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# 18-Year-Old College Senior To Receive Diploma at Georgia Southern University's Commencement Saturday

*MAY 8, 2008*

Emily Hager was not your normal incoming college freshman. When she receives her bachelor's degree in writing and linguistics with a minor in Spanish, one thing will definitely separate her from other graduates she is only 18 years old.

When Hager crosses the stage at Paulson Stadium and accepts her diploma, she will become one of the youngest students ever to graduate from Georgia Southern University. With the encouragement of a supportive family, Hager has accomplished a major goal that sets her years ahead of others her age, most of whom just attended their high school senior prom.

Growing up, Hager was always an exceptional student, but she admits she was shy and quiet. Her fellow students, who all had driver's licenses and high school stories, never knew that she was four or more years younger than others in the class. Some professors didn't even realize that she was younger until they were notified by University representatives who wanted to ensure that Hager was afforded the same respect and rigorous course work as her classmates.

'In one of my early Spanish language classes, we had to go around the room and say our ages in Spanish,' recalls Hager. 'When I said my age, several people corrected me, until I finally convinced them that I really was 15.'

Before she was old enough to drive, Hager was limited in her on-campus activities by having to walk everywhere, but in recent years she has taken an active role on the planning committee for the Mission Possible Leadership Conference. In addition, she has danced in the recent Theatre and Performance production of 'On Dragonfly Wings.'

Hager is not only an outstanding student, but also an accomplished ballet dancer. During the summers, she participated in ballet programs with the American Ballet Theatre, the Kansas City Ballet, the Atlanta Ballet, and the Boston Ballet. This summer she will travel to San Francisco for the Alonzo King's LINES Ballet School, and in the fall she will apprentice with the Greensboro Ballet in Greensboro, N.C. She hopes, too, to find arts-related work that will mesh with her dancing career.

'Going to school at Georgia Southern gave me the flexibility to dance,' says Hager, 'and the support of my family has been everything. From transporting me before I could drive, to teaching me the things I didn't know how to do, they have been wonderful. My mom has been able to talk me through things, too. They're proud of me, and that means a lot.'

Would she advise other students to enter college at 14? 'It depends on your situation,' says Hager. 'For me, the priority was school and the freedom to pursue dance, so it worked well.'

# **Georgia Southern University offers first live broadcast of Commencement ceremony**

*MAY 8, 2008*

For the first time ever, Georgia Southern University's Spring Commencement ceremony will be broadcast live locally via Channel 97 on Northland Cable. The ceremony takes place Saturday, May 10, at Paulson Stadium beginning at 8:45 a.m. The ceremony will also be streamed live via Webcast on the Internet [www.georgiasouthern.edu/commencement](http://www.georgiasouthern.edu/commencement) at the same time.

The connection to Channel 97 is made possible by newly installed fiber optic cable connections installed by the University this spring. Channel 97 is a local government access channel owned jointly by Georgia Southern University and the City of Statesboro, with programming provided through the Communication Arts Department at Georgia Southern University.

If the commencement ceremony is moved indoors to Hanner Fieldhouse due to inclement weather, the ceremony will only be available live via the Internet.

The University Store will also be offering videos of the entire 2008 Spring Commencement for sale. For more information on Commencement DVD purchases, contact: 912-681-5181.