

SUMMER 2022

# LANDER

MAGAZINE FOR ALUMNI & FRIENDS OF THE UNIVERSITY

150  
1872-2022

## The Sesquicentennial

*Lander Celebrates 150 Years  
of Excellence in Education*

Building a Pipeline of Qualified Nursing Professionals | Business Graduates Find Success in the Field | Alumni & Faculty Awards





LANDER UN





## *A Spectacular Show*

On March 15, more than 2,000 people gathered on Lander University's campus to officially kick off the University's year-long Sesquicentennial Celebration with historical presentations, student performances, games, dancing and music mixed with moments of nostalgia. As the evening's grand finale, a spectacular fireworks show filled the sky above campus. This image is a composite of five frames, photographed by Lander Professor of Art Jon Holloway, and compiled by design student Michael Kline.

*On the Front Cover: Photo by Laura B. Wood '16*



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Dear friends,

It's been two years since we have had the opportunity to present you with an edition of *Lander Magazine*, and what a unique two years it has been for our nation, our world and for our Lander University family. COVID-19 brought us all new obstacles to overcome. Students had to adjust to learning from home for a semester. Faculty and staff faced new challenges. And as we returned to campus, we continued to adapt our learning environment to provide a meaningful education for students, while also keeping our campus community safe.

The resilience of this University, however, is just one of the many things we have to celebrate. This year, Lander University commemorates its 150<sup>th</sup> birthday, and this edition of *Lander Magazine* is a tribute to our century and a half of equipping graduates to make a difference in the workplace and the world.

In this edition, you'll read about alumni of Lander's College of Business, who put their skills into action with exciting careers in a wide range of fields across the globe. One alumnus works for Google, one began his own company, and one alumna used her education to reach the other side of the map, working for Eaton in Australia. You'll also learn of new scholarship opportunities for our students, including the Jim Lander Scholarship, honoring the legacy of Lander alumnus Jim Lander, former state senator and comptroller general, and the great-grandson of our founder, the Rev. Samuel Lander.

Generous contributions to student scholarships are coming from our valued community partners, as well. Last year, First Citizens Bank of Greenwood established the first endowed scholarship for grad students in our College of Business. And earlier this year, we joined our friends from Self Regional Healthcare to announce the establishment of the Self Regional Scholars Program, a transformational endowed gift that will help us address South Carolina's growing need for health care professionals.

Over the last seven years, you've heard me discuss Lander's growth – growth in enrollment, growth in online and graduate degree programs, and growth in our fundraising efforts, to name a few. But, I'm also excited to share the growth of our footprint, as we expand our campus with new buildings and other enhancement projects, including a brand new, state-of-the-art nursing building and our new Nursing Skills Simulation Center. We'll be sharing more exciting updates with you later this year.

As we continue our Sesquicentennial Celebration, it's appropriate for us to look backward – to reflect on our University's rich history and traditions, and honor those people and those moments in history that helped us arrive at where we are today. But it's also important that we look forward. As I walk our campus today, I can't help but think of what Lander will look like in the next 150 years because of the seeds that we are planting today.



Richard Cosentino  
 President, Lander University

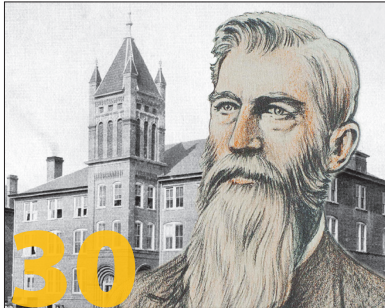






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## A NOTE FROM THE **editor**

Did you miss us?

We have certainly missed you – our loyal *Lander Magazine* readers – over the last two years. As you may recall, our last issue was in 2019, before the world was changed by COVID-19. The pandemic presented new challenges and disruptions to almost every aspect of our daily lives, and *Lander Magazine* was not immune. As the University worked quickly to implement necessary changes to ensure the health and safety of our campus community, the Office of University Relations made the difficult decision to postpone printing of the magazine while our focus and resources were shifted to other critical needs.

Much has occurred at Lander University during our magazine hiatus. There were many important updates and wonderful feature stories that we had planned to share with you during that time. In fact, we chose to include several of those articles in this issue, along with more recent news and events. We felt these stories – our student, alumni and faculty achievements – were important to share with our readers and friends, even if they may be a little "dated." But while we were able to pack this issue with a lot of information, we simply could not include *everything* that has occurred since 2019. We hope you will forgive any inadvertent omissions in this issue, and I encourage you to check our website and social media for the stories and news we couldn't include.

We are very excited to be back "in print!" On behalf of the entire *Lander Magazine* staff, we thank you for your patience, and we hope you enjoy this issue!

Sincerely,

Megan Price  
Editor, *Lander Magazine*

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# College of Graduate & Online Studies Expands Opportunities to Students Around the Globe



Lander University has expanded its already robust academic catalog through the creation of the College of Graduate and Online Studies, which opened its doors last fall.

"We are proud to establish a college offering high-quality, affordable and accessible online options for students who want to begin, or even finish, an undergraduate or master's degree," said President Richard Cosentino.

A core value of the College of Graduate and Online Studies is to provide high-quality and affordable education. The total cost is \$390 per credit hour for online undergraduate programs, and \$545 per credit hour, with no additional student fees, for graduate programs. Special tuition rates are available for veterans, teachers and public employees.

Lander's lineup of online degree programs is growing quickly, with a variety of degrees currently offered. Bachelor's programs range from business administration to health promotion and wellness, and there are six graduate programs offered, including the new Master of Business Administration. Enrolled graduate students will also have the opportunity to join Lander's graduate assistantship program, which provides grad students the opportunity to work approximately 20 hours per week during the academic year for a 50% tuition discount and a \$3,000 per semester stipend. Jobs in the graduate assistantship program align with each student's field of study, providing them with opportunities to gain relevant work experience to bolster their resume while they are completing their master's degrees.

Some 32,000 South Carolinians are in online degree programs through out-of-state institutions. Lander's goal is to give these students the degrees they need, in the high-quality online format they want, closer to home.

Dr. Lloyd Willis, associate professor of English, is serving as interim dean of the college and was instrumental in its development. He wants Lander's online students to know they are full-fledged Bearcats. "They are part of the Lander family, from day one until they drive into town to walk across the graduation stage." ■



Lloyd Willis

## S.C. Secretary of Veterans' Affairs Visits Lander

***In December, Major General William F. Grimsley, secretary of South Carolina's Department of Veterans' Affairs, visited the Lander University campus to discuss Lander's status as a veteran-friendly institution with University officials.***

Pictured, from left to right, are Dr. Todd Gambill, vice president for Enrollment and Access Management; Adam Taylor, vice president and chief of staff; Dr. Richard Cosentino, president of Lander University; Secretary Grimsley; Sym Singh, Lander alumnus and director of legislative affairs for the Office of the Governor; and Jason Smith, director of Lander's Office of Military and Veteran Services. ■





# Celebrating Achievements

## Lander Recognizes '21-22 Student Life Leaders

"We're here tonight because this is a particularly proud moment for those of us who have the privilege of working at the University," Dr. Boyd Yarbrough, vice president of Student Affairs at Lander, told a crowd of students, parents, faculty and staff at the 2021-22 Student Life Awards, held in April. "That is because we get the opportunity to celebrate your successes, to celebrate your victories, to celebrate your accomplishments, and to get a glimpse of all the amazing things that lie ahead of you."

Hosted annually, the Student Life Awards commemorates the achievements of members of the Lander student body over the course of the academic year.

**The President's Award**, given by President Richard Cosentino in recognition of service to the Lander community, was awarded to **Elizabeth Wall**, of North Augusta. Wall was chosen because of her ability to balance being both a student-athlete and nursing major effortlessly. Wall is also the president of the equestrian team, an active member of the Lander University Student Nurses Association, and an extern at Self Regional Healthcare. She volunteered her free time in recent months at the Self Regional Cancer Center, where she assisted patients and their families in the making of Easter crafts. She has previously helped coordinate blood donation drives to help stock blood banks in the local area.

Meanwhile, the awards for **Samuel and Laura Lander Man and Woman of the Year** were presented to **Jackson Carter**, of Barnwell, and **Maria Martinez-Contreras**, of Lexington. The Samuel and Laura Lander Man and Woman of the Year awards are named in honor of Lander University's founder, the Rev. Samuel Lander, and his wife, Laura. The individuals

chosen for these honors are those who demonstrate the true spirit of Lander, in pursuit of excellence in all aspects of their collegiate endeavors.

Carter, this year's Samuel Lander Man of the Year, was described as an integral student employee. Carter is a manager within the Fitness Center and president of the Lander Powerlifting Club. He was credited with creating a positive environment for all those who come into the Fitness Center. "It can be scary to walk into an unfamiliar environment, when everyone around seems to know what they're doing," his nominator wrote. "It could be as little as a smile and friendly greeting, giving a fist bump, or asking someone what they are focusing on in the gym that day. Small actions of kindness like these can have a big impact on someone who is silently struggling."

Martinez-Contreras, this year's Laura Lander Woman of the Year, was called "the perfect example of a Lander woman." Her involvement on campus has included service as president of her sorority, Gamma Phi Beta, as well as the Panhellenic Council, the Order of Omega, Bearcat Rally and Somos LU. Contreras is also a Presidential Ambassador and a former Orientation Leader. "She is dedicated to her education and her extracurricular activities," her nominator wrote. "She has been impactful in many ways, including bringing more women into Greek Life, and by diversifying our organizations. She is a very involved and committed woman, and she meets everyone with the utmost dignity and respect." ■



Elizabeth Wall, left, and Vice President Boyd Yarbrough

Maria Martinez-Contreras, left, and Jackson Carter



Scan to see a full list of Lander University's 2022 Student Life Award recipients.



**NEW PROGRAMS INCLUDE:**

- Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT)  
(Emphases in Visual Art K-12 and Special Education - Multicategorical)
- Master of Business Administration (MBA)
- Master of Fine Arts (MFA), Visual Art  
(Emphases in 2D Studio and 3D Studio)
- Master of Science (MS), Exercise Science
- Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS),  
Business Administration
- Bachelor of Arts (BA), Entrepreneurship
- Bachelor of Arts (BA), Humanities
- Bachelor of Arts (BA), International Studies
- Bachelor of Design (BDes), Graphic Design
- Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA), Visual Art  
(Emphases in 2D Studio & 3D Studio)
- Bachelor of Science (BS), Biology, Medical
- Bachelor of Science (BS), Business Admin.  
(New Emphases in Hospitality Management,  
Information Technology Management,  
and Sports Management)
- Bachelor of Science (BS), Cybersecurity  
(Emphases in CIS and Political Science)
- Bachelor of Science (BS), Data Science  
(Emphases in Business Analytics, CIS and  
Mathematics)
- Bachelor of Science (BS), Digital Media Prod.
- Bachelor of Science (BS), History  
(New emphasis in Public History)
- Bachelor of Science (BS), Human Services
- Bachelor of Science (BS), Paralegal Studies
- Bachelor of Science (BS), Public Health  
(Emphasis in Genetic Studies)
- Graduate Certificate,  
All-Hazard Emergency Management
- Undergraduate Certificate,  
Genetic Health Studies

**Launching New Degree Programs**

From the humanities to data science and cybersecurity, Lander University is ramping up the number of degree programs it offers.

Since fall of 2020, Lander has announced more than 20 new programs for students to choose from — part of Lander's efforts to provide students with wider access to the quality education they will need for new and exciting career opportunities that await them after graduation.

Among these new programs is Lander's Bachelor of Science in Paralegal Studies, which is offered through traditional and online outlets through Lander's main campus in Greenwood, and through a blended or hybrid model at the University Center of Greenville. The curriculum includes core classes in law, as well as in technical writing, ethics and speech. The program is especially geared towards students who have already completed a two-year degree program at one of South Carolina's technical colleges, and Lander has been partnering with these institutions to establish articulation agreements to fast track the transfer process.

Another of these new programs is Lander's Bachelor of Science in International Studies, designed to strengthen students' understanding of globalization, culture and cooperation. The core courses of the program include world history and political science, and topics for upper-level classes include examining international business practices, world health, foreign policy and international law.

Lander has also expanded its graduate programs. In the spring of 2021, Lander's College of Business announced that the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) granted approval for its Master of Science in Business Administration (MBA) program. The first cohort of students began taking classes in the fall of 2021.

Meanwhile, the College of Arts and Humanities recently launched its Master of Fine Arts (MFA) in Visual Art, with emphases in 2D and 3D Studio, as well as its Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) in Visual Art K-12, for students who aspire to be accomplished artists as well as artist educators, and fully explore the relationship between teaching and the creative process.

"Lander University is committed to providing the citizens of South Carolina with an affordable path towards a wide array of career opportunities through high-quality education," said Dr. Scott Jones, provost and executive vice president for Academic Affairs at Lander. "We are proud to offer these new programs that we know will help prepare our students for twenty-first century careers." ■

**Lander Welcomes Darden, Greenthal to Administration**

Amanda Darden



Joseph Greenthal

This spring, Lander announced the appointment of two new members of the President's Cabinet. Dr. Amanda Darden was selected as Lander's first Vice President for Student Experience and Quality Assurance, a new role that was developed to oversee initiatives that ensure a quality student experience that drives robust retention and graduation rates. Darden, who most recently served as director of the Center for Excellence and Student Success at Coastal Carolina, joined the Lander family in June. Joseph Greenthal, an award-winning financial executive with higher education and private sector experience, will be stepping into the role of Vice President for Finance and Administration. Greenthal will begin duties at Lander on July 1, after most recently serving as CFO of Alfred State College, a part of the State University of New York (SUNY) system. ■



# EMERGENCY ASSIST

## Scholarship Offered for M.S. in Emergency Management Program

### FIRST RESPONDERS AND PUBLIC EMPLOYEES

who wish to pursue studies in Lander University's online M.S. in Emergency Management program may be eligible for a scholarship to support their studies.

Lander is offering qualified first responders and public employees a need-based scholarship up to \$6,000 (\$1,500 per semester). The scholarship, first available during the Fall 2021 semester, is designed to assist those dedicated to public service careers, said Dr. Todd Gambill, vice president for Enrollment and Access Management at Lander.

"We know that many people who have committed themselves to a life of public service often have limited resources to continue their education," he said. "Lander appreciates the work that they are doing. We have developed this scholarship to help them pursue a graduate degree in emergency management and grow their careers."

Lander's Emergency Management program offers a comprehensive education in the science of management for natural and man-made disasters. The curriculum takes an interdisciplinary approach that

borrows from several academic fields and best-practices in this emerging field of study.

The program is particularly beneficial because of its flexibility for working professionals, Gambill said.

"Many people already working in first responder or public service careers may not have the opportunity to pursue traditional, in-person education programs," he said. "We hope that graduates leave our program better prepared to serve their communities."

"First responder" personnel, who may qualify for the scholarship, include professional and volunteer law enforcement officers, firefighters, emergency medical technicians or paramedics.

Employees of any federal, state or local government or other government agencies are considered "public employees."

Scholarship applicants will be required to complete the FAFSA and scholarship application, which will be used to verify their first responder/government employee status. ■

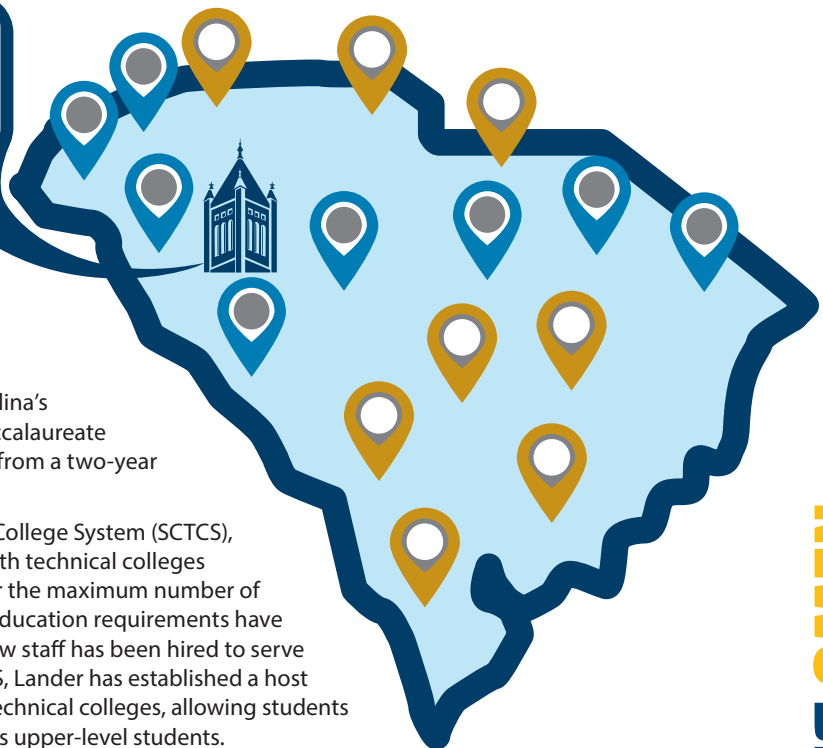
## SIGNED, SEALED AND SEAMLESS

### Lander University Signs Articulation Agreements with South Carolina's Technical Colleges

Lander University has partnered with several of South Carolina's technical colleges in recent months in efforts to make a baccalaureate education more accessible for students looking to transfer from a two-year institution.

Through its partnership with the South Carolina Technical College System (SCTCS), Lander has signed over a dozen articulation agreements with technical colleges across the state to ensure students can successfully transfer the maximum number of credits into their new programs at the University. General education requirements have been revised to allow for a smooth transfer process, and new staff has been hired to serve transfer students. In addition to the agreements with SCTCS, Lander has established a host of smaller agreements with programs available at specific technical colleges, allowing students to transfer into Lander's corresponding four-year program as upper-level students.

Last August, the University also hosted its first Transfer Summit in partnership with the SCTCS, allowing statewide partners of the University to continue working to provide South Carolina students with a high level of service and educational quality, according to Lloyd Willis, interim dean of the College of Graduate and Online Studies. The summit featured sessions with members of Lander's faculty, as well as leadership from the SCTCS, the National Institute for the Study of Transfer Students, and Greenville Technical College. ■







Jack Lawrence

Terry Pruitt

Jim Shubert

## New Trustees Join Board

The University recently added two new members to its Board of Trustees and honored former board member Jack W. Lawrence.

In the fall of 2020, Lander announced that Dr. Terry O. Pruitt '82, of Spartanburg, had been elected to replace Lawrence, also of Spartanburg, who retired after 16 years of service on the Board.

Pruitt received a Bachelor of Arts in Music Education and taught music for 13 years in South Carolina's public schools before going into education administration. Pruitt has served as a principal and superintendent, and has served the school districts of Hampton County, Bamberg County and Spartanburg County. He is currently the chief academic officer for Spartanburg County School District 7, overseeing all aspects of curriculum, instruction, assessment and leadership with the district. Pruitt earned his master's degree in education administration from The Citadel and his doctorate from Nova Southeastern University.

In March 2021, the South Carolina General Assembly elected Jim Shubert '88, of Simpsonville, to the seat vacated by the passing of Maurice Holloway '78, who served on Lander's Board of Trustees since its inception. Shubert received his Bachelor of Science in Exercise Science from Lander before beginning his successful career in surgical technologies. He currently works for Abiomed, which supplies cardiovascular technology and devices to hospitals throughout the southeast, and manufactures the world's first percutaneous ventricular assist device.

At the Board's meeting on March 9, 2021, Lawrence, a retired family law attorney, was named Trustee Emeritus. Lawrence served as a member of Lander's Board of Trustees for 16 years, including as chair from 2013 to 2017. Lawrence led the board through the process that culminated in the hiring of Dr. Richard Cosentino as Lander's 12th president in 2015.

Lawrence, who earned a bachelor's degree in business administration from Wofford College in 1965, and a juris doctor degree from the University of South Carolina in 1968, called the Board's recognition of him "a true honor, and it means so much. Being on this board has been a big experience in my life."

Cosentino thanked Lawrence for his friendship, guidance and support. "He has been an amazing leader for our institution. He is a strategic thinker, an excellent communicator, and always paid attention to the issues at hand. It thrills me that our Board is honoring him in this way. It is very deserved," Cosentino said. ■

## Fresh, Fabulous and Almost Here!

### Freshens to Open on Campus This Fall

Soon, Lander University students will have a fresh new dining option available in the Grier Student Center. The University announced in the fall of 2021 that Freshens, an Atlanta-based, fast-casual restaurant serving smoothies, rice bowls and salads, will serve Lander Bearcats beginning in the Fall 2022 semester.

Founded in 1985, Freshens aims to provide diners with healthier alternatives to fast food, with prepared-to-order dishes inspired by "fresh ingredients and authentic flavors," according to the company's website.

The addition is just the latest in a number of exciting dining enhancements at the University. Lander also recently opened a Chick-fil-A restaurant in the Grier Student Center, and significantly expanded its on-campus Starbucks to accommodate the University's growing enrollment. ■





# Lander Is ‘Home, Family, Purpose’

*For more than 36 years*, Baptist Collegiate Minister Scott Smith has called Lander University his home. In May of 2021, Lander recognized Smith for his extraordinary record of service to the University and its students, awarding him an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters.

At the conferral of his degree at Lander’s Spring 2021 commencement exercises, then-Board of Trustees Chair Linda Dolny said to Smith, “Yours has been a life dedicated to enriching the lives of those around you. In your role as Baptist Collegiate Minister, you have acted as pastor, counselor, advocate, teacher and friend to thousands of individuals on the Lander campus and far beyond.”

It’s not the first time that Lander has acknowledged its indebtedness to Smith. In 2008, he was awarded the Lander Medallion of Honor, reserved for members of the community who have dedicated their time, talents, energy and personal resources to improving Lander. “Today, more than a decade later, you continue to serve as an inspiration to all those who seek to leave the world a better place than they found it,” Dolny said.

A native of Pendleton, Smith was commissioned to the ministry by First Baptist Church of Pendleton in 1973. He

earned a bachelor’s degree from Furman University in 1977 and a master’s degree from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1979. Before beginning work at Lander on June 1, 1985, he served for four years as director of the Baptist Campus Ministry at Baptist College, now Charleston Southern University, and also directed the Baptist Campus Ministry at The Citadel.

Along with his work at Lander, Smith has led several ambitious mission trips, including one to Boston, Mass., to work with AIDS patients, and another one to New Orleans, La., to help with relief efforts following Hurricane Katrina.

For 29 years after coming to Greenwood, he was assisted by his wife, Judy, who died in 2014. “The students used to love watching how Judy and I reacted to each other,” he told *The Baptist Courier* in 2017. “They loved Judy.”

He was tested again by COVID-19. When campus closed in March 2020, the BCM responded by going virtual, meeting with students every Thursday to maintain contact and offer encouragement. When campus reopened in August of that year, Smith and BCM Assistant Director Katie Troutmann began holding meetings and services outdoors in the parking lot. Later that fall, they moved things back indoors, rearranging rooms for activities, such as small group Bible studies, to allow for social distancing.

According to Smith, students today have more serious problems than those of the past, with severe depression, feelings of disconnectedness, and thoughts of suicide heading the list. That’s why having an outlet such as the BCM, where they can connect with other students and find friends, is important in helping students cope with today’s stresses and challenges.

Smith said the friendships formed at BCM last a lifetime. He keeps in touch with students after they leave Lander, and they keep in touch with him. He has officiated in more than 130 weddings. “I have participated with other ministers in a good many of these weddings. I have participated by doing vows, prayers and welcomes,” he said.

A longtime member of South Main Street Baptist Church, Smith is the father of two Lander alumni — Cherry Lynne, who graduated in 2006, and Charles Thomas, who graduated two years later.

Smith said he has “felt purpose and direction serving others at Lander. The relationships with students, faculty and staff, administrators, coaches, local churches and other ministers have been inspirational to me.”

Lander, he said, has been “home and family and purpose.” ■



**Left:** Baptist Collegiate Minister Scott Smith, left, stands with Lander University President Richard Cosentino at Lander’s Spring 2021 Commencement Exercises, during which Smith was presented an Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters.





## Gratitude Takes the Spotlight

### Lander University Honors Donors & Scholarship Recipients at Annual Celebration



Scholarship recipients and donors enjoy each other's company at the 37th Annual Eleanor Teal Donor Appreciation and Scholarship Celebration.



*Their stories* were as disparate as their paths: a college professor who believes in giving back, a student whose mother is working to put her daughter through college, and a young woman from Zimbabwe who believed that college was only a dream.

But a simple, powerful bond, known as gratitude, linked them all.

The 37th Annual Eleanor Teal Donor Appreciation and Scholarship Celebration at Lander University, held in October, honored the extraordinary people whose generosity makes college more affordable and accessible for students whose dreams are being realized because of the donors.

Dr. Richard Cosentino, Lander University president, told the scholarship recipients, "When you graduate, you will more fully realize the support you received from these generous donors."

Cosentino's message was not lost on the Lander students who are the beneficiaries of those who support higher education. Kaiya Downs-Santa of Greenville, a senior majoring in biology, received the Jerry D. Wilson Scholarship for Excellence in Science.

"The pandemic affected my family's finances," she said. "Receiving this scholarship is a help to my mother, who is paying for my education. I appreciate it so much."

Wilson, who established the scholarship in 1995 with his wife, Sandy, said he worked his way through college and understands the benefit of financial support. "Someone gave me a scholarship to help me go to college," Wilson said of his education at Ohio University. "I decided that I wanted to do the same one day."

Dr. Larry D. Vereen, a Lander biology professor who established the Vereen Scholarship in 1997 for biology majors, earned his undergraduate and master's degrees at Clemson University, before attending Colorado State University for his doctoral degree. "It might sound like a cliché, but the support I got made me want to pay it forward – or pay it back, depending on the direction you choose."

Having the opportunity to pursue a college education abroad seemed impossible to Tinotenda Hope Viga of Zimbabwe. However, a scholarship from the Dr. Douglas and Mrs. Jean Mufuka Scholars Program brought her to Lander.

One of three student scholarship recipients speaking at the dinner, Viga said, "I never thought that I was going to be able to go to a university, much less a university in the United States. My life has been transformed by these generous donors. It seems like I'm still dreaming. They have given me hope for my future ... they are making a change in the world."

Steve Wohlwend, who earned his degree in accounting in 1981, was recruited to play golf at Lander. The athletic and academic scholarships he received supported his undergraduate education, which then led to studies at Mercer University and the Wharton School of Business.

Wohlwend, chair of The Lander Foundation Board of Directors, and his wife, Liz, have created a scholarship endowment. "Keep this wheel moving forward," he told the scholarship recipients. "We can't wait to see what you accomplish." ■



# Kevin Witherspoon, Lander's Inaugural Dr. Benjamin E. Mays Endowed Chair

Lander Professor of History Dr. Kevin Witherspoon was named the inaugural holder of the Dr. Benjamin E. Mays Endowed Chair in June of 2020.

Witherspoon teaches a course on Mays and the evolution of civil rights in the United States. He also coordinates special events celebrating Mays' many contributions through joint projects between Lander and the local Dr. Benjamin E. Mays Historical Preservation Site, including opportunities for students through internships and research.

Witherspoon joined the Lander faculty in 2006 "and continues to provide excellence in teaching, research and service to the University," said Dr. Scott Jones, provost and executive vice president for Academic Affairs at Lander.

"His expertise in the history of the 20th century and publications that tie to the topics of race and civil rights enable him to teach a course on Dr. Mays, and he has a record of coordinating high-quality programs for our campus and local community," Jones said, adding that Witherspoon has already built a strong relationship with the Mays site.

"As much as one can, I aspire to follow the example he set for all of us," said Witherspoon. "I am humbled and honored to have been named the inaugural holder of the Mays Endowed Chair, and I am deeply grateful to the donors who made it possible."

The Dr. Benjamin E. Mays Endowed Chair was created in 2020 through a gift from Doug and Sally Kauffmann. Doug is the former chair of The Lander Foundation's Board of Directors, and Sally is a 1975 alumna. Their gift created the second-ever endowed chair at Lander and the first in the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences. Mike Worley, executive director of The Lander Foundation, said, "Their transformative gift will help continue the work of Mays in the Greenwood region, South Carolina and beyond." ■



Dr. Kevin Witherspoon

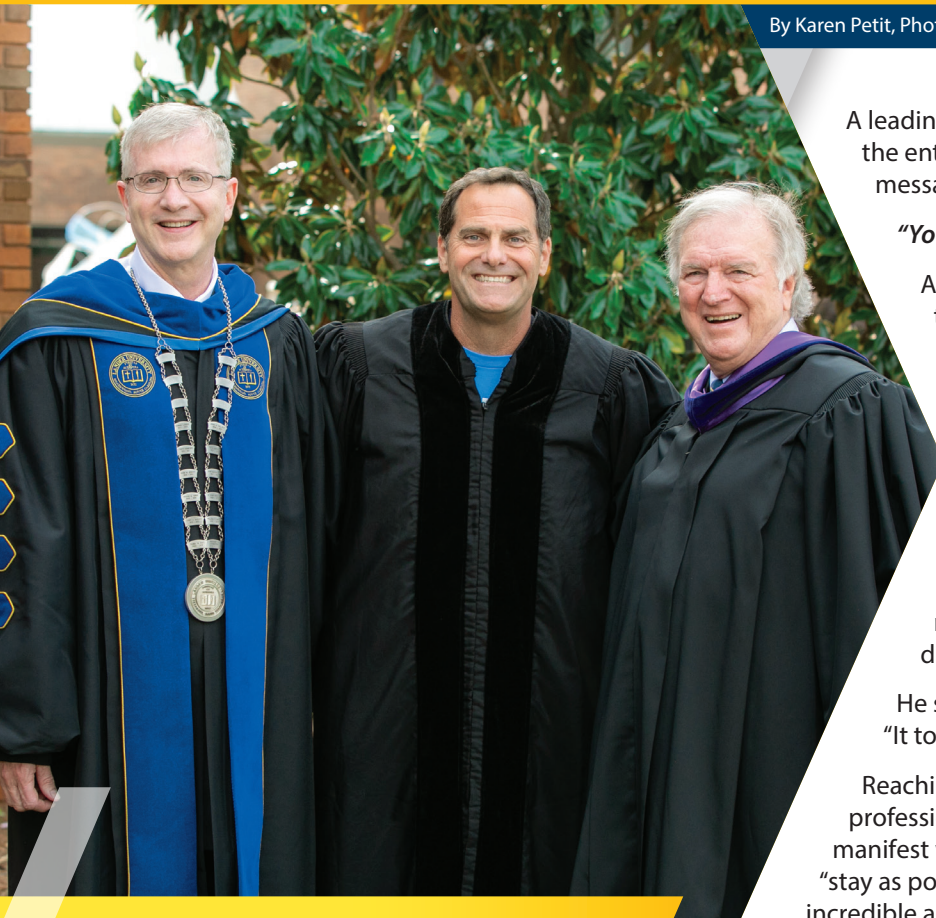
*"As much as one can, I aspire to follow the example he set for all of us."*



# 'Manifest the Life You Want'

'The Office' Star Andy Buckley Encourages Class of 2022 to Stay Positive and Make Life 'Incredible'

By Karen Petit, Photos by Laura B. Wood '16, Dawn Lewis & Deb Nygro



Pictured above, from left: Lander President Richard Cosentino; commencement speaker and actor Andy Buckley; and honorary degree recipient Randy Bouknight, retired Vice President for Student Affairs.

A leading Hollywood actor, whose first attempt at working in the entertainment industry didn't fare well, had an important message for Lander University's Spring 2022 graduates:

*"You can manifest whatever lives you want."*

Andy Buckley, known for his role as David Wallace, CFO of the Dunder Mifflin Paper Co. on the hit television series *The Office*, was the featured guest speaker at Lander's 165th Commencement exercises, held May 4 in Finis Horne Arena. During the two ceremonies, the University awarded bachelor's and master's degrees to more than 446 graduates.

Buckley, who attended Stanford University as a member of the golf team, worked for a while as a financial adviser before his career in acting launched. In a lively, nontraditional commencement speech, Buckley said his dream early in life was "to be James Dean."

He said he knew that he wanted to act in movies and TV shows. "It took a while, but it happened."

Reaching his ultimate goal of acting and working with dedicated professionals, Buckley said, had helped him realize that "you can manifest whatever life you want." He challenged the Class of 2022 to "stay as positive as you can possibly be ... you can make your life as incredible and magnificent as you want it to be, and why not do that? We only get one shot."

Already seeking the magnificent life, described by Buckley, is new graduate Samantha Alexander, of Hodges, who earned a bachelor's degree in nursing. Although Alexander previously earned a bachelor's degree in exercise science from Lander in 2014, the 2022 ceremony was the first time for the official "walk" across the stage.

"This degree means more to me," she said. "A lot more tears were involved in this degree. I knew that I would do it, but it didn't seem real for a long time."

Alexander has balanced her academic studies with military service. A member of the U.S. National Guard, Alexander is an ES Sergeant, with duties that include weapons inspection and repair. She hopes to become re-classified as a combat medic and already is working in civilian life as a nurse. Just two days before graduation, she began her orientation as an intensive care nurse at Newberry Hospital. Her goal is to become an aviation paramedic.

For Onye Cosom, of West Columbia, the day marked a milestone. As a TRIO Scholar, Cosom became the first in her family to graduate from college. "Today really means the world to me," said Cosom, who earned her bachelor's degree in business administration and marketing management. "I am the first."







The third of eight children, Cosom said her brothers and sisters “will be able to see that they can graduate, too.”

Another achievement for Cosom: she has secured a marketing job in Columbia.

In its morning and afternoon ceremonies, Lander also honored its “Golden Graduates” who graduated between 1970 and 1972. Presented with a medallion and special certificate, the honorees were called “remarkable graduates.”

Rhonda McDowell, of Ninety Six, and Cheryl Agnew-Bell, of Greenwood, graduated in 1972. They said returning to campus was an opportunity to see former classmates and share memories. It also was a chance to see how much the campus has changed, McDowell said.

Agnew-Bell, who earned her bachelor’s degree in elementary education, said, “It’s wonderful to be invited back to the campus and be appreciated. I’m very thankful for the education I received.”

It may not be Hollywood, but history major Grayson Elizabeth-Ann Peoples, of Clinton, is leaving for Disney World to participate in the Disney College Program. She honed her skills as a public speaker during internships at the Battle of Musgrove Mill State Historic Site and the Charleston Museum.

“The most meaningful part of my education and what I’ve enjoyed most about Lander is my relationships with each of my professors. I was a name here and not a number, and that helped me excel as a student,” she said. “Commencement is a recognition of how much Lander has helped me grow as a person. I can’t wait to get out there and put what I’ve learned and gained to good use.”

Ladavia Sheree Jones, of Saluda, said the meaningful part of her being at Lander was having the opportunity to expand on the communications aspects of her education. “While I’m

confident in the English aspect, the media and communications department was a new field for me to explore. I tried my hand at media writing and broadcasting radio, which was an exciting thing to be able to experience.”

Jones, who worked an off-campus job during her four years at Lander, plans to pursue a career in journalism and start a publishing career.

In addition to a rigorous academic schedule, Jones recently worked with the Greenwood Community Theatre on social media and video projects – all of which are bringing her to a new chapter in her life. “While I’ll treasure every memory I’ve made and everything I’ve learned, I’m finally ready to move onward,” she said.

With a new degree in hand, Lander alumnus Damion Moragne won’t be leaving his alma mater. In June, he began a new job at Lander working with students. One of the most recognizable people on campus, Damion served as a student liaison for the Office of the President. He was an announcer for athletic and student events, a LINK 101 Peer Leader and an Orientation Leader. Most of all, he was an unofficial ambassador of kindness throughout campus.

Yet, Moragne, of Ware Shoals, said he will remember his student experience for having the “opportunity to meet and see so many people ... my goal was to always spread a positive light on campus. Lander is home. Now, I’ll be working as a Bearcat.” ■



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## Thayer Award

The Thayer Award, presented on behalf of the family of Dr. Henry Thayer to the Lander University student graduating with the highest GPA, went to Sara Summerfield, pictured, of Florence. An early childhood education major, Summerfield graduated with a perfect 4.0 average following the Spring 2022 semester. The Honors College student completed more than 140 credit hours as an undergraduate, earning not only her early childhood teaching certificate, but also her Montessori credentials. She plans to begin her career as the lead teacher in a Montessori classroom in Irmo. Summerfield was invited back to campus in late May for the presentation of the award during a special ceremony in the College of Education.



## Golden Grads

Below: Lander welcomed back its newest "Golden Grads" – members of the Class of 1972 – to participate in the spring commencement, marking the graduates' 50th anniversary.







## A Life of Exemplary Service

### Bouknight Receives Honorary Doctorate

By Graham Duncan; Photo by Laura B. Wood '16



President Richard Cosentino and the Board of Trustees used Lander's Spring Commencement Exercises as an opportunity to recognize one individual whose career has spanned one-third of the school's history. Former Vice President for Student Affairs Randy Bouknight, praised for his loyalty and devotion to Lander, was awarded an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters during the 10 a.m. ceremony.

"Yours has been a life of exemplary service to Lander University's students, alumni, faculty and staff," said Don Lloyd, vice chair of Lander's Board of Trustees, "and for a half-century, you have given generously of your time and talents to enrich the lives of those around you."

Bouknight began his service to Lander in 1972, after finishing his graduate studies at the Northwestern State University of Louisiana. He was initially hired to serve as the assistant dean of students and dean of men. Two years later, he was promoted by President Larry Jackson to dean of students. In 1979, Jackson promoted Bouknight once again – this time to vice president for Student Affairs, a position he held until 2018.

"Over the course of your unprecedented tenure, you touched the lives of tens of thousands of Lander's students," Lloyd said, "helping to shape them into leaders of the workplace, their communities and our world."

"Very few people in our University's history – in any university's history – have a record of service as long as Randy Bouknight's," Cosentino said. "It is only right that we now honor Randy for his dedication to Lander with the highest degree awarded by our University."

Bouknight's service to Lander isn't finished, and since his retirement in 2018, he has continued to serve as a special gift officer for University Advancement. His unique blend of community and alumni relations – and his lifelong friendships and connections – give him the chance to assist alumni and friends of Lander in making an impact through their financial support of the institution.

"Your extraordinary leadership and commitment has helped drive Lander University's development and success over the last 50 years," said Don Scott, chair of the Board of Trustees. "To quote your colleagues, 'You have played a significant role in who we are, what we stand for, and what makes us unique – and we are all the better for it.'"



# IN THE PEOPLE BUSINESS

## With a Transformational Gift, Self Regional Establishes New Scholars Program at Lander to Build Pipeline of Highly Credentialed Nurses

By Graham Duncan; Photos by Laura B. Wood '16

Coming from a manufacturing background, Self Regional Healthcare Vice President of Human Resources Brent Parris said he used to think of his job in terms of making widgets. His perspective changed, however, when he made the switch to the health care industry.

"A big reason for me joining Self Regional Healthcare was because I understood the human part of what we do in health care," he said. "As you start your nursing journey, I would encourage you to never lose the humanity of what it is we do, because that human part is so key."


His remarks were given during a recent banquet hosted by Self Regional, as the local health care provider and Lander University honored rising juniors who were named to the first cohort of the Self Regional Scholars Program. Each of them a nursing major at Lander, Parris' remarks served as a reminder that their careers as nurses will be much different from the career paths of other

students at Lander. As future nurses, they will lead professional lives that will require a different set of skills, have their own set of daily obstacles, and ultimately come with their own rewards.

As nurses, these inaugural Self Scholars aren't in the widget business. They're in the people business.

The new scholarship program, which was announced earlier this year, is offered annually to Lander's highest-performing nursing students who demonstrate exceptional academic performance, community involvement and career potential, among other characteristics.

It's made possible by a transformational endowed gift from Self Regional, with the hopes of energizing Lander's already robust School of Nursing, as well as addressing the need for highly trained nurses in South Carolina.



This page: Lander nursing students demonstrate the new equipment provided in the University's completely renovated nursing skills simulation center during a ribbon-cutting ceremony in February. Opposite: Self Regional Healthcare CEO Dr. Matt Logan and Lander President Richard Cosentino, standing center, are pictured with Lander nursing students, while other nursing majors practice on equipment in one of the center's large laboratory spaces.





Above: The first cohort of the Self Regional Scholars Program at Lander University recently attended a banquet hosted by Self Regional. Pictured, back row from left, are Dr. Matt Logan, CEO of Self Regional Healthcare; Cyrus Kelly, of Sharpsburg, Ga.; Sarah Smith, of Gilbert; Carlee Stockman, of Greenwood; Sierra Harrison, of Greenwood; Abigail Wallace, of Chapin; Autumn Smoke, of Barnwell; Sydney Brewster, of Iva; Anna Joy Hulsey, of Gaffney; Blain Tomas, of Greenwood; Kacey Weathers, of Gray Court; and Dr. Scott Jones, provost and executive vice president for Academic Affairs at Lander University. Pictured, front row from left, are Christina Aguayo, of Las Cruces, N.M.; Aislynn Lopez, of Greenwood; LeeAnna Fingerlin, of Saluda; and Kirsten Dale, of Pageland.

"This gift is monumental for our institution, our students and our community," said Lander University President Richard Cosentino. "Lander University and Self Regional Healthcare have an enduring partnership through health care and nursing education, and this gift reaffirms our shared commitment to providing our region with quality health care and health care professionals."

Heightened by the pressures of the COVID-19 pandemic, the health care industry is facing an unprecedented shortfall of qualified, baccalaureate-prepared nurses. The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) reported a number of factors are contributing to this shortage, including nurses nearing retirement age, changing patient demographics and increasing stresses which lead to burnout. This shortage is expected to hit the Southern and Western regions of the United States the hardest through 2030.

Closer to home, a 2017 study by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Health Resources and Services Administration ranked South Carolina fourth in the nation for states predicted to have a nursing shortage in the next decade. This trend has only been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

But the Self Regional Scholars Program aims to curb this shortfall. The program will give these selected nursing students more exposure to Self Regional earlier on in their training. The scholarship is exclusively available for rising junior nursing majors, who will be automatically accepted into Self Regional's already established and highly successful externship program as seniors. Each year, the grant selection committee will choose a limited number of students to receive the \$10,000 award, with preference given to students from Greenwood, Laurens, Edgefield, Abbeville, McCormick, Newberry and Saluda counties (GLEAMNS). *(continued next page)*





## IN THE PEOPLE BUSINESS ...CONTINUED

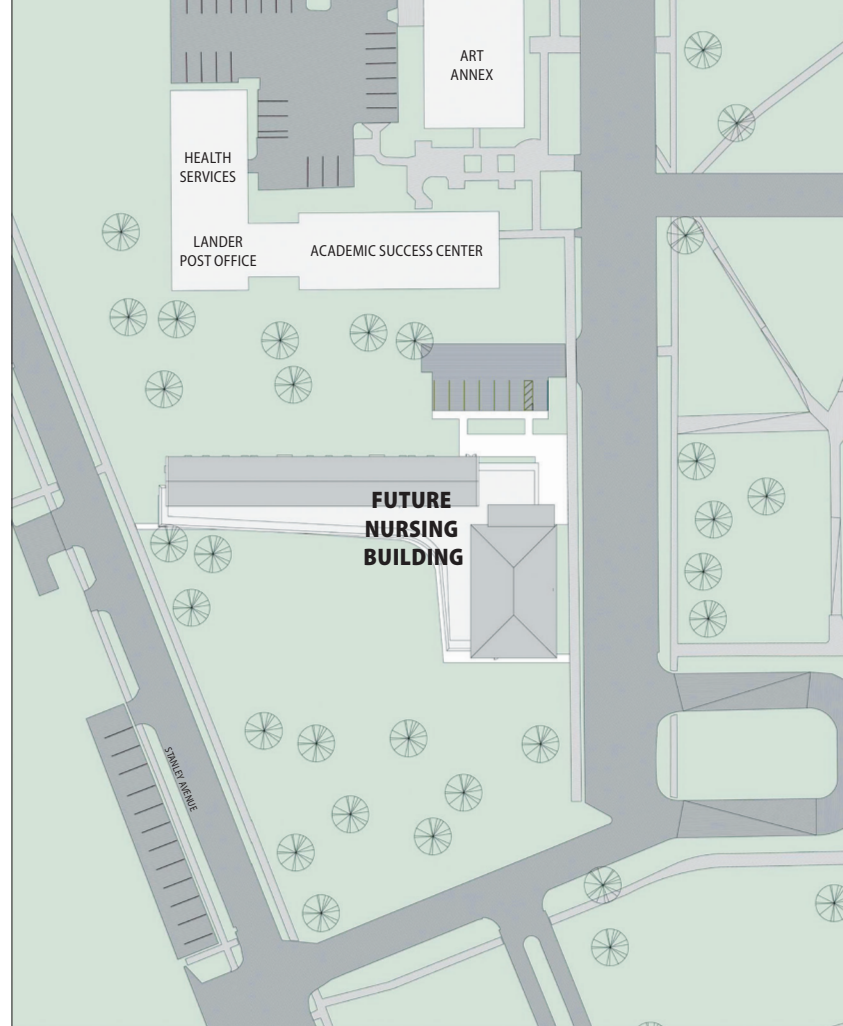
As Self Regional Healthcare continues working toward its larger efforts to be a health care provider of choice in South Carolina, Self Regional CEO Dr. Matt Logan believes the Self Scholars from Lander University will play a significant role in helping to meet those goals. "We want to create an environment here that provides high-quality care and an excellent experience for every patient who seeks care with us," said Logan. "We know that graduates of Lander University's School of Nursing are well-trained and set up for future success."

"I want every single one of you to come work for us," Logan told the first cohort of Self Scholars. "I would love for you to have your whole career with us, because I know Lander provides excellent training."

## EXPANDING THE PARTNERSHIP

"The Self Regional Scholars Program further expands Lander's academic-practice partnership with Self Regional Healthcare, and provides Self with an additional year of contact with our best and brightest students," said Dr. Holisa Wharton, dean of the William Preston Turner School of Nursing at Lander. "The program will also help Lander grow its efforts to recruit and support diverse students from the GLEAMNS region, in the hopes that they will begin their career as baccalaureate-trained nurses in our local communities."

Self Regional's gift also secures exclusive naming rights for Lander's forthcoming, state-of-the-art nursing building, as well as the University's newly renovated nursing skills simulation center (NSSC), formerly known as the American Legion Building, near Lander's main campus. Soon, both of these facilities will proudly display Self Regional's name alongside the University's,



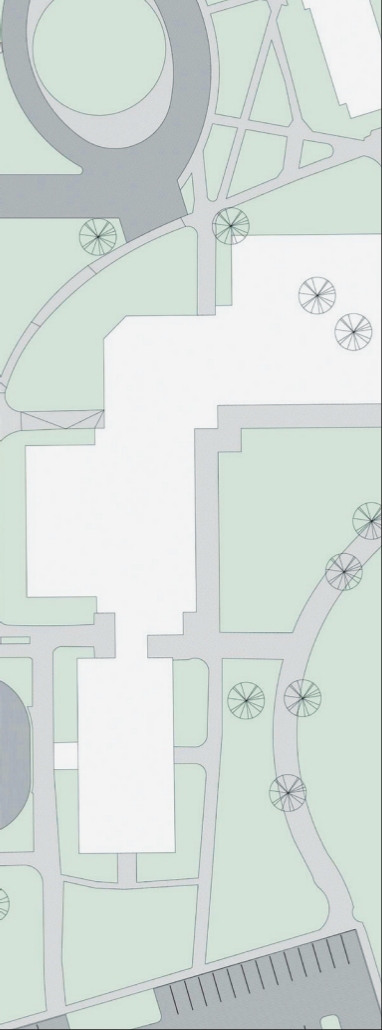
Preliminary site plan for Lander's future, state-of-the-art nursing building.

serving as further evidence of both institutions' support for one another, as well as their commitment of service to the Lakelands community, and to the state of South Carolina.

Opened earlier this year, the NSSC contains four teaching-learning labs that can accommodate 80 students per session. In addition, the NSSC has three practice labs that students can use for group practice sessions or clinical skill remediation. Bedside computers allow for video-based instruction, simulated virtual







Officials from Lander University and Self Regional Healthcare tour the recently opened nursing skills simulation center. Pictured, from left, are Adam Taylor, vice president and chief of staff at Lander; Mike Worley, vice president for University Advancement at Lander; Sharon Walb, assistant vice president of Patient Care Services at Self Regional Healthcare; Don Scott, chair of Lander's Board of Trustees; Dr. Matt Logan, CEO of Self Regional Healthcare; Lander President Dr. Richard Cosentino; Dr. Holisa Wharton, dean of Lander's School of Nursing; and Dr. Scott Jones, provost and executive vice president for Academic Affairs at Lander.

patient encounters and electronic health record simulations. Wharton said new technologies will be brought online soon, including augmented reality and virtual training.

Recognizing the state's need for a pipeline of nurses, the South Carolina General Assembly also stepped up to the plate by making a significant investment in health care training at Lander University. Initial funding for the construction of Lander's future nursing building was included in the state's budget for fiscal year 2021-22, and

according to legislators, the state's growing nursing shortage was at the heart of their decision to fund the new facility. Their confidence in Lander's rigorous and enriching nursing program was another deciding factor.

"With such a high demand for nurses in our community, and in our state," said S.C. Senator Billy Garrett, a Lander alumnus himself, "this additional clinical space on campus will allow Lander to produce more of the highly qualified nurses for which Lander University is known."

With more clinical space for nursing majors – who already account for nearly one quarter of the school's total student body – Lander will be able to accept more students into its nursing program. Once the new nursing building is brought online, University officials estimate the School of Nursing will be able to triple the number of students permitted to progress to upper-level coursework and finish their nursing degree. And, as statistics show that three out of every four Lander graduates stay in South Carolina after graduation, this should soon result in the steady stream of nurses that Lander, Self Regional and state leaders are looking for.

"Our state legislators believe in the importance of quality education and quality health care," added Don Scott, chair of the Lander University Board of Trustees. "Lander University and Self Regional Healthcare are well-respected, trusted leaders in these fields. Having Self Regional's name on our state-of-the-art nursing education facilities is a very visible symbol of our longstanding alliance, and our commitment to serving the diverse needs of our local communities." ■

Below and opposite page: These artist concepts show a possible design for the University's future nursing building, which along with the newly renovated nursing skills simulation center, will include Self Regional Healthcare's name.







# LIFE @ LANDER

Photos by Deb Nygro, Laura B. Wood '16, and Allison Devore '22

After months of pandemic restrictions, the 2021-22 academic year saw a return to more “normal” campus life, full of opportunities to enjoy interacting with others. Our newest Bearcats learned the ropes of college life at Freshman Orientation over the summer, and we welcomed a record number of students – the most in Lander’s 150-year history – back to campus for the start of the fall semester. Bearcat Country came alive during Welcome Week, and students enjoyed a year packed with festivals, fun runs, food truck days, Greek life, competitions, activities and entertainment, as well as traditional favorites, including Communiversity, the Holiday Tree Lighting, Family Day and Senior Week. An End-of-the-Year Celebration gave students one more chance to connect with friends and enjoy Life at Lander before the summer break.







BEAR



CATS



ENJOY THIS LOOK AT SOME OF OUR FAVORITE MOMENTS FROM THE 2021-22 ACADEMIC YEAR











# Emphasizing SUCCESS

## Lander's College of Business Is Preparing Leaders for a World of Exciting Careers

By Graham Duncan, Submitted photos

Those who study at Lander University's College of Business leave with more than just a business degree. Graduates enter the workforce with confidence that they possess the communication and problem-solving skills that are in high-demand, and applicable to positions in a wide array of industries around the world.

The College of Business offers an applied approach to business education. Students take classes in all facets of business, delivered through high levels of interaction between students and faculty, as well as new and innovative learning experiences. It is because of this model of education that students and alumni alike attribute their successes, academically and professionally, to the preparation they acquired from Lander's business faculty, and the practical training they receive both inside and outside the classroom.

The principles of a liberal arts education that are synonymous with Lander University are also found within its College of Business. The curriculum allows majors to receive a well-rounded education, while also choosing

one of several emphases, including accounting, financial services, health care management, hospitality management, information technology management, sports management and management/marketing. In the fall of 2020, the college also launched a Bachelor of Arts in Entrepreneurship, which takes a holistic curricular approach to business education by combining students' general education experience with four main cognates: Business Core, Business Writing, Human and Social Discovery, and Creativity and Innovation.

Meanwhile, business and non-business majors alike can take advantage of adding one of the college's minors to their degree programs. And, the college also recently launched the Bachelor of Applied Science in Business Administration, which is geared towards prospective students who have already completed an associate's degree from a two-year institution.

In addition to their expansion in undergraduate programs, the College now offers two graduate degrees. Prospective graduate students can now choose Lander University as their place of study with the fully-online Master of Science in Management (MSM) program, where students gain a solid





foundation in all aspects of quality management, including process management, supply chain management, quality policy, quality planning, quality control and quality improvement. Or, students may choose Lander's online and hybrid Master of Business Administration (MBA) program, designed to provide managerial and strategic insights across various business functions to prepare graduates to lead organizations and drive results.

The mission of Lander's College of Business echoes that of the University's: to produce graduates who are ready for successful professional careers in the workplace, or to go on to graduate school. With Lander business alumni working in career fields across the country and around the globe, it's clear that Lander's College of Business is meeting the mark. ■

## Master of Science in Management

With Lander University uniquely located among a number of large manufacturing corporations, and the continued economic health of this sector of the state's economy, well-trained quality managers continue to be in high demand.

And Lander's new MSM program satisfies this demand. Available fully online, this 30-credit program takes just 12 months to complete for full-time students. It's the perfect fit for both undergraduates who are looking to continue their education in a graduate program, as well as non-traditional students who are looking to expand their resume to qualify for senior-level positions within their industry.

Recent studies show that the demand for specialized masters-level programs are on the rise, and a variety of the positions advertised in Lander's region of the country require quality management or quality control experiences and training. The MSM program aims to provide more depth of knowledge and skills in management than a typical MBA degree, thus preparing successful candidates for these management-level careers.

To learn more about the program, visit [lander.edu/msm](http://lander.edu/msm).

## Master of Business Administration

In August of 2021, Lander University began offering its new Master of Business Administration (MBA) program to the first cohort of students.

The program is billed as fast, affordable and offered fully online or as a hybrid model, with convenient eight-week semesters that allow students to take just one or two courses at a time and finish in as little as 12 months.

The program is also the first of its kind: Lander's MBA is the only AACSB-accredited MBA program in the state that includes micro-credentials as a required MBA degree component, which according to College of Business Dean Mick Fekula means that Lander's MBA graduates will gain specific "employer-valued" skill sets.

"We are very excited about Lander's MBA program," Fekula said at Lander's announcement of the new program. "It provides our community with an accessible, affordable and efficient way to earn an advanced degree."

To learn more about the program, visit [lander.edu/mba](http://lander.edu/mba).



## **Dr. Mick Fekula** STARNES FAMILY DEAN OF BUSINESS

In 2021, Lander University named Dr. Mick Fekula its next dean of the Lander University College of Business.

"I was attracted to Lander University because of its bold strategic plan," said Fekula. "The vision is exciting and offers a great direction. The business dean's position is an excellent opportunity to make a significant contribution to the institution."

Fekula joined Lander University in January of last year, after five successful years as the dean of the School of Business at the University of South Carolina Aiken. Prior to that, he served as the first chair of the Department of Leadership Studies at The Citadel—a department he helped establish.

Last September, Fekula was officially installed as the Starnes Family Dean of

Business, named in honor of the generosity of the family of George R. Starnes, trustee emeritus and former chair of the Lander University Board of Trustees.

Dr. Scott Jones, provost and executive vice president for Academic Affairs at Lander, welcomed Fekula to his new position, saying he "brings a wealth of experience to this position. His many years of leadership at universities in South Carolina will enable the College of Business to build upon its recent successes."

"We are confident that our graduate and undergraduate programs will continue to be programs of choice throughout our region, state and beyond," added Jones. ■



# Ben Moores '11

## VERSATILE, LIFELONG LEARNER

Lander University alumnus Ben Moores understands the importance of teamwork.

It's something he first learned while playing soccer at Lander under legendary coach Van Taylor, and it's something he continues to practice as a program manager for Google in Silicone Valley.

"Coach Taylor was more than a soccer coach," said Moores, "he genuinely cared about your future." Coach Taylor's management skills motivated Moores athletically as well as academically, and now, he puts those same skills to use while overseeing YouTube's Media & Platforms Program Management team across products with a combined revenue exceeding \$5 billion per year.

In addition to his time on the soccer team, it was Lander University's College of Business that helped make Moores a versatile, lifelong learner. "Lander's curriculum was designed in a way that offered the diversity I needed to focus my attention in specific areas, while also getting a well-rounded education in all facets of business," he said.

After graduation, Moores applied his Lander degree to his first job as a technical specialist for Bizness Apps, a small tech startup based in San Francisco. Within two years, Moores had worked his way up to lead a global team of international app designers from across Asia.

From there, Moores landed a position as lead technical project manager at Glassdoor.com, a website where current and former employees

are able to anonymously review companies and submit salary information with the aim of increasing transparency in the workplace. "I gained a lot of my technical expertise there," said Moores, who prioritized professional development to expand his knowledge and exposure of technical concepts. "I spent two years hunkering down trying to build the



technical ability I didn't yet have. It was all about complimenting my business experience and education with a technical skill set."

That professional development ultimately paid off. It was because of his time at Glassdoor.com that led Google to name him program manager on the Google for Jobs initiative. "If you go to Google and you type in 'jobs near me,' instead of immediately being directed to other websites, you will be presented with a browser module that displays relevant jobs," said Moores, who initially transferred from Glassdoor.com to Google to take a job as a technical specialist. "I was tapped for this project because of my experience at Glassdoor."

Moores then moved to YouTube, owned by Google, and led Launch Operations for YouTube TV for three years, coordinating the acquisition and deployment of new networks and channels as they are brought onto the platform. When he first started, YouTube TV was only available in five of the 210 Designated Market Areas (DMAs) in the United States, with only 30,000 subscribers. Today, thanks in no small part to Moores' leadership, the platform is now available in all 210 DMAs and boasts over 4 million subscribers nationwide. Moores announced the expansion on YouTube's official blog and was quoted in national press outlets, including *Forbes*.

Moores leads Launch Operations for YouTube TV, coordinating the acquisition and deployment of new networks and channels as they're brought onto the platform.

Additionally, Moores was responsible for leading the successful rollout of PBS on YouTube TV, the first time the network has ever been available on a digital platform other than their own. Moores also led the launch of HBO on the platform, and his team was responsible for the deployment of YouTube's first-ever exclusive live sports acquisition, broadcasting 25 Major League Baseball games exclusively through YouTube. "It was a fantastic experience, and I learned a ton!" he said. Moores currently leads a team of program managers across YouTube TV, YouTube Live Sports, YouTube Originals and new 'stealth mode' bets.

But, even in a leadership position at a tech giant in Silicon Valley, Moores isn't through learning. In addition to his Lander degree, he also holds an MBA from the University of Manchester, and he's currently a student pilot. Having a thirst for knowledge is something he encourages current students who are looking to go into the tech industry to develop early on. "If you're sure that's the direction you want to go, take advantage of all the online resources that are out there to technically supplement your business education," he said. ■



# Terrell Turner '07

## ALTRUISM AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP: A NEW VENTURE IN AN UNCERTAIN TIME

By Karen Petit

Starting a new business during an international pandemic could be a bold move or a potential disaster. But having honed strong leadership and business skills in corporate America, Lander alumnus Terrell Turner stepped bravely out on a limb last spring and secured his footing.

He didn't falter or fall, and today he's hard at work consulting with small and mid-sized business owners to help them achieve their dreams. His company, the TLTurner Group in Charlotte, N.C., offers a wide range of services to businesses, including financial health assessments, pricing and profitability analysis, individual consultations, accounting and finance support – just for starters.

As if that weren't enough to keep him busy, Turner also hosts a popular show, *Business Talk Library*, on YouTube. The show, featuring interviews with business owners and entrepreneurs from all walks of life, tackles topics that many business owners encounter in their daily operations. Viewers get advice on a wide range of topics from financing, entrepreneurship and taxes, to advice on moving creative ideas from dreams to reality, and learning how to pick up the pieces after a crisis.

An easy-going but astute conversationalist, Turner brings each person's business experiences to the forefront and helps them tell their stories, which become teachable moments for viewers.

"Many people have great ideas but don't know how to get started. Or, they are busy running a business and encounter obstacles that they didn't anticipate," said Turner, whose executive positions with Fortune 500 companies have given him the foundation and expertise to advise clients.

"Some business owners feel alone in the challenges they have. *Business Talk Library* shows them that other people have had similar experiences and solved these same problems. They are not alone, and they can work through what they are facing," he said.



The show has helped him develop networking skills that he uses in his own business. "I was starting my business at the beginning of the pandemic," he said. "I wondered at times if it was the right thing to do. If I was going to be successful, I knew that networking in a remote world was going to be vital. In 2020, I used the show to meet 263 new people through one-on-one conversations."

He was quick to answer the call from The Lander Foundation to bring attention to the newly formed Student Crisis Fund, established in 2020 for Lander students struggling financially because of the pandemic. Turner created a video about the fund that was posted online and distributed to alumni, donors and a wide University audience.

"Lander became one of the first in the state to develop this type of fund," Turner said. "I was happy to assist the Foundation with this project."

That effort was followed by another video for Lander's Day of Caring. Turner, who recently was named to The Lander Foundation Board of Directors, said he is pleased to be able to give back to his alma mater. "My education at Lander opened many doors for me," he said. "Being part of the Foundation board means that I can help someone else have the same kinds of opportunities that helped me."

As a high school teenager, Turner visited larger universities before coming to tour Lander's campus in Greenwood. The son of a military veteran who had retired in Columbia, Turner said a Columbia High School football coach encouraged him to visit Lander.

Turner followed the coach's advice, and was impressed with the leadership opportunities that he would have at the University. He became immersed in campus organizations, including the fraternity Phi Beta Sigma, was elected as president of Lander's Student Government Association, and was selected for a business internship in Mexico.

After earning his bachelor's degree in business administration from Lander University in 2007, Turner went to work in corporate America while pursuing a master's degree in accountancy through a summer program at the University of Notre Dame. His career in public accounting began with the internationally acclaimed Ernst & Young. He's climbed the corporate ladder by serving in multiple finance leadership roles in the United States and Brazil; and in Fortune 500 companies, such as Navistar and General Electric.

"My education at Lander put me on the trajectory that I'm experiencing now," said Turner. "I had great experiences inside and outside the classroom, which enabled me to attend Notre Dame and pursue my goals of working for some of the world's leading businesses."

He said he is fortunate to draw on the expertise of his wife, Lola Turner, an executive at Honeywell, as he builds the TLTurner Group, which has found a niche among restaurants and food-related businesses.

"These businesses are vital to every community, and many have suffered in the pandemic," he said. "Our company is working to help them have the financial skills and knowledge to rebuild and grow." ■



## Meg O'Dell '18 & '20

### BRINGING BUSINESS SAVVY TO THE SCIENCE LAB

For Lander alumna Meg O'Dell, every day at work brings a new challenge.

"When I go to work, I know I am going to be doing something that I am fully engaged in," she said. "I like working in a collaborative environment where I can work with others to solve problems."

O'Dell is one of several non-traditional students who have gone through Lander University's MSM program – someone whose first degree isn't business. She obtained her Bachelor of Science in Chemistry from Lander University in 2018, and worked as a lab technician at D&D Laboratories before making her way over to the Greenwood Genetic Center. And after completing her master's degree in 2020, O'Dell was quickly promoted to quality improvement assistant for the diagnostic laboratories – a promotion she attributes to her uniquely blended education from Lander, first in chemistry, and then in management.

"Labs are businesses, too," O'Dell said. "On top of your technical skill set, you need to function in traditional business areas as well."

As an ambitious young professional, O'Dell recognized that having a master's in management would give her the business training necessary to further her career. "While this degree is very different from my background in the sciences, I knew it would help me get to where I wanted to be professionally," she said.



After she learned that Lander University would be offering a fully online master's degree in management, she knew it was just the opportunity she was searching for. "I wanted something that fit my professional goals, my timeline and my lifestyle," she said. "I realized this program was the perfect fit for me."

While participation in a fully online program can seem stressful, O'Dell says that she was amazed with how effective her professors were at keeping students engaged with the material. "At first, I was nervous to sign up for an online program," she said. "I had never taken online classes like these before, and I wasn't sure how I was going to do with it. But the instructors were amazing with their communication with students, and they worked tirelessly to ensure that the gap between online and traditional learning is minuscule or nonexistent."

"I thought that an online program might lack the 'Lander charm' that made me want to go to Bearcat Country in the first place, but here it is in droves!" she added.

O'Dell pointed to Dr. Cherie Rains, assistant professor of marketing, as just one example of a member of Lander's faculty who has gone above and beyond to deliver a top-notch online learning experience to her students. "She even offered to have help sessions where we could speak with her, online or even in person, about the material we were learning," O'Dell said. "It can't be easy juggling online classes with teaching a regular course load, and I have really appreciated how much care we receive from all our instructors."

In addition to providing her with a "stepping stone" in her professional life, O'Dell has found that much of the material she was learning in class was



applicable to several aspects of her day-to-day work environment. In fact, she's already begun using the techniques and practices she has learned in class to enhance her daily tasks in the lab.

"Labs are businesses, too," O'Dell said. "On top of your technical skill set, you need to function in traditional business areas as well."

"I love being in a work setting that is challenging and fulfilling," said O'Dell. "The beauty of this program is that I now have a diverse set of practical business skills to pair with my technical background, and I'm confident that this will continue to lead to new and exciting adventures in the future." ■



## Tarryn Angermeier '16

### A NEW CULTURE DOWN UNDER

While she has spent the last few years working in Australia as a financial accountant for Eaton Corporation, Lander University alumna Tarryn Angermeier '16 wasn't always a business major.

"I changed my degree to business during my sophomore year because I felt like it would open up more job opportunities down the line," she said. "It wasn't until I started taking the finance and accounting courses under some amazing professors that I started to really enjoy what I was learning and started to see a future in finance."

Angermeier earned a B.S. in Business Administration, magna cum laude, with an emphasis in accounting, and has worked with Eaton since 2016, first in South Carolina, California and Indiana, before transferring to "the land down under." Eaton is a multinational power management company that carries a large portfolio of products and services in several different industries. "Personally, I enjoy the fast pace and constant changes," said Angermeier, adding that her coworkers and managers "have created an environment that makes me excited to come to work each day."

Angermeier admits it was her first accounting class with Dr. Gail Moore that inspired her to declare her accounting emphasis. "I loved her passion and enthusiasm in the classroom," said Angermeier. "She has this uncanny ability to make accounting fun - two words I never thought I would use in the same sentence."

Dr. Moore was also in charge of accounting internships, helping Angermeier complete three successful internships while studying at Lander.

"These experiences were really where I started to figure out which facet of the finance/accounting industry I wanted to work in," said Angermeier. Her third and final internship was with Eaton, where she worked for the hydraulics site in Greenwood for nine months.

From there, Angermeier was encouraged by the accounting team to join the Financial Leadership Development Program (FLDP), in which participants gain experience within different industries, while simultaneously working in different areas of the country.

It was this opportunity that led her to her time in Indiana and California, before rolling off the program a year early to pursue the chance to live in Australia with her fiancé.

Of course, when Eaton heard of her plans to leave the United States, they quickly made moves to keep her on their team. "Eaton offered to sponsor my Visa and a position in Melbourne at a vehicle site," she said. "I was very honored and thrilled to have the chance to grow and expand my view of the world while immersing myself in a new culture and continuing my career with Eaton."

Upon the outbreak of COVID-19 around the globe, the Australian government enacted some of the longest and toughest lockdowns in the world. For Angermeier, this meant not being able to travel outside of the country for nearly two years. But, the former Lander University volleyball player says the strict approach ultimately kept case numbers low, and in return gave her more opportunities to enjoy her new life in Melbourne, in addition to focusing on her professional career. "Because of the strict measures, I was able to have a full beach volleyball season," said Angermeier, who ended up finishing in the top eight women volleyball players in Australia.

Angermeier credits Lander University's College of Business for preparing her for her adventure, presenting her opportunities to strengthen her weaknesses and learn new skills.

"Textbook to real world is very different," she said. "The internship opportunities I had at Lander University provided small glimpses into the real working world and gave me exposure that one just can't get in a classroom." ■

"It wasn't until I started taking the finance and accounting courses under some amazing professors that I started to really enjoy what I was learning, and started to see a future in finance."



## Mihajlo Kozjak '14

### PREPARED FOR THE REAL WORLD OF BUSINESS

Lander University graduate Mihajlo Kozjak describes a typical day on the job as “dynamic.”

While he’s based in New York City, working for one of the world’s largest professional services networks gives him plenty of opportunities to travel across the country.

Kozjak currently works as a director for EY-Parthenon, a subdivision of professional services company Ernst & Young, which focuses on strategy management consulting. Ernst & Young, along with Deloitte & Touche, KPMG and PricewaterhouseCoopers, make up the “Big 4,” which are considered the four largest professional services networks in the world.

“As part of the Mergers and Acquisitions group, I work in a very dynamic environment,” said Kozjak, who helps advise Fortune 500 companies that are in the process of merging with or acquiring smaller companies. So far, he’s worked on projects for companies from several different industries, including banking, oil and gas, aerospace and consumer products. Kozjak’s recent promotion to director has him focusing on companies within the financial sector, and some of his most recent projects include Morgan Stanley’s acquisition of E\*Trade, and of Eaton Vance.

Kozjak graduated from Lander University in 2014 with a B.S. in Business Administration. Prior to Ernst & Young, he worked for Booz Allen Hamilton in Washington, D.C.

In addition to his supportive management team at EY, Kozjak also contributes his success to the foundation he received from his alma mater, with professors and advisors who were industry experts, able to offer their keen insight on a rapidly-changing marketplace.

“My first association with the professional services industry was an MIS (Management Information Systems) class my junior year,” he said. After splitting the class into two groups, Kozjak and his



peers were given the chance to partner with local Greenwood businesses to provide consultation on better business and marketing practices that would translate into larger profits.

“The best part was that we were actually tracking the performance of those businesses,” said Kozjak. “We got real data and used it to measure which group had better results.”

After completing that course, Kozjak was recruited to join Lander Enactus, a student-led organization providing marketing and other professional services to local businesses as an extracurricular activity.

Today, he’s still consulting businesses; but now, it’s on a much larger scale than before. Kozjak confirms that it was the practical, real-world approach that Lander’s business students receive that prepared him for his current career. ■



# 150 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE

*Lander's Sesquicentennial Celebration Honors Past, Celebrates Future*

*There are few institutions in the United States that make it to see their 150th birthday.*

*Lander University crossed that extraordinary milestone on February 12, 2022, celebrating its sesquicentennial — 150 years of preparing broadly educated, well-informed graduates who are equipped for responsible participation in the civic lives of their communities and careers.*

From its humble beginnings as a small, church-supported college for women in Williamston, S.C., to its present status as a public, four-year, comprehensive university with nearly 4,000 students and over 90 areas of study, Lander's growth over the course of the first 150 years of its history has been truly exceptional.

Founded by the Rev. Samuel Lander as Williamston Female College in 1872, the private institution opened on February 12 with 33 students, and upped its enrollment to 44 students only 24 hours later. The college immediately caught the attention of families seeking a place where their daughters could be educated. During those foundational years, the college began with a mission "to impart health and vigor of body, mind and spirit."

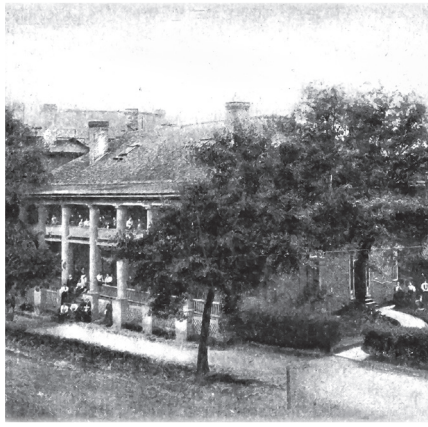
When the college outgrew the infrastructure of Williamston, nearby Greenwood clamored at the opportunity to relocate the successful school to its

own growing community. With only two buildings at that time — Greenwood Hall and Laura Lander Hall — the college re-opened its doors on September 27, 1904, ushering in a new chapter in the institution's history. And along with its new home came a new name, Lander College, in honor of its founder.

Within a decade, Lander College added athletic programs and a new dormitory to accommodate a growing student body. By the time the college marked its 50th anniversary in 1922, it had awarded more than 560 bachelor's degrees and three master's degrees.

Yet another chapter began in 1944, when Lander admitted its first male student, Oliver L. Thomas, becoming fully coed by the end of World War II. Initial accreditation from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools followed in 1952, and in 1964, Lander enrolled its first Black student, Mary Alice Brown, who would go on to receive a Bachelor of Science in Medical Technology. Over the next decades, the college would continue to grow and transform, first becoming a state institution in 1973, and then, in 1992, becoming Lander University.



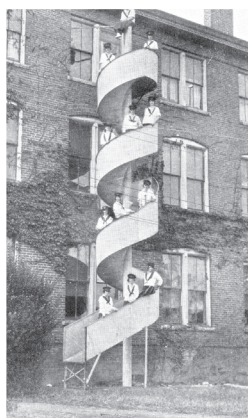


And since that time, new academic, athletic and student life programs have been added, and new buildings and facilities have been constructed, as more and more students seek out the exceptional opportunities that only a Lander education can provide. To help ensure those opportunities remain accessible to all students, Lander's Board of Trustees voted in 2016 to freeze tuition — a bold and innovative move that set into motion a period of unprecedented enrollment growth that continues even today.

What began as a small, private, female college is now a thriving university, with more students and alumni than ever before, and programs that educate scholars around the globe.

As the University celebrates its sesquicentennial year, we celebrate the hard work and dedication of thousands of students, faculty, staff and alumni who have contributed to this success story that the Lander community enjoys today.

We celebrate that which makes a Lander University education unique among its peers. Market-driven programs give students early exposure to their future careers and the training they need to participate in their chosen field. That training is coupled with genuine, meaningful liberal arts experiences that provide students with opportunities to look at problems from multiple perspectives. At Lander, we foster creativity and scholarship; effective communication and problem-solving skills;





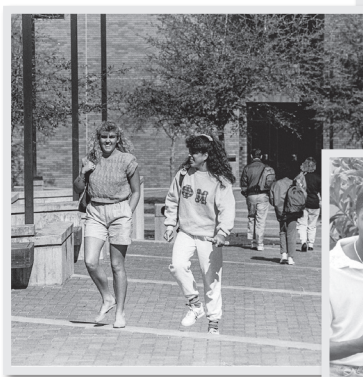
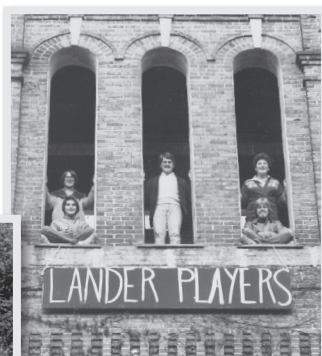
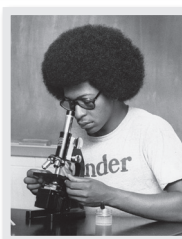


values of diversity and respect for all people; and civic engagement and service to others.

We celebrate our community's determination throughout Lander's history — weathering times of war, economic turmoil, and even global pandemics. In good times and in bad, Lander University has never faltered in its promise to provide its students with an enriching education that prepares them for the workplace and the world that awaits them after graduation — a world which has its own flurry of obstacles and challenges.

It has been said that every success story includes constant adaptation, revision and change. Every academic year, every midterm and final exam, every graduation, every homecoming, every sports victory is its own unique chapter in a much larger story — a success story — that is still being written, adapted, revised and changed by our Lander family.

Much has been accomplished since Lander University's founding on February 12, 1872. And as we honor and celebrate our past, our students, alumni, faculty, staff and friends are excited for the future and what our University will accomplish over the next 150 years. ■







# 150

SESQUICENTENNIAL

# CELEBRATION

*On March 15, more than 2,000 people gathered in Lander's spacious Assembly Plaza to officially kick off the University's year-long Sesquicentennial Celebration with historical presentations, student performances, games, dancing and music, mixed with moments of nostalgia.*

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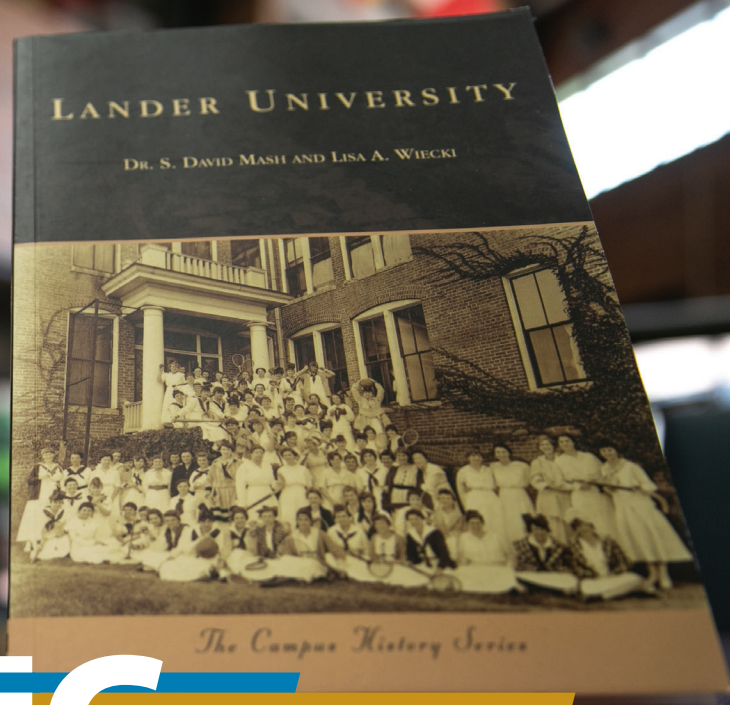
*The evening concluded with a spectacular fireworks show over the heart of campus, which was preceded by the ringing of Lander's original bell.*

*Made by the Meneely and Kimberly bell-casting foundry of New York, the 225-pound bell was shipped to Williamston on February 11, 1876.*

*When the college moved to Greenwood in 1904, Lander's first bell made the journey as well, and it rang from the iconic tower of Laura Lander Hall for many years, until it was replaced with a 35-bell carillon. The original bell is now housed in University Archives for safekeeping.*







# EXPLORING OUR HISTORY

By Karen Petit, Photos by Laura B. Wood '16

*Colleagues Dive Into  
University's Past  
for New Book*

## ***Is it Hollywood? Or Greenwood?***

Photographs of beautiful young women dressed in elegant evening gowns and men wearing tuxedos and white dinner jackets to special events portray a time of glamour in the post-World War II era of Lander University.

More reminiscent of the golden age of Hollywood than life at a small Southern college, the images are among more than 150 photographs in a new 130-page book, *Lander University*, which celebrates Lander's sesquicentennial. Released in April, the book is sponsored by The Lander Foundation and published by Arcadia Press, known for its regional and nostalgic publications.

The book represents over six months of dedicated efforts by Lisa Wiecki, director of Library Services at Jackson Library, and her colleague David Mash, associate director of Library Services. They relied on archival photographs from the early years of Williamston Female College, founded in 1872 in Williamston, S.C., and the forerunner of Lander College (now University), as well as photographs taken by students and faculty. Scrapbooks donated to the University were also essential to the project.

"Many of the photographs have never been seen before," said Wiecki. "David and I found that our days, nights and weekends were consumed by this work. We really learned about the student experience from these donated items."

She is quick to praise the library's staff for their commitment to the project. "Our staff worked tirelessly with us to identify images and their context. It was a huge team effort, and truly this is the most enjoyable project I've ever worked on," Wiecki said.

The book project is a perfect fit for the University's anniversary year, and an opportunity to share wonderful, but forgotten, chapters of Lander's story with alumni, students and the University's friends and supporters.

*Lander University* depicts the school's life and history through the middle of the 20th century, although some photographs portray more recent years on campus. "The book gives us an opportunity to look back and see what a special school this is, and what a history we have," Mash said.

Wiecki added, "This book is visual storytelling, but also includes information from our research."

The University's first president, Samuel Lander, used the image of the mineral spring near the Williamston Female College to form a symbol of health and wellbeing, including a "spring of knowledge" essential to education. This theme could be seen in the school's earliest publication, *The Naiad*, which was named for the Greek mythological nymphs who inhabited springs, lakes and other bodies of fresh water. A comprehensive newsletter and college catalogue, *The Naiad* carried news from the campus and surrounding area.

Readers of the new book will find it is organized according to Lander's outline of the different streams of learning – mental, aesthetic, physical and social – and not by chronological order.

"The images in each chapter reflect a specific stream of learning," Mash said. "We noticed water themes throughout the school's early history."



Their research also found that the presidency of Dr. Boyce M. Grier, 1948–66, was highlighted by a focus on student life and the beauty of the era. “Dr. Grier had a keen intuition about the importance of public image,” Wiecki said. “The ‘social stream’ section of the book depicts Dr. Grier’s years at Lander. An energy and excitement were ignited on this campus when he arrived.”

In fact, it was during Grier’s tenure that one Lander student, Miriam Stevenson of Winnsboro, became internationally recognized for her beauty. In the early 1950s, Stevenson was crowned Miss Lander, Miss Greenwood, Miss South Carolina, and then Miss South Carolina USA, Miss USA, and ultimately Miss Universe.

“The school was glamorous,” Wiecki said. “It looked like so much fun. Student life seemed to blossom during Dr. Grier’s years at Lander.”

The team found “so many fascinating vignettes” to Lander, Mash said. “The University has a strong cultural and economic impact on the Greenwood community. I’m not sure many people today understand how strong that impact has been over the years.”

The people of Greenwood always have been enthusiastic supporters of Lander and were eager to become the home of the college when it was seeking to relocate from Williamston in 1904. “The town acquired the property for the school. They were ‘all in’ when it came to bringing the college to Greenwood,” Mash said. “It was a cooperative effort at every level.”

The nostalgia of *Lander University* highlights that the University’s story isn’t told solely in the passage of years. The story has been written by the people who came to Lander in pursuit of an education. “The people who attended and those who graduated are part of the lineage of Lander,” Mash said.

That lineage, meticulously researched by library colleagues, will continue through a new generation of Lander University students and alumni.

*Lander University* is now available for purchase through Barnes&Noble, Amazon and other online book retailers. ■

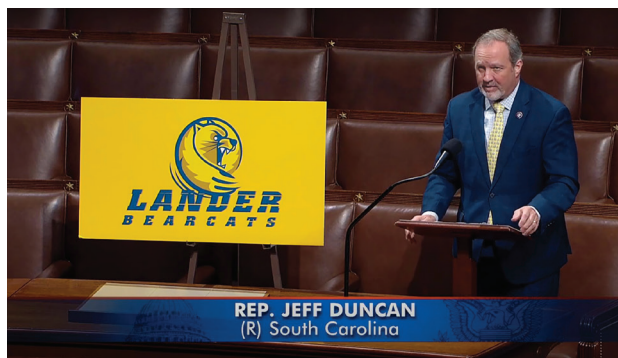


Lisa Wiecki, left, director of Library Services at Jackson Library, and David Mash, associate director of Library Services, were instrumental in the development of the new book, *Lander University*, now available for purchase.



## MARKING A MILESTONE

In March, the South Carolina Legislature celebrated Lander’s Sesquicentennial with S.C. House and Senate resolutions, recognizing the University’s “transformative impact” on students, alumni, the community and the state over the past century and a half. State Reps. John McCravy and Anne Parks, and S.C. Sen. Billy Garrett presented the resolutions to President Richard Cosentino and administrators during a special ceremony on campus, remarking that “there has never been a time that was better for Lander University.” That same month, U.S. Congressman Jeff Duncan gave a presentation from the floor of the House of Representatives honoring the institution’s milestone anniversary.



Top: Pictured at the presentation on campus are (L-R) Rep. John McCravy, President Richard Cosentino, First Lady Jessica Cosentino, Sen. Billy Garrett, and Rep. Anne Parks.

Bottom: U.S. Rep. Jeff Duncan makes a presentation from the House floor.



# LANDER SHINES IN SERVING STUDENTS

## University Community Unites to Support Students in Need With Bear Necessities Food Pantry and Crisis Fund

By Karen Petit

**"Each loyal heart is filled with pride." That's part of Lander University's alma mater.**

And that pride was underscored in the compassion shown by alumni, faculty, staff, students and friends of the university in responding to the early challenges of COVID-19. Two important initiatives – the Student Crisis Fund and the Bear Necessities Food Pantry – came to fruition in 2020, even as colleges and universities were shuttered for months in the spring and summer of that year.

As the pandemic got under way and communities quickly enacted safety measures – such as social distancing, online learning and temporary business closures – many students faced unexpected expenses and loss of employment. Recognizing a critical need, The Lander Foundation contacted its network of supporters and established the Student Crisis Fund, which would provide immediate assistance for students facing financial emergencies related to the pandemic. It took only 17 days from the development of the fund, including receipt of the first donations, to grant funds to a student.

"We moved quickly from idea to implementation to the first award," said Mike Worley, vice president for University Advancement at Lander. "The support we had was invaluable in those early weeks of COVID-19, so much so that we decided to continue to have this fund to meet the ongoing and future needs of our students."

At the same time, a second effort was under way to help solve another student need at Lander: the problem of food insecurity, a silent but serious issue on college and university campuses nationwide.

Dr. Boyd Yarbrough, vice president for Student Affairs at Lander University, said many of the first discussions were anecdotal. "We began learning about faculty members who kept crackers and peanut butter or granola bars in cabinets for their students, or who would pay for a student's meal. The stories told us that we had to do something."

A task force was formed, and a study was conducted to reveal the scope of the problem at Lander. The study revealed that nearly 26 percent of Lander students who responded to the questions about their personal availability to food had not eaten for at least one entire day during the last 30 days. Of those students, 57 percent reported not eating for four days or more during the month.

The Bear Necessities Food Pantry opened in August 2020, through a partnership with the Greenwood County Food Bank and the determination of campus volunteers who wanted to help students.

The food pantry drew an immediate response from students. By the end of the first year, as many as 80 students a week visited the food pantry, located in the Lide residence hall. There, they found a pantry stocked with canned goods, frozen and pre-packaged foods, and breads and pastries.

Dr. Chris Sacerdote of Lander's College of Education, who coordinates the volunteer effort at the food pantry, said students are appreciative. "We heard comments like, 'this is the first week I didn't have to worry about food,' or 'it is so much easier to study when I am not worried about food.'"







Above: The Emerald Empire Band performs at Lander University's Music For Meals Benefit in October. Top right: President Cosentino cuts the ribbon at the grand opening of the Bear Necessities Food Pantry in 2020. Bottom right: Members of the community deliver a large donation to the pantry, which is located in Lide residence hall.

Lander student Iesha Brown, who is pursuing a bachelor's degree in business administration with a health care management emphasis, has volunteered with the food pantry since its opening. She said volunteering is a way to help her community. "I also get to meet new people. I love it when Wednesday comes ... because I get to go to the food pantry and volunteer. It is by far the highlight of my week."

Brown, too, has seen a steady growth of interest among students. "Most of the students are excited to come. They've started bringing their friends, and I love that."

In the first weeks of the Fall 2021 semester, the food pantry saw its numbers grow to more than 100 students being served each week.

Then came another new experience for the food pantry: a major fundraiser, Music for Meals, planned and organized by Leadership Greenwood. COVID-19 restrictions forced the rescheduling twice of the Music for Meals benefit, but on a perfect fall evening in October, the event proved a success.

"To see Music for Meals come to fruition brought true joy to our hearts. We are ecstatic about the success of this first year," said Vice President Yarbrough, who is also an alumnus of the Leadership Greenwood program.

Lander now has months of experience and research to understand the needs of students. Dr. Zach Rubin, a Lander assistant professor of sociology, has continued to study food insecurity at the University.

His recent research found that more than half of Lander's student body struggles with securing enough food to eat on a regular basis – a number consistent to what other colleges and universities are reporting, he said.

"This study gives us a more comprehensive view of our students' needs and the challenges they face, many of which became greater because of the pandemic," he said.

The food pantry is an important first step in the process of helping students have a successful college experience. "The work done in the first year of the food pantry was exceptional," Rubin said.

—Photos by Laura B. Wood '16 and Deb Nygro

**"Each loyal heart is filled with pride" is part of Lander University's alma mater.**





# 21-22 SPORTS ROUNDUP



## MEN'S SOCCER

The men's soccer team battled through adversity and injuries to finish in third place in the Peach Belt. The Bearcats had four All-Conference players, including Tom Mariott, who was named Player of the Year for the second-straight season. Mariott and Max McNulty were named All-Region and CoSIDA Academic All-Americans. Tom was also named All-American by the D2CCA.



## WOMEN'S SOCCER

The women's soccer team finished the regular season with 11 wins and finished in second place in the conference while also picking up a 2-1 win over #2 Flagler. The Bearcats also advanced to the PBC semifinals for the first time since 2013. The team also had three players named All-Conference.



## SOFTBALL

The softball team got off to one of the best starts in school history as they sit at 24-5 overall. After losing the season's opening game, the Bearcats then went on the third-longest winning streak in program history, winning 15 games in a row.



## CROSS COUNTRY

The men's cross country team finished sixth at the Peach Belt Championship, while the women finished eighth.



## MEN'S TENNIS

The men's tennis team has been nationally ranked all season, staying in the top 15 as a team. They are winding down the regular season and preparing for the Peach Belt Tournament and are currently ranked third in the NCAA Southeast Regional Poll.



## WOMEN'S TENNIS

The women's tennis team has had an impressive spring. The Bearcats started hot, and in the middle of March, they jumped into the ITA Division II national rankings for the first time since 2015.





## MEN'S & WOMEN'S RUGBY

This spring, the men's and women's rugby teams have had some great performances. The women won the State Championship, going undefeated in the Tournament. The Bearcats defeated Clemson, The Citadel, Coastal Carolina, and the University of South Carolina. The men finished second at the Furman 7's tournament and picked up two wins at the South Carolina 7's Tournament, outscoring their opponents 95-78.



## WOMEN'S LACROSSE

In just their third season of competition, the women's lacrosse team has been setting records. The team earned the program's first win over a ranked team as they defeated #10 Limestone 16-15. The Bearcats also picked up their first conference win and earned the program's first national ranking, moving up as high as 16 in the country. Mickey Burnett was also named IWLCA National Player of the Week.



## MEN'S LACROSSE

The men's lacrosse team started the season 5-0 and picked up a win over Anderson University, who was ranked later in the season. The Bearcats are averaging 14.7 goals per game, and Carter Wilcox and Adam Mather have been named PBC Player of the Week.



## MEN'S GOLF

The men's golf team had an outstanding spring season, seeing the Bearcats finish in the top five in three-straight tournaments. The Bearcats finished seventh at the Peach Belt Championship, while Maxime Legros won the Individual Championship by three strokes. Lander is currently ranked in the top 10 nationally in the GolfStat and Coaches polls. The Bearcats were also ranked ninth in the first NCAA Regional Rankings.



## WOMEN'S GOLF

The women's golf team had a great season as they finished tied for second at the Peach Belt Conference Championship. This was the Bearcats' fifth top-five finish, including winning the Converse Spring Invite. Hannah Stephenson is currently ranked 40th in the country and finished tied for third at the PBC Conference Championship with teammate Ella Nilsson.



## BASEBALL

The Lander baseball team sits at 14-12 this season and 4-5 in conference play. The Bearcats have a win over #15 Newberry and #25 North Georgia. Their most significant win of the season was a 10-2 win over top-ranked Wingate.

#ClawsUp





# 21-22 SPORTS ROUNDUP, CONTINUED



## WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

The women's team battled through injuries and advanced to the NCAA Tournament for the eighth straight season before falling in the Sweet 16. The Bearcats had three players named All-Conference, and Makaila Cange was named Player of the Year for the second-straight season. Sarah Crews was also the PBC Elite 16 Academic Award winner.



## MEN'S BASKETBALL

The men's basketball team won 14 games, the program's second-highest win total in the last six years. The Bearcats also had wins over #12 Augusta and #21 Flagler and advanced to the PBC semifinals. Dominic Stanford was named PBC Freshman of the Year, and Jared Sherfield was named All-Conference.



## WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL

Under first-year head coach Jeff Reynolds, the Lander volleyball team saw a ten-win improvement from last season. Also, it advanced to the semifinals of the conference tournament, where they nearly upset top-seeded Flagler. Christina Aguayo was named First-Team All-Conference.



## BASS FISHING

The Bass fishing team has shown out on the water and earned the program's first national ranking in the ACA School of the Year standings. The Bearcats have had three teams qualify for National Championship tournaments during the spring season.

## LANDER ATHLETICS HOLDS 2022 GOLDEN CLAWS

On April 25, the Lander Athletics Department held its annual banquet at Finis Horne Arena, honoring the University's student-athletes for their 2021-22 school year accomplishments.

**Zeth Brower**, pictured left, received the M.V. Wells Award given annually to the Lander Male Athlete of the Year. Brower finished the season 18-0, becoming the wrestling program's first All-American and National Champion.

For the second year, **Makaila Cange**, right, a junior women's basketball player from Douglasville, Ga., received the Dr. Samuel C. Hodges Award as the Female Athlete of the Year. On January 12, she broke the program records for points in a game with 43 and field goals made with 16. She was named Peach Belt Player of the Year, All-American, and Academic All-American.

**Deegan Green**, center, received the Dr. Boyce M. Grier Award as the student-athlete who best exemplifies sportsmanship, integrity, pride in the University, and a positive attitude. Green has been a four-year member of the cheer team and student worker in athletics.

For a full list of student-athlete award recipients, visit [LanderBearcats.com](http://LanderBearcats.com).





## CLINCHING THE CHAMPIONSHIP

Becoming Lander wrestling's first-ever All-American, redshirt sophomore Zeth Brower upped the ante in 2022 and became the first Bearcat wrestler to be named a National Champion following his hard-fought win at the NCAA Division II Wrestling Championships, held in March in St. Louis, Mo.

To capture the title, Brower faced the country's No. 2 wrestler, Branson Proudlock of the University of Findlay (Ohio), after downing a host of other top-ranked competitors. With his 6-4 win over Proudlock, Brower marked a triumphant high note in his collegiate career and for Lander's wrestling program, in only its third year. It also marked an incredible comeback for Brower, who suffered a serious hand injury last fall that left him in a cast for weeks. But rather than let the injury stop him, Brower continued training and conditioning until he was able to return to the mat.

And return he did, dominating the competition to finish the 2022 season at 18-0 overall. With his impressive performance, the Medford, Ore., native raked in accolades including South Atlantic Conference Carolinas Wrestler of the Year and Super Region II Wrestler of the Year. One of seven Bearcat wrestlers to be named to the National Wrestling Coaches Association (NWCA)'s 2022 Division II Scholar All-Americans, Brower also received this year's M.V. Wells Award as Lander's Male Athlete of the Year.

Following the historic season for the team, Lander University was selected to be the host site for the 2024 NCAA Div. II Super Region II Wrestling Championships.

"We are extremely excited to host the NCAA Super Regional here at Horne Arena," said wrestling head coach R.C. LaHaye. "Our student-athletes love the chance to compete at home, and being able to do it during a post-season event will make their experience here at Lander even more special."

### FOLLOW THE BEARCATS

For full schedules, results and the latest information on all Lander sports, visit:  
[LanderBearcats.com](http://LanderBearcats.com)

# #clawsUP



# FIELD HOUSE of DREAMS

At 17,000 square feet,  
Lander's beautiful new field house  
is expanding opportunities for student-athletes.

By Zack Bennett

Photos by Laura B. Wood '16 and Walker Smith

Last fall, Lander University Athletics cut the ribbon on its newest addition – a 17,000-square-foot field house, located at the University's 28-acre Jeff May Sports Complex. Lander student-athletes, coaches, administrators and community members gathered Nov. 3 to celebrate the official opening and tour the expansive facility.

"It's hard to believe that we can make our beautiful complex any better – but we can, and we're about to make it better [by opening this exceptional facility]," said Lander University President Richard Cosentino, during his remarks prior to cutting the ribbon.

"What really makes this building special to me is that it's a testament to how Lander overcomes challenges," he said. Although the COVID-19 pandemic delayed progress numerous times, it was the hard work of Lander Athletic Director Brian Reese, former Vice President for Finance and Administration Stacie Bowie, the University's procurement, finance and physical plant teams, "and countless other people who came together to make this building possible."

The new field house is home to the men's and women's lacrosse teams and the wrestling team. The Bearcat wrestling program will benefit from an improved practice area, and the wrestling room is now one of the largest wrestling practice facilities in the entirety of NCAA Division II athletics. The building also includes locker room space for athletes, and office space for head coaches and athletic staff.

Plans for the field house building, which was formerly a fitness center operated by Self Regional Healthcare, began in 2019, with project design by McMillan Pazdan Smith Architects, electrical engineering by Burdette Engineering, and mechanical engineering by Peritus Engineers. Satchel Construction served as general contractor. Lander's physical plant crew also put in many hours to get this building finished and ready to go for students and coaches.

At the ribbon cutting ceremony, then-Vice President Stacie Bowie told the student-athletes, "Today is really about you. This new field house has Lander's name on it, but it's your field house. We built this for you because we want you to have the best experience possible as a Bearcat."

In addition to lacrosse and wrestling, the strength and conditioning programs are housed at the facility, serving all 650-plus Lander student-athletes. Each piece of equipment is brand new and customized with Lander branding and logos.

"This is a grand day for Lander Athletics with the opening of the new field house," said Brian Reese, Lander athletic director. "It's a great addition to our own Jeff May Complex, which is already one of the best facilities in all of NCAA Division II – and probably most of Division I."

Reese thanked local and state legislators, Lander's Board of Trustees and Foundation Board, and the University administration for their efforts to push the project to completion, especially during the challenges of the pandemic. "Without your support, this building would have never gotten off the ground."

The University's efforts in bringing the field house to life were also supported by many other individuals and organizations, including a generous gift from alumna Kat Finkbeiner '71 and her husband, Erwin, which helped fund the equipment for the strength and conditioning room. "The Finkbeiners' support for Lander is legendary, and their gift is a game changer for our entire athletic department," said Reese.

Lander Wrestling Head Coach R.C. LaHaye, who spoke along with head coaches Bob Dachille (women's lacrosse), Anthony LePore (men's lacrosse) and Jordan Jacobs (strength and conditioning), said what is most important about the new facility is the opportunities it will provide student-athletes.

"These young people in our programs are going to learn qualities such as integrity, honesty, work ethic, discipline. Those qualities are going to carry them far beyond their time here at Lander, and help accelerate them in the work force and in life," he said. "Another quality is gratitude ... and we as a staff, as student-athletes, as a program, are extremely thankful for this facility. We're going to work hard to make the most of it, and to make you proud." ■





**Left:** Lander University President Richard Cosentino (center) cuts the ribbon for a new field house at the University's Jeff May Sports Complex on Wednesday, Nov. 3, 2021. Cosentino is joined by (pictured, from left): Greenwood Mayor Brandon Smith; Lander Athletics supporters Kat Finkbeiner '71 and husband, Erwin; Athletic Director Brian Reese; S.C. Senator Billy Garrett; then-Lander Vice President for Finance and Administration Stacie Bowie; Greenwood County Council Chairman Chuck Moates; and Greenwood County Councilman Theo Lane.

**Above:** Lander's student-athletes enjoy the new facilities in the building.



### TAKE A LOOK

SCAN TO WATCH THE RIBBON CUTTING CEREMONY AND TAKE A TOUR OF LANDER'S NEW FIELD HOUSE.





# Faculty 2021

## AWARDS







Because of the COVID-19 disruption to the Lander Magazine, we were unable to share these exceptional faculty stories with our readers last fall. We hope you enjoy learning more about our 2021 Faculty Award winners, and we look forward to introducing the 2022 Faculty Award winners in the Fall/Winter issue of our magazine.



## Misty L. Jameson, 2021 Distinguished Professor, Earns Accolades for Her Compassion

By Karen Petit

Dr. Misty L. Jameson, a professor of English and film studies, is Lander University's Distinguished Professor for 2021. Her 13-year career at Lander began in 2008 when she became an assistant professor in the College of Arts and Humanities. She rose through the academic ranks to become an associate professor in 2014 and was promoted to professor in August of 2020.

During her tenure at Lander, Jameson has taught introductory English and film studies courses, as well as world literature and other courses providing a strong academic foundation for the study of the English language. Through her film classes, students have explored cinema's history, film noir and warfare, science fiction, and the Western genre of film.

However, it is Jameson's compassion that earned high praise from students. Lander history professor Dr. Kevin Witherspoon, chair of the committee that selected Jameson as Distinguished Professor, highlighted students' "rave reviews" of their professor.

"I was very nervous about the sort of professors I might have, but you made it very easy for me to understand things and come to you for help," one student wrote.

Others were grateful for her "compassion and willingness to help," especially during the pandemic.

Jameson earned her doctoral degree in English in 2008 from the University of Georgia, where she was a teaching assistant, and her bachelor's and master's degrees in English from Mississippi State University.

At Lander, Jameson has had a remarkable record of service through key leadership roles in her department, as well as posts on Faculty Senate. She is the representative from the College of Arts and Humanities; on the Academic Honor Council; the faculty advisor to *New Voices*: Lander University's Student Journal; and a member of the Tenure & Promotion Committee.

Beyond campus, she has been a foster volunteer for the Humane Society of Greenwood and is a "community cat friend," committed to feeding and sheltering local stray cats. She is a member of the S.C. Foothills chapter of the Sierra Club.

The breadth of her dedication to Lander and the community was lauded by Witherspoon. "It is a testament to her work ethic and commitment to scholarship that she remains a productive scholar despite her many activities, having published five articles and delivered more than two dozen presentations over the last decade."

Jameson is humbled by the accolades, adding, "I was just doing my job." ■

*Their stories continue...* 



# 2021 Faculty AWARDS



## **Laura Martin, 2021 Moore Award for Excellence in General Education Teaching**

By Graham Duncan

Assistant Professor of English Laura Martin says being a community of encouragement for students is what she loves most about working at Lander. “There’s a lot of effort put into helping our students succeed,” said Martin.

The University’s commitment to academic success intersects with Martin’s own passion for student success. She believes that a classroom is a place for students to express and explore their thoughts and values, emphasizing that academia is not only a place for “learning skills and following guidelines,” but also “a place where [students] can develop their own aesthetic and focus on what they find meaningful and beautiful.”

It’s because of her dedication to students’ personal and professional growth that the University chose Laura Martin to receive the 2021 Moore Award for Excellence in General Education Teaching. Martin’s colleagues roundly agree she is a worthy recipient of this high honor.

In her nomination, Dr. Lillian Craton, professor of English and director of Lander’s Honors College, wrote, “[Laura’s] classes are about asking questions rather than providing simple answers. Our writing class titles often include the word ‘inquiry,’ but sometimes we all get bogged down in technical aspects of writing. Laura keeps the focus on the inquiry itself: she answers questions with encouragement and more questions, and her students feel like it’s their ideas, rather than her ideas, that ultimately matter.”

Martin has served as a member of Lander’s Diversity Advisory Council and with Leaders on Understanding Diversity (LOUD). She is also an accomplished writer. Her personal essay, “A Wretch Like Me,” was published in the Summer 2020 issue of *MARY: A Journal of New Writing*. Additionally, her essay, “Dead Horse Bay,” was a semi-finalist for the Brooklyn Nonfiction Prize and published by *Mr. Beller’s Neighborhood*.

Martin’s colleagues say they greatly appreciate her welcoming, cooperative approach to her work within Lander’s Department of English and Foreign Languages. “It’s great to have colleagues like her that are open to collaboration and reflective teaching practices,” said Dr. James Anderson, associate professor of English, who has worked with Martin to develop English Composition courses. “I’ve grown as a teacher through working with Laura.” ■



## **Tess Gemberling, 2021 Young Faculty Teaching Award**

By Zack Bennett

Dr. Tess Gemberling, assistant professor of psychology, is Lander University’s 2021 Young Faculty Teaching Award recipient. Gemberling finished her third year as an assistant professor of psychology and “consistently receives very positive feedback on her teaching from both colleagues and students,” said Dr. Scott Jones, provost and executive vice president for Academic Affairs. “For many reasons, we are proud to celebrate Tess’s accomplishments.”

This award is given annually to a young faculty member who demonstrates the qualities associated with effective teaching. Applicants must prepare a portfolio that documents the following: a substantive, innovative use of methods of teaching, including technology; a strong record of attendance and participation in conferences and other professional venues that address teaching; evidence that the faculty

“I believe  
education  
should go beyond  
the classroom.”

member has incorporated relevant and decent developments in the field into courses taught; and quality of publications, presentations, exhibitions or performances at state, regional and national conferences, or other professional venues.

“Students respond well to her introductory general education courses, as well as upper-level courses on research methods that are dreaded by some students,” said Jones, who additionally highlighted her use of “high-impact practices and active learning strategies” to engage students.

“As a teacher, I try my best to engage students by demonstrating how psychology is in our daily lives,” said Gemberling. “I believe education should go beyond the classroom to improve ourselves and the society we live in, such as learning about effective communication or diverse perspectives.”

Gemberling’s mentorship has resulted in students presenting work at Lander’s Academic Symposium, as well as at external conferences, including the Association of Psychological Science, an international-level venue. Some students have even joined her in academic work, co-authoring manuscripts for publication. Outside the classroom, she serves as the club advisor for Lander Spectrum, Lander’s gay-straight alliance. ■





## Jeff Barfield, 2021 Young Faculty Scholar Award

By Jeff Lagrone

To win Lander's Young Faculty Scholar Award, a faculty member has to have an impressive record of publications, and Assistant Professor of Physical Education and Exercise Science Dr. Jeff Barfield does.

He's published numerous articles in peer-reviewed journals, and several more have been accepted for publication. A recent

The interaction with students —  
being able to see someone  
light up and get it. That's  
what thrills me about it.

example is "Energy Generation, Transfer, and Absorption at the Shoulder and Elbow in Youth Baseball Pitchers," which has been accepted by the journal *Sports Biomechanics*.

Barfield, who graduated from Auburn University in 2019 with a Ph.D. in kinesiology, was a pitcher in college, and his interest in improving his performance on the mound while avoiding injuries led to his career as a specialist in upper-extremity biomechanics.

He was hired, in part, to establish a biomechanics lab at Lander, and that's what he's been busy doing.

"It's come a long way from when I got here," he said. "Now it's fully equipped and able to collect data. I've already had conversations with the baseball team and the softball team, and they're both interested in coming into the lab to get research done on their pitchers. I'm really excited to get that started, both to help them, but also to give the undergraduates in the program an opportunity to work in the research field and get to look at motion from an analytical standpoint."

Barfield, who teaches courses in areas including wellness, exercise biomechanics and motor learning, enjoys "the interaction with students – being able to see someone light up and get it. That's what thrills me about it," he said.

Education is not "memorization of facts, but teaching a student how to think. I try to get students to think about motion – about anatomy and physiology – on a deeper level, and how it all works together," he said. ■



## Anissa Lawrence, 2021 Outstanding LINK Instructor

By Karen Petit

Anissa Lawrence rolled the dice on her future when she left Las Vegas and made the decision to move across the country to Greenwood, S.C.

She didn't know it then, but the odds were in her favor.

Not only did the former special events coordinator leave the Nevada casinos behind, but Lawrence embarked on a journey in higher education for which the dividends could not have been more rewarding.

No one would ever suspect that Lawrence, the recipient of Lander University's 2021 Outstanding LINK Instructor Award, had been a college dropout. "I was a college dropout several times, in fact," said Lawrence, Lander's academic transfer coordinator.

LINK, short for Learning, Involvement, Networking and Knowledge, helps Lander's first-year students make the transition from high school to college.

Lawrence, who joined the LINK faculty in fall of 2020, said, "The program encourages students to be involved on campus and in the community. It also supports their individual goals and provides them with the knowledge and resources to reach their goals."

Moving here  
was a gamble.  
But I've found a real  
purpose in my  
life at Lander.

Lawrence began her career as an administrative specialist in the College of Arts and Humanities, and then moved to the Academic Success Center. She completed her bachelor's degree in interdisciplinary studies from Liberty University in 2018, and an MBA in 2020, also from Liberty.

"It's hard to believe that I found a true career in South Carolina and one that I love so much," Lawrence said.

"Moving here was a gamble. But I've found a real purpose in my life at Lander." ■



# HONORING A STATESMAN

By Jeff Lagrone

Former South Carolina statesman, comptroller general and Lander University alumnus Jim Lander '86 is shown on the front porch of his home in Newberry. -photograph courtesy of Leslie Orr

Descendants of Rev. Samuel Lander, the founder of Lander University, have created a scholarship honoring his great-grandson, former South Carolina statesman, comptroller general and Lander University alumnus James Lander '86, who died in October of 2020, at the age of 90.

"Jim" Lander was the first male descendant of Samuel Lander who carried the Lander name to graduate from the University, graduating in 1986 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration and Interdisciplinary Studies. He also received an honorary Doctor of Laws degree from his alma mater in 2000.

A native of Abbeville, Lander was elected in 1992 to the S.C. Senate for District 18, a position he held until becoming South Carolina's 40th comptroller general in 1999. While in the Senate, he served on numerous legislative committees and was chairman of the Joint Legislative Committee for People with Disabilities. He was named Legislator of the Year by the S.C. Association of Counties, the S.C. Association of the Deaf, and the Advocates for the Rights of Citizens with Disabilities.

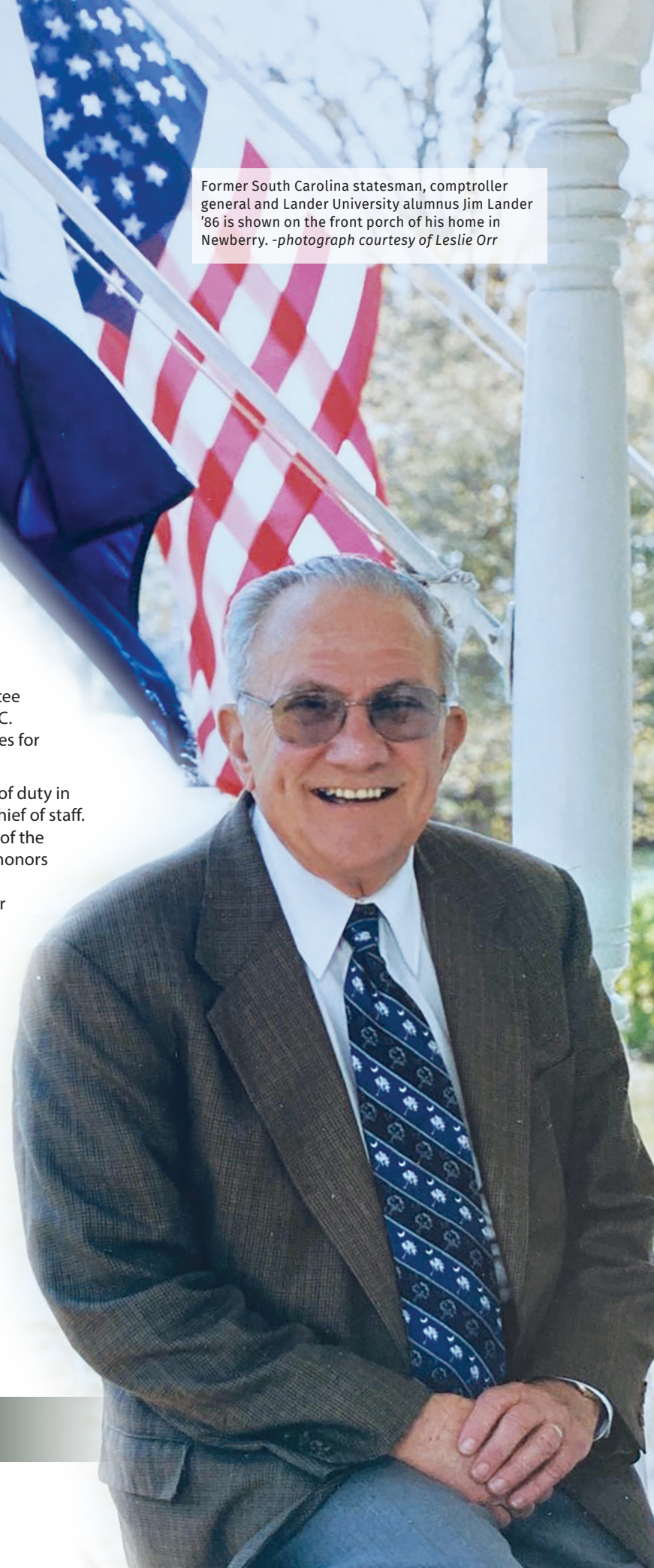
Lander enlisted in the S.C. Army National Guard in 1949 and served tours of duty in Korea and Vietnam. He retired in 1985 as the S.C. Army National Guard's chief of staff. That same year, Governor Richard Riley conferred upon Lander the Order of the Palmetto, South Carolina's highest civilian honor. He received numerous honors and awards, including the Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star Medal, the U.S. Meritorious Service Medal, the Cross of Gallantry, the Armed Forces Honor Medal of the Republic of Vietnam, the S.C. Palmetto Cross, and the S.C. Distinguished Service Medal.

Following his retirement from the National Guard, Lander served as commander and major general of the S.C. State Guard for several years. He remained active in many veterans' organizations, and was a former national president of the State Guard Association of the United States. A longtime resident of Newberry, he was very involved with his local community, holding chairman roles with many civic organizations and serving as a deacon and Sunday school teacher at First Baptist Church of Newberry.

Lander University Board of Trustees member Dr. DeWitt B. Stone, Jr., a second cousin to Jim Lander, described him as "a thoughtful and caring person — a friend to all. He was a leader in his town, in the South Carolina National Guard, in the South Carolina Senate, and as comptroller of the State of South Carolina."

The scholarship will assist a student who is well-prepared academically and who wishes to major in political science. Preference will be given to a student who is participating in the ROTC program, or who is a veteran. ■

Those wishing to contribute to the Jim Lander Scholarship Fund should contact the Lander Foundation at 864-388-8351.







## Mother & Daughter *Pay It Forward* Through Endowed Scholarship

By Zack Bennett  
and Eric Lawson;  
contributed photo

“We wanted to do as much as we could to help other students by providing some form of financial help.”

When Amanda Wagoner Rathgeber was set to graduate from Lander University in 2007, her parents established a scholarship for biology students in her honor. Their decision to make the generous gift was grounded by their first-hand experience of the impact scholarships can make in the life of a college student.

“Amanda was blessed to qualify for scholarships, and we as a family know their value,” said Gina Strait, her mother. “Some scholarships were large, while others were smaller. When combined, though, they accounted for more than 95% of Amanda’s college education funding.”

From when she was a child, Wagoner Rathgeber has known she wanted a career that involved working with animals. Currently serving as a veterinary surgeon in Columbia, it’s clear that now-Doctor Wagoner Rathgeber has achieved her goal.

All the years in between that were devoted to learning, training and interning would most likely not have been possible, though, without the financial assistance that came from her scholarships.

“Because of the scholarships I received as a student, I wasn’t financially strapped with college debt when I graduated,” Wagoner Rathgeber said.

When her career gained traction, she decided to join her parents by helping to fund the scholarship that bears her name.

### ENDOWING THE SCHOLARSHIP

After the sudden death of her father, Randy, in 2014, Wagoner Rathgeber and her mother began to think of ways to preserve the scholarship if they, too, were unable to continue to support it.

“We wanted to do as much as we could to help other students by providing some form of financial help. We were concerned, though, about the possibility of that help going away if we were no longer able to support the scholarship for whatever reason,” explained Strait.

After speaking with officials with The Lander Foundation, Wagoner Rathgeber and her mother decided to endow the scholarship.

With a regular scholarship, the donor gives a certain amount of money that is used to fund that scholarship, in order for the scholarship to recur annually.

An endowed scholarship, however, works differently. The donor provides a larger financial gift to the University for a specific purpose. The University then invests the funds from the gift, and uses the interest to permanently fund their scholarship.

“By making the decision to endow it, we’re assured we can continue to help Lander biology students regardless of what the future holds,” said Strait.

### AMANDA’S JOURNEY TO LANDER

“When it came time to select a college, Lander wasn’t even on my radar – but it quickly became my top choice,” she said. “Because I grew up in Columbia, I was convinced that I would enroll at the University of South Carolina.”

Taking the advice of her mother to at least visit other colleges and universities before making a decision, Wagoner Rathgeber visited Lander.

“It was then that I realized that if I enrolled at Lander, I wouldn’t be just a number to my professors, and they would guide me along my journey to reach my dreams and goals.” ■



# REELING IN OPPORTUNITIES

By Jeff Lagrone & Karen Petit, Photos by Laura B. Wood '16



For some time, bass fishing has been a sport at which Lander has excelled. Earlier this year, the Bearcat anglers were ranked as high as 20th nationally in the Association of Collegiate Anglers (ACA) Bass Pro Shop School of the Year rankings – the highest-ranked program in South Carolina.

"We've been the top-ranked team in the state the last couple of years, and I don't see that changing at all," said Head Coach Drew Pridgen '20.

Lander Director of Athletics Brian Reese said the long-term goal for the team is to be "the best in the entire South."

Pridgen, who graduated from Lander in December 2020 with a business management and marketing degree, fished for Lander for four years, qualifying to compete in two national championship events, held on the Harris Chain of Lakes in Florida.

"It was a really, really neat experience, going down there and being able to compete for Lander and fish for a national championship," he said.

He and Brandon Cobb, director of bass fishing operations, are excited about being handed the reins to one of Lander's newest athletic programs. Pridgen has been working hard to line up sponsors for the sport, which can be quite expensive, and also recruiting new members to the co-ed team.

New scholarships, such as the Dean Peebles Memorial Scholarship and the WorleyBirdFarms Scholarship, have helped with recruiting, as have the housing grants that Lander makes available to team members.



Lander is one of only a few schools that offers financial support to anglers, which partly accounts for the makeup of the team. The roster includes team members from as far away as Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and Texas.

"Scholarships are critical to the success of a team," said Reese. "Being able to award scholarships gives us the opportunity to recruit high-caliber student athletes who are successful in the classroom and in the sports that they pursue."

Pridgen, who fished for Greenwood High School, said that collegiate fishing is a different game than high school fishing. For one thing, there is no boat captain. "It's just you and your partner, or you alone," he said.

The secret to successful fishing, according to Pridgen, is "time on the water. It's all about trying to figure out what the fish are doing, where the fish are at." Some good fish-finding equipment helps, but "just because you find them doesn't mean you're going to catch them."

Senior Britt Myers, a business major from Lake Wylie, is one Lander angler who has been both finding the fish and catching them. In his years at Lander, he has won a local college championship, a team of the year award and several college tournaments. He qualified to fish in the Bassmaster College National Championship every year.

Lander's business program stood out to him when he was a high school student, trying to decide which college to attend, but the fishing team, he said, "was the main reason I came to Lander." Myers, who hopes to fish professionally, said that the best thing about fishing for Lander "is the camaraderie between everybody on the team. The guys on this team are all great people and fun to be around," he said.

Like Myers, business major Kaleb Brown, of Northfield, Mass., said that fishing is the reason he came to Lander.

"I fished a lot of tournaments in high school and

knew I wanted to fish on the collegiate level. With the help of my parents, I was able to narrow down schools throughout the country with established programs that could be a good fit for me. I talked with coaches and presidents of various teams and went on a trip down the East Coast to visit my top three schools. Lander had me hooked the second I stepped on campus."

It would not be going too far to say that Brown is a serious fisherman. "I have fished all over the country, from chasing snook in the Florida Keys to ice fishing for lake trout in Maine. However, through all of my fishing endeavors, bass fishing and tournament bass fishing in particular has always been at the top of my list for favorite kind of fishing. I got my first bass boat when I was in the seventh grade, and it consumed my world from there on out."

Brown, a junior, has already qualified to compete for several national championships, and as a freshman won the S.C. Bass Nation College State Championship. Earlier this year, he was on one of two Bearcat fishing teams to compete at the Major League Fishing (MLF) National Championship in Wagoner, Okla.

He hopes that he will be able to continue to fish in both the Bassmaster and MLF College Series National Championship events held each year. After college, he would like to compete in the Bassmaster Open Series, as well as state and regional tournaments, in hopes of qualifying to fish at the highest level of tournament bass fishing, the Bassmaster Elite Series.

Pridgen has some more immediate goals of his own. He would like to have three to five teams, or boats, qualify to compete for national championships. A top 15 finish in the annual School of the Year competition is another goal.

He believes the recognition he seeks will come sooner rather than later. "I think we've got a chance to make some noise," he said. ■





# FIRST CITIZENS ESTABLISHES FIRST



Pictured from the left are Erin Layland '00, Lynne Elliott '91, Matt Howard, all of First Citizens Bank; Lander President Richard Cosentino; Jerry Stevens '93 of First Citizens Bank; Dr. Mick Fekula, dean of Lander's College of Business; and Mike Worley, vice president for University Advancement.

## SCHOLARSHIP FOR MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAMS

A gift of \$25,000 from First Citizens Bank of Greenwood in 2021 established the first endowed scholarship for the master's degree programs in Lander University's College of Business.

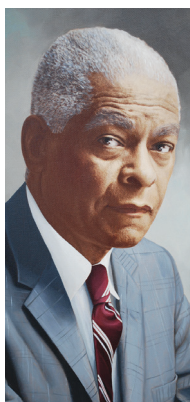
The scholarship is designated for first-generation college graduates seeking a master's degree in business, said Jerry Stevens, '93, senior vice president and market executive with First Citizens Bank.

"Throughout its 125-year history, First Citizens has been committed to giving back to the communities that it serves," said Stevens. "We hope this gift will have an impact for first-generation students and help remove the financial obstacles facing many students who want to pursue graduate studies."

The gift comes at a time when the University is marking record growth, said Lander President Dr. Richard Cosentino.

"Our University appreciates the confidence that First Citizens has in the job that we are doing to educate our students," said Cosentino, emphasizing First Citizens' long commitment to undergraduate student education. "This scholarship is an important investment as Lander seeks to enhance its graduate degree programs in business, and educate the state and nation's future business leaders."

The scholarship offers an incentive for graduate students to consider Lander for their education, said Dr. Mick Fekula, the Starnes Family Dean for Lander's College of Business. "Graduate scholarships often are rare in comparison to those offered for undergraduate students. We hope this partnership with First Citizens will open the door to more opportunities for our graduate business programs," he said. ■



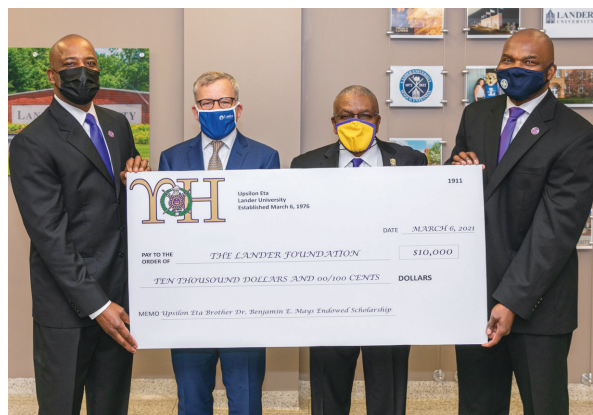
Dr. Benjamin E. Mays

## HONORING DR. BENJAMIN E. MAYS

Also in 2021, members of the Upsilon Eta chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity established the Upsilon Eta Brother Dr. Benjamin E. Mays Endowed Scholarship, honoring the well-known minister, educator and social activist who was born in Greenwood County and served as mentor to civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Like the Upsilon Eta brothers establishing the scholarship, Mays was himself a member of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity.

The scholarship, which is renewable, is open to all majors, with preference given to students from historically underserved backgrounds. Applicants should be either freshmen, sophomores or juniors, have a minimum 2.5 grade point average, be involved in extracurricular activities, and demonstrate financial need. ■



Pictured, from left, are Upsilon Eta member Warren Bacote '89; Lander Foundation Executive Director Mike Worley; Upsilon Eta member Robert McClinton '78; and Upsilon Eta member Cory Plowden '99.





# Medieval History

## IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

By Jeff Lagrone



Teaching millennial students about life in the Middle Ages is not without its challenges, according to Lander Professor of History Dr. Robert Figueira.

"I'm really teaching about an alien culture and society.

It's exotic, it's strange, it's different," said Figueira, Lander's

only medievalist since 1991, when he was hired as chair of the former Division of History and Political Science.

Part of the problem for students lies in the difficulty of finding sources. "It's not something you punch up on Wikipedia and it's there. Maybe you'll have to go over to the library and get some books down off the shelf. I say, 'You have a book on King John, look in the index; look at the footnotes; you can build your bibliography by looking at other people's bibliographies.'"

Hours of close study are sometimes needed to extract meaning from the sources that exist. Figueira said that students don't always have the patience necessary for that kind of thing.

"And, I think this is the curse of the modern information technology revolution. We're so overloaded with information that we've gotten away from the notion that you've got to buckle down with less material and try to understand it more thoroughly."

Not knowing Latin, along with a modern European language or two, can also put students at a disadvantage. When Figueira teaches "Robin Hood: Fact, Fiction and Films," he has students to read the earliest Robin Hood ballad in English, and they read most of it in the original.





**Pictured: Lander Professor of History Dr. Robert Figueira addresses Honors College students in his Italian Renaissance class. – photo by Laura B. Wood '16**

“It’s Middle English turning into modern English. It’s difficult for students at the beginning,” he said.

The religious fervor of people living during the Middle Ages strikes some of his students as “new and alien,” but life was short then. It was common to lose half of one’s siblings by the time they were two, and one’s parents by the time they were in their thirties.

“Or there’s a bad harvest, and about 10 percent of the people in your village don’t make it through winter — they’re undernourished. Or the flu comes along and takes them out. Or you have a pandemic or a plague. So here you are, 18 years old, and you’re surrounded by death all around you. What do you think about? You think about eternal truths, transcendence, life after death.”

Figueira sees medieval influences in modern-day law, the marriage ceremony, local architecture and practically everywhere else, and he uses these remnants of the past to sell students on the relevance of the subject. Lecturing itself, he tells them, is a pedagogical form that began in the Middle Ages. “I show them that the underpinnings of modern life in many ways are medieval.”

Students respond best, he thinks, when he tells stories about particular individuals who lived in the past. “If I can get up and tell a story about a guy who’s in charge of a small religious house and the way he has to navigate his way through his days and weeks of life, it’s attractive to our students,” he said.

It was a European history professor at Wesleyan University who made the idea of teaching history attractive to him.

“He was a very fluent speaker,” he said. “I watched the work he was doing and said, ‘that looks like fun, I’d like to do that.’”

He decided to focus on medieval history after a conversation with his older brother Thomas, now a professor of classics and ancient history at Rutgers, who said he was going to graduate school to study Greek and Roman history and literature. Choosing the Middle Ages, Figueira said, was “kind of a flippant thing to do. It was a decision made rather quickly.”

After graduating from Wesleyan with a bachelor’s degree in 1973, Figueira enrolled in the medieval studies program at Cornell, earning a master’s degree in 1976 and a doctorate in 1980.

Before arriving at Lander, he taught as a graduate assistant at Cornell and then in numerous other places, including Trinity College/Washington; Emory University; the Institut für Englische Philologie, Bayerische-Julius-Maximilians-Universität in Würzburg, Germany; Southern Methodist University; Wright State University; and Saint Mary’s College of Minnesota.

The topic of Figueira’s dissertation was The Canon Law of Medieval Papal Legation, and the contributions to church law of the legates — emissaries of the pope — continue to be an area of interest. Legates were usually learned men from countries other than the one to which they were sent on church business. “At times they assumed very, very crucial roles in representing the pope,” he said.

Figueira identified his strong points as “medieval political history, church history, intellectual history. I’m not a social historian. So although I teach social history, I don’t have that much to do with teaching peasant life, agricultural productivity, things like that.”

*–continued next page*



A Lander history degree opens the door for graduates to pursue careers in law, journalism, politics, government administration, international relations, teaching, research, museum work and more.

Ordinarily, there's "not a huge groundswell" of interest in the medieval history courses he teaches, but there are exceptions to the rule. Several years ago, the Robin Hood course that he taught had one of the highest enrollments of any summer class at Lander. He was asked if the success of *Lord of the Rings* has increased the popularity of the Middle Ages as a subject area.

"To a certain extent, yes," he said, calling it "great literature of the twentieth century," and the author, J.R.R. Tolkien, "masterful. I'm very impressed with Tolkien," he said.

Life during the Middle Ages has sometimes been portrayed as a kind of golden age, but Figueira isn't buying it. He said that nostalgia for the Middle Ages is "something you find in literature. It's something you can understand if you're very, very rich," but most people were not.

"I ask my students, 'Have you ever been camping in winter in wet weather?' That's what it was like. You're happy to have your hut, because your hut is a lot more comfortable than your physical environment otherwise."

Sanitary conditions during the Middle Ages left something to be desired. "Probably the stench would kill me; I couldn't stand the smell. It was dirty," he said.

Figueira encourages the history majors in his classes to apply for jobs in museums, at historical sites and in similar settings. Getting certified to teach middle school or high school is another option. A degree in history can also lead to careers in law, journalism, politics, government administration, international relations, and all kinds of research, but he is not supportive of the idea of pursuing a Ph.D. in hopes of teaching medieval history on the college level, because the job market is very limited.

"Doing medieval history isn't going to work in this country, because it's not our local history. If we were in Britain, I'd say, 'do the Middle Ages,' because there are public history jobs with medieval sites here in Britain, but we're not in Britain."

While teaching what he estimates to have been about 8,000 students over the last 40 years, Figueira has somehow also found time to engage in all kinds of scholarly activity, editing 13 issues of *The Proceedings*, the journal published by the South Carolina Historical Association; and *Plenitude of Power: The Doctrines and Exercise of Authority in the Middle Ages: Essays in Memory of Robert Louis*



Pictured: Dr. Figueira poses with an example of a medieval sword. –contributed

*Benson*. He has also written innumerable articles, book chapters, reviews, conference papers, encyclopedia and dictionary entries.

He recently finished the manuscript for a new book, *The View from the Palmetto Grove: Essays in European History* from the South Carolina Historical Association.

For some time, he has been working on an edition of the writings of Richard de Mores, an English canon lawyer who taught law at the University of Bologna, in Italy, during the last decade of the twelfth century. The project involves comparing three parchment manuscripts written in Latin shorthand, which may represent de Mores's lecture notes. De Mores, he said, "is spoken about highly. He was recognized as an expert in law."

Figueira has also been busy working on several of his courses: The Crusades, The Italian Renaissance, Medieval Mentalities and Robin Hood.

He was asked if he ever feels a disconnect between the bygone world he spends so much time in and the world that surrounds him. "I'd say no. That was then, this is now. I know what happens in between, so I can sort of make the connection."

Figueira described the "confessional civilization" that existed in Europe during the Middle Ages as a world in which "everything was integrated with everything else," and he agreed that it "has a certain allure and attraction."

However, he said, "I don't lament or long for that old world, because that's not possible." ■



# CYBER SENTINELS

By Jeff Lagrone

## Lander's Cybersecurity Program is Preparing Students for the Emerging Challenges of the Digital World

On May 7, 2021, a cyber attack shut down a pipeline that supplies an estimated 45 percent of the fuel consumed on the East Coast.

Then, on May 30, the largest beef supplier in the world was hacked, closing meat plants across the U.S. and Australia.

Over the Fourth of July weekend, an attack against the information technology firm Kaseya affected hundreds of businesses worldwide, forcing 800 grocery stores to close in Sweden and leading to a ransom demand of \$70 million.

"The cycle for major cyber incidents has now become a matter of days," according to Emil Sayegh, president and CEO of Ntirety, a provider of comprehensive security programs. "If there was ever a time to get serious about cybersecurity, that time is now."

Lander University has been serious about cybersecurity for some time. In 2016, it began offering a minor in the subject, and in 2021, it began offering a major, approved by both the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) and the S.C. Commission on Higher Education (CHE).

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**Pictured this page: Lander Associate Professor of Computer Science Dr. Farha Ali, standing far left, and Cody Barr '20, now a TIAA information security engineer, work on a cybersecurity project during class in the spring of 2020. - Photos by Deb Nygro**

**Opposite page: Left, Assistant Professor of Computer Science Dr. El Basher Elmahdi, standing, instructs students in his cybersecurity class. Right, 2019 graduate Chris Martin now uses his Lander education to protect his alma mater as an information security consultant. - Photos by Laura B. Wood '16**



"I guarantee you we're interested in cybersecurity," said Professor of Physics Dr. David Slimmer, dean of the College of Science and Mathematics. The interest in cybersecurity, not only at Lander, but elsewhere, is being driven in part by the establishment of a cybersecurity center for the military at Fort Gordon.

"They're bringing all kinds of money, they're going to have wonderful internship opportunities, they're going to be looking for people to work there, all kinds of things," Slimmer said.

Working at Fort Gordon is far from the only place that cybersecurity graduates can find work. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the number of individuals employed within the cybersecurity sector is expected to grow by 31 percent through 2029, or by six times the national average, with many entry-level jobs paying nearly \$100,000 a year.

Banks, universities, health care organizations, school districts, government agencies and private corporations are all scrambling to protect their systems from hackers. "Even small companies are hiring people for cybersecurity," Slimmer said.

Lander's minor in cybersecurity allowed it to see "how popular it would be. We knew that we had something that people were interested in," he said.

Offering a full major in cybersecurity allows Lander to stay competitive with other colleges and universities in the region, Slimmer said. "We've got to grow, to be able to offer the variations and the differences that people want, and also the research. Research is going to be a key thing," he said.

One of the things that makes Lander's program unique is its cybersecurity major with a political science emphasis.

"This program is for the student who's more interested in the policies of [cybersecurity]. They'll be the person who says, 'Here's what we can do, here's how we'll fight this, here's our next step.'"

Offering the program online, as well as offering courses through Lander's suite at the University Center of Greenville (UCG) are goals, Slimmer said, to help reach nontraditional students. Lander also plans to partner with some of the area's technical schools, so students can start work on their degree elsewhere and finish up coursework at the University.

Slimmer credited Associate Professor of Computer Science Dr. Farha Ali, Professor of Computing Dr. Gilliean Lee, and Professor of Mathematics Dr. Chris Duncan for their work in getting the program off the ground.





"The three of them all played a part in writing the proposal, getting the background information, putting it together and getting it approved. Their proposal went through unanimously - it was highly successful," he said.

To help implement the new program, Lander hired Assistant Professor of Computing Dr. El Basher Elmahdi, a cybersecurity specialist with a Ph.D. from the University of Alabama at Huntsville.

"I was very impressed when I met him the first time. We knew that we wanted him," Slimmer said.

Elmahdi was excited for the opportunity to participate in developing the major, and enjoys "preparing students for the job market by providing a well-rounded foundation in all aspects of cybersecurity."

His enthusiasm is shared by students who have declared cybersecurity as their major.

"I love the cybersecurity major so far," said Ryan DeZutel, of Yardley, Pa. He said he chose it as his course of study because he "noticed a lot of cell phone networks are being hacked, and hackers are selling people's personal information online for bitcoin." He wants to protect their information, he said, "so people can feel safe."

It was Elizabeth Tibbs's father who steered her toward the major. "I have always been interested in doing something related to computers, but when my dad told me about cybersecurity, it really piqued my interest," said Tibbs, a resident of Pickens.

Slimmer said that "there's a ton of opportunities" for people with cybersecurity training, and recent Lander graduates who minored in the subject are proving him right. For example, 2019 graduate Chris Martin is an information security consultant at Lander.

"My job consists of advising people about the various information security policies at Lander, monitoring current cybersecurity trends, and making sure Lander's policies are consistent with state standards. I'm also responsible for recording and reporting security risks and breaches, and I train faculty and staff to be more aware of information security risks," he said.

Like Martin, 2020 graduate Cody Barr majored in computer information systems and minored in cybersecurity.

He began his career as a technical associate with TIAA Financial Services in Charlotte, but was recently promoted to information security engineer.

"I work on user behavior analytics," said Barr. "We model and monitor internal users and their actions within the company network. My team is responsible for preventing malicious insiders or compromised accounts from inflicting harm to company assets or leaking confidential client information. We monitor user actions that span the entire company, from human resources to accounting and other teams in cyber. We have to model all actions to separate normal behavior from signs of compromise."

He said, "My job is extremely rewarding, as it pushes me to learn something new every day." He hopes to eventually land a position as a penetration tester – a person hired by companies to test their networks and applications by hacking into them.

Lander did a good job of preparing him for a career, Barr said. "I gained a solid foundation of skills that I use daily, like networking, programming, forensics, and researching new products and technologies."

He said that competing against other schools as a member of Lander's cyberdefense team allowed him "to build practical experience with the skills I learned in the classroom before I ventured into the professional world, making my transition seamless."

Barr minored in cybersecurity because it was practical, but he completely fell in love with the subject.

"It's an exciting field," he said. ■



# HOMECOMING WEEK 2021

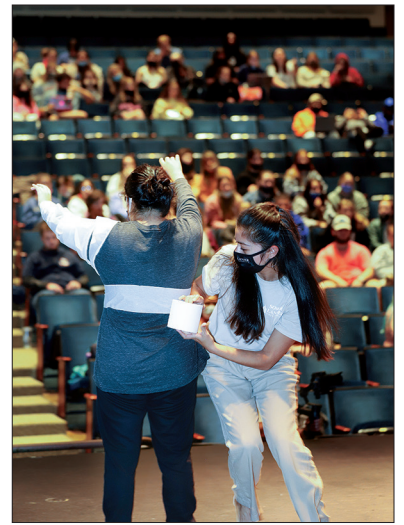
OCTOBER 25-30

## NIGHT OF THE LIVING BEARCAT

Lander Gets Into the Spooky  
Spirit as Homecoming  
Coincides with Halloween







**October brought a change to tradition** as organizers shifted Homecoming Week from the bitter cold of winter to the warmer and more colorful season of autumn. Spirited fun was the hallmark of the 2021 "Night of the Living Bearcat" Homecoming Week festivities.

**During the spell of activities,** students carved pumpkins, watched a scary movie, searched for hidden medallions, performed in a talent show, raised money for a community service project and dressed in masquerade.

**When competition points were tallied,** Phi Mu and Delta Sigma Phi won Gold Cup honors for large groups, while the Lander Anime-niacs won the Blue Cup for small groups.



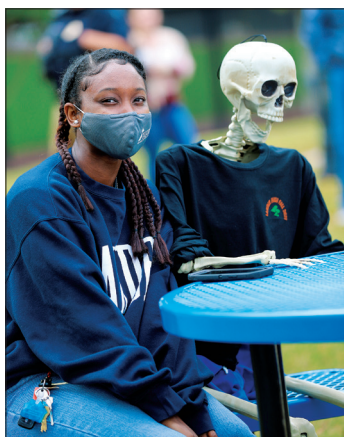
# HOMECOMING WEEK 2021

## OCTOBER 25-30

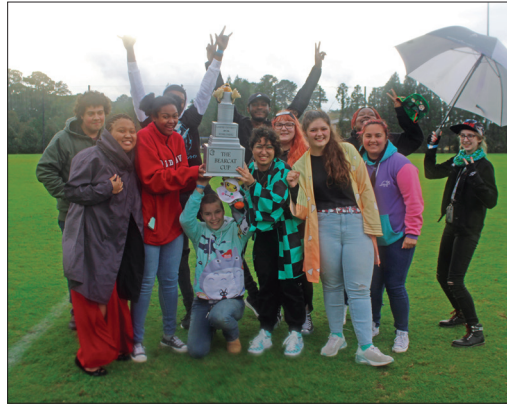
**Everyone gathered** on October 30th for the “Nightmare on Montague Street” tailgating, held at the Jeff May Sports Complex. Bearcat fans filled the stands to rally for the men’s soccer team as they played against Flagler, and cheer for the Homecoming Court after the game.

**Chase Maxwell**, a senior from Anderson, and **Raylyn Garner**, a senior from Laurens, were crowned as the 2021 King and Queen.

**Alumni reconnected** with former classmates during a golf outing, dined with their college deans in the dining hall, and reminisced about the good ol’ days as they grilled out with friends before the game.







**SAVE  
THE  
DATE**

**OCT 14-15, 2022**

Lander University's 2022 Homecoming Weekend is just around the corner! We hope you will mark your calendars and join us for this special weekend. Whether you come back every year, or haven't been back in a while, Fall Homecoming is the place for you! For information about Homecoming, visit [lander.edu/alumni](http://lander.edu/alumni).

 **20  
22  
HOME  
COMING  
WEEKEND**





# *Alumni* AWARD WINNERS

2021

*L*ander University honored six outstanding alumni for their dedication and service to their alma mater and their communities during the annual Alumni Awards Ceremony, held on Saturday, Oct. 30, 2021.

President Richard Cosentino called the recipients "excellent ambassadors of Lander who have demonstrated what is possible by earning a degree from Lander University."



## GRACE ILLER NORMAN AWARD

# LEAVING A LEGACY

### *Remembering Maurice Holloway '78*

By Graham Duncan

Students and alumni of Lander University often remark of how their education at Lander challenged them to live a life of service to others. Those who knew the late Maurice Holloway, a longtime member of the University's Board of Trustees and recipient of the 2021 Grace Iller Norman Award, affirm that he embodied the Lander spirit in his selfless devotion to his alma mater, his community and to the State of South Carolina.

After graduating from Greenwood High School in 1974, Holloway enrolled in then-Lander College, receiving his Bachelor of Science in 1978. In January of 2020, he retired from a career with AT&T (formerly Bell South) that spanned 42 years and included progressive managerial roles.

In 1988, the same year he was named Young Alumnus of the Year by the Lander Alumni Association, Holloway was called to serve as an inaugural member of Lander's newly formed Board of Trustees. Anne Walker '72, trustee and former chair who began serving with Maurice that same year, remembers her colleague for his continued loyalty to Lander, with a strong emphasis on the University's students.

"It was a pleasure to serve with Maurice, as he always wanted the best for Lander and her students," said Walker. "He regularly reminded our board that students were our top priority. Maurice was truly 'a Prince of a man,' who daily lived the Golden Rule. He is deeply missed."

Dr. Linda Dolny, another former chair of the board, agreed with Walker, adding that Holloway's graceful approach at board meetings, even at times of contention, was deeply appreciated. "His contagious smile and warm welcome were always readily available," said Dolny. "You could count on Maurice for an honest opinion delivered gently even when he disagreed. He knew how to respectfully disagree – a characteristic we all need in these days of strong opinions. He will be greatly missed by me and so many others."

Because of his faithful service to Lander, the Board of Trustees voted unanimously to posthumously appoint Holloway as trustee emeritus in May. His wife, Dr. Mary Holloway '78, was present at the meeting. "Maurice loved Lander," she said, adding that the couple's schedule often revolved around his commitment to serving Lander as a trustee and as an alum. "He especially loved this board. Lander meant so much to him."

Holloway is remembered as one of the most active members of the Alumni Association, attending multiple events every year. In 2000, the Holloways cemented their love for Lander through the establishment of the Maurice and Mary Holloway Endowed Scholarship, which is awarded



*Maurice Holloway*

**August 30, 1956 - September 16, 2020**

to an African American student from Greenwood or McCormick County and is renewable each year provided the recipient maintains a 3.0 GPA.

It was in recognition of this love of Lander that the Alumni Association decided to posthumously award Holloway the Grace Iller Norman Award, the association's highest honor.

"Maurice Holloway was a dedicated alumnus and adamant supporter of Lander University and its mission," said Mike Worley, vice president for University Advancement at Lander. "He led a life of service to our institution, and it is a fitting tribute to name him recipient of the Grace Iller Norman Award, to commemorate his many years of service and loyalty to Lander." ■

*Alumni and friends of Lander University who wish to help celebrate the life and legacy of Maurice Holloway are invited to make a contribution to the Maurice and Mary Holloway Endowed Scholarship via The Lander Foundation, 320 Stanley Ave., Greenwood, SC, 29649, or by visiting [lander.edu/give](http://lander.edu/give).*



# DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD RECIPIENTS

**Brad E. Rader '98**, a native of Simpsonville, graduated from Lander University with a Bachelor of Science in History, and served as a member of the Pi Kappa Alpha Honor Society and Kappa Sigma fraternity. Rader continued his studies at Widener University Commonwealth School of Law, in Harrisburg, Pa., where he earned his Juris Doctorate with a concentration in law and government.

Rader later accepted a position with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Office of General Counsel as an attorney, and thereafter as chief counsel in the HUD Richmond Field Office. He now serves as the deputy regional counsel in the Philadelphia Regional Office for the mid-Atlantic region.

During his 18 years of public service, Rader has served in many capacities, but his career is highlighted by his role as the general counsel's legal advisory expert on Opportunity Zones in support of the HUD Secretary's Chairmanship of the White House Opportunity and Revitalization Council. Rader's published work in the ABA's *Journal of Affordable Housing and Community Development Law* underlined the goals and promises of Opportunity Zones in local communities.

In recognition of his commitment, service and contribution to HUD's mission, Rader received the Secretary's Award for Excellence from former HUD Secretary Ben Carson. He was also one of 50 lawyers nationwide in 2020 to receive the inaugural Connect Media Lawyers in Real Estate Award, which honors those who have made an impact through their practice in real estate-related matters, and for contributions made as members of the industry and community. ■



**Ryan L. Peck '06** earned a scholarship to play soccer at Lander University and graduated cum laude with a business administration degree in one hand, and an NCAA Southeast Region championship ring on the other. In the classroom, he was a member of the Peach Belt Conference (PBC) Presidential Honor Roll, Dean's List honoree, Jean T. McFerrin Scholarship recipient, and College of Business Management/Marketing Award winner. During his four-year soccer career, Peck was named to the PBC All-Sportsmanship Team while also being elected the Student Athlete Advisory Committee President as a senior.

In addition to his Lander education, Peck earned his MBA in Sport Management from Florida Atlantic University (FAU). He followed his passion to establish a career in sports that would pave the way for future student-athletes in the same manner Lander provided him.

Peck has helped secure more than \$50 million in direct support for student-athletes thus far during his career. After starting with the athletics corporate sales team at FAU, he transitioned to the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, and netted seven sports marketing national awards, in addition to establishing multiple ticket sales and attendance records. Peck also enjoyed a three-year stint playing semi-professional soccer with the Chattanooga Football Club, helping the team reach the 2010 NPSL National Finals.

Rising rapidly through the ranks of intercollegiate athletics, Peck continued to the University of Denver, where he served as associate vice chancellor. He secured more than 50 new endowments and was part of a department that captured numerous I-AAA Learfield Sports Directors' Cups and NCAA National Championships.

Now as the deputy director of athletics at the University of North Texas, Peck has led the best fundraising years in department history and spearheaded record-breaking revenue growth across ticketing, licensing and sponsorships.

Peck and his wife, Emma, reside in Lantana, Texas. ■



# YOUNG ALUMNI AWARD RECIPIENTS



## Lonnie Nesbitt '07

earned his Bachelor of Arts in Mass Communications from Lander, before participating in the Walt Disney World College Program. At the completion of the program, he remained in Florida to pursue a full-time career within Disney.

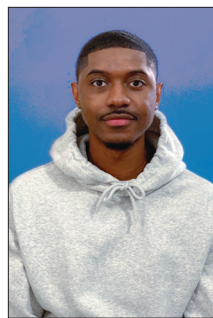
During his tenure at Disney, he has held roles in operations, merchandise, guest relations, payroll,

guest services and project management. He is currently employed with Walt Disney World Resort, most recently working as a labor administrator for the Disney Vacation Club.

As a singer, living in Florida provides Nesbitt with the opportunity to serve others through the arts with Central Florida Community Arts. There, he has had the chance to record songs, sing with an elite group of professionals, and partner with countless organizations to bring joy to the Orlando area during the holidays, as well as bring acknowledgment to the arts.

Nesbitt also recently launched a business, Health Fitness Happiness, where he focuses on empowering young adults to embrace their value by strengthening themselves from inside out, using fitness training and life coaching. He also became a Certified Love Advocate, in which he helps spread love by promoting random acts of kindness, with the focus on giving others hope that their journey is not over. Nesbitt has served in many areas within his church and community, and he continues to support the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., which he joined in 2006.

Nesbitt is happily married to his wife, Zakiya, whom he met at Disney; and is the father of two sons, Lonnie III and Jeremiah. ■



**Kevin Campbell Jr. '14** earned a Bachelor of Science in Visual Arts with graphic design emphasis at Lander, where he was also a member of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. As part of his service, he helped coordinate monthly programs involving students and created fundraisers to benefit charity, while also completing community service projects on campus.

After graduating, Campbell began his career at WIS-TV News as a motion designer.

Coincidentally, the morning of his interview, he welcomed his son into the world with his college sweetheart, and now wife, Shaniqua.

During his time with WIS-TV, he became a member of the Graphic Communications Committee at the Applied Technology Education Campus (ATEC) in Camden. This committee consisted of a group of design professionals who would assist the instructor with developing curriculum for the graphic communications program, based on what students might experience in the field.

After his tenure at WIS-TV, Campbell began working with the Oklahoma City Thunder as a motion graphics animator in the video production department. While there, he became more advanced in his work by using 3D design and learning how to shoot and edit video.

After an exciting couple of years with the team, he thought it was time to follow his passion in apparel and fashion. Campbell is now a designer at The Whitaker Grp, which was named Retailer of the Year in the Footwear News Achievement Awards for 2020. The Whitaker Grp is an umbrella company for four retail banners: A Ma Maniere, Social Status, APB, and Prosper. Campbell leads graphic design across apparel, product, footwear and collaborations. ■



**Laura Brown Wood '16** is a native of Laurens and earned her Bachelor of Science in Visual Arts from Lander University, with an emphasis in graphic design.

As a student, she was highly involved in the Baptist Collegiate Ministry, the Presidential Ambassadors Program, and served as secretary on the charter chapter for Lander's Habitat for Humanity.

Wood is now the staff photographer for Lander's Office of University Relations and Publications. In that role, she creates photographic artwork for printed marketing materials, the University magazine, website, news releases and social media platforms. Wood enjoys that her position at Lander enables her to interact with the entire University community as she documents the achievements of students, employees and alumni.

One of her roles is scheduling and taking directory portraits for all full-time employees. It is a simple yet rewarding task, as it gives Wood the opportunity to learn all employees by name and spend time getting to know them. Wood formerly served as communications committee chair of Lander's Staff Senate and enjoyed having the opportunity to represent and advocate for her fellow Lander employees.

Along with her full-time photography position at Lander, Wood manages her personal photography business specializing in portraits and events. For the past six years, she has documented events for Uptown Greenwood, which has grown her love for the Greenwood community. ■



# Class Notes

Class Notes are compiled by Debbie Dill, assistant director of Alumni Engagement. Please mail items for Class Notes to Alumni Engagement, CPO Box 6004, Lander University, 320 Stanley Ave., Greenwood, S.C. 29649, or email items to [alumni@lander.edu](mailto:alumni@lander.edu).

## '80s

**Melanie Gilmer Johnson '81** retired from teaching after 28 years, serving for the past 13 years at Crescent High School.

**George Starnes '81** generously established an endowed chair for the deanship for the University's College of Business in January 2020.

**Melissa Bane '83** became an Employee Owner of the firm Greenwood Capital on October 1, 2020, and is now in her ninth year as a member of the team.

**Gary Adamo '88** retired in May of 2020 after 25 years of practicing law. He is now an adjunct criminal justice professor at Spring Arbor University.

## '90s

**Janette Miller '90** was named principal of Woodfields Elementary School in Greenwood, to begin in the 2021-22 school year. Janette was previously the assistant principal at Woodfields.

**Stephan Moyon '92** was appointed President of VELUX America, effective January 1, 2020. Stephan also serves as VP of The Lander Foundation Board.

**Christie Ware Bryan '92, M'97** was named Teacher of the Year for the Lincoln County School District in October of 2019. Christie resides in Lincolnton, Ga., and has been teaching 29 years.

**Phyllis Zuehlke '93** received the "Women of Excellence Award" in March of 2020 by the Greenwood Chamber of Commerce.

**Stacey W. Bevill '95**, owner of Golden Career Strategies in Spartanburg, earned the designation of APMG International

Certified Local Change Agent (CLCA) in July 2021.

**Mikelle Porter '96** received the "Chairman's Award" from the Greater Greer Chamber of Commerce on January 23, 2020. Mikelle has been active with the chamber since 2005 and currently sits on their Leadership Development Council.

**Brad Rader '98** was named as a Lander University Distinguished Alumnus in 2020 and was appointed as the Deputy Regional Counsel for Region III in the Philadelphia Regional Office of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in December 2019.

**Lori O'Shields Shaw '99** earned her Master of Social Work from Simmons University in 2020.

**Tina Hastings Tolson '99** was named Deputy Director of the Burton Center in January 2020. Tina has been employed with Burton Center for 20 years.

## TAKING THE REINS

### Suzann Coutts Steps In As Executive Director of the Lander University Alumni Association

In 2021, Lander welcomed Suzann Coutts to Greenwood as the new executive director of the Lander University Alumni Association. Hailing from Texas, she brings a track record of 13 years of leadership experience and building programs in similar-sized associations.

Coutts views her role as the "chief engagement officer" within the Lander University Alumni Association and University Advancement. She said that some of her goals "include increasing strategic engagement opportunities for our Alumni Association Board of Directors, and a renewed focus on regional alumni engagement efforts." She also envisions building a robust student engagement and philanthropy education program through the existing Student Alumni Association.

Previously, Coutts served as the director for Alumni Relations at McMurry University in Abilene, Texas, for more than seven years. At McMurry she led all alumni engagement initiatives including the management of volunteer boards, the university alumni awards program, student philanthropy education and alumni/student mentoring.

Prior to her role at McMurry University, she was the assistant director for Alumni Relations at Clarkson University in Potsdam, N.Y., where her



responsibilities included recruiting, training and supporting more than 20 regional chapter volunteers.

Coutts has forged a reputation as a relationship builder during her 15 years in higher education, with a strong foundation in communication and a commitment to service. She has been a volunteer and active in the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE), a global, nonprofit organization dedicated to educational advancement, focusing on areas such as alumni relations, communications, development, marketing and advancement services.

She feels a passion for building community and playing a role in helping make higher education possible for students of today, and of the future. She said she considers herself fortunate to be among those whose work "brings them great joy." ■



## '00s

**Tamara Cox '00**, Media Specialist at Wren High School in Anderson, was selected as a South Carolina Honor Roll Teacher, one of five finalists for the 2020 South Carolina Teacher of the Year. In 2019, she was also one of ten recipients nationwide of the I Love My Librarian Award, sponsored by the American Library Association, the New York Public Library and *The New York Times*.

**Scott Kates '00** accepted a position with ShipCo Transport Inc. as national operations manager, LCL Imports U.S., in January 2020.

**Alice Hodges '00** received the "Women of Excellence Award" in March of 2020 by the Greenwood Chamber of Commerce.

**William "Gray" Ellenberg '01**, senior vice president-investment officer, Wells Fargo Advisors in Greenwood, was recognized as a premier advisor by Wells Fargo Advisors in April 2021.

**Joey Hurt '01** joined property management group NHE, Inc., in 2014 and was named controller in July 2020.

**Kristen Sargent Hopkins '03** was named principal of Lakeview Elementary, Greenwood, beginning in the 2021-22 school year. She has been an educator for 18 years, and recently served as assistant principal at Mays Elementary School.

**Wendy Queen '03** was named to *Chemical & Engineering News'* prestigious Talented 12 Class of 2020.

**Derek Raper '03**, joined South State Bank in November 2019 as middle market banker-Midlands after 14 years with Wells Fargo.

**Hannah Dover '04** received the "Women of Excellence Award" in March of 2020 by the Greenwood Chamber of Commerce.

**Rorie Bradley '06** earned his Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) from Concordia University-Portland in July 2019. He serves as the director of special populations and disabilities for Central Georgia Technical College in Warner Robins, Ga.

**Cherry Smith '06** published her second book, *Sleepwalk Jones*, on July 11, 2019. Her first book, *Juniper Jupiter: World's Greatest Juggler*, was published in 2018.

**DeAndra Keeter '07** published a book in June 2021 titled, *The Time I Spent with You*. The book was written to help children cope with loss.

**LaShonda Chiles '08** was named head coach for Greenwood High School women's basketball.

## '10s

**Dr. Tashinga Musonza '10** was presented the 2019 Golden Scalpel Award by the Department of Emergency Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine.

**Rachel Walden '10** received Vanderbilt University's School of Nursing Friend of Nursing Award in October 2020. Rachel is the instruction librarian and health sciences informationist in the university's Eskind Biomedical Library.

**Kenneth Roach '13** was named the Carolinas Association of Registrars and Admissions Officers (CACRAO) vice president for admissions for South Carolina in January 2020. He is the associate director for freshmen and transfer students with Lander University's Admissions Office.

**Rhett Sapough '13** joined Millsaps College in October 2020 as their director of admission.

**Mary Katherine Pegram Revels '14** accepted a position with 919 Marketing as an account coordinator.

**Austin Wilson '15** won a national title with the Iredell Warriors in the AA United States Football Alliance in January 2021.

**Jonah Johnson '16** earned his M. Ed. in Educational Leadership from the American College of Education in Indiana.

## WEDDINGS

**Sarah Kendall O'Quinn '19** married Matthew Robinson on June 28, 2019. The couple resides in Greenwood.

**Breanna Butler '19** married **Graham Duncan '17** on Oct. 26, 2019. Breanna is an English teacher at Emerald High School, and Graham works for Lander University as a staff writer with University Relations

and an adjunct English instructor. The couple resides in Greenwood.

**Catherine Sayre '16** married Scott Cassell II on March 30, 2018, in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic. Catherine is a real estate agent and owner of Cassell Proprieties, LLC. The couple resides in Easley.

**Amanda Wagoner '07** married Bob Rathgeber on October 12, 2019. Amanda is a veterinary surgeon at VCA Animal Specialty Center of S.C. The couple resides in Columbia.

**Langley Minton '10** married Larry Richardson Jr. on March 28, 2020. Langley is employed by Upper Savannah Council of Governments. The couple resides in Greenwood.

**Julia Minton '13** married William Akers III on January 9, 2021. The couple resides in Ninety Six.

**Sabrina Cheek '14** married Stephen Williams on April 3, 2021. Sabrina is a social studies teacher at Fairfield Central High School in Winnsboro.

**Hillary Coursey '17** married **Charles Childress III '18** on May 29, 2021. Hillary is the administrative assistant to the principal at Greenwood High School. The couple resides in Greenwood.

**Kerri Jones '10** married Will Thompson Jr. on June 12, 2021. Kerri is employed by Harley Funeral Home and Crematory and Will is employed by Lander University's Physical Plant.

## BIRTHS

**Michael '08 and Amber Jenkins Young '09** welcomed daughter Miriam Grace on April 17, 2019. Miriam joined big brothers Hudson and Grant.

**Mallory Brown Cameron '13 and Michael Cameron '14** welcomed daughter Kennedy Noel on December 17, 2019. Kennedy joined big brother Ryland.

**Madison Kubal Cassell '14 and Waymon Cassell '11** welcomed daughter Magnolia Campbell on February 26, 2020. Magnolia joined big sister Evelyn Grace.

**Anna Finkbeiner Gowan '13 and Will Gowan '15** welcomed son William



Herschel Gowan IV on March 6, 2020. Proud family members include grandparents **Kat Laye Finkbeiner '71** and Erwin Finkbeiner; and aunt **Katie Finkbeiner Engram '09** and uncle **Joseph Engram '07**.

**Melissa Tellin Greenlee '05** and Tyler Greenlee welcomed son Alexander Hauk on March 8, 2020. Alexander joined big sister AnnTellin.

**Nina Bonetti Singh '14 and Sym Singh '07** welcomed daughter Isabella Grace Kaur on March 9, 2020. Isabella joined big brothers Bryse and Jack.

**Lindsay Blanton Colvin '13** and Josh Colvin welcomed daughter Charlotte Mackenzie on July 31, 2020.

**Ashley Stathas White '06** and Thomas White welcomed daughter Andi Nicole on November 9, 2020. Andi joined big sister Charley Mae.

**Kaylee Jo Fowler Peppers '17, M'19** and TJ Peppers welcomed son Troy Fowler on November 12, 2020.

**Erin Garland Nodine '14 and Sonny Nodine '16** welcomed daughter Hastings Carolina on April 20, 2021.

**Ayrn Sexton Gilstrap '15** and Matthew Gilstrap welcomed daughter Hendrix Denise on May 9, 2021.

**Cody Brock '13 and Liz Jones Brock '13** welcomed son Brody Lane May 26, 2021. Brody joined big sister Elly Rae.

**Don Durden '12** and Katherine Durden welcomed son Jackson Davis on June 22, 2021. Jackson joined big brothers Luke and Ryan.

## IN MEMORIAM

**Florence Brown Haddon '39** of Due West died March 19, 2020.

**Elizabeth Louisa Coker Tyler '40** of Florence died June 24, 2019.

**Irma Boyd Poole '41** of Greenwood died April 21, 2021.

**Helen Watkins Harrison '43** of Greenwood died January 5, 2020.

**Gloria Louise Wicker '44** of Mount Pleasant died January 10, 2020.

**Dorothy "Dot" Parkman Coleman '45** of Saluda died April 14, 2021.

**Myra Young Drinkard Stroud '45** of Greenwood died July 22, 2020.

**Sara Goodyear Sutton '45** of Greenwood died September 11, 2020.

**Laler Horne Palmer '46** of Greenwood died December 20, 2020.

**Vivian Canfield Teasley '46** of Greenville died September 11, 2020.

**Nancy Atkins Hannah '48** of Abbeville died August 17, 2020.

**Thelma Chiles Clark '49** of Columbia died May 5, 2020.

**Hilda Creed Marshall '49** of Graniteville died May 12, 2020.

**Flora Broome Blum Files '50** of Greenwood died March 2, 2020.

**Mary Clyde Collier Summers '51** of Walterboro died April 12, 2020.

**Peggy Stribling Seawright '53** of Honea Path died November 11, 2020.

**Jean Still Tommie '53** of Greenwood died August 13, 2020.

**Ann Byrd Herd Bowen '54** of Arlington died April 18, 2020.

**Helen Mahon Hall '55** of Laurens died February 11, 2021.

**Patricia "Patsy" Hammond Powell '55** of Lincolnton, Ga., died December 21, 2020.

**Perryne Willis Williamson '55** of Greenwood died May 23, 2020.

**Julia Tolbert Morrison '56** of Ware Shoals died July 7, 2020.

**Lula May Parkman '57** of Saluda died December 2, 2019.

**Verna Cooper Jenkins '58** of Columbia died June 20, 2020.

**Anita Gorman McGarity '58** of Elberton, Ga., died March 25, 2021.

**M. Vivian Dove Sprouse '60** of Fort Mill died December 19, 2020.

**Linda Graham Bowers '62** of Greenwood died April 29, 2021.

**Elsie "Lee" Craig '62** of Sumter died May 25, 2021.

**Jane Chandler Rush '63** of Troy died August 20, 2020.

**Glenn Carlisle Banks '64** of Newport News, Va., died March 16, 2021.

**Calvin L. Bostic '64** of Greer died August 31, 2019.

**Latitia "Tisha" Gray Montgomery '64** of Simpsonville died January 31, 2021.

**John E. Bartley '66** of Atlanta, Ga., died May 6, 2021.

**Jane Culbertson Harrison '66** of Lexington died July 28, 2020.

**Virginia young Robinson '66** of Greenwood died March 3, 2021.

**Bonnie Ross Campbell '67** of Mount Pleasant died May 10, 2021.

**Bennie Killingsworth Ridgeway Dietrichsen '67** of Newberry died November 19, 2019.

**Gloria Adams Bearden '68** of Ninety Six died November 19, 2019.

**Alison Hasty DiRocca '68** of Greenwood died March 15, 2021.

**James "Jim" C. Rush, Jr. '68** of McCormick died January 31, 2021.

**Mary Webb Hamrick '69** of Inman died September 29, 2019.

**Walter M. Moore '69** of Greenwood died June 27, 2020.

**Jeannette Stubbs Altman '72** of Dillon died July 30, 2020.

**Don W. Clark '72** of Lexington died January 25, 2020.

**E. Ray Tackett '72** of Myrtle Beach died May 14, 2021.

**Hazel Ann Tisdale '72** of Greenville died August 12, 2019.

**Elois Chappell Jones '73** of Greenwood died March 21, 2021.

*Class Notes Continues on pg. 73*



BY KAREN PETIT



## FROM SOUTH CAROLINA TO “THE LAST FRONTIER,” MARCUS BROWN '15 IS COMMITTED TO SERVICE

IT MAY BE THE NICKNAME FOR THE NATION'S 49TH STATE, BUT ALASKA IS NOW HOME FOR LANDER UNIVERSITY ALUMNUS MARCUS BROWN.

Brown is serving his country in the very place once known as “Seward’s Folly” – a name given to the 1867 transaction that U.S. Secretary of State William Henry Seward made to purchase the land from Russia.

“It’s a far piece,” as they say back in South Carolina, from where Brown was born and raised in Camden. Today, more than 4,200 miles separate Brown from his family and friends.

A graduate of Camden High School, Brown earned a bachelor’s degree in business administration in 2015 from Lander, where he was a member of the Highlander Battalion ROTC program.

He enlisted in the U.S. Army on March 19, 2012, while enrolled at Lander. “I took the 2012-13 school year off to complete basic combat training and advanced individual training,” said Brown. “I originally enlisted in the S.C. National Guard before switching to active duty in 2017.”

The decision to dedicate his life to military service wasn’t difficult, Brown said.

Two uncles had served in the military. He decided to join “because I saw all the benefits it (the Army) could offer, along with the opportunity to do something bigger than myself.”

Brown’s desire to serve others was evident before he graduated from Lander. During

his college days, Lander friends and staff recognized Brown for his selfless actions and willingness to help others. When he was nominated for the Samuel Lander Man of the Year award in 2014 – an honor which he received – the nomination recognized Brown for his commitment “to put himself before others,” as evidenced by his service with the National Guard and community work with afterschool programs for young people.

The nomination also went further to say that Brown “sacrifices his time by giving a helping hand to the elderly and donating time at the soup kitchen ... he isn’t just a great person – he also has a great heart.”

In addition to his volunteerism, Brown was a resident assistant on campus and a member of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc., an international organization that promotes service.

Brown got to know Lander when a neighbor was attending a freshman orientation session on campus. “I fell in love with the campus,” Brown said. “Greenwood and the Lander campus gave me an at-home feeling that I could not pass up on.”

He said his favorite memories from Lander were “going to the café/student center between classes and the people I met while there.”

Even today, “I can truly say that the people I met at Lander are definitely family,” he said. “I call Lander ‘the hidden gem’ of colleges in the state of South Carolina.”

Stationed in Fort Wainwright, Alaska, Brown has earned the rank of captain and is a company commander. Fort Wainwright, the “Home of the Arctic Warriors,” is located in

the central interior area of Alaska. For those less familiar with Alaska’s geography, the city of Fairbanks is located to the west, and the city of North Pole is to the southeast.

Brown and his wife, Kayla, a 2015 Lander graduate, are parents to Marcus Jr., 4, and welcomed a daughter, Hazley, in February. “Alaska has been an adjustment for my family and me, but at the same time the beauty of the state has been absolutely breathtaking,” he said.

The family has had the opportunity to view the northern lights, also known as the aurora borealis, at night. “The lights actually appeared to dance in the night sky. On the night we watched, the lights were green, but they also can be pink and blue,” he said.

In addition to working out at the gym, Brown said he enjoys learning something new about Alaska every day. “I love that Alaska is so scenic and peaceful, which is unlike any other place I’ve been,” he said.

He is looking ahead to making the military his long-term career and hopes that he eventually can be stationed back on the East Coast. “I haven’t been uprooted. I still have one foot in South Carolina, and one foot in Alaska,” he said.

No doubt, Brown’s family and friends will be glad to have the Army leader with the contagious smile and big heart plant both feet back on familiar ground one day.

And who knows? In the meantime, he may have a chance to visit that far off North Pole before returning home. ■



# 'RIGHT PATH'

## TAKES LEON LOTT '16 TO POSTS IN LAW ENFORCEMENT, EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

By Karen Petit

*It may surprise some that the 2021 National Sheriff of the Year discovered his future career after finding himself on the other side of the law at age 16.*

### *His crime? Egging police cars.*

The arrest, a half century ago, and a subsequent diversion program helped the young Leon Lott – now the Richland County, S.C., sheriff for more than 26 years – discover that he “wanted to help guide others along the path that I had been given: the right path and a second chance to do what I knew to be right.”

The “right path,” which spans a 40-year law enforcement career for Lott, ultimately led to the National Sheriffs’ Association (NSA) award, presented last June at a ceremony in Arizona. Lott is the Palmetto State’s first sheriff to receive the NSA’s Ferris E. Lucas Award, which recognizes a sheriff for contributions to improve the Office of Sheriff at local, state and national levels.

The path also led him to Lander University for a teaching post and, ultimately, a master’s degree.

“However we want to refer to the profession – policing, law enforcement, peace officer,

cops – it is all about helping people. That’s our priority mission. It should be everyone’s mission to help others,” said Lott, whose determined, but humble, demeanor has served him well in his profession and has garnered the admiration of national and international law enforcement leaders.

A long-time advocate for higher education, Lott was an adjunct professor teaching community policing and media relations at Lander when the University began its master’s program in Emergency Management. “That fact, as well as my desire to learn more in that field, created the perfect opportunity for me.”

The events of 9/11 and various natural disasters already had made him realize “that my job required far more of me as an emergency response leader than just being a cop,” he said. “I knew that I needed to be knowledgeable on emergency management issues.”

The program, from which Lott earned his master’s degree in 2016, also was a logical choice because of his service with the S.C. State Guard. Promoted in 2018 to brigadier general, commander of the State Guard, Lott manages the state’s response to natural disasters, in addition to his duties as sheriff.

“In those two capacities, I learned that every aspect of the Lander program proved to be invaluable. For example, while I was in the program, South Carolina experienced the 1,000-year flood in 2015,” he said. “What I had learned – and was learning in the program – proved to have tremendous practical application.” Without the education he received from Lander, “I would not, in my opinion, have been adequately prepared to respond professionally as either commander or sheriff,” he said.

The S.C. State Guard is an all-volunteer state defense force, comprising teams of experienced engineers, medical and legal professionals, law enforcement officers, communications experts, prior military

members and other professionals. The guard is a legislatively mandated state military force, organized under the S.C. Military Department, and also encompasses the S.C. Army National Guard, S.C. Air National Guard, and S.C. Emergency Division.

“Born of the state’s 1st Provincial Militia in 1670, we are easily one of the oldest military organizations in the United States,” he said. “Like traditional militia forces, which have served as the genesis of all American armed forces since the founding of this nation, all of our volunteers are unpaid professionals, fully trained and fully equipped to respond to any natural or man-made disasters which threaten our state and its citizens.”

Law enforcement officers, military personnel and other first responders often are the “go-to” people in circumstances beyond their usual scope of duty. Lott said Lander’s Emergency Management program “educates public safety leaders and practitioners in how we are to work together effectively, and to understand the various roles of all involved.”

“Over the years, we have learned that our greatest enemy is, and has been, Mother Nature. Every day somewhere across North America, a natural disaster occurs,” Lott said. “As public safety professionals, we must be prepared to respond to these disasters as a team. Our individual expertise must be expanded to cross the various public safety responses needed. No longer does one agency respond: All public safety disciplines must respond as a coordinated and cohesive team.”

Such committed leadership is a cornerstone of the NSA award, which Lott said is “a recognition for the great team at the Richland County Sheriff’s Department, as well as the S.C. State Guard and more broadly the State of South Carolina.”

The S.C. Sheriffs’ Association named Lott the 2021 Sheriff of the Year, the second time that he has received the state award. ■



Leon Lott '16, left, Sheriff of Richland County, is pictured with Lisa Broderick, executive director of Police2Peace.



**Ira Preston Meeks '74** of Centralia, Wash., died May 6, 2020.

**Phyllis Dianne Davenport '75** of Greenwood died January 30, 2021.

**Barbara Ervin Stewart '75, '94** of Greenwood died March 2, 2021.

**Richard C. Goodenough '76** of Beaufort died August 24, 2020.

**Milam "Mike" F. Williams '76** of Greenwood died July 22, 2020.

**Rebecca Hembree Fasciano '77** of Bluffton died May 28, 2021.

**R. Joy Anthony Gravley '77, M'86** of Greenwood died August 20, 2020.

**Howard G. Jones '77** of Ware Shoals died July 16, 2020.

**Wynette Stewart Leake '77** of Greenwood died August 4, 2020.

**Emma Roseanne "Rosie" Christie '78** of Sumter died June 14, 2020.

**Maurice Holloway '78** of Columbia died September 16, 2020.

**Ron E. Minton '78** of Greenwood died July 17, 2020.

**Susan Huff Rush '79** of Stone Mountain, Ga., died March 9, 2020.

**Charles H. West '79** of Belton died July 22, 2020.

**George "Chip" Galphin III '80** of Hodges died November 11, 2019.

**Thomas H. Padgett '80** of Pickens died April 26, 2021.

**Tamelia "Tammy" A. Harper '81** of Johns Creek, Ga., died October 28, 2020.

**Victor R. Irby '81** of Greenwood died November 15, 2019.

**Betty Atkison Scott '81** of Greenwood died April 14, 2021.

**Kevin E. Boiter '83** of Laurens died March 8, 2021.

**Steve T. Drummond '83** of Greenwood died April 14, 2021.

**Cheryl Faulkner Bell '84, '95** of Abbeville died November 17, 2020.

**Stan W. Turner '84** of Ninety Six died August 20, 2020.

**James "Jim" A. Lander '86** of Newberry died October 29, 2020.

**Mary Jane McAllister '87** of Donalds died July 2, 2020.

**Alma Renee Epting '88** of Little Mountain died June 7, 2020.

**Michele Gentry Freeman '88** of Clinton died March 9, 2020.

**Ronald "Ronny" L. Davis '90** of Jacksonville, Fla., died October 22, 2020.

**Mark G. Lorentz '91** of Greenwood died March 7, 2020.

**April Schnupper Medford '92** of Greenwood died April 13, 2021.

**Rev. Bernard White '92** of Greenwood died July 31, 2020.

**Lillie Williams Brown '93** of Greenwood died April 20, 2021.

**Fred O. Deal '94** of Greenwood died October 31, 2020.

**Renee Howard Shiflet '94, '04** of Greenwood died May 18, 2020.

**Tameka Y. Bell '99** of Irmo died January 7, 2021.

**Wendy Watt Martin '03** of Abbeville died January 30, 2020.

**Christopher B. Moore '08, M'09** of Greenwood died April 3, 2021.

**Brianna Ashley Surrento '19** of Long Beach, Miss., died March 23, 2020. ■

## 1911 CLASS RING SHINES A LIGHT ON THE UNIVERSITY'S LONG HISTORY

Take a look at this remarkable class ring from a member of the Class of '11 ... the Class of 1911, that is! Lander University was honored to receive this recent gift from Dibble Cooper, a resident of Greenwood and member of the legendary Swingin' Medallions. The class ring originally belonged to Cooper's grandmother, and currently holds the record at Lander as the oldest class ring known to the University. Cooper also generously donated his grandmother's diploma, and both artifacts are currently on display in the Office of the President at Lander University.

*Photo by Laura B. Wood '16*







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## CLINCHING THE CHAMPIONSHIP



This spring, Lander's Zeth Brower, pictured, became the wrestling program's first All-American and National Champion, after clinching the title at the NCAA Division II Wrestling Championships in St. Louis, Mo. Brower, a red-shirt sophomore, received the M.V. Wells Award, given annually to the Lander Male Athlete of the Year, and was also named the South Atlantic Conference Carolinas Wrestler of the Year and the Super Region II Wrestler of the Year.

*Read more about his performance and other Bearcat accolades on page 40 of this issue of Lander Magazine.*