Georgia Southern hires professional guitarist and Broadway veteran to lead new music industry program

January 19, 2022

Georgia Southern has hired professional guitarist and composer Eric B. Davis as its inaugural Gretsch Distinguished Scholar of Guitar/Music Industry.

Davis, who has extensive industry experience, has been performing for Broadway shows continuously since 2009, and is currently guitarist and in-house contractor for *Jagged Little Pill*. The show’s original cast soundtrack recording, which includes Davis, won a Grammy in 2019.

He has been the touring guitarist for singer/actress Kristin Chenoweth since 2012, and has been the guitar chair and music director for numerous Broadway productions, including *The Prom*, *Groundhog Day* and *Matilda the Musical*. He has degrees from Juilliard and the San Francisco Conservatory, and has taught at the Aaron Copland School of Music, New York University, and the Brooklyn College Conservatory of Music.

“We are thrilled that Eric Davis will be joining the Fred and Dinah Gretsch School of Music as the Gretsch Distinguished Scholar of Guitar and Music Industry,” said Steven A. Harper, professor and chair of Georgia Southern’s Fred and Dinah Gretsch School of Music. “I’m excited about having him as the leader of our music industry program, because he will give our students a first-rate educational experience, as he has been involved in all aspects of the music business and understands how to make a career in it. Personally, I’m especially looking forward to hearing him perform on the magnificent instruments that are part of the Gretsch Collection held by Georgia Southern.”

Davis will make an immediate impact on the Gretsch school and its students, said John R. Kraft, dean of the College of Arts and Humanities.
“Eric has the whole package: experience on stage and behind the scenes; experience with the nuts-and-bolts of the music industry; a practical orientation toward career progress; a gift for teaching; mastery of classical, jazz, and rock guitar technique; a clear understanding of Georgia Southern and its mission; and a deep appreciation for the Gretsch legacy,” Kraft said.

Naming the Gretsch Distinguished Scholar of Guitar/Music Industry comes just about a year after the papers were signed to establish the Fred and Dinah Gretsch School of Music at Georgia Southern University.

Fred Gretsch is the great-grandson of a German immigrant and entrepreneur who began the company in Brooklyn by handcrafting banjos, drums and tambourines in a small workshop. Now based in Pooler, Georgia, Fred and his wife Dinah – the executive vice president and chief financial officer of the Gretsch

The Gretches have long been involved in music education programs and lending their name and their history to Georgia Southern solidified a vision for Georgia Southern to be recognized as having the very best music school in the Southeast.

In the year since Gretches and Georgia Southern formalized their partnership, the university:

- Opened That Great Gretsch Sound! museum in District Live’s new lobby and performance space on the banks of the Savannah River. The center tells the Gretsch story and has a permanent display of music memorabilia, highlighting more than 135 years of Gretsch instruments.
- Hosted Grammy-award winning singer/songwriter/storyteller and multi-instrumentalist Steve Wariner in concert in the Fine Arts Auditorium at Savannah’s Armstrong Campus in Savannah.
- Hired a Project Curator for Fred & Dinah Gretsch Artifacts Collection to help catalog and manage the permanent Gretsch Collection and curate That Great Gretsch Sound! Museum.
- Hired a project archivist for the Gretsch Archival Records, a three-year position in University Libraries who would primarily be responsible for the arrangement and description of the Gretsch archival records, to include print, photographic, audiovisual and digitally born materials.

Posted in Press Releases, University Homepage
Georgia Southern University’s Urkolia Andrews, DrPH, receives national Nadinne Cruz Community Engagement Professional Award

January 19, 2022

Urkolia Andrews, DrPH, is the recipient of the national Nadinne Cruz Community Engagement Professional Award. The Nadinne Cruz Community Engagement Professional Award celebrates the ethical leadership and advocacy demonstrated by community engagement professionals.

Georgia Southern University’s Assistant Director of Service-Learning Urkolia Andrews, DrPH, is this year’s recipient of the national Nadinne Cruz Community Engagement Professional Award. This recognition is courtesy of Campus Compact, which is a network of colleges across the country dedicated to promoting and recognizing public work in higher education.
The **Nadinne Cruz Community Engagement Professional Award** celebrates the ethical leadership and advocacy demonstrated by community engagement professionals. Recipients have demonstrated collaboration with communities focused on transformative change; a commitment to justice-oriented work; and an impact on the larger movement to build ethical and effective community engagement locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally.

Andrews leads the Service-Learning Faculty Fellows, Service-Learning Student Facilitators, the Institute for Community Partnerships, and oversees community engagement at the University. But her dedication to Georgia Southern started well before diving into her community-driven work. Andrews holds three degrees for Georgia Southern.

Andrew said receiving the award is exciting and humbling, but added that awards isn’t what fuels the fire.

“I don’t think the award brings the validation, I think seeing the final product does,” Andrews said. “When you can look at something and say our students assisted with that, or when you can look at something and say a community partner thought enough about us to ask us to participate and help them do that. That brings that validation piece.”

Her work stretches beyond campus. Before joining Georgia Southern, she served as the executive director for Hearts and Hands Clinic in Statesboro.

“Georgia Southern is fortunate to have Dr. Urkovia Andrews facilitating service-learning and community engagement efforts for our students,” said Vice President for Student Affairs Shay Little, Ph.D. “She brings a depth of knowledge that challenges our students to use their talents to become responsible community members. I am delighted at this recognition; she represents our university with distinction and is most deserving of this honor.”

This isn’t the first time Andrews has been recognized for her work. In 2021, she was given a separate national award for her experiential education research.

In a statement, Campus Compact said, “By taking a multi-faceted approach and building powerful connections among the Georgia Southern community and local leaders, she has created a strategic, effective, and long-lasting coalition that works together to create positive change.”

Posted in **Awards and Recognition, Faculty Highlights**

Tags: [awards](#), [Faculty](#), [Office of Leadership and Community Engagement](#)
Georgia Southern University’s Zach S. Henderson Library is one of 50 U.S. libraries selected to host *Americans and the Holocaust*, a traveling exhibition from the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum that examines the motives, pressures and fears that shaped Americans’ responses to Nazism, war and genocide in Europe during the 1930s and 1940s.

The touring library exhibition — based on the special exhibition of the same name at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. — will travel to U.S. libraries from 2020 to 2022.

“We are so proud to be selected from a pool of more than 250 applicants to host this important and powerful exhibition,” said Lisa Carmichael, Ph.D., dean of Libraries at Georgia Southern University. “We encourage community members to come explore it, and we’re excited to be partnering with local organizations, as well. The exhibition will challenge people to not only ask ‘what would I have done?’ but also, ‘what will I do?’”

*Americans and the Holocaust* will be on display at Henderson Library on Georgia Southern University’s Statesboro Campus, along with a series of related special events on both campuses.
from Feb. 1 to March 11. The community opening and reception will take place on Feb. 9 at 5:30 p.m. in Henderson Library.

Based on extensive new research of that period, Americans and the Holocaust addresses important themes in American history, exploring the many factors, including the Great Depression, isolationism, xenophobia, racism and antisemitism, that influenced decisions made by the U.S. government, the news media, organizations and individuals as they responded to Nazism. This exhibition will challenge the commonly held assumptions that Americans knew little and did nothing about the Nazi persecution and murder of Jews as the Holocaust unfolded.

Drawing on a remarkable collection of primary sources from the 1930s and 1940s, the exhibition focuses on the stories of individuals and groups of Americans who took action in response to Nazism. It will challenge visitors to consider the responsibilities and obstacles faced by individuals — from President Franklin Delano Roosevelt to ordinary Americans — who made difficult choices, sought to effect change and, in a few cases, took significant risks to help victims of Nazism even as rescue never became a government priority.

In addition to the traveling exhibition on loan, Henderson Library received a cash grant to support public programs. The grant also covered one library staff member’s attendance at an orientation workshop at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.

For more information about Americans and the Holocaust and related programming at Georgia Southern University, visit georgiasouthern.libguides.com/aath.

Americans and the Holocaust: A Traveling Exhibition for Libraries is an educational initiative of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and the American Library Association. To learn more about the exhibition, visit ushmm.org/americans-ala.

Americans and the Holocaust was made possible by the generous support of lead sponsor Jeannie and Jonathan Lavine. Additional major funding was provided by the Bildners — Joan and Allen z”l, Elisa Spungen and Rob, Nancy and Jim; and Jane and Daniel Och. The Museum’s exhibitions are also supported by the Lester Robbins and Sheila Johnson Robbins Traveling and Special Exhibitions Fund, established in 1990.

ABOUT GEORGIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

The University Libraries support Georgia Southern University’s mission by providing access to information, collections, and services designed to meet the scholarly needs of the University and its diverse community. The Libraries advance independent lifelong learning, information literacy, intellectual and creative discovery, and student success. We foster a welcoming and innovative learning environment, both physically and virtually, for research, collaboration, and preservation of resources.

About the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum
A living memorial to the Holocaust, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum inspires leaders and citizens worldwide to confront hatred, prevent genocide, and promote human dignity.
The Museum’s far-reaching educational programs and global impact are made possible by generous donors. For more information, visit ushmm.org.

About the American Library Association
The American Library Association (ALA) is the foremost national organization providing resources to inspire library and information professionals to transform their communities through essential programs and services. For more than 140 years, the ALA has been the trusted voice for academic, public, school, government and special libraries, advocating for the profession and the library’s role in enhancing learning and ensuring access to information for all. For more information, visit ala.org.

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