

GCU MAGAZINE

VOLUME 22 FALL 2024

Celebrating the Class of **2024**



A PUBLICATION OF
GEORGIAN COURT UNIVERSITY

GCU MAGAZINE

VOLUME 22 FALL 2024

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Georgian Court University Magazine is published by the Office of Institutional Advancement and our partners at Princeton Strategic Communications (PSC). Phone: 732-987-2232 • E-mail: advancement@georgian.edu

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

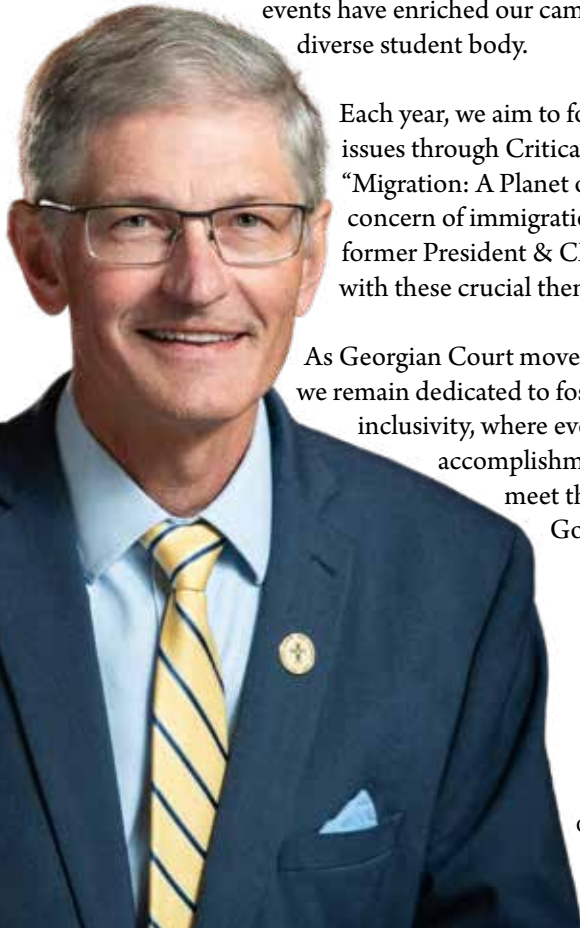
As we turn the pages of another exciting chapter at Georgian Court University, it is with immense pride that we reflect on the past year's remarkable stories and achievements. Our community continues to demonstrate a shared commitment to purposeful learning, academic excellence, and service, exemplifying the values that define our institution.

First and foremost, we celebrate the Class of 2024, whose extraordinary journey exemplifies the spirit and determination of Georgian Court. These graduates have navigated challenges with unwavering determination, embraced new experiences with open hearts, and enriched the fabric of our campus community (p. 6). Their stories of resilience and success reflect the strength of the support systems provided by GCU, and we are confident they will continue to thrive in their future endeavors.

As demand for skilled nurses continues to grow, we empower individuals to change their careers and enter the nursing field through our accelerated and direct-entry nursing programs (p. 10). These programs break down traditional barriers and prepare students from diverse academic backgrounds to meet the evolving needs of their communities.

This year, we lost a beloved and cherished member of our community. Dr. Louise Wootton (1964-2024) left an indelible mark on Georgian Court as a respected educator, dedicated researcher, and inspiring mentor (p. 14). She dedicated 27 years to enriching the lives of our students while passionately advocating for environmental stewardship, sustainability initiatives, and animal welfare. Her legacy of inspiration, compassion, and advocacy will continue to resonate within our community and beyond.

Our vibrant campus spirit is reflected in the myriad activities hosted by the Office of Student Life this past year (p. 16). From a fall festival to a speakeasy event, student appreciation day, and a luau, these events have enriched our campus culture and provided a sense of belonging to our diverse student body.



Each year, we aim to foster dialogue and inspire solutions to contemporary issues through Critical Concerns Week (p. 25). This year's theme, "Migration: A Planet on the Move," focused on the Sisters of Mercy critical concern of immigration. Dr. Carolyn Y. Woo, our keynote speaker and former President & CEO of Catholic Relief Services, inspired us to engage with these crucial themes.

As Georgian Court moves into another year of growth and exploration, we remain dedicated to fostering a community of learning, compassion, and inclusivity, where everyone can thrive and achieve their full potential. Our accomplishments from the past year will be our guiding light as we meet the challenges that lie ahead—together.

Go Lions!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joseph R. Marbach". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Joseph R. Marbach, Ph.D.
President

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CELEBRATING THE CLASS OF 2024:

TRIUMPHS OF RESILIENCE, ACHIEVEMENT, AND SUPPORT



On May 9th, 2024, Georgian Court's campus was aglow with pride and a sense of achievement as the smiles of 494 graduates and the well-wishing of their families and friends radiated across campus.

Throughout their time at Georgian Court, our 2024 graduates have overcome challenges with unwavering determination, embraced new experiences with open hearts, and enriched the fabric of our campus community. We are honored to be part of their stories and blessed to have them as part of ours.

RESILIENCE: OVERCOMING ADVERSITY TO ACCOMPLISH OUR GOALS

While navigating challenges from being first-generation students to managing family illnesses and responsibilities and working full-time, three Georgian Court students found their stride as students, exemplifying resilience in the face of adversity.



Reflecting on her undergraduate journey, during which she managed the demands of nursing school and clinical and her Navy Reserve responsibilities, Laura UmanaSolano recalled, "With some family members falling ill, it weighed heavily on me. My first two semesters were challenging." Persevering through the finish line, Laura now aspires to combine her patriotism and passion for healthcare with a career in the Naval Reserve Nursing Corps.



Melissa Binoya has been on a journey to better her life – and her children's lives – since she left high school to raise her daughter at fifteen. Overcoming homelessness and uncertainties about her academic future, Melissa has completed a 4+1 Master's in Integrative Health. "Georgian Court was my stepping-stone to my higher purpose in life. It's all still a work in progress, just like me, but I'm currently



exploring naturopathic medicine doctorate programs with the dream of opening my own integrative practice in New Jersey.”



A first-generation student, Venecia Munoz excelled in her studies toward a bachelor’s in Health Profession Studies while juggling two full-time jobs to support her parents. Sharing her resilience and determination with other first-generation students, Venecia

advised, “It’s okay to need help, and it’s not going to be easy. Don’t underestimate the help you can get and accept all the help you are offered.”

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE: PURSUING KNOWLEDGE TO INCREASE IMPACT

The intelligence of GCU students goes without question, with international accolades and awards regularly bestowed upon them. Even when their educational journeys became challenging, five Class of 2024 graduates proved perseverance leads to incredible achievements.

Lillyann Vogel caught a glimpse of her future as she cheered from the crowd during her mother’s Georgian Court graduation in 2011. Driven by her passion for supporting children in challenging circumstances “feel safe,” Lillyann worked two jobs to help her achieve her dreams. Her academic achievements, including induction into the Kappa Gamma Pi National Catholic Honor Society, the Phi Alpha Social Work Honor Society, Magna Cum Laude, and the Mercy and Social Justice in Social Work award, landed her the job she’d worked so hard for: a career in Social Work with the New Jersey Department of Children and Families.



After taking an extended educational hiatus after high school, Jimmy Woo found that his love of learning was calling him to pursue his bachelor’s in marketing. Jimmy reflected, “I don’t want to compete with my peers. I want to contribute something meaningful

to the communities I’m part of, and that starts with listening and learning from those around me.” Jimmy’s commitment to understanding and bettering the world is evident in his

award-winning advocacy paper, Rated 'M' for Men: Understanding the Toxic Culture of Gaming and Streaming. Initially written for Dr. Melanie Clark Mogavero's class, Shaping Lives: Women and Gender, Jimmy's paper was accepted into the New Jersey Women and Gender Studies Consortium and presented at a 2024 panel held at Drew University.



After graduating from GCU with a bachelor's degree in Biochemistry and a stellar 3.96 GPA, Jennifer Matthews returned to campus to further her studies while working on an undergraduate research project funded by a NASA New Jersey Space Grant. Under the guidance of Dr.

Beth Schaefer, Professor of Physics, Dr. Sarita Nemani, Professor of Mathematics, and Dr. Prasad Lakkaraju, Professor of Chemistry, Jennifer synthesized a carbon quantum dot, a non-toxic alternative made with carbon instead of cadmium. These dots hold potential as bioimaging and microscopy applications, which Jennifer looks forward to exploring as her research continues. Jennifer's academic achievements at GCU include induction into Alpha Sigma Lambda and Chi Alpha Epsilon and the Academic Achievement Award in Chemical Sciences.



Dorcas Gbeve-Hill found her life's purpose at the intersection of two of her most important roles: mother and scholar. After Dorcas' thirteen-year-old daughter was diagnosed with cerebral palsy, she delved into researching how parents raising children with disabilities care for their mental health. Dorcas aims to use her GCU education, marked by consistent

President's List accolades, receiving the OSHE award, and induction into Psi Alpha, Chi Alpha, and the Kappa Zeta Chapter of Alpha Sigma (ALS National Honors Society), and her experience writing "The Mental Status of Parents Raising a Child with a Disability," to offer support to individuals who may lack the knowledge and skills to cope by practicing self-care.



Sheila McNeil discovered her passion for health and served our country for over twenty years as a member of the Army National Guard. She is now on the path to earning a Master of Arts Degree in Integrative Health. In addition to academic studies,

McNeil also participated in the university's annual Health Expo, and this year, she gave a presentation on a study she conducted on "Mindful Munching." Her research aimed to enhance people's relationships with food, reducing stress while improving health and well-being. Her ultimate goal is to establish a wellness business, inspired and guided by her educational journey at Georgian Court University. Reflecting on her experience, she remarked, "The curriculum is fantastic, and the professors were always spot on. The program is well-balanced and introduces you to so many different modalities you might not even know exist. It really just opens up the whole world."

SYSTEMS OF SUPPORT: FOSTERING GROWTH AND SUCCESS

Ensuring that our students have access to every available resource and opportunity is at the heart of our mission at Georgian Court, fueling our commitment to providing personalized support. Among the countless students who received individualized guidance, three were especially moved by the kindness and encouragement of the GCU community.



Originally from Vietnam, Sister Mary Tam Phan was initially concerned about language barriers and exam timing while pursuing her Fine Arts degree at GCU.

Sister Tam Phan feared whether she was proficient enough in her second language to succeed until faculty and staff reassured her that her goal should be to 'take her time and get it right.' As her time on Georgian Court's campus ended, Sister Tam Phan set her sights on mentoring younger Sisters in graphic design. She reflected on her experience, "The people here are very kind, and I am thankful for my

two years of study in America. Although my time here ends, I will keep GCU in my prayers. May God bless our school.”

Georgian Court’s Catholic mission made campus feel like home for Sister Rachael Mshindani despite being over 7,000 miles from her community in Kenya. While pursuing her bachelor’s in Health Profession Studies, Mshindani found comfort in Sunday Masses and weekday celebrations arranged by Campus Ministry. With a boundless passion for her career in nursing, Mshindani has already gained acceptance into GCU’s Master of Science in Nursing program, and looking ahead to her ‘homecoming,’ enthused, “No matter where I am needed, it will be my joy to serve my people.”



Alexa Kowalski was originally supposed to graduate in 2023 but chose to take some time away from her studies to care for her mental health. Once she returned to campus, Kowalski found “an amazing support system that made the transition easier.” To others facing similar challenges, Kowalski encouraged her peers not to give up when times get tough but to seek the space and support needed. Now, Kowalski will put her bachelor’s in Social Work into practice as she begins her career with the New Jersey Division of Child Protection and Permanency; my mission is to be an “advocate and inspire hope for those facing adversity in our communities.”



Left to Right: Amuhelang Magaya, Ph.D.; Deborah Snyder; Luran Schwerthoffer, an Education major from the Class of 2024; Marilyn E. Gonyo, Ed.D., Trustee, Georgian Court University; and Matthew Manfra.

WORDS OF ADVICE: GUIDANCE FOR THE GRADUATES

As the Class of 2024 prepared to pull their tassels from right to left, signifying their official program completion, inspiring words echoed through the auditorium.



“From this day on, we will continue to dream and aspire to accomplish goals that mean so much to us...Nothing is impossible if we exemplify courage.”

– Kayla Latendresse
2024 Undergraduate Student Speaker

“True success rises in environments where everyone feels valued. Be authentic leaders, build strong networks, don’t be afraid to ask for help, and be resilient in the face of setbacks.”

– Rodrigo Colón, Jr. ’95, ’17
Renowned Career Coach
2024 Commencement Speaker

“Face tomorrow with confidence, not arrogance, and draw upon your experiences to become great leaders.”

– John E. Harmon, Sr.
Founder, President, and CEO of the
African American Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey
2024 Honorary Doctorate of Business Administration Recipient

“Be proud of your achievements and remember to embody the Mercy Core Values. Lead by example with compassion, and never forget to be compassionate to yourself.”

– Julie Matthew ’23
2024 Graduate Student Speaker

New Beginnings in Nursing:

INNOVATIVE PATHWAYS AT GEORGIAN COURT

It's never too late to pursue your passions at Georgian Court. The university is expanding opportunities for those interested in nursing to join the field through two programs: the Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing (ABS_N) and the Direct Entry Master of Science in Nursing (DE-MS_N). These innovative pathways are breaking down traditional barriers and welcoming students from diverse academic backgrounds into the dynamic world of healthcare.

“These programs offer students new beginnings,” said Dr. Teri Wurmser, Dean of the Georgian Court — Hackensack Meridian *Health* School of Nursing. Our ABS_N and DE-MS_N programs not only prepare students to become successful nurses and leaders but also provide a fresh start for individuals to transform their passions into meaningful and fulfilling careers.”

ACCELERATED BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN NURSING (ABS_N)

The Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing program is designed for graduates with a bachelor's degree in any field who wish to transition to nursing and earn their degree in fifteen months rather than a traditional four-year program. Through Georgian Court's partnership with Hackensack Meridian *Health*, students gain firsthand experience beyond textbook learning, preparing them to meet the demands of patient care and healthcare teams.

The ABS_N program includes rigorous coursework and hands-on clinical rotations in diverse areas such as pediatrics, behavioral health, community health, mother-baby care, and medical-surgical nursing. Students also benefit from a preceptorship, providing invaluable mentorship from experienced nurses in hospital settings to ensure they are well-prepared for a successful nursing career.



Dr. Joan Harvey, D.N.P., M.S.N., Professor in Residence of the Hackensack Meridian *Health* School of Nursing and Wellness at GCU, emphasized the students' success with a 100% pass rate on the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX), a nationwide exam for the licensing of nurses. "At Georgian Court, our commitment goes beyond academics; it's about fostering personal connections and mentorship. We take pride in seeing our graduates thrive as healthcare professionals, maintain lasting relationships, and continue to support them in their careers."

FROM DIETITIAN TO NURSE

Katlin Dolan, a 2024 graduate of the ABSN program, worked as a registered dietitian for ten years before entering the ABSN program. Her journey was inspired by caring for her mother during her battle with stage IV cancer. Reflecting on her ABSN experience, Katlin stated,



"The ABSN program gave me essential skills and a strong foundation for launching my career as an RN. The emphasis on critical thinking and problem-solving has equipped me to analyze situations, prioritize patient needs, and make informed clinical judgments."

Katlin values the unwavering support of faculty and staff who provided academic guidance and emotional encouragement, crediting her clinical instructors' mentorship and constructive

feedback with fostering her growth. Katlin cherishes the strong bond formed among classmates, describing it as unmatched—supporting each other through challenges and celebrating successes together.

Now working in an inpatient oncology unit, she added, “I am grateful to be in a position where I can honor my mom by providing care to these patients.”

FROM BIOLOGY TO THE EMERGENCY ROOM



Michael Spitzer, a 2024 graduate, has completed the program and now works as an Emergency Room nurse at Ocean University Medical Center. “I chose this specialty for its fast-paced, dynamic environment, which demands quick thinking and decisive action. My professors played a significant role in supporting my decision, encouraging me, and instilling confidence in my abilities,” he reflected.

Before pursuing a career in nursing, Michael earned a bachelor’s in biology and gained experience working in computer technology and as a competitive swim coach. His career change was inspired by caring for his ill grandfather. Michael explained, “Witnessing his resilience and the impact of compassionate care profoundly influenced me. This experience ignited a passion for nursing as I realized nurses’ significant role in patient care and recovery. My grandfather’s courage and our bond during that time motivated me to dedicate my life to helping others in similar situations.”

DIRECT ENTRY MASTER OF SCIENCE IN NURSING (DE-MSN)

The Direct Entry Master of Science in Nursing (DE-MSN) program is a two-year, full-time, face-to-face program designed for graduates with non-nursing bachelor’s degrees aspiring to become registered nurses (RNs). In partnership with Hackensack Meridian Health, this master’s program provides hands-on training and access to



cutting-edge healthcare resources. In addition to the pre-licensure training, the students earn a master’s degree with courses including advanced pathophysiology, advanced pharmacology, advanced health assessment/diagnostics, health informatics, and quality improvement. Students learn from practicing nurses across regional health systems and engage in an innovative curriculum beyond traditional bedside care, exploring emerging fields like quality improvement and health informatics. Georgian Court’s DE-MSN is among a select few programs nationwide, preparing graduates to deliver compassionate care and pursue leadership roles in nursing.

Jo Ann Cummings, PhD, director of the program, describes it as tailored for students with a bachelor’s degree in fields outside of nursing. The faculty, courses, clinicals, and practice resources are designed to support this transition into healthcare, making it accessible even without a prior educational background in the field.

“What makes this program truly unique and personally rewarding is our diverse student body. Coming from varied backgrounds, they enrich discussions and contribute to a vibrant learning environment,” explained Dr. Cummings.

In addition to hands-on bedside training, students in this program are paired with and mentored by advanced practice nurses to enhance their skill development. They also benefit from access to the Assessment Technologies Institute (ATI), a program that assesses their progress and performance. Based on the assessments, they receive personalized study plans to strengthen areas needing improvement before taking the NCLEX.

A FAMILY LEGACY OF NURSING



Current DE-MSN student JoChena Dort, a first-generation Haitian American, is driven by her family's values. Her grandmother, a nurse in Haiti, moved to the United States for a better life, instilling independence and a strong work ethic.

JoChena's mother, who is an educator, emphasized education and encouraged her pursuit of higher learning. JoChena holds a bachelor's degree in biology and a minor in chemistry and currently works as a Medical Technologist in Laboratory Sciences. She aims to transition into nursing, specifically in the emergency room setting, where she can apply advanced clinical skills to deliver patient care.

Looking ahead, JoChena plans to expand her nursing career through research, advanced clinical practice, and academia. "I chose the Direct Entry Master of Science in Nursing program at Georgian Court University because it provided me with the unique opportunity to obtain my Master's Degree while pursuing nursing as a new career."

Looking back on her transformative experience in the program, JoChena shared, "My experience in the program has been incredibly life-changing. Incorporating advanced physical health assessment, pathophysiology, and pharmacology has bolstered my confidence in patient care. Despite the program's rigor, I feel fully prepared to embark on my nursing journey. The knowledgeable and approachable faculty, many still active in clinical settings, offer invaluable guidance and create innovative case studies. The small class sizes foster a supportive and close-knit learning environment."

FROM COORDINATOR TO CAREGIVER

Kayla Zambrana holds a bachelor's degree in health administration with a minor in human resource management and previously worked as an office coordinator at a cancer center. Inspired by the nurses she collaborated with, Kayla pursued the DE-MSN program at Georgian Court University.

"While exploring nursing schools, the DE-MSN program stood out as my top choice because it offered both a nursing degree and a master's in quality improvement in just two years," she explained. Kayla envisions starting her career as a bedside pediatric nurse and eventually pursuing a pediatric nurse practitioner license.



Reflecting on her journey, she shares, "This has been one of the most memorable and rewarding experiences of my life. The hard work, perseverance, and unending support from professors and clinical staff have prepared me to be the best nurse I can be."





REMEMBERING DR. LOUISE WOOTTON

In March 2024, the Georgian Court community mourned the loss of a beloved member, Dr. Louise Wootton. Her journey as a respected educator, dedicated researcher, and inspiring mentor shaped countless lives.

Born on the Isle of Guernsey, Dr. Wootton's journey took her to Canada, where she earned her Bachelor's degree from Acadia College in Nova Scotia and a Master's degree in Biology from the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. She earned her Doctoral degree at the University of Maryland at College Park before relocating to New Jersey, where she joined our university community in 1997.

Dr. Wootton devoted 27 years to Georgian Court University, starting as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Biology. Over time, she progressed to the roles of Associate Professor and Professor and eventually became the department chair. In 2011, Dr. Wootton took on the role of Director of Sustainability to promote the campus'

environmental and sustainability initiatives. Her contributions and leadership inspired students and faculty, fostering a culture of stewardship at Georgian Court.

In the early 2010s, Dr. Wootton launched a successful trap-neuter-release (TNR) program for the university's feral cats and collaborated with students in the pre-veterinary program to provide care. As the TNR program reduced the campus cat population, Dr. Wootton began fostering cats and kittens through Calling All Cats Rescues in Toms River. To continue offering valuable experience for pre-veterinary students and provide a calming environment for all students, she brought the fostered cats to campus, creating the "Cat Room," a sanctuary for cats and students alike. Through her efforts with Calling All Cats Rescues, Dr. Wootton facilitated the adoption of over 130 cats.

Beyond her administrative and advocacy efforts, Dr. Wootton was cherished for her warmth, kindness, and

profound impact on her students and colleagues. Her approachable demeanor and genuine care for everyone she encountered left a lasting mark.

Former students remember Dr. Wootton as a source of academic support and personal inspiration, and her colleagues remember her as thoughtful and nurturing:

“Louise was passionate, knowledgeable, fearless, loyal, and caring. She was a wonderful senior colleague who always had the best interest of newer faculty in mind,” reflected Jessica Lisa, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Biology. “In addition to her constant support, Louise always took the time to send little notes or gifts that let you know she was thinking about you. I am not sure how she found the time to do everything that she did, but she was amazing, and we are not a complete department without her.”

The impact of Dr. Wootton’s mentorship is clear when listening to Jaelyn Ciccone, ’17. “The love she had for her

career, students, and animals was larger than life. I will forever be grateful to her for keeping me calm and focused during course selections, application processes, and interviews,” shared Jaelyn.

Wendy Newcomb Beattie, ’01, ’05, reflected on Dr. Wootton’s legacy: “She was an amazing professor who will be remembered fondly. She was dedicated to her work, the core values of Georgian Court University, and the successes of her students. Dr. Wootton was a brilliant professor who was personable and had a great sense of humor. She was truly an inspirational role model because she was a strong, successful female who encouraged me to follow my dreams. I am grateful for having known her. She was a special woman.”

Dr. Louise Wootton leaves a legacy of inspiration and compassion that will continue to resonate within the Georgian Court community and beyond. We will forever cherish her memory.





THESE ARE THE 'GOOD OLD DAYS'

“When you ask most people what they remember from college, their answers usually revolve around the time they spent with their peers.”

– Dean of Students Sharmay Wood

Georgian Court University’s Office of Student Life hosted an exciting variety of activities during the 2023-2024 academic year, significantly enriching the campus culture and student experience.

Dean Wood believes involvement in student life activities is crucial for academic success and personal growth. These campus events allow students to network and build support systems with other students and faculty.

“A sense of belonging is key. It’s not just one of the reasons why people choose to attend a university, but it’s why they stay,” said Dean Wood.

This past year featured several standout events that resonated with the student body:



Campus Activities Board Fall Festival:

This event included crowd favorites like stuff-a-plush, a mechanical pumpkin, music, food, and a giant bonfire, setting a festive tone for the semester.



Speakeasy: Originally established to celebrate Black History Month, this event quickly became a monthly favorite. It featured themed drinks, food, and a lively band in the Casino Ballroom.



Student Appreciation Day: This afternoon celebration at the end of the academic year included ice cream trucks, a dunk tank, dancing, a DJ, and a variety of food on the campus lawn—the perfect celebration of a year of hard work.



Luau: This student-suggested event in the courtyard switched up the lunchtime experience by featuring a steel drum band, luau-themed food, and an inflatable surfboard, providing a fun and refreshing break from routine.

The planning process for student life activities at Georgian Court is highly collaborative, involving continuous feedback from students. Event planning is often led by the Campus Activities Board, Student Government, and various student-run clubs.

“When a student comes to us with an idea, we help make it a reality. We support them in funding, organization, and planning,” says Dean Wood. This involvement empowers students to take initiative and participate in the vibrant campus community.

“My favorite activity was the Paint and Sip event,” said second-year graduate student Lauren Jensen. “I’ve had the pleasure of being involved in planning many events, allowing me to make lasting connections, gain hands-on learning experience, and see GCU from a unique perspective.”

Faculty members are also welcome to participate in student life activities. Events such as grocery bingo, where a faculty member called the numbers, saw strong faculty turnout, enhancing the sense of community on campus.

The main goals of Student Life for the upcoming academic year include building on the successful foundation established in the past year and expanding student clubs, whether that’s new intramural sports or community service organizations.

“Our goal is to provide students with the best experience possible,” said Dean Wood.

Dean Wood encourages students who want to get involved to attend events, visit the Student Life office, or reach out via Instagram (@georgiancourtlife). Ahead of the fall semester, Georgian Court will launch a new student engagement app that lists all events and provides a platform for students to connect with campus departments and each other.

By thinking outside the box and empowering students to be involved in planning activities, Georgian Court ensures that student life remains an integral part of the college experience.



WORTH THE WAIT:

REFLECTIONS FROM 45 YEARS OF TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATION

At Georgian Court, education isn't a finite curriculum confined to a classroom but a lifelong commitment to observing the world and allowing new information to shape our opinions.

As she prepares to complete her B.A. in Visual Art later this year, Darlene Eason of Eatontown, New Jersey, reflects on 45 years of transformative education at Georgian Court, having initially enrolled in Georgian Court College (GCC) in 1979 to pursue a degree in Visual Art and Elementary Education.

What made you choose to enroll in Georgian Court College in 1979?

GCC had everything I was looking for—academically and more. I had recently learned of the love of God expressed through Jesus Christ and felt it was vital for me to find others who were living with the awareness of God's love. The college's Christian values and excellent academics, which allowed me to grow in both aspects of my life, drew me to the program.

Why did you choose not to complete your degree at the time?

My priorities were shifting then, but the idea of returning to Georgian Court was always in the back of my mind. After meeting my husband, Bob, we started a family, and I committed my time to raising our children.

Did you pursue any continuing education while focused on parenting?

I enrolled in classes at Brookdale Community College, knowing I could later transfer those credits to GCU and complete my degree when the time was right. During my hiatus from Georgian Court, I also discovered my love for pottery. By combining this new passion with my faith, I started "Glorious Vessels," a program that teaches the biblical parable of the potter and the clay through pottery classes. In recent years, I enrolled in a few online courses at another university.

How did you decide it was the right time to return to Georgian Court?

Though I'm happy my path has finally brought me back to GCU, the journey hasn't been entirely joyous. Over the past five-and-a-half years, I have been the primary caretaker for my husband, Bob, as he battled brain cancer, which required me to withdraw from my online courses. After Bob passed away in October, I decided to reconnect with GCU.

The art classes I'm taking this semester have been an incredible source of healing for me. I didn't expect to find this opportunity to express myself, but it has been a gift during the grieving process.

Where does your passion for art come from?

My dad was an incredible artist with pencils, pens, and brushes! He encouraged me to explore art, but I didn't find my passion for it until I got my hands in the clay.

What has it been like to return to the university as a nontraditional student?

It has been inspiring to be back on campus! The Mercy core values of respect, integrity, justice, compassion, and service resonate profoundly and remind me that I still have an essential part to play. I've found the GCU community to be accepting, helpful, and encouraging in practical ways and through expressed sensitivity to my unique needs.

Have any GCU faculty members been particularly impactful on your education?

In days gone by, Sister Caroline—a Dean at the time—really believed in me, and Sister Nick taught me what it looks like for a teacher to care about both her subject and students. Currently, Leo Morrissey, M.F.A., Associate Professor of Art, has been a tremendous help in clarifying my goals, discerning my next steps, creating a plan, and providing an environment where I can enjoy my artwork while progressing toward graduation.

What has been your biggest challenge throughout your academic career, and how have you overcome it?

Life situations, circumstances, and timing have been prohibitive. Sometimes, we must jump in when an opportunity presents itself, while other times, we need to create the opportunity for ourselves. Discerning the difference is key.

What are your goals for the academic year?

By the end of the year, I hope to create work that I can proudly present at our senior exhibition. Working toward this goal brings me full circle, as I'm expanding on the skills I learned when I first came to GCU in 1979. I'm grateful for the opportunity to develop my art further, and I hope to continue to build on these skills throughout my life.

Where would you be now if you had not returned to GCU?

The opportunity to complete my degree might have slipped away if I hadn't taken advantage of it. Choosing where to invest your time is one of the most important and consequential decisions you can make.

What are your plans after graduation?

I'll continue to seek ways to grow personally and opportunities to share the wisdom and experience that I've gained with others who can benefit. I will, of course, continue to enjoy my clay work and share God's love with those who want to hear.

What advice do you have for other students who have taken a break from college and want to complete their degrees but are unsure where to start?

Just do it! Take the first step! Invest in yourself by enrolling. I found everyone at GCU in Admissions, Registrar, and Financial Aid helpful and encouraging. I now have a clear path and am enjoying immersing myself in my art while working toward graduation.

For more information on Undergraduate Admissions, contact us at (732) 987-2700 or admissions@georgian.edu.



GEORGIAN COURT RECOGNIZED AS NEW JERSEY'S SOLE UNIVERSITY PROVIDER FOR WILSON READING SYSTEMS CERTIFICATION

Positively impacting the next generation begins with training effective teachers who can successfully meet the abilities of their students. As the only university provider of the Wilson Reading System in New Jersey, Georgian Court is leading the charge in equipping educators with the tools they need to support striving readers.

We sat down with Dr. Denise Furlong, Assistant Professor and Director of Advanced Programs for Reading Specialists and ESL, to discuss the importance of structured literacy and how the Wilson Reading System transforms student instruction.

What is the Wilson Reading System (WRS)?

WRS is designed for students in grades 2–12 and adults with word-level deficits who are not making sufficient progress through their current intervention, have been unable to learn with other teaching strategies, or require more intensive structured literacy instruction due to a language-based learning disability, such as dyslexia. Providing intensive WRS instruction in small groups or individually with a highly skilled teacher makes reading and spelling success achievable.

Can you tell us more about the Online/Hybrid Introductory Course at GCU?

The WRS Introductory Course provides an overview of the Wilson Reading System. It provides teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary to address the five principles of literacy instruction that align with the Common Core Learning Standards (Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Vocabulary, Fluency, and Comprehension) and serves as the prerequisite for WRS Level I Certification.

Students participate in hands-on activities utilizing WRS research-based, multisensory strategies to maximize the learning of students with reading difficulties, and since they can complete the course online, they can be paired with a student in their district to complete their practicum.

Which degree programs at Georgian Court include the WRS Introductory Course?

We have three exciting new programs for educators seeking to hone their specializations and improve their instructional abilities, the Master of Education (M.Ed.) in Multisensory Literacy with Reading Specialist Endorsement, M.Ed. in Multisensory Literacy with ESL Endorsement, and M.Ed. in Multisensory Literacy with Teacher of Students with Disabilities Endorsement.

Who can most benefit from WRS Certification?

There's a misconception that this program is just for reading teachers and specialists, but it can truly benefit all educators, even at the secondary level. So many students make it to later points in school but are still striving readers. We need to find more ways to support student success, and helping students overcome reading trauma provides them with 'the keys to the kingdom,' so to speak. It opens so many doors for their educational potential.



Can you tell us about your experience participating in the WRS Certification?

It has been absolutely wonderful for me, and the nine-year-old striving reader with whom I'm completing my practicum has loved it, too! I've been able to immediately implement the new concepts I'm learning through Wilson, and it's skyrocketed my student's confidence. Her teachers say that she's becoming a class leader, constantly raising her hand to participate in lessons reviewing structured literacy.

Has the program been successful at GCU?

Absolutely! We currently have thirteen students at various points in their Certification process and expect enrollment to increase as more New Jersey educators realize the opportunity that Georgian Court offers!

For more information on Advanced Programs for Reading Specialists & ESL at Georgian Court, contact Dr. Denise Furlong at (732) 987-2449 or dfurlong@georgian.edu.



GEORGIAN COURT'S PROFESSORS RANKED BEST IN NEW JERSEY

While the Georgian Court community has always known that our faculty is among the best in the county, Collegerover made it official in 2023!

In a study comparing the student reviews of over 79,000 professors across more than 2,100 schools on RateMyProfessors.com, the prominent college and university information platform ranked Georgian Court among the best in the nation. GCU placed 1st out of 20 New Jersey-based higher education institutions.

For over a century, Georgian Court has stood out for its unique approach to education, guided by the Mercy Catholic tradition. Our faculty and staff are not just educators, but mentors, guiding our scholars' total development — intellectually, ethically, physically, and spiritually. This unwavering commitment to our students' growth sets us apart and has been a long-standing source of pride and acclaim for the university, particularly in recent years.

Since 2022, GCU's faculty have made significant contributions to their respective fields, producing over 130 books, journal articles, conference presentations, grants, and creative works. This academic prowess has been recognized with a Guggenheim Fellowship, multiple accolades from NJBIZ,

and an award from the Garden State Film Festival, further enhancing Georgian Court's reputation.

Appreciated for its small classes, with a student-to-faculty ratio of 11:1, and personalized education with all courses taught by faculty members, Georgian Court has evolved to offer a wide variety of academic programs designed for today's world while remaining steadfast to our tradition of providing a unique college experience guided by the core values of respect, integrity, justice, compassion, and service.

The 2023 U.S. News & World Report rankings of the Best Regional Universities underscored these advantages, in which Georgian Court received high marks for social mobility, student/faculty ratio, and low debt, ranking among the top 17% for Student/Faculty Ratio among the 167 higher education institutions in Universities North category.

"Our faculty continue to demonstrate an incredible dedication to the students they teach, and our small class size allows our students to truly connect with them," said President Joseph R. Marbach, Ph.D. "Georgian Court has historically been a place for caring and thoughtful instruction that prepares our students for successful careers, and we're proud to continue that tradition."



MERCY VALUES MAKE THE HOLIDAYS BRIGHT FOR LOCAL FAMILIES

“For I was hungry and you gave me food” (Mt 25:35).

In the story of the Last Judgment, Jesus reminds us that one of the fundamental measures of our lives will be how we care for people in need. This past holiday season, the spirit of helping others was palpable across Georgian Court’s campus as student volunteers participated in various community-focused initiatives and events, from assembling peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and Thanksgiving food baskets to collecting toys, clothes, and monetary donations.

“Georgian Court is constantly serving the local community because that’s what it means to be a Mercy community. When we see people suffering, we respond in concrete ways,” explained Jeff Schaffer, Executive Director of Mission & Ministry. “Giving food to the hungry is a Corporal Act of Mercy straight from the Bible. GCU’s charitable food drives are a way to make Mercy real in our world.”

Hunger and Homeless Awareness Week November 11-18, 2024

Annual events funded by the New Jersey Hunger Free Campus Grant.

Thanksgiving Food Basket Assembly: In partnership with Interfaith Family Services (Toms River) and Providence House-Ocean County (Whiting), a Catholic Charities service, student volunteers assemble dozens of Thanksgiving Food Baskets for distribution to women and families experiencing domestic violence in Ocean County. For over a decade, GCU has provided at least 30 baskets annually.

St. Peter’s Free Community Lunch Program: Student volunteers put their sandwich-making skills to the test as they assembled dozens of turkey, peanut butter & jelly, and cheese sandwiches for families in Freehold Borough and surrounding communities.

Holiday Gift Drives Friday, November 29th, 2024

The Giving Tree Project: Students, faculty, and staff selected tags from the “Giving Tree” that included special gift requests for items like toys and clothing given to families through Interfaith.

Providence House Toy Collection: A general toy collection enabled the creation of a “Christmas Store,” where Providence House clients could select gifts for their children and families. In 2023, the Georgian Court community collected more than 450 gifts.

In addition to undergraduate student volunteers, students from the “GEN 400: Visioning a Future: Justice, Compassion, and Service” class participated in these events as a course capstone, giving them

practical experience and insight into how they can make a difference and do their part to shape a better world.

Sharmay Wood, Dean of Students, noted that student involvement in events and community service is paramount. “We believe that participation in these service projects is a transformative experience for our students. It offers them opportunities for personal growth, helping them discover new skills and strengths while also boosting their self-esteem and confidence as they witness the positive impact they can have on the lives of others. Moreover, it instills a sense of responsibility in them to recognize their role in addressing societal issues and becoming agents of positive change.”

Though the holiday season is particularly ripe with opportunities for students, volunteerism and community outreach are deeply ingrained in the GCU culture throughout the year.

Each year, the university sponsors a campus-wide Backpack and School Supply drive and an Easter Basket drive, and many student organizations also run smaller drives throughout the year. Georgian Court also hosts numerous educational programs and even volunteer service trips to support efforts to address critical issues like homelessness, domestic abuse, hunger, and justice. It is also home to Julian’s Cupboard Student Food Pantry, which helps fight food insecurity within the campus community.

“These initiatives play a pivotal role in building a sense of community on our campus,” said Dean Wood. “When students, faculty, and staff come together to serve the broader community, it forges connections and shared purpose, fostering a strong sense of belonging and unity within our university.”

Anyone interested in volunteering with or donating to our community outreach programs can reach Jeff Schaffer at Mission & Ministry at 732-987-2600 or jschaffer@georgian.edu.

PARTNERSHIP WITH ST. GEORGE'S UNIVERSITY MAKES PATHWAYS TO MEDICINE AND VETERINARY



When you ask many kindergarten students what they want to be when they grow up, becoming a doctor or a veterinarian are almost always among the top responses. However, as these aspiring caretakers progress through their education, access to the programs that make these careers possible often has many obstacles, including formidable competition and varying undergraduate prerequisite requirements across colleges and universities.

Removing barriers and helping students better navigate the educational road to becoming a doctor or veterinarian is the goal of the Pathways program now offered at GCU through a partnership with St. George's University (SGU) in Grenada.

A leader in international educational partnerships and programs, the SGU School of Medicine works with a network of more than 75 hospitals and health systems in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom to offer clinical and ambulatory training. The School of Veterinary Medicine provides clinical training at over 30 affiliated institutions in six countries.

"Through this partnership with SGU, we can provide a growing number of students interested in medical and veterinary school a clear, integrated path into an accredited, reputable medical school with a strong track record for residency placement in the U.S.," explained Dr. Janice Warner, Provost of Georgian Court University.

Throughout New Jersey and across the country, the growing need for medical professionals underscores the importance of programs like Pathways, as the demand for doctors and veterinarians continues to outpace supply.

"The American Association of Medical Colleges reported an estimated shortage of up to 139,000 physicians by 2033. According to the American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges, thousands of jobs remain unfilled each year across all sectors of professional activity and at all levels of specialization."

According to U.S. News & World Report, "early assurance" programs, like Pathways, can save students time, minimize their financial burden, and help reduce stress: "... these students can devote more undergraduate time to other activities and studying more subjects of their choice because they do not have to participate in the costly and time-consuming process of applying to multiple med schools."

Dr. Warner noted, "Georgian Court University has always been committed to creating educational opportunities that help students excel academically and provide the guidance and support they need to achieve their career goals."

To ensure their ultimate success, students who qualify for the GCU/SGU pre-medicine or pre-veterinary option will have their entire process mapped out, with access to a dedicated team of GCU faculty advisors and mentors to help them navigate their coursework.

"St. George's is thrilled to partner with Georgian Court University and to offer their most qualified students multiple pathways to a degree in medicine or veterinary medicine," said Dr. Richard Liebowitz, Vice Chancellor of St. George's University. "We look forward to empowering GCU students to pursue their dreams."

For more information about how to apply for the pathways program, contact Dr. Carolyn Bergman, Chair of the Department of Biology at Georgian Court, at (732) 987-2372 or cbergman@georgian.edu.



CHANGEMAKERS AT THE COURT: “UNIDOS: CLIMATE EDUCATION INITIATIVE” ACHIEVES INTERNATIONAL ACCLAIM

One of the most impressive attributes of Georgian Court’s students and faculty is their commitment to achieving excellence in every pursuit, and the university’s new climate education exchange program with Universidad Viña Del Mar (UVM) in Chile is no exception.

This past December, Georgian Court’s initiative was one of six climate action exchange programs received a 100k Strong in the Americas grant award, recognizing partnerships between higher education institutions in the United States and Argentina, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay. Each grant-winning team, including Georgian Court, received \$50,000 to expand climate-focused student exchange programs.

“This is an exciting opportunity for Georgian Court students to participate in a transformative learning experience that develops their intercultural understanding,” said GCU Director of Global Education Programs Laura Dunn Grodewald. “Students are learning how to take action and teach local youth about important issues related to the environment and the global interconnectedness of environmental issues.”

After attending the in-person announcement of the awards at the U.S. Ambassador of Chile’s residence in Santiago, Grodewald launched the “UniDos: Climate Education Initiative,” with the support of GCU Director of Grants and Government Relations Stephanie Dorman.

“It was a pleasure working with Laura and our partners at UVM to bring the first reciprocal exchange program to GCU, and I’m excited to continue supporting the program,” said Dorman, who played a significant role in the grant writing process. “This program is a testament to the power of community support and collaboration.”

During the inaugural virtual exchange course this past spring, around 20 Georgian Court and UVM students collaborated to design workshops on the public health effects of sea and beach pollution, air pollution, and wildfires—problems shared between the two communities.

This past summer, five Georgian Court and five UVM students from the program shared what they learned during the course with 100 youths—50 in Valparaíso, Chile, and 50 in New Jersey—while serving as camp counselors and workshop presenters at a four-day Children’s Climate Camp. The program allowed students with limited global opportunities to travel internationally, setting the stage for future exchanges between the two institutions.

Learn more about Global Education Programs at Georgian Court at georgian.edu/study-abroad.

Core funding for “UniDos: Climate Education Initiative” comes from the 100,000 Strong in the Americas Innovation Fund and its partner, CAF: Development Bank of Latin America & the Caribbean, along with the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs at U.S. Department of State and U.S. Mission-Chile, as part of the dynamic public-private sector collaboration between WHA/DOS and Partners of the Americas, working with companies, foundations, regional government entities, and academic networks in the United States and the rest of the Western Hemisphere to create innovative, sustainable partnerships that provide access to new models of academic exchange and training programs in the Americas.

CRITICAL CONCERNS WEEK 2024:

CATHOLIC HUMANITARIAN DR. CAROLYN Y. WOO EXPLORES IMMIGRATION & MIGRATION ISSUES

A seed of hope in lovingly tended soil can flourish into a field of beautiful blooms. That was the concept behind Critical Concerns Week at Georgian Court, an annual program of lectures, workshops, presentations, and displays designed to raise awareness, spark dialogue, and inspire modern-day solutions for a variety of important humanitarian and social issues.

Each year, the focus of Critical Concerns Week shifts to address one of the five critical concerns of the Sisters of Mercy. In 2024, the theme, “Migration: A Planet on the Move,” focused on immigration. (The other four concerns are Racism, Earth, Non-Violence, and Women.)

“Migration has always been a part of human adaptation to environmental stress, social, economic, and political upheaval, and the desire for human and cultural connection. Human beings migrate for freedom, safety, family, and new opportunities,” said Jeff Schaffer, Executive Director of Mission & Ministry at Georgian Court.

In addition to the annual lecture and display series, this year’s events included a dance performance, a global marketplace vendor fair showcasing entrepreneurs from around the globe, and a clothing drive for migrants in need.

The week’s events culminated in the keynote address, “Successful Refugees Resettlement: A Whole of Society Approach,” presented by Dr. Carolyn Y. Woo, a renowned author, scholar, humanitarian, and former President & CEO of Catholic

Relief Services, the official international humanitarian agency of the Catholic community in the U.S.

“We were honored to have Dr. Woo as our keynote speaker to shed light on this critical issue and share her real-world experiences working with refugees, migrants, and immigrant populations,” added Schaffer.



Despite the scale of the challenges of immigration we are currently facing here and abroad, Dr. Woo’s presentation highlighted some responses that can be undertaken to integrate migrant populations successfully in a whole-of-society approach.

“As people of Mercy, when we see the suffering of those who must be on the move, we are called to compassion,” added Schaffer.

In addition to human migration, presentations explored the migration of birds, fish, insects, and wildlife, which have adapted to migrate with the rhythm of changing seasons and environmental conditions.

To learn more about Critical Concerns Week, visit georgian.edu/critical-concerns-2024.

Georgian Court’s Mulcahy Institute for Social Justice, established in 2020 to promote the values of social justice to students and future generations, sponsored the 2024 Keynote Address.

GEORGIAN COURT PREPARES FUTURE MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELORS FOR SUCCESS



Georgian Court University’s Masters of Arts in Clinical Mental Health Counseling program has again proven its merit by receiving full re-accreditation from the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP).

The 2024 re-accreditation, retroactive to 2022 and effective through 2032, indicates that the program demonstrates excellence across 68 criteria and over 100 curricular standards, from faculty qualifications to the learning environment and curriculum evaluation. First accredited in 2012, the program must undergo an annual self-evaluation and a comprehensive review by CACREP every ten years.

This accreditation provides significant benefits to Georgian Court students. Graduates from accredited programs find it easier to obtain licensure because they can bypass the step of submitting course syllabi and other proof of meeting criteria. CACREP-accredited program graduates are highly preferred candidates in the workforce.

Dr. Harriett Gaddy, Associate Professor and Director of the Clinical Mental Health Counseling program, said, “The accred-

itation is a testament to the program’s quality. It indicates that our program meets the profession’s standards, and it sets up our graduates for success.”

Georgian Court’s MA in Clinical Mental Health Counseling boasts a 100% pass rate on the National Counselor Exam, a requirement for New Jersey licensure, and every program graduate has become a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC). Last year’s cohort was 20 students.

Dr. Susan E. O. Field, Professor of Psychology and Chair of the Department of Psychology and Counseling, said, “This strong program resonates with the university’s mission and goals. I’m looking forward to seeing our graduates continue to thrive.”

Drs. Gaddy and Field, the faculty members who led the program to re-accreditation, hope to expand enrollment in future years while maintaining the high standards that earned Georgian Court its esteemed CACREP status.

With this re-accreditation, Georgian Court solidifies its position as a leader in mental health counseling education, equipping students with the knowledge and credentials needed to excel in their careers.



HELP US TELL YOUR STORY *ON SOCIAL MEDIA!*

Attention Alumni!

Do you have photos from your time as a Lion? We want to tell your story!

Send your best Georgian Court throwback photos to marketing@georgian.edu with a one-sentence description of the photo for a chance to be featured on our main social media channels.

You can send yearbook photos, stills of you and your friends, shots from move-in day, or any image showcasing your time at GCU. You can even send in a current photo along with your throwback photo for a “then-and-now” feature.

We look forward to hearing from you!

GEORGIAN COURT EARNS 2023-24 MEN'S SPORTSMANSHIP AWARD

On May 22, 2024, Georgian Court claimed the 2023-24 Central Atlantic Collegiate Conference (CACC) Sportsmanship Award for men's sports following the recently completed spring season, as announced by Commissioner Dan Mara. The university topped the men's standings with an average score of 15.80.

Georgian Court was identified as the first-place school in the recent standings by the total number of sportsmanship votes the institution received over the course of the fall, winter, and spring seasons in men's sports, divided by the total number of male sports competed in by the institution during the three seasons.



Each sport's team sportsmanship award is voted on by the league's head coaches in their respective sport.

Head coaches speak with their student-athletes prior to voting to gain feedback on which opposing teams demonstrated outstanding class and character throughout the season.

The Lions competed in all five of their CACC men's sports. Georgian Court claimed the Team Sportsmanship

Award in men's basketball as the Lions logged 37 points in the voting, the school's track & field team placed second in its voting with a mark of 18 points, and cross country brought in 15 points for a third-place finish. Men's lacrosse also finished third, securing nine points.



ANTICIPATION BUILDS FOR GEORGIAN COURT'S FIRST BASEBALL SEASON

Anticipation builds towards the start of Georgian Court's first-ever baseball season, with Head Coach Arlan Freeman building a roster to compete in the Central Atlantic Collegiate Conference in 2025.

The roster development process began in the spring of 2024, when Freeman welcomed four student-athletes — Jaydon Cabezudo, Caleb Carter, Samir Lopez, and Jesus Santos-Guzman — as the first recruits for the Lions Baseball program. They spent the spring practicing with Coach Freeman and Assistant Coach Dan Intili, offering a glimpse of the program's future.

Since then, Coach Freeman has actively sought local high school talent and recruited transfers to complete the roster for the Lions' debut season.

Fans will have the opportunity to preview the team during the "Fall Ball" season this fall, leading up to Georgian Court's first NCAA game in the spring of 2025.





Join the

GEORGIAN COURT UNIVERSITY **BLUE & GOLD** ATHLETIC CLUB

MISSION

To encourage alumni, family and friends to show our current student-athletes what it really means to be GCU Strong!

BENEFITS

Members will have exclusive access to an array of benefits. Including free admission to all home athletic events, ticket to Blueclaws Blue & Gold Launch Event, Exclusive T-Shirt, Golf outing discounts, Homecoming beer garden access plus more!

MEMBERSHIP COST

Alumni - \$25 Per year for the first four years of membership.
Individuals - \$100 Per year
Corporate Sponsorship - Packages start at \$250 per year

GOALS

To continue your legacy of GCU Strong. To enhance our alumni relations and allow for new networking opportunities.



SCAN FOR MORE INFO!

ACROBATICS AND TUMBLING EARN FIRST WIN IN INAUGURAL SEASON



On April 5th, 2024, Georgian Court's Acrobatics and Tumbling team earned its first win in program history during its debut season. The team achieved a season-high score to triumph over Long Island University and Stevenson University in a tri-meet.

"Seeing the team put in so much work every single day and overcome injuries and adversities made the victory that much more rewarding," said Head Acrobatics and Tumbling Coach Sierra Garcia. "This win proved to our team just how talented they are, and it has motivated us to keep pushing for more victories. I couldn't be happier for the team."

Georgian Court added acrobatics & tumbling to its varsity intercollegiate sports offering in the 2023-2024 academic year, becoming the 46th collegiate program to compete at the Division II level. It is the Lions' 15th varsity sport, its ninth women's program, and the first addition to Georgian Court since men's lacrosse was introduced during the 2015-2016 academic year.



Acrobatics & tumbling is the evolution of different forms of gymnastics, involving tumbling, tosses, acrobatic lifts, and pyramids. It is one of the fastest-growing collegiate sports in the country.

PROUD ALUMNI LOLA AGABITI SALAMANDRA AND VIVIAN SALAMANDRA BRINK



Vivian Salamandra Brink celebrated her Class of 1973's 50th-anniversary reunion at Georgian Court on October 13th-14th, 2023. After she came home from Reunion & Homecoming Weekend, she showed her new GCU shirt to her mom, Lola Agabiti Salamandra—who graduated from GCU in 1945! Lola chose her own shirt shortly afterward, and now they're matching!

RINGING THE BELL ON INNOVATION

On May 14th, 2024, Georgian Court reached a significant milestone in its commitment to forward-thinking education and strategic industry partnerships. President Marbach and Ken Karamichael, Associate Vice President for Professional Studies and Business Development, participated in a special closing bell ceremony at the Nasdaq alongside Gary Vaynerchuck, the Chairman of VaynerX and CEO of VaynerMedia.

The event celebrated the launch of Vaynerchuck's latest book, "Day Trading Attention," which has been officially adopted as the textbook for Georgian Court's Social Media Marketing course (MK246) in the School of Business and Digital Media.

By integrating "Day Trading Attention" into MK246's curriculum, GCU ensures students in the School of Business and Digital Media are equipped with the most



current, interactive social media strategies and content—while expanding its strategic engagement with the business community.



GEORGIAN COURT SISTERS CELEBRATE JUBILEE MILESTONES

Two beloved members of the GCU community, Sister Dorothy Lazarick and Sister Christine Triggs, have achieved remarkable milestones in their lifelong journeys as Sisters of Mercy. Sister Dorothy, who served at Georgian Court for many years, commemorated an extraordinary 70 years of dedication. Sister Christine, a proud graduate of the Class of 1974, celebrated 50 years.

Both were honored as distinguished 2024 Jubilarians of Mount Saint Mary.

The Sisters of Mercy's annual Jubilee celebration underscores their enduring legacy as an international community of Roman Catholic women dedicated to living out the Gospel of Jesus. In 1908, the Sisters founded Mount Saint Mary College, which became Georgian Court College in 1924.

[Here is the full list of 2024 Jubilarians across the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas:](#)

85 Years

Sister Mary de Pazzi Socha
Sister Mary Emerita Stoulig

80 Years

Sister Helen Cahill
Sister Mary Timothy Galbraith
Sister M. Raymond Joseph Griffin
Sister Mary Generose Kubesh
Sister M. Alberic Martin

75 Years

Sister Laurette Betz
Sister Mary Dolores Boersma
Sister Rita Carr
Sister Rosemary Connelly
Sister Mercita Curley
Sister Mary Rose Curry
Sister M. Assunta Desposito
Sister Joan Donahue
Sister Phyllis Doyle

Sister Barbara Dudley
Sister Marise Fabie
Sister Bernadette Geiser
Sister Mary Audrey Hallahan
Sister Mary Hanseder
Sister M. Zoe Keller
Sister Ellen Kelly
Sister Muriel Kershaw
Sister Miriam Theresa Lavelle
Sister Rose Litwin

Sister Mary Elizabeth Loftus
Sister Jeanne-Margaret McNally
Sister Madeline Moore
Sister Mary Christel Nolan
Sister Julia M. Norton
Sister Mary Paulinus Oakes
Sister Ellen Philbin
Sister Dorothy Ann Plafcan
Sister Aileen Purvey
Sister Jeanne M. Reichart
Sister Joyce Marie Riley
Sister Rosemary Ryan
Sister Mary Margot Schueneman
Sister Mary Carmelita Shaughnessy
Sister Nancy Thompson
Sister Mary Ann Thue
Sister Mary Alberta Van Remmen
Sister Mary Annunciata Williamson
Sister Mary Lois Wozniak
Sister Mary Joel Zobro

70 Years

Sister Nancy Audette
Sister Carol Baetz
Sister Mary Corlita Bonnarens
Sister Ellen Boyle
Sister Mary Janice Brink
Sister M. Dianne Carlson
Sister Anne Carron
Sister Ana Maria Cases
Sister Sheila Casey
Sister Mariana Connolly
Sister Eileen P. Curley
Sister Teresa Cusack
Sister Mary Elizabeth Dolan
Sister James Marie Donahue
Sister Angela Marie Ebberwein
Sister Mary Bernarde Entress
Sister Mary Chabanel Finnegan
Sister Lucy Elizabeth Frein
Sister Elizabeth Gaynor
Sister Marilyn Gottemoeller
Sister Gloria Graves
Sister Joan Hilbert
Sister Mary Andrew Himes
Sister Mary Lucille Holtz
Sister Kathleen Horgan

Sister Margaret Mary Johnson
Sister Mary Irma Kiss
Sister Juliana Kozman
Sister Rose Mary Kucera
Sister Dorothy Lazarick
Sister Marie Carolyn Levand
Sister Dolores Liptak
Sister Johanna Maguire
Sister M. Faith McKean
Sister Joan McKeon
Sister Rita Ann Meehan
Sister Mary-Leonita Metoyer
Sister Lorraine Mullin
Sister Mary Ellen O'Bryan
Sister Jeanne O'Rourke
Sister Barbara Anne Ozelski
Sister Mary Geneva Paluka
Sister Terese Marie Perry
Sister Pauline Marie Petruzzella
Sister M. Michaelinda Plante
Sister Lucy Ploof
Sister Maura Power
Sister Mary Bernadette Quigg
Sister Thomas Marie Rakus
Sister Mary Simon Robb
Sister Joan Mary Rokicki
Sister Mary Patricia Schnapp
Sister Joan Sherry
Sister Priscilla Smith
Sister Miriam Francis Stadulis
Sister Jean Strawbridge
Sister Kathleen Thornton
Sister Aliceann Walsh
Sister Mary Shamus Zehrer

60 Years

Sister Gloria Mary Avila
Sister Gilmary Bauer
Sister Madonna Marie Bolton
Sister Frances Boyle
Sister Victoria Brady
Sister Mary Ruth Broz
Sister Elizabeth Anne Calfapietra
Sister Eileen Campbell
Sister Patricia Carroll
Sister Theresa Condon
Sister JoAnne Kathryn Courneen

Sister Mary Ann Dillon
Sister Mary Clare Donnelly
Sister Cheryl Driscoll
Sister Mary Sarah Ducey
Sister Monica Ellerbusch
Sister Betty Ann Elmer
Sister Jean Evans
Sister Marilyn Fanning
Sister M. Theresa Farrell
Sister Sharon M. Ford
Sister Susan Fortier
Sister Barbara Grant
Sister Eleanor Guerin
Sister Carmelita Hagan
Sister Sheila Harrington
Sister Bonnie Heh
Sister Jane Hotstream
Sister Dolores Huhman
Sister Maureen Jessnik
Sister Lillian Jordan
Sister Sue Keefe
Sister Jacqueline Marie Kieslich
Sister Cabrini Koelsch
Sister Catherine Mary Kuper
Sister Kim Marie Lajoie
Sister Suzanne LePre
Sister Kathleen Lyons
Sister Kathleen Manish
Sister Diane Matera
Sister Virginia Medwid
Sister Margaret Mitchell
Sister Katherine Mroz
Sister Maureen Mulcrone
Sister Honora Nicholson
Sister Celeste Marie Nuttman
Sister Mary Melanie O'Brien
Sister Mary Jeanne Oesterle
Sister Kathleen Mary O'Hanlon
Sister Marie-Bernadette Pape
Sister Joan Marie Pfauser
Sister Cheryl Marie Phillips
Sister Dolores Preisinger
Sister Kathryn Preston
Sister Ann Provost
Sister Marita Carmel Rondinelli
Sister Theresa Ruddy
Sister Lucy Marie Schluth

Sister Christine Seghetti
Sister Eileen P. Smith
Sister Diane Swanson
Sister Elaine Sweeney
Sister Anna Marie Tag
Sister Kathy Thill
Sister Phyllis Thompson
Sister Mary Dolores Wagner
Sister Susan Welsh
Sister Carol Wilson
Sister Carolyn Zionce

50 Years

Sister Mary Ann Clarahan
Sister Jean-Marie Gorman
Sister Rita Levasseur
Sister Catherine Maguire
Sister Laura Mary Reicks
Sister Margaret A Scarpone
Sister Judith Ann Smith
Sister Kathleen Smith
Sister Mayon Sylvain
Sister Mary Patricia Thompson
Sister Christine Triggs
Sister M. Deborah Raye Troillett
Sister Rita Marie Valade
Sister Alicia Zapata

25 Years

Sister Anne Henehan
Sister Cicily Kurian
Sister Barbara McDermott
Sister Kathleen Sisson



THE MERCY CROSS: A BEACON OF FAITH

The Mercy Cross that adorns the Dorothy Marron University Community Chapel is a powerful sign of hospitality, grace, and faith. It was installed in the 2021-2022 academic year and dedicated on September 22nd, 2022, thanks to the efforts of Jeff Schaffer, Executive Director of Mission & Ministry and Paul DaPonte, Ph.D., former Executive Director for Mission Integration and Special Assistant to the President.

“One of the primary reasons for adding the cross to the chapel was to help identify it specifically as a chapel,” said Schaffer. “I noticed that visitors often had difficulty finding the chapel. They would drive right by the chapel and not know it! We realized that the signage was insufficient to identify the building as a chapel, so we began to work toward adding a cross to be more readily identified as a religious structure.”



The decision to use the Mercy Cross, rooted in the tradition of the Sisters of Mercy, underscores Georgian Court’s connection to its Mercy core values and founding principles. The design mirrors the original cross worn by the Sisters as part of their habit.

“Ultimately, the cross installed on the chapel reminds us of our Mercy identity and invites us to worship the God of Mercy,” explained Schaffer.

RAYSIDE SISTERS MAKE GEORGIAN COURT A FAMILY TRADITION



Georgian Court is a family affair for the Raysides, with all four sisters—Shinnecka (BA in Biology, 2016), Shikel (BA in Psychology, 2019), Shana (BA in Psychology, 2020), and Shanae (BS in Business Administration, 2023)—graduating as first-generation students. Shana, a TRIO Scholar, now serves as GCU’s head volleyball coach, and her sister Shanae is also a TRIO Scholar.

Is Georgian Court a tradition in your family? Share your story (and photos) at alumni@georgian.edu.

CLASS NOTES

1960s

Mary Halpin '66 traveled to New York and stayed with Bess Mulvihill '66 at her home. During their time together, the two visited Beth DiTolla '66 for lunch in Port Washington!



From left to right: Bess Mulvihill '66, Beth DiTolla '66, Mary Halpin '66

1970s



Annie Hanna Cestra '73 and Helen Hanna Casey '71 gathered their classmates and friends for a reunion in Naples, Florida. Pictured from left to right are Vivian Salamandra Brink '73, Patti Morris Ryan '73, Lynn Straub Brady '71, Terry Wattendorf Tibits '71, Tess O'Brien Giuliani '71, Helen Hanna Casey '71, Annie Hanna Cestra '73, and Carol Rosko Taylor '71 (missing from picture).

1980s

Lynn Vazquez '88, '93, '00 is a full-time, tenured faculty member in the Mathematics Department at Ocean County College. She was named Faculty of the Year at OCC for the 2023-2024 academic year.



Alice Bosies Velez '84, '93 and Margaret (Meg) Pearson Palmer '86 celebrated Meg's 60th birthday in Paris. Alice and Meg were Georgian Court big/little sisters and have kept in touch for over 40 years!

1990s

Jayne Sullivan Wesler, Esq., '92 published her 10th book, a novel, which is the first in a series. Her impressive body of work includes six non-fiction books and four novels!



2000s

Nikima Barnhill Newsome '01 was recently appointed to the position of Director of Records and Election Services/City Clerk for the City of Santa Monica in Santa Monica, CA. She and her husband, Dave, continue to reside in Los Angeles.

2010s

Yesenia Gonzales '16 is an insurance broker at Liberty Company Insurance Brokers in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, specializing in high-value luxury homes.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

WEDDINGS



**Joseph Burgard '17 and
Tara Burgard '18**
(formerly Tara Vitale)
— May 20th, 2022

**Allison Bouthillette '18 and
Salvatore Bilancione**
— April 22nd, 2023



**Maureen Kotusky '99, '18 and
Ray Pronnicki** — November 3rd, 2023

BIRTHS



**Joseph Burgard '17 and
Tara Burgard '18** — Charlotte
Grace Burgard, born
June 21st, 2024

Karissa Tedesco, M.S.Ed '12
(formerly Karissa Merkel) and Brian
Tedesco — Vincenzo Michael Tedesco,
born August 19th, 2023



Rachele Vespi-McGowan '14, '19
— Weston Walker McGowan,
born January 5th, 2024

Do you have good news to share? Send your updates to alumni@georgian.edu for possible inclusion in upcoming magazines.

IN MEMORIAM

Margaret Mary San Antonio, RSM, '44
Mary Sargent Brettner '47
Doris Musa '50
Mercedes Buckalew Paton '51
Alice Skokos '51
Penelope Karagias Arvanitis '52
Nan Antonio Paterniti '53
Mary Geis, RSM, '54, sister of
Mary Christina Geis, RSM, '49
Agnes O'Mara Ryan '55
Barbara Tirrell Davero '57, sister of
Margaret Tirrell O'Brien '40 and
Mary Jayne Tirrell Moran '52, aunt of
Elizabeth O'Brien Kline '64
Maryanne Raye '58
June Doyle '59,
sister of Mary Joyce Doyle '60
Mary Pauline Kuntne, RSM, '59
Elizabeth Masters O'Neill '59
Mary Louise McDonald Begg '60
Eugenia Palmegiano, Ph.D., '60
Beverly Holzberg-Levy '61
Joan McCarthy Kuchinski '61
Marlene Fritz, RSM, '64
Joan Held Fitzgerald '65
Rosalie Burrows, J.D., '66,
cousin of Candida Frenking Jens '57
Marilyn Fiero Overstreet '66
Gloriana Gleason Rodriguez '66
Margaret A. Waldron, RSM, '67
Joan McKeon, RSM, '68
Virginia Randall '69
Eleanor Tyler '69
Helen Bevacqua Fetter '70
Sharon Smith '70
Patricia Conlin, RSM, '71
Helen Fox '71
Lois Brennan Allen '73
Jean Morse '73
Sandra Larson McBroom '73
Maureen Fitzgerald Crane '75
Jody Sporn '79

Carla Crohn Friedman '79, '92
Sandra Algor James '80
Nancy Holland '81
Theresa McNeil '81
Maryann Ragucci '81
Nancy Csurbak Reid '81
Gregory Greer '82
Bohdan Bortnyk Sr. '83
Bernadine Jankowski Borowick '84,
sister of Laurine Jankowski Sibilia,
M.A., M.Ed., '81
Mary Caselli-Renn '84
Elizabeth Juhasz Leu, RN, '88
Marjorie Douglas Edelson '89
Stephanie Willie Wuestneck '90
Carole Gill Adamo '91
Wendi Morrisroe Allison '92
Patrick Lelinho '93
Patricia Will '93
Karen Newman Nobel '94
Peter Morris, Ed.D., '94, '02
Jessica Ferreira Ciriello '95
Loretta Lupino Donato '96, mother of
Rosemarie Donato Margolies '90, '95
and Alexandra Donato Jaffe '97
Elisabeth Collins Michels '96
Robert Morris Jr. '99, husband of
Nancy Frydendahl Morris '90
Deborah Perez '01
Kelly Poole '01
Nancie Rose '01
Elizabeth Ann Frank '03
Anna Eby '04
Renee McMillan '04
Carol Webb Post '04
Laura Berenger DeCaro '06
Nicholas Krupinski '07
Leslie Miller '07
Barry McQueen '10
Sue Weisbecker '12
Christian Casciano '20

Clement S. Bramley, father of Donald
Bramley '02 and David Bramley '03, '10
Anupam DasGupta, husband of
Professor Kasturi DasGupta
Corrine R. Donley, *assistant professor
of special education*
Patricia Dority, *former director for
health services*
Dorothy Light, *honorary Doctor of
Humanities, '91*
John K. Lloyd, *former board of trustee
member*
John McGovern, *former professor of
business*
Timothy O'Hara, husband of Professor
Susan Lauffer O'Hara
Benjamin G. Pulcrano, *former
professor and student support
services employee*
Louise S. Wootton,
professor of biology

We offer our condolences to any losses experienced in the lives of our GCU community. This list represents all passings shared with the Georgian Court Office of Alumni Relations between July 14th, 2023 and June 30th, 2024.

The print issue of last year's publication erroneously listed Kasturi DasGupta, professor emerita in sociology, in our In Memoriam section. We understand the sensitivity of such matters and apologize for the error.

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RELIVE COMMENCEMENT!

On Thursday, May 9th, we celebrated our 113th Annual Commencement, marking the graduation of 494 members of the Class of 2024! Even the clouds and light rain couldn't stop the smiles and pride of graduates and their loved ones on this special day. Scan the QR code to view or download photos from throughout the day or watch videos of the ceremonies.



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To get started, we invite you to explore FreeWill and their online estate planning tool. You can create a will for free and easily designate a gift to GCU in your plans.



Scan the QR code or visit FreeWill.com/GeorgianCourtUniversity to create your legacy.

Have you already included Georgian Court University in your estate plan? If so, we'd love to thank you for your gift and ensure your generosity is directed to the program or cause area or your choice. Please fill out a brief gift intent form at FreeWill.com/Record/GeorgianCourtUniversity or scan the QR code to tell us about your gift.



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