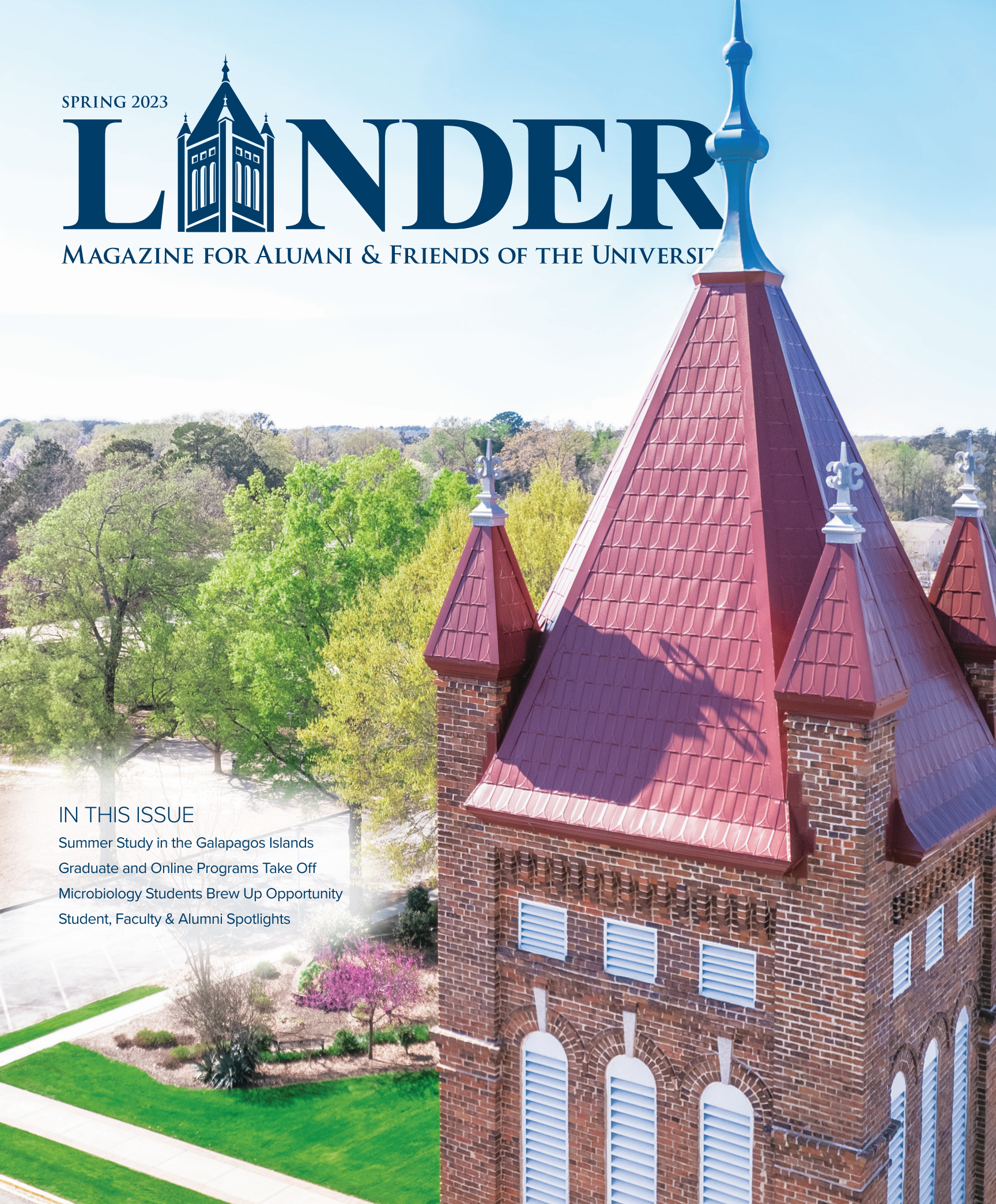
SPRING 2023

LANDER

MAGAZINE FOR ALUMNI & FRIENDS OF THE UNIVERSI



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Summer Study in the Galapagos Islands

Graduate and Online Programs Take Off

Microbiology Students Brew Up Opportunity

Student, Faculty & Alumni Spotlights

Light up the Night

The annual Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony has become a cherished tradition for the Lander campus, drawing thousands of students, faculty, staff, alumni and community members for an evening of joyous fun. The 2022 ceremony, held on Nov. 29, featured a historic theme in honor of the University's Sesquicentennial, and attendees enjoyed a fantastic lineup of activities and entertainment, including student dance and music performances, ice skating, horse-drawn carriage rides, a magic village and Ferris wheel. Following the lighting of the Lander Tree, the evening wrapped up with a holiday-inspired concert by the Lander Wind Ensemble.





Photo by Staff Photographer Laura B. Wood

LANDER
UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE
FOR ALUMNI & FRIENDS

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Lander Family,

Amid the progress we've made at Lander University in recent years, the iconic bell tower of Laura Lander Hall has remained the same: a symbol of the legacy of a Lander education. As the cover of this edition of *Lander Magazine* displays, we are proud to share with you the finished product of the restoration of our University's most visible building.

Each hour, the carillon chimes have reminded us of the many generations of Lander graduates who have used their education to lead productive lives of service in their communities and beyond. Now, with new roofing and brickwork, the bell tower will remind us of the generations of graduates yet to come, who will go on to make a difference in our state, our country and the whole world.

This is just one of many exciting innovations happening at Lander today. We began this academic year with an enrollment of 4,170 students - the largest ever! Meanwhile, our Board of Trustees, once again, froze tuition for the eighth consecutive year, maintaining our commitment to offering a quality four-year education to our graduates at a price they can afford. To help with our growth in enrollment, our General Assembly has allocated funding to construct a new information commons on campus. Once complete, the General Assembly has also made funding available to renovate the existing Jackson Library into new academic space to accommodate the growing number of students on our campus.

In this edition, you'll learn that part of our growth has been fueled by the success of our College of Graduate and Online Studies. By forging partnerships with school districts, local governments, non-profits and private businesses, Lander's online and graduate programs have made higher education possible for a wide range of career professionals, including educators, public safety officers and even city administrators.

You'll also find stories of the students, faculty and staff who demonstrate what it means to be a Bearcat. Professors, like Dr. Samuel Reed, understand the challenges of juggling academic studies with working and raising children. Students, like Elisa Howansky, are eager to travel abroad to put what they're learning in the classroom into practice through summer learning experiences. And staff members, like Karla Coffey, go above and beyond to enhance our campus and improve our students' college experience.

I am inspired by the stories, and I hope these pages of *Lander Magazine* will serve as inspiration for you, too, as you think of ways you can live life like a Bearcat. One way is to consider making a contribution to The Lander Foundation. Our scholarship programs are what make college education possible for so many of our students. We couldn't do what we do without the generosity of our Lander family.

We are grateful for the many alumni and friends who continue the Lander legacy through their support of our University. Thank you for your investment in our students' potential.

Richard Cosentino
President, Lander University



ON THE COVER

There's something new about "Old Main." The iconic bell tower of Laura Lander Hall, also known as Old Main, underwent a "facelift" of sorts over the winter to address a number of issues related to aging. For three months, scaffolding enveloped the nearly 120-year-old tower as crews replaced water-damaged wooden fascia, soffit and trim, repaired the brickwork, installed operable shutters, and refurbished the decorative finials. Capping off the project was the addition of metal shingling in brick red – harkening back to the original color seen in historical pictures of the building after its construction in 1903-04. The beautiful new look was unveiled in January, just as students returned for the start of the spring semester. The tower renovation is one of nearly 20 major capital projects recently completed, in progress or planned on campus, totaling over $35 million in renovations, repairs and new construction at the University.

Photo by Laura B. Wood
Front cover photo by Walker Smith

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EXPANDING THE PRACTICE-PARTNERSHIP: LANDER, SELF REGIONAL LAUNCH NEW PROGRAMS, FACILITY

In the fall, Lander University and Self Regional Healthcare announced the establishment of two new practice-partnerships that will further enhance the educational experience for Lander's nursing students and assist Self Regional in their mission to provide the Lakelands region with quality care.

The Clinical Accelerated Readiness Experience (CARE) Program at Self Regional Healthcare is a new co-curricular program available to Lander's nursing students during their senior year. As part of the program, students will be hired as paid patient care technicians at Self Regional. After successful completion of each semester, students will receive a $4,000 stipend from Self Regional—a total of $8,000 for their senior year. In return, students agree to work at Self Regional for one year after graduation. Each year, 50 percent of Lander's senior nursing cohort will be eligible for participation in this program.

Meanwhile, the health care provider has also established a Dedicated Education Unit (DEU) to provide Lander students with additional preceptor-led clinical instruction. The DEU will expose students to a diverse work environment, helping them to develop their resourcefulness, versatility, communication and compassion for patient care as they complete their nursing education.

"Lander University and Self Regional Healthcare have a shared commitment to providing our region with quality health care and health care professionals," said



Dr. Matt Logan (left), CEO of Self Regional Healthcare; Carol Stefaniak (second from left), Self Regional's chief nursing officer; and Dr. Holisa Wharton (right), dean of the School of Nursing at Lander, stand with participants of the newly-established CARE Program at Self Regional Healthcare. -Photos by Laura B. Wood

Dr. Richard Cosentino, president of Lander University. "The CARE Program and the Dedicated Education Unit at Self Regional are just the latest steps our two institutions have taken to advance that common mission."

The two institutions also recently held a grand opening ceremony for Lander's Self Regional Healthcare Nursing Skills Simulation Center (NSSC). This new facility features some of the most advanced resources in nursing education, with four teaching-learning labs that can accommodate up to 80 students per session each. The NSSC also includes three practice labs for group practice sessions and clinical skills remediation, and bedside computers that simulate virtual patient encounters and electronic health records. ■ By Graham Duncan

See More Photos & Video

FROZEN TUITION FOR THE 8TH YEAR

Students attending Lander for the 2023-24 academic year will enter with tuition costs that have not increased since 2016.

In a unanimous vote at their December meeting, the Lander University Board of Trustees decided to freeze tuition for the eighth consecutive year.

Lander's tuition continues to be $5,350 per semester, or $10,700 per year, for full-time, in-state students. General fees, which were locked at $500 per semester in 2017 ($1,000 per year), also remain frozen.

The tuition freeze comes at a time when Lander has experienced record-breaking enrollment. For the Fall 2022 semester, the University's enrollment after the first week of classes was at 4,170 students – a seven-percent increase over the previous year, and a 54-percent increase since 2015.

Consistently low tuition rates help students and their families plan for college education costs, said Dr. Todd Gambill, vice president for Enrollment and Access Management.

"Our president and Board of Trustees are committed to making a Lander education accessible to South Carolina families," said Gambill. "Freezing tuition is especially important during times of inflation and financial uncertainties."

Lander University President Richard Cosentino praised the University's trustees for maintaining a tight rein on tuition costs, especially when the nation is experiencing steep inflation hikes. "Our board members believe higher education should be affordable and accessible for the students we serve, 91 percent being residents of our state."

Donald H. Scott, chair of the Board of Trustees, said keeping tuition costs affordable enables students to focus on developing the professional skills they need for their future careers and not to be worried about student loan debt.

"We are thankful for President Cosentino's leadership, and for the hard work of our faculty and staff who teach, recruit and retain high-caliber students," Scott said. ■ By Karen Petit



The Bridge EL PUENTE LATINO

A new initiative at Lander is aiming to serve the Hispanic community inside and outside of the University.

El Puente Latino is designed to "be the bridge that closes the gaps that young Hispanic leaders encounter throughout their college paths," said Liz Scott-Araiza, coordinator of Hispanic/Latino enrollment and program leader.

"We want to mentor, build leadership and promote bilingualism."

Scott-Araiza aims to make sure that all relative information is available in a clear, understandable manner to those who may not speak English as a first language, or at all. "Most of these families' first language is Spanish, and they assume there is no one who can help them or answer their questions," she said. "When only a segment of the family speaks English, we must support the whole family by providing information and communication avenues in both languages."

One way to achieve this mission is by networking with groups such as the South Carolina Commission for Minority Affairs and the Hispanic Alliance, as well as additional educational institutions. Collaboration with outside organizations provides an avenue to maximize resources and compound efforts to provide Hispanic students and their families with the most resources possible.

"In the Hispanic community, we are not individuals. We are units, we are families," said Scott-Araiza. "We want families to know that El Puente and Lander are here for them, and we want them to trust that they will have full support in their college path." ■ By Zack Bennett



LANDER EARNS GOLD STATUS AS A MILITARY FRIENDLY SCHOOL

The University has earned a Gold Award status as a Military Friendly School for 2022-23.

"This is a notable achievement," said Jason Smith, director of Lander's Military and Veteran Services. "It displays the compassion, support and continued efforts of the University, faculty and staff in pursuing and investing in the necessary infrastructure and programs to serve the needs of our veterans, current service members and their dependents."

Nearly 2,000 schools participated in the 2022-23 survey. Of those, just 282 were selected for a Gold Award status.

"As a veteran myself, I find it rewarding to assist and guide our fellow veteran and military students and their family members to make their experience here at Lander one that is distinguished," said Smith.

"I couldn't have made a better decision for school after getting off Army active duty," said student Casey Hunt, of Piedmont. "I was nervous about the transition into college because I was behind my age group and the pandemic, but Military and Veteran Services made it so easy." ■ By Zack Bennett












Photos by Laura B. Wood

FACULTY TENURES & PROMOTIONS

The University Tenure and Promotions Committee announced the promotions and granting of tenure to outstanding members of the Lander University faculty for the 2022-23 academic year. Tenure and promotions are awarded to those members of faculty who have demonstrated themselves to be effective educators, skilled researchers and valued members of the University community.

Promoted to the rank of Associate Professor, with tenure, are Linda Carson, of the Department of Government, Criminology and Sociology; Dr. Matthew Peters, of the College of Business; Dr. Shana Southard-Dobbs, of the Department of Psychological Science and Human Services; and Stephanie Yonce, of the School of Nursing.

Promoted to Senior Lecturer is Dr. Michelle Deady, of the Department of Physical Sciences.

Promoted to the rank of Professor are Dr. Martin Carmichael, of the Department of Physical Education and Exercise Science; Dr. Mandy Cleveland, of the Department of Psychological Science and Human Services; Dr. Albert Dukes, of the Department of Physical Sciences; Doug McAbee, of the Department of Art+Design; and Dr. Kimberly Richburg, of the Department of Government, Criminology and Sociology.

"We're grateful to have such dedicated and impactful faculty," said then-Provost Scott Jones. "They, like so many others, make Lander the wonderful learning environment that it is." ■ By Zack Bennett

Pictured from top:
Dr. Martin Carmichael
Linda Carson
Dr. Mandy Cleveland
Dr. Michelle Deady
Dr. Albert Dukes
Doug McAbee
Dr. Matthew Peters
Dr. Kimberly Richburg
Dr. Shana Southard-Dobbs
Stephanie Yonce

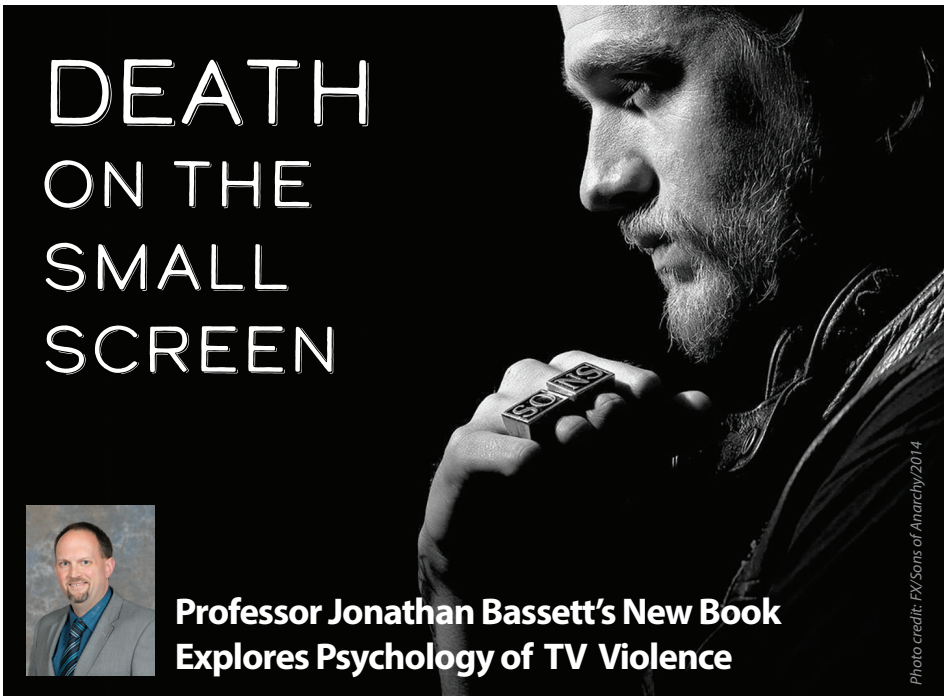


Photo credit: FX/Sons of Anarchy/2014

Professor Jonathan Bassett's New Book Explores Psychology of TV Violence

A new book by Professor of Psychology Dr. Jonathan Bassett takes a closer look at how the motivations of fictional characters within popular television series—including HBO's *Game of Thrones* and FX's *Sons of Anarchy*—can "teach viewers about both the constructive and destructive ways we try to deal with our own mortality," according to Bassett.

Bassett's *Death on the Small Screen*, published in October by McFarland Publishers, is a culmination of Bassett's previous scholarly work. Earlier versions of select chapters were first presented as papers at annual meetings of the Popular Culture Association of the South. Meanwhile, another chapter was originally published in *PSYART: A Hyperlink Journal for the Psychological Study of the Arts* in 2014. Bassett was granted sabbatical for the spring semester of 2020 to write his new book.

Bassett has been a member of the Lander faculty since 2005, teaching courses in social psychology, research, behavioral statistics and the psychology of death and dying for the Department of Psychological Science and Human Services. He has published over 40 articles in peer-reviewed journals and has given over 90 conference presentations. His work in the classroom also led to recognition as Outstanding Teacher of Psychology from the S.C. Psychological Association.

"I am grateful for the sabbatical program and the support Lander University provided for the scholarly efforts over the years that led to this book," said Bassett. "I am excited about the release of the book that will appeal to a wide range of readers, both those who are interested in violence as a social issue and those who are fans of the specific programs explored."

■ By Graham Duncan

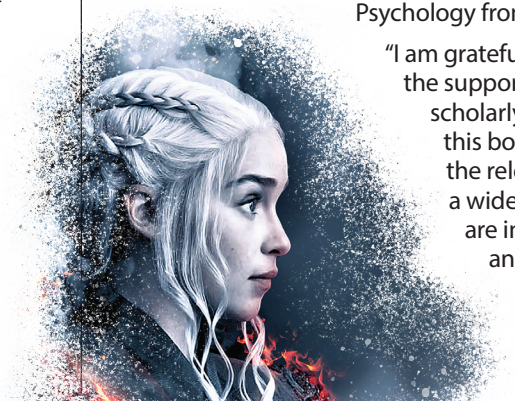


Photo credit: HBO/Game Of Thrones

BABY BEARCAT DAY



Photos by Laura B. Wood

MORE THAN 100 FIRST GRADERS from Greenwood District 50's Dr. Benjamin E. Mays Elementary School took a field trip to Lander's campus to enjoy a fun day of learning on Baby Bearcat Day in September. The day was facilitated by the University's College of Education and featured activities designed by the college's education majors, who also led the first graders through the activities during their day on campus.

The morning kicked off with a scavenger hunt around the campus before launching into educational activities like science bingo, a literacy activity and a variety of additional enrichment programs for the Mays students.

"Our students learned a ton about classroom management, moving students from location to location, and what it looks like to plan and implement hands-on projects," said Dr. Tamara Pack, assistant chair of the Department of Teacher Education. "Our students enjoyed the day just as much as the Mays students." ■ By Zack Bennett



Above: Amie Wicker, of Newberry, works with first graders from Dr. Benjamin E. Mays Elementary school during Baby Bearcat Day.



Photo by Bonner Abercrombie

But wait, there's more...

Keep up with all the latest Lander news by visiting our website and clicking the News tab at the top.

LANDER NEWS ARCHIVES

College of Business Hosts Second Annual Leadership Symposium

The success stories of Lander University alumni were on full display during the second annual Lander Business Leadership Symposium, which featured workshops and breakout sessions for alumni to share their career experiences and advice with current business students.

One alumnus, with experience in providing development and networking opportunities to young professionals, served as the keynote speaker for the symposium in October. Joseph Bowers '87 is the co-founder and CEO of The Creation Companies, a world-class retreat and executive learning destination. He previously served as the president and chief operating officer of Geniecast, a real-time learning delivery platform he also co-founded.

Additionally, Bowers has served as the Chief Networking Officer for the Young Presidents Organization (YPO) and provided oversight for the organization's International Mentoring Program, as well as the Member Networks platform. His experience in networking and professional development made him the perfect choice to keynote the symposium. As part of the event's proceedings, Bowers was awarded the Distinguished Business Leadership Award in recognition of his exemplary commitment to business leadership. Bowers is only the second person to receive this award. The first was George R. Starnes, of the Class of 1981 and former chair of Lander University's Board of Trustees.

■ By Graham Duncan



Starnes Family Dean of Business Dr. Mick Fekula (left) presents Joseph Bowers '87 with the Distinguished Business Leadership Award from Lander University's College of Business. Bowers served as the keynote speaker for the second annual Lander Business Leadership Symposium, hosted by the College on Thursday, Oct. 13.
-Photo courtesy Kayla Davis

STUDENT LIAISON

The 22-23 academic year saw the launch of a new initiative intended to enhance the student experience for first-year Bearcats. The Student Liaison program is focused on connecting with freshmen, as well as sharing important information with the entire student body.

"For this program to be successful, it is crucial to connect with all freshmen," said Dr. Amanda Darden, vice president for Student Experience and Quality Assurance. "This means connecting with the LINK classes, resident assistants in buildings where freshmen live, freshmen who live off campus and answering questions that all students have regularly."

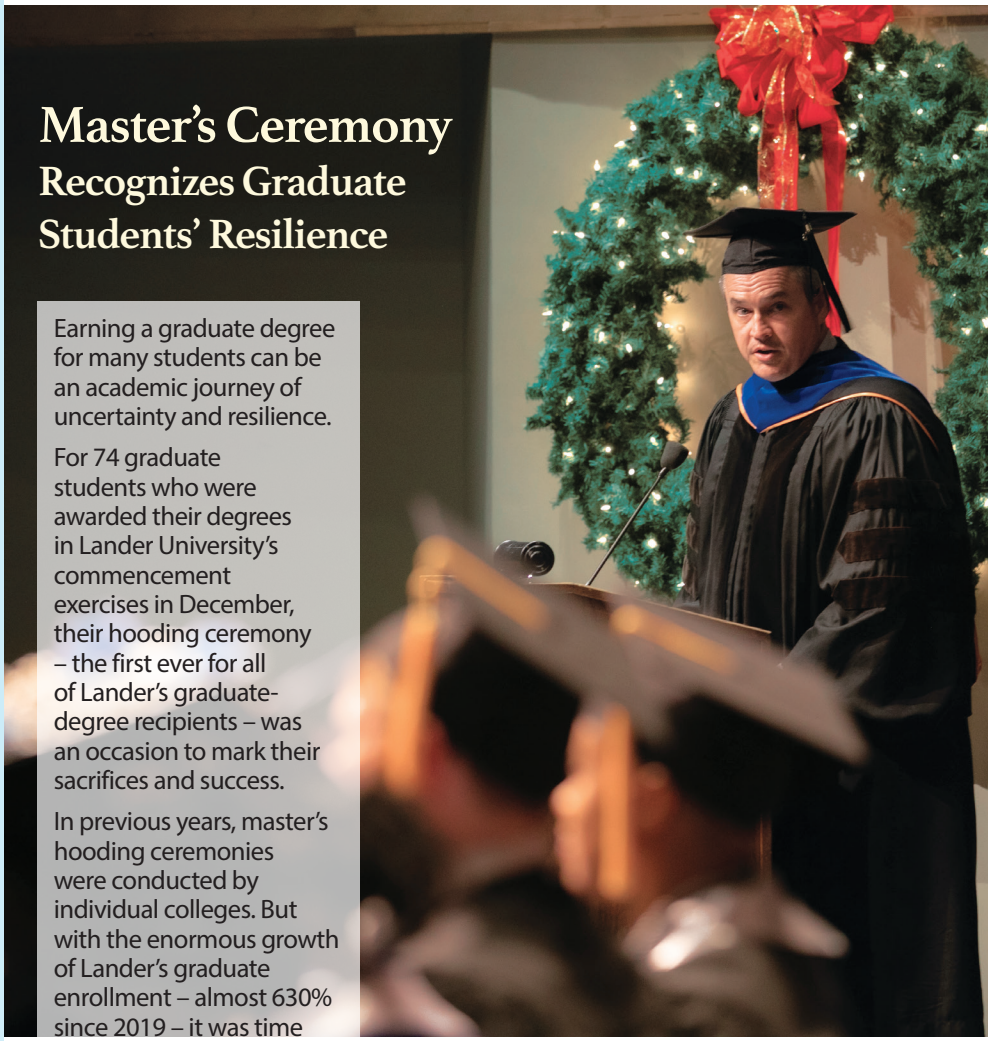
The connection comes in the form of the Student Liaisons themselves, who are upperclassmen at the University. They do this through providing resources, activities and sharing tips for success. "We want to provide first-time freshmen opportunities to engage with upperclassmen to connect with both the University and its student body early in their academic path," said Darden.

The Liaisons host social events, like a caramel apple social in the Grier Student Center Dining Hall, and meet and greets around campus with free snacks and Lander gear. "So far, this has been a great experience," said Student Liaison Olivia Veidt, of Wilmington, Ohio. "I feel extremely connected to so many people on campus." ■ By Zack Bennett



Pictured are '22-23 Student Liaisons (L-R) Olivia Veidt, and Marielle Fallon. - Photo by Laura B. Wood

Master's Ceremony
Recognizes Graduate Students' Resilience



Photos by Laura B. Wood

Earning a graduate degree for many students can be an academic journey of uncertainty and resilience.

For 74 graduate students who were awarded their degrees in Lander University's commencement exercises in December, their hooding ceremony – the first ever for all of Lander's graduate-degree recipients – was an occasion to mark their sacrifices and success.

In previous years, master's hooding ceremonies were conducted by individual colleges. But with the enormous growth of Lander's graduate enrollment – almost 630% since 2019 – it was time to recognize all graduate students at the same time, said Dr. Lloyd Willis, dean of the College of Graduate and Online Studies.

Members of the Class of 2022 earned their degrees while balancing family responsibilities and full-time jobs in a wide range of professions. Their struggles were great. Many worked on spreadsheets at the kitchen table after feeding their families dinner, or wrote discussion posts after their spouses went to bed. Others did class readings while sitting in cars as their sons or daughters attended soccer practice or dance, Willis said.





Sometimes, a student made corrections on essays because the toddler they were holding loved smacking the keyboard. Some turned in assignments late because they got COVID or the flu, or a spouse or child did. Others lost family members.

"You have overcome incredible obstacles," Willis told those at the ceremony. "You should be so proud. Your families, friends and loved ones should be proud. Lander is proud." ■ By Karen Petit



State Provides Funding for New Info Commons

When the South Carolina General Assembly passed its FY 2022-23 budget, it included over $17 million in new funding for Lander University for the second year in a row. And $8 million of that figure will go towards a new information commons on the University's campus. An additional $6 million was allocated to renovate the existing Jackson Library into classroom and laboratory space upon the completion of the new information commons.

Jackson Library was first constructed in 1976, when Lander's enrollment was around 1,500 students. Because of its continued increases in enrollment year after year, the University has outgrown the original design capacity of the building. Once constructed, the new information commons will add new technology and resources that reflect how students and faculty access and evaluate information in the twenty-first century.

Lawmakers say it was that high level of growth at Lander, and the need for more classroom and laboratory space, that led to the funding of these projects. President Richard Cosentino thanked the legislature for their continued support of Lander, saying, "Our General Assembly knows that this investment into Lander University is an investment in the future workforce of our great state."

■ By Graham Duncan

Photos by Laura B. Wood



Above: Nursing major Cyrus Kelly addresses attendees at the annual scholarship celebration.

Below: Lander student Carley Muilenburg poses with scholarship donors, from left, David Lander Henderson, Ann Carol Corley and Betty Jo Henderson.



Generosity Leads to Success

Lander Celebrates Donors, Students at Annual Event

College scholarships help students pay for their education. But behind every college scholarship is a story of dreams and a deep hope for the future.

At Lander University's 38th annual Eleanor Teal Donor Appreciation and Scholarship Celebration, stories of academic success and generosity became the hallmark of the evening.

Cyrus Kelly, of Sharpsburg, Ga., said the funds from the Self Regional Healthcare Endowed Scholarship will support his dreams of becoming a nurse. "Self is giving me access to more resources than I ever had before," he said.

After the deaths of her father and sister, a young, uncertain Reese Williams put her hope in Lander, and said, the "University transformed my life."

A senior mathematics major from Lexington, Williams said she was facing an uncertain future. But the Terry and Valerie Evans Scholarship and the Zeigler-Gregg Scholarship boosted Williams' confidence and ability to succeed. "Donors welcomed me on the elevator of success."

David Lander Henderson, great-grandson of Lander's founder, Samuel Lander, benefited from a scholarship to study history at Lander. He and his wife, Betty Jo, and their family member, Ann Carol Corley, support multiple scholarships at the University, including one for Carley Muilenburg, a chemistry major from Leesville.

The scholarship is crucial to Muilenburg's ability to pursue her goal of becoming a chemistry teacher. "I am paying for college myself," she said. "I worked really hard in high school to be able to come to college … having this scholarship means that I can do what I want for my future."

Henderson said he believes his great-grandfather would be proud of the University, established as Williamston Female College 150 years ago. "Lander has had an enduring impact. If the University had not made a difference in the lives of South Carolinians, it would not have lasted. Lander's future seems very, very bright." ■ By Karen Petit



Lander Extends Learning Through Corporate Partners Program

A partnership between Lander University and six area businesses and corporations will help employees earn their bachelor's or master's degrees through online courses and reduced tuition fees.

"Since its inception, Lander University's College of Graduate and Online Studies has focused on helping working adults continue their education through online options," said Dr. Lloyd Willis, the college's dean. "Many universities across the country accomplish this same goal by partnering with local companies and providing a level of targeted service for their employees to make degree programs more accessible."

The first community partners are Countybank, Greenwood Capital, Lonza, Greenwood Regional Rehabilitation Hospital, National Healthcare and VELUX Group USA. Through the partnership agreements, Lander will offer a 25 percent tuition discount to employees enrolled in online programs.

"This arrangement allows the University to assist working adults, who often think their only options for degrees are large, out-of-state online institutions. Many working adults are unaware that these options exist within South Carolina and that our programs are affordable and tailored to their specific career needs," Willis said.

Corporate partners see a strong need locally for enhancing their employees' education.

"We are committed to serving our associates by providing education and training opportunities," said Jamie Hedgepath, chief human resources officer for Countybank and Greenwood Capital. "We are excited to expand our existing relationship with Lander to provide local cost-effective educational opportunities for our associates and help them grow on both a personal and professional level."

The opportunities to learn online at Lander are extensive. The University offers undergraduate online programs in business administration, human services, paralegal studies, criminology, psychology and public health. Lander also has an RN to BSN program which enables RNs to complete a bachelor's degree in nursing.

Graduate online programs are available in business administration, management, education, emergency management, exercise science and nursing. ■ By Karen Petit



Unique Gift Preserves History

Good things can come in small packages, at least as far as Lander associate director of Library Services Dr. David Mash is concerned.

Mash recently received a phone call from Jane McGahee, of Clinton, who told him that she had been going through some things that belonged to her grandmother, Clara Bobo, who attended Lander during the 1930s, and had come across three old Lander College yearbooks. "She couldn't bear to throw them away, and she said, 'would you be interested in these?' And I said, 'absolutely,'" Mash recalled.



The yearbooks Mash received were signed by numerous classmates of Bobo, as well as Dr. John W. Speake, president of Lander from 1932-41. Between two of the yearbooks was something that Mash found even more interesting: a souvenir folder of 17 postcards depicting Greenwood landmarks of the 1930s. "We're just so excited that this little piece came," Mash said, calling the folder "unique to anything we have."

Mash is in the process of digitizing the photos and researching the places shown so that he can annotate each image. He encouraged friends of the University to donate old postcards or other items of historical importance to Lander's archives collection. Even something small, he said, can be "of large consequence."

■ By Jeff Lagrone

Sweeping Success

LANDER ART STUDENTS DOMINATE AT 2023 PBC ART EXHIBITION

Lander University students from the Department of Art + Design earned top honors in the 2023 Peach Belt Conference Art Exhibition.

Of the six awards given in the annual competition, Lander students received four of the prizes.

Lander students swept the Campus Spirit Category by winning all of the awards.

Kyle Bryant, of Easley, won first place for his "Heads Will Roll" multimedia sculpture of a headless Queen of Hearts.

Jacob Ray Harry, of Simpsonville, earned second place honors with his sculpture, "Ride 'Em Cowboy," created in steel and wood.

A multimedia work of art, featuring a rabbit wearing a men's suit and titled "Calvin Works a 9-5," won third place for Maggie Ahern, of Easley.

In the General Category, Anastasia Muzzarelli earned second place for her oil and acrylic painting "Familiar Faces."

For the ninth consecutive year, the art exhibition is presented digitally and has become a virtual exhibition for art lovers. Each institution in the Peach Belt Conference was invited to submit digital images of two- or three-dimensional artwork completed by students and faculty. All submitted artworks were featured in a slideshow presentation during the recent Peach Belt Conference Basketball Tournament Championships.



Anastasia Muzzarelli earned second place honors in the 2023 Peach Belt Conference Art Exhibition.



Kyle Bryant, a senior at Lander University, created the Queen of Hearts sculpture, which won first place in the Peach Belt Conference Art Exhibition.

Muzzarelli, of Mauldin, said the human form was her inspiration for the painting.

"I was very interested in drawing and creating works that included the human form, and I wanted to experiment with different ways to portray the face," she said. "I incorporated a lot of friends and family and tried to create a flowing composition with a range of emotions."

Bryant, who recently won the Slay Sculpture Award during Lander's Student Juried Exhibition, said the Queen of Hearts was first created for a puppet parade at Lander. He enhanced the puppet for the Lander art show and included a miniature guillotine as part of the display.

Lander students have a history of success in the Peach Belt art show. Last year, Lander students won first place honors in the General and Campus Spirit categories. In 2021, student artists won four of the six awards.

■ By Karen Petit; Photos by Laura B. Wood

This Is How We Brew It

Lander Microbiology Students Conduct Research for Local Business

By Karen Petit

A microbiology class at Lander University can say "cheers" to the nation's rapidly growing, competitive craft beer industry and know that their research is part of that success.

The average consumer probably has little knowledge of the intense research that goes into the brewing of craft beers and other beverages. But 16 students in the Biology 421 class at Lander spent the Fall 2022 semester working with faculty member Dr. Melissa Hayes, an assistant professor of biology, and AnnaBelle Kratz, cellar manager of Good Times Brewing, to study the impact of wort pH on yeast kinetics. Their research ultimately led to the development of a new Bearcat Brew for Good Times' customers.

Their findings, recently released at a scientific poster session at Good Times Brewing for Lander faculty and the community, revealed the intricacies of brewing beer.

Wort is the "beer starter." It's a liquid containing sugars that will be fermented by yeast. The process ultimately yields alcohol.

Hayes said the study of yeast kinetics includes the duration of fermentation *(number of days to final specific gravity)*, temperature, pH of the initial wort *(how acidic or basic the liquid is)* and the final beer product, as well as "harvest parameters," such as yield, cell count and viability.

"These parameters were measured during and after fermentation over multiple batches," Hayes said. "The study helped to answer a beer industry-wide concern over what can cause the variation in beer quality from batch to batch and also led to understanding the microbiology of why this happens."

For Kratz, the decision to involve Lander's science students was practical. "Brewing beer is all science. There is no way of getting around it."

At Good Times and other breweries, yeast is re-used and changed over time depending on how the yeast performs in the fermentation process. The impact of wort pH on yeast can affect the taste of a beer, Kratz said.



Hayes said the collaboration gave her microbiology students the opportunity to learn scientific techniques that they may encounter in future studies or careers. "In this case, it went from an academic dimension to how our work could impact a local brewery. For a business, it's not easy to maintain consistent taste and quality among the batches of beer. Our research helped answer some of those questions."

Ethan Fowler, a senior from Conway, was among the students discussing their research posters. "It was really exciting to learn about the craft beer industry. Our science wasn't focused on a life-or-death situation, but on science in the workplace," he said.

Fellow student Zach Branham, a senior from Greenville, agreed. "It was fun to see how our work directly relates to something we could do after Lander."



Branham is right: the rapid growth of the craft beer industry has created a market for science graduates with degrees in microbiology, chemistry, fermentation and other related disciplines.

"We don't always have opportunities for this type of hands-on research. It was very exciting to be part of this work," said Kayla Freeland, a senior from Charleston.

The class was a perfect fit for Andrea Burchett, of Great Falls, who will graduate in May. She plans to attend graduate school to study food microbiology. "The experience was fun and practical. We were working with a brewery. This was not basic microbiology. We'll be out in the world very soon working with other microbiologists."

Working with Lander was a win-win for students and the brewery, Kratz said. "They gained real-world experience. They could see how what they are studying has an impact on business, and we were able to use those research findings." ■

See more about this story.
Video by Walker Smith.
Pictures by Deb Nygro.

"Compassion in Class"



Peterra Richburg, and daughter Aria
- Photo Contributed

A Show of Kindness in the Classroom Goes Viral

By Karen Petit

In a world weary of dreary news stories, the compassion found in a Lander University math class became an unexpected viral sensation.

The study of math has been known to produce frustration and tears among students of every age. But when the tears sprang from a visitor, Dr. Samuel Reed leapt into action. The "visitor" was Aria, the two-month-old daughter of Peterra Richburg, a senior majoring in elementary education and a student in one of Reed's Fall 2022 classes.

A last-minute change in childcare put Richburg in a quandary. Should she stay home and miss class or go to campus? Richburg, determined to stay on track with her coursework and graduation goals, put Aria in the car and headed to Lander. "I didn't have time to let Dr. Reed know that I was bringing her with me. I was so nervous about it."

While their arrival may have been a surprise to her classmates, the response was one of pure joy. "They were saying, 'there's a baby in the class,'" said Richburg, who was grateful for the welcoming reception Aria received.

Later on during the class, when Aria became a bit fussy, the baby's unhappiness led Reed to do the unexpected. The assistant professor of math education scooped Aria up and continued teaching so that Richburg could take notes. Aria was comforted, and the class continued.

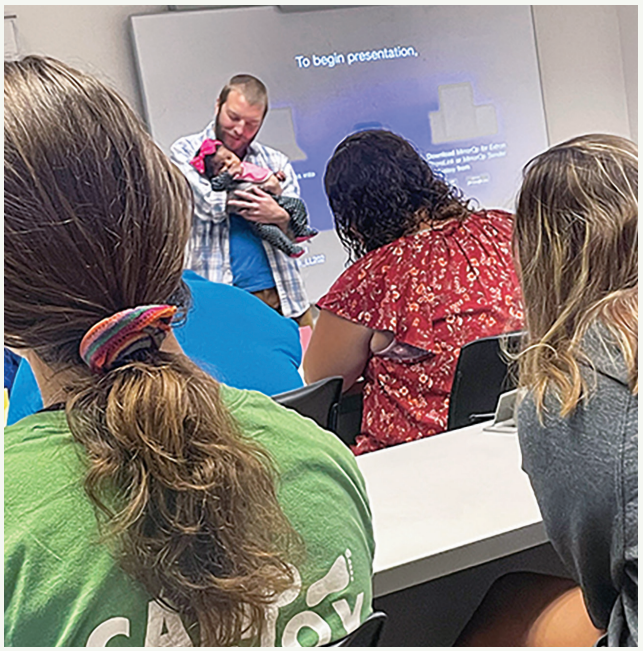
"She was alert and looking around when Dr. Reed was holding her," Richburg said. "It was very sweet."

The new mom snapped a photo and shared it on social media with the tag "Compassion In Class." The post caught the attention of people on campus and beyond, and South Carolina television stations clamored to share the news with the public.

After that, the story spread quickly to stations throughout the United States, and also caught the attention of a television station in Norway, which featured Lander's lesson in compassionate education for its viewers.

National websites were happy to share the news, as well. Sen. Tim Scott, R-S.C., posted Reed and Richburg's story on his U.S. Senate website.

Reed was described as "a master at handling tears in his math class, be they of his adult students or a tiny human who's only been on the planet for a couple of months" by the news and lifestyle website, Upworthy.



Two-month-old Aria already is taking part in studies at Lander. During an unexpected day for her mother, Peterra Richburg, Aria went to class. When she became fussy, Dr. Samuel Reed jumped into action, picked her up and continued teaching. - Photo Contributed

With his rapid response to Aria's cries, no one could have imagined that the baby was the first to attend one of Reed's classes. "I was surprised and excited by baby Aria's visit to the class," he said. "Peterra had not brought her to class this semester, and I did not even know she was a new mom."

When Aria became fussy, "I figured we could ignore her cries until Mom [could settle her], or I could hold her and see if I could help. So, I picked her up and continued teaching," said Reed, who was leading a class on how to teach addition to students. "I also wanted Peterra to not feel distracted and be able to actively participate with her peers around her. Plus, who doesn't want to hold a cute baby!? Guests, especially cute babies, are always a pleasant visit."

The father of a toddler himself, Reed said, "As a parent, I think I have always had a healthy expectation that 'my community is going to help me raise this child, right?' I feel it would be rather hypocritical of me to not be willing to turn around and help another parent who needs a little love and compassion in the moment."

> "...Compassionate professors serve as a reminder that there are plenty of good teachers out there in this world."

Reed said he is very fortunate to be a faculty member at Lander and part of the Lander community. "I am not a unique Lander professor who goes out of their way to accommodate students. In fact, I am not even the first of my colleagues in the mathematics department to go viral for holding a student's baby and continuing to teach," he said.

Reed is referring to Dr. Josie Ryan. In 2016, a photo of Ryan holding a baby during her class received national and international attention. The viral moment occurred when a student began the academic year and gave birth during the second week. When new mother Sarah Thompson was able to return, Ryan asked her to bring the newborn to class. Sarah was hesitant at first. But a hectic day sent her and son, Isaiah, to class. Ryan taught with the sleeping baby in her arms, and Isaiah went to the class on other occasions.

In a story on Go2Tutors, a national education news website, Reed and Ryan received kudos: "Tender stories like those of these compassionate professors serve as a reminder that there are plenty of good teachers out there in this world. Today, young, new mothers feel the pressure more than ever to continue with their career aspirations, despite the need and expectation to care for little ones at home. Having stories like this reminds them that there is help found in unsuspected places."

Richburg, a Charleston native, is completing her student teaching and hopes to return to the Lowcountry and teach at Charleston Morningside Middle, where she was a student. She's spent her last year juggling classes and a one-hour commute to Lander. "I get up every morning after having no rest," she said. "I don't mind. Aria is my world. I love her so much."

Reed said the attention was "interesting, in a word," adding that the story caught the attention of students throughout campus. "I think it made them realize Dr. Reed cares."

Reed said that he was grateful he could help Peterra "on her one last hurdle to get her degree. It was great to be a helping hand along the way."

Aria has been back to campus with her mother since that frantic August visit. And, maybe in another 18 years or so, Aria can be a Lander Bearcat, too. ■



Practicing Being Human

Faculty Portraits by Laura B. Wood

Lander University's 2022 Distinguished Professor: Elizabeth Snipes

When she first applied to teach at Lander University in 2011, Professor Elizabeth Snipes, of Lander University's Department of Art + Design, said she did so at the insistence of colleagues who told her that Lander's art department "was on the verge of something wonderful."

Today, if you were to ask Snipes, Lander's 2022 Distinguished Professor, what was (and remains) so wonderful about Lander, she would be happy to tell you: "the enthusiasm, dedication and joy that the faculty and staff have for teaching and learning," she said. "I love being part of decisions, efforts and outcomes that are student-centered at Lander."

Snipes' studios are student-centered, too. Her passion and enthusiasm inspires her students to put their best creative foot forward, and her desire to help students grow beyond what they think is possible is behind every lesson she teaches.

"Teaching studio art," she said, "involves carefully crafting scenarios; supporting my students with information, demonstration and encouragement; and carefully observing and responding to each student as they navigate difficult creative decisions." Supporting students as they address the challenges they face in the classroom is a rewarding experience as an educator because of how those scenarios help Lander students evolve into more mature artists, as well as more mature human beings.

"To practice art is to practice being human," she said. "Each project is a scenario that is very planned ahead, but one that also unfolds in the space of the classroom and in the mind, body, eye and spirit of each student uniquely in real time."

"Life is a creative process as well when we think in these terms," she said.

Snipes' most recent solo exhibition, *Groundless*, was held at Anderson University in the fall of 2021, and included 14 original paintings that she says were inspired by her experiences as both a mother and artist while on quarantine in the COVID-19 pandemic. Her work was also featured as part of the grand opening of Grant & Little, a new gallery space in Atlanta. Along with her scholarly work, Snipes' service to Lander has been equally fulfilling, contributing to the development of new degree programs,

like the Bachelor of Fine Arts, the Bachelor of Design, the Master of Fine Arts and the Master of Arts in Teaching.

“Watching the first BFA graduates get their degrees was incredibly memorable,” she said. “Being a part of crafting a curriculum and implementing a new degree program—and fostering a valuable professional skill set in our students—was memorable and rewarding.”

At the heart of the decision to name Snipes as Lander’s 2022 Distinguished Professor was how she empowers her students in every aspect of her career, whether it be guiding students through a class assignment, or helping them navigate the city streets of another country as a co-leader on study tours abroad. Haley Floyd, lecturer and foundations coordinator for the Department of Art + Design, reflected on her own experience with Snipes’ devotion to her students, having been one of Snipes’ students before the two were co-workers.

“She approaches art-making as a skill set that is developed through practice, not an innate ability that you either have or do not have,” Floyd said of Snipes, adding that she “has an amazing gift of encouraging students to push themselves further without making them feel like they aren’t already ‘good enough.’”

What Floyd admires most about working with Snipes, though, is her grace—how she readily admits that learning, even for herself, is a lifelong process which doesn’t stop at the completion of one’s formal education. Floyd recalled a trip abroad with Snipes, “where everything that could possibly go wrong did, in fact, go wrong.”

But even in the most difficult of circumstances, Floyd admired Snipes’ ability to keep her composure, elegantly turning each situation into an opportunity for students to learn. “She lives her life as an artist, a learner and an educator, breathing new life, excitement and wonder into some of the most ordinary, mundane things,” Floyd said.

“This, in the world of learning, is such a treasure.”

■ By Graham Duncan



Dr. Osvaldo Parrilla
2022 Moore Award

A love for language and literature, which began in high school, became the foundation for Dr. Osvaldo Parrilla’s career as an educator.

A first-generation college graduate who continues “to love what I do,” Parrilla is the 2022 recipient of Lander University’s Moore Award for Excellence in General Education Teaching.

Parrilla, a professor of Spanish in the Department of English and Foreign Languages, joined Lander’s faculty in 2007 and teaches all levels of Spanish. His passion for teaching began during his youth in Saint Croix, Virgin Islands, when “I learned to appreciate books, plays and short stories,” he said. “I fell in love with literature, and I decided to become a Spanish teacher.”

Parrilla was determined to go to college. His parents, both from Puerto Rico, had not earned high school degrees, but they were proud of his goals and supported him in his undergraduate program at the University of the Virgin Islands. His first job in bilingual education and Spanish began in 1985 at the island’s John H. Woodson Jr. High School, a post he held until Hurricane Hugo destroyed the tropical paradise in 1989.

The disaster led Parrilla to Buffalo, N.Y., where he continued working in public schools. In the following years, he earned a master’s degree from New York University and a doctorate from Texas Tech University and went on to teaching positions at universities in Tennessee, North Carolina and South Carolina.

Students rave about Parrilla’s teaching, said Dr. Mark Rollins, dean of Lander’s College of Arts & Humanities.

“Dr. Parrilla’s students enjoy learning Spanish with him because he makes class lively, interactive and fun. Students love his sense of humor and effective use of class time,” Rollins said. “Many students take introductory Spanish classes simply to fulfill a requirement. Dr. Parrilla gives them much more than they bargained for. Students often cite his class as their favorite of the semester.”

Beyond the classroom, Parrilla is the faculty advisor to Somos LU, which serves and promotes the interests of the Hispanic community on campus. His encouragement and support for the club led to Parrilla being named the 2022 Advisor of the Year, an annual award given to a Lander faculty or staff member for their significant voluntary involvement in co-curricular activities.

Parrilla’s love for learning endures. He marched in Lander’s 165th Commencement Ceremony in May 2022 as the recipient of a B.S. in Visual Art degree and sat among the students with whom he had taken classes and those whom he taught. “It reminded me once again how valuable a college degree is and how much it can change your life,” he said.

■ By Karen Petit



Dr. Ashton Davis
2022 Young Faculty Teaching Award

Lander Lecturer of Chemistry Dr. Ashton Davis, the winner of this year's Young Faculty Teaching Award, specializes in making general education chemistry courses more accessible for students.

Before beginning work at Lander in 2020, she was a chemistry learning specialist at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, a role in which she served as both an academic coach and leader of CHEMpossible, a learning group for students in introductory chemistry courses.

She has continued teaching general education chemistry courses since arriving at Lander. In 2021, she became coordinator of the Chemistry 105/106 sequence, a position that involves working with instructors to standardize curriculum and policies among different sections. Davis developed course-specific materials for the Chemistry 105 lab, including a recitation assignment, a recitation activity PowerPoint for instructors, quizzes and grading rubrics.

"Recitation takes place during the first 45 minutes of lab and includes a few select problems from the previous week's content. The instructor can go over the problems at a slower pace and answer questions from students," she said.

Students need all the help they can get, according to Davis, who earned a Ph.D. in organic chemistry at the University of Florida.

"Most students taking CHEM 105 are first-semester freshmen, and the transition from high school classes to college classes is a big one," she said.

She helps students by giving them "low-stakes opportunities to test their knowledge. We have frequent quizzes and clicker-type questions so students can see what they know and what they don't. The exam is not the time for students to realize they didn't actually know the information."

She devotes class time to "working problems together, developing those critical thinking skills, and shifting from passive memorization. It is important that students learn how to think instead of what to think."

Davis said she has enjoyed her time at Lander.

"The small classroom size allows me to interact with all the students and learn their names, and lends itself to more group activities. I appreciate the support given by my dean and chair to try new things in the classroom and coordinate the CHEM 105/106 lecture and lab courses," she said. ■ By Jeff Lagrone



Abby Pilgrim
Outstanding LINK Instructor Award

The Learning, Involvement, Networking and Knowledge (LINK) program at Lander aims to help provide first-year University students with a smooth transition into college life. LINK instructors play a vital role in new students' development, and Abby Pilgrim '21 was honored with this year's Outstanding LINK Instructor Award at the 2022 Staff Excellence Awards Breakfast.

After graduating from Lander, she was hired as a full-time tutoring and supplemental instruction coordinator in the Academic Success Center (ASC), where part of her role involves providing classroom instruction for the University's LINK program. Prior

Faculty Portraits by Laura B. Wood



Dr. Zach Rubin
2022 Young Faculty Scholar Award

His research on "intentional communities" has earned Dr. Zach Rubin the Lander University 2022 Young Faculty Scholar Award.

Rubin, an assistant professor of sociology, also led an in-depth study on food insecurity at Lander University, the first such study to document the challenges faced by students not having consistent access to food and/or meals.

His research on intentional communities, also known as communes, received national recognition from the Communal Studies Association, which selected Rubin for the "Outstanding Article" award in this field of research in 2020 and again in 2021 – the first time a researcher has received the honor in two consecutive years. In addition to five journal articles, Rubin also has written two book reviews, contributed three pieces to the American Sociological Association's national teaching resource and made five conference presentations.

Intentional communities have existed in America since the early 1600s. In fact, some researchers consider Jamestown, the first permanent English settlement in the Americas, and the Massachusetts Bay Colony, settled by the Puritans, to be early examples of intentional communities.

Dr. Lucas McMillan, dean of Lander's College of Behavioral and Social Sciences, said Rubin's research actively informs and improves his teaching.

"He has re-shaped courses to give students practice in gathering data about the Greenwood area and then helps students use community-oriented data to understand social problems. His work on food insecurity led students to participate in a nine-county phone survey," he said. "Dr. Rubin has connected and collaborated with local nonprofits on these data projects and to better demonstrate the applied nature of sociology."

Rubin earned his bachelor's degree in geography and sociology from the University of Missouri, Columbia, as well as a master's degree in geography and doctorate in sociology. Before joining Lander's faculty in 2019, Rubin was a graduate instructor at the University of Missouri and an adjunct professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of Indianapolis.

He is an associate editor of the Criminology and Deviance Section of *TRAILS*, the Teaching Resources and Innovations Library in Sociology. For the Communal Studies Association, Rubin is a member of the board of directors and also is chair of the Book Awards Committee. He is on the board of the Center for Sustainable and Cooperative Living at Dancing Rabbit Ecovillage.

Rubin, who has received travel and research grants to support his studies, is chair of Lander's Student Needs Committee and a faculty mentor of the Tabletop Gaming Association. He has been a volunteer at Lander's Bear Necessities Food Pantry since its opening in 2020. ■ By Karen Petit

to her graduation, Pilgrim was a student employee of the ASC and was recognized as the ASC Mentor of the Year in 2021.

"When students come into the Academic Success Center and have questions, she's always the first to say 'let me help you,' or 'I'll show you how to do that,'" said Anissa Lawrence, academic transfer coordinator.

In her role as LINK instructor, Pilgrim fosters the growth of new Bearcats' intellectual skills and interpersonal competencies for collegiate success. Additionally, she also helps students get comfortably settled into college life, while encouraging each individual student to explore their sets of personal values, and fosters commitments to exploring and pursuing their life goals. ■ By Zack Bennett

FALL 2022 COMMENCEMENT

Graduates Can Boldly Say to the Next Unknown, "Bring It On!"

By Karen Petit

If there was one certainty for the graduates at Lander University's 166th commencement ceremonies in December, it was that change is an inevitable part of life – and that showing up every day to face those changes is crucial.

Commencement speaker Elizabeth Snipes, a professor of art and Lander's 2022 Distinguished Professor of the Year, said the COVID-19 pandemic turned the world upside down, bringing changes to the graduates' academic journeys and plans. Snipes was the featured speaker as Lander conferred bachelor's and master's degrees to 305 graduates.

During the pandemic's upheaval, Snipes said she came to the realization that "we cannot change circumstances," but the circumstances do change – and how a person grows from these circumstances is optional for each individual.

Calin Wharton, of Abbeville, who earned a master's degree in business administration, said her quest toward graduation included the deaths of four family members over a three-month time span, the burning of her church, and "doing all of this, the studying and working, during the pandemic." Yet, the adversity helped her "prove to myself that I was worth it, that I could challenge myself and be proactive. I could do this," said Wharton, who is a data analyst for Self Regional Healthcare.

Evan Hatch, of Columbia, who also earned his master's degree in business administration, said overcoming obstacles gave him the opportunity to "change myself, or adapt." He did so because earning his degree was the opportunity to fulfill a dream his mother had for herself and a goal, too, of his grandmother. "I finished this out for them."

Snipes' encouragement that graduates "show up" rung true for Honors College graduate Gabby Rogers, of Greenwood. Showing up on difficult days was a habit formed while earning her bachelor's degree in biology with a genetics emphasis. Taking organic chemistry classes online during the pandemic shutdown "was not the easiest thing to do." But she showed up for those classes, and the ones held on campus when she returned in August 2020. Now, Rogers is looking ahead and plans to apply for medical school in the fall.

"Today is the start of something new. I'm finishing this part of my life and moving on to something else," Rogers said.

When nursing student Lydia O'Neal showed up for a pediatric nursing internship in Arusha, Tanzania, she faced culture shock. Patients were being treated for severe malnutrition, typhoid and malaria, which are rare in the United States. But the welcoming reception from the community's people made her feel at home within a couple of days. O'Neal, of Hanahan, said she was looking ahead to a career as a labor and delivery nurse at Self Regional, but her study abroad experience helped her envision a life as an international travel nurse.

Alexis Stone said she was ready to put her science degree to use when she began working at the Greenwood Genetic Center after graduation.





Photos by Laura B. Wood



Thayer Award

Eric Olle "Samuel" Maardh, of Stockholm, Sweden, received the Fall 2022 Thayer Award, Lander's highest academic honor recognizing the student graduating with the highest GPA. Maardh, who also earned a 4.0 Medalist designation, earned a B.S. in Business Administration, Management/Marketing.

Her undergraduate education forged a sense of independence and self-reliance. "Today means I did it. I will be working in my dream job," she said.

She's ready, too, for whatever lies ahead. "I'm very OK with jumping in full speed."

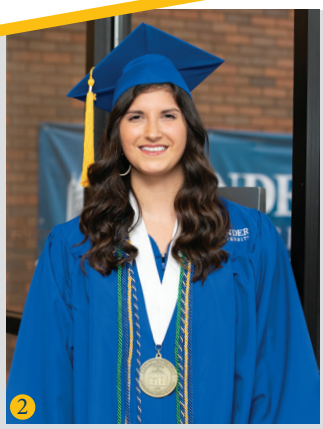
Snipes told the Class of 2022, "Appreciate the hard work that you have done. Celebrate … so that you can show up again and again and again."

That way, the new Lander alumni can say boldly to the next unknown, "Bring it on!" ■

See More Photos & Video

FALL 2022 COMMENCEMENT


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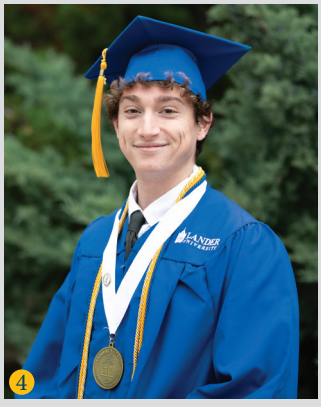

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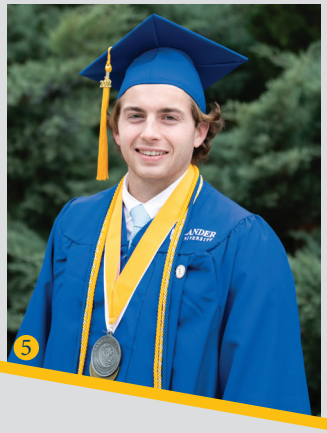

3

4.0 MEDALISTS

Students who achieved a 4.0 GPA were recognized as University Medalists and presented with a special medallion as part of their academic regalia.


4

1. **Mical Caleb Dean**
   B.S. in Business Administration
2. **Savannah Overholt Holliday**
   B.S. in Nursing
3. **Ashley Daniela Garcia**
   B.F.A. in Visual Art
4. **Trevor Joseph Bertha**
   B.S. in Business Administration
5. **Jonah Isaac Miller**
   B.S. in Business Administration
6. **Erik Michael Haynie**
   B.S. in Business Administration


5


6











Photos by Bonner Abercrombie, Dawn Lewis, Deb Nygro and Laura B. Wood










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I50






2022
BSN
CLASS OF 2022
CLASS OF 2022







The College of Graduate & Online Studies

PROVIDING AN AUTHENTIC EXPERIENCE FROM ENROLLMENT TO COMMENCEMENT

BY GRAHAM DUNCAN

The demand for online educational opportunities is on the rise.

Research indicates that over 30,000 residents in South Carolina are enrolled in online programs at out-of-state colleges. Lander's newly formed College of Graduate and Online Studies aims to provide those residents who are looking to further their education with convenient, high-caliber online graduate and undergraduate programs at an affordable, in-state price.

"We want those people to know they have an in-state option that gives them the quality, flexibility and majors they want," said Dr. Lloyd Willis, dean of the College of Graduate and Online Studies.

While Lander already has an established track record of providing that level of education face-to-face, housing and classroom capacities have put a limit on the growth of traditional enrollment—which has seen all-time highs in recent years. Now, with many graduate and undergraduate programs being offered online, "there's no limit to who can be a Bearcat," Willis said.

The recruitment efforts of Lander's newest academic college have passed key milestones since its establishment, with new programs being added to meet the career interests of prospective students and the demands of the workforce.

In the fall of 2022, Lander enrolled over 250 online undergraduate students and more than 600 graduate students—both numbers a sharp increase from the year prior. Graduate enrollment, in particular, has skyrocketed over 600% since just 2019. While some of those students are in-person, depending on their program, the majority are online.

And with the College's focus on nurturing growth in these programs, Willis expects this number to continue climbing as more people learn of the opportunities to advance their education with a degree from Lander University ... in South Carolina and far beyond.

"We have students enrolling from 23 states, and from as far away as California, Washington, Texas, Illinois and Delaware," Willis said.

Part of what attracts these students to Lander are the relationships being built with community partners that allow some students to earn their degrees at a discounted rate. For example, the College of Graduate and Online Studies has established a series of agreements with local school districts that pave the way for teachers to enroll in one of Lander's M.Ed. programs at little or no cost to them. The districts use

Undergraduate

ONLINE PROGRAMS

- Bachelor of Science,
  Business Administration
- Bachelor of Applied Science,
  Business Administration
- Bachelor of Science in Nursing (RN to BSN)
- Bachelor of Science,
  Human Services
  Paralegal Studies
  Criminology
  Public Health
  Psychology

Graduate

ONLINE & ON-CAMPUS PROGRAMS

- Master of Arts in Teaching,
  Special Education
  Visual Art K-12
- Master of Business Administration
- Master of Education, Montessori Education
- Master of Education, Teaching and Learning
  Diverse Learners
  Instructional Technology
  Montessori Education
- Master of Fine Arts, Visual Art
- Master of Science, Emergency Management
- Master of Science, Exercise Science
- Master of Science in Management
- Master of Science in Nursing,
  Clinical Nurse Leader

professional development funding to purchase a certain number of seats in Lander's programs, and then fill those seats with teachers interested in sharpening their classroom teaching skills with a master's degree. School districts say this is a useful tool in improving teacher retention.

The College is also forging corporate partnerships so companies can offer their employees a discounted rate on tuition. Meanwhile, a discounted tuition rate has been established for all employees of public and nonprofit agencies across the state.

And, the College now offers graduate assistantships, which provide a 50% tuition discount and a stipend of $3,000 per semester in exchange for working 20 hours a week on campus. These master's students serve in a number of different offices and departments, enhancing the Lander experience for every student. "Our graduate assistantships are a great deal," Willis said, "and are a benefit, not only to our grad students, but to our entire University."

Those who are finishing their bachelor's degree view graduate education as an obvious pathway to adding specific master's-level credentials that will accelerate their career growth. Lander now offers a wide-range of graduate degrees aimed at giving students the specific education their future employers will be on the lookout for.

But Lander's programs aren't just for recent college graduates, Willis stressed. They're for anyone who is looking to fine tune their craft and demonstrate readiness for leadership roles.

"Over half of our graduate students are mid-career professionals," Willis said. "They are coming back to school because they want to advance their careers and increase their earning capacity."

Online and graduate studies aren't unique to Lander University, but Willis says Lander's student-centered, service-oriented approach is unique. The authenticity that applicants and students feel at every step of the process—from enrollment to commencement—is what sets Lander's College of Online and Graduate Studies apart from other institutions.

"If a student requests information from another institution, they may get a recorded phone call that asks them to press a button to talk to someone," Willis said. "If someone requests information about a Lander University graduate program, they get a personal phone call, an email message or a text message from our graduate admissions counselor. It is obvious that they are talking to a real person, and the experience is like this from the time they inquire until the time they graduate."

"They are coming back to school because they want to advance their careers and increase their earning capacity."

Johnathan McAllister '06

READY FOR THE NEXT NATURAL DISASTER



Photo Contributed by NCFBI

Lander University alumnus Johnathan McAllister knew from an early age that he wanted to go into law enforcement after watching those he admired most lead successful careers in the field. "Law enforcement gave them the opportunity to make a difference in a variety of ways," he said, "not just a single approach."

McAllister earned a sociology degree from Lander in 2006, and now serves the Conway, South Carolina, Police Department as a patrol lieutenant. Off duty, though, McAllister has returned to Lander—this time working towards a Master of Science in Emergency Management online through the University's College of Graduate and Online Studies.

Earning a master's has been on his to-do list for some time. McAllister loves his career, his co-workers and the City of Conway's residents, and sees continuing his education as an investment not only in himself, but also an investment in those he serves. He hopes to one day hold a post as chief-of-police, and chose to continue his education in order to take the next step towards that career goal.

When it came to picking a program for graduate school, however, McAllister said he "did not want to take classes at just any university." He was searching for a program that would enhance his emergency preparedness on the job while being offered in an affordable online format that would fit his schedule. It was at the South Carolina Training Officers Conference that McAllister first learned of the emergency management program offered by his alma mater.

"I was 100 percent on board," he said.

As a law enforcement officer, McAllister claims one of the leading benefits of Lander's graduate programs is the public employee discount offered by the College of Graduate and Online Studies, providing a pathway to higher education to those who make communities safer. In his own department, he is an advocate among his colleagues for professional development and continuing education.

"I have recommended this program to several of my co-workers," he said, "and hope they take advantage of the opportunity."

Graduate school wasn't just about the next career move for McAllister, but about putting the principles he's learning in Lander's program to use while on the job. His current role with the Conway Police Department provides him with regular opportunities to do just that. When South Carolina was hit with historic flooding caused by hurricanes Matthew and Joaquin in 2015, McAllister was tapped to lead the city's emergency operation center—a position he still holds today. Those experiences working inside the field of emergency management have helped him contribute to various classroom scenarios and discussions, and those lessons "in the classroom" have equipped McAllister with the right tools to respond to the next natural disaster.

McAllister even recently parlayed his experience and advanced education into an acceptance into the FBI National Academy. And because of the convenient online format of his master's program at Lander, he was able to participate in this training program without having to put his studies on hold. "My leadership skills, as well as my operational skills, have evolved thanks to Lander University," McAllister said.



Photo by Laura B. Wood

Brittni Johnson '21/'22

INSPIRING STUDENTS ARTISTICALLY, ATHLETICALLY AND ACADEMICALLY

During her first run at college, Brittni Johnson's primary focus at Lander University was on her stellar athletic career. A former basketball player, Johnson joined in the women's basketball team's triumphs in winning their first NCAA Southeast Regional Tournament Championship, as well as the first Elite Eight appearance in program history. She also scored 1,000 career points while at Lander, and was twice named to the Peach Belt Conference All-Tournament Team.

"I shared the floor with several great athletes," she said, "and also met several more in other sports."

After taking a break from college life, Johnson chose to return to Lander to finish her art degree. She assembled what she called her "going back to school dream team," and in 2021, she received her Bachelor of Science in Visual Art.

And shortly after, Johnson found herself "back in the paint" as a graduate student in Lander's Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT), Visual Art K-12 program. She completed her master's degree in the fall of 2022.

"Honestly, I wouldn't have guessed in a million years that I would be pursuing this degree," she said. While a coaching career had crossed her mind before, Johnson had never thought of herself as a classroom teacher. Yet, it was Professor of Art Elizabeth Snipes who persuaded her to consider a career as an art educator, where Johnson could inspire student growth artistically, athletically and academically, on the court and in the studio.

After months of conversations with Snipes and Professor of Art Sandy Singletary, of the Department of Art + Design, Johnson took a "leap of faith" and enrolled in the MAT program. "They helped me find the teacher in myself," she said.

For Johnson, art presents us with an opportunity to learn about ourselves. Her work focuses on raising awareness for mental health issues, as well as Black history. "I believe my best works have come from expressing these topics," she said. Projects may start with a single image inside her head, based on a past event, through her own self-care exercises, or learning about her own family history. But as Johnson sketches her ideas out, and works with her professors to choose the appropriate medium and style for a project, her single image flourishes into something meaningful, beautiful and rich in detail.

Johnson was nervous coming back to school at the age of 30, but praised Lander's Department of Art + Design for providing what she describes as "an overwhelming sense of togetherness. That was comforting in my return to Lander and has been comforting since." In fact, that sense of togetherness—the family-like bond she has with her peers and her professors—has been a source of motivation for her during the course of her studies. And, just as they were in her basketball career, Johnson's mother and grandmother continue to be her biggest cheerleaders in the "arena of life."

Because of that welcoming, familial atmosphere, Johnson happily recommends Lander University and the MAT program to anyone interested in a career as an art educator.

"The art family at Lander is truly here to help you grow as an artist, a professional and a human being," she said. "You will have great leadership and great people in your corner."

Eric Delgado '04/'20

PROVIDING LEADERSHIP RIGHT HERE IN THE LAKELANDS



Photo by Laura B. Wood

When two-time Lander University graduate Eric Delgado was asked to serve as the city administrator for Laurens, South Carolina, it wasn't his first time in an important leadership role.

When he first graduated from Lander in 2004 with a bachelor's in history, he was commissioned a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army, and served as the information technology director at Camp Casey in South Korea. Delgado was then sent to Fort Stewart in Georgia, where he trained as the executive officer of a signal company that would be stationed in Iraq.

"Serving in the Army during a time of war presented me with unique opportunities for personal growth in leadership," he said.

It was Delgado's military experience that put him on the path to public administration. He was only a sophomore at Lander when he saw the terrorist attacks on 9/11 along with his classmates, and he felt called to serve his country. During his deployment to Iraq, Delgado was promoted to the rank of captain and oversaw a military transition team that trained Iraqi forces and coordinated the provincial reconstruction of Babil, Iraq.

"Public service took on a new meaning for me," Delgado said of his tenure in Iraq. With his newfound understanding of service, he returned to Lander to obtain a Master of Science in Management (MSM). Just a few short weeks after finishing the degree program, Delgado landed another opportunity to serve when he was offered the position of city administrator by Laurens Mayor Nathan Senn. According to Delgado, strategic, comprehensive planning and teamwork are essential pieces in the "puzzle of success," and he believes the City of Laurens has those pieces.

Delgado's educational journey didn't stop with just one master's degree. Since graduating from Lander the second time, Delgado went on to receive a Master of Public Administration from Clemson. He's now looking towards getting his MBA—which would be his third Lander degree.

Yet, it was the MSM program at Lander University that gave Delgado his first dose of the right management and leadership training he now utilizes as city administrator for the City of Laurens. Overseeing the daily operations in city government, and supervising multiple city departments require candidates with comprehensive training in management-based competencies, including leadership, human development and strategic planning. Healthy relationships between local governments and their business communities are also necessary to foster economic growth, and specialized training in management helped Delgado stand out as a candidate with the proper background to build bridges for more public-private partnerships.

According to College of Graduate and Online Studies Dean Dr. Lloyd Willis, Delgado's appointment as administrator for the City of Laurens shows just how versatile Lander's Master of Science Management program is for leaders in the workplace and the world.

"You don't need to be a business major to pursue a business-oriented master's program," Willis said. "The principles our business faculty teach in our MSM program are relevant to leadership positions in a wide array of fields. No matter your career goals, a Lander University education will give you the training you need to get where you want to go." ■

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Photos by Laura B. Wood

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Environmental Warrior

Pollinators Have Ally in '22 Alston Award Winner

By Jeff Lagrone | Photos by Laura B. Wood



Lander Assistant Grounds Manager Karla Coffey '19 is being recognized for her efforts to beautify campus. Last May, Coffey learned that she had been selected to receive the Mary Frances Poole Alston Award, established by Rowland P. Alston, host of the SCETV gardening show, "Making It Grow," to honor his grandmother, a 1914 graduate of Lander. The award recognizes a faculty or staff member who has made an impact on the campus community.

Associate Professor of Biology Dr. Andrew Schwendemann, one of several faculty members who nominated Coffey, called her "passionate about her work. Karla puts a lot of thought into the plants on campus."

In July, when Fox Carolina was in town to do a story on the Festival of Discovery, it focused its coverage on Coffey and her work at Lander. Greenwood City Manager Julie Wilkie, Coffey's former supervisor, also contributed to the story. She said that she hated to lose Coffey to Lander, "but we understood why they took her, because she was so great at what she did."

A native of Maryland, Coffey "was raised in the garden. My mom is a big gardener, so I grew up with it."

When her family moved to South Carolina in 2015, she volunteered to work on topiaries for the City of Greenwood. That led to a part-time job that became a full-time job when she graduated from Lander in 2019 with an environmental science degree.

"That's how I got involved in horticulture and learned about growing things in a greenhouse. I worked on the topiaries all day long," she said.

Coffey approaches horticulture "from an environmental lens," and that is reflected in the pollinator gardens she has established on campus, which serve as magnets for butterflies, birds and bees.

"I try to plant only pollinator-friendly plants, with an emphasis on natives," she said, but she is open to incorporating non-native plants into the landscape "if they're good pollinator plants, or if they're so beautiful or smell so good that they improve the human experience."

She said that climate extremes and habitat loss are making it hard on pollinators.

"We have tons of houses and municipal places and suburban sprawl, and people don't necessarily plant native plants in their back yards," she said.

Coffey, who is a master gardener, is doing her part to help by putting in three gardens specifically designed to attract pollinators. Two are in Moran Assembly Plaza that she built with the assistance of the Bearcats Give Back alumni association club, and one is in front of Laura Lander Hall, which she built with help from the Environmental Science Student Organization (ESSO). The gardens feature an assortment of delicacies like milkweed, butterfly weed, salvia, bee balm and coneflowers.

"The milkweed family is invaluable for its use as the larval host plant for Monarch butterflies, and the nectar from milkweed flowers is some of the most favored by hundreds of pollinator species. Parsley is the larval host plant for the eastern tiger swallowtail butterfly." She said that herbs like basil, lavender and mint attract not only butterflies, but hummingbirds and bees, too.

South Carolina has 170 species of native bees, according to Coffey. Honeybees get most of the credit for their pollinating abilities, but bumblebees and other bees "actually do more pollination than honeybees do."

Bees are already foraging in January. She tries to accommodate them, by having cold-hardy plants like snapdragons and pansies on the menu.

"I want something blooming all year long," she said.

Coffey described the pollinator gardens on campus as "a work in progress. Gardens don't really get perfect until

MANY FACTORS INFLUENCE THE DECLINE OF BEES, INCLUDING HABITAT FRAGMENTATION, INCREASED USE OF NEONICOTINOID PESTICIDES, COLONY COLLAPSE DISORDER AND CLIMATE CHANGE.

their third year, and of course I keep moving things around. Three years is really when something is established," she said.

Although she finds her work rewarding, Coffey admits to having "ulterior motives" for what she does. "My ulterior motive is environmentalism," she said.

Coffey believes that people should make more of an effort to live in concert with nature, rather than in conflict with it. To her that means preserving natural areas and providing corridors in which wildlife can move freely.

It also means providing food.

"We have lots of bird species right here that are only here because of the plants that we have on this campus. We have migratory birds that move through here, like the cedar waxwing; we see those every spring, because they eat the holly berries on the holly trees that are around campus. That's why it's so important to have native plants, so that when those birds are moving through here, they can find something to eat."



Coffey favors native plants over others because of their resistance to disease and drought. "They're designed to make it in South Carolina; they don't need a lot of care. I cut them back in the fall, and that's about it. They're native to this area, so they have all of the things they need to survive."

She believes that insect pests are best dealt with by the predators already present, such as birds, wasps, snakes, frogs, turtles and toads.

"Let Mother Nature take care of it, because there's already an entire structure and mechanism in place to keep pests in check."

When weeds threaten to take over, she prefers to remove them by hand, or by incinerating them with her "flamethrower" – a torch fed by a propane tank on a cart. "It's a great way to reduce your Round Up use and stave off herbicide resistance," she said.

Another way that people can reduce their impact on the environment is by growing their own food, or by getting it from local farmers, instead of buying food that's "coming from Argentina or from Mexico or from China. If everybody really put in an effort to eat local, I think it would solve most of the environmental problems we have today. So much carbon gets put in the atmosphere just so you can get a strawberry from California."

Coffey said she has several goals. One is putting in a pollinator garden with plants "like Maximilian sunflower, ironweed, Joe Pye weed, things that are really tall, and then have other things supporting them. You have to have layers and movement," she said.

Ever since she was a student, she has wanted Lander to be recognized as a Bee Campus, U.S.A. For that to happen, additional faculty, staff and students would have to join her crusade. She hopes they do.

"We need more environmental warriors here," she said.

Down the road, she would also like to teach. However, she said, "I'm not willing to give up the shovel and go inside yet. I've got to be out here in the dirt." ■









LANDER LIFE













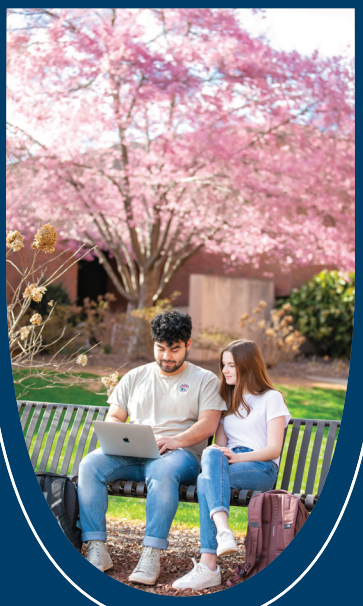



















BEARCATS @CAMPUS

Photos by Bonner Abercrombie, Deb C. Nygro, Laura B. Wood, and Student Photographers Allison Devore and Emily Montgomery





Out of Your Comfort Zone

By Graham Duncan

Honors College Student Elisa Howansky Spends Summer Working with Giant Tortoises of the Galapagos Islands

Having also been accepted to two other colleges in South Carolina, Lander University wasn't Elisa Howansky's first choice. Deciding to major in biology, however, seemed like a no-brainer.

"Ever since I was a child, I always loved biology," Howansky said. "I spent most of my childhood watching nature and paleontology documentaries. I have never had a doubt in my mind about the fact that the field of biology is where I belong."

That sense of belonging Howansky first felt in the field of biology became an important factor when it came to calling Lander a home away from home for four years. For Howansky, and for many other students and alumni, too, the welcoming environment at Lander—the fellowship that runs through the Lander community—is something that can't be replicated on other college campuses.

"The connections, both personal and professional, I've made here are ones I will carry with me for the rest of my life," said Howansky. "I have learned so much more than I would have if I had attended a larger university. I feel like it was fate that I ended up here. I wouldn't change it for anything."

And as that fate would have it, studying at Lander also afforded the senior Honors College student a summer break-away experience of a lifetime: the chance to care for the giant tortoises of the Galapagos Islands while stationed in the Arnaldo Tupiza Tortoise Breeding Center of Galapagos National Park.

The internship opportunity was offered through International Outreach Initiatives (IOI), an organization dedicated to both improving conservation efforts, as well as the quality of life for local residents of isolated communities like Puerto Villamil, where Howansky stayed.

To complete the break-away experience, Howansky wrote a blog at the request of Dr. Lillian Craton, director of the Honors College, chronicling not only the day-to-day activities of the internship, but also discussing the effects of ecotourism on conservation efforts.

Though the giant tortoises have no natural predators, human populations have contributed to the introduction of rats, ants and dogs, all of which have led to a dangerous decline in the tortoise population.

"These predators cannot harm them once their shell hardens—at about ten years old—but when they are babies, the ants and rats eat them out of their shells," Howansky explained. "Dogs eat their eggs and generally stress them out. This is why places like the breeding center are so important. It gives the baby tortoises a safe place to grow up until they are ready to be released."



COMMON NAME: Galápagos Tortoise
SCIENTIFIC NAME: Chelonoidis
TYPE: Reptile **DIET:** Herbivore
SIZE: Up to six feet
WEIGHT: Up to 573 lbs

Fact Source: nationalgeographic.com





Photos Courtesy Elisa Howansky

While some in the conservation community believe that ecotourism can be a hindrance to conservation, Howansky believes that it can have a net positive effect. It provides locals with a source of income, which discourages them from eating wild animals in secret or illegally importing animals from the mainland that may pose risks to the ecosystem. Tourism dollars are also re-invested in conservation, such as through the recruitment of volunteers who can keep protected areas clean of garbage and can help keep human activity to a minimum.

As Howansky described in a blog post, COVID-19 provided conservationists with a lens through which to see life without the benefits of ecotourism. During the worst days of the pandemic, the islands saw very few visits from tourists. This meant less income for residents, and fewer volunteers to assist with conservation.

“The people struggled to feed themselves during that time,” Howansky wrote, noting that many turned to importing chickens, ducks and livestock to survive. This disturbed the island’s natural environment, with some of those animals making their way into protected areas.

Bearcats Pay Forward the Gift of Travel

The financial cost of international travel proved to be an obstacle in the months leading up to the trip. So, Howansky set up an account with GoFundMe, an online crowdfunding platform that allows users to raise money for big life events like Howansky’s internship.

After being shared by Craton and other members of the Lander family on social media, dozens of Bearcats stepped up to the plate—including several Honors College alumni who knew what traveling abroad meant for them during their time at Lander.

With only a few hours left in the campaign, and with still a long way to go to reach Howansky’s fundraising goal, Lander alumna Frannie Weiland made one last donation, accounting for nearly half of Howansky’s travel expenses.

Weiland and Howansky shared some things in common. Weiland was a member of the Honors College at Lander, and they are both the first in their respective families to attend college. And, like Howansky, Weiland also knew the financial challenges of traveling to another country.

Recalling that it was her own summer internship in Kenya that helped her confirm her calling to be a nurse, and wanting someone else to have that same experience abroad, Weiland was inspired to pay it forward.

“I wish every student could wake up in a foreign country, feel that sunshine on their face, and have that ‘this is what I was made for’ moment,” Weiland said. “To this day, I’m in awe of that experience and believe it will be one of my greatest adventures… Everyone deserves that moment.”

Howansky’s own “moment,” working as an intern with the giant tortoises of the Galapagos Islands, provided unforgettable life lessons on independence and navigating another country, in addition to cementing a strong passion for preserving the natural world.

“I had never previously been abroad,” said Howansky. “I had never been to the ocean before. I totally went out of my comfort zone for this trip!” ■

FALL 2022 HOMECOMING





















After points were tallied for the week-long competitions, winners of this year's Bearcat Cup are the Anime-niacs for the Blue Division and Zeta Tau Alpha for the Gold Division.



Photo Courtesy of Student Activities















Photos by Randy Pace, Deb C. Nygro and Laura B. Wood

FALL 2022 HOMECOMING

BEARCAT 2072: THE NEXT ERA

Using Lander's 150th birthday as an inspiration and springboard for Homecoming 2022, students envisioned the future with this year's theme, *Bearcat 2072: The Next Era*.

The week of October 10-15 started with a banner unveiling and powerlifting competition. Teams rallied in a neon-lit game of *Time Warped Dodgeball*, splashed shades of glow in a *Bearcat Utopia Paint Party*, and strutted their talents in *A Rift in Time Showcase*.

Embracing the spirit of community, Lander students, faculty and staff took time throughout the week to donate coats, sweaters, socks and warm blankets. The items were donated to Meg's House, a shelter that supports victims of domestic violence in Greenwood, McCormick and Edgefield counties.

Saturday morning brought a blue sky and ideal weather for students to gather on the Front Lawn for tailgating. Later that afternoon, fans cheered on the Bearcats volleyball team in their quest against Young Harris.

Following the game, the Homecoming Court was introduced, and results were announced. Chad Smith and Azjanae Anderson took the reign as Homecoming King and Queen for 2022. Smith, a senior sociology major from Inman, was sponsored by Phi Mu Fraternity. Anderson, a senior business administration major from Columbia, was sponsored by Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.

■ By Deb Nygro

See More Photos & Video





ALUMNI WEEKEND

Homecoming weekend also held an assortment of lively activities and social gatherings for alumni to visit with friends and former classmates, explore campus and reconnect with their alma mater.

Golfers took a swing at raising funds for the University's golf team by heading to the greens at Greenwood Country Club for the annual Martin-Sims Golf Classic. Alumni of all classes gathered outside of Howard's on Main for an evening of drinks and appetizers.

The alumni tent at tailgating was a popular spot to pick up a welcome packet filled with Lander ribbons, spirit gear, passes to the Homecoming game and food tickets.

Members of the National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc. celebrated their charter's 40th anniversary; and Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. recognized their 25th year. The reunion weekend included a meet and greet, tailgating, stroll competition and a special tribute to those who have provided service to the Lander community.

Homecoming Day featured several college sessions for alumni and their families to experience. Audiences were treated to a fun physics demonstration, tales of Samuel Lander's early years, and insight into the drawling tongue of the Southern language.

■ By Deb Nygro











Photos by Graham Duncan, Deb C. Nygro, Randy Pace and Laura B. Wood

FALL 2022 HOMECOMING



















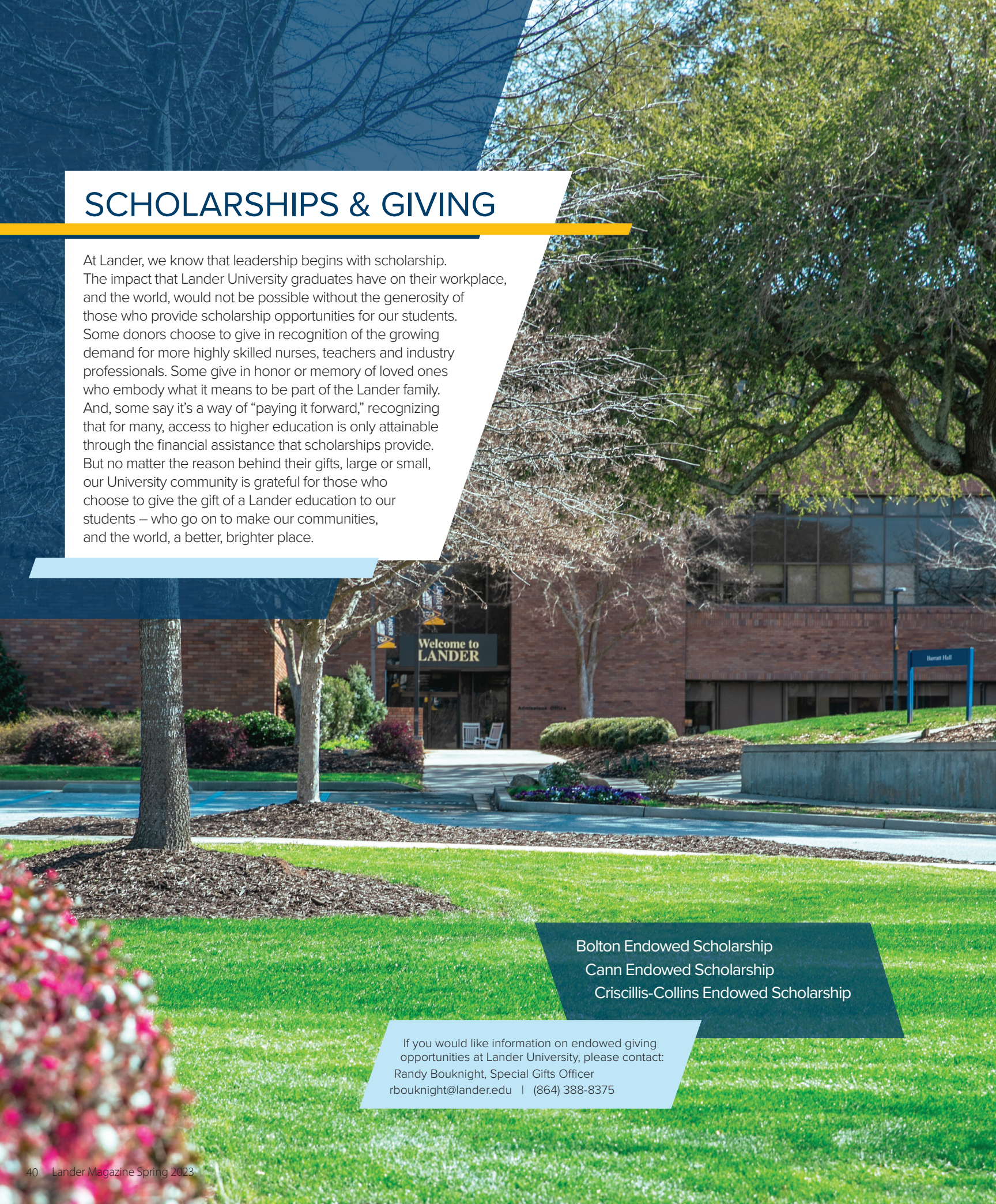






SCHOLARSHIPS & GIVING

At Lander, we know that leadership begins with scholarship. The impact that Lander University graduates have on their workplace, and the world, would not be possible without the generosity of those who provide scholarship opportunities for our students. Some donors choose to give in recognition of the growing demand for more highly skilled nurses, teachers and industry professionals. Some give in honor or memory of loved ones who embody what it means to be part of the Lander family. And, some say it's a way of "paying it forward," recognizing that for many, access to higher education is only attainable through the financial assistance that scholarships provide. But no matter the reason behind their gifts, large or small, our University community is grateful for those who choose to give the gift of a Lander education to our students – who go on to make our communities, and the world, a better, brighter place.



Bolton Endowed Scholarship
Cann Endowed Scholarship
Criscillis-Collins Endowed Scholarship

If you would like information on endowed giving opportunities at Lander University, please contact:
Randy Bouknight, Special Gifts Officer
rbouknight@lander.edu | (864) 388-8375

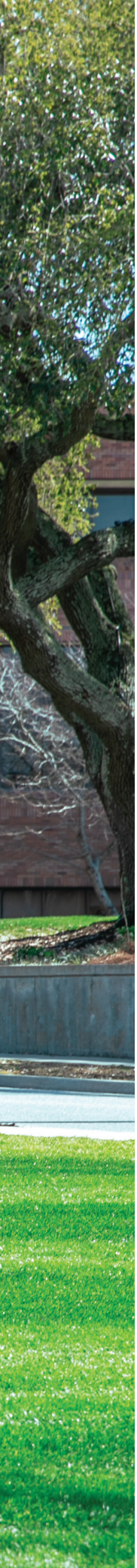


Photo Courtesy of Steve Bolton



Steve & Linda Bolton

ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP

Steve Bolton graduated from Lander in 1969 with a degree in sociology. During his senior year at Lander, he won the Hodges Medal for best all-around athlete. He was also president of Lander's student body and a member of Lander's first tennis team.

Following his graduation, Bolton began a 21-year career as a helicopter pilot for the U.S. Army, retiring as a lieutenant colonel. He then worked for several defense contractors and was owner of a management and consulting company.

After graduating from Lander, he only returned to Greenwood sporadically, and his "giving to Lander was also sporadic," he said.

He began to think about doing more as a result of attending his 40th class reunion and "seeing first-hand the growth and progress at Lander." He said that his late wife, Linda, also "encouraged me to get back involved in Lander life."

He began by making contributions to the tennis program and The Lander Foundation. Since then, he has served as an active member of the Foundation, the Lander Alumni Association Board, and as a volunteer for many University initiatives.

In 2021, he established the Steve and Linda Bolton Endowed Scholarship. The scholarship is open to any major in the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences, with preference given to first-year students.

The scholarship helped Alexandria Castro, a sociology major from Simpsonville, to enjoy a successful first year at Lander. She made the President's Honor Roll during the fall of 2021, and the Dean's List last spring.

Castro said that the scholarship "has definitely helped ease the financial burden of college," and allowed her to concentrate on her studies.

"It's also helped reaffirm that I found a major that I enjoy and do well in," she said.

While unsure of her career path, she said, "I'm currently looking at public relations or an archivist position." ■ By Jeff Lagrone



Scholarship recipient Alexandria Castro. -Photo by Laura B. Wood



Photo Courtesy of Spartanburg Methodist College

Katherine Davis Cann

ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP

The Katherine Davis Cann Endowed Scholarship was created to assist a rising junior majoring in history or political science. To be considered for the award, a student must also have an exemplary academic record, good character, and potential for future service.

Dr. Kathy Cann, whom the scholarship honors, graduated from Lander with a B.A. in history in 1969. She also earned an M.A. in history at the University of North Carolina, and a Ph.D. in history at the University of South Carolina.

The author of two books and numerous book chapters about South Carolina history, Cann retired as professor of history and chair of the Social Science Division at Spartanburg Methodist College, where she encouraged many of her two-year students to consider continuing their education at Lander. She also served as president of the Lander Alumni Association.

Cann's husband, Professor Emeritus of History Dr. Marvin Cann, joined the Lander faculty in 1967 and taught at Lander for 38 years.

"For me, it was a fulfilling career in a college that attracted good students, offered an educational opportunity to many first-generation students, and provided an enjoyable professional association with a group of dedicated colleagues," Marvin said.

The Canns are impressed with the quality of Lander's history and political science programs.

"We especially appreciate the academic leadership provided by Dr. Lucas McMillan and the scholarly achievements of many of the faculty. Beyond their scholarly contributions, we appreciate the close individual attention the faculty provide for their students," he said.

Over the years, Cann and his wife have supported Lander in a variety of ways.

"The Katherine Davis Cann Scholarship seemed an effective way to provide continuing support to outstanding students in the history and political science programs," he said.

Senior public history major Cameron Jones, of Aiken, said he was "extremely grateful" for the support of the Cann Scholarship. Because of it, he added, "I don't have to stress about any financial problems."

A resident assistant, president of Lander's Black Student Union and member of the Phi Alpha Theta honor society, Jones has been on the Dean's List his entire time at the University.

After graduating, he would like to serve as director of an African American museum.

"I have a passion for teaching Black history and educating others about our culture," he said. ■ By Jeff Lagrone



Scholarship recipient Cameron Jones. -Photo by Laura B. Wood





Far left: Pictured (L-R) are Jimmy and Melissa "Missy" Criscillis; and Lander student and Criscillis-Collins scholarship recipient Matthew Burgess, of Seneca.

Left: Ken Collins, creator of the Criscillis-Collins Endowed Scholarship, and Missy Criscillis.

Criscillis-Collins Endowed Scholarship

GENEROSITY THAT GOES BEYOND A CONNECTION TO LANDER

Scholarships are an integral and foundational piece of higher education that provide financial assistance to aspiring students. Through a generous donation, Ken Collins has endowed a scholarship in honor of Melissa Criscillis, his nephew's daughter-in-law.

"My relationship with her has grown very close through family gatherings," said Collins. "I now consider her and her family as a very close part of my family."

Collins learned of Lander nearly four decades ago, when both his niece and nephew graduated from the University. "I learned from them how good Lander's nursing program is. Because of their Lander experience I became a friend and fan of Lander."

"Jesus has blessed my life in so many ways and has given me the resources to help others," said Collins. "I take great pleasure in using those resources to help children have a stable home environment and others to better themselves by getting an education."

"Uncle Ken is such a special person and he has such a big heart for children," said Criscillis. "I have always worked with kids and he has always been intrigued with listening to my nursing stories, from transport issues with helicopters, to me learning how to work in the operating room for heart surgeries."

"Other than family, nursing has been the most rewarding aspect of my life," added Criscillis. "I worked full time and attended school full time for all four of my degrees," she said. "I have been blessed with an amazing family that was very supportive of my academic endeavors and nursing career."

Her family's support helped drive her to obtaining four degrees: an associate degree in nursing, bachelor's in nursing, a master's in nursing and a doctorate of nursing practice. "I had to work to help my husband care for our family and home, and did not want my choices to take away from my family, and I put a lot of pressure on myself," she said. "And it was worth every minute."

"I watched her children grow and saw what a great mother she was to her two boys and what a great wife she was to her husband," said Collins. "I have so much love and respect for her and I consider her my daughter."

After school, her career launched her into the role of a pediatric intensive care nurse, and she was "lucky to love the role, the patient population and the ability to form relationships with patients and families." Eventually, she transitioned to a pediatric critical care transport nurse. "I was able to grow and had more autonomy, which led me to the nurse practitioner role."

Now Criscillis works as the lead advance practice provider for the pediatric heart surgeon at Augusta University Health. "I absolutely love my career, my patients and my work family," she said.

"Nursing provides so many opportunities. It has been so rewarding to help others through times of joy and sadness, and I know nursing has made me a better person."

Collins wants the scholarship to help someone from Oconee County or the Upstate of South Carolina get a degree in nursing. "Hopefully this scholarship will make getting a degree a little easier financially and let them be able to enjoy their college experience," he said.

Criscillis echoed this sentiment, adding, "The giving, caring nature of Uncle Ken motivates me to do more for others, and I hope this feeling is passed on through this scholarship."

And although new, the scholarship already has been earned by its first recipient: Matthew Burgess, of Seneca. When he learned he was the recipient of the scholarship, Burgess felt "very proud and happy for myself and my family. I view the scholarship as a result of all the hard work I have put into the nursing program and on the baseball team here at Lander University." ■ By Zack Bennett



A YEAR TO REMEMBER

Lander's Sesquicentennial Marks 150 Years of Achievement

BY KAREN PETIT

At Lander University, the Sesquicentennial year will be remembered as one of memorable events and achievements involving students, alumni, friends of the University and the community. From lectures, exhibits, fireworks, record enrollment – and so much more – 2022 was one for the history books.

The year 2022 was many lifetimes away from the day in 1871 when Dr. Samuel Lander, a minister and educator, arrived in Williamston, S.C., and established residence in an abandoned hotel with his wife and seven children. Lander agreed to forego a salary from the Methodist Church, which sent him to preach in the town, if the church would pay the expenses for his family to live there.

Lander and his wife, Laura, spent the next year renovating the building. On Feb. 12, 1872, Williamston Female College, the forerunner of Lander College and ultimately Lander University, opened.

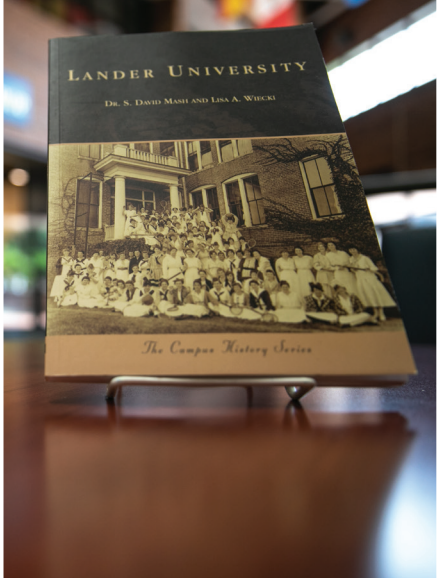
It was a bold undertaking. Yet, families were eager to educate their daughters, and Lander, who had been disappointed by the lack of academic standards and work in most schools for girls, was determined to bring quality education to young women.

In a future issue of *The Naiad*, the college's newsletter, Lander wrote, "We have yet to learn that the higher education, like every thing else of superior worth, must be paid for according to its value. There are indications of … a more liberal spirit in behalf of our male schools, whereat we sincerely rejoice. What we desire is that there may be a parallel movement for our schools for girls. Let the one be done, and let the other not be left undone."

Fast forward 150 years from the founding of the school, the former college fulfilled the commitment to not leave the education of girls "undone," and along the way in 1944 Oliver L. Thomas became Lander's first male student.

The celebratory year was ushered in with the annual Founder's Day fundraiser covering 1,872 minutes from Feb. 11 and 12. The majority of gifts—94% of







the donations— supported scholarships for students and the University's Excellence Fund to continue the founder's vision of quality education.

In March, Lander welcomed the community to campus for the Sesquicentennial Celebration, on a joyous evening of music, student performances and the ringing of the original 1876 bell from the Williamston campus.

A colorful display of fireworks illuminated the Greenwood sky as students and alumni gathered to share their place in the University's history.

Lander University's story was shared with the public through pictures and brief snippets of information in the meticulously researched book, Lander University, by Dr. S. David Mash and Lisa Wiecki of the Jackson Library. Featuring vintage photos from the early years of Williamston Female College, through the glamorous 1950s when Lander beauty, Miriam Stevenson, was crowned Miss Universe, the book is a signature tribute to the life of an institution which thrived during the turbulent Reconstruction Era and survived two World Wars, two pandemics and a Great Depression – any of which could have halted the college's mission.



The stories of student life in the book are only one part of Lander's place in Greenwood. "The University has a strong cultural and economic impact on the Greenwood community," Mash said. "I'm not sure many people today understand how strong that impact has been over the years."

The 150th year at the University was an opportunity to turb back the pages of time and recognize another milestone. Fifty years ago, in the summer of 1972, then South Carolina Gov. John C. West officially signed legislation to make Lander College, the forerunner of Lander University, a state-supported institution of higher education.

A half-century later, in August of 2022, that institution would welcome its largest-ever student body. For the fall semester, the University's enrollment after the first week of classes was at 4,170 students – a seven-percent increase over the previous year, and a 54-percent increase since 2015.

In September, The Greenwood Museum showcased Lander's academic life in a carefully curated history exhibit, which included yearbooks, a "rat hat" popular among freshmen, photographs of students and campus life, and a tribute to Lander's 12 presidents.

A 1904 photograph in the museum's display showed Samuel Lander laying the cornerstone for Old Main, marking Williamston Female College's relocation to Greenwood. The Lander founder, who died a short time after the photo was made, would not live to see the building completed.

Continued

On This Spread: Lander University students, employees, alumni and community members browse exhibits at The Greenwood Museum detailing the University's rich and unique history. The exhibit ran September through December. Left: Miriam Stevenson.

A YEAR TO REMEMBER

Shortly before student exams in December, Lander once again welcomed the community to campus for the annual tree lighting ceremony. Thousands converged to celebrate the holiday and a campus tradition rooted in history.

The Sesquicentennial year ended with other highlights in December, including Lander serving as the Grand Marshal for the Uptown Greenwood Christmas Parade, led by Mr. and Mrs. Bearcat riding in a convertible.

And the yearlong celebration spanned much farther than the campus and local community. The University was honored by South Carolina Senate and House of Representatives resolutions honoring Lander's "transformative impact" on the state. South Carolina Sen. Billy Garrett, a Lander alumnus, said, "It's an absolute pleasure to represent the University in front of the Senate. Everyone is really excited about Lander."

The University's founder probably never fathomed the impact his dream of higher education would have in future years. Considered a visionary by his contemporaries and those who've studied his writings, the minister, born to Irish immigrants, laid a foundation that was rock solid.

Dr. John O. Willson, the college's second president, said, "Beyond all doubt, Dr. Lander's greatest success as a teacher or as a manager of a school grew out of his personality. His pure life, his refinement, his sympathy, his modesty, his enthusiasm, his openness to truth, his patience, his capacity to love and awake love, these splendid characteristics were fully developed."

As the 21st century continues to write the University's next chapter, it does so on an ideal rooted in time, sacrifice, determination and dreams – an ideal solidly Lander. ■







Greenwood Museum Coordinator of Exhibits Dr. Marion Smith, pictured, worked closely with members of the University faculty, staff and administration to develop the Lander University History Exhibit, which ran in conjunction with Lander's Sesquicentennial Celebration. Among the items displayed were documents and records dating back to the institution's founding in 1872; historical clothing and sporting items; yearbooks and catalogs; a 225-pound school bell dating to 1876; and many photographs spanning Lander's 150-year history. -Photos by Laura B. Wood & Deb C. Nygro

Crowning Achievement



See More Photos & Video

Shelley Nevins Captures Title of Miss Lander University 2023



A gospel choir singer committed to a life of service is the 2023 Miss Lander University.

Shelley Nevins, a junior business major from Columbia, also was named Miss Congeniality, an honor voted on by the pageant contestants. For her talent presentation, Nevins sang "At Last," a song made popular by Etta James.

Nevins, crowned by Anna Joy Hulsey, last year's Miss Lander University, said, "Having the opportunity to represent the University in this way will be a wonderful experience. I am so grateful."

First runner-up was Autumn Nicole Lockhart, of Chesnee, a freshman with a double major in elementary education and Spanish. Talent winner Jessica Rose Palmer, of Sumter, was named second runner-up. Lillian Raine Strawn, of Clarks Hill, received the People's Choice Award, decided by members of the Lander community.

Nevins, a President's List honoree, was sponsored by Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc. A member of Lander's student diversity board, LOUD, Nevins is president of Minorities on the Move, which supports Lander's Gospel Choir.

"My favorite thing about being part of Minorities on the Move is being able to spread the word of God to others through singing with my members," she said. "I sing with many gifted and amazing people in the Gospel Choir who are not afraid to be themselves."

Nevins said she believes in the importance of a life devoted to service. "I love to live by the saying, 'serve others like Christ served the church.' Service is the epitome of who I am."

Her service activities include working with food banks, participating in blood drives and volunteering with the March of Dimes, as well as safe houses for women and children, and feeding the needy.

Since choosing Lander for her undergraduate education, Nevins said, "I have been filled with love and support … I love the versatility of the programs here at Lander and how they prepare students for jobs in the outside world."

Being a student at Lander "allows me to flourish to be the best version of myself," Nevins said.

■ By Karen Petit; Photos by Laura B. Wood



FROM ZIMBABWE TO LANDER

NATHAN MUGANDE CHARTS A COURSE OF SUCCESS

By Karen Petit

Living 8,000 miles from his family in Harare, Zimbabwe, Nathan Mugande has become immersed in South Carolina's life and culture as he's charted his own course of success at Lander University.

Talking to Mugande is one of those rare experiences in which a person senses this student is destined for achievements beyond our comprehension. He has a love for gaming; yet, he spends hours in Lander's chemistry labs deep in research with faculty members and helping other students with their experiments. His academic achievements have placed him on the prestigious President's List since his first semester, and he is on track to graduate in 2024 with a bachelor's degree and MBA.

The decision to merge two intense areas of study might give many people pause. Yet Mugande, a junior who is pursuing a double major in chemistry and biology, has pushed forward without hesitation.

"Medical care is a patient- and business-centered profession. Medicine is a practice to care for people, but there is a business side as well," he said. "You want to make decisions that will benefit patients, of course, as well as health care providers and investors."

With his senior year just months away, Mugande is already looking ahead to studying at U.S. medical schools that would allow him to earn medical and doctoral degrees concurrently. He would like to be a physician-scientist in the field of neurological surgery. "I want to be able to treat patients and conduct effective research," he said. "I feel like the hard work is worth it to live a life that you enjoy the most."

Mugande came to Lander through a scholarship from the Dr. Douglas and Mrs. Jean Mufuka Scholars program.

He had seen the University only online before arriving in August 2020, and he wasted no time getting to know the campus and all that it had to offer.

With his easygoing demeanor and joyous smile, it's no wonder that Mugande became a Presidential Ambassador during his freshman year. The opportunity to meet future students and their parents on campus tours gave him a chance to learn about his new home and its people.

"I love the diversity of the United States," he said. "Zimbabwe is not very diverse. The United States really is a melting pot, not only of people, but of many different ideas."

His love for that diversity has extended to a radio show that he developed for XLR-Lander Radio. During the 8 p.m. Monday program, *Lander University and Beyond*, Mugande interviews international students and features music from their countries.

When he was crowned Mr. Lander last year, Mugande used the popular physics effect, called Bernoulli's principle, for his talent. The dramatic presentation, which produced a huge puff of smoke across the stage, showcased how objects heavier than air can fly. Named for an 18th-century scientist, Daniel Bernoulli, the principle is important in understanding fluid dynamics.

The talent choice wasn't a surprise to anyone who knows Mugande. "Science has been my talent for a long time; hence, what I would do in front of people wasn't unexpected," he explained.

What was unexpected, perhaps, was his precision at showing the wonder of science and winning over a panel of judges with his skill. As a chemistry lab assistant, Mugande spends hours every week setting up the equipment that students will need to conduct their lab experiments.









Mr. Lander Pageant Photos by Deb C. Nygro

Student Profile Portraits by Laura B. Wood

That experience has helped him become a better student. "Wherever chemistry is involved, I like to be a part of it. Working in the labs helps me perfect my skills. I have a better understanding of the instruments and the techniques of how to use them."

Dr. David Slimmer, dean of the College of Science & Mathematics, worked with Mugande to develop his talent for the competition and then asked him to assist with the STEAM Festival, an outdoor celebration of science, technology, engineering, the arts and math for students in the Lakelands.

"Nathan jumped on the opportunity right away. There were a lot of people at different times," Slimmer said. "Nathan went right to work with the demonstrations. He really won over the children, and they loved talking to him."

Away from the stage, Mugande is working on a research project with Dr. Lisa Brodhacker, a Lander chemistry professor, to make a new compound that will help with the thermal expansion of epoxy telescope mirrors.

"If successful, this will improve the quality of the images that the telescope mirrors produce," said Brodhacker. "Nathan brings so much natural curiosity to the research project. It's students like him who end up making discoveries that I would have never considered. This makes my job so much fun."

The breadth of experiences provided by Lander has far exceeded the expectations Mugande had when he was still in his native country of Zimbabwe.

"Growing up in Zimbabwe, a scholarship like the Mufuka Scholarship is something I could only dream of. It's an opportunity that has changed my life unimaginably," he said. "I had set specific goals for my life, and I had an idea of who I wanted to be, but Lander proved me wrong. Lander has shown me that I was making myself mediocre, and I can be twice as much as I ever imagined. At Lander, I have learned to pursue incredible things."

Slimmer has high praise for Mugande, a member of Lander's chapter of the American Chemical Society. "He is going to be very successful. The question is 'where will he stop?' He is involved in so many different things on campus. It is just astounding. I would consider him the ideal student, not only because of his grades but because of his demeanor. He is very respectful toward professors and other students, and he is always willing to help."

And Mugande, who recently was named a student liaison for Lander's new Office of Student Experience and Quality Assurance, had high praise for his University. "You will get opportunities that are bigger than Lander from Lander." ■

SPORTS ROUNDUP

FALL 2022 BEARCAT ATHLETICS

By Thomas Holland; Photos by Bob Stoner, Hayden Joyner, Isaiah Grant

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THE MEN'S SOCCER TEAM once again dominated the pitch in the fall, winning the regular-season and tournament Peach Belt Championship. The Bearcat defense allowed just 1.1 goals per game, including recording eight shutouts, finishing with a 12-3-6 record. Lander headed to the NCAA Tournament for the first time since 2018, where they advanced to the second round, falling to the top-seed Florida Tech in penalty kicks after playing to a 1-1 draw. Six players were named All-Conference, while Lee Squires was named Co-Coach of the Year and Samuel Maardah was named the PBC Elite 16 winner. Marco Gueli and Jed Smith were named All-Americans, and Gueli was named the USC Division II Scholar Plater of the Year.









THE WOMEN'S CROSS-COUNTRY TEAM finished eighth at the Peach Belt Championship, with Missy O'Toole being named the PBC Elite 16 winner.

FOR WOMEN'S RUGBY, Jessica and Bailey Burt were named first team All-NIRA All-Americans, while Abbigail Melton was named second team. The Bearcats picked up wins against The Citadel, Clemson, Newberry, and Guilford College.

THE WOMEN'S SOCCER TEAM battled hard throughout the fall to finish fourth in the Peach Belt. The Bearcats finished the regular season 3-0-1 to secure the fourth seed in the conference tournament, where they shut out USC Aiken 2-0 to advance to the semifinals—the first time in program history the team made the semifinals in back-to-back seasons. The Bearcat defense was outstanding all season long, recording six shutouts and allowing just 0.94 goals per game, which was third best in the PBC. Mia Piazza was named First Team All-Conference for Lander.





THE VOLLEYBALL TEAM had an outstanding season in the fall. The Bearcats won 20 or more games for the first time since 2019 and the ninth time in program history. Lander finished second in the conference—just one game out of first—and were the only team in the conference to win their season series against every team. The Bearcats also made their first NCAA postseason appearance since 2018, and picked up their first NCAA win since 2015, when they defeated Anderson in the first round. Three players were named All-Conference, while Jeff Reynolds was named Coach of the Year and Katie Miller was named Freshman of the Year. Miller also became the first player in program history to be named All-American.

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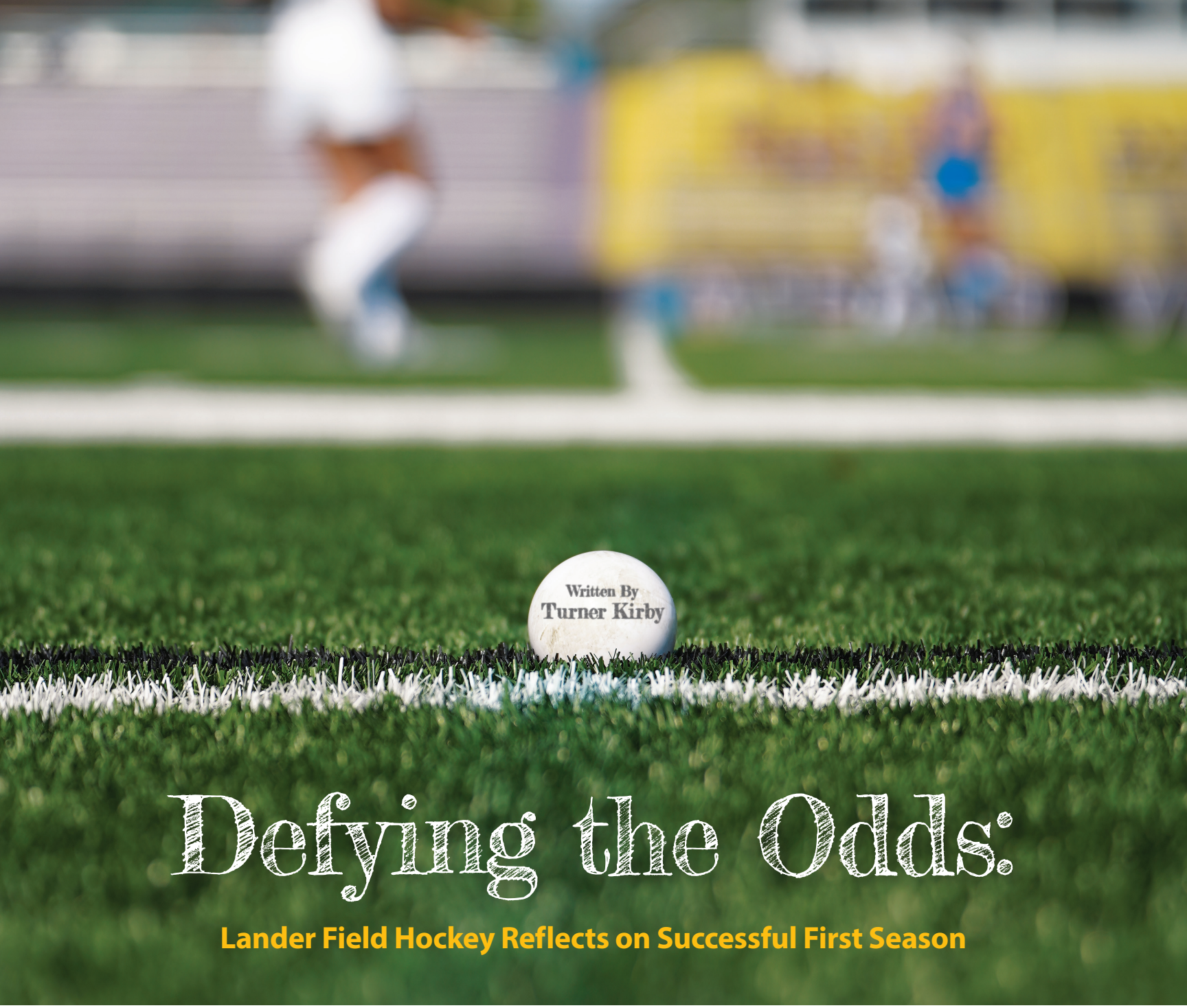






THE MEN'S RUGBY TEAM picked up two wins over The Citadel and Georgia in the fall, while having four players named All-Conference. Cam Smith was named National Collegiate Rugby Scholastic All-American.

Senior Madilyn Reed broke the school record for career assists in Lander's final game of the season, while also being named PBC Specialist of the Week a record seven times. Miller was also named PBC Player of the Week four times during the season.



Defying the Odds:

Lander Field Hockey Reflects on Successful First Season

PHOTO BY STUDENT PHOTOGRAPHER HAYDEN JOYNER

The first year of any sports program isn't usually met with high expectations. But, when Lander Field Hockey joined the South Atlantic Conference (SAC) for the 2022 season, they defied the odds in what turned out to be the best inaugural season by a South Atlantic Conference team ever.

The Bearcats had 14 players on their roster, no dedicated on-campus field and played four home games with 13 on the road. Despite these challenges, they won nine games, produced four All-Conference players, made the conference semifinals, and had a second team All-American.

Meanwhile, Wingate and Lincoln Memorial (two other SAC first-year programs) had 23 and 19 players on their rosters, respectively. Combined, they managed to win just three games — and both failed to score a goal against the Bearcats in their matchups during the season.

Leading the Bearcats in their inaugural season was Head Coach Robbert Schenk, who came from the University of North Carolina — one of the best Division I field hockey programs in the country. In Chapel Hill, Schenk was specifically focused on the team's offense. That translated to Greenwood, where the Bearcats ranked fourth in the conference in goals per game, led by All-American Sophie Schmitz.

Schmitz was the highest-scoring freshman in the conference, putting up 16 goals and recording 37 points.

"When we looked at other games, we saw positions that teams did not expect you to be in, and we wanted to focus on those parts," said Schenk. "Sophie was very relentless in those positions. Our team was focused on finding those positions, and Sophie was great at filling them and finding the goal."

The schedule didn't do the Bearcats any favors as they played their first ever game against the defending conference champions and tenth-ranked Converse Valkyries. Despite the difference on paper, Lander made it clear that they weren't going to be an easy out for any team and scored first over the Valkyries. Puck Boschma would find Sophie Schmitz for the first goal in program history, not even four minutes into the contest. Even though the rest of the game didn't go the way the team hoped, that moment was a spark that showed the potential, and it resonated with Schenk.

"That showed we were capable of beating the better teams and it showed the team that we were close. We brought that over to a lot of games," he said.

Even with the setback in their opening game, Lander had another opportunity to make history the next week, when they defeated Lincoln Memorial, 7-0, to deliver the program's first-ever win.

The Bearcats approached the midway point in the season with a 2-4 record, coming off of a heartbreaking loss to Belmont Abbey in a shootout after Lander dominated the two overtime periods but couldn't score. That midpoint was marked by a trip to Missouri that saw them take down Maryville, 5-0. And, in front of a national audience on ESPN+, the Bearcats weren't scared by the bright lights, taking down Division I Lindenwood, 1-0, in double overtime.

"It kind of helped us [being on ESPN]," said Schenk. "The team knew the camera was on them and they wanted to do the extra part. It was a tough day, the team was exhausted, it was a tough field to play on … but if you look at that game, we did everything as a team — and while Lindenwood was strong individually, they weren't as strong of a team as we were."



Lander suffered two more overtime heartbreaks after that to Newberry and Converse. But even in these losses, they showed that they could compete with anyone in the conference.

Meanwhile, a 2-0 win over Wingate and a 3-1 win on Senior Day over Coker would put Lander in a tie for the third and final spot in the conference tournament for the SAC Mountain Division, setting up a win-or-go-home matchup with the Limestone Saints — a team that defeated Lander, 3-0, earlier in the season.

During the Bearcats' winning streak, there were still more adversities to face.

"We lost two players due to injuries so we had no subs," said Schenk. "We knew we couldn't just run around full speed and then expect to come off for some minutes of rest."

Despite all of the injuries and obstacles, and facing off against one of the more established teams in the conference, Lander once again overcame and outshot Limestone,13-1. Sophie Schmitz would score a penalty stroke right before the third quarter horn to give Lander a 1-0 lead heading into the last quarter of action.

Coming out of the break, Schenk was forced to make a decision on how to handle the rest of the game being as shorthanded as they were.

"I had to ask myself 'are we going to score more goals,' and if the answer was no, we had to focus more on the defensive side. While they did have a couple of good opportunities from penalty corners, our defense held strong and they held the ball for large portions near the end of the game to seal off the win," said Schenk.

In the SAC Tournament, the Bearcats found themselves in another rematch with Belmont Abbey who defeated them at home earlier in the season in the shootout after Lander dominated the overtime periods. The game was played at a public park just as winter started to settle in South Carolina, producing one of the coldest days of the season.

But Schenk's team once again won the mental game despite tough conditions.

"The mindset for that game was different," Schenk said. "It was less of playing as a team and more of not letting the cold impact us. We knew that we had the mental edge in that way."

In recognition of Lander's successful first season, four players were selected for the All-Conference team. Schmitz and goalie Kelsey Gibbons were selected to the first team, while Lieke Toma and Frederique Van Der Houwen were selected to the second



Photos by Bob Stoner

team. Those four selections were third only to the top two teams in the conference: Converse and Mount Olive.

"You kind of wish you could've given the whole team an award for what they pushed through the whole season, but those four players were amazing," Schenk said. "They always found a way to make an impact when it mattered the most."

Although the game didn't go the way that Lander had hoped in the conference semifinals, it didn't diminish what the team had accomplished up to that point. They showed the entire conference that Lander Field Hockey is going to be a team to watch over the next few years as they build on the success of this first year. ■

Alumni Awards 2022

Providing Leadership Around the World: Lander Recognizes Three Outstanding Alumni

"It's not every day that we have the opportunity to recognize our alumni for the good work they do in their communities," Lander University President Richard Cosentino said during Lander's annual Alumni Awards Ceremony in October.

The program was held at the conclusion of Lander's week of Homecoming festivities, which included a score of activities for students, social gatherings for alumni and a tailgating event Saturday morning. Several events, including the awards reception, paid special tribute to the University's Sesquicentennial—celebrating 150 years of preparing graduates for lives of leadership and service.

"This year's alumni awards are particularly special, because they come at a time when we celebrate Lander turning 150 years old," said Cosentino. "These alumni are not only ambassadors of Lander University. They exemplify how a Lander education has empowered generations of students to lead productive lives around the world." ■

Sharon M. Adams '65

GRACE ILER NORMAN AWARD



Pictured: Lander Alumni Association President Terry Evans '76, left, and Sharon M. Adams '65. - Photo by Randy Pace

Each year, the Lander University Alumni Association recognizes one alumnus or alumna who has displayed a deep love for Lander through exemplary service with the Grace Iler Norman Alumni Service Award—the association's highest honor. Sharon Adams was nominated by one of her classmates for regularly coordinating class reunions, and for leading efforts to create a scholarship in honor of the Class of 1965.

After finishing her degree in history, Adams served as a teacher for 32 years in Spartanburg County School District 2 and as a volunteer for several civic organizations, including two terms on the Lander Alumni Association Board of Directors. Her nominators remarked that Adams is well known for "always singing the praises of Lander and what it meant to her."

Since retiring from teaching, she is now a world traveler. Recent trips abroad include excursions in Europe, Thailand, and a special trip to Hong Kong to visit one of her former students. Her retirement has also given her the chance to stay connected with Lander classmates. "Keeping in touch and organizing class meetings in Columbia for lunch is such a pleasure," she said. ■ By Graham Duncan

Col. Cory J. Plowden '99

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD

Lander University's Distinguished Alumni Award recognizes graduates who have not only distinguished themselves through professional accomplishments, but who have also gone beyond a successful vocation to do something of greater benefit for the communities they serve.

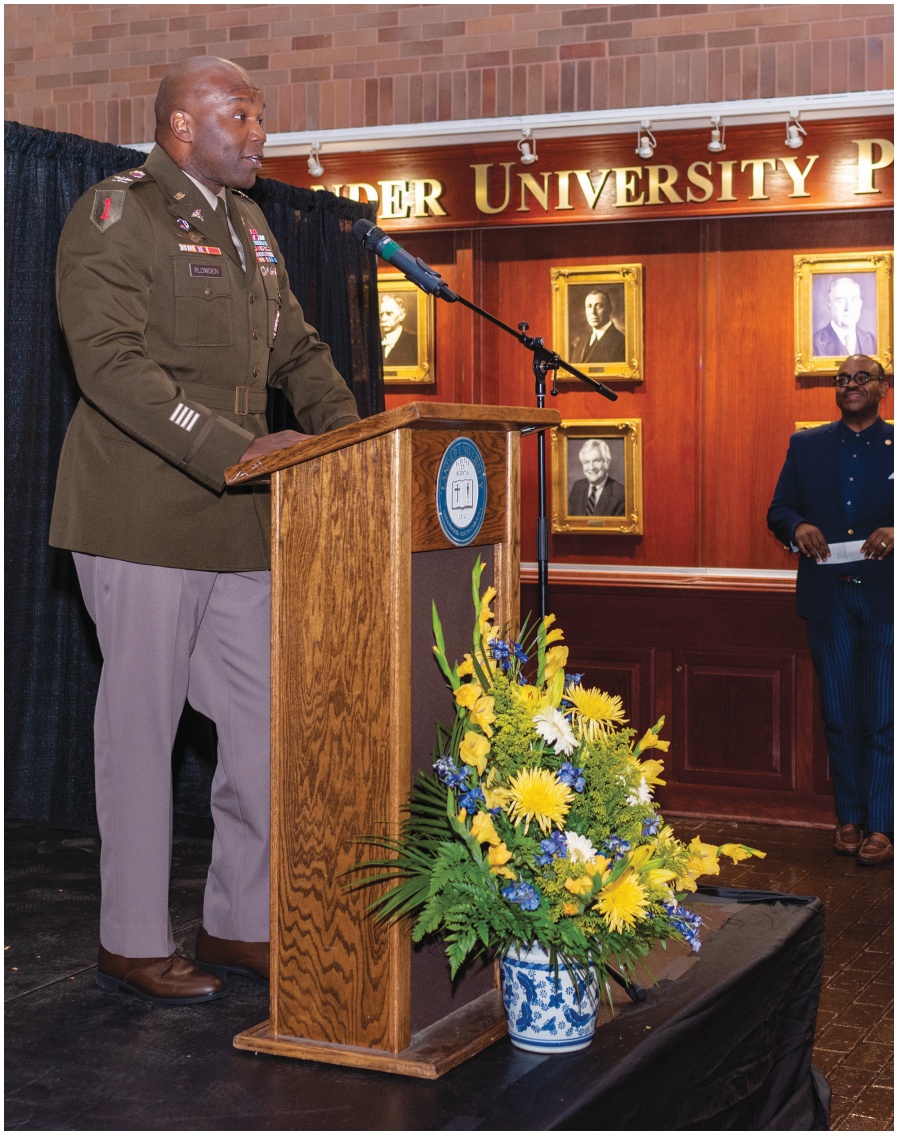
This year's recipient, Col. Cory J. Plowden, was chosen for his many years of service in the United States Army.

Plowden received a degree in biology from Lander in 1999 and was commissioned into the Medical Service Corps as a Distinguished Military Graduate. He holds a master's in health care administration from Webster University and has received training at numerous military schools, including the Combined Arms and Services Staff School, the Intermediate Level Education/Advance Operations Course and the Army War College.

Plowden has completed 19 assignments in his 23 years of distinguished military service, including three combat tours—two in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, and one in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. He is currently assigned as the commander and director of the Desmond T. Doss Health Clinic, at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii.

Plowden received the Young Alumni Achievement Award in 2011, and along with his continued service to the nation, has continued to provide unwavering support to Lander. He is a past member of the Lander Alumni Association Board of Directors, and in 2021 joined his fellow members of the Upsilon Eta Chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. to endow the Dr. Benjamin E. Mays Endowed Scholarship at Lander.

■ By Graham Duncan





Above: Col. Cory Plowden '99 delivers remarks at the Lander Alumni Association's annual awards dinner in October.

Left: Col. Plowden poses with award nominator and Lander classmate LaShaye Hutchinson '96.

- Photos by Randy Pace



Katie Troutman '07, right, and Scott Smith, Lander Baptist Collegiate Minister. - Photo by Randy Pace

Katie Troutman '07

YOUNG ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

The Young Alumni Achievement Award is presented to graduates, age 40 or younger at the time of nomination, who have demonstrated significant career achievement, have been acknowledged by their peers for outstanding work, and who show promise of future professional success. Katie Troutman's nominator called her "the epitome" of a successful young alumna.

Currently, Troutman, a member of the Class of 2007, serves as the associate director of Lander's Baptist Collegiate Ministry (BCM), where she has worked since 2010. Her colleagues say she has been instrumental in helping students find direction in their lives and shaping their understanding of the world. Troutman previously served in various roles at Connie Maxwell Children's Ministries, and holds a master's in Christian studies from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in addition to her degree in education from Lander.

Troutman is serving a three-year term on a national committee with the Baptist Collegiate Network. She has been on several mission trips across the United States, Peru and Russia, and co-led a mission trip to Egypt. Originally from Rock Hill, she enjoys attending sporting events, walking, traveling and spending time with friends and family.

■ By Graham Duncan

ALUMNI NEWS

Join our Alumni Community and stay connected! Keep up with alumni events, homecoming, reunion days and Lander on the Road dates/locations.

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CLASS NOTES SUBMISSIONS

We welcome Class Notes submissions from all alumni! Please remember to include the class year(s) in submissions.

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If your class note was omitted, please accept our sincere apologies and bring this to our attention. Class notes that are submitted after the magazine copy deadline will appear in the next issue of *Lander Magazine.*

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

1980s

Susan Mountford Hilley '86 was named the new interim school counselor at Mathews Elementary School.

Virginia Rackley Scates '89 received the 2022 Excellence in Teaching Award from Limestone University, by the South Carolina Independent Colleges & Universities Council, Apr. 5, 2022.

1990s

Toni Myers Able '91 is the new executive director of Laurens County First Steps.

Suzanne Tyler Moore '93 was named 2022 Teacher of the Year at Oakdale Elementary School.

Stephanie Lee Burgess '94 was named 2023 S.C. Secondary Assistant Principal of the Year by the S.C. Association of School Administrators.

Shannon Scarborough Cullens '94 was named Teacher of the Year 2022-23 at Westview Middle School.

Keith Grounsell '97 was named police chief of Laurens, Jul. 25, 2022.

Stilian Shishkov '97 was featured in *Forbes* Bulgaria magazine for a merger of his business, Sportal Media Group, with Ringier Sports Media Group, Aug. 2022.

Tracey Mason '98 was named Richland School District Two 2022-23 District Teacher of the Year.

Greg Rice '98 was named Teacher of the Year 2022-23 at Northside Middle School.

Lena Scott Sprouse '98 was named Teacher of the Year 2022-23 at Rice Elementary School.

2000s

Leslie Reynolds Fisher '00/'03 was named assistant principal at Westview Middle School.

Christina Johnson Trainor '00 joined SEFA Group as the vice president of human resources, Jan. 2022.

Robbie Bennett '01, was named one of Georgia's top 500 most influential leaders.

Michael Goodwin '01 was a contestant on the 2021 season of America's Got Talent.

John Mark Scruggs '01 was named Teacher of the Year 2022-23 at Emerald High School.

Zebulon Young '03 joined Harvest Hope Food Bank as the director of human resources, Feb. 2022.

Leslie A. Cobb '04 joined Berkshire Hathaway/C. Dan Joyner Realtors of Greenville in the Woodruff at Five Forks office, Jun. 2021.

Brent Garrett '04 was named IBSC's 2022 Leadership Award recipient, Aug. 2021.

Mandy Wilkes Lloyd '04 was named Teacher of the Year 2022-23 at Greenwood High School.

Ashley Scott Stokes '06 was named the South Carolina Independent School Association Assistant Headmaster of the Year, Nov. 2022.

Taylor N. Johnston '07 moved into a new position with Lander University as the decision support systems manager, Jan. 2022.

Jessica Spense Sprouse '07 was named a new assistant principal at Greenwood High School.

Ricky "Rico" Salliewhite '08/'14 was named a new principal at Brewer Middle School.

2010s

Beth Whittle Bell '11 was named Teacher of the Year 2022-23 at Brewer Middle School.

Stephanie Boozer '11 was named Teacher of the Year 2022-23 at Lakeview Elementary and is the new assistant principal at Rice Elementary School.

Ongela Hill Nance '11 was named Teacher of the Year 2022-23 at Mathews Elementary School.

Daniel Harris '13 received the Rising Star Award from Loyola University New Orleans during their annual Staff Awards Ceremony in May 2022.

Whitney Patterson Stennett '14 joined Internal Medicine of Piedmont, with Self Regional, as a nurse practitioner.

Robert Maynor '15 was selected as the winner of the 2022 South Carolina Novel Series for his debut novel, *The Big Game is Every Night*.

MaryKate Leggieri '15/'21 has a new position at Lander University as lecturer of professional development and director of online programs and professional development.

Austin Wilson '15, from Apr. 26 to May 1, 2022, played club football for Team USA International against opposing teams in the Mexico State of Oaxaca. Team USA won!

Ryan Sacoco '16 was named women's basketball coach at East Carteret High School, Jul. 2021.

2020s

Hailey Calcut '20 was named the 2022 1st Year Teacher of the Year at Woodfields Elementary School.

Julie Hyatt '20 was named the 2022 1st Year Teacher of the Year at Pinecrest Elementary School.

Carly Davis '21 was named the 2022 1st Year Teacher of the Year at Rice Elementary School.

Emilee Fertick '21 was named the 2022 1st Year Teacher of the Year at Westview Middle School.

Alicia Loggins '21 was named the 2022 1st Year Teacher of the Year at the Early Childhood & Montessori School.

Matalyn Mills '21 was named the 2022 1st Year Teacher of the Year at Brewer Middle School.

Ariana Catherine O'Dell '21 was named the 2022 1st Year Teacher of the Year at Lakeview Elementary.

Gemma Perez '21 was named the 2022 1st Year Teacher of the Year at Greenwood High School.

Abby Pilgrim '21 was hired as a student success advisor at Lander University, Jun. 2021.

Alyssa Whittle '21 was named the 2022 1st Year Teacher of the Year at Mays Elementary School.

Weddings

Ashley Nicole Cliatt '11 and John Adam Hixon, Jr., Columbia, Jul. 17, 2021. They reside in Columbia.

Sarah Elizabeth Bowers '18 and Charles Sheldon Davis, Aiken, Dec. 4, 2021. They reside in Aiken.

Laura M. Brown '16 and **Avery Keith Wood '18**, Laurens, Oct. 23, 2021. They reside in Greenwood.

Births

Virginia Alexander Cononie '06 and Michael Cononie, a daughter, Vivian Mae, Jul. 10, 2019.

David Connor '09 and **Kirstin Stewart Connor '12**, a daughter, Kennedy Alexandra, Jul. 21, 2021.

John '11 and **Marina Morgan Proctor '11**, a son, John Fowler, on Apr. 2, 2022. He joins big sister, Wren.

Lauren DeBacco Gable '12 and Thomas Gable, a daughter, Josephine Kaye, Oct. 18, 2021.

Megan McCartney '12 and Wade Lister, a son, Myer James, Jan. 28, 2022.

Kacie Calliham McCutcheon '12 and Tyler McCutcheon, a son, Miles Dale, on Apr. 27, 2022. He joins big brother Briggs.

Janza Walker Moore '13 and Jordan Moore, a daughter, Emoree Joy, Nov. 7, 2021.

Mary Katherine Revels '14 and Andrew Revels, a daughter, Emmary Jane, Apr. 5, 2022.

Tyler Griffin '15 and **Jessica Trotter Griffin '17**, a son, Heath Justin, Aug. 25, 2021.

Kathleen Dillard Crowder '16 and James Crowder, a son, Benjamin Luke, Mar. 24, 2021.

In Memoriam

Nancy Anderson Self '34, West Columbia, Jun. 12, 2021.

Martha Mitchel Guess Caughman '40, Sumter, Jul., 21, 2022.

Beulah Chestnut Marvin '43, Stokesdale, N.C., Mar. 28, 2022.

Sarah Bush Walker '43, Evans, Ga., Dec. 16, 2022.

Martha Epps Frye '45, Carthage, N.C., Dec. 12, 2021.

Mary Cheatham Batson '46, Greer, Jun. 16, 2021.

Viola Burton McDowell '48, Roswell, Ga., Jul. 10, 2021.

Ira Nelle Shaw Smith '49, Greenwood, Oct. 7, 2022.

June Bryan Scott '51, McCormick, Dec. 3, 2022.

Marjorie Spelts Tollison '52, Columbia, Sep. 16, 2021.

Dorothy Layton King '54, Camarillo, Calif., Nov. 22, 2021.

Betty Saunders Hydrick '55, Ruffin, Dec. 19, 2022.

Ann Simmons Arnold '56, Greenwood, Jun. 22, 2022.

Vera McMillan Neal '56, Walterboro, Jul. 9, 2022.

Helen Bellamy Sease '56, Ehrhardt, Nov. 12, 2021.

Jerry Telford Latham '58, Greenwood, Nov. 22, 2022.

Sameul A. McQuerns '59, Fort Worth, Texas, Aug. 2, 2021.

Joyce Stokely Ranallo '60, Rice Lake, Wis., Nov. 3, 2022.

Ramona Gail Ouzts Harvey '61, Greenwood, Nov. 10, 2022.

Lunette Anderson Nanney '61, Anderson, Dec. 31, 2021.

Johanna "AnnJi" Hund Salley '61, Wilmington, N.C., Dec. 22, 2021.

Betty Lynn Snider '61, Arkadelphia, Ark., Jul. 22, 2022.

Martha Scott Hoole '62, Ninety Six, Sep. 3, 2021.

Frances Johnson Hindman '63, Burlington, N.C., Jul. 1, 2022.

Class Notes Continues on pg. 59

LANDER ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

The Lander Alumni Association's Board of Directors is made up of graduates spanning six decades, working together to actively promote and grow inclusive, lifelong engagement of current and future alumni through service and support for the advancement of Lander University.

Board members play a vital role volunteering for Alumni Association sponsored events throughout the year, including our annual Ring Ceremony, Dinner with 10 Bearcats, and Homecoming!

If you are interested in learning more about serving on the Alumni Board, please contact our office at **alumni@lander.edu** or call (864) 388-8718.

To nominate, visit **giving.lander.edu/alumni-board**.

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Chrissie Cofield Latimore '11

President Biden Taps Lander Alumna for U.S. Marshal Service



Contributed Photo

When U.S. President Joe Biden needed a U.S. Marshal for South Carolina, he chose Lander University alumna Chrissie Cofield Latimore '11.

A statement from the White House at the time of her nomination said U.S. Marshals are "chosen for their devotion to enforcing the law, their professionalism, their experience and credentials, their dedication to pursuing equal justice for all, and their commitment to the independence of the Department of Justice."

Latimore was confirmed by the U.S. Senate for the post on Dec. 6, 2022.

The former Laurens police chief, Latimore is a Clinton native who became the first African-American female and first female police chief in Laurens. She worked with the Laurens Police Department for more than 20 years and also with the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division (SLED). She is a veteran of the U.S. Army and U.S. Army Reserve.

Dr. Lucas McMillan, dean of Lander's College of Behavioral and Social Sciences, said the University is extremely proud of Latimore.

"The presidential nomination and Senate confirmation speak volumes about her professionalism and service as a leader in S.C. law enforcement. This important federal post is another step in an accomplished career that includes service as special agent for SLED and as chief of police for Laurens," he said.

"It is clear that Lander University provides a quality education. U.S. Marshal Latimore has contributed to that as a part-time criminology instructor in the past few years. We are sad that our students will no longer benefit from her expertise, but she continues to be a strong role model for our students."

In addition to her degree from Lander, Latimore earned an associate's degree from Piedmont Technical College, and a master's degree from Anderson University's Command College.

The U.S. Marshals Service is the nation's oldest and most versatile federal law enforcement agency. It was founded in 1789, when President George Washington signed commissions for 13 Marshals to serve the new nation.

■ By Karen Petit

Rachel Crenshaw Thompson '63, Honea Path, Mar. 25, 2022.

Eloise Hendrick Dusenbury '65, Conway, Sep. 30, 2021.

Mayble Moon Lesley '65, Greenwood, Jul. 9, 2022.

George Mason Speer, Jr. '65, Abbeville, Dec. 31, 2021.

Jennie Rae Surratt Clayton '67, Blacksburg, Nov. 7, 2022.

Reba Pruitt Brown '69, Washington, Ga., June 3, 2022.

Joe A. Shirley Jr. '69, Due West, Nov. 12, 2022.

Joe R. Giles, Sr. '70, Clinton, Feb. 6, 2022.

Sara Ross Clay '71, Greer, Feb. 28, 2022.

Jene Wise Klopp '71/'98, Georgetown, Aug. 26, 2022.

Linda Harris Phillips '71, Greenwood, Dec. 8, 2022.

Wayne A. Powell, Sr. '71, Greenwood, Feb. 6, 2022.

Dana A. Gravley '72, Greenwood, Nov. 8, 2021.

Kathleen "Kathy" Thompson Beeks '73, Branchville, Aug. 19, 2021.

Steven J. Brown '74, Greenwood, Aug. 13, 2021.

Joseph DuBose Fennell '74, Greenwood, Dec. 2, 2022.

William Jeffers "Jeff" McWatty '74, Greenwood, Oct. 4, 2022.

Larry W. Parnell '75, Greenwood, May 14, 2022.

William "Bill" T. Arnett '77, Greenwood, Nov. 1, 2022.

Elsie Jackson Blakely '77, Clinton, Aug. 16, 2022.

Jesse L. Butler '77, Summit, N.J., Sep. 11, 2021.

Louis A. Davis '77, Greenwood, Jun. 8, 2022.

Keenan D. Kelly '79, Abbeville, Oct. 3, 2021.

Randall Eric Carter '81, Johnsonville, Nov. 2, 2022.

James T. Cason '81, McCormick, Jul. 12, 2022.

Walker Crosby '81, Aiken, Oct. 13, 2022.

Stephen H. Bailey '82, Greenville, Dec. 5, 2022.

Jack W. Davenport '83, Lugoff, Nov. 10, 2022.

Samuel J. "Sammy" Deery, IV '83, Greenwood, Mar. 23, 2022.

Sonya "Soni" Rushton Davis '84, Hodges, Nov. 18, 2021.

Leslie DeAnne Gregory '86, Greenwood, Nov. 25, 2022.

Kathryn "Kay" Summers Cherup '87, Lexington, Aug. 29, 2021.

Kecia Russell Burkart '89, Anderson, Aug. 4, 2022.

Candy Warren Green '89, Due West, May 26, 2022.

Mary Lynn Looney Ross '93, Charleston, Aug. 22, 2021.

Michael Shane Wood '94, Ninety Six, Feb. 23, 2022.

Allison Bearden Foster '97, Union, Aug. 27, 2021.

Marshall Brandon Wilson '97, Abbeville, Dec. 2, 2022.

Deana Styron Coker '03, Greenwood, May 13, 2022.

Matthew C. Jackson '03, Colorado Springs, Colo., Sep. 19, 2022.

Bryan J. Corley '04, Greenwood, Jun. 2, 2021.

SSG Phillip Wayne Whiteside, II '04, Greenwood, Aug. 21, 2021.

Mary Ann Bryant '05, Ninety Six, Apr. 21, 2022.

Aron J. Bell, II '18, Binghamton, N.Y., Jun. 13, 2021.

Faculty/Staff

Robert T. "Bob" Barrett passed away suddenly on Mar. 15, 2023. Dr. Barrett served as dean of the College of Business and Public Affairs from 2012 until his retirement in 2017.

Walter M. Patterson, III passed away Nov. 26, 2022. He worked for over twenty years as a professor of mathematics and directed the dual-degree engineering and Honors International programs.

Mary Edmunds Osborne passed away on Jan. 30, 2023. She worked for 13 years in the Lander's bookstore before retiring.

Patricia "Pat" Poole passed away Dec. 21, 2021. She worked for Lander as the benefits and employment manager for Human Resources and retired in 2013.

Branimir "Branko" Rieger passed away Feb. 11, 2022. He was an emeritus professor of English at Lander and taught for over thirty years.

Dr. Samrendra Singh passed away Nov. 18, 2022. He was a professor of sociology from 1970 - 2000. ■



Mrs. Margaret Moran

Remembering Lander's Former First Lady | 1938-2022

The Lander University family mourned the passing of Mrs. Margaret Frances Queen Moran, wife of past Lander University President William C. Moran and First Lady of the University from 1992-2000, who died Dec. 30 at her home in Pawleys Island, S.C. She was 84.

A native of West Virginia, Mrs. Moran graduated from St. Mary's School of Nursing in June of 1959. While attending St. Mary's, Margaret met a young undergraduate from nearby Marshall University – William "Bill" Moran – who quickly stole her heart, and the pair were married in August of 1959. Early in their marriage, the Morans moved quite often in an effort to advance Bill's career in academia, while simultaneously raising their two sons, Kevin and Tom. During those years, Margaret found her calling as a radiology, surgical and OB/GYN nurse at health care facilities in Maryland, West Virginia and Tennessee.

In the 1980s, the Moran family moved to Florence, S.C., where Dr. Moran was appointed as a vice president at Francis Marion University, and Mrs. Moran served as director of McClenaghan Place Retirement Center. The Morans arrived in Greenwood to begin their tenure as Lander's President and First Lady on July 1, 1992 – the same date that then-Lander College moved to University status.

With her compassionate manner and genuine warmth, Mrs. Moran quickly endeared herself to the Lander and Greenwood communities. A mother figure to Lander's students, she was well-known on campus and beyond as a gracious hostess. Her receptions, garden parties and suppers at the President's Home became cherished Lander traditions.

Mrs. Moran was also actively involved with many charitable and civic organizations in the region, devoting her time and talents to serving the larger community and those in need. Following Dr. Moran's retirement as President in 2000, the couple moved to the S.C. coast, where Margaret and Bill enjoyed spending time with their grandchildren and family.

Mrs. Moran was predeceased by her husband in 2009, and by her eldest son, Kevin, in 2010. Surviving are her son, Tom, and his wife Liz; grandchildren Wesley Tyler Moran (Beth Ann), Michael Paxton Moran, and Sarah Elizabeth Moran; great-grandchildren Henry Hutchinson "Hutch" Moran and Elizabeth Gray "Birdie" Moran; as well as several siblings, and many nieces and nephews.

Alumni and friends may choose to honor the memory of Mrs. Margaret Moran with a gift to the William C. and Margaret F. Moran Scholarship, in care of The Lander Foundation, 320 Stanley Avenue, Campus Box 6004, Greenwood, S.C. 29649, or by calling (864) 388-8350.

Lt. Gen. Maria R. Gervais '87

BUILDING A LEGACY: SERVICE TO AMERICA DEFINES CAREER

The three stars on Lt. Gen. Maria R. Gervais' uniform designate her post as a senior officer in the U.S. Army and represent decades of commitment to our nation.

The Lander University alumna, who is approaching 36 years of military service, has devoted her life to the U.S. Army, a time spent building a legacy of duty that lives through the thousands of men and women whom she has led and trained in her U.S. Army assignments, and with whom she has worked in posts around the world.

While the stars command attention, it is the general's demeanor and words which bring everyone to attention. Reserved and dignified, Gervais is quick to smile and laugh, exuding a warmth most people may not expect from a high-ranking officer. But when Gervais speaks of patriotism, duty and service, her message is powerful.

On a whirlwind trip to Greenwood, Gervais and her husband, retired U.S. Army Lt. Col. Chris Gervais, met with Lander officials and toured the campus. They also visited the Greenwood County Veterans Center, where Lander's alumna was honored with the "Great American Award" by Rosalind Burke, director of the Greenwood Veterans Affairs Office.

While talking to Reserve Officers' Training Corps cadets from Lander, Newberry College and Presbyterian College, Gervais discussed her experiences of military service with the cadets and told them, "You are the future of our Army, and you are in the best leadership program."

She speaks from experience. Gervais is the Deputy Commanding General/Chief of Staff for the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) and is stationed at Fort Eustis, Va.

In the military, "we do leadership every day," she said. "The soldiers that you are leading are hungry for your leadership. You are entering the best trained, best equipped, best respected military in the world. You are going to lead America's sons and daughters."

That responsibility, she said, comes with "much trust and confidence at such a young age, but you can lead. And you will. Even on your worst day, it better be the best day for those that you lead."

As a young military officer, Gervais said the opportunities afforded her through the Army gave her extensive training. "The Army sent me to school, gave me skills. I developed trust and confidence. I became part of a larger team. The opportunities, the things that I have gotten to do are why I'm here more than 30 years later. You are going to have the best journey."

For those wondering if they had the capacity to lead, Gervais put doubts to rest. She acknowledged that she was an introvert in her early life. "I used to be so quiet. But I watched, and I learned every day from higher ranking officers, my peers and my subordinates. I continue to learn and to grow, just as you will. I can see the talent and potential in you."

That Gervais would choose a career in the military seems a given. Her father, the late Robert J. Rea, served in the U.S. Army and U.S. Air Force and had tours in Korea and Vietnam. Her brother, U.S. Army Sgt. Robert S. Rea, is a Vietnam War veteran.

The family of nine children, of which Gervais is the seventh child, moved to Greenwood after the family lived at Fort Jackson. She said her mother, the late Verna Dillon Rea, fell in love with the Palmetto State.

"There was no other choice but South Carolina as our home," she said.

At Greenwood High, Gervais was an avid athlete. She chose Lander, in part, because she would have the opportunity to play for the women's basketball team, but also because of the personal attention that students received from the staff and faculty. "I knew that I could succeed here," she said.

When an injury ended her basketball career, she focused on improving her health and advancing her studies. In her junior year, she joined Lander's ROTC program. She knew that her father's military service had given her family "a great life," and she believed that she would have opportunities to advance in her career.

But she admits that she never imagined how outstanding those opportunities would be. Her military career began when Gervais received her Regular Army commission in 1987 as a Distinguished Military Graduate of the Lander College ROTC program.

Because of her studies in biology, Gervais was assigned to the U.S. Army's Chemical Corps. Her professional military education includes Chemical Officer basic and advanced courses;



the Command and General Staff College, and the U.S. Army War College, where she earned a Master of Military Strategic Studies. She also earned a master's in human resources from Webster University.

Gervais has served tours in Germany, Afghanistan, Iraq and Saudi Arabia, and her service encompasses a variety of command and staff assignments at every level. Her posts have included duties at the Pentagon and recently in the Army Futures Command as the first cross-functional team director for the Synthetic Training Environment in Orlando, Fla.









Her awards and decorations from the U.S. Army include the Distinguished Service Medal, five Legions of Merit, Bronze Star Medal, seven Meritorious Service Medals, two Joint Service Commendation Medals, six Army Commendation Medals, two Army Achievement Medals, and an Iraqi Campaign Medal.

Gervais also has earned a Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, two National Defense Service Medals, and other medals recognizing her service in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Southwest Asia.

Her numerous tours of duty and work "have helped me understand how much I love America and what we stand for … the ideals and ideology and freedom."

In recent years, she has helped to bring advances in technology to the military. Gervais has worked with the U.S. Army to adapt gaming technology for military training. Gaming technology offers lessons in creating "bloodless battles" before soldiers are in real-life combat situations. "We are re-creating the physics of the battlefield," she said.

The training is "powerful," Gervais said, and enables the Army to build better, cohesive teams of soldiers with the ability "to engage in real fighting and reduce casualties."

During her visits to Lander over the years, Gervais said she is impressed that the campus has maintained the same personal touches that she experienced as a student. "The campus is amazing … the progress that is being made."

She praised her alma mater for its energy and commitment to students. "I just loved being here. You felt like you were part of a close-knit community. I think about the foundation that Lander gave me – a great education, the exposure to so many opportunities. It was ingrained in me. I think that is something that Lander will never lose," she said.

The love for learning, developed at Lander, is an integral part of her life. "Every single day, I go home and ask 'what did I do that I was not especially proud of' and 'what can I do to improve myself.' Character is something you must work at every day."

■ By Karen Petit

Pictured, Lt. Gen. Maria Gervais '87 speaks to students in Lander's ROTC program, members of the University administration and others during her visit to campus and Greenwood in 2022. -Photos by Laura B. Wood

We Can't Wait to Welcome You *Home*



Save *The* Date

Returning to February—
Homecoming & Alumni Reunion Weekend

February 9-10, 2024

Robert Maynor '15

BIG GAME MATERIAL

Alum's First Novel Selected for Publication

Since graduating from Lander University, Robert Maynor has made a point to keep in touch with his former professor, Dr. Andy Jameson, who teaches literature and creative writing courses for Lander's Department of English and Foreign Languages.

The pair regularly swap reading lists, chat about college football, and exchange early drafts of stories they're working on for feedback. When Maynor shared that his first novel, *The Big Game Is Every Night*, had been selected for publication by the South Carolina Arts Commission and Hub City Press, Jameson said that news came as no surprise to him.

"The thing about Robby is that he always had material," Jameson said. "Sometimes it takes a while as a writer to figure out what your material is, but Robby regularly had material."

Maynor believes one of the most important lessons he learned at Lander was where to go looking for the material that was uniquely his own. "I was already writing when I came to Lander," he said, "but I was mostly writing the stories I thought I was 'supposed' to write." As an English major, he found his voice and explored new ways to put his own ideas down on paper, rather than someone else's. And as a member of the Honors College, he took courses in a wide range of topics, including travel writing, logic and rhetoric. He still uses the principles he learned from these courses, both as a professional writer and in his work as a conservationist.

"My time at Lander helped me to understand myself and my community in new ways, and empowered me to write about the people and places and ideas that I am keenly familiar with and passionate about," he said.

Maynor's first novel, *The Big Game Is Every Night*, showcases that keen understanding of self he developed while studying at Lander. It's a coming-of-age story set in South Carolina's Lowcountry that follows Grady Hayes, a high school student and a promising football player who slips into a state of loneliness and depression following a devastating leg injury. The book will be published in the fall of 2023 by Hub City Press, and will be available for purchase wherever books are sold.



Photos Contributed by Robert Maynor

Short stories by Maynor have appeared in several publications, including *Blood Orange Review, BULL, The Carolina Quarterly* and *CRAFT*, among other places. Like the main character of his novel, Maynor is from the Lowcountry. He lives and writes in a patched-up fish camp on the bank of the Edisto River, "the longest free-flowing blackwater river in North America," Maynor said. His work has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize, and he is the past recipient of the Larry Brown Short Story Award and the Coker Fellowship in Fiction from the South Carolina Academy of Authors.

Maynor also credited his alma mater with giving him the confidence he needed as a young writer. While rejection letters can be discouraging, another valuable life skill he picked up at Lander was his endurance: "to keep writing and keep submitting, despite the narrow odds and the persistent rejection that comes along with being a writer."

Jameson thinks that endurance is crucial to finding success in writing.

"With enough practice, most students will eventually develop their voice and find where to look for their material, but few have the drive to keep on writing and submitting after they graduate," Jameson said. "I knew right away that Robby had the drive."

■ By Graham Duncan



Photo courtesy Lexington County Sheriff's Department

Carleisha Gilliam '15

PROTECTING THE INNOCENT

Lander Alumna Serves as Investigator with Lexington County Special Victims Unit

Deciding what to study in college is a difficult choice for many people, but not for Carleisha Gilliam '15. Since early childhood, she knew that she wanted to go into law enforcement.

After graduating high school, Gilliam settled on attending Lander University and pursuing a Bachelor of Science in sociology with an emphasis in criminal justice. "Alongside the courses, the professors and Lander University Police Department also played a huge role in leading me towards my career," she said. Gilliam specifically points towards an internship she completed with the City of Abbeville. "It was my first experience seeing the day-to-day work of a law enforcement officer."

One of her final assignments before obtaining her bachelor's degree required the creation of a portfolio, part of which included listing both long- and short-term goals. "I still have that portfolio and often pull it out to remind myself of the goals I set in my last days as an undergraduate at Lander."

Following her graduation and a couple years on the job, Gilliam decided that an advanced degree was next and enrolled at Columbia College. "My experience at Lander University helped me earn my master's in criminal justice because it showed me that higher education is key to continuing to grow," said Gilliam, who finished her second degree in 2018.

Her career path after her graduation from Lander began at the City of Newberry Police Department in 2015. Her time in Newberry was followed by a stint in the Lexington Medical Center Public Safety Department.

"In 2019 I found my home as a patrol deputy at Lexington County Sheriff's Department," she said. She serves as an investigator in the Special Victims Unit, a post she was promoted to in 2021 after just two years with the department. Gilliam's co-workers in Lexington noticed her potential, which inspired her even more. "It feels good to have people that back you up, and you just met them," she said. "It's like they're family now."

Working in this specific unit is "first and foremost an honor," said Gilliam. She mainly handles cases involving abuse against children and vulnerable adults. "These cases allow us to be the voices for the most innocent group of people we hold dear to our hearts," she said.

Experiencing these types of cases on a regular basis can be strenuous and present unique challenges for investigators. "We deal with a lot of children who have been abused," said Gilliam. "That in itself is tough, but to have the team that I have, I really couldn't ask for any other group to work with."

She credits her team with always maintaining a strong mental state and finding ways to get through tough situations as a unit, and said, "I just really couldn't ask for any other guys to work with."

A tough mindset and determination are not new qualities for Gilliam. Her willingness to tackle challenges head-on dates back to her time as a student, when she was taking on new obstacles and lessons every day in class. "I've learned that some things in life you may not accomplish on the first go around," she said. "Never give up on yourself. Stay in the fight and your time will come."

That strong mindset and determination have propelled Gilliam towards her lifelong goals. "I am living my career goals," she said. "There's nothing more rewarding than to be in the current position I am today."

■ By Zack Bennett



Cindy Riddle '82

Lander Alumna Honored with Thomas A. Hatfield Lifetime Achievement Award

The South Carolina Art Education Association (SCAEA) named Cindy Riddle '82 as the 2022 recipient of the Thomas A. Hatfield Lifetime Achievement Award. Riddle is the assistant superintendent of visual and performing arts for Spartanburg School District One.

Riddle credited her alma mater with preparing her for a stellar career in art education. "The impact of my education at Lander University exhibits everything you envision in an arts education graduate: strong work ethic, arts learning and advocacy for all students in the arts," said Riddle. "A high-quality instructional foundation was laid by my Lander professors and colleagues, and their support and guidance continued for me throughout my career."

Riddle was chosen for the award for her leadership in Spartanburg One, which resulted in the development of quality arts programs throughout the district. SCAEA also recognized Riddle for her development of a mentor program for visual art instructors in her district. Riddle is a past president of SCAEA, and served on the Delegates Assembly for the National Art Educators Association (NAEA) from 2018 to 2021. SCAEA also recognized Riddle for her leadership as president during the COVID-19 pandemic, and for honoring the core values of the association through the implementation of a new board position for equity, diversity and inclusion.

Over her 23-year teaching career, Riddle has received numerous awards. In 2015, she was named South Carolina Art Education Administrator of the Year, and in 2017, she received the Dr. Deborah Smith Hoffman Mentor Award. In 2020, she received the prestigious Governor's Award for the Arts in Arts Education. In addition to being a champion of arts education, Riddle is also a practicing visual artist and owner of Chicken Coop Art Co.

■ *Contributed by SCAEA; Photo courtesy of Cindy Riddle*



RINGING IN TRADITION

The Lander University Alumni Association held its third annual ring ceremony on Feb. 11. The ceremony is designed to honor the University's junior and senior students, who received their customized Lander University class rings during the event. "Let this ring serve as a token of the pride and affection that you have for Lander and all of your accomplishments here," said Suzann Couts, executive director of Alumni Engagement.

– By Jeff Lagrone; Photos by Laura B. Wood

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Defying the Odds

When Lander Field Hockey joined the South Atlantic Conference for the 2022 season, they didn't expect to end the year with the best inaugural season in conference history. However, their season would be one for the record books. Read more about the team's exciting first season and other Lander sports on page 50 of this issue.



-Photo by Student Photographer Hayden Joyner