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When Marie LoMonaco was hired in May 1973, she was a brand new master’s graduate from Emory University. She was given something akin to a “Mission Impossible” assignment – create a nursing program in time for the following fall semester in September. Within four months the program was written and approved by the National League of Nursing and in September 1973, 50 students entered the program. In 1975, Gordon graduated its first nursing class.

The original program that LoMonaco started at Gordon has grown from an associate degree in nursing to now include a registered nurse (RN) to bachelor of science in nursing (BSN) completion degree, and a bachelor of science in nursing (BSN).

The school, once housed in Smith Hall, built in 1939, is now in the state-of-the-art Nursing and Health Sciences Building opened on April 1, 2011. The 59,000 square foot, three-story building includes a simulated hospital ward and a practice laboratory. Its William C. Byrd Pediatric Simulation Laboratory includes realistic “sim-babies” that can be programmed to cry, move and react to stimuli. Next to this lab is the George H. Hightower Sr. Adult Simulation Laboratory with equally realistic “sim-adults.”

She could not have known how the school would grow into one of Gordon’s premiere programs, but she kept in touch from her home in Griffin after she left the college to become the nursing director at Warm Springs and then the nursing curriculum director for Georgia State University.

This 16th issue of the President’s Report is dedicated to Dr. Marie E. LoMonaco.

She died Jan. 2, 2018, age 87.
Colleagues,

It is an honor and pleasure to serve as the new president of Gordon State College. Since assuming the presidency June 1, my days have been filled with endless opportunities to meet individuals on campus and in the community. I have remained impressed by each person who continues to make the college a better place. The contributions are unique and special. Each person brings something different to our college. With the help of each person, Gordon State College will continue to be a place where students flourish.

It is my goal in my first year to gather information that will help guide Gordon State through this transition and change in leadership. As this transition takes place, I am confident we will remain relevant to our students, community, and the 14-county region we serve. It takes a team to make the end goal a reality, and I am confident we have the right individuals to achieve that goal.

This upcoming year will be filled with excitement and new beginnings. At the same time, we will all be feeling a certain level of anxiety until the journey becomes familiar. I want you to know that we are all included in this process of moving forward. I am confident Gordon State College will continue to advance and grow with the help of each colleague, friend, and community member. The journey will be difficult and it will take a great deal of commitment and energy. However, together, as a Highlander family, we will succeed.

Highlanders Forward,

Kirk A. Nooks, Ed.D., President
Gordon State College
“Highlanders Forward!”

You’ll hear that a lot from Dr. Kirk A. Nooks, and forward is exactly the way he and Gordon State College are moving.

“Moving forward means taking the very best that we have to offer, things that are stitched into the fabric of Gordon and arcing that forward,” said Nooks who became Gordon's fourth President on June 1, 2018.

“Things like the excellence that we’ve always been known for, our ability to remain relevant and evolve from our start as a high school through the military college years to becoming a part of the University System of Georgia.”

“We’ve always found a way to morph, and that’s what moving forward is. It is taking all of our legacy and all the energy that we have now and morphing again, so that in 50 years when people look back, they will say ‘That group did their part being great stewards of Gordon and the Gordon legacy.’”
Nooks grew up in Brooklyn, New York, the son of Jamaican immigrants who moved to the United States to give their sons, Mark and Kirk a better life.

“My mother was a seamstress who could make almost anything even without a pattern,” he said. “My father was a taxi driver most of the time but would later become a school bus driver. My mom opened a shop, and next door was a beauty salon. I got a job there sweeping, cleaning out the shampoo bowls and chores like that. It gave me some pocket money and it was there that I learned to love afternoon soap operas, particularly The Bold and the Beautiful and the Young and the Restless.”

Soap operas aside, Nooks learned early the value of a job well done.

“Both of my parents did what they could do to make a life for us,” Nooks said. “What we lacked in resources, they made up for in love, instilling a strong work ethic, faith and values and a strong sense of entrepreneurism.”

But as the boys reached their teens, Brooklyn became too much, and his parents sought a different environment. So during spring break 1989 the family loaded up their light blue station wagon and headed south to Stone Mountain where some family and friends lived.

“It didn’t take my mom long to decide that this was it; we weren’t going back to Brooklyn, so we enrolled at Stone Mountain High School. I was in the 10th grade, and my brother was a senior.”

Nooks says growing up in Brooklyn taught him how to survive, and he still recalls several teachers fondly.

“But I got to Stone Mountain, and I really began to think that I was going to make it. I learned that I had options and I learned about college and how real it could be. I learned that you could be a leader if you chose to do so.”

“I decided I was interested in engineering,” he said. “So I applied to several schools and Mercer University was one of them.”

Nooks recalls how Mercer reached out and helped him see himself as a student there.

“I can recall holding those postcards sent by admissions and reading them over and over, probably 50 times and each time seeing something new,” he said.

He bloomed at Mercer.

“I became Kirk Nooks, not Mark’s little brother, not that Nooks’ boy; I was Kirk.”

He became involved in residence life because it offered leadership opportunities and a little money.
“My freshman year tuition was $16,000, and my family’s contribution totaled $4,000. Money was tight, but when I was 10, a car hit me. At the time a settlement was set aside for me to receive when I turned 18,” he explained. “The settlement amount was $4,000, so that accident, in essence, paid for my first year of college.”

He took out student loans and stayed involved in residence life to pay for the remainder of college and his degree in engineering.

He met his wife Alison while still an undergrad and the couple, married 20 years in September 2018, remained in the Macon area where he earned a master’s degree at Mercer and landed a contractor job at Warner Robins Air Logistic Center.

But something was lacking.

“I always knew in my heart that higher education had a profound impact on my life,” he said. “But there was always a nagging sense that I’m not fulfilling my greatest potential, a nagging feeling that I’m here to do something slightly different.”

One day a colleague who had decided to go back to school brought him some paperwork to sign.

“He shared that his lifelong goal was to be a faculty member at his alma mater. I was amazed. I said, ‘You can’t jumpstart in the middle of life.’ He told me, “Kirk if it’s worth having, it’s worth working for.”

“I played that conversation over and over in my head, and I kept telling myself that we had a newborn, we had a really good life, and I convinced myself that my wife was not going to go for it.”

But yet a pattern that surfaced in his childhood, a pattern of solid support from nearly everyone he encounters, emerged again. His wife was on board with the change but wanted him to consider George Washington University in Washington, D.C.

“I applied to GW, was accepted and we uprooted our lives. For the next five years of the program, I soaked up everything I could about about higher education, administration, students. It was like this is what I was meant to do. Many people supported my desire to learn through internships – many of which were unpaid – and helped to transform my career and life.”

His journey in higher education administration has included Prince George’s Community College in Maryland, Northern Virginia Community College, Georgia Highlands College and most recently Metropolitan Community College-Longview in Missouri where he served as president.

Nooks doesn’t take “good enough” as an option in his life or as an excuse from others.

“I always want to see how we can improve something for the students,” he said. “They only spend two or four years with us, so we need to do our best to help them out. That’s the lens I always look though. I am very student focused and student centered. I do believe that if we take care of the student and help that student to be successful in everything else good about the experience will come our way.”
Chuck Olson tells a story about himself when he was on the staff of Georgia State University’s newspaper, the *Signal*. A friend of his was accused of some infraction of the university’s regulations, and he went to his friend’s defense in a way he first learned while a 14-year-old cadet at Culver Military Academy and then at Gordon Military College.

“I learned about rules at Culver and at Gordon,” he said, “and how to work them.”

At the time, he did not realize the significance of what he learned at Culver nor of his simple desire to learn more about legal research. Even today, he will admit that he entered the law through “the back door.” He had a talent for legal research, and others noticed.

He also had a talent as an equestrian, and when he entered Culver, he joined the Black Horse Troop. According to Culver’s website, the Black Horse Troop “boasts the Academy’s best horsemen” to serve as representatives of Culver and escorts to “presidents, emperors, kings and queens.”

Beside horses, legal research and completing his communication degree (specializing in urban life), Olson had yet another interest that reached back to his time at Culver and then his time at Gordon Military College – ROTC, the Reserve Officers’ Training Corps.

He learned about Gordon as a high school student when his parents drove through Barnesville on their way to vacation in Florida. At the time, U.S. Route 41 was a main thoroughfare from Georgia deep into Florida, and it went right through Barnesville. Gordon cadets from Florida often haunted this road in uniform with their thumbs out to hitch a ride home.

The Making

by Peter Boltz
Close to graduation from high school in Illinois, Olson compiled a list of colleges he would like to attend, and he included Gordon. When it came to choose the one he would attend, he had a list of criteria: he wanted to attend a military college with Army ROTC that would accept his two years of ROTC at Culver and not require him to go through a “plebe” system again. Of all the schools, only Gordon credited his Culver years.

“I think a plebe system is a good thing,” he said, “it teaches good habits and values, but it is an experience you should only have once in your life.”

At Gordon, he was a basketball manager and worked as a spotter in the scoreboard at football games, so when he was asked if he would cover sports for the college’s newspaper, the Reveille, he became a sports writer. He also became the advertising manager and managing editor for

Olson (2d row center) with the staff of the 148th Support Battalion, 48th Inf (Mech) Brigade, Georgia Army National Guard at “Painted Rocks” at the National Training Center, Ft. Irwin, California in 1992. Olson, then a major, served as the assistant material management officer.
the paper, and it was during this time that the *Reveille* “swept the Georgia College Press Association awards.”

As a ROTC student, Olson had the option of going “formal,” that is, to sign a contract with the Army that allows a college student to be commissioned as a second lieutenant upon graduation.

He knew what he was getting himself into because most of the ROTC staff at Gordon were veterans of either Korea or Vietnam. The Vietnam War was raging in 1967 when Olson signed his contract and was sworn in. One of the professors of Military Science at Gordon, Capt. Gerald M. Wynn made sure his students understood that as newly commissioned lieutenants, they should expect to be sent to Vietnam. In the summer of 1967, Olson went to Fort Bragg, North Carolina, along with 16 other cadets from Gordon for six weeks of training and war games. In the autumn of that year, Wynn, who had been promoted to major while at Gordon and reassigned to combat in Vietnam, was killed in action.

Intent on earning a bachelor’s degree, he enrolled at Georgia State after his two years at Gordon. Because a number of credits from Gordon did not transfer to Georgia State, not to mention his change of major, he didn’t graduate until 1971. By October of that year he went on active duty and was sent to Fort Benning for training, but by then the war was winding down and the Army was not in need of so many new lieutenants. Olson, along with two-thirds of his class at Benning, were put into the reserves. He returned to Atlanta and found a job with the Georgia State Criminal Commission as courts planner, the same job he had as an intern with the Atlanta Regional Commission. While there, he was able to secure an appointment as platoon leader in the 48th Infantry Brigade (Mechanized) of the Georgia Army National Guard.

Not long afterwards, he went to work for the Prosecuting Attorneys’ Council of Georgia as the grants manager and training coordinator. According to the Georgia government web page, PACGa “assists attorneys by providing continuing legal education and assisting with legal research.” It did not take long for the Council to realize Olson’s talent for legal research.

“The more oddball the question,” Olson said, “the more I loved it.”

After fours years with PACGa, he finally succumbed to the idea of becoming a lawyer and so he enrolled in the Woodrow Wilson College of Law, graduating in 1981, passing his Bar exams, and being assigned to help prosecute Harold Chancey and 12 others in 1981. That he was assigned such a high-profile case right after graduation and the Bar speaks to Olson’s abilities.

“I didn’t see my office during daytime for 18 months,” he said, “because I was always in court in Monroe.” He was somewhat of a mystery man to many of the PACGa employees, as he had an office but never was in it except at night.

Said to be in the Dixie Mafia, Chancey was charged with violating the Georgia RICO (Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations) Act (a statute which Olson had drafted for a South Georgia legislator), arson and murder. As part of the prosecuting team, Olson put his research skills to work, helping to convict Chancey of a “drug-importation-and-distribution enterprise.” Olson was also on the legal team that successfully sustained Chancey’s conviction when he brought an appeal, once again employing what he learned at Culver – know the regulations.

Today, Chuck Olson is retired both from the National Guard and as a prosecutor - mostly. One thing that he has so far not retired from is scouting. In fact, he was awarded the Robert E. Burt Boy Scout Volunteer Award from the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution in October 2017 for his “dedicated service to the young men in the Boy Scouts of America.”
On the 80th anniversary of President Franklin Roosevelt’s visit to Barnesville, people came to see the Power to the People exhibit on the campus of Gordon State College and to hear a program of speakers commemorate the event. It was on Aug. 11, 1938, that Roosevelt dedicated the Lamar Electric Cooperative, created through the Rural Electrification Administration, a key element of the president’s New Deal.

One of the speakers, FDR’s great grandson Haven Luke, made two observations about his great grandfather.

First, it is clear that the president’s time at Warm Springs, Georgia, influenced him as a man and a leader. “It gave him a profound and deep understanding of people,” Luke said.

Second, federal programs can have a lasting positive impact on the social and economic well being of people.

Other speakers on the program including Kirk A. Nooks, president of Gordon State; Peter Banks, mayor of Barnesville; George Hooks, former Georgia state senator; G. Wayne Clough, former president of Georgia Institute of Technology; Abit Massey, FDR Warm Springs Memorial Advisory Committee; Bob M. Patterson, senior pastor of First Baptist of Warm Springs, Georgia; and James Fowler, FDR re-enactor.

The program lasted for only the day, but the Power to the People exhibit is on permanent display in Gordon’s Guillebeau Hall. For more information on the exhibit, please call Gordon’s advancement office, 678-359-5124.
Dr. Amanda Duffus has a picture of herself on her webpage kissing a frog. A more iconic image of this infectious disease biologist may be difficult to find considering she has been studying frogs for two decades. More specifically, since 2004 she has been studying a grave threat to the survival of frogs, a genus of viruses called Ranavirus.

In 1992, *Smithsonian* magazine published the article “Amphibian Alarm: Just Where Have All the Frogs Gone?” about the inexplicable disappearance of frogs from places where they once thrived in great numbers. Biologists like Amanda have been working on the problem, discovering that Ranavirus is killing not just frogs but all sorts of amphibians, fish and reptiles.

While the threat of Ranavirus to human health is not immediate, it is an immediate threat to a source of food, fish. And if you are in the business of fish farming, Ranavirus is possibly an immediate threat to your livelihood.

For Amanda, her focus on frogs is not just about the food chain. She is actually fond of frogs.

“I have a frog named Tweek (after the character on *South Park*), a White’s tree frog from Australia,” she said. “I think he was captive bred, and I’ve had him since 2003.”

While she was working on her bachelor of science in biology at Queen’s University in Kingston, Ontario, Tweek would rest on her neck while she studied. She said that “he probably liked the warmth,” but it was clear Amanda has a soft spot in her heart for the old frog.

Once she earned her biology degree from Queens University, she began her search for a master’s program that would let her work with amphibians, and so she went for an interview with Dr. Michael Berrill at Trent University in Peterborough, Ontario, for a teaching/research assistantship. The same day as the interview, Berrill made an offer, and she accepted. Berrill specialized in amphibian biology and tracking emergent diseases, a nice fit to Amanda’s own research interests.

By the time she graduated in 2006, she knew she wanted to continue her study of Ranavirus but more specifically, the virus’s effect on frogs. Her search for the right school and the right research supervisor led her to the Institute of Zoology at the Zoological Society of London and Queen Mary University of London where she worked with Dr. Trent Garner (IoZ) and Dr. Richard Nichols (QMUL).

As a brand new Ph.D. in 2010, she thought she had a post-doctoral position set up at Glasgow University, but a downturn in the economy meant the loss of the position, and she ended up back at her parents’ in Levack, Ontario.

“At age 28, having lived on my own since I was 18, I was living in my parent’s basement. It was a tough adjustment for everyone,” she said.
One day she found a job posting for a temporary assistant professor of biology at Gordon State College. Unknowingly, she and her family had driven within 13 miles of Gordon a number of times on their way to St. Petersburg, Florida. Her father had a great aunt who lived there, so once a year he'd pack the family into the car and drive from Levack down the I-75 corridor.

On her first day at Gordon, she met math professor Dr. John George, and as the saying goes, they “clicked.” Soon thereafter, they were engaged and then married. Her one-year temporary appointment grew into a tenured associate professorship of biology, and her marriage has grown into a family of three to include their son, Robbie, who is now 5.

In addition to all these personal changes, Amanda also experienced a change in professional focus. “I went from doing a lot of research and a little teaching to doing a lot of teaching and a little research,” she said. Happily, she has found a way to continue making a significant contribution to science by mentoring her students’ research.

Just since the beginning of 2018, she has helped 11 of her students create poster presentations about the phylogenetics (evolution) of the virus.

According to one of these presentations, “Ranaviruses are known to affect several endangered species, and it is therefore important to understand the phylogenetic relationships between the different species and strains of Ranavirus to best address the threat that each may pose in a given situation.”

In other words, science cannot fight the many species and strains of Ranavirus unless they can be clearly identified from one another, and Amanda and her students are helping in that fight. It’s unlikely their work will extinguish Ranavirus, but Amanda hopes its impact could be mitigated in many cases.

That’s good news for Tweek and his friends.
Since 1852 Gordon has been evolving. Initially as a high school, Gordon was focused on educating the students from the local area. As needs changed, the stewards of the Gordon legacy made the necessary adjustments to ensure the institution remained relevant. The school transformed into a military institute in 1872, developed into Gordon High School and Junior College in 1933, joined the University System of Georgia in 1972 and was later designated as Gordon State College in 2006. During this timeline, it was evident that this institution was no stranger to moving forward to meet new challenges. In 2018, we stand ready to do it again.

Since joining the Gordon State College family, I have remained impressed by each person who continues to make the college a better place. The contributions are unique and special. Each person brings something different to our college and the culmination is more than first imagined. In my first 100 days, I can truly say I am motivated and driven by the amount of talent within the institution and our region. Through meetings, events, and campus engagements, I have been given the opportunity to connect with several groups of people. I have immersed myself in learning from faculty, staff, students and community leaders. Equal to the passion each person had for Gordon was the excitement they displayed for our current transitional period and our future together.

This transitional year provides an opportunity to help drive and create an environment where student success remains the priority. This is the central theme that will serve as our North Star as we prepare the institution for the future. This document will highlight the actionable steps that will be taken this year prior to launching our strategic plan in July 2019. Our future is bright. It is time to being writing the next chapter entitled, Remembering the Legacy: Pursuing the Dream – Highlanders Forward!
I. Expand and deepen our knowledge of the 14-county primary service region
   a. Launch Marketing Perception and Enrollment Audit Study
   b. Host on- and off-campus Listening Session Tour
   c. Conduct Regional Workforce Study to define the educational needs of the citizenry
   d. Explore partnerships that support the notion of an education ecosystem

II. Shape a “Highlander ethos” that continues to place students, and their experiences, at the heart of everything we do
   a. Adopt a Strategic Enrollment Management approach throughout the institution
   b. Create a blended Campus & Residential Life Engagement plan
   c. Develop the Highlander Leadership Academy for faculty and staff

III. Embrace and advance our role as a University System of Georgia state college by increasing the rate of students attaining credentials, while maintaining a steadfast commitment to affordability and institutional efficiency.
   a. Review and adopt the results of the Comprehensive Administrative Review study
   b. Expand and scale Momentum Year efforts across the college
   c. Develop, update and align institutional policies and procedures

IV. Leverage our physical and fiscal resources to foster an environment of excellence
   a. Partner with the Foundation and Alumni Association to develop new opportunities for support and engagement
   b. Complete the construction of the Student Welcome Center and renovation of the Academic Building
   c. Rebuild the FY19 budget, and design the FY20 budget, with the focus on delivering timely reports which can support data-informed decisions

V. Create an updated narrative and build awareness
   a. Undergo the overhaul and redesign of the college website
   b. Conduct a refresh of the Gordon State College Branding Study
   c. Initiate the Strategic Planning Process that will culminate in May 2019

For more information on President Nook’s first 100 days, please go to the following web page: gordonstate.edu/president/100-day-report
For Derious Brown, life as a businessman began before he came to Gordon State College to earn an associate degree in business in May 2014. Working in the retail clothing business, he “enjoyed putting people in clothes.”

While at Gordon, he helped stage fashion shows and found internship opportunities, one of which was with Kontrol magazine. At Sheen magazine, he found a mentor in the editor Sammie Haynes.

Now the owner of Dappered-Daily Styling Co., Derious attends to the style needs of everyday and celebrity clients. Perhaps you’ve heard of a couple of the latter: Yara Shadidi of ABC’s show Blackish, and R&B singer Vivian Green.

Wendy Giere-Frye earned her B.A. in history from Gordon in May 2014 and then a master’s in history from Georgia State University in 2018.

She is now working on a degree at Xavier University of New Orleans - a masters of education and curriculum instruction. While this shift in academic focus seems out of kilter with her degrees in history, it is her history with Gordon State College that has led her to the Xavier program.

She hailed Peter Higgins, Jeff Knighton, Terry Betkowski and Tom Aiello as the mentors who helped her develop a passion for education and teaching. “Because of them, I want to pay that forward.”

No doubt her passion and academic success helped her land a fellowship with the Norman C. Francis Teaching Residency Program (NCFTR). In exchange for a four-year commitment working as an educator in the underserved areas of New Orleans, NCFTR pays her tuition.

Before Evelyn Roche could graduate from Gordon State College’s human services baccalaureate program, she had to present a capstone project. She didn’t have to go to China to complete this requirement, but since she interned in China, it just worked out that way.

She worked in Nanjing for seven months doing mental health assessments and teaching English for Kids ‘R’ Kids, but she also got to be a tourist. Visiting the Great Wall was a dream come true, and she was also able to visit Beijing, Shanghai and Hong Kong.

Evelyn works for Grady Memorial Hospital as both a substance abuse counselor and a mental health technician.

When Kooper Groce was a senior in high school, parents of fourth graders would call her for help tutoring their children. “I was the babysitter of the town, so parents knew teaching was of interest to me.”

Knowing this of herself, she entered Gordon State College’s early childhood education program, and in May 2018 she graduated summa cum laude. She started teaching first grade at Taylor County Primary School the following August.

Perhaps the biggest contribution Gordon made to her education was a relationship with her professors. She named Dr. Katie Wester-Neal, Dr. Beth Pollock and Dr. Pamela Bell, the latter being someone she confers with a lot.

Kooper advises education students to treat their class work at Gordon seriously because one day their class projects will most certainly be of use in class.
“Life has been moving at an absolutely dizzying pace since I got here,” Joshua Torbert wrote from Japan where he is teaching English to Japanese children in the third through sixth grade.

About 12 years ago, he became interested in things Japanese, which he cultivated by making Japanese friends and studying the language even while he was earning his English bachelor’s at Gordon.

“I’m interested in taking it further,” he said. “Teaching university level English as a foreign language is where my mind is now.”

He credits his adviser, Dr. Doug Davis, for helping him take on “the behemoth task” of making his Japanese dream come true - and for “a glimpse into the world of postmodern literature.”

He also mentioned Dr. Ed Whitelock who “helped push me on to the finish line,” and Dr. Stephen Powers for “his brilliantly twisted sense of humor that made the grind of college much more bearable.”

Going into his fourth year teaching history at Lamar County Middle School, Justin Gunnels was ready to get back “into the groove” of teaching by the time August arrived.

Among his many other duties, he serves as a hospital-homebound teacher for the district and provides instruction for students that can not attend the traditional classroom setting.

He plans to become a principal and to this end he earned a master of curriculum and instruction from Columbus State University in 2016 and a specialist in educational leadership degree from Valdosta State University in 2018.

As a graduate, he has some good advice for students in Gordon’s history/secondary education baccalaureate program: “Make sure you learn the special education requirements and know your curriculum. This will put you ahead of the game.”

When Justin Sumner graduated from Gordon in December 2014, he stepped right into a classroom at Ola High School in Henry County, replacing a teacher who was moved to another position.

“T got a little pushback from her students who were used to her style of teaching,” he said, “but they eventually warmed up to me.”

Besides teaching, Sumner is the junior varsity girls basketball coach, a job he wasn't quite prepared for to begin with, but he has since “become a student of the game and the team has steadily improved.”

In December 2018, he will have graduated from Georgia Southern University with a master’s in secondary education. This opens the door to becoming an assistant principal, and with additional certification, he hopes to become a principal.
It is called the momentum year, the year that catapults students into the ranks of those who graduate. It is their first year at Gordon State College when students develop “an area of academic interest, receive help to stay on track and follow a clearly defined outlined course of study,” according to the University System of Georgia.

Unfortunately, students can also lose their momentum in the first year, and this is why the USG has initiated its Momentum Year program, to help students keep up their momentum right up to graduation.

In October 2017, Jeff Knighton, Ric Calhoun, Peter Higgins and Matthew Little traveled to the University of West Georgia to learn more about the initiative. Knighton is Gordon’s provost; Calhoun is the assistant vice president for innovative education and strategic initiatives; Higgins is the assistant vice president of academic excellence; and Little is the strategic initiatives project manager.

Gordon was one of five schools to win a grant of $10,000 for its momentum year program named the Highlander EDGE (engaged innovators, dedicated scholars, gifted communicators, and ethical leaders).

EDGE addresses the objectives set out by the USG: to have students complete 30 credit hours of course work in their first year, which would include the first English and math courses. This course work would also include nine hours in a student’s particular area of interest.

In addition to the 30 credit hours, the Momentum Year initiative recognizes the need to help students make a purposeful choice of “focus area” (area of interest) and to have a “growth mindset.”

These two concepts inform the course work, because without them, a student is less likely to finish their 30 credit hours.

Choosing a focus area has to do with deciding on a major. A student’s growth mindset has to do with how he or she deals with struggle and setbacks. Students with a healthy mindset tend to finish their degrees.

Gordon’s EDGE program involves four strategies that will aid students in completing their 30 hours, exploring a focus area and building a growth mindset. The heart of the program is centralized advising and schedule development for all first-year students.

There is yet one more part to Gordon’s response to the Momentum Year initiative – a course named Freshman Introduction to Reasoning Essentials (FIRE) 1000, which is now required of all incoming freshmen. This course is designed to help students develop their growth mindset and focus areas, two key concepts of the Momentum Year initiative.
In his address to Gordon State College fall ’17 graduates, Professor Emeritus Dr. Don Butts asked one thing of them…to think. “I have spent most of my adult life trying to get people, including myself, to think more and think better,” he said. “So I ask one favor of today’s graduates…and that is that the next time you face a problem, or an issue be it political, personal, financial or the like…before you act or react, just take a few minutes and think about it.”

More than 300 students satisfied requirements to graduate at the end of Fall ’17 semester, and 210 participated in the ceremony held in the Student Activity and Recreation Center.

Trayvond Souder, who earned a B.S. in management and administration was excited about putting his degree to work as a sales and operations management trainee with Penske Logistics.

“I’m the first in my family to graduate from college,” he said. “I am one of six kids from a single parent home, but I didn’t let anything get in my way. I worked hard, but I was also fortunate enough to have supportive friends, excellent professors and the help of the Career Services Center. I will never forget the influence my time at Gordon State has had on my life.”

The spring ’18 graduation featured the newly appointed president, Dr. Kirk A. Nooks, as guest speaker. “Looking out on you this morning reminds me of my undergraduate commencement ceremony quite some time ago,” Nooks told the graduating class. “I can still recall this surreal feeling that came over me as the program progressed moment by moment. As we sat there listening to the commencement speaker, I remember thinking to myself, ‘Am I ready for the real world?’”

Nooks assured the graduates that yes, they were ready for the real world.

Interim President Stuart Rayfield awarded 334 degrees to 306 graduates as an overflow crowd of family, friends, and others looked on from Lambdin Green.

“I can’t believe it,” said Lynn Ray, a nontraditional student, awarded an associate of science degree.

“I wanted my grandchildren to see that you can finish college, no matter how old you are,” Ray said. “No matter what obstacles you might face.”

The first in his family to graduate from college, Justin Serna graduated summa cum laude with a bachelor’s degree in biology.

“It’s been a wonderful four years here at Gordon State,” he said. “I’m surrounded by the support of my family, and I could not be any more grateful. They know how important and how dedicated I am to my educational goals, and they’ve supported me in every step through college.”

Serna will continue his education at Georgia State University where he hopes to earn a master’s in molecular genetics and biochemistry.
MOVE-IN DAY

Just four days before the beginning of the fall 2018 semester, Aug. 4, Gordon State College students moved into their residence halls. Traffic was a little heavier around College Drive and Highlander Way, but with the help of volunteers, moving in day went a little smoother.

Gordon State has three residence halls: Gordon Village, Gordon Commons and Melton Hall. The three together can house approximately 1,000 students.

A NEW HOME FOR THE ADMISSIONS OFFICE

The Gordon State College Student Services Center is expected to be complete and serving students by early next summer.

The single-story building, at the corner of College Drive and Spencer Street, is designed to centralize the admissions process for students.

“We want to make the admissions process as seamless as possible for students. To be able to offer admissions, financial aid and a component of the business office literally within steps of each other in a single building allows Gordon State College to do just that,” said GSC President Kirk A. Nooks.

The 11,271 square-foot building will feature desktop and laptop computer stations, a waiting room for parents and a meeting room that can accommodate seating for 60 or used for events that require open space. Sliding glass partitions offer privacy while still allowing natural light and an open feel.

Also located in the Center will be the admissions office, financial aid office, and some business office personnel.

The University System of Georgia Board of Regents allocated funding for the $3 million project from its minor capital projects budget.

Parking will be available in the lot behind the building with access from both College Drive and Spencer Street.

The building’s design is by JMA Architecture, Interiors, Planning, Perry, Ga. Benning Construction Company, Atlanta, is in charge of construction.
A Poet Came to Read

Mike James has this wonderful poem called *My Wife’s Shoes*, about a man who sometimes dances with his wife while wearing her high heels.

He said the poem is not a confession but a creation based on a comment by a former governor of Texas, Anne Richards, that “Ginger Rogers did everything Fred Astaire did except she did it in high heels and reverse.”

In the poem, he says, “We don’t complete each other in the way of puzzles, myths, and romantic movies. No, we are the near miss most couples are.”

“Most of my poems are completely made up,” he said. “I tell people all the time that I don’t write memoir, I write fiction.”

Then he added, “My wife is a foot shorter than me. There’s no way her shoes could ever go on my feet.”

James read a few of his poems in the Student Activities and Recreation Center on April 11 by way of invitation from Perry Ivey and Stephen Powers, two of the college’s English faculty. James and Ivey met one summer at Georgia Tech where Ivey, as the McEver chair of poetry, was teaching a poetry workshop.

At one point, Ivey ribbed James about his one-line poems, at which he recited one of them called *Love in Winter*: “Never mind the cold hands.”

Besides reading his poetry, James also had some advice about writing poetry.

“Write a lot, he said, although most of what you write will be trash. James used George Gershwin as an example, saying he regularly wrote six songs a day “so he could get all the bad ones out of the way.”

“A budding poet once complained to him that he couldn’t spare his time at the gym to write more.

“‘Forget about the gym,’ James said. “Look at me. I’m 30 pounds overweight, but I write a lot of poems.”

James’s latest book is *Crows In The Jukebox*, from Bottom Dog Press. It and other of his books can be found at mikejamespoetry.com.

Study Reveals Gordon State Pumps $144 Million into Regional Economy

Gordon State College contributed more than $144 million to the regional economy and provided 1,317 jobs in fiscal year 2016. (Numbers for FY 2017 are not published until after the publication of the President’s Report.)

Gordon State’s impact on the regional economy grew $9.6 million, and an additional 28 jobs were created during the fiscal year that spanned July 1, 2015, to June 30, 2016.

Of the College’s total job impact, 320 exist on campus with 997 off-campus jobs that exist due to institution-related spending.

According to the report released by the University System of Georgia, spending by Gordon State students accounted for $78.5 million of the total $143 million contributed to the regional economy – an increase of $2 million.

“The University System is committed to its role in supporting and advancing the economic growth of the State of Georgia,” said Chancellor Steve Wrigley. “These numbers reflect the hard work and support of Georgians across the state, and we hope to continue to drive innovation, workforce development and job creation for years to come.”

The economic impact of the USG is a measure of direct and indirect spending that contributes to the regions served by the System’s colleges and universities.

Initial spending by USG institutions and students equaled approximately $11 billion, or almost 66 percent of the total economic impact. The remaining $5.8 billion of the economic impact was created by respending, which is the multiplier effect of the dollars that are spent again in the region.

The FY 2016 study found that the University System generated nearly 157,967 full- and part-time jobs – 3.6 percent of all jobs in Georgia. Approximately 32 percent of these positions are on campus as USG employees, and 68 percent are off-campus positions in either the private or public sectors.
The Archduke Piano Trio, Wednesday, September 19. The trio includes pianist William Ransom, cellist Charae Krueger and violinist Helen Kim.

Timothy Miller, tenor vocalist, Thursday, November 15. Perhaps most widely recognized for his stirring renditions of God Bless America during the seventh inning stretch of Atlanta Braves home games, Mr. Miller is an active performer with both national and international credits.

Choral Winter Concert, Friday, November 16. Join us for our annual Choral Concert by our college vocal groups.

Christina Smith, flutist, Tuesday, February 26. Christina Smith is one of the most sought-after flutists in the country as an orchestral player, soloist, chamber musician, and teacher. Ms. Smith is the principal flutist of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, where she holds the Jill Hertz Principal Flute chair, endowed in perpetuity.

Atlanta Guitar Trio, Thursday, April 18. Scott Plato, Adam Craighead, and Bill Hearn have many decades of experience in guitar performance and as educators of guitar. Working together as The Atlanta Guitar Trio, they provide audiences with exciting, fun, and entertainingly musical concert programs.

Spring Concert, Thursday, April 25. Join us for our annual Choral Concert by our college vocal groups.

Gordon State College Theatre Season

A Raisin in the Sun by Lorraine Hansberry, March 27-31. This groundbreaking story is about an African-American family aspiring to move beyond segregation and disenfranchisement in 1950s Chicago. Despite its specific era, the work speaks universally to the desire to improve one’s circumstances while disagreeing on the best way of achieving them.

Clybourne Park by Bruce Norris, March 27-31. A spin-off of Lorraine Hansberry’s A Raisin in the Sun, this razor-sharp satire takes a jab at race and real estate in a fictional Chicago neighborhood. Staged readings will be given from the play the same dates as A Raisin in the Sun.

A Devised Theatre Experience, April 8-12. A Devised Theatre Experience presents Sound and Fury: Stage Combat, featuring actors displaying their armed and unarmed acting abilities.
A Commitment to Lifelong Learning
Gordon’s Community Education Department

One of the interesting things to notice about Gordon State College’s Community Education department is that it is like a college within the College. It has faculty; it has courses; it has an administration; it is situated on a college campus; and it has students.

However, its faculty typically are not academicians, although they can be. Its courses do not lead to academic degrees, and its students can be as young as six months!

And whereas the administration of GSC is housed (mostly) in the spacious, three-storied Lambdin Hall, Community Education is in a ranch house it currently shares with the college’s Welcome Center on the edge of Gordon’s campus.

One of those staff is Debbie Christian, CE’s program administrator, and another is Jessica Eanes, its CE specialist. Despite the different titles conferred on them by Gordon, they call each other partners, an indication of their close working relationship.

The two of them are kept busy year-round, but their busiest time is summer when hundreds of students come to Gordon for camps.

During the rest of the year, CE administers a wide range of classes that are not part of academic degree programs but instead personal and professional development for all age groups.

Christian nicely summarized the meaning of community education when she said that it “reflects a spirit of collaboration, flexibility and creativity in service to the needs of our community.”

And in that spirit, CE is enthusiastic about its future growth.

Gordon Librarian Beth Pye Recognized by the Georgia Archives

Professor Beth Pye was recognized by the Georgia Historical Records Advisory Council on Oct. 26 with an award for Excellence in Local History Advocacy.

Pye, who is an associate professor of library science at Gordon State College, won the award for her documentation of Gordon’s football program from 1896 to 1971.

She developed a year-by-year photographic record of the football team’s beginning and compiled a list of the football scores. When scores were not available in the school records she searched them out from old editions of the Barnesville Herald Gazette starting with the 1895 edition, reading and scanning relevant articles.

By the time she completed the project in the spring of 2012, she had eight notebooks of photographs, score compilations, memorabilia and newspaper articles.

Professor Pye’s work on Gordon’s football program is available and accessible at the Hightower Collaborative Learning Center and Library on the campus of Gordon State College in Barnesville.
Bill Hewitt, president of the Class of ’68, once thought that when Gordon became part of the University System of Georgia in 1972, the break between eras was so complete that he no longer had a relationship with today’s college. His college was called Gordon Military College; the college that took its place is called Gordon State College. At his college, male students were cadets in the Reserve Officers’ Training Corps; no military training is offered at the college that took its place.

In short, Hewitt and his class felt an almost complete disconnect with the school they were an integral, historical and personal part of, but on April 20 Gordon and the Class of ’68 reconnected.

Before the class sat down to supper on the fourth floor of the IC Building, Hewitt took to the podium to welcome his classmates.

“Some folks here at the reunion haven’t been back since they left in 1968,” he said, “but there are folks who worked hard to bridge the chasm between the former Gordon Military College and the college of today, Gordon State College.” And with that, he acknowledged Gordon’s vice president of advancement, Rhonda Toon, who was applauded warmly. He also acknowledged the hard work of Lynn Yates, Candi Babeock and Skipper Burns – all from the advancement office – in helping to make the reunion a success.

“Y’all hit a homerun out of the park,” Hewitt said. “We’ll be back for more reunions.”

And with that said, bygones were left to be bygones, and the Class of ’68 turned its attention to enjoying each other’s company and being entertained by an almost endless procession of speakers at the podium.

One of the first presentations was a thank you to Gail Rooks for her standout work on the reunion committee and a thank you to the entire reunion committee of Rooks, Susan Allen, Tina Davies, Sue Caughman, Susan McRaney, Gayle White, Deborah Johnston, Sam Neuner, Red Sammons and Becky Wilson.

The evening took on a freewheeling, ad lib turn when Sammons took over the podium as impromptu master of ceremonies. For example, while he was speaking, Sue Caughman went up and turned the volume down a little on the PA system.

Someone in the audience shouted out, “Red, she’s turning you down!”

He shot back, “She’d be the first,” which drew groans
from the audience. Then, by way of apology, he added he couldn’t help himself when given a “straight line.”

At another point Gayle White and Ann Joyner took over the podium to tell a story that played on their heights, White being quite a bit taller than Joyner. The two of them remembered their excitement when their graduation gowns had come in, and then their exasperation when they put them on. Advertised as “one size fits all,” the gowns didn’t fit either one of them well, an obvious problem they quickly brought to the attention of W.B. Akins, acting president at the time.

The atmosphere turned serious when the military veterans were called to the front by Rooks, White and Caughman to be honored by their classmates. These were men who went on active duty in one of the worst years of the Vietnam War.

Then came the reading of the names of deceased classmates by Susan McRaney and Sam Neuner. Of the 135 members of the Class of ’68, 21 had died and were named, and then taps was played. Red Sammons, returning to the podium afterwards, acknowledged his tears and said what many were feeling, that this was the hardest part of the evening.

The program ended with singing the Alma Mater of their day: “Gordon, Gordon, is the slogan, mingled with our cheers. We will cherish, we will love thee in the passing years.”

And so they have.
Gordon alumni had a treat from Mother Nature waiting for them when they visited Alumni House during Alumni Weekend 2018 the third weekend of April. The knockout roses, the gift of Bobby Wines ('62), in the courtyard were in full bloom and ablaze under clear skies. To this, Mother Nature added moderate temperatures.

Alumni House’s courtyard was the setting for lunch on Saturday, and as anyone knows, dining well in a beautiful location makes for an enjoyable experience. Many were reluctant to leave after finishing their meals, finding the courtyard the perfect spot to catch up with friends.

Later in the afternoon, alumni gathered at the Military Memorial for a roll call of those Gordon alumni who died in the military service of the United States. Rick Hahn, College Class of ’64 read the names engraved in the stone of the Memorial, reminding those in attendance that they were “on honored ground.” The solemnity was reinforced by piper Archie Ray, College Class of ’68, playing Amazing Grace with a short introduction called a descant.

Afterwards, he led the troop of alumni and guests to dinner in the college’s dining facility, Highlander Hall, playing the march MacRae Meadow. The tune, written by Charlie Glendinning is named after the location of the Highland Games in Linville, North Carolina, home of the games since 1956.
Join us for Gordon College Alumni Weekend 2019
Friday, May 3 – Sunday, May 5, 2019

Come join us for a weekend of renewing friendships, making new friends, reminiscing, good food and drink, and fun. Alumni Weekend is for all Gordon alumni, no matter what year they graduated.

A Shout-Out! to the following classes:

Come join us for special recognition and reception!

Contact Mary Browning at via email at mbrowning@gordonstate.edu or call her at 678-359-5073.

We can also be reached via the U.S. Postal Service:
Gordon College, Alumni Relations Office, 419 College Drive, Barnesville, GA 30204.
Miriam Howard (l.) and Dot Patrick were the only alumni from the high school Class of ’45 to make it to Alumni Weekend ’18, but this didn’t seem to dampen their spirits. Just before this shot was taken, they recalled watching cadets lining up in formation before the start of classes.

“We wanted to look at those boys,” Miriam said, and Dot added, “And hopefully, they would look up at us.”

Although they were not close friends while at Gordon Military College, they knew each other for the five years they were enrolled. After graduation, Miriam married Charles Howard Jr. and they moved to Oklahoma. Dot remained in Barnesville and went to work at the Gordon Café.

Dot said that at the time, young women had few choices of employment. They could work at a restaurant, retail, the Western Union office, the telephone company, Aldora, or Carter’s. She ended up working at Carter’s for 43 years, although she worked at Western Union for a short spell.

If the telegram were meant for someone in walking distance, she would deliver it as she did the day that Germany surrendered, May 7, 1945. The telegram was from a soldier alerting his wife that he had landed in New York City, but Dot knew she would not be home because everyone was in the streets celebrating Victory in Europe (VE) Day. Working her way through “hootin’ and hollerin’” townspeople, she made her delivery.

Unfortunately, she also had to deliver sad news, like the telegram informing a father that his son, initially declared missing, had been declared dead. “He didn’t even open the envelope,” Dot said. “He already knew, so he just put it in his pocket, walked out the door and went home.”

Years after Dot retired from Carter’s Mill, she went to work for Gordon’s food service Sodexo selling coffee from a kiosk in the Student Center with her friend Elmira Worthy. She said she loved the job, recalling how sweet and nice the students were.

When Miriam married, she not only married into her husband C.B. Howard’s family but she also married into the Army Air Corps, her husband’s service during World War II. After the war when they were newlyweds, they went to Tulsa where he earned his FAA mechanics license. From Tulsa, they returned to Atlanta where he worked for Delta Air Lines and then Eastern Air Lines.

In Tulsa, she went to work as a secretary for a company that made parts for the military, and in recalling the memory, she started to laugh about correcting her boss’s grammar when typing his letters. She told him she checked her corrections with her high school English teacher.

That would be Miss Marion. Miriam called her from Tulsa! From then on she’d tease her boss about getting his grammar correct or else she would have to call Miss Marion.

Miriam still lives in the Atlanta area, and one day while listening to the radio, a song put her into a melancholy and nostalgic mood, and she didn’t understand why. Then it occurred to her, it was the theme song of the Gordon orchestra when she was in high school, Moonlight Serenade.

Inspired by the memory, she called Gordon, and this is how she came to be at Alumni Weekend 2018. “Everyone was so sweet,” she said. “It was a dream come true.”
The Comeback Kid

The year was 1976, just four years after Gordon Military College joined the University System of Georgia and became to be known as Gordon Junior College. Jerry Wilborn was an athlete from South Gwinnett High School in Snellville, Georgia, who came to Gordon on a baseball scholarship.

“I think it was for room, board, books and tuition,” he said, but he was not certain. Memories tend to fade after so many years, and what’s more, his memorabilia from his time at Gordon was lost to fire.

His gratitude for his time at Gordon, however, has never faded.

“Had I not played baseball and then earned my two-year degree, I probably would never have gone on to finish a four-year degree,” he said. “I look at Gordon fondly because it is where my successful career in information technology started.”

The four-year degree he referred to was a bachelor’s in business administration with a minor in computer science from Georgia State University in March 1981. His first job after graduation was in the nascent industry of information technology.

According to Jerry, IBM had just introduced the IBM PC, which, among other things, indicated to him that the industry had growth potential. He said another reason he took the job is because he was a broke college student needing a job!

After working for a couple of Fortune 50 IT companies in the first 12 years after graduation, he moved into the health care information technology field and spent the last 20 years of his career at McKesson Corp.

He retired three years ago and now lives at Reynolds Plantation in Greensboro, Georgia.

Gordon Generals Meet the Gordon Highlanders

In the ’90-’91 Georgia NJCAA basketball season, Gordon’s basketball team, then known as the Generals, surprised many, including their coach, Len West, with a winning season that never seemed to lose its momentum. In January, several members of the team came with family members to watch the Gordon Highlanders play Central Georgia Technical College and also be recognized by fans at halftime.

Pictured below is Jerry Jones (l.), Richard Simpson and Melvin Martin. In March 1991, the Generals journeyed to Franklin Springs, Georgia, for the Georgia Junior College State Tournament. They first beat Abraham Baldwin, 76-51, then Truett-McConnell, 110-107, and finally South Georgia, 88-60.

As state junior college champions, they met Florida’s state champion, Polk Community College. Their loss by one point ended the Generals’ march to a national championship.

The point spread went a little worse for the Gordon Highlanders, losing 88-63.
Dick Willers, ’54, joined the Air Force after graduating from Gordon, and then went to work in the family electrical contractors business. He is enjoying his retirement with his wife, spending time between their Tampa home and their Blairsville home.

Don Pierce, ’61, received the 2017 University of Georgia Baseball Athletic Achievement Award. Pierce, won a scholarship to Gordon Military College and from Gordon transferred to UGA. After a time in the minor leagues, he built a career in public education and coaching. The award recognizes UGA baseball players who have distinguished themselves on the playing field.

Danks Seel, ’64, and his wife, Renee Bush Seel, celebrated their 51st wedding anniversary in April 2018. They met at Gordon Military College in 1963 at a campus football game.

Pamela Jean Pulliam Swift, ’68, is a retired elementary school teacher living in Gainesville with husband Walter Dallas Swift. They have four children and five grandchildren. She said her favorite memory of Gordon is going to Gordon football games, then afterward to a “sock hop” in the gym.

Otis Raybon Jr., ’74, announced his retirement from his position as the Rome News-Tribune publisher effective Dec. 2018. In his 54-year newspaper career, he worked for The Griffin Daily News, the Valdosta Daily Times, the Americus Times Recorder, the Dalton Daily Citizen and The Daily Leader and The Prentiss Headlight.

Lynn Hughes Akin, ’87, completed her doctorate in education in curriculum and leadership in August 2017 at Columbus State University.

David Artessa, ’05, is the new senior pastor of Monticello Baptist Church. He is married to Johna Childers and they have two children: Ella and Luca.

Miranda Royals, ’07, works for Robert Goldberg and Associates as a paralegal specializing in probate and Medicaid issues. She is married to Ashley Royals and they have three children, Alexis, Ashton and Ayden.

Lakeitha Rousseau, ’08, has been recognized for her work as an extraordinary nurse by the Daisy Foundation. An acronym for Diseases Attacking the Immune SYstem, Daisy recognizes nurses of remarkable compassion and caregiving. Rousseau herself began her battle with breast cancer in 2015. She said she thinks that her experience helps her patients “ease their minds in regard to their journey and treatment.”

Kahla Franklin, ’10, earned her A.A. in English at Gordon State College in 2010 while completing her B.A. in political science and minor degree in journalism at Georgia State University. After graduating from Georgia State University in 2013, she went on to intern at CBS 46 News in Atlanta, GA, which led to jobs as a newscast producer in Columbus, GA, and Jacksonville, FL. Kahla was recently accepted to the Savannah College of Art and Design where she will complete her MFA in film and television.

Georgia Marshall, ’12, was presented with a master’s degree from Georgia State University in May 2018. She earned her associate degree from Gordon in 2011 and his bachelor’s in English from Gordon in 2014.

Paige Wynn, ’13, was chosen Teacher of the Year, ’17-’18 for Moreland Road Elementary School in Griffin, GA. She has taught 4th grade science, math and social studies at Moreland since she earned her B.S. in education from Gordon.

Crystal Bales, ’14, is a family nurse practitioner (FNP-C) with Eagle’s Landing Family Practice in the Atlanta metropolitan area. She earned her A.S.N. in 2012, then her B.S.N. in 2014 from Gordon State College. She completed her graduate training for her FNP from South University in Savannah, Ga.

Matthew R. Herring, ’14, was presented with a master’s degree from Georgia State University in May 2018. He earned his associate degree in English from Gordon in 2011 and his bachelor’s in English from Gordon in 2014.

Jocelyn Hines, ’13, graduated from South University School of Pharmacy last year and is now a pharmacist at Rite Aid in Centerville, GA.
Three from 1964

Goebel Berry (l.), Bill Sanders and Charles Van Rysselberge enjoyed an “after-the-New Year” breakfast at Loretta’s Country Kitchen in Oakwood, Georgia, in February. Goebel lives in Loganville, and Sanders and Van Rysselberge live in Gainesville. Van Rysselberge said his “all-time favorite teacher,” Mrs. Zedene Long, was Goebel’s aunt.

Ben Joiner Recognized by GHRAC

Ben Joiner’s senior history seminar paper, “Science Education and the Seminary Movement of Central Georgia, 1820-1840” earned him the Award for Excellence in Student Research Using Historical Records from the Georgia Historical Records Advisory Council (GHRAC) in October 2017.

A 2017 graduate of Gordon State College’s history baccalaureate program, Joiner proudly displayed his award next to his wife, Destiny.

Jacob Holloway, ’10, was awarded an Army Challenge Coin by the Secretary of the Army, Dr. Mark Esper in April. Holloway works at the U.S. Army Environmental Command at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston, in San Antonio, Texas.

In the photograph, Holloway stands next to his wife, Priscilla, who is holding their son Baier. Standing in front of their father are Duke (l.) and Lanie Jane.

Make a Note to Write a Class Note

The President’s Report is a good way for you and your classmates to stay in touch with each other.

Have you been promoted, changed jobs, gotten married, moved or visited an exotic corner of the globe? Share your news with Gordon’s Alumni Relations Office and have it reported in the Class Notes section in next year’s magazine.

It’s easy, just send your news by USPO to the Alumni Relations Office, Gordon State College, 419 College Drive, Barnesville, Ga., 30204 or e-mail it to mbrowning@gordonstate.edu, or call Mary Browning at 678-359-5073.

If you prefer to use your fax machine, here’s the number to use: 678-359-5738.
The New Stephen Lesko Scholarship

Stephen Lesko was a first-generation American born to a coal mining family who came from Eastern Europe in the early 1900s. Stephen himself went down into the mines when he was only 12 to help support the family.

When he had children of his own, he wanted them to get an education, knowing the opportunities that come with an education. All of his daughters went to college, majoring in the sciences. Two of his children earned Ph.D.s. His son, Stephen Jr., was one of these, joining Johns Hopkins University as a cancer researcher.

It is through this family line that Gordon State College has been endowed with the Stephen Lesko Scholarship through the good graces of Thomas Lantzy and Sharon Ringler. Thomas is the grandson of the coal miner Stephen Lesko.

It is no wonder then that the couple also gave their older two sons the opportunity to go to college, in particular, Gordon State College.

The eldest, Thomas, was a dual enrollment student working with Dr. Richard Baskin. He graduated with an associate degree in general studies, summa cum laude. From Gordon he went to the University of Georgia with a B.A. in history. After working as deputy chief of staff for State Senator Curt Thompson, he went to law school and is now a practicing attorney in Virginia.

“Dr. Gary Cox in Gordon’s history department had a huge impact on Thomas,” his mother said. “He taught Thomas to think critically and to challenge himself as a learner.”

Thomas’s brother, Matthew, graduated from Gordon in 2015 with a B.S. in biology, summa cum laude.

“Dr. Cathy Lee in Gordon’s biology department mentored Matthew both in the classroom and in his independent study,” his mother said. “She allowed him the opportunity to write and present his research, which is just amazing for an undergraduate.”

She added that her “entire family has been blessed by Gordon State and the experiences we’ve had there. We are very pleased to have the opportunity to give back in some small measure.”

It is worth noting the academic pedigree of the Ringler-Lantzys. Johns Hopkins University is the first research university in the United States, established in 1876. This is where the coal miner’s son conducted his cancer research.

Thomas Ringler-Lantzy’s scholarship was to William and Mary Law School. The College of William and Mary, founded in 1693, is the second-oldest institution of higher education in the United States after Harvard University.

Matthew Ringler-Lantzy is currently working on his master’s degree in medical biotechnology at Brown University. Brown University, founded in 1764, is one of the nine colonial colleges chartered before the American Revolution.

All from an immigrant’s son who went down into the mines at age 12.
The Annual Donor Roll includes the names of those whose gifts were received between July 1, 2017, and June 30, 2018. In preparing this document every effort has been made to ensure accuracy and completeness. If a mistake was made in the way a donor is identified or if a donor’s name was omitted from a gift list, we sincerely apologize. Please report any corrections to the Office of Advancement at 678-359-5124 or rhondat@gordonstate.edu. Thank you.
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