# GEORGIAN COURT UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE

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# FROM THE FRONTLER

GCU COMMUNITY RESPONDS TO THE PANDEMIC



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#### DEAR FRIENDS,

s Christmas and the holiday season approaches, we are grateful for you—our alumni, friends, donors, and supporters. You've been with us through it all, from heart-wrenching difficulties to newfound

heart-wrenching difficulties to newfound perspectives on life. The last 20 months pushed Georgian

Court graduates, faculty, students, and staff to the frontlines of positive change (p. 4). You rolled up your sleeves in hospitals, laboratories, counseling offices, and in classrooms. You quickly embraced virtual teaching and learning (p. 8), and you made difficult, but necessary, decisions to guide school districts, public health policy, and in some cases, private businesses.

Amid extraordinary challenges, your support of GCU remains strong, as you will see in our latest Impact Report. In the face of uncertainty, you donated time and resources to mentor students, and your financial giving broke records, resulting in more scholarships and funding for strategic university priorities.

One of those priorities is GCU's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (p. 10), an integral part of our mission that mirrors the Mercy core values. Strengthening our financial footing is equally important and despite pandemic pressures, Georgian Court has forged ahead.

For example, just days before this magazine went to press, the GCU School of Education earned full re-accreditation from CAEP, the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation. It was a challenging two-year process, but GCU's CAEP report was nearly flawless. A tough panel of auditors gave us full approval without any recommendations or stipulations. Both Standard & Poor's and Moody's this year upgraded our ratings outlook. We climbed to #109 in regional rankings by U.S. News & World Report, and its editors also noted our ability to help students secure their place in the middle class. Various organizations also turned to GCU for leadership: I was named board chair for the Independent Colleges and Universities of New Jersey (ICUNJ), and I was asked to chair the President's Council for the CACC, our athletics conference.

There is so much momentum at Georgian Court. Keep reading to learn how we successfully launched GCU's new accelerated nursing degree (p. 12), celebrated multiple virtual and in-person Commencement events, saw our best-ever season for women's basketball (p. 39), marked our first virtual alumni Reunion (p. 45), and the ways students got *really* creative with campus activities (p. 26).

Again, the holidays are almost here and I welcome this season joyful celebration and togetherness. We are a Catholic university, and therefore called to be responsible for each other and to care for the common good.

As you celebrate Christmas and ring in the New Year, I encourage you to reflect on all of the good that Georgian Court is doing and celebrate our shared sense of community. It is, I believe, one of our greatest gifts.

#### Go Lions,

" K Mehl

Joseph R. Marbach, Ph.D. President



# GEORGIAN COURT UNIVERSITY

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## GEORGIAN COURT UNIVERSITY

THE MERCY UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY



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#### FROM THE FRONTLINES: GCU COMMUNITY Responds to the Pandemic

The Mercy core value of service is always in the spotlight, but never more so than during the COVID-19 pandemic, when GCU alumni and students put themselves on the frontlines as social workers, teachers, and EMTs.



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story by SHEILA NOONAN photograph by JIM CONNOLLY

# GCU COMMUNITY RESPONDS TO THE PANDEMIC

SAMANTHA GLASSFORD '12 HAS HAD TO ADAPT HER ENGLISH COMPOSITION AND LITERATURE COURSES AT OCEAN COUNTY COLLEGE TO SUIT HER STUDENTS' NEEDS. OSHUA ORGEL '21 SPENT HIS EARLY CAREER as a rabbi addressing people's spiritual needs. Then came a change in interest, influenced by family members who work in health care. Today, the biology graduate, who headed to medical school this fall, tends to physical needs as an emergency medical technician (EMT)—a challenging call at any time, but especially during the pandemic.

"COVID-19 changed our protocols," explains Mr. Orgel, a volunteer with the Hatzolah ("relief" or "rescue" in Hebrew) first aid squad in Lakewood. "We now gown up before approaching patients and wear N95 masks, which makes communication more difficult, especially with older people who have hearing loss. Children, too. The mask covers most of my face, so I smile with my eyes." He notes that hospital emergency rooms are busier than ever, which can mean a lengthy wait in the parking lot or the need to transport the patient to another facility.

Mr. Orgel is one of about 30 million Americans—including other Georgian Court graduates and students—working on the pandemic frontline to keep people physically and mentally healthy. Any pre-med student has a full schedule, but Mr. Orgel balances several priorities: 5 to 10 EMT calls a week; a business partnership with his wife in Child SMART, a childcare center; and parenting five children under age 8, including an infant.

"In early morning, I get the kids ready for their day, then have about from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM for my online classes and assignments," says the 30-yearold. "That's also when I go on about 80% of my EMT calls. When I come back home, I actually feel rested—it's a break from classwork that others fill with a pick-up basketball game or computers—and then back to studying."

The pandemic has affected Mr. Orgel personally—he and his family had the coronavirus in September 2020—and deepened his commitment to the medical profession. "I've seen some COVID-19 patients who haven't made it and the worst the virus can do," he says. "And while COVID-19 will likely long be under control by the time I'm a doctor, being an EMT during the pandemic has made me even more passionate about medicine."

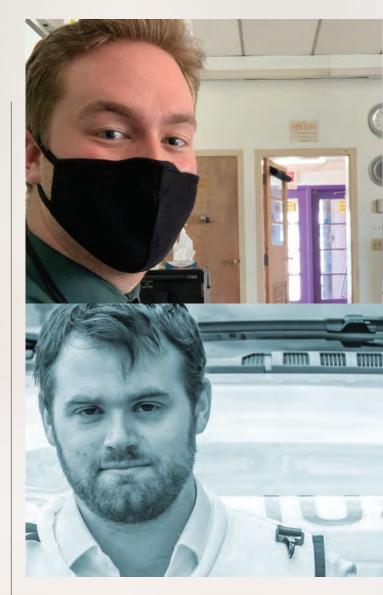
#### Lessons in Adaptability

In Spring 2020, Daniel Ginchereau '20 was a history/secondary education student learning in virtual classrooms because of COVID-19 safety precautions. In 2020–2021, he was teaching in a hybrid classroom at Cherry Hill High School West, filling in as a long-term substitute. At the time of the interview, about three-fourths of his students were learning from home, and the others were sitting at desks spaced six feet apart in the school. (*Editor's Note: Most of his students returned to the classroom in early March 2021, necessitating a room change to accommodate 17 students with social distancing and additional upheaval.*) Teaching during these novel circumstances takes flexibility, empathy, and creativity, he's discovered.

"In typical times, bringing World Civilization to life for five sections of ninth graders, many who are vocal about their dislike of history, can be an uphill climb," he says. "Now, instead of the excitement of high school 'firsts,' some students are caring for younger siblings while their parents work. And while some kids thrive with a work-at-your-own pace schedule, it's clear others miss the classroom setting and structure."

Mr. Ginchereau says a Georgian Court course on classroom technology provided "an arsenal of tools to use to make virtual content interesting." And just as he would in a traditional classroom, the first-year teacher aims to create a personable and comfortable learning environment, whether that means occasional Fido or Fluffy cameos ("kids love seeing homelife, especially pets") or a Friday midnight assignment deadline to accommodate a variety of schedules.

While time will tell how students fare in this unusual learning environment, teachers like Mr. Ginchereau, who became a special education humanities teacher at Carusi Middle School in Cherry Hill this fall, try to



connect with each of them. "I'm thrilled to be teaching. It's what I've wanted to do since I was a little kid," he says.

It took Samantha Glassford '12 a little longer to find her passion for teaching.

"I came to Georgian Court very shy and reserved, and not knowing at all what was ahead for me," she says. English professors, such as Paul Cappucci, Ph.D., became valued mentors, and through campus experiences such as Women in Leadership Development (WILD), she found her calling: the college classroom.

For the past seven years, Ms. Glassford has taught English composition and literature at Ocean County College (OCC). She's earned a reputation among students for being accessible, helpful, approachable—and even funny. While some classroom tactics have changed during the pandemic, she says, her desire to help OCC students be the best writers they can hasn't wavered.

"We typically do a lot of workshop-style learning in composition classes, where students form small groups, engage with each other, and receive hands-on help," explains Ms. Glassford, who had a six-class schedule last fall and spring, plus teaching during the summer session. "Obviously, with remote learning that doesn't work very well, so I make myself as available as I can with open office hours. I've removed some extraneous assignments and activities during the pandemic so students can bring me their best work on major projects."

Ms. Glassford records her lectures so that students have the option of attending live or watching them later.



In Spring 2021, Daniel Ginchereau '20 was teaching in a hybrid classroom at Cherry Hill High School West, where most of the students had returned to inperson learning.

Joshua Orgel '21 is a volunteer EMT with the Hatzolah first aid squad in Lakewood–in addition to his medical school studies and busy home life.

Amber Lotsi '14 says the social work education she received at GCU trained her to be "prepared for anything."

Social worker Ellen Solly '14 manages calls on a confidential hotline from health care workers and others, many of whom are experiencing anxiety or depression due to the pandemic.

"Many of my students are 'nontraditional'—older, with young children and working one or two jobs. In one classroom survey, I found at that least 75% of my students had jobs. They appreciate the flexibility," she says, and something she, as a student herself, does, too. She earned her master's degree in English from Monmouth University and is working toward a doctorate in educational leadership from Rowan University.

The Spring 2020 semester was a learning curve, but since then, remote learning has become second nature to both her and returning students, Ms. Glassford says. However, she believes, even when in-person instruction becomes widely available on college campuses, the pandemic has changed the learning paradigm in higher education.

"My colleagues and I talk about this all the time. Hybrid class and remote learning won't go away—they'll remain options, and college education will look vastly different than it did before the pandemic," she believes. "The emergence of remote learning was inevitable—COVID-19 just accelerated it."

#### **Putting Preparation to Work**

Licensed social workers must complete continuing education units (CEUs) to maintain their status in the states where they practice. As both social workers Amber Lotsi '14 and Ellen Solly '14 discovered, existing CEU courses don't cover pandemics. Instead, they've drawn on their GCU education, foundational social work concepts, and community support to serve clients and grow professionally.

While at HCA Houston Healthcare Clear Lake, Ms. Lotsi's typical responsibilities included helping hospice patients and their families and assisting when the Texas child services division was involved. Additional duties emerged during the pandemic, such as investigating whether homebound patients' insurance covered oxygen delivery, and if not, helping them apply for charity care to cover the cost.

"One big adjustment was the limited face-to-face contact I had with patients, and instead, conducting assessments or referrals by phone. I really missed the personal interactions that are an important part of who I am as a social worker," says Ms. Lotsi, who holds a Master of Social Work degree and works at the Menninger Clinic, a substance use/mental health hospital. The local community's supportive response—a constant flow of meals and uplifting messages—meant a lot to Ms. Lotsi and her hospital colleagues.

"When people took time to bring us meals, it made me feel really appreciated," she says.

During these "unusual times," says Ms. Lotsi, she gained an even greater appreciation for the social work education she received at GCU.

"I was trained to be prepared for anything, and role play exercises based on my professors' own work experiences gave me the confidence that I can handle anything. Even a pandemic." The clients, too, inspire her. "Seeing other people get through challenges makes you know you can get through them, too," she says.

Ms. Solly, who also holds an M.S.W. degree, is an employee assistance program case manager for Intrado, which contracts with thousands of companies across the United States. A confidential 24/7 hotline is available to clients' employees who are dealing with work- or home-related issues, often seeking referrals to practitioners or programs. During a typical day, she answers about 30 calls, many of which have been pandemic-related since February 2020.

"At the beginning, the calls we received were mainly due to sheer panic of not knowing what was going on in our world," says Ms. Solly. "I helped them realize what was out of their control—such as finding a cure—and encouraged them to be solution-focused on what they could do, such as frequent handwashing, wearing masks, and staying socially distant."

The pandemic has been especially difficult for people with substance abuse issues, she says, who can't physically attend meetings and worry that they'll start using drugs or alcohol again. Some already have.

"Fortunately, many call the hotline before they relapse, so I am able to identify resources and make referrals to a practitioner or program," says Ms. Solly. "I follow up to see if they're keeping appointments, but also to help them normalize what they're experiencing and understand we are going through some difficult unknowns."

Ms. Solly also receives calls from health care workers, many who are in "sheer distress" and experiencing anxiety or depression.

"They're emotionally and physically drained, and it helps to let them talk. It might be a nurse who just finished a 12-hour shift and lost patients to COVID-19," she says. "I'll ask, 'Did you do everything you could with the resources you had?' and assure them that even with their best efforts, some patients won't survive. They often don't have time to sit and take care of themselves, so I give them an opportunity to reflect and get through their day, as well as suggest relevant resources."

Grounded in a GCU social work education that often took her out of her comfort zone, Ms. Solly says working during the pandemic has been a struggle, but it has an upside.

"2020 pushed me to serve my clients and my community better," she says. "I've grown as a practitioner." ■

# Pivoting During the Pandemic HOW GEORGIAN COURT FACULTY TRANSITIONED TO REMOTE LEARNING VIRTUALLY OVERNIGHT

#### story by GWEN MORAN

ARCH 2020 WILL GO DOWN IN HISTORY as the month so many things changed—some forever—as a result of the pandemic. And the Georgian Court University campus was no exception. Virtually overnight, the impact of COVID-19 and the race to keep students, faculty, and the community safe flipped the script on the "traditional" way of teaching, as classes became remote.

So, when Stephanie Rahill, Ph.D., associate professor of psychology and director of the M.A. in School Psychology program, stepped into her role as the director of Georgian Court's Center for Teaching and Learning, she had a big job ahead of her. The university had remote learning systems in place already, but they were typically asynchronous programs. In other words, students could typically access instructional videos on their own, or hybrid models where they can access materials and time spent with their professor or instructor for questions and discussion. Typical classroom instruction is synchronous, where students and instructors are involved in live sessions at the same time. Shifting to entirely remote, asynchronous or hybrid models was an enormous undertaking.

#### **All Hands on Deck**

"As soon as we shut down, there was definitely a big scramble for all of us as faculty," says Dr. Rahill. "We were thinking: How do we still engage with our students? We can't just talk into a computer for an hour and 15 minutes. That doesn't work. How do we still meet learning outcomes? What works best?"

She credits the instructional technology team for the job they did supporting faculty as they began using tools like WebEx and Blackboard to collaborate and host live sessions with students and set up discussion forums for faculty to share information and resources.

For newer faculty, the challenge was even greater. Jessica Keene, assistant professor of history, had recently finished her Ph.D. and had only begun teaching at Georgian Court in January 2020.

"I was just getting a better handle on my schedule and understanding what I needed to do to manage a classroom and the rug got pulled out from under us when we got the call," she says.

It was trial and error at first, but by summer, Dr. Rahill says things became more intentional. As the teams realized that this wasn't a short-term situation and would be continuing into the 2020–2021 academic year, the IT team spearheaded more training to examine best practices in using technology. The university held a four-week course to help instructors understand how to maximize their effectiveness in remote instruction. Dr. Rahill offered training in pedagogy.

#### **Creativity in Action**

Throughout this time, faculty members were collaborating, as well, says Stephanie M. Chung, Ph.D., assistant professor of nursing. "We were definitely on the phone more than ever, at all hours of the day. If I found something that could help another faculty member's course, we would be e-mailing or calling," she says.

Dr. Stephanie Rahill

Dr. Michael Wortley

Dr. Jessica Keene

Dr. Stephanie Chung

And sometimes, the professors had to get creative. Nursing instruction often requires demonstration and hands-on practice. One skill nursing students need to learn is how to suction an airway, which is typically done with a manikin. A lab instructor creatively used a paper cup with a hole cut in the bottom of it to teach them the skill remotely, Dr. Chung recalls.

"They were so resourceful," she says.

Michael Wortley, Ph.D., assistant professor of exercise science, says that keeping students engaged is one of the most challenging parts of this new normal. In a classroom setting, you can read the room and sense whether students understand the material and are keeping up. In the remote learning era—where persuade each other to choose a certain option. And he's done videos where he's included graphics about the lessons in a "reverse green screen" format, he says. He hopes that students seeing him explain things along with the graphics makes the video more engaging, as opposed to them just hearing his "disembodied voice over some PowerPoint slides," he says.

Dr. Keene has also implemented a system where students must read and either write a journal entry or post about the assignment. Those elements are not weighted heavily in their grade, but it's an incentive to do the reading beforehand and come to class prepared. It's been working, and she intends to keep that element of her class even when classes are in person

#### In fact, the faculty members agree that this period of reinvention and introspection has taught them lessons and techniques that they'll take forward into whatever the "next normal" is.

so-called "Zoom fatigue" is an issue—many students keep their laptop cameras off. Then, he started implementing a tip he'd heard about.

"I remember seeing some advice that you should ask a question that requires some interaction every couple of minutes," he says.

So, every few minutes, he'll ask a question and tell students to use Zoom reactions—thumbs-up for "agree" and frown face for "disagree"—to show whether they agree or disagree. In a recent class about communication, he had students try to again. Dr. Keene has also invited guest speakers from Europe, California, and Maryland—something she says she might not have thought about if classrooms hadn't been disrupted.

In fact, the faculty members agree that this period of reinvention and introspection taught them lessons and techniques that they'll take forward into whatever the "next normal" is. For now, however, each is focused on continuing to find the best formats, practices, and techniques to serve their students.

# MISSIONPOSSIBLE

#### GEORGIAN COURT UNDERSCORES COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

trike up a conversation with GCU Chief Diversity Officers Ria DasGupta, Ed.D., and Joy L. Smith, Ed.D., and each will tell you the same thing—they were born to do this: shining a light on matters of equity, inclusion, and diversity.

"We have a lot to do," says Dr. Smith who serves as the CDO for student affairs. "From curriculum development to who's enrolling on our campus, we are moving to a place where diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) are always intentional—not an afterthought."

Her colleague agrees.

"We are moving forward in every area of the university to institutionalize diversity, equity, and inclusion," says Dr. DasGupta, the CDO for academic affairs and community outreach. "It is a vehicle to help us get to the much larger mission of Georgian Court."

#### Addressing DEI Needs

GCU President Joseph R. Marbach, Ph.D., announced the creation of a chief diversity officer position in June 2020 as national unrest unfolded in the wake of George Floyd's murder in Minnesota. Other campus diversity initiatives were already underway, but the national flashpoint made it clear that many students, faculty, staff, and alumni wanted more.

GCU soon launched a national search that yielded two exceptional finalists, and in January 2021, Dr. Marbach named Dr. DasGupta and Dr. Smith as chief diversity officers.

"They work with me and with our chief mission officer [Paul DaPonte, Ph.D.] to educate and guide our community to better

live our Mercy mission," says Dr. Marbach. "Doing so requires us to lead—and come together—by respecting and celebrating the dignity of each person we encounter."

Dr. DasGupta and Dr. Smith are also at the helm of GCU's existing Council for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (CDEI), a 45-member campus advisory group that launched in 2019 as the Council for Diversity and Inclusion.

#### **DEI—A Thread Through "Everything"**

Now, several months into their jobs, Dr. Smith and Dr. DasGupta have conducted campus listening tours and exhaustive research to better understand GCU's needs. They have ambitious plans that examine gender identity, microaggressions, critical race theory, disability justice, and inclusive practices in academic course development.

A faculty-student brown bag series will focus on relevant research. A student coffeehouse conversation series is in the works. The new L.E.A.D. men's program is creating opportunities for male students to talk candidly about the issues they face, especially as first-generation college students, first-generation Americans, and as students of color.

Partnering with student groups is important, too. For example, during Hispanic Heritage Month, the DEI office cosponsored "Latina Made, Not Maid," a focus on the stereotypes of Latinx women in today's society.

And then there's the pandemic, which exposed additional DEI problems.

Ria-DasGupta, CDO for academic affairs and community outreach





Joy Smith, Ed.D., CDO for student affairs; Jewel Boyd, coordinator for student activities and engagement; Kim Markland, TRIO academic specialist; Danielle Lamb, director of TRIO-Student Support Services; Erika Hernandez, co-founder and CEO, Latina Made Not Maid; Provost Janice Warner, Ph.D.; and Jaime A. Rivera, Ph.D.; and Jaime A. Rivera, Ph.D., associate professor of world languages and cultures and director of the Vamos/Avanzando program, at the "Latina Made, Not Made" presentation on October 6, 2021

"Equity dynamics exposed food insecurities and other challenges related to access and equity," notes Dr. Smith. Her office is collaborating with the Office of Campus Ministry in its work with two local nonprofits to support the GCU food pantry.

"Our work is to make it clear that diversity, equity, and inclusion are part of everything," says Dr. Smith, a Syracuse University alumna who earned her doctorate from Rutgers University. Her research interests include social inequality and the intersection of race, class, gender, and sexual orientation in higher education.

"Everyone needs to understand how diversity, equity, and inclusion relate to their areas of work—whether it's academic areas or administrative areas—this is their job, too. We are inviting people to bring their talents and skills to the table in ways that honor their identities and experiences," Dr. Smith adds.

Building on those experiences is critical, according to Dr. DasGupta, a Rutgers (Douglass College) graduate who earned her doctorate in international and multicultural education at the University of San Francisco.

"My work with the faculty is to build inclusive classrooms and pedagogy, to create awareness, and to cultivate understanding around inclusive spaces," explains Dr. DasGupta, who is establishing GCU's Equitable Pedagogy Institute. Through the institute, faculty can workshop elements of their courses with regard to DEI, and faculty and staff can access foundational materials to hone equitable teaching practices.

And that's just the beginning. The DEI office has even bigger plans for 2022 and beyond.

#### **A Matter of Mission**

Dr. DasGupta and Dr. Smith are part of the Office of M ssion Integration. The organizational structure reflects a commitment to the university's Mercy core values of respect, integrity, justice, compassion, and service.

"They are strong values that are essential to DEI work, which also reflects the global mission and concerns of the Sisters of Mercy," says. Dr. DasGupta. "Our work aims for a social justice that centers on the dignity of whole persons."

She is well aware that the chief diversity roles at GCU come with enormous responsibility—from convening dialogues around racism to rethinking inclusiveness related to gender dynamics, socioeconomics, ability, and sexual orientation.

Each will tell you that the work ahead represents a heavy lift. But neither Dr. DasGupta nor Dr. Smith is going it alone.

"We are reaching out to the entire GCU community—faculty, students, administrators, and alumni—to be ambassadors as we lead the charge," says Dr. Smith.

"The two of us won't do all the work," she says. "We create the vision for what needs to be done, but having people dedicated to the work of being a champion for diversity, equity, and inclusion is critical."

Read more about the work of the new Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in their inaugural newsletter at https://bit.ly/DEI News



# A BUMPER CROP OF NURSING'S BEST

#### story by SHEILA NOONAN

hat do the best Jersey gardens and the Georgian Court– Hackensack Meridian *Health* School of Nursing have in common? The perfect mixture for growth. For the nursing school, that includes dedicated faculty (many of whom also have clinical roles), an outstanding health care partner, challenging curriculum and programs, motivated students, and generous donors. Most of all, especially during the pandemic, it has had resiliency.

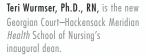
Teri Wurmser, Ph.D., RN, the nursing school's dean, credits her faculty for doing what nurses are known for—responding during a crisis with empathy. In the Spring 2020 semester, "we had to very quickly pivot and adapt lectures to synchronous online formats," she says. "For our laboratories and some of our clinicals, we had to rapidly find technology and simulations that would give our students the same type of experience as an in-person setting. We use ATI for testing, and they were very helpful with providing rigorous case studies."

Nursing students were the first at Georgian Court to return to the classroom—socially distanced and with masks, larger classes split between virtual and in person—but GCU felt it was really important that students have that face time.

"Our experience with the nursing students showed that if everyone takes precautions and monitors their well-being, we could operate regularly and return to somewhat normal classroom conditions," says Provost Janice Warner, Ph.D. "Nursing students led the way."

Keeping the educational standards and experiences high early in the pandemic was one challenge. The other—supporting students.





tech, Ethan says, "I learned to pick up on situations and anticipate the team's needs." Patients who came into the ER with COVID-19 symptoms were quickly triaged, and if they tested positive for the virus, transported to designated floors.

The then-nursing student's time in the ICU during in the pandemic was different—and not only for him. It was frightening very early on, he admits, until more information about COVID-19 was available.

"We followed the new protocols and safety measures—the PPE and N95s—and learned more about the virus," says Ethan. "When I'd see media reports about health care workers who said, 'I didn't sign up for this' and quit, I'd think, 'Well, actually you did. Your job is to take care of sick people, even when it isn't easy.' It's a mentality you have to internalize if you're going into the profession."

With strict restrictions on family member visits, Ethan had an important role in facilitating communication between COVID-19 patients and their loved ones. The simple act of setting up an iPad in a patient's room became one of the pandemic's hallmarks of compassionate care.

#### **A Nursing School's Roots**

The pandemic grew the nursing school administrators, faculty, and students in many unanticipated ways, professionally and personally. The foundation for this growth was set in 2008 with the introduction of a nursing school program at GCU, the first in Ocean County to offer a four-year B.S.N. degree. Hackensack Meridian *Health*, which now includes 17 hospitals and more than 500 health-related centers, has been a partner from the start, providing essential "real-world" learning opportunities and student scholarships.

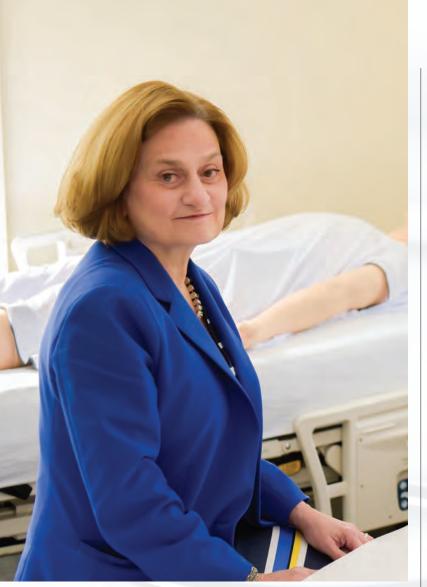
"The first class had about 20 to 25 students, and nursing was a department within the GCU School of Arts and Sciences," explains Dr. Warner. "As enrollment took off, nursing became the largest department in Arts and Sciences, so it made sense to create a separate nursing school." The Georgian Court–Hackensack Meridian *Health* School of Nursing, credentialed by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education and the New Jersey Board of Nursing, officially launched in 2020 with Dr. Wurmser, one of its founders, named the inaugural dean.

The nursing school's enrollment has climbed over the last 13 years, with more than 400 students anticipated in 2021–2022. One reason for the growth—a national nursing shortage has been anticipated for years, as baby boomers in the profession retire.

"Once I graduated nursing school, I never had to find a job. It always found me," says Dr. Wurmser. "That's still true today. In health care, especially nursing, you're going to have a job, and at GCU, by graduation, more than 90% of our students are employed.

"But I think there's something else that makes nursing attractive, and that's the desire to serve, which is a hallmark of our profession. Many of our students have family members who are nurses. Others have taken care of ill loved ones or been sick themselves and realize that it's the nurses who are with the patients 24/7. Today's nursing is also a technology-driven field, and that has a lot of appeal with younger generations."

It took Ethan time to discover that nursing was his passion. He earned a bachelor's degree in bio-interdisciplinary health services from St. Joseph's University, but after graduation, wasn't finding his



"Our faculty did a wonderful job making themselves available to our students, some of whom needed one-on-one contact," says Dr. Wurmser. "We had town halls almost every week to let students know we were there for them. We didn't always have the answers, but we knew what was on their minds, and we tried to be as helpful as possible."

But what is educating a nurse without patients? In Fall 2020 and with the proper personal protective equipment, Georgian Court nursing students returned to clinical settings at Hackensack Meridian *Health* and other hospitals. About 40% of the nursing school's May 2021 graduates worked at a hospital during the pandemic, and many students administered COVID-19 vaccines at local immunization sites.

Ethan Carpenter '21 was a patient care technician at Jersey Shore University Medical Center's emergency room while a student, but a practicum in the Intensive Care Unit during COVID-19 revealed a different facet of nursing to him. In the fast-paced ER and triage area, says Ethan, he assisted nurses with taking vital signs, transporting patients, cleaning up rooms, and taking vials to the blood bank. In his four years as a patient care Ethan Carpenter '21, who graduated in May, is now a nurse in Jersey Shore University Medical Center's Cardiac ICU Stepdown Unit.

niche. His mother, a nurse, and his father, a hospital administrator and physician, encouraged him to take the patient care tech role.

"I decided to work in the hospital environment and see how I would feel about it. And after my first day, I thought, this is definitely what I want," he says, first taking core classes at Brookdale Community College and then enrolling in Georgian Court's program. He recently began his first nursing job in Jersey Shore's Cardiac ICU Stepdown Unit.

Ethan is one of an increasing number of men entering the nursing profession. As of April 2021, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that 12% of registered nurses are men, compared with 2.7% male RNs in 1970. For there to be more male nurses, obviously, there are more male nursing students, a demographic on the rise at Georgian Court–Hackensack Meridian *Health* School of Nursing (co-founded by a male nurse, Richard Hader, RN, Ph.D., FAAN, CHE, NE-BC, CPHQ, who was nationally recognized in his field). The nursing school has always been coed, notes Dr. Wurmser, and today, more men are entering the program.

While females account for most nursing roles, and society might view nursing as a women's field, Ethan believes it's time to move forward.

"Some men might not think nursing's a very masculine role," he says. "Anyone who's ever worked in an emergency room can tell you nursing's not a very feminine role, either. Nursing is simply a really solid profession for anyone to enter."

#### A School on the Grow

Since its inception, Georgian Court has been challenging the status quo, and that's true when it comes to the university's academic programs as well as societal issues. The nursing school's newest offering is an accelerated B.S.N. (A.B.S.N.) program in which people who've earned a bachelor's degree in another discipline can earn their Bachelor of Nursing degree in as little as 14 months. The 67-credit, highly selective program is attracting candidates from



The nursing school is growing in other ways, some of which directly support students. In July 2020, Georgian Court announced a \$200,000 donation from the Jules L. Plangere, Jr. Family Foundation that funded four scholarships to highly achieving students. One reason Georgian Court was selected—the direct COVID-19 assistance it provided to the local community. Also in 2020, a \$24,500 grant from the Provident Bank Foundation funded a Newborn Tory neonatal simulator, giving nursing students access to important demonstrations, hands-on instruction, and testing modules.

It wouldn't be a growth story without noting the nursing school's physical expansion.

"We're very excited about this facet, too, because it says a lot

"Your job is to take care of sick people, even when it isn't easy.' It's a mentality you have to internalize if you're going into the profession."

beyond Georgian Court's solid Central and South New Jersey base because of its pace—aspiring nurses eager to enter the profession and the school's reputation. Now recruiting for its second cohort, the accelerated program's numbers started off intentionally small (the first cohort had 18 students) and is aimed at high-academically achieving students who can keep up and succeed in its fast pace.

There's another small, but flourishing, part of Georgian Court's nursing community. Students from the nearby New Seminary, an Orthodox Jewish higher education institution, are enrolling in Georgian Court's nursing programs.

"We're bringing in students who otherwise wouldn't necessarily become nurses, and at the same time, adding to our diversity and equity efforts in a different way," said Dr. Warner. about where we're heading. The nursing school began in Hamilton Hall, and with more students and programs, we've grown out of it," said Dr. Wurmser. "We're still there, but we needed more lab space, which we now have in Mercy Hall and have also converted the Music Building into nursing labs. They did a beautiful job. And, we'll have a significant presence in the new planned nursing and health sciences building that will help accomplish what we want to do."

What's next? The university envisions an expanded health care focus, from master's-degree programs in nursing to other health care professions. "We also aspire to become more regional, as we're seeing from the applicants to the accelerated B.S.N. program," says Dr. Warner. "With health care, there are many opportunities for Georgian Court to grow."

#### FACULTY

#### BARBARA AMENDOLIA, DR.N.P., NNP, APN-BC, joined the full-time

faculty of the Georgian Court-Hackensack Meridian Health School of Nursing as an associate professor of nursing in Fall 2020. She is a certified registered neonatal nurse practitioner and neonatal resuscitation program instructor. She has worked in clinical practice at Cooper University Hospital, where she provided direct in-patient care of critically ill neonates and their families. Dr. Amendolia previously served on the faculty of the University of Pennsylvania's nurse practitioner program. She has also taught at Stockton University and Drexel University, where she earned her Doctor of Nursing Practice.

#### SAROJ ARYAL, PH.D.,

joined the full-time faculty of the School of Arts and Sciences as an assistant professor of mathematics in Spring 2020. He previously served as an associate professor of mathematics at Montana State University-Billings. Dr. Aryal is enthusiastic about getting undergraduate students involved in his research projects. He has already mentored several GCU students for conference presentations and recently presented "Stability of Polynomials Under Uniform Perturbation of Coefficients" at the 2021 Virtual Joint Mathematics Meetings. He earned his Ph.D. and his M.S. in Mathematics at the University of Wyoming.

#### ELLEN M. BERNHARD, PH.D.,

joined the full-time faculty of the School of Business and Digital Media as an assistant professor of digital communication in Fall 2020. She most recently served as an instructor at Saint Joseph's University and Chestnut Hill College. She earned her Ph.D. in the Department of Culture and Communication at Drexel University with a dissertation on contemporary punk communities and the evolution of American punk rock. She is the author of Contemporary Punk Rock Communities: Scenes of Inclusion and Dedication (2019).



#### CONSTANCE M. BIALOBOCKI, RN,

**CCN**, joined the full-time faculty of the Georgian Court-Hackensack Meridian Health School of Nursing as an assistant professor of nursing in Spring 2021. She most recently served as a faculty instructor and clinical instructor at the Chamberlain College of Nursing and as an adjunct clinical instructor at Rowan College at Burlington County. Ms. Bialobocki also worked in the Medical ICU (MICU) and in ambulatory care/triage at Deborah Heart and Lung Center. She earned her M.S.N. in Nursing Practice at New Jersey City University and is currently working toward her Doctor of Nursing Practice degree at Monmouth University.

#### RICHARD V. CALDES, ED.D., '88,

joined the full-time faculty of the School of Education as a lecturer in administration and leadership in Fall 2020. He previously served as the director of student field experiences and clinical partnerships (since 2018) and lecturer (since 2016) at GCU. Dr. Caldes was the principal of Brick Memorial High School and New Egypt High School, an interim superintendent of schools for the Brick Township School District, and an edTPA scorer for Pearson Education. He earned his Doctor of Educational Leadership at Argosy University and completed master's degree and teaching certificate programs at Georgian Court.

**DENISE A. FURLONG, ED.D.**, joined the full-time faculty of the School of Education as an assistant professor of education and director of the reading specialist program in Fall 2021. She comes to us with more than 20 years of experience in teaching Grades K-12. She also has served as a teaching portfolio coach and mentor for Alternate Route students at Rutgers University and an adjunct professor and ESL teacher educator at Rider University. Dr. Furlong is the author of Voices of Newcomers: Experiences of Multilingual Learners (in press, EduMatch Publishing). She earned her Ed.D. in Literacy Education and Ed.M. in Language Education at Rutgers.

#### STEPHEN H. GENCO, ED.D., '92, '00, joined the

full-time faculty of the School of Education as an assistant professor of administration and leadership in Fall 2020. He previously served as the superintendent of the Jackson Township School District and the South Plainfield School District. He has also served as an assistant superintendent, principal, vice principal, science teacher, and coach in New Jersey schools. He earned his Ed.D. in Educational Leadership at Rowan University and two master's degrees (school counseling and administration) from Georgian Court.

#### **MICHELLE HABERL**

joined the full-time faculty of the School of Arts and Sciences as a visiting professor of painting and drawing in Fall 2021. She most recently served as an adjunct faculty member at Rowan University, Rowan College at Burlington County, and Salem Community College. Ms. Haberl has exhibited her artwork across New Jersey and Pennsylvania, as well as in New York, Texas, and Wisconsin, where she was an artist-in-residence at the Wormfarm Institute. She earned her Master of Fine Arts at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts.

#### JESSICA KEENE, PH.D.,

joined the full-time faculty of the School of Arts and Sciences as an assistant professor of history in Spring 2020. Her research interests include early modern English gender and religious history. Dr. Keene's current book project, titled Spiritual Fornication: Monasticism and Sexual Depravity in Reformation England, argues that ideas about sexual depravity were central to the process and progress of Protestant reform in 16<sup>th</sup>-century England. She recently completed her Ph.D. in History at Johns Hopkins University. She has taught at Johns Hopkins and Goucher College.





JESSICA A. LISA, PH.D., joined the full-time faculty of the School of Arts and Sciences as assistant professor of biology in Fall 2021. She most recently served as a teaching instructor at Rutgers University in the Department of Biochemistry and Microbiology. Dr. Lisa's research interests include molecular microbial ecology and bioinformatics; ecology of microorganisms involved in biogeochemical cycling; and microbial indicators of watershed and ecosystem health; as well as sustainability, green infrastructure, and climate change. She earned her Ph.D. in Marine Science, Biological Sciences at the College of William and Mary.

#### BRIAN C. MCSHERRY, J.D.,

joined the full-time faculty of the School of Business and Digital Media as an assistant professor of graphic design and multimedia in Fall 2021. He most recently served as an adjunct assistant professor at Queensborough Community College and Borough of Manhattan Community College. A Fulbright Scholar, Dr. McSherry earned his J.D. degree at SUNY Buffalo Law School and his M.F.A. with Distinction in Studio Arts at the University at Buffalo. He is an attorney and a freelance graphic designer whose work has been exhibited throughout New York and Connecticut.

#### NICOLA A. MEADE, PH.D., NCC,

**LCPC (MD)**, joined the full-time faculty of the School of Arts and Sciences as an assistant professor of psychology in Fall 2021. She most recently served as a visiting assistant professor at Hood College and an adjunct instructor at Old Dominion University. Dr. Meade is a Nationally Certified Counselor with an M.S. in Pastoral Counseling. In her private practice, she sees clients both virtually and in person. She earned her Ph.D. in Counseling Education and Supervision with a Concentration in Mental Health from Old Dominion University.

#### MARIA LUCILA N. QUEVEDO, RN,

joined the full-time faculty of the Georgian Court-Hackensack Meridian Health School of Nursing as a clinical nursing coordinator/ lecturer in Fall 2021. She most recently worked as a registered nurse in the ICU Stepdown Unit and the emergency room at Community Medical Center. In 2018, Ms. Quevedo received a Nursing Excellence Award for Empirical Quality Outcomes. She holds a Master of Science in Nursing Education from Capella University. She is fluent in English as well as Tagalog.

#### ERIC ROSENBERG, PH.D., joined

the full-time faculty of the School of Arts and Sciences as an assistant professor of applied computing and director of the computer information systems program in Fall 2020. He recently served as a visiting professor at Rutgers University. For 40 years, he was a principal member of the technical staff for Bell Labs/AT&T, where he developed mathematical models and algorithms for a variety of problems. Dr. Rosenberg is the inventor or co-inventor of 19 patents and has published several books, including Fractal Dimensions of Networks (2020). He earned his B.A. in Mathematics at Oberlin College and his Ph.D. in Operations Research at Stanford University.

#### RENEE R. SPACE, D.S.W., LSW,

joined the full-time faculty of the School of Arts and Sciences as a lecturer in social work in Fall 2021. She recently served as adjunct faculty at Bloomsburg University, Salem Community College, and Temple University, and as a parttime lecturer at Rutgers University. Dr. Space is a licensed social worker who incorporates cultural humility and understanding in working with diverse communities, schools, and service providers. She has worked at BAYADA Inc., Value Options of New Jersey Inc., and Heartland Hospice. Dr. Space earned her D.S.W. from Capella University.





#### CHRISTINE STEVENSON, M.S.L.S., '11

joined the full-time faculty of the Sister Mary Joseph Cunningham Library as the outreach and engagement librarian in Fall 2021. She has worked for the GCU library and the School of Education since 2015. Her research interests include creative space planning and programming; bibliotherapy; gamification; outreach; and diversity, equity, and inclusion. Ms. Stevenson has a special interest in reading and writing young adult literature and is the curator of the annual Dose of Poetry workshop series at GCU. She earned her Master of Science in Library and Information Science from Clarion University of Pennsylvania.

#### DENISE E. VAN SANT-SMITH, PH.D.,

**RN. CNE.** joined the full-time faculty of the Georgian Court-Hackensack Meridian Health School of Nursing as an assistant professor of nursing in Fall 2020. She recently served as a lecturer II with a focus in the medical surgical nursing at Ocean County College. A registered nurse who worked at Community Medical Center, Dr. Van Sant-Smith is a certified nurse educator, a certified Pediatric Advanced Life Support Program provider, an Advanced Cardiovascular Life Support Program provider, and an Association of Diabetes Care and Education specialist. She earned her Ph.D. in Nursing at Duquesne University.

#### CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR NEWEST EMERITI FACULTY

JAMES J. CARROLL, D.B.A., professor emeritus of business administration

F. THOMAS CRAWLEY JR., ED.D., associate professor emeritus of education

STEPHEN M. LEVINE, PH.D., professor emeritus of psychology

#### **BEST WISHES IN RETIREMENT**

**BANANI DHAR, PH.D.,** assistant professor of mathematics, who served GCU for more than 13 years



## GCU STUDENTS VOLUNTEER IN SOUTH AFRICAN Special Needs School

#### story by ERICA CALECA '21

In January 2020, GCU School of Education students and staff traveled more than 8,000 miles for Education, and Culture in South Africa, a service trip led by Lindiwe Magaya, Ph.D., associate professor of education, and Mary Ann Smorra, Ed.D., professor of education. There, the travelers volunteered at the Open Air School in Durban, which serves children with physical impairments, from mild to severe. The GCU group also donated school supplies collected by the GCU community to help those in need. But beyond the primary goal of service, GCU students also learned firsthand about the culture, customs, and values of South Africans.

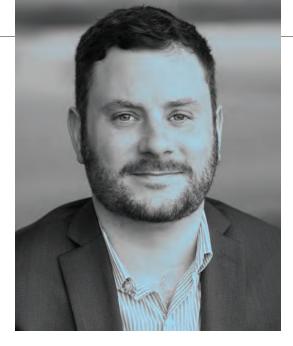
The trip "provided an opportunity to serve, learn, and be inspired," said Dr. Magaya, who noted that this was one of the most rewarding trips she has ever taken.

Antoinette Hynes '21, who recently graduated with a degree in English and elementary education, stated that what she gained from the trip was "the importance of understanding the backgrounds of my students and their different abilities. The schools in South Africa did a great job of connecting with students and treating them as individuals, something I hope to mirror in my future classes."

"Observing how caring and patient the teachers and staff were at Open Air was inspiring and showed me what a true educator should look like," said Olivia Santarsiero '20, an interdisciplinary and elementary education graduate, who added that the experience confirmed her "belief that all students deserve the least restrictive environment possible in which to learn."

Students, as well as staff, saw the challenges that children with special needs face—such as availability of resources. Teacher preparation programs in South Africa do not offer special education certificates, but no matter the challenges that special needs children face, they—as well as their teachers—are resilient.

Dr. Magaya adds that the entire group was "inspired by how the children persevere and excel in academics, sports, and cultural activities by embracing their school motto of 'I can and I will."



### ETHICALLY SPEAKING

#### story by MELISSA KVIDAHL REILLY

Assistant Professor of Philosophy Corey Katz, Ph.D., has been interested in ethics for as long as he can remember. As a child, he devoured science fiction and dystopian novels, immersing himself in different societies with different sets of values. And it wasn't long before he started pondering the questions at the root of these texts: Who determines what's "fair?" Are we born with a universal moral code? What are our basic human rights?

At the same time, Dr. Katz grew up in a household where concern for the climate was front and center; his father owned a company focused on energy efficiency and green building practices.

"When I got to college, I started learning more about climate change and the threats it poses to human well-being, never mind the well-being of the rest of life on this planet, if we do not control it," he says. "Addressing this problem is very difficult, economically and technologically, and it raises all kinds of ethical questions." At once, his two interests—in the climate and in ethics—converged.

Most commonly, bioethics refers to the ethical questions surrounding health care. But Dr. Katz has a broader approach. "To me, bioethics is ethics as it relates to biology," he says. "It's more than just health care, and it includes the ethical questions raised by biotechnology, like genetic modification, as well as those raised by environmental issues."

Most of his work focuses on the theoretical and practical questions surrounding environmental challenges like pollution and climate change, and he's currently working on a book addressing one of today's most pressing questions: which environmental risks are morally acceptable, and which are not? For example, drilling for oil and then burning it for energy carries a number of environmental risks, but some might argue that the benefits outweigh these risks—oil provides jobs, wealth, and benefits for our society. Dr. Katz's book will explore the opposing point of view, that there are certain basic human rights that should never be violated, even if it's for the supposed greater good of society.

#### **Bioethics at Georgian Court**

Georgian Court University is preparing students to ponder these questions and more with a new bioethics course, which meets General Education requirements and is available to students of any major. The course equips students with the skills needed to make moral arguments, understand and apply moral theories, and ponder ethical questions relative to their own beliefs and opinions.

"Another focus area of bioethics we're hoping to develop at the university is in regard to health care," Dr. Katz says. "We want to help students in health care fields gain the practical skills needed to navigate the ethical dilemmas they will face in their work, but also explore the challenges involved in making health care itself more environmentally friendly, by shrinking its ecological footprint."

To expose this interdisciplinary field to even more students, the Department of Religious Studies, Theology, and Philosophy recently launched an ethics minor. Its classes run the gamut from the theoretical to the practical, exploring ethics as it relates to media, business, social work, criminal justice, human rights, sustainability, and more.

"Ethics isn't just about the theoretical," says Dr. Katz. "Regardless of the profession our students pursue, it's important to be able to weigh the moral implications of their decisions."

#### BIOETHICS 101: The Big Questions

The following questions are just some of those addressed by Dr. Katz and his students. Where do you land?

#### Do health care providers have the right to go against the informed choice of a patient for the patient's benefit?

Dr. Katz and his students examine the moral and theoretical implications of providing beneficial treatments to a patient who doesn't want them, and why we should respect the autonomous choices of competent individuals.

#### Can human beings gain and lose personhood or a right to life?

This topic is especially appropriate for beginning or end-of-life questions, e.g., utilizing embryonic stem cells or removing life support for those in a persistent vegetative state.

#### Do we have ethical responsibilities to animals and the rest of the natural world?

It might seem obvious to protect endangered animals or forests that support ecosystems providing economic goods and services. But what about aspects of the natural world that don't directly benefit us? The class ponders whether we should make sacrifices purely out of respect for the natural world. Mathias Madersbacher



# INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS OFFER PERSPECTIVES ON RETURNING DURING PANDEMIC

Sister Pascaline Musyoka (left) and Sister Thuan Bui (right) are both international students who transferred to GCU in Fall 2020.

#### story by LANDRY CHETA

As the pandemic continued to take its toll, loneliness infiltrated the hearts of GCU international students who missed their classmates, teammates, and dear friends back in the United States. The psychological and emotional burden of being separated from the people who had shaped us as men and women these last few years was bad enough, but it was exacerbated by the challenges of online classes and a time difference. I knew I had to jump through the extra hoops—including an expensive COVID-19 test to ensure my seat on one of only a few flights—mandated by the government to make it back to my second home at GCU.

Since returning to the United States, I realized that my experience was not unique. My teammate Mathias Madersbacher, now a sophomore exercise science, wellness, and sports major, came from Austria as a firstyear student in Fall 2020.

"Coming back wasn't an easy decision," said Mathias, echoing the sentiment of most of our fellow international students, "but I really missed being here [in the United States]. I missed the people, my friends, and the environment."

Sister Thuan Bui, a senior religious studies major from Vietnam, transferred to Georgian Court in Fall 2020.

"At the time of COVID-19, which is a higher risk to my health, it was hard for me to decide to live on campus," said Sister Thuan. "I sent a lot of e-mails to GCU, and they always helped me feel safe. In addition, I prayed and thought that our school would have plans to protect and always do the best for students. Therefore, I felt comfortable moving to GCU.

When I came here, I had a bit of worry about living with many people from other places," Sister Thuan recalled. "After a few days, I felt safe and happy to be here because I saw everyone try to do their best to create a safe place."

For me and many other international students, we also find ourselves in the privileged position of being studentathletes, so we feel a duty to take care of things on and off the field, and that often takes concentration, dedication, and devotion.

"It was important to come back because I felt it was my responsibility as a student and as an athlete," agreed Gianluca Cersosimo, a junior finance major from Argentina and fellow soccer player, noted. "I also thought that I needed to separate the environments—my country, as a place where I want to be on vacation and relax, and the university, as the place where I can focus on my study and athletic success."

I've seen that we belong to a community that is willing to work together to make the best of a difficult situation. Of course, it has been annoying and frustrating at times to have restrictions on where we can go, what we can do, and who we can meet in and around campus, but I've sought solace from the effort that GCU has put in during this seemingly never-ending pandemic that has allowed us to continue to chase our dreams.

*Editor's Note: Landry Cheta is a senior biology major and member of the men's soccer team from Brighton, England.* 

# HIT THE GROUND RUNNING

story by Gail H. Towns



Chief Financial Officer Amy Bosio joined the Georgian Court family in the spring of 2020, a time of considerable uncertainty. She immediately went to work marshaling resources and staff to ensure business continuity and assisting with campus-wide decision-making. That included how to disburse more than \$10 million in federal pandemic relief funds. Over the last 18 months, GCU put nearly \$4 million in federal funds directly into the hands of needy students. About \$6 million helped cover COVID-19 expenses and revenue losses tied to the pandemic. There were additional investments in muchneeded technology upgrades, including new computers, displays, webcams, improved Wi-Fi, and more.

At the same time, the university saw its credit ratings improve. Both Moody's and S&P upgraded their outlook for GCU, citing budget management, new academic programs, and better retention.

Although she arrived at GCU at a unique time, Ms. Bosio draws on decades of experience to get the job done. She has spent more than 30 years in corporate, K-12, and higher education environments. Before coming to GCU, she was a vice president of finance at Rowan University, where she provided strategic direction for the School of Osteopathic Medicine, the Office of Contracting and Procurement Services, and Accounts Payable. She previously served at LaSalle University, Drexel University, and St. Joseph's University. She also served as an interim treasurer and assistant comptroller at the University of Pennsylvania, where she earned her M.B.A. and her undergraduate degree.

# NEW TRUSTEES BRING NEW TALENT, INSIGHT TO GCU LEADERSHIP

Georgian Court University has welcomed eight new members to its Board of Trustees since July 2020. Each is distinguished professionally and in community service. The diverse group shares a strong commitment to Georgian Court's mission and students.

#### **DIVERSE LEADERS AND THINKERS**

The lineup of new leaders is exceptionally diverse, from their work in nonprofit, civic, and Catholic organizations to higher education, finance, and corporate industry. The new trustees are:



JAMES E. ANDREWS '16, director of the Office for Black Catholics, Archdiocese of Philadelphia, and past president of the National Association of Black Catholic Administrators. A board member of the nonprofit Fathers and Children Equality and facilitator for the Saint Martin de Porres Pastoral Parish Council, Mr. Andrews holds a Master of Arts in Theology degree from Georgian Court.



THERESA M. BRODRICK, RN, PH.D., NE-BC, executive vice president and network chief nurse executive for Hackensack Meridian *Health*, joined the board in 2020. As network chief nurse executive, she is responsible for all nursing practices across the network, establishing network nursing policies and overseeing the direction of nursing services. She is a proven health care executive with more than 30 years of progressive health care management experience in large academic and community institutions.



ALICIA COOK '08, director of communications at the American Guild of Musical Artists and a best-selling poet, essayist, and speaker who uses her activism to fight the opioid epidemic. Among several honors, she received an Everyday Hero award from NJTV. Ms. Cook earned a bachelor's degree in English from Georgian Court and was its Distinguished Alumni of the Year in 2020. Most recently, she spoke at Georgian Court's 2021 Commencement and during the university's first-ever Summer Career Symposium.



CHRIS EVERETT DOMES, ED.D., the sixth president of Neumann University and a strong proponent of Catholic Franciscan education. During his 35+ years in higher education, Dr. Domes has led initiatives in strategic planning, fundraising, academic program expansion, enrollment management, community relations, technology access, and campus growth.



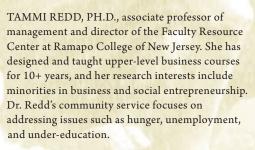


acquisition for PSEG Services Corporation, the latest role in her distinguished human resources career. She holds a bachelor's degree in business administration from Georgian Court and is a former member of the Alumni Board of Directors and a recipient of the university's Alumni Service Award.

JOYCE HECKMAN '83, director, talent

ROBERT HUTCHINS, CPA, CEO and managing director of Ellavoz Impact Capital, as well as an angel investor in several industries and board member of public and private companies. Among his numerous civic activities, Mr. Hutchins is a founder and chair of the Board of Trustees of the Ocean Housing Alliance, Inc., which serves mentally disabled individuals in Ocean County, New Jersey.







REVEREND MONSIGNOR JOSEPH N. ROSIE, who was ordained to the priesthood in 1990. After several parish roles in New Jersey, he is currently pastor of St. James Parish, Red Bank, and Episcopal vicar for Monmouth County. He has served on the Boards of St. Lawrence Rehabilitation Center and Morris Hall and Catholic Charities, Diocese of Trenton, as well as several Diocesan councils.

GCU's governing board this year will be led by board chair Robert Mulcahy III, a lifelong community servant, civic leader, and a former Rutgers University athletics director, and Julia A. Upton, RSM, a Sister of Mercy who is provost emerita and distinguished professor of theology at St. John's University in New York.

#### REMEMBERING THOSE WHO LOVED, Served Georgian Court



#### DIANE SZUBROWSKI, RSM

Diane Szubrowski, RSM, 83, was known to light up a room wherever she was sent or served, longtime friends and colleagues shared during her Mass of Christian Burial this summer in Watchung. There were plenty of memories to exchange about Sister Diane, who took her vows in the New Jersey Regional Community of the Sisters of Mercy: peace advocate, licensed family therapist, GCU trustee chair, and later, a university donor relations volunteer.

For some, she exuded joy. Others remembered that she always had a smile—and a story—to share. GCU alumni and staff recalled her constant concern for others. Sister Diane embraced relationships that spanned decades and demographics. She was especially fond of her work with Mercy Center in Asbury Park, students at Sisters Academy, and those at Georgian Court. She was also very close to Georgian Court alumnae from the Class of 1968.

"Sister Diane always returned to the place she held close to her heart—Georgian Court," said Matt Manfra, GCU vice president for institutional advancement, recalling her words when she received the 2019 Alumni Service Award.

"Part of my heart is here," Sister Diane said then. "What I love is the heart and soul of the university. I feel privileged to be part of the Georgian Court community in keeping the spirit of Mercy alive."



#### RAYMOND SHEA JR.

Former GCU Board of Trustees Chair Ray Shea, 78, wore many hats in addition to his leadership role at Georgian Court. He was passionate about helping others and did so in many ways—as an entrepreneur and employer, real estate attorney, eloquent writer, local community leader, and more.

"Ray was a visionary. A dreamer. A creator. A humanitarian," members of his family wrote following his death on March 24. "However, his proudest title was that of a family man."

Mr. Shea's 12-year tenure on the Board of Trustees included service as chair and vice chair. Board colleagues supported his work beyond GCU, including the launch of Laurita Winery, which he co-created in New Egypt—not far from campus—with a business partner.

Mr. Shea, a fixture at GCU's annual scholarship golf outing and pre-board meeting worship services, was equally passionate about organizations such as Saint Barnabas Healthcare System and his family nonprofit—the Kate Shea Foundation, established to raise money for cancer research. His daughter Kate, who died at age 25 from leukemia in 1998, inspired Mr. Shea's goal of completing 25 marathons in her honor. He met the goal and kept going, ultimately doing 39 marathons.



#### **TERRY MULCAHY**

The Georgian Court community lost one of its biggest fans earlier this year when Marie "Terry" Mulcahy died peacefully at age 84.

She was the wife of GCU Board of Trustees Chair Robert Mulcahy III and mother of Trustee Megan E. Mulcahy Romano. She fully supported their work with GCU and was especially drawn to the university's commitment to service, a core belief that shaped all that she did, personally and professionally. During their 61 years of marriage, she was integral to her husband's success and commitment to public service

but gave equally her own time.

The mother of seven (and grandmother to 15) served on the Board of Directors of the New Jersey Ballet, the Mendham Board of Education, and was a trustee of the Mendham Senior Housing Corporation. She also served on the board of a residential treatment center for teenage alcoholics and served on the Family Life Curriculum Committee of the Mendham Borough School District. In addition, she was a proud, active alumna of the College of New Rochelle.

She held many roles at St. Joseph's Parish in Mendham and St. James Parish in Basking Ridge. She taught CCD for more than 20 years, sang in the choir, and was a board member of Eva's Kitchen and Sheltering Program in Paterson.

Scan this QR code or visit **alumni.georgian.edu/give-now** to make a gift in honor of these individuals to the Sister Diane Szubrowski Memorial Scholarship Fund, Raymond F. Shea Memorial Scholarship, or the Angel Fund for Student Emergency Needs (in honor of Terry Mulcahy).



# GEORGIAN COURT UNIVERSITY

IOW YOUR GIFTS EXPAND POSSIBILITY



#### DEAR ALUMNI, DONORS AND FRIENDS

So much has changed since the first days of the pandemic in 2020. One thing has not—the remarkable support Georgian Court receives from our alumni and friends.

You have been here for us through these difficult times supporting our students, their scholarship, our faculty, and our athletics programs to name a few. On behalf of my colleagues, thank you.

As the pandemic progressed, your support has meant more than ever for our students and for Georgian Court. When we called, you answered by supporting our Angel Fund for emergency student needs. This important fund provides students with the emergency funds they needed during very uncertain times.

You have also provided record support for our Lions Fund, the university's premier fund for student success. The impact from this support allows us to apply these dollars to the unforeseen. And we've certainly been through many unanticipated experiences since 2020.

Your impact, outreach, and prayers mean so much. Thank you for your thoughtful and kind support of The Court!

I hope you'll enjoy these impact stories of members of the Georgian Court family who are making a difference.

With GCU pride,

Matto.

Matthew R. Manfra Vice President for Institutional Advancement

#### GCU SEES RECORD-BREAKING FUNDRAISING

As many institutions of higher education and charities have faced downturns in fundraising through the pandemic, the Georgian Court University community rallied to produce two of the best fundraising years in the last decade.

For fiscal year 2019–2020, Georgian Court University raised over \$1.68 million, which was a 33% increase in dollars from the previous year. The fiscal year, which ran from July 1, 2019, through June 30, 2020, was, at the time, the highest of the last five years.

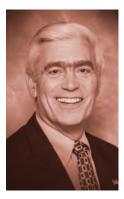
Fiscal year 2020–2021 showed even greater fundraising gains with over \$2.3 million raised, reflecting a 10-year record. Student scholarship and unrestricted giving were leading areas of support.

"Donors to Georgian Court University are making a difference in the lives of our students. Over the past two years, we've seen new and loyal donors contribute to help, and we are so grateful for their amazing generosity and leadership," stated Matthew R. Manfra, vice president for institutional advancement. "Every gift counts, and every gift helps to make an impact for our students. That's why I give to GCU."

With 43% of GCU students coming from lowincome families and 39% that are first-generation college students, providing incoming students with an affordable education is front of mind for GCU's fundraising team, which saw five-year highs in major giving and corporate and foundation support over the past two years.

The fundraising success is even more valued due to the challenges that were faced in 2020. The 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Scholarship and Golf Classic was postponed, and other events and activities were cancelled.

"My colleagues and I are so happy to welcome our friends back to our beautiful campus," says Mr. Manfra. "I also look forward to sharing with you the successes of our resilient students and how they rose above the challenges of the past few years."



#### WITH JOHN K. LLOYD, FACHE

FORMER CO-CEO, HACKENSACK MERIDIAN HEALTH AND FORMER GCU TRUSTEE

#### WHAT ARE SOME OF THE LESSONS YOU HAVE LEARNED IN YOUR DISTINGUISHED CAREER THAT COULD APPLY TO THE CURRENT STATE OF AFF<mark>AIRS I</mark>N HEALTH CARE?

I would say ... to stay one step ahead of population needs in a given environment. The importance of care integration and the building of a continuum of care was an immediate goal of our team at Meridian Health as our geographic blueprint grew. The individual needs of the recipients of our care no longer centered on hospital-based patient care. Health care had to have easy access and be in close proximity to those seeking the care. But probably the most important part... is to strive to maintain and grow the culture in which our team members work. Open communication and trust between the executive staff and those working in patient care settings are key to any health care system's success. I always held myself accountable to this number-one goal.

#### WHAT CHANGES DO YOU FORESEE IN THE POST-PANDEMIC HEALTH CARE LANDSCAPE?

The pandemic has made one thing very clear: there are vast inequalities in health care in America. Our health care delivery system needs to adapt quickly to these discrepancies so that our most vulnerable populations receive the same care as those who are more fortunate. Health care leaders need to design a system that is inclusive and incorporates the social determinants of health. Being present in the patient's community to provide health care will be very important. Also, nurses, as frontline workers, need to be at the policymaking table as a voice in what they are seeing and how they interpret the needs of the patients and their families. The continued use of technology like that of telehealth will also be critical in the post-pandemic future.

#### WHAT IMPACT HAVE NURSES MADE IN THE HEALTH CARE Field, and how do you see their role growing in the coming years?

Nurses have always been at the forefront of health and patient care. During the pandemic, the role of the nurse was highlighted by the grim details of COVID in the news and social media. Nurses not only became the lifeline for sick and dying patients, but a lifeline for the patient's loved ones. The face of a nurse was often the last face the patient saw. The nurses became heroes—although, in my mind, they always have been! Nurses will need to continue the advancement of their degrees, and nurse practitioners will continue to take on a larger role in primary care and public health. Their roles as leaders in public and community health initiatives will be of great importance.

#### HOW CAN THE GEORGIAN COURT-HACKENSACK MERIDIAN Health School of Nursing Help Address the growing Needs of the Shortage of Nurses because of Retirement or Burn Out?

The Georgian Court–Hackensack Meridian *Health* School of Nursing is an outstanding example of collaboration between a renowned health care system and a well-regarded academic program graduating highly qualified registered nurses. In 2008, the school became the first generic B.S.N. program in Monmouth and Ocean counties. This collaboration was initiated by me—then-president of Meridian Health; Dr. Richard Hader, then-chief nursing officer of Meridian Health; and Sister Rosemary Jeffries, GCU's then-president. It allowed for current RNs and those seeking to enter the field of nursing at a baccalaureate level in the current health care market.

Currently, there are more than 400 nursing students [in] . . . this amazing program. These future baccalaureate-prepared nurses will enable our health care system to provide professional and state-of-the-art care to those in our community. It is also interesting to note that the new accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing program (A.B.S.N.) allows students with a bachelor's degree in another field of expertise to receive their nursing degree in a little over a year. It's very intensive, but these highly motivated students will enable the health care system to continue to deliver top-notch nursing care in the future.

## WHAT ARE THE GREATEST OPPORTUNITIES FOR POSITIVE GROWTH WITHIN THE HEALTH CARE COMMUNITY?

To grow both the nursing profession and health care in general, we, as leaders, must think creatively. We need to encourage our health care providers to continue professional growth of there team members. There are a number of ways to achieve this professional growth:

- Continue to provide access to advanced degrees such as B.S.N., M.S.N., Ph.D. programs, etc.
- Provide continuing education dealing with geriatric and mental health. These populations are often overlooked in today's health care.
- Continue to invest in health care simulation labs in order to provide our leaders of tomorrow with cutting-edge technology to best handle real-life situations.

# NVESTING IN OUR HEALTH

The future of Georgian Court University is one of growth and change. How the university will evolve is at the heart of the university's Strategic Compass and a new campus master plan. In 2019, architects from Kimmel Bogrette proposed restoring historic components of our campus, including one of our historic entrances, repurposing some buildings, and renovating others. But the biggest change? Adding a much-needed academic building in the historic center of our campus, the Italian Gardens. This building, illustrated by the rendering below, will be the new home of the Georgian Court–Hackensack Meridian *Health* School of Nursing.

#### WHY NURSING?

New Jersey is expected to see the third-largest shortage of nurses by the year 2030 (more than 11,000 nurses) according to the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration. In light of the continuing COVID-19 pandemic and with the expected shortage in nurses in New Jersey, it is critical to continue to educate students with an interest in entering the field. The Georgian Court–Hackensack Meridian *Health* School of Nursing, founded in 2008, has grown from about 20 to 25 students to more than 400 this year, and from a department within the School of Arts and Sciences to a standalone school. The school has already expanded from its home in Hamilton Hall across campus to additional spaces in both Mercy Hall and the Music Center to accommodate the

CENTER FOR NURSING, HEALTH.

IMPACT 2021

growing number of students. (*Read more about the growth of the school on pp. 12–15 of this magazine.*)

This new, state-of-the-art facility will provide GCU students with a dedicated, premier learning environment with technology that will educate and train the next generation of nurses and health care providers. Interior elements are being designed based on the feedback of GCU faculty, staff, and students and will include a simulation lab, classroom space, and locations for individual and group study. Nursing students won't be the only ones who benefit—students with majors such as health profession studies and health sciences will also learn in this space. And, as GCU adapts and expands programs for other health-related professions based on need, this space will be vital in helping graduate prepared,

ND WELLNESS

dedicated professionals.

The Georgian Court–Hackensack Meridian *Health* School of Nursing needs your support now more than ever. In addition to the need for new physical space, nursing students have unique expenses related to the program, including uniforms, books, nursing supplies, equipment such as stethoscopes, standardized testing, malpractice insurance, and background checks. These additional expenses cause an increased financial burden for our nursing students. Scholarships help the nursing student defray the cost of tuition and fees.

Visit **alumni.georgian.edu/give-now** and select School of Nursing to invest in a talented and dedicated pipeline of health professionals prepared to meet the medical care needs of our community.



#### A LION LEAVES A LASTING IMPRESSION ALICE BOSIES VELEZ '84, '93 & JAIME VELEZ

story by ToniAnn McLaughlin

Alice Bosies Velez '84, '93, and three of her siblings attended St. Mary's High School in South Amboy. Between the Sisters of Mercy and Alice's parents, Georgian Court was the obvious choice for her.

"On our very first visit, my father met Patrick Gavan at the Ninth Street Gate," Ms. Velez recalled. "After they chatted for a few minutes, we pulled away and my dad said, 'You'll do fine here.' And he was right."

Ms. Velez cherished her time at Georgian Court as a student and wants to ensure that other students have a life-changing experience at this very special place. But for the first 15 years after graduation, her only involvement was donating to Georgian Court after receiving calls from the annual giving Phonathon.

Ms. Velez's niece, Keri Tarantino Carlton '99, also chose to attend Georgian Court and became very involved on campus and in the Student Government Association. She shared alumni and campus activities with her aunt and through this, Ms. Velez became more and more engaged. Then one day, Ms. Velez brought her children to campus for breakfast with the Easter Bunny in the Casino—and it felt like coming home. Her niece joined the Alumni Board of Directors (ABOD) and eventually, Ms. Velez did as well.

During her time on the ABOD, Ms. Velez was elected vice president, which in turn made her president-elect. On June 30, 2021, she completed her term as president. Over the last few years, she strived to build on the progress made by the previous executive board of directors in support of the university and the Alumni Association. Her hope for the future is that that the university and Alumni Association leadership continue their success as they further the mission of GCU.

In addition to being an active alumni leader, Ms. Velez also gives back. She and her husband, Jaime, created the Velez Family Scholarship to help GCU students in need. Both are first-generation college graduates and are very grateful that they benefited from the generosity of others when they went to college, so they wanted to create the same opportunity for others. While all colleges and universities need unrestricted donations, the Velezes wanted to ensure that a student who wants to attend Georgian Court, but thinks they must choose another school due to financial need, has the opportunity to become a GCU Lion. Ms. Velez hopes that any student who receives a scholarship truly realizes what a gift they have received and that someday they, too, will pay it forward. The Velez Family Scholarship is meant to make receiving an education just a little less financially stressful.

Ms. Velez could speak indefinitely about how Georgian Court has affected her life. And although we never really know the full impact of our actions, her main hope is that students who choose Georgian Court will look back and realize that it will always be a part of them, just as they will always be a part of Georgian Court.



#### A LEGACY LIVES ON JULES L. PLANGERE JR. & JANE PLANGERE, THE JULES L. PLANGERE JR. FAMILY FOUNDATION

#### story by Frank Mascia

Fondly remembered as an energetic and civic-minded leader in our community. Jules L. Plangere Jr. left behind a legacy of philanthropy when he passed away in 2016.

His remarkable journey began when he returned to New Jersey in 1947 after serving as an Army anti-aircraft artillery officer in the South Pacific. He was hired as a management trainee at the *Asbury Park Press* and spent the next 50 years rising through the ranks to become publisher and co-owner of the newspaper. In his later years, Mr. Plangere was a senior partner of Press Communications LLC, a multimedia company that owns several New Jersey radio stations.

Throughout his life, he was known for his many acts of personal and professional kindness. In his retirement, he and his wife, Jane, established the Jules L. Plangere Jr. Family Foundation, which supports a myriad of causes, including Georgian Court University. The foundation's recent gift to fund scholarships for the Georgian Court–Hackensack Meridian *Health* School of Nursing serves as their latest endeavor to positively affect the lives of our community. The four endowed scholarships for nursing and health professional students will serve as a legacy gift to ensure that our future health care leaders can fulfill their dreams to serve others. With the demand for health professionals continuing to grow, this transformational gift will continuously address the needs within health care for decades to come. Georgian Court University is immensely grateful to the foundation, the Plangere family, and its trustees for their belief and faith in our educational mission.

#### **BRIDGING THE GAPS SUZANNE SHARKEY VALLA '66 & EUGENE VALLA**

#### story by Frank Mascia

Even though Suzanne Sharkey Valla '66 has resided in California's Bay Area since her marriage to Gene Valla in 1968, she is Georgian Court University through and through. Thanks to her professional career and her philanthropy, Ms. Valla continues to make a positive impact on the lives of her local community and the GCU family.

Ms. Valla received a B.A. in Biology from Georgian Court University. Subsequently, she received medical technology certification from Herrick Hospital in Berkeley, California. In 1992, she received an M.S. in Marriage Family Child Counseling from San Francisco State University. She earned her California state license in 1996 to practice marriage and family therapy. After working in school and family counseling for more than 20 years for the Archdiocese of San Francisco, Suzanne is now a volunteer therapist in the nonprofit community.

Gene Valla's career began as a CPA, which he followed up with a 40-year career with a privately-owned commercial real estate company, for which he served as president during the company's last nine years. He was introduced to philanthropy during his service as a trustee of a private foundation over a 25year period ending in 2014.

The Vallas have made their mark at GCU in so many ways. The Suzanne Sharkey Valla Endowed Scholarship, established in 2007, has provided the necessary resources for scores of students to realize their hopes and dreams. More recently, however, they gifted \$25,000 to support the Angel Fund for student emergency needs and the Georgian Court–Hackensack Meridian *Health* School of Nursing. Their matching gift is a challenge to inspire others to give beyond their current levels and entice new donors to lend their resources to these all-important endeavors. The Vallas view the



Angel Fund as a bridge for students to meet their basic needs, which allows them to focus solely on their studies. They also recognize the great importance of our nurses and health care workers during these challenging times.

Their belief and faith in a community of solutions is what guides Suzanne and Gene Valla to be vital parts of both the community as a whole and the solutions that provide those communities with a greater sense of purpose and fulfillment. Georgian Court University is grateful for their unwavering support and genuine faith in our students—past, present, and future.



#### ANSWERING THE CALL TO LEAD LISA GLEASON, ED.D., '12

#### *story by* Gail H. Towns

The pandemic challenged parents, students, and teachers in previously unimaginable ways—learning loss, technology disparities, mental health strain, and most recently, the contentious return to classrooms. These are tough issues, and Georgian Court alumna and New Jersey Assistant Commissioner of Education Lisa Gleason, Ed.D., '12 is facing them head on.

The former Wall Township director of curriculum and instruction was named to the state post in late 2020. At the time, school districts and families were still grappling with the fallout from mostly remote learning and other COVID-19 problems.

She accepted the role and immediately put her years of experience—and what she learned in GCU's graduate program in administration and leadership—to work.

"As an educational leader, I am deeply committed to equity in education; authentic, inclusive curriculum; and inducting bright, talented novice educators into our profession," says Dr. Gleason, a highly sought-after speaker and GCU adjunct professor. She teaches organizational leadership, data-based decision making, research methods, and curriculum management—all topics educators face daily.

"I credit much of my success to the incredible network of mentors and professors who provided me with a truly meaningful educational experience and internship opportunities that were relevant and timely in the field," says Dr. Gleason.

Her own expertise has been timely, too. In June, Dr. Gleason joined state officials and others to reflect on effects of the pandemic.

"I believe the old adage that in all crises lie opportunities," she told NJ Spotlight News, "and those opportunities lie in the lessons we've learned from this situation—perseverance, determination, and new ways to think about teaching and learning."

Amu Magaya, Ed.D., acting dean of the GCU School of Education, applauds her optimism.

"Dr. Gleason represents what it takes to be an educational leader grounded in strategic plans, vision, and mission for student success," he says. "Our program is all about identifying and preparing high-quality candidates who are ready and capable. Leadership is all about caring about people."



James Andrews (center) with Johann M. Vento, Ph.D., GCU professor of theology and religious studies and chair of the Department of Religious Studies, Theology, and Philosophy (left) and Mary-Paula Cancienne, RSM, Ph.D., former GCU assistant professor of religious studies/theology (right) at his Commencement ceremony

#### THE EMBODIMENT OF SERVICE JAMES E. ANDREWS '16

#### story by Matthew R. Manfra

One of the five Mercy values at Georgian Court University is service, and alumnus James E. Andrews '16 has epitomized this value throughout his educational, professional, and personal life.

After nearly 40 years working for the U.S. Department of Labor, largely in the area of employee training, Mr. Andrews could have put his feet up and celebrated a remarkable and rewarding career where he helped others. Instead, he embarked on a second career that involved him giving back to Catholics in the Philadelphia and Camden areas.

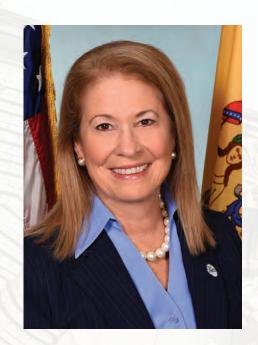
Following his retirement from the Department of Labor, Mr. Andrews was named the director of the Office for Black Catholics and coordinator of the Racial Justice Commission for the Diocese of Camden. The position was part time with a great deal of responsibilities and opportunities, and he worked to create a culture of communication enabling various ethnic groups to share their experiences and challenges. It was during this time that he completed an M.A. in Theology degree from GCU and was a member of Theta Alpha Kappa, the national honor society for religious studies and theology.

In 2016, he was elected president of the National Association of Black Catholic Administrators. He is the former chair of the Cheyney University Foundation Board and was a district governor of Toastmasters International, leading 90 clubs in Eastern Pennsylvania and South Jersey. He served as president of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc., Philadelphia Alumni Chapter, and was an officer of Men of BACA, an affiliate of Kappa Alpha Psi. He currently serves on the Sisters of Saint Joseph Neighborhood Center Advisory Council in Camden.

Most recently, in October 2020, the Archdiocese of Philadelphia selected Mr. Andrews as their new director of the Office for Black Catholics. In this role, he's continuing to provide leadership and service to an even larger community.

I M P A C T 2 0 2 1

# THE WOMAN WHO NEEDS NO INTRODUCTION



Judith Persichilli's full title is "commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Health for the State of New Jersey." However, you are unlikely to hear those words uttered by New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy any time she is introduced during the COVID-19 press conferences he hosts. Instead, Governor Murphy refers to her as the "woman who needs no introduction" for her constant and steadfast leadership of New Jersey's efforts to battle the pandemic. And on June 18, 2021, it was announced that the new Department of Health building in Trenton would be named the Judith M. Persichilli Building in honor of her past and ongoing service to the people of New Jersey during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Although you may see her regularly, what you may not know about Judith M. Persichilli, RN, is that she served as the vice chair of GCU Board of Trustees throughout much of the pandemic and has been a member since 2014. A nurse by training, she also received an honorary Doctor of Health degree from Georgian Court in 2009.

Prior to being named health commissioner, Ms. Persichilli served as the acting CEO of University Hospital in Newark, interim president and CEO of Michigan's CHE Trinity Health, and president and CEO of Catholic Health East. She also served for eight years as CEO at St. Francis Medical Center in Trenton.

Visit https://bit.ly/GCU\_JudyP21 to watch Ms. Persichilli speak to nursing graduates at Commencement 2021. ATTHECOURT



## A STRONG INTERNET CONNECTION

Despite the pandemic keeping most students at home, GCU engaged, entertained, and supported with a variety of socially distant and virtual programming.

#### story by MELISSA KVIDAHL REILLY

It starts with tired eyes. Then it migrates to stiffness in the shoulders or an ache in the lower back. The mind goes cloudy, and the sharp focus you might have had at the beginning of the day fades into a hazy sense of burnout. Sound familiar?

Zoom fatigue is a serious challenge for anyone working, learning, or socializing from home, and students at Georgian Court University are no exception. And while the hope was that videoconferencing would be left behind as things returned to normal, the reality was that—a year into the pandemic—most students were still attending class from behind their computer screens.

At GCU, the bustling campus environment dotted with study groups, shared meals, and just-for-fun events like concerts and other entertainment was, sadly, on pause as everyone navigated the pandemic.

Where did this leave student engagement and events, which also went virtual? "Zoom fatigue is real, and it has been a major hurdle for those of us planning virtual events," said Erin McCarron, assistant dean of students and director of student life. "Our students were craving human-to-human moments, a sense of community, and laughter. It was more important than ever to engage with students now, during this time when they feel especially lonely and isolated."

#### The Socially Distant Scene

According to Jewel Boyd, coordinator of student activities and engagement, what students craved most was a return to the typical college experience. And though that's hard to do in a pandemic, it's not impossible. A limited number of events and activities took place in person on campus, with social distancing and contact tracing protocols firmly in place.

In an effort to get students away from their screens and back outside, Michael F. Gross, Ph.D., associate provost, professor of biology, and director of the arboretum, led historic campus tours for small, preregistered groups of four. There was also a socially distant bonfire on campus, complete with a DJ, hot chocolate, and prewrapped snacks, as well as a few movie nights outside on the soccer field.

Recently, the popular stuff-a-bear event was reimagined for Valentine's Day. Students signed up for time slots in advance, came to campus, and created their bears. "We also had an Instagram contest," said Ally Ferry '21, then-president of the Campus Activities Board (CAB). "We asked students who participated in this event to snap a Valentine's-Day-themed picture of their bear for a chance to win an Amazon gift card. I love putting on events that students will enjoy, so it's been nice to offer a few in person."

#### **Virtual Reality**

While socially distant in-person events on campus were the gold standard for students, hosting these kinds of programs was incredibly difficult during the pandemic. At the same time, maintaining a sense of community remained paramount. That's why some of the most popular virtual events have mirrored successful in-person events of semesters past.

CAB typically invites a ghost hunter to campus each year to visit the Georgian Court Mansion and detect its legendary paranormal activity. This time around, he hosted a successful Zoom presentation and answered questions about ghosts. The popular Servant Leadership Summit was also online this year, and it garnered 70 attendees and loads of positive feedback.

Outside vendors are filled in to offer virtual events that would typically be on campus. "Our biweekly Free Money Game Show was really popular, and trivia topics ranged from Disney, Marvel, and Harry Potter to finish-the-lyric themes and movie and television trivia," said Ally. Participation was simple: students logged onto Zoom to see the host and responded to the multiple-choice questions on their phones. No interaction was needed, which can be a welcome respite for some Zoom-fatigued students.

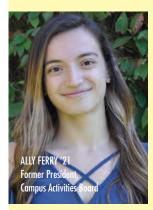
For others, interaction is just what they need. In fact, Office of Student Life graduate assistant DaShawn Lamar-Baldwin became GCU's breakout pandemic star of sorts, thanks to his popular *Win It With Wheezy* virtual game show. "Everyone knows DeShawn as Wheezy, and he has a great personality that brings everyone together," said Ms. McCarron. "Students wanted to have fun, laugh, and have a human connection. He really helped them feel that sense of normalcy."

One of the most powerful virtual events, though, was a Zoom discussion with President Joseph R. Marbach, Ph.D. after the Capitol Hill insurrection on January 6. "Students logged on and shared their experiences and reactions," says Ms. McCarron, while President

Marbach harnessed his political science expertise to offer insights and much-needed support. "We wanted to drive home the fact that GCU supports sharing your political opinions, thoughts, and feelings, but there's a way to go about that responsibly," said Ms. McCarron. "The talk really gave everyone a sense of hope. Overall, our online events, but especially this event, drove home what the core of GCU is about and what was so needed during this pandemic: support and community."

#### **2021 STUDENT LEADER SPOTLIGHTS:**

These are just some of the student leaders—now graduates—who helped fellow students stay engaged during the 2020–2021 year



5-8

Former President,

**Black Student Union** 

DASHAWN "WHEEZY"

LAMAR-BALDWIN '20

Student Life

Graduate Assistant, Office of

KAYLA WILSON 21

ANI

#### **ON GIVING BACK:**

It feels really rewarding to see everyone having a good time and knowing you're involved in the reason why.

#### **ON STAYING CONNECTED:**

I hope students learn that they can still connect with one another, even though it is virtually. Staying connected while apart is so important during this time, and CAB tries to put on weekly events that everyone will enjoy.

#### **ON STAYING FLEXIBLE:**

I try to meet students halfway, and it's as simple as that. We changed the format of our meetings from Zoom to Instagram Live just to give students the opportunity to close the computer and log onto an app that they already use daily.

#### ON PANDEMIC LESSONS Learned:

The power of prayer is real; don't ever doubt it!

# ON THE VALUE OF COMMUNITY:

I see *Win it with Wheezy* as more than a game show. I see it as a place where I can have a conversation with the participants and really get them engaged and having a great time.

#### HIS MESSAGE TO STUDENTS:

You are not alone in this situation, and we are trying our best as a school to make your experience feel as close to normal as possible. I know virtual events can be hard to get into, but I just really hope students see them as a great way to get their mind off things, stop worrying, and have a good time.

GEORGIAN COURT UNIVERSITY / FALL 2021

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# SHOWCASING WORK FROM A DISTANCE

#### story by GWEN MORAN

In Spring 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic changed just about everything related to life on university campuses. In addition to teaching remotely, faculty members had another challenge: finding remote solutions for students to present the projects, exhibitions, and showcases that are such an important part of their curricula.

But never underestimate the resourcefulness of Georgian Court faculty and students. Virtual exhibitions and showcases became the norm. Sometimes, the shifts necessary were subtle. In other cases, they required rethinking the entire approach to showcasing student work. Here are some of the ways the Georgian Court community found to show off students' work and accomplishments.

#### **Dance Like Everyone's Watching**

Students in GCU's choreography classes needed to shift online, but also had to learn new skills. They also had to create mostly solo work, although some worked with family. By Fall 2020, Megan Mazarick, assistant professor of dance, was mentoring seniors to create their capstone advanced choreography projects, again mostly working solo. But it was still disappointing.

"They had put in all this work, and we had to figure out how to shift them into solos for the camera, which is a very different experience from creating choreography for multiple dancers in a theater," said Silvana M. Cardell, associate professor and chair of the Department of Dance.

But the students rose to the occasion. They adapted routines and learned how to frame performances for the camera. Now, after three semesters of creating choreography and ensemble performances, some have even found creative ways to include family members.

"One dancer had two twin sisters," recalled Ms. Cardell. "The other day, she showed me the choreography and the dancer and her two sisters look all the same. And I thought, what's going on? Then I realized what was happening." And there's another upside: More family members can see the performances because they're online.

#### **Pinning Their Hopes Remotely**

At the end of their education, nursing schools typically hold a "pinning ceremony," where soon-to-be graduates receive a pin that signifies the completion of their studies. This year, with the pandemic making gatherings impossible, the entire ceremony was designed remotely, said Kathryn E. Fleming, Ph.D., assistant dean of the Georgian Court–Hackensack Meridian *Health* School of Nursing and professor-in-residence.

"It's not going to replace in-person ceremonies. There is something missing with that sort of that human connection seeing your professors in a different light, because now we're becoming colleagues with them," said Dr. Fleming. But the remote option helped keep people safe while giving students the honor they deserve. And because it allows more people to attend, streaming "will certainly be an option in the future," she said. (*Editor's Note: The 2021 pinning ceremony was combined with Commencement in May for an in-person event that was also streamed to a larger audience.*)

#### **Ready for the Pandemic**

The Department of Integrative Health and Exercise Science's M.A. in Integrative Health program has been totally online since 2012. That experience made faculty ready for the pandemic, said associate professor and chair Sachiko Komagata, Ph.D., PT. Typically, the department holds hybrid presentations

#### **GEORGIAN COURT UNIVERSITY**

Welcome to the Department of Dance Faculty-Led Ensemble and Guest Artist Fall 2020 Virtual Performances The program will begin in a moment.

twice per year to showcase graduate students' final research projects. They are open to the public and some attendees are remote, while others attend in person. But the pandemic has shifted all presentations to remote since Spring 2020.

During their presentations, students share their research questions, review of the literature, methods of inquiry, results, discussion, and conclusion using visual aids. In some cases, they may show a video clip of an innovative integrative health demonstration including movement or sound, or portions of interviews with subject-matter experts.

"That helps audience understand their research project better," said Dr. Komagata. "Since we have been doing remote WITH THE 2021–2022 ACADEMIC YEAR, IN-PERSON GATHERINGS ARE SLOWLY BEGINNING TO RETURN, ALLOWING PEOPLE TO SHARE SUCH SPECIAL EVENTS AND SHOWCASES TOGETHER. HOWEVER, ADDING A REMOTE ELEMENT CONTINUES TO ALLOW STUDENTS TO SHARE THEIR WORK WITH A BROADER AUDIENCE OF FAMILY AND FRIENDS.

presentations for almost a decade, our students have refined their multimedia skills to make the remote presentations more engaging."

#### **Design Goes Online**

Toward the end of their senior year, graphic design and multimedia majors at Georgian Court typically work into the late-night hours to prepare to display their senior projects in the M. Christina Geis Art Gallery or the International Collaboration Center. But when the pandemic threatened to shut down those important opportunities to show off their hard work, Jinsook Kim, Ph.D., assistant professor and chair of the Department of Communication, Graphic Design, and Multimedia, found a way to hold a virtual event.

"The transformation was something I really had to think through, because if they hadn't done it before, they may not be ready to transform their assets by themselves," said Dr. Kim.

Dr. Kim decided that using interactive websites would be the best way to present students' work. Using free website design platforms, seven graduating seniors each presented seven pieces exploring a particular theme in three different channels (2D, 3D, 4D, or IxD—interaction design), as well as four revisited projects from past classes. The challenges of showing the work online were considerable, but the students met the challenge, creating vibrant websites to showcase their work. An added bonus was that friends and family members from all over could view the students' work. This year, roughly 10 students participated.

With the 2021–2022 academic year, in-person gatherings are slowly beginning to return, allowing people to share such special events and showcases together. However, adding a remote element continues to allow students to share their work with a broader audience of family and friends.





### NEW TRANSITION AND CAREER STUDIES PROGRAM OFFERS OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

Last fall, Georgian Court was awarded a nearly \$2.5 million grant for Transition and Career Studies (TCS), a new inclusive education program for students with intellectual disabilities, through the federal Transition and Postsecondary Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities. For qualified students, TCS provides an opportunity to learn in college classrooms, live on the GCU campus, and engage with typically enrolled students through clubs, sports, and campus events. At the end of four years, successful TCS students receive a Board of Trustees-approved certificate of completion.

"Students with intellectual disabilities who complete college-based programs like ours are more likely to be gainfully employed than those who do not," says Susan E. O. Field, Ph.D., GCU professor of psychology and TCS program director. "They're more likely to live independently. We want them to grow intellectually, but we also want them to grow socially. And we want them to develop vocational skills and to identify and obtain not just a job, but a career."

### Transition and Career Studies—A Model Approach to Inclusive Education

To accomplish these goals, Dr. Field has led the creation of TCS with guidance from her mentor, Jerry G. Petroff, Ph.D., who has run a similar initiative at The College of New Jersey (TCNJ) for 18 years, and input from an intern who completed the TCNJ program. A GCU multi-department steering committee, including representatives from academic affairs and student life, as well as students, has also been instrumental in shaping TCS.

TCS students enroll in classes from GCU's General Education sequence, such as literature and history, choose electives, and take specially designed career and academic/social support courses. In the fourth year, they have an off-campus internship.

"All of the General Education and elective courses are taught on an inclusive model, meaning typically enrolled students and TCS students are side-by-side in the classroom," said Dr. Field. Because of their intellectual disabilities, TCS students receive "beyond reasonable accommodations on a case-by-case basis depending on the needs and skills of the individual student." For example, if a course requires a weekly paper, a TCS student might need to complete only three or four papers during the semester.

Each TCS student is paired with a typically enrolled GCU student, who attends classes and campus events with them, providing both academic and social support. TCS is a residential program, so participants live in a residence hall with their own residential advisor (RA). This year, their RA is Cheyenne Hunsberger, a nursing major, student-athlete, president of Unified Sports, and a member of the TCS steering committee.

"To me, the TCS program means that you can learn to become independent, and it's very friendly to people with intellectual disabilities," said Tyler Henry, one of the program's initial four students.

#### Support for TCS

Georgian Court University is grateful to the early funders of this endeavor, including GCU Trustee Robert Hutchins, CEO of Ellavoz Impact Capital, a social impact private equity management firm. Mr. Hutchins has provided support for student scholarships. Corporate and foundation support is provided by Kessler Foundation, a global leader in rehabilitation research and employment funding. The Kessler Foundation is supporting the salary of the campus life coordinator. TD Charitable Foundation is providing general support of TCS. TD Charitable Foundation, the philanthropic arm of TD Bank, strives to serve the individuals, families, and businesses in all the communities where TD Bank operates.

"I am so glad to be a part of the new TCS program at GCU and to help my peers become more adjusted to the academic expectations of college courses as well as to life on campus," says Ashley Goetz, TCS mentor. "Our main goal as mentors is to provide the TCS students with academic and social support to aid in their journey to independence. I strongly encourage all young adults with intellectual disabilities to consider postsecondary education options such as GCU's TCS program."

Visit georgian.edu/transition-and-career-studies for a TCS application and additional program details and criteria.



### GEORGIAN COURT'S OLDEST-KNOWN GRADUATE GATHERS GLOBAL HEADLINES

#### story by TARA M. STRICKLAND

Marion Thomas turned 90 years old on December 7, 2020. But since Mom, or "Granya," as she is known to her grandchildren, lives in a skilled nursing facility and COVID-19 numbers were rising, her family planned a virtual celebration with a special surprise—a long-awaited degree from her alma mater, Georgian Court.

In 1998, Mrs. Thomas and her husband, John, were living in Toms River, New Jersey, where they had retired after living in Bergen County. And after a lifetime of encouraging her 6 children and 18 grandchildren to pursue a college degree, Mrs. Thomas began her freshman year at Georgian Court College (now University) at the age of 67. Her grandchildren, many of whom were in school at the same time, even offered her college advice.

She earned 113 credits over the next decade, until her husband was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. She left school to devote herself to caring for John, who passed away in 2012. "Once my dad got ill, she really just focused on him," said daughter Ellen Thomas Wilson, noting that she attended seminars on the disease to learn as much as she could.

President Joseph R. Marbach, Ph.D.; Provost Janice Warner, Ph.D.; and Tara Strickland from the Office of Marketing and Communications joined the joyous Zoom celebration to announce that after assessing Mrs. Thomas's long career in supporting her parish as well as in business, the university had determined that she had earned the remaining 7 credits she needed to meet degree requirements.

"Each of our Mercy core values can only be fulfilled by being in relation to others," President Marbach told Mrs. Thomas as he conferred her Bachelor of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies degree. "This is exactly what you have done throughout your life, with your dedication to your faith, your family, and your community."

Mrs. Thomas's reaction to the news: "It's about time!"

Her inspiring story quickly went global. It started with a front-page story in the *Asbury Park Press*, which was picked up by *USA Today* and other media outlets around the world, as well as a story on NBC News. On January 8, Mrs. Thomas and her family were interviewed by cohost Jenna Bush Hager on *Today With Hoda & Jenna*, where they announced their latest news: the foundation of the Marion B. Thomas Scholarship for nontraditional students.

On May 20, Mrs. Thomas returned to Georgian Court to celebrate her hard-earned degree in person with her family during Commencement 2021. Her fiery red hair and quick wit were on full display as she celebrated her achievement with her fellow 2020 and 2021 graduates, bringing smiles to everyone she encountered.

Please consider a gift at **alumni.georgian.edu/marion\_thomas** in honor of Marion's lifetime of accomplishments. Her scholarship will assist individuals who wish to continue their education after a hiatus and are pursuing coursework in the humanities.

### COMMENCEMENT 2020

While we couldn't gather for a true ceremony when originally scheduled, GCU held a virtual Celebration of the Class of 2020 on May 20, followed by a drive-through parade. When restrictions finally allowed us to gather in person, GCU celebrated the 2020 graduates in three ceremonies held October 17–18. Daniel Ginchereau '20 spoke on behalf of the bachelor's-degree recipients, and Cynthia Shymanski '20 spoke on behalf of the graduate-degree recipients. Alice Bosies Velez '84, '93 welcomed them all to the GCU Alumni Association.

Visit georgian.edu/commencement2020 to see more photos and videos from these celebrations.





Faculty and staff waved at and congratulated more than 100 graduates who joined the drive-through parade on campus on May 20.



Master's-degree graduates from Ceremony 1 on October 17 wave at their families.



Bachelor's-degree graduates, led by Daniel Ginchereau '20 (front right) process away from the Apollo Fountain during the start of Ceremony 2.

# **COMMENCEMENT** 2021

On May 19–20, 2021, GCU celebrated the August 2020, December 2020, and May 2021 graduates in four ceremonies. Brianna Griffin '21 spoke on behalf of undergraduate students at two ceremonies, Cindy Reinman '21 spoke to the graduating nursing candidates, and Laura Burns '21 spoke on behalf of the master's-degree candidate recipients. Alice Bosies Velez '84, '93, as the then-president of the Alumni Association, welcomed the graduates as new alumni.

Visit georgian.edu/commencement2021 to see more photos and videos from these celebrations.

Alicia Cook '08, best-selling poet, award-winning activist, and songwriter—ant now a GCU trustee—addressed graduates during Ceremony 1.



During Ceremony 2, nursing graduates honored their late classmate Britani Kramer '21, whose family accepted her degree posthumously. Judith M. Persichilli, RN, commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Health and GCU trustee, addressed the graduates. For more on the "woman who needs no introduction," see p. 25.





Master's-degree graduates were happy to have a sense of normalcy as they celebrated in front of the Apollo Fountain after Ceremony 4. During the ceremony, Marlene Laó-Collins, executive director of Catholic Charities, Diocese of Trenton, received a Doctor of Public Service degree.

# <mark>COURTSHORTS</mark>



#### **CHEERS TO GCU!**

The university admissions team is excited to be back in schools, at college fairs, and at other events spreading the word about Georgian Court. **Chris Krzak**, vice president for enrollment management, is counting on alumni educators—from classroom teachers to county superintendents—to help tell others about the university. **Get a free GCU pennant to hang in your classroom or school hallways** and show your #GCUPride. Go to **georgian.edu/promo** for more information.

#### **CRITICAL CONCERNS 2021**

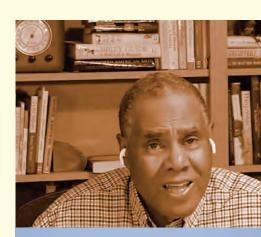
God's timing isn't always our timing, but we must act immediately to address a climate emergency and environmental racism. That's according to **Steve Curwood**, executive producer and host of NPR's award-winning environmental news program *Living on Earth*. Mr. Curwood was one of two keynote speakers during Georgian Court University's Critical Concerns Week 2021.

The climate emergency, Mr. Curwood said, is evident through the onslaught of tornadoes, increasingly intensive winter storms, and warmer temperatures at the earth's poles. Especially alarming, he said, is a recent study that suggests even the Amazon rainforest, long considered a bulwark against climate change, is actually contributing to it. "We really need to deal with this emergency now. Not next year. Not in 10 years," he said.

Keynote speaker **Winona LaDuke**, a leading expert on Indigenous economics, food, and energy policy, addressed GCU via Zoom from the White Earth Reservation in northern Minnesota. Ms. LaDuke, also director of Honor the Earth, a platform she co-founded with the Indigo Girls, challenged GCU listeners to live and work in ways that will benefit descendants seven generations from today. "Two paths can be chosen," she said. "One that is scorched and leads to destruction, or one that is new, green, and leads to *Mino-Bimaadiziwin*, or 'the good life."

#### **AWARD-WINNING POET VISITS GCU**

National Poetry Month 2021 began with an unforgettable reading by Visiting Poet **Patricia Smith.** The April 1 reading drew students, faculty, staff, and poetry fans for a 90-minute session with the Guggenheim fellow, author of eight volumes of poetry and two-time Pushcart Prize winner. During the Zoom event, she read from her published works and shared powerful insights on poetry as a medium for truth, justice, witness, and celebration.





# C O U R T S H O R T S



#### NURSING STUDENT Becomes Published Author

Georgian Court nursing student **Yasmin Amaro-Garcia '21** is one of the authors whose work appears in *Today's Inspired Young Latinas,* Volume III. The Lakewood native joins other writers who share personal stories in the book. The series, published by Fig Factor Media, includes Yasmin's story among its poignant collection of personal stories intended to activate hope and passion.

"I feel ecstatic to be a published author! It has been a dream of mine since I could read," Yasmin says. "As I became a bookworm throughout my childhood, I knew that one day I wanted to become an author and inspire others just as many authors inspired me as I was growing up."



#### **GIVING BACK—BY THE NUMBERS**

This fall, the GCU community collected items to assist Afghan refugees settling into their new lives in the United States. The collection for our new neighbors resulted in more than—

9 trips to Catholic Charities to drop off donations

60 boxes of donations

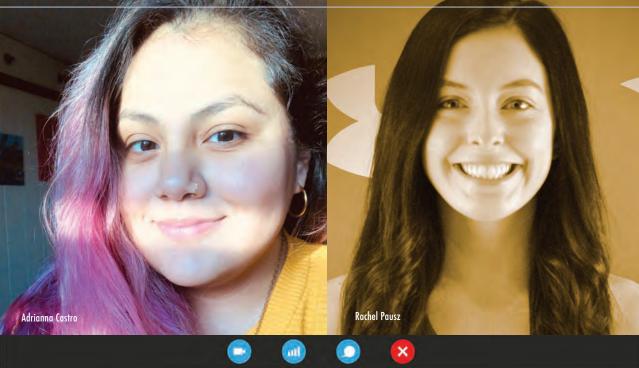
IO6 student volunteer hours

1,850 donated items, including clothes, toys, toiletries, school supplies, and much more

#### NEW STUDENTS RISE TO FEED THE HUNGRY

In what has become a tradition during New Student Orientation, the Class of 2025 received a hands-on introduction to the Mercy core value of service. **Upward of 200 first-year and transfer students packed the Casino to create 18,144 meal kits.** The meal packaging experience is sponsored by Rise Against Hunger, which produces millions of nutritious meals annually that are then distributed to expert partners and advocates worldwide.





# A NEW OPPORTUNITY: GLOBAL VIRTUAL INTERNSHIPS

#### story by DANIEL CAPPUCCI

While the COVID-19 pandemic has limited our physical travel, it has opened up a world full of possibilities online, allowing GCU students to take full advantage of global virtual internships. These opportunities have allowed students to experience the way different countries conduct business and experience that country's social norms and culture—without leaving their homes.

"Students are able to gain intercultural competence skills, crosscultural collaboration, and a wonderful opportunity to put this on your résumé while being connected to a partner in another country and working remotely for them with mentors in the other country as well," said Laura Grodewald, director of global education programs.

"During the summer, GCU sent out e-mails on global virtual internships," said Rachel Pausz, a senior accounting major. "After looking at the program, I was able to find a program that matched my career path."

Rachel completed her four-week internship virtually in Fall 2020 at The Chic Icon in Barcelona, Spain, and "was able to work side by side with coworkers from across the world." She worked with other interns to research and create a franchise structure for the company to present to potential franchisees and helped create a sponsorship brochure to help The Chic Icon approach sponsors for VIP events and parties.

"It was a very positive experience, and I gained a lot of realworld experience from it," Rachel added.

Senior Craig Berger completed a virtual internship with Nemi Teas in London in Summer 2020. He said he was drawn to the experience because "it was the opportunity to intern abroad but at my house." During the internship, he did market research and data analysis and learned a lot about how companies operate, as well as how to balance his schoolwork with an overseas internship. It also led him to change his major from business administration to finance.

"If a student can't afford to go abroad for an internship, it's almost equally as rewarding doing it at home," said Adrianna Castro '21, a recent social work graduate who completed a virtual internship in Morocco. "These organizations and groups work with students to accommodate different time zones and schedules and truly want the best for the student. They want the internship to be something to remember.

"My favorite part of this experience had to be, hands down, the weekly Zoom meetings with my supervisors," Adrianna shared. "For one meeting, we were virtually invited to a 'traditional dinner' to celebrate the Prophet Muhammed's birthday. We learned how to make a traditional dish called *tagine*, met members of the Moroccan community, and talked in detail about any questions we had during the dinner."

All three students said that they would 100% do this again if given the chance.

"I will forever be grateful for this experience because it opened my eyes to possible career paths that I didn't know I was interested in," said Adrianna. "It grew my passion to be the best social worker I can possibly be and gave me more strength to help fight against injustices happening around me."

Visit bit.ly/GCU\_Global21 to learn more about global virtual internships.

### LAURA LIESMAN DEPARTS GCU AFTER LEADING LIONS FOR 18 YEARS

#### story by Christopher McKibben

This past August, after 18 years leading the Georgian Court University Lions as assistant vice president/director of athletics, Laura Liesman announced her departure from Georgian Court University for a similar position with the University of Illinois Springfield.

"After 18 wonderful years and many memories here at Georgian Court, I will be heading back to my native Illinois for the next adventure," stated Ms. Liesman. "I am very excited to get started at UIS, but have nothing but the utmost gratitude for all of the great faculty, staff, and especially the current and former student-athletes at Georgian Court University. The joy and pride that GCU has offered me over the years cannot be overstated . . . thank you, Lions."

Serving Georgian Court University since September 2003, Ms. Liesman led the GCU athletics program to new heights. Under her leadership, GCU athletics seamlessly made the transition from NAIA to NCAA Division II. In 2013, Georgian Court welcomed the addition of men's athletics when the university transitioned to a fully coeducational institution.

Ms. Liesman developed Georgian Court into a highly competitive program, both on the regional and national levels. Georgian Court offered just six athletic offerings upon her arrival on campus. During Ms. Liesman's tenure, the Lions expanded their intercollegiate sports offerings to 14 with the addition of men's and women's track & field, men's & women's lacrosse, men's cross country, men's soccer, and men's basketball to bring the number of studentathletes from 45 to over 300.

Under Ms. Liesman's guidance, GCU constructed a \$26-million, state-of-the-art athletics complex in 2008 and added a turf field in 2013. Since its debut, the facilities have played host to more than 40 Central Atlantic Collegiate Conference (CACC) Championships, including the inaugural CACC Championships Festival in Spring 2019, as Georgian Court crowned five conference champions all on the same weekend. The Lions have captured 40 conference titles under Ms. Liesman's tutelage.

Ms. Liesman implemented initiatives focused on the overall development of the student-athlete experience and strengthening the department as a whole during her time at The Court. Through two NCAA DII Strategic Alliance Matching Grants, the department was able to hire an associate AD for student welfare and an assistant AD for operations. Emphasizing life outside of athletics as well, the Lions received the NCAA Division II Teamworks Award for most service hours completed in both 2017 and 2018.

The Aurora, Illinois, native has served on numerous NCAA committees and was elected chair of the NCAA Division II Management Council in October 2018. She began her four-year term with the NCAA Management Council in May 2016 as the CACC representative. She also served as chair of NCAA Division II softball in 2010. In addition, she served as the vice president of the CACC from 2006 to 2008 and president from 2012 to 2016.



Ms. Liesman, a two-time (2011, 2018) CACC Athletic Director of the Year selection, was named a 2019–2020 Under Armour Athletic Director of the Year, a group that spanned seven divisions (NCAA FBS, FCS, Division I-AAA, II, III, NAIA/Other Four-Year Institutions, and Junior College/Community Colleges). She also was the recipient of the prestigious Collegiate Athletic Administrators of New Jersey Garden State Award in October 2017, recognizing "enduring contributions to the development of intercollegiate athletics in the state of New Jersey."

Nicole Degenhardt, currently the head softball coach, will serve as interim director of athletics, as a national search is currently underway to permanently fill the position.



Head Strength and Conditioning Coach Donald Smith

### STUDENT-ATHLETE WELL-BEING FOCUS OF NEW STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING COACH

#### story by Christopher McKibben

GCU Athletics sets the well-being of its student-athletes as a top priority within its day-to-day operations, and a core component of student-athlete success. With guidance from governing bodies such as the NCAA, ACSM, NATA, and NSCA, GCU aligns itself with the standards that have been shown to increase the likelihood of studentathlete achievement.

The most recent effort to assist student-athletes in their understanding of the steps they can take to increase their well-being came in the form of a virtual presentation. Presented by the Lions' sports medicine staff, the seminar covered a variety of facts and lessons surrounding nutrition, exercise, mindset, sleep, and immunity.

Nutrition is the anchor within fitness and performance and is a large determinate of a person's overall welfare. One can often overcome deficits in health and performance with the right energy balance derived from good nutrition. In addition, Georgian Court strives to provide nutritious eating options, courtesy of food service provider, Aramark, and its healthy eating initiatives. Student-athletes are presented with healthy eating choices, along with the knowledge to guide their decision-making.

Another large component of student-athlete well-being is exercise. The American College of Sports Medicine suggests that people who regularly participate in resistance exercise reduce the risk of numerous diseases, improve their quality of life, and reduce mortality. In addition to its overall health benefits, resistance exercise serves as one of the most beneficial tools in increasing athletic performance.

"Guided programming based around evidence-based principles allows student-athletes to excel in their sport, while enjoying the fulfillment of seeing themselves improve," stated GCU Head Strength and Conditioning Coach and Certified Athletic Trainer Donald Smith.

Perhaps underrepresented in most instances, but largely important, are other factors associated with healthy living, such as sleep. The NCAA Sport Science Institute accounts that over half of student-athletes report daytime fatigue. Presenting recommendations around good sleeping habits can lead to healthier behaviors. Good sleeping practices are reiterated by the Department of Athletics. Behaviors focused on adopting good eating, exercising, and sleeping habits can serve as tools to help a student-athlete live a healthier lifestyle.

"The presentation served as a framework to guide studentathletes in reaching their goals pertaining to their overall well-being and performance," stated Coach Smith. "It not only informs the student-athlete on what goals to set, but also addresses how and why goals are set. We believe providing direction, while allowing the student-athlete to make autonomous decisions, is a keystone to promoting their achievements. At Georgian Court, we understand that a healthy athlete is a happy athlete, in all facets. We look forward to continuing to provide information that can lead to the success of our athletic population."



### DRAMATIC TURNAROUND FOR Softball brings gcu close to championship

#### story by Christopher McKibben

Taking over a struggling softball program that witnessed a revolving door of head coaches—with four different dugout leaders over the previous seven seasons—Nicole Degenhardt knew an uphill battle awaited as she took the helm of GCU softball.

Compiling a 7-39 record her first season of 2016, the future appeared seemingly bleak on the diamond for the royal-and-gold. A major overhaul was in order. And that's exactly what Coach Degenhardt did as she tirelessly scoured the country for top talent. Fast forward to 2021. A complete 180-degree transformation was on full display as the 38-6 Lions not only secured their first Central Atlantic Collegiate Conference (CACC) Championship banner in 12 years, but advanced to within one win of the NCAA Division II Championships for the second time in program history (2009).

The Lions, who earned a national ranking of #22 in the National Fastpitch Coaches Association (NFCA) Top-25 poll, defeated Bloomfield College in the CACC title game last May, catapulting the club to the NCAA Division II East Regional Tournament in Manchester, New Hampshire, where GCU went 3-2 in five thrilling contests.

Coach Degenhardt, named CACC Softball Coach of the Year for the third-consecutive season this past spring, is not the only one reaping the rewards of their hard work and success. Seven Lions earned All-CACC status, while Alyssa Herrera took the nation by storm as an NFCA First-Team All-American, as well as a Schutt Sports/NFCA Division II Player of the Year and Freshman of the Year finalist.

The Lions will commence their 2022 campaign on March 1, 2022, with a visit to Rollins College in Winter Park, Florida.



### WOMEN'S BASKETBALL SEES BEST-EVER SEASON DURING PANDEMICS

#### story by Christopher McKibben

During a year that had been as atypical as they come, Georgian Court University women's basketball decided to stick to that theme as Head Coach Jasmine "Jazz" Perazic hit the hardwood and decided to produce the most successful season for the Lions since joining the ranks of NCAA Division II way back in 2002–2003.

The Lions, who did not see their first action of the campaign until January 28, made up for lost time as the royal-and-gold finished the regular season a perfect 7-0 in a condensed slate. GCU, which earned the top-seed in the Central Atlantic Collegiate Conference (CACC) Championship Tournament, sealed a semifinal triumph over #4 Concordia College before advancing to the title game vs. #2 Dominican College and earning a berth in the 2021 NCAA East Regional Tournament in Amherst, New York, with an at-large bid.

Ranked nationally for the first time as an NCAA Division II program, the Lions climbed as high as #17 in the D2SIDA Media Poll. The squad, facing off once again against the aforementioned Concordia, defeated the Clippers in the first round of the NCAA East Regionals for a win in the Lions' DII national tournament debut.

Georgian Court, not surprisingly, collected an abundance of postseason accolades, including Coach Perazic achieving the moniker of CACC Women's Basketball Coach of the Year. Newcomer Anyssa Fields made quite an impact, as the first-year student-athlete received CACC Player of the Year, CACC Defensive Player of the Year, and All-CACC praise. Tian Addison enjoyed a stellar sophomore campaign, culminating with All-CACC recognition.





### STAR LACROSSE GOALKEEPER EARNS ACCOLADES

#### story by Christopher McKibben

Georgian Court's Austin Geissel '20, now a graduate student, closed out his storied collegiate career in style this past spring as the men's lacrosse star goalkeeper earned a spot on the United States Intercollegiate Lacrosse Association (USILA) All-American Third Team.

Austin, also a Second-Team All-Region pick, enjoyed a stellar final campaign in 2021 as the three-time CACC Goalkeeper of the Year topped all conference netminders with 172 total saves and a .593 save percentage, while placing second with a 9.87 goals-against average, in 13 total games played. The Pompton Plains, New Jersey, native, who participated in the USILA Senior All-Star Game in Bristol, Rhode Island, over Memorial Day weekend, collected 10 or more saves in all but one of his outings, including a season-high 20 in the Lions' home contest vs. archrival Chestnut Hill College on April 20.

The most-accomplished men's lacrosse student-athlete in program and conference history, Austin is not only the all-time career saves leader in NCAA Division II, but also the first-ever with 1,000 career saves. The All-CACC First-Team selection accomplished the feat in the Lions' regular-season finale at Dominican College on May 1.

### GCU'S CASADO NAMED TO CACC Hall of Fame

#### story by Christopher McKibben

This past September, the Central Atlantic Collegiate Conference (CACC) announced the six members of the CACC Hall of Fame Class of 2021, one of whom is former GCU women's volleyball great Angie Casado '09.

Ms. Casado earned four major conference awards during her brilliant career, including being named the CACC Player of the Year three times (2006–2008) and the conference's Newcomer of the Year in 2004. A two-time All-American, Ms. Casado helped lead the Lions to three CACC Championships and was a member of the 2008 team that became the first conference volleyball program to win a match in the NCAA Division II Regional Tournament.

The proud alum posted 1,895 kills and 269 service aces for her career. She earned First-Team All-CACC honors during each of her four seasons of competition. This will be Ms. Casado's second induction into the CACC Hall of Fame, as she was part of the 2008 championship squad that earned induction three years ago. That memorable squad went 32-5 overall and posted a 21-0 mark in CACC play (including the postseason) to win the conference championship.

The remainder of the CACC Class of 2021 includes four individuals and one team: John Brennan (Felician University cross country head coach), Garret Kerr (University of the Sciences men's basketball student-athlete), Libby Nichols (Thomas Jefferson University/Philadelphia University women's lacrosse studentathlete), Daniele Piludu (Concordia College men's tennis student-athlete), and the 2011–2012 Wilmington University men's golf team.

Ms. Casado will be recognized with an official hall of fame induction ceremony on campus during the 2021–2022 season. She will join GCU's previous individual inductees—Carol Walters '91 (women's basketball), Heather Walker Hastie '08 (softball/volleyball), and Nikkie Kelly Malanda '97 (women's soccer) in the CACC hall.

### GCU Aluma Makes History in Her Hometown

#### story by **GWEN MORAN**

The November 2020 election was filled with historic firsts—and a Georgian Court University alumna was among them. Elizabeth Arthur, D.B.A., '08, broke through two barriers in her Vineland, New Jersey, election: She became the first African American person and the first woman to become the council president of Cumberland County's largest and most populous municipality.

#### **Making History**

Dr. Arthur has a long history in Vineland, which was her husband's hometown. The couple settled in the town in 1970 and raised three nowgrown children. Dr. Arthur was a member of the school board before she was appointed to the council in 2018 after the resignation of another member. At the time, she was the first African American to sit on the council. Due to New Jersey law, she had to run again in 2019 to keep her post for another year. Her election last November secured her place on the council for four more years.

Because she secured the most votes of any elected member, Dr. Arthur had had the option to seek the presidency of the five-member committee. Support for her presidency was unanimous and marked the first time that a woman and an African American person held that post.

"I was dumbfounded at first," she says when she learned of her historic firsts. "Even while I was running, I knew that there hadn't been that many women to serve as councilpersons here. But the closer we got to the end of the election, the more people would say, you realize that you could make history. When everything was counted, I was stunned."

#### A Lifelong Love of Learning

Dr. Arthur's children were no longer children when she decided to go to back to college. "It was something my mom wanted me to do out of high school, but I didn't want to do it," she recalls.

She had graduated from Cumberland County College in 1991. She earned a bachelor's degree from Thomas Edison State College (now University) in 2006, then took advantage of Cumberland County College's reciprocal agreement with Georgian Court to earn her Master of Business Administration degree in 2008. Her love of learning led her to ultimately earn her Doctor of Business Administration degree from Walden University in 2016.

"The professors at Georgian Court were very helpful," she recalls. "I've stayed in touch with the people who graduated with me. The networking, the camaraderie—it was just a good experience."

Her professional life has also changed as Dr. Arthur's interests converged with opportunities. She began working in southern New Jersey's glass industry, at such well-known companies as Kontes Glass; Wheaton Industries; and Gerresheimer Glass, Inc. At first, Dr. Arthur worked in business roles, starting as a purchasing clerk at Wheaton through a temporary staffing agency.

"I like to tell people that I 'temporarily' stayed there for 23 years," she says. She worked her way up to administrative assistant to the vice president of the Glass Division, purchasing department, and to purchasing agent in corporate purchasing. When an opportunity in information technology (IT) came up, she took it, becoming part of the SAP (a business operations software) project team. From there, she worked in consulting firms and then at Gerresheimer in IT roles, as a systems analyst.

Now, her education and career have come full circle. Dr. Arthur teaches in the computer science departments at Rowan College of South Jersey (formerly Cumberland County College) and Raritan Valley Community College. There, she hopes to impart her love of learning and show her students the possibilities that exist in the field. And, as a groundbreaking figure in local politics, she's also leading by example.



DR. ELIZABETH ARTHUR '08 IS THE FIRST AFRICAN AMERICAN PERSON AND THE FIRST WOMAN TO BECOME THE COUNCIL PRESIDENT OF CUMBERLAND COUNTY'S LARGEST AND MOST POPULOUS MUNICIPALITY.

# ClassNotes

# 1960s 1980s

#### PercyLee Hart RSM, '67,

former trustee, received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Union County Commission on the Status of Women in March 2020.

Carolyn Martin, Ph.D., '68 published her sixth collection of poetry, *The Catalog of Small Contentments*, in Summer 2021.

# **1970**s

#### Barbara Swan Herbert '76

retired in December 2019 after serving for 40 years at Georgian Court. Her most recent responsibilities were serving as the behavioral sciences librarian. She received emerita status—as assistant librarian emerita—from President Joseph R. Marbach, Ph.D. Although she misses her library colleagues, she is enjoying retirement.

### Patricia Burger Golden-

#### Gartner '88, '04

has been working as an educator and advocate for children and adults with special needs and abilities. she developed an "Abilities Awareness" program with fellow GCU educators. The program encourages all students to be compassionate toward and accepting of their peers who have abilities that are different from their own. She has brought students and their families from the Schroth School to meet with teacher candidates and education faculty at GCU several times. which allowed the students to have a voice. Paddi is teaching with GCU's Transition and Career Studies program this fall, which is a new four-year transition and postsecondary inclusive college-based program for students with intellectual disabilities.



#### **Cheryl Stoeber-Goff '79**

Last year, the Georgian Court alumni community lost a dear member. Cheryl Stoeber-Goff '79 was an active member of the Alumni Association. By day, she was a curator for the Monmouth County Park System and in her downtime, she was a dedicated GCU volunteer and donor. We could count on her support every year, especially when it came to campus beautification projects and her class scholarship. She served as president of the Alumni Board of Directors and remained a staple of the Alumni Association ever since. In 1987, she received the Alumni Service Award, an accolade that meant the world to her.

Last fall, the Alumni Association posthumously awarded Cheryl with the Lion Lifetime Achievement Award. This award recognizes the alumna/us with distinguished history over a lifetime of leadership, shared vision, and extraordinary service to Georgian Court University and the community. This is not an award that is given out annually; rather, it is awarded when someone worthy of such an honor is evident. Cheryl was certainly worthy of that honor. She will be forever be remembered as a part of the Georgian Court family.



#### Lynda Nathanson Sutton '70

The GCU community mourns the loss of cherished alumni Lynda Nathanson Sutton '70. In 2020, the alumni office was elated when a member of the Class of 1970 reached out to say they wanted to be involved in planning their 50<sup>th</sup> Reunion. Lynda was so enthusiastic about getting her classmates together and celebrating such a special time.

However, the world had other plans for in-person gatherings at the time, and our reunion festivities were forced to be held virtually. This did not deter Lynda from making her 50<sup>th</sup> reunion a memorable one. We still got together—virtually—and shared stories, laughs and memories. We are so grateful of the time Lynda had with her classmates that Friday night last October.

During this year's Reunion and Homecoming Weekend, Mass was said in Lynda's honor. In addition, her class has dedicated a tree on campus in her memory. Hertree is located next to the memorial tree for her sister, Diane Nathanson Wynne '68.

### **1990**s

#### Elisa Ferrante Riis '90

became the program director of the Community Development Institute Head Start (CDI HS) Frederick and Clarke Counties program in Winchester, Virginia. She has been with the Head Start program since December 2017, previously serving as the health and nutrition coordinator.

#### Tracy Moore Handerhan

**'93, '97, '02** became Wall Township School District's new superintendent of schools in July 2020.

#### Irene Marcousis '94 was

became the new principal of Central Regional High School in Bayville in July 2021.

#### Karen Walsh '95, '06 was

awarded a Missions Award from LADACIN Network for working at a group home amid COVID-19. The LADACIN Network, a nonprofit agency, provides a continuum of care, including educational, therapeutic, social, residential, and support services to infants, children, and adults with complex physical and developmental disabilities or delays. She is currently working on publishing her first book of poetry, Writings on on the Wall.

### **Karina Brunori Lucid, Esq., '96** is the founder

and president of Lucid Law. Her firm recently relocated their headquarters to Bridgewater, New Jersey, to create more convenience for clients and focus on a safer work environment for employees during the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### **Carol Fisher Megill '96** and her husband, Edgar, celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary in Summer 2021 with their four children and eight grandchildren.

# 2000s

Laura Carolfi Kelly '09 self-published a bilingual children's picture book, *Tower in the Stars/Torre en las Estrellas.* This book talks about death to help parents and caregivers explain death to even the youngest of persons. This book received five-star reviews from grief workers, child life specialists, teachers, and parents.

#### William Wegner '09,

completed "Dare to Be Holy!" Parish Mission with Good News International, a Catholic lay ministry based in Howell.

# 2010s

#### Loretta Christiansen M.D.,

**'10** was appointed chief medical officer for the entire U.S. Indian Health Service in August 2021.

**Ebony Lattimer '12** became the new principal of Riverside School in Princeton in August 2021.

#### Luka Zgonjanin '17 spent his first year after graduation working as a business analyst for one of the leading financial software companies in the industry in Jersey City. He has since returned to his home country of Serbia, where he has been working as an account and sales manager for almost three years.



#### **Giving Tuesday: November 29**

On Tuesday, November 29, loyal alumni, friends, faculty, staff, and other supporters joined GCU for this global day of giving! Georgian Court holds a special place in our hearts, and your gift of any amount—donated anytime—helps engage and inspire the entire GCU community. Gifts offered on Giving Tuesday and beyond support life-changing opportunities for GCU students today and for years to come.

Ready to show your pride? Visit **georgian.edu/giving** and make a gift to the fund of your choice. Thank you for making a difference and helping us reach our goals this year!



#### ABOD 2021-2022 Update

The Georgian Court University Alumni Board of Directors (ABOD) is excited to be in the midst of another great year. In July, we welcomed our new president, Kristen Cladek '14, and vice president, Stephanie Dalton '94. Kristen and Stephanie both bleed blue and gold and value Georgian Court and its mission.

The ABOD's mission is to further the spiritual, cultural, and intellectual growth of the alumni of GCU. They seek to enhance the bond among its members and partner with the university in its mission, goals, and financial growth.

We are excited to welcome our new ABOD members:

- Thomas DiPaolo '12
- Kathleen Metz '62
- Mary Pierce '06
- Loretta Roe '83
- Aileen Seda '21
- Casey Stoya '19

In their first few months since joining, this new crop of members dove headfirst into volunteering and becoming more involved at GCU. So far, Mary was a panelist for the Summer Career Symposium event for students; Casey was the alumni speaker at Convocation, when we welcome our students to the new academic year, and Aileen is serving on the Council for Diversity and Inclusion alongside fellow ABOD member Marylu Dalton '82, '93.

If you are interested in joining the ABOD or becoming a more active member of our alumni community, contact **alumni@georgian.edu**.

#### Casey Tumblety '18 was

awarded Monmouth County Bowler of the Year from the Monmouth County Association of the United States Bowling Congress (MCUSBC) for the 2020– 2021 season. He currently works for the YMCA of Greater Monmouth County and was named Counselor of the Week this past July for his dedication to his work and his team. Xena Valenzuela '18, was named girls lacrosse head coach for Mater Dei Prep in Middletown.

#### Alba Herrero Gómez '19

began working at the Institute for Bioengineering of Catalonia working in the Biosensors for Bioengineering Group as a laboratory technician. Alba is one of the investigators for a European project for NMR analysis of the metabolic changes of organs on chip and microfluidic devices. She has recently been offered a Ph.D. position in the laboratory.

#### Gene Lanzoni '19 was

ordained to the permanent diaconate by Bishop O'Connell to serve in the Diocese of Trenton at the Church of St. Ann in Lawrenceville in May 2021. Distinguished Alumni Award: Alicia Cook '08

Outstanding Senior Award: Elizabeth "Lily" Antonowicz '20



Lion Lifetime Achievement Award: Cheryl Stoeber-Goff '79

Alumni Service Award: Constance "Connie" Anne Reymann '77, '00

# Showing "Love for The Court": Alumni Award 2020 Winners

On a daily basis, GCU alumni show the world what it means to live the Mercy core values and what servant leadership looks like, and the recipients of the 2020 Alumni Awards proved that. On November 17, 2020, the Office of Alumni Relations hosted a virtual celebration to recognize the 2020 recipients:

"You're making your impact and creating a legacy at Georgian Court. So much of our university's success stems from the many ways you support Georgian Court," said GCU President Joseph R. Marbach, Ph.D., during the event. "We see it in Kendalia Turner's standout performance not only as an athlete, but as a leader-on and off the field; Lily Antonowicz and her kind spirit, Mercy commitment, and her work as a scholar; Alicia Cook's dedication to spreading awareness to better understand the challenges those suffering from addiction and their families face; Connie Reymann and her continuous commitment to The Court; and we saw it in the life and work of our beloved friend Cheryl Stoeber-Goff, whose dedication to Georgian Court was only outweighed by her genuine love of The Court." (Cheryl passed away in 2020, and this award was given posthumously. For more on Cheryl, see p. 42).

We are so proud of these women. We look forward to sharing the 2021 Alumni Award recipients with you in the next issue.



# Reuniting . . . Virtually? Virtual Reunion Week 2020

story by ALICIA A. SMITH

Reunion and Homecoming Weekend is always one of the highlights of the year at Georgian Court, but with social distancing and stayat-home orders, the traditional few days of reminiscing with old friends, cheering on our current student-athletes, and dining in the Mansion was something the Office of Alumni Relations knew wouldn't be possible. Instead of just hoping for brighter days ahead, we created a weeklong Virtual Reunion event for everyone to enjoy without having to leave the comfort and safety of home.

Virtual Reunion Week 2020 took place from October 26 through 30, and welcomed nearly 100 alumni and friends to various events via Zoom. Participants received carefully curated Reunion goodie boxes with items that could be used throughout the events and beyond. Each box contained a mini Georgian Court pennant flag to show their Lion Pride, along with GCU stickers, M&M's, a wine glass, coasters, face mask, and more!

The week kicked off with an awesome online bingo party Monday evening. Attendees played rounds of party bingo that included a DJ and emcee, dance breaks, scavenger hunts, and even a pet cam! On Tuesday, President Marbach presented "Demystifying the Electoral College." In preparation for the upcoming 2020 election, Dr. Marbach, along with moderator Gail Towns, executive director of marketing and communications, broke down how the Electoral College works, explained how each



The Reunion tasting box for wine o'clock

state's electoral votes are counted, and took time to answer questions from attendees. Wellness Wednesday began with a yoga class hosted by Jamey Brooks Stofko '00, '15 and continued with an informative discussion from the dean of the Georgian Court–Hackensack Meridian *Health* School of Nursing, Teri Wurmser, Ph.D. Dean Wurmser gave attendees an inside look into what's new in nursing at GCU and beyond, and how grateful we all are for the amazing nurses who go above and beyond—especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. On Thursday, alumni were able to partake in a beautiful Mass that was streamed live from the Mansion chapel. Personal intentions were submitted by attendees and included in the prayer of the faithful. That evening, Reunion attendees were able to turn their living rooms in tasting rooms for a virtual wine tasting. Participants were shipped kits that included eight mini bottles of wine, and a trained sommelier discussed each wine, its origin, and its perfect food pairing.

Virtual Reunion Week concluded with a special event for the 50<sup>th</sup> Reunion Class of 1970. Members of the class gathered on Friday evening via Zoom and were welcomed by President Marbach. They enjoyed a slideshow of their yearbook photos and other photos throughout the last 50 years.

If this year has taught us anything, it is that no matter the distance, the memories made and the friendships that flourish at Georgian Court transcend all. If you would like to watch a playback of Dr. Marbach's or Dean Wurmser's talks, they are available on the Georgian Court YouTube channel. To keep up with all things GCU alumni, visit our website at **alumni.georgian.edu** and follow us on Facebook and LinkedIn.

We can't wait to share photos of our 2021 Reunion and Homecoming Weekend, which brought us back to campus October 14–16 as this magazine was going to press.

# Congratulations to the Sisters of Mercy Jubilarians!



in 2021

Rita C. McGurk '59

Mary Faith Moore '61

#### 80 Years in 2021

Mary Valerie Balbach '56. former admissions coordinator for the School of Education

70 Years in 2020

in 2021



75 Years in 2020

Jane Dever '60

Margaret Mary



#### 60 Years in 2020



Mary Louiseann Fritz '71



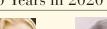
Irene Gormley, former trustee

50 Years—Golden Jubilee in 2020

Laurine Stefany '71



Anita Talar '65, former director of library services



Maria Cordis Richey, Ph.D.,'50,

professor emerita of English and former college president



Mary Anton Frick '67 Mary T. Gomolka '67

Margaret Waldron '67

#### in 2021

Lee Ann Amico '70 Kathleen M. Curnyn '70 Kathleen McDonnell '70 Mary Michaelita Popovice '69 Judith Schubert, Ph.D., '66, professor of theology and religious studies, Alice M. Swartz '70 Lorraine Wolliard '70

#### 25 Years in 2021

Mary C. Bilderback, former assistant director of the arboretum and lecturer in biology



Catherine Darcy, Ph.D., '72, former director of service learning

Sisters Kathleen M. Curnyn, Lorraine Wolliard, Lee Ann Amico, Alice M. Swartz, and Kathleen McDonnell (left to right) celebrated their 60th Jubilee at a Mercy Day 2021 celebration at The Mount.



Sisters Rita C. McGurk (75 years), Mary T. Gomolka (70 years), Kathleen Curnyn (60 years), Valerie Balbach (80 years), Kathleen McDonnell (60 years) (standing, left to right) and Mary Faith Moore (75 years, seated) celebrated their Jubilees at a Mercy Day 2021 celebration at The Mount.

GEORGIAN COURT UNIVERSITY / FALL 2021

#### Engagements

Alexa Niro '12 and Sean Hector / Catherine Dee '15 and Kevin DiMaulo / Nikolet Berne '18 and Joseph Zolnoski

#### Weddings



Sherri Vant '13 and Jason Nagy-5/5/19



Clarissa DeLuca '13, '16 and Kirsten Miles DeLuca '13, '17 – 10/15/2019



Amanda Earle '15 and Joel Max-9/14/2020

**Dawn DeBatt '01** and John Allan Thompson—7/15/17 **Cassandra Lenkowski '13** and Cody Kulik—10/13/19

#### Children



Patrick and **Sherry Keech Coulter '05**— Samantha Grace, born 4/11/20



Ashley Shaloo, Ph.D., '07— Leitrim, born 10/10/20



Andrew and **Diana Zelinski Harlow '12**—Amelia, born 3/17/20



Bill and Janine Mooney '13— Lillian Juliette, born 10/8/19

#### IN MEMORIAM

Agnes Moore Higgins '39, mother of Faine Ssmith '67 and Maureen Higgins '98 Mary McGurl McGinley '40 Doris Jacobs Olesky '40 Frances D'Aloia Semler '41 Eleanor Lame Brennan '42, aunt of Kathleen Alpaugh '82 Diana Volta Calta '42 Patricia Scola Orbe '42, daughter of Virginia Orbe '64 Margherita Marchione, MPF, Ph.D., '43 Marguerite Laube Daley '44 Jeanne Tomasulo Kay '45 Audrey Morrison McGovern '45 Jeanne Shaughnessy Clewis '46 Nancy Ryan Engel '46 Josephine Ferrecchia '46 Vivienne Pisciotta Hardeen '47 Adeline Falivene Blee '48 JoAnn McCarthy Donnelly '48 Eleanor Viano McManus '48 Rosemary Quigley McPhillips '48 Jeanne Ward Olsen '48 Anne Wilcox Hahn '49 Margaret MacVeagh Schweers '49 Cecily Swabb Zerbe '49 Athanasia Michals Arbes '50 Miss Clare Costello '50 Theresa Huang Lee Lang '50 Helen Pappas Skopas '50 Phyllis De Spirito Bocina '51 Helen Hickey Craemer '51 Joan Kozusko Gadek '52, mother of Karen Fiorentini '78 Damaris Bray Sayce '53, sister of Patricia Matonak '52 Rose Loscarso '53 Mary Martha Harcar, RSM, '54 Mary Donahue Johnson '54, '78 May Lee Liu '54 Camilla Perini Vetri '54 Mary-Frances Callery Hennessy '56 Maureen McElwee Moran '56 Marilyn Peter Duffy '58 Eileen Smith Nolan '58 Rose Marie Bellocchio Correia '59, grandmother of Theresa R. Cordovano '15, '19 Dorothy Flynn, RSM, '60 Caroline McKinnon '60 Catherine Basso Szymanski '62, sister of Mary Basso '67,'94 Diane Rainier Bryda '64 Marie Butler '64, sister of Lynn Butler '68 Elsie Dubac '64 Donna Gabriele Hunter '64 Margo Mroz Sciarrotta '64 Eileen Conway Busby '66 Donna Gagen Cianciulli '66 Eileen Holschuh Dominick '66 Edwina Rudolph, RSM, '66 Eloise Jocher Sawicki '66 Jane Veldof, RSM, '67 Patricia Deckert, RSM, RN, '68 Margo Kavanaugh, RSM, '68 Mary Ellen Wormann McCrystal '68 Diane Szubrowski, RSM, '68, former trustee and director of donor relations Elizabeth Gavan '69, sister of Joyce Gavan '61, '82 and Colleen Petersen '75 Rosemary Kruger Brandolini '70 Jewel Brennan, Ph.D., D.Min., '70 Margaret Russell, RSM, '70, '78 Lynda Nathanson Sutton '70, sister of Diane Nathanson Wynne '68 Joann De Nigris Cooper '71 Shèr Farrell '71 Nancy Lynch Geschke '73, sister of Mary Ellen Gallagher '71 Merald Goldman '73, '80 Louise Johnson Holley '73 Rosemary Farawell Prindle '74 Claire Prato Weimmer '74, mother of Amanda Weimmer '05,'06 Lorraine Sup Gajdzis '75 June Delli Santi Jenkins '75 Marian Cheavers, RN, '76 Sherry DiPasquale '76

Maria Malvarez Freitas '77, '81 Claudia Shuttleworth '78 Deborah Troy Stewart '78 Cheryl Stoeber-Goff '79 Robin Curran Maguire '80 Roy Feldman '80 Elaine Hennessy '81, mother of Kristin Hennessy '03 Leslie Maks '81 Jean Schaab McDevitt '81 Irene Zorojew '83, mother of Fatima Osipowicz '70 and Tamila Purpuro '82 David Friedman '84, husband of Mary Ellen McAlevey '85 Jeri Miele '84 Dolores Hesse Fink '85 Lynn Craig Gustafson '85, mother of Laura Gustafson '94 and sister of Wendy Schafer '86 Jo-Ann Biczo Paulson '85 Kathleen Cassidy Holevinski '86 Regina Yankowski '86 Karen Caruso Clinch '87 Lorraine Macfarland Janick '87 Marietta Jean Spano Jazikoff, CPA, '87 Murray Harvey'89 Helen Lockhart '89 Deborah Petersen Childers '92, mother of Katie Stein '02, '07 Elizabeth La Fragola Gaus '92 Barbara Cleri Newman '92 Fred West '92 Joyce Hendrickson Amato '93 Doreen Theobald Logan '93 Jeannette Henig Beyer '95 Maryjo Labruno Coppola '96 Michael Stover '96 Leigh Doninger '97 Maurice McGowan '97 Andrea Isenburg Carr '98 Judith Grygowicz Seeley '98 Barbara Bisaha '99 Francine Diehm Morris '99 Maria Mills Picchierri '99, '03 Anna Camporeale Spiecker '01 Stephen Daisak '02 Heather MacDonald '02 William Bruno '03 Karen Pestana Teu '04 Anne Matthews '08 Erin Gifford Rua '09, sister-in-law of Elizabeth Rua '09, Samantha Rua '08, and Michael Rua '15 Elana Oches Figaro '13, sister of Danielle Oches '10 Babette Lipnick '14 Britani Kramer '21 Edmund Bennett, former trustee and grandfather of Kimberly Bennett '10, Amanda Bennett Morey '08, and Rowen Bush '01 Timothy Brennan, Ed.D., former adjunct lecturer and husband of Gemma Brennan, Ed.D., '84, '93, adjunct lecturer Marian Casey, former administrative assistant and mother of Richard Casey '99 Margaret DeBenedictis, former student Spencer Fields, former employee Patricia Gillis, former secretary of the department of business and mother of Jennifer Moir '92 and Marybeth Klink '93 Glen Gouveia, maintenance supervisor Mary Gurley, former interim dean Roy Hadley, completer of the teaching certificate program, husband of Carol Hadley '06, and father of Michael Hadley '03 Virginia Hasson, former professor of education Anita Kneeley, former lecturer in education Jennifer LeClaire, former student Frank Lineberry, former student teacher supervisor Edward Marks, former maintenance and groundskeep lead Marie "Terry" Mulcahy, friend of GCU; wife of Robert E. Mulcahy III, Board of Trustees chair; and father of Megan E. Mulcahy Romano, trustee Maureen Murnane, former assistant professor of education Bernard Neiderman, former student-teacher supervisor Blossom Nissman, Ed.D., former professor of education Raymond F. Shea Jr., former trustee Reverend Gerard Sloyan, friend of GCU Lynnda Williams, former lecturer in education Roxanne Zygmund, former administrative coordinator, Office of Mission Integration and Office of the Provost

Georgian Court University wishes to extend its prayers and condolences to the families of alumni, members of the university community, and friends who have passed away.

# 2020 Global Photo Contest

WHILE GLOBAL TRAVEL was essentially halted during the height of the pandemic, we were still able to enjoy the submissions for the 2020 Global Photo Contest. The first- and second-place winners are featured here.

Visit **study-abroad-blog.georgian.edu** to read more about the stories behind these photos and other global education adventures.

#### **First Place:**

#### Melissa Antonowicz '20 Switzerland

(taken on March 2020 Faculty-led program) During Spring Break 2020, seven student and two faculty members traveled on a faculty-led program to Switzerland. They visited cities like Bern and Geneva, exploring the architecture and food as well as sites connected to authors like Mary and Percy Bysshe Shelley and Lord Byron, which connected their travels to their classwork.

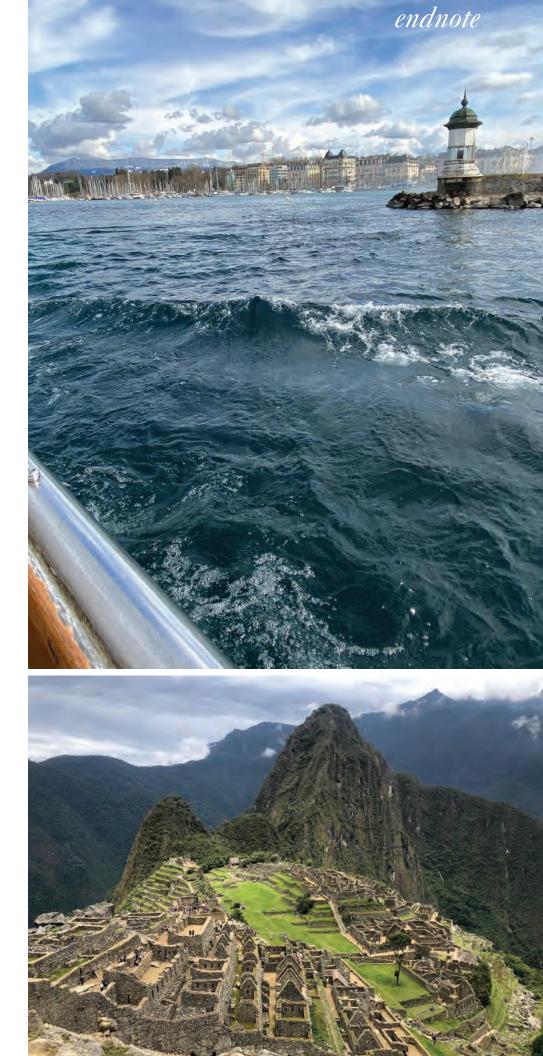
"Most of [us] did not know each other before they left, but now [we] are very close," Melissa wrote on the Global Education blog, noting that she enjoyed everything about Switzerland, especially the beautiful lakes. "Traveling in a group is tremendously beneficial not only because students are exposed to new cultures, but because they are talking to people from GCU and getting the chance to come out of their shell a little bit."

#### **Second Place:**

#### Alexandria "Lexy" Forsyth '22 Peru

In January 2020, GCU nursing students traveled to Peru on a faculty-led program, where they treated patients in a local clinic, explored the Peruvian culture, and checked out some amazing sites.

"Working in the clinic really opened my eyes to how truly fortunate we are in the United States. Some of our patients have never seen a doctor before in their lives and the way that they live is totally unsanitary. They would never reach the standards we have for health care," Lexy wrote on the Global Education blog. "I learned so much during this trip, and I am especially thankful to Laura [Grodewald, director of global education programs,] for helping me translate and to improve my Spanish. I was very nervous in the beginning, but as I got more comfortable, I was able to speak to the patients by myself."



#### GEORGIAN COURT UNIVERSITY THE MERCY UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

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# Finding Opportunity on a Small Campus

GCU biology graduate Brint Barker '20 wasted no time starting his career. He started with the New Jersey Forest Service as a senior, after completing five internships.

Brint, who received the Peter F. DeLaurentis Perpetual Scholarship and a track & field scholarship, interned for the New Jersey Conservation Foundation and the Friends of Valley Open Space in Hopewell, removing invasive plant species taking over parks and privatelyowned land. He also interned with RareFind Nursery in Jackson; the Sister Mary Grace Burns Arboretum under Michael F. Gross, Ph.D., professor of biology and associate provost; and with biology professor Louise S. Wootton, Ph.D., doing data collection on wetland plant growth.

"People like Dr. Gross—he knows a lot about plants, and he prepared me," says Brint. "So did Dr. Wootton and Dr. Brunella Bowditch [associate professor of biology]—those are three people that I can say that if I didn't have them, I wouldn't be here right now."

Brint recently made a move to Medford Nursery, a retail plant nursery in Lumberton. There he does integrated pest management and is the head supervisory propagator.

"I'm back in the greenhouse doing what I want to do," Brint says about the move. "We had \$8 million in returns last year; this year, we had \$15 million in returns. The industry is growing, and they're going to need leaders."

Make a scholarship gift to Georgian Court University and expand possibility for future alumni like Brint. Visit **georgian.edu/giving** or call 732-987-2232 to give.