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Recommended Citation

Georgia Southern University, "Business Innovation Group (BIG) News" (2012). *Business Innovation Group News (2010-2021)*. 159.

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William A. Freeman Scholars: Landon Latham and Ben Woods

February 15, 2012

Georgia Southern University junior Landon Latham and senior Ben Woods are the current recipients of the William A. Freeman Scholarship. Latham is currently double majoring in economics and regional development and minoring in mathematics, while Woods is majoring in economics and finance.

The two young men were awarded the scholarship based on their academic record, relevant extracurricular activities and potential for success in the College of Business Administration (COBA). Totalling \$20,000 over four years, the William A. Freeman Scholarship is the largest endowment offered in COBA.



William A. Freeman was a 1957 graduate of Georgia Southern Teacher's College. After graduating he worked his way up to President of Watkins Industries. He managed Watkins Trucking, the seventh largest trucking firm in North America, Waco Insurance Corp, and a real estate development company.

Generous with his wealth, he set up not only the William A. Freeman Scholarship but also ten other scholarships in the Georgia Southern Honor's Program. Freeman has also sponsored COBA's Professor of the Year Award since 1991.

Landon Latham

Originally from Douglas, Ga. Latham struggled to make his decision about college. He considered going to South Georgia College, a two-year residential college, which is located in his home town. *"I was really thinking about staying home for a few years," said Latham. "It would be a lot cheaper and a huge money saver."*



It wasn't until Latham came to Georgia Southern on an Honor's visit that his mind changed. *"I fell in love with Georgia Southern right away," said Latham. "I thought it was a good profile for me because I wanted to go to a school where I would be academically challenged, and entering into the Honor's program I felt it was guaranteed."*

Latham applied for the William A. Freeman Scholarship online and then came to campus for an interview during December of his senior year. After he was awarded the scholarship, there was no question of where he would attend college- Georgia Southern would be his new home.

Sophomore year helped Latham discover his future job interests. Taking introductory economics and accounting classes, he found economics as his true passion and declared it as his major.

Latham is also majoring in regional development because he feels it is a relevant to our world and is an important topic to study. Nevertheless, he admits double majoring and minoring been quite a challenge.

Even while double majoring, Latham has still found the time to work. He is currently a tutor for Student-Athlete Services and a Career Educator at the Office of Career Services. Latham also resides as the College of Business Administration (COBA) Student Advisory Board president. *"A lot of people have negative things to say about working while you're in school, but I think the exact opposite," said Latham. "I think it has made me a better student, developing all types of skills especially time management."*

Over the next year, Latham plans to work and take classes. Next spring he hopes to be a part of the Eagles in DC Program, an undergraduate congressional internship offered at Georgia Southern. Thanks to the William A. Freeman Scholarship, after Latham's graduation he will go on to graduate school. *"The scholarship has been a blessing. I don't have any student loan debts," said Latham. "If I had student debt hanging over my head that might make me look at future plans completely different. Now I can safely plan to go off to graduate school."*

Latham even hopes to go on to obtain his Ph.D. *"I am very thankful for the Freeman family, Georgia Southern, and the College of Business," said Latham. "If it weren't for them I would not be where I am today. I would not get to where I am going tomorrow."*

Ben Woods



For Ben Woods, the William A. Freeman Scholarship finalized his attendance to Georgia Southern. Originally from Hawkinsville, Ga., Woods also considered staying home and attending a junior college. Middle Georgia College is located only a mere 12 miles from his house. *"If I hadn't gotten the scholarship I probably would have stayed home and went there," said Woods. "So getting the scholarship really allowed me to be able to come to Georgia Southern."*

Woods applied for the Georgia Southern Honor's Program in fall of 2007 and was invited to come to campus for an official visit. This would be the first time Woods got a glimpse of Georgia Southern's campus. *"I honestly really loved the campus," said Woods. "I had family that came here and so it was kind of like a family tradition almost."*

A single class during Woods' senior year in high school helped him determine his plans for the future. Thanks to advanced placement course in microeconomics and an exceptional teacher, Woods went on to study economics in college.

While at Georgia Southern, Woods has worked at the Recreation Activities Center. He is currently a tutor for COBA and is interning with banking Prof. Ed Sibbald consulting for local banks. Woods works alongside Sibbald to compile reports for local banks, community banks and banks in the region of the same asset class. *"It is a good service for the banks because some smaller banks might not have experts in this type of area," said Woods. "Mr. Sibbald was a CFO for a large bank in Chicago so he is pretty much an expert on this."*

Woods is finishing up his senior year working on his honors thesis. He is steadily searching for a job after graduation and is studying for actuarial exams. An actuarial exam is a series of examinations that must be passed in order to become a risk management professional. Woods is studying for the first two and plans to take them during this semester. He is scheduled to graduate in May.