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Recommended Citation

Georgia Southern University, "Newsroom" (2018). *Newsroom*. 1518.
<https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/newsroom/1518>

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College of Business alumni receive AICPA Elijah Watt Sells Award

JUNE 27, 2018

Save

Two Georgia Southern University College of Business alumni received the 2017 Elijah Watt Sells Award from the American Institute of CPAs (AICPA) for their performance on the CPA Exam. Candidates are eligible for the award during the calendar year in which they complete the CPA Exam.

Christopher Groll ('16), a finance alumnus employed by KPMG in Atlanta, and Linette Rousseau ('16), a Master's of Accounting alumna employed with University of Wisconsin-Madison were among 58 CPA candidates who received the award.

To be considered, candidates must have obtained a cumulative average score above 95.5 across all four sections of the CPA Exam, passed all four sections of the examination on their first attempt and completed testing in 2017. A total of 95,858 individuals sat for the examination in 2017.

"The CPA Exam protects the public interest by ensuring, along with education and experience requirements, that only qualified individuals are able to become licensed as Certified Public Accountants," said Mike Decker, Association of International Certified Professional Accountants vice president of examinations. "Passing the Exam is a career milestone. And the extraordinary performance of this year's Sells Award winners is truly an impressive accomplishment."

The Elijah Watt Sells Award program was established by the AICPA in 1923 to recognize outstanding performance on the CPA Examination. Sells, one of the first CPAs in the U.S., was active in the establishment of the AICPA and played a key role advancing professional education within the profession.

"The School of Accountancy has set as a core principle to support the highest level of professional credentialing for our students," stated Tim Pearson, Ph.D., director of the Georgia Southern University School of Accountancy. "Our CPA exam pass rate continues to exceed the national average, and we have some very strong students perform exceptionally well on the exam."

About the American Institute of CPAs

The AICPA is the world's largest member association representing the CPA profession, with more than 431,000 members in 137 countries and territories, and a history of serving the public interest since 1887. AICPA members represent many areas of practice, including business and industry, public practice, government, education and consulting. The AICPA sets ethical standards for its members and U.S. auditing standards for private companies, nonprofit organizations, and federal, state and local governments. It develops and grades the Uniform CPA Examination, offers specialized credentials, builds the pipeline of future talent and drives professional competency development to advance the vitality, relevance and quality of the profession. The AICPA maintains offices in New York, Washington, D.C., Durham, North Carolina, and Ewing, New Jersey.

About the Association of International Certified Professional Accountants

The Association of International Certified Professional Accountants (the Association) is the most influential body of professional accountants, combining the strengths of the AICPA and The Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA) to power opportunity, trust and prosperity for people, businesses and economies worldwide. It represents 667,000 members and students across 184 countries and territories in public and management accounting and advocates for the public interest and business sustainability on current and emerging issues. With broad reach, rigor and resources, the Association advances the reputation, employability and quality of CPAs, CGMAs and accounting and finance professionals globally.

Georgia Southern's Armstrong Campus hosts annual Golden Graduates Luncheon: Richard Kessler and Christian Sottile discuss Armstrong Mansion's legacy and renovation

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Armstrong State University alumni Faye Kirschner ('65), John Sewell ('60) and Patricia Sewell ('61) at the 2018 Golden Graduates Luncheon

On July 25, Georgia Southern University's Office of Alumni Relations hosted the Golden Graduates Luncheon, an annual tradition that brings members of the Armstrong State University classes of 1937 through 1965 together, in the Student Union Ballroom on the Armstrong Campus.

"Our Armstrong alumni will always be honored," said Associate Director of Alumni Relations Cheryl Ciucevich. "We will continue to have programming for them as long as they continue to come, as well as as having them invited to Georgia Southern events."

Almost 40 of the former students, who were graduates of the original downtown Savannah campus, located in the George F. Armstrong Mansion on the corner of Gaston and Bull Streets, flipped through 'Geechee yearbooks and reminisced about the University's early decades as black-and-white college portrait badges served as proud identifiers. A catered lunch allowed guests time to mingle further before turning their attention to guest speakers Richard C. Kessler, CEO of the hospitality brand Kessler Collection, and architect Christian Sottile, who presented "The Legacy of the Armstrong House: From Mansion to College to Mansion."



Richard Kessler and Christian Sottile

Kessler, a Savannah native who purchased the iconic Italian-Renaissance Revival Armstrong Mansion last year and is restoring the property for use as a personal residence with the help of Sottile, addressed the importance of Armstrong.

"Armstrong and you, the graduates, have played a significant role in the growth and improvement of Savannah over the years," he noted. "Armstrong has made this city a better place to live. So congratulations to you on what you have already accomplished."

He also touched on the Armstrong Mansion's distinct character and why he was drawn to the building.

"It was important to me because it is a real iconic structure in the city," said Kessler. "There's really nothing like it that I know about in the southeast. It has a certain character and quality that you just don't find in most structures, even in Savannah. It also has the historical importance of being the birthplace of Armstrong College."

Armstrong Notable Alumni member Faye Kirschner ('65) appreciates Kessler's efforts.

"When you have an institution that's been around since 1935 you want to keep it going," she said. "We're so excited that Richard Kessler is restoring the old Armstrong building and that's another part of the legacy."

While the Armstrong Mansion presentation made for a special occasion, the Golden Graduates Luncheon itself continues to take the main stage.

"It's a very important event," said Kirschner. "It's been different places different years. I really enjoy seeing all the people and we talk about memories. It's wonderful."

Georgia Southern University, a public Carnegie Doctoral/Research institution founded in 1906, offers 141 degree programs serving more than 27,000 students through nine colleges on three campuses in Statesboro, Savannah, Hinesville and online instruction. A leader in higher education in southeast Georgia, the University provides a diverse student population with expert faculty, world-class scholarship and hands-on learning opportunities. Georgia Southern creates lifelong learners who serve as responsible scholars, leaders and stewards in their communities.

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