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#### Recommended Citation

Georgia Southern University, "Newsroom" (2019). *Newsroom*. 1781.  
<https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/newsroom/1781>

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## Georgia Southern alumna named one of 100 Most Influential Women in Supply Chain

December 16, 2019



Stephanie Powell Thomas

With the passion that alumna Stephanie Powell Thomas has for helping women succeed in the supply chain industry, it's no surprise she was recently named one of the 100 Most Influential Women in Supply Chain by B2G Consulting's list of Women Supply Chain Leaders for 2020.

Thomas, who in 2013 was the first graduate from Georgia Southern University's doctoral program in logistics and supply chain management in the Parker College of Business, is currently an assistant professor of supply chain management at the University of Arkansas.

"Being named to this list motivates me to continue to support women in this field," Thomas said. "To get that kind of recognition says to me that someone sees the benefit of focusing on women as they achieve high levels of leadership."

Prior to earning her Ph.D., Thomas led a successful career working in supply chain management for companies like Lowe's, Stanley Tools and IBM. She landed at Georgia Southern after her husband joined the logistics and supply chain faculty in the Parker College of Business.

Later, Thomas also joined the faculty at Georgia Southern in 2009, where she first felt a calling to mentor female students majoring in supply chain and logistics.

“At Georgia Southern, I really found that helping women was my calling and the reason I was led to academia,” she said. “So I decided to start a women’s group at Georgia Southern, and it was very small. We’d have five to 10 people show up if we were lucky. But that was where I really started cultivating that deep investment in students and trying to prepare them for careers ahead of them.”

After earning her doctorate, Thomas and her husband found an opportunity at Texas Tech University in 2017, where the pair took the supply chain field of study from a concentration to a major.

She was able to continue her passion for guiding students, but she soon realized there was a need for female mentorship in this field after seeing growth in enrollment.

“We found that just by having a female with industry experience as the faculty in the intro level course dramatically started to increase the number of females who were changing to supply chain as an area of study,” she said. “Along with the increase in females in the program, there was an increase in overall diversity as well.”

After joining the faculty at the University of Arkansas, she took on the role of executive director of Women Impacting Supply Chain Excellence (WISE), where she provides mentorship and professional development opportunities to female supply chain students. The group hosted its first conference this fall semester, which drew participation from more than a dozen universities across the country.

Looking to the future, Thomas anticipates growing the WISE Conference each year with hopes of connecting young women in the supply chain industry from different universities so they can grow their network.

“There has been research to support that diversity has a positive impact on performance, and in an area of business that has traditionally been more heavily male-dominated, I think there are lots of opportunities for women to bring in new ideas, new perspectives and fresh talent, and that’s going to have a long-reaching impact on the discipline.”

Georgia Southern University, a public Carnegie Doctoral/R2 institution founded in 1906, offers 141 degree programs serving more than 26,000 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. Visit [GeorgiaSouthern.edu](https://www.GeorgiaSouthern.edu).

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