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PRESIDENT’S REPORT

Fall 2014, Volume 12, Number 1

On the Cover:
Angela and Alan Giles believe in education so strongly that they have rewritten their will to include a legacy gift to Gordon State College. Their story starts on page 53.

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Make Gordon part of your legacy. Include the Gordon State College Foundation in your estate planning.

2,758 Full-Time Students
1,429 Part-Time Students

22% of students originate from Henry County

Graduates in first Fall semester graduation ceremonies

93% of full-time first-year students receive financial aid

$141 million contributed to the regional economy

21:1 Student-Faculty Ratio

Statistics courtesy of Dr. Kimberley Clark, director of GSC Institutional Research.

ON-Campus 1,044
OFF-Campus

Job Creation as a Result of Institutional Related Spending

25 and over 22-24 18-21 17 and under

63% 5% 28% 9% 2% 3% 22% of students
Dear Friends,

First of all, thank you. Gordon State College has done great things and will continue to do great things because of you. Over the years you have supported us with your engagement, encouragement and generous contributions. Your stories, shared through this publication, have inspired countless young people to come to Gordon and pursue their dreams.

Speaking of young people, here are three recent successful graduates. Camilo Caballero (AS Pre-business ’12) recently graduated from Georgia Tech and was awarded a Thomas R. Pickering Fellowship in foreign affairs for graduate studies. Laura West (BS Biology ’14) received a fellowship for the graduate program in marine biology at the University of South Alabama. And Chris Childress (BS History ’14) will be entering Mercer University’s law school in fall 2014.

These young alumni are wonderful examples of Gordon’s quality programs. Our bachelor’s students leave prepared for top graduate schools, our associate students leave prepared to transfer to quality bachelor’s programs, and our professional programs in nursing and education prepare graduates to step into the workforce.

If you have driven through campus during 2014, you noticed construction on the new Student Activity and Recreation Center on the corner of College Drive and Highlander Way. Less visible will be the interior renovation of the Hightower Library. Both the Center and the Library projects ensure the quality of Gordon’s programs well into the 21st century.

Something we can all be especially proud of is the imminent construction of our military memorial. We are so close that I would like to extend an invitation to all of you to attend the dedication of the Gordon Military Memorial during Alumni Weekend in April 2015. This will be a fulfillment of a powerful dream.

And a final note. If you have been a faithful contributor, thank you. I’d like to encourage you to continue or enhance your support; the need for external support has never been greater. If you have never contributed, it’s not hard to do. In fact, you could do it right now. Make your check out to the Gordon State College Foundation, then mail it to the address on the back of this magazine. I promise that your gift will make a difference in the future success of a deserving student. You’ll be glad you did!

Max Burns
President
Gordon State College

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He was a familiar face at many Gordon functions across a time period that stretched half a century. Whether Gordon was known at the time as Gordon Military College, Gordon College or Gordon State College, Maj. Paget was a presence, and one liked and enjoyed over the years by too many people to count. Even those who didn’t know him, especially during the last 12 years, can remember him as the man in that trademark red blazer of his. Although he served in the U.S. Army of Occupation in Berlin at the end of World War II in 1945, his rank of major came to him as the commandant of cadets at Gordon Military College 1954 to 1959.

One of the stories he liked to tell was about a man falling through the ceiling in his bathtub. When he was commandant, he and his wife were housed in a faculty apartment in South Barracks as was the practice of the time. The two of them were watching television in their living room when all of sudden the ceiling gave way and man and bathtub came through. Other than embarrassment, the man was unhurt.

Whether or not the story was completely true is unknown, but anyone who heard the story knew one thing to be absolutely true - the fun Paget had in telling it.

His son Mike remembers as a boy riding his bike down the ranks of cadets in formation when one of them spit on him in passing. Seeing this, Maj. Paget disciplined the cadet as much for spitting while in formation as for spitting on his son.

Years later, Paget unexpectedly met the cadet, now a high school principal. Just as unexpectedly, the principal told his former commandant how he appreciated Paget’s “firm and fair” discipline.

After leaving Gordon, he continued his work as an educator, becoming the principal of Jonesboro High School in 1959, Bremen High School in 1962 and then Jackson High School in 1969. He ended his career as assistant superintendent of the Butts County School System in the 1990s.

Maj. Paget passed away on Oct. 29, 2013, at the age of 87.


“Ben” Manchester Carroll Paget Jr.
It is March and we are sitting outside, the weather is wonderful - clear blue sky and warm – and the view of legendary Superstition Mountain spectacular. Obviously this does not describe Georgia in March but does describe a typical winter day in Chuck and Julie Antonio’s backyard in Gold Canyon, Ariz. It is March – 11 strenuous miles that lasted 10 hours. Visitors to his home can take a shorter hike around his small yard landscaped with a wide variety of desert- hearty trees like the palo verde, the palo blanco and the ironwood. The ironwood is an especially dense and hard wood. Chuck has a broad and long ironwood table on his patio that he uses for food preparation.

Trees suited for the desert climate are not the only plants in his yard. He also has agave, ocotillo, gopher plant, brittlebush, fairy dusters, jojoba, penstemon, and verbena. Hummingbirds are welcome on the property and make well-camouflaged nests in the palo verde tree, whereas rabbits are fenced out to protect the plants.

“Julie is a master gardener,” he said, explaining in part the variety and health of the yard’s flora. The two of them met in China Lake, Calif., in 1986 and have been married for 24 years. Chuck has a way with plants himself, something he learned from his parents who always had a garden.

His father grew up in Forsyth, Ga., where Chuck’s grandparents owned and operated the Royal Palm Café. His father, Basil J., graduated from Gordon Military College in 1936. When the United States was drawn into World War II, Monk, as he was called, joined the Army Air Corps, became a B-24 Liberator navigator and later retired as a lieutenant colonel.

Chuck said his father was part of the ill-fated Operation Tidal Wave air attack on the oil refineries of Ploesti, Romania, on Aug. 1, 1943. Fortunately, his father’s bomber was ordered to fall out of formation to check on another B-24, which had to ditch in the Mediterranean. By the time his father’s plane had returned to altitude, it was too far away to return to formation.

“I probably wouldn’t be here right now had my father gone on,” Chuck said.

After the war, his family moved around. He remembers starting 3rd grade in Macon, Ga., and moving back to the family home in Forsyth where he started 8th grade at Mary Persons. As a schoolboy, he remembers his father waking him early in the morning, going on his newspaper route and returning in time to make the coffee at the Royal Palm Café.

“One day my dad asked me if I was interested in Gordon,” Chuck said, and when he said he would be, they drove “way over” to Barnesville to meet with Gordon’s president, Col. C.T.B. Harris. As was his habit, Col. Harris interviewed his prospective student and when it was over, he told Chuck that he would be glad to have him come to Gordon to start his 9th grade year.

For his freshman and sophomore years, Chuck was a commuting student who rode with another Forsyth cadet named Charles Jensen.

“I liked the school and the courses and the military,” he said, and that he was also able to take some college courses while in high school. “By the end of my sophomore year, the family moved to Barnesville where my father got a job at a bank.”

This suited Chuck just fine, he said, because his commute cut into the time he could spend with both his Forsyth and Barnesville friends. As he put it, he “missed out on friendships” and so during these two years he “buried himself in sports and academics.”

An algebra teacher stands out as a significant influence, Mrs. Bobbie Rainey.

“She woke me up,” he said. “She told me not to take myself too seriously. She encouraged me in a really useful and mature way, even allowing me to teach a couple of classes.”

He also remembers the strong influences of Miss Marion with her mnemonics like “P-Y-R-R-H-I-C, we hope to graduate in ’63.” And also Maj. Reynolds Bush, who not only taught him mathematics but also taught his dad.

“What made Gordon so good were the academics,” Chuck said. He ended up being his class’s valedictorian and an Eagle Scout to boot even while working at Wise-bram’s Department Store and Mansour’s Men Shop.

As a town cadet, he was allowed to live in the family home on Rose Avenue and to own a car – a pickup truck really, a ’47 Studebaker his dad bought for $10 at a police auction. It was in pretty bad shape, but with a new distributor cap, spark plugs and a little tinkering, they got it going and kept it going for 1½ years.

“One day my friends and I cut drill and took off into the hills in the Studebaker,” he said. “I thought I could...
Chuck wanted to fly attack aircraft because he liked the mission and the aircraft. He knew fighter pilots got it out and bent the fender in the process. Chuck’s solution was to use a broom handle that was in the bed of the truck to not only bend the fender back but to hold it in place. The broom handle remained part of the truck’s fender up to the day of its well-deserved retirement.

“The day I completed the flight program, Chuck promptly applied for...”

As he explained that part of his working career, “I was broke.” Despite it all, he earned a bachelor of science in chemistry at age 32 in 1977. “I was competing with younger men and women with 4.0 averages for medical school, so I got the chemistry degree to be more competitive,” he said. And just to be even more competitive, he graduated summa cum laude. Nonetheless, he wasn’t immediately accepted into medical school, “was starving,” and needed work. A friend he knew from his Navy and corporate flying days told him that a Saudi Arabian airline named Saudia was looking for pilots. Two of his friends, J.P. Jones and Bud Garske, were already working for Saudia, so Chuck did two things.

First, he applied to medical school a second time, and second, just in case, he accepted the position of pilot-qualified flight engineer for Saudia, which at the time was being managed by TWA airlines. The day he completed the flight engineer course while in Kansas City, Mo., he said, “I learned I had been accepted into med school, so I called my med school adviser and asked him what supporting the ground troops. He said he likely was inspired by World War II movies and film clips on television that he and his dad watched as well as trips to air shows with his dad.

He flew 100 combat missions in an A-7B Corsair II from the deck of the aircraft carrier Ticonderoga (CVA-14), a third of them at night, mostly into Laos and the DMZ (demilitarized zone) between North and South Vietnam. Then, one night in May 1969, he had to eject from his A-7 into the South China Sea after a refueling mission went wrong. After quite enough uncertainty in a failing life raft in “heavy seas and stormy weather,” he was rescued and returned to flying combat missions within a couple of days.

After his tour in Vietnam, he was transferred to a training squadron, instructing others how to fly in the T-2 Buckeye, but this turned out to be something he did not want to do, so in March 1971, he left the Navy and completed a BS degree in industrial management at Georgia Tech in December 1972. He would not return to the Navy until 1978.

As a civilian, he flew for the Sea Pines Company and Charles E. Fraser, the initial developer of Hilton Head, S.C.; the WFC Corporation of Miami, and then Saudia, the namesake airline of Saudi Arabia. He flew the Cessna 402, the Mitsubishi MU-2, the de Havilland Canada DHC-6 Twin Otter, and served as a pilot-qualified flight engineer on a Saudia B-707. Then he heard about the Navy’s Naval Aviator Research Flight Surgeon program, which would allow him to continue flying as a physician. So in 1975, he went back to school, Armstrong Atlantic State University in Savannah, for two years. He drove back and forth between Savannah for school and Hilton Head for work, which was anything he could get from driving a golf cart, to working as a dockhand, to piloting or whatever.

“After the Vietnam War, I learned the limits of my abilities, and I wanted to fly.”

He was accepted into med school, so I got the chemistry degree to be more competitive,” he said. And just to be even more competitive, he graduated summa cum laude. Nonetheless, he wasn’t immediately accepted into medical school, “was starving,” and needed work. A friend he knew from his Navy and corporate flying days told him that a Saudi Arabian airline named Saudia was looking for pilots. Two of his friends, J.P. Jones and Bud Garske, were already working for Saudia, so Chuck did two things.

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“The day I completed the flight engineer course while in Kansas City, Mo.,” he said, “I learned I had been accepted into med school, so I called my med school adviser and asked him...”
if there was any advantage to starting school that summer instead of working, I told him I had been hired by Saudia and was broke. He told me there was no advantage and to go make money and to come to school in the fall if this was still what I wanted to do.”

So he went to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, where he worked and weighed the idea of quitting at the end of six months to start medical school. His friends at Saudia advised him to go to medical school with a blunt evaluation of working for the airline: “This job is boring.”

He agreed and left Saudia and Saudi Arabia in August 1978 to enter the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) in Charleston, S.C.

To help pay for his schooling, he applied to and was accepted for the Armed Forces Health Scholarship Program, but this meant he had to resign his commission as a lieutenant commander in the Navy and return to the lowest officer rank in the Navy, ensign. This didn’t prove to be a problem for Chuck, but it did lead to some interesting situations.

As a veteran Navy combat pilot in Vietnam, Chuck was awarded an impressive amount of “fruit salad,” or decorations, to wear on his uniform—much more than an ensign in the Navy’s Medical Corps could normally expect to wear. One day, while he was fulfilling his eight weeks of active duty in Pensacola, Fla., these ribbons attracted the attention of a salty old senior chief petty officer, someone to be treated carefully by your run-of-the-mill ensign. But Chuck was not such an ensign. He and his fellow pilots on the Ticonderoga would often have a little fun with the carrier’s chief petty officers by deliberately misnaming parts of the ship. They would call bulkheads “walls,” hatches “doors,” and ladders “stairs,” which would lead to patient corrections by the petty officers until they caught onto the game.

The chief didn’t know this about Chuck, and when his curiosity got the better of him, the chief came up to him and said, “I gotta ask about all those ribbons on your uniform.”

Chuck couldn’t resist messing with yet another chief, and so he spun a yarn about being in the flight surgeon program and wanting some ribbons to dress up his uniform. “I could see the chief getting red and worked up when I told him this because wearing unearned decorations is a court martial offense,” he said. “But at the right moment I explained to him my service in Vietnam and reduction in rank.”

In their junior year, medical students are asked what they want to do their residency in, and Chuck declared his desire to attend the Navy Flight Surgeon School after completing a family practice internship at the Naval Hospital in Pensacola, Fla.

“Flight surgeon is really a misnomer,” he said. “Flight surgeons are really general medicine doctors.” He explained that the term derived from World War I when the doctors who deployed with aviators could and did perform minor surgeries. During World War II, flight surgeons became responsible for the general health care of pilots, referring them to specialists when necessary. It was not certain he would attain his ambition to become a Naval Aviator Research Flight Surgeon since the Navy had only eight billets for that specialty at the time, but when he graduated from MUSC in 1982, he became one of the eight. In 1983, he was an intern and in 1984 he was in flight surgeon school.

He spent the first two years of his life as a flight surgeon, starting in mid-1984, at Naval Air Station Oceana in Virginia Beach, Va., with Fighter Squadron 101, also known as the Grim Reapers. It is here where he was trained to fly the Grumman F-14 Tomcat fighter while also serving in the Navy clinic on base as a medical doctor for Navy and Marine families. Eventually, he became an F-14 instructor specializing in night flight training.

This, he said, prepared him early in 1986 to join VX-5, an operational test squadron, at China Lake, Calif., where he continued to be a flight surgeon and a pilot, this time flying the McDonnell Douglas F/A-18 Hornet fighter/attack aircraft. He would eventually become the squadron’s chief operational test director (COTD).

“I was one of two pilots and the only pilot/flight surgeon doing F/A-18 night vision testing,” he said. “This was very early in the military’s use of night vision technologies in fixed wing aircraft, and Antonio helped develop a training program to aid pilots in their understanding of the physiological and perceptual effects when flying with and using night vision devices.”

A year before he left the Navy in 1994 to pursue other interests, he was selected by the Navy as one of its pilot candidates for the NASA space shuttle program. He was then selected by NASA to interview as a mission specialist, which is what he wanted since he could then make space walks. Unfortunately, he was not one of the 24 who were selected from the final group of 100 applicants selected by NASA for an interview at the Lyndon Johnson Space Center in Houston. Although disappointed, he was very much honored.

“I was amazed to even be interviewed,” he said. “There were many very bright and talented people among those selected to interview.”

After leaving the Navy, Chuck went to work as a contractor for an Air Force Research Laboratory at Williams Air Force Base in the eastern part of Phoenix, Ariz. There he was able to help introduce night vision systems into a number of Air Force aircraft such as the A-10, F-15, F-16 and C-130, as well as help develop a Night Vision Goggle (NVG) training program that is still in use by the Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps.

In 1999, he joined the Federal Civil Service working for the Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division in Patuxent River, Md., testing night vision devices and helmet mounted displays (HMD). In 2006, he moved with Julie back to Phoenix where he continued to work as a Naval Civil servant. In 2008, he retired from the civil service and became a part-time Navy contractor continuing to support the same programs while also developing training programs for various night vision and HMD systems.

He also provides consultant services to various organizations and is a part-time instructor for the National Test Pilot School in Mojave, Calif., a position he’s held to this day since 2000.
Knowing Where to Look

Research Librarian Beth Pye

by Tamara Boatwright

For nearly 27 years Beth Pye has been providing reference and research assistance to students, faculty and staff at Gordon State College.

“Everyone in the library provides reference or research assistance as needed, but I specialize in it. As the reference or research librarian, I help Gordon State faculty and staff find the information they need for their research or projects and teach Gordon State students how to find the information they need, and in certain cases help them find it,” Pye explained. “I teach the Methods of Library Research class, present orientations to classes and work with students on a one-to-one basis as necessary. In addition when the general public uses our library, such as local high school students, I help them find any information they need.”

Pye is also the go-to person on campus for items that have been, or need to be, archived. This job includes processing and cataloging the growing collection – treasured gifts from alumni and friends of Gordon or items found at yard sales and at online sites. The items range from pieces of jewelry, to photographs to uniform pieces from the Gordon Military era and even a snare drum.

Each piece is meticulously cataloged, delicately wrapped or secured in special paper and stored in archival boxes – no newspaper packing and boxes rescued from a dumpster for these items.

“Everything must be dealt with properly to preserve it,” Pye explained as she pulled off a pair of cotton gloves explaining that even the oil on hands that appear dry can eventually damage items.

Pye discovered that she likes finding things and had a knack for it early on – way before Google, the Internet and computers made research easier for all of us.

“When I sat down and really thought about what I wanted to do, I decided getting my master’s in library science would allow me to do what I love: researching different subjects and teaching/helping people to find the information that they need,” she explained. “Each question gives another chance to teach someone how to find useful, accurate information for their purposes. I always tell students that I would much rather help them find the information they need than anything else.”

She recalls one evening receiving what she initially thought was a robocall advertising something.

“It became clear that the computer-generated voice on the phone was someone without the use of their voice seeking research help,” she said. “We went back and forth several minutes and the person thanked me and hung up. I’ve never heard back, but I feel good about being able to help someone in that way.”

And while technology has certainly impacted nearly every part of our lives, Pye thinks physical libraries will always have a place – at least in the near future.

“In the future with information available in physical and increasingly in electronic format I think libraries will have two versions of themselves: the physical building and the electronic version. The physical building serves as a research place containing or providing access to information in both
physical and electronic formats. It provides space for groups to work together on a research project as well as individuals who need quiet spaces to access information and think about their particular project. I think libraries will store some items outside the library but still maintain a physical collection of pertinent sources for quick and easy access by patrons. If and when digitizing technology becomes cheaper, more and more individual libraries may digitize unique materials for which they own the copyright while students working on research in connection with their college career may digitally publish this research through their college and allow access through the library. The use of small wireless devices will increasingly be used to take advantage of the library’s materials and services both within and outside the library.”

Pye grew up in Rex, Ga., the second of four children. She attended North Georgia College, the University of Georgia and Emory University where she earned a bachelor’s degree in English literature and a Master of Librarianship. Her hobbies tie into her life’s work. She enjoys reading, spending time with family and friends, watching old movies, family history, and travel.

She wants to get back to London so she can make her way through the entire British Museum and would like to visit the Louvre in Paris and walk along the canals in Amsterdam. L’Isle-sur-la-Sorgue, Arles, Nîmes, Avignon and Nice in the South of France are also on her list.

When asked to name the one person who has most influenced her, Pye says she can’t. “I can’t choose one person because my family and circle of friends over the years have influenced or taught me different things such as be helpful, work at things if they are important to you, messing up is part of life, try to look at things from others’ viewpoints and it is possible to have a circle of best friends.”

Of course Pye is a big reader and claims a number of favorites.

Pride and Prejudice – “I like the humor and the relationship between Elizabeth Bennett and Mr. Darcy.”

Gone Away Lake – “The idea of two cousins finding a forgotten town that only has two residents and making it their own is interesting.”

All the Weyrs of Pern – “This is part of Anne McCaffrey’s sci-fi Dragonriders of Pern series. I love the characters, how it gives more information about the beginnings of Pern and uses science to solve the main problem of Pern.”

The Lord of the Rings – “This is a wonderful fantasy novel that is just fun to read. I love all the characters and the story of the quest.”

Aunt Dimity’s Good Deed – “This is one of Nancy Atherton’s Aunt Dimity mystery series, and I like it because it continues the adventures of Lori and Aunt Dimity. Lori looks for her father-in-law after he disappears, meets some of her husband’s relatives and digs through the family’s history in England.”

H is is a very old neighborhood in a coastal city older than the country itself. Although he doesn’t live along this particular stretch of Charleston, South Carolina, he has spent a great amount of time as a child and as an adult at his grandmother’s home located on what is commonly referred to as High Battery. He may not live here with his wife and family, but this is his neighborhood nonetheless, and he treats those passing through it with the grace and pride of a resident.
On one particular morning, Chuck Bennett was chatting with an acquaintance when one of the city’s parking meter men came up on them from Atlantic Street. Bennett greeted the man, and with that, Bennett and the man talked a short bit about the state of meter collections and thoughts about the city’s tourism economy. It was as if the two of them had known each other since high school in some small town rather than a city of about 125,000 residents and 4 million-plus visitors a year.

Shortly after the meter man continued on his rounds, two women came up on Bennett from South Battery. He greeted them, and once again a conversation ensued – this time about the renovation of the city’s historical homes. The women appeared delighted they were meeting one of the building’s architects. Bennett talked a short bit about the state of meter collections and the irony – 1986 was the year he started his contracting business, not when he started working on the house.

“I had been working on this house a little less than a month,” he said, “when a tourist came up to me and asked if I had been working on the house since 1986.”

The memory brought a smile to his face because of the irony – 1986 was the year he started his contracting business, not when he started working on the house since 1986.

The women appeared delighted they were meeting one of the city’s premier renovators, and then they took their leave, off on the rest of their morning walk.

From a humble beginning of $1,500 and a donated truck, Chuck Bennett Contracting today is as established and respected as the historic homes he works on. His sign, affixed to the homes he works on bears the slogan “Restoring Charleston Since 1986,” and many of the buildings he’s worked on bear the coveted marker of the Preservation Society of Charleston. According to the Society’s website, buildings have the right to bear their marker when a building possesses architectural integrity. Other criteria include the historical and artistic values, and unique construction methods of a building.

When Bennett takes on a historical building’s renovation or remodeling, he has to take these things and more into consideration. Most of the time, this means the outside of the building has to retain its architectural integrity while the interior can be changed, even drastically.

One of his most extensive renovations was 58 King St. “The house was in such deplorable shape that I had to tear down everything except the north and south walls,” he said. “I even had a backhoe inside the house to gut it. It was so deteriorated that nothing was salvageable. You couldn’t go in it as it was; you would have fallen through the floor.”

The current asking price for the house is a million and a half, and it is situated next door to 17 East Bay where he spent a good deal of his childhood with his grandmother, Iona McAlister Willis. “My mother [Mary Willis Bennett] was raised in that house,” he said. “When I was a baby, my mother would drop me off with granny but not before mother cautioned her to never let me walk on the high battery. When I was older, I spent many weekends up there on the second story porch, sleeping on a rollaway cot. My mother’s wedding reception was in that house, and my own wedding rehearsal party, 42 years ago, was also held in that house.”

When a hurricane hit Charleston in 1935, water came up to his grandmother’s front door. “The Coast Guard came up and bumped its boat against the front door to get her to evacuate, but granny and other family refused to leave. They had moved the piano to bolster the front door and rode out the storm unscathed.”

Bennett claims a Charleston heritage that reaches back five generations, but his wife, Fran, claims nine. Her family, the Seabrooks, came to Charleston in 1680. Not only is this a long time ago, the year of the Seabrooks’ landing is only 10 years after the first landing of 93 people in 1670. Growing up in Mt. Pleasant, across the Cooper River from Charleston, the two have known each other all their lives. Within the first 6½ years of their marriage, they had four children: Mary Elizabeth, the eldest, next, Chad lives in Hollywood, Calif., and is the founder and CEO of Populus Brands. Twice, since he graduated from Furman University, he has been recognized by his alma mater for his helping Furman students get internships in television production.

Bennett attended Bishop England High School in the heart of Charleston, and when he graduated, his father sent him to Gordon Military College. “Daddy thought I needed some structure in my life, so he sent me to Gordon Military,” he said. “Back then, you listened to your father and you did what he said to do. The Citadel was an option, but I didn’t want to go there.”

While at Gordon he became close friends with Smitty Graham who he said was his “absolute best friend” in Barnerville. Bennett also has high praise for Smitty’s mother, Rebecca, who he calls a “smart, smart lady” whose home became his home away from home. Smitty acknowledges his friend as “a good, good man,” who gave as good as he got in the friendship. “It seems like we’ve known each other forever. I guess we have.”

Smitty cannot remember the first time the two met, but maybe it was because he was already friends with cadets from Charleston, like Mike Onufer, who took him on a visit home to Charleston. The proximity of the
Chuck got his first speeding ticket. He said he managed to use to travel to Atlanta, Charleston and other places. Fran got married. "I thought it was the best thing I had ever eaten," he said with a chuckle. "The wedding was the biggest thing I had ever seen. It was in a huge Catholic Church that must've been there when Columbus landed." When Chuck married Fran, Smitty was in the wedding, stripped pants, white gloves and all. "I said no, that I had already enrolled for the fall semester at Gordon. So I was discharged from the ship in Mombasa," he said. "Pound Hall needed an adult presence," he said, "and Fran got married." Smitty owned a '65 Mustang that the two of them used to travel to Atlanta, Charleston and other places. Two stories stand out about this Mustang.

The second story comes from Smitty, and it's about the time he and Chuck drove the Mustang to Rock Creek Park, not far from Barnesville. Smitty parked the car on the far side of the bridge, but not quite far enough on the far side. When Chuck stepped out of the car, his footing slipped and he went down the shallow embankment and into the creek.

"I thought it was hilarious. I laughed but I don't think Chuck did. I know that's pretty insensitive of me, but I've got trophies for insensitivity," Smitty joked. When Chuck married Fran, Smitty was in the wedding, stripped pants, white gloves and all. "The only thing missing was a cocked hat," Smitty said with a chuckle. "The wedding was the biggest thing I had ever seen. It was in a huge Catholic Church that must've been there when Columbus landed."

When Smitty married, he and his wife honeymooned in Charleston. Chuck sent a horse and carriage to pick them up and take them on a tour of Charleston, complete with champagne.

"That was pretty damned nice," Smitty said. "Chuck and Fran have always made me a part of their family."

Looking back on their Gordon days, Chuck said, "In retrospect we were merely cadets doing what cadets do best, looking for trouble."

Chuck's grades were not all that good, and in the summer of 1967, the height of the Vietnam War, his draft board notified him he was 1A – that is, he was going to be drafted. Having lived next to the ocean all his life and having sailed it for many of those years, he joined the Navy, serving until 1970.

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"I said no, that I had already enrolled for the fall semester at Gordon. So I was discharged from the ship in Mombasa."

He found his way back home on military flights to Nairobi, to Rhein-Main, Germany, to Dover, Del., to Charlotte, and finally to Charleston in August 1970. By September, he was back at Gordon, where he received free tuition in exchange for supervising Pound Hall.

"Pound Hall needed an adult presence," he said, "and I needed a year to graduate," which he did, earning his associate degree in English. With his degree in hand, he returned to Charleston to marry Fran and go to work for her father who owned a power line construction company. For 14 years, he helped build power lines in five different states, leaving for work on Monday morning and returning home on Friday afternoon.

"Then in 1986," he said, "I decided I had a better idea."

Even though he had no previous experience in the building trade, he decided to start his own building business. What he didn't know, he learned, and what he didn't have time to learn, he contracted out to experts. After nearly 30 years of working in Charleston, which include the damage wrought by Hurricane Hugo just three years after he started his business, Bennett has intimate knowledge of many of the buildings he passes as he drives around the city.

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Graham home on Spencer Street to Gordon's drill field may also have played a part.

Still, most boarding cadets didn't have much to do with the locals, or so Smitty recollects. He remembers a football player telling him that his family was the only one who ever invited him over.

Regardless of how the two became friends, once they did, Chuck was a frequent visitor to the Graham household in Mount Pleasant, S.C., just across the Cooper River Bridge from Charleston. Smitty still recalls his first taste of shrimp creole, a dish served by Chuck's mother during one visit.

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During an informal tour for a visitor, he pointed out a window on the second floor of a building on Meeting Street. The owner wanted a bathroom placed on the street side. Another building, also on Meeting, had the misfortune of having an aged water heater on its fourth floor. It burst and every ceiling below it fell. He's found graffiti left by Union and Confederate soldiers. He's found holes made by Union cannon shot, and when the shot is still in the hole, he removes it but is careful to leave the hole. When he's had to excavate, he's found the bones of pig, dog and cow but fortunately none of human, which is a distinct probability in a city which has been ravaged by war.

When asked how many times he's renovated historic Charleston buildings since 1986, he paused, trying to be precise, but the best he could answer was "hundreds."

Bennett has a particularly close relationship with a building that played a significant role in America's Civil War – Hibernian Hall, built in 1841 and the only building
left that is “associated with the National Democratic Convention of 1860,” according to the National Park Service. It is also the home of the Hibernian Society, an Irish benevolent organization, of which Bennett is a member.

“Our motto,” he said, “is ‘Being familiar with misfortune, I learn to assist the unfortunate.’”

“Both of my sons are members,” he said. “So were my father and both my grandfathers. It’s an all-male, father-son society founded in 1801 to help the Irish immigrate to the United States. It has evolved into an organization which gives scholarships to the Citadel and College of Charleston.”

In the foyer of Hibernian Hall is a handsome glass case protecting a beautiful punch bowl used for the Hall’s inaugural in 1841. Chuck said he and fellow Hibernians used to mix Christmas eggnog in the bowl using an electric egg beater, but when his wife, Fran, discovered this, she called a halt to the practice. The bowl was far too valuable for anything other than preservation, so Chuck built the case for it.

Bennett is a member of another all-male club, the exclusive Carolina Yacht Club, established in 1883. Even though Bennett will joke that the club was founded for the purpose of “yachting and drinking,” he’s clearly proud of the club’s program for teaching young people how to sail.

Bennett himself will tell you he grew up around sailboats and has been sailing since he was 12. As he got older, the boats got bigger and he sailed them farther. As a member of the Carolina Yacht Club, he’s participated in yacht club sanctioned races that started in Connecticut and ended in the Bahamas.

He said that as he grew from a 12-year-old into his teenaged years, he raced more and more until he got into ocean racing. For 15 years, Bennett raced on the 45-foot yacht club sanctioned races that started in Connecticut and ended in the Bahamas.

His grandchildren are too young to be sailing Charleston Harbor on their own much less the ocean, but he’s already started to get them thinking about it. He has built them wooden boat cradles and beds. The one he built for his 5-year-old grandson App has a pirate ship theme, a Jolly Roger flag included. Already a couple of his granddaughters are learning how to sail in sunfish and 420s at the Carolina Yacht Club’s school for boys and girls. One day, when he’s old enough, App will join his cousins.

And one day, they will be like their grandfather and grandmother’s generations. They will be the ones chatting with meter men and curious tourists on High Battery, sailing their daily lives through the ocean of tourists who inundate their city.

But for now, it’s still Chuck’s city. As he stands looking out over the harbor from 17 East Battery, a car horn blasts. He turns to see his real estate agent Jane Smith in a car stopped in the middle of the street.

She calls out from an open car window, “Chuck, I need to talk with you.”

To the tourists walking and driving around them, they are just two people having a quick conversation blocking traffic for a short spell. But they are more than that. Bennett is more than that. He’s a fifth generation Charlestonian making sure his descendants keep their neighborhood along High Battery.
She said he would look at the model from behind his drawing, hold his pencil up, and with one eye closed measure the nose along the pencil’s length. Then he’d hold that length of pencil up to the drawing and in that way get the nose’s length in the drawing correct.

After completing Professor Adams’ class, she modeled for him and his students in another drawing class. He gave her his drawing, which is one of her treasured possessions, as did several of the students. She said that some of their depictions of her are “scary,” but added that she had “no room to criticize” since her drawing skill is limited.

“I got my foundation in art at Gordon,” she said, which she explained as “knowing she wanted to one day make a living out of being creative.”

After she graduated from Gordon in 1997 with an associate degree in art, she transferred to West Georgia where she went into its art program taking a lot of ceramics courses.

“One day, my ceramics professor, Cameron Covert, asked me what I was going to do with all my ceramics courses,” she said. “I hadn’t really thought about it at the time,” she said, “but somewhere in the back of my mind I saw myself going around to outdoor markets and festivals and selling mugs.”

The idea of it strikes her as funny today, but at the time, Professor Covert wasn’t trying to be funny. He had her own construction company that did residential renovations, wore a flannel shirt, blue jeans and work boots to class. On her belt was an “old school” type of cell phone called a Nextel which she used to stay in touch with her crew, even during class. When it beeped, she answered.

“She was very rough looking compared to us students,” Beth said. “We were all very much into fashion, well-put together, and here she was in her work clothes. We were caught completely off guard.”

The classroom was not the usual box of a room. It had a loft with an exposed stairwell, huge windows that were set too high to look out of and white cinderblock walls. A room Beth described as modern.

Maggie told them she wanted them to measure “the space” so that they could diagram it in its entirety on paper. Then she had them reach into a hat, one student at a time, and pull out a folded piece of paper. Each had a description of a different client, his or her profession, income, family size and what the client wanted to use the space for. Beth came up with a doctor who wanted an apartment.

And this was her project for the semester, to design the space as an apartment, and not just the furnishings commonly associated with interior design like wall and floor coverings and furniture. She had to show electrical, plumbing, lighting, and anything else required by building code – and she had to write a budget that accomplished the work and didn’t break her client’s bank account.

Beth was hooked from that class onward on a specialty of interior design known as space planning. And she was so good at it that after graduation, she landed a job with Group VI in Peachtree City almost as soon as she graduated. When she went for her interview, she accidentally locked her keys in her car.

She laughed and said, “So they were stuck with me the whole day, but they hired me and I worked for them for five years. I still do contract work with them.”

At Group VI, she worked for Bill Vallaley, who she describes as her boss and good friend. “I learned from him for five years. He taught me if you don’t know the answer to something, don’t b.s. Say you’ll find out and then follow up.”

Besides this bit of professional wisdom, she also...
President’s Report

Credits Vallely with teaching her enough to start her own business, Blue Fox Designs in Senoia, Ga.

Space planning requires her to take into account the space allowed, the client’s needs, landlord requirements, ADA standards, fire code compliance and the roles of the people who will be using the space. This is just the first stage of her work, and it requires a lot of note taking and revisions.

“Once the space plan is completed, the details of the office are considered,” she said. “For example, a furniture layout is needed to determine where voice/data/electrical outlets will be located. If it’s a doctor’s office, special lighting may be needed in examination rooms.”

The “grand finale” of a project involves the finishes, what people will actually see.

“Whether it’s granite on the teller line in a credit union or laminate in a break room, every single item in a space has to be presented, selected and priced to make sure it falls within budget. All the specifications have to be documented and located on a drawing for use in construction.”

Each project involves relationships with real estate agents, contractors, clients and manufacturer representatives.

“I have worked for the last 15 years establishing these relationships and the payoff is that 100 percent of my business is by referral.”

In a doctor’s office or hospital, doctors never enter their personal offices through the waiting room; they always have a separate entrance/exit. Beth sometimes refers to these exits as “escape routes.”

As an example of what she does, she talked about a wig shop in LaGrange that the new owners of the building were going to replace with a branch of Southern Federal Credit Union.

It all started with a chance meeting with the credit union’s representative at a Target. They recognized each other because Beth had already worked on earlier projects for SFCU. He asked her if she was interested, and a few days later, they drove down to LaGrange, Ga., to do an initial survey of a historical building which was a gas station originally, then a taxi service, and, at the time of the visit, a wig shop.

She described the shop as open for business, two sweet ladies waiting on customers. This is how it often is on an initial survey. She has to work around people and things in a space, taking measurements and photographs. Then she takes both back to her office and starts diagramming the space with AutoCAD on her computer.

For the job, she also had to work with the local historical society, which informed her that the front façade of the building had to be kept intact. In addition to this constraint, she could not build anything on the city’s promenade on the side of the building. But it all turned out well, and LaGrange has a branch of the Southern Federal Credit Union, and Beth has good memories of the project. To this day, she thinks of it as one of her favorite and best “before-and-after jobs.”

As should be expected, style is very important in this line of work, and it is not uncommon for someone to ask Beth if she designed a space or not because it looks like “something she would do.”

Even though nine times out of 10 she can claim to be the designer, she really doesn’t have a name for her style. The best she can do is describe her style as a mix of trendy, the latest and greatest, and timelessness.

“Once a week I have a rep stop by the office to update the library and show me new products,” she said. “I love seeing the new trends and finding the perfect ‘unexpected’ material to use on a project.”

She likes to apply the unexpected to her wardrobe too, like a bright pair of shoes with a neutral outfit or a huge necklace with a simple white T-shirt and jeans.

Maybe this is the secret to her professional success. She’s found a job that suits her style.

“Every day is different, whether on the jobsite with a hard hat and boots, or in a board room with heels.”
Jackson Bush was a young man who loved cars and good-natured fun, but he was also very much a gentleman. He was such a gentleman that when he heard that fellow Fredonia Congregational Methodist Church member and friend Faye Walker was getting married, he sent her a card. "Young men usually don't do that. That shows you what a caring person he was. I still have that card today," Walker said. "I will cherish it always."

It was the only card that Walker would receive from Jackson. Milton Jackson Bush was killed in action near Bien Hoa, South Vietnam on May 18, 1969. The C-123K Provider of the 310th Special Ops Squadron he was on was hit by ground fire while on an airlift sortie near Tanh Linh, 50 miles east of Bien Hoa Airbase. The crew tried to get back to Bien Hoa but crashed six miles short of the runway. All six crewmen were killed.

Jackson was only 22 and had been in Vietnam a little less than three months. His body was brought home and laid to rest in the cemetery of the little white church where he and his family had been members for years. "He was such an exceptional young man, so handsome, thoughtful and so caring," Walker said. "He could have been most anything, most anything he put his mind to."

Jackson was drafted like most young men of his day. He went into the Air Force and was stationed at Dover, Del. He was a sergeant with the 310th SOS, 315th SOW, 7th Air Force and worked as a load master.

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Founders Day 2014

As it turned out, it was. Not only did guests enjoy themselves, but the event raised the targeted amount needed to create a scholarship, $25,000. Inside the Fine Arts Auditorium lobby, guests gathered for drinks and conversation before The Return started their concert whose two sets were divided by a Beatles-inspired reception/buffet in the tent.

Before the band came on stage, Happy Hopkins, chairman of Gordon State College’s Foundation, greeted guests and thanked them for helping to raise scholarship money. No sooner than he started walking off the stage, The Return was walking on to screams reminiscent of the sounds heard on the Beatles debut on the Ed Sullivan Show.

While The Return is not the Beatles, Richard Stelling (John), Mike Fulop (George), Shane Landers (Paul) and Adam Thurston (Ringo) include a number of mannerisms characteristic of a Beatles concert, like joking with the audience. Just before launching into Twist and Shout, “Paul” introduced the song as one “stolen from the movie Ferris Bueller’s Day Off.” The song of course was not stolen from anywhere, but a Beatles cover of the hit single by the Isley Brothers.

At intermission, The Return went to their dressing room to change costume and rest their voices and everyone else took the covered walkway to the tent. The different buffet items were identified by the labels on 33⅓ vinyl records made to look like Beatles’ LPs. Enlarged album cover art decorated tables. The centerpiece of the tent was a huge flower arrangement set above the fruit and dessert platters.

When The Return returned for their second set they found a reinvigoration of the audience full of Octopus’s Garden mini crab cakes, Sgt. Pepper’s red and yellow pepper bruschetta, Twist and Shout twisted chicken wontons, and other Beatles-inspired food.

Jennifer Parker

Jennifer Parker is the Gordon State College Outstanding Scholar for the 2013-14 academic year.

Parker, an emergency room nurse at Southern Regional Hospital in Riverdale, graduated last December with an associate degree in nursing. She began work toward her bachelor’s degree in nursing in June.

There have been a few bumps along the road to her dream job. She did not complete high school but later earned a GED. Her first choice of a career in accounting didn’t work out because the business she worked for closed. Her second office job ended for the same reason.

“I get bored easily,” she said. “And one day I noticed how busy everyone was in a doctor’s office – from the front desk, to the medical assistants and nurses working with patients.”

So she went back to school to become an LPN, licensed practical nurse.

“It was a great job, but I was limited in what I could do, and I wanted to do more, so I entered the nursing program at Gordon,” she said. “It was a tough two years, but so worth it. Now, here I am again, wanting to do more and looking at two more years of school.”

She eventually wants to be a nurse practitioner and work with acute care patients.

Parker said she could not have made it were it not for the support of her mother, Pam Thrasher, her stepfather Maen Yassine and her husband, Nathan. She said everyone went out of their way to help her succeed and have pledged to do the same as she pursues her BSN.

“My husband works away so I moved back into my mother’s house. Maen gave up his home office space for me to turn into a study room – I need a lot of room when I study.”

But those who know Parker say it is her determination that helped her succeed.

“Jennifer took the leadership role to the next level in her position as President of the Gordon State College Association of Nursing Students,” said Samantha Bishop, associate professor of nursing. “As president, she played an active role in all the events that GCANS participated in such as blood drives, tornado relief efforts, the annual Georgia Association of Nursing Students convention, Empty Stocking Fund and Operation Christmas Child. She was actively involved with the campus and community in the role of volunteer at flu vaccine clinics, hearing and vision screenings, health fairs, and HIV screenings in conjunction with the Lamar County Health Department. She has shown extreme leadership and has great potential as a future leader.”

As Gordon’s Outstanding Scholar, Parker was recognized on Academic Recognition Day during the recent session of the Georgia General Assembly. Academic Recognition Day was first held in 1987 as a “celebration of individual academic achievement and recognition of those students who exemplify that which is best about the University System of Georgia and its institutions.”

Jennifer Parker

Outstanding Scholar Jennifer Parker

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FALL GRADUATION

Diplomas were awarded to 150 students in the first ever fall semester graduation ceremonies at Gordon State College on Dec. 13, 2013. The ceremony was held in Alumni Memorial Hall and Sherman R. Day, former interim president of Gordon College and an administrator with the University System of Georgia, addressed the graduates. Since its first days as part of the University System of Georgia, graduation has been held only once a year in May at the end of spring semester on the quad in front of Lambdin Hall. Students who completed their degree requirements in summer or fall semesters would march then.

Instead of sunning on a sandy beach, a group of Gordon State College students spent their spring break in Selma, Ala., working with the nonprofit Freedom Foundation. Selma was the site of a fateful and violent attack by Alabama State troopers and local police on a peaceful Civil Rights march in 1965. More than 50 of the marchers were hospitalized. Alongside other college students from across the country, the Gordon students, most of whom are human services majors, spent a large part of their time learning about the social and political structure of Selma. One full afternoon was devoted to introducing the students to Dr. Martin Luther King’s nonviolence training and how it can be integrated into daily life. While in Alabama, the group was treated to a special screening of the in-development documentary, I Will Dance. The film focuses on the history and expansion of the Freedom Foundation’s youth-oriented group called the Random Acts of Theater Company, or RATCo. Since its formation in Selma, RATCo groups have started in Colorado, Washington, D.C., and Georgia.

Recent Gordon graduate Emily Mumford coordinated the alternative break for the Freedom Foundation. “I loved the opportunity to serve as a coordinator. It is a fulfilling and rewarding experience to see hundreds of college students impacted and transformed each year by a week of service learning in the Selma community,” she said. “While we host a week-long experience, we have noticed for many that this trip leaves a much longer impact. It is extremely rewarding and encouraging to witness and be a part of this program.”

Gordon State College Sociology Professor Christy Flatt served as faculty supervisor for the trip and is already working on next year’s spring break opportunity. “For 2015, I plan on merging the service learning opportunity with academic concepts. The best elements of the 2014 trip were both the sociological and historical ideas visible in Selma,” she said. “I have plans to develop a course that centers on effects of race and its influence on the Southern states.”

The alternative spring break trip, though sponsored by the human services department at Gordon, is open to all students interested in spending time lending a hand and learning more about the history of Selma and changes occurring in the small southern town.

Recital Series Opens WITH THE VEGA STRING QUARTET

The 2014-15 Gordon State College Recital Series began Sept. 16 with The Vega String Quartet. Members include Domenic Salerno and Jessica Shuang Wu, violins; Yinzil Kong, viola; and Guang Wang, cello. The New York Times wrote their playing “had a kind of clean intoxication to it, pulling the listener along.”

Soprano Indra Thomas continues the series with a performance on Oct. 30. According to her website, she is “considered one of the foremost Aidas in the world today,” a role she sang “in a performance that was televised throughout France during the summer of 2011.”

David Cougheron, concertmaster of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, returns to Gordon on Jan. 20. Originally from Oslo, Norway, Mr. Cougheron began playing violin at the age of three. Praised by The New York Times for “playing with superb agility and accuracy and with a full-bodied, chocolatey sound,” Shelley Monroe Huang will perform on the bassoon for the Series’ conclusion on Feb. 18.

All concerts begin at 7:30 p.m. and take place on the stage of the Gordon State College Fine Arts Auditorium.

“I loved the opportunity to serve as a coordinator. It is a fulfilling and rewarding experience to see hundreds of college students impacted and transformed each year by a week of service learning in the Selma community.” – Emily Mumford

Return to Selma

by Raven Willis

The Vega String Quartet.

President Max Burns presents Asia Anderson (B.A. English) with her diploma.

(left to right) Kaley Compton (B.S. human services major), Juleia Green (B.S. human services major) and Emily Mumford (’14 Gordon State B.S. human services graduate)
HIGHTOWER LIBRARY STEPS INTO THE 21ST CENTURY

When Gordon State College’s library, named after Dorothy Watson Hightower, was built in 1978, the college’s enrollment was 1,400 and the first personal computers were still being sold out of a California garage. Overhead projectors, VCRs, portable screens and tape recorders were still de rigueur. Today these “technologies” and the way the library’s floor space is used are so 20th century.

To bring the Hightower Library into the 21st century, the college began a $4.9 million renovation in July in order to meet the needs of the college’s strategic plan and a student body that has grown 300 percent.

As can be seen in the photos to the right, the current floor plan does not include collaborative learning space – this is one thing the renovation will address. The plan also calls for mobile storage areas.

At the groundbreaking, which was held on a bitterly cold January day, Tommy Hopkins, representing the University System Board of Regents, told the crowd that the Center will be a much-needed addition to Gordon State College and will help accommodate growth and the expectations of students.

“It will make Gordon a more attractive alternative for prospective students and support student success. This is our top priority: to significantly increase the numbers of Georgians completing college and earning degrees at some level through the Governor’s Complete College Georgia initiative,” Hopkins told the crowd.

Rachel Adams, then Student Government Association president welcomed the crowd. Also participating in the groundbreaking was Chris Childress, SGA president 2012-2013 and Anni Skurja, SGA president 2011-2012.

STUDENT ACTIVITY AND RECREATION CENTER DUE TO OPEN IN EARLY 2015

Construction is well under way for the 55,000-square-foot Student Activity and Recreation Center that will anchor the northeast side of campus and is expected to be completed in early 2015.

The Center is adjacent to Alumni Memorial Hall which was built in 1963. Although the Center will replace Alumni Hall as the home of Gordon State’s Highlander basketball team, the older building will continue to be used for student activities.

The Center will contain a basketball court with seating on both sides of the court and a stage area at one end, weight training and cardio workout areas, game room and lounge, multi-use area, food court and food preparation area, offices and storage areas.

“People will always, at least for many, many generations to come, want to hold an actual book,” she said.

Capers most recently coached basketball at Aiken Technical College, and under his direction the program won three Region 10 NJCAA Division 1 Conference championships and two Region 10 NJCAA Division 1 Tournament championships.

“Capers to Lead the Basketball Team”

Third Time’s a Charm Gordon Professor Makes It to Jeopardy

After years of being a fan, Gordon State College Professor Muneal Muneal finally made it to the set as a contestant on the iconic game show Jeopardy last fall.

Of the 100,000 people who take the qualifying test each year, only 400 end up as actual contestants, Muneal explained.

Muneal said he has watched the show since he was 11 or 12 and had tried to win an audition three times. His first attempt was in college, then another attempt in graduate school. In spring 2013, he learned that he was scheduled to audition for the show at the end of the semester in May – leaving him little time to prepare.

“I did not study for the audition. There wasn’t time. It was the end of the semester, and I had just finished giving exams,” he said. “I told myself, ‘I’m just going to go in there with what I know and see where it gets me.’”

The audition was successful.

“I’d just finished teaching my summer class, I was working on getting ready for the fall semester, and I had a little bit of extra time,” he said. “So, I was able to do some studying for the actual performance. I read through some books that gave a brief synopsis on major issues in different fields, and spent a lot of time watching documentaries, specifically around American presidents. By doing this, I learned about everything connected with them, such as wars, policy, and government.”

Muneal assumed he would have the least trouble with any category on the topics of television and television history.

“I really enjoy reading about television history and broadcast history so I was really looking forward to having those as possible categories,” he said.

Two categories that he most dreaded were American sports and 19th century literature.

“ ‘I wasn’t born in this country and so many of the sports I grew up knowing about are not really the sports that are played here,’ he explained. ‘I was nervous about being quizzed on 19th century literature because I was worried that a question would come up and I would completely blank or freeze up and then not be able to face my students on line it down, being an English professor.’”

Muneal says that he enjoyed sharing the experience with the other contestants as much as he enjoyed playing Jeopardy.

“The best part of the experience is that you get to know the other contestants. We all shared the same fears and were equally nervous,” Muneal said. “The atmosphere was not cutthroat at all. We were in it together, and the Jeopardy staff really went the distance in making sure that everyone was enjoying the experience as a game and having fun with one another.”

Gaither to Lead the Library and Capers to Lead the Basketball Team

Professor Sonya Gaither is the new director of the Hightower Library, and Bruce Capers is the new head coach of the Highlanders basketball team.

Gaither was formerly the library assessment officer at Georgia Southern University and earned her Ed.D. in educational administration.

Despite the growing use of Kindles and the like, Gaither said there will always be a need for a library building and actual books.

“People will always, at least for many, many generations to come, want to hold an actual book,” she said.

The correct response: “What is a Nerf ball?”

And the outcome? Muneal got hung up on the category toys and the “answer,” “A caveman-themed game in which rocks were thrown at other players led to the creation of this product in 1969.”

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NEW COLLEGE SEAL A MIX OF THE OLD AND THE NEW

The new Gordon State College Seal was officially revealed in April to alumni gathered for Alumni Weekend 2014. Central to the redesigned seal is the columned arch that is a replica of the portico of Lambdin Hall. The title of the book penned by beloved former faculty member Miss Marion Bush, Character, Culture and Scholarship, forms a drape over the columns.

The new seal came about as part of the recently completed strategic planning process. During the process the strategic planning committee which was made up of faculty, staff, alumni and community members discussed the need to protect and honor the history and heritage of Gordon State College. So the seal was redesigned to better recognize the present Gordon State College while linking to the college’s past.

The Gordon State College Foundation, alumni advisory board, staff and faculty all approved the new design. The new seal was also approved by the University System Board of Regents.

It will now be featured on all official documents and made its debut May 9 on diplomas that were awarded to spring graduates.

The Claymore Garners Seven Awards

The Gordon State College student newspaper, The Claymore, won seven awards in the 2013 Georgia College Press Association contest this year.

The annual contest honors outstanding work published by student newspapers at two-and four-year colleges and universities in the state.

The Claymore, launched in fall semester 2013 with a new staff and new advisers, was the overall winner among papers in the two-year division in two categories: first place for Improvement, an award for enhanced quality of content and appearance; and first place for General Advertising, which recognizes effective and attractive content and design.

The newspaper won third place in General Excellence, the highest level of competition, second place in Best Campus Community Service-Features and third place in Layout/Design.

Two editors won individual awards: Reba Williams, second place, Best Feature Story, for a piece about disability services at the college; and Sharrin-Ann Solomon, third place, Best News Article-Objective Reporting, for a profile of music faculty member James Wallace and his reflections on civil rights.

Gordon State College student Steven Lisius may be the biggest cheerleader the school has.

The theater major took it upon himself to provide the campus with its very own Highlander mascot and for the past year he has attended athletic events in an effort to stir up team spirit. Lisius was inspired when he heard several of his friends who play sports discussing the need for more school spirit and that Gordon State didn’t have a live mascot at any sports events.

“I thought, ‘Well, I could do that,’” said Lisius. “So I went out and bought a costume and started going to the games and stirring up the crowd.”

Lisius has spent nearly $300 on his mascot attire which includes a kilt, a sash, a wig and a homemade beard.

“I found a store in Atlanta that specialized in kilts and other Scottish attire,” he said.

He was adopted as the official mascot for Gordon State athletics.

“I never planned on that,” Lisius said. “I was just there because I am a big believer in school spirit. I believe we should support everything on campus, whether it’s a soccer game or a school play.”

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The season ends with An Evening of Original One Acts on Apr. 8-12. Students in Laura King’s colloquium will produce and perform their origi-nal works.

All shows run Wednesday through Sunday. Wednesday through Saturday shows start at 7:30 p.m. Sunday shows start at 2 p.m.

Tickets for all performances are available at the door of the Fine Arts Theater and are $7 for adults, $6 for senior citizens, $5 for non-Gordon students, $4 each for groups of 10 or more.
Gordon State College contributed more than $141 million to the regional economy and provided 1,418 jobs in fiscal year 2012, according to an annual report by the University System of Georgia.

Of the jobs provided, 374 are on-campus while 1,044 are off-campus jobs that exist due to institution-related spending.

The report also revealed that spending by Gordon State students accounted for $80 million of the total $141 million contributed to the local economy.

“These numbers show that Gordon State College continues to drive the local economy and contributes greatly to the regional economy while providing, most importantly, a quality education to thousands of students,” said Gordon State College President Max Burns. “Gordon State College is ranked fourth among the state’s 14 state colleges in economic impact and jobs provided.”

To calculate the economic impact for FY12, the Selig Center for Economic Growth in the University of Georgia’s Terry College of Business analyzed data collected between July 1, 2011, and June 30, 2012. The annual study is conducted on behalf of the Board of Regents.

“We have been analyzing the University System’s economic impact for a number of years and what is clear is the importance of these colleges and universities on local and state economies and from just about every variable: direct spending, income, production of goods and services and jobs,” said Jeffrey Humphreys, director of the Selig Center.

“The highly competitive seven-week SEEP is intended to help students focus and gain practical knowledge toward their career goals in the medical field. Oluwole was granted access to the advanced college area of study, the most prestigious and competitive within the program.

“Medical school has always been my goal,” Oluwole said. “I want to heal people, help people to be healthy. It’s not just about the money.”
President’s Report

Midgie had saved all of them, tags with instructions for the printer still fixed to each picture, because she knew the day would come for a reunion. She was going to be ready, and she was.

The lead for this year’s Alumni Weekend might also be Mercer Bush expressing his gratitude for his commandant, Lt. Ed Legge, even though Legge took a paddle to him numerous times.

“You could be expelled from Gordon if you had too many demerits,” Bush said, “and one way you could reduce them would be to pay a visit to Ed Legge’s office. For every whack, two demerits would be erased.”

This was a significant benefit, Bush said, because if a cadet accumulated too many demerits, he could be expelled. Still, the benefit had some drawbacks, especially if a cadet had 10 demerits he needed to shed in a hurry. Taking five whacks on the bottom was out of the question when even two could make sitting in class uncomfortable. And this is where Bush’s gratitude comes in. He said Legge had a way of confusing his mathematics so that more demerits were subtracted from the cadet than were merited by the number of whacks Legge gave. What’s more, Legge didn’t lay into his swing as hard as he was capable of.

Bob Lovein, the master of ceremonies for the Class of ’64’s reunion, spoke before supper of a different commandant, Lt. Ed Legge, even though Legge took a paddle to him numerous times.

“He brought his classmates’ attention to a poster in clear view of everyone seated around their dinner tables, a poster with the yearbook pictures of 35 classmates who had died. Lovein solemnly named every one of them. He said that they and everyone on the room made life at Gordon “super.”

“We often did foolish things, and sometimes flat out against-the-law things,” he said. “We are not only Gordon survivors, but after 50 years, we are just survivors.”

The next morning, John Boesch (HS ’57), John Campbell (C ’69), Powell Cotter (C ’61) and George McMath (HS ’64) grabbed their golf clubs and joined Gordon College President Max Burns and Gordon State College Alumni Association Chair Kevin Blosster, Skipper Burns, Candi Babcock and Rhonda Toon. He also thanked the college’s food service provider Sodexo whose head chef Bill Littiken served up a menu of Bourbon Street chicken thighs, shrimp and sausage gumbo, Cajun beans and rice and assorted cobbler desserts.

The band Junkshun played rock ‘n’ roll and blues on the deck during the meal, and then got diners up on their feet to have some fun on the dance floor. Every now and then, Junkshun’s lead singer Creché Navarro waded into the audience for a little sing-along or to rouse people to dance. The evening ended when the band finished its last set at 9 p.m. When breakfast in Highlander Hall ended the next morning, another alumni weekend came to a successful end.

After a lunch of pulled pork sliders, beef kabobs, roasted potatoes and other dishes served in the courtyard of Alumni House, alumni had several choices of activities. They could attend a baseball game between Gordon and Georgia Highlands College and watch George Bugg (C ’55) throw out the first pitch. They could attend the Military Memorial update in the courtyard, visit the historical collections and archives in the Hightower Library, go on a campus tour, or be on their own.

The afternoon went by quickly and before long people were returning to the courtyard at Alumni House for dinner at 5:30. Before giving the blessing, President Max Burns thanked the college staff who organized Alumni Weekend 2014. Natalie Rischiabieti, Skipper Burns, Candi Babcock and Rhonda Toon. He also thanked the college’s food service provider Sodexo whose head chef Bill Littiken served up a menu of Bourbon Street chicken thighs, shrimp and sausage gumbo, Cajun beans and rice and assorted cobbler desserts.

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Not with dancing and rock music like the night before, but with many extended goodbyes from classmates, and many promises to stay in touch.
Moving the Military Memorial

The New Site Will Be Where North Barracks Once Stood

Alumni Weekend 2014 had one serious business item to address and that was the status of the Military Memorial. On the Saturday of the Weekend, members of the 350 and other alumni sat down for an afternoon meeting in the courtyard of Alumni House to listen to an update by the college’s vice president of advancement, Rhonda Toon.

The original plan for the Memorial, drawn up five years ago, called for a fund raising campaign to raise $350,000 to build the Memorial in conjunction with the building of Gordon State College’s new student center. That center has been under construction since the beginning of the 2014 New Year.

Toon told her audience that the original plan which included a memorial wall, a fountain and a portico modeled after the old Lambdin Hall portico had to be altered for several reasons, the primary reason being funding.

Despite a final push, the campaign did not reach the $350,000 mark, but at the time of this issue’s printing, it did result in gifts exceeding $210,000, including pledges, from 517 gifts, according to Toon.

“All of you told me from the beginning that you wanted something big enough that some future president can’t come along and tear down later,” she said, adding that the money raised should be sufficient to the task.

The task, however, would be minus the fountain. When it became clear in the fall of 2013 that the 350 campaign might fall short, Toon sent out a letter to 350 members and other donors asking for their input. All responses indicated a preference for the new site near Lambdin was preferable. Toon later sent out a letter to 350 members and other donors asking for their input. All responses indicated a preference for the new site.

President Burns, Lee Fruitticher, vice president of finance and administration, and Toon met with architect Bob Smith in the summer of 2014 and the rendering that is included in this article is a result of his work. Construction on the Memorial is expected to be completed by Alumni Week in 2015. Plans are underway for a dedication ceremony to be held on the afternoon of April 18.

The original group of alumni who met with the architect when the idea was first conceived is assisting in the plans for the ceremony. They are Rick Hahn, Oliver Halle, Danks Seel, KiKe Seda and Don Neuner. Others who have ideas for this event are encouraged to email Toon at rhondat@gordonstate.edu. Help is also needed to make sure that all the names of the deceased are included on the wall of honor. Please check the Military Memorial website page http://www2.gordonstate.edu/militarymemorial/ to see if the name of your classmate or family member is included on the list.

“This memorial is something that has been talked about for a very long time. Far into the future Gordon students and alumni will walk through the columned portico and read the names on the wall. They will know that we valued the sacrifice these students and faculty made. They will understand that Gordon’s history as an honor Army ROTC school was part of the heritage and foundation of the institution. I think we can all celebrate the completion of this project and hope we will have a wonderful turnout for the event next April,” said Toon.

Another reason for altering the Memorial’s plan lay in the original plan for the new student center. As first conceived, the building would be a multi-story structure, but when the college’s administration realized it could get more for the same amount of money, a single-story structure was approved. What this meant was there was less room for the Memorial since the footprint of the student center was greatly enlarged.

One of the 350, John Boesch, asked if the Memorial shouldn’t be relocated. Toon thanked him for bringing up the issue of relocation and said that campus officials had studied two possibilities. The first was to keep the Memorial alongside the new student center; the second was to move the Memorial to a spot between Lambdin Hall and the library, along a walkway that already existed.

Another 350 member, Robert Melvin, expressed an opinion that many at the meeting felt. To keep the Memorial alongside the student center would diminish its impact because it would be like a narrow valley between the new student center and Alumni Memorial Hall gymnasium.

Toon told her audience that the location between Lambdin and the library had several benefits. It was already a trafficked walkway; there were few, if any, electrical, gas or water conduits to work around; and it was on the side of campus that most alumni consider the original campus. Furthermore it would be visible to car and foot traffic along College Drive.

After a visit to the site, all in attendance agreed that the new site near Lambdin was preferable. Toon later sent out a letter to 350 members and other donors asking for their input. All responses indicated a preference for the new site.
Gordon Gave Me

FRIENDS AND FAMILY

Gordon State College Graduate Jieun Kim

by Peter Boltz

It takes a strong person, a committed person, to make dreams, especially big ones, come true and Gordon State College alumna Jieun Kim is one of them.

A citizen of South Korea, Kim came to the United States in early 2006 to study English for two months at Georgia Southwestern University in Americus, Ga. This was after she spent 10 months taking English courses in the Philippines, and before that, studying English in her homeland.

“A lot of Koreans are well educated,” she said. “Ninety percent of my friends have college degrees.”

She explained that Koreans who speak English are considered to be “so much smarter” than others, and because English is so valued, many Koreans speak at least a little of it.

“English is key to education,” she said, “but it is hard to practice your English everyday in Korea.”

“My first impression of Gordon was that it was so pretty. This was shortly after the first or second Harry Potter movie, and I thought the campus between Smith and the IC Building was like a scene out of the movie. “

She was first to her dorm assignment in Watson Hall, and since a friend had advised her to do so, she laid claim to the lower bunk and the desk by the window. Her roommate, Angela Ellis, showed up while Jieun was getting something to eat with a friend. Later Jieun learned that Angela’s boyfriend, seeing that the bottom bunk had been claimed, said, “See, I told you we should have gotten here early.”

“I chose Gordon because the school was well-known for its nursing program. It was the best and still is,” she said.

“My first year in the United States was a turning point in my life. One of the professors at Dongseo University in Busan, South Korea, was strapped for time. Jieun didn’t come to the United States just to learn English. Her bigger goal was to become a physician, but her interest in medicine was going to be the role of a doctor or a nurse. Her own experience from nursing school led her to rethink her plans for the future. She remained interested in medicine but not in the role of a doctor or nurse. Her interest turned to informatics.

“The BSN (bachelor of science in nursing) at Gordon requires a lot of research,” she said, “and I did my research papers on informatics. This fit nicely with my bachelor’s degree in multimedia engineering in 2004 from Dongseo University in Busan.”

According to Gordon’s nursing website, informatics focuses on health care data and the management of health care information resources. It addresses the nature, structure, and translation of data into usable forms of information for the advancement of health and health care of individuals and populations.

In her last semester, she was working 19 hours a week as a tutor in Gordon’s Student Success Center, enrolled in six courses, and worrying about how she was going to manage her clinicals. Jieun could not see how she would be able to do them in informatics because she had to do them somewhere near and no such place existed that she knew of. On top of that, she was strapped for time. When she met with her program coordinator Professor Christina Quinn, Jieun told her she would have to choose a site for her clinicals which would suit her time and distance constraints rather than her interest in infor-
Quinn assured her that she could find a site for her, and that she knew Jieun could handle the time constraints. Dr. Quinn knew the director of information management at Spalding Regional Medical Center in nearby Griffin, and so found Jieun the perfect fit.

“She thrived in this environment and had very positive feedback from the director who was her preceptor [instructor] for the experience,” Quinn said.

After she graduated in May 2012, she stayed on at Spalding Regional for two months as a member of the team implementing the hospital’s new CPOE (computerized physician order entry) system.

By then, she had already made a decision that seems counterintuitive – she decided to enroll in Georgia State University’s MBA program.

She explained that when she was at Spalding Regional as a student, she saw firsthand the value of CPOE in health care and decided she wanted to be someone who helped health care providers start using the new technology. To be this person, this “guide” as she put it, she needed an MBA.

“About 80 to 90 percent of American health organizations have some sort of informatics system, only a few do not,” she said. “These organizations are making meaningful use of the technology, but there is still quite a bit of work to be done in implementation.”

It has taken her eight years, but with her background in nursing and informatics, and a master’s in business administration, Jieun has positioned herself at the front end of the medical informatics industry, an enviable position to be in.

Jieun will be the first person to tell you that she did not accomplish her dreams alone.

“My mother, Myoung-yi Kang, has been my strongest supporter of my dreams,” Jieun said. “She did all the research for my coming to the United States.”

And while Jieun has only been back to Korea three times in the last eight years, her mother, a widow since 2006, has come to see her daughter every single year.

When she asked her about this, she told him she wanted to learn everything she might have missed the first time around.

“I recall that she faithfully attended the audited class, both actively taking notes and asking probing questions. This is the only time in my 25 years at Gordon that I’ve seen a student possess this level of dedication to excellence and intrinsic motivation to learn for its own sake.”

Her history professor Dr. Richard Purvis, Dr. Christina Quinn, Dr. Joe Mayo, Dr. Jeremy Richards, Dr. Beikhe Jia, Dr. Cris Ferman-Ennis and Professor Peter Higgins.

“I loved learning from Dr. Purvis,” Jieun said. “I started recording her lectures after I realized I wasn’t getting all she said in class.”

For her part, Dr. Purvis thinks Jieun is “one of the smartest people” she’s ever known. “She picked up on things quickly, always doing what she had to do, and more.”

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Jieun fell in love, and in the summer of 2014 married Dr. Rajinikanth Seshan, a kidney specialist. Furthermore, because she worked while in school, won scholarships and had the support of her family, she was married without a dime’s worth of student debt.

Asked about her professors at Gordon State, theirs names are foremost in her mind: Dr. Anne Purvis, Dr. Christina Quinn, Dr. Joe Mayo, Dr. Jeremy Richards, Dr. Beikhe Jia, Dr. Cris Ferman-Ennis and Professor Peter Higgins.

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Lee and Donna Brown chose to return to school a little later in life, and chose to do it together. Often mistaken as parents of a student or even as faculty members the couple, who have been married 27 years, decided to return to school spring semester 2012. And so far, they have taken every class together, often walking hand in hand across campus, book bags in tow.

Lee attended Gordon College following his graduation from Upson Lee High School, and Donna attended the University of Georgia, after graduating from Lamar County High. They met the next summer, fell in love and married the following February.

“We had every intention of returning to school, but we both decided at the time to work full time for a while in order to establish our new home,” said Lee.

A few years later, after the birth of their first daughter, the Browns returned to school. Lee back at Gordon and Donna at Southern Crescent Technical College, known as Flint Technical College. Both were pursuing degrees in computer science.

“I was almost finished with my degree when the program got canceled,” said Donna. “Lee completed a few courses at Gordon. We were not able to complete what we had originally set out to accomplish because of timing.”

The Browns focused on raising their two daughters, Debbie, 22, and Sarah, 16. Lee worked as a firefighter for the Thomaston Fire Department, where he has served for 30 years, and Donna worked as a secretary and also operated an in-home daycare.

“I lost my job due to cut-backs,” said Donna. “Our daughters are older, so Lee and I felt it was the perfect time to return to school. We decided to do it together in an effort to have time with one another and we also knew that we could help each other with the school work.”

This time, the Browns returned to school to pursue a degree in music. Donna has served as a church choir director at two different churches and both she and her husband are seasoned performers.

“We decided on music in an effort to sharpen our skills and hopefully have more opportunities to entertain together in the future. I am very impressed with the music program. Gordon State holds itself to a very high standard and we are challenged and better for it,” said Lee.

Both are members of the Gordon State Chorus as well as the Vocal Ensemble. But returning to college classrooms full of students half their age did pose some challenges.

“At first I felt a bit intimidated sitting in class with students so much younger than me,” said Donna. “We both felt like we had forgotten more than we could remember. We were encouraged when we attended a session for adult learners and learned that there were more than 1000 adult learners attending Gordon. During the meeting, we were given some tips and tools to use to make our transition back into school easier. It was a comfort.”

The decision to return to Gordon has proved to be very rewarding for both Lee and Donna.

“It’s been fun,” said Lee. “We are able to discuss and compare notes and it has been something we can share. I also really enjoy the campus. I enjoy the facilities that the Student Center offers and the professors here really go out of their way to help students.”

Donna agrees.

“Attending Gordon State alongside my husband is a very special opportunity for me. It has brought our family closer together because it has given us the chance to share so many more experiences together. It’s one thing to watch your spouse succeed at something, but being able to go on the journey with him and come out on the other side of it together makes all the difference in the world.”

In 2011, James Bodiford went for a heart screening. He thought it would be a nice Valentine’s Day gift for his wife, Nancy. As it turned out, it was a nice gift for the both of them because doctors were able to detect, then correct, serious blockages with quadruple bypass surgery.

He would later report to the Marietta Daily Journal that the surgery left him with more energy.

“This is a good thing because he has things to do, like retire from his job as a Cobb County Superior Court judge at the end of 2014. His retirement will mark the end of a career that saw him preside over some of the most infamous criminal cases in the history of Georgia. Brian Nichols is such a case.

He is the man convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment by Bodiford for the murder of four people in 2005. After a rampage inside the Fulton County Courthouse, where he killed a judge, a court reporter, and a sheriff’s deputy, Nichols murdered yet another man who was a federal law enforcement officer after escaping the courthouse.

Only 33 miles away, and on the day Bodiford was interviewed for this story, a heavily armed man attempted to storm the Forsyth County Courthouse and take hostages.

While a comparison with the Brian Nichols’ rampage is a chilling reminder of how dangerous it can be to be a judge, Jim Bodiford is warm and inviting as is his corner office on the sixth floor of the Cobb County Superior Courthouse. He likes to say it offers the best view of any government office in Marietta because Kennesaw Mountain is off in the distance and a nice view of the city is spread out below.

He smiles easily and doesn’t seem at all the man sometimes described in the press as “no-nonsense,” at least not outside of the courtroom and when talking about his two years at Gordon Military High School. In fact, it’s possible to see a bit of mischief in the eyes of Jim the cadet who comes to life when Bodiford the judge remembers those days.

“My dad sent me to Gordon,” he said. “In those days it was not uncommon for kids to go to military school, and my father, an aeronautics engineer with Lockheed, was familiar with a number of them. He knew that Sen. Richard Russell had gone to Gordon.”

He doesn’t recall a pre-school year meeting with Gordon’s president, Col. Woodrow Light, as was the practice of Light’s predecessor, Col. C.T.B. Harris, but Jim did come down to Barnesville before the school year started to buy his uniforms.

“My memory of Gordon was that my fellow cadets were more worldly than I,” Jim said. “Other cadets seemed to have a greater knowledge of the world than I. They understood the world better.

“A good friend’s dad was an Air Force officer, and so he had lived around the world, like Okinawa, whereas I had only been to the New York World’s Fair in 1964 and visited relatives in Maine.”

He said he had a lot of fun at Gordon and enjoyed the camaraderie of fellow boarding students. The nature
of this camaraderie is illustrated by a story he likes to tell about taking a leadership group down to the Georgia Diagnostic and Classification Prison in Jackson.

“While we were there, I discovered that the assistant warden was someone I went to Gordon with. He sees me and says, ‘Jimmy, I never thought you’d be a judge,’” and for once I had a quick comeback and said, ‘And I never thought you’d be in prison.’”

Bodiford didn’t say what kind of fun he had as a Gordon cadet, but he did say it was a bit of cadet fun that brought him before the commandant, Col. John F. Schmelzer, for “one of the most important lessons” he ever learned.

He was involved in some sort of prank with a number of other cadets, but he was the only one who came to Schmelzer’s attention. When Schmelzer pronounced his punishment, Jim objected that he wasn’t the only one at fault and so shouldn’t be the only one paying the price.

“I’m sending them a message through you,” the commandant said, and to this day his message is still clear. Making an example of one will suffice as a lesson to many.

Of his teachers, his favorite was Mrs. Bobbie Rainey, his mathematics teacher.

“She got me,” he said. And she was kind to him. He doesn’t really know why, although he guesses that there might have been a “Cobb connection,” but then again, “She got me,” he said. And she was kind to him. He doesn’t really know why, although he guesses that there might have been a “Cobb connection,” but then again, doesn’t really know why, although he guesses that there might have been a “Cobb connection,” but then again, “she saw through his teenage posturing.”

When he graduated, he was aware of the quality of his education, but it made him overconfident about his first year at the University of West Georgia. He let his discipline slide and he made a poor academic showing. Giving up on academics at the time, he joined the Marines and served in the reserves. And when his time was up with the Marines, he took stock.

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Bodiford didn’t say what kind of fun he had as a Gordon cadet, but he did say it was a bit of cadet fun that brought him before the commandant, Col. John F. Schmelzer, for “one of the most important lessons” he ever learned.

He was involved in some sort of prank with a number of other cadets, but he was the only one who came to Schmelzer’s attention. When Schmelzer pronounced his punishment, Jim objected that he wasn’t the only one at fault and so shouldn’t be the only one paying the price.

“I’m sending them a message through you,” the commandant said, and to this day his message is still clear. Making an example of one will suffice as a lesson to many.

Of his teachers, his favorite was Mrs. Bobbie Rainey, his mathematics teacher.

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“I thought to myself, I really need to make something of myself and stop playing around,” he said.

So he went back to school, Mercer this time, “bucked down” and earned his bachelor’s and then went on to the John Marshall Law School in Atlanta. From then on he made his steady climb to superior judge.

Before becoming a judge, he was in private practice in Marietta, and then a prosecutor for the Cobb County district attorney’s office.

Becoming the chief magistrate judge for Cobb County in 1985, he also served as a Powder Springs municipal judge several nights a month.

In 1994 he was elected as superior court judge, re-elected in 1998, and again in 2002, 2006 and 2010. He said that he will see this last term to the end, which will enable those “who are interested to run for an open seat like I did 20 years ago.”

In addition to the Brian Nichols case, Bodiford presided over the high-profile cases of Fred Tokars, Lynn Turner and Ray Brent Marsh.

Tokars hired Curtis Rower in 1992, to murder his wife, Sara, which he did with a shotgun in front of their two young children. A jury convicted Tokars of murder and Judge Bodiford sentenced him to life.

Turner was found guilty in 2001 for murdering her first husband and later a boyfriend with antifreeze.

Marsh was brought to trial in 2002 for failing to properly dispose of more than 300 bodies sent to his business, Tri-State Crematory in Noble, Ga.

Retirement means he will have happier occasions ahead of him although he hasn’t quite sorted out the thousand different things he wants to do except for perhaps two.

The first thing isn’t much of a surprise since it ends up on many a retiree’s list. He wants to travel. More specifically, he wants to drive Florida’s A1A Highway without having to worry about a schedule.

“I don’t want to be in a hurry,” Bodiford said. “If we see someplace interesting to visit or someplace where we want to eat, we will just stop.”

The second thing he wants to do is something he’s been working on since 2012 when his father died at the age of 91.

“My dad’s home in Powder Springs is a historical home, more than 100 years old,” he said. “I sold it to the city for their museum but I have not as of yet cleaned out all of dad’s stuff.”

That stuff, in particular, is an amazing amount of paper, including blue books from his undergraduate days at the University of Cincinnati. He said that whereas he can expect his wife to join him in traveling the A1A, he is likely to be on his own in clearing out all of his dad’s papers.

In addition to these more family-oriented retirement plans, Bodiford is hoping to continue his professional work but not in such a “regimented” way as he has been doing the last 29 years on the bench.

One such goal is to be appointed to Georgia’s senior judge program by Gov. Nathan Deal. As a senior judge, Bodiford could expect to be invited to preside over cases where all available judges had conflicts of interest or when a jurisdiction’s caseload has grown too large and needs to be expedited.

Mediation is also of professional interest to him after his retirement from the Superior Court. As a mediator of civil cases, he would help opposing parties reach their own solution to their conflict rather than have one imposed on them in court by a judge.

“I see it all the time,” he said. “People expect me as the judge to resolve their conflict the way they think it should be resolved. They come into court expecting it to be the best day of their lives, but it doesn’t happen that way. Even when someone wins a case, he or she may still end up unhappy as in the case when attorney’s fees are not awarded.”

He said he would like to bring people together in mediation and be able to say to themselves that they can live with a solution of their own making.

“They won’t resolve to the point of high-fiving, but at least they could say, ‘It’s over.’ I would get personal satisfaction over this.”

A final professional interest he would like to pursue in retirement is case evaluation, a job he’s especially qualified to do because case evaluators have to be able to think like judges.

“I would be able to tell people how a judge would decide their cases without them actually having to go to court and face a legally binding judgment,” Bodiford said.

The benefit for the clients is that they then can decide if they really want to go to court.

The benefit for the soon-to-be-retired Cobb County Superior Court Judge is that he gets to wish them good luck and return to one of the thousand different things he wants to do in retirement.
Peter Banks, ’58, traveled on his third mission trip to Honduras, which he described as an uplifting experience. The purpose of the trip was to pour concrete floors to improve the living conditions in village houses. Banks was traveling with the First United Methodist Church of Barnesville, Ga.

John Wise, ’62, was recently awarded the “Legend” award for 47 years of “Trusted, Loyal Service” at Love Automotive of Cayce, S.C. Since 1996, Wise has been the executive manager of the company. Wise’s interests are Harley Davidson motorcycles, and he is a regular in the Harley Club monthly meetings. Wise holds a seat on the Board of Greater Columbia (S.C.) Landscaping Association, and he is also the secretary-treasurer of the new car dealers of Columbia and Lexington, S.C.

William (Billy) F. Sanders, ’64, is engaged to marry Janet Cain this year. Sanders is the district manager of Jackson Electric Membership Corporation and a member of the Gainesville Rotary Club. He enjoys antique cars, house boating, waterskiing, engine repairs, dancing and listening to fine music. Sanders has two daughters, Candice and Joanna, and two granddaughters, Abby and Lexi.

George Scott, ’68, competed in the Golden Olympics and captured three of the top awards, prevailing in the discuss, shot put and hammer.

Doug Tuttle, ’71, chief operating officer of United Bank, retired with 36 years of service and was honored with a reception at the Barnesville bank. Tuttle joined the bank in 1977 and served in an array of leadership roles including assistant vice president, vice president, senior loan officer, president, and was the first chief operating officer. Tuttle will continue to serve on the bank’s profit sharing, trust and investment and credit committees, and the Barnesville/Lamar County Industrial Development Authority.

Wesley ( Wes) Williamson, ’80, won Northrop Grumman’s 2014 Aerospace Systems President’s Award in the Innovation Excellence category for research and development of Advanced Metamaterials. Aerospace Systems President Tom Vice sent Williamson that he should “feel a special sense of satisfaction” for his “visionary ideas, tireless dedication, and drive to excellence.”

Mike O’Quinn, ’81, was an art major at Gordon who wanted to be a rock star. O’Quinn makes his living singing and playing the piano, performing in Atlanta, Memphis, Nashville, Europe and the Caribbean. For the last 20 years O’Quinn has worked on and off for Carnival Cruise Lines, as well as clubs and concerts. In addition to hundreds of songs he has written, O’Quinn has written three novels and several comic books. O’Quinn and his wife have moved back to Jackson and he works regularly in Macon and Atlanta.

Scott Camp, ’82, was inducted into the Covetta Sports Hall of Fame on Feb. 8, 2014. Camp went on to Valdosta State from Gordon to play in the Division II World Series and later signed as a free agent with the Astros in 1986. Camp works for Delta Air Lines and resides in Fayetteville with his wife Jennifer and their two daughters.

Glenn Polk, ’89, was promoted by Spalding County to deputy chief of administration. Deputy Chief Polk is a lifelong resident of Spalding County, has an associate of science degree from Gordon in business administration, a bachelor of business administration from Clayton State College, and a master of public administration from Walden University.

Dexter Williams, ’91, is a family service worker for the LaGrange Head Start program. Williams served on the Green- ville city council from 1998 to 2006 and also served as mayor pro tem from 2004 to 2006. Williams graduated from the University of West Georgia in 1986 with a B.A. in mass communication and he also earned a master’s in public administration from Troy University.

Sara L. Lewis, ’93, graduated from Griffin High in 1980. Lewis retired from the State of Georgia in 1999. Lewis later went back to school and obtain her bachelor’s degree in 2004 from Columbus State University in criminal justice.

Patty Cole, ’95, a healthcare science technology teacher at Jasper County High School in Monticello, Ga., was recently recognized by the Georgia Department of Education for her exemplary work in constructing a model lesson. Her lesson, “Life Stages in Healthcare” was selected for publication on a national literacy website to be accessed by teachers all over the country. Cole has worked in the hospital setting for 10 years as a nurse and also as the assistant director of nursing at a local nursing home.

Jessica Bottoms Evans, ’01, was named head coach of the Lamar County High School, Ga., Lady Trojans Varsity softball team. Evans returned to Barnesville after graduating from Columbus State University and took a job at L.C.H.S. as a biology teacher and assisted Aly Carr-Hatterman coach softball at Gordon. She now teaches health and physical education at Lamar County Primary School and is an assistant varsity basketball coach.

Mike O’Quinn, ’81, published his first book titled Haunted Asylums, Prisons, and Sanatoriums. Davis explores frightening ghost stories and true paranormal encounters at 10 well-known, haunted institutions across the United States. This unique collection of investigations is filled with terrifying photos, spooky highlights from on-site tours, and historical information about each location.

Joel Griffin, ’06, is now the head baseball coach at Bonner High School in Liburn, Ga. Griffin spent the past four seasons as pitching coach at Archer High School in Lawrenceville, Ga. He is com-
Laura West, Camilo Caballero and Chris Childress

Three Gordon Graduates of Note

In 2004 Laura West was a sixth grader at Lamar County Middle School who visited Gordon State College as part of then President Lawrence Weill’s program, “I’m Going to College.” As part of the program, each of the hundred students received a small gift from Weill, shook his hand and promised him that one day they would attend college.

The small gift was a little rectangle of plastic that read, “Turn Over to See a Future Gordon College Graduate.” The flip side of the rectangle promised him that one day they would attend college.

On May 9, 2014, she graduated, magna cum laude, with a Bachelor of Science in biology. She is currently in the marine biology program – on a full-ride fellowship – at the University of South Alabama in Mobile to study at its Dauphin Island Sea Lab en route to earning a Ph.D.

Camilo Caballero, AS ’12, has been selected as a Thomas R. Pickering Fellow by the U.S. Department of State and the National Woodrow Wilson Foundation. After Gordon, Caballero continued his education at Georgia Tech majoring in international studies and graduated spring 2014. After Gordon, Caballero continued his education at Georgia Tech majoring in international studies and graduated spring 2014.

The Lamar County High School ROTC presented the colors while the Gordon State College Chorus performed and taps was bugled by music major Ryan Augsten.

Also speaking at this year’s event was James Watts, an officer with the Gordon State College Police Department and a veteran of two tours of duty in Iraq.

He emotionally recalled how his father, a World War II veteran, rarely talked about his service. Watts said they were watching a “war movie,” something the elder Watts would rarely do, one afternoon when his father finally opened up. The elder Watts told his son that he fibbed about his age so he could join the Army even though he was only 16 and how he was wounded while fighting Japanese soldiers.

“A veteran can be anybody,” Watts said. “But he is always someone who has sworn to defend their country with their life. I am honored today to be in the presence of veterans who have served in World War II, Korea, Vietnam and other wars. I thank you for your service.”

The Lamar County High School ROTC presented the colors while the Gordon State College Chorus performed and taps was bugled by music major Ryan Augsten.

Plans call for the flags that lined Lambdin Green to be used again next year, according to Carey Lisk, president of the Student Veterans Association and coordinator of the event.

“We hope to eventually have enough flags to cover the grassy areas of Lambdin Green,” Lisk said. “But we hope all the additional flags are those of thanks, not flags remembering someone who was lost to a war.”

What’s New with You?

Class notes are a great way for you to let your classmates stay informed about what’s new with you and your personal and professional activities.

And it’s easy to do. Just send your name, the years you attended Gordon, and what you would like to include in your class note to Natalie Rischbieter, Gordon’s alumni coordinator, and we’ll be happy to share your news in next year’s President’s Report.

You can mail your items to Natalie Rischbieter, Alumni Relations Office, Gordon College, 419 College Drive, Barnesville, Ga., 30204, e-mail her at natalier@gordonstate.edu or call her at 678-359-5073. You may also fax your class note to 678-359-5738.

We want to know your news!
John D. Stallings, like many who graduated from Upson-Lee High School in Thomaston, Ga., attended Gordon College because it was nearby, inexpensive and provided an education equal to any of its sister institutions in the University System of Georgia.

He graduated with an associate degree in business administration in 1997 and said he probably would have gotten his bachelor’s had Gordon been a four-year college. He said he really enjoyed his time at Gordon remembering his English professor, Dr. Bill Day, and his history professor, Dr. Hutch Johnson.

“I’ve always enjoyed history,” Stallings said, “particularly religious history, American history and world history.”

After graduation he went to work for the Georgia Department of Transportation and is today a right of way specialist whose job it is to purchase property when roads need to be built.

Stallings sits on the Thomaston City Council, representing the city’s 3rd District, and is a member of the Georgia Republican Party State Committee. He is also state president of the Georgia Department of Transportation Engineers’ Association and a deacon at Trinity Baptist Church in Thomaston.

Ben Steele, AS ’00, moved from his current position as assistant principal and assistant principal of instruction at Kennedy Road Middle School to his new position of principal of Futral Road Elementary School. Both schools part of the Griffin-Spalding County School System.

Steele earned his associate of science degree from Gordon and then his bachelor’s in health and physical education from the University of West Georgia. His master’s, from Troy State University, is in instructional technology.

He started his professional life as a health and physical education teacher at Luella Middle School in the Henry County School System. From there he became an intervention specialist and assistant principal of Cowan Road Elementary.

“I enjoyed my time at Gordon,” he said. “I would have stayed on four years, but at the time, Gordon just had two-year degrees and was on the quarter system.”
Angela grew up with five brothers in Metter, Ga., and after high school went to work in the mid ’60s at The Trust Company of Georgia and made $245 a month at the bank. Even though she had no car and rode the bus, she was always about $50 short. Fortunately, her older brothers helped her out. Leaving the banking business, she went to work in the financial markets which increased her income.

She learned the business so well after getting all her required registrations that when the branch manager with whom she worked left for New York City, she took over his book of institutional accounts. This sales manager later persuaded her to leave Georgia to work with him in New York City. There she worked by day and went to night school, earning her B.S. in finance from the New York Institute of Finance.

And so was launched her career as a fixed income saleswoman. In a decade when women’s libbers were burning their bras, Angela was breaking one glass ceiling after another but not easily. Often enough, she had men stand in her way, literally.

“One time when I was about 24 or 25, I was covering institutional accounts,” she said. “I had an appointment with the treasurer of the state of North Carolina, and we planned to meet at an exclusive restaurant in Manhattan. When I arrived at the restaurant, I was stopped at the door and told no women were allowed to go in.”

She displayed no outrage at this point in her story; in fact she just smiled and said it was all eventually sorted out. She was taken up a service elevator in the kitchen to a private dining room for her luncheon appointment.

“Being in a man’s world in the 1960s, I had to prove myself,” she said. “And even though I had a degree, what got me accepted into that world was that I could do the work.”

This is the kind of attitude that got her ahead in her field, but she noticed that hustle wasn’t enough. When she looked around at the other brokers she worked with, she saw men and women with college degrees, some with advanced degrees. And she saw that their education gave them an added edge in their ambitions.

It wasn’t so much that these colleagues had a piece of paper with the name of a school and a degree on it, it’s what that piece of paper represented.

Like other Gordon Military graduates, Alan praises the education he received from such figures as chemistry teacher Capt. Buchan, history teacher Miss Ora Lee Howard and English teacher Mrs. T. A. Witcher.

W.T. Buchan were just good teachers. Then there was our history teacher Capt. Buchan, who was very much similar except she had no outrage at this point in her story; in fact she just smiled and said it was all eventually sorted out. She was taken up a service elevator in the kitchen to a private dining room for her luncheon appointment.

Alan didn’t grow up with any siblings, nor did he have a male role model. Instead of living with his mother and stepfather, he lived with his grandmother from the age of 3 months in her Atlanta, boarding house that she owned. His grandmother was a teacher with a master’s degree in her Atlanta, boarding house that she owned.

When his grandmother died, Alan was sent to Gordon Military High School at age 13. His mother sold the boarding house and used the money to send him to Gordon. Even with the money from the sale, he still worked at Dairy Queen during summer breaks to raise the money needed to buy his uniforms.

The two of them have something akin to a formula for success, although they wouldn’t call it a formula. But if they did, it would probably be along the line of hustle + education = success.

Alan remembers working for the U.S. Postal Service after he served his time in the Army in the Military Police. He was in Atlanta and unloaded trucks jammed so tight with bags of mail that he had to struggle to free them. In particular, he remembers doing this in the summer heat and humidity.

One day when he was being evaluated by his supervisor, he was asked what his goals were. His answer took his supervisor aback since Alan’s answer was to ask him what his goals were. Asked to explain, Alan said that his goals were whatever his supervisor’s goals were. Such a response and then acting on it cleared a path upward for Alan.

Angela’s attitude was very much similar except she was trying to break through a glass ceiling while Alan was trying to break mail sacks free from a tractor trailer.

“Once when I was about 24 or 25, I was covering institutional accounts,” she said. “I had an appointment with the treasurer of the state of North Carolina, and we planned to meet at an exclusive restaurant in Manhattan. When I arrived at the restaurant, I was stopped at the door and told no women were allowed to go in.”

“Being in a man’s world in the 1960s, I had to prove myself,” she said. “And even though I had a degree, what got me accepted into that world was that I could do the work.”

This is the kind of attitude that got her ahead in her field, but she noticed that hustle wasn’t enough. When she looked around at the other brokers she worked with, she saw men and women with college degrees, some with advanced degrees. And she saw that their education gave them an added edge in their ambitions.

It wasn’t so much that these colleagues had a piece of paper with the name of a school and a degree on it, it’s what that piece of paper represented.

Discipline worked hand in hand with stability at Gordon. Cadets like Alan were expected to behave in certain ways, and these ways didn’t change a great deal, especially revolve in the morning and taps at night. Discipline, role models and friendship at Gordon, and many of them, like him, went on to build successful careers.

Perhaps, he said, they should remember something they were taught to say at Gordon about making excuses: “The only excuse is no excuse, sir.”
They are more than mother and daughter, these two. Nancy Watraven and her daughter Cody share the rare distinction of being scholarship recipients at Gordon State College. For the 2014-2015 academic year, Nancy holds the Rotary Club of Griffin scholarship and Cody the David Bishop scholarship.

Nancy graduated cum laude from Gordon’s associate of science nursing program in May 2014 and is now enrolled in Gordon’s bachelor of science nursing program.

Nursing is what she has been called to do, and so she’s answering the call.

“I’ve had many experiences with nurses,” Nancy said, “and I know what a huge difference a good nurse can make. A good nurse not only has the skills to take care of you physically but to minister to you emotionally and spiritually.”

Daughter Cody is in Gordon’s bachelor of arts English program because of her love of writing and literature. Her goal is to be able to support herself as a writer.

“J.K. Rowling is one of my role models. Her story of how she made it as a writer is so inspiring, and it reminds me to never give up. I don’t intend to become super rich with my writing, but if it actually gets to the point where I can quit my day job, that would be nice,” she said.

Cody also said she would like to see the world so she has her eyes on study abroad opportunities like Gordon’s Chafin Smith Study Abroad scholarship. This scholarship was established by Claudette Smith in memory of the many travels she shared with her late husband Chad.

Students interested in applying for one of the many Gordon State College Foundation scholarships should go to www2.gordonstate.edu/findscholarships where the application process is explained. The deadline for all scholarships is March 1, which is strictly adhered to, so start early.

MOTHER/DAUGHTER SCHOLARS

Gordon State College academic departments are benefiting from alumna Louise Jackson’s special hobby. Jackson, who died at age 107 in December 2013, was a self-proclaimed “rock hound” and former Gordon Military College librarian. She collected rocks and amassed an amazing collection, asking friends to bring her rocks from the places they traveled to around the world.

The collection totals some 300 rock and mineral specimens and is as good as a gold mine to the College. The collection totals some 300 rock and mineral specimens and is as good as a gold mine to the College. Some of the rocks include peridot, quartz, amethyst, geodes, rubies, a few fossils and even a tray of spear and arrowheads.

Everything was donated to the College by Louise’s daughter, Nancy Jackson Thomas, a 1957 Gordon Military College graduate, along with a vest worn by Louise Jackson, who died at age 107 in December 2013, and a few fossils and even a tray of spear and arrowheads.

Nancy holds the Rotary Club of Griffin scholarship and Cody the David Bishop scholarship.

They are more than mother and daughter, these two. Nancy Watraven and her daughter Cody share the rare distinction of being scholarship recipients at Gordon State College. For the 2014-2015 academic year, Nancy holds the Rotary Club of Griffin scholarship and Cody the David Bishop scholarship.

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When Joseph P. Bray came to Gordon Military College for a job interview in 1962, he liked what he saw. A year later, he brought his new bride, Frances, to Gordon. She also liked what she saw.

“Joe and I were on the same page about Gordon,” Frances said. “He absolutely fell in love with it when he visited for his interview. Something touched him.”

Gordon’s heritage.

Joseph P. Bray came to Gordon Military College in 1962, and after the war he was able to go to college with the help of the GI Bill, but he was grateful to have it.

Frances said her husband wished he could help students’ families enjoyed a unique of “one big family” where everyone, faculty, staff, students and students’ families enjoyed a unique camaraderie.

“Families sacrificed for their children’s education, and the faculty had a real heart in what they did,” she said. “They were close to their students, they were totally dedicated.”

The Joseph P. and Frances Bray Scholarship

Bray, who was Gordon Military College’s last president before the college became part of the University System of Georgia, died five years ago.

“Joe was in the Navy during World War II, and after the war he was able to go to college with the help of the GI Bill,” she said. “His attitude was that he was going to go to college whether or not there was a GI Bill, but he was grateful to have it.”

Frances said in her interview that he could help him solve his financial burdens, and today, even though he has passed away, his wish will be fulfilled.

It appears the two of them are still on the same page. She and President Bray joined a vibrant academic community in 1962 that sincerely cared for the well-being of its students. The Bray scholarship for her is a matter of continuing education, and more. She and President Bray joined a vibrant academic community in 1962 that sincerely cared for the well-being of its students. The Bray scholarship for her is a matter of continuing.
Ida and L.V. Phair
Faith Perch
Jeanie and W.A. Prior
Dr. James (Jim) O. Richards
Orielis Rogers
Jesse E. Rogers, Sr.
Caroline J. Rutland
Haywood Shaw
Chuck Shiver
William Harry Shugart
Philip E. Simmons, Sr.
Earl T. Smith
Louise F. Speir
David Sutter
Richard Sutter
William (Billy) Logan Tate
Dori Watson
LTC John E. Watts
Vera O. Watts
Estelle Webster
Eugene Williams
Jesse D. Woodcock
John T. Zalkir, Jr.

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Clint K. Chastain
Class of 1967
Dr. Alan Gahr
Anna North Hogan
Dr. Hutch Johnson
Leila L. Morgan
Benjamin North
Louisa J. and Sherron Popman
Sylvia L. Prout
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Nancy Jackson Thomas
Rhonda L. Too
Lawrence T. Walker
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Robert (Bobby) L. White

Gifts given in support of the 335 Project to build a Gordon military memorial
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The **PRESIDENT’S REPORT**
Is for All Gordon Alumni

Whether you attended Gordon when it was a private military school or after it became part of the University System of Georgia, the President’s Report is for you, and about you. Even if you attended Gordon for only a semester, you are part of the Gordon State College family.

If you know of an alumnus who does not know about the *President’s Report*, let us know who he or she is. Contact Natalie Rischbieter at natalier@gordonstate.edu or call her at 678-359-5073. You may also fax your contact information to 678-359-5738. We want you on our roll of alumni. Gordon College, Advancement Office, 419 College Drive, Barnesville, GA 30204.