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# Fred and Dinah Gretsch School of Music professor receives 2 national awards

September 2, 2022



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The Voice Foundation presented Henderson with the 2022 Voice Education Research Awareness (VERA) Award for his “outstanding contributions to the field of voice.” He received the award in Philadelphia as part of the foundation’s annual symposium. The award honors unique leaders who have enhanced appreciation for the human voice, and recognizes those who have a dedication to excellence, education or mentorship. The award also acknowledges role models in voice use and advancement.

The Voice Foundation praised Henderson’s efforts to integrate the worlds of voice science and voice pedagogy, and commended the way Henderson incorporated expert opinion and guidance into thoughtful policy decisions.

“I am honored and humbled,” Henderson said. “It was a total surprise for this distinguished body to recognize me for my work. Congrats to my fellow awardees rock legend Jon Bon Jovi, baritone Vladimir Chernov and Brazilian broadcaster William Bonner, who have all given so much to the professional voice community.”

A month later, the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) awarded Henderson the IMPACT Award for his exceptional and unwavering dedication to the organization, and for the significant impact his leadership, initiative and achievements have made on the association during its 57th national conference in Chicago. NATS is the world's largest professional association of voice and collaborative pianists with more than 7,000 members in the United States, Canada and more than 35 other countries. Members represent all music styles and work in independent studios, community schools, elementary and secondary schools, higher education or in the medical field.

Henderson has been a major contributor to both the Voice Foundation and NATS for decades. In addition to his academic appointment, he has served as executive director of NATS since 2008, and prior to his current appointment, was involved with the organization for 15 years.

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## [Georgia Southern student receives award for work in disability advocacy](#)

September 2, 2022



Jill King (pictured on the far-right) received the 2022 National Alliance on Mental Illness Georgia Young Leader Award. She is also the co-founder of the Students With Disabilities Advocacy Group at Georgia Southern.

In just one year, Jill King went from a student who was forced to rethink her entire future to being a leader in her community and receiving the 2022 National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Georgia Young Leader Award.

In August 2020, King, who is from Statesboro, was away at college when she became ill and began enduring chronic pain. She was diagnosed with fibromyalgia, a condition which can cause immense pain throughout the body, and render a person disabled. Just two months after starting her college journey, King returned home to be with her parents, both of whom are Eagle alumni. In January 2021, she enrolled at Georgia Southern University as a student with a disability.

That's when she and her friends began building the foundation for an advocacy group for students with disabilities.



“Something about the disabled community is we’re always trying to find each other, because it’s a unique experience being disabled,” she said. “You’re always going to find your group of people who understand what it’s like. You don’t have to explain your struggles. They know exactly what you’re talking about.”

Around the same time, King’s eyesight began to deteriorate. A month later, she was legally blind.

Soon, King and her fellow co-founders, Brianne Dollar and Madeline Ryan Smith, launched and registered the Students With Disabilities Advocacy Group at Georgia Southern. The group began to align itself with statewide

partners, provide Americans with Disabilities Act training to University faculty and staff and participate on panels to further educate the campus community.

Within its first year of existence, the campus chapter grew to more than 40 student participants. It also began earning recognition for its work in offering help to others, noted King.

“We’ve got a lot of students and that means we’ve got a lot of disabled students who might not know we’re here and that there is something for them,” she said. “So really being acknowledged helps people who might need to see that we exist.”

While King is excited and humbled by the NAMI award, she said it’s more reflective of the group’s mission as a whole.

“None of us expected it to be this big this quickly,” she said. “We knew it was needed, but being received in the way it has is more than I could have asked for. Just being acknowledged for the work we do is always incredibly humbling, because of how personal it is for me.”

On top of being recognized by NAMI, King was also recently awarded the Rookie of the Year Award from the Social Health Network, an organization which promotes communication and leadership within the health care community.

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