



FALL 2025

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The Underwood Era — A President's *Enduring Stewardship*

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in the President's Home

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In Our Lens

President William D. Underwood shares *The Magician's Hat* with Roberts Academy students during their end-of-year celebration May 25. Written by former NFL and Georgia Bulldogs player Malcolm Mitchell, the book highlights the power of reading — a fitting message for the school, which opened in 2024 as Georgia's only dyslexia program outside metro Atlanta. Built and endowed with the largest financial commitment in the University's history from **Hal and Marjorie Roberts** of Lakeland, Florida, Roberts Academy serves children in grades 2-6.

A President's Farewell, A Professor's Return

Over the past two decades, it has been a very special privilege to lead this uniquely impactful university, which today stands among the leading private research universities in the nation.

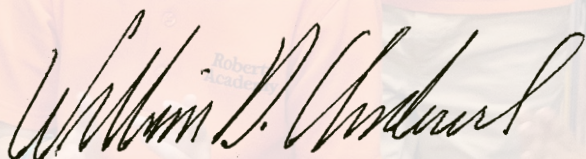
I am especially pleased that this standing has been achieved without sacrificing the qualities that have made Mercer special. We have preserved a personal and intimate educational environment in which class sizes for undergraduates remain among the smallest in the country. Mercer's heritage as an institution founded and sustained by people in the free-church tradition continues to undergird our strong commitment to intellectual freedom. This same heritage drives compelling programs that inspire students to lead lives of service to others. And we have remained a place committed to providing opportunity for individuals, regardless of background, seeking to improve their lives and achieve their dreams.

As we look to the future at Mercer, we envision a vibrant and exciting academic community committed to interpreting its founding heritage in a way that meets the needs of our students while also addressing the needs of our state, our nation and, indeed, all of humankind. We have been propelled forward by energetic and esteemed faculty, committed staff and supportive alumni and friends.

I've been blessed by as talented, committed and experienced a leadership team as there is in higher education. Our governing board is remarkably supportive and forward-looking in embracing the initiatives that have empowered Mercer to change the world. I am especially grateful to my family — my spouse Lesli, children Jessica and William and their spouses Gerard and Daly, and Cricket, who has become our unofficial campus mascot. They have stood with me through the challenges of the Mercer presidency.

I began my career in higher education as a law professor — a role that I cherished. I've always believed that the vital work of any university worthy of the name takes place in its classrooms, libraries and laboratories. I am especially grateful now for the opportunity to return to the classroom teaching law where I began my journey in higher education long ago.

May Mercer continue to grow and prosper: Go Bears!



— William D. Underwood, *President*

THE MERCERIAN®, FALL 2025 FEATURE

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President Underwood's
Transformative Years at Mercer

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Alumni who graduated within the past two years may be eligible for Mercer's Special Consideration Program for Graduate Studies.

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and start in January, March, May, August and October.

MERCER
UNIVERSITY



NEW SCHOOL OF MEDICINE BUILDING

NEW MERCER MEDICAL SCHOOL BUILDING

TO BE LOCATED AT GATEWAY TO DOWNTOWN MACON

The Mercer School of Medicine will construct a new, 150,000-square-foot facility overlooking the Ocmulgee River in downtown Macon, the first step in a \$400 million redevelopment of the area.

The Macon-Bibb County Urban Development Authority approved selling 11 parcels at 815 Riverside Drive, between Spring and Second streets, to the University on Feb. 27.

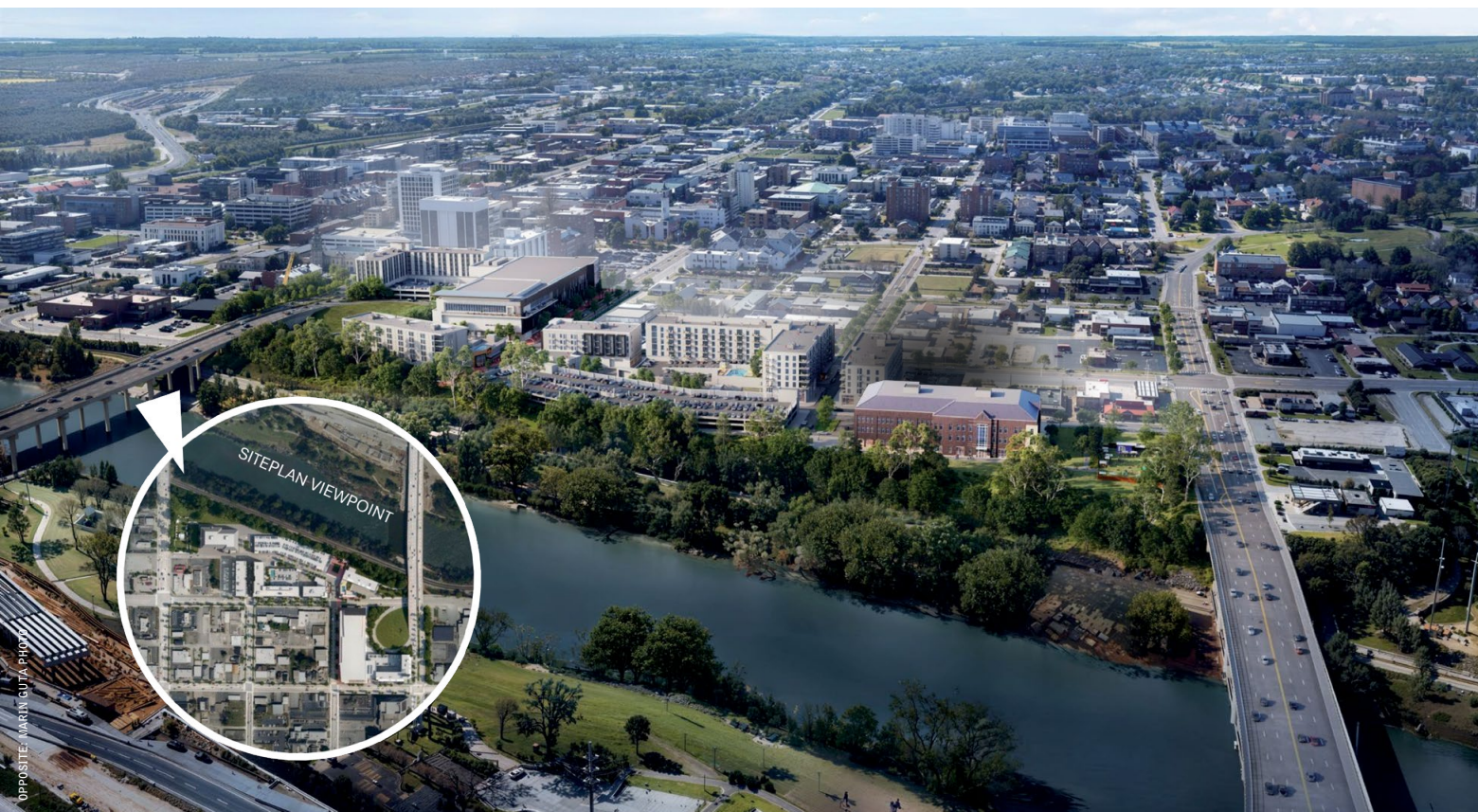
“Developing a riverfront home for the Mercer University School of Medicine seizes a unique opportunity to construct a stunning

new facility designed to meet the needs of a growing student population with 21st century technology at an important gateway into Macon,” President **William D. Underwood** said.

The medical school has grown dramatically since it opened in 1982, more than doubling the number of M.D. students from 96 to 240 and adding Ph.D. and master’s-level programs.

“More and better instructional and research space is required to accommodate a growing number of students, scientists, technicians and graduate students, as well >>

An artist’s rendering shows what the proposed \$400 million public-private development in downtown Macon might look like, with the Macon-Bibb County Convention Center and hotel in the top left and the mixed-use hotel, residential, retail, offices and Mercer School of Medicine building across Riverside Drive bordering the Ocmulgee River.



SACRED SPECTRUM PROJECT

as more advanced equipment and technology,” said School of Medicine Dean **Jean R. Sumner**, M.D., F.A.C.P.

Replacing the existing facility on the main campus would be difficult due to space limitations, Underwood said, and relocating the medical school downtown will create an opportunity to have a transformative impact on the broader Macon community.

“It will attract related residential, retail and hotel development to what will become a vibrant and attractive new entry point into downtown Macon,” he said. “The overall impact on downtown Macon will be transformational in building on the highly successful revitalization efforts of the past decade.”

Macon-Bibb County Mayor **Lester Miller**, CLAS ’91, LAW ’94, said the development will tie in directly with the

“More and better instructional and research space is required to accommodate a growing number of students, scientists, technicians and graduate students, as well as more advanced equipment and technology.”

— **Dr. Jean R. Sumner**



county’s work at the site of the demolished hotel on First Street and the East Bank development along Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard.

“Our city along the Ocmulgee River and First Street is about to undergo a major transformation,” he said.

In addition to housing the new medical school facility, plans for the Mercer property include apartments, an office building, retail space, parking decks and a hotel. Across Riverside Drive, the city is planning to construct a new convention center and hotel on the site of the former Ramada Plaza, which was demolished in January.

Site work is expected to begin in late 2025, with construction of the medical school facility to begin in the second quarter of 2026. ♦

TOWNSEND SCHOOL OF MUSIC AWARDED \$1.25M GRANT TO ENHANCE WORSHIP FOR NEURODIVERGENT CHILDREN THROUGH MUSIC AND ARTS



Townsend School of Music was awarded a \$1.25 million, five-year grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. to help establish the The Sacred Spectrum Project: Enhancing Worship for Neurodivergent Children Through Music and the Arts. The project aims to study the experiences and needs of neurodivergent (ND) children in worship to enhance their worship experiences through music and art.

The program is funded through Lilly Endowment’s Nurturing Children Through Worship and Prayer Initiative. The national initiative aims to support faith-based organizations as they help children grow in faith and deepen their relationships with God.

Dr. Nathan Myrick, assistant professor of sacred music, was the lead faculty member on the proposal and is serving as grant director. He said the project's goal is to develop educational resources for congregations to better include neurodivergent children in worship.

"Despite calls for greater inclusion [of neurodivergent children], there is uncertainty about how to achieve this," said Dr. Myrick. "The project will explore how neurodivergent children respond to liturgical elements like music and develop practical guides for inclusion."

Dr. Myrick, an ethnomusicologist and theological ethicist, studies how music facilitates human flourishing in religious and quasi-religious communities and says he is fascinated by the ways musical activity forms and frames human relationships.

"There are roughly 5 million North Americans whose neurological abilities differ from typical expectations, but remarkably little has been published, and therefore broadly known, about their needs and experiences — to say nothing of children," said Dr. Myrick. "Perhaps, we may learn by listening to what ND children are saying."

Mercer is one of 170 organizations funded through three rounds of the initiative, which was launched in 2022. The grants are funding efforts to help organizations that serve congregations in a broad spectrum of Christian traditions develop new and/or enhance existing programs as they design worship services and prayer practices that more intentionally and fully engage children.

"I am excited about this opportunity for the Townsend School of Music," said **Dr. Gary Gerber**, dean of the School of Music. "There is such a need for the study and

"Despite calls for greater inclusion [of neurodivergent children], there is uncertainty about how to achieve this."

— Dr. Nathan Myrick



Dr. Myrick



Dr. Gerber

subsequent development of worship materials and resources for neurodivergent children. This grant will enable the School to conduct research to develop these materials, which will enhance and nurture the worship experiences of neurodivergent children." ♦

The McCorkle Music Building houses the Townsend School of Music.



BEST VALUE, NETHERTON HONORED, NEW POLICE CHIEF

MERCER NAMED A BEST VALUE COLLEGE BY PRINCETON REVIEW

Mercer is one of the nation's Best Value Colleges for 2025, combining exceptional education and career preparation at a relatively affordable price, according to The Princeton Review®. The Princeton Review chose 209 schools for its 2025 list, released in June. Mercer was also ranked No. 15 on the list of Top 20 Best Schools for Making an Impact (private schools) based on community service opportunities, student government, sustainability efforts and on-campus student engagement.



TRUSTEES APPROVE NEW DEGREE PROGRAMS

Mercer's Board of Trustees, meeting on the Cecil B. Day Graduate and Professional Campus in Atlanta in April, approved new degree programs in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, School of Music and School of Medicine. Trustees approved two new School of Music degree programs that will be based in a new Institute for Music Production: A Bachelor of Music in production and a Bachelor of Science in music business. The Institute, which will be physically housed at Mercer Music at Capricorn in downtown Macon, will also administer certificate programs in music production. A Bachelor of Arts in multidisciplinary studies offered in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences was also approved by the board, and the School of Medicine was given approval to begin a partnership with the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences to offer an undergraduate Accelerated Mercer Medical Scholars program. The degree track will be offered as an option in the Bachelor of Science in biomedical sciences degree.



President William D. Underwood, Dr. James S. Netherton and Executive Vice President Dr. Penny L. Elkins at Dr. Netherton's retirement reception.

EXECUTIVE VP FOR ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE DR. JAMES S. NETHERTON RETIRES

Dr. James S. Netherton, who served as Mercer University's executive vice president for administration and finance since 2007, retired June 30. Dr. Netherton oversaw the treasurer's office, budget and analysis, human resources, compensation and benefits, physical plant, information technology, auxiliary services, Mercer Police, the Mercer Engineering Research Center, intercollegiate athletics, and the University Center. More than 40 major facility projects were undertaken during his tenure, including a transformation of the

Macon campus, significant additions to the Atlanta campus, an expansion of the Savannah School of Medicine campus, and construction of the School of Medicine campus in Columbus.

Julia T. Davis, who started as an auditor at Mercer in 1996 and most recently served as vice president for finance and treasurer, was promoted to senior vice president for finance and administration, effective July 1.



Davis

UNIVERSITY APPOINTS FIRST FEMALE CHIEF OF POLICE

The University appointed **Haley Beckham** as its first female chief of police, effective June 1. She succeeded Chief **Gary Mills**, who retired after serving in the position since January 2024. Beckham most recently served as manager of the school safety section at the Georgia Public Safety Training Center in Forsyth. She has more than 15 years of law enforcement experience and brings a deep commitment to public safety, student well-being and collaborative policing within academic communities.

Haley Beckham was appointed the University's first female chief of police.



MERCER DESIGNATED A NATIONAL CENTER OF ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE IN CYBER DEFENSE

Mercer has been designated as a National Center of Academic Excellence in Cyber Defense by the National Centers of Academic Excellence in Cybersecurity program for Cyber Defense that is administered by the National Security Agency. Valid through 2029, the prestigious designation reflects a rigorous evaluation of Mercer's Bachelor of Science in cybersecurity program, the department of computer science and the Center for Cyber Outreach, Research and Education.

MERCER RANKED AS NO. 1 MILITARY FRIENDLY® SCHOOL FOR THIRD STRAIGHT YEAR

For the third straight year, Mercer is ranked as a No. 1 Military Friendly® School for the 2025-2026 award year. The rankings place the University at the top of 537 institutions nationwide recognized for their military and veteran programs and initiatives. Mercer first received the Military Friendly® designation in 2017 and has earned rankings in one of the four exemplary categories — Top 10 Gold, Gold, Silver or Bronze — every year since.



MERCER COMMENCEMENTS

MERCER CONFERRED DEGREES TO MORE THAN 2,600 GRADUATES AT FOUR COMMENCEMENTS IN MAY

Mercer conferred bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees to more than 2,600 students participating in four commencements during May in Macon and Atlanta. The total number of students meeting the requirements for graduation exceeded 3,000. Commencement speakers included state Sen. **John F. Kennedy**, BUS '87, LAW '90, for the School of Medicine; Managing Partner with Strickland Debrow LLP **Vernon M. Strickland**, LAW '06, for Mercer Law School; Board of Trustees Chair **Thomas P. (Tom) Bishop**, CLAS '82, LAW '85, in Atlanta and Macon;



President Underwood (left) with state Sen. John F. Kennedy (center), who received an honorary Doctor of Laws degree during the medical school ceremony, and MUSM Dean Dr. Jean Sumner (right)

and graduating senior **Shannon Dougherty** in Macon.

The University also conferred an honorary Doctor of Laws degree to Sen. Kennedy during the medical school ceremony, and an honorary Doctor of Humanities degree to **Zelma Redding**, founder and president of the Otis Redding Foundation, during the Macon ceremony.

Due to inclement weather, the Macon commencement ceremony was moved from Five Star Stadium to the Macon Coliseum.



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SCHOLARSHIPS, FELLOWSHIPS, HONORS

SCHOLARSHIPS FELLOWSHIPS & HONORS

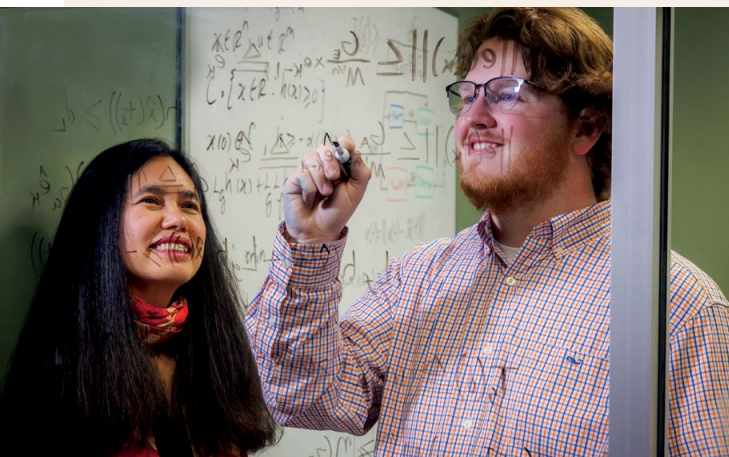
ANOTHER RECORD YEAR

Juniors **Wesley Kinney**, **Isabella Phillips** and **Ainsley Westbrook** were recipients of the Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship, the nation's most prestigious scholarship for undergraduates in science, mathematics and engineering. Mercer was the only school in Georgia with engineering winners and the only school nationwide with more than two winners in engineering. The students were selected from a pool of 1,350 undergraduates nominated by 446 institutions to be awarded scholarships for the 2025-26 academic year. Kinney, Phillips and Westbrook bring Mercer's total winners to 23 since 2013, solidifying its position as

THREE JUNIORS NAMED GOLDWATER SCHOLARS

one of Georgia's top producers of Goldwater Scholars.

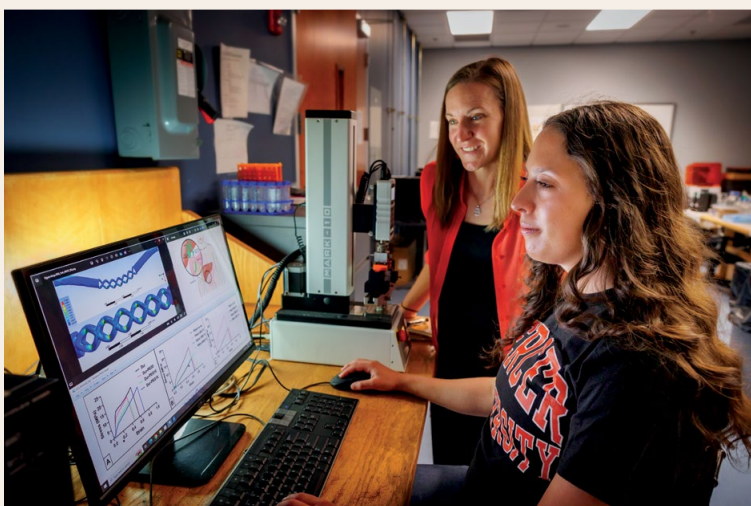
From Peachtree City, Kinney is a double-major in electrical engineering and mathematics. He is a Stamps Scholar, in the Engineering Honors Program and is a member of Tau Beta Pi engineering honor society and Beta Upsilon Chi fraternity. From Newnan, Phillips is a neuroscience major and is a member of the University Honors Program and the Nu Rho Psi honor society. From Cincinnati, Westbrook is a biomedical engineering major, a recipient of the engineering honor society Tau Beta Pi Scholarship and a member of the Alpha Delta Pi sorority.



Wesley Kinney, right, works in the lab of Dr. Makhin Thitsa, associate professor of electrical and computer engineering.



Dr. Katie Northcutt, professor of biology and director of the neuroscience program, left, and Goldwater Scholar Isabella Phillips



Ainsley Westbrook, right, works in the lab of Dr. Joanna Thomas, associate professor of biomedical engineering.

SCHOLARSHIPS, FELLOWSHIPS, HONORS

OFFICE OF GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT AWARDS 22 SCHOLARSHIPS FOR STUDENTS TO STUDY ABROAD

The Office of Global Engagement has awarded its latest round of Global Leader Scholarships (GLS), providing 22 students with a total of \$51,000 to participate in study abroad programs during the 2025 summer and fall semesters. The GLS program was launched in 2019 to support students with financial need in pursuing long-term study abroad opportunities at the University. The recipients are **Clifford Alford, Maria Bautista, Xiya Burton, Zachary Carman, Nancy Cifuentes-Martinez, Willow Crabtree, Giang Doan, Megan Fachisthers, Lily Gardiner, Alisha Lalani, Ilona Lively, Cristian Martindale, Kristen McLeod, Madyson McManigle, Sreeja Pandiri, Madeleine Pardue, Aaryan Patel, Anna Stein, Madeline Stewart, Carolina Stover, Ria Tamrakar** and **Hannah Walker**.



JUNIOR NAMED NEWMAN CIVIC FELLOW

Junior **Harris Wallace** is one of 142 student civic leaders from 38 states, Washington, D.C., and Mexico named a Newman Civic Fellow for 2025-2026. The program recognizes and supports student public problem solvers, and fellows are nominated by their president or chancellor based on their potential for public leadership and their work with communities. Wallace is in the University Honors Program, a Stamps Scholar, a democracy fellow with Mercer Votes, president of Mercer Young Democrats, associate chief justice for the Office of Student Conduct Resolution and student assistant with the Center for Career and Professional Development.



Wallace, CLAS '27

RECENT GRADUATE NAMED PHI KAPPA PHI FELLOW

Carter Murdaugh, a 2025 graduate, was named one of 48 Phi Kappa Phi Fellows nationwide and received \$8,500 for his first year of graduate study at Florida State University. He was initiated into Phi Kappa Phi earlier this year and majored in biochemistry and molecular biology with a minor in music. He was also a member of Phi Kappa Phi, Gamma Sigma Epsilon chemistry honor society and Beta Beta Beta biological honor society and was awarded the Franklin James Scholarship in Chemistry.



Murdaugh, CLAS '25

MERCERIAN SELECTED FOR PRESTIGIOUS FULBRIGHT AWARD

Class of 2025's

Zainab Shaik was selected to receive a prestigious Fulbright U.S. Student Award for the 2025-26 academic year. The program places grantees in schools overseas

to supplement local English language instruction. Shaik was awarded a Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship to Senegal. Clinical psychology doctoral student **Victoria J. Casey** was selected as an alternate, and five other students and recent graduates were named semifinalists during this award cycle, including Class of 2025 philosophy and French double-major **Papa Guerrero**; second-year clinical mental health counseling master's student **Juliana Krueger**; Class of 2025 mechanical engineering major **Savannah Richie**; Class of 2025 neuroscience major **Genevieve Smith**; and Class of 2025 music and history double-major **Daniel Stein**.



Shaik, CLAS '25

46 STUDENTS INDUCTED INTO PHI BETA KAPPA SOCIETY

Forty-six students were inducted into the prestigious Phi Beta Kappa Society by Mercer's Zeta of Georgia Chapter for the 2024-2025 academic year. It is the largest class of inductees since Mercer's chapter was established in 2016. The invitation process is considered one of the most selective in the nation. Prospective Phi Beta Kappa inductees are usually seniors among the top 10% of their graduating class who have completed a broad range of liberal arts and sciences coursework, including foreign language study and mathematics. Exceptional students meeting the Society's requirements may also be considered as juniors. The following students make up Mercer's 10th induction class:

Aderonke Esther Adewumi, Stephanie Alexandra Amendola, McKayla M. Ayettey, Chase Daniel Baker, Aylah Maresa Birks, Isabella Ann Bordenca, Bailey Leonor Byrdsong, Zachary Thomas Carman, Reema Kalpesh Chande, Evangeline A. Chidi-Maha, Tatiana Frances Cobos, Emma Charlotte Davis, Dale Spencer Degonia, Ian Gregory DeRosso, William Parker Dragoin, Aurora Leigh Estabrook, Haven Elisabeth Estabrook, Rafael Garcia Chirino, Grace Nealie Gasaway, Ashleigh L. Gray, Anna Callista Hale, Nyny Trieu Hoang, Devin Myles Jones, Kylla Michelle Justice, Harumi Carolina Kano Torres, Mokshitha Katkoori, Janhavi Gurudatta Kulkarni, Emily Anne Lewis, Ashley L. Morales-Lopez, Carter Lane Murdaugh, Alana F. Murray, Nicole Evelyn Nelson, Naluchi Bernadette Okonkwo, Davis Heejoon Park, Niyati Mukesh Patel, Jana Alyssa Richardson, Mandia Patricia Roberts, Albert Jason Rother, Zainab Shaik, Genevieve Evelynne Smith, Shreya Sudakar, Emma Grace Teng, Jason Tha Siam Lian, Bryce R. Williams, Jalisa Marie Williams and Ruth A. Windsor.



SCHOLARSHIPS, FELLOWSHIPS, HONORS

SEVENTEEN STUDENTS SELECTED TO STUDY ABROAD AS GILMAN SCHOLARS

Seventeen students were chosen during the spring 2025 selection cycle to receive a total of \$47,500 in funding to study abroad through the prestigious Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship program. The recipients are **Maria Bautista, Madeline Brown, Jennifer Cruz, Jaden Groce, Luke Hand, Alexis Hoard, Adam Le, Maya Lee, Brandy Leyva Nava, Gregory Midura, Katelyn Ngo, Chelsea Smith, Sneha Timsina, Uchechi Uwazie, Ryan Vo, Hannah Walker and Kailyn Walker.**



SENIOR NAMED 2025 PHI BETA KAPPA KEY INTO PUBLIC SERVICE SCHOLAR

Senior **Latoya Bartley**, a history and anthropology double-major with a global health studies minor, was awarded the Phi Beta Kappa Key into Public Service scholarship, which recognizes 20 exceptional liberal arts and sciences students with a demonstrated interest in pursuing careers in local, state and federal government. Scholars were chosen from more than 700 rising college juniors and senior applicants attending Phi Beta Kappa chapter institutions across the nation. Bartley received a \$5,000 undergraduate scholarship and participated in an educational conference in Washington, D.C.



Bartley, CLAS '26

SENIOR NAMED SNYDER SCHOLAR FOR EXCELLENCE IN CHEMISTRY

Senior **Abby Williamson**, a chemistry major with a minor in mathematics from Newnan, was named a 2025 Snyder Scholar for Excellence in Chemistry and spent 10 weeks at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign working with their chemistry department. The Snyder Scholar program, established by Harold R. Snyder, recognizes undergraduate students from across the country who have an interest in organic chemistry. The fellowship provides a \$5,000 award for the 10-week stay.



Williamson, CLAS '26

JUNIOR AWARDED CDC LEWIS SCHOLARS POSITION

Junior **Ellen Jones**, from Lake Wales, Florida, was awarded a CDC John R. Lewis Undergraduate Public Health Scholars position at the University of South Dakota Center for the Prevention of Child Maltreatment this past summer. The CDC's Office of Health Equity partners with seven institutions to deliver the Lewis Scholars Program. Jones is a Stamps Scholar and in the University Honors Program. She is also vice president of chapter wellness for Alpha Gamma Delta, director of scholarship for Mercer's Panhellenic Council, in the swim club and serves as a study abroad ambassador.



From left, Ellen Jones, CHP '27, and Campus Life Executive Director Meredith Keating White

ALUMNI & STUDENT HONORS

ALUMNI & STUDENT HONORS

MERCER WINS 2025 CFA INSTITUTE SOUTHERN CLASSIC RESEARCH CHALLENGE

For the third time in six years, Mercer won the 2025 Chartered Financial Analyst Institute Southern Classic Research Challenge, which features aspiring investment professionals representing colleges and universities from Georgia, South Carolina and Alabama. The Mercer team won the cWhallenge in 2021 and 2022 and placed second in 2020, 2023 and 2024. The winning team included School of Business 2025 graduates **Shannon Dougherty**, **Alina A. Noorani** and **Luke E. Hand**, and senior **Dylan J. Mitchell**. The students were led by faculty mentor **Dr. Geoffrey Ngene** and industry mentor Aaron Foresman of Crawford Investment Counsel.



Mercer's team won the 2025 CFA Institute Southern Classic Research Challenge held at Kennesaw State University. From left, Dr. Geoffrey M. Ngene, Dylan Mitchell, Alina Noorani and Shannon Dougherty. Not pictured, Luke Hand.

TWO MERCERIANS APPOINTED TO REPORT FOR AMERICA

May 2025 graduates **Amélie Horace** and **Megan Jackson** are the first Mercerians appointed to Report for America corps, a national service program that places talented, emerging journalists in local newsrooms to report on under-covered topics and communities across the U.S. and its territories. Horace joined WUSF in Tampa, Florida, as an audience engagement producer. Jackson joined the *Marietta Daily Journal* as a city government reporter in suburban Atlanta.



Horace, CLAS '25



Jackson, CLAS '25

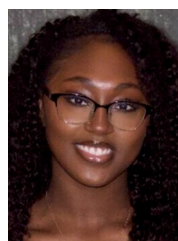
REPORT FOR AMERICA

ALUMNI SELECTED FOR PEACE CORPS SERVICE

Laura Morrissey was selected to serve in the Peace Corps in Indonesia, and December 2024 graduate **Naahemaa A. Osei-Tutu** was selected to serve in the Peace Corps in the Dominican Republic. Morrissey, a global health studies major with minors in Spanish and sociology, is serving as an English teacher and teacher trainer. Osei-Tutu, a global health studies and Spanish double-major, is spending 27 months as a youth development coordinator.



Morrissey, CLAS '25



Osei-Tutu, CLAS '24



Peace Corps



MERCER UNIVERSITY PRESS

celebrates **46th** year
of publishing excellence

Publishing authors from across the United States, **Mercer University Press** proudly offers a new season filled with essays, fiction, poetry, biography, literary criticism, philosophy and religion.

Fall/Winter 2025 season highlighted titles include: ***More than a President: Sundays with Jimmy Carter*** edited by Andrew Greer, select Sunday School lessons spanning five decades taught by Jimmy Carter; ***Charlotte Rowe's Journal: A Woman's Missionary Career in British India, 1815-1822*** edited by Reid S. Trulson, the newly-found journal of America's first appointed woman missionary; ***I Am a Georgia Girl: The Life of Lucille Selig Frank, 1888-1957*** by Ann Hite, an intimate portrait of the young wife of Leo Frank, who spent the rest of her life trying to prove Leo's innocence; ***A Merry Chatty Christmas: A Stella Bankwell Story***, by bestselling author and syndicated columnist Ronda Rich, a heartwarming story of Stella and friends as they celebrate Christmas in the north Georgia mountains; ***The Deliverance of Barker McRae*** by Stacia Pelletier, a novel set against the backdrop of the Georgia Gold Rush that weaves a tale of trespass, frontier religion, fathers and daughters, and friendships between unlikely companions; and ***Deceptive Speed: Eddie Lee Ivery's Run Through Tech, Titledown, and Temptation*** by Jerry Gentry, the compelling story of Ivery's rise to athletic stardom, his fall into drug addiction, and his ultimate recovery.

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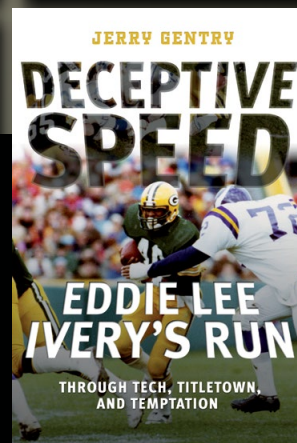
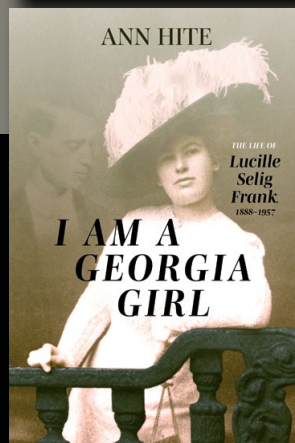
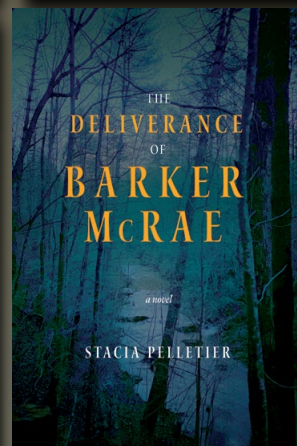
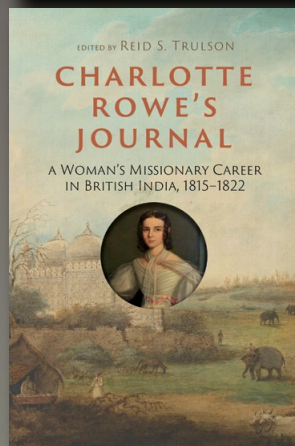
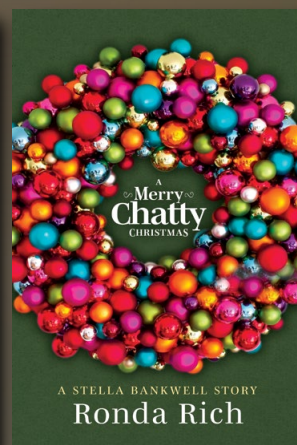
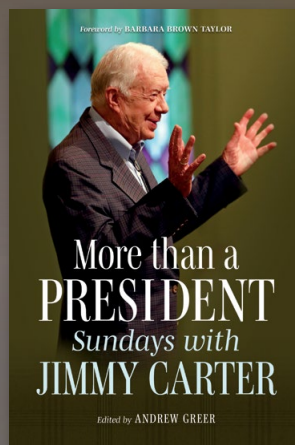
35th Saturday, Dec. 13
10:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.
InterContinental Buckhead Atlanta

Authors Luncheon

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AUTHORS APPEARING include Emily Carpenter, Carolyn Newton Curry, Carmen Agra Deedy, John T. Edge, Andrew Greer, Ann Hite, R. William Johnstone, Thomas Maier, Stacia Pelletier, Jennifer Pitt, William Rawlings, Ronda Rich and more. For additional information, email steele_tn@mercer.edu.



FACULTY & STAFF HONORS & RECOGNITION

PROFESSOR MAKES ENGINEERING ACADEMY'S '40 UNDER 40' LIST

Assistant Professor of Environmental and Civil Engineering and Director of The Cecil Day Family Center for International Groundwater Innovation **Dr. Adaline Buerck** was selected by the American Academy of Environmental Engineers and Scientists for its 40 Under 40 Recognition Program for rising stars in the field. Dr. Buerck is passionate about water innovations that improve the lives of others, and she's been able to tackle that at the local and international level since joining Mercer's faculty in 2022.

Dr. Adaline Buerck, center, works with students on water quality testing in the Dominican Republic in 2023.



Dr. Adaline Buerck, fifth from left, and the Mercer On Mission 2024 Belize team



FACULTY, STAFF

LONGTIME PROFESSOR RECEIVES JOE AND JEAN HENDRICKS EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AWARD

Jordan “Jody” Blanke, Ernest L. Baskin Jr. Distinguished Professor of Computer Science and Law in the School of Business, is this year’s recipient of the Joe and Jean Hendricks Excellence in Teaching Award, which was presented at the Atlanta commencement on May 10. The annual award recognizes a full-time teacher who best exemplifies the qualities that distinguished siblings Dr. Joseph “Papa Joe” Hendricks and Dr. Jean Hendricks as teachers and mentors to generations of Mercer students. Over his 40 years at Mercer, Blanke has taught a wide variety of graduate and undergraduate courses in computer science, law and ethics. He regularly teaches legal, ethical and regulatory environment of business; legal and ethical issues affecting big data; privacy law and policy; technology and the law; and employment law.



Blanke

JUNOD, McCREANOR HONORED ON ALL-SOUTHERN CONFERENCE FACULTY AND STAFF TEAM

Michael Junod, director of the University Center, and **Dr. Philip McCreanor**, professor and chair of the environmental and civil engineering department, were named to the All-Southern Conference Faculty and Staff Team by The Southern Conference. The All-SoCon Faculty and Staff Team consists of two individuals from each of the 10 member institutions who share the common characteristics of demonstrated service to the institution and contributions to campus life and the local community.



Junod



Dr. McCreanor

DIRECTOR OF VISIONARY STUDENT PANEL RECOGNIZED FOR CAMPUS AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Associate Director of Engaged Learning **Lauren Shinholster** and her Visionary Student Panel program were selected for Campus Compact’s Excellence in Civic and Community Engagement Programming Award. The national award recognizes initiatives that use on-campus civic and community engagement to address meaningful areas of need and make effective and long-lasting positive changes in communities. The Visionary Student Panel invites undergraduate students to present ideas for independent projects that engage in highly impactful community and civic engagement work and

provides them with the skills and funding to implement them. Shinholster also received the 2025 Gulf South Summit Award for Outstanding Practitioner Contributions to Service-Learning in Higher Education.



From left, Dr. Mary K. Grant, Campus Compact board of directors; Lauren Shinholster; and Bobbie Laur, Campus Compact president, at Campus Compact’s Excellence in Civic and Community Engagement Programming Award ceremony

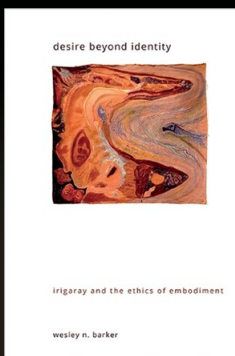


Dr. Carol Bokros, left, director of pre-health professional programs, receives the Mike MacCarthy Mentorship Award from Johnna Wright, coordinator of fellowships and scholarships, at the student recognition banquet on April 15.

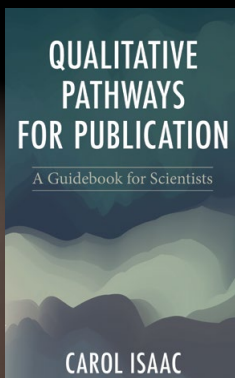
PRE-HEALTH ADVISOR AWARDED MIKE MACCARTHY MENTORSHIP AWARD

Dr. Carol Bokros, director of pre-health professional programs, received the Mike MacCarthy Mentorship Award during the student recognition banquet on April 15. As of spring 2025, Mercer had more than 1,000 students across 18 available pre-health tracks. Dr. Bokros offers students one-on-one advising appointments, and in spring 2024, she launched the pre-health ambassadors program to connect students on similar paths.

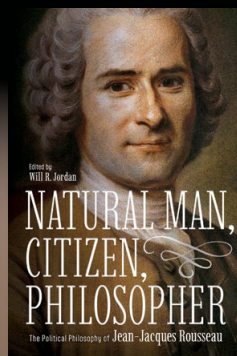
MERCER FACULTY AUTHOR NEW BOOKS



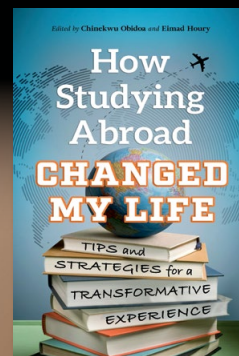
DR. WESLEY BARKER, associate professor of religious studies, published the book *Desire Beyond Identity: Irigaray and the Ethics of Embodiment*.



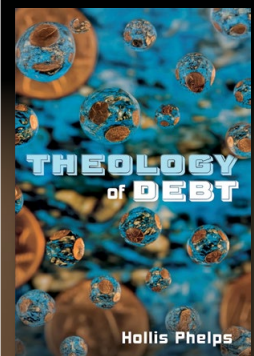
DR. CAROL ISAAC, associate professor of educational leadership, published the book *Qualitative Pathways for Publication: A Guidebook for Scientists*. A concise, nuts-and-bolts encapsulation of the essentials qualitative researchers in STEM need to know to get their work accepted and published, written by a longtime qualitative methodologist and qualitative reviewer for academic journals.



DR. WILL JORDAN, professor of political science and co-director of the Center for America's Founding Principles, edited the latest edition in the A.V. Elliott Conference Series — *Natural Man, Citizen, Philosopher: The Political Philosophy of Jean-Jacques Rousseau*.



DR. CHINEKWU OBIDOA, associate professor of global health studies and Africana studies, and **DR. EIMAD HOURY**, professor emeritus of political science, edited *How Studying Abroad Changed My Life*. Released by Mercer University Press, the book is a collection of essays/stories of Mercer alumni and faculty and their experiences through study abroad.



DR. HOLLIS PHELPS, associate professor of interdisciplinary studies, published the book *Theology of Debt* with Cascade Press. The book focuses on the various ways in which debt functions at theological and moral levels.



A L E G A C Y O F S T E W A R D S H I P

President Underwood's Transformative Years at Mercer

BY LARRY D. BRUMLEY

FULFILLING A PLEDGE HE MADE WHEN ELECTED AS MERCER UNIVERSITY'S 18TH PRESIDENT IN DECEMBER 2005, WILLIAM D. UNDERWOOD WILL CONCLUDE HIS ACADEMIC CAREER WHERE IT BEGAN — IN THE CLASSROOM.

UNDERWOOD INFORMED THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES AT ITS APRIL MEETING ON THE ATLANTA CAMPUS THAT HE IS STEPPING DOWN AS PRESIDENT TO RETURN TO FULL-TIME TEACHING IN 2026. HE WILL HOLD THE TOMMY MALONE DISTINGUISHED CHAIR IN TRIAL ADVOCACY AT MERCER LAW SCHOOL.

A PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH COMMITTEE CHAIRED BY FORMER BOARD CHAIR AND CURRENT TRUSTEE RICHARD A. (DOC) SCHNEIDER HAS BEEN TASKED WITH IDENTIFYING AND RECOMMENDING MERCER'S 19TH PRESIDENT. CONTINUED ON PAGE 22 >>





President Underwood with Cricket
in the President's Home

With help from the group Friends of Tattnall Square Park, the city of Macon, the Knight Foundation and volunteers, Mercer worked to refurbish Tattnall Square Park. In 2015, the Tattnall Square Park Fountain, modeled after one that once served as the park's centerpiece, was dedicated.



*“BEING RESPONSIBLE FOR THE STEWARDSHIP
OF THIS SPECIAL PLACE — FOR PRESERVING IT
FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS — HAS BEEN THE
PROFESSIONAL HONOR OF A LIFETIME.”*

— President William D. Underwood



Underwood

Continued from page 18

"I could feel Mercer's soul the first time I visited campus. Being responsible for the stewardship of this special place — for preserving it for future generations — has been the professional honor of a lifetime," Underwood said. "I am grateful to the talented and supportive board members who entrusted me with this responsibility. I am thankful for the strong and stable senior team members who have been by my side. And I am especially grateful for the students, faculty and staff who have inspired me. Now I look forward to achieving my long-held ambition of stepping back up to the classroom."

Underwood has led the University during a period of dynamic growth and development. Enrollment has increased by more than 30% to more than 9,200 students enrolled in 12 schools and colleges.

"President Underwood's work transformed Mercer into a national research university and a global force for bettering the lives of those we serve," said Board of Trustees Chair **Thomas P. (Tom) Bishop**, CLAS '82, LAW '85. "His efforts updated and expanded all our campuses in ways that helped the University and their surrounding communities. That vision for growing Mercer also helped advance the redevelopment of downtown Macon, most recently with the announcement of the new medical school campus project on Riverside Drive. We are so fortunate for President Underwood's tenure."

"Student learning and teaching are at the core of President Underwood's leadership ethos of this university. His ongoing engagement with students — his embracing their aspirations, listening to their challenges, and seeking to create an environment that enables their thriving — has informed his presidential decision-making," said **Cathy Callaway Adams**, TIFT '81, chair of the Board of Trustees Executive Committee and former chair of the board. "From construction projects to new curriculum offerings to athletics to gathering spaces to music and arts opportunities to study abroad and more, President Underwood has established University strategy and measured success by its impact to students and how effectively Mercer is equipping them to lead lives of service and purpose. We are grateful his impact will continue with his return to his first love of classroom teaching."

Prior to becoming Mercer's 18th president, Underwood served at Baylor >>

"President Underwood has been an exceptional leader throughout his more than 19 years of service to the Mercer community. His genuine care for students was evident during my time working with him as Student Government Association president and has remained clear in my experience as a staff member. His steady leadership has left a lasting impact on our university, and I deeply admire the example he has set, one that continues to inspire me in my journey as a Mercerian."

Adam Penland, CLAS '20 and '21

SGA President, 2019-20 and 2020-21

Assistant Director of Campus Life

"When Bill Underwood stepped onto Mercer University's campus in 2006 as its 18th president, he brought with him a welcoming, refreshing, well-established set of 'old school values,' like honesty, integrity, decency and transparency, which has allowed the University to grow and prosper. It has become a successful, prestigious R2 school while maintaining and enhancing its already strong reputation, within Georgia and the South, for strong academics, for fostering student success, for a commitment to the service of the entire state of Georgia, while promoting a commitment to 'Changing the World.' There has also been an increase in faculty scholarship, as well as the robustness of the scholarship. President Underwood has been a very good president by any metric!"

Dr. Kedrick Hartfield

Professor of Mathematics and University Marshal

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

"As Bill Underwood closes this chapter of his career, I characterize his many, many accomplishments with the term 'transformational leadership.' He has facilitated a major transformation of Mercer's footprint from the campus grounds ... to neighborhoods ... to across the globe. As 2024 president of the President's Club and as an alum, I marvel at his deep commitment, devotion and love for the Mercer family and am pleased that he will continue to be a part of the Mercer family."

Karla Heath-Sands, CLAS '84

Past Chair, President's Club

The Underwood Years



December 2005

The Mercer Board of Trustees unanimously elects William D. Underwood as the University's 18th president during a meeting on the historic Penfield campus.



July 2006

President Underwood takes office.



July 2006 — **Townsend School of Music is established**, absorbing the former Department of Music in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and the Robert McDuffie Center for Strings is founded as a special institute within the School of Music.

April 2007

Mercer and the city of Macon announce establishment of the **College Hill Corridor Commission**, formalizing a student-designed initiative to revitalize the two-mile corridor that connects the Macon campus to downtown Macon.



Summer 2007

Mercer On Mission is launched, with 38 students and six faculty members deployed to Kenya, Guatemala and Brazil.

MERCER ON MISSION
Crossing cultures. Changing lives.



Summer 2007 —

Mercer Athletic Foundation is established to generate additional funds to support Mercer athletic programs and student-athletes.



University as interim president and held the prestigious Leon Jaworski Chair at the Baylor School of Law. In 2004, he was named a Master Teacher at Baylor — at the time one of only 21 in the institution's history to be so designated — in recognition of extraordinary classroom teaching over an extended period.

Living Out Mercer's Mission

Presidential transitions are rare at Mercer. The University has had only three presidents over the last 65 years.

When Underwood, 69, assumed the presidency from **Dr. R. Kirby Godsey**, Mercer's longest-serving president at 27 years, on July 1, 2006, he took stewardship of an institution that was on the cusp of celebrating the 175th anniversary of its founding.

It also was in the final stages of winding down its historic relationship with the Georgia Baptist Convention, whose leaders in 1833 founded the institution. The two entities had come to the conclusion that they were incompatible and decided to part ways.

The son of a Baptist minister, Underwood knew that Mercer's soul was rooted in its commitment to religious and intellectual freedom and embracing the worth and potential of every student. From the outset of his administration, he sought to ensure that the University's soul was nurtured and preserved for future generations and cultivated in new ways.

In the spring of 2006, as president-elect, he charged University Minister **Dr. Craig McMahan** with creating a program that would combine service, research and study abroad to expand the University's reach around the world and deploy the talents, skills and knowledge of students and faculty to improve the human condition.

A year later, in 2007, Mercer On Mission was established and sent 38 students and six faculty to Guatemala, Kenya and Brazil. Over the ensuing years, Mercer students and faculty have fitted more than 23,000 amputees in Vietnam with low-cost prosthetics, invented patented mechanisms to protect artisanal gold miners from dangerous mercury vapor in South America and Central America, designed and installed systems to bring clean water to rural communities in Africa and the Dominican Republic, helped widows from the Rwandan genocide start businesses, and so much more.

Almost 3,000 students and faculty have participated in more than 200

Continued on page 30 >>

“President Underwood came in with a plan to bring Mercer athletics to the national stage.

He has built a top 10 football program after resurrecting the team in 2013 on top of numerous other athletics accomplishments. Tammy and I have been major contributors to the athletic programs due in large part to President Underwood's vision.”

Charlie Cantrell

Mercer Trustee

Past President, Mercer Athletic Foundation

“Bill Underwood has been a consistently clear and leading voice

for the redevelopment of Macon's downtown and urban core. He has led Mercer as a vital partner in the economic transformation of downtown, while serving as chair of NewTown Macon for almost two decades. Bill's vision to establish the academic center of Mercer's School of Medicine in the downtown area underscores his strong commitment to revitalizing the heart of Macon. I believe strengthening the alliance between the University and the community will endure as being among the most important achievements that have defined the legacy of his leadership. It is a great privilege to serve beside him.”

Karen J. Lambert, CLAS '77

President and CEO

Peyton Anderson Foundation

“Since assuming the presidency,

Bill Underwood has guided our university through a period of unprecedented focus, growth and renewal. Under his visionary leadership, the University has not only expanded its academic offerings and research initiatives, but also deepened its commitment to student success, inclusion and community engagement. His leadership continued a legacy of making sure what's good for Mercer is absolutely good for Macon. Mercer is stronger, more dynamic and better positioned for the years ahead because of his steadfast commitment and transformative vision.

Eli Morgan, CLAS '83

Mercer Trustee

Past Chair, Alumni Association Board of Directors

Life Member, President's Club



Fall 2007

The new Science and Engineering Building is dedicated on the Macon campus.



Fall 2008

The School of Medicine expands its two-year clinical campus in Savannah to a full, four-year M.D. program.

Fall 2008 — University begins a yearlong celebration of the 175th anniversary of its founding.



Fall 2012

The Reg Murphy Center for Collaborative Journalism is established with \$4.6 million in funding from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation and \$1 million in funding from the Peyton Anderson Foundation.



Fall 2012 — The Eula Mae and John Baugh Center for Baptist Leadership is established on the Atlanta campus.



Fall 2009

University enrollment surpasses 8,000 students.



Fall 2012 — The Mercer Health Sciences Center, a multi-campus academic health center incorporating the School of Medicine, College of Pharmacy and College of Nursing, is established.



Fall 2012 — The School of Medicine establishes a third- and fourth-year M.D. clinical program in Columbus.



November 2012

Emily Parker Myers Admissions and Welcome Center is dedicated.



November 2012 — Homer and Ruth Drake Field House is dedicated.





August 2013

Mercer resumes competition in intercollegiate football after a 72-year hiatus and sets NCAA Division I record for most wins by a first-year program, finishing the season with a 10-2 record and a perfect 8-0 home record.

August 2013 —

Mercer dedicates Cruz Plaza, a major improvement project that transformed the center of the Macon campus.



July 2014

Mercer joins the prestigious Southern Conference, one of the nation's oldest collegiate athletic conferences.

July 2014 —

After a major renovation, Mercer Medicine opens a new clinical facility in downtown Macon's former Georgia Music Hall of Fame building.



October 2014

On the strength of its growing research profile, Mercer is admitted to the Georgia Research Alliance.



July 2013

The College of Health Professions, the University's 12th academic unit, is established as part of the Mercer Health Sciences Center.



September 2013

University kicks off a year-long commemoration of the 50th anniversary of its integration with a keynote address by former U.N. Ambassador Andrew Young.



March 2014

Men's basketball wins the Atlantic Sun Conference championship and goes on to defeat Duke in the second round of the NCAA tournament.



November 2014

During Homecoming, Mercer launches the \$400 million Aspire fundraising campaign.





During a watch party in Hawkins Arena for the 2014 NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament bracket announcement, President Underwood leads the cheer when it was announced that Mercer would face Duke in the opening round in Raleigh, N.C. The No. 14-seeded Bears would go on to upset the No. 3-seeded Blue Devils 78-71 on March 21 in a game televised nationally on CBS.

UNDERWOOD PRESIDENCY

By the Numbers

Mercer athletic teams
have won

46

regular-season
and tournament
conference
championships.

More than

\$400 million

in new construction and
major renovation projects
were completed on
every Mercer campus.

More than

1,000 beds

of student housing have
been added to the
Macon and
Atlanta campuses.

Mercer has become a

leading producer

of Fulbright, Goldwater, and
Gilman Scholars, as well as one of the
five highest producers among
Peace Corps prep sites.

The University's **financial** strength has never been greater:

- Total assets exceed **\$1 billion**.
- Operating budget has doubled from \$172 million to more than **\$350 million**, and every fiscal year has ended with a budget surplus.
- The recently completed Aspire capital campaign raised more than **\$500 million** for facilities, endowment and operating support.
- Endowment has more than tripled, from \$175 million to almost **\$530 million**.
- Quasi-endowment has grown from \$15 million to more than **\$100 million**.
 - Long-term debt has remained constant at **\$188 million**.
- The University achieved A-grade bond ratings from Moody's Investor Services and Standard and Poor's.

Georgia Trend magazine has named President Underwood

to its **100** Most Influential Georgians list
for **13** consecutive years.

February 2015

Mercer's two-year-old, 10,000-seat stadium, home of Mercer Bears football and lacrosse, is renamed Five Star Stadium in recognition of a multi-million dollar commitment, the largest-ever for Mercer athletics and one of the largest in the University's history, from Five Star Automotive Group.



June 2016

Mercer baseball outfielder Kyle Lewis wins the Golden Spikes Award, collegiate baseball's most prestigious honor, in addition to being named Baseball America's National Player of the Year. Lewis would go on to be a first-round draft choice of the Seattle Mariners and earned unanimous American League Rookie of the Year honors in 2020.



February 2017

Mercer baseball christens its new home, OrthoGeorgia Park, with a walk-off 6-5 win over the Georgia Bulldogs before an overflow crowd of thousands.



August 2017

Twenty-five Mercer M.D. students are awarded the inaugural Physicians for Rural Georgia Scholarships, which cover 85% to 100% of medical school tuition. The program is later named for Mercer alumnus and then-Gov. Nathan Deal, who advocated for \$35 million in state funding to endow the program.



March 2015

A \$10 million commitment from Macon resident Jo Phelps Fabian establishes the Jo Phelps Fabian Center for Musical Excellence in the Townsend School of Music.



April 2015

First Mercer Theatre performances are held in the renovated Tattnell Square Center for the Arts on the Macon campus.



Fall 2015

Mercer awarded a chapter of Phi Beta Kappa, the nation's oldest and most prestigious academic honor society.



September 2016

Legacy Hall, a new freshman residence hall on the Macon campus, is dedicated.



January 2018

Classes begin in the new Spearman C. Godsey Science Center on the Macon campus, the largest academic facility project in the University's history.



Underwood

Continued from page 24

Mercer On Mission projects around the world since 2007. Generous support from donors including the Eula Mae and John Baugh Foundation, the Sheridan Foundation and hundreds of Mercer alumni and friends, have underwritten the costs of the program, so students only pay tuition for coursework associated with the projects. All their travel and in-country expenses, as well as funds for equipment and supplies, are covered by gifts.

“Through Mercer On Mission, members of our community live out the imperative of loving our neighbors as ourselves,” Underwood said. “Hundreds of students, faculty and staff are deployed annually to more than a dozen countries where they carry out sustainable, impactful research and service programs. Through this work, they learn what it means to live full and meaningful lives.”

Today, Mercer On Mission is a signature program of the University, envisioned by Underwood as an impactful way for Mercer to live out its mission to teach, to learn, to create, to discover, to inspire, to empower and to serve.

Expanding the University's Footprint and National Stature

Underwood also leaves a legacy of expanding Mercer's footprint across the state of Georgia and elevating its national stature.

During his tenure, the Mercer Health Sciences Center was established, incorporating the School of Medicine, College of Pharmacy, College of Nursing, and the University's newest academic unit, the College of Health Professions. Collectively, the Mercer Health Sciences Center enrolls almost 2,000 students who are preparing to be physicians, nurses, pharmacists, physical therapists, physician assistants, public health professionals, athletic trainers, psychologists, marriage and family therapists, and researchers.

The School of Medicine, established in 1982 to educate physicians and other health care professionals to meet the needs of rural, medically underserved areas in Georgia, has expanded across the state over the last 20 years. It now has four-year M.D. campuses in Macon, Savannah and Columbus, and a two-year M.D. clinical campus in Valdosta. It is one of the largest private medical schools in the country. >>

“After a Sunday service at Maranatha Baptist Church in Plains,

I was speaking with one of the parishioners, President Jimmy Carter, about the extraordinary things that were happening at Mercer. Quickly, President Carter interjected, ‘Bill Underwood is the finest university president in America.’

Bill Underwood has shaped Mercer, not into an ivory tower, but into a field hospital where students and faculty are well-trained, fervently inspired and generously supported in what the Jewish tradition calls *tikun olam*, healing the world. Because of his vision, Mercer faculty and students through Roberts Academy are helping young children with dyslexia reach their full potential, thousands of overlooked Georgians now have exceptional health care through Mercer's rural health care initiatives, and Mercer On Mission students and faculty have fit over 23,000 amputees with prosthetic legs and hands, provided access to clean water for more than 250,000 people, and protected thousands of people from mercury and lead pollution. Bill Underwood's vision has made him, indisputably, the finest university president in America.”

Dr. Craig McMahan

*University Minister and
Director, Mercer On Mission*

“Bill Underwood's presidency has been transformational!

Under his forward-thinking leadership, the University has expanded its reach far beyond the boundaries of our nation and has given its students a personal understanding of what missions can be. In the process of academic advancement, he has revitalized the city of Macon by restoring its downtown and making it a welcoming place where its history becomes a part of Mercer's present and future. President Underwood has made the advancement of the medical school a priority. He has worked with the state of Georgia to provide primary care physicians to underserved parts of the state. This is an example of his vision that addresses real problems in ways that make Mercer unique.”

Nathan Deal, CLAS '64, LAW '66

82nd Governor of Georgia (2011-2019)

March 2018

Mercer women's basketball has its best season in program history, compiling a 30-3 record, winning both the Southern Conference regular season and tournament championships, going undefeated in conference play, earning a national top 25 ranking and coming within five points of knocking off No. 4 seed Georgia in the NCAA tournament.



March 2018 —

Mercer undergraduate debaters Jaz Buckley and Kyle Bligen win the National Parliamentary Debate Association championship, becoming the first African-American team to win a national debate championship.



June 2020

Annual research expenditures surpass \$50 million.



April 2021

The Macon-based Phil J. and Alice S. Sheridan Foundation commits \$10 million to endow The Sheridan Center at Mercer University to support the work of Mercer On Mission throughout the globe.

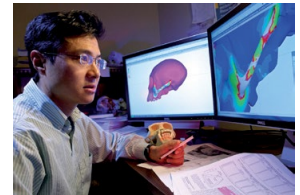


Summer 2018

Mercer Medicine opens its first rural medicine clinic, in Plains, and in the ensuing years opens six additional clinics around Central and South Georgia.

December 2018

Mercer is classified as a Doctoral University with High Research Activity (R2) following an adjustment to the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education. R2 is the second-highest level of doctoral research universities in the country.



December 2019



Mercer Music at Capricorn celebrates the grand re-opening of the historic Capricorn Sound Studios in downtown Macon after an extensive restoration.



Fall 2020



University enrollment surpasses 9,000 students in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

December 2021

University endowment surpasses \$500 million.



Mercer Medicine, the faculty practice plan of the School of Medicine, expanded beyond Macon and now operates additional clinics in Plains, Clay County, Harris County, Putnam County, Taylor County and Jekyll Island, delivering primary care to parts of the state that previously had among the worst health outcomes in Georgia.

Underwood has also led the University to significantly increase its research expenditures to almost \$50 million a year, resulting in Mercer's admission to the Georgia Research Alliance and its reclassification as a Doctoral Research University with High Research Activity (R2), one of only 139 such institutions in the nation.

A long-held aspiration of the University to be awarded a chapter of Phi Beta Kappa, the nation's oldest and most prestigious honor society, was realized in 2015, putting Mercer in an elite group of liberal arts institutions.

Campus Transformation

Mercer's campuses have undergone physical transformations during Underwood's presidency.

More than \$400 million has been invested in new facilities and major renovations in Macon, Atlanta, Savannah and Columbus.

The Macon campus, in particular, looks quite different from when Underwood took office in 2006. Virtually every corner of the campus has been touched, including new entrances, creation of large green spaces, clearing out of obsolete buildings and construction of major new facilities like the Godsey Science Center.

A big change to the Macon campus was the re-introduction of intercollegiate football in 2013 after a 72-year hiatus. That resulted in construction of the Ruth and Homer Drake Field House and Five Star Stadium, along with other major improvements to the west side of campus.

More than 1,000 beds of student housing have been added to the Macon campus since 2010 to accommodate the growing undergraduate enrollment.

The Cecil B. Day Graduate and Professional campus in Atlanta has added more student housing, new green spaces and the state-of-the-art, 65,000-square-foot Moyer Pharmacy and Health Sciences Center, which opened in 2024.

Financial Strength

While the University has grown significantly over the last two decades, it has done so with Underwood's commitment >>

"In the 12 years I have served Wofford College and participated in the Southern Conference,

Bill Underwood has been a source of thoughtfulness and measured in his perspective of an athletics environment that has undergone, and continues to undergo, rapid and complex change. His perspective has led us in directions that serve our student-athletes and athletics programs while honoring our fundamental mission as academic institutions. In our shared purpose as partners in the SoCon, we have developed a most-valued friendship that will carry on well beyond our service to our institutions and the conference."

Dr. Nayef Samhat

*President
Wofford College*

"One of the great accomplishments of President Underwood's tenure

has been the restraint on tuition and continued affordability for Mercer students. Mercer students have enjoyed extraordinary facilities and beautiful campuses. President Underwood and his leadership team have kept tuition and fees for a Mercer education at the lowest level among quality liberal arts colleges and universities of excellence in the Southeast. He has made it a priority to provide an excellent education for Mercer students and their parents at a reasonable cost."

David E. Hudson, CLAS '68

Mercer Trustee and former Board Chair

"I've had a front row seat to watch Bill Underwood lead

with both vision and generosity. He brought the clarity, conviction and persuasive skill of a great trial lawyer to a very different setting — always advocating for what's right and making the case for private higher education with unmatched force and integrity. He never hesitated to share Mercer's strengths to benefit students across the state, and his collaborative spirit lifted all of us. Bill's legacy is one of leadership that elevates others — showing time and again that a rising tide truly lifts all boats."

Jenna Colvin

*President
Georgia Independent Colleges Association*

January 2022

The School of Medicine's new state-of-the-art facility opens on the banks of the Chattahoochee River in downtown Columbus, enabling Mercer to expand its total M.D. enrollment on three campuses to 720 students.



February 2023

Mercer School of Medicine and Children's Healthcare of Atlanta launch a major initiative focused on improving pediatric health care in rural Georgia, supported by a dedicated and long-term sustainable fund of \$200 million allocated by the Children's Board of Trustees.



January 2024

The Tony and Nancy Moye Pharmacy and Health Sciences Center opens on the Atlanta campus.



March 2024

College Street Plaza, a landscaped green space between Connell Student Center and Plunkett Hall, opens on the Macon campus, replacing an abandoned section of College Street and the Connell parking lot.



November 2022

A Mercer Law School team wins the Allstar National Mock Trial challenge, knocking off Harvard in the semifinals and UCLA in the finals. It is the largest invitational law school mock trial competition in the country.

November 2022 — Trustees vote to increase the Aspire Campaign goal from \$400 million to \$500 million.



Fall 2023

During Homecoming, Mercer celebrates the conclusion of its highly successful Aspire fundraising campaign, booking more than \$506 million in gifts and pledges against an original campaign goal of \$400 million.



Fall 2023 — Mercer Law School begins yearlong celebration of its 150th year.



June 2024

Total University assets surpass \$1 billion.



to fiscal discipline and creating value for Mercer students.

One of the criticisms of higher education is the rate at which costs have increased and student debt has grown.

Since early in his tenure, Underwood has mandated that tuition increases be kept at or below the rate of inflation, as measured by the consumer price index. Some programs, such as law and medicine, have had multiple years of no tuition increases. In 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, Mercer froze tuition for undergraduates.

As a consequence, Mercer's costs relative to its peer institutions have gone down, resulting in multiple college guides and national rankings naming Mercer a "best value." Average student debt has also gone down relative to other institutions. Today, average federal student loan debt for Mercer undergraduates is \$21,082, well below the national average for private universities (\$33,910) and for all Georgia institutions (\$42,026).

Even with disciplined tuition increases, Mercer's total assets have now surpassed \$1 billion, and its endowment has grown from \$175 million to almost \$530 million. The University in 2024 successfully completed the \$500 million Aspire Campaign that raised funds for scholarships, facilities, endowed chairs and operating support.

One of Underwood's proudest achievements, which he attributes to a team effort across the University, is that Mercer has finished each of its 19 fiscal years under his administration with a balanced budget.

The University's long-term debt has remained stable at just under \$190 million during the Underwood administration. As a consequence, Standard and Poor's and Moody's Investor Services have given Mercer bonds an A rating with a stable outlook.

A Lasting Imprint

For someone who earned his undergraduate and law degrees from other institutions, Underwood has become the consummate Mercerian. The University has no greater champion, and as he returns to his first love of teaching, William D. Underwood's imprint on Mercer will be evident for generations to come. ♦

Photographers: Maryann Bates, Michelle Beavers, Jan Horne Crocker, Jessica Gratigny, Marin Guta, Paula Heller, Bekah Howard, Roger Idenden, John Knight, Amy Maddox, Matt Odom, Saldivia-Jones Photography, Christopher Ian Smith, Matt Smith, Jamie Tucker, Jessica Whitley, Jerry Wolford, Leah Yetter

Presidential Search Committee



The Mercer Board of Trustees Executive Committee appointed a 12-member Presidential Search Committee in May and charged it with the responsibility of identifying and recommending a successor to the University's 18th president, **William D. Underwood**.

"The members of the Presidential Search Committee have agreed to invest the time and effort necessary to define and conduct a search process that will identify candidates to be Mercer's next president," said Board of Trustees Chair **Thomas P. (Tom) Bishop**, CLAS '82, LAW '85. "The board is grateful to have such a talented and experienced group doing this important work."

The Presidential Search Committee is led by former Board Chair **Richard A. (Doc) Schneider**, LAW '81, of Atlanta. Other members of the committee, who are all current trustees, include:

- **Cathy Callaway Adams**, TIFT '81, of Kennesaw, chair of the Executive Committee and a former board chair
- **Robert F. (Bob) Hatcher** of Macon, a Life Trustee and former board chair
- **Rev. James C. (Jimmy) Elder Jr.**, CLAS '77, of Columbus
- **David E. Hudson**, CLAS '68, of Augusta, former board chair and chair of the Presidential Search Committee that recommended Underwood in 2005
- **The Honorable W. Louis Sands**, CLAS '71, LAW '74, of Albany
- **William A. (Tony) Moye**, PHARM '73, of McDonough, former board chair
- **Amy Miller Wall**, CLAS '97, LAW '00, of Shreveport, Louisiana
- **Dr. Jennifer Nunn Tarbutton**, MED '01, of Sandersville
- **David E. Linch**, BUS '80, of Atlanta
- **Carolyn Townsend McAfee Bruner**, HON '99, of Macon, Life Trustee
- **Bishop**, of Kennesaw, serves as *ex officio*

"Twenty years ago, a Presidential Search Committee found a transformational new leader for Mercer, leading to tremendous growth in the size of its student body, its emergence as a national research university and its impressive campus footprints in Macon, Atlanta and all across the state of Georgia," Schneider said. "Now, a new Presidential Search Committee, comprised of a talented and diverse group of dedicated Mercerians, takes up the exciting assignment of finding Mercer's 19th president. We look forward to our work, and we are Mercer On Mission once more. We are thankful to President Underwood for his long and impactful service."

August 2024

School of Medicine establishes third- and fourth-year M.D. clinical program in Valdosta.



August 2024 — Roberts Academy at Mercer University, Georgia's only school for dyslexic students outside metro Atlanta, opens two blocks from the Macon campus.

The school was built and endowed with the largest financial commitment in the University's history from Hal and Marjorie Roberts of Lakeland, Florida.



November 2024

Mercer football wins its first outright Southern Conference championship and advances to the quarterfinals of the NCAA Division I FCS Championships, finishing the season as the No. 7-ranked team in the nation.

February 2025

University announces plans to relocate the School of Medicine's Macon campus to downtown as part of a \$400 million multi-use, public-private development along the Ocmulgee River and Riverside Drive.



April 2025

President Underwood informs the Board of Trustees of his intention to return to full-time teaching in the law school in 2026.



May 2025

President Underwood presides over his final commencement. More than 44,000 graduates — about half of the University's living alumni — were presented diplomas during his tenure as president.



August 2025

Mercer enrolls a record 1,130 new residential undergraduate students on the Macon campus.



Summer 2025

The total number of students and faculty participating in Mercer On Mission projects around the world approaches 3,000.





homecoming.mercer.edu



MERCER UNIVERSITY HOMECOMING 2025

Mark your calendars for Nov. 14 & 15!

Homecoming 2025 at Mercer is just around the corner and we can't wait to celebrate with you. Here's to our Bear family, honoring the bonds we've built — our past; the progress we've made — our present; and the milestones we'll meet — our future. Together, we will continue to roar louder than ever!

M BEAR BRIEFS

SOFTBALL, WOMEN'S LACROSSE

Bears Roar to 40 Wins, and NCAA Post-Season

Taylor



The fifth-seeded Mercer softball team registered a 7-1 record in the 2025 Southern Conference Tournament, including a pair of wins over top-seeded Chattanooga on Championship Saturday, to secure the program's first conference title, as well as the league's automatic berth into the NCAA Tournament. The Bears defeated six of the other seven teams in the SoCon Tournament field and were 6-0 in elimination contests. The Orange & Black hit .319 with 11 home runs and 61 RBI over its eight-game stay, while also scoring 8.1 runs per game. Five players hit .318 or better across the eight-game span as well. Mercer sent six representatives to the SoCon All-Tournament team after the celebration, including junior pitcher **Grace Taylor**, who collected Most Outstanding Player accolades after going 4-0 with a 2.59 ERA in six appearances. The magic continued into the postseason as the Bears split four games in the NCAA Tournament, including victories over



Women's Lacrosse Captures 6th



SoCon Glory

Georgia Tech and Florida Atlantic. Mercer closed out the historic campaign with 21 wins in its final 26 outings to finish with a 40-26 record — just the

second 40-win season in the 40-year history of the program, and the first time that win plateau has been reached since the 2009 Bears finished 40-19.

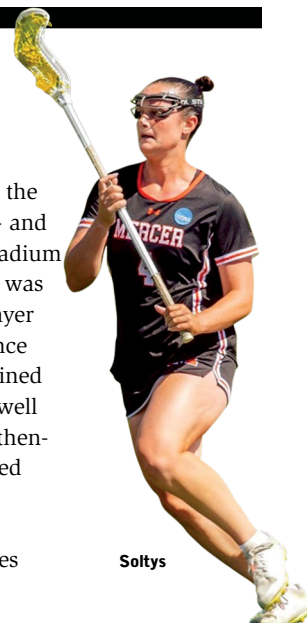
The softball team rings feature Mercer script and striping to match the team uniforms.



Conference Championship

It was business as usual for the Mercer women's lacrosse team in 2025 as the Bears amassed double-digit victories for the fourth-straight year and captured their sixth conference championship in the last eight seasons with a 16-8 throttling of High Point in the Big South Conference Tournament championship game in early May. It was the fourth-straight Big South Conference Tournament title for the Orange & Black, who clinched a share of their fourth consecutive Big South Conference regular season crown the week before. The win over the Panthers in the tournament championship game clinched the league's automatic bid into the NCAA postseason

— the seventh NCAA Tournament berth under the direction of head coach **Samantha Eustace** — and helped Mercer improve to 29-12 at Five Star Stadium over the last four seasons. Senior **Abby Soltys** was named the Big South Conference Defensive Player of the Year to headline a quartet of all-conference standouts for the Bears, while Mercer also attained the program's signature win along the way as well when the Bears traveled northward and upset then-No. 9 Clemson in early March. Mercer continued to dominate in the academic arena as well, as evidenced by 16 student-athletes being named to the Intercollegiate Women's Lacrosse Coaches Association Academic Honor Roll in July.



Soltys

Mercer Hosts LAFC on FIFA Club World Cup Stage

The Mercer athletics department, in a partnership with Macon-Bibb County, Visit Macon and the Georgia Department of Economic Development, served as home base for the Los Angeles Football Club (LAFC) throughout its run in the 2025 FIFA Club World Cup held June 14-July 13 nationwide. LAFC qualified for the Club World Cup after a thrilling play-in victory over Club

America on May 31 in Southern California. LAFC, which held its first practice at Mercer's Betts Stadium on June 14, opened its portion of Group D play two days later when it took on famed English Premier League Club Chelsea at Mercedes-Benz Stadium in Atlanta. While in Central Georgia, the perennial Major League Soccer contender partnered with Mercer soccer teams for a free youth clinic at Five Star Stadium. Macon-Bibb Mayor **Lester Miller**, CLAS '91, LAW '94, who was on hand for the June 3 announcement at Heritage Hall in the University Center, added that Macon has also been approved as a practice site for next summer's World Cup, which is also hosting games in Atlanta. The site has yet to be matched with a team. LAFC dropped a pair of one-goal heartbreakers in the Club World Cup but closed out its tournament run with a 1-1 draw with Brazil-based Flamengo.

Mercer Director of Athletics Jim Cole, left, joined Mayor Lester Miller, right, and administrators from Visit Macon on June 3 to announce that Central Georgia would serve as home base to LAFC throughout the MLS club's run during the 2025 FIFA Club World Cup.



MERCER ATHLETIC FOUNDATION

EST. 2008

NEW ERA OF MERCER TENNIS AND GOLF

Fall 2025 ushered in a new era of Mercer tennis and golf with the dedication of the Copelan Tennis Complex, the Janet & Carlisle Overstreet Tennis Center and the Kevin & Carolyn Scheck Golf Performance Center. The 5,800-square-foot facility houses coaches' offices, lounges for both golf and tennis, a training room, tennis locker rooms and a golf facility outfitted with state-of-the-art technology, hitting bays and a putting lab. This \$3 million facility was donor funded and is the first building seen when entering campus from the College Street entrance.



Football Seals Historic Season with Championship Rings

It was all smiles on April 7 as Mercer's nationally ranked football team put an emphatic cap on a magical 2024 season with a championship ring ceremony at the Fall Line banquet hall in downtown Macon. More than 300 rings were presented to student-athletes, coaches, administrators and ardent supporters in celebration of Mercer's run to an 11-3 record and its first Southern Conference championship in the 51-season history of the program. In addition to the championship rings, Mercer's seniors were presented with their official letterman jackets, as well as a photo memento to honor their

collegiate career in the Orange & Black. Picked to finish fourth among the nine Southern Conference squads in a preseason poll of the league's head coaches, the Bears utilized one of the nation's top defensive units to power their way through the Southern Conference gauntlet. On the other side of the ball, Mercer

Senior offensive lineman Riley Adcock, left, and junior defensive lineman Joshua Williams were among more than 100 football players who were presented with Southern Conference championship rings in early April.



averaged more than 400 yards and 33 points per game behind a balanced offense that was anchored by senior transfer **Dwayne McGee**, who shattered the school's single-season rushing record with 1,187 yards on the ground.

The flurry of postseason awards was kicked off by a school-record and league-best 13 players named to the All SoCon squads.

Men's tennis won their first-ever SoCon Championship this past spring and received their championship rings — the first in school history to feature the sailor bear logo — during the dedication of the new facility.



NEW OL' TOBY

A new can design for Ol' Toby Easy Ale is available for the 2025-26 academic year. Over 20,000 cans of Ol' Toby have been sold to date, with 10 cents per can going back to the Athletic Foundation's Champions Fund Endowment. Brewed by Fall Line Brewery in downtown Macon, Ol' Toby is available in the brewery, at local stores and on campus at athletic events!



MEDICINE, NURSING

Mercer Partners in Center for Adults with Intellectual, Developmental Disabilities

The School of Medicine, in partnership with the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities and River Edge Behavioral Health, opened the Mercer University School of Medicine Center for IDD Care in August. The Center, located in downtown Macon and a few blocks from the campus,

offers a full spectrum of outpatient health services tailored to the unique and complex needs of adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The 34,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art diagnostic facility — the first of its kind in the state — brings together River Edge's short-term behavioral and crisis services with MUSM's personalized outpatient health care services. Beyond clinical services, the Center for IDD Care will serve as a hub for education and research where Mercer will train medical students, physicians and allied health professionals in the specialized skills needed to care for this population.

Below: Representatives from Mercer University School of Medicine, Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, River Edge and Parrish Construction Group, along with state and local officials, were in attendance for the open house and ribbon cutting ceremony on June 9.



School of Medicine Announces **2025 Primary Care Accelerated Track Scholars**

The School of Medicine announced its latest class of Primary Care Accelerated Track (ACT) Scholars. The program is designed to address Georgia's critical shortage of primary care physicians by allowing students interested in a career in family medicine, general internal medicine or pediatrics to complete their medical school coursework in an accelerated three-year program with less debt. Upon completion of residency, ACT Scholars are required to participate in three years of continuous, full-time, primary care medical practice in a medically underserved rural area of Georgia. This year's class of Primary Care Accelerated Track Scholars is **Roman Fortin**, from Columbus; **Camden Garland**, from Monticello;

Tray Richburg, from Columbus; **Eva Cimaglia**, from Athens; **Saqita Noor**, from Newnan; **Leena Patel**, from Unadilla; **Dakota Scott**, from Eatonton; **Maclane Zant**, from Madison; **Hayley Newbold**, from Roswell.



Fortin



Garland



Richburg



Cimaglia



Noor



Patel



Scott



Zant



Newbold

Nursing Receives **\$500,000 Grant to Increase Graduates Entering the Georgia Workforce**

The College of Nursing received a \$500,000 grant from the Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce to increase the number of nurse graduates entering Georgia's workforce. The grant will support expansion of Mercer's Bachelor of Science in nursing degree program, adding a four-year degree option on the Macon campus this fall, in addition to the B.S.N. offered on the University's Cecil B. Day Graduate and Professional Campus in Atlanta. The grant also will allow the College to invest in educational equipment and supplies for its nursing skills and simulation labs, allowing students to engage in realistic patient care scenarios.



Medicine Graduate Receives University High Honor

The University presented Doctor of Medicine May 2025 graduate **Myles Nicholas Duncan** with one of its highest honors, the Algernon Sydney Sullivan Award, during medical school commencement on May 3 in Macon. The elite recognition is awarded annually to one graduating senior from Mercer's undergraduate programs and one graduating student from a graduate program. The award celebrates those who demonstrate through thought and action the noble characteristics of integrity, compassion, selflessness and moral courage. It recognizes those who strive not only for personal excellence but for the betterment of others.

Myles Nicholas Duncan
and his family during
Mercer University
School of Medicine's
commencement ceremony
on May 3 in Macon.



Double Bear Dr. Loraine Sumner Named Medical Director of Mercer Medicine's Rural Clinics

In July, **Dr. Loraine Sumner**, CLAS '98, MED '03, was named medical director of Mercer Medicine's rural primary care clinics. Mercer Medicine, a subsidiary of the School of Medicine, is committed to improving access to care in the rural areas of Georgia that need it most. Dr. Sumner oversees the clinical operations of six rural clinics across the state, ensuring that the high standard of care Mercer Medicine is known for continues as the network expands. Mercer Medicine currently has rural clinics in Clay County, Harris County, Jekyll Island, Plains, Putnam County and Taylor County. Dr. Sumner joined Mercer Medicine in Plains as a primary care physician in the spring of 2024.



Dr. Sumner



Dr. Miller

Pharmacy Professor Named Faculty Member of the Year by Pharmacy Association

Dr. Susan W. Miller, professor of pharmacy practice, has been named the 2025 Faculty Member of the Year by the Georgia Pharmacy Association. The award, presented during the association's annual convention in June, honors faculty who demonstrate outstanding leadership, mentorship and dedication to student pharmacists. Dr. Miller is the second Mercer faculty member in as many years to receive the honor, following **Dr. Christine Klein's** recognition in 2024.

School of Medicine Honored for Excellence in Workforce Development

The School of Medicine was recognized by the National Association of Extension 4-H Youth Development Professionals as the state winner for the Excellence in Workforce Development Award. The award recognizes MUSM's Setting Your Sights on Medical School program, a collaborative initiative that aims to inspire rural Georgia youth to pursue careers in health care. Launched in 2016, the program has engaged high school students from 26 rural counties across the state, offering them a rare and exciting glimpse into life as medical students and physicians.

Be-Atrice Cunningham, left, accepts the Excellence in Workforce Development Award from Jakyn J. Tyson of University of Georgia Extension.



2025 Children's Healthcare of Atlanta Rural Scholars Announced

The School of Medicine announced the second cohort of Children's Healthcare of Atlanta Marriage and Family Therapy Scholars and the third cohort of Children's Healthcare of Atlanta Rural Pediatric Scholars for the 2025 academic year. The scholars will receive full tuition for up to four academic years in return for their commitment to serve children in rural Georgia upon completing their education. The scholars will also receive specialized training at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta facilities, including autism training for the Master of Family Therapy

students. The 2025 cohort of Rural Pediatric Scholars is **Caitlyn Carter** (Class of 2029); **Lillian Coppage** (Class of 2029); **Kiram Harrison** (Class of 2029); **Jinha Kim** (Class of 2029); **Reed Resendiz** (Class of 2028); **John Santander** (Class of 2029) and **Bansari Shah** (Class of 2029).

The 2025 cohort of Marriage and Family Therapy Scholars is **Erica Jolla** (Class of 2027); **Heather Lunsford** (Class of 2026); **Mary Roberts** (Class of 2027); **Kearston Shannon** (Class of 2026); **Tisha Trammell-Ayers** (Class of 2027) and **Sara Wood** (Class of 2026).



From left, 2025 Children's Healthcare of Atlanta Rural Family Therapy Scholars; Marc Welsh, vice president of child advocacy, Children's; Larry Greenbaum, M.D., Ph.D., division chief, nephrology, Children's; Mercer President William D. Underwood; School of Medicine Dean Jean Sumner, M.D., FACP; and 2025 Children's Rural Pediatric Scholars.

BEARNotes



ACHIEVEMENTS

1960s

Linda Wattson Carson, CLAS '60, celebrated 30 years with ABC 7/WWSB-TV and 62 years of on-air broadcasting. She is a co-host of Suncoast View, a daily lifestyle show. Carson began her career in Atlanta in 1963. She was with 10 other stations before joining ABC 7. She currently has no plans to retire.

1970s

Peter R. Corbin, LAW '75, was recognized by the Florida Bar for being a member in good standing for 50 years.

Ted E. Day Jr., LAW '75, was recognized by the Florida Bar for being a member in good standing for 50 years.

John F. Dickinson, CLAS '72, LAW '75, was recognized by the Florida Bar for being a member in good standing for 50 years.

Kenneth A. Jones, LAW '75, was recognized by the Florida Bar for being a member in good standing for 50 years.

The Hon. Jack O. Partain III, LAW '72, was appointed to the Georgia Commission on Dispute Resolution by the Georgia Supreme Court. Partain was also recognized by the Florida Bar for being a member in good standing for 50 years.

Charles A. Sorenson, CLAS '72, LAW '75, was recognized by the Florida Bar for being a member in good standing for 50 years.

Stephen E. Tanner, CLAS '71, LAW '75, was recognized by the Florida Bar for being a member in good standing for 50 years.

1980s

Joe I. Allen II, CAS '87, executive director of the Gwinnett Place Community Improvement District, was honored with the 2025 Public Service Award during the Gwinnett

Chamber of Commerce's 77th annual dinner at the Gas South District. The evening celebrated the outstanding contributions of individuals pivotal to the prosperity of Gwinnett County and recognized exceptional achievements in the community. Allen was awarded the 2025 Public Service Award presented to well-respected individuals based on their service to other people, objectives and the Gwinnett community, above and beyond excellence in one's own profession, business, service or enterprise. Allen also received the 2024 Professional Excellence Award from the Council for Quality Growth in November 2024.

Lisa Carlton, LAW '89, was appointed by Gov. Ron DeSantis to the State of Florida's 12th Judicial Circuit Judicial Nominating Commission.

The Hon. R. Keith Kelly, LAW '87, was elected to a third term on the Circuit Court of South Carolina by the South Carolina General Assembly in February.

1990s

M. Brian Blake, EGR '97, president of Georgia State University, was named President of the Year by the Association of College Unions International (ACUI) in recognition of his dedicated support for student activities and the important role of the college union in fostering community on campus. Blake received the award March 16 during the ACUI's annual conference in New York. He was named Georgia State's eighth president and first Black president in 2021.

The Hon. Michael P. Boggs, LAW '90, joined Hunter Maclean as a partner. Boggs will concentrate on advising clients across a broad range of legal matters, including complex litigation, government-related issues and strategic policy changes.

The Hon. Robert "Chan" Caudell, LAW '92, was appointed vice president and general counsel at Georgia Transmission, a not-for-profit electric cooperative serving 38 local Electric Membership Corporations and more than 4.7 million Georgians. Caudell brings nearly 30 years of legal experience to the role, including more than a decade as a Superior Court judge in the Mountain Judicial Circuit. In his new role, Caudell joins the executive team and will provide strategic

REMEMBERING...

Friend and Generous Supporter

Bill Betts

William H. "Bill" Betts Jr. of Brenham, Texas, died June 9 at the age of 69. Betts graduated from Brenham High School in 1974 and earned his bachelor's degree in psychology from Texas A&M University. He then attended Southern Methodist University Dedman School of Law, where he was editor of the *SMU Law Review* and graduated in 1980. A respected attorney and well-known expert in his field, Betts was president and shareholder of Betts, Walters and Mutscher PC and was the recipient of numerous awards. Betts was also a philanthropist and volunteer, serving in leadership positions in multiple professional and civic organizations. Betts and his wife of 42 years, Paula, joined the Mercer family when their son, **Will Betts**, BUS '13, enrolled at Mercer and joined the men's soccer team. Betts was a board member of the Mercer Athletic Foundation, Life Member and chair of The President's Club and recipient of the University's Alumni by Choice award. In 2019, the University dedicated Betts Stadium to honor the generous support of the Betts Family that supported renovations of the widest-ranging facility project in Mercer soccer history.



 *Scan the codes to view complete obituaries.

Send your ACCOMPLISHMENTS, MARRIAGES, BIRTHS & ANNIVERSARIES and IN MEMORY announcements for THE MERCERIAN to **ERIN LONES**, director of advancement communications, at lones_ep@mercer.edu.

legal oversight to help guide critical energy infrastructure across Georgia.

Kelly Shea Crites, LAW '93, launched a new law firm serving clients in the Potomac Highlands and throughout West Virginia. The Law Office of Kelly S. Crites PLLC provides legal counsel and representation for family law matters, estate planning and trusts, and business and real estate law. Crites previously served as a family court judge in West Virginia.

Kimberly Weaver Duffley, LAW '94, joined the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) as the senior director of energy policy and legal counsel in March. Duffley leads NARUC's initiatives on energy policy and coordinates energy issues across the Association. She oversees NARUC's legal and policy efforts on energy matters before the Federal Energy

Regulatory Commission (FERC), the Department of Energy, Congress, the federal courts and other agencies. She also serves as the staff lead for the Association's committees on electricity, energy resources and the environment, gas, and Washington action on energy issues. Before joining NARUC, Duffley served as a commissioner for the North Carolina Utilities Commission since 2019 and chaired NARUC's committee on electricity. She was also a member and co-chair of the Federal-State Current Issues Collaborative and the Joint Federal-State Task Force on Electric Transmission, both FERC-NARUC initiatives.

Bradley M. Griffin, BUS '98, became the CEO of Fairview Park Hospital in Dublin in March. He returns to Fairview Park after serving as associate administrator and COO from 2003-2008. Griffin's

career includes more than 25 years in health care, serving as COO and CEO at several facilities across the Southeast, most recently serving as COO at Doctors Hospital of Augusta (DHOA). In his two and a half years at DHOA, Griffin managed more than \$50 million in capital projects and played a vital role in improving employee and physician engagement.

Deborah Hinerfeld, BUS '95, was appointed to the Georgia State Board of Occupational Therapy by Gov. Brian Kemp. Hinerfeld has been an occupational therapist for more than 30 years, working with children, adolescents and adults in private practice, schools and hospital settings. She is certified in comprehensive behavioral interventions for tics and has undergone postprofessional training and certification in

Trustee and Generous Supporter

Malcolm Burgess

Malcolm S. Burgess Jr. of Macon died May 5 at the age of 80. Born in Asheville, North Carolina, Burgess attended Lanier High School in Macon and

graduated with a bachelor's degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He served his country in Vietnam as an officer in the U.S. Army. Burgess was CEO of Burgess Pigment Co. He was a dedicated volunteer and philanthropist, serving on several community boards in Macon and the surrounding area. Burgess was a Mercer trustee, a Life Member of The President's Club and the recipient of the University's Alumni by Choice award. He was a generous supporter to a diverse range of University programs, including music and the arts, engineering, the Executive Forum business speaker series, the School of Medicine and intercollegiate athletics. In 2020, his daughter, **Rebecca Burgess**, LAW '01, and his son, Sandy Burgess,

established The Malcolm and Candy Burgess Endowed Scholarship of Distinction to celebrate their parents' birthdays and to provide scholarships for students enrolled in the McDuffie Center for Strings.



sensory integration evaluation and intervention. Hinerfeld completed her doctoral degree in health sciences with a focus in health care administration in 2017 and has taught at two graduate-level occupational therapy programs in Atlanta.

Kevin Lee, EGR '97, was named one of the Top 10 Chief Digital Officers globally by *Technology Magazine*. In his role at BT Group, Lee has been pivotal in revamping the company's digital infrastructure, focusing on customer experience and operational efficiency. His innovative initiatives leveraging data analytics, AI and cloud technologies have transformed BT's digital services, enhancing agility and responsiveness to market needs. Lee's leadership ensures that BT Group remains at the forefront of the telecommunications

industry, delivering cutting-edge digital solutions.

Troy W. Marsh, LAW '94, was reelected to the Board of Governors of the State Bar of Georgia. Marsh will continue to serve in the Ogeechee Judicial Circuit, Post 2 seat on the board, representing Bulloch, Effingham, Jenkins and Screven counties.

Scott G. Mills, LAW '96, joined Goggans, Stutzman, Hudson, Wilson & Mize LLP as an associate focusing on commercial and residential real estate law matters.

Amy V. Humes Norris, LAW '98, joined the law firm Goggan, Stutzman, Hudson, Wilson & Mize LLP in the Columbus office.

Melissa Heifferon Poole, LAW '98, was appointed as the Solicitor General of Long County by Gov. Brian Kemp. Previously, Poole served as an assistant district

attorney for the Atlantic Judicial Circuit and a solicitor for the City of Richmond Hill.

Margaret "Maggie" Sigman Puccini, LAW '99, was named a 2025 Super Lawyer. Puccini practices bankruptcy, creditors' rights and commercial litigation at Bouhan Falligant in Savannah.

2000s

Phillip Anderson, COPA '01, was appointed executive vice president and Savannah market executive of Great Oaks Bank. In this leadership role, Anderson will spearhead the bank's growth initiatives, community engagements and relationship-building efforts throughout the Savannah market. With more than 25 years of senior-level experience in commercial banking, private banking and wealth

management, Anderson brings a wealth of expertise and a proven track record of driving business development and operational excellence. His career includes leadership roles at prominent regional and community banks where he consistently exceeded goals for loan production, deposits and client retention.

Bryan E. Bates, LAW '04, joined Bradley Arant Boult Cummings LLP as a partner in the Bankruptcy & Creditors' Rights Practice Group. Bates concentrates his practice on business bankruptcy, creditors' rights and related commercial litigation. He is a director with the Southeastern Bankruptcy Law Institute and serves on the board of the Atlanta Chapter of the Turnaround Management Association.

Jason W. Blanchard, LAW '07, was selected as Homeland Security Investigations Atlanta's 2024 Prosecutor of the Year in the Southern District of Georgia for his work as an assistant U.S. attorney and Project Safe Childhood coordinator.

Matthew T. Butler, LAW '07, was appointed as commonwealth's attorney for the 47th Judicial Circuit in Kentucky by Gov. Andy Beshear on July 1, 2024. Following a contested November election, Butler retained his position and began a six-year term in January.

Joshua A. Carroll, BUS '03, LAW '07, was elected as the 70th president of the Georgia Trial Lawyers Association. As president, Carroll oversees the executive committee, presides over officer meetings and works with the association's CEO regarding daily decision making and policy strategy.

Charles M. Crain, CLAS '09, was promoted to managing vice president of policy for the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM). In this role, Crain oversees a manufacturing policy agenda that will fuel growth, innovation and competitiveness for manufacturers across the U.S. Most recently, he served as vice president of domestic policy. Since joining NAM seven years ago, Crain has built a strong reputation as a trusted policy leader and effective advocate. Before joining NAM, he worked at the Biotechnology Innovation Organization. He began

his career on Capitol Hill, serving members of both the House Financial Services and Senate Finance committees.

The Hon. James "Jay" Crowe Jr., CLAS '00, LAW '03, was appointed by Gov. Brian Kemp to be State Court Judge for Worth County. **Jason T. Cummings**, LAW '08, joined Gunderson Dettmer as a partner in the Atlanta office. His practice focuses on finance transactions, strategic investments, mergers and acquisitions, joint ventures and other strategic business matters.

Charles K. Depriest, BUS '03, was appointed to the North Georgia Mountains Authority by Gov. Brian Kemp. Depriest brings more than 25 years of extensive experience in finance, operations and executive leadership to his role. In 2016, he co-founded Georgia Stone Products, a construction materials producer that was acquired by Summit Materials in 2017. His previous roles at Summit include East Region CFO, leader of enterprise standardization and Central Region president. A U.S. Army veteran, Depriest holds a bachelor's degree in professional accountancy from Mississippi State University, an MBA from Mercer and is a CPA and Chartered Global Management Accountant.

Karen E. Ferguson, LAW '02, joined The Hartford as a senior staff attorney.

Adam Ferrell, CLAS '01, LAW '04, was elected to the Board of Governors for the State Bar of Georgia. He will represent the Waycross Judicial Circuit Post 2, which includes Bacon, Brantley, Charlton, Coffee, Pierce and Ware counties.

Jason Gaines, EGR '04, was appointed CEO of the MSM Group North America Inc. that was recently launched by Czechoslovak Group. MSM Group specializes in the production and services of medium- and large-caliber ammunition. Gaines has more than 20 years of experience in the munitions industry, primarily focusing on large- and medium-caliber ammunition, artillery, energetics, propulsion, pyrotechnics and demilitarization services. Prior to his new appointment, Gaines spent more than 20 years in various leadership roles at General

Dynamics-Ordnance and Tactical Systems including senior vice president and general manager of the munition systems business, overseeing operations across a broad portfolio of munitions programs. He also holds an MBA from the University of Tampa.

Bradley M. Harmon, LAW '02, was selected as a 2025 Georgia Super Lawyer. Harmon practices business litigation at HunterMaclean in Savannah.

The Hon. Robert W. "Bert" Guy Jr., LAW '02, is serving as president of the Council of Superior Court Judges of Georgia from May 2025 through April 2026.

Paul W. Hamilton, LAW '04, was re-elected to the Board of Governors of the State Bar of Georgia. He will represent Brooks, Colquitt, Echols, Lowndes and Thomas counties.

Soo Hong, LAW '08, was appointed to the Judicial Nominating Commission by Gov. Brian Kemp.

Matthew K. Hube, LAW '00, was sworn in as Superior Court Judge for the Ogeechee Judicial Circuit.

Jason Jennette, CLAS '94, EGR '01, is entering his third year as a lecturer in computer science after 16 years teaching computer information systems at Cape Fear Community College.

Alexis Antonacci Lambert, CLAS '05, was appointed secretary of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection by Gov. Ron DeSantis in November. Most recently, Lambert served as the chief of staff for the Florida Division of Bond Finance. Before joining the Division, she was chief of staff at the Florida Department of Health. Lambert began her career in the communications field, serving as the lead spokesperson for several state agencies, including the Department of Children and Families, Department of Business and Professional Regulation and Florida's Chief Financial Officer.

Joshua W. Lee, CLAS '07, was named one of the *Atlanta Business Chronicle's* 40 Under 40, a prestigious recognition program that highlights the accomplishments of young professionals and emerging leaders in the Atlanta business community. Lee is co-founder and chief operating officer of Trilith Institute.

Darryl W. Lunon II, LAW '08, was appointed associate vice chancellor, senior counsel and chief of staff to general counsel

at Vanderbilt University. Lunon, who joined Vanderbilt in July 2024 from the Georgia Institute of Technology, brings extensive experience in higher education law. Lunon will be responsible for advising university leadership on strategic initiatives, offering counsel to the general counsel, overseeing the legal operations and budget of the Office of General Counsel and leading the university-wide internal audit and enterprise risk management functions. Prior to joining Vanderbilt, Lunon served as deputy general counsel and chief ethics and compliance officer at Georgia Tech and held the position of inaugural chief legal officer and director of compliance at the Applied Research Laboratory at The Pennsylvania State University. He is also a decorated U.S. Army combat veteran and paratrooper with more than 14 years of service and two deployments. Lunon holds two bachelor's degrees: one in general science from Morehouse College and one in civil and environmental engineering from Georgia Tech. He was recently appointed to serve a three-year term on the board of directors for the National Association of College and University Attorneys. He was also honored with the First Decade Award at the association's 2025 annual conference.

Quentin L. Marlin, LAW '07, was appointed by Gov. Brian Kemp to the Judicial Nominating Commission.

Floyd S. "Trey" Mills III, LAW '05, was recognized as a Super Lawyer in South Carolina for his work as a personal injury plaintiff's lawyer.

Patrick Mincey, LAW '08, was listed in the *Business North Carolina* Legal Elite for 2025 and was included on the 2025 North Carolina Super Lawyers list. Last year, Mincey was selected for inclusion in *The Best Lawyers in America* for white collar criminal defense.

Mitchell Murchison, EGR '06, was appointed president and CEO of Cranston, a civil and structural engineering, landscape architecture, surveying and planning firm serving Southeast communities since 1967.

Murchison joined Cranston in 2006 and most recently served as vice president and director of civil engineering. An Augusta native, Murchison has diverse engineering experience with Cranston, including projects relating to land development, municipal infrastructure, water resources

REMEMBERING...

Friend and Generous Supporter

Madge Byington

Madge T. Byington of Homerville died Aug. 2 at the age of 86. Born in Vienna, Byington moved to Macon at age 5 and graduated from Miller High School in 1957. In June 1958, she married Frank E. Byington. They lived in Macon and in Jacksonville, Florida, where they raised three children. After her husband retired from Sandoz Pharmaceuticals in 1990, Byington worked with him in establishing Wakefield Pharmaceuticals. Following the death of her first husband, Byington married Jonathon Futch of Homerville, where they primarily resided. Byington was an active supporter of various schools and programs at Mercer, including Mercer athletics, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the College of Pharmacy. She was a Life Member of The President's Club and received the Mercer Alumna by Choice Award in 2014. Her daughter, **Laurie Byington**, is a 1992 graduate of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.



Alumna and Generous Supporter

Martha Christian

The Hon. Martha C. Christian, LAW '80, of Macon died Jan. 16 at the age of 75. After earning a bachelor's degree from Georgia State University in 1972, Christian taught school in North Carolina. In 1974, she earned a master's degree from the University of Georgia and served as the high school counselor of Morgan County High School. She graduated from Mercer's School of Law in 1980 with honors and was on the *Law Review*. Christian practiced law in Macon until she was appointed to the Superior Court Bench by Gov. Zell Miller in 1994. She served as the first woman Superior Court judge in the Macon Judicial

Circuit and later served as chief judge of the circuit. While in Macon, Christian was a generous supporter of the School of Law. She retired in 2011 and moved to Rabun County with George, her high school sweetheart and husband of 52 years.



management and transportation. **Christopher J. Near**, LAW '03, was elected shareholder in Ogletree

Deakins' Columbia, South Carolina, office. Near practices throughout the U.S. as a strategic advisor to

contractors and subcontractors who do business with the federal government.

Alumna and Former Faculty

Dr. Cathryn Futral

Dr. Cathryn Futral, TIFT '49, of Forsyth, died Feb. 11 at the age of 96. Dr. Futral graduated with a major in English from Tift College, a master's degree in religious education from New Orleans Baptist

Theological Seminary and a master's degree in English and doctorate from the University of Southern Mississippi. She was a professor of English and administrator at Tift College for 38 years and professor of English and associate dean of the Tift College of Education at Mercer. Dr. Futral was a brilliant scholar, an esteemed colleague and a wise and encouraging professor to generations of students. The Cathryn Futral Excellence in Teaching Award is given each year at the Mercer Honors Program by the



Tift College of Education to a distinguished professor. The Cathryn Futral Shakespeare Scholarship, started by a Tift alumna, is awarded annually to a student enrolled in the College of Education.



Alumnus and Faculty Member

Dr. David Innes

Dr. David Lyn Innes, LAW '05, of Forsyth died Aug. 6 at the age of 83. Dr. Innes earned his bachelor's degree at Ohio Wesleyan University, where he met his wife of almost 61 years, Janet Koons.

Dr. Innes earned a master's degree from the University of Cincinnati in 1966 and a doctorate from The Ohio State University in 1969. A lifelong learner, Dr. Innes went back to school late in his career to earn a law degree from Mercer's School of Law in 2005. As much as he loved being a student, he loved teaching even more. During a career that spanned 60 years, Dr. Innes



taught at Ohio Wesleyan University, Temple University in Philadelphia, The Ohio State University and at Mercer School of Medicine, serving as the first faculty member of the newly formed medical school in 1980.



Nicholas John Roecker,

LAW '08, joined the Financial Industry Group as a partner in the Atlanta office of ReedSmith in April. He joins ReedSmith from Alston & Bird, where he advised clients on leveraged buyouts, recapitalizations, asset-based financings, investment-grade credit facilities and other types of debt financing across various industries and sectors.

Benjamin Sammons, CLAS '04, was named the first chaplain of Wingate University in March. Sammons began teaching English at Wingate in 2015. He left to take seminary classes in 2020 and returned to the English faculty in 2022. In his role as chaplain, Sammons will organize religious services, community discussions and faith-exploration events; be a spiritual voice at other University events; and serve as a "caregiver" for the campus community.

Lindsey R. Stewart, CLAS '06, LAW '09, joined Constangy, Brooks, Smith & Prophete LLP as an associate. Stewart's practice focuses on representing employers, insurers and self-insured organizations in workers' compensation defense cases.

Haynes Maier Studstill, LAW '07, was appointed to the University System of Georgia Board of Regents by Gov. Brian Kemp. Studstill is a partner at the Valdosta law firm, Studstill Firm LLP, where her practice focuses on representing individuals and families in disputes with insurance companies.

Zachary H. Thomas, LAW '04, was reelected as a National Trial Lawyers-Civil Plaintiff Top 100 Trial Lawyer in Georgia. He was recognized as a 2025 Georgia Super Lawyer for the third consecutive year. Thomas serves on the board of the Civil Justice Political Action Committee of the Georgia Trial Lawyers Association. He is a graduate of the Georgia Trial Lawyers Association leadership program, has served on the Executive Committee of the Georgia Trial Lawyers Association and is the past president of the Savannah Trial Lawyers Association.

Lt. Col. Charles G. Warren (ret.), CLAS '00, LAW '03, joined Campbell Law School in August as an assistant professor. Warren most recently served as a military appellate judge in the U.S. Air Force. He teaches criminal law and criminal procedure.

2010s

Randi Adkins-Warren, LAW '12, was selected for the 40 Under 40 Class of 2025 by the *Atlanta Business Chronicle*.

Dustin E. Davies, LAW '11, completed his service as president of the Gainesville-Northeastern Bar Association. Davies was selected as a 2025 Georgia Super Lawyer Rising Star in personal injury for the 10th consecutive year.

J. Micah Dickie, LAW '16, was named partner at Fisher & Phillips LLP in January.

Ryan W. English, LAW '12, was appointed by Gov. Brian Kemp as the solicitor general of Houston County and sworn in on April 3.

Diantha V. Ellis, LAW '18, was selected as the assistant vice president of policy and compliance at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College. Ellis holds tenure as professor of business administration in the Stratford School of Business and serves as the faculty advisor for the College's Student Government Association.

Anna Adams Groce, CLAS '10, recently joined the University System of Georgia Foundation as the assistant vice chancellor. Previously, Groce served as director of stewardship and donor relations at Kennesaw State University.

Dan Walter Hines, LAW '10, BUS '10, was promoted to vice president, Commercial Products, of FN America LLC. Hines will drive FN's growth strategy through his leadership of the Commercial and Law Enforcement Sales, Product Development, and Marketing teams. Hines was an officer in the U.S. Army and served in the Iraq War. He joined FN America as director of marketing in 2023.

Jennifer M. Howard, LAW '14, won the Rising Star award from the Colorado chapter of the American Immigration Lawyers Association.

Maha Khalaj, LAW '13, was elected to partner at Kilpatrick, Townsend & Stockton LLP. Khalaj's practice focuses on technology and intellectual property transactions.

Jayla Moody Marshall, CLAS '19, graduated with a doctorate of philosophy in educational leadership, policy and human development from North Carolina State University. Marshall represented the Class of 2025 as the College of Education graduate student commencement speaker.

Joan McCallum, LAW '10, senior counsel in Chamberlain Hrdlicka's Atlanta office in the

Brandon L. Peak, LAW '04, was inducted as a Fellow of the American College of Trial

Lawyers, one of the premier legal associations in North America. Peak is a partner with Peak

Wooten McDaniel & Colwell LLP, which handles significant cases throughout Georgia and the nation.

Corporate, Securities and Finance Practice group, was ranked by Chambers & Partners, the leading independent professional legal research company, as an Up-and-Coming Corporate/M&A attorney in Georgia.

Alfred Dexter McGuire, EDU '10, was named Principal of the Year by Savannah-Chatham County Public School System. McGuire has been the principal of Woodville-Tompkins High School in Savannah for 12 years.

Patrick G. McKenzie, LAW '13, was named partner at Reed Smith in the Atlanta office. His practice focuses primarily on representing private equity funds and their portfolio companies in corporate transactions.

Grace Wallace Mills, LAW '18, joined Leitner, Williams, Dooley & Napolitan PLLC as a licensed associate attorney in the Chattanooga, Tennessee, office. Her primary practice areas are general liability, juvenile law, wills and trusts and workers' compensation law.

Matthew C. Mitchell, LAW '10, BUS '10, was appointed by Gov. Kay Ivey as the district judge for the 38th Judicial Circuit in Jackson County, Alabama.

Chloe A. Mondesir, COPA '19, began The Fibroids Agenda Fund to advocate and raise funds to cover women's fibroid removal surgeries and related treatment expenses. The fund has benefited a fibroids practice, a few fibroids grassroots organizations, fibroids outreach and education initiatives, and several patients directly for pre- and post-op care. Mondesir also created the podcast "CLO Chats" for fibroids survivors to share their stories.

Brooke Pettis Newby, LAW '10, was appointed to the Judicial Nominating Commission by Gov. Brian Kemp.

Erica Hickey Opitz, LAW '10, shareholder in Chamberlain Hrdlicka's Atlanta office in the Corporate, Securities and Finance practice group, was ranked by Chambers & Partners, the leading independent professional legal research company, among the top Corporate/M&A attorneys in Georgia.

Dr. Justin W. Peterson, CLAS '10, MED '14, was selected by the students and confirmed by the Mercer University School of Medicine Alpha Omega Alpha - Georgia Delta Chapter as the

recipient of the Volunteer Clinical Faculty Award. The prestigious award honors clinical faculty in community practices who dedicate their time and expertise to teaching and mentoring medical students and residents. Peterson was also inducted into the Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society, a highly competitive organization that recognizes excellence in scholarship, professionalism and leadership in medicine.

The Hon. Trent Reichling, LAW '10, was appointed by Gov. Ron DeSantis to serve as judge on the 20th Judicial Circuit Court. Previously, Reichling served as an assistant U.S. attorney for the Middle District of Florida.

2020s

Margaret Elizabeth "Maggie" Andrews, DIV '23, was ordained to the Gospel Ministry at First Baptist Church of Decatur on March 23.

William Anthony, CLAS '21, joined Swift Currie as an associate in the firm's workers' compensation practice group. His practice focuses on dispute resolution, client counseling and effective negotiation. Anthony has a background representing clients in hearings and mediations, crafting detailed evaluations and settlement strategies and ensuring that his clients' interests are well-protected. While in law school, he contributed to legal scholarship through his involvement with the University of Georgia School of Law's *Journal of Intellectual Property Law*, reflecting his commitment to both the practice and advancement of the law. Anthony earned his bachelor's degree in law and public policy and another in communication from Mercer. He earned his juris doctor degree from the University of Georgia School of Law.

E. Chris Blessy, LAW '22, joined Swift Currie as an associate in the firm's coverage and commercial litigation practice group. His practice focuses on automobile litigation, trucking and transportation litigation, commercial litigation, general liability and premises liability. In his previous role as a staff attorney with Clayton County Superior Court, Blessy successfully negotiated settlements in high-exposure liability cases and delivered favorable outcomes in contested liability cases by identifying and leveraging gaps in plaintiffs'

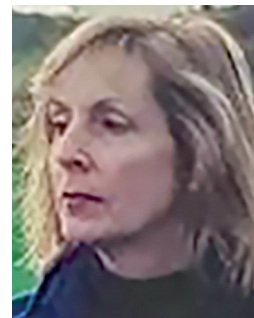
REMEMBERING...

Alumna and Award Recipient

Anne Longman

Anne Longman, CLAS '71, of Tallahassee, Florida, died on May 1 at the age of 76. The middle child in a Puritan family, Longman was born in Battle Creek, Michigan, and raised primarily in Lake Worth, Florida. She graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree and was the recipient of the Algernon Sydney Sullivan Award in 1971. After graduating from Mercer, Longman earned a master's degree in literature from the University of North Carolina and a law degree from Florida State University. She clerked for a federal judge and later became a founding member of Lewis, Longman & Walker. Longman helped grow the firm into a statewide environmental law firm and was a guiding force in the firm for more than 30 years. While she

had many professional accomplishments, she was most proud of her family, which included her two daughters and four grandchildren. She loved Mercer and was a longtime dedicated supporter of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.



Former Faculty Member

Dr. Vincent Lopez

Dr. A. Vincent "Vince" Lopez of Atlanta died Feb. 4 at the age of 86. Born in Montgomery, Alabama, Dr. Lopez graduated with his bachelor's and master's degrees from Auburn University and received his doctorate from the University of Mississippi. He was a devoted educator at the Mercer College of Pharmacy for more than 30 years. He was awarded the title professor emeritus and is remembered as a positive, interesting and passionate faculty member. He was an inspiration at the College and was responsible for shaping many successful pharmaceutical careers of his students. Dr.

Lopez generously supported the College of Pharmacy. He established The A. Vincent Lopez Endowed Scholarship in 1999 to provide scholarships for students enrolled in the College and was named a Life Member of The President's Club.



evidence during discovery and depositions. Blessy is a member of the Georgia Defense Lawyers

Association, the State Bar of Georgia and the Claims and Litigation Management Alliance.

He earned his bachelor's degree in criminal justice with a minor in psychology from the University of

Friend and Generous Supporter

Tom McDonald

Thomas C. McDonald of Vancouver, Washington, died July 17 at the age of 91. McDonald attended Mercer in 1951 before going on to earn degrees from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Harvard University. McDonald was a successful entrepreneur who created, rebuilt and nurtured scores of businesses throughout his career. He married the late **Ramona Ellington McDonald**, a 1952 graduate of Tift College, in 1954. In 2013, the couple made a large endowment gift to underwrite the University's Center for America's Founding Principles. In recognition of the major gift, the Center was renamed the Thomas C. and Ramona E. McDonald Center for America's Founding Principles.



In addition, the McDonalds funded the Thomas C. and Ramona E. McDonald Fund for the Advancement of Global Education to benefit students from the Dominican Republic, where the couple's family had business interests.



Alumnus and Former Trustee

Bob Moore

Robert L. "Bob" Moore Jr., CLAS '76, of Lyons, died May 11 at the age of 71. Born in Swainsboro, Moore graduated from Robert Toombs Christian Academy in 1972 and earned a bachelor's degree from Mercer in 1976. He returned to the family business after the death of his father and was CEO of Lark Builders Inc. for 45 years. He was also co-owner of Jab-O Metal Fabricating Company. Moore was active in his community, serving in a leadership capacity on various boards and councils. He was a charter member of The Oaks Baptist Church and was instrumental,



along with others, in founding the church. He was an avid fan and supporter of the Mercer Bears. Moore served as a University trustee and was a Life Member of The President's Club.



America as the August Chapter Champion. Faulkner currently serves as the media relations director for the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities, where she leads media strategy and communications for the agency's statewide outreach, programs and events. She also serves as editor-in-chief for the organization's digital publications and manages a wide range of internal and external messaging.

Rev. Jeremy Sean Hall, DIV '17, '22, was named senior pastor of North Hills Community Baptist Church in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in July 2024. Hall previously served as associate pastor of faith development at Towne View Baptist Church in Pensacola, Florida.

Luckshume Ketheeswaran, LAW '24, joined HunterMaclean as an associate in the firm's litigation and employment groups.

Lars Lonnroth, CLAS '23, was promoted to digital content manager with 13WMAZ in Macon. Prior to his new role, Lonnroth worked as a digital content producer for the station since June 2023, primarily focusing on the criminal justice system, crime and covering the Macon-Bibb, Houston County and federal courts. Before joining 13WMAZ, he worked with Georgia Public Broadcasting and WFAE, a public radio station in North Carolina.

J. Hunter Moreland, LAW '20, was promoted to partner at Hoffman & Associates LLC. Moreland's practice focuses on estate planning, probate and tax matters.

Victoria R. Nease, LAW '21, was named a 2025 Georgia Rising Star and was recognized on the list of "Ones to Watch" by *The Best Lawyers in America* 2025. Nease practices transportation and maritime law with HunterMaclean in Savannah.

Kayla Pfeifer, LAW '24, joined Baker Donelson as an associate, focusing her practice on various litigation matters.

Amelia Banks Rivers, CLAS '22, was awarded a Fulbright Award to teach English in Colombia for a year. She will be teaching at Universidad Catolica de Oriente in Rionegro. After earning a master's degree in musicology from Florida State University and completing her master's thesis on a Colombian/Venezuelan genre of music called joropo, Rivers applied to be an English teaching assistant in Colombia focusing on the

Llanos region. She credits her time as an undergraduate at Mercer with inspiring her Fulbright journey.

Nathaniel Stinson Jr., LAW '23, is proudly serving his country as a commissioned officer in the U.S. Army Judge Advocate General's Corps as a first lieutenant.

Jade L. Thomas, EDU '22, was named 2026 Georgia Teacher of the Year runner-up by the Georgia Department of Education. Thomas, a fourth-grade English language arts and social studies teacher at Lake Joy Elementary in Warner Robins, was previously named one of 10 finalists for the statewide award. She is also a U.S. Marine Corps veteran and co-founded the school's Military Kids Club, which supports children of military families.

Nicholas B. Tuz, LAW '20, joined the Atlanta office of Wood, Smith, Henning and Berman as a senior associate.

MARRIAGES, BIRTHS & ANNIVERSARIES

2010s

Morgann Belcher Bradshaw, CLAS '13, and **Stephen Bradshaw**, CLAS '12, BUS '14, welcomed their fourth child, Baylor, on Sept. 18, 2024.

Jasmine Garrett Ellington, CLAS '14, NUR '19, NUR '23, and her husband, Damon, welcomed their son, Damon Kevin Lamar Ellington III, on June 23.

Wesley Han-Burgess, CLAS '10, and his husband, Eddy, welcomed their first daughter, Toni Renee, in February.

Ga Yeon Moon Jones, NUR '18, and her husband, **Caleb Edward Jones**, EGR '17, EGR '18, welcomed their daughter, Colette, on May 20.

Maggie Johnson Reimer, CLAS '15, and her husband, **Wesley Reimer**, welcomed their second child, Whitney Kathryn, on May 31. Whitney joins her proud brother Marshall.

2020s

Rachel Copeland, CLAS '19, DIV '22, married Blake Terri on Oct. 14, 2024. Copeland is an ordained minister of youth at First Baptist Church of Dalton.

Abigail Nicholson Warnock, EDU '20, and her husband, Tyler, welcomed their daughter, Reynolds, on March 18, 2024.

North Carolina at Charlotte. **Dr. Natalie Duke**, MED '22, was accepted to a child and

adolescent psychiatry fellowship at Yale University Solnit South that began in July.

Tianna Faulkner, BUS '22, was recognized by the Georgia Chapter of Public Relations Society of

IN MEMORY

1940s

Marjorie Carlisle Ambrister, NUR '45, of Deland, Florida, on Jan. 6.
Irvin Cheney Jr., CLAS '48, of Roswell, on Oct. 4, 2024.
Betsy Hatcher Hibble, CLAS '49, of Macon, on June 16.
Betty Bradley Horton, CLAS '49, of Peachtree City, on Dec. 1, 2024.
Laurie Nicholson Johnston, TIFT '48, of Gainesville, Florida, on March 16.
Rose Waldron Sims, CLAS '46, of Smyrna, on Nov. 24, 2024.
Rev. John R. Stanton, CLAS '49, of Richmond, Virginia, on Feb. 7.

1950s

Barbara Edmunds Adolph, CLAS '58, of Cincinnati, Ohio, on Jan. 2.
Judson C. Bivins, LAW '54, of Mount Vernon, on Nov. 27, 2024.
Joann Black, CLAS '56, of Orange City, Florida, on Nov. 24, 2024.
Miriam Perkins Brady, TIFT '57, of Concord, North Carolina, on April 9.
Edward E. Bryan, CLAS '52, of Cumming, on March 24.
George S. Carpenter Jr., LAW '52, of Milledgeville, on April 9.
Nina Durrett Childs, EDU '57, of Gray, on March 1.
Virginia Bryans Cone, CLAS '57, of Marietta, on Jan. 18.
Carole Butler DuVall, TIFT '56, of Watkinsville, on May 29.
William G. Fallin, LAW '59, of Moultrie, on Jan. 4.
James W. Fuller, CLAS '53, of Montgomery, Alabama, on Oct. 26, 2024.
Janet Segers Gary, TIFT '56, of Decatur, on Feb. 24.
Rev. R. Edward Gilstrap, CLAS '55, of Cleburne, Texas, on Dec. 28, 2024.
Ellen Wilson Golden, NUR '54, of Owens Cross Roads, Alabama, on Nov. 14, 2024.
P. Benson Ham, LAW '59, of Smarr, on Jan. 11.
Jack W. Hendrix, CLAS '50, of Columbus, on Jan. 13.
James B. "Jim" Hiers Jr., CLAS '50, of Atlanta, on Aug. 26.
Louise Caudle Horvath, CLAS '55, of LaGrange, on Oct. 21, 2024.
Sylvia Byrd Jameson, CLAS '54, of Orange Park, Florida, on Dec. 19, 2024.
Gretta V. Johnson, TIFT '50, of Copperhill, Tennessee, on May 9.
Carolyn Evans Jones, TIFT '52, of Macon, on April 6.
Dr. Margaret Davis Kenworthy, EDU '58, of Macon, on June 20.
Col. W. Thomas King, CLAS '57, of Huntsville, Alabama, on Sept. 21, 2024.
Dr. Martha Cottrell Kroupa, CLAS '57, of Athens, on Feb. 20.

Hariot Rogers Lippmann, CLAS '50, of Columbus, on Jan. 30.

Charles C. Mann, PHA '57, of Elberton, on Dec. 27, 2024.

George L. Markey, CLAS '50, of Debarry, Florida, on July 1.

Beverly Webb McLean, TIFT '51, of Fayetteville, on Jan. 22.

Dorothy Andrews Rose Perkins, CLAS '51, of Tallahassee, Florida, on March 23.

Betty McGraw Porterfield, CLAS '56, of Rockhill, South Carolina, on May 19.

Dr. Daniel Roberts, CLAS '53, of Rockledge, Florida, on June 14.

Geraldine Troutman Robertson, CLAS '56, of Fairview, Tennessee, on Jan. 30, 2024.

Celetta Dykes Sanders, CLAS '55, of Lafayette, on March 24.

Rev. Samuel N. Scarbrough, CLAS '55, of Macon, on Nov. 2, 2024.

Warren K. Scoville, CLAS '58, of Griffin, on March 20.

Rev. Clark D. Standard, CLAS '56, of Columbus, on Oct. 22, 2024.

Peggy Wood Stewart, EDU '52, of Gainesville, on Feb. 8.

Charles D. Stewart Jr., CLAS '53, of Savannah, on May 13.

Vonice Stewart, NUR '59, of Alma, on Sept. 12, 2024.

Rev. Robert L. Thompson, CLAS '52, of Tifton, on May 1, 2024.

Carlos Tucker Jr., CLAS '56, of Macon, on Feb. 16, 2024.

Ben W. Ussery, CLAS '57, of Vero Beach, Florida, on April 17, 2024.

Linda Hatcher Wigley, CLAS '59, of Macon, on Dec. 18, 2024.

Dr. George J. Williams Jr., CLAS '59, of Alma, on March 11.

Ben M. Woodall, CLAS '58, of Griffin, on Feb. 6, 2024.

Roy W. Wyche Jr., CLAS '50, of Macon, on Nov. 13, 2024.

1960s

Charles E. Austin, CLAS '60, of Dunwoody, on March 29.

Rev. W. Donald Bennett, CLAS '62, of Tuscaloosa, Alabama, on Feb. 5.

Katherine "Kay" Edge Bonner, TIFT '65, of Albany, on May 13.

Rev. Robert T. Cantrell, CLAS '60, of Gerald, Missouri, on Dec. 10, 2024.

John B. Dahin Jr., CLAS '67, of Fort Myers, Florida, on March 3.

Dr. Beth Daniell, CLAS '69, of Decatur, on Aug. 6, 2024.

Herbert M. Duffee Jr., PHA '62, of Longwood, Florida, on Jan. 6.

Maye Lyon Eaton, TIFT '60, of Roswell, on March 11.

Sandra English, NUR '61, of Milledgeville, on May 20, 2024.

A. Curtis Farrar Jr., LAW '69, of Douglas, on Aug. 1, 2024.

Dr. Stewart D. Gilbert, CLAS '65, of Tifton, on Feb. 16.

Mildred L. Hackney, NUR '60, of Washington, on Jan. 1.

REMEMBERING...

Alumna and Former Trustee

Dr. Frances Reeves

Dr. Frances Elenor "Pal" Skinner Reeves, CLAS '47, of West Point died May 1 at the age of 98. After graduating from Mercer in 1945 with a Bachelor of Arts in psychology, Dr. Reeves earned an Ed.D. from Auburn University in 1977, specializing in marriage and family counseling. She was a director of the Auburn Alumni Association, a member of Auburn Human Sciences Development Board and trustee of Rockridge Baptist Association. Dr. Reeves was chair and owner of Skinner's Furniture Stores and vice president and director of Valley National Bank. She served as a Mercer Trustee from 1982 to 1987 and from 1991 to

1995. She was a loyal and generous University supporter, making annual gifts for more than 60 years to the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and Mercer University Press.



Angelyn Sims Hearn, TIFT '65, of Jackson, on June 18.

Edward L. Hill, LAW '66, of Conyers, on Feb. 19.

Martha Ann McWhorter Hughes, NUR '63, of Marietta, on April 5.

Gayle James, TIFT '60, of Deland, Florida, on May 31.

Linda Gale Jennings, TIFT '67, of Gray, on Nov. 19, 2024.

Cmdr. C. Wayne Jones, CLAS '60, of Hendersonville, Tennessee, on Jan. 5.

LaRee Tuggle Kilgore, TIFT '61, of Macon, on June 8.

Rev. John M. King, CLAS '60, of Monroe, on June 15.

Dr. Lon B. Knight Jr., CLAS '66, of Greenville, South Carolina, on May 2.

Walter O. Loescher III, CLAS '60, of Muscadine, Alabama, on May 16, 2024.

Jacquelyn Dean Lower, CLAS '64, of Sachse, Texas, on June 6.

John P. Manton, LAW '67, of Cumming, on June 13.

Carolyn Welborn McCrackin, TIFT '60, of Tiger, on Sept. 22, 2024.

Annetta Horne McEachern, EDU '67, of Miami, on Jan. 6.

Elizabeth Potter Merrell, CLAS '66, of Charlotte, North Carolina, on April 15.

J. Wynn Pelham, LAW '66, of Monroe, on March 5.

Jerry Poole, CLAS '64, of Marietta, on Sept. 16, 2024.

Jean Williams Ralston, TIFT '67, of Concord, on April 25.

Shirley Jackson Randall, CLAS '61, of Cedartown, on June 10.

David L. Ratley, CLAS '68, of Hiawassee, on March 9.

Herbert A. Rivers, LAW '67, of Atlanta, on Jan. 3, 2024.

William J. Roberts Jr., LAW '65, of Lake City, Florida, on Nov. 27, 2024.

Withla Robinson, CLAS '62, of Thomasville, on Dec. 11, 2024.

William K. M. Shaheen, PHA '62, of Fort Lauderdale, Florida, on Oct. 25, 2024.

G. Clifton Smith, LAW '61, of Tavares, Florida, on May 9.

Al Stephenson, CLAS '63, of Scottsdale, Arizona, on Jan. 8.

Nancy Wilson Stryker, NUR '67, of Lilburn, on April 1.

Carl J. Surret, LAW '68, of Augusta, on Feb. 2.

Dr. Timothy B. Swango, CLAS '65, of Winter Haven, Florida, on Jan. 24.

Dr. William B. Thomas, CLAS '64, of Valdosta, on Nov. 3, 2024.

Betty Smith Thompson, TIFT '66, of Tifton, on Jan. 9.

Nancy Wilson Thompson, CLAS '63, of Junction City, on Jan. 28.

Myra Gittens Waldrep, TIFT '62, of Forsyth, on April 30.

Dr. Howell A. Wasden III, CLAS '66, of Warm Springs, on March 17.

Clyde Wilson, NUR '66, of Davidson, North Carolina, on Dec. 31, 2024.

1970s

The Hon. J. Dixon Belk, LAW '70, of Columbus, on May 8.

Toby Rand Bonner, CAS '76, of Gainesville, on Jan. 15.

Judy Shaver Bowles, TIFT '72, of Peachtree City, on Sept. 4, 2024.

Donald W. Conn, CLAS '71, of Atlanta, on Feb. 12.

Dian Dukes Cooley, TIFT '74, of Forsyth, on May 25.

Diane M. Locke Dorsey, TIFT '70, of Gainesville, on Jan. 2.

Luman C. Earle, LAW '72, of Dublin, on Nov. 4, 2024.

Dr. Russ A. Elkins, CLAS '70, of Adel, on March 13.

Linda Jones Eller, CLAS '74, of Macon, on March 24.

Felix P. Graham Jr., LAW '73, of Danielsville, on Nov. 26, 2024.

Becky Buntin Gunn, CLAS '72, of Macon, on July 27, 2024.

Teresa Weinelt Hall, CLAS '73, of Tacoma, Washington, on Dec. 27, 2024.

Friend and Generous University Supporter

Dr. Cecil Whitaker

Dr. Cecil Francis Whitaker of Columbus died Feb. 7 at the age of 87. Born in Macon, Dr. Whitaker graduated as valedictorian of Lanier High School in 1955. He then attended Duke University, where he met his future wife, Terry. In 1962, he graduated from the Medical College of Georgia (MCG) in Augusta. After his internship in Macon, he served as a medical officer in the U.S. Navy. He then served his four-year residency in obstetrics and gynecology at MCG. In 1969, he joined OB/GYN Associates in Columbus, where he served until his retirement in 2003. Throughout his career, he was a member and leader of many professional and civic organizations and was actively involved in his church. He also earned several awards in his profession, including the 2012 MCG Alumni Association's Distinguished Alumnus Award. Dr. Whitaker was a generous supporter of Mercer School of Medicine's Columbus campus.



Donna Ashman Hastings, CLAS '70, of Jacksonville, Florida, on Jan. 7.
Hollis H. Hooks, CLAS '72, of Lakeland, Florida, on May 10.
Robert J. Lindner, BUS '77, of Marietta, on May 3.
Larry P. Lynch, LAW '72, of Monticello, on Sept. 22, 2024.
Mary Cathy Sanders Madden, CLAS '73, of Macon, on Sept. 27, 2024.
Phyllis Hall Maretz, TIFT '70, of Washington, on Dec. 17, 2024.
Steven C. Moon, PHA '79, of Jasper, on Sept. 22, 2024.
Buddy M. Nesmith Jr., CLAS '74, of Burnsville, North Carolina, on Sept. 14, 2024.
Sharon Bryant Newman, EDU '72, of Marietta, on Sept. 20, 2024.
Lawrence J. Phalin, LAW '70, of Waynesville, North Carolina, on Sept. 29, 2024.
Chester W. Pierce, CLAS '70, of Marietta, on Jan. 11.
James Roger Poole, LAW '79, of Spartanburg, South Carolina, on Jan. 29.
Mark S. Reed, CLAS '74, of Raleigh, North Carolina, on Oct. 24, 2024.
Betty Speir Sanders, CAS '78, of Atlanta, on Jan. 30.
The Hon. Charles S. Sexton, LAW '78, of Kodak, Tennessee, on Jan. 21.

Mary Crandall Smith, EDU '75, of Taylorsville, on Feb. 22.
Ola Johnson Spires, CLAS '72, of Macon, on June 23.
Robbin Dowell St. John, PHA '79, of Amelia Island, Florida, on Nov. 9, 2024.
Terry G. Tiller, CLAS '78, of Greensboro, on March 12.
J. Edward Trice Jr., LAW '75, of Thomaston, on March 31.
Phyllis Webb, TIFT '78, of Clarksville, on March 16.
Dr. Gregory L. Wehunt, PHA '72, of Dallas, on Jan. 10.
James C. West III, LAW '75, of Decatur, on June 1, 2024.
Charles H. Weston, LAW '71, of Macon, on Aug. 4, 2024.
Charles B. Whiteman, CLAS '75, of Nashville, Tennessee, on Aug. 8, 2024.
James L. Wiggins, LAW '75, of Eastman, on Jan. 28, 2024.
Samuel A. Wilson Jr., LAW '75, of Macon, on Jan. 11.
Dr. Gary J. Woods, CLAS '72, of Hahira, on Feb. 15.

1980s

Shirley Edwards Annis, CAS '81, of Frisco, Texas, on Jan. 8, 2024.
Donna Davis Bailey, TIFT '81, of Fayetteville, on Feb. 26.

Walter O. Cannon Jr., CLAS '80, of Cordele, on March 14.
Susan Murphree Ebersbach, LAW '86, of Newnan, on Sept. 1, 2024.
Dr. C. Randall Edwards, MED '86, of Cedartown, on Feb. 7.
Jerry L. Folds, BUS '88, of Winston, on May 9, 2024.
P. Dewey Gill, LAW '85, of Ellaville, on May 2.
Rodrick K. Harris, TIFT '84, of Atlanta, on Dec. 4, 2024.
Dr. Barbara A. Holmes, LAW '84, of Palm Harbor, Florida, on Oct. 15, 2024.
Thomas R. Hutto, CAS '83, of Warrenton, on Feb. 13.
Stephen P. Lucas, CLAS '88, of Cumming, on March 25.
W. Gregory McCall, LAW '80, of Charlotte, North Carolina, on Oct. 19, 2024.
Douglas A. McCann, LAW '81, of Shepherdsville, Kentucky, on Nov. 10, 2024.
Angella M. Mercer, BUS '86, of Macon, on May 22, 2024.
Genevieve Derks Miller, CLAS '85, of Conyers, on May 4.
Gary L. Moser, LAW '81, of Valdosta, on March 9.
Frank C. Pinkston Jr., CLAS '82, of Macon, on June 13.
Holly Lynn Bonds, NUR '89, of Marietta, on April 7.

Joseph D. Suggs, CLAS '87, of Atlanta, on March 5.
Joni Gruelle Wannamaker, CAS '82, of Rome, on May 11.
Mildred Page Wells, CLAS '80, of Franklin, North Carolina, on May 10.
James N. Wheelless, TIFT '87, of Thomaston, on July 12, 2024.
Teresa Hendrix Wilcox, CLAS '85, of Macon, on Feb. 4.
Melvin J. Williams, LAW '81, of Macon, on Dec. 21, 2024.
Mary Jane Rodgers Yorke, LAW '81, of Lake Park, on Jan. 9.

1990s

Elgin C. Aeschliman, BUS '90, of Roswell, on Jan. 19.
Richard M. Barnes, LAW '94, of Dacula, on Feb. 9.
Dr. Larry C. Boyd, MED '91, of Seymour, Texas, on Feb. 7.
Barbara C. Conrad, EDU '97, of Marietta, on April 29.
Laurie Berglund Cowart, CLAS '96, of Signal Mountain, Tennessee, on March 15.
Barbara Crosby, BUS '95, of Stone Mountain, on April 11.
Kristen Tapley Daniel, BUS '91, of Macon, on March 20.
Elaine Foster, BUS '93, of Duluth, on Jan. 8.
Michael A. Fowler, BUS '90, of Gainesville, Florida, on June 8.
Marc S. Gruverman, CLAS '90, of Fort Lauderdale, Florida, on Feb. 5.
Benjamin G. Hudson III, LAW '93, of Bolingbroke, on May 21.
Jon R. Meyers, LAW '97, of Washington, D.C., on July 27, 2024.
Dr. Donald W. Pate, MED '91, of Newport, Arkansas, on July 9, 2024.
Richard H. Simpson, LAW '96, of Brunswick, on March 20.
Thomas O. Sippel, LAW '96, of Alpharetta, on May 8.
Calvin L. Till Jr., EGR '95, of Forsyth, on April 19.

2000s

Phyllis Windham McHale Carpenter, BUS '03, of Perry, on May 21.
Erik Entrekin, LAW '06, of Atlanta, on April 22.
Capt. David W. Felker, EGR '00, of Crestview, Florida, on Feb. 27.
Ashley Lynn Green, CLAS '08, of Milton, on June 13.
Dr. George H. Hart III, MED '01, of Macon, on April 6.
Ilesha T. Reedy Holness, EDU '09, of Conley, on April 14.
Lucy Hardester Lott, COPA '01, of Fitzgerald, on Jan. 22, 2024.
Patricia Sams Powell, COPA '04, of Palmyra, Virginia, on Feb. 18.
Christina Marie Summer, LAW '00, of Columbia, South Carolina, on Sept. 5, 2024.
Alan P. Taylor, LAW '06, of Wills Point, Texas, on Feb. 9.

2010s

Ronan R. Cajimat, NUR '12, of Alpharetta, on Jan. 1.
Corinne Poirier Coning, BUS '12, of Suwanee, on April 10.
Ella L. Flemister, MED '14, of Griffin, on June 2.
Benjie Harbin, BUS '15, of Evans, on April 30.
Rev. Brenda Thompson McCalop, DIV '10, of Pilot Mountain, North Carolina, on Dec. 12, 2024.
Dr. Zac T. Medley, PHA '11, of Hickman, Tennessee, on Oct. 26, 2024.
Phyllis Colwell Everidge Tanner, CLAS '18, of Macon, on Jan. 24.
Hasani K. Widemond, BUS '12, of Smyrna, on Aug. 31, 2024.

Friends

Sue Moore Argo, of Atlanta, on Oct. 26, 2024.
C. Duncan Beard, of Atlanta, on Aug. 31, 2024.
Wallace Bysinger, of Hendersonville, North Carolina, on March 30.
William H. Campbell, of Marshallville, on Dec. 10, 2024.
Sandra E. Childs, of Warner Robins, on Dec. 20, 2024.
Dr. Jacqueline Christman, of Macon, on Oct. 12, 2024.
Dr. Thomas A. Cook, of Datil, New Mexico, on April 9.
Alice Dalton, of Atlanta, on March 25.
Adrian Gnam, of Macon, on April 16.
Donald D. Hicks, of Macon, on Dec. 30, 2024.
Garnelle Horwitz, of Macon, on Jan. 3.
Catherine Ewing Ivey, of Macon, on April 7.
Dr. Tracie Jenkins, of Macon, on Oct. 25, 2024.
Dr. George C. King, of Clayton, on March 10.
Dr. Leonard Lancette, of Decatur, on Dec. 9, 2024.
David S. McCowen, of Atlanta, on April 28.
Charlotte E. McMullan, of Macon, on Feb. 11.
Debbie Mitchell, of Woodbine, on Feb. 16.
Dr. Bruce Morgan, of Gainesville, on Nov. 21, 2024.
Donna F. Kelly Newham, of Waynesville, on Feb. 9.
Dr. John F. Schaefer, of Deming, New Mexico, on Dec. 31, 2024.
Gene B. Strauss, of Macon, on June 21.
John G. Summerville, of Peachtree City, on March 25.
Anne Compton Thomas, of Griffin, on April 2, 2025.
Dr. William N. Wessinger, of Savannah, on Feb. 20.
Bonita L. Whorton, of Macon, on Jan. 12.

50-75-100 YEARS AGO

Photos and archival information
assembled by Haley-Marie Ellegood of the
Tarver Library Special Collections staff.

50 YEARS AGO

1975 - Nitty Gritty Dirt Band Performs Concert for Mercer Students —

On Oct. 17, 1975, the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band performed at the Warner Robins Civic Center. The concert was sponsored by the Mercer University Student Activities Board, and buses were chartered to take students to the venue. (SOURCE: *The Macon Telegraph and News*, Oct. 12, 1975, and *The Mercer Cluster*, Oct. 24, 1975)



75 YEARS AGO

1950 - Edwin Johnston Named Professor — In 1950, **Dr. Edwin Johnston** became the Greek professor in the Roberts School of Christianity (now the Roberts Department of Religion). Dr. Johnston was a 1941 graduate of Mercer who had recently completed his Ph.D. in New Testament from the University of Manchester. He was later named the Roberts Professor of Bible and served on various faculty committees. In addition to being a professor, Dr. Johnston was a chaplain in the U.S. Army Reserve for 33 years, a preacher and a writer. In 1989, he retired from Mercer after 39 years. Following his retirement, the Edwin Dargan Johnston Christianity Faculty Research Fund was established in his honor. (SOURCE: *The Mercer Cluster*, Sept. 22, 1950, *The Christian Index*, Aug. 24, 1989, and *The Den*, April 3, 2012)

100 YEARS AGO

1925 - Centennial Stadium Dedicated — On Sept. 26, 1925, Centennial Stadium, later renamed Porter Stadium, was dedicated. The new football stadium had recently completed construction at a cost of almost \$92,000. Dedication ceremonies included speeches, a parade, a band performance and a football game between Mercer and the University of Georgia. While Mercer started the game well, they ultimately lost to Georgia 32-0. Over 6,000 people attended the game.

After Mercer ended its football program in 1942, the stadium was primarily used for high school football games. The stadium was demolished in 1995 after falling into disrepair. (SOURCE: *The Macon Daily Telegraph*, Sept. 27, 1925, and *The Macon Telegraph*, Aug. 10, 1995)





MEET OUR NEW STAFF MEMBERS

To better serve Mercer's alumni and friends, the Office of University Advancement and Office of Alumni Engagement recently added new staff members to coordinate fundraising and alumni activities, as well as to build relationships and foster goodwill among its constituents.



Lake Lambert IV, CLAS '23, joined the Office of Alumni Engagement in March as the coordinator of alumni engagement. Lambert is a graduate of Mercer with a bachelor's degree in history and minors in education and Africana studies. While a student, he worked in the Office of Student Affairs, studied abroad at the University of Essex and served as president of Kappa Sigma Fraternity. Before joining Mercer, Lambert was the mobile visitor center manager for Visit Macon. In his role, Lambert helps the alumni engagement team plan and execute special alumni and campus events like Reunion Zero, Homecoming and Mercer Mixers. Lambert brings a knowledge of higher education and experience in creating new programming to the position.



Matt May joined the Office of University Advancement in May as director of development for the College of Health Professions. A Chicago native, May served in the U.S. Marines before beginning his business career in Atlanta. He earned his bachelor's degree from Georgia Gwinnett College and joined the school's development office, where he worked in prospect research and as a development officer. In his role as director of development at Mercer, May's responsibilities include researching prospects, developing relationships with alumni and constituents, and generating annual fund and major gifts for the College of Health Professions.



NEW STAFF MEMBERS — CONTINUED

Roderick Douthit joined the Office of University Advancement in June as director of development for the College of Pharmacy. Originally from North Carolina, Douthit has lived in the Atlanta area since 1993. He has more than 25 years of experience in marketing, strategy, sponsorships and fundraising with companies including BellSouth, AT&T Wireless, Cox Communications and SunTrust/Truist. Most recently, he worked with the National Black MBA Association, where he was responsible for the management, identification, solicitation, negotiation and closing of all high-level strategic targets and fundraising. Douthit has a bachelor's degree in business administration from North Carolina A&T State University and a master's degree in business administration from Georgia State University. As director of development, his responsibilities include raising support for College of Pharmacy operational funds, capital projects and endowment funds.



MERCER CELEBRATES NEW PRESIDENT'S CLUB LIFE MEMBERS

New Life Members of The President's Club were recognized on April 19, during the University's 59th annual celebration of its most generous supporters. Members of The President's Club gathered for dinner followed by a dessert reception at The St. Regis Hotel, Atlanta.

The University's highest level of leadership giving, The President's Club Life Member status is conferred on those individuals and churches who have contributed at least \$100,000 to Mercer. At this year's event, the following were recognized for achieving Life Member status: **First Baptist Church of Rome, Susan Gunby, Mick and Betty Kicklighter, Rabun and Terri Matthews, Warren and Carol Power, Kevin and Carolyn Scheck, Loraine Sumner, and Fred Toney.**

For more information on leadership giving, visit giving.mercer.edu.

New President's Club Life Members attending the celebration with President William D. Underwood.
(L-R, back row): President William D. Underwood; Warren Randall Power, LAW '88; Jimmy Gentry (FBC Rome); Allen "Rabun" Matthews III, CLAS '61; Lt. Gen. (ret.) Claude M. "Mick" Kicklighter, CLAS '55; Charles "Fred" Toney, CLAS '63; Kevin A. Scheck
(L-R, front row): Carol Long Power, EDU '86; Susan Sweat Gunby, NUR '68; Cynthia "Loraine" Sumner, CLAS '98, MED '03; Terri P. Matthews; Elizabeth "Betty" Exley Kicklighter, CLAS '57; Carolyn J. Scheck





BEARS *Travel* **PROGRAM**

THE OFFICE OF ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT

is pleased to introduce the revamped

BEARS TRAVEL PROGRAM

debuting in 2026!

Discover the geysers, volcanoes, geothermal pools, natural lights, and ancient culture of stunning Iceland; or visit four different countries, shop world-renowned Christmas markets, experience curated excursions, and superior fine dining while cruising Europe's Danube River.

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[ALUMNI.MERCER.EDU](https://alumni.mercer.edu)

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BE THE BEAR



2025-2026 MERCER BASKETBALL

SCHEDULE

Women's *Men's*



11.3 @ UNC ASHEVILLE
11.6 CLEMSON
11.10 GARDNER-WEBB
11.13 @ WAKE FOREST
11.19 @ JACKSON ST
11.22 @ GEORGIA SOUTHERN
11.25 FLORIDA A&M
11.28 @ CHARLESTON SOUTHERN
12.3 @ CAMPBELL
12.6 @ JACKSONVILLE ST
12.14 MISSISSIPPI VALLEY ST
12.17 ERSKINE
12.20 @ TULANE TOURNAMENT
12.21 @ TULANE TOURNAMENT
1.2 AUBURN MONTGOMERY
1.8 * @ WCU
1.10 * @ UNCG
1.17 * SAMFORD
1.22 * FURMAN
1.24 * WOFFORD
1.30 * @ CHATTANOOGA
2.1 * @ ETSU
2.5 * UNCG
2.7 * WCU
2.14 * @ SAMFORD
2.19 * @ WOFFORD
2.21 * @ FURMAN
2.26 ETSU
2.28 CHATTANOOGA

11.3 @ TENNESSEE
11.6 LAGRANGE
11.9 LIPSCOMB
11.15 @ WINTHROP
11.22 @ ECU
11.26 APPALACHIAN ST
11.29 @ ELON
12.2 GEORGIA ST
12.13 @ CLEMSON
12.17 @ UCF
12.20 @ WASHINGTON ST
12.28 BAPTIST
12.31 * @ FURMAN
1.3 * @ ETSU
1.7 * THE CITADEL
1.10 * WOFFORD
1.15 * @ VMI
1.17 * @ UNCG
1.21 * WCU
1.24 * @ WOFFORD
1.29 * UNCG
1.31 * VMI
2.5 * @ CHATTANOOGA
2.7 * @ SAMFORD
2.11 * FURMAN
2.14 * @ THE CITADEL
2.19 * CHATTANOOGA
2.21 * SAMFORD
2.25 * @ WCU
2.28 * ETSU



* CONFERENCE @ AWAY