GEORGIAN COURT UNIVERSITY

MAGAZINE

IN SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY



#### DEAR FRIENDS,

ith the start of a new semester in sight, we would be remiss not to reflect on the remarkable year of milestones and 'firsts' that we've achieved at Georgian Court, such as our first doctoral students receiving their Psy.D. in School Psychology (p. 4).

The greater community is taking notice, too, with several accolades to the credit of our students, staff, and faculty, including a prestigious Guggenheim Fellowship (p.16), Fulbright Scholarship (p. 17), and ranking as New Jersey's #1 Catholic university for value.

For more than a century, GCU has maintained a steadfast commitment to shaping the education of scholars, advocates, visionaries, changemakers, truth seekers, humanitarians, and challengers of the status quo. Our graduates use their degrees to do well — both financially and professionally — and to do good in the world, which is why we're renewing promises made to our students, alumni, donors, and supporters.

In March, we agreed to a land sale that provides incredible opportunities to expand and expedite our Campus Master Plan (p. 12) to meet the changing needs of our students, like the construction of the new Nursing and Health Sciences Center, for example. The academic center will provide cutting-edge facilities to support our tradition of training caring professionals, including programs like the Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing, which celebrated its first graduates (p. 19) at our 111th Commencement Ceremony (inside back cover).

As we honor our growth, the words of Sister Catherine McAuley echo in our hearts: "resolve to be good today, but better tomorrow." Using this wisdom — and with your support — the best is yet to come as we "Renew GCU."

Go Lions,

President

Joseph R. Marbach, Ph.D.

ly R Mehl



#### GEORGIAN COURT UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE

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That was 2007, and Dr. Mancuso, now director of the Psy.D. in School Psychology program, joined in that shared responsibility, standing on the shoulders of several university faculty and administration giants and walking side-by-side with others. In May 2022, the long-held, fiercely worked-for dream was reached when five students, all currently school psychologists, crossed the Commencement stage and became Georgian Court's first doctoral graduates. "It's a very special day in Georgian Court history," said GCU President Joseph R. Marbach. The first cohort of program graduates includes: Christine Clark, Psy.D., '13, '15, '22; Samantha Defilippo, Psy.D., BCBA, '13, '14, '22; Sara Kahan, Psy.D., BCBA, '18, '22; Lauren Schaible, Psy.D., BCBA, '22; and Amy Winters, Psy.D., '09, '13, '22.

The Psy.D. in School Psychology program has long roots. Under the leadership of Professors Emeritae Linda James, Ph.D., and Lorraine Licata, Ph.D., it began in 1993 as a school psychology certificate add-on option to the M.A. in Counseling degree. Joseph E. Colford III, professor emeritus of psychology, was the main force behind creating and getting accreditation for an M.A. in School Psychology program about the time Dr. Mancuso joined Georgian Court.

Momentum toward a doctoral program stalled during the 2008 recession, but then, along with the country's economy, gathered steam again. "Bill Behre, the provost at the time, said, 'OK, you've had this program in development for a while. We either need to push it across the goal line or punt the ball," recalls Dr. Mancuso. "We said, 'We're going to do it."

Creating the Psy.D. in School Psychology program involved curriculum development, many phases of university reviews, and securing approval from New Jersey's Office of the Secretary of Higher Education. The state process added a wrinkle to the timeline. Because it was Georgian Court's first application for a doctoral program, the state required a second independent reviewer in addition to a university-sponsored independent reviewer, who gave the program a favorable recommendation.

"Finally, in January 2019, we got across the goal line, so to speak," said Dr. Mancuso. "It's a program that's had many 'parents,' including Stephanie Rahill, Ph.D., who leads the M.A. in School Psychology and Certificate of Advanced Graduate Studies (CAGS) program so others could focus on the doctoral program. Her contributions enabled us to move forward." Dr. Rahill maintained the M.A./CAGS programs' approval by the National Association of School Psychologists and also attained accreditation by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation.

There are two paths to a GCU Psy.D. in School Psychology degree: a five-year, 112-credit program for students entering as undergraduates, and a three-year, 47-credit advanced standing program for students who are already certified school psychologists. In addition to classroom work, both paths require practicum hours, an internship, and a dissertation. Currently, there are 26 students enrolled in the advanced standing track and seven in the five-year program.

#### Why a Psy.D. in School Psychology . . . and Why Georgian Court?

As with teachers, there's a shortage of school psychologists in America's K–12 schools. A generally accepted school psychologist-to-student ratio is 1:500. According to a March 2022 Education Week article, which examined federal education data, only about 20% of New Jersey public school districts meet that ratio. Evaluations and counseling are two foundational responsibilities of school psychologists, the latter amplified by pandemic-related anxiety, depression, school phobia, and difficulties acclimating back to the classroom.

Still, only about 30% of school psychologists have a doctoral degree. Every person's reason for taking on this rigorous academic endeavor varies, but the Psy.D. in School Psychology is a career differentiator in at least two ways. It provides a foundation for leadership roles within a school district and also allows school psychologists to practice in external community settings such as hospitals and clinics, or to serve as expert evaluators outside their own districts. There's a need for both — for students, and so the degree holder can achieve career goals. The first cohort graduates plan to make the most of



A Milestone for Georgian Court University: Our First Doctoral Candidates

the full range of opportunities available to Psy.D. in School Psychology degree holders.

"As much as we school psychologists can do to help children and their families in the school setting, I believe that there is more work to be done, which can only be accomplished in an outside setting," said Dr. Kahan.

For Dr. Clark, her doctoral degree is an opportunity to expand her counseling services. "It's what I love most about my job—forming that connection with students and their families," she said. "Georgian Court always taught us to make sure we have that connection with the family because there's so much more to someone's situation. You have to support the family as well as the student."

GCU's Psy.D. in School Psychology program is one of four options in New Jersey, but for this first cohort, it was the only choice. Its flexibility, with night classes and the ability to complete internship hours within their own school district, made it possible for them to keep working. All the graduates had previous exposure to Georgian Court, whether as undergraduates, master's-degree students in psychology or applied behavior analysis, adjunct faculty, or a combination of the three, and were drawn to the small class size, emphasis on Mercy core values, and the faculty's subject matter expertise, approachability, and compassion.

"I knew there were doctorate programs across the state, but also knowing how well Georgian Court prepared me for my master's degree, I really wanted to get my doctorate from here," said Dr. Winters. "I've never regretted not going anywhere else; I give the faculty tremendous credit for making me the professional I am today."

Just as there are qualities students look for in doctoral programs, there's an essential characteristic Georgian Court finds desirable in its Psy.D. students. "During interviews, we ask, 'Do you have a strong voice?" said Dr. Mancuso. "Sometimes they look at us a little sideways, but what we mean is advocacy. One of the most important functions for



school psychologists is advocating on behalf of a child. We're strong believers in technical accuracy in our program, but we also train our students to develop a compass that orients them to meet the needs of children and their families."

#### **Facing the Challenges**

Doctoral programs are rigorous academically, testing not only subject matter knowledge, but also personal stamina and resiliency. The first advanced standing graduates faced a variety of challenges: balancing course requirements with full-time jobs and adjunct teaching, parenthood, and a global pandemic.

"I was challenged, but I also felt if I wasn't being challenged, I wasn't doing it right," said Dr. Winters. "There were times when I thought, 'This is so hard. I don't know if I can do it.' I came out of it a lot tougher. The program wasn't what I expected, but it's everything I hoped for."

Like her classmates, to say that Dr. Defilippo was juggling several balls in the air while completing the program is an understatement. "An adjunct teaching position came up unexpectedly, and in January I was instructing two of the applied behavior analysis courses," she said. "Not only was I trying to finish my internship, research, and dissertation, but I was preparing coursework and lectures." To top it off, house renovations were ongoing throughout the program. She's happy to have both her diploma and an office back.

Dr. Schaible describes her experience as a roller coaster ride and is grateful for the support she received from her husband, family, classmates, and faculty. "There was no slacking off — everything I did required intense preparation and meant time away from my children, one of whom has special needs," she said. "Finally, I had to tell myself that I was worthy of the goal I was trying to reach."

One student's challenge was also a blessing. "My precious daughter, Rachelli, was born right at the end of the program," said Dr. Kahan. "While it was definitely not a walk in the park — I was back to working on my dissertation about a week after she was born — I was able to make it to the end." Classmates and faculty were extremely supportive and excited for her, which she said made all the difference. "The best part was having my daughter at the graduation, wearing a bib that said, "My mom got her Psy.D.; You can call her doctor."

The hallmark of a doctoral program is the dissertation. Here are the titles and a brief description of the research conducted by the GCU Psy.D. In school psychology program's first cohort.

#### Parent Experiences of Grief When Caring for a Child with a Diagnosed Mental Health Disorder

Dr. Christine Clark's research is the first to examine parent experiences following a child's mental health diagnosis. Her survey results showed that parents who have a good relationship with their child and/or have support from a significant other are less likely to experience grief. Even still, these parents can benefit from nonjudgmental care through school district resource referrals or private therapy.

#### Evaluating the Effectiveness of Graphical Feedback Within Behavioral Skills Training on BCBA® Aspirants' Visual Analysis Skills

Graphs help evaluate the effectiveness of behavioral skills training in people with autism and other conditions, many of whom receive the services of Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs). Dr. Samantha Defilippo's research focused on using graphs to visually reflect the performance of individuals working toward BCBA certification — what they did well and what needs improvement. While studies have looked at using graphical feedback in this way, it is not yet incorporated in training modules.

#### Conjoint Behavioral Consultation in Early Childhood via Remote Delivery

Dr. Sara Kahan evaluated a consultation model for parents and teachers of preschoolers with academic, social-emotional, or behavioral challenges via Google Meet. The model was proven effective, and both parents and teachers perceived using the consultation to help the child as highly acceptable. That means there's a model for helping children that not only works, but is something that teachers and parents are happy to engage in and be part of.

#### Home School Collaboration: A Comparison of Perspectives Between School Psychologists and Parents of Children Receiving Special Education Services

When a student receives special education services, school psychologists and parents often have differing views on goals and whether they are reached. Sometimes, the goals are the same, but the two parties are expressing them in different terms. Dr. Lauren Schaible's qualitative research explored the barriers to collaboration between parents and school psychologists and the solutions to breaking them down to help the child better succeed.

#### Examining School Psychologists' Implicit and Explicit Bias Towards LGBTQ Students in Schools

Dr. Amy Winters' research focused on whether school psychologists are biased against LGBTQ students, with a specific interest in implicit, or hidden, bias. The ideal situation would be no bias, but through a survey of school psychologists, she found only 27% held no bias toward gay or straight people — while 73% had bias. The more positive school psychologists' perceptions, the more likely they were to provide services for and attend training related to LGBTQ students.

#### A Shared Calling, a Shared Destination for

# THREE GCU EDUCATION GRADS

story by Sheila Noonan

SIGN IN AMANDA PANARIELLO'S cheerfully decorated fourth-to-sixth-grade classroom boldly declares: "What I love most about my classroom is who I share it with." Depending on enrollment, that could include verbal and nonverbal students with autism and children with learning differences, mobility limitations, emotional challenges, or who are included within any of the dozen or so disability categories recognized by the New Jersey Department of Education.

To Ms. Panariello '18 and two other Georgian Court University graduates, April Bodner '17 and Jill Behan '17, '19, special education students truly are special.

"Instead of focusing on what my students can't do," says Ms. Bodner, who has five pupils in her third-to-fifth-grade classroom, "I think about what they can." She beams with pride when talking about her students' growth in class participation and eye contact, significant challenges for some. "One nonverbal student wanted absolutely nothing to do with anything in the fall. Now he's come a long way, sitting with classmates during circle time and communicating more through a device," she said.

Ms. Behan, who teaches kindergarten through second-grade special needs students, was drawn to the special education classroom since she was a peer mentor in middle school, being a "buddy" at lunch, in gym class, and on field trips. "I knew from then on I wanted to be a special education teacher," she said. Ms. Panariello also felt an early calling to her field. "I wanted to be a person who advocates for the special education population and makes sure they are receiving the same education every student deserves."

In addition to being fully qualified special education teachers, Ms. Behan and Ms. Bodner have master's degrees in applied behavior analysis (ABA), one of the few approaches that are consistently effective at treating behavioral disorders such as autism, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and others. Georgian Court's M.A. in ABA program, which Ms. Behan completed, now has three specialty tracks: generalist, autism specialist, and school specialist.

#### A Small World of Lion Pride

The three teachers share a deeply held commitment to their students and their educational field, which they say is equally challenging and rewarding. And whether by divine intervention or coincidence, they have the same employer. Ms. Panariello and Ms. Bodner work at the Millstone Township Elementary School, and easily connect with Ms. Behan at the Millstone Township Primary School next door through group messages. Ms. Behan knew the other two





teachers while a student at Georgian Court, while Ms. Panariello and Ms. Bodner met on the job this year. "Georgian Court was immediately something we had in common," said Ms. Panariello. "I soon found that April's passion for the job and the connection she has with her students makes it easy to work with her. She's such a good teacher and friend that working together is a breeze."

They frequently share ideas, and this school year, they collaborated on awareness month programs for students at both schools about Down syndrome and autism. At the elementary school, Ms. Panariello's and Ms. Bodner's students help in a business the teachers created, Millstone's Mouthwatering Munchies. The classes decide what they'd like to make, such as trail mix, and whether it's for them to enjoy or to sell to other teachers. If the latter, students make the recipes, deliver them, and collect payment—fun ways to

instill interpersonal and money math skills while helping students feel pride in being part of a school community.

#### **The Georgian Court Difference**

Even with teachers such as these three dedicated alumnae, there's cause for concern in special education classrooms in New Jersey and across the nation. A general teacher shortage has been worrisome for years, with classroom vacancies driven by baby boomer retirements not being filled at an even pace. Adding to the teacher drain: fallout resignations from the pressures of teaching during a pandemic or an increasingly politicized curriculum driven by some lawmakers and members of the public. Special education has historically experienced high turnover. New Jersey, with about 17 percent of its public school students classified and enrolled in special education programs, is one of 48 states facing a shortage of fully qualified special educators.

While school districts, state lawmakers, and others search for answers, GCU's School of Education has been emphasizing inclusivity in its curriculum and classroom placements for years at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Notably, all GCU education majors in the undergraduate program are dually certified with a Teacher of Students with Disabilities endorsement. "It's a unique and important distinction from other education programs," said Amuhelang Magaya, Ph.D., associate professor and acting dean of the School of Education. "Our graduates are able to teach in general and special education classrooms. We intentionally designed our teacher-preparation program to meet the needs of diverse student populations."

Before joining Georgian Court this year, Deborah Snyder, director of teacher preparation placement and clinical partnerships, was a school superintendent. "We only hired teachers who were dually certified because even in a general education classroom, you're still going to have students with special needs," she said. Now that Ms. Snyder assists education majors with classroom placement, she sees how relationship building is another Georgian Court differentiator. "We have strong connections with all of the public schools in Ocean and Monmouth counties, where many of our students are from," she said, noting that placements for observation or student teaching are typically made within 30 miles of a student's home.

Additionally, Georgian Court's small class size, a hallmark throughout the university, gives education faculty and Ms. Snyder opportunities to better know their students and thus offer placements more tailored to their interests, including special education.

There are other differentiators as well: professors who work in the education field and the university mission.

Nancy B. Sardone, Ph.D., professor of education and coordinator of edTPA, had a tremendous impact on Ms. Panariello because of her ability to infuse inclusivity in every assignment. "We had a mainstream assignment for the average student, then differentiated it for above grade level and below grade level," she recalls. "We had projects where a student was visually or hearing impaired, which aren't commonly found even within special education classrooms. Dr. Sardone really opened my eyes to different disabilities and how to tailor lessons to a student's needs."

The Mercy core values of respect, integrity, compassion, service, and justice are foundational to the entire GCU community, but they take on extra significance when applied to special education instruction. "All my classes were centered on the Mercy core values, and the ethics components of each class was pivotal in my development as a teacher," said Ms. Behan. "These classes weren't just about theories; I was taught by professors who were out in the teaching field and living by a very meaningful ethical code. That was huge to me."

#### **Finding Answers to the Shortage**

Solutions for a special education teacher shortage aren't necessarily simple to find, implement, or even fund, but Dr. Magaya has a few ideas. "Georgian Court and other colleges can partner with

school districts to form education or teacher academies within their high schools, so once students interested in education reach college, they have an understanding and appreciation of teaching," he said. To bring the academy concept full circle, once those former academy students have earned their bachelor's degree in education, there'd be a path to employment at the high schools they graduated from. The academies would target the shortage areas, and grants or tuition credits could be built into the cohorts to attract candidates.

Dr. Magaya also believes faculty advisors have important roles in fueling the teacher pipeline. "We need to be intentional about tracking education majors so that they can finish on time and with less debt, and to be resourceful to them and make sure our advising is on point," he said.

Teacher burnout is very real, especially within the special education sector where success looks different than in a regular classroom. "The challenging days can be very difficult, and yet I think I have the best job in the world," said Ms. Panariello. "Yes, there times when a student is happy one moment and has a meltdown, but those times occur far less frequently than most people think. I focus on the life skills we're teaching them—how to tell time, read social situations, or make conversation with students in regular classrooms—and it brings me much joy."

All three teachers agreed that the supportive administrators they have in the Millstone Township School District helps relieve any stress they might have. "If you don't have a support system, whether your principal, your classroom aides, or other professionals, the job is much more difficult," said Ms. Bodner. "I felt accepted and supported here at Millstone from Day 1."

#### **Everyone Is Valued**

The right of all students, regardless of ability, to have a free public education is codified in law. But beyond that, to GCU education professors and graduates, providing special education to students who need it is much more than a requirement. Disability is not inability.

"Special education teachers are preparing our students to contribute to society in any way they can," said Ms. Bodner. "We have a life skills room where we expose them to things they can do, such as sorting items, making deliveries, or preparing food. Within the definition of disabilities are also people who have changed the world in amazing ways. If someone doesn't understand the importance of educating students with different educational needs, they need to educate themselves and see what's really out there."

"As a Catholic University in the Mercy tradition, our mission is to empower students to shape a just and compassionate world," adds Dr. Magaya. "Furthermore, we believe that 'all human beings are created in the image of God,' which means all human beings were created equally by God, and as a Mercy university, we have a heart for the underrepresented. Providing an education to students with special needs is a calling. This is who we are. We see everybody as valuable."

#### GOOD TODAY, BETTER TOMORROW:

# LAND SALE EXPANDS POSSIBILITIES FOR THE FUTURE OF GEORGIAN COURT

The interior of the new center for nursing and health sciences will feature classrooms, faculty offices, labs, and a multipurpose meeting/conference space, along with sweeping campus views.

ince 1908, Georgian Court University has found guidance in the wisdom of Catherine McAuley, foundress of the Sisters of Mercy. One of her enduring quotes, "Resolve to be good today, but better tomorrow," continues to inspire us to evolve and improve.

This past March, we announced a pivotal milestone in Georgian Court's history: the sale of 42 acres of mostly unused land at the edge of our campus and several administrative buildings along Lakewood Avenue to our neighbors at Beth Medrash Govoha. The strategic decision, reached after nearly two years of carefully considered negotiations, presents an incredible opportunity to meet the changing needs of our students. The proceeds from this sale, coupled with the generosity of alumni and friends of Georgian Court, expedite the launch and expand the scope of our campus master plan, ensuring a better and brighter tomorrow for our students, faculty, and staff.

#### **Expanded Possibilities**

As we approach our 100th anniversary of being in Lakewood, we are reinvesting now in the historic heart of campus to propel the future of Georgian Court. Our goal? To dramatically improve the student experience and academic offerings while preserving the classic charm that makes GCU such a special place to learn and teach.

Take our historic Casino, for example. It will become a modern student center. Once complete, the Casino will become GCU's primary gathering place for students who live on campus and those who commute, providing much-needed common space for group study, breakout sessions, and socializing. Designed to meet the needs of the modern-day student, it will also house a brand-new bookstore and campus dining, making it easy for hungry students to refuel before they hit the books. The optimization of currently underutilized spaces within the Casino will transform it into a central resource center for Georgian Court's core support programs, including Student Affairs, Health Services, TRIO—Student Support Services, Global Education, and the Educational Opportunity Fund. Improved accessibility to some of our most critical programs will encourage students to take advantage of the many resources available at Georgian Court. More than a century ago, the Gould family built the Casino for their personal recreation — we want to ensure that countless future generations can enjoy and benefit from their former playground.



# SAYING GOODBYE TO AMANI JENNINGS, OUR DEAN OF STUDENTS

June 30th was our last day with Amani Jennings, who served as the Dean of Students and Deputy Title IX Coordinator at GCU for over five years. Amani has since assumed an exciting new role as the Dean of Students at Bowie State University, a historically black university located in Bowie, Maryland. "Dean Jennings has an amazing ability to defuse tense situations and lead student affairs forward," said Provost Janice Warner. "He has been a calm, thoughtful, and knowledgeable presence and partner."

We sat down with Amani to discuss his time with Georgian Court and his future plans. Take a look:

#### How long did you work for GCU? How would you describe your tenure?

I joined GCU in January of 2017, so I've been with the university for five amazing years. GCU is a great, small community, and it's home to people that are genuinely passionate about the institution and kind to their fellow community members. I am so grateful for the acceptance and warmth that I received during my tenure at GCU.

#### What surprised you about GCU?

Everything and everyone at GCU surprised me, but I was most struck by how individual faculty and staff were so giving with their time and energy. Erin McCarron and Evelyn Saul-Quinn were particularly instrumental in getting me in tune with campus activities.

I would also note that GCU's leadership programs are so well developed. The university did a great job in assembling well-planned, well-structured leadership development groups and programs. That was very impressive to me coming on board.

#### Where are you going next?

In my next role, I'll be serving as the Dean of Students for Bowie State University, located in Bowie, Maryland. While I'm familiar with the state, it will still be a new environment to me; further, Bowie is a historically black university, which I'm thrilled to explore and learn more about.

#### What is it about working for an HBCU that excites you?

Most people don't know this, but the majority of African American college graduates come from historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs). Further, while other colleges in the COVID-19 era are struggling with enrollment, HBCUs are thriving. I suspect that's because they do an excellent job of creating safe, welcoming environments that are supportive of students of color. In these moments of crisis, students of color feel more of a need to be in those supportive spaces.

#### What did you like about working in Lakewood?

I learned a great deal about orthodox Judaism by working in such close proximity with the community. It was a fascinating, educational, and cultural experience for me, and I'm so grateful to have had that opportunity.

#### What should future students know about GCU?

Georgian Court University's mission and Mercy core values aren't just used as advertising fodder: there is a consistent, sincere effort to incorporate these values into all aspects of campus life. It's rare to see any organization live its stated values so thoroughly, and it's one of the many aspects of GCU that make the institution so unique.

#### What did you like about your role at GCU?

The role of Dean of Students is deeply embedded in the culture of higher education. I've taken that role very seriously, and it was an honor for me to hold that title at Georgian Court.

#### What would you say to a new student at Georgian Court?

Embrace all of the experiences, all of the challenges, all of the joy, and all of the struggles that are indicative of college years.

Embrace everything, and don't be afraid of challenges, because they make us better human beings, better thinkers, and better students.

Don't be afraid of being challenged by different ideologies. Embrace all of those challenges and accept the growth that comes from it.

#### Is there anything else that you'd like to share with the community?

I will miss Georgian Court. It was an honor for me to serve as the university's Dean of Students.

The concept of "servant leadership" is something that I've always been interested in, and my time at GCU taught me more about serving leadership than any other professional experience in my life. Georgian Court University taught me how to be a serving leader, and I will be forever grateful for that.



"The concept of 'servant leadership' is something that I've always been interested in, and my time at GCU taught me more about serving leadership than any other professional experience in my life."

-AMANI JENNINGS



# DANCE DIRECTOR SILVANA CARDELL RECEIVES PRESTIGIOUS GUGGENHEIM FELLOWSHIP

The John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation awards fellowships to exceptional individuals so these visionaries in their respective fields can freely create. Creativity is second nature to Silvana Cardell, who is among six choreographers in this year's prestigious Guggenheim Fellows cohort. Ms. Cardell, associate professor of dance and director of the dance program at Georgian Court University and artistic director of the Philadelphia-based Cardell Dance Theater, is a multi-award winning choreographer, dancer, and educator.

This year's 180-member Guggenheim Fellows cohort was chosen from among nearly 2,500 applicants. *The Philadelphia Dance Journal* and American Theatre website published articles referencing Ms. Cardell's inclusion in the high-achieving group.

With her fellowship award, Ms. Cardell will choreograph a performance, Disposable Bodies, that examines the treatment of bodies — both human and nonhuman. The work reflects her career-long artistic theme of justice — also one of the Mercy core values to which Georgian Court is committed.

"As a dancer, my mission is to connect audiences to their bodies. In *Disposable Bodies*, I am proposing a challenging and critical look at issues we consider only human," said Ms. Cardell. "I am asking you, as we think about injustices, to remember how

injustices connect us beyond the human realm to those creatures we consider below us, as we are willing to disregard their suffering." The work will ask the audience to contemplate two fundamental questions: "Who counts as human?" and "Whose lives count as lives?"

A combination of movement, installation, sound, sculpture, and live video, *Disposable Bodies* will premiere at Taller Puertorriqueño in Philadelphia this October and will be copresented by Philadelphia Dance Projects.

When announcing this year's fellowships, Edward Hirsch, president of the Guggenheim Foundation and 1985 Fellow in Poetry, said that "the work supported by the foundation will aid in our collective effort to better understand the new world we're in, where we've come from, and where we're going." Ms. Cardell is hopeful that's true with *Disposable Bodies*, and also that her GCU students can take another message from her career and the Guggenheim Fellowship.

"Do not give up at the first rejection," she said. "Find a way to follow your vision and your desires. Perseverance and focus will not only advance your life, they can expand knowledge and change the world!"

# GCU BASKETBALL PLAYER TAKES A SHOT AND NETS A FULBRIGHT FELLOWSHIP

Recent graduate Hanna Thrainsdottir '22 knows the thrill of making challenging shots both on and off the court. The Iceland native and basketball player received a prestigious Fulbright Fellowship for the 2022–2023 academic year. Only a handful of applicants are chosen each year by the Icelandic Fulbright Commission for the highly competitive scholarship, which supports Icelandic students' graduate studies in the United States and furthers its goals of mutual understanding and knowledge sharing between the two countries. The generous financial award would go far toward covering master's program tuition, and the opportunity to participate in the scholarly Fulbright community was even more appealing. She submitted her application — a long shot, or so she believed.

The commission felt differently, and while Hanna was "very surprised" at her selection as a Fulbright scholar, others in the GCU community were not.

#### **Hanna-Inspired and Prepared**

"Hanna is a dedicated, genuine leader who inspires and encourages those around her to be themselves and be engaged," said Laura Grodewald, director of global education programs. "Hanna's receipt of this prestigious award reflects her commitment to GCU's core values of justice, respect, integrity, service, and compassion, locally and globally. She demonstrates this commitment that aligns both with GCU's mission and the Fulbright mission, and we are proud to say that she is a GCU Lion!"

Fulbright Fellowships are awarded to the very brightest, most accomplished college students — Hanna now among them. She graduated with a 4.0 GPA — earning her one of the three Academic Excellence Awards at Commencement — won multiple academic and athletic awards, was inducted into three academic honor societies, and held leadership roles in campus organizations. She is also a published short story author, is fluent in Icelandic and English, and can hold her own in Spanish and Danish.

#### A Turnover of the Academic Kind

Hanna admits it was the opportunity to play basketball, not academics, that drew her to GCU. "When my parents and I toured the campus in 2017, it was meeting Coach Jazz [Women's Basketball Coach Jasmina Perazic], as well as liking the smaller, family feel of the campus, that convinced me I was meant to come here," she said. Hanna chose the digital communication major because she thought it would be a good use of her skillsets—she was the go-to video maker among her friends in Iceland—and allow her to focus on basketball.

However, after one class with

Marci Mazzarotto, Ph.D., assistant professor of digital communication and coordinator of the digital communication program, "I realized my major was not going to be a breeze," Hanna said. "That class changed my life. It made me passionate about my studies, especially the application of theoretical concepts to the real world." She added a second major, psychology, to challenge herself further and receive additional exposure to empirical research.

This fall, Hanna heads to New York University to pursue an M.A. in Media, Culture, and Communication. "I have many research interests, but I am specifically interested in analyzing the representation of different social groups in popular culture," she said, "as well as researching how Icelandic, a minority language, is used in our digitally saturated world."

Her GCU education, notes Hanna, is a solid foundation on which to build her future. "The teaching has been amazing. Both of my advisors, Dr. Mazzarotto and Susan E. O. Field, Ph.D., from the Department of Psychology and Counseling, have been extremely supportive. They've gone above and beyond in many ways."

#### **Basketball and Beyond**

Playing basketball for Georgian Court has given the 6-foot forward, a team captain, numerous experiences. One of them was a first for GCU — an appearance in the 2021 NCAA Division II Eastern Regional Tournament. She's also had an an "automatic friendship group."

As with any college sport, playing basketball required Hanna to be an extremely organized planner and to carefully prioritize other activities.

tremely organized planner and to carefully prioritize other activities.

With that mindset, she had a presence not only in the
classroom and on the court, but in the broader GCU community.

Hanna was an international student mentor for the Office of Global Education Programs, guiding new international students as they prepared for their experience at GCU. She was also president of the LGBTQ student organization and served on the Council for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion as an active contributor to its

programming committee. Being able to offer panels and other events to students, even by

Zoom, is important, she believes, as the university builds a more inclusive community, not one where differences are merely tolerated.

Hanna said she is grateful — for the variety of experiences she's had at GCU as a vibrant ambassador for international education and for what lies ahead as a Fulbright Fellow.

Adapted from a story by
Sheila Noonan. Visit **georgian.edu/ fulbright-hanna** to read the
full-length story. ■

### WELCOMING DR. KELLY MCNEAL TO GEORGIAN COURT



GCU is home to a wealth of accomplished, dedicated faculty and staff, and our latest addition to the team is no exception.

Dr. Kelly McNeal, our newest Dean of the School of Education, served as Chair of the Department of Special Education, Disability Studies and Professional Counseling at William Paterson University. She also served as a faculty member at the university from 2006 to 2022.

Dr. McNeal has been published as an author and reviewer in myriad publications; has served as a panel presenter, invited speaker, and workshop presenter on multiple continents; and earned her Ph.D. in Language, Literacy, and Learning from Fordham University.

We sat down with Dr. McNeal to discuss her new role with Georgian Court and her past work in higher education:

#### WHAT MAKES YOU EXCITED ABOUT JOINING GEORGIAN COURT UNIVERSITY?

I am honored to have been selected as Georgian Court University's Dean of the School of Education. As the landscape for teacher preparation and the preparation of advanced school personnel and school leaders continues to change in New Jersey, I am excited about joining. It has a strong history of preparing educational professionals and is dedicated to advancing a strong future.

#### FROM YOUR PERSPECTIVE, WHAT DIFFERENTIATES GCU FROM OTHER UNIVERSITIES?

From my perspective, GCU's Mercy Core Values of Respect, Integrity, Justice, Compassion, and Service differentiate it from other universities. Having a strong preparation at a university where these values are the intentional roots of all behaviors sets a resilient foundation for future teachers, personnel, and school leaders to work with an ethic of care, which is an integral part of today's changing sociopolitical landscape in education.

#### AS DEAN OF GCU'S SCHOOL OF EDUCATION, WHAT IS THE PRIMARY FOCUS OF YOUR WORK?

As Dean of the GCU School of Education, the focus of my work will be to advance GCU's vision and goals as they relate to the School of Education. My work will focus on inspiring, nurturing, and facilitating growth and development for faculty, staff, and students as well as upholding high standards throughout the school. This includes enhancing a culture of collaboration which prioritizes meaningful engagement while ensuring the school, faculty, staff, and students adhere to GCU policies and procedures.

As Dean, I will lead the school in related accreditation, outreach, service, and scholarly initiatives that ensure relevance and success.

It will be my honor to represent GCU at school, university, and community events. Furthermore, I will be an advocate for students and work to further diversify the student body.

#### WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR GOALS FOR THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION?

GCU has a strong history of educating high-performing teachers, school personnel, and school leaders. My goal is to build on this remarkable history which has a foundation in the forward-thinking programming that already exists here at the school such as dual-certification programs. I see that it is equally important for me to inspire and support the dedicated, notable faculty and staff.

The landscape of certification is changing in New Jersey, with teacher shortages reaching a dire level. Therefore, a priority will be to creatively work within the School of Education, in collaboration with the other Schools at GCU, to quickly respond to changing legislation so GCU can further serve the New Jersey community by providing the outstanding preparation GCU is known for to more teacher candidates.

#### WHERE DID YOU WORK PRIOR TO JOINING GCU?

I am coming to GCU after spending a decade and a half at William Paterson University. My most recent position at William Paterson University was as Chair and Professor in the Department of Special Education, Professional Counseling, and Disability Studies.

#### HOW CAN STUDENTS BEST GET IN TOUCH WITH YOU?

Students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members can get in touch with me via email at kmcneal@georgian.edu. I have an open door policy, so if you are on campus and see my door open, please feel free to stop by, say "hello" and introduce yourself. I am eager to attend campus events where I look forward to meeting GCU community members.

#### FIRST, FAST, AND 100% PHENOMENAL:

#### INAUGURAL A.B.S.N. COHORT RECEIVES THEIR PINS



**Top Left:** Graduates of Georgian Court's Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing Program in their pinning ceremony

Center Left: Joan Harvey, D.N.P., professor-in-residence and director of the A.B.S.N. program

Bottom Left: Inaugural A.B.S.N. Cohort featured in our historic Mansion

Nursing's pinning ceremony, which acknowledges students' successful completion of program work, has been a rite of passage for well over a century. On a brisk February day, Georgian Court's campus was aglow with pride as the first cohort of the Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing (A.B.S.N.) program offered by the Hackensack Meridian *Health* School of Nursing and Wellness at GCU kept that tradition. More than 125 guests gathered to celebrate 19 students as they put their own modern, meaningful twist and the time-honored tradition. Instead of faculty members pinning students, the students — all of whom began and ended the program together — pinned each other.

#### An Accelerated Demand for B.S.N.s

Georgian Court's accelerated nursing program is helping to fill a void at a very critical time, as the combination of baby boomer retirees and the pandemic's catastrophic effect on nursing burnout continues to drain the profession in large numbers rapidly across the nation.

Accelerated programs are in demand because they provide qualified nurses to fill vacancies relatively quickly. Added benefits of A.B.S.N. graduates are the valuable skills and perspectives they bring from other fields and their informed understanding of the high-pressure demands of the nursing field.

#### A Pledge, Pins, and Pride

After completing a rigorous program, which consolidated four years of nursing school in 14 months, the diverse cohort, with almost half of them men in a traditionally female-populated occupation, stood before faculty, administrators, family, and friends to acknowledge the culmination of their hard work.

Remarks from Janice Warner, Ph.D., GCU Provost, Teri Wurmser, Ph.D., the nursing school's dean, and Joan Harvey, D.N.P., professor-in-residence and director of the A.B.S.N. program, underscored the students' resilience and accomplishments, with the A.B.S.N. director taking a final official opportunity to offer some of her renowned "Helpful Harvey Hints." Among them: never forget the "why" you came into the profession and always remember the principles of practice you've learned.

Yitzchok "Zak" Manies, the student speaker and recipient of the Richard Hader Academic Excellence Award, described a student journey that was "intense, demanding, and profound." In light of this, Manies commended his classmates for forming "a cohesive unit, supporting one another, refusing to accept any failure, and ultimately rejoicing in each other's successes."

As the students pinned one other, each briefly dedicated their nurse's pin. Spouses, children, parents, and friends received many warm words of appreciation, including Sabrina Muscato's late father, whom she acknowledged by sharing, "Although he could not be here with me, I know he is beaming from Heaven."

#### First A.B.S.N. Graduates Leave a Lasting Impression

While no longer physically present on campus, the first cohort of graduates has permanently shaped the education of future cohorts by uncovering valuable ways to improve the program.

# NEW TRUSTEES WITH STRONG GCU TIES JOIN BOARD

Georgian Court University welcomed five new members to its Board of Trustees as of July 1, 2022. Each has strong GCU ties, whether as alumni, former board members, or former faculty or staff and is distinguished professionally and in community service. We look forward to adding their talents to our already strong board.



RODRIGO A. COLON '95, '17 has 25 years of experience as a corporate HR management insider specializing in diversity and inclusion, professional networker, and career coach. As an in-demand executive coach and professional speaker, he reveals his depth of his career management experience and shares the wisdom he has acquired. He demonstrates the power of networking as a giving and sharing activity, and aggressively challenges professionals to be relentless in building their networking skills while managing their careers as a business - the CEO of ME, Inc. He is a published author and radio host, two-time Georgian Court graduate, and member of the GCU Alumni Court of Honor.



MARY ELLEN FUHRMAN, RSM, has been a teacher, a principal, an elected leader in the Sisters of Mercy, a member of an administrative team in health care, and life coordinator at a Mercy skilled nursing and personal care facility. She served as a Georgian Court trustee from 2001 to 2005, later becoming director of mission integration and then special assistant to the president for mission integration and strategic planning. She also co-chaired GCU's re-accreditation with the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. Returning to GCU now to experience the excitement of all that has happened and will continue to evolve is a gift to her.



MARILYN E. GONYO, Ed.D., is a retired GCU professor of education. She taught graduate-level courses, directed the diagnostic and tutorial learning center for children, and was the director and cofounder of the program for college learning disabled students. Dr. Gonyo also served as an education program specialist with the New Jersey Department of Education, was on staff at Montclair University, and held various instructional positions in public

schools. She was a consultant to publishing companies and public and private schools and was appointed to the New Jersey Governor's Task Force on Reading Disabilities. Dr. Gonyo has established an endowed professional development fund and endowed scholarship at GCU.



DEACON JAMES J. KNIPPER '15, is the publisher of Clear Faith Publishing LLL, focused on publishing books with a spiritual foundation. A GCU trustee from 2005 to 2012, he earned an M.A. in Theology in 2015 and was awarded an honorary Doctor of Business Administration degree in 2017 from GCU. He is a member of the Board of Trustees for the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C., and sits on the Finance Committee for the Diocese of Trenton. He is a member of St. Paul's Catholic Church in Princeton, where he serves as a deacon to the parish.



ELIZABETH M. SCHMALZ '16 has been in the cosmetic industry, collaborating with major global marketers of cosmetics and fragrances, for more than 30 years. She is the owner of American Flavors and Fragrances, a privately held company that provides strategic development services and the sale of flavors and fragrances to leading global companies in the personal and home fragrance categories. Ms. Schmalz received an honorary Doctor of Public Service in 2012 from GCU and is also a 2016 graduate. She is a member of the Board of Trustees of Riverview Medical Center Foundation; the Advisory Board for the Upper Room Spiritual Center; and the Board of Directors of Applied DNA Sciences, a leading company in biotech sciences.



#### REMEMBERING BOB MULCAHY

Georgian Court University mourns the loss of Robert "Bob" Mulcahy III, chair of the University Board of Trustees and a steadfast champion of the GCU mission, who died February 8, 2022.

"For nearly 10 years, Bob gave us his absolute best. This is a tremendous loss to the university and to all who were touched by his life of service," said GCU President Joseph R. Marbach, Ph.D.

#### **Putting His Vast Experience to Work for Georgian Court**

The former Rutgers University athletics director joined the GCU trustee board in 2012 as higher education was grappling with recession-era challenges. Trustees regularly tapped his deep knowledge of revenue generation, marketing, and business development to make difficult decisions.

He brought with him an incredible record of service and experience. In 1976, Governor Brendan Byrne named him New Jersey's first corrections commissioner, and within days of taking the job, Mr. Mulcahy helped diffuse a volatile hostage situation at the former Rahway State Prison.

For nearly 20 years, Mr. Mulcahy was president and CEO of the New Jersey Sports and Public Exposition Authority, operating the Meadowlands Sports Complex and building the \$275 million Atlantic City Convention Center and Adventure Aquarium in Camden. Most recently, he served as a

chairman for the New Jersey Casino Reinvestment Development Authority.

The Villanova University graduate, who got his start in public service in 1970 as mayor of Mendham, also served as an officer in the U.S. Navy. He was also an author, having published his memoir, An Athletic Director's Story and the Future of College Sports in America (Rutgers University Press, 2020).

#### **Focused on Mission**

For the father of 7 and grandfather of 15, supporting GCU was a family affair. His daughter Megan E. Mulcahy Romano joined the GCU board in 2015, and his late wife, Terry, was especially drawn to the university's core values. After her death, the family requested donations to the GCU Angel Fund in her name.

In late 2020, private donations established the Mulcahy Institute for Social Justice, which will be formally launched in 2022. The institute's intellectual focus will be peace and nonviolence and will offer programs to students and other members of the community.

"He used his leadership savvy and commitment to the Catholic faith to move our university forward in so many ways," said Dr. Marbach. "The Georgian Court family will benefit for years to come because he was so invested in our mission, our students, and Catholic higher education."



#### KEN KARAMICHAEL

#### ON THE CENTER FOR PROFESSIONAL STUDIES



GCU provides a number of resources for its students to pursue their educational and professional goals. One of these comprehensive resources is the Center for Professional Studies.

We sat down with Ken Karamichael, Associate Vice President for Professional Studies & Business Development, to discuss how the Center for Professional Studies (CPS) enhances learning for GCU community members:

#### WHAT IS THE CENTER FOR PROFESSIONAL STUDIES, EXACTLY?

The Center for Professional Studies is an educational gateway for adult, professional, and non-traditional students to pursue lifelong learning. The center offers over five hundred programs annually. CPS works directly with businesses, associations, non-profits, chambers of commerce, government, and other educational institutions to provide skills-specific curriculum and activities to meet the needs of an ever-changing economy.

Our business-related offerings include all skill levels — from basic accounting, through advanced Six-Sigma, lean business planning, entrepreneurship, and wealth management. We also offer industry-recognized certification preparation programs such as the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), Project Management Professional (PMP), Pharmacy Technician, Certified Clinical Medical Assistant (CCMA), Certified Professional Life Coach, and variety of computer coding (COMPTIA A+) and artificial intelligence (AI) bootcamps.

#### WHAT MAKES THE CENTER SO SPECIAL WITHIN THE UNIVERSITY?

CPS is an integrator — it links our internal educational excellence with our external community and business partner needs. These direct relationships allow professionals in our donor and alumni engagement units to proactively expand conversations and opportunities to better serve our benefactors. Giving and professional development no longer need to be separate thought processes.

#### WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR GOALS FOR CPS?

GCU has world-class undergraduate and graduate programs that may be of interest to those who work full-time, yet are challenged to find the time to complete a degree. We envision new opportunities that allow non-traditional, professional, or retired communities to receive a traditional academic experience. One of these programs to look forward to is the CPS eXperience, whereby participants of all ages, interests, or professional stages can earn a university degree at their desired pace.

Additionally, we will be seeking alumni, community partners, philanthropists, and business owners to co-author the establishment of New Jersey's first Generational Wealth Academy. This initiative seeks to establish marked pathways toward systemic financial growth for underserved and underrepresented communities throughout central NJ and beyond.

#### WHAT COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS EXIST ABOUT YOUR WORK OR THE CENTER ITSELF?

Perhaps the most common misconception is that continuing education centers like CPS are solely designed for professionals seeking required education or training to advance in their jobs. Core continuing education practitioners use buzz words that may only resonate with certain subgroups. What does the term 'Workforce Development' mean to you? If you work in the government, this is code for 'training.' If you are an undergraduate, this may appear as 'courses designed for working professionals.' Furthermore, a retired senior may see this term and immediately ignore all offerings completely.

#### FROM YOUR PERSPECTIVE, WHAT DIFFERENTIATES GCU FROM OTHER UNIVERSITIES?

The commitment and culture toward quality education, inclusion, and whole-student development is contagious. It's amazing to experience this in action. In fact, it is what attracted me to the university the first time I visited over 15 years ago — and why leading the center is so important. Sign up for a CPS class today by visiting CPS.GEORGIAN.EDU.

# SHARING WILL ENRICH EVERYONE WITH MORE KNOWLEDGE.

- Ana Monnar Founder of Readers Are Leaders U.S.A.

GCU's Center for Professional Studies is looking for individuals who have a skill, hobby or expertise that they want to share and facilitate a class.

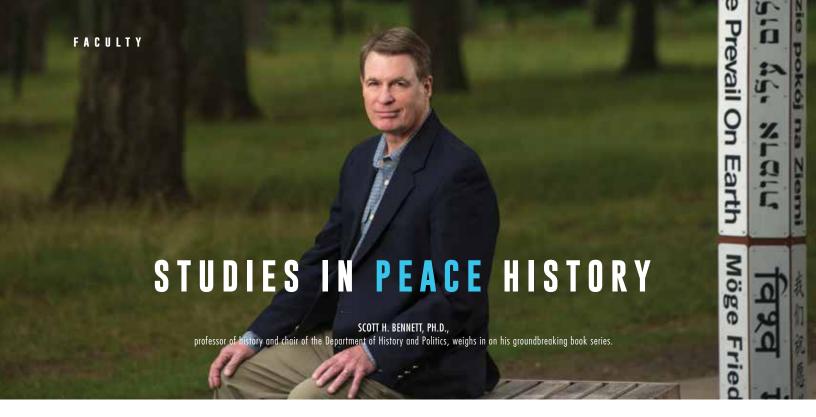
#### **About the Center for Professional Studies**

The Center for Professional Studies is grounded in GCU's core values of respect, integrity, justice, compassion, and service while continuing to introduce new personal and professional development opportunities for the benefit of our students, communities, and workforce.

Do you have a specific skill, hobby, or expertise that you want to share? Have you ever thought of teaching? GCU's Center for Professional Studies accepts course proposals year-round!

Visit georgian.edu/center-for-professional-studies/ to submit a proposal or learn more.

GEORGIAN COURT UNIVERSITY



Dr. Bennett is co-editing a new book series for Brill, a major publisher headquartered in the Netherlands. The series, Studies in Peace History, promotes new scholarship on peace history and on the movements, groups, people, and actions that have opposed both war and its causes.

We sat down with Dr. Bennett to learn more about Studies in Peace History and what we should expect to learn from the series:

#### LET'S START WITH THE BASICS. WHAT IS "PEACE HISTORY"?

Peace history is the movements, groups, people, actions, and ideas that have opposed war and have aimed to eliminate the social causes of war. I've always had an interest in America's role in the world, along with social and political reform movements. Peace history combines these two themes.

#### HOW DOES THE MERCY TRADITION PLAY A ROLE IN PEACE HISTORY?

I'm co-editing the series with Michael Clinton, Ph.D., a professor of history at Gwynedd Mercy University. Maybe it's not so much coincidental as it is a felicitous convergence of values that Dr. Clinton and I both hail from Mercy traditions: these institutions and peace historians share common values and concerns, which are expressed in their support for peace, nonviolence, and social justice.

#### WHEN WILL BOOKS IN THE SERIES BE PUBLISHED?

The series looks to publish one to two books in the first couple of years. It typically takes at least a year to publish after receiving a manuscript; Jerry Elmer is likely first up in the series. He has a well-regarded presentation on civil disobedience and is writing a book on conscription in America and its opponents.

#### WHAT TYPE OF SUBMISSIONS INTEREST YOU?

The topics in the series run the gamut, with submissions to come by historians, political scientists, anthropologists, sociologists, and more. It's accessible across disciplines and time periods.

What we want are submissions that use lots of real evidence. There are different approaches—social scientists have a tendency toward grand theories; historians are skeptical about that. We look at the uniqueness of a particular event — yes, something may have happened in World War I — but doesn't mean the same will apply to every other conflict.

#### ARE THERE MAJOR THEMES IN THE SERIES THAT PEOPLE SHOULD BE AWARE OF?

'War and peace' is an interesting and important theme. On a popular level, many people find 'war and conflict' compelling — and this is reflected in mass culture and in literature and history. Likewise, the story of those who have opposed, and resisted war is also exciting and inspiring.

I would also emphasize that in a world with nuclear weapons and other WMD, war can trigger mass murder — even human extinction. There are thousands of books on military history, but notably fewer studies on the history of peace movements, activists, and campaigns — all of which can provide lessons and alternatives to war and violence. Studies about peace and nonviolence offer a counternarrative to war and violence; they make it possible to image credible alternatives to war and violence.

#### CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT YOUR OTHER RESEARCH? WHAT DO YOU PRIMARILY FOCUS ON?

I've focused on radical pacifism, political nonviolence, and conscientious objectors. In my work, I explore how radical pacifists have opposed war, militarism, and violence while also advocating for human rights, civil liberties, and social justice. I'm now completing a biography of Igal Roodenko, a radical pacifist and conscientious objector.

#### WHAT IS A COMMON MISCONCEPTION ABOUT PEACE MOVEMENTS?

One of the core tenants of history of peace movements is that there are alternatives to war. They may fall under the rubric of nonviolent strategy, but in the popular thinking, 'sounds like a great idea in theory, but never works in practice.' That position ignores so much. In most wars, there's a 50% failure rate — violence doesn't work most of the time.

#### WHY IS PEACE HISTORY NOTEWORTHY OR IMPORTANT?

It might save the human race from extinction.

Dr. Scott H. Bennett has been a member of the GCU faculty since 2010. He was a Fulbright professor at Leiden University in The Netherlands and taught at both the Copenhagen International School in Denmark and the International School of Torino in Italy, and previously served as the president of the Peace History Society.

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



#### MAGAZINE STRIKES GOLD

Georgian Court University Magazine has won The Award of Excellence in the General-Education Institution category at the 28th 2022 Annual Communicators Award by the Academy of Interactive and Visual Arts.

The Communicator Awards are the leading international awards program honoring talent in this highly competitive field. Founded nearly three decades ago, The Communicator Awards receives almost 5,000 entries from companies, agencies, studios, and boutique shops of all sizes, making it, globally, one of the largest award shows of its kind. The Award of Excellence, the highest honor, is given to those entrants whose ability to communicate positions them as the best in the field.

The Communicator Awards is sanctioned and judged by the Academy of Interactive & Visual Arts, an invitation-only group consisting of top-tier professionals from acclaimed media, communications, advertising, creative and marketing firms. AIVA members include executives from organizations like Amazon, Big Spaceship, Chelsea Pictures, Conde Nast, Critical Mass, Disney, ESPN, GE Digital, IBM, The Nation of Artists, Nextdoor, Spotify, Time, Inc., the Wall Street Journal/Dow Jones, and Wired.

# GCU Alumnus Builds a Place Where ANYONE Can Play

ANYONE who has experience with individuals with special needs or disabilities knows that finding places that are accommodating both in structure and culture isn't always easy. Some may need soft surfaces in case they fall when they play. Others may need a quiet place to sit or easy walking paths. And the people in the facility should be kind and welcoming.

Chances are, if someone needs an accommodation, Christian Kane, '99, and his team have thought of it in a remarkable new 3.5-acre activities complex. RWJ Barnabas Health Field of Dreams in Toms River is a private community for anyone with special needs, regardless of age or ability.

#### **Growing opportunity from the unthinkable**

The Toms River Field of Dreams story began in 2012, when Kane was stopped at a traffic light with his 19-month-old son Gavin in the back seat. They were waiting to make a left turn when a fully loaded beer truck hit the car from behind. Gavin sustained a traumatic brain injury that still affects him.

Kane and his wife, Mary, wanted Gavin to have the same opportunities as their other five children. So, Kane envisioned creating a baseball field where Gavin could play. Baseball is a family tradition. Kane played for Monmouth University before he pursued his graduate degree at Georgian Court, which he completed in 1999.

He began the foundation for the field in 2017. As a high school math teacher, he wasn't an expert in raising funds for a community project, but he began doing speaking engagements to spread the word and raise the money he needed to complete the project. Soon, he realized that there was another opportunity. Each time he did a speaking engagement, people who had loved ones with special needs approached him with suggestions. A short walking path for a grandparent who had suffered a stroke. A quiet place for those who are overstimulated to find calm. A place where they would feel comfortable and accepted.

"I realized that I was talking to a larger community rather than a five-year-old boy with a traumatic brain injury. I'm talking about people in their 50s and 60s and 70s. And they had no place to go," he recalls.

#### Realizing the dream

Soon, the plans expanded far beyond a baseball field to help give people with special needs the places and spaces they needed for exercise, activity, and fun. The complex now has a playground with soft surfaces, a variety of equipment, and a place to play chess, backgammon, and checkers. It features multiple types of swings, including bucket swings. A specially designed zip line lets people of all abilities join in the fun. A music arch is equipped with various percussion instruments so visitors can make a little music.

For those who like to play games, there is a 9-hole miniature golf course, as well as bocci ball courts that are wide enough to accommodate people who use walkers or wheelchairs. The basketball court is made from a hard surface that is easy for people in wheelchairs to navigate. The baseball diamond that was the original inspiration for the complex is home to the organization's Challenger basketball, football, and soccer programs. It can also be used for community events like pumpkin patches and Easter egg hunts.

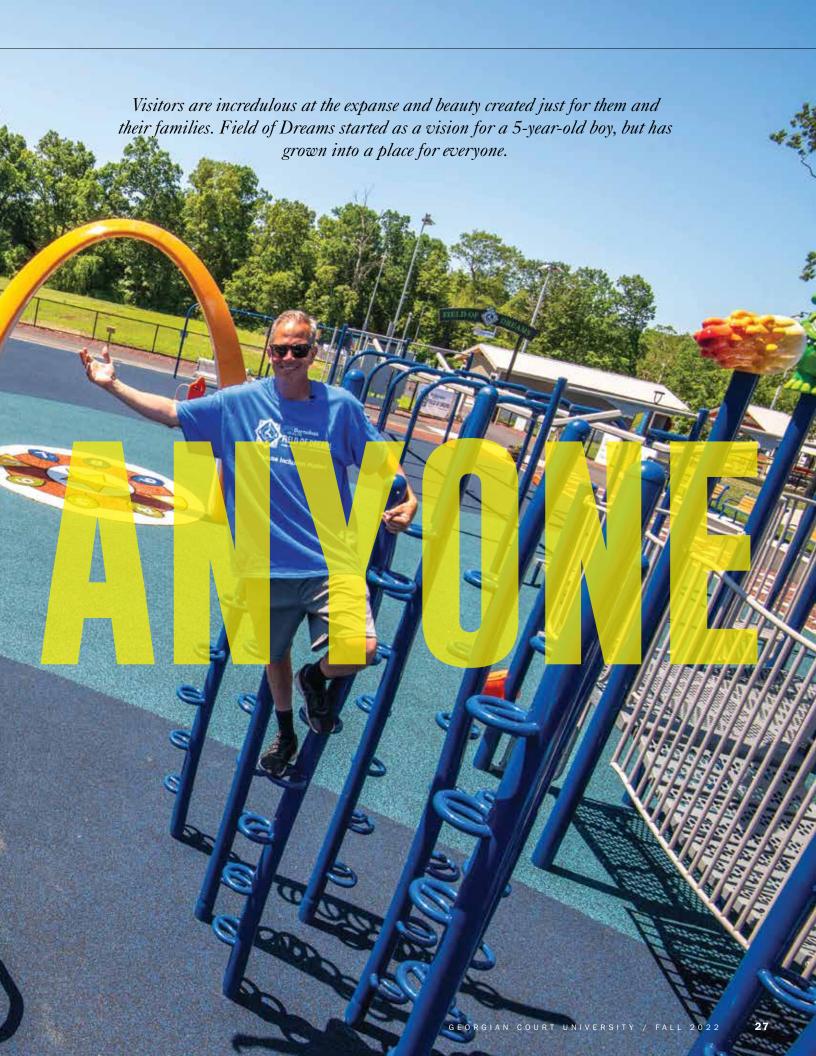
The facility also has a snack shack and community garden. Special needs bathrooms help ensure that people have the assistance and privacy they need. Videos of the expansive facility are available on the organization's website, https://rwjbhfieldofdreams.com.

#### **Priceless memories**

As the vision grew, so did the budget. The complex became a \$3.5 million dollar project. Kane is still actively fundraising to pay for the final \$300,000. Helping people who are typically unfamiliar with the world of special needs people has been the key to his success so far.

"It helps that I'm a high school math teacher. If I can convince 17- and 18-year-olds that statistics is not so bad, I could probably sell tickets," he says. "So, I told them my story."

And the result is priceless. Visitors are incredulous at the expanse and beauty created just for them and their families. Field of Dreams started as a vision for a 5-year-old boy, but has grown into a place for everyone.



## ClassNotes



#### Members of the Class of 1966

Members of the Class of 1966 held a mini reunion in Bonita Springs, Florida, in April 2022. Pictured are Elizabeth Healey Mulvihill, Mary Bowman Halpin, Beth Healey DiTolla, Mary Kenny Folan, Virginia "Ginger" Brown Moran, Lauren Mooney Pavlovich, Kathleen Scanlin Tschaen, Dunila Borer Brogan, Susan Flynn Fornatale, and Donna Esposito Hughes (left to right).



#### GCU Alumni Reception, Naples

On March 13, 2022, President R. Marbach. Ph.D., and other university leaders joined local alumni and friends for a GCU gathering in Naples, Florida. The event was hosted by Helen Hanna Casey '71, Annie Hanna Cestra '73, and Patti Morris Ryan '73. Pictured are Class of 1973 alumnae Annie Hanna Cestra, Vivian Salamandra Brink and Patti Morris Rvan (left to right).

#### 1970s

Vicky Binetti '71 was honored by New Jersey's Greater Washington Township Chamber of Commerce in April as their 2022 Rick Zammer Award Recipient. The award recognizes individuals who go above and beyond to make a positive contribution to their community. Vicky has volunteered for the township for 20 years and made many contributions. She developed and championed the Wellhead Protection Ordinance, which protects groundwater sources; established a Green Business Recognition program; and encouraged participation of the arts through the Painting the Township program. Vicky currently serves as chair of both the Washington Township **Environmental Commission** and the Sustainable Washington Township Green Team. She is a member of the Washington Township Open Space Advisory Committee and a board member of the Rotary

Club of Washington Township, Margaret E. Heggan Free Public Library, and Music at Bunker Hill. She also serves on the leadership team of TriCounty Sustainability, a collaborative of municipal green team and environmental commission members in Burlington, Camden, and Gloucester counties.

Dorothy Horton Turner
'71 wrote and published
three historical romance
novels under the pseudonym
Amethyst Creek after retiring
from the local school district in
Pueblo, Colorado. Her books
have received several
positive professional reviews.



#### GCU Pride from Head to Toe!

Vivian Salamandra Brink '73 (right) and her mother, Lola Agabiti Salamandra '45 (left), love their new GCU alumni socks!

2020s

Elizabeth Antonowicz, SSW, '21 recieved the Outstanding M.S.W. Student Studying in New Brunswick Award from the Rutgers University School of Social Work. She recently participated in a White House Executive Briefing to speak about the impact of the student loan debt crisis and why immediate and long-term solutions are critical.

# Wherever you go, you are always a part of Georgian Court University.



GCU values an education that fosters lifelong learning, and our community members who support the University's growth. Georgian Court University has partnered with FreeWill: an online resource that allows you to write a will in just 20 minutes. We invite our entire community to utilize this free resource to take control of your estate planning, helping you feel secure knowing you have a plan for the future.

As you write your will, FreeWill provides you with the opportunity to include GCU in your estate plan-creating a legacy of perpetuity for our University.

Join the 580,000 individuals who have already used FreeWill to make their wills and secure their futures.

Visit FreeWill.com/GeorgianCourtUniversity to create your legacy with GCU.







Nearly 20 members of the Class of 1966 returned to campus to commemorate their 55th Reunion and celebrate at the Golden Lions Dinner in The Mansion.

ABOVE: Members of the Class of 1970 Rosemary Naughton, Barbara Buck, Bridget O'Connor, and Trudy Iwansky (left to right) pose at the Apollo Fountain during their belated in-person 50th Reunion celebration (after a virtual celebration in 2020).

BELOW: Alice Bosies Velez '84, '93, Alumni Service Award recipient; Dr. Marianne Holler '81, Distinguished Alumni Award recipient; Provost Janice Warner, Ph.D., and Allyson Ferry '21, Outstanding Senior Award recipient, pose at the Alumni Awards Brunch (left to right).

#### Reunion & Homecoming 2021:

## Celebrating in Person Once Again

by Alicia A. Smith

Beautiful fall weather and the smiling faces of our alumni, students, and friends on campus made for the perfect Reunion & Homecoming Weekend after being fully virtual in 2020. The festivities got started Thursday, October 14, with a virtual bingo party for guests both near and far to join in the celebration. On Friday, alumni gathered in The Mansion for a cocktail reception, where they mingled and reminisced about their time at The Court.

Saturday began with the Alumni Awards Brunch where Marianne Holler, D.O., '81; Alice Bosies Velez '84, '93; Allyson Ferry '21; and Madison Heck '21 were presented with the Distinguished Alumni, Alumni Service, Outstanding Senior, and Sportsmanship awards, respectively. We are so proud of our alumni and their accomplishments!

The day continued with a historic walking tour of campus, beer and wine garden, various athletics games, a "do-it-yourself" craft event, and Mass. The weekend concluded with the Golden Lions Dinner, which celebrates the class commemorating their 50th Reunion and all 50th Reunion classes before them. We had members of the Class of 1970 (for a redo!), 1971, and 1966 celebrating this wonderful milestone.

To view photos from the weekend, please visit bit.ly/GCU2021Reunion.

#### Children



Joel and  $\bf Amanda~Earl~Max~'15$  — Phoenix Rachael Max, born 1/6/22



Christopher and **Jennifer Swenticky Rice '14**— Evelyn Faye Swenticky, born 3/11/22





#### IN MEMORIAM

Katherine Scanlan O'Neill '46

Nancy Irving McCurn '47

Betty Jean Buck Byrnes '51

Marjorie Maling Harvey '52

Theresa Castello Lutz '56

Barbara Doyle Corning '57

Barbara Zakor Polizzotti '57

Joan O'Leary Petite '58

Patricia Kerrigan Foley '62

Paulette Christine Damico, RSM, '63, sister of Mary Claude Damico, RSM, '64

Theresa Smith Mong '63, sister of Margaret Mary Smith '59

Alice Hofmann Craghead '64

Joan Cooke France '64

Mary Louise Schlechtweg Taylor '65

Jane Harris Gibson '67

Ellen McGrath-Thorpe '68

Cutie Theresa Kwan Fellows '68

Gerry Kelley '70

Karen Zambella Cragnolin '71

Marion Martoglio Harris '71

Jane Hardy, RSM, '75

Margarita Tillander '75

Susan Mary Sullivan Mills '76

Mary Caffrey Lohmann '77

Nancy Ladd Zachem '79

Denise DeFillipo Rothstein '79

Sharon Gilmore '79, '89

William Morris '80

Jean Paradise '81

Doris Stender Arzt, RN, '81

Betty Glover '83

Raymond Driscoll '83

Joan Cooper '84

Kathleen Bronson '85, wife of David Bronson '97

Doreen Chabok Paolo '85, sister of Constance Chabok '91

Jodi D'Auria Sharpe '88

Robert Williams '89, brother of Nan Williams '89

John Clemente '89

Pat Busichio Shaheen '93

Roger Rhaesa '96

MaryEllen Suckow '96

Suzanne Ryan '00

Allison Grasso '04, mother of Daniel Grasso '13

Michelle McDonough '04

William Wegner '09

Douglas McIlvain, father of James McIlvain '06

Charles Dailey, former adjunct lecturer in business

Robert Mulcahy, former chair, GCU Board of Trustees

Blanche Lombardi, grandmother of Michelle Walko '15

John Long, husband of Elaine Long '61; father of Joycelin Long '92, Karin Therien '95, Jennifer Silvestri '97, '17, and Rosemary Hop '01; father-in-law of Walter Therien '95, '06; and grandfather of Jamie Long '12

Geraldine Hadley, former student teacher supervisor in education

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.



#### GEORGIAN COURT UNIVERSITY

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#### What's the True Legacy of a Scholarship? Lives Changed.

In 1967, Ralph Spohn married Georgian Court alumna Veronica "Roni" Gordon '66. Ralph went on to earn a Ph.D. in Inorganic Chemistry and was a scientist and researcher with Exxon Chemical for nearly 30 years. Roni earned an M.L.S. degree and ran several libraries. The couple had two children, Amy and Bryan. But sadly, Roni passed away from cancer in 1988.

"During her final days, I told her that I would set up a scholarship in her name for teachers or scientists," Dr. Spohn said at the Annual Scholarship Brunch held in March 2022.

He held true to his word, and the Veronica Gordon Spohn Class of 1966 Perpetual Endowed Scholarship was established to benefit students with a focus on science and education. The scholarship, one of GCU's longest-standing scholarships, has provided vital funding to 40 students over the last three decades.

"My entire family — children, grandchildren, and myself included — are grateful to have the blessings we have in order to be able to support future teachers and scientists through the scholarship," Dr. Spohn added.

Included among the recipients are Jean M. Fede, D.O., '94, a staff pathologist at Pathology Associates of Princeton and attending physician at the University Medical Center of Princeton, where she is also the director of transfusion medicine services and chairperson of the Blood Utilization Committee; Renee Ordino '93, CEO of her own cosmetic company and the creator of the legendary, "first-of-its-kind" kiss-proof ColorStay Lipstick from Revlon; and Gabrielle Tull '15, who is studying to become an ophthalmologist.

Help make an education a reality for GCU students. Visit alumni.georgian.edu/give now to make a gift toward student scholarships.

