

# THE Mercerian

FALL 2023

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"A Night of Georgia Music" Wins Emmy

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VOLUME 33, NO. 2

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# In Our Lens

### College Street Transformation

A portion of College Street that runs through the Macon campus is being transformed into a pedestrian-friendly, attractive greenspace. Construction is underway on the project, which will be completed in two phases and is expected to be finished by March 2024. The centerpiece is the creation of a circular green space, similar to Cruz Plaza, but smaller, in front of the Connell Student Center. Brick pavers will replace the current asphalt roadway.





THE MERCERIAN, FALL 2023

# FEATURES

Mercer Law **150**  
Turns **18**

Mercerians Leave  
Lasting Impact in  
Dominican Republic

Mercer Establishes  
Roberts Academy for  
Children with Dyslexia

**18**  
**28**  
**34**

## DEPARTMENTS

BEARINGS	3
BEAR BRIEFS	40
MERCER HEALTH SCIENCES	44
BEAR NOTES	48
50-75-100 YEARS AGO	55
ADVANCEMENT UPDATES	56



# MAKE IT MERCER AGAIN!

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



## SPECIAL CONSIDERATION PROGRAM BENEFITS



Tuition benefit for the entire length of the program



Waived test score requirement for most eligible programs



Priority admission consideration

## BECOME A DOUBLE BEAR

Explore eligible graduate programs and learn more about the tuition benefit at [mercer.edu/scp](http://mercer.edu/scp). Waive the application fee with code **MERCERIAN23**.

**MERCER**  
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## ALUMNA PROFILE

# HELPING MAKE THE IMPOSSIBLE POSSIBLE IN MACON

**E**rin Keller fell in love with Mercer University first, and then she fell in love with Macon. From a college student to a professional, she's seen the downtown area come a long way. As NewTown Macon's chief of staff and vice president for development, she is part of a team that is continuing to revitalize and reimagine the city center.

Keller, originally from LaPlace, Louisiana, played on Mercer's women's basketball team and graduated in 2008 with a communications degree.

"When I came for my official visit as a senior in high school, it was 15 minutes there, and I knew it was where I wanted to be," she said. "I wanted to have extracurricular opportunities where I wasn't just defined as a student-athlete. Mercer gave me that. My time at Mercer offered me the best of both worlds, an all-around college experience that allowed me to play at the collegiate level and prepared

A close-up portrait of Erin Keller. She has long, wavy, blonde hair and is wearing a black turtleneck sweater over an orange blazer. She is smiling warmly at the camera. A gold chain necklace with a circular pendant hangs around her neck. The background is blurred, showing some greenery and possibly a building.

me for what I'm doing now."

## ALUMNA PROFILE, ADMIN UPDATES

me for life after graduation."

Following graduation, Keller went to Valdosta State University to pursue a master's degree in higher education leadership and took a graduate assistantship on the women's basketball team. She thought she wanted a career coaching basketball, but she quickly realized that wasn't the path for her.

After completing her graduate degree, a job opening brought her back to Mercer and Macon. She served as an admissions counselor for three years and coordinator of alumni programs for one year, and then a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity came calling.

Mercer alumnus **Josh Rogers**, CLAS '05, president and CEO of NewTown Macon, wanted to recruit Keller for a position leading capital campaigns and managing fundraisers, grants and donor relations. She accepted and began that role with NewTown Macon in July 2014.



"It was something different, a new challenge. It was an opportunity that was completely unknown," Keller said. "It's different when someone looks at you and says, 'You're my first option' — when someone believes in you more than you believe in yourself."

When Keller was a Mercer student, downtown Macon was deserted and didn't have much to offer besides nightlife, she said. But then, the College Hill Alliance — an organization funded by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation that was dedicated to creating positive change along a two-mile stretch between Mercer's campus and downtown — lit a spark of hope and change that spread through Macon.

"It was the launch pad," she said. "There was a plan; there was hope; there were resources. It gave people a reason to believe that the impossible was possible because you saw change. That momentum had Maconites believing revitalizing downtown was possible."

Organizations like NewTown Macon, the Peyton Anderson Foundation, the Knight Foundation, the Urban Development Authority and dedicated residents built on existing efforts to save the city center. Much of the change has been locally led and charged, and that is Macon's "super power," Keller said.

"NewTown has expanded and evolved to be the organization that is known to figure out issues. If it's going to benefit downtown, we want to figure out a solution," she said. "As Macon has grown, it's really embraced its authenticity."

Today, Keller sometimes feels like she needs to pinch herself when walking downtown. It's now a vibrant area where people can live, work, play and walk in between. She never dreamed the area would become home to businesses like Hotel Forty Five and The Woodward Hotel, and she's proud to be part of an organization that has supported such ventures and a place that demonstrates unparalleled civic pride.

Keller is on a team that's "changing the hearts and minds of people who think that downtown Macon is dead," she said. "I love getting to do this type of work with people that are genuinely passionate about the change that we want to see and that we want to make. Some of the things that we're doing now will change the downtown area for years to come."

Keller's work allows her to continue to be involved in Mercer from afar, while being involved in projects that could be of impact for generations.

"Because I love Mercer, I fell in love with Macon. It's kind of this symbiotic relationship: What's good for Macon is good for Mercer, and what's good for Mercer is good for Macon," she said. "A lot of the things that are going on in Macon have to do a lot with Mercerians. That speaks to the impact of a Mercer education. Macon embraces youthful leadership, and several [leaders] are Mercerians who are shifting the trajectory of our city through creativity, innovation and compassion. I'm just honored to be among a great group of Mercerians committed to good-doing."

**THERE WAS A PLAN; THERE WAS HOPE; THERE WERE RESOURCES.  
IT GAVE PEOPLE A REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THE IMPOSSIBLE  
WAS POSSIBLE BECAUSE YOU SAW CHANGE.**

# TRUSTEES APPROVE RECORD OPERATING BUDGET, TWO NEW UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE PROGRAMS

Mercer's Board of Trustees, meeting on the Cecil B. Day Graduate and Professional Campus in Atlanta in April, adopted a **record \$302.7 million operating budget for 2023-24**, exclusive of more than \$50 million in federal research grants. Continuing more than a decade of below-market annual tuition increases, trustees voted to limit the tuition increase for Macon undergraduate

programs to 3% for 2023-24. The School of Medicine and the College of Nursing will have no tuition increases in their undergraduate and graduate programs for 2023-24. Law students will see a 2% increase. Tuition increases for most other programs range from 0% to 3%. In addition, trustees approved a **new Bachelor of Arts degree in anthropology** that will be offered by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences in Macon beginning in the fall. They also approved a **new Bachelor of Science in Education in Computer Science Education** that will be offered by the College of Education on the Macon campus.

## GUSTAFSON NAMED PRESIDENT OF PRESBYTERIAN COLLEGE

**D**r. Anita Olson Gustafson, dean of Mercer's College of Liberal Arts and Sciences since 2016, was named June 27 as the 20th president of Presbyterian College, effective Aug. 1.

Under Dr. Gustafson's leadership, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences enrollment surpassed 1,900 students, and new academic programs — including majors in anthropology, cybersecurity and statistics, as well as several minors and certificates — were added to the curriculum.

"I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to work with an amazing group of faculty, staff, alumni and students in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences," Dr. Gustafson said. "Mercer is a dynamic university that fully realizes its mission of sending students to go and change the world. It has been a privilege to be a Mercer Bear over the past seven years, and I am confident that great things are ahead for Mercer and for the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences."

Before coming to Mercer,

Dr. Gustafson served as professor of history at Presbyterian College beginning in 1997. She also held terms as interim provost from 2010-2012, interim dean of academic programs from 2005-2007, and chair of the history department from 2000-2004. She was named Presbyterian's Professor of the Year in 2007 and received the Excellence in Teaching Award from South Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities, also in 2007.

Dr. Gustafson earned her Ph.D. and Master of Arts in history from Northwestern University. She completed her undergraduate studies at North Park University in Chicago, earning a Bachelor of Arts in economics and Swedish.



## HALL NAMED GENERAL COUNSEL

**M**atthew R. Hall, who has served as interim general counsel at Mercer since Jan. 5, 2022, has had the interim dropped from his title and assumed the role of senior vice president and general counsel. A Double Bear, Hall joined the Office of General Counsel in 2019 as assistant general counsel and was promoted to associate general counsel in 2020. He replaces **William G. Solomon**,



who retired Jan. 4, 2022, after serving for a quarter century as Mercer's chief legal officer. Solomon has served as of counsel with the University since his retirement and will continue to serve in that capacity. A native of Blackshear, Hall earned both his B.A. (1996) and J.D. (2000) from Mercer.

# MERCER DEBATE WINS NOVICE NATIONALS FOR 5TH TIME

The Mercer debate team won the Novice Nationals for the fifth time in the National Parliamentary Debate Association (NPDA) tournament. The University has now won this award more than any other college or university that participates in the NPDA. Additionally, there have been six Black debaters to win the Novice Nationals, and all of them have been from Mercer. The tournament took place from March 25-27 at the University of the Pacific in Stockton, California. The students who competed this year were **Jayla Owens** and **Thomas Bartlett**. **Dr. Vasile Stănescu** was one of three coaches who helped with the team this year, in addition to associate director of debate **Fiker Tesfaye** and alumnus **Cam Wade**, CLAS '22.

Mercer Debate team members, from left:  
Niyati Patel, Thomas Bartlett, Jayla Owens,  
Associate Debate Director Fiker Tesfaye,  
Chirayu Salgarkar and  
Debate Director Dr. Vasile Stănescu



## MERCER RANKED NO. 1 ON MILITARY FRIENDLY® SCHOOLS LIST

Mercer is ranked No. 1 – its highest-ever placement – as a Military Friendly® School for the 2023-24 award year. The ranking by Victory places Mercer at the top of its category and among 665 institutions across the country recognized for their military and veteran programs and initiatives. Mercer first received the Military Friendly® designation in 2017 and earned rankings in one of the four exemplary categories – Top 10 Gold, Gold, Silver or Bronze – each of the past four years. Institutions earning the Military Friendly® School designation were evaluated using both public data sources and responses from a proprietary survey. More than 1,800 schools participated in the 2023-24 survey.



## MERCER NAMED 1 OF 258 VOTER FRIENDLY CAMPUSES IN THE U.S.



Mercer is one of 258 colleges and universities in 38 states and the District of Columbia to be named a Voter Friendly Campus for 2023-24. The designation comes from NASPA – Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education and Fair Elections Center's Campus Vote Project. The program is designed to help institutions address the challenges that prevent college students from participating in the political process and foster a culture of democratic engagement on their campuses. This designation recognizes college and university campuses that have committed to voter registration, education and turnout as part of their institutional mission.

## "A NIGHT OF GEORGIA MUSIC"

RECORDED FOR PUBLIC TELEVISION AT MACON'S HISTORIC GRAND OPERA HOUSE IN FRONT OF A SOLD-OUT LIVE AUDIENCE, WON AN

# EMMY AWARD

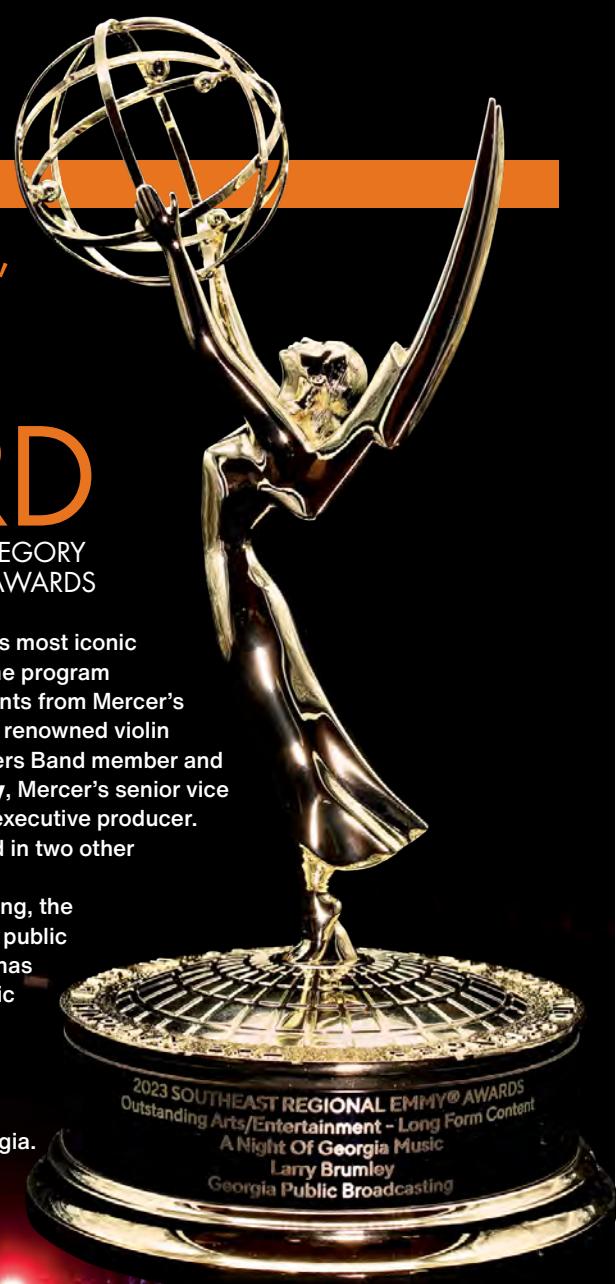
IN THE ARTS/ENTERTAINMENT-LONG FORM CONTENT CATEGORY DURING THE 49<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL SOUTHEAST REGIONAL EMMY AWARDS CEREMONY IN ATLANTA ON JUNE 17.

The performance dynamically showcases some of the Peach State's most iconic songs, headlined by three of Georgia's most well-known musicians. The program features R.E.M. founding member and Macon native **Mike Mills**; students from Mercer's **Robert McDuffie Center for Strings** and its founder, internationally renowned violin soloist and Macon native **Robert McDuffie**; and former Allman Brothers Band member and current Rolling Stones keyboardist **Chuck Leavell**. **Larry D. Brumley**, Mercer's senior vice president for marketing communications and chief of staff, served as executive producer.

In addition to the category in which it won, the show was nominated in two other categories: musical composition/arrangement and lighting.

"A Night of Georgia Music" premiered on Georgia Public Broadcasting, the show's presenting station, on July 4, 2022, and is being distributed to public television stations nationally by American Public Television. It already has been aired, or is scheduled to air, in almost 50% of the country's public television markets. It also is available to stream at gpb.org.

Major funding for A Night of Georgia Music was provided by The Peyton Anderson Foundation and the W. Mansfield Jennings Jr. Charitable Trust. Additional funding was provided by the Knight Foundation Fund at the Community Foundation of Central Georgia.



# SCOTT APPOINTED COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES INTERIM DEAN

**D**r. John Thomas (Tom) Scott, professor and chair of the History Department in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, was named interim dean of the University's oldest academic unit, effective Aug. 1. He succeeds **Dr. Anita Olson Gustafson**, who served as dean for seven years before assuming the presidency of Presbyterian College in Clinton, South Carolina.

Dr. Scott, who also serves as University Marshal, joined Mercer's faculty in 1991 and has also directed the Honors Program. His academic specialty is early American and U.S. religious and intellectual history.

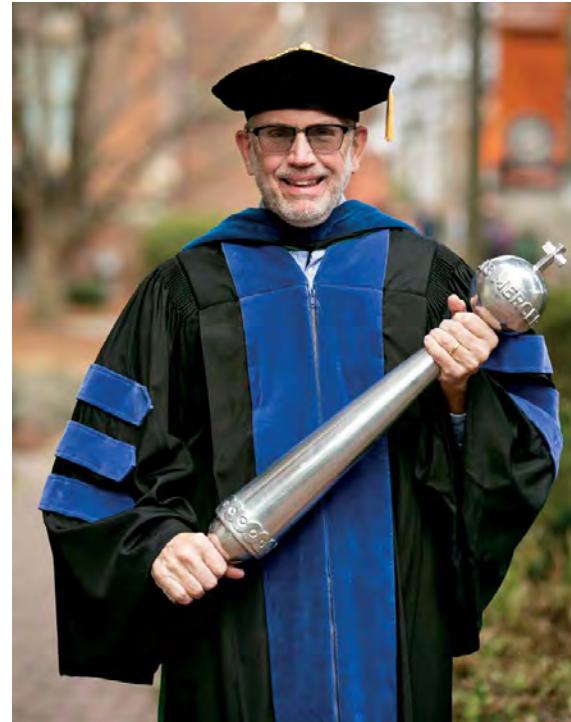
"I'm grateful to Tom Scott for agreeing to assume interim leadership of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences," said Mercer Provost **Dr. D. Scott Davis**. "He's a well-respected scholar and teacher, and over his more than three-decade tenure at Mercer he has effectively served the University in a variety of capacities. He has mentored countless students who have gone on to significant achievements after graduation. The College will be in excellent hands

with Tom as interim dean."

In late August, a search committee was appointed to lead the process of recommending a permanent dean.

"I am humbled and honored to be named interim dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and thankful for the confidence Provost Davis has shown in me with this appointment," Dr. Scott said. "I will do my best to continue the positive momentum that Dean Gustafson and my colleagues in CLAS have helped create for the College during her tenure as dean."

Dr. Scott earned his undergraduate degree in history from Vanderbilt University and holds an M.A. in history from the University of Georgia and a Ph.D. in history from The College of William and Mary. He studied also at the University of Leeds. Dr. Scott is the author of numerous academic journal articles and a book on the 1730s Wesley Mission to Georgia, published by Lehigh Press. He is co-editor, with **Dr. Achim Kopp** of CLAS, of a forthcoming collection of Moravian journals to Georgia from the 1730s, also from Lehigh Press.



Dr. Scott

## JOHNNY COHEN

HAS BEEN NAMED THE SECOND DIRECTOR OF MERCER'S MCEACHERN ART CENTER (THE MAC).



A Macon native, his work reflects on consumer and shopping culture using colorful 3D displays.  
*Read more about Cohen on The Den.*



Read this and other stories about all things Mercer at **theDen** [den.mercer.edu](http://den.mercer.edu)



# MERCER UNIVERSITY PRESS

celebrates 44<sup>th</sup> year  
of publishing excellence

# M

**er**cer University Press offers a new season of books rich in fiction, poetry, music, food, history, philosophy and religion.

Highlighted titles from the Fall/Winter 2023 season include: **Allman Joy** by Bill Connell with John Lynskey, the memoir of a young drummer from Tuscaloosa,

Alabama; **Where Here Is Hard to Say** by Mercer professor of creative writing Gordon Johnston, a collection of poems navigating the losses and renewals of nature and life; **The Wisdom of Winter** by Jackie K. Cooper, a collection of personal stories about love, faith, family and friendship; **From Biscuits to Lane Cake** edited by Evan A. Kutzler, a history of the life of Southwest Georgian Emma Rylander Lane (1856–1904) — and the backstory of Alabama's official state dessert; **St. Simons Island** by Ronda Rich, a mystery Stella Bankwell and friends set out to solve, and that most surely will send a deep rattling through Atlanta's exclusive Buckhead; and **The Girl from the Red Rose Motel** by Susan Beckham Zurenda, a coming-of-age contemporary novel about two highschoolers, difficult family circumstances and unexpected but important relationships.

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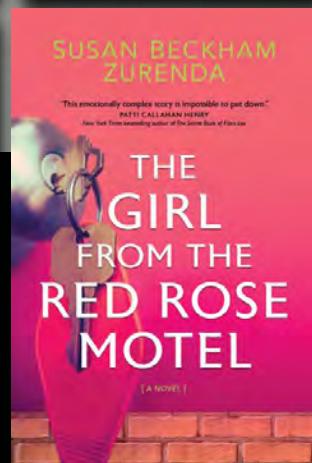
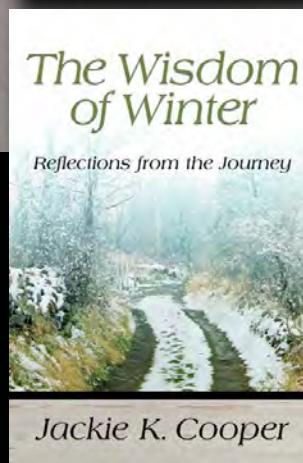
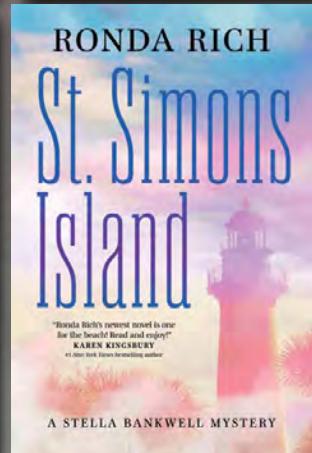
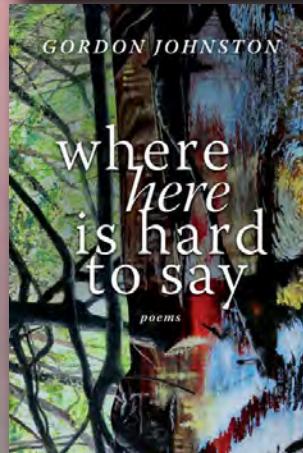
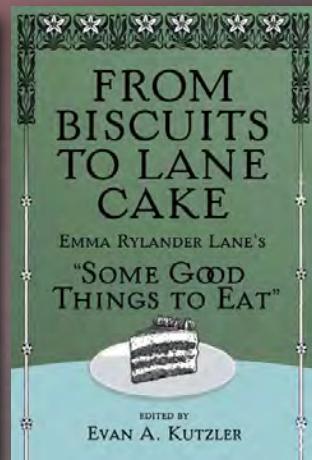
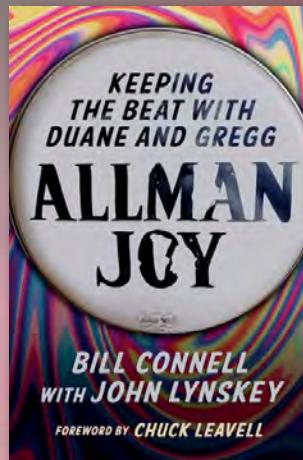
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**33rd** Saturday, Dec. 9  
10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.  
InterContinental Buckhead Atlanta  
**Authors Luncheon**

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**AUTHORS APPEARING** include Frederick Allen, Lerita Coleman Brown, Jackie K. Cooper, Patti Callahan Henry, Gordon Johnston, Patrick E. Longan, James Davis May, Otis Moss III, Richard North Patterson, William Rawlings, Ronda Rich, David Schaeffer and Susan Beckham Zurenda. For additional information, email [steele\\_tn@mercer.edu](mailto:steele_tn@mercer.edu).



# SCHOLARSHIPS & FELLOWSHIPS

## THREE STUDENTS NAMED GOLDWATER SCHOLARS

Three students from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences were announced as recipients of the Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship, the nation's most prestigious scholarship for undergraduates in science, mathematics and engineering.

**Ryan Brownlee, Dakota Ellis and Bryana Whitaker** were among 413 college sophomores and juniors from across the U.S. — including 20 from Georgia institutions — to be awarded the scholarship for the 2023-24 academic year. Brownlee, Ellis and Whitaker bring the University's total number of winners to 18 since 2013, making Mercer one of the state's leading producers of Goldwater Scholars. The one- and two-year scholarships cover the cost of tuition, fees, books, and room and board up to a maximum of \$7,500 per year. Brownlee, a biochemistry and molecular biology major, conducts research in the labs of **Dr. Linda Hensel**, professor of



Goldwater Scholars for 2023, left to right, Dakota Ellis, Ryan Brownlee and Bryana Whitaker.

biology, and **Dr. Christy Bridges**, professor of biomedical sciences. Ellis, a biochemistry and molecular biology major, conducts research in the lab of **Dr. Emilianne Limbrick**, assistant professor of chemistry, and Whitaker, a neuroscience and creative writing double-major, conducts research in the lab of **Dr. Joshua Rodefer**, assistant professor of neuroscience and psychology.

## TWO MERCERIANS SELECTED FOR 2022-23 FULBRIGHT AWARDS

Two Mercerians were selected to receive Fulbright U.S. Student Awards for the 2022-23 academic year, with one additional student selected as an alternate.

**Justin Henry**, who graduated in May with a public health and Spanish double-major, and **Kimberly Tibbetts**, who graduated in 2022 with an English and Spanish double-major, were chosen as finalists and awarded Fulbright English Teaching Assistantships to Colombia and Spain, respectively. **Kaitlyn Fowler**, who graduated in May with a sociology major, was selected as an alternate for a Fulbright Study/Research Grant to attend the Peace, Mediation and Conflict Research master's program at Tampere University in Finland.

In addition, five Class of 2023 graduates were named semifinalists during this award cycle:

**Savannah Granito**,  
**Mary Helene Hall**,  
**Madison Holloway**,  
**McKenna Kaufman**

and **Alexander John Paul Lutz**. Mercer has a total of 32 student and alumni Fulbright Award recipients over the past 14 selection cycles dating back to 2010.



Henry, CLAS '23



Tibbetts, CLAS '22

## COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES INDUCTS 38 STUDENTS INTO PHI BETA KAPPA SOCIETY

Thirty-eight students were inducted into the prestigious Phi Beta Kappa Society by Mercer's Zeta of Georgia Chapter for the 2022-23 academic year.

Prospective Phi Beta Kappa inductees are usually seniors among the top 10 percent of their graduating class who have completed a broad range of liberal arts and sciences coursework, including foreign language study and mathematics.

Exceptional students meeting the society's requirements may also be considered as juniors. The following students

make up Mercer's eighth induction class:

**Aleshia Allen, Emily Bacallao, Keely Beltran, Ben Browne, Sydnee Burke, Cierra Crawford, Sara Davila Severiano, Ashlyn Donner, Nicholas Fox, Ryanne Franklin, Komal Gandhi, Kellie Harmon, Keeli Hennon, Justin Henry,**



**Makenzie Hicks, Erika Houser, Lindsay Hunt, McKenna Kaufman, Grace Kelley, Zaina Khutliwala, Alexander John Paul Lutz, Madison Martin, Sophia McWhirter, Sarah Monteiro, Arsha Moorthy, Akash Patel, Param Patel, Michelly Pereira, Stevon Porcha, Annalise Porreca, Taylor Porterfield, Whitney Ray, Jesus Rijo, Ivia Rollins, Matthew Shatto, Madeline Smith, Matthew Thompson and Parker Vidmar.**

## 16 STUDENTS SELECTED TO STUDY ABROAD AS GILMAN SCHOLARS

Sixteen Mercer students were chosen during the fall and spring 2023 selection cycles to receive a total of \$50,000 in funding to study abroad through the prestigious Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship program. The recipients are

**Aleshia Allen, Lakeeyya Brockington, Cindy Cao, Nigeria Harkless, Genevieve Haskins, Fatoumata Keita, Savannah Lackey, Makiwen McGarrah, Johnera Miller, Hayley Moise, Kayla Nguyen, Abigail O'Donnell, Samuel Patton, Deborah Roh, Beyonce Shinholster and Kaley Woods.** Gilman 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. Mercer has been recognized as both a Gilman Top Producing Institution and a Gilman Greatest Growth Institution for its role in broadening the student population that studies abroad overall, as well as in areas of priority achievement.

## THREE MERCER ALUMNI SELECTED FOR NSF GRADUATE RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS

Mercer had three alumni selected for this year's highly competitive National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship Program. College of Liberal Arts and Sciences alumni **Samantha Brown** and **Evan Stair** and School of Engineering alumna **Leia Troop** are among 2,552 students nationwide offered fellowships through the program, which recruits high-potential, early-career scientists and engineers and supports their graduate research training in science, technology, engineering and mathematics fields. The five-year fellowships include three years of financial support, including an annual stipend of \$37,000 and a cost of education allowance of \$12,000 to the institution. The selection of three fellows ties the University record for a single year. Brown, a chemistry and neuroscience double-major, is pursuing her Ph.D. in chemistry at the University of Illinois. Stair, a chemistry major, is pursuing his Ph.D. in chemistry at the University of North Carolina. Troop, a biomedical engineering major, is pursuing her Ph.D. in biomedical engineering at Virginia Commonwealth University. All three graduated from Mercer in 2021.



Stair, CLAS '21



Troop, EGR '21



Brown, CLAS '21



## TWO STUDENTS SELECTED TO PARTICIPATE IN AMGEN SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

**Kyla Hudson** and **Nuren Lara** were selected as AMGEN Scholars to spend 10 weeks this past summer conducting research at the California Institute of Technology. Hudson and Lara, both chemistry majors, are the latest Mercer students to participate in the highly selective program designed to prepare science, technology, engineering and math majors for top-tier graduate and professional schools and provide research experiences at world-class research universities.

Upon graduation, Hudson aims to pursue a Ph.D. and become a professor or researcher. Lara plans to attend graduate school to pursue a doctorate in chemistry, with plans to become a chemistry professor.



Hudson



Lara

## MERCER AWARDS 21 GLOBAL LEADER SCHOLARSHIPS

The Office of Global Engagement awarded its latest round of Global Leader Scholarships, providing 21 students with a total of \$65,590 to participate in study abroad programs during the 2023 summer and fall semesters. The Global Leader Scholarship program launched in 2019 to support students with financial need in pursuing long-term study abroad opportunities at the University. The recipients are **Zack Al-Husein**, **Jaiden Aliff**, **Max Ayers**, **Emily Bacallao**, **Keslyn Billings**, **Isabella Bordenca**, **Lakeeyya Brockington**, **Tatiana Cobos**, **Oluwatosin Ebunola**, **Manasi Giridharan**, **Lauren Kraft**, **Janhavi Kulkarni**, **MaKenna Lawler**, **Maret McWhorter**, **Ivana Opoku**, **Abigail Ott**, **Alexandria Porter**, **Kendall Ross**, **Lala Sanyang**, **Lily Sharpe** and **Kaley Woods**.

## FOUR RECENT GRADUATES SELECTED FOR PEACE CORPS SERVICE

Class of 2023 graduates **Cierra Crawford, Sariya Mathis, Nicole Ngan and Jendai Sealey** were selected to serve the Peace Corps. Crawford, a global health studies and Spanish

double-major, will serve as a maternal and child health promoter in Guatemala. Mathis, a psychology and Spanish double-major, will serve as a youth development facilitator in Peru. Ngan, a global health studies major, will serve as a community health facilitator in Vanuatu, an island country in the southwestern Pacific Ocean. Sealey, a public health and Spanish double-major, will serve as a youth development facilitator in Costa Rica. The Peace Corps,



Crawford, CLAS '23



Mathis, CLAS '23



Sealey, CLAS '23



Ngan, CLAS '23

established by President John F. Kennedy in 1961, is a volunteer program administered by the U.S. government to send the best and brightest Americans abroad to tackle the most pressing needs of people around the world. To date, more than 240,000 Americans have served in 142 countries. Mercer ranks among the top Peace Corps Prep certificate-issuing institutions in the U.S.

## TWO ENGINEERING STUDENTS RECEIVE SMART SCHOLARSHIP

School of Engineering students **Abigail Maddox** and **Sarah Fenimore** were awarded the Science, Mathematics and Research for Transformation (SMART) Scholarship by the U.S. Department of Defense.

Maddox and Fenimore will receive full tuition, a stipend and full-time employment with the Department of Defense after graduation. As part of the scholarship, they also participated in a summer research internship in which they were paired with a mentor at one of the scholarship program's sponsoring facilities. Maddox, a mechanical engineering major, and Fenimore, a civil engineering major, plan to work at Robins Air Force Base after graduation.



Maddox



Fenimore

## RECENT GRADUATE AWARDED CARTER CENTER INTERNSHIP, TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIP IN FRANCE

Class of 2023 graduate **Abigail Yemisrach** was awarded an internship at the Carter Center in Atlanta and admitted to the Teaching Assistant Program in France. Yemisrach, who double-majored in public health and French, interned at the Carter Center this past summer as part of the Trachoma Control Program, in which she worked to help eliminate trachoma, the world's leading cause of preventable



Yemisrach, CLAS '23

blindness, in five African countries. In October, she will begin a seven-month Teaching Assistant Program in France, where she will teach English at a French high school. The program is offered by the Cultural Services Division of the French Embassy in the U.S.



## RECENT GRADUATE NAMED GRAPHIC DESIGN USA STUDENT TO WATCH

Class of 2023 graduate **Carly Curran**, a graphic design major, was named a Student to Watch by Graphic Design USA. With the help of several of America's leading art and design schools, Graphic Design USA annually identifies top undergraduate, graduate and continuing education students ready to burst onto the design scene. Curran developed and honed her skills through a variety of Mercer classes, experiences and freelance projects. A member of the women's lacrosse team, she has done graphic design work for Mercer Athletics as well as for the Art Department, including for an academic textbook. Her areas of focus include digital illustration, photography and interactive design, in addition to studio-based work that includes ceramics.

## STUDENT HONORED AS NEWMAN CIVIC FELLOW

**Yash Jani** was one of 154 student civic leaders selected to Campus Compact's 2023-24 cohort of Newman Civic Fellows. Jani, a neuroscience major and Stamps Scholar from Albany, joins students from 38 states, Washington, D.C., and Mexico to form the cohort. The Newman Civic Fellowship recognizes students who stand out for their commitment to creating positive change in communities locally and around the world. Jani is committed to helping address unmet health care needs in the community and is deeply invested in his hometown in Southwest Georgia, where he has volunteered at health fairs and hospitals. After graduating, he plans to attend medical school and become a community physician.



Jani

## ENGINEERING ALUMNUS NAMED TAU BETA PI FELLOW

School of Engineering alumnus **Daniel Krashin** is among 32 scholars nationwide awarded Tau Beta Pi graduate fellowships for the 2023-24 academic year. The Fellowship Board of Tau Beta Pi engineering honor society annually selects fellows to receive cash stipends of \$10,000 for advanced degree programs of study. Krashin earned his bachelor's degree in electrical engineering in May and will pursue his master's degree in sustainable design and construction with a concentration in energy at Stanford University. He has received the Brandt Fellowship, which is made possible thanks to a gift from Larry D. Brandt.



Krashin, EGR '23

# FACULTY & STAFF HONORS & RECOGNITION

## KAREN J. SNEDDON APPOINTED DEAN OF MERCER LAW

Following a national search that yielded three finalists, Mercer announced the appointment of **Karen J. Sneddon** as dean of the School of Law. Sneddon has served as interim dean since Oct. 1, 2021, after former Dean Cathy Cox was appointed president of Georgia College & State University. Prior to being named interim dean, Sneddon served as professor of law and associate dean for faculty research and development. She teaches, writes and speaks in the areas of legal writing, wills and real estate transactions. Prior to joining the law faculty in 2006, Sneddon was a Forrester Fellow at Tulane Law School and an associate at a New York City law firm. She graduated *summa cum laude* from Louisiana State University and *summa cum laude* from Tulane Law School.



Sneddon

## DR. WILL JORDAN RECEIVES HENDRICKS EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AWARD

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Professor of Political Science **Dr. Will Jordan** is the 2023 recipient of the Joe and Jean Hendricks Excellence in Teaching Award, which was presented at Mercer's Macon commencement on May 15. The annual award recognizes a full-time teacher who best exemplifies the qualities that distinguished Joe and Jean Hendricks as teachers and mentors to generations of Mercer students. These include challenging and inspiring teaching in and out of the classroom, active engagement of students in the process of learning, discovery and leadership, as well as caring mentoring to motivate students and junior faculty to achieve their highest aspirations. The Joe and Jean Hendricks Excellence in Teaching Award carries a \$5,000 stipend.



Dr. Jordan

## MERCER APPOINTS MEREDITH KEATING-WHITE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CAMPUS LIFE

**Meredith Keating-White** has been appointed executive director for the Office of Campus Life and Student Involvement. Keating-White has worked at the University since August 2017. She most recently served as associate director of campus life and student involvement. Prior to that, she served as assistant director of campus life and student involvement. Keating-White holds a master's degree in higher education leadership from Old Dominion University and a bachelor's degree in leadership development from Louisiana State University.



Keating-White

## TWO PROFESSORS NAMED GOVERNOR'S TEACHING FELLOWS

Two College of Professional Advancement faculty members were chosen as Governor's Teaching Fellows, a highly selective program designed to develop important teaching skills through emerging technologies and instructional tools and sponsored by the Institute of Higher Education at the University of Georgia.



Dr. Walhall

**Dr. Sabrina Walhall**, professor of science, was selected for the Spring Symposium Program held in May, which was STEM-themed for the first time. **Dr. John Carroll**, associate professor of organizational development and leadership program coordinator, was selected to participate in the Academic Year Symposia Program that began Sept. 13. The Governor's Teaching Fellows



Dr. Carroll

Program was established in 1995 by Zell Miller, who served as governor of Georgia from 1991-1999, to provide Georgia's higher education faculty with expanded opportunities for developing important teaching skills.

Left to right,  
Dr. Cameron Kunzelman,  
Dr. Linda Hensel and  
Dr. David A. Davis



## BIOLOGY PROFESSOR AWARDED 2023 MIKE MACCARTHY MENTORSHIP AWARD

Mercer has awarded **Dr. Linda Hensel**, professor of biology, the Mike MacCarthy Mentorship Award for her leadership in providing hands-on research experiences to undergraduate students. She received the award on April 11 during the annual student recognition banquet held by the Office of National Fellowships and Scholarships. The Mike MacCarthy Mentorship Award is named for the late Dr. Michael MacCarthy, associate professor of environmental and civil engineering and director of the engineering for development program.

## PROFESSOR RECEIVES AWARD FOR DISTINCTION IN TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION EDUCATION

**Dr. Helen Grady**, professor emerita in the School of Engineering, has been named the recipient of the 2023 Ronald S. Blicq Award for Distinction in Technical Communication Education by the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers Professional Communication Society. The international award recognizes innovative educators who have influenced the ways technical communication is taught in pre-college settings, undergraduate and graduate university degree programs, and professional life through workshops and seminars. Dr. Grady taught

30 different technical communication and engineering courses during her 29-year tenure at Mercer. She was instrumental in shaping the technical communication undergraduate and graduate curricula and created nine new undergraduate and two new graduate courses. She also helped design the School of Engineering's Master of Science in Technical Communication Management, which is offered fully online.



Dr. Grady

## TWO MERCERIANS SELECTED AS FULBRIGHT SPECIALISTS

**Dr. Danielle Buehrer**, vice provost for institutional effectiveness, was selected to serve two weeks overseas as part of the prestigious Fulbright Specialist Program. She served in Côte d'Ivoire, West Africa, assisting the International University of Grand-Bassam in applying for accreditation with an institutional accreditation agency in the United States. In addition, **Dr. Jacqueline Stephen**, a faculty member in the College of Professional Advancement, was selected for a six-week assignment in Timor-Leste in Southeast Asia, where she planned to work with the Office of Ombudsman for Human Rights and Justice at its primary location in the capital city of Dili. The Fulbright Specialist Program is the short-term arm of the larger Fulbright Program, sponsored by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. Fulbright Specialists serve assignments at overseas colleges and universities, where they share expertise, strengthen institutional linkages, hone skills, gain international experience, and learn about other cultures while building capacity at their host institutions.

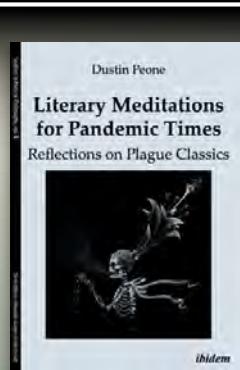


Dr. Buehrer



Dr. Stephen

# MERCER FACULTY AUTHOR NEW BOOKS

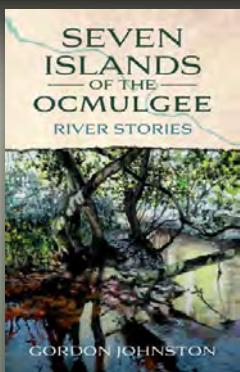


Dustin Peone  
**Literary Meditations for Pandemic Times**  
Reflections on Plague Classics



*ibidem*

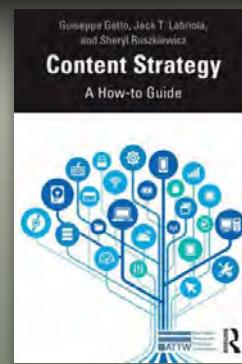
**DR. DUSTIN PEONE**, liberal studies adjunct instructor, had his book *Literary Meditations for Pandemic Times: Reflections on Plague Classics* released as Volume 9 of the series *Studies in Medical Philosophy*.



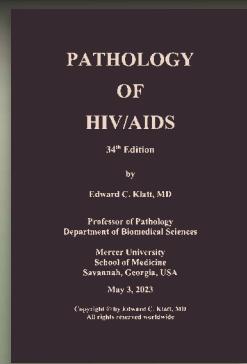
**DR. GORDON JOHNSTON**, professor of English, is the author of the new short story collection *Seven Islands of the Ocmulgee: River Stories* (Mercer University Press).



**DR. DAVID A. DAVIS**, professor of English, published his book *Driven to the Field: Sharecropping and Southern Literature* (University of Virginia Press).



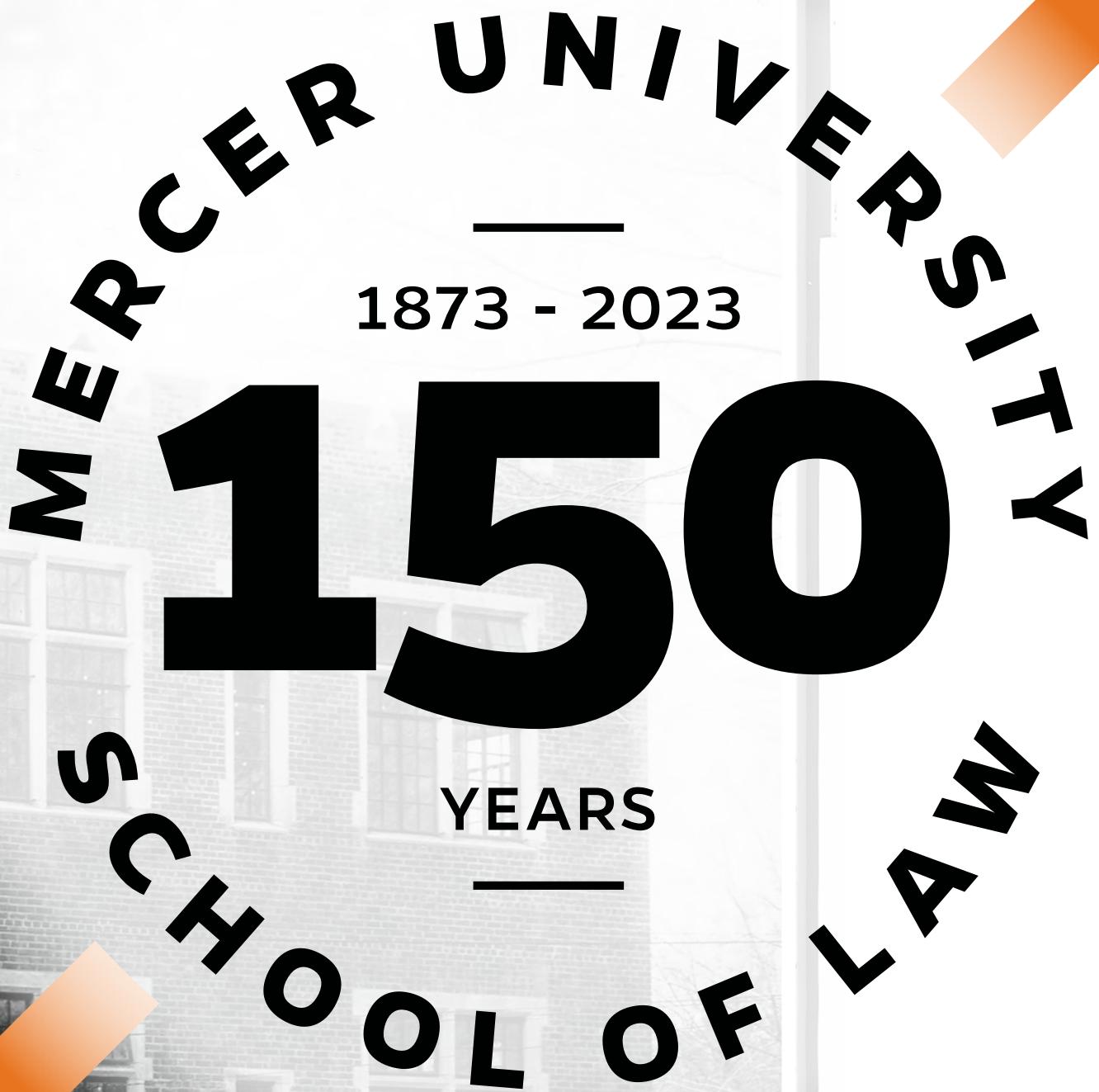
**DR. GIUSEPPE GETTO**, associate professor of technical communication, co-authored and published the book *Content Strategy: A How-to Guide*.



**DR. EDWARD C. KLATT**, professor of biomedical sciences, released the 34th edition of the textbook *Pathology of HIV/AIDS* (Eccles Health Sciences Library).

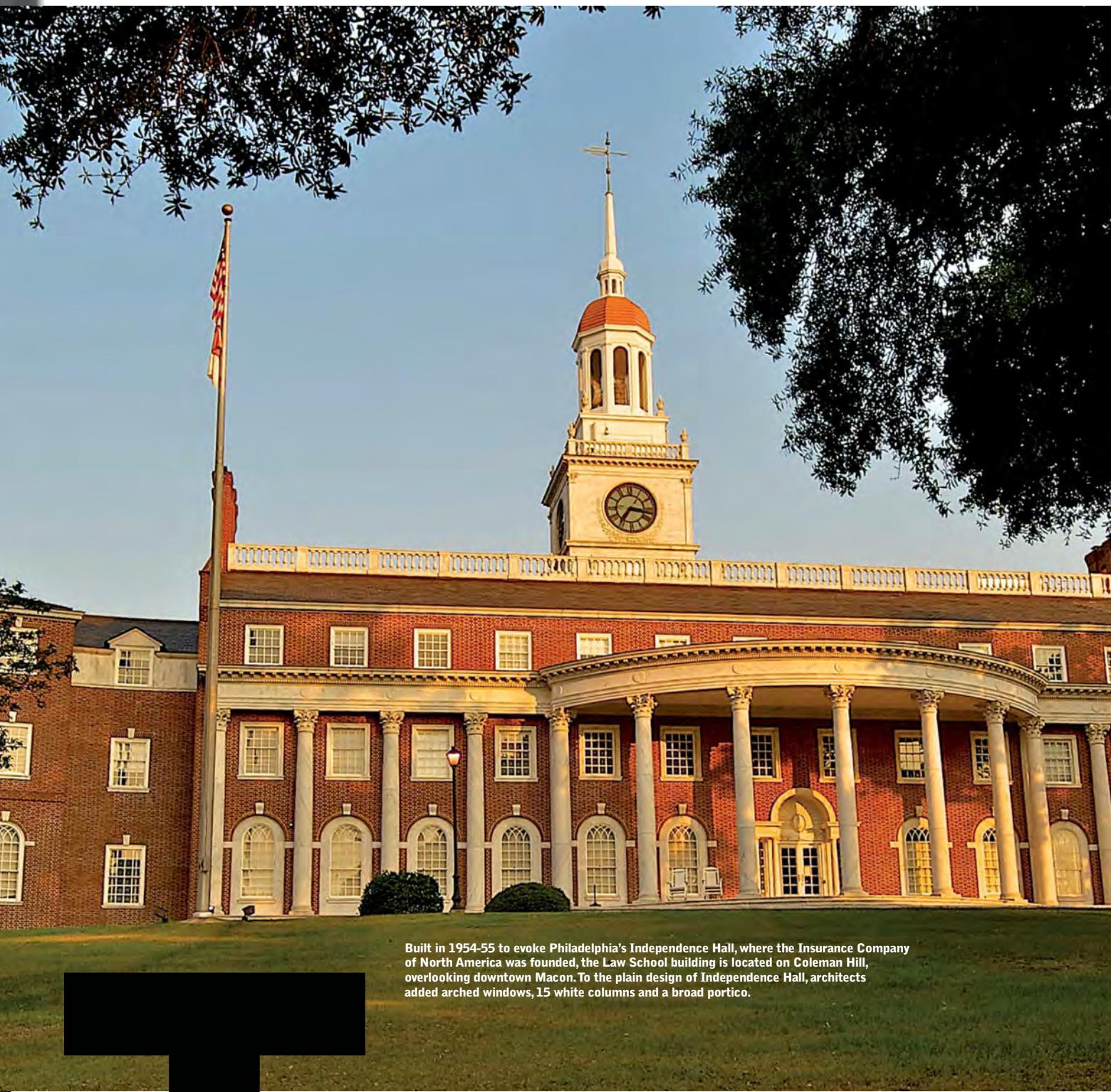


Ryals Hall, dedicated in 1930 as the Law School's first permanent campus home, was designed to accommodate 125 students. By the late 1970s, the School had outgrown the space and moved to its current home on Coleman Hill.



By NEIL SKENE

**MERCER LAW SCHOOL** OVER ITS 150-YEAR HISTORY HAS MADE AN INDELIBLE MARK ON GEORGIA AND LEGAL EDUCATION. IT WAS ONE OF THE FIRST LAW SCHOOLS TO BE ESTABLISHED IN THE SOUTH — JUST TWO YEARS AFTER MERCER UNIVERSITY MOVED TO MACON FROM PENFIELD IN 1871. ➔



Built in 1954-55 to evoke Philadelphia's Independence Hall, where the Insurance Company of North America was founded, the Law School building is located on Coleman Hill, overlooking downtown Macon. To the plain design of Independence Hall, architects added arched windows, 15 white columns and a broad portico.

oday, there are Mercer Law alumni in all 50 states and many other countries around the globe. Virtually every town and city in Georgia has a Mercer attorney or judge, manifesting the School's 150-year reputation of preparing practice-ready lawyers, community leaders and public servants.

The Law School started with seven students and the three part-time professors

who had won approval from Mercer's trustees to start a law school. The founders and early faculty were models of lawyers' involvement and leadership in the larger community. "The school was conceived in professionalism and dedicated to excellence," wrote federal judge **William Augustus Bootle**, LAW '25, in a history of the Law School in 1990. "These men taught at night after the day's work was done."

Today that focus on skillful legal practice has taken



Mercer to the 2023 national championship in moot court (appellate advocacy) and a narrow loss to UCLA in the 2023 national trial competition. Overall, Mercer is ranked fourth in the nation in National Trial Advocacy, behind UCLA but still ahead of Harvard.

"For 150 years the Law School has really focused on preparing students for

practice and has not lost sight of that, even as we have grown and changed," said Dean **Karen J. Sneddon** as she prepared for the school's celebration of 150 years on Oct. 13.

The Law School was the idea of an impressive young lawyer from Talbotton who had finished the University of Georgia Law School in 1871 and joined his father's law practice in Macon. **Walter B. Hill's** first accomplishment had been to create the first Annotated Code of Georgia laws, a model for the nation.

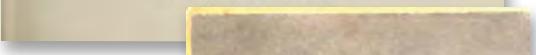
In 1873, Hill concluded that the southern half of Georgia needed a law school. He enlisted Superior Court Judge **C.B. Cole** and **Clifford Anderson**, a city alderman who had helped engineer Macon's successful bid to lure Mercer University from Penfield two years earlier. They won the Mercer trustees' approval. Judge Cole became chairman of the faculty but died a year later, and Anderson became faculty chairman.

Hill and Anderson would later lead the founding of the Georgia Bar Association, with headquarters in Macon, and serve as early presidents. Anderson became Georgia attorney general in 1880 and served 10 years. The law firm he helped build, now known as Anderson, Walker & Reichert, remains Macon's oldest law firm. Hill became chancellor of the University of Georgia in 1899.

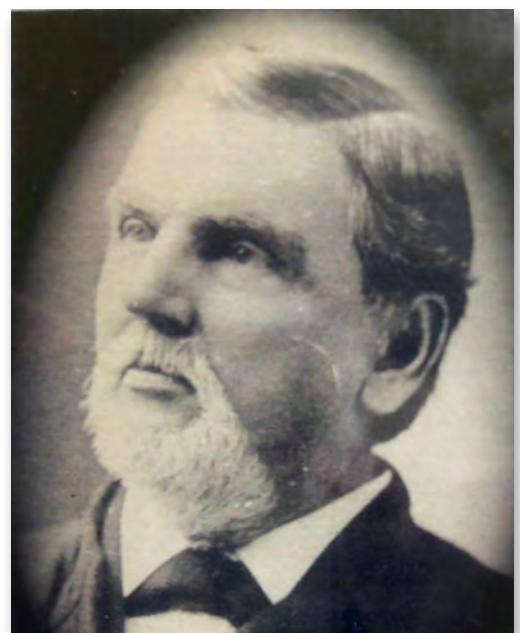
There was no building, not even a classroom at first. Classes were held in Judge Cole's courthouse office or in faculty homes. Teaching consisted of lectures and treatises.



THE LATE CHANCELLOR WALTER BARNARD HILL, OF THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA.  
(Born September 8, 1811; died, December 25, 1881.)



The founders,  
from top:  
**Walter B. Hill,**  
**Judge C.B. Cole,**  
**Clifford Anderson**



These more intimate classes further established the faculty as examples of what a Mercer lawyer should be.

In 1875, the Georgia General Assembly authorized Mercer Law School to grant law degrees, which at the time allowed admission to the bar without an exam.

Law schools were proliferating across America then, in part because of the spirit of entrepreneurship in what Mark Twain called the Gilded Age, and in part because the rise of federal laws, railroads, stock exchanges and growing businesses created a demand for lawyers with greater skill and knowledge.

Mercer's early law graduates gained stature not only in law but in politics, government and other fields. The graduating class in 1876 included **William S. West**, who became a state senator who led the creation of what is now Valdosta State University and in 1914 became a U.S. senator. **Harry Stillwell Edwards**, an 1877 graduate, became editor of the *Macon Telegraph* and a novelist.

The founding faculty took on prominent roles in Georgia. In 1883, Hill and Anderson joined with Macon lawyer

**Lewis N. Whittle** and eight others to establish the Georgia Bar Association. Anderson was the fourth president and Hill, the fifth. Macon was the Georgia Bar's headquarters for 90 years. One of the early goals of the Georgia Bar was to set higher standards for admission to the bar — standards that would motivate aspiring lawyers to attend law school.

Today, the immediate past president and the president-elect of the bar are Mercer Law graduates

**Sarah B. "Sally" Akins** of Savannah, LAW '90, and **Ivy N. Cadle** of Macon, LAW '07.

Kathryne Pierce Jackson entered Mercer Law School as its first female student in 1917.

#### Rep. Carl Vinson



In 1886, the new federal judge in Macon, Emory Speer, took on the additional role as dean of the Law School. By 1893, the graduating class had 11 members. Judge **William H. Felton**, who lived in what is now the Hay House down the hill from the Law School's current home and whose classes were held in the ground level of the house, joined the faculty in 1899. **Clem P. Steed** taught in the basement of what is now Mercer's Godsey Administration Building.

The school continued to attract high-caliber students.

**Walter F. George** graduated in the Class of 1901 and went into law practice in Cordele and won judgeships on the Superior Court, the Court of Appeals, and finally the Georgia Supreme Court before winning election to the U.S. Senate in 1922. He served for 44 years, chaired the Foreign Relations Committee during World War II and at other times the Finance Committee, which put him in a key position to protect Georgia's business interests, and became the president *pro tem*, third in line of succession to the American presidency.

**Carl Vinson** was in the Class of 1902. He became a powerful senior member of Congress and the only Mercer graduate with a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier bearing his name.

Another student in that class was **R.C. Bell**. As chief justice of the Georgia Supreme Court, Bell would be the speaker at the dedication of the Ryals Law Building, the law school's first real home, in 1930 — just as the current chief justice, **Michael P. Boggs**, LAW '90, is

to be the speaker at the Law School's 150th anniversary event in October.

By 1910, the last year with a one-year curriculum, there were 53 students in the graduating class.

In 1917, Mercer opened its Law School to women. That fall, **Kathyne Pierce Jackson**, known in the style of the day as Mrs. W.E. Jackson, enrolled. The *Macon News* described her as a teacher and "daughter of Sergeant Patrick Pierce of the police force." Her husband was reported to work for the fire department. She became president of her senior Law School class. A week after graduation in 1919, she was co-counsel for one of three defendants in the mugging of a doctor on Orange Street and won the case. Three weeks later she became the first woman admitted to practice in Macon's federal court.

Two more women enrolled that fall. It would be another 45 years, though, before the Law School had its first woman on the faculty:

**Leah Farb Chanin**, a 1954 graduate, hired by the Law School's longest-serving full-time dean, **James P. Quarles** (1954-69), to be law librarian and a professor. She served as interim dean 1986-87, the first woman in that role.

In 1920, the Law School got its first home, a makeshift repurposing of the dining room at Sherwood Hall on the Mercer campus. There was "only a partition separating the law library from the University laundry," wrote Judge Bootle, who became a Mercer Life Trustee and the judge who ordered the integration of the University of Georgia in 1961.

Bigger changes were in store as the Roaring '20s boosted the nation's economy. The faculty was now largely full-time. The curriculum expanded to three years. In 1923, **Rufus C. Harris**, Mercer's future president, joined the law faculty and led Mercer's acceptance into the American



Sen. Walter F. George, a major force in the U.S. Senate during the administrations of Presidents Franklin Roosevelt, Harry Truman and Dwight Eisenhower, ended his career as president *pro tem* of the Senate, third in line of succession to the presidency.

Association of Law Schools that year and accreditation in 1925 by the American Bar Association. Harris also led the shift from lectures and texts into the discussions of case law.

In 1927, Mercer trustee **Thomas E. Ryals**, a partner in the Anderson law firm, offered to provide a fourth of the cost of a new building for the Law School if others would contribute the rest. More than 400 donors came forward. On June 2, 1930, Ryals Hall was dedicated with space for 125 students. It was the Law School's first real home and housed the School for the next 48 years.

The Depression of the 1930s hit hard. Enrollment dropped to 45 for the fall of 1932. Bootle, who had been U.S. Attorney in Macon under President Herbert Hoover, became part-time dean — all the School could afford.

After closing during World War II, the school reopened in 1945 with eight students. One was **Griffin B. Bell** from Americus, who had served in the Army's Quartermaster Corp. Another was **G. Harrold Carswell** from Irwinton, who had entered the Navy in 1941. Bell went on to be a federal appellate judge and then

attorney general of the United States and chairman of Mercer's Board of Trustees. Carswell, who likewise became a federal appellate judge, was nominated by President Richard Nixon for the U.S. Supreme Court in 1969, but his nomination was rejected by the U.S. Senate.

On April 8, 1947, Mercer trustees renamed the school the Walter F. George School of Law. The Walter F. George Foundation was created with its own self-perpetuating board, and more than half-a-million dollars promptly poured in to honor Sen. George and support the School.

Also in 1947, **F. Hodge O'Neal** arrived as dean. In the spring of 1948, he announced that, for the first time, "the Law School finds itself unable to admit all who desire to enter." He capped enrollment at 150 students. He also launched the state's first law review.

The Law School was 75 years old.

**T**he 1950s and '60s brought new growth and more change to the Law School. The three-story addition, named for Valdosta businessman **Harley Langdale**, LAW 1912, housed a new library, a student lounge and faculty offices.

A ceremony in Willingham Chapel on Nov. 16, 1973, jointly celebrated the 100th birthday of the Law School and the 90th birthday of 1902 graduate

**President Jimmy Carter**, left, looks on as **Griffin B. Bell** is sworn in by **Chief Justice Warren E. Burger** as the 72nd U.S. attorney general, while wife **Mary Bell** holds the Bible.

Mary Alice Buckner entered Mercer Law School in 1970 as its first Black female student.



U.S. NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION PHOTO

Carl Vinson, who had retired after 51 years as the U.S. Congressman from Middle Georgia — holding the seat longer than any past member of Congress. President Nixon headlined the event.

Of more enduring significance was the arrival of the first Black students. Mercer President Harris had led the racial integration of the University in 1963, but it was 1969 before the first Black law student, **Jerry Boykin**, enrolled. The next class brought two more Black students, including the first Black woman, **Mary Alice Buckner**, LAW '73, followed by future Mercer trustee and federal judge **W. Louis Sands**, LAW '74.

Mercer trustees had also started planning for a new “law center” that could increase the size of the school to 450 students. The ideal building was at the top of beautiful Coleman Hill: a stately four-story building with a clock tower, built in 1954-55 by the Insurance Company of North America to evoke Philadelphia’s Independence Hall. It had replaced a grand mansion that had been atop the hill for 60 years.

The price of the INA building seemed well beyond Mercer’s means, but it was made possible



Judge William Augustus Bootle



by a deal structure called a “bargain-sale,” in which Mercer would pay in cash the value on INA’s books and the remaining market value would be a charitable gift to Mercer with a tax deduction.

**George Woodruff** stepped in to provide Mercer’s \$1 million cash portion of the deal. Woodruff was the brother of Coca-Cola CEO Robert Woodruff and an entrepreneur in his own right. Woodruff had been a trustee of the Walter F. George Foundation since 1965. More money poured in from other major donors for the interior of the new building. The move-in happened after fall semester of 1977. The formal dedication on May 4, 1979, featured a speech by U.S. Chief Justice Warren E. Burger, introduced by Mercer Law grad and former U.S. Attorney General Griffin Bell.

The growth that followed brought new challenges, particularly to continue the distinctiveness of a smaller, practice-focused Law School that had attracted students for 100 years. Financing came, one last time, from George Woodruff. At his death at age 91 on Feb. 4, 1987, Woodruff bequeathed to the school Coca-Cola stock, which by 1990 had grown to more than \$18 million.

A new dean, **Philip D. Shelton**, viewed the Woodruff bequest as an opportunity to reposition Mercer in the competitive landscape of law schools. To better compete for the best students, Shelton wanted to reshape the

curriculum to emphasize what Mercer had always been known for: producing young lawyers with courtroom skills. The faculty restructured the course of study and created what is still known as the “Woodruff Curriculum.” Legal writing moved to a central place. “Professionalism” was added later to emphasize integrity and community service.

Mercer would now be presented as a law school with a distinctive building, curriculum and culture.

**Daisy Hurst Floyd** arrived as dean in 2004. She was the first female to be appointed dean through a search process. Her research and teaching had focused on new concepts in legal education, including more clinical experiences for students.

In recent years, more than half of the Law School’s

student enrollment has been women. **Marilyn Sutton**, assistant dean for admissions, said female applicants express particular interest in social justice and making a difference as leaders in their communities. Minority students make up 22% of the enrollment, twice the level from the 1990s, and include Asian and Hispanic as well as Black students. The enrollment target has held at 380 for 30 years.

Karen Sneddon earlier this year was appointed dean, the fourth woman (including Interim Dean Chanin) to serve in that capacity. “When I go and talk with alumni, I am always amazed at how many boards they are on, what kind of leadership positions they may have,” she said. She talks about the School’s new commitment to civics education in Macon’s public schools and other community service projects and reflects on the careers of



prominent graduates over the years.

"I think they were attracted to the Law School because of that connection to service," Sneddon said. "Our graduates do all kinds of things, but wherever they go, they make a difference."

**Neil Skene**, LAW '77, has been a member and chair of the Law School Board of Visitors and is a member and founding chair of Mercer's National Journalism Advisory Board. A former editor and publisher, he is author of *The Florida Supreme Court: A Journey Toward Justice, 1971-1987* (University Press of Florida, 2017). He is also author of "*The Path to Coleman Hill: Mercer Law School's 150-Year Journey*" (Mercer Law Review, 2023).



## PROMINENT MERCER LAW ALUMNI FROM THE PAST 50 YEARS



Nathan Deal, 82nd governor of Georgia, former U.S. Congressman and current Mercer trustee



Cathy Cox, former Georgia secretary of state and dean of the Law School from 2017-21



Carlton Mobley, Chief Justice of the Georgia Supreme Court from 1972-74



Michael P. Boggs, current chief justice of the Georgia Supreme Court and Mercer trustee



Yvette Miller, first Black woman to serve as chief judge of the Court of Appeals and two-term Mercer trustee



W. Louis Sands, first Black federal district judge in the Middle District of Georgia and three-term Mercer trustee

### MACON MAYORS

Buck Melton,  
mayor from 1975-79



Robert Reichert,  
mayor from 2013-20



Lester Miller,  
mayor from 2021-present



# MERCERIANS LEAVE LASTING IMPACT IN DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

■ THIS SUMMER, **20 MERCERIANS** WORKED ALONGSIDE RESIDENTS OF SABANA BONITA AND SAT WITH THEM TO LEARN ABOUT THEIR LIVES AND PERSPECTIVES. WHEN THEY LEFT THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC THREE WEEKS LATER, A **NEW WATER TANK AND SYSTEM** WERE NEARLY COMPLETE, WHICH WOULD LEAVE A LEGACY OF **CLEAN WATER** FOR YEARS TO COME. ↗



# I CAN E PUBLIC

THROUGH WATER ACCESS WORK

By **ANDREA HONAKER**

Photographs by **MATTHEW SMITH**



The Mercer group and local residents dig a trench for a new water system in the Sabana Bonita neighborhood in the town of El Cercado in the San Juan province of the Dominican Republic.

# E

leven engineering majors, five journalism majors and four faculty members participated in the eighth Mercer On Mission trip to the Dominican Republic, where they continued to serve communities in the town of El Cercado in the San Juan province.

The program was initiated by the late **Dr. Michael MacCarthy**, associate professor of environmental and civil engineering, and has been continued by **Dr. Natalia Cardelino**, assistant professor of environmental and civil engineering, and **Dr. Laura Moody**, associate professor and chair of industrial engineering and industrial management. **Debbie Blankenship**, director of Mercer's Center for Collaborative Journalism, and **Dr. Adaline Buerck**, assistant professor



of environmental and civil engineering and director of Mercer's Cecil Day Family Center for International Groundwater Innovation, also went on this year's trip.

"I was really impressed with what engineering does in those communities around El Cercado," Blankenship said. "It literally changes lives in those communities and leaves this lasting impact there. Those stone water tanks that engineering has built, those are going to be there forever."

The students rotated through three jobs: water system construction, water testing, and community surveys and interviews. The Sabana Bonita community had outgrown its 3,000-gallon water system, so the Mercer team helped construct a new spring box with an 11,000-gallon water tank, said Dr. Cardelino, who led this aspect of the trip.

They also repaired water piping that had been damaged during flooding in the Manyai neighborhood, where Mercerians worked in 2022. Local engineers, plumbers and community members worked alongside them and completed a few remaining tasks after the Mercerians left.

"We accomplished more than we thought we were going to get done," Dr. Cardelino said. "There's so much of what we learn at the University that's so theoretical. It's one thing to tell people, but it's another to actually show them and [get] hands-on experience. ☺"





# 2023 MERCER ON MISSION PROGRAMS

**TWO HUNDRED AND EIGHTY MERCERIANS** participating in 15 Mercer On Mission programs traveled to 12 countries this past summer for a service-learning experience like no other. From fitting amputees with new prosthetics to providing impoverished areas with clean drinking water, each program led to tangible changes in the world.

 **Dominican Republic** A team from the School of Engineering traveled to El Cercado to build water tanks, pipe water to communities and show residents how to test water. Students used surveys and interviews to determine the community's attitudes and needs with respect to persons with disabilities and identified opportunities to improve accessibility in the community. Journalism students on the trip interviewed community members and documented the program.

Mercer Service Scholars organized and conducted an English as a foreign language workshop series at Universidad Central del Este and several private and public schools in San Pedro de Macorís, as requested by them according to their needs and interests. The group also helped the university translate and edit a proposal for UNESCO.

 **GEORGIA** Students and faculty helped build cultural bridges in Georgia. The team stayed in Tbilisi at the Beteli Center for refugees, learning the refugees' stories and helping make pottery, which the refugees sold to send money back home. The group also attended Christian, Jewish and Muslim worship services at the interfaith Peace Cathedral, conversed with Muslim students, and visited the George Eliava Institute of Bacteriophages, Microbiology and Virology.

 **GUYANA** Artisanal and small-scale gold miners traditionally have used mercury or cyanide to extract gold from ore, which releases toxic materials into the environment. Students returned to Bartica and, in collaboration with the Guyana Geology and Mines Commission, monitored mercury emissions from shops where gold is processed. Students also trained commission representatives to use portable X-ray fluorescence analyzers to screen for metal contamination in soil, tailings, mining slag and paint.

 **HONDURAS** Under the supervision of faculty from the Master of Family Therapy program in the School of Medicine, students had the opportunity to serve children and families in rural Honduras. The team provided psychoeducation and family therapy clinics at an elementary and middle school in coordination with school staff and the local physician, working with children in small groups throughout the day. In the afternoon, students gave counseling sessions to families in need.

 **INDIA** A College of Nursing team provided health care and education to small towns around Darjeeling and Delhi. This included well checks for children; health education for students; first aid courses for teachers; community clinics with a focus on women's health; health education for women; community screening for diabetes, hypertension and other chronic diseases; and working alongside local health care workers in community clinics.

 **MEXICO** Mercerians worked with Universidad Tecnológica de Izúcar de Matamoros in Puebla as part of an interdisciplinary language and research exchange. Mercer and UTIM students held language workshops for university and community educators and created and implemented a program of science, technology, engineering, arts and math activities to engage elementary and middle school students in English. The School



Clockwise from lower left, the Mercer group and local residents examine the existing spring box and piping for damage and assess the water level prior to building a new water system; the Mercer group and local residents carry stones for a new water tank; the Mercer group and local residents use stones to build the tank.



## 2023 MERCER ON MISSION PROGRAMS, *Continued*

of Engineering also began a collaboration with UTIM to enhance agricultural programs with the design of a bioreactor system.

**Mongolia** Students and faculty worked with the Children of the Peak Sanctuary project to help address childhood poverty in Ulaanbaatar, where large income disparities have emerged. With the objective of helping the project achieve its goals, the Mercer team worked to expand English education and social development programs for children while actively supplementing efforts already in place to give kids hope and tools to work toward a brighter future.

**Rwanda** In partnership with local organizations, a School of Business team trained more than 100 Rwandan entrepreneurs, many of them widows and orphans of the 1994 genocide, to help them start and sustain businesses that would provide social and economic mobility to their families and communities. Some students worked with the Ubumwe Tailor Shop partners, in which they interviewed tailors, followed "the journey of a bag," selected fabrics and styles, and helped the tailors renovate their shop.

In addition, counseling faculty and students from the College of Professional Advancement trained volunteers in a group treatment model of trauma therapy for survivors of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. Business and mental health are closely tied. A mentally healthy workforce is necessary for businesses to prosper, and some Rwandans participated in both the business and counseling training.

**South Africa** A School of Business team returned to Cape Town to work with Streetscapes, a nonprofit working to combat homelessness. The Mercer team worked alongside the nonprofit's staff and clients to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of its Urban Farms Program as a locally grown and organic social enterprise. The team also evaluated and modified its recommendations from last year based on financial viability, social impact, and environmental sustainability.

A separate Mercer team in Cape Town worked to empower youth by delivering innovative computer science lessons — including introductory programming, cybersecurity awareness and basic encryption — to middle and high school students. The high school students also learned data science techniques. Learning these skills showed the participants what they're capable of, built their confidence, and opened their eyes to future careers they could pursue.

**South Korea** A Mercer team worked with North Korean refugees and their children with a goal of developing their English language skills and knowledge in engineering, including 3D printing and robotics, to prepare them to enter South Korea's technology-based workforce. Through classroom teaching and participating in various programs together, Mercer students learned about Korean culture — including the Korean War and its effect on the country and its people — and helped lessen the gap in education and culture that the refugee students face in their daily lives.

**Tanzania** Mercerians partnered with Hakizetu, a Tanzanian nongovernmental organization that works to empower women, to develop and pilot a secondary school curriculum aimed at reducing gender-based violence. The curriculum used the concept of mindset transformation to encourage a shift in sociocultural norms around gender-based violence, early childhood marriage, and girls leaving school early. Mercer students presented the lessons in two urban secondary schools, with vocational students, and in two rural community groups.

**Vietnam** This flagship program continued its prosthetics work in Vietnam, which is home to an estimated 100,000 amputees. Students, faculty and staff fit amputees with the Mercer universal prostheses, taught and trained patients to work with prosthetic devices, and fit children with disabilities with orthotic braces. In addition, they collected data on amputee gait, helped with physical therapy and assisted pharmacists with dispensing medication. This year, the team fitted 854 prostheses and treated over 3,000 orthopedic patients.

Working with locals day after day, learning how to do construction, the experience is just invaluable."

Dr. Buerck trained the students on how to test water for lead, chlorine, nitrates, nitrites, turbidity, pH, total dissolved solids and bacteria like E. coli. Some of the samples were analyzed on site, and some were brought back to the compound where the team was staying. That data can be used to provide feedback to in-country partners on changes that need to be made in water treatment, Dr. Buerck said.

Dr. MacCarthy had observed a need for mobility and accessibility work in the Dominican Republic and had asked Dr. Moody to focus on this on an upcoming Mercer On Mission trip. Dr. MacCarthy died in 2021 while on sabbatical.

This year, the Mercer team used a survey developed by the World Health Organization to gauge the Dominicans' attitudes toward disability. They also conducted in-depth interviews with people with disabilities or caregivers about their needs, expectations and desires. These conversations may lead to accessibility construction projects, such as wheelchair ramps, and advocacy and education initiatives on future trips.

"This year was our opportunity to fulfill what Dr. MacCarthy wanted to do," Dr. Moody said. "I started my career working in rehabilitation engineering. I've had an ongoing interest in that type of thing, so it was a great fit for me to join that to what we were doing with the water supply."

"This was the first year that journalism majors joined this Mercer On Mission program. In addition to the other work, the five upper-level students documented the trip. They worked together on a few stories published on The Macon Newsroom website, macon-newsroom.com, before the trip and on a multimedia project while in the Dominican Republic. Each student also completed an individual video, story or photo project," Blankenship said.

"It was great to see the students grow, develop and gain confidence in themselves," Dr. Cardelino said.

"I've always prayed that I would have a job that would allow me to impact people, and I didn't realize





“how civil engineering could help me do this,” said rising sophomore **Laura Folsom**, a civil engineering major. “This trip helped me see that I could use my future career to help people in different communities and my own community.”

Rising senior **Timmons Johansen**, an industrial engineering major, said the experience challenged him and pushed him outside his comfort zone. It showed him that he could be productive even in a new environment.

“It really lit a fire in me and got me ambitious to do more exploring and really go after my goals,” he said.



Read more about  
the Dominican Republic trip  
on *The Den*.



Clockwise from top, Mercer students and faculty interview local residents; a Mercer journalism student captures photos and video of local children; Dr. Adaline Buerck (right) trains the Mercer students in water testing.

Read this and other  
stories about **the Den**  
all things Mercer at [den.mercer.edu](http://den.mercer.edu)

# Mercer establishing transitional school with dyslexia

# C

onstruction is underway on a transitional school for children with dyslexia that is adjacent to Mercer's Macon campus.

## ROBERTS Academy

at Mercer University,

which was announced last November, is being constructed, equipped and endowed through a major gift commitment by **Hal and Marjorie Roberts** of Lakeland, Florida. A groundbreaking ceremony was held on March 23.

The Academy will be affiliated with Mercer's Tift College of Education and will be the only school of its kind in Georgia outside of Atlanta.

"Every year, millions of children in this country are diagnosed with dyslexia, the most common cause of reading, writing and spelling challenges. With early screening, early diagnosis, early evidence-based

reading intervention and appropriate accommodations, dyslexic individuals can become highly successful," Mercer President **William D. Underwood** said during the Nov. 10 announcement. "People like Albert Einstein, Thomas Edison, Leonardo da Vinci, Walt Disney, Steve Jobs and Pablo Picasso were dyslexic. Several American presidents were also dyslexic."

Opening in the fall of 2024, Roberts Academy will initially serve as many as 80 students in grades two through five, with potential to expand enrollment and grade levels served.

The Academy is being built off Linden Avenue, near the Mercer Outdoor Recreation Complex and two blocks from Tattnall Square Park.

"It is very important to the Roberts family and to the University that Roberts Academy be affordable for

CHRISTOPHER IAN SMITH PHOTO



# to serve children

# exia



Participating in the March 23 groundbreaking ceremony for Roberts Academy were, left to right, Board of Trustees Chair Raymond McLeod (Thad) Warren III, Marjorie Roberts, Hal Roberts, College of Education Dean Dr. Thomas Koballa, Roberts Academy Head of School Joy Wood, Provost Dr. D. Scott Davis, and President William D. Underwood.

families with dyslexic children,” Underwood said. “Thanks to the extraordinary generosity of Hal and Marjorie Roberts, we will be able to achieve that objective.”

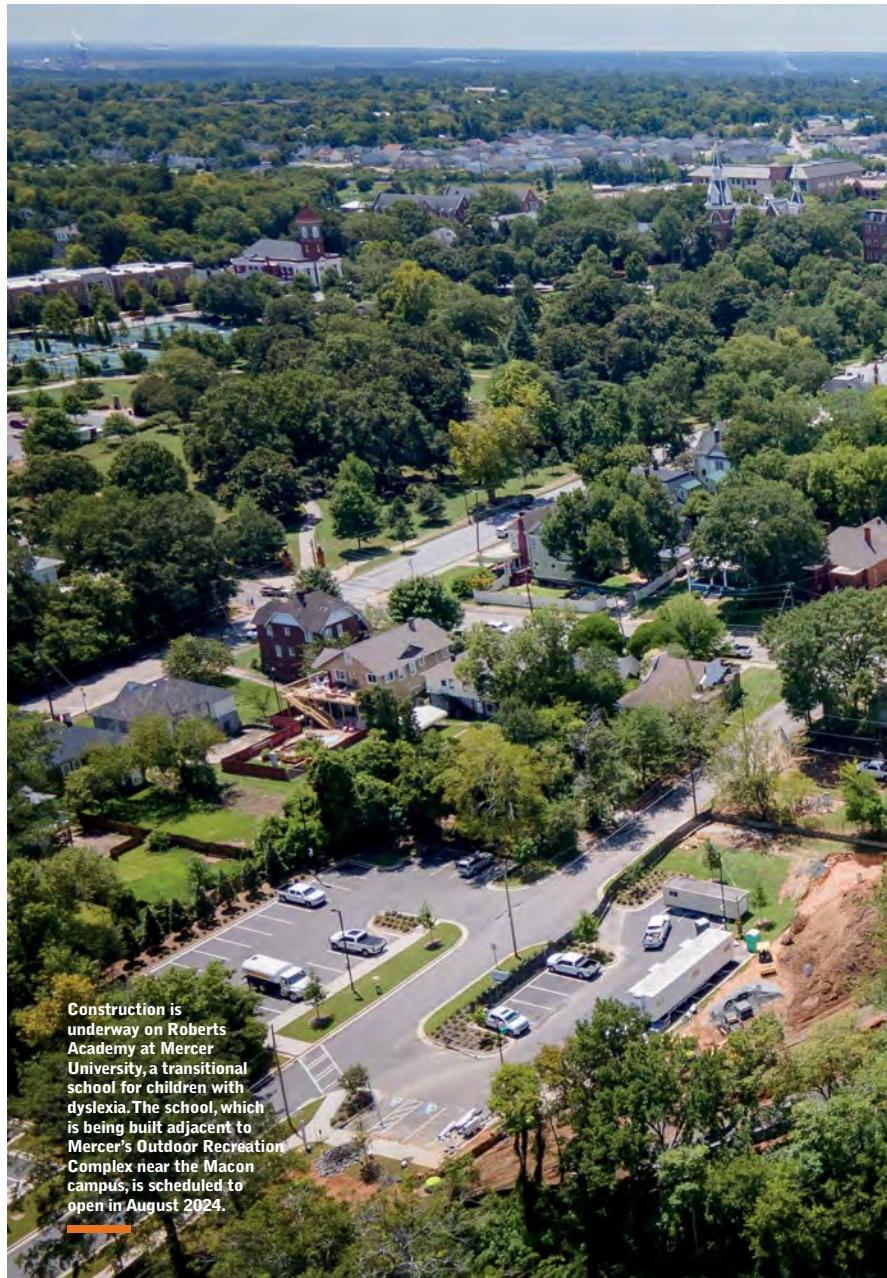
Modeled after the successful Roberts Academy at Florida Southern College in Lakeland, the mission of Roberts Academy at Mercer University is to prepare students with dyslexia to achieve academic success through dynamic educational programs.

“Albert Einstein, Thomas Edison, Leonardo da Vinci, Walt Disney, Steve Jobs and Pablo Picasso were dyslexic. Several American presidents were also dyslexic.”

“We are elated that Mercer University understands our dream of sharing the appropriate method of teaching children in Middle Georgia who have dyslexia. Having experienced our grandchildren’s early struggles and their later achievements, and those of hundreds of children at the Academy in Lakeland, we feel compelled to help others accomplish the same success,” said Hal Roberts. “We have experienced parents in tears of frustration and been with them two weeks later as they were thrilled over their child’s immediate acceptance by children with the same challenges and their early progress in school.”

Roberts Academy will teach a comprehensive curriculum using the Orton-Gillingham approach, a specialized learning method clinically proven to help students with dyslexia. Applied in the Academy’s classroom, the Orton-Gillingham approach will engage students in action-oriented learning that combines auditory, visual and physical movement elements to teach basic concepts of reading, writing and spelling across the curriculum.

Students can attend Roberts Academy until they have mastered the skills to accommodate their learning differences and are prepared to succeed in a traditional school setting.



Construction is underway on Roberts Academy at Mercer University, a transitional school for children with dyslexia. The school, which is being built adjacent to Mercer’s Outdoor Recreation Complex near the Macon campus, is scheduled to open in August 2024.

“Roberts Academy’s curriculum will follow the Georgia Standards for Excellence. Students will learn and demonstrate competencies in mathematics, science, social studies, art, music and physical education, along with reading, writing and spelling,” said **Dr. Thomas Koballa**, dean of the College of Education. “As a transitional school, we aim to prepare students with the understanding, skills and confidence to succeed in a traditional public or independent school. I also envision Roberts Academy as a hub for teacher professional development about dyslexia.”

**Joy Wood** assumed responsibility as Roberts Academy’s founding head of school on July 1, coming from Marietta-based GRACEPOINT School, a private, specialized Christian school for dyslexic learners, where she served as head of school since 2015. She also has served as elementary principal at the Wesleyan School in Atlanta, as well as director of curriculum and a fourth-grade teacher at Christ the King Catholic School in Atlanta.



"I am sincerely honored and grateful to serve as the founding head of Roberts Academy at Mercer University," Wood said. "The partnership with Mercer University is invaluable to implementing the school's mission and will allow us to provide significant opportunities in all program areas.

"At Roberts Academy we will empower dyslexic learners with knowledge and skills to remediate their reading difficulties, and just as important we will guide them to embrace the many gifts that their dyslexia provides beyond daily academics. In my career I



Wood

have been fortunate to witness firsthand the positive impact that a school dedicated to children with dyslexia can have on a child's life and family," she said. "The students at Roberts Academy will not only learn how to read, but their self-esteem will improve as they grow into confident learners. The culture at Roberts Academy will be one of optimism, inspiration and encouragement as the students learn how to take risks in a safe and loving environment."

Wood holds a Master of Arts in Education from Central Michigan University and a Bachelor of Science in Education from Millsaps College in Mississippi.

For more information or inquiries by families of prospective students, prospective employees or others, visit [robertsacademy.org](http://robertsacademy.org).

# MERCER UNIVERSITY HOMECOMING 2023

Make plans to join us November 10-11!

**H**ey, Bears! Get those paws pointed toward Macon November 10-11 for Homecoming 2023! We've got a weekend of familiar favorites, new activities and new campus features awaiting your return. Tailgating, fireworks, recognition of our Anniversary Classes, celebrations of our Half Century Club members and Alumni & Friends Awards recipients, and, of course, Homecoming t-shirts are just a few of the slated offerings. Visit [homecoming.mercer.edu](http://homecoming.mercer.edu) for the most up-to-date schedule and to register for events.

**Welcome Home, Bears. Together We Roar!**



# BEAR M BRIEFS

ATHLETICS

## Women's Lacrosse Advances to NCAA Tournament

**M**ercer women's lacrosse advanced to NCAA post-season play for the fifth time in program history after capping a 17-2 season with an 11-10 win over Campbell in the Big South Tournament championship on May 17.

**Shannon Urey**, the Big South Offensive Player of the Year, led all scorers with five goals, including a hat trick in the first quarter of the tournament championship, which was hosted by the Bears.

Coach **Samantha Eustace**'s team captured both the Big South regular season and tournament titles this season.

Mercer drew No. 8 Notre Dame in the first round of the NCAA tournament, in the regional hosted by the

University of Florida. The Fighting Irish prevailed over the Bears, 21-6. Notre Dame outscored Mercer 8-0 in the first quarter to take control early in the game. Shots on goal were 24-13 in favor of the Irish.

At the conclusion of the season, team members **Emma Pizzo**, **Maddi Koury** and **Kate Vanderlinde** were named to the College Sports Communicators Academic All-District Team. The honor is given to student-athletes nationwide who excel athletically and academically.

To be eligible for the honor, student-athletes must hold at least a 3.5 cumulative GPA and be a starter or important reserve on the team while playing in at least 50% of the team's games.



SPORTS INFORMATION PHOTOS





Dubnik



Järvelä



# Women's Golf Finishes 3rd at NGI

The Mercer women's golf team advanced to postseason tournament play and finished third out of 10 teams at the National Golf Invitational, hosted in May by *Golfweek* at the Ak-Chin Southern Dunes Golf Club in Maricopa, Arizona. The Bears finished 26-over, 890 for the tournament, 12 shots back of tournament champion Penn State and one shot back of second place Iowa.

**Mikayla Dubnik** and **Camilla Järvelä** each finished tied for sixth place at 3-over, 219.

The team earned a trip to the NGI after finishing as runner-up at the 2023 Southern Conference Championship at Moss Creek Golf Club in Hilton Head, South Carolina, on April 18. Mercer turned in a team score of 913 (+49). SoCon champion Furman finished 19 strokes ahead of the Bears at 894 (+30).

## SUTTON NAMED WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL COACH

**Chad Sutton** was named Mercer's head volleyball coach on April 6, joining the Bears from Coastal Carolina, where he served as an assistant coach for the 2022 season.



Sutton

At Coastal Carolina, Sutton helped guide the Chanticleers to the No. 2 seed in the Sun Belt East Division for the 2022 championships. Prior to joining Coastal Carolina, Sutton served as volunteer assistant coach at Purdue. He made the jump to the collegiate ranks from Cardinal Mooney Catholic High School in Sarasota, Florida, where he served as head coach for five seasons, winning a state championship in 2019.

A 2009 graduate of Florida State University, Sutton holds a bachelor's degree in sport management.

ATHLETIC FOUNDATION, SoCon HONOR ROLL

# THREE ATHLETICS FACILITIES PROJECTS

totaling more than \$300,000 were funded through the generosity of 111 donors this year.

Lead Project Donors —

Ashley, CLAS '91, EDU '96, and Dean, LAW '94, Copelan  
(women's basketball film room)  
Dr. Doug, CLAS '59, and Jane Skelton (softball renovations)  
Tom, LAW '03, and Courtney Swift (women's soccer locker room)



2

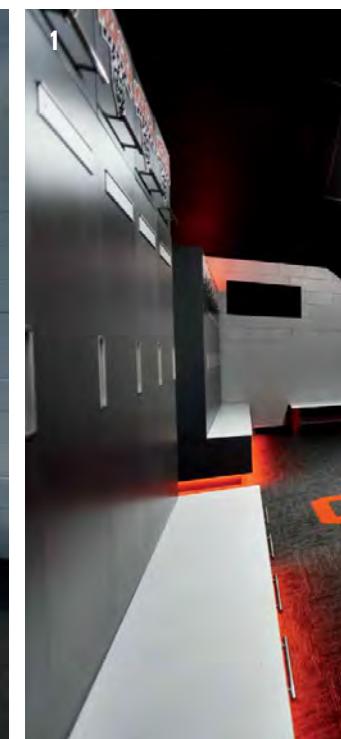
The Mercer Athletic Foundation undertook three special projects during the 2022-23 academic year. 1—The women's soccer locker room received a dramatic renovation that included state-of-the-art lockers, new signage and flooring, as well as 2—an upgraded lounge. 3—The women's basketball film room renovation puts Mercer women's basketball in a class by itself within the Southern Conference with new stadium-style seating and high-end flooring. 4—Sikes Field at the Skelton Complex, home of Mercer softball, saw the addition of new outfield and backstop padding as well as new bucket seats in the center sections of the stadium.



4



3



1



## MERCER WINS 8TH CONSECUTIVE BARRETT- BONNER AWARD

Mercer won its eighth consecutive Barrett-Bonner Award from the Southern Conference following the 2022-23 academic year. The award was presented May 31 at the Honors Dinner during the 2023 SoCon spring meetings in Hilton Head, South Carolina.

The Barrett-Bonner Award is given to the SoCon institution that places the highest percentage of its student-athletes on the league's academic honor roll. Mercer placed 294 student-athletes on the Southern Conference Honor Roll.

Mercer has won the award each year it has been eligible since joining the conference during the 2014-15 academic year, and its eight-year winning streak continues to extend past former member, Davidson, which won six consecutive from 2008-09 to 2013-14. In the award's 31-year history, Mercer and Davidson are the only schools to win the Barrett-Bonner on multiple occasions and have combined to win 28 times.

First presented in 1994, the Barrett-Bonner Award is named after Col. John G. Barrett, faculty athletics representative at Virginia Military Institute from 1965-87, and Dr. Francis W. Bonner, faculty athletics representative at Furman University from 1968-90.

Dr. Jeffrey Hugdahl, left, receives the Barrett-Bonner award from Southern Conference Commissioner Jim Schaus.



MEDICINE

## SCHOOL OF MEDICINE, CHILDREN'S JOIN FORCES TO ADVANCE PEDIATRIC HEALTH CARE IN RURAL GEORGIA

**M**ercer University School of Medicine and Children's Healthcare of Atlanta together have launched a major initiative focused on improving pediatric health care in rural Georgia. The

initiative, which was announced Feb. 22 by Gov. Brian Kemp at the Georgia State Capitol, includes a series of pilot programs focused on improving access to pediatric care close to home.

The affiliation between the School of Medicine and Children's will be funded by a dedicated and long-term sustainable fund of \$200 million that the Children's Board of Trustees allocated in 2022.

One of the top priorities that Mercer has identified is an urgent

Gov. Brian Kemp on Feb. 22 announces a new rural pediatric health care initiative involving Children's Healthcare of Atlanta and Mercer School of Medicine.





## MERCER ANNOUNCES FIRST CLASS OF CHILDREN'S HEALTHCARE OF ATLANTA RURAL PEDIATRIC SCHOLARS

The School of Medicine has announced the first group of Children's Healthcare of Atlanta Rural Pediatric Scholarship Program recipients. MUSM selected scholars based on their commitment to become pediatricians, strong ties to rural Georgia, character, leadership qualities, community involvement, and their commitment to serving in rural, underserved Georgia after their scholarship obligations are met. They receive full tuition for up to four academic years and must maintain good academic standing. This year's class of Rural Pediatric Scholarship Program recipients are **Mackenzie Best** of Bonaire (Class of 2026); **Lauren Brooker** of Sandersville (Class of 2025); **Jonathon Edgy** of Waynesville (Class of 2023); **Leeia Fields** of Douglas (Class of 2025); **Kimberly Gunby** of Stapleton (Class of 2024); **Megan Hobbs** of Hazlehurst (Class of 2025);

**Alyssa Lorenzen** of Forsyth (Class of 2025); **Landon Simmons** of Euharlee (Class of 2026); **Harsimran Singh** of Bainbridge (Class of 2026); and **Nelliena Young** of Albany (Class of 2023). The Children's Healthcare of Atlanta Rural Pediatric Scholarship Program was established as part of a joint initiative between the School of Medicine and Children's Healthcare of Atlanta. The scholarship, along with other projects, is funded by a dedicated and long-term sustainable fund allocated by the Children's Healthcare of Atlanta Board of Trustees.

*One of the top priorities that Mercer has identified is an URGENT NEED FOR MORE PEDIATRICIANS THROUGHOUT GEORGIA.*

need for more pediatricians throughout Georgia. To help increase access to pediatricians in rural counties, Children's is funding 10 full-tuition scholarships in 2023 through a program at the School of Medicine for medical students specializing in pediatrics who commit to serving in rural Georgia for at least four years after residency.

mental health support.

The initiative initially will involve hospitals, pediatricians and school systems representing 11 rural Georgia counties.

"This important affiliation between Mercer University School of Medicine and Children's Healthcare of Atlanta will improve access to pediatric medicine in rural Georgia," said School of Medicine Dean **Jean R. Sumner**, M.D., FACP. "I believe this is a transformational opportunity for the state of Georgia and rural children."

In addition, the funding will allow the School of Medicine to leverage its demonstrated understanding of the health care needs of rural communities to conduct and evaluate the pilot programs. Children's will provide the specialized pediatric clinical knowledge needed to launch and sustain those programs.

Proposed pilots and projects include helping better prepare rural hospitals to treat pediatric patients in emergency departments, supporting rural pediatricians, and expanding behavioral and

## SCHOOL OF MEDICINE PROFESSOR RECEIVES GRANT TO STUDY LONG COVID

**Mohammed Abdelsaid**, RPh, Ph.D., assistant professor of pharmacology in the School of Medicine, received an American Heart Association Institutional Research Enhancement Award to study how COVID-19 affects brain functions, focusing on cognitive impairments. The funding is for \$154,000 over two years and will support Dr. Abdelsaid and his team as they work to research possible treatments to prevent COVID-19 induced brain damage.

While COVID-19 mortality has dropped significantly, ongoing complications of long-term COVID-19 continue to rise. One of these devastating complications is brain fog and a decline in learning and memory functions. Dr. Abdelsaid's studies will investigate how COVID-19 causes damage in brain blood vessels that lead to brain fog and impaired cognitive functions.



Dr. Abdelsaid

## PROFESSOR TO LEAD INITIATIVE FOCUSED ON ORGAN DONATION, TRANSPLANT EDUCATION

**Brian H. Childs**, M.Div., Ph.D., HEC-C, has been named director of the **Carlos and Marguerite Mason Center for Organ Donation and Transplant Education and Policy** in the School of Medicine. The Mason Center promotes organ donation by focusing on the facets of donation — cadaveric and living donors — for the state of Georgia. It will be one of only two academic research programs focused on transplant ethics and policy in the United States and the only such center in the South. Coordinating with LifeLink of Georgia, as well as organ procurement organizations in South Carolina and Maryland, the Mason Center will develop educational opportunities for School of Medicine students. It will use Georgia Rural Health Innovation Center data and connections with community stakeholders to position itself as an impactful research and education program in the state. Additional School of Medicine faculty working with the Mason Center are **Caroline Anglim**, Ph.D., and **Donald Carter III**, D.B.E., MBA, M.Div., both assistant professors in the bioethics and medical humanities department.



Dr. Childs

## COLLEGE OF PHARMACY SIGNS 2 TRANSFER ADMISSION AGREEMENTS



Mercer University College of Pharmacy recently signed transfer admission agreements with Georgia Gwinnett College and Georgia College & State University that will enable students at those schools to receive priority applicant status for the College of Pharmacy's Doctor of Pharmacy program.

Under the terms of the agreement, students in this pathway program will complete their prerequisites and part of their bachelor's degree requirements at their undergraduate institution before enrolling in Mercer's Pharm.D. program. They will then be able to transfer back the first year of Mercer's Pharm.D. program credits to fulfill bachelor's degree requirements at their undergraduate institution.

An advantage of the program is that it will save Georgia Gwinnett and Georgia College students a year in earning their bachelor's degrees. The program also provides enhanced advising from a Mercer pre-pharmacy adviser each year of their undergraduate studies.



## DR. KEISHA CALLINS NAMED INAUGURAL SANDRA DUNAGAN DEAL RURAL SERVICE FELLOW

**Keisha Reneé Collins**, M.D., MPH, clinical faculty member in the School of Medicine, received the inaugural Sandra Dunagan Deal Rural Service Fellow award, established in September 2022 by the School of Medicine to honor former first lady of Georgia **Sandra Deal** and her commitment to education, volunteerism and community

involvement. This 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,

furthering the School's mission. Dr. Callins received the award during the School of Medicine's commencement ceremony on May 6 in the presence of former **Gov. Nathan Deal**, a two-time Mercer alumnus, who assisted Mercer President **William D. Underwood** in awarding the recognition.

# BEARNotes



## ACHIEVEMENTS

### 1950s

**Elliott E. Brack**, CLAS '57, was recently inducted into the Georgia Press Association Golden Club for his more than 50 years of service in the newspaper business. A native Georgian, Brack was born on a farm in Wilkinson County in 1935 and grew up in Macon before embarking on a career of news dissemination that reached across a large swath of the state of Georgia for more than 70 years. Brack holds a master's degree from the University of Iowa. It is estimated that he has written more than 10,000 columns in his career. In 2008, he completed an 850-page book on the history of Gwinnett County, titled *Gwinnett: A Little Above Atlanta*. He also published for the Gwinnett Bicentennial another small book, *366 Facts About Gwinnett* in 2018 and updated it in 2022.

### 1970s

**William Keith Baker**, CLAS '78, was elected by his peers to serve as chairman of the Chaffee County, Colorado, Board of County Commissioners. Baker is a retired U.S. Navy commander and is in his second term as a county commissioner.

#### The Hon. Lawrence Lewis Korda

LAW '73, was recognized by the Florida Bar for his 50 years of Bar membership in good standing.

**Michael D. McRae**, LAW '75, was re-elected to serve on the Board of Governors of the State Bar of Georgia in the Tallapoosa Judicial Circuit Post 1 representing Haralson and Polk counties. McRae practices with McRae, Smith, Peek, Harman & Monroe LLP in Cedartown.

**Send your ACCOMPLISHMENTS, MARRIAGES & BIRTHS and IN MEMORY announcements for THE MERCERIAN to ERIN LONES, director of advancement communications, at [lones\\_ep@mercer.edu](mailto:lones_ep@mercer.edu).**

**Albert Henry Mickler**, LAW '73, was recognized by the Florida Bar for his 50 years of Bar membership in good standing.

**The Hon. William Randall Slaughter II**, LAW '73, was recognized by the Florida Bar for his 50 years of Bar membership in good standing.

**Wallace H. Wright**, LAW '70, won the Georgia legal profession's 23rd Annual Justice Robert Benham Award for Community Service for Judicial District 8. From 1984 until his retirement in 2008, Wright was the senior partner of the law firm Wallace H. Wright, Attorney PC, now known as Wright & Edwards PC.

### 1980s

**Vicki Caraway**, NUR '89, was elected to serve a two-year term on the board of directors of the Nursing Consortium of Florida. Caraway is vice president and chief nursing officer at Baptist Health Miami Cancer Institute.

**Mark Hayward**, CLAS '82, recently received the highest honor from Lambda Chi Alpha fraternity for his many years of service. The Order of Merit award, which has been bestowed upon members since 1935, recognizes unusual, lengthy and dedicated service to Lambda Chi Alpha, especially on the local chapter level. Hayward first joined Lambda Chi Alpha in 1979 as an initiate of Zeta Omega Zeta at Mercer University. In his time in Florida, he has served for more than 25 years as Master Steward at Embry Riddle Aeronautical University, Daytona Beach chapter. Hayward has served on the General Fraternity's Nominating Committee twice and also assisted in helping create chapters at Stetson University in DeLand and Rollins College in Winter Park. Hayward is the first recipient of this award from the Mercer University chapter.

**Nathan M. Jolles**, LAW '87, was the Sole Proprietor Statewide Winner of the 2023 Georgia Legal Food Frenzy, a statewide competition to support food banks in Georgia. Funds raised by Jolles were donated to the Golden Harvest Food Bank. Additionally, he serves on the boards of the Augusta Jewish Museum and Historic Augusta among other professional pursuits.

## REMEMBERING...

### Distinguished Law Alumnus

## Dent Bostick

**Charles D. "Dent" Bostick**, CLAS '52, LAW '58, of Nashville, Tennessee, died on Jan. 12 at the age of 91. Bostick practiced law in his hometown of Gainesville before pursuing a career in academia. In 1966, he became assistant professor of law at the University of Florida. Two years later, he moved his family to Franklin, Tennessee, where he joined the faculty at Vanderbilt. In 1980, he was named dean of the Law School and led the school in that role until 1985, when he left to spend a year as visiting professor of law at the University of Leeds in England. Returning to Vanderbilt, he resumed teaching until his retirement in 1992. Bostick was a loyal supporter of Mercer Law, making annual gifts at the President's Club level every year since his graduation. In 2004, he received the Outstanding Alumni Award from Mercer Law.



### Loyal Alumnus and Former Trustee

## Roddy Clark

**Joseph Hayes "Roddy" Clark**, CLAS '68, died on Feb. 7 at the age of 76. A native of Ringgold, Clark met his wife, **Sara Smith Clark**, CLAS '68, while a student at Mercer. He was a member of Alpha Tau Omega fraternity. After graduating, he had a long career in the medical device industry. For more than 20 years, Clark was a venture capitalist manager in Birmingham, Alabama. He had a passion for helping people and working in his garden. In 2012, Clark and his wife established The Smith-Clark Endowed Scholarship to provide scholarships for students from Catoosa County.



Clark served on the Mercer Athletic Foundation Board and was a Mercer trustee from 2006 to 2011. He and his wife were named President's Club Life Members in 2012.

**Leland Malchow**, LAW '85, expanded his offices to Beaufort and North Augusta, South Carolina. The lawyers in his firm are licensed

in Georgia and South Carolina. He has been recognized as a Super Lawyer since 2013 and Best Lawyer since 2011. Malchow created a

lifelike courtroom and holds mock trials, bringing people in to hear facts about a pending case and gathering their input. Malchow's





## Loyal Alumnus and Generous Supporter Fleming Hawthorne

**W**illiam "Fleming" Hawthorne Jr., CLAS '64, '70, of Jeffersonville, died on March 26. He is survived by his loving wife of 58 years, **Sarah Beck Hawthorne**, CLAS '64, whom he met at Mercer. Together, the couple founded AlphaSkills, a business that provides training and materials to help students become knowledgeable, enthusiastic and proficient readers. The couple's daughter, Jennifer Hawthorne Smith, is a 1989 graduate of Mercer's Tift College of Education. While a student, Hawthorne was a member of Alpha Tau Omega fraternity. He was a generous supporter of Mercer Athletics and served on the Athletic Foundation board from 2012 to 2015.



practice centers on personal injury and wrongful death.

**James R. Thompson**, LAW '85, received the Housing Court Assistance Center Volunteer of the Year Award given by the Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation during its annual celebration.

**Robert "Jay" Wilkinson**, LAW '89, joined Baker Donelson as of counsel in the firm's Chattanooga, Tennessee, office, bringing with him more than 20 years of experience in bankruptcy, restructuring and creditors' rights.

**The Hon. Dianne Goetz Yamin**, LAW '86, retired after 32 years on the bench as the probate judge in Danbury, Connecticut. The New American Dream Foundation granted her the Lifetime Achievement Award, and the Greater Danbury Chamber of Commerce Women's Business Council gave her the Heart of Women Award. Yamin was elected president of the National College of Probate Judges, the only national organization dedicated to the improvement of probate law and probate courts.

### 1990s

**Anna Kent Blackwelder**, LAW '95, was named a general counsel finalist for the *Charlotte Business Journal's Corporate Counsel Awards* for 2023. Blackwelder also celebrates her 25th anniversary with SGL Carbon this year.

**Rebecca Ruth Porter Bronnum**, CLAS '97, was named principal of Haymon Morris Middle School in Barrow County, effective June 1.

**Alysia Mary Beth Cockrell Davis**, BUS '98, '00, became the new First Lady of Fairmont State University in Fairmont, West Virginia, when her husband, Michael Davis, assumed his post as president of the University on July 1.

**The Hon. Vincent Craig Crawford**, LAW '90, was awarded the Willie Lovett Award by the Child Protection and Advocacy section of the Georgia State Bar at the annual State Bar meeting. The award is given to an individual who has demonstrated a professional career and outstanding service to child protection, children's rights and the

advocacy of children. The award is also given to any attorney or judge who exemplifies excellence and professionalism in a nonlaw-related community service organization.

**J. Jeffery Deery**, LAW '90, was selected as a 2023 Florida Super Lawyer. Deery practices business litigation at Winderweede, Haines, Ward, and Woodman in Orlando, Florida.

**Kim Wilkerson Higginbotham**, LAW '95, is serving in the Northern Judicial District, Post 1 seat on the Board of Governors of the State Bar of Georgia. The Northern Judicial Circuit includes Elbert, Franklin, Hart, Madison and Oglethorpe counties.

**Jon W. Hedgepeth**, LAW '91, was honored in the 2022 edition of *Best Lawyers in America* as a leading lawyer in the area of family law. He was also selected as a Super Lawyer for the 10th consecutive year.

**John F. Kennedy**, CLAS '87, LAW '90, was elected unanimously to serve as the *president pro tempore* of the Georgia Senate. The *president pro tempore* of the Senate serves

as presiding officer over the Senate in the absence of the president of the Senate, the lieutenant governor. He is responsible for managing the administrative duties of the Senate and serves as a member of the Senate Committee on Assignments. *Pro tem* Kennedy was first elected to the Georgia Senate in 2014. After serving as Gov. Nathan Deal's floor leader during his first term, his Republican colleagues elected him to serve as majority caucus chairman in 2017, and he served in that position until he received the nomination to serve as *president pro tempore* of the Senate this past November.

**Anabelle Dy Keohane**, PHA '97, accepted the position of regional associate director with Sanofi Respiratory and Immunology Field-based Medical Science Liaisons in the East Region in May 2022.

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

**Amanda Napolitano**, ENG '95, executive director of The DONNA Foundation, was selected and celebrated as one of the *Jacksonville Business Journal's Women of Influence* for 2023 at the organization's annual luncheon in March. The *Jacksonville Business Journal* applauded Napolitano's dedicated work serving individuals and families experiencing a breast cancer diagnosis.

**The Hon. Bryan C. Ramos**, LAW '99, was nominated to serve as the chief judge of the Brookhaven Municipal Court. Ramos began his career as a judicial clerk for the Houston County Judicial Circuit after graduating from Mercer Law. After spending five years at a large Atlanta law firm, he started his private practice, Ramos & Law, in 2005. Ramos & Law is a workers' compensation firm dedicated to Georgia's injured workers. Ramos is the first Filipino American man to serve as a judge in the State of Georgia.

**Jamie Carl Tallent**, BUS '96, was installed as a board member of the Georgia Bankers Association. Tallent is president and CEO of River

City Bank in Rome and has more than 25 years of experience in the banking industry. He joined River City Bank as president and CEO in 2019 after having served in high-level positions with several banks.

**The Hon. Jeffrey A. Watkins**, LAW '92, was appointed to the Georgia Court of Appeals by Gov. Brian Kemp. Watkins joins the intermediate appellate court following the death of Judge Clyde L. Reese in December.

### 2000s

**Jason W. Blanchard**, LAW '07, was selected as one of seven assistant U.S. attorneys nationally for an Executive Office for U.S. Attorneys Director's Awards in the category of "Superior Performance as an Assistant United States Attorney - Civil." The award was presented May 3 at the Department of Justice headquarters in Washington, D.C.

**BethAnn Smith Browning**, EDU '01, was named principal at Brookwood School in Dalton. Previously, Browning was the principal at Dalton Junior High School and has worked for Dalton Public Schools for 19 years. She began her career as

an elementary teacher at Clarkesville Elementary in Habersham County Schools in Clarkesville. She became the literacy coordinator at Blue Ridge School, later becoming the school's assistant principal, where she served for six years. In 2021, when the district reorganized secondary schools, Browning moved to Dalton Junior High School as assistant principal. Browning holds a doctor of education in learning and leadership from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga; a specialist's degree in instruction and a Master of Arts in early childhood education from Piedmont University in Demorest; and a Bachelor of Science in early childhood education from Mercer.

**Andrew W. "Andy" Carter**, CLAS '07, accepted a position as director of giving for Landmark Christian Academy in Fairburn in July. Carter previously served as the director of annual giving in Mercer's Office of University Advancement for 14 years, running the University's phonathon program and overseeing crowdfunding efforts.

**Trent L. Coggins**, CLAS '95, MBA '98, LAW '01, joined the

faculty of the Langdale College of Business Administration at Valdosta State University teaching business law, health care law and entrepreneurship. He was also named the director of the J. Donald Lee Center for Entrepreneurship, which opened in March.

**John Craig Cotton**, LAW '01, of Cotton, Forehand & Donohue PC was elected to serve on the Board of Governors of the State Bar of Georgia in the Cordele Judicial Circuit seat representing Ben Hill, Crisp, Dooly and Wilcox counties.

**Amy Phelps Fouse**, EDU '00, was awarded the 2023 Jim Puckett Outstanding Educator award by the Georgia Association of Educational Leaders at the annual summer conference. Fouse currently serves as ELA coordinator (6-12) for the Houston County School District. She serves as a member-at-large on the Tift College Alumnae Association Board of Directors.

**Austin Gower Jr.**, LAW '99, was appointed by Gov. Brian P. Kemp to the Chattahoochee Circuit Public Defender Supervisory Panel.

**Tanjaneca Rambert Herring**, EDU '02, recently published her first book, *When I Look Into My Daughter's Eyes*. Herring wrote the book for her daughter, Zion, as an inspirational story about what a mother observes in her remarkable daughter as she begins her journey through life, walking in her own truth. Herring is a retired educator who has a passion for writing and storytelling. She is a committed advocate for women and children and is passionate about community engagement and community equity.

**Benjamin Bruce Kenemer**, CLAS '02, LAW '05, was appointed district attorney for the Conasauga Judicial Circuit by Gov. Brian Kemp. Kenemer has worked in the district attorney's office for the Conasauga Judicial Circuit since 2006.

**Kristin Pollard Kiel**, LAW '08, was awarded the "40 under 40 Nation's Best Advocates" award by the National Bar Association. She was also honored by Oakwood University, her undergraduate alma mater, with its inaugural "40 under 40" award.

**Brittany Adams Lavalle**, LAW '08, was named deputy executive director for the Tennessee District Attorney's General Conference.

**Matt Matson**, LAW '08, recently announced the opening of

Matson Law Firm in Augusta, a solo practice devoted to business litigation, personal injury and criminal defense.

**Patrick M. Mincey**, LAW '08, was listed among the 2022 Legal Elite in Criminal Law and Litigation by *Business North Carolina* magazine and was named to the North Carolina Super Lawyers list.

Mincey is a partner with Cranfill Sumner LLP in Wilmington, North Carolina, and was selected as the chair of the Administrative, Regulatory and Government Law Practice Group. He also serves as chair of the firm's White Collar, Government Investigations and Special Matters Practice Group.

**Billy Joe Nelson Jr.**, LAW '09, was elected district attorney of the Atlantic Judicial Circuit on Nov. 8, 2022, and took office on Jan. 1. The Atlantic Judicial Circuit is comprised of six counties including Bryan, Evans, Liberty, Long, McIntosh and Tattnall. Nelson previously served as an assistant district attorney in the Atlantic Judicial Circuit for 11 years and served as solicitor general of Long County for five years following his appointment by Gov. Nathan Deal in 2017. He resides in Hinesville with his wife, Kathryn Brock Nelson, and their three children.

**Allan Pitchford III**, BUS '06, was promoted from major to lieutenant colonel in the U.S. Army during a Feb. 10 ceremony held on Mercer's Macon campus. Pitchford came to the University 25 years ago as an eighth grader when his father, the late Sgt. 1st Class Jay Pitchford, began teaching in the ROTC program. He often visited campus with his dad, and by the time he graduated high school, he had a four-year Army ROTC scholarship to attend Mercer. At the University, he met his wife, Suzanne; earned a degree from the School of Business; and was commissioned as an Army aviator. Since graduating in 2006, the Army has taken Pitchford throughout the country to Alabama, Texas, New Mexico and Kentucky, and across the globe to Korea and Afghanistan. With this promotion, he's now stationed at Fort Gordon near Augusta, where he works in the Cyber Center of Excellence as an operations research system analyst.

**Robert F. Glass**, LAW '07, and **James A. Robson**, LAW '07, celebrated the 10-year anniversary

### REMEMBERING... *Loyal Tift College Alumna*

## Evelyn Joiner

**Evelyn York Joiner**, TIFT '56, died on May 9. While at Tift, she was active in many organizations and served as class president for all four years, was selected to Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges in 1956, and received a scholarship to Duke University, where she earned a master's in English in 1957. Joiner taught one year before accepting the position of associate professor of English in the Tift College Extension at Georgia Baptist Hospital School of Nursing, a position she held from 1958 to 1962. When her children were in high school, she worked as office manager in her husband's CPA firm until he retired in 2011. Joiner served as president and board member of the Tift College Alumnae Association and as a member of the Tift College of Mercer University Alumnae Board after the merger of the two schools. In 2008, she was the recipient of the Tift College Meritorious Service Award, and she was named a Life Member of the Mercer President's Club in 2014.



### Distinguished Law Alumnus Richard Mills

**T**he Hon. **Richard Henry Mills**, LAW '57, of Springfield, Illinois, died on July 16 at the age of 93. Mills was a United States District Judge for the Central District of Illinois. From 1976 until 1985, he was a justice of the Appellate Court of Illinois, and before that, he served 10 years as an Illinois circuit judge. Prior to his judicial career, Mills was state's attorney of Cass County, served as legal adviser to the Illinois Youth Commission and was a country lawyer with offices in Virginia, Illinois, where his grandfather opened a law office in 1870. He was a major general in the Illinois State Militia and a retired colonel in the United States Army. His military career spanned 33 years, on active and reserve duty. Mills received the Bronze Star for his service with the 3rd Infantry Division in the Korean War. In addition to his Bronze Star, his other decorations include two Army Meritorious Service Medals, the Joint Service Commendation Medal and the Korean Service Medal with Battle Star. He also holds both the U.S. and Korean President Unit Citations. Mills served on the Mercer Law Board of Visitors from 1977 to 1984 and was chairman from 1983 to 1984. In 2018, he received the Meritorious Service Award from Mercer Law.



## Former Trustee and Honorary Alumna

## Dorothy Pryor

**D**orothy M. "Dot" Pryor, HON '92, of Alpharetta, died on March 12 at the age of 98. An Alabama native, Pryor served with that state's Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) before joining Georgia WMU, where she rose to the position of executive director in 1963 and led the organization until her retirement in 1991. During her career, she traveled to 40 countries in South America, Europe, Asia, Africa and the Middle East, as well as throughout the U.S. The Liberian Baptist Seminary named a portion of its campus the Dorothy Pryor Compound in recognition of her many years of encouragement and support. Pryor was a graduate of Judson College and Carver School of Missions and Social Work (now The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary). She received honorary doctorates from Judson College, Tift College and Mercer. She served as a member of the McAfee School of Theology Board of Visitors and chair of the Georgia Baptist College of Nursing Board of Visitors. In 2010, Pryor established an endowed scholarship to provide scholarships for students enrolled in the School of Theology.



of their law firm, Glass & Robson LLC on July 1. Glass & Robson is a law firm specializing in serious personal injury and wrongful death cases representing victims and their families.

**Jeffrey Reynolds**, LAW '06, celebrated 15 years with The Ticket Clinic law firm in Tampa, Florida. He has been the managing partner for 10 years and recently opened another office in Clearwater, Florida.

**Erin Bowles Reynolds**, LAW '06, was named partner at Bush Graziano Rice & Platter in Tampa, Florida.

**Trent Thompson**, ENG '01, was named vice president of infrastructure at Thomas and Hutton (T&H). He will oversee water resources, environmental, structural and transportation departments across all 10 regions. With 22 years of experience at T&H, Thompson is a licensed professional engineer managing infrastructure projects for local, state and federal government agencies. He is an active member

of the National Society of Professional Engineers, American Water Works Association and National Fire Protection Association.

**Lt. Col. Nathan A. White**, LAW '05, has joined Taylor English Duma LLP as a partner and is based in its Carolinas office.

## 2010s

**Kelsey Kicklighter Bartlett**, CLAS '15, LAW '18, joined Kicklighter Law in October 2022 as an associate attorney, working with her father **Claude M.**

**"Mickey" Kicklighter Jr.**, CLAS '79, LAW '82, and fellow Mercer Law alumnus **Brian J. Fussell Jr.**, LAW '20.

**Kenvoris L. "Ken" Blair**, COPA '14, led the Warren County MLK initiative and shared the initiative with community leaders during his hometown's Annual MLK Observance Day in January. The initiative is a vision for the Warren County community that seeks to work together in unity to highlight historical opportunities

for the city of Warrenton. Included in the initiative is the renaming of Cedar Park in memory of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The initiative will also provide updates and improvements to the local park. Blair is the director of strategic initiatives at Wesleyan College.

**Cassandra S. Bradford**, CLAS '10, was elevated to shareholder with Chamberlain Hrdlicka. Bradford is a member of the firm's Atlanta-based Tax Controversy and Litigation Section. She defends clients in state and federal audits and appeals, as well as litigation in the Tax Court and other federal courts. She has spent her entire legal career at Chamberlain since graduating from Georgia State University's joint JD/MBA program.

**Caitlin Childers Brown**, CLAS '12, was named pastor and minister of service and community at Highland Hills Baptist Church in Macon and began serving on July 16. Brown will copastor with her husband, **Ethan M. Brown**, CLAS '14.

**Ethan M. Brown**, CLAS '14, was named pastor and minister of care and discipleship at Highland Hills Baptist Church in Macon and began serving on July 16. Brown will copastor with his wife, **Caitlin Childers Brown**, CLAS '12.

**Maclaren "Mac" B. Brydon**, BUS '19, founder of Bear Food, was named Matthews 2022 Business of the Year. Established in 2018, Bear Food LLC offers premium food products, including a variety of Virginia peanut flavors. The business has grown dramatically over the past years, with its products located in more than 250 stores throughout the United States. Not only has the business thrived, but it opened its first brick-and-mortar store in downtown Matthews, North Carolina, in 2022, offering a variety of products made throughout the Charlotte region. Brydon is very involved in giving back to his community. A portion of sales from every Bear Food order is donated to Rainbow Express Ministries, a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing experiences, seminars, events and jobs for young adults with disabilities.

**Joe Cusack**, LAW '15, was named deputy director and general counsel at the Georgia Government Transparency and Campaign Finance Commission, where he specializes in regulating and advising political campaigns, candidates for public office and lobbyists.

**Ron E. Daniels**, LAW '12, completed his term as the 76th president of the Young Lawyers Division (YLD) of the State Bar of Georgia. He previously served as secretary, treasurer and president-elect of the YLD.

**Emmanuel Donate**, LAW '10, earned his Ph.D. in astrophysics in 2019 from the University of Georgia.

**Diantha Ellis**, LAW '18, was recently promoted to professor of business administration at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College (ABAC). The rank of full professor is the highest faculty rank at the college. The position requires that the faculty member have a terminal degree in the teaching discipline and is awarded to faculty who show clear and convincing evidence of exemplary achievement in their schools. Ellis teaches economics and business law at the Stafford School of Business at ABAC.

**William "Alan" Franks**, BUS '10, CLAS '10, recently published his first book, *Empowered Money*. The book covers everything one needs to know about managing finances and offers an A-to-Z guide to building a personal financial plan. Franks is a certified financial planner professional and founder of The Mill Financial Partners, a fee-based financial advising firm located in Atlanta.

**Siena B. Gaddy**, LAW '18, was installed as coeditor of The YLD Review, the newsletter of the Young Lawyers Division (YLD) of the State Bar of Georgia. Additionally, she received the YLD's Award of Achievement for Outstanding Service to the Profession. Gaddy is a judicial law clerk for the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Middle District of Georgia and an adjunct professor at Mercer Law.

**Kenneth D. Hall**, LAW '13, joined MendenFreiman LLP as counsel in its business law and tax planning practice areas. Prior to joining MendenFreiman, Hall was a partner at Moore Ingram Johnson & Steele LLP.

**Caitlin Wise Harris**, LAW '19, was selected to serve on the board of the Community Foundation of West Georgia.

**Meghan Jordan Heckman**, LAW '18, became a partner at Kirbo & Heckman, Attorneys at Law LLC in Bainbridge.

**Juawn A. Jackson**, EDU '17, was elected as president of the Bibb County Board of Education on Jan. 19. First elected at 26 and now at 29, Jackson is the youngest person to be elected to serve on the board and to serve as president. Jackson, a resident of Macon, graduated from the Bibb County School District in 2012.

**Virginia Stieghan Josey**, LAW '16, was installed as secretary of the Young Lawyers Division (YLD) of the State Bar of Georgia at the Annual Meeting in Savannah. Josey is also an adjunct professor at Mercer University School of Law, where she teaches advanced litigation drafting.

**Clayton T. Kendrick**, LAW '19, opened The Kendrick Law Firm in January.

**Donna Maye**, EDU '18, has authored two books, *Grateful for Grace: Reflections on Caring for Mom* (Donna Olivia, 2021) and *I Can Do My Ballet* (Olivia D'Josef, 2008).

**Garon Muller**, CLAS '08, LAW '11, was elected president of the Augusta Bar Association for 2023. **Alex Myers**, LAW '18, was sworn in as chief magistrate judge of Dawson County on Apr. 27.

**Steven Chambliss Outzs**, LAW '15, was appointed attorney adviser (instructor) for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers in Glynn on June 20.

**Dawn Morrow Parkman**, EDU '17, was named Clayton County District Teacher of the Year for 2022-2023.

**Conley J. Scott**, LAW '19, is general attorney with the Office of Chief Counsel - IRS, SB/SE Division.

**Andrew "Andy" Smith III**, LAW '11, was sworn in as a magistrate court judge in Cherokee County.

**William Tsao**, BUS '11, was promoted in March 2020 from Robins AFB to Barksdale AFB for a position within Air Force Global Strike Command. Since moving, he has been involved in several key innovation efforts and has improved processes of weapon systems that are part of the nation's nuclear triad.

**Wesley C. Turner**, LAW '10, joined the Atlanta office of Arnall Golden Gregory LLP as a partner in the firm's real estate practice and a member of the retail, industrial and warehouse industry teams.

**Jacob "Jake" Wallace**, LAW '16, was named partner at Goggans, Stutzman, Hudson, Wilson and Mize LLP in Columbus. Wallace practices real estate and finance law representing builders, homebuyers, homeowners and lenders.

**Michelle Urbani Wallace**, LAW '16, was named the 2023 Woman of Achievement by the Atlanta Bar Association for her significant contributions in furthering the interests of women in the profession and in Metro Atlanta, and for her significant professional achievements. Wallace was sworn in as the chair of the Women in the Profession Section of the Atlanta Bar Association. She is the founding attorney and owner of Advantage Law Firm in Atlanta, where she lives with her husband and daughter.

**Ken Wilson**, LAW '14, was named principal at Beasley Allen's Atlanta office. Wilson practices in the Toxic Torts Section and is working with

the Georgia attorney general on Georgia's opioid litigation.

**Hussene Youssouf**, BUS '10, joined Serta Simmons Bedding as a senior finance manager.

## 2020s

**Aimee R. Carter**, BUS '20, accepted a position as a sales tax accountant, financial services for Chick-fil-A. Carter previously worked as an accountant for Nichiha USA Inc. for 11 years. Carter has an undergraduate degree from the University of West Georgia and earned an MBA from Mercer.

**Chanel Davenport**, COPA '23, was appointed to the American Academy of Professional Coders (AAPC) Chapter Association Board of Directors, representing the AAPC's Southeast region. Davenport is a highly accomplished health care professional with 25 years of experience.

**Bubba Dunn**, LAW '22, has joined Hall, Booth, Smith PC as an associate in the Brunswick office. Dunn will focus his practice on medical malpractice matters.

**Emory L. Larkin**, LAW '21, joined HunterMacLean as an associate in the firm's Real Estate Practice Group.

**Ariel Newman**, CLAS '17, LAW '20, was selected by the American Association of Law Libraries to serve on the editorial board for their publication, *Spectrum*. The editorial board helps shape, solicit and curate content for the magazine. Newman is the student services and reference librarian at University of Missouri - Kansas City School of Law.

## MARRIAGES & BIRTHS

### 1990s

**John Sawyer**, MUS '98, and his wife, Amy, welcomed their son, Elliot James, on Nov. 27, 2022, in Manchester, New Hampshire. Elliott joins his proud big brother, Samuel Lanier.

### 2010s

**Jenna Lasseter Carroll**, LAW '13, and her husband, **Jake Carroll**, LAW '14, welcomed their second son, Caden, in March. **Rachel Sauls Ellis**, EDU '14, and her husband, Stephen, welcomed their first child, Pascal, on Feb. 9.

**REMEMBERING...**  
*Friend and Generous Supporter*

## Jimmy Ragans

**James "Jimmy" Wilmer Ragans**, of Tallahassee, Florida, died on May 28 at the age of 92. A Florida native and Korean War veteran, Ragans managed a grocery store in Jacksonville, Florida, before moving to Tallahassee, where he focused mostly on tire companies, service stations, convenience stores and real estate. Ragans was active in his community, serving as the chief fundraiser for the philanthropic projects of the Tallahassee Civitan Club for many years. He formerly served on the board of the Tallahassee State Bank as well as a member of other civic groups. He is survived by his wife of 59 years, **Sherrill Williams Ragans**, TIFT '58, Tift Alumnae leader and former

Mercer trustee. In 2000, the couple established an endowed scholarship to provide funds for students enrolled in Mercer's Tift College of Education. They were named Life Members of The President's Club in 2010.



*Loyal Alumna and Former Trustee*

## Suzanne Saunders

**Suzanne Henry Saunders**, CLAS '68, of Columbus died on May 3. A graduate of Columbus High School, Saunders received scholarships to attend Mercer for her undergraduate degree and Georgia State University for her master's degree. While a Mercer student, she was a member of Alpha Gamma Delta sorority. Upon graduation, she began teaching at Norcross High School and eventually returned home to transition into a successful career at TSYS, becoming one of the first female group executives and a pivotal member of the company's growth in its nascent years. During her career and even upon her retirement from TSYS,

she only became busier with her involvement in several community and civic organizations. Saunders served on the CLAS Alumni Board of Directors from 1995 to 1997 and was a Mercer trustee from 1995 to 2000.



**Meghan Vickers Heckman**, LAW '18, and her husband, Jimmy, welcomed their first child, a son named Robin Jordan Heckman, in June.

**Brittany Pullen Smith**, LAW '13, and **Andrew "Andy" Smith III**, LAW '11, welcomed their second child, Madeline Kay Smith, on Jan. 11.

**Suzanne Palmer Walker**, CLAS '07, and her husband, Lee, welcomed their son, Wynn, on Jan. 11.



*Former Trustee and Generous Supporter*

# Sam Way

**S**amuel Albert Way III, of Hawkinsville, died on Feb. 12 at the age of 96. After graduating from the University of Georgia in 1949, Way joined his father and uncle in their family business, Way Brothers Auto. Several years later, his younger brother, Ramsey T. "Bub" Way, joined the business, beginning a partnership and bond of the two brothers that lasted for more than seven decades. Way also had a deep and abiding love for his hometown of Hawkinsville and was active in several community organizations, serving in various leadership positions. Among his business associations, his proudest was as chairman of Planters Bank, where he joined the board in 1961 and began working as president in 1978. His leadership and vision of this company led to a community bank that now serves numerous counties in Middle Georgia. Way served three terms as a Mercer trustee.



## IN MEMORY

### 1940s

**Clarence E. Boynton**, CLAS '45, of Sharpsburg, on Dec. 29, 2022.

**Catherine Carnes**, NUR '45, of Stone Mountain, on Dec. 30, 2022.

**Riley Wynne Carroll**, CLAS '47, of Huntsville, Alabama, on June 16.

**Willie D. Gunn**, CLAS '49, of Newnan, on April 5.

**Cindy Haskin Harrison**, CLAS '49, of Augusta, on June 29.

**Jean Dillard Pound**, TIFT '49, of Marietta, on Nov. 29, 2022.

**Joan Thompson Rowland**, CLAS '49, of Aiken, South Carolina, on Dec. 16, 2022.

**Sarah Sims**, NUR '40, of Marietta, on May 20.

**Hester Griner Smalley**, CLAS '49, of Reseda, California, on June 8, 2022.

### 1950s

**Paul D. Bobbitt**, CLAS '51, of Windsor, Connecticut, on May 21.

**John Andrew Carter**, CLAS '51, of Gainesville, on Feb. 22.

**Lucile Fortuna Carter**, CLAS '54, of Gainesville, on April 8.

**Jimmy D. Connell**, CLAS '57, of Perry, on Feb. 8.

**Dudley S. Dodgen**, CLAS '56, of Saint Helena Island, South Carolina, on Jan. 11.

**Rose Ann Arnett Dupree**, TIFT '58, of Midland, on April 8.

**Bobbie E. Edge**, CLAS '55, of Jasper, on Jan. 26.

**Charles R. Haffenden Jr.**, CLAS '55, of Homosassa, Florida, on Dec. 31, 2022.

**James Curtis Hardy Jr.**, CLAS '54, of Jacksonville Beach, Florida, on Dec. 3, 2022.

**Mary Ann Floyd Hightower**, TIFT '50, of Atlanta, on April 2.

**Sara Sappenfield Hodge**, TIFT '55, of Bel Air, Maryland, on Dec. 5, 2022.

**Janey Lovell Lampros**, NUR '56, of Clayton, on March 23, 2022.

**Joseph J. Lipton**, LAW '58, of Columbia, South Carolina, on May 16.

**Jack Hamby Mansfield**, CLAS '55, of Cartersville, on March 19.

**James Farmer Park Jr.**, CLAS '57, of North Augusta, South Carolina, on July 1.

**William McCrary Pickard**, CLAS '57, of Saint Simons Island, on Jan. 18.

**Malcolm Gene Plummer**, CLAS '57, of Macon, on Jan. 20.

**Kittie Jones Ponder**, CLAS '50, of Maryville, Tennessee, on Jan. 21.

**Billy J. Price**, CLAS '59, of Jasper, on Feb. 24, 2022.

**Hugh Davis Ridgway Jr.**, CLAS '57, of Athens, on March 3.

**Thomas R. Rowe Jr.**, CLAS '56, of Okeechobee, Florida, on April 3.

**Wynelle O'Quinn Ryle**, CLAS '52, of Macon, on Feb. 21.

**Jerelyn Weyer Saur**, CLAS '53, of Shreveport, Louisiana, on Dec. 21, 2022.

**Dr. Bob D. Shepherd**, CLAS '59, of Morganton, North Carolina, on April 30.

**Kristina Moore Simms**, CLAS '56, of Marietta, on Dec. 18, 2022.

**Cathryn D. Daniels Smith**, CLAS '59, of Columbus, on Dec. 18, 2022.

**Delores Brown Watson**, CLAS '56, of Forsyth, on April 24.

**Ward Franklin Wiant**, PHA '53, of Atlanta, on July 5.

**Sam P. Wilburn Jr.**, CLAS '56, of Young Harris, on March 5.

**Elizabeth Camp Wyche**, CLAS '52, of Macon, on March 9.

**Furman R. York**, CLAS '58, of Nashville, Tennessee, on April 23.

### 1960s

**William Merritt Alexander Jr.**, CLAS '60, of Atlanta, on Jan. 18.

**Russell F. Armstrong**, LAW '65, of Ormond Beach, Florida, on June 7.

**Clarence E. Asbill**, CLAS '61, of Johnston, South Carolina, on April 6.

**Annie Adams Ayers**, CLAS '67, of Toccoa, on Sept. 9, 2022.

**James Bortree Balsiger**, LAW '64, of Vero Beach, Florida, on July 17.

**Sandra Sapp Bassett**, CLAS '65, of Macon, on Dec. 19, 2022.

**Robert R. Becker**, CLAS '64, of Milner, on Oct. 11, 2022.

**Lynda Wimberly Cherryhomes**, CLAS '66, of Amarillo, Texas, on Feb. 5.

**Patsy Vedder Clark**, TIFT '66, of Forsyth, on April 28, 2022.

**Gloria E. Clavijo**, PHA '65, of Cumming, on Nov. 25, 2022.

**Larry Y. Couey**, CLAS '66, of Anniston, Alabama, on June 27.

**Anne Weed Day**, TIFT '61, of Flowery Branch, on Jan. 23.

**Brenda Duke**, CLAS '64, of Newnan, on Dec. 28, 2022.

**Charles H. "Corky" Edwards**, PHA '69, of Louisville, Kentucky, on Oct. 26, 2022.

**Pamela Sprouse Hammond**, CLAS '69, of Franklin, Tennessee, on March 9.

**Suzette Jones Haverfield**, CLAS '65, of Atlanta, on Jan. 9.

**Robert Franklin Hershner Jr.**, LAW '69, of Macon, on Jan. 8.

**Emory S. Heyward Jr.**, CLAS '63, of Murfreesboro, Tennessee, on Jan. 1.

**Julia Frances Hickson**, CLAS '67, of Thomasville, on Dec. 18, 2022.

**Betty Russell Huddleston**, NUR '60, of Powder Springs, on Jan. 28.

**Judy Howell King**, CLAS '68, of Midland, on March 23.

**Margaret McDaniel Kitchings**, EDU '63, of Belton, Texas, on Feb. 7.

**Zelda D. Duke Loftin**, CLAS '65, of Carrollton, on Aug. 17, 2022.

**Kenneth Paul McBride**, CLAS '64, of Lynchburg, Virginia, on July 4.

**Ralph Mitchell Overstreet**, CLAS '68, of Hobie Sound, Florida, on Dec. 11, 2022.

**JoAnn Durden Payne**, NUR '65, of Rentz, on March 28.

**John Weston Peach**, LAW '65, of Jasper, Florida, on Feb. 8.

**Tullye Burch Ralph**, TIFT '65, of Forsyth, on March 29, 2022.

**Ann H. Hood Reid**, CLAS '65, of Carrabelle, Florida, on Feb. 18.

**Faye Stith Rich**, CLAS '61, of Batesville, Mississippi, on Dec. 24, 2022.

**Katherine Snow Segars**, CLAS '66, of Athens, on Feb. 15.

**Kathy Wiseman Sirmans**, CLAS '67, of Destin, Florida, on April 9.

**Marion L. Smith**, PHA '60, of McDonough, on March 21.

**Arvin F. Spell III**, CLAS '61, of Covington, on June 9.

**Susan Laverne Gleaton Thompson**, TIFT '62, of Coleman, on Jan. 23.

**Carolyn G. Golden Tumlin**, CLAS '60, of Douglasville, on Jan. 28.

**Samuel Lester Vance**, CLAS '62, of Charlotte, North Carolina, on June 3.

**Sallie Shirley Varnadoe**, NUR '60, of Social Circle, on Nov. 30, 2022.

**Jeanette Cannon Williford**, CLAS '62, of Senoia, on May 18.

**Emily Howard Wilson**, TIFT '66, of Locust Grove, on Jan. 22.

**Sylvia Wiley Zellner**, TIFT '62, of Millen, on Jan. 20.

### 1970s

**Beverly Reid Aldridge**, TIFT '77, of Forsyth, on Aug. 12, 2022.

**Drexley C. Barksdale**, BUS '76, of Amelia Island, Florida, on Dec. 16, 2022.

**Susan Chambliss Becht**, CLAS '76, of Jacksonville, Florida, on Dec. 25, 2022.

**Nancy K. Bennett**, CLAS '75, of Lilburn, on Jan. 1.

**Lori Blackwelder**, TIFT '78, of Knoxville, Tennessee, on March 17.

**William P. Boughner**, CLAS '77, of Greensboro, on Feb. 13.

**David Harold Bottoms Jr.**, CLAS '71, of Atlanta, on March 10.

**June B. Briney**, CLAS '79, of Austin, Texas, on March 10.

**Charles Clifford Carter**, LAW '75, of Columbus, on Feb. 7.

**James Wendell Duncan**, CLAS '76, of Grovetown, on Jan. 7.

**Barbara Woodall Flournoy**, EDU '70, of Savannah, on March 26.

REMEMBERING...

*Former Trustee and Generous Supporter*

## Al Williams

**H**ubert Alvin "Al" Williams, of Macon, died on April 7 at the age of 93. After graduating from Dexter High School in 1947 and joining the National Guard in 1948, he moved to Macon with \$10 in his pocket. Some of his early jobs in Macon included work at a grocery store, as a salesman at R.A. McCord Ford and as a Coca-Cola truck driver. In 1956, Williams purchased Sanco Products Co. with his dear friend, Wallace Hogan. Sanco continues to be a success today, now operated by Williams's son. In 1974, Williams founded Macon Bank, now Wells Fargo, and served on several bank boards. He was involved in real estate and real estate development and owned many properties throughout the area. He was also the owner and operator of Johnson-Williams Insurance Agency in the late 1970s. Williams served four terms as a Mercer trustee and was chair of the board from 1995 to 1996. He and his wife of 34 years, **Peggy**, established an endowed scholarship in Mercer's School of Business in 1998. They were named Life Members of The President's Club in 2001. Williams was instrumental in the founding of the School of Medicine, the School of Engineering and the School of Theology.



**Brett Gandy Gandy**, CLAS '77, of Santa Ana, California, on Feb. 3.

**John S. Hagood**, CLAS '71, of Ocala, Florida, on March 29.

**Marcia O. Oliver Hammock**, CLAS '72, of Flowery Branch, on March 6.

**Mary Lou Boykin Harrison**, CLAS '71, of Winter Haven, Florida, on Dec. 15, 2022.

**John P. Hart**, CLAS '77, of Bennington, Vermont, on Jan. 18.

**Hugh M. Hope**, BUS '76, of Cumming, on Dec. 14, 2022.

**Michael S. Hutchinson**, CLAS '78, of Lithonia, on Dec. 27, 2022.

**Michael R. Leach**, CLAS '77, of Macon, on Jan. 4.

**William R. Mattox Jr.**, CLAS '73, of Minneapolis on Jan. 23.

**James Lee McTyre Jr.**, CLAS '78, of Columbus, on Feb. 26.

**Jennifer Wrenn Mitchell**, CLAS '73, of Suwanee, on Dec. 20, 2022.

**Rebecca Ann Mullins**, TIFT '71, of Pine Mountain, on Feb. 14.

**Pamela Turner Parker**, NUR '73, of Columbus, on Oct. 19, 2022.

**Lawrence Wayne Pierce**, PHA '72, of Atlanta, on April 1.

**William Harold Pinson Jr.**, LAW '72, of Savannah, on March 20.

**Stanley Harold Pollock**, LAW '73, of Dunwoody, on Feb. 5.

**Paulette Smith Reeves**, CLAS '72, of Macon, on Feb. 18.

**Laura Williams Roberts**, NUR '73, of West Melbourne, Florida, on Sept. 3, 2022.

**Nancy Wyatt Saunders**, EDU '77, of Warren, Ohio, on March 6.

**William C. Thompson**, PHA '70, of Braselton, on June 10.

**Susie Ingram Wilkins Trinkle**, TIFT '71, of Atlanta, on Jan. 28.

**Irene D. Davis Tzianabos**, CLAS '79, of Peachtree Corners, on Dec. 20, 2022.

## 1980s

**Wayne M. Akins**, BUS '84, of Atlanta, on April 9.

**Ralph E. Burns Jr.**, LAW '80, of Charlotte, North Carolina, on Dec. 19, 2022.

**Robert Colliersmith**, LAW '80, of Marietta, on Nov. 21, 2022.

**Rita A. Curry**, CLAS '80, of Wenonah, New Jersey, on March 22.

**David A. Downs**, CLAS '82, of White, on April 17.

**Mary Ellis Flory**, TIFT '81, of Hampton, on Aug. 19, 2022.

**Billiard Lee Gibbs Jr.**, CLAS '86, of Opelika, Alabama, on Oct. 12, 2022.

**Kim M. Goodrum**, CLAS '87, of Hawkinsville, on Feb. 20.

**Samuel Fielding Greneker**, LAW '87, of Valdosta, on July 5.

**Ernest Howard Jr.**, PHA '84, of Eustis, Florida, on Nov. 19, 2022.

**Jean Watts Jackson**, TIFT '85, of Forsyth, on Dec. 8, 2022.

**Paula Binion Ketchem**, PHA '85, of Dallas, on May 16.

**Kay V. King**, TIFT '84, of Thomaston, on Nov. 20, 2022.

**Julianna M. Lee**, CLAS '84, of Stone Mountain, on Dec. 14, 2022.

**Ann F. McQuay**, CLAS '88, of Buford, on July 10.

**Peter Todd Mullady**, CLAS '89, of Rochester, Minnesota, on July 7.

**Gloria Longshore Patman**, EDU '83, of Atlanta, on Jan. 25.

**Rodger Lee Purdy**, BUS '89, of Peachtree City, on Feb. 2.

**Nell Hitchcock Tallant**, TIFT '83, of Warner Robins, on Feb. 18.

**Charles Lee Walding**, PHA '82, of Conyers, on June 29.

**Harold Wilson Whiteman Jr.**, LAW '80, of Atlanta, on Feb. 15.

## 1990s

**Donna Crawford Carroll**, COPA '99, of Rhine, on Dec. 25, 2022.

**Vasudev Venkatrao Kulkarni**, BUS '98, of Dublin, on Jan. 29.

**Donald Eugene Lancaster**, BUS '97, of Jacksonville, Florida, on March 9.

**Wendy McFarland**, CLAS '91, of Ocilla, on Dec. 12, 2022.

**Julian Kelly McLendon Jr.**, MED '91, of Forsyth, on Dec. 21, 2022.

**Laurie Stewart Saxon**, CLAS '90, of Cumming, on Sept. 16, 2022.

## 2000s

**Sheila Lanette Bratton**, BUS '01, of Atlanta, on Jan. 8.

**Andy Morris Cohen**, LAW '07, of Atlanta, on June 15, 2022.

**Gaynelle Morgan Fournier**, PHA '07, of Hiawassee, on March 13.

**Eric E. Garvin**, CLAS '06, of Staten Island, New York, on Jan. 21.

**Kimberly Jean Ivey**, CLAS '03, of Jackson, on April 1.

**David Boyd Williams**, BUS '00, of Macon, on May 21.

**William Phillip Yeats**, BUS '05, of Macon, on Feb. 28.

## 2010s

**Kyle Joseph Frank**, EGR '16, of Indian Harbor Beach, Florida, on Dec. 19, 2022.

**Spencer Scott Geerlings**, BUS '18, of Newnan, on June 10.

**Chase Hall**, NUR '21, of Atlanta, on Dec. 23, 2022.

**Felicia Denise Jordan**, COPA '13, of Griffin, on Dec. 14, 2022.

**Melanie D. Markman**, EGR '14, of Savannah, on Feb. 10.

**Jessica Lauren Miller**, Mullinix, MED '14, of Tyrone, on March 22.

## FRIENDS, FACULTY & STAFF

**Paul R. Allison**, of Huntsville, Alabama, on Dec. 14, 2022.

**Nadine C. Barron**, of Colquitt, on Dec. 20, 2022.

**David Taylor Barwick**, of Macon, on Feb. 26.

**Michael D. Billingsley**, of Tuscaloosa, Alabama, on Dec. 15, 2022.

**William F. Bloom**, of Macon, on March 29.

**Ronald W. Brass**, of Arden, North Carolina, on Jan. 17.

**Ray I. Bridger**, of Macon, on Jan. 24.

**Judith L. Burge**, of Atlanta, on June 18.

**Debra Cisneros**, of Macon, on May 24.

**Jamie H. Cockfield**, of Macon, on May 11.

**William Paul Culbreth**, of Albany, on Dec. 13, 2022.

**Wayne W. Edgecomb Jr.**, of Atlanta, on Jan. 8.

**Alera Jill Self Elliott**, of Macon, on April 5.

**Hayward Fountain**, of Chamblee, on Sept. 25, 2021.

**Edmund Walker Goddard**, of Griffin, on Dec. 14, 2022.

**Dwight Hobbs**, of Macon, on July 21.

**Rex L. Jones**, of Marietta, on May 31.

**Richard F. Leighton**, of Savannah, on Feb. 5.

**Jerry A. Lumley**, of Macon, on March 13, 2022.

**Paul E. MacNeil**, of Macon, on Feb. 27.

**Thomas W. Marks**, of Atlanta, on Jan. 18, 2022.

**Russell David McMahan**, of Macon, on Dec. 11, 2022.

**Robert W. Merz**, of Tucker, on March 10.

**H.G. Pattiilo**, of Decatur, on Feb. 18.

**Hugh C. Peacock Jr.**, of Rome, on Feb. 7.

**Marilyn S. Peyton**, of Newberry, Florida, on May 16.

**Roger H. Prentice**, of Wolfville, Nova Scotia, on April 8, 2022.

**Douglas S. Schorr**, of Columbus, on July 8, 2022.

**William H. Terry III**, of Macon, on March 10.

**Dewey Touchton**, of Deltona, Florida, on Nov. 21, 2022.

**Maureen T. Vandiver**, of Decatur, on June 1.

# 50-75-100 YEARS AGO

Photos and archival information assembled by Gaby Hale and Daniel Williams of the Tarver Library Special Collections staff.

## 100 YEARS AGO

**1923 - Mercer at 90** — Mercer celebrated its 90th anniversary on Monday, Jan. 15, 1923, with a host of activities. The main event was a banquet held in the new dining hall (pictured), which had been completed the previous year and was then dedicated as Daniel Marshall Hall in honor of an early Georgia Baptist preacher. *The Cluster* observed that the school began in 1833 with three faculty members and 39 students but on its 90th birthday had 73 faculty and nearly 900 students. The school indeed was experiencing a period of significant growth under president Rufus W. Weaver. Only five years earlier, there had been a mere 12 faculty members and 250 students in two departments. While projections that Mercer would reach 1,000 in enrollment in the fall fell short, there were nonetheless

956 students studying under 87 faculty members in 15 departments by October 1923. Buildings were part of the growth, as well, and the new dining hall was the first of a \$2.5 million master plan. By the 1930s, Daniel Marshall Hall had been renamed Penfield Hall. The building still stands on campus and has served many functions in addition to dining during its century of service, including as a gymnasium, the student center, and the campus bookstore. (SOURCE: *The Cluster* issues for Jan. 12, Jan. 19, Sept. 26, and Oct. 26, 1923; *Mercer University Bulletin* April 1922)

## 75 YEARS AGO

**1948 - Mercer's Mascots Named** — Mercer's mascots were officially named Toby and Tot after a contest sponsored by *The Cluster* in October 1948. The names were suggested by freshman John Meeks, and he won the contest "on the basis of genuine originality, cleverness of idea, and suitability of the name suggested." Other names suggested included Sylvester and Sadie, Buster and Betty, and Honeysuckle and Butterball. (SOURCE: *Cluster* issues of Oct. 6 and 13, 1948)



## 50 YEARS AGO

**1973 - President Nixon Visits** — President Richard M. Nixon came to Mercer on Sunday, Nov. 18, 1973, to honor former Congressman and Mercer alumnus Carl Vinson on his 90th birthday and to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Walter F. George School of Law. Georgia Gov. Jimmy Carter and Secretary of the Navy John Warner were also in attendance, and a nuclear carrier was named in Vinson's honor that day. (PHOTO: Mercer President Rufus C. Harris speaks with President Nixon before the events. SOURCE: *Cluster* Nov. 26, 1973; *Mercerian* Winter 1974)



ALUMNI  
ASSOCIATION  
TO BE LED BY

# B. TODD SMITH

**B.** Todd Smith, a 1993 and 1997 graduate of the School of Business, has been named associate vice president for university advancement and executive director of the Mercer Alumni Association. Smith has been with Mercer since 2009 as director of development for the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and began his new role on Feb. 1.

In his new position, Smith will continue his development work while leading a team responsible for the planning, implementation and management of programs and projects that strategically engage alumni and friends. Smith shares Mercer's vision for building strong and mutually beneficial ties between the University and its constituents, promoting goodwill in the community and creating a dynamic program that will stimulate interest, build



B. Todd Smith

loyalty, increase involvement and generate support for the University.

"I am excited for the opportunity to serve the University in this capacity," said Smith. "The people have always been my favorite thing about Mercer. I love hearing about the shared experiences that bring our community together as we encourage the next generation of students, serve our communities and work together to advance the mission of Mercer. I look forward to building new relationships and expanding the scope of our programs to engage alumni and friends. Together we roar!"

With more than 14 years of experience at Mercer, Smith brings invaluable institutional knowledge to this crucial role. As director of development, Smith played a major role in organizing and facilitating board meetings of

the CLAS Alumni Advisory Board, recruiting new members, increasing board participation and working together to advance Mercer's mission.

Smith is married to **Mary Kay McPherson Smith**, CLAS '93, and they have triplets who are seniors at Mercer: **Benjamin, Matthew** and **Mary Margaret**.

## UNIVERSITY RECOGNIZES NEW PRESIDENT'S CLUB LIFE MEMBERS

New Life Members of The President's Club were recognized on April 14, during the University's 57th annual celebration of its most generous supporters. Members of The President's Club gathered for dinner followed by a dessert reception at The St. Regis Hotel, Atlanta.

The Mercer University President's Club was established in 1964 to recognize alumni and friends who provide a nucleus of support for the University. Over the years, this select group of alumni and friends has supplied nearly three-quarters of the gifts from individuals for annual support. Friends and alumni of Mercer who contribute \$1,000 or more during the calendar year are eligible for membership in The President's Club.

The University's highest level of leadership giving, President's Club Life Member, is conferred on those individuals and churches who have contributed at least \$100,000 to Mercer. At this year's event, the following were recognized for achieving Life Member status: **Louis and Jana Abbott, Tony Adams, Bill and Layle Argo, Scott and Cathy Davis, Tom and Wendy Reiman, and James and Meghan Thomas**.

(L-R, back row): Louis Abbott, CLAS '99; James Thomas, CLAS '93;

Scott Davis; Tom Reiman, LAW '74; Bill Argo, CLAS '76;

Tony Adams; President William D. Underwood

(L-R, front row): Jana Abbott; Meghan Thomas;

Cathy Davis, CLAS '95; Wendy Reiman; Layle Argo.



# Double Bear Supports the Mission

## Dr. Stanley D. Jones,

CLAS '92, MED '96, was first introduced to Mercer in 1987 through Step-Ahead, a program that invited high school students to participate in summer classes. He fell in love with the smaller classes, approachable professors, friendly students and the high academic standards. After the six-week program, he knew Mercer was the place for him.

Since graduating from medical school, Jones has stayed involved with Mercer, supporting both the University's mission to change the world and the School of Medicine's mission to change rural Georgia through his time, profession, and financial contributions. A pediatric physician in Jesup, Jones has been a clinical preceptor to Mercer medical students for the past two decades. He previously served on the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Alumni Advisory Board and currently serves as a University trustee.

"I enjoy giving back to Mercer both financially and through acts of service," Jones said. "I was fortunate enough to receive scholarship money to help attend Mercer, and I consider it a privilege to give the same opportunity I was given to someone else. The continued strength of the University tomorrow depends on our support today."



**Gifts to the University** represent an endorsement of the University's work and mission and help ensure the distinguishing characteristics of the Mercer experience for the next generation to come. Visit [giving.mercer.edu](http://giving.mercer.edu) to find out how you can support our mission.

**MERCER**  
UNIVERSITY



**BE THE BEAR**



**Mercer began its 191st academic year**  
by welcoming a record-breaking freshman class of more  
than 1,000 students. Along with more than 100 transfer  
students, it is the largest and most talented entering  
group of undergraduates in the University's history.