

# Newsroom

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Georgia Southern University

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# 21-year-old earns masters degree, becomes Double Eagle this May

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*Double Eagle Arianna Archer*

Rolling with the punches is something that Georgia Southern University student Arianna Archer learned at a young age. Her positive attitude while facing challenges head-on and adapting to succeed has helped garner her the title of Double Eagle at just 21 years old.

Archer, a Cuthbert, Georgia, native, came to Georgia Southern at age 17 after overcoming many adversities throughout her childhood. Archer's mother experienced numerous pregnancy and birthing complications, leading many doctors to believe Archer would be developmentally delayed. Later, her father was murdered and the case went cold, and she and her family decided to move to a new town.

With a fresh start, Archer's new teachers discovered she was academically ahead of her peers, and she began taking gifted classes. She went on to dual enroll while in high school and came to Georgia Southern, again ahead of her peers.

At just 19, Archer earned her bachelor's in public health from Georgia Southern and soon enrolled in the Master of Health Administration (MHA) program with aspirations of one day becoming the CEO of a hospital. However, "So

much has changed in two years," she said.

"Basically, the first semester of the MHA program really opened my eyes to understanding that there are literally a thousand ways you can go with this degree," said Archer. "The program really gave us the opportunity to take it upon ourselves to find what do we enjoy doing within the field, and the opportunity to do something that doesn't necessarily feel like work."

She credits the program with helping her develop a passion for process and quality improvement, which she plans to combine with another passion of hers: working with new mothers and babies to help them overcome hurdles like breastfeeding, labor pregnancy and delivery complications, and etc. Even more specifically, she's passionate about helping those of various racial or ethnic backgrounds in low-income or less advantaged communities.

"I've been doing a lot of reading and research to look at the maternal mortality rates of black and Hispanic women, and there are just a lot of inconsistencies in the levels of care they are receiving that go completely unnoticed," Archer said. "A lot of research hasn't been done, and it's a touchy subject that people somewhat look over."

Archer spent time researching and reading about the topic, and specifically became interested in helping new mothers learn to breastfeed. This interest was increased after landing an internship with a lactation consultant in Savannah and seeing the experiences of family members.

"I feel like there aren't many improved processes available in facilities in which lots of new moms decide to labor and deliver," Archer said. "Unfortunately, processes inside hospitals and facilities often get overlooked and rarely changes from patient to patient. A lot of doctors and nurses are really skilled, but sometimes they look at patients as numbers rather than a case-by-case basis to cater to them and what's going to work."

With her internship continuing into the summer, Archer plans to get as much experience under her belt in this area of expertise. Her goal is to become a director of a birthing center, or possibly opening her own.

"I want to make sure moms and babies are having the best experience that they can," she said. "Of course, I probably can't save the world, but if I can help as many moms and babies get in and out of the hospital as safely as possible, that would be my dream."

As Archer reflects on her journey at Georgia Southern, she's proud she has been able to maintain a 4.0 GPA in the MHA program despite working two part-time jobs. She is grateful to the faculty in her program for their flexibility and dedication to making sure her cohort succeeded.

"With all the professors I've had, in graduate and undergraduate, I can always reach out to them and they'll sit and talk through things with me, with anyone," she said. "It's really great to have not only trained and knowledgeable professors, but to have those that are also open-minded to help students in their time of need."

While her college career has been "amazing, kind of scary and way too fast," Archer feels adequately prepared for her future.

"I'm honestly just grateful to have been able to come here to have the opportunity to receive these two degrees," she said. "Even if I'm not able to start my birthing center tomorrow, I feel Georgia Southern has prepared me to do anything in the field of public health and health administration."

# Graduating athletic training majors earn 100% pass rate on exit exam

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Nine graduating athletic training majors at Georgia Southern University have earned a 100% pass rate on their Board of Certification (BOC) exam. The comprehensive test covers a student's entire education and clinical experience and must be passed in order to become a certified athletic trainer.

"I'm so proud of all of us," said athletic training major Carli Vining. "These three years have definitely been hard, so we all feel really blessed to have succeeded. My time at Georgia Southern has been so amazing. I really do love it here and will cherish it always."

Steve Patterson, Ed.D., director of the Athletic Training Program at Georgia Southern, said this is the first time in 10 years that a graduating class at the university has earned a 100% pass rate. The national average, he said, is around 82%.

The multiple choice, simulated question exam is a capstone test on the classroom instruction and clinical work the students go through. Those who wish to become certified athletic trainers must take the exam through an accredited program. Georgia Southern is one of five accredited programs in Georgia.

"Watching these nine young ladies and their determination to achieve this goal has been very impressive," said Patterson. "They have worked really hard, and it has been a great opportunity to work with them. I also believe a big component of how well they performed is the faculty here who taught them, Dr. Erin Jordan and Dr. Jessica Mutchler, as well as the clinical preceptors that play a huge role in preparing the students for this."

Students must complete 300 hours of clinical rotations throughout each semester in addition to their normal coursework. Faculty administer mock exams throughout their studies, and students essentially begin preparing for this exam as soon as they are admitted to the program.

"Passing the BOC was an amazing feeling," said Stephany Tourtillott. "We have worked three years for this certification and have gained numerous skills and expanded our knowledge. Georgia Southern has given me an amazing experience."

In addition to passing the BOC exam, Patterson said graduates from the athletic training program go on to earn advanced degrees or begin work upon graduation.

"Our students have had great success following graduation furthering their education and obtaining employment in the field, and this class will be no exception to that," he said.

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# Approximately 4,000 degrees conferred during Georgia Southern commencement ceremonies

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This weekend, Georgia Southern celebrated approximately 4,000 undergraduate and graduate students from the University's Statesboro, Armstrong and Liberty Campuses in a university-wide Spring 2019 Commencement ceremony and individual college ceremonies.

For the first time, Georgia Southern's 14th President, Dr. Kyle Marrero, presided over the commencement exercises for the university-wide ceremony, held today at Allen E. Paulson Stadium in Statesboro. Marrero joined the university on April 1.

After welcoming the spirited crowd of students and their family and friends, he expressed his appreciation for Eagle Nation students, faculty and staff.

"I have learned our students have a passion for knowledge, for service and for leading in a world where more direction is often needed," said Marrero. "I have learned our faculty and staff have a passion for our students – for their success, for their experience, and for their future."

He also applauded university alumni who proudly support the university, its history and the impact it has on the region, and congratulated the students on all of their hard work. Following, he welcomed fashion executive, self-made multimillionaire and ABC "Shark Tank" star Daymond John as the commencement speaker.

John's success story of sacrifice, hard work and perseverance as he turned a \$40 budget into FUBU, a \$6 billion fashion brand, inspired students. He is also a New York Times best-selling author, branding guru and highly sought-after motivational speaker. In 2013, John was appointed as a Presidential Ambassador for Global Entrepreneurship by former President Barack Obama.

In addition to the university-wide ceremony, the Waters College of Health Professions, College of Behavioral and Social Sciences, College of Education, Allen E. Paulson College of Engineering and Computing, Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health, College of Science and Mathematics, Parker College of Business and College of Arts and Humanities held their own ceremonies where every graduate from that college was recognized individually. These ceremonies were led by college deans and allowed greater involvement from the faculty, enabling the university to focus on individual student academic achievement. The ceremonies heightened the academic distinction students have achieved and allowed for recognitions such as doctoral degree hooding and honors designations.

In a special tribute, the university also awarded posthumous degrees to the families of Caitlyn Baggett, Morgan Bass, Emily Clark, Abbie DeLoach and Catherine "McKay" Pittman, the School of Nursing students who were

tragically killed in 2015.

Approximately 3,200 undergraduate students and 800 graduate students received degrees during the ceremony for their respective colleges.



Georgia Southern University, a public Carnegie Doctoral/R2 institution founded in 1906, offers 141 degree programs serving nearly 26,500 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. Visit [GeorgiaSouthern.edu](https://www.GeorgiaSouthern.edu).