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Tony Award-winning musical, ‘The Color Purple,’ to inspire audiences at Georgia Southern’s Performing Arts Center this Friday

November 5, 2019

In a stunning reimagining of an epic story about a young woman’s journey to love and triumph in the American South, the Performing Arts Center (PAC) on Georgia Southern University’s Statesboro Campus will present “The Color Purple” this Friday, Nov. 8, at 7:30 p.m. as part of its 2019-2020 Main Stage Series.

“This is truly a beautiful, inspiring show, and I think it’s such an important story to tell, with a wonderful connection to the rural Georgia community and our shared history,” said PAC Director Stacie McDaniel.

Called “a joyous celebration of storytelling” by The New York Times, “The Color Purple” breathes new life into the heartbreaking and redemptive story based on Alice Walker’s Pulitzer Prize-winning novel and the subsequent Academy Award-nominated film. With a soul-raising, Grammy-winning score of jazz, gospel, ragtime and blues, the musical follows Celie, a working-class, African American woman in rural Georgia, as she struggles with her lot in life and tries to reconnect with lost family. Spanning the decades between 1909 and the 1940s, the production that New York Magazine calls “one of the greatest revivals ever,” exhilarated Broadway with 11 Tony Award nominations in 2006 and won a Tony Award for Best Revival in 2016.

Tickets are on sale now at the PAC Box Office, with discounts for Georgia Southern students, faculty and staff. Group rates for groups of 10 or more are also available. Visit the Box Office in person Monday through Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. or purchase tickets over the phone at 912-478-7999 or online at www.georgiasouthern.edu/pac.

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.
Georgia Southern celebrates first-generation college students, faculty, staff

November 5, 2019

This week, Georgia Southern University is celebrating the experiences of first-generation college faculty, staff and students like Demetrius Hurst, a senior biology major from Waycross, Georgia, who will be the first in his family to graduate from college when he crosses the commencement stage in May.

Georgia Southern’s TRiO Student Support Services (SSS) program is a U.S. Department of Education TRIO Program and is 100% supported in Federal funds. It is comprised of outreach and student success initiatives designed to identify and provide services for students who are first-generation, low income and/or disabled. Numerous activities and events will be hosted this week on the Statesboro, Armstrong and Liberty campuses to include speakers, an ice cream social, resource fair/rally and the sharing of powerful stories from first-generation faculty, staff and students like Hurst.

Hurst, whose mother did not graduate from college and whose father did not pursue higher education, has had to adjust to his life on the Armstrong Campus on his own.

“I had to find mentors to look up to academically,” said Hurst. “I had to figure out and keep track of my financial aid, campus jobs and helpful resources on this campus. The most influential resources were Men of Vision and Excellence, Collegiate 100 and TRiO.”

Once Hurst found his way into the TRiO SSS program, the support was significant. The office provides financial and economic literacy, assist students in applying for admission to graduate and professional programs and information on student financial aid programs, providing the benefits and resources for locating public and private scholarships, academic and personal advising as well as tutoring and mentoring.

“TRiO has changed my life with its resources and opportunities for growth,” said Hurst. “I experienced the benefits of networking mostly through this organization. It was TRiO that brought me out of my shell by putting me in positions that would require me to speak publicly.”

Nov. 8 is National First-Generation College Student Day and marks the 54th anniversary of the signing of the 1965 Higher Education Act, which helped millions of disadvantaged students like Hurst become the first members of their families to earn college degrees.

After graduation, Hurst plans to take a year off to prepare to attend medical school in 2021. He also plans to pursue one of his lifelong dreams of starting a nonprofit organization.

“I want to give back to my community by creating a nonprofit organization for those who want to pursue medicine,” said Hurst. “I want them to participate in workshops as well as networking opportunities that will mold them into the applicants that medical schools are looking for. I want them to have the opportunities that I didn’t have.”

For more information on Georgia Southern’s National First-Generation Day celebration or TRiO Student Support Services, visit https://students.georgiasouthern.edu/trioss/operation-first-generation/.