

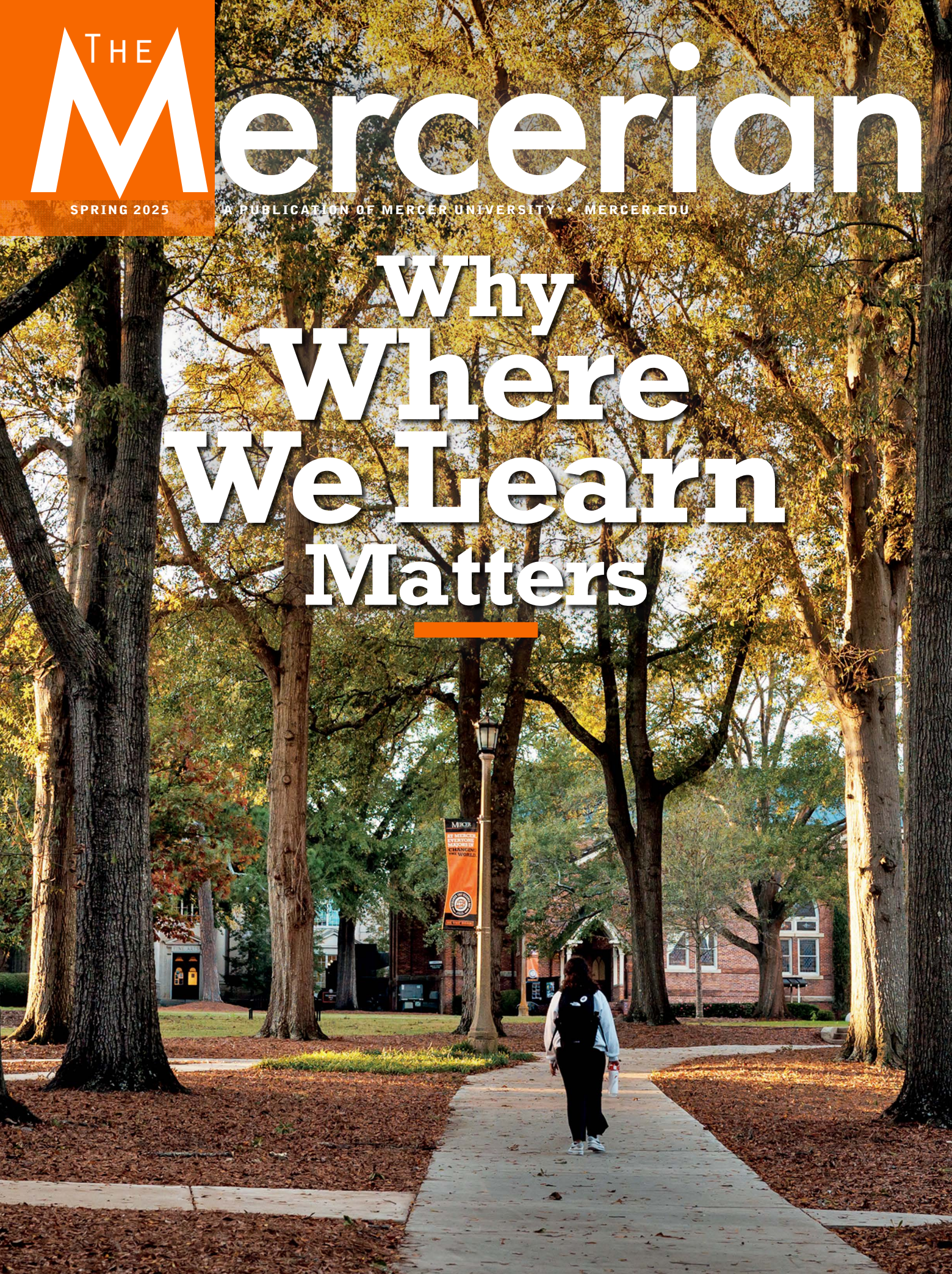
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Mercerian

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In **Our** Lens

Encore! at Carnegie Hall – Mercer University's Robert McDuffie Center for Strings, Mercer Singers, alumni and friends returned to Carnegie Hall's Stern Auditorium/Perelman Stage in New York City for a one-night performance on Feb. 17. They presented a thrilling repertoire, including the wildly popular *Sunrise Mass* by Ola Gjeilo. The performance featured McDuffie Center Director **Amy Schwartz Moretti** and was conducted by **Dr. Stanley L. Roberts**, associate dean of music and the Arthur Lowndes Rich Professor of Choral Conducting, and the Emerson Quartet's Paul Watkins.



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MERCER UNIVERSITY
MOURNS THE LOSS
OF LIFE TRUSTEE

JIMMY CARTER



BY LARRY D. BRUMLEY

JAMES EARL (JIMMY) CARTER JR., MERCER UNIVERSITY LIFE TRUSTEE, NOBEL LAUREATE AND THE 39TH PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, DIED DEC. 29, 2024. HE WAS 100.

INITIALLY ELECTED IN 2012 TO THE MERCER BOARD OF TRUSTEES — THE ONLY BOARD HE SERVED ON AFTER LEAVING THE WHITE HOUSE — PRESIDENT CARTER WAS ELECTED A LIFE TRUSTEE IN 2017.



“President Carter, as with every endeavor he pursued, was an active, engaged trustee,” Mercer President **William D. Underwood** said. “Until his health began to decline in 2019, he never missed a board meeting. He asked tough questions, offered keen insights, and took every opportunity to advance Mercer and its mission. He offered wise counsel to me and was a good friend. His death leaves a significant void in the Mercer family. With profound gratitude for the life he lived, we offer our prayers to the Carter family for peace and comfort in this time of loss.”

President Carter’s support of Mercer spans half a century, dating to his tenure as the 76th >>

President Carter addresses a packed Toney Auditorium in Willingham Hall during the President’s Lecture Series on Oct. 23, 2008.



Mercer School of Medicine students and area residents visit with President Carter during a 2019 Mercer Medicine health fair in Plains.



governor of Georgia, when in the mid-1970s he authorized the initial state funding that led to establishment of the Mercer University School of Medicine, which opened in 1982.

During his tenure on the Mercer board, he was a strong advocate for the School of Medicine’s mission to prepare primary care physicians for rural and other underserved areas of Georgia. As a trustee, President Carter made the motion to build a four-year campus of the School of Medicine in Columbus to provide more physicians for the state. It opened in 2022.

In 2018, President Carter called Underwood and asked for his help in recruiting a physician to Plains, which had recently lost its only doctor. A couple of weeks passed, and President Carter



*“As a trustee of the University,
I know that Mercer On Mission
programs inspire and empower
students to continue to think of ways
to put others before self.”*
— **President Jimmy Carter**

followed up with an email that simply read, “Bill, where’s our doctor?” That led to the School of Medicine opening its first rural clinic in Plains, staffed with a physician and nurse, within weeks of President Carter’s request. Mercer Medicine now has six rural clinics across Georgia and more locations under consideration.

President Carter was also a strong proponent of Mercer’s international service and research initiative, Mercer On Mission, which has deployed hundreds of Mercer students and faculty to dozens of countries around the world to improve the human condition.

“As a trustee of the University, I know that Mercer On Mission programs inspire and empower students to continue to think of ways to put others before self,” he once said in an interview. It was a principle he modeled.

In 2008, President Carter and Underwood served as co-chairs of The New Baptist Covenant, which involved leaders of more than 30 Baptist organizations claiming more than 20 million members throughout the United States and Canada.

It culminated with a celebration that drew 20,000 diverse Baptists to the Georgia World Congress Center in Atlanta. The work continues today, bridging divisions and seeking ways of cooperative engagement among a wide spectrum of Baptists in North America.

In 2016, President Carter spoke at Macon Commencement and assisted in the conferring of an honorary doctorate on musician **Gregg Allman**. The subject of a documentary titled *Jimmy Carter: Rock & Roll President*, he told the audience that he likely wouldn’t have been elected without the help of the Allman Brothers Band and Capricorn Records co-founder and Mercer graduate **Phil Walden**, who helped raise money for his campaign when it was running low on cash.

At a board meeting three years earlier, President Carter advocated for the awarding of an honorary degree to Macon-native **Richard “Little Richard” Penniman**.

Two of the more than two dozen books authored by President Carter were published by Mercer University Press.

Photographers: Paula Heller, John Knight, Amy Maddox, Saldivia-Jones Photography, Leah Yetter

Opposite page, clockwise from top left: President Carter speaks at a New Baptist Covenant news conference at the Carter Center in 2007 as Mercer President William D. Underwood and former President Bill Clinton look on; Underwood and President Carter present Rock and Roll Hall of Famer Gregg Allman with an honorary Doctor of Humanities degree during the 2016 Macon commencement; President Carter takes notes during a Mercer Board of Trustees meeting; President Carter and Rosalynn Carter with Dr. Jean Sumner, dean of the School of Medicine, and Underwood following a ribbon-cutting for the Plains Mercer Medicine clinic; President Carter greets students in the Godsey Administration Building during a campus visit; Student Government Association President John Buckner presents President Carter with a Mercer sweatshirt at the conclusion of the 2008 President’s Lecture.



MAKE IT MERCER AGAIN!

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STUDENTS GAIN FIELD EXPERIENCE DURING INTERNSHIPS WITH PRESTIGIOUS CORPORATIONS

By **ANDREA HONAKER**

Through their University connections and top-notch academic credentials, Mercer students have made a habit of securing competitive summer internships. This past summer, students traveled across the United States and even abroad to work with big-name companies, where they gained practical experience in their field of study.

A Mercer connection opened the door for senior **Shaw London** to intern at Axogen in Tampa, Florida. A biomedical engineering major, he heard 2005 School of Engineering alumna **Stacy Arnold**, Axogen vice president of product development and clinical research, speak during a biotechnology forum that Mercer hosted in fall 2023. London became interested in Axogen and later reached out to Arnold.

“That [Mercer connection] was one of the biggest assets going in for me with the internship. I have a pretty strong resume as it is, but applying to internships in engineering is very competitive,” London said.

London said Axogen’s mission to help patients with peripheral nerve damage restore feeling made him want to work with the company.

“It really spoke to me how patient-oriented they are,” said London, who worked in-office at Axogen until August and remotely until November. “Being a biotech company, it’s really easy to try and grow the company while forgetting about their mission, but their mission is at the forefront of everything they do.”

London was part of the clinical science team under the clinical research department, which is in charge of preclinical and clinical studies for Axogen products. The main project he was involved in this summer was a study for a nerve cap for neuroma, which occurs when a severed nerve has no direction to grow. This work involved a lot of data analysis. >>



PEXELS PHOTO; OPPOSITE: MARIN GUTA PHOTO

MERCER CONNECTIONS, RECORD ENROLLMENT

“It’s really interesting to see that side of research. I’ve been in biology labs before doing the hard labor, so it’s interesting to see the behind the scenes (of analysis),” he said during his internship.

London said he loved the environment at Axogen. The people he worked with were supportive and enthusiastic about helping him learn.

He said his experiences with Food and Drug Administration protocols and data analysis have been beneficial as he tackles his Mercer senior design project. His team is trying to make a spine implant that could potentially go on the market for a company. In addition, his time with Axogen will help him decide his next steps after graduation, whether that is pursuing a master’s degree or going straight into the workforce.



London

“Building the connections with Axogen could help launch a career into biotech for me,” he said.

“I’m very thankful for the opportunity from Axogen, and I’m very happy to get to work on their team and be able to help propel my future endeavors.”



Kong

Senior **Dejun (Derek) Kong**, an economics major, was a digital and technology consulting intern with PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, or PwC, in Shanghai over the summer. PwC is among the four largest professional services networks in the world, with the others being Deloitte, EY and KPMG.

Kong believes that his internship with KPMG gave him a competitive edge for the PwC internship. In addition to real-world experience, the internship allowed Kong to spend time with his grandparents and friends who live in Shanghai.

Kong worked on an information planning and digital transformation project for a well-known North American oil company and assisted in the implementation of SAP —

Systems Applications and Products in Data Processing — vendor-managed services. He also managed data quality evaluations for a leading Chinese solar energy company.

“I got my first experience with consulting and applied what I learned in my classes to solve real-life problems,” said Kong, who plans to go to graduate school for business analytics after completing his undergraduate degree. “The experience with



Sanchez

the projects can help me understand the field a lot quicker. It also opens up the door for many future opportunities.”

Jay Sanchez was selected for a cybersecurity summer internship with life insurance company Equitable in his hometown of Charlotte, North Carolina. Sanchez is a cybersecurity and information science and technology double-major who graduated in December.

He said a Mercer class on network security gave him a good foundation for his work this summer with the security architecture and engineering team. He learned how to set up firewall policies and helped implement and maintain security measures.

“I like the opportunity, all the hands-on experience. I like that I get to do what I studied for,” Sanchez said during his internship. “This has given me the opportunity to learn more. I’m really



Dougherty

interested in technology and how things work and why they work, all the details, and I’m passionate about security too.”

Charlotte also was the summer home for senior **Shannon Dougherty**, a triple-major in finance, economics and accounting. She completed a 10-week internship in the chief finance office of Bank of America.

Dougherty, a Stamps Scholar, learned about the opportunity from Mercer alumni **Emily Smith** and **Lindy Kanaday**, who now work at the bank. She applied

for the internship in July 2023, participated in an extensive three-round interview process, and learned of her acceptance in November.

“Right now, we’re doing a lot of forecasting and financial modeling for different groups. It’s been cool to apply what we learned in class and see how it works in a corporate setting,” she said during her internship. “Sometimes in school, it’s the big question of, ‘How will this apply to the corporate setting?’ It’s been cool being part of meaningful projects.”

Dougherty had the opportunity to network with longtime employees and gain exposure to many different types of software.

The internship could lead Dougherty to full-time work with Bank of America, which she is interested in. Interns are normally invited to join the two-year Financial Management Analyst Program with Bank of America after they graduate. They rotate through two areas of the company during those two years and then are offered full-time positions.

Dougherty said it’s never too early for Mercer students to start thinking about internships and career opportunities. The timeline for applying for the Bank of America internship was early, and School of Business Dean **Dr. Julie Petherbridge** and professor **Dr. Jeff Ngene** provided guidance and helped her navigate the process.

“Don’t let that fear of not knowing stop you from having those conversations,” Dougherty said. “It’s always worth trying and having those conversations with your mentors and professors. There’s a lot of people willing to help. You have to advocate for yourself and let them know you’re interested.” ♦

Read these and other stories about
all things Mercer at
theDen
den.mercer.edu

RECORD OPENING DAY FALL ENROLLMENT

Mercer set a new enrollment record of **9,232**

last fall. Key contributors to the enrollment growth were increases in the University’s law and medical schools, as well as graduate programs in education. The undergraduate, graduate and professional students represent 49 states and 38 countries, and 87% of students are residents of Georgia.



The Class of 2028 forms an MU on Cruz Plaza during 2024 Bear Beginnings.

RANKINGS, TRUSTEES, PARTNERSHIP

MERCER MARKS 22 YEARS AS ONE OF PRINCETON REVIEW'S 'BEST COLLEGES'

For the 22nd consecutive year, Mercer is one of the nation's best institutions for undergraduates according to The Princeton Review®. The education services company featured Mercer in *The Best 390 Colleges: 2025 Edition*. The annual guide only features about 15% of America's four-year colleges. In the guide's detailed ranking lists, Mercer was ranked third on the Most Engaged in Community Service list and 17th on the Friendliest Students list.



BOARD ELECTS NEW TRUSTEES AND OFFICERS

The University's Board of Trustees elected nine new trustees and re-elected **Thomas P. (Tom) Bishop**, CLAS '82, LAW '85, as board chair during its annual Homecoming meeting in November. The nine new trustees include **Charlie Cantrell**; **Dericus Harvey**, ENG '99; **David Linch**, BUS '80; **Jackie Baugh Moore**; **M. Diane Owens**, CLAS '77, LAW '80; **Rev. Matthew Sapp**, CLAS '08, DIV '12; **Chris Sheridan**; **Thad Warren**, CLAS '86; and **Jerry Wilson**, BUS '86. Trustees who rotated off the board and were recognized for their service include **Heather Darden**, CLAS '98; **Nathan Deal**, CLAS '64, LAW '66; **Gene Gabbard**; **Rev. Dr. Kevin Head**; **Dr. Stanley Jones**, CLAS '92, MED '96; **Judge Yvette Miller**, CLAS '77, LAW '80; **James Thomas**, CLAS '93; **Judge Marc Treadwell**, LAW '81; and **Bradley Turner**. **Cathy Callaway Adams**, TIFT '81, was re-elected chair of the Executive Committee for 2025.

MERCER EARNS TOP MARKS FOR VALUE AND UNDERGRADUATE TEACHING IN U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT RANKINGS

Mercer once again ranks among the top national universities in value and undergraduate teaching, according to *U.S. News & World Report's* annual America's Best Colleges issue, released this fall. The University came in at No. 40 on the Best Value ranking list and No. 56 in undergraduate teaching among 436 national universities.



MATT SMITH PHOTO; OPPOSITE: CHRISTOPHER IAN SMITH PHOTO

THE PIEDMONT GRAND OPERA HOUSE

NAMING PARTNERSHIP

The Grand Opera House, the iconic and historic Macon theater and live performance hall in the heart of downtown, has a new name — The Piedmont Grand Opera House. Officials from Piedmont, which operates two hospitals in Macon — Piedmont Macon Medical Center and Piedmont Macon North Hospital — joined officials from the theater and Mercer, which has managed

The Grand since 1995, to unveil the new name on Oct. 10. Throughout more than a century of service to the community, these institutions have been trusted names for Georgians. Adding Piedmont to the theater's name is part of a multi-year deal between the institutions. The Grand also recently named its large reception room the Cox Room in a partnership with Cox Communications.



From left, Frank Wood, The Piedmont Grand Opera House executive director; Stephen J. Daugherty, CEO of Piedmont Macon; and Mercer President William D. Underwood stand under a just-revealed sign announcing the theater's new name as The Piedmont Grand Opera House.



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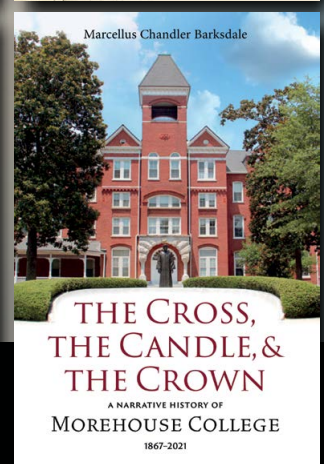
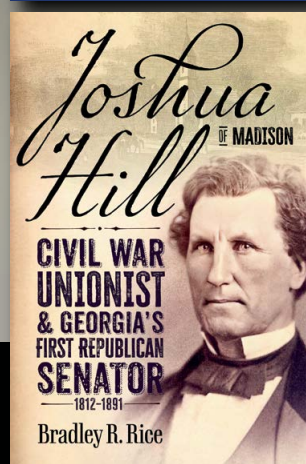
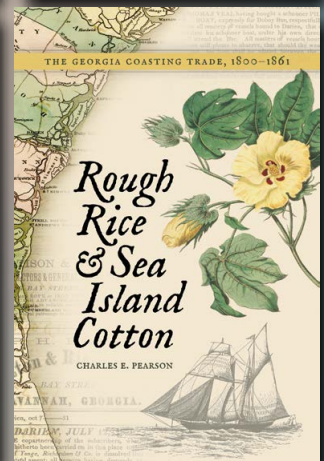
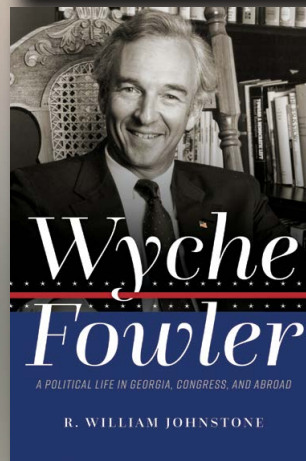
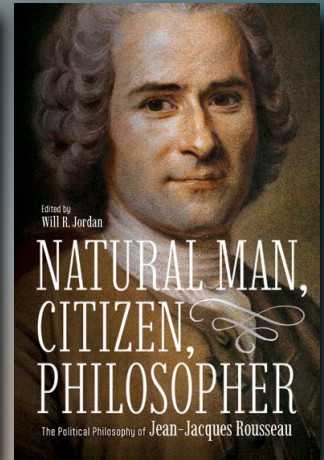
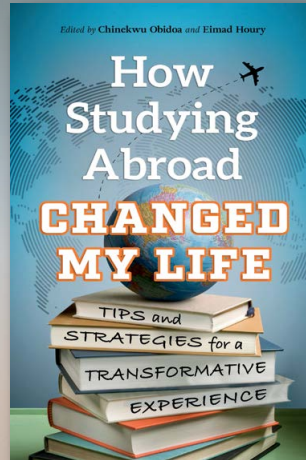
Publishing authors from across the United States, **Mercer University Press** proudly offers a new season filled with essays, nature, fiction, poetry, biography, literary criticism, history, philosophy and religion.

Spring/Summer 2025 season

highlighted titles include: **How Studying Abroad Changed My Life** edited by Mercer professor Dr. Chinekwu Obidoa and emeritus professor Dr. Eimad Houry, which includes stories from Mercer

alumni and faculty on the impact of their immersive learning experiences; **Wyche Fowler** by R. William Johnstone, a biography on Fowler's political life and accomplishments in Georgia, Congress and abroad as U.S. Ambassador; **Joshua Hill of Madison** by Bradley R. Rice, emeritus professor of history at Clayton State University, a biography of the Civil War Unionist and Georgia's first Republican Senator; **Natural Man, Citizen, Philosopher**, a collection of essays on Jean-Jacques Rousseau from the 2023 A.V. Elliott Conference on Great Books and Ideas at Mercer University edited by Dr. Will R. Jordan, Mercer professor of political science; **Rough Rice and Sea Island Cotton** by Charles E. Pearson, an extensively researched study of nineteenth-century Southern maritime and agriculture history; and **The Cross, the Candle, and the Crown** by Marcellus C. Barksdale, retired professor of history and Africana Studies at Morehouse College, the inspirational beginnings and history of Morehouse College from 1867 through 2021.

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FACULTY HONORS & RECOGNITION

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR AMONG HONOREES FOR GOVERNOR'S AWARDS FOR THE ARTS AND HUMANITIES

Associate Professor of History and Interdisciplinary Studies **Dr. Melanie Pavich** was among the honorees for this year's Governor's Awards for the Arts and Humanities for her work and the work of Mercer students on the Georgia coast. Dr. Pavich leads a multiyear project with her College of Professional Advancement students to preserve Gullah Geechee and African American heritage and heritage sites in Coastal Georgia. She has received three Georgia Humanities grants for the nine-plus-year research-based service-learning project, in partnership with the Georgia Department of Economic Development, through funding from the Georgia General Assembly.



Celebrants at the state Capitol for a formal ceremony recognizing the 10 recipients of the 13th annual Governor's Award for the Arts and Humanities.

FACULTY



Dr. Vikraman Baskaran, associate professor and program coordinator of health informatics, gives a talk titled "Machine Learning in Health Care" on Jan. 6, 2024, at the Alpharetta Library.

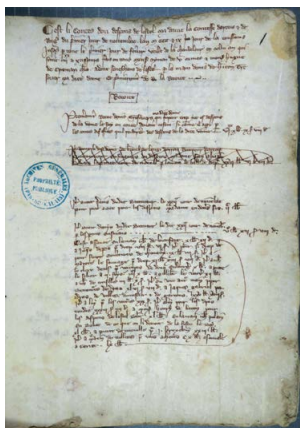
INFORMATICS PROFESSOR SELECTED FOR GOVERNOR'S TEACHING FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

College of Professional Advancement Associate Professor of Informatics **Dr. Vikraman Baskaran** was recently selected for the prestigious Governor's Teaching Fellowship Program for the 2024-25 academic year. Dr. Baskaran, who last year received the University's College of Professional Advancement Award for Excellence in Teaching, was one of 16 applicants selected for the Governor's Teaching Fellowship Academic Year Symposium Program.

HISTORY PROFESSOR CONDUCTING LANDSCAPE, GARDEN RESEARCH DURING YEARLONG FELLOWSHIP

Dr. Abigail Dowling, assistant professor of history in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, is spending the academic year at one of the nation's most popular gardens, where she is furthering her research related to garden and landscape studies. Dr. Dowling is taking a yearlong sabbatical to be a part of the 2024-25 cohort of Dumbarton Oaks Fellows. Dumbarton Oaks,

located in Washington, D.C., is a Harvard University institution that specializes in the disciplines of Byzantine, pre-Columbian and garden and landscape studies. Dr. Dowling is among 35 scholars selected for the program and among five chosen specifically for the garden and landscape studies discipline.



Left: A parchment account dated 1309 in a register book of the household of Mahaut, a primary focus of Dr. Dowling's research, from the Archives départementales de Pas-de-Calais in Arras, France.



Right: Pictured is the seal of the countess Mahaut, a primary focus of Dr. Dowling's research. Mahaut's seal would have only been attached to important documents sent to other major rulers or lords.



Dr. Dowling holds a French manuscript in her archive, the largest roll in the collection.

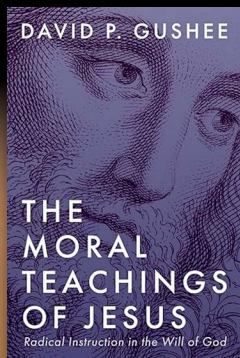
HISTORY PROFESSOR AWARDED LORING FELLOWSHIP FOR CIVIL WAR RESEARCH

A prestigious fellowship is helping a University professor to expand upon research exploring the literary and emotional history of Civil War soldiers and their families. **Dr. Sarah Gardner**, Distinguished University Professor of History, is the recipient of the 2024-25 Loring Fellowship on the Civil War, Its Origins and Consequences. Awarded to only one scholar each year, the fellowship gives Dr. Gardner access to rare historical materials housed at the Massachusetts Historical Society and the Boston Athenaeum, co-sponsors of the fellowship.

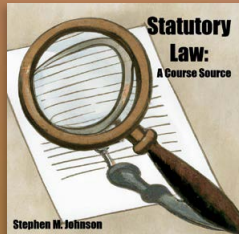
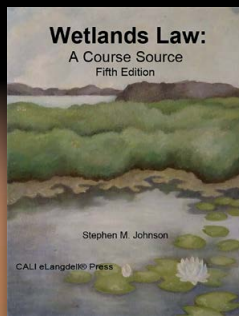


Dr. Gardner

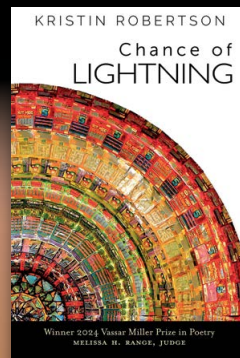
MERCER FACULTY AUTHOR NEW BOOKS



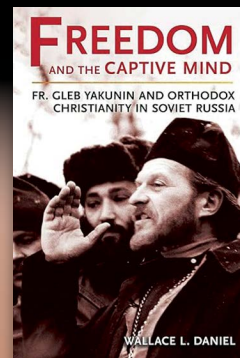
REV. DR. DAVID GUSHEE, Distinguished University Professor of Christian Ethics, based at McAfee School of Theology, published his 29th book, a work of biblical interpretation titled *The Moral Teachings of Jesus: Radical Instruction in the Will of God*.



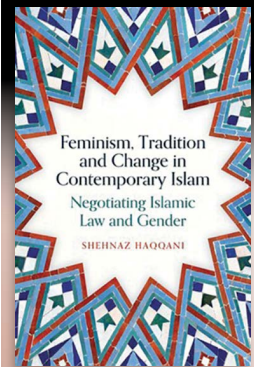
STEPHEN M. JOHNSON, professor, had two books published: *Statutory Law: A Course Source* and a revised version of *Wetlands Law: A Course Source*.



DR. KRISTIN ROBERTSON, assistant professor of writing and literature, published a new book of poetry titled *Chance of Lightning*. It was selected from nearly 500 manuscripts for the Vassar Miller Prize in Poetry. The collection features a series of persona poems written from the points of view of imaginary lottery winners sharing how they've spent their windfalls.



DR. WALLACE DANIEL, Distinguished University Professor of History and Scholar in Residence, published his latest book titled *Freedom and the Captive Mind: Fr. Gleb Yakunin and Orthodox Christianity in Soviet Russia*, a biography of Fr. Gleb Yakunin, the first Orthodox priest to adopt an ecumenical approach to Russian Orthodoxy, earning him the enmity of conservative groups within the Church and gratitude from other religious denominations.



DR. SHEHNAZ HAQQANI, assistant professor of religion, published a book titled *Feminism, Tradition and Change in Contemporary Islam: Negotiating Islamic Law and Gender*. The book explores questions of change and tradition in contemporary Islam, asking what Muslims consider to be the criteria of change as they reflect on new realities.

SCHOLARSHIPS, FELLOWSHIPS

SCHOLARSHIPS & FELLOWSHIPS

UNIVERSITY WELCOMES 13TH CLASS OF STAMPS SCHOLARS

Mercer welcomed nine incoming freshmen last fall as part of the University's 13th class of Stamps Scholars. Mercer's newest Stamps Scholars include **Reagan Cooke, Arushi Cumer, Elaine Do, Florence Nduna, Kaylee Nichols, Allison Sidley,**

Ria Tamrakar, Shivani Trivedi and Isaac Monteiro. Three additional students, **Wesley Kinney, Prakriti Sapkota and Allie Ford,** joined the Stamps Scholars program in the spring, bringing the current number of Scholars at Mercer to 33.



JUNIOR RECEIVES CDC AWARD FOR PUBLIC HEALTH RESEARCH

Junior **Jordan King** was named a recipient of The Williams-Hutchins Health Equity Award for her research on refugee services in South Dakota. The award recognizes exceptional student projects from participants in the CDC John R. Lewis Undergraduate Public Health Scholars Program that advance health disparity science and minority health. King, a global health studies and biology double-major, represented the Kennedy Krieger Institute in Baltimore.



ALUMNUS RYAN BROWNLEE NAMED PHI KAPPA PHI FELLOW

2024 graduate **Ryan Brownlee** has been named one of 54 Phi Kappa Phi Fellows nationwide and received \$8,500 for his first year of graduate study at the Medical College of Georgia at Augusta University. Brownlee, from Flowery Branch, majored in biochemistry and molecular biology. As an undergraduate, he was awarded the prestigious Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship, was in University Honors and was one of 50 students nationwide to receive the Phi Beta Kappa Pioneer Award designed to encourage and reward undergraduate members for developing the research, engagement and leadership skills necessary to become successful scholars.



Brownlee, CLAS '24

COUNSELING GRADUATE AMONG 32 IN NATION TO RECEIVE PRESTIGIOUS FELLOWSHIP

College of Professional Advancement master's degree in clinical mental health counseling graduate student **Nathaneal Barrow** was awarded the National Board for Certified Counselors Foundation Minority Fellowship. The Fellowship is open to counseling students committed to providing services to underserved and underrepresented communities. As a Fellow, Barrow will receive \$12,000 from the Foundation to aid in his academic pursuits, along with training opportunities and mentorship. Barrow received his bachelor's degree in psychology in May 2024 and was the recipient of Mercer's 2024 McAfee Vision and Leadership Scholarship.



Barrow, COPA '24

TWO STUDENTS AWARDED PHI KAPPA PHI STUDY ABROAD GRANTS

Students **Marina Serra** and **Gerell Glenn** were awarded 2024 Phi Kappa Phi study abroad grants. The \$1,000 grants were awarded to 125 students across the nation and are designed to support undergraduates from campuses that have Phi Kappa Phi chapters as they seek expanded knowledge and experience in their academic fields by studying abroad. Serra, a junior from Peachtree City, is majoring in biomedical engineering and spent a month in Ben Tre, Soc Trang, and Dong Thap, Vietnam, as part of a team analyzing patients to create custom above-knee, below-knee and hand and arm prosthetics as well as providing orthopedic and medical care. Glenn, a senior from Hephzibah, is majoring in creative writing and will study for an academic year in Fukuoka, Japan, at Seinan Gakuin University.



Serra, EGR '26



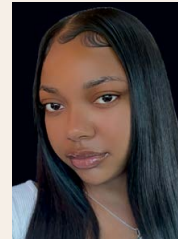
Glenn, CLAS '25

SCHOLARSHIPS, FELLOWSHIPS

GRADUATE STUDENTS SELECTED AS PRE-MASTER'S FELLOWS TO ADDRESS MENTAL HEALTH WORKFORCE SHORTAGE

Two College of Professional Advancement graduate students were selected as inaugural Pre-Master's Fellows as part of the National Mental Health Workforce Acceleration Collaborative. **Kaylah Keitt** and **LaTosma McGhee** each receive a monthly stipend while completing their clinical internships and will have opportunities for training in mental health and substance use treatment. Keitt, a student in the clinical mental health counseling master's degree program, will graduate in August and will complete her clinical internship at Laurel Heights Hospital in Atlanta. McGhee,

a student in the clinical mental health counseling master's degree program, will graduate in May and will complete her clinical internship at Riverwoods Behavioral Health in Riverdale. She is also a U.S. Department of Education Rehabilitation Services Administration Scholar.



Keitt, COPA '25



McGhee, COPA '25

COLLEGE OF PROFESSIONAL ADVANCEMENT ANNOUNCES NEW CLASS OF RSA SCHOLARS

Eight counseling graduate students were selected as Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) Scholars and will receive funding from the College of Professional Advancement's multi-million-dollar grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Education. This year's RSA Scholars are **Yasmeen Burgess, Candra Garrett, Angie Holland, Kenya Harris, Brooke-Lynn Jeffries, Gia Mehdiof, Wade White** and **Mary Wycle**.

The Scholars will receive funding to pursue the Master of Science degree in clinical rehabilitation counseling, and upon completion of their degree, they commit to working at any state vocational rehabilitation agency or other eligible employment site for each academic year they receive funding.



Left to right: Mary Wycle, Gia Mehdiof, Candra Garrett, Wade White, Angie Holland, LaTosma McGhee (returning scholar), Yasmeen Burgess and Kenya Harris. Not pictured: Brooke-Lynn Jeffries

ELEVEN STUDENTS SELECTED TO STUDY ABROAD AS GILMAN SCHOLARS

Eleven students were chosen during the fall 2024 selection cycle to receive a total of \$36,000 in funding to study abroad through the prestigious Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship program. The recipients are **Nichole Harris, Keyana Hunt, Jean Hyun, Destinee Jackson, Alex Marshall, Lindsay Murray, Amann Patel, Abiola Soboyejo, Rayhan Stapleton, Emma Tew** and **Rukiyat Thompson**. Scholars receive up to \$5,000 — or up to \$8,000 if they are also a recipient of the Gilman Critical Need Language Award — to apply toward their study abroad or internship program costs.



Eleven Mercer students were awarded Gilman Scholarships. Among those students are (l-r) Alex Marshall, Keyana Hunt, Emma Tew, Jean Hyun, Nichole Harris and Abiola Soboyejo.

ENGINEERING STUDENT TRAVIS WHITE JR. SELECTED AS TAU BETA PI SCHOLAR

School of Engineering senior **Travis White Jr.** was awarded a Tau Beta Pi scholarship for the 2024-25 academic year. The Fellowship Board of the engineering honor society Tau Beta Pi selected 253 engineering students from 1,328 applicants nationwide. Tau Beta Pi scholarships are awarded to members entering their senior year of study based on the competitive criteria of high scholarship,

campus leadership and service, and promise of future contributions to the engineering profession. White, an Engineering Honors student, is a mechanical engineering major enrolled in the School of Engineering's 4 + 1 Integrated Degree program.



White, EGR '25

OFFICE OF GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT AWARDS 22 GLOBAL LEADER SCHOLARSHIPS

The University's Office of Global Engagement awarded its latest round of Global Leader Scholarships, providing 22 students with a total of \$71,500 to participate in study abroad programs during the spring semester. Of the 22 students who received the most recent scholarships, seven will participate in exchange or affiliate programs and 15 will join faculty-led programs. They include **Junaid Alam, Alberto Aponte, Lauren Autrey, Maria Bautista, Emily Benelli, Sandy Dinh, Kaitlyn Eidson, Hannah Griffin, Shannon Hill, Jazayla Huggins, Joshua Kardon, Gabriel Kopp, Callie Lowery, Cristian Martindale, Erin Meeks, Sarah Pruitt Messick, Stephanie Ned, David Pham, Hannah Simpson, Shane Tharani, Abby Whitehead** and **Leila Works**.



Mercer recently awarded 22 students with Global Leader Scholarships. Among those students are (front l-r) Maria Bautista, Junaid Alam, Lauren Autrey, Erin Meeks, (back l-r) Hannah Simpson, Gabriel Kopp, Joshua Kardon, Kaitlyn Eidson and Cristian Martindale.

ALUMNI HONORS & RECOGNITION

ANNUAL ALUMNI AWARDS DINNER RECOGNIZES OUTSTANDING MERCERIANS

Seven Mercerians were recognized for their contributions to the University during the ninth annual Alumni and Friends Awards Reception and Dinner held Nov. 1 during Homecoming. The Mercer Alumni Association honored **Stephen C. Bradshaw**, CLAS '12, BUS '14, of Augusta as the recipient of the Thomas Sewell Plunkett Young Alumnus Award; **David E. Hudson**, CLAS '68, of Augusta received the

Meritorious Service Award; and **Richard A. “Doc” Schneider**, LAW '81, of Atlanta received the Distinguished Alumnus Award. The Mercer Athletic Foundation also recognized the newest class of inductees into the Mercer Athletic Hall of Fame: **Billy Burns**, baseball; **Bob Hoffman**, men’s basketball; and **Kahlia Lawrence**, CLAS '18, women’s basketball. Mercer trustee and alumna **Ashley Amos Copelan**, CLAS '91, EDU '96, was inducted into the Athletic Hall of Honor.



LAW ALUMNI SERVE GEORGIA SUPREME COURT AS TERM LAW CLERKS

Mercer Law School graduates **Elliza Guta**, '22, and **Stephen Greenway**, '24, are serving as 2024-2025 term law clerks for the Georgia Supreme Court. Greenway, from Marietta, is clerking for Justice Sarah Hawkins Warren. Guta, from Tampa, Florida, is clerking for Presiding Justice Nels S.D. Peterson. Term law clerks serve for one year, assisting their assigned justices with legal research, drafting and reviewing opinions, preparing for oral arguments, and other important responsibilities.



Guta, LAW '22



Greenway, LAW '24

THREE MERCERIANs **40** **NAMED TO** UNDER **40**

ALUMNA NAMED TO GEORGIA TREND'S 40 UNDER 40

Alumna **Kaitlynn Kressin**, a born-and-raised Maconite and co-owner of Fall Line Brewing Co., Just Tap'd and Kressin Realty, was named to *Georgia Trend* magazine's 2024 "40 Under 40" list.

Kressin, who graduated from Mercer in 2015 with a degree in psychology and sociology, is involved in the Macon community in a number of ways, including as a board member for the Historic Macon Foundation and Cherry Blossom Festival, vice president of the Bragg Jam board, and a Macon Rotary Club member. Her past accolades include being named an Emerging Leader by NewTown Macon, Small Business Leader of the Year by the Greater Macon Chamber of Commerce, and the 2022 recipient of Mercer's Thomas Sewell Plunkett Young Alumna Award.



Kressin, CLAS '15

INNOVATIONS IN TEACHING AWARD WINNER NAMED TO TWO 40 UNDER 40 LISTS

Stetson-Hatcher School of Business Associate Professor of Management and Entrepreneurship **Dr. Briana Stenard** was named to the *Atlanta Business Chronicle's* Metro Atlanta 40 Under 40 list and Georgia Tech's 40 Under 40 alumni class. The *Atlanta Business Chronicle* list is chosen annually by a panel from the Chronicle newsroom, the editor and publisher, and a group of 40 Under 40 alumni. This year, they had about 330 nominations. Georgia Tech considered more than 200 alumni from around the world for their 2024 40 Under 40. At Georgia Tech, Dr. Stenard earned her Ph.D. in strategic management with a focus on entrepreneurship. Dr. Stenard was also the 2024 recipient of Mercer's Innovations in Teaching Award that annually recognizes the efforts of a Mercer undergraduate faculty member who successfully provides students with engaging learning opportunities inside and outside the classroom.



Dr. Stenard

MASTER'S STUDENT AMONG RURAL MAGAZINE'S 40 UNDER 40

Sam Oliver Jr. was serving as associate director of financial planning and registrar services at the School of Medicine in Columbus when he was recognized in August as one of the top four honorees in *Rural Leader Magazine's* 2024 40 Under 40. Every year, Rural Leader Magazine selects 40 outstanding individuals under the age of 40 who have made significant contributions to rural communities in Georgia and neighboring states. Oliver was nominated for the award by former students he has helped over his career at multiple institutions. Oliver is currently pursuing a master's in technical communication management from the School of Engineering and is executive director of student financial services and Title IV compliance at Chattahoochee Valley Community College in Phenix City, Alabama.



Master's student Sam Oliver Jr., second from right, was recognized in August as one of the top four honorees in *Rural Leader Magazine's* 2024 40 Under 40.

REMEMBERING Dr. Scott Davis

MERCER UNIVERSITY PROVOST AND PROFESSOR OF CHEMISTRY **DR. D. SCOTT DAVIS** DIED UNEXPECTEDLY FROM AN APPARENT HEART ATTACK ON FEB. 9. HE WAS 61.

More than 1,000 faculty, staff, students, alumni, family and friends packed Willingham Auditorium's Toney Auditorium on Feb. 19 for a memorial service to remember the University's longest-serving provost, whose influence on Mercer's academic enterprise was profound and far-reaching.

Appointed as chief academic officer in 2012, he oversaw the University's 12 schools and colleges, the Mercer Health Sciences Center, the Division of Student Life, University libraries, research, institutional effectiveness, international programs, registrar, academic and advising services and Mercer University Press, among other units.

"Scott Davis was the finest provost with whom I have had the privilege to serve," said Mercer President **William D. Underwood**. "In addition to a brilliant mind, Scott was determined to make Mercer the best it could be. He loved Mercer. When there were tough things that needed to be done, I could always count on Scott. His legacy will endure far into the future of this University."

"The University recently celebrated Founders' Day in honor and memory of those who have shaped Mercer over its near 200-year history, and there is no doubt that our colleague, friend, and one many of us considered as family, Scott Davis, joins the ranks of those memorialized visionaries who made Mercer better," said **Dr. Penny L. Elkins**, executive vice president. "His ambition was to advance this institution, and he did so with great insight and integrity. We will always remember him and celebrate his legacy as we move forward to build on the strong foundation that he left."

Dr. Davis joined the Mercer faculty as assistant professor of chemistry in 1991, was promoted to associate professor in 1996, and served as chair of the department from 2000-2002, when he was named associate dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. He served as associate executive vice president from 2003-2006, when he was named senior vice provost for research and dean of graduate studies. Dr. Davis held the rank of professor of chemistry.

Dr. Garland Crawford, professor of chemistry and assistant provost for research, is one of Dr. Davis' former students.

"First and foremost, Scott was a student-focused teacher and administrator. He came to Mercer to work



Dr. Davis

closely with students, which defined his numerous contributions to the University for over 30 years," Dr. Crawford said. "His dynamic and engaging personality in the classroom helped countless undergraduate students navigate chemistry. His frank mentorship and encouragement guided many of us to find callings that were not part of our original plans. He was a staunch believer in the values of higher education and steadfast in his commitment to making Mercer a better place. I, along with many other of his former students, have been fortunate to count him as a life-long advisor and friend."

A native of South Carolina, Dr. Davis earned a B.S. from Erskine College and a Ph.D. in organic chemistry from Emory University. He completed a post-doctoral appointment at the University of Illinois,

HIGHLIGHTS OF DR. DAVIS' TENURE AS PROVOST INCLUDE:

- MERCER WAS RECLASSIFIED AS A DOCTORAL UNIVERSITY WITH HIGH RESEARCH ACTIVITY (R2), THE SECOND-HIGHEST LEVEL IN THE CARNEGIE CLASSIFICATION.
- THE UNIVERSITY WAS ADMITTED TO THE GEORGIA RESEARCH ALLIANCE AND APPROACHED \$50 MILLION IN ANNUAL RESEARCH EXPENDITURES.
- MERCER WAS AWARDED A PHI BETA KAPPA CHAPTER, THE NATION'S OLDEST AND MOST PRESTIGIOUS HONOR SOCIETY IN THE LIBERAL ARTS.
- ENROLLMENT SURPASSED 9,200 STUDENTS.
- THE MERCER HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER AND THE UNIVERSITY'S 12TH ACADEMIC UNIT – THE COLLEGE OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS – WERE ESTABLISHED.
- THE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE EXPANDED ITS SAVANNAH CAMPUS, OPENED A NEW FOUR-YEAR CAMPUS IN COLUMBUS, AND ADDED A CLINICAL CAMPUS IN VALDOSTA.
- MERCER MEDICINE OPENED SIX RURAL CLINICS.
- THE 143,000-SQUARE-FOOT GODSEY SCIENCE CENTER OPENED ON THE MACON CAMPUS.
- EXTENSIVE RENOVATIONS WERE COMPLETED ON THE WILLET SCIENCE CENTER ON THE MACON CAMPUS.
- THE 65,000-SQUARE-FOOT MOYE PHARMACY AND HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER OPENED ON THE ATLANTA CAMPUS.
- HUNDREDS OF MERCER STUDENTS EARNED NATIONALLY COMPETITIVE AWARDS, INCLUDING FULBRIGHT SCHOLARSHIPS, GOLDWATER SCHOLARSHIPS, HOLLINGS SCHOLARSHIPS, PICKERING FELLOWSHIPS, AND RANGEL FELLOWSHIPS.
- THE UNIVERSITY WAS RECOGNIZED AS A TOP PRODUCER OF GILMAN SCHOLARS AND PEACE CORPS PREP CERTIFICATE-ISSUING INSTITUTIONS.



Dr. Davis and daughter Layne following the 2023 commencement.

Urbana-Champaign, and was a member of Phi Beta Kappa, Sigma Xi Scientific Honor Society, Omicron Delta Kappa Society and Gamma Sigma Epsilon Chemistry Honor Society.

“If you worked with Scott Davis, you knew he loved his family, worked very hard, was an accomplished chemist, a brilliant mind, a revered teacher, a sports fan and a talented golfer,” said School of Medicine Dean **Jean Sumner, M.D., F.A.C.P.** “Incredibly funny, his quick wit put others at ease, and his intellect was impressive. He cared deeply for the Mercer family, and as provost, he managed the academic programs with great skill. He will be greatly missed by all who knew him.”

A former member of the Erskine golf team, Dr. Davis was an avid golfer and played on a team that won a tournament the day he died. He was a strong supporter of Mercer athletics and student-athletes, in particular the men’s golf team.

“Scott was more than just a colleague and confidant, he was also one of my best friends,” said Mercer men’s golf coach **Jason Payne.** “He was involved in every aspect of the men’s golf program. He made time to visit with every recruit, attend practices and travel to competitions. When the team was competing, he was always watching live scoring and constantly texting or calling me during a round. His daily presence will be missed by many across the entire athletic department.”

Dr. Davis is survived by his wife, **Cathy**, whom he met at Mercer, and their daughters, **Miller Ann** and recent Mercer graduate **Layne**, a Double Bear, and by a son, **Ryan.**

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests contributions to the D. Scott Davis Memorial Fund at Mercer. Memorial gifts may be made online at go.mercer.edu/davismemorialfund; by mail to Mercer University, Office of University Advancement, 1501 Mercer University Drive, Macon, GA 31207 (note Davis Memorial Fund on check); or by phone at (478) 301-2715.



Why Place Matters

Mercer's dedication to creating spaces that inspire learning, build community

By **ANDREA HONAKER**



Cruz Plaza, Macon



Mercerians are a special kind of people.



They learn how to serve others and solve problems as students, go out into the world as graduates eager to make their mark, and become community leaders and changemakers as alumni.

Behind these accomplished graduates is a place that served as their home away from home as well as a source of inspiration during their journey. In addition to its academic facilities, Mercer has continually invested in outdoor spaces on its campuses because they are a vital component to creating community.

Over the past few decades, the beauty of the Macon and Atlanta campuses has been enhanced through landscaping and hardscaping projects, and that will continue to be a focus because the setting where Mercerians find themselves and their greatness matters. >>



Administration and Conference Center, Atlanta

“You want college to be a great experience for people,” President **William D. Underwood** said. “Having spaces that are designed to bring people together and build community enhances that experience in a way almost nothing else can.”

He said the Macon campus was already beautiful when he arrived as Mercer’s 18th president in 2006. Surrounded by long-standing buildings like the R. Kirby Godsey Administration Building and Willingham Hall, the Historic Quad communicated Mercer’s stability, depth, quality and tradition, all of which make people want to be a part of the University community.

That’s why Mercer has held on to its historic buildings, renovating them as necessary, and why new academic facilities have been built to stand the test of time, Underwood said. The state-of-the-art Godsey Science Center is one of the newest additions to the Macon campus and the Moye

Pharmacy and Health Sciences Center to the Atlanta campus.

“When [students] leave, we want them to have a lifelong affinity for the place,” he said. “We want them to be able to come back and see places that are familiar, that bring back great memories in their collegiate experience.”

Upon beginning his presidency, Underwood also saw opportunities to make the campus more inviting and leave a better first impression.

“When they come to visit Mercer, especially for the first time, people are excited about seeing the place that they’ve heard about,” he said. “We want there to be a wow factor when people arrive at Mercer, and we think that communicates something about the quality of the institution.”

In Macon, the Mercer University Drive entrance was redesigned to accomplish that and, more recently, a new >>

“Having spaces that are designed to bring people together and build community enhances that experience in a way almost nothing else can.”

— **President William D. Underwood**



Godsey Administration Building, Macon

“Mercer is so nimble at how they approach the implementation of their vision. ... It has to be done right. It has to work to improve the pedestrian experience.”

— Todd Fuller, HGOR

entrance at the intersection of College Street and Coleman Avenue. An additional entry point on the Atlanta campus was built through the new Mercer Village. All three entrances were designed by Atlanta landscape architecture firm HGOR, which began its work with the University in 2013 with Cruz Plaza.

This was the most transformative project for the Macon campus, turning an unattractive area with an abandoned street into a vibrant gathering spot for students, Underwood said. The green space created cohesion and completely changed the campus’s look and feel.

“We were so impressed with HGOR that we retained them to do lots of other projects,” said **Dr. James Netherton**, executive vice president for administration and finance. “Everything they’ve done has helped make the campus more beautiful.”

HGOR’s unique philosophy considers the social, economic and environmental aspects of a design, said Todd Fuller, principal architect. The firm aims to create outside spaces that support community, sustainability and stewardship, while also keeping >>





Godsey Science Center, Macon



Administration and Conference Center, Atlanta

in mind the fiscal decisions and challenges that institutions face.

“Mercer is so nimble at how they approach the implementation of their vision,” Fuller said. “We know from working with Mercer over the series of 12 years that there are important values and missions that our designs have to fulfill. It has to be done right. It has to work to improve the pedestrian experience.”

Since it started working with Mercer, HGOR’s designs have removed 3,000 linear feet — or roughly 2/3 of a mile — of roadway on the Macon campus, which is a testament to the University’s commitment to the pedestrian experience, Fuller said. Open outdoor spaces facilitate shared experiences with others and end up being the most memorable locations when

people reflect back on their college years.

“When you’re inside a building, that building can be anywhere in the world,” Fuller said. “When you’re outside, the ecosystem, the weather, the unique topography of the land, the views you have really define what is truly unique in that sense of place. It’s the unique opportunity to set the placemaking aspects of being on a college campus and at Mercer University apart, versus the interior construction projects or the buildings.”

Hardscape and landscape projects help tie together the different architectural elements of a campus and smooth out the rough edges, Fuller said. The funds in these projects often have an outsized impact.



MAKING M

Mercer’s Macon campus has been described of making memories there, ‘romantic’

THE TOWER

Jill Richstone (CLAS '10),
Robert Richstone (EGR '11)

“We got engaged in the tower in 2010. The proposal in the tower was actually the finale of an elaborate scavenger hunt Robert set up for me around Mercer’s campus, leading me to multiple spots that were special to us. When we got married, Robert’s godmother actually made the groom’s cake to look like the Mercer Tower — it was amazing! Mercer’s campus is incredibly special to my husband and I because it’s where we fell in love. As corny as that may sound, we have so many special memories around the campus.”



THE QUAD

Kia Pascal (NUR '12),
Daniel Pascal (NUR '19)

“My husband and I first laid eyes on each other on the Quad during a flag football OR frisbee game (neither of us can agree on which one lol)! I can still remember exactly where I spotted him to this day, 14 years later!”



“It’s a lot more cost-effective in terms of an investment to transform a campus, and I think some of the things we’ve done on campus have helped to create a cohesive sense of place,” Fuller said. “There’s a lot of great aspects of investing in a hardscape landscape project that can really kind of be a multiplier for other things that are happening on campus otherwise.”

Another major transformation on the Macon campus came with the construction of College Street Plaza, an area with green space and brick pavers in front of Connell Student Center, Dr. Netherton said. This plaza, completed in spring 2024, eliminated College Street parking and created a second large gathering spot on campus.

Small changes can also have a big impact on the functionality and flow of a college campus, Dr. Netherton said. As part of the renovations at Wiggs Hall, the building’s front porch was extended, creating a more attractive entrance as well as a place for people to congregate. Projects like the Phi Beta Kappa Plaza and Newton Plaza have provided more intimate areas for students to study and join in fellowship, Underwood said. In addition, a smaller green space was created where the old Computer Science Building once stood.

On the south side of campus, the M. Diane Owens Garden paired function and beauty by creating a needed detention pond as well as a quiet sitting area, Fuller said. >>

MERCER MEMORIES

as ‘beautiful’ and ‘historical,’ but based on Mercerians’ personal stories might have to be added to the list. In their own words ...

ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

Aaron Tart Smith (EGR '97),
Stephen Smith

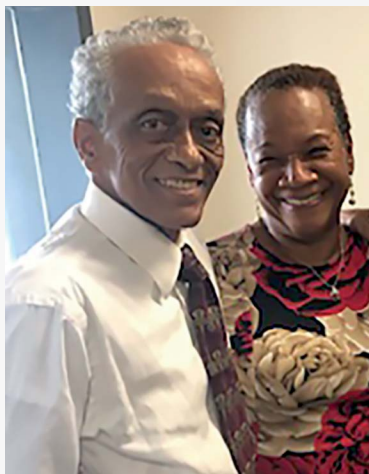
“My husband Stephen and I got engaged on the steps of the Administration Building the night of Pan(hellenic) Dance in the fall of my senior year. Almost 24 years later, July 2020, when our oldest daughter was touring Mercer, we reenacted the event and took pics. Super special place!”



SHERWOOD HALL and ART BUILDING

Gwendolyn Payton (CLAS '72), the late **Victor Payton** (CLAS '71)

“In the fall of 1970, my husband asked me to marry him while I was visiting him in his dorm room at Sherwood Hall. He dropped to one knee, held out his hand with the tab of a Coke can in it and asked me to marry him. I hesitated when I saw the Coke tab. He asked three times, after the third time, I said ‘Yes!’ About a week later, as I sat on a bench near the art building, he dropped to his knees again, held out his hand with the ring and asked me to marry him! Again, I said, ‘Yes!’ We celebrated 50 years of marriage in June 2021.”



NEWTON CHAPEL

Maggie Reimer, assistant director of communications and marketing for the School of Law (CLAS '15), Wesley Reimer

“We were married in Newton Chapel. I’ve always loved Newton because of how classically beautiful it is, with the giant beams and beautiful stained glass. There’s so much history, and you can really feel it with every step you take inside the building. We’ll be able to walk through Mercer’s campus in 40 years, and Newton Chapel will still be standing strong and beautiful, and we can reminisce about our wedding day.”





College Street Plaza Entrance, Macon



Phi Beta Kappa Plaza, Macon



Newton Plaza, Macon



M. Diane Owens Garden, Macon



“When [students] leave, we want them to have a lifelong affinity for the place. We want them to be able to come back and see places that are familiar, that bring back great memories.”
— **President Underwood**

Beautification projects on the Atlanta campus — located in a large, forested area — have been a priority for the University in recent years. With retail and residential elements, Mercer Village in Atlanta has created more opportunities for students to build community. The Administration and Conference Center was redesigned to feature attractive landscaping and additional outdoor meeting spots.

“HGOR took the space around the building that nobody ever used and completely redid it,” Dr. Netherton said. “We turned it into a place of beauty that functions well.”

In addition, 11 acres of campus were touched through the project that constructed the Moyer Pharmacy and Health Sciences Center, which opened in 2023, Fuller said.

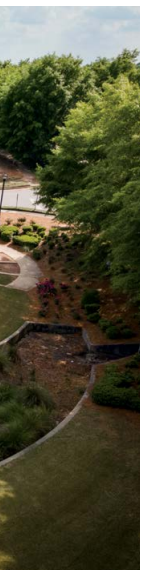
“It really started to formalize meaningful connections and place-making components of that campus,” he said. “Through the master-planning vision that we’ve done with the University, that campus has the potential of being built out to

the same level as the Macon campus. From the hardscape/landscape scope, the improvements of the open space really have the opportunity of tying the Mercer brand and the Mercer character together.”

Those outdoor spaces and components are beneficial to everyone who comes to Mercer, whether they’re prospective students, current students, alumni or community members.

“Beauty in the world is important. Mercer students who come through here will learn to appreciate how this campus is laid out, the beauty, the functionality,” Dr. Netherton said. “Those students will then go on and at some point, they’ll be leaders in their local communities, and some of them will be in a position to bring greater beauty and greater functionality to things going on in other locations.” ♦

Photographers: Bekah Howard, Christopher Ian Smith, Jamie Tucker, Matt Smith, Jamie Tucker, Leah Yetter



As *The Mercerian* was going to press...

Mercer University Named a Top 25 Beautiful College Campus by *U.S. News & World Report*

The magazine noted Mercer’s “blooming azaleas, magnolia and pink Yoshino cherry trees, vibrant fall foliage and Victorian Gothic-style architecture” as part of the landscape that makes the Macon campus stand out. The list, published Jan. 31, also called out the iconic spires atop the R. Kirby Godsey Administration Building and the architecture of the School of Law, which was modeled after Independence Hall in Philadelphia.

“There’s a magic formula in the intersection of a historic tree-canopied oasis and the modern amenities necessary

for a campus of Mercer’s stature,” University President **William D. Underwood** told *U.S. News & World Report*. “It’s a formula that can’t be manufactured.”

Mercer is joined on the list by campuses such as Harvard, Notre Dame, Princeton, Duke and Stanford.

U.S. News & World Report, a recognized leader in college and graduate school rankings, stated that it chose colleges for the list based on “attributes such as stunning architecture, picturesque settings or spectacular landscaping.”



MATT SMITH PHOTO

How One Grant Is Helping Train More Counselors to Work With Clients With Disabilities

By **JENNIFER FALK**

A major federal grant is helping Mercer University students fill a much-needed role in the counseling profession.

Since 2015, the University has received more than \$2.1 million from the U.S. Department of Education Rehabilitation Services Administration to fund scholarships for students pursuing a master's degree in clinical rehabilitation counseling. To date, 82 students have received the scholarship, said **Dr. Suneetha Manyam**, professor of counseling and grant assessment coordinator in the College of Professional Advancement.

"The reason why this grant started from the Department of Education was because there are a lot of shortages at the state offices of certified rehabilitation counselors at the master's level," she said. "So, to boost those numbers and also to help serve the rehabilitation population, the Department of Education decided to encourage the master's degree training at the University."

Clinical rehabilitation counseling is a specialty that focuses on helping people with physical, mental or emotional disabilities gain employment and become self-sufficient. This type of counseling takes a holistic view of mental health, taking into consideration a disability's impact on a person's job, quality of life and social connections, said **Dr. Kristina Henderson**, associate professor of counseling and program coordinator for the Master of Science in clinical rehabilitation counseling.

"The ultimate goal is helping folks with disabilities just live as full a life as they can, and that means employment and recreation and relationships," she said.

One in four adults living in the U.S. has some type of disability, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Additionally, one in five U.S. adults experiences mental illness each year, according to the National Alliance on Mental Illness. And yet, the



National Council for Mental Wellbeing reports that 77% of U.S. counties are experiencing a severe shortage of mental health providers.

"There are just not enough people to serve folks with disabilities," Dr. Henderson said.

“The ultimate goal is helping folks with disabilities just live as full a life as they can, and that means employment and recreation and relationships.”

— **Dr. Kristina Henderson**

The Rehabilitation Services Administration grant provides scholarships of up to 100% tuition for up to nine credit hours for three semesters of enrollment in Mercer's Master of Science in clinical rehabilitation counseling program. In return, scholars commit to working for a state vocational rehabilitation agency or disability-related organization for two years for each

academic year of funding received.

“We’ve got people who work at the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency. We’ve got people that work for the Department of Veterans Affairs,” Dr. Henderson said. “We’ve had people work in correctional facilities because that is another place where folks with disabilities are underserved. We have people at community service boards, which are the public mental health providers.”

Janice Barrocas, a recipient of a Rehabilitation Services Administration scholarship, graduated with her master’s in clinical rehabilitation counseling in 2020. After graduation, she worked as a certified rehabilitation counselor at the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency in Tucker before opening a private practice in 2022 in DeKalb County.

Barrocas, who also is a licensed professional counselor, helps her clients cope with vision loss. She is a founding member of the Task Force Empowering Blind Independence.

“Adjusting to vision loss is a non-bereavement loss. Nobody died,” she said. “In society, we have a lot of traditions around how to support each other emotionally when someone passes. When someone becomes permanently and significantly disabled, people don’t know what to do with that, and socially, we haven’t been taught.”

A person adjusting to vision loss goes through specific stages emotionally, similar to the stages of grief, she said. These include physical and social trauma, shock, denial, mourning and withdrawal, depression, and, eventually, learning new coping skills. These stages culminate in self-acceptance and self-esteem as a visually impaired person.

“But a lot of the way you recover, a lot of the way a person develops a new identity as a confident visually impaired person, is learning new skills,” she said. “You learn nonvisual ways of doing things, getting technology to talk to you, learning white cane navigation skills and how to access resources. All these are things a sighted person takes for granted when they come into counseling.”

Barrocas helps clients accept their disability and connect with resources, meeting them where they are — figuratively and sometimes literally. Initial client discussions include questions about their vision and how they access print.

Accessibility is a clinical issue. Many people seeking adjustment counseling are new to having low vision or blindness. Barrocas asks clients about the best way to communicate and complete paperwork as part of her counseling intake process.

“What I do as a counselor is I determine what that visual disability is and then cater their plan to them.”
— **Moses Little**



“Are you a texter? If I leave you a voicemail, will you know that you’ve received it? A visually impaired client won’t necessarily be able to see a visual icon on their flat screen phone. I ask, ‘If I send you documents to sign electronically, will that work for you?’” she said.

Barrocas assures clients she will accommodate their disability and provide needed support to complete intake paperwork. If a client cannot access print and has no sighted assistance available to complete necessary forms, Barrocas will travel to the client.

“I offer to bring hard copies of consent forms out to you and carry a signature guide,” she said. “I will read every word of these forms to you aloud and put a pen in your hand and help

JAMIE TUCKER PHOTO

Dr. Kristina Henderson, associate professor of counseling and program coordinator for the Master of Science in clinical rehabilitation counseling, teaches a class on the Atlanta campus.



you find the right places to sign it if you like.”

Moses Little, another recipient of a Rehabilitation Services Administration scholarship, also works with clients who are blind or have low vision. He graduated with his master’s in clinical rehabilitation counseling in 2021 and now works as a certified rehabilitation counselor at the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency in Athens. He also serves on the governor-appointed State Rehabilitation Council.

“What I do as a counselor is I determine what that visual disability is and then cater their plan to them. Each and every client is different. Working with the blind and low-vision community is special because you learn so much

about their viewpoint and how life looks to them on a regular basis,” he said.

He offers clients specialized training and helps them receive various accommodations from employers, such as using a screen magnifier or screen reader that can help those who are blind or have low vision use a computer.

Little said he’s always felt a calling to become a counselor, and helping others through difficult times to reclaim their independence is meaningful.

“From what I’ve been told, the number one feared disability for many people is losing their vision, and so being able to assist in that transition is very important to me, and I appreciate them giving me the opportunity to help,” he said. ♦



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. The theme **"Together We Roar"** is a powerful reminder of the strength and unity that defines our incredible Bear family. Here's to celebrating the bonds we've built, the progress we've made and the bright future ahead. Together, we will continue to roar louder than ever!





homecoming.mercer.edu

BEAR BRIEFS

FOOTBALL

HISTORY MADE

Football Wins Southern Conference Championship



AGAIN

The encore to a 10-win season in 2023 that led the Mercer football program to its first NCAA postseason berth was a 2024 season that saw the Bears win their first outright Southern Conference regular season championship.

Fueling the historic run was a record six straight wins to open the

The Bears captured their first Southern Conference championship to highlight a historic season that saw them advance all the way to the NCAA Quarterfinals as the No. 7 National Seed. Mercer also secured a No. 7 listing in the final Top 25 national polls.



2024 season on the way to an 11-3 record and a run to the quarterfinals round of the NCAA FCS Playoffs.

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 league gauntlet and stake claim to the first conference championship in the 51-year history of the program.

Mercer paced all 123 FCS teams in five defensive statistical categories, including school-record marks for forced turnovers (34), passes intercepted (25) and rushing defense (70.8 rushing yards/game allowed).

On the other side of the ball, Mercer 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 1,191 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, while Mercer also claimed SoCon Offensive Player (McGee), Defensive Player (**Brayden Manley**) and Freshman Player (**Andrew Zock**) of the Year laurels as well. Five student-athletes picked up All-

America laurels from Stats Perform FCS, including senior **T.J. Moore**, who finished as runner-up in the voting for the Buck Buchanan Award, which is given to the FCS's national Defensive Player of the Year, while also earning the program's first invitation to the FCS Awards Banquet in Frisco, Texas. Moore shared the postseason awards stage with McGee, who was named one of the 35 finalists for the Walter Payton Award, as well as Manley, who was on the list of 35 finalists for the Buck Buchanan Award.

Head Coach **Mike Jacobs** was a finalist for the Eddie Robinson Coach of the Year Award, while Zock was named among 25 finalists for the Jerry Rice Award, which honors the national Freshman of the Year in college football's Division I FCS subdivision.

Senior **Myles Redding** picked off three passes in the FCS playoffs to finish with a college football-best nine interceptions on the season.



Volleyball Notches Program Superlatives Amid Record-Breaking Season

An eight-match win streak that spanned much of the month of October was enough to fuel a historic 2024 campaign for the Mercer volleyball team, which earned its first postseason tournament invitation in the 40-year history of the program. Boasting a veteran squad that included a trio of high-impact seniors, the Bears closed out the regular season by churning out victories in 13 of their last 15 outings, including a thrilling five-set home triumph over Wofford in mid-November that gave MU its first outright regular season Southern Conference title, as well as its third league title in the last five seasons. The 2024 season for the Bears was truly “coming up aces” as the Orange and Black led all nine SoCon squads and ranked third nationally with a school record 260 service aces, including

seven outings in which the Bears registered 10 or more points on services. Rising to the No. 60 position in the NCAA’s Ratings Percentage Index (RPI) — the highest RPI ranking in program history — the Bears traveled to Greenville, North Carolina, to take on UConn in the opening round of the National Invitational Volleyball Championships (NIVC). Award season was business as usual for the Bears as well, with senior outside hitter **Skye Ekes** earning the program’s first All-America honor. Six student-athletes were named to the All-SoCon squads, while Ekes and fellow senior **Brooke Phillips** helped Mercer boast SoCon Offensive and Defensive Player of the Year honors, respectively. Mercer finished 2024 with a school-record 26 victories — just the third 20-win season in school history — thanks, in large part, to a perfect 12-0 record inside Hawkins Arena.



The Bears’ thrilling 3-2 win over Wofford clinched their first outright SoCon regular season crown.

Postseason Awards Prove Plentiful for Women's Soccer

Sophomore forward **Larkin Thomason** earned just the second Southern Conference Player of the Year honor in program history (first since **Nicole Icen** in 1998) and led a parade of six Mercer women's soccer



Sophomore forward Larkin Thomason (right) was named the Southern Conference Player of the Year in October after pacing the league with 38 points on 16 goals and six assists.

players to the awards podium following an 11-win campaign for the Bears in the fall. Thomason, who logged the nation's fifth-best point total (34) on the shoulders of a SoCon-best 14 goals and six assists, was one of four Bears (**Kendall Cook, Lena Dykes, Sara Engels, Jada Moorman**) to be lauded with all-conference honors, while rookie defender **Maggie Collins** earned a spot on the SoCon All-Freshman Team. Mercer opened its 2024 campaign with a 3-0 home shutout of Auburn, who would go on to rattle off 13 wins on the way to an NCAA Tournament berth, and then provided an encore by recording its most wins (11) since posting a 16-4-0 clip in 2019. The Bears have now claimed the conference player of the year four times in their 31-year history, including **Mirela Ninic**, who earned Atlantic Sun Player of the Year laurels following both the 1997 and 1998 seasons.

Tennis Tandem Totes National Ranking Into Spring Season

A productive fall season on the doubles courts for senior **Marceau Fouilhoux** and junior **Nemanja Stefanovic** provided dividends in early December, when the pair became the first tennis tandem in program history to attain a national ranking. The duo checked in at No. 55 in the winter edition of Intercollegiate Tennis Association rankings and will carry the torch into the spring season as the only Southern Conference doubles pair to sport a national ranking. It is the first national ranking for Mercer, singles or doubles, since **Olivier Stuart** boasted a national ranking on the singles court during both the 2018-19 and 2019-20 campaigns. Fouilhoux/Stefanovic compiled a 7-3 record in doubles play during the fall season, including a six-match win streak.



Senior Marceau Fouilhoux (left) and junior Nemanja Stefanovic comprise the first doubles tandem in Mercer men's tennis history to boast a national ranking. The duo transitioned into the spring season carrying a No. 55 listing.

MEDICINE

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE ANNOUNCES 2024 NATHAN DEAL SCHOLARS

The School of Medicine recognized 10 new Nathan Deal Scholars for the 2024-25 academic year. Nathan Deal Scholars are eligible based on their strong ties to rural Georgia and selected for their character, leadership qualities, community involvement and their likelihood of serving in

rural, underserved Georgia even after their scholarship obligations are met.

They will receive 85%-100% of tuition for up to four academic years. The scholarship is an endowment funded by a one-time appropriation of \$35 million from the state of Georgia. These funds were proceeds of a settlement the state received from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services in February 2016. This year's class of Nathan Deal Scholars are **Alexander Gomez** of Cairo, **Wes Livingston** of Alma, **Jayln Massey** of Cave Spring, **Chloe Pate** of Fitzgerald, **Mahi Patel** of Sparta, **Caroline Scarborough** of Eastman, **Lindsey Tatum** of Clarksville, **Bryer Touchton** of Valdosta, **Gracie White** of Moultrie and **Sam Wu** of Forsyth.



The 2024 scholars were honored during the annual Nathan Deal Scholars Luncheon, in the presence of School of Medicine Dean Dr. Jean Sumner, former Georgia Gov. Nathan Deal and Mercer President William D. Underwood.

DR. ALICE HOUSE NAMED 2024 SANDRA DUNAGAN DEAL RURAL SERVICE FELLOW

Alice Aumann House, M.D., FAAFP, senior associate dean of admissions and student affairs and professor, received the 2024 Sandra Dunagan Deal Rural Service Fellow award, established in September 2022 by Mercer University School of Medicine to honor former first lady of Georgia Sandra Deal and her commitment to education, volunteerism and community involvement. The award recognizes a faculty member, community partner or volunteer who has made significant contributions to mentoring, inspiring and encouraging Mercer medical students to care for Georgians in rural, underserved areas. Each year, Nathan Deal Scholars select the recipient who best exemplifies Sandra Deal's selfless devotion, love for education and promotion of excellence.



From left, Dr. Keisha Collins (2023 Sandra Dunagan Deal Rural Service Fellow) and MUSM Dean Dr. Jean Sumner celebrated this year's honoree, Dr. Alice House.

2024 PRIMARY CARE ACCELERATED TRACK SCHOLARS ANNOUNCED

The School of Medicine announced its latest class of Primary Care Accelerated Track (ACT) Scholars. Designed to address Georgia's critical shortage of primary care physicians, the program allows 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. Scholars are accepted into a residency program at one of MUSM's partner hospitals, and upon completion of residency 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 ACT Scholars includes **Abigail Mastin** of Forsyth, **Cameron Paschal** of Social Circle, **Pratik Patel** of Bainbridge, **Nicole Bello** of McDonough, **Franklin Harvey** of Jeffersonville, **Carter Waits** of Jackson, **Courtney Dubose** of Lawrenceville, **Sara O'Neal** of Thomasville, **Phoebe Guidry** of Perry, **Konner Murray** of Gray, and **Melinda Busman** of Americus.



Mastin



Paschal



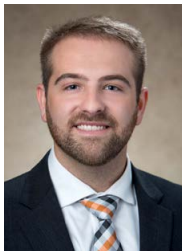
Patel



Bello



Harvey



Waits



Dubose



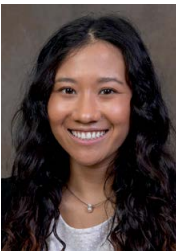
O'Neal



Guidry



Murray

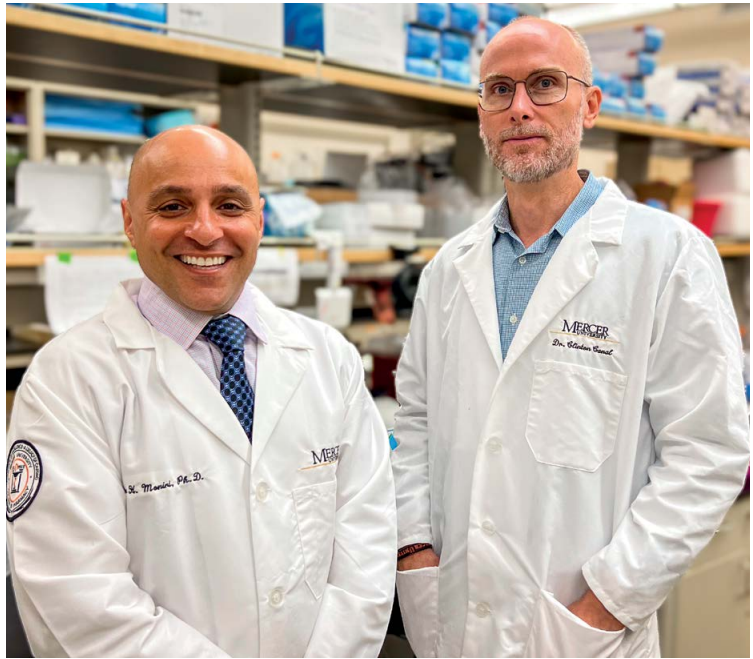


Busman

RESEARCHERS RECEIVE GRANT TO STUDY DRUG DANGERS

Associate Dean for Research and Professor of Pharmaceutical Sciences **Dr. Nader Moniri** and Associate Professor of Pharmaceutical Sciences **Dr. Clinton Canal** have been awarded a \$388,000 grant from the National Institutes of Health to explore how the drug xylazine affects the human body, specifically when combined with fentanyl. Xylazine is frequently mixed with fentanyl to extend the powerful opioid's euphoric effects. The implications of this research could lead to life-saving interventions for those affected by xylazine-related complications. This is Dr. Canal's third NIH grant and Dr. Moniri's fifth, reflecting their deep commitment to advancing scientific knowledge in fields critical to public health.

Dr. Moniri, left, and Dr. Canal



PROFESSOR AWARDED GRANT TO STUDY STEM CELL THERAPY FOR INFLAMMATORY BOWEL DISORDERS

School of Medicine Professor **Raghavan Chinnadurai**, Ph.D., has been awarded a \$387,616 grant from the National Institutes of Health to research the characteristics and potency of rare stem cell populations from patients with inflammatory bowel disorders and their devastating complication, perianal fistula. The grant was awarded by the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases through the NIH's Research Enhancement Award Program for health professional schools and graduate schools. Dr. Chinnadurai's lab has already published four significant publications related to inflammatory bowel disease translational science and cellular therapy.



Dr. Chinnadurai, right

MUSM PROFESSOR RECEIVES GRANT TO STUDY EFFECT OF CERTAIN PROTEINS ON DISEASE

School of Medicine Assistant Professor of Genetics **Pamela Cook**, Ph.D., has been awarded a \$176,238 grant to study the impact of certain proteins on a variety of diseases, including cancer, neurodegenerative diseases and autoimmune disorders, which could lead to advances in screening and treatment. Dr. Cook received the grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to support her research of long interspersed nuclear element-1 (LINE-1) proteins, which could be a key to understanding the development and progression of multiple diseases. Associate Professor **James Drummond**, Ph.D., also will contribute as a co-principal investigator on the grant.



Dr. Cook

PHARM.D. STUDENT EARNS NATIONAL HISPANIC HEALTH FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP

Megan Rebollar, a third-year Doctor of Pharmacy (Pharm.D.) student at the College of Pharmacy, earned one of 18 prestigious scholarships awarded by the National Hispanic Health Foundation. Funded by the United Health Foundation, the scholarship provides up to \$20,000 to graduate students from the Western United States pursuing careers in medicine, nursing, dentistry, pharmacy or physician assistance.



PHARMACY PROFESSOR AWARDED LARGEST NIH GRANT IN COLLEGE'S HISTORY

Dr. Raquibul Hasan, College of Pharmacy associate professor of pharmaceutical sciences, received a \$2.98 million research grant from the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI), a division of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The funding will support his work on how statins — commonly prescribed to lower cholesterol — may also provide a new and immediate way to reduce blood pressure. This grant is the largest received

by the College of Pharmacy from the NIH. For the same research, Dr. Hasan also received the American Heart Association's \$300,000 Second Century Early Faculty Independence Award, his third grant from the American Heart Association. Dr. Hasan's lab, part of the Hasan Cardiovascular Research Laboratory at Mercer, is at the forefront of efforts to repurpose existing drugs and discover new treatments for vascular conditions like high blood pressure, diabetes, stroke and erectile dysfunction.





ACHIEVEMENTS

1970s

Paul Clements, CLAS '77, retired as lead psychologist for Pickens County Schools. Clements is now the clinical director for mental health at the state prison hospital in Grovetown.

Randall A. "Randy" Jordan, LAW '76, was selected for inclusion in The Best Lawyers in America 2025. Jordan practices railroad law with HunterMaclean on Saint Simons Island.

David F. Sipple, LAW '72, was selected for The Best Lawyers in America 2025. Sipple practices admiralty and maritime law at HunterMaclean in Savannah.

David Thompson, EDU '72, '74, was one of six professional storytellers invited to represent the United States at the Second International Marrakech Storytelling Festival in February 2023. He and 86 other tellers representing all parts of the world gathered for nine days in Marrakech, Morocco – the storytelling capital of the world with an unbroken 1,500- to 2,000-year history – to share, learn and tell stories to strangers in restaurants, schools, libraries, coffee houses, even on the main market square, the Jemaa el-Fnaa.

1980s

Fred S. Bergen Sr., LAW '86, received the South Carolina Governor's Cup Billfishing Series Carroll A. Campbell Award in October 2024. The lifetime achievement award honors individuals and families who have been an integral part of billfish conservation in South Carolina and who embody Campbell's principles and passions.

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.

Zachery Mitcham, BUS '80, published two books: *How I Gave My Way to Personal Wealth: A Spiritual Guide to Prosperity and Key Security Concepts That All CISOs Should Know – Cyber Guardians: A CISO's Guide to Protecting the Digital World*.

Barry Morge, LAW '85, was named chair of the Illinois State Bar Association's Standing Committee on Professional Responsibility in June 2024.

Dr. Tim Riley, CAS '87, was named president of Genesis Joy House, a women's homeless shelter in June 2024. Genesis Joy House is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that houses homeless female veterans. Located in Warner Robins, Genesis Joy House also provides support services, helps the female veterans secure permanent housing, and helps them link to other services they need to remain successful.

1990s

Amy Gay Bell, LAW '99, was the recipient of the State Bar of Georgia's Child Protection and Advocacy Section's Judge Willie Lovett Award for excellence in child advocacy.

Latesha Y. Bradley, LAW '98, was appointed as the new juvenile court judge for Lowndes County. Bradley will also preside over judicial matters for Echols County.

D. Bryant Chitwood, CLAS '91, was named Teacher of the Year for the second year in a row at Mountain Education-Banks County Campus for the 2023-24 school year. Chitwood was also named MTSS/TRI coordinator at West Hall High School in Oakwood.

Joseph Henry "Joey" Cowart, LAW '96, was reappointed to the Prosecuting Attorneys Qualifications Commission by Georgia House Speaker Jon Burns. Cowart served as the Bulloch County solicitor general for 16 years and currently operates his law practice.

J. Jeffrey Deery, LAW '90, was named Orlando Lawyer of the Year in banking and finance litigation. Deery also was selected for inclusion in The Best Lawyers

REMEMBERING...

Former Faculty Member

Al Bond

A

Alpha M. "Al" Bond, former College of Liberal Arts and Sciences faculty member, died on Jan. 7 at the age of 94. He graduated from

Tenafly High School in 1948 and attended Dartmouth College, graduating *cum laude* with a philosophy degree in 1952. He then attended Columbia University in

New York City, earning a master's degree in philosophy in 1953. In 1961, after completing classes in sociology at Emory University, Bond was hired as an instructor at Mercer. He completed his thesis and received his doctorate from Emory in 1963.

Bond taught at Mercer from 1961 to 1996. His tenure included serving on the curriculum committee as both member and chair for several years and twice serving as chair of the sociology department. Memorial gifts may be made to the Alpha M. Bond Endowed Scholarship.



*Scan the codes to view complete obituaries.



Alumnus and Former Faculty Member

Manley Brown

M

Manley F. Brown, LAW '65, alumnus and former School of Law faculty member, died on Dec. 9, 2024, at the age of 83.

Born in Sols Creek, North Carolina, Brown graduated from Cullowhee High School in Cullowhee, North Carolina, in 1958. After attending Western Carolina University,

Brown attended Mercer Law School, where he graduated second in his class and was editor of the *Mercer Law Review*. He was law clerk to Middle District Court of Georgia federal judge **William Augustus Bootle**, CLAS '24, LAW '25, HON '82. He was then hired as an assistant United States attorney. In 1969, Brown worked with Adams, O'Neal & Hemingway in Macon. In 1977, he joined Hank T. O'Neal Jr.; **Kice Stone**, LAW '67; and

Lamar W. Sizemore Jr., CLAS '70, LAW '74, to establish his own firm of O'Neal, Stone & Brown, now O'Neal & Brown.

Brown retired in 2019. Brown also taught several generations of students at Mercer Law School, serving as an adjunct professor for nearly 45 years.



Alumnus and Former Faculty Member

Rob Donner

Dr. Robert S. Donner, CLAS '55, alumnus and former School of Medicine faculty member, died on Sept. 1, 2024. Born in Newark, New Jersey, in 1934, Dr. Donner's family moved to Macon in 1940, and he graduated from Lanier High School in 1951. He attended college at Mercer and Emory, and after three years of college, he was accepted at the Medical College of Georgia, where he received his M.D. degree in 1958. After completing an internship, residency training and post-graduate training in pathology, he served a year on the medical staff at MD Anderson Hospital. He returned to Macon and joined the pathology department of the Macon Hospital as an associate pathologist. The pathology department grew to become the Ocmulgee Medical Pathology Association, P.A. (OMPAPA), which provided pathology services for all the hospitals in Macon. When Mercer University School of Medicine (MUSM) was established, OMPAPA members joined the MUSM faculty. During his Mercer tenure, Dr. Donner served as chair of pathology, chair of the curriculum committee and as the associate dean of academic affairs. In 2014, he received an award for outstanding service to MUSM since the inception of the School.



Alumnus and Generous Supporter

Tom Harrison

Rev. George "Tom" Harrison, CLAS '50, alumnus and generous University supporter, died on June 24, 2024, at the age of 95. A native of Washington County, Harrison was the first Eagle Scout in the county. He attended Georgia Tech and graduated from Mercer. Harrison received his master's degree from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He was the founder and administrator of Glendale Nursing Home in Wadley. He also pastored several churches in both Jefferson and Laurens County. He retired from Wadley Baptist Church. Harrison and his late wife of 64 years, Betty Ann Greenway Harrison, were generous supporters of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the School of Theology.



in America in commercial litigation and banking and finance litigation. **Christian E. Hardigree**, LAW '96, was recently selected as a Fulbright Scholar for the Fulbright International Administrative Educators program in France. The program seeks to build greater capacity for international education programming, enhance cross-cultural perspectives and initiate collaborations. Hardigree has been regional chancellor at the University of South Florida in St. Petersburg, Florida, since May of 2022. In this role, she oversees the overall operation and excellence of the campus and provides leadership in planning and execution of key strategic initiatives, from student success to increasing campus efforts in internationalization. **Melissa Gifford Hise**, CLAS '90, was elected to the Superior Court bench for the Lookout Mountain Judicial Circuit comprised of Chattooga, Walker, Dade and Catoosa counties. Hise succeeds retiring Chief Judge Kristina Cook Graham and began her term on Jan. 1. **Dr. Robert Jones**, MED '90, is a delegate of the Medical Association of Georgia House of Delegates and a member of the Bibb County Medical Society Board of Directors. **James Barton "Jim" Manley Jr.**, LAW '96, was appointed to the Judicial Nominating Commission by Gov. Brian Kemp. **Steven McComas**, BUS '92, received the 2024 Gator100 Business recognition from the University of Florida Alumni Association, honoring former students leading with some of the fastest-growing business owners and entrepreneurs in the world for his company, Responsive Technology Partners Inc. Headquartered in Georgia, Responsive Technology Partners Inc. is an industry-leading technology firm operating in North Carolina, Virginia, Georgia, Florida and Texas. Under his leadership as CEO and founding member, Responsive Technology Partners Inc. was named the

808th fastest growing company in America by *Inc. 5000 Magazine* in 2023 and has reached the top 40 ranking for IT firms with *Inc. 5000 Magazine* for a fourth consecutive year in the company's seven-year history. **The Hon. Shondeana Crews Morris**, LAW '97, was appointed to the Judicial Nominating Commission by Gov. Brian Kemp. **James Nash**, PHA '97, was selected as the new dean of the Uniformed Services University College of Allied Health Sciences (CAHS). The CAHS allows service members to earn resident college credit for their military training programs and to establish academic residency with a pathway to a degree in their military occupation. Previously, Nash was a professor and dean of the College of Health and Pharmacy at Husson University in Bangor, Maine. **Blaine Palmer**, CLAS '98, was appointed to a new position as vice president and managing broker of Atlanta Fine Homes Sotheby's International Realty's Intown Office, the consistent No. 1 brokerage in metro Atlanta for sales volume and growth over \$2 billion a year. Palmer was recognized for a lifetime career achievement of over \$500 million in sales volume and leads a team of 132 Global Luxury Real Estate Advisors in his new capacity. **Angela Francisco Segura**, BUS '91, recently accepted a position as a business consultant for the Small Business Development Center at the Lutgert College of Business at Florida Gulf Coast University in Fort Myers, Florida. **Frank Turner**, LAW '94, was appointed to the Judicial Nominating Commission by Gov. Brian Kemp.

2000s
Kristina Goodwin "Kristi" Connell, BUS '97, LAW '00, was appointed to the Judicial Nominating Commission by Gov. Brian Kemp. Connell is an assistant district attorney for the Columbia Circuit. **Jacob E. "Jake" Daly**, LAW '00, was elected to the board of

directors of the Georgia Defense Lawyers Association.

Mary Burgin Edwards, CLAS '01, an academic health science librarian at the University of Florida, was promoted to the rank of University Librarian on July 1, 2024.

The Hon. Charles Evans, LAW '00, was appointed to the Judicial Nominating Commission by Gov. Brian Kemp. Evans is the presiding judge of the juvenile court of the Columbia Judicial Circuit.

Amy Phelps Fouse, EDU '00, received the Distinguished Service Award for Supervision of Instruction from the Georgia Association of Curriculum and Instructional Supervisors in November 2024. The Distinguished Service Award is presented to a supervisor in Georgia public education who has made significant contributions to the field of instruction.

Fouse is the coordinator of English language arts and world languages for the Houston County School District.

Bradley M. Harmon, LAW '02, was selected for inclusion in The Best Lawyers in America 2025. Harmon practices construction litigation at HunterMaclean in Savannah.

Anne Kaufold-Wiggins, LAW '05, was appointed by Gov. Brian Kemp to the Judicial Nominating Commission.

Jason D. Lewis, CLAS '00, LAW '06, was promoted to vice president of the board of the Georgia Defense Lawyers Association.

Darrell Sutton, LAW '03, was appointed to the Judicial Nominating Commission by Gov. Brian Kemp.

Dr. Earl Stewart Jr., CLAS '09, was appointed Wellstar's new medical director of health equity in October 2024. Stewart, a native of Augusta, graduated with honors from Mercer University and Meharry Medical College, and he completed his internal medicine residency at Brown University. His clinical interests include heart disease prevention; the effects of the environment and climate on health; health equity; and the connection between spirituality and medicine.

2010s

Christopher R. Conley, BUS '14, was elected to membership of the Seattle-based law firm Ryan, Swanson & Cleveland PLLC, effective Jan. 1. Previously an associate, Conley relocated in 2021 to Seattle from Georgia, where he had been practicing since 2017. His complex litigation practice includes representing clients in trial, appellate and supreme courts and handling various arbitration matters.

Cherie Bonder Goldman, EDU '19, received a 2024 Notable Alumnae Award by Girls Preparatory School. Goldman is in her 15th year with the Savannah-Chatham school district and was most recently named the district's literacy effectiveness officer, responsible for integrating the district's literacy efforts internally across grades PK-12 and externally with families and community partners. She was named Georgia Teacher of the Year in 2022.

Falen O. Cox, LAW '10, was appointed as a lawyer chairperson of the Unlicensed Practice of Law Committee for Judicial Administrative District 1 by the Supreme Court of Georgia on April 26, 2024.

Anna Adams Groce, CLAS '10, was recently promoted to executive director of stewardship and donor engagement at Kennesaw State University.

Dr. Ryan Guilbault, MED '19, accepted a pediatric orthopaedic surgery fellowship at Harvard University-Boston Children's Hospital and a second fellowship in pediatric limb deformity surgery at Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne, Australia.

Shane C. Harper, CLAS '16, recently graduated from Howard County Fire Academy Trainee Class 18 as a firefighter/EMT. Harper will assist the department in responding to 911 calls involving fire and rescue incidents, as well as provide Spanish/English interpretation for the Hispanic community.

Ian McIntyre, LAW '17, was recently named partner at his firm Butler, Quin & Hochman PLLC, in Charlotte, North Carolina. McIntyre has been

REMEMBERING...

Alumnus, Former Trustee and Loyal Supporter

Bob Hearn

Robert Watson Hearn Jr., CLAS '60, alumnus and loyal University supporter, died on Dec. 2, 2024, at the age of 86. Born in Macon, Hearn graduated from Lanier

High School in 1956. After attending Georgia Tech for two years, he enrolled at Mercer, where he served as president of Scabbard and Blade and Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity. He was also a member of Sigma Mu Honorary Academic Society and was designated a Distinguished Military Graduate in 1960. After a career of 33 years in mortgage banking, Hearn retired in 1996 as president and CEO of SunTrust Mortgage Inc., one of the largest mortgage banking firms in the country at the time. Hearn served two terms on the Mercer Board of Trustees and was on the President's Council in 1983. He was also president of the Greater Atlanta Mercer Alumni Association in 1972 and was president of the DeKalb Alumni Association of SAE in 1968.

Last fall, Hearn was recognized in *The Mercerian* as one of the University's most loyal supporters, having made a gift to the University every year since 1962.



Alumnus and Generous Supporter

Frank Jordan

The Hon. Frank J. Jordan Jr., CLAS '69, LAW '72, died on Oct. 30, 2024. A native of Talbotton, Jordan graduated from Talbot County High School in 1965, where he was the Star

Student of his graduating class, played on the basketball team and was a member of the band. While an undergraduate student at Mercer, he was a member of Phi Delta Theta fraternity and was in the ROTC.

Following his graduation from Mercer Law School, Jordan served in the U.S. Army, from which he was honorably discharged as a lieutenant. Jordan was admitted to the Georgia Bar in 1972 and had a private law practice in Talbotton for 28 years. In 2000, he was appointed to the Chattahoochee Judicial Circuit Superior Court bench where he served until his retirement on Dec. 31, 2017. During his tenure as a judge, he initiated and presided over the Adult Drug Court Program in the Chattahoochee Judicial Circuit. Jordan was a generous supporter of Mercer Law School.



Alumnus and Former Trustee

Reg Murphy

John Reginald “Reg” Murphy, CLAS ’55, HON ’75, alumnus and former trustee, died on Nov. 9, 2024, at the age of 90. A native of Gainesville, Murphy began his journalism career while an undergraduate student at Mercer in the 1950s, covering local news, sports and the state capitol for the *Macon Telegraph*. He went on to serve as a reporter for, and then editor of, the *Atlanta Constitution*. Murphy later served as editor and publisher of the *San Francisco Examiner* and publisher and CEO of the *Baltimore Sun*. From 1996 to 1998, he was president and CEO of the National Geographic Society. Murphy was a loyal Mercer supporter, having served five terms on the Board of Trustees. He received the Distinguished Alumnus Award in 1971 and was awarded an honorary Doctor of Laws degree in 1975. In December 2023, the University named its Center for Collaborative Journalism in honor of Murphy’s long and accomplished career as a journalist and publishing executive.



Alumna and Loyal University Supporter

Mary Frances Newsome

Mary Frances Harrison Newsome, CLAS ’46, an alumna and loyal University supporter, died on Sept. 25, 2024, at the age of 97. A native of Wrightsville, Newsome graduated from Wrightsville High School as valedictorian in 1943 at the age of 16. She then attended Mercer, where she was very involved in student life, serving as secretary-treasurer of the sophomore class, a member of the Alpha Delta Pi sorority, president of the 1946 senior class, vice president of Girls’ Student Government, and many other campus organizations. She was also sweetheart and sponsor of Alpha Tau Omega fraternity. Newsome completed her formal education with a year of graduate studies in counseling at the University of Georgia. She taught school for four years, but after her mother’s death, she owned and operated Harrison’s Department Store in Wrightsville for the next 49 years, until 2000, at which time she closed the store and retired. In the fall of 2021, Newsome was recognized as the University’s most loyal supporter with a record of more than 60 years of annual gifts to the University.



with the firm since 2019, and his practice primarily focuses on personal injury and workers’ compensation litigation.

Jordan Morris McIntyre, LAW ’19, left her position as a felony prosecutor at the Cabarrus County district attorney’s office and joined the firm of Reed & Thompson in Concord, North Carolina. McIntyre now practices in estates, trusts and guardianship proceedings.

Alex Preston, CLAS ’13, is a film production teacher at Ridgeview Charter Middle School in Sandy Springs and was promoted to pathway lead for the middle school film programs throughout Fulton County Schools in Metro Atlanta.

Mattie Hardin Tondreault, LAW ’15, was appointed to the State of Florida’s 10th Judicial Circuit Judicial Nominating Commission by Gov. Ron DeSantis.

Lindsey Hancock Warden, CLAS ’15, supported the development of Traverse, a 6-12 social studies curriculum program, as a contracted academic designer at Imagine Learning. Traverse was recently named a finalist in the 2024 SIIA CODiE Awards for Best Social Sciences/Studies Instructional Solution. Warden returned to work for Imagine Learning as a senior partner engagement specialist. In this role, she serves as a pedagogical expert, helping to lead the Traverse pilot process and product implementation for school district partners.

Carrie Horne Wheeler, EGR ’11, earned her master’s degree in mechanical engineering from Johns Hopkins University in May 2024.

2020s

Harvey Canty, DIV ’20, was promoted to senior manager of human resources of William Carter’s Company.

Bailey Marshall, LAW ’22, was hired as an associate attorney at Nimmons Malchow Johnson, a personal injury firm in Augusta. Marshall joins partner and Mercer alumnus **Leland Malchow**, LAW ’85.

Laura Picott, LAW ’23, was named a 2024 Terry Trailblazer Recipient of the Terry College of

Business from the University of Georgia. The award recognizes four outstanding diverse alumni who are pioneers in their industry.

Stacey Young Rivers, EDU ’23, was named to the list of Top 50 Women Leaders of Atlanta for 2024. Rivers is the senior director of people growth and enterprise skills strategy at Warner Bros. Discovery. A mom, author and avid blogger for her “Level Up on Learning” newsletter, Rivers’s latest book collaboration, *The Adventures of Women in Tech: The Workbook*, shares career guidance for anyone invested in taking their career to the next level.

MARRIAGES BIRTHS & ANNIVERSARIES

1950s

Rev. William “McKinley” Wright, CLAS ’54, celebrated his 104th birthday on Sept. 16, 2024.

1990s

Maricka “Ricky” Rogers-Randall, EGR ’91, and Edward Randall, announced the adoption of their son, Corbin Emil Rogers Randall, on March 12, 2024.

2010s

Kimberly Kettlehut Abrams, EGR ’13, welcomed her second son, Clayton Jones Abrams, on May 23, 2024.

Stephanie White Bellows, PHA ’16, welcomed her son, John Lawrence Bellows, on Jan. 14, 2024.

Meredith Jane Blalock, PHA ’12, and Daniel Shenoda welcomed their first child, Selena, on June 23, 2024.

Timara Harvey Bridges, BUS ’17, and her husband, Alex Bridges, BUS ’17, celebrated their fifth anniversary and the first birthday of their twin daughters in November of 2024.

Maclaren “Mac” B. Brydon, BUS ’19, and his wife, Kylie, celebrated the birth of their daughter, Lyla.

Colleen Closson, CLAS ’16, and **Tyler Harris**, CLAS ’13, were married on March 2, 2024, in Valdosta, surrounded by their families and many of their close friends from Mercer.



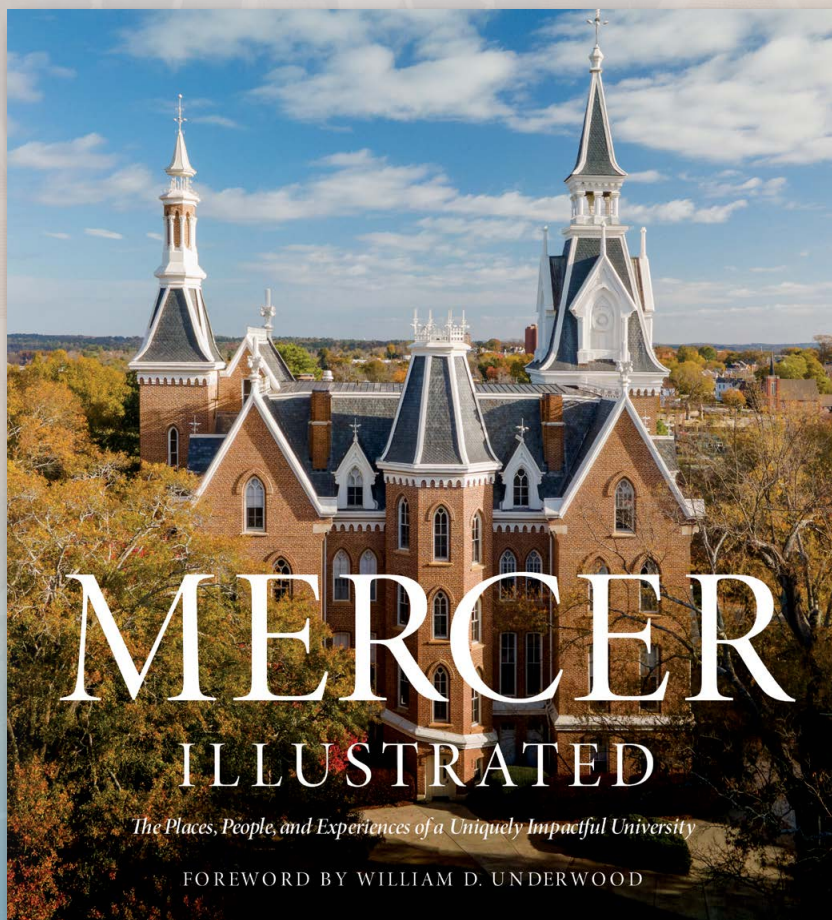
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ANNOUNCING:
MERCER
ILLUSTRATED

Mercer Illustrated: **The People, Places and Experiences of a Uniquely Impactful University** highlights the places, people, spirit, and experiences that collectively contribute to Mercer's impact on the world.

An elegant, hard-bound coffee table book, the 208-page folio features more than 250 images shot by 36 photographers from around the country and includes a foreword by President **William D. Underwood** and accompanying text by **Dr. Gordon Johnston**, professor of English and creative writing in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. With sections showcasing the University's campuses in Macon, Atlanta, Columbus, and Savannah and the academic, athletic, arts, service, and social events that nourish mind and soul and build community in each location, this collection offers a slice of Mercer life from all the areas of the world and the state that the University has called home over the last 191 years.

Order from Mercer University Press directly at www.mupress.org and receive a 40% Mercer Alumni discount online by using coupon code **MERCERALUM** at checkout or by calling (478) 301-2880. Shipping charges and taxes will apply. **List price:** \$60



FOREWORD BY WILLIAM D. UNDERWOOD

REMEMBERING...

Alumnus and Alumni Award Recipient

Josh Rogers

Joshua M. Rogers, CLAS '05, alumnus and alumni award recipient, died on Nov. 24, 2024. Rogers graduated from Mercer in 2005 and earned a master's degree from the University of York in 2007.



While a student at Mercer, Rogers served as a member of the Student Government Association all four years and was president his senior year. He was a member of Kappa Alpha Order and also served as co-chair of Mercer Nights events for QuadWorks. Rogers was the recipient of the 2005 Algernon Sydney Sullivan Award. After graduation, he began his first job with the City of Macon and the College Hill Alliance. Before turning 30, he was named executive director of Historic Macon Foundation, where he led the transformation of the Beall's Hill neighborhood. Rogers went on to become the president and CEO of NewTown Macon at the age of 32. His accomplishments were numerous and include 2023 Macon-Bibb County Citizen of the Year, *Macon Magazine's* 5 under 40, *Georgia Trend's* 40 Under 40, Macon-Bibb County Partner of the Year (2017), and NewTown Macon's 360 Degree Partner Progress Award (2011). In 2012, he was the recipient of the Mercer Alumni Association's Thomas Sewell Plunkett Young Alumni Award.



Alumnus and Loyal Supporter

Bennie Stephens

Lt. Col. Bennie Mathews Stephens, CLAS '67, alumnus and loyal supporter, died on Jan. 4 at the age of 79. Born in Macon, Stephens attended Green Street Elementary School and matriculated at Peter G. Appling High School where he graduated valedictorian of his class. Stephens was a trailblazer as one of the first three Black students to integrate Mercer. He was a member of the ROTC program, which he completed before enlisting in the U.S. Army. A Vietnam veteran, Stephens retired as lieutenant colonel after more than 25 years of serving his country. He received the Bronze Star Meritorious Service Medal (4 Oak Leaf Cluster), Vietnam Service Medal (3 Oak Leaf Cluster) and other medals and awards. As a civilian, Stephens worked at Wells Fargo as a manager and Labor Ready as an office manager. He was a loyal supporter of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences for more than 50 years.



Heather Phillips Porter, CLAS '12, and her husband, Desmond, welcomed their first child in December 2024.
Leah Cochran Purser, BUS '19, welcomed her first son on July 15, 2024.
Amry Jean Stanley, BUS '11, married Daniel Leroux on Nov. 24, 2024.
Cody Kinderman Stephens, EGR '10, celebrated the birth of her third child, Kanyon Kruz Stephens, in May 2024.
Katie Vick Techman, EGR '18, '19, and her husband, Chris, welcomed their second son, Jackson James Techman, in February 2024.

2020s

Emily Bartlett, CLAS '21, and **Kallie McDaniel**, CLAS '21, were married on Aug. 23, 2024. The couple were in the same O-group and met on the first day of Mercer orientation.

IN MEMORY

1940s

Irvin Benjamin "Van" Cheney Jr., CLAS '48, of Roswell, on Oct. 4, 2024.
Betty Bradley Horton, CLAS '49, of Peachtree City, on Dec. 1, 2024.
Anna John Watkins Morcock, TIFT '48, of Charlotte, North Carolina, on Aug. 7, 2024.
Rose Waldron Sims, CLAS '46, of Smyrna, on Nov. 24, 2024.
Mary Timmons Sullivan, PHA '47, of McDonough, on Feb. 24, 2024.

1950s

Maynard W. Brown, CLAS '56, of Acworth, on July 29, 2024.
Patricia Allen Cannon, CLAS '56, of Gainesville, on Aug. 22, 2024.
Mary Sue Lane Crittenden, NUR '54, of Dunwoody, on Oct. 5, 2024.
Melvin Clinton Doss, CLAS '58, of Toccoa, on July 30, 2024.
James W. Fuller, CLAS '53, of Montgomery, Alabama, on Oct. 26, 2024.
William B. Hanson, CLAS '56, of Dothan, Alabama, on July 15, 2024.
John W. Holden Jr., CLAS '58, of Augusta, on July 19, 2024.

Louise Caudle Horvath, CLAS '55, of LaGrange, on Oct. 21, 2024.
Betty Carter Johnson, CLAS '59, of Knoxville, Tennessee, on Oct. 4, 2024.
William Thomas "Tom" King, CLAS '57, of Huntsville, Alabama, on Sept. 21, 2024.
Julian R. LeRoy, CLAS '52, of Austell, on Aug. 30, 2024.
Theresa Mann Manley, CLAS '56, of Montpelier, Virginia, on Oct. 20, 2023.
James O. Morgan Jr., CLAS '52, of Hendersonville, North Carolina, on Sept. 2, 2024.
Josephine "Berdie" Robinson Myers, NUR '51, of Tucker, on Aug. 15, 2024.
Lonnie Hue Pope, CLAS '57, of Atlanta, on Aug. 21, 2024.
W. Eugene Ruble, CLAS '59, of Winston Salem, North Carolina, on Sept. 10, 2024.
Samuel N. Scarbrough, CLAS '55, of Macon, on Nov. 2, 2024.
Miriam Thurman Selden, CLAS '52, of Salem, Oregon, on May 10, 2023.
Glenda Best Smith, CLAS '56, of Greenwood, South Carolina, on Sept. 19, 2024.
Clark D. Standard, CLAS '56, of Columbus, on Oct. 22, 2024.
Vonice Stewart, NUR '59, of Alma, on Sept. 12, 2024.
George H. Weems, CLAS '56, of Eatonton, on July 13, 2023.
Linda Hatcher Wigley, CLAS '59, of Macon, on Dec. 18, 2024.

1960s

Joseph "Joe" Becknell, CLAS '60, of Atlanta, on Aug. 12, 2024.
Brenda Taff Buckelew, CLAS '64, of Covington, on Aug. 28, 2024.
Edith Collins Carey, NUR '61, of Shelby, North Carolina, on Sept. 2, 2023.
Margaret Anne Dupree Carswell, CLAS '66, of Macon, on Aug. 30, 2024.
Ned W. Clarke, CLAS '61, of McDonough, on Aug. 15, 2024.
Joan Cole Cox, NUR '61, of Naples, Florida, on Dec. 11, 2024.
Robert Bryant Curley, CLAS '69, of Roswell, on July 6, 2024.
Angelane Beth Daniell, CLAS '69, of Decatur, on Aug. 6, 2024.
Sandra English, NUR '61, of Milledgeville, on May 20, 2024.
Charles "Hugh" Fillingim, CLAS '68, of Pooler, on March 4, 2023.

Joel R. Freeman, CLAS '68, of Mount Pleasant, South Carolina, on Sept. 20, 2024.

Elaine Rutland Helms, TIFT '67, of Marietta, on July 6, 2024.

Dwight A. Honeycutt, CLAS '61, of Macon, on Oct. 10, 2024.

Brinson E. Hood, CLAS '65, of Saint Louis, Missouri, on Jan. 31, 2024.

Nancy Otwell Houston, CLAS '61, of Colbert, on Nov. 6, 2024.

Marvin "Larry" Kemper, CLAS '60, of Macon, on Aug. 7, 2024.

Joseph E. Killingsworth, CLAS '68, of Ailey, on Sept. 20, 2024.

Joanna Brown Mahood, CLAS '68, of New Smyrna Beach, Florida, on Sept. 18, 2024.

Thomas B. "Tommy" Martin Jr., CLAS '62, of Reynolds, on July 11, 2024.

Ann Walker Pierce, EDU '63, of Perry, on Oct. 10, 2024.

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

John R. Ray, CLAS '62, of Bloomington, Illinois, on March 5, 2024.

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

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

John B. Simpson, CLAS '64, of Donalsonville, on May 24, 2023.

Jerome E. Spence, CLAS '65, of Jacksonville, Florida, on July 21, 2024.

Glenda Noble Starr, CLAS '63, of Macon, on Aug. 25, 2024.

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

1970s

Raymond S. Coleman Jr., BUS '77, of Douglas, on July 21, 2024.

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

Joy Jones, NUR '75, of Augusta, on Aug. 18, 2023.

Elizabeth Jenkins Landrum, TIFT '71, of Marietta, on July 27, 2024.

G. Alan Lansdell, LAW '77, of Decatur, Alabama, on July 23, 2024.

Larry P. Lynch, LAW '72, of Monticello, on Sept. 22, 2024.

Mary Cathy Sanders Madden, CLAS '73, of Macon, on Sept. 27, 2024.

Steven C. Moon, PHA '79, of Jasper, on Sept. 22, 2024.

Sharon Bryant Newman, EDU '72, of Marietta, on Sept. 20, 2024.

Dennis L. Null, LAW '70, of Mayfield, Kentucky, on Sept. 17, 2024.

Lawrence "Larry" J. Phalin, LAW '70, of Waynesville, North Carolina, on Sept. 29, 2024.

Mark S. Reed, CLAS '74, of Raleigh, North Carolina, on Oct. 24, 2024.

Charles H. Weston Sr., LAW '71, of Macon, on Aug. 4, 2024.

Charles B. Whiteman, CLAS '75, of Nashville, Tennessee, on Aug. 8, 2024.

1980s

Shirley A. Baisden, MED '89, of The Villages, Florida, on Sept. 14, 2024.

Sarah Ann Bartholomew, LAW '89, of Valdosta, on July 28, 2024.

Wesley T. "Wes" Cowan, PHA '80, of Baneberry, Tennessee, on June 9, 2024.

Susan Murphree Ebersbach, LAW '86, of Newnan, on Sept. 1, 2024.

Barbara A. Holmes, LAW '84, of Palm Harbor, Florida, on Oct. 15, 2024.

Sandra B. Skellen Keil, LAW '87, of Macon, on Sept. 1, 2024.

Gary W. Matre, BUS '82, of Henderson, Nevada, on June 1, 2023.

William Gregory "Greg" McCall, LAW '80, of Charlotte, North Carolina, on Oct. 19, 2024.

Douglas A. McCann, LAW '81, of Shepherdsville, Kentucky, on Nov. 10, 2024.

Michael S. Parrish, BUS '84, of Eatonton, on Oct. 12, 2024.

Melvyn J. Williams, LAW '81, of Macon, on Dec. 20, 2024.

1990s

Michael D. Birchmore, LAW '90, of Springville, Alabama, on Aug. 28, 2024.

John W. Geiger, LAW '90, of Perry, on Sept. 12, 2024.

Parrish C. Hill, BUS '92, of Perry, on July 15, 2024.

Lee I. James, BUS '97, of Groveland, Florida, on Sept. 26, 2024.

Shirleen F. Matlock, COPA '90, of Douglasville, on Sept. 15, 2024.

Jon R. "J.R." Meyers, LAW '97, of Washington, D.C., on July 27, 2024.

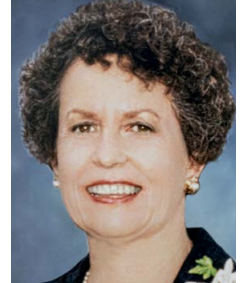
REMEMBERING...

Alumna and Generous Supporter

Eleanor Toney

Eleanor Louise Haynes Toney, CLAS '61, alumna and generous University supporter, died on Sept. 24, 2024, at the age of 85. Toney was born in Blakely and grew up in Bainbridge.

She attended Bainbridge High School where she excelled, graduating as valedictorian in 1957. Later that year, she entered Mercer, where she earned a degree in English with a minor in Spanish. While a student, Toney was a member of the Chi Omega sorority, president of the Ciceronian Literary Society, member of the Honor Society, member of the Homecoming Court, and the Sigma Alpha Epsilon Chapter Sweetheart and Sponsor for 1960. Most importantly, she developed many lifelong friendships and met the love of her life and husband of 63 years, **Fred Toney**, CLAS '63. In April 2023, Mercer named its iconic 130-year-old, 850-seat auditorium in Willingham Hall the Eleanor Haynes Toney Auditorium in her honor. After graduating in 1960, Toney became an English teacher at Lanier Junior High School in Macon. After moving around to several states in the Southeast, the couple moved to the San Francisco Bay Area in 1978 and made it their home. Toney took great pleasure in creating a home and caring for her two children and four grandchildren.



Mufid A. Othman, BUS '99, of Macon, on Aug. 12, 2024.

Donald "Don" W. Pate, MED '91, of Newport, Arkansas, on July 9, 2024.

Jondavid T. Perry, EDU '97, of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on Sept. 10, 2024.

Lisa Rankin, NUR '96, of Griffin, on July 17, 2024.

Damon L. Talley, PHA '99, of Kennesaw, on Oct. 28, 2024.

Randy D. Williams, BUS '98, of Eastman, on Aug. 4, 2024.

2000s

Leward "Lewie" Dunn, BUS '00, of Fairburn, on June 29, 2024.

Bryce Alan Johnson, LAW '04, of Tifton, on Dec. 2, 2024.

Deborah "Debby" Kinman, EGR '01, of Hawkinsville, on Aug. 16, 2024.

Deidre Michele Murray, BUS '03, of Conyers, on Sept. 17, 2024.

Kimberly Michelle Shaver, CLAS '00, of Hewitt, Texas, on Sept. 11, 2024.

Christina Marie Sumner, LAW '00, of Columbia, South Carolina, on Sept. 5, 2024.

2020s

Josie-Tatum Mattox Carlson, CHP '24, of Blackshear, on Nov. 12, 2024.

FRIENDS

Jacqueline Christman, of Macon, on Oct. 12, 2024.

Duane E. Davis, of Jasper, on Aug. 11, 2024.

Eugene A. Demonet, of Hamilton, on Sept. 14, 2024.

Frances Beard Estes, of Hattiesburg, Mississippi, on Oct. 21, 2024.

Allen F. Grum, of Silver Spring, Maryland, on Oct. 17, 2024.

Donald D. Hicks, of Macon, on Dec. 30, 2024.

Tracie Jenkins, of Macon, on Oct. 25, 2024.

Melissa A. Kling-Newberry, of Macon, on Sept. 19, 2024.

Michael N. LeBlang, of Savannah, on June 30, 2024.

Thomas McMahan, of Florence, Kentucky, on July 10, 2024.

Richard B. Nelson, of Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, on Aug. 30, 2024.

William S. Rhodes, of Atlanta, on July 14, 2024.

John Riski, of Sandy Springs, on Dec. 23, 2023.

Nancy Scott Rogers, of Tucker, on July 14, 2024.

Ramsey T. "Bub" Way Sr., of Hawkinsville, on Aug. 18, 2024.

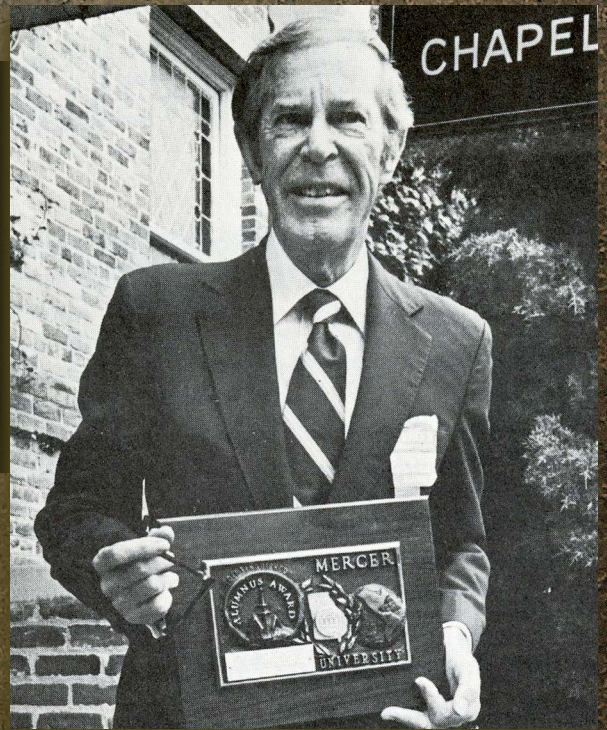
Harold A. "Hal" Young, of Macon, on Jan. 28, 2024.

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 - Walter Dowling Receives Distinguished Alumnus Award — On Alumni Day, **Dr. Walter Dowling** received the Distinguished Alumnus Award “for service to humanity and for personal dedication which have fostered the ideals of the University.” After graduating from Mercer in 1925, Dowling worked in the U.S. State Department for more than 30 years, including serving as a deputy commissioner in Austria, ambassador to Korea and ambassador to West Germany. In 1970, he returned to Mercer as an ambassador-in-residence and a political science professor. Dowling’s Distinguished Alumnus Award and some of his personal papers are housed in the Mercer University Archives. (SOURCE: *The Mercerian*, Spring 1975 and *The Mercerian*, Summer 1975)



75 YEARS AGO

1950 - Mary Erin Porter Hall Expanded — In 1950, a new wing to Mary Erin Porter Hall was constructed. The three-story wing provided housing for 100 female students. In 1957, the wing was named Sallie Boone Hall in honor of **Sallie Boone**, who served the University as a teacher, librarian and counselor for more than 30 years. (SOURCE: *The Mercerian*, April 1950, *The Mercerian*, June 1950, and *The Mercerian*, December 1957)

100 YEARS AGO

1925 - Groover Hall Constructed — After receiving donations from benefactors, work began to transform the former Alumni Cymnasium into a building for the School of Theology. The new building included six classrooms, six offices and a large library with more than 10,000 books. The building was named Groover Memorial Hall in memory of **Charles E. Groover**, whose widow donated a major portion of the \$25,000 used for its construction. (SOURCE: *The Mercer Alumnus*, March 1925 and *The Macon Daily Telegraph*, June 10, 1925)



ADVANCEMENT LAUNCHES DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT CENTER

Staying engaged with alumni plays a crucial role in raising support for the University. One of the many ways Mercer has historically engaged with alumni and friends is through the Mercer Phonathon.

For decades, the University has hired a team of students each academic year to conduct the phonathon program. These student representatives call alumni and friends to update contact information, raise awareness of campus news, and ask for philanthropic support for the various academic units and programs that benefit all Mercerians.

In the past, engaging alumni and friends only required a phone call, but as more people have moved away from landlines and are utilizing digital methods of communication, the telephone is not always the best way to connect.

To better engage its constituents, the Office of University Advancement launched a new digital engagement center this fall. The Mercer Engagement Center restructured the previous student calling program and is staffed by digital engagement officers — current students who contact Mercer alumni, parents and friends, with the focus of building relationships. The goal of the center is to combine the power of technology, data and human touch to deliver personalized and relevant experiences to Mercer alumni and friends.

Josh Thompson, director of donor experience and digital philanthropy, is charged with overseeing the Mercer Engagement Center.

“Previously, student callers focused their work solely on phone calls,” Thompson said. “Unlike a traditional call center, our engagement officers use a variety of channels for outreach, including phone, email, text, and video.”

The center currently employs 11 students who work approximately six hours each week. Each digital engagement officer devotes three hours weekly to phone calls and the rest of their work hours to creating personalized videos and emails for alumni and friends.



Branden Nekic serves as a digital engagement officer in Mercer's new Digital Engagement Center.

“Unlike a traditional call center, our engagement officers use a variety of channels for outreach...”

— **Josh Thompson**

Branden Nekic is a freshman finance major in the School of Business who serves as a digital engagement officer. He was one of the center’s new hires for the academic year and enjoys engaging with the University’s alumni and friends.

“As a scholarship recipient, I am so grateful for the support of alumni and friends,” Nekic said. “This job has helped me understand how important philanthropic support is to Mercer

and its students. I really enjoy hearing about others’ Mercer experiences and having the opportunity to connect with more members of the Mercer family.”

Mercer’s Digital Engagement Center wants to connect with you. When you see Mercer University on your caller ID, in your text messages, or in your inbox, take a moment to answer the call or open the message and meet one of our digital engagement officers. You will have the opportunity to share your own Mercer experience with a current student and learn more about how you can make a difference in the lives of our students who are changing the world.

BEARS, GET READY!

ORANGE & BLACK GIVEBACK

MERCER UNIVERSITY
WEEK OF GIVING • MAY 5-11, 2025















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MERCER FOOTBALL

2025 SCHEDULE RELEASE

VS AUG. 23 <small>MEMPHIS</small>			VS AUG. 30
VS SEPT. 13 <small>ALABAMA</small>			AT SEPT. 20
AT SEPT. 27 <small>FLORIDA</small>			VS OCT. 4
AT OCT. 11 <small>FLORIDA STATE</small>			VS OCT. 25
AT NOV. 1 <small>FLORIDA STATE</small>			AT NOV. 8
VS NOV. 15 <small>GEORGIA</small>			AT NOV. 22

HOME ————— AWAY

