.

After you catch the excitement on the field, let Georgia Natural Gas® tackle the competition with an exclusive offer for Eagles fans.

Visit gngsavings.com/EAGLES or call 888.211.8322

PROMO CODE: EAGLES