

GCU MAGAZINE

VOLUME 21 FALL 2023



A LEGACY OF WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP

A PUBLICATION OF
**GEORGIAN
COURT
UNIVERSITY**

GCU MAGAZINE

VOLUME 21 FALL 2023

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

It is always a pleasure to reflect on the remarkable students, faculty, and staff who shape Georgian Court. With unwavering dedication and a commitment to excellence, members of our community continue to achieve extraordinary things and build on our storied legacy.

Our rich history of women's leadership remains an enduring source of inspiration and pride (pg. 6). Georgian Court's story is marked by pioneering women who have blazed trails within our halls and in society at large, and they continue to lead as we navigate the challenges and opportunities facing universities nationwide.

Embracing people of all ethnicities and backgrounds is inherently rooted in our mission and Mercy core values. We have taken significant strides forward in promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion (pg. 10), ensuring our community is reflective of our nation's diverse population, and that our programs and services meet the needs of our students.

Our faculty members have continuously demonstrated their intellectual prowess and dedication to scholarship with a multitude of publications in the past year (pg. 14). Their contributions to our community and their respective fields, which underscore our commitment to academic excellence, are immeasurable.

Among our most interesting academic resources is the Matthew J. Sheridan Special Collection of Prison Literature (p. 37), developed and restored over the course of decades by Dr. Matthew Sheridan. This collection of over 1,000 volumes, many of which date to the mid-19th century, serves as a valuable resource for the serious scholar, the student, or anyone researching the prison system.

Our commitment to holistic education extends beyond the classroom. Our Transition & Career Studies program (pg. 26) enables students with intellectual disabilities to grow academically and socially, identify career paths, and immerse themselves in college life.

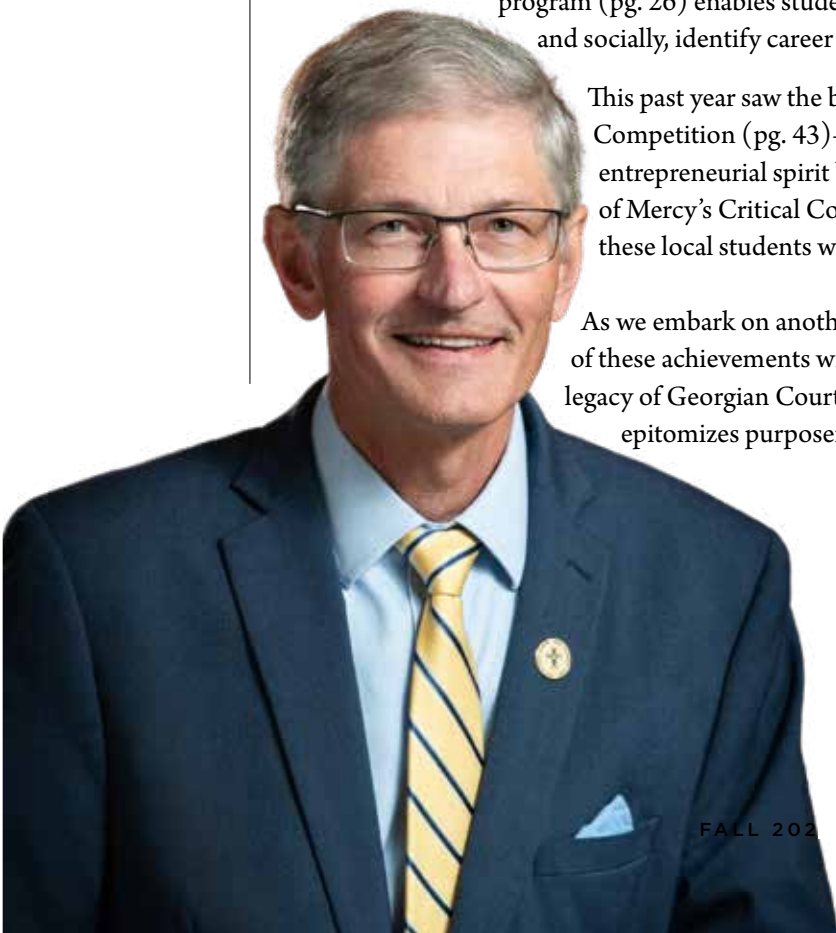
This past year saw the birth of our inaugural Lion's Den Pitch & Innovation Competition (pg. 43)—a platform for high school students to unleash their entrepreneurial spirit by pitching business ideas that address the Sisters of Mercy's Critical Concerns. The enthusiasm and creativity displayed by these local students was truly remarkable.

As we embark on another year of growth and learning, let us carry the spirit of these achievements with us. Together, we will continue to build upon the legacy of Georgian Court University and make strides toward a future that epitomizes purposeful learning, compassion, and inclusivity.

Go Lions!



Joseph R. Marbach, Ph.D.
President



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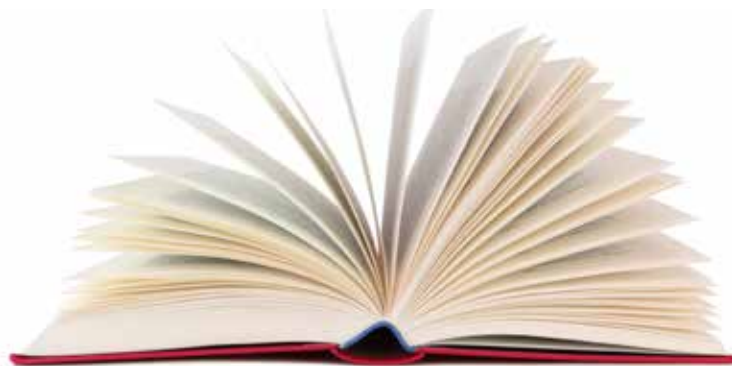
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FEATURE ARTICLE

A LEGACY OF WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP

When the Sisters of Mercy founded Georgian Court as an all-women's educational institution in 1908, they had a mission: to educate and enhance the lives of young women. Take Mother Mary Cecilia Scully, who leveraged her business acumen to purchase Georgian Court; and Mother Mary John, the first Dean at Georgian Court.

Georgian Court became co-ed in 2012, but its history of women's leadership laid the strong foundation that makes GCU what it is today.

"While higher education generally provided what was then called 'a chilly climate for women,' at the time of its founding Georgian Court College was quite the opposite," said Dr. Mary Chinery, Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences. "Georgian Court had women in every key leadership position – president, deans, department chairs, and more." Sister Barbara Williams, who joined the university as

Registrar in 1960, said, "Women ran the place for a little over 100 years, and I think we did a pretty good job."

Sister Williams went on to become President from 1980 to 2000. Over those two decades, she increased the university's endowment from \$200,000 to \$32 million. Georgian Court is still reaping the benefits of her hard work through investments in new programs, scholarships, and continuous improvements throughout the historic campus.

Presently a co-ed Catholic institution, Georgian Court still sets a high standard for women's leadership in higher education. 100% of GCU's deans are women, a significant achievement considering that nationwide, only around half of higher education administrators are female. The university reached this milestone in July of 2022 when Dr. Kelly McNeal became the Dean of the School of Education. Over half of the administrators on the President Leadership Council are women, and women



From left: Jennifer J. Edmonds, Ph.D., Dean of the School of Business & Digital Media; Janice Warner, Ph.D., Provost; Teri Wurmser, Ph.D., Dean of the Hackensack Meridian Health School of Nursing and Wellness at GCU; and Mary Chinery, Ph.D., Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences

hold many top positions at the university, including Provost, Director of DEI Initiatives, Dean of Students, Director of Career Services, the Director of Financial Aid, and the Director of Global Education.

“The work environment at GCU is very supportive. I never feel like I have to censor myself or like I will be judged for giving my honest opinions,” said Dr. McNeal. “When I needed the institutional backing of the Provost to apply for the Certification of Eligibility with Advanced Standing (CEAS) pilot program, she immediately said yes. It’s a pleasure to work for an institution that says ‘yes’ because they trust me and my abilities.”

In her new position, Dr. McNeal has also helped establish a School of Education Welcome Center, where students can go for any information they may need about undergraduate and graduate studies, alumni resources, student teaching applications, and more.

Dr. Jennifer Edmonds became the Dean of the School of Business & Digital Media in 2019. Since then, she has completely revamped the school’s mission statement and strategic plan and accomplished most of the goals she laid out during that process.

“The unique thing about the GCU community is that we truly want to know each other’s strengths and weaknesses to learn how each individual can contribute to the team,” said Dr. Edmonds. “At the end of the day, gender shouldn’t matter. If you’re on the team, you’re on the team. There is equity in that your gender doesn’t matter as long as you can do the job.”

While an increasing number of college graduates are women, the number of women in university administrative positions remains relatively small. The deans at Georgian Court hope to instill confidence in the next generation of leaders who could change that: their students.



**Dr. Kelly McNeal,
Dean of the School
of Education**

“The whole idea behind starting as a women’s-only institution was to provide role models for the women who came to college,” Sister Williams added. “It’s important to have women in leadership in any field so that the next generation of women leaders know their goals are possible.”

The university is proud to integrate women’s issues into transformative

educational experiences for students and the community.

“Women have always been educated at Georgian Court to assume they would obtain leadership positions in whichever fields they chose—education, business, science. Many current women leaders in higher education have emerged from Catholic and especially women’s colleges and universities,” said Dr. Chinery, who has overseen the development of many new degrees in the School of Arts and Sciences through collaboration with the President and the Provost.

In the spring, Georgian Court hosted the 19th Annual Undergraduate Research Colloquium of the New Jersey Women and Gender Studies Consortium (NJWGSC), a state-wide forum for discussing and supporting Women’s and Gender Studies Programs.

Dr. Teri Wurmser, Dean of the Hackensack Meridian *Health* School of Nursing and Wellness at GCU, was the founding chair of the school. She recognized a need for a bachelor’s program in nursing, as none existed in Monmouth or Ocean counties. Since then, she has started a direct-entry master’s program and opened the school to other studies, including social work, integrative health, and exercise science.

Thirty-two students from all over the state presented on various topics, looking through the feminist lens to better understand the arts, history, religion, business, medicine, and the sciences. The student presenters were of all different majors, and the students chose which topics they wished to explore, from art to activism.

“The success of a program is reflected in its graduates, and at Georgian Court, we’ve always been very student-centric. The students that come out of the School of Nursing and Wellness go on to be leaders in their field,” said Dr. Wurmser.

Brenna A. Sullivan, a freshman from Scotch Plains, New Jersey, presented her project Eating Disorders in Collegiate Running. Catherine Quinn, a senior from Wall, New Jersey, sparked discussion about ownership and artistry through her project, Emily Dickinson and Taylor Swift: Setting Standards in Autonomous Authorship. Other presentation topics included spirituality, colonialism, and the impact of the patriarchy on an anime television series.

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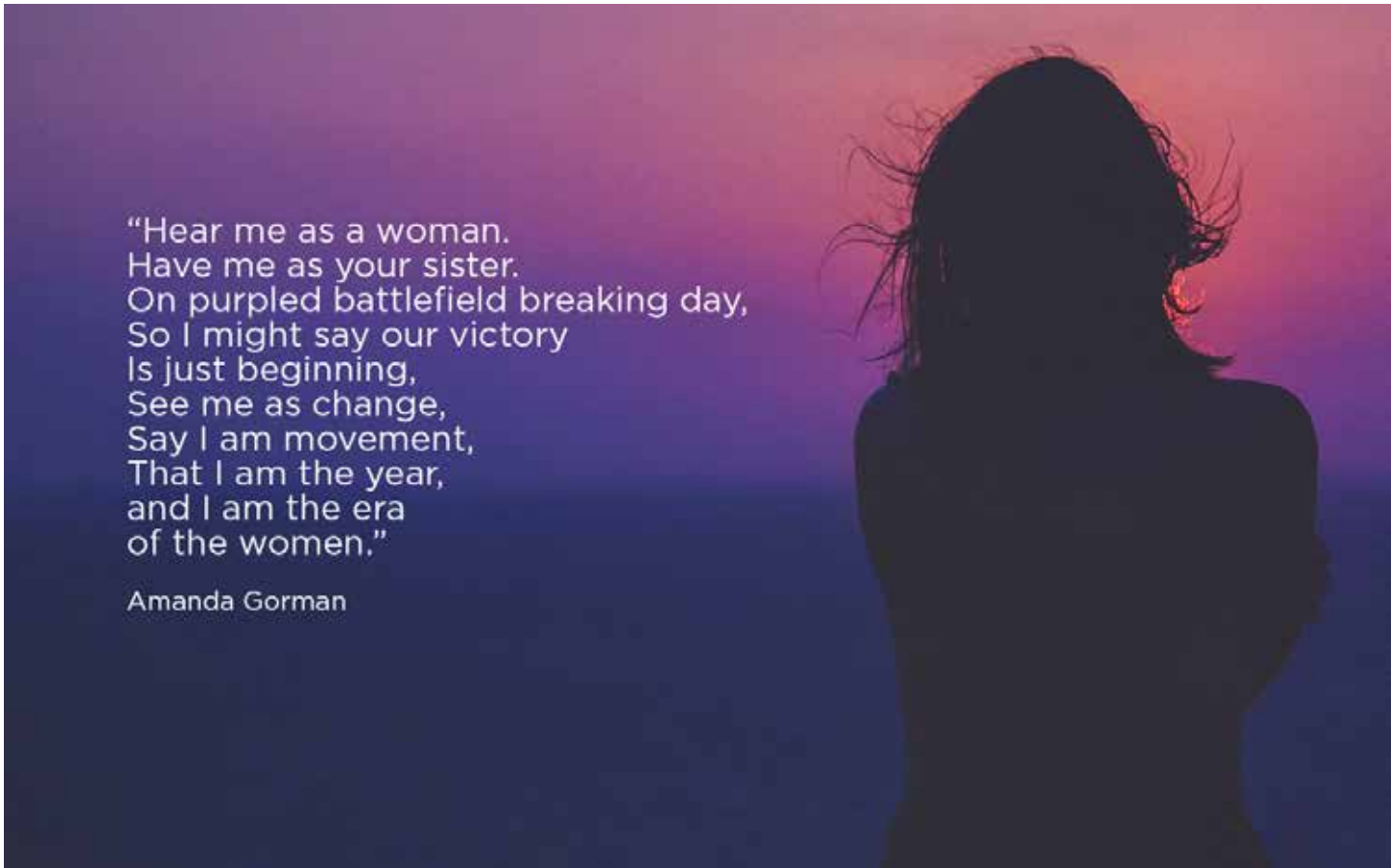
This year, Georgian Court also hosted “CCW 23 Women: Critical Concerns Week,” a week-long series of events dedicated to improving the situation of women around the world.

These included faculty/staff retreats, panel discussions, service opportunities, and presentations on a broad range of topics, including Celebrating Women in Business and Digital Media, Women as Agents of Change, The Recovery of Women’s Voices in Catholic Tradition, and Women on the Move: The Changing Face of Migration to the U.S.

In addition to hosting the above discussions, Georgian Court facilitated support and trips to Providence House, a non-profit offering myriad services to women experiencing domestic violence and their children.

In recognition of Georgian Court’s commitment to combating inequality, the university was named a 2023 Empowering Women Honoree by NJBIZ in June. The award goes to more than 50 New Jersey-affiliated companies and organizations for their tangible and innovative efforts to advance women in the workplace and community.

Georgian Court’s special concern for women gives life to the ideals of justice, compassion, and excellence by educating both women and men to be informed, active citizens of a dynamic and complex world. By placing women’s success at the center of the mission, GCU underscores the pivotal role that women play in global change.



“Hear me as a woman.
Have me as your sister.
On purpled battlefield breaking day,
So I might say our victory
Is just beginning,
See me as change,
Say I am movement,
That I am the year,
and I am the era
of the women.”

Amanda Gorman



BUILDING AN AUTHENTIC COMMUNITY:

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at Georgian Court

GUIDED BY THE MERCY MISSION

Twelve years before the 19th Amendment was ratified by Congress granting women the right to vote, The Sisters of Mercy founded Georgian Court to provide much-needed educational opportunities for women. Then, in the 1970s, GCU began admitting men to evening school and graduate programs to meet the expanding educational needs of the greater community. As our campus has grown, so has our commitment to fostering a college community that is reflective of our nation's diverse population and to providing individualized programs and services that meet the needs of our students.

At Georgian Court, embracing people of all ethnicities and backgrounds has never been a question of law—it's inherently rooted in our mission and Mercy core values of respect, integrity, justice, compassion, and service. So, despite our deep concern over the possible higher education-related repercussions of the June 29th, 2023, ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court, which effectively eliminated the use of affirmative action to create a more racially diverse

student population, we are confident that it will not affect our current or future admissions practices, nor our commitment to providing educational opportunities to all qualified applicants. GCU will remain a welcoming and supportive campus under the leadership of the Office of Diversity, Education, and Inclusion (DEI).

THE OFFICE OF DIVERSITY, EDUCATION, AND INCLUSION

Launched in January 2021, the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion represents our strong commitment to the moral foundations that Catherine McAuley set forth. The office builds upon Georgian Court's efforts to create academic spaces and work environments in which diversity, equity, and inclusion are visibly celebrated and promoted and to provide students with wide-ranging experiences to ensure they graduate with the knowledge and skills necessary for living, working, and thriving in a global society.

Under the leadership of Chief Diversity Officer and Associate Provost for Student Support and Services,



Dr. Joy Smith, the four committees that make up the Council for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (CDEI) advance DEI as part of GCU's larger vision for a social justice that centers the dignity of the whole person.

"At the heart of Georgian Court's DEI efforts is the desire to build a respectful community that recognizes and welcomes the full spectrum of humanity, which is encouraged through university programming, training for faculty and staff, and academic and financial support for GCU students," explained Dr. Smith. "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," she added.

MAKING ADMISSIONS ACCESSIBLE FOR ALL

To promote diversity on campus, the Office of Admissions must employ recruitment efforts accessible to a wide range of students. As his immediate family's first college graduate, Carlos Cano, Director of Admission Communications & Marketing, is honored to work at a college that is commit-

ted to making it easier to navigate the process of applying to college, especially for those who speak English as a second language or are first in their family to pursue a degree.

"When I was applying to college, it was all trial and error. My parents hadn't attended university, and they worked full time, so they couldn't help me with applications or drive me to visit different campuses," Carlos recalled, "My community was densely populated. My high school had a 99% college attendance rate. With heavy caseloads, my counselors could only provide the bare minimum support, spending most of their time obtaining and filing academic transcripts and letters of recommendation," he continued.

Committed to providing better resources to the next generation than those that he received, Carlos is especially proud that Georgian Court's Office of Admissions staffs Spanish-speaking counselors, and that his calendar is full of scheduled visits to speak to high school juniors and seniors in their hometowns throughout the state.

ON-CAMPUS SERVICES, PROGRAMS, AND SUPPORT

Once accepted into college, many students require individualized support to achieve their greatest potential—be it through an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), scholarships, tutoring or student success programs, the camaraderie of a multicultural student organization, or the support of a specialized academic track. Georgian Court continues to consciously create opportunities for students of all ages, races, abilities, and identities to thrive.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY FUND (EOF)



Designed for underrepresented and financially disadvantaged students in New Jersey, the EOF program provides accepted first-year students with a six-week Summer Program at GCU, and subsequent academic and educational advisement, tutoring, leadership development initiatives, and a supplemental financial aid grant. The EOF program promotes persistence through degree completion and pursuing their future careers.

MILITARY AND VETERAN SERVICES



Dr. Joshua Burns, Assistant Professor of Integrative Health, serves as Director, Military & Veteran Services and Outreach at Georgian Court. In his role, Dr. Burns uses his experience as a United States Air Force veteran to lead GCU's efforts to provide individualized educational support to the men and women who have dedicated their lives to protecting our country. In addition to moving the Veteran's Lounge into a larger space in Jeffries Hall in December 2022, Dr. Burns works to raise awareness of GCU programs and services that are available to meet the needs of the military community by attending local events and coordinating the base's needs with the university's offerings. Focused on further improving the accessibility of these services, Dr. Burns is working to organize a Veteran's Expo at Georgian Court, allowing service members to explore all of their potential resources under a single roof.

STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS



GCU has more than 40 clubs and organizations for students to choose from to ignite their interests and passions, hone their leadership skills, and connect to their cultural roots, community, and unique identities. Active student organizations on campus include the Black Student Union, Global Lions, Latin American Student Organization (LASO), and LGBTQ@GCU.

STUDENT SUCCESS



The Office of Student Success provides a holistic approach to achieving a college degree through programs and services designed to help students succeed academically and personally. With that aim, Student Success offers many resources: disability services and ADA accommodations, peer tutoring, and The Learning Connection, a support program for students with disabilities.

TRANSITION AND CAREER STUDIES (TCS)



TCS is a four-year transition and postsecondary program for students with intellectual disabilities, which provides students with on-campus experiences, support from peer mentors, and academic and social skill development. The program promotes independence, builds confidence, and expands the pathways to possibility.

TRIO STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES



This federally funded program helps ensure that every student thrives at GCU. Eligible students receive academic resources, including tutoring, study skills workshops, mentoring, and financial literacy training. TRIO fosters an institutional climate supportive of student success that increases the number of students who complete their postsecondary education.

VAMOS



VAMOS is one of the many ways that GCU provides students with the resources they need to invest in themselves and their community.

LatinX students receive assistance in their journey through college, including scholarships of up to \$1,000 a year for up to four years, dedicated academic support from GCU faculty and staff, and two cohort courses that encourage a sense of community among program participants.

VAMOS program participants are also enrolled in 12 invitation-only Avanzando workshops, a program created by UnidosUS. These workshops give Latinx, first-generation college students the necessary tools and support to navigate and graduate from college.

“Latinx student enrollment at the local high school in Lakewood is over 90%,” explained Dr. Jaime Rivera, Academic & Student Affairs Director of Latinx Initiatives, “so we know that the need for programs and services that meet the unique needs of these students is substantial. Each year, we take feedback from our program participants to continue improving our offerings and meet their evolving needs.”

Under Dr. Rivera’s leadership, 43 students have completed the Avanzando workshops over the past three years, and the enrollment numbers, under the more robust, recently-launched, VAMOS program, that includes the Avanzando workshops, continue to grow each year.

BUILDING ON OUR FOUNDATIONS

“We’re making great strides in the authentic work of building community,” Dr. Smith said of recent campus progress.

This past year, GCU held its first Black History Month Reception for alumni, students, faculty, and staff, expanded the Veteran’s Lounge and its library, and honored various affinity groups throughout the year in addition to providing them with spaces to meet, learn, and grow.

The Sisters of Mercy believe in the power of education to meet the community’s needs. As these needs continue to evolve and grow, Georgian Court will find innovative new ways to meet students where they are and welcome them into our Lion Pride.

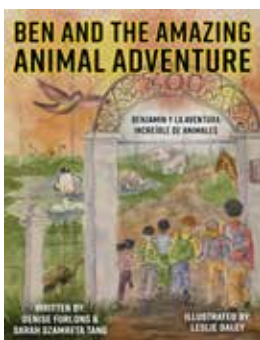
“There is still work to be done,” continued Dr. Smith, “We have a real opportunity to expand Georgian Court’s possibilities each time we encounter a new student need. I’m looking forward to opening a Lactation Room to meet the needs of our students with infants and to supporting Dr. Burns’s efforts to host a Veteran’s Expo at GCU.”

To learn more about our commitment to building diverse and inclusive spaces, visit [Georgian.edu/diversity-education-inclusion](https://georgian.edu/diversity-education-inclusion) or contact The Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at ODEI@georgian.edu.



PEDAGOGY, PUNK, AND PROSE

What do these three topics have in common? Georgian Court faculty members have something new to say about each of them. Eleven of GCU's distinguished faculty members published work in the past academic year, and the publications range from training guides for future educators, to the history of punk music, to a memoir about surviving war. The scope of these texts is a testament to the diverse range of knowledge, experience, and skills among GCU faculty.



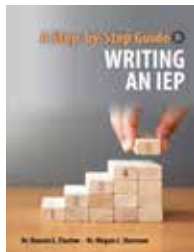
practical applications, tools, and skills to equip middle leaders to meaningfully participate in crisis management and resolution in institutions.

Denise Furlong, Ed.D., Assistant Professor/Director of Advanced Programs for Reading Specialist and ESL, wrote “Holistic Professional Learning in Times of Crisis,” a chapter published in the *Handbook of Research on Activating Middle Executives’ Agency to Lead and Manage in Times of Crisis*. The book offers

Furlong also co-wrote a children’s book with Sarah Szamreta Tang titled *Ben and the Amazing Animal Adventure*—which recognizes children with food allergies to spread awareness and understanding—and won the 2023 Delta Kappa Gamma (DKG) Educator Book Award for her book *Voices of Newcomers: Experiences of Multilingual Learners*.

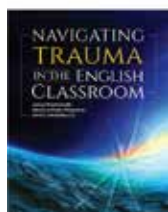
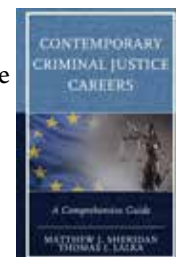
“This is an easy-to-read, practical guide for the early career educator, the seasoned educator, and the administrator looking to meet the needs of Multilingual/English Learners, in particular, Newcomers and SLIFE (Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education),” said DKG, the International Society for Women Educators.

While Dr. Furlong approached her guide for future educators from the discipline of Education, Stephanie Rahill, Ph.D., and Heather Tacovsky, Ph.D., Associate and Assistant Professors of Psychology and Counseling respectively, approached the same topic through the lens of Psychology. Their essay, “Teachers as Change Agents: Challenging Future Teachers to Advocate for Evidence-Based Principles of Learning, Development, and Motivation,” serves as a resource for training future educators to advocate for their students.



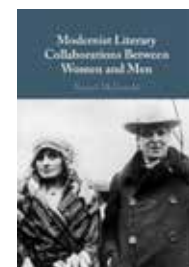
Megan Sherman, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Chairperson, and Bachelor of Social Work Program Director in the Department of Social Work, wrote to future educators through the lens of Social Work in her book *A Step-by-Step Guide to Writing an IEP*. The book is a valuable resource for school social workers, Child Study Team members, special education teachers, and anyone interested in the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process. Dr. Sherman also released a second book with Kendall Hunt Publishing, *Emotional Readiness for Social Work Practice: A Skills-Building Guide*, a valuable resource for social work students and new social work practitioners.

Other faculty members, such as **Matthew Sheridan, Ed.D.**, Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice, created guides specific to their field for students and educators. Sheridan, in collaboration with Thomas J. Lalka, wrote *Contemporary Criminal Justice Careers: A Comprehensive Guide*, a resource for students, faculty, advisors, and classroom instructors who are seeking guidance for a successful criminal justice career, from the entrance into the profession, through career development, occupational refocus, professional options, to retirement preparation.



Kristen Park Wedlock, M.F.A., Assistant Professor of Writing, co-wrote *Navigating Trauma in the English Classroom*, a book of strategies for educators to adapt to the modern-day classroom. By exploring how trauma impacts students' ability to read literature, write, and engage, the book prepares English teachers to relate to students triggered by content that evokes past traumas. Wedlock and her co-authors also created a podcast for Columbia Teachers College, "Teaching Today," that expands on their book.

Associate Professor of English and Director of the University Honors Program, **Russell McDonald, Ph.D.**, wrote *Modernist Literary Collaborations Between Women and Men*, in which he explores 'cross-sex' collaboration as a valuable and subversive strategy for bringing women and men's differing perspectives into productive dialogue while harnessing the creative potential of gendered discord.



Marci Mazzarotto, M.F.A., Ph.D., Assistant Professor and Program Coordinator of Digital Communication, addresses digital humanists in her chapter titled "Pedagogy of Play: Fluxus in the College Classroom," published in *Reimagining the Humanities*. The book seeks to reimagine the humanities when many disciplines face resource losses and the demands of rapidly changing classrooms, campuses, and external solutions.



Associate Professor of World Languages and Culture, **Jaime Rivera, Ph.D.**, published "Describing and Perceiving Sexual Orientation Based on Linguistic Cues," a chapter in the book he co-edited with John W. Schiweter, *Engaging in Critical Language Studies*. According to Ryuko Kubota from the University of British Columbia, "This volume illuminates critical issues in language studies by questioning unequal relations of power regarding race, gender, sexuality, ability, language, multimodality, communication, and more. The authors' critical engagement offers renewed understandings of identity, pedagogy, and policies."

Other faculty members wrote from a personal perspective, such as **Lindiwe Magaya, Ph.D.**, Associate Professor of Education, who penned *The Guarded One: A Child's Journey Through War*. This memoir, told from a child's perspective, brings to light the effects of war on children and the importance of a strong social support system.

Ellen Bernhard, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Digital Communication, published the essay "Milo goes to college, Ellen goes to grad school: The series of events that turned an afterschool hobby into a hardcore pursuit of punk rock," in *Hardcore Research: Punk, Practice, Politics*. The book brings together scholars with personal ties to past and present punk scenes, who examine this subcultural phenomenon's rich and varied histories and its current forms at the intersection of culture and academia.

GEORGIAN COURT'S 112TH ANNUAL COMMENCEMENT

Bright sunshine, broad smiles, and endless joy filled the campus on May 17th as Georgian Court University welcomed nearly 3,000 graduates, families, alumni, and special guests to celebrate the 112th Annual Commencement Ceremony. In total, 504 degrees were conferred.

The day began with an uplifting Baccalaureate Mass at the Wellness Center led by Rev. Greg Boyle, S.J., Msgr. Vince Gartland, Msgr. Joseph Rosie and Deacon Jim Knipper '15, H'17. Graduating senior Jhelaine Palo served as the Lector and soprano Liana Hollendonner regaled the audience with beautiful hymns under the musical direction of Rob MacReynolds.

The striking melody of the bagpipes marked the traditional procession of graduates around the Apollo Fountain to the outdoor stage cheered on by a field packed with well-wishers on this momentous day.

Dr. Janice Warner, Provost, welcomed the crowd during both ceremonies and Jeffrey Schaffer, Director of Campus Ministry and Mission, led the Invocations.

"You will be changemakers, truth-seekers, and challengers of the status quo. You are ready to make your mark and to make a difference," President Marbach said during his welcome address. He told undergraduates, "My advice to you is to pursue your passion. Do what you love to do. This,

in turn, will inspire you to pursue a lifetime of learning and your ultimate success."

Preside Marbach's remarks to graduate students recognized the contributions many have already made in their fields and to their communities, and he called out their uniqueness as a select group. "Less than 15 percent of Americans have an advanced degree. Only one in seven of your fellow citizens have accomplished what you have done... you join a rarified segment of society, and for that, we are exceptionally proud of you, and all that you have accomplished," he said.



Undergraduate student speaker Giayana Feliciano, who earned a B.A. in Psychology and is the immediate Past President of the Student Government Association Executive Board, gave a heartfelt and tearful address, thanking everyone for making this journey

possible. "Georgian Court University instills a sense of strength and pride in its students, reinforcing the fact that we are leaders who are capable of achieving whatever we set our minds to and today, we have proven our supporters were right!" She charged her fellow graduates to continue to grow, learn, excel, and to "Do the very best in everything you undertake and know that you are a winner."

Graduate student speaker Jennifer DePietro, who earned an M.S. in Communication & Digital Marketing, spoke about the challenges of going back to school as an adult

and how GCU helped make her success possible. “Not all schools would encourage a mom, an employee—the so-called “non-traditional student”—to take a degree. But not all schools are Georgian Court. This special concern for women is not just a line in our mission statement; it is the guiding principle for the work that we do here.” She added, “It was the core principle of compassion, intellectually grown through all of the core values, that drove me to keep pushing forward. And all of us here today are proof of the power of those values and in the value of higher education ... I say, where you start out does not dictate where you will end up. You write your own story.”



President Marbach conferred two honorary degrees during commencement. The honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters was presented to undergraduate commencement speaker Father Greg

Boyle, Founder of Homeboy Industries in Los Angeles, the largest gang-intervention, rehabilitation, and re-entry program in the world. Dr. Boyle shared amusing but impactful stories about people he has helped and how they continue to change the perspectives of others. He echoed Dr. Martin Luther King’s words telling graduates that GCU is “not a place you come to, it is the place you go from,” and to “go to the margins, not to make a difference, but to be made different and to have your heart altered.” He relayed: “You go from here to dismantle the barriers that exclude. And in order to do that, you stand at the margins. Because that is the only way they will get erased.”

The honorary Doctor of Business Administration degree was presented to graduate commencement speaker Carol Stillwell, Owner and President and CEO of Stillwell-Hansen, Inc. a leader in data center infrastructure solutions. Stillwell described her challenges and path to success as a woman without a college degree in the male-dominated construction industry. She talked about the importance of volunteering and supporting organizations and scholarships that improve communities and help women overcome obstacles to achieve success. “I am certain the skills and tools you have developed here at Georgian Court will allow you to navigate it all with gratitude and humility when times are good and strength, courage, and grace when faced with life’s obstacles.” She added, “You can’t have rainbows without the rain. You will certainly have some of both, and in the end, remember this: ‘It is the journey that matters most.’”

Chair of the Board of Trustees Dr. Julia Upton, RSM, congratulated all graduates, telling the undergraduates that GCU “will be on the sidelines to cheer you on or lend a hand in whatever way you need,” and encouraging graduates to “Be open to discoveries, continue to wonder, to probe, to take risks. Keep in your mind and heart those who are less fortunate than you, and search for ways to help them.”

Several achievements and awards by faculty and students were also recognized during the ceremonies.

- Six professors attained the rank of Emeriti for at least 10 years of service as full-time faculty. Dr. Kathleen Froriep – Associate Professor Emerita; Dr. Parvathi Murthy – Professor Emerita of Chemistry; Dr. Mary Ann Smorra – Professor Emerita of Education; Dr. Joseph Springer – Professor Emeritus of Psychology; Dr. Claire Gallagher – Professor Emerita of Education; and Dr. Joseph Gower – Professor Emeritus of Theology and Religious Studies.
- The Virginia Graham ’31 Award for Teaching Excellence: Dr. Sarita Nemani Professor of Mathematics.
- The Award for Academic Excellence: Aristides Papoutsakis.
- Kingdon Gould, Jr. Award: Sulyvette Almodovar.

Kristen Cladek, M.S.W., ’14, President of the Alumni Board of Directors, also offered greetings to our new graduates during both ceremonies.

“Commencement is an event commemorating the transition of life from one stage to the next, but the lessons learned at school, the ones



learned in the classroom and outside of it, will serve you for the rest of your lives,” she said. “As a graduate of Georgian Court, you are equipped with the tools for success and will forever be part of the GCU family.”

At the end of the day, 354 Bachelor’s Degrees, 146 Master’s Degrees and 4 Doctorate Degrees were awarded from the university’s four schools. The undergraduate student speaker summed up the day well: “Be proud today of this awesome accomplishment, be grateful that you made it to the end, and be determined to continue to soar; you’ve got this,” said Feliciano. “GO LIONS!”

ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP & GOLF CLASSIC

Georgian Court's Annual Scholarship and Golf Classic was held on May 8th, 2023 at Battleground Country Club in Manalapan, New Jersey. The Scholarship and Golf Classic is unequivocally our most important fundraising event of the year, with proceeds funding scholarships that make the dream of an education possible for hundreds of students.

This year, GCU hosted award-winning actor Kelsey Grammer, known for his many iconic roles including NBC's sitcom Cheers and its spin-off Frasier. The event, which was covered by News 12 New Jersey and the Asbury Park Press, raised over \$138,000 in support of student scholarships, making it one of the most successful to date.



NJBIZ AWARDS CELEBRATE EXCELLENCE IN DIVERSITY, HEALTHCARE, BUSINESS AND EDUCATION

NJBIZ, the definitive voice of New Jersey business news, has served the community since 1987 by providing business leaders and executives with “the news and information that matters most.”

Given NJBIZ’s broad cross-section of readership throughout the state and commitment to business and media excellence, it is especially gratifying that the media outlet has honored Georgian Court with five separate recognitions in the past 18 months.

These accolades highlight our dedication to fostering a transformative educational experience and affirm our impact on the local community and beyond. Each award recognizes the outstanding contributions of our faculty, staff, and students, all of whom deserve applause for their accomplishments.



As we celebrate this exciting milestone, let us delve into the exceptional achievements and pioneering initiatives that have culminated in these awards:

EMPOWERING WOMEN

In acknowledgment of Georgian Court’s “commitment to recruiting, hiring, and promoting women,” the university was named a 2023 Empowering Women Honoree by NJBIZ, one of only two institutions of higher education in the state to receive the award.

“It is time to honor those organizations that invest in, elevate and support women leaders,” Suzanne Fischer-Huettner, publisher and managing director

of NJBIZ, said during the program’s unveiling earlier this year. “Women leaders can only succeed with the support of the organizations they work for and with.”

As of Fall ‘22, Georgian Court has 100% female deans, 67% female faculty members, and over 50% female administrators on its President Leadership Council. Provost Janice Warner accepted the award on August 1st.

HEALTHCARE HEROES

In two consecutive years, a Georgian Court faculty member has been named an NJBIZ Healthcare Hero for “making a significant impact on the quality of health care in New Jersey.”

In 2022, Dr. Teri Wurmser – Dean of the Hackensack Meridian Health School of Nursing and Wellness at

GCU – took home the award for Georgian Court. She was one of seven people selected to be honored in the “Health Care Professional” category.

“I am very grateful and honored by this award, but I am here because of the support of all the good people and mentors that I work with. My goal has always been to support nursing; it is a fabulous profession that offers many opportunities. My work focuses on elevating the nursing profession so that our students and staff can be the very best that they can be,” said Wurmser.



The following year, Dr. Robin Solbach, Director of Health and Counseling, was one of six people honored by NJBIZ in the “Education Hero” category of their 2023 Healthcare Heroes award program. Dr. Solbach’s dedication to maintaining the highest standard of care for students has earned The Counseling Center at GCU accreditation by the International Accreditation of Counseling Services every year since 2006.

“Dr. Solbach has been an exceptional member of the GCU family for years, and we are extremely pleased that NJBIZ is recognizing her work,” said President Marbach. “Her passion for helping students is evident in the number of initiatives and services she and her team have made available to promote success and achieve overall wellness.”



BEST WOMEN IN BUSINESS

Dr. Jennifer J. Edmonds, Dean of the School of Business & Digital Media and Professor of Business Administration, was named one of 2022’s Best 50 Women in Business by NJBIZ. The outlet honored “50 women who have made a significant impact on New Jersey business and the community at large” at their awards ceremony on October 26th, 2022.

Dean Edmonds was one of only three honorees from institutions of higher education recognized by NJBIZ. She is a current member of the Boards of Trustees for the Mercy Center of Asbury Park and Monmouth Medical Center, has led pioneering initiatives at Georgian Court since assuming her role in 2019, including the launch of the Inaugural Lion’s Den Pitch & Innovation Competition (pg. 43).

EDUCATION POWER 50

Last year, President Marbach was named one of the 2022 NJBIZ Education Power 50, placing 10th on the publication’s list of “educators and administrators who have persevered through interruptions in education due to the COVID-19 pandemic.”



NJBIZ recognized President Marbach for Georgian Court’s trailblazing decision to become the state’s first institution of higher education to offer employees a four-day compressed workweek option year-round. President Marbach was also acknowledged for guiding GCU in our historic land deal with Beth Medrash Govoha Lakewood yeshiva, “strengthening the relationship between the schools, which share a commitment to serving the Lakewood community.”

NJBIZ further lauded Georgian Court’s focus on creating programs to meet growing market and industry demands, with President Marbach overseeing the launch of a 24-month Direct-Entry Master of Nursing program through the Hackensack Meridian *Health* School of Nursing and Wellness at GCU, the only such program in the state.

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL ALUMNA AMONG FINAL NINE NOMINEES FOR 2022 NCAA WOMAN OF THE YEAR

When the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) selected Hanna Thrainsdottir '22 as a Woman of the Year nominee, the mere thought of advancing to the next round made her feel "on top of the world." Not only did she move on to the next round, but the GCU women's basketball forward and team captain was chosen as one of the nine finalists for the 2022 NCAA Woman of the Year award.

"I was so happy just to be selected as a nominee," said 24-year-old Thrainsdottir. "I could not have gotten here without the support of my teammates, Coach Jazz, the athletics department, my advisors, my professors, and my family. I am really proud to represent Georgian Court."

"The entire GCU community was excited and proud to have Hanna selected as a nominee for this national recognition," said President Marbach. "Hanna is a tremendous scholar and athlete and was an integral part of our GCU community over the past four years. She truly represents the best of GCU and embodies the spirit of our Mercy core values: respect, integrity, justice, compassion, and service."

"This is a great honor, and I am so happy for her," said Coach Jasmina "Jazz" Perazic, who coached Hanna for all four of her years at GCU. "I don't know anyone else who has received this nomination in all my years as a basketball coach and player. It is a huge accomplishment for Georgian Court."

Having received a prestigious Fulbright Fellowship for the 2022–2023 academic year, the nomination was another

significant milestone for Thrainsdottir. She was actively involved with her family in the GCU Athletics Department and the larger university community as president of the LGBTQ+ organization on campus, an active contributor to the Council for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and an international student mentor for the Office of Global Education Programs.



"Hanna has been one of the most talented student-athletes, the most wonderful teammate, and a natural leader," said Coach Jazz. "She has made everyone on the team better including our coaching staff. Besides being an amazing athlete and an extraordinary student, she is also a beautiful person, fun, inspiring, and a person of character. It has truly been a pleasure and a privilege to coach her."

After graduating, Thrainsdottir moved to Manhattan to pursue a master's degree in Media, Culture, and Communications at New York University (NYU) and play basketball for the NYU team. Hanna aims to research the representation of women, people of color, and LGBTQ+ people in the media. She is also interested in exploring the use of the Icelandic language in media.

"I am very passionate about equality for women and LGBTQ+ people," said Thrainsdottir. "Being from Iceland, I want to be a role model for younger female athletes. I want to show them that they can be good at school and be good at sports at the same time. They can be more than just one thing. If I can help one girl continue doing what she loves, I will be happy."

GEORGIAN COURT ADDS ACROBATICS & TUMBLING TO ITS VARSITY INTERCOLLEGIATE SPORTS OFFERINGS



Sierra Garcia has been chosen as the first-ever head coach for Georgian Court's Acrobatics and Tumbling team, with the program starting in 2023-24.

On August 3rd, 2022, Georgian Court announced the addition of acrobatics & tumbling to its varsity intercollegiate sports offerings.

Acrobatics & Tumbling, an NCAA emerging sport for women, will debut at GCU as part of the 2023-24 spring athletic season. It will become the Lions' 15th varsity sport (ninth women's program) and the University's first addition since bringing on men's lacrosse during the 2015-16 campaign. The sport is governed nationally by the National Collegiate Acrobatics and Tumbling Association.

Georgian Court will be the 46th collegiate program, and the 32nd to compete at the Division II level. GCU will also be the fourth Central Atlantic Collegiate Conference (CACC) institution to add Acrobatics & Tumbling.

"Georgian Court is thrilled to be adding this new and engaging offering, Acrobatics & Tumbling," stated Director of Athletics Daniel Sempkowski. "The sport has grown significantly in the last few years, reaching the 40-member mark this past spring. Our head coach, Sierra Garcia, has been recruiting throughout the year to prepare for competition this fall."

CELEBRATING OUR ATHLETICS HALL OF FAME CLASS OF 2023

The 2023 Georgian Court Athletics Hall of Fame induction celebrates the best of Georgian Court Athletics. This year's class marks the fourth overall and first since 2017. It brings the total number of Hall of Famers to 18 with the induction of seven distinguished individuals: four student-athletes, two University Presidents, and a team physician. It also boasts the first male student-athlete to be inducted into the Hall of Fame.

Entering the Hall of Fame as members of the class of 2023 were student-athletes Ann Casado (Volleyball), Michael Clarke (Men's Soccer), Kelly Lyons (Women's Soccer) and Ryan McGrath (Women's Lacrosse), University Presidents Sister Rosemary Jeffries and Sister Barbara Williams, and team physician Dr. Stephen Rice.

Congratulations to the new members of our Hall of Fame!

GEORGIAN COURT WINS FIRST-EVER CACC MEN'S CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIP

History was made on Sunday morning, October 30th, 2022. For the first time in the 10-year history of the Georgian Court Men's Cross Country program, they brought the Central Atlantic Collegiate Championship to Lakewood. The Lion men placed three in the top 10 and five in the top 20, scoring 59 points and beating second-place Jefferson by just six points.

The CACC Championships were held in Philadelphia at Belmont Plateau, a challenging course the Lions were familiar with, having raced there in September. All four Lions who finished the race in September improved their time over the 8K course by more than a minute.

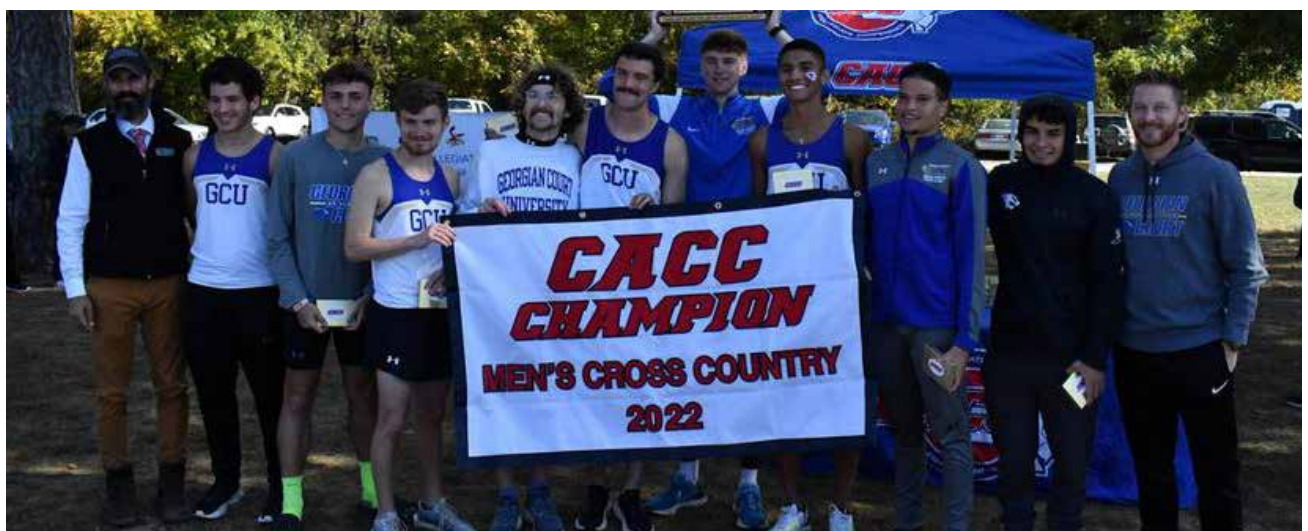
Like they have all season, Kyle Spector and Alec Valle helped lead the team, each placing in the top 10. But a number of Lions stepped up when it mattered most after having inconsistent starts to their seasons. Battling back from injuries, last year's individual champion, Xavier Seals, put together his best race of the season to finish in the top 10. Georgian Court's belief in seniors Will Spector and Kevin Knoetig, who had completed just five of a possible 10 races during the season, paid off as they

both finished in the top 20 and displaced two Jefferson runners, which proved to be the difference in the scoring.

Kyle Spector was the Lions' first scorer. He placed fourth running 27:39.0. Spector was second at the meet on this course in September, but still improved his time by 66 seconds. Xavier Seals finished second for the Lions in seventh place with a time of 27:50.6 and Alec Valle was 10th in 27:59.1. Valle's time was an improvement by 90 seconds from his first race at Belmont Plateau.

Will Spector and Kevin Knoetig completed the top five for GCU. Spector ran 28:42.8 and Knoetig crossed the line in 29:05.8. Joseph Jamolawicz and Riley Keffer rounded out the field for GCU. Jamolawicz improved his time on this course by 92 seconds and finished 22nd running 29:24.3. Keffer was 24th overall, running 29:43.2 which was nearly two minutes ahead of his race in September.

Not only was this the first Georgian Court men's CACC Championship in program history, but it was also the first CACC Cross Country Championship for Head Coach Mike Murawski on either the men's or women's side.



SISTER MICHELE ARONICA AND DEACON JAMES J. KNIPPER APPOINTED TO LEAD GEORGIAN COURT UNIVERSITY TRUSTEES

On June 29th, 2023, Sr. Michele Aronica, a Sister of Mercy and an academic leader, was appointed the new chair of Georgian Court University's Board of Trustees. She was joined by the Roman Catholic deacon serving the Diocese of Trenton, James J. Knipper '15, H'17, as vice-chair of GCU's governing board.

"Sister Michele and Jim are exceptionally qualified leaders with decades of experience in higher education, management, and religious service," said President Marbach. "Their demonstrated leadership skills will be pivotal to maintaining the highest standards of governance for our university. They have provided years of dedicated and thoughtful service to Georgian Court University."

A WEALTH OF EXPERIENCE

With over three decades of experience as a dedicated professor, non-profit executive, and religious leader, Sr. Michele is well suited to lead Georgian Court's Board of Trustees.

Sr. Michele Aronica served as a Professor of Sociology at St. Joseph's College from 1978-2005 and 2011-2021.

During her tenure at the college, she chaired the Department of Sociology, Criminal Justice, and Social Work; led the Faculty Senate Executive Committee as President and Vice President; and chaired multiple Senate and institutional committees. As Department Chair, she led the development of new academic programs including hybrid programs in criminal justice and social justice, a concentration in social work, and the Bachelor of Social Work degree.



She has recently been engaged as a consultant for leaders, and leading organizational change within institutions. Most personally to Sr. Michele, she was significantly involved in developing the Northeast community of Sisters of Mercy by merging six separate communities into one.

Sr. Michele has been a member of GCU's Board of Trustees since 2017, serving on various committees, including Mission Integration, Academic and Student Affairs (most recently as Chair), Governance, and the Executive Committee of the Board. She is also a member of the Board of Trustees for the Mercy Education System of the Americas and the University of Detroit Mercy, where she serves as chair of Academic Affairs and Vice Chair of the Enrollment Management and Student Life Committee.

Sr. Michele obtained her Master of Arts in Sociology from Long Island University and her Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology from Boston College.



Deacon Knipper is currently in his second tenure as a GCU Board of Trustees member and follows his father, Mr. Joseph P. Knipper, who served as a Trustee from 2002 to 2008. Deacon Jim has served on several Board committees and was co-chair of the Georgian Court golf

outing. He is the former CEO of J. Knipper and Company, Inc.

As a current member of the Board of Trustees for GCU and a member of the Finance Council of the Diocese of Trenton, Jim is poised to play a leading role in Georgian Court's future. He is also a member of the Board of Trustees for the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. In 1981, Jim Knipper graduated from the University of Scranton with a degree in Chemistry, and in 1984 he received a Master's in Business in the Pharmaceutical Industry from Fairleigh Dickinson University. He also earned his Master's in Theology from Georgian Court in May 2015 and was awarded an honorary degree from the university in May 2018.

When not serving his faith community at St. Paul's in Princeton, Deacon Knipper is a principal of Clear Faith Publishing LLC.

The Board of Trustees was previously led by chair Sister Julia Upton RSM, Ph.D., and vice-chair Megan Mulcahy Romano. They navigated a historic land deal that took place in March 2022.

NEW TRUSTEE BRINGS VAST PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR EXPERIENCE TO SERVE GEORGIAN COURT



Kenneth M. Esser, Jr., Senior Vice President of Behavioral Health CTS and Special Advisor to the CEO of Hackensack Meridian *Health*, has joined the university's Board of Trustees.

Mr. Esser has served in a senior role with Hackensack Meridian *Health* since 2018, before which he led the development and implementation of PSE&G's "utility of the future" strategy as their Manager, Program Growth and Strategy. His multi-decade career also spans the public sector, having served as the Chief Energy Advisor to the Office of the Governor of the State of New Jersey and as a Policy Advisor for Energy and Economic Growth for the NJDEP.

TRANSITION AND CAREER STUDIES: A LIFE-CHANGING PATH TO SUCCESS



While many young people with Intellectual Disabilities (ID) dream of going to college, only 4% of Institutes of Higher Education in the United States currently have programs to serve this special population of students.

Enter the GCU Transition to Career Studies Program (TCS): one of only two four-year programs for New Jersey students with ID, and the only program in the state to offer a fully-integrated residential experience in on-campus residence halls. GCU's program is among only 12 at Catholic universities in the U.S.

TCS is a 121-credit non-degree certificate program that allows students to grow academically and socially, identify a career path, and immerse themselves in college life. The fall of 2021 welcomed the first class of four students to campus, and as of the fall of 2023, there are now 15 participants.

"We never thought our son would be able to go to college. He was in his own world, he wasn't very verbal, and it was difficult for him to express himself to others," said Ramkrishna Pal, the father of Neelotpol (Neel), who was

in the inaugural TCS class. "Now that he has been in TCS and living on campus, he engages with people, is more vocal about his needs, and extends his hand to make new friendships. He has transformed."

Mr. Pal credits his son's progress to the strength, support, and compassion of the TCS team built by program creator and director Susan Field, Ph.D., a Psychology Professor and Chair of the Department of Psychology and Counseling. The dedicated staff includes the Operational Director, an Academic Coordinator, a Campus Life Coordinator, a Vocational Coordinator, and a group of GCU students that serve as Peer Mentors.

The TCS curriculum is divided into academics, social skill building, and career exploration. TCS students take regular general education courses alongside other Georgian Court students on subjects such as History, Math, and English Composition and electives like Art and Music.

"Our Academic Coordinator works directly with the faculty to make sure the students are doing well and to create class modifications when needed to help them succeed," explained Sharlene Smith, Ph.D., Operational Director

for the TCS Program. “We also have Peer Mentors assigned to accompany students to classes, take notes, and help with homework or projects.”

The social skill-building portion of the program offers courses and training to foster confidence; improve social, interpersonal, and advocacy skills; teach students about community living; and help them gain more independence.

Dr. Field explained that Peer Mentors play a key role in student socialization. “Our mentors are very service-oriented students, and they are really invested in these students and are committed to supporting and assisting to help them succeed.”

“We do everything with them, from taking them to campus events and joining them at the dining hall, to little things like playing UNO or bowling,” said Madison Donahue, a Peer Mentor who noted that the campus community has welcomed the TCS students. “We are a small campus, so we see them every day and can help them build connections with other students. The more time we spend together, the more open and talkative they become to everyone.”

Career development and job readiness is another major area of focus for TCS students. “Research shows that students who graduate from programs like TCS are three times more likely to be employed at the end of the program than individuals who don’t have access to these programs,” stated Dr. Field.

“They all have high aspirations, but we want to make sure that their career choices align with their vocational skills, interests, and strengths, and we work to get as close as possible to achieving their career goals,” explained Dr. Smith, who noted that the program also includes four semester-long practicum experiences on campus and a full-year off-campus internship.

TCS student Neel Pal has set his sights on a career in the healthcare field. “I want to work at JFK Hospital. I would like to care for others and know how to manage them. I want to learn how to work with patients and nurses.”

TCS student Daniel Zang’s goal is to become a computer technician. “I already found my career: technology in the transportation industry. I deal with computers all the time, and I like any kind of transportation, trains, buses, airplanes—you name it, I will do it!”

Daniel’s mom, Sophia Shi, says she sees the changes in her son since he joined the TCS program. “He is definitely more

confident, and he feels capable of doing things on his own. And, the social environment at school is very important; it gives him a feeling of belonging.”

Daniel, who said he now has so many friends he can’t count them, agrees, “The TCS program helped me work on my independence. You need to be happy during college—I am happy!”

Neel summed it up: “I go to college to learn new things. I get new experiences.

I get to interact with [friends] and support them and have fun. GCU is a place to learn and have a good life.”

Students who successfully complete the TCS program will receive a board-certified GCU certificate of completion, and they can earn college credits for any courses taken without modification. Georgian Court’s program offers scholarships funded by generous private donations, and students may be eligible to receive federal financial aid.

The TCS program is underwritten by a nearly \$2.5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education, through Transition and Postsecondary Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (TPSID)—the federal effort to support comprehensive transition and postsecondary programs for students with intellectual disabilities.



BUILDING BRIDGES OF SUPPORT:

HOW DR. JOSHUA BURNS SERVES FELLOW VETERANS

Veterans comprise roughly 3-4% of college students in the United States, bringing an array of skills and knowledge as they seek higher education. As a participant in the Veterans Affairs' Yellow Ribbon Program, which enables military and veteran students to attend and afford college, Georgian Court's Office of Veteran and Military Services and Outreach is equipped to do just that.

"There are a lot more specific needs for veteran students compared to regular students," says Joshua Burns, Ph.D., Director of Military and Veteran Services and Outreach. "We are dedicated to helping military and veteran students achieve their academic goals, even when dealing with schedule conflicts, outside obligations, and deployments."

The Military and Veteran Services Office launched in December of 2022, at which point Georgian Court had 19 enrolled veterans. These students are provided with a single, specialized point of contact, offering advising, accommodations, and G.I Bill certifications. The university further supports student veterans with membership in the university's chapter of Student Veterans of America—providing opportunities for leadership positions, webinars, conferences, and national leadership and advocacy events—and the SALUTE National Honor Society.

To ensure academic programs are aligned with the needs and qualifications of veteran and military students, Georgian Court offers a variety of degrees and certificate programs that meet base needs assessments, along with an expanding curriculum of specialized online offerings.

The office further conducts outreach services, intended to spread awareness about services and programs offered at Georgian Court University. "We attend veteran expos and work with the bases to spread awareness. We ensure that our services currently offered align with the needs of the local bases," says Dr. Burns. The office hopes to expand awareness of Georgian Court's services and help more veteran and military students.



Among the cornerstones of Georgian Court's services for veterans is the Veterans Lounge, opened in 2019 and situated in Jeffries Hall. The Lounge provides students with a quiet place to study and features a small library of donated veteran and military-specific literature, including transitioning from active military and becoming a veteran, mental health, and emotional intelligence. The lounge also offers food and drinks for veteran students, and sits adjacent to Dr. Burns' office for easy access to helpful resources.

SISTERS OF THE COURT

The word ‘mercy’ is featured prominently throughout the Bible—mentioned not once or twice, but an impressive 262 times. As defined by the Oxford Dictionary, mercy is the “compassion or forgiveness shown toward someone whom it is within one’s power to punish or harm,” but at Georgian Court University, we know that it holds a much deeper meaning. Mercy is akin to love, strongly tied to being pulled to act in ways that counter sadness, darkness, and despair.

Catherine McAuley was inspired to apply the teachings of mercy in everyday life. In turn, she inspired generations of women to follow her guidance and pursue her mission of a kinder world order. Among those inspired by her teachings are the many Sisters who dedicated themselves to The Court, as Georgian Court was historically called, and Dr. Marci Mazzarotto, Assistant Professor, Digital Communication, and Chair, Department of Communication and Graphic Design.

While pursuing her Master of Fine Arts in Film and TV Production at Asbury University, Dr. Mazzarotto sought a captivating story for her final thesis. Proving the adage that sometimes the hardest desired answer is often right below your nose, she was moved to interview twelve Sisters of Mercy who spent time learning, teaching, and growing at The Court. Alumni and students may recognize familiar names, including Sister Barbara Williams, Sister Rosemary Jeffries, Sister Maria Cordis Richey, and Sister Janice Edwards, who will be featured in a solo exhibition at The Geis Gallery this fall.

Dr. Mazzarotto asked each Sister to answer several questions, two of which include: What inspired them to enter The Sisters of Mercy? And, what changes, opportunities, and evolutions did they experience during their time serving?

The core focus of Dr. Mazzarotto’s film, resulting from the interviews, is why The Court was established, particularly in 1908 when women didn’t have the right to vote. What inspired the women to stand tall at the forefront of social justice reform?

“The process of interviewing the Sisters was very empowering,” Dr. Mazzarotto reflected, “I really enjoyed learning more about the history of The Court, and working with two GCU alumni, Production Assistant Lindsey Kardashian ‘23 and Animator/Graphic Designer Brandon Ogrodnik ‘22.”

The 18-minute film required more than 18 months of research, filming, and post-production – an average of one month per edited minute – but that was only the start of sharing her findings with a broader audience. Today, Dr. Mazzarotto is navigating the complex processes of securing the licensing she needs to begin touring her film across the independent film festival circuit. Everything from historical video clips to film settings to musical scores requires separate forms and filings, a time-consuming and tedious process that underscores Dr. Mazzarotto’s dedication to spreading the message of Mercy throughout the country and world.

“I’m immensely grateful to the Georgian Court community for sharing their stories and resources and making this film possible,” concluded Dr. Mazzarotto with pride.



IN MEMORIAM

Margaret Mary San Antonio, RSM, `44
 Janet Riley LaBorne `46,
mother of Janet Laborne Erikson `74
 Elinor Murphy May `47
 Marie Lambert Vahlsing `48
 Sarah Lombardi Pietrafesa `49
 Margaret Gardella Glynn `51
 Marjorie Maling Harvey `52
 Patricia Bray Matonak `52
 Jeanne Innes Brown `54
 Grace Chiniski Oliveira `54
 Marilyn Tighe Schaad `56
 Rosalyn Gindoff `57
 Peggy Blank Murphy `59
 Elizabeth Masters O'Neill `59
 Dorothy Rowland Heinlen, Ph.D., `60
 Marguerite Shuler Wiecek `62,
sister-in-law of Susan Phillips Shuler `61
 Gail Gleason Milgram, Ed.D., `63
 Elena Truncellito Santoro `64
 Roseanne Hill O'Brien `64
 Carole Miano Basso `64
 Katherine Theresa Cairone, RSM, `64
 Mary Anne Kelly De Fuccio, Ed.D., `64
 Patricia Horvath Malyk `64
 Catherine Predham Flood `66
 Doreen Glassgold Mercer `66
 Mary Jane Brandwood Stevens `66
 Justyna Steuer Carlson `66
 Barbara Backus Fahley `68
 Patricia Croddick Delatush `69
 Mary Marlene Cunningham, RSM, `70
 Gail Platt Weise `70
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 Maryann Giambalvo Pucilowski `72
 Linda Hulley Carr `72
 Carol Germann Montgomery `73
 Magdalene Lodato, RN, `74
 Ann Schraber Plasteras `74
 Suzanne Bonsper McArthur `75
 Patricia Bickens `75
 Barbara Swan Herbert `76
 Melanie Molzon Cottrell `76

Valerie Brownrigg `77, `83
 Elizabeth Goga `77
 Maureen O'Connor Maxwell `77
 Carol Handerhan Newell `78
 Elizabeth Rozier `78
 Margaret Richetti `79
 Wynne Vitelli Barbato `79
 Elizabeth Cowell McCormack `80
 Mary Ryan `81
 Catherine Jackson `82
 Nina Parisi `82
 Alice Gordon Minervino `83
 Maura Kennedy `83
 Sherry Hopkins Doyle `86
 Thelma Northart `87
 Pamela Musa-Murphy `88
 Virginia Quinn Hesse `88
 Colleen Russoniello `89
 Phyllis Eckert `89
 Catherine O'Leary Malvasio `89,
mother of Catherine Malvasio `03
 and Joseph Malvasio `05 and
mother-in-law of Sandra Davis
 Malvasio `04, `07
 Nancy Batters Hamilton `89
 Cynthia Lasky Antico `90
 Maryann Smith `90, `93
 Patricia Orzepowski Wilson `90
 Theresa Moran `92
 Laura Taussig `93
 Kenneth Zelinski `94
 Laura DePremio Palmer `96, `01
 Edith Nestor Saal `96
 Victoria Telesca Pine `98
 Theresa Manfredi Simon `99,
mother of Debora Simon `07
 Amy Smith `00
 Mary Cole `01
 Robert Boyce `02
 Grace Lammerding Henkel `02
 Winifred Klimek `07
 Stephanie Wussow `10, *sister of*
 Amanda Wussow `00, `06 and *cousin*
 of Colleen Briordy Hoeler `98

Gloria M. Mazziotti, M.A., `11
 Howard W. Andrews, Ph.D., `12
 Ilia Dejesus `20
 Eva Bouzard-Hui
 Ruth Ann Burns, *former board*
of trustee member and former
vice president of marketing &
external affairs
 Elvene Clements, *mother of*
 Carole Clements Howell `84
 John F. Croddick Sr., *former trustee*
 Anupam DasGupta, *husband of*
 Kasturi DasGupta, *professor emerita*
in sociology
 Harriet Douglas,
former food service worker
 Anne Johnson,
former dining hall hostess
 Eugene Mason, *former adjunct*
professor in the school of education
 Gerald Morreale
 Francis Nace
 Timothy Ryan
 Amy Saccone
 Karin Wainright

We offer our condolences to any losses experienced in the lives of our GCU community. This list represents all passings shared with the Georgian Court Office of Alumni Relations between May 23rd, 2022 and July 13th, 2023.

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

CLASS NOTES

1960s

Amelia McTamaneý`67, was recently awarded the American Montessori Society 2023 Recognition Award for Service by Christopher Academy, the Montessori School of Westfield. Amelia has spent most of her career in Montessori education and has participated in many Montessori organizations, including as a founding member and trustee of New Jersey Montessori Administrator's Council and Montessori Accreditation for Teacher Education. Amelia has served on many local charitable organizations including the Westfield Red Cross and Westfield Rotary. Amelia has worked quietly behind the scenes for AMS and Montessori since 1976 having helped both governments and society understand, accept, and recognize Montessori education.



Pat Heanue`68 and husband, John hosted GCU alumni and friends in Vero Beach, Florida this past March. Guests included President Marbach, former Trustee John Seazholtz and wife Leona, Jean Moseley`68, Celia Milano`97, Assistant Vice President for Development Frank Mascia, and Vice President for Institutional Advancement Matt Manfra.

1970s

Alumni friends gathered in Florida this past April to share memories of their time at The Court.



Pictured are **Annie Hanna Cestra`73**, **Carol Rosko Taylor`71**, **Helen Hanna Casey`71**, **Lynn Brady Straub`71**, and **Terry Tibbetts`71**.

1990s

Brenda Pagliaro Emery, Esq.`90, recently joined MediationWorks in Delray Beach, Florida. She is already a Florida Supreme Court Certified Circuit Court Mediator and arbitrator and has more than three decades of legal and litigation experience.

Lauren Mindnich Hardman`96, is a Level 3 Florida State Fire Instructor at Melbourne Beach. She is also a Level 2 Dragon Boat Coach and took her local team to two Club Crew National Championships and Club Crew Worlds where her team consisted of 1/3 of breast cancer survivors.

2000s

Sarah Demarco, Psy.D.`07, recently earned her MA in Forensic Psychology and PsyD in Clinical Psychology and works as a Forensic Psychologist. She also co-authored a handbook published by Oxford University Press, specifically geared toward medical and mental health professionals alike entitled *Firearms and Clinical Practice: A Handbook for Medical and Mental Health Professionals*.

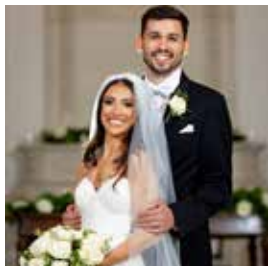
2010s

Zoila "Lily" Solano`12, was recently appointed by the Charlotte County Sheriff's Office in Florida as Senior Chaplain.

Kimberly Paul, RN`16, opened a new medi-spa business in Marlton, New Jersey.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

WEDDINGS



Michael Pontrelli '17, '18 and
Gabrielle Caleca '18



Ryan and Natalie
Hnath Kirkirt '19, '21
10/9/2022

CHILDREN



Stephen and Kristin Kohler '12
Chloe Anne Francis Hornick,
born 4/26/2021



Michael Pontrelli '17, '18 and
Gabrielle Caleca '18
Adriana Grace Pontrelli,
born 6/9/2023

ACHIEVEMENTS



Tunisha Thompson '03
published her first book,
*"The Real Pain of Stress:
What To Do When Bubble
Baths Won't Fix It."*



Kimberly Paul '16 opened a new
med-spa business, Luxe Hydro
Club, in Marlton, New Jersey.

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

REUNION & HOMECOMING WEEKEND '22 PHOTO RECAP



The women's basketball team celebrates during introductions at Hoops Madness in the Wellness Center.

Members of the Class of 1972 pose with balloons during the alumni brunch.



President Marbach poses alongside the 2022 alumni award recipients. Isabelle Marks Moska '83 (Distinguished Alumni Award), Christine Hedgebeth '16 (Young Alumni Award), Joanne Huelsman '77 (Alumni Service Award), Hanna Thrainsdottir '22 (Sportsmanship Award). Not pictured: Faith Bennett '22 (Outstanding Senior Award).

A group of student-athletes presents President Marbach with a check for a donation to the University.



Dr. Michael Gross leads the historic walking tour around campus. Pictured here with alumni in the Japanese Garden.

President Marbach welcomes alumni to campus from the trolley.



Guests enjoyed the ice cream truck on campus.



The class of 1972 poses on the steps of the Mansion with their class flag during the Golden Lions Dinner commemorating their 50th reunion.

Students enjoyed casino night in the Casino!



CLASS FLAGS



Convocation marks the start of the academic year and a time-honored tradition at Georgian Court University.

Each year during the Convocation ceremony, a flag with their graduation year is presented to the Student Government Association President to welcome the incoming class. Four years later, at Commencement, the Student Government Association President returns that class flag to the Alumni Association to represent the newest alumni of Georgian Court. These flags date back to the early years of GCU and can be seen displayed at Convocation, Commencement, and Reunion & Homecoming Weekend.

This collection of flags represents all that is Georgian Court University: respect, integrity, justice, compassion, and service. We see these Mercy core values carried out in our students and in our alumni, and these flags represent all of their contributions and achievements.



HELP US TELL YOUR STORY *ON SOCIAL MEDIA!*

Attention Alumni!

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

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

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

We look forward to hearing from you!

RECHARGE & EXPAND YOUR LEARNING



CENTER FOR PROFESSIONAL STUDIES

Learning is for life! Our CPS featured programs represent the most popular online (in-demand) training programs designed to meet the changing needs of employers and workforce partners within healthcare, business, technology, vocational, and professional trade associations.



WILSON – LEVEL 1 CERTIFICATION



TECH BOOTCAMPS

- CYBER SECURITY
- AI MACHINE LEARNING
- FULL STACK WEB DEVELOPMENT
- AND MORE...



ACCELERATED NURSING PROGRAM FOR NON-NURSES

Our 14-month, accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing (B.S.N.) program is an intensive, hands-on experience that prepares students to achieve RN licensure and launch their careers soon after completion.



[CPS.GEORGIAN.EDU](https://cps.georgian.edu)

BEHIND THE BARS AND BEYOND THE PAGES:

EXPLORING THE LITERATURE COLLECTION AT GEORGIAN COURT UNIVERSITY

Georgian Court's library is home to a unique collection of books: prison literature. The Matthew J. Sheridan Special Collection of Prison Literature, named after the university's Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice, holds over 1,000 volumes. The special collection largely centers on U.S. prisons, in addition to featuring volumes from Great Britain, French Guiana, Canada, South Africa, and Cuba, many of which date from the mid-1800s. Dr. Sheridan has dedicated his life to criminology and criminal justice, building and analyzing the primarily autobiographical collection along the way.

"The majority of our autobiographies are written by convicts. There are also autobiographies by guards, wardens, and ministers, and their stories are not unlike those of the convicts. There are many similarities between the imprisoned and those working behind the prison walls," said Dr. Sheridan. Beyond its litany of autobiographies, the collection includes other genres and topics including history, dramas, diaries, fiction, the death penalty, and prison reform.

"If you pick up any textbook about criminal justice, you will find very few references from the convict. You will find references about the convict, but not from the convict," said Dr. Sheridan. "We have works written from the source—it humanizes the imprisoned person and gives us a whole new perspective that has been overlooked in the past." The experience of confinement and the effects of prison are rarely explored through the eyes of the incarcerated. As such, Georgian Court's collection of prison literature is vital to providing an in-depth analysis of prison culture.

Prison literature also allows for analysis and comparison across time and culture. The size of the collection makes it a valuable resource for the serious scholar, the student, or anyone researching the prison system. It can also serve as background for the media and other inquiries about prison experience, reform, and history.

As a criminal justice professor, Dr. Sheridan uses books from the collection in many of his courses, including

Introduction to Corrections, Correctional Management, Controversial Topics in Criminology, Juvenile Justice, and Community Corrections. "It has unlimited applicability and room for analysis across all disciplines and topics," added Dr. Sheridan.

Each book included in the collection is rare, as most prison books only receive one printing, with few copies made.

These books are seldom found in homes and are frequently discarded by libraries due to a lack of public interest. Dr. Sheridan has spent decades locating and restoring the books to build this significant collection.

To read books in the collection, those interested can bring a list of titles and call numbers to the circulation desk in the library. Photographs, photocopies, and scanning are permitted. The Matthew J. Sheridan Special Collection of Prison Literature at Georgian Court is a closed collection; visitors cannot browse in person and the books cannot be checked out.

For any questions regarding the Matthew J. Sheridan Collection of Prison Literature, contact Dr. Sheridan at msheridan@georgian.edu.



DR. MICHAEL GROSS:

CULTIVATING KNOWLEDGE AND NATURE AT GEORGIAN COURT

Dr. Michael Gross is a highly respected figure at Georgian Court, where he has been an integral part of the academic community since 1992. With an impressive background in biology and accounting, Dr. Gross joined GCU after discovering a tenure track position in the classified ads of the Chronicle of Higher Education, a time before the internet revolutionized job searches. After visiting the campus and finding a perfect fit, he accepted the position and has remained a steadfast presence ever since.

Throughout his tenure at GCU, Dr. Gross' passion for education and administration has led him to various roles, including serving as the Chair of the Biology Department. He is widely recognized for his meticulous attention to detail and adeptness in handling administrative responsibilities. In 2002, he assumed the role of Associate Provost for Academic Program Development, a position he reluctantly accepted to help implement an academic restructuring plan, but that he later embraced wholeheartedly due to its alignment with his skill set.

In addition to his administrative contributions, Dr. Gross has played a pivotal role in nurturing the university's natural beauty as the Director of the Sister Mary Grace Burns Arboretum. Taking over the reins in 2001, he has devoted himself to maintaining and enhancing the arboretum's distinctiveness. Dr. Gross's passion for the living collections, along with his determination to preserve the four

historic gardens on campus, has made him an invaluable asset to GCU's landscape and cultural heritage.

The below interview with Dr. Gross delves into his longstanding connection with Georgian Court and the Arboretum:

WHAT BROUGHT YOU TO GEORGIAN COURT?

In 1991, I assumed a one-year role as Assistant Professor of Biology at Marshall University. My research up to that point was in coastal salt marshes, and—given the university's location in West Virginia, where there are no such marshes—I was interested in moving to another part of the country that would suit my research and interests.

I started looking for a tenure-track biology position in early 1992, and as this was during the pre-internet era, I adopted the same approach for my job search as everyone else in higher education: I looked through the job ads in a print edition of the Chronicle of Higher Education. I came across one ad for Georgian Court, and having never previously heard of it, I looked in Peterson's Guide to Colleges (which students used to pick colleges), found out more, and decided to apply.

In the summer of 1992, after months without hearing from anyone, I received a phone call from the Chair of Georgian Court's biology department, who asked me to drive up the parkway from Delaware—where I was con-

ducting research at the time—and visit the historic campus. From the beauty of our gardens, to the range of subjects I would be able to teach at the university, I came away from the visit with an overwhelmingly positive impression. I accepted the job offer on July 4, 1992 and have been here ever since.

WHEN DID YOU BECOME THE ASSOCIATE PROVOST FOR ACADEMIC PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT?

Four years after joining Georgian Court, I became the Chair of the university's Biology Department. Parts of this position suited me well, because I'm detail oriented, I like doing paperwork, and I had internet skills at a time when most people didn't.

Six years later, I was asked by university leadership to assume the role of Associate Provost, presumably as the result of the administrative work I did as Chair of the Biology Department. I didn't apply for the job, I didn't want it, and I turned it down upon receiving the offer. I was eventually talked into doing it for one year and quickly found myself enjoying the role, which I've now held for over 21 years.

HOW DID YOU BECOME THE DIRECTOR OF THE SISTER MARY GRACE BURNS ARBORETUM?

In 2001, Mary Stockton, the then-Arboretum Director, retired, leaving me as the only "plant person" at Georgian Court. While I knew nothing about trees, and would have to learn about them, I took on the role. It became something that I was more than comfortable with, and I was interested in doing it, and I was happy to. I still am.

WHAT MAKES THE SISTER MARY GRACE BURNS ARBORETUM SPECIAL?

I'm a volunteer representative in a group comprising 29 of New Jersey's public gardens (Georgian Court's Arboretum being one of them). I've been to all 29 gardens, and no two are alike.

Our arboretum, established in 1989 and named after Sister Mary Grace Burns, comprises the landscaped part of our campus. It includes over 2,200 woody plants from over 190 species, representing most of the native species of the New Jersey Pine Barrens and a large number of nonnative plant species.

The arboretum features four historic gardens, three of which were designed by famed architect Bruce Price and all four of which were created by 1910. Each of the four gardens has its own theme: the Japanese Garden, the Italian Garden, the Formal Garden, and the Sunken Garden. All of the gardens feature objects from the early 20th century or centuries before, either copies or originals from other parts of the world.

In short: as a national historic landmark with four unique gardens that date from the late Gilded Age, our Arboretum is certainly unique.

WHICH GARDEN IS YOUR FAVORITE?

While all of our gardens are special in their own ways, the Japanese Garden is the most special to me. It was designed by Japanese-American landscape architect Takeo Shiota, perhaps best known for designing the Japanese Hill-and-Pond Garden at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, and includes a genuine teahouse from the Japan-British exhibition of 1910. The garden is home to three custom-designed wooden bridges, several cultivars of Japanese maples added in 2013 to replace those lost in Superstorm Sandy, a stately Umbrella Pine, and so much more.



WHAT MAKES THE OTHER THREE GARDENS SO SPECIAL? LET'S START WITH THE SUNKEN GARDEN.

The sunken garden is home to a lagoon that connects to Lake Carasaljo. It's the most ornate garden on our campus, featuring a 17th-century marble fountain from a garden in southern France, a double marble staircase flanked by lions,

and carved marble benches that are supposed copies of benches featured in the Vatican Garden. (I didn't see our benches at the Vatican Garden when I visited it, so I can't be sure.)



THE FORMAL GARDEN?

The formal garden is in the French parterre style of gardening, which was developed by Claude Mollet in the 17th century. The style consists of symmetrical patterns made up of plant beds and low hedges (boxwood hedges, in the case of our garden) that are separated and connected by paths like those that can be found in Versailles, intended to show man's ability to dominate nature. This style is in stark contrast with the Japanese style, in which the landscape is deliberately in harmony with nature. My appreciation of the formal garden grew when I started pruning the boxwood hedges myself several years ago. One day, I started pruning two different hedge configurations and realized that they were the same linear length by the fact that it took me the same amount of time to prune each hedge. I had been the arboretum director for over 15 years by the time I came to fully appreciate the garden's symmetry—and that appreciation came about by pruning hedges.



AND LASTLY, THE ITALIAN GARDEN?

The Italian Garden is home to our beloved Fountain of Apollo, sculpted by John Massey Rhind; a wrought iron eagle-and-dragon sculpture commissioned by Emperor Wilhelm II for the 1900 Paris World Fair and later purchased by the Goulds; life-size statues of Greek gods and goddesses; floral urns mounted on marble pedestals; and on, and on.

Most of the trees in the garden are conifers—and even though the garden was fully designed by 1910, it didn't include tree species native to Italy until some Italian Cypresses were added in 1999.

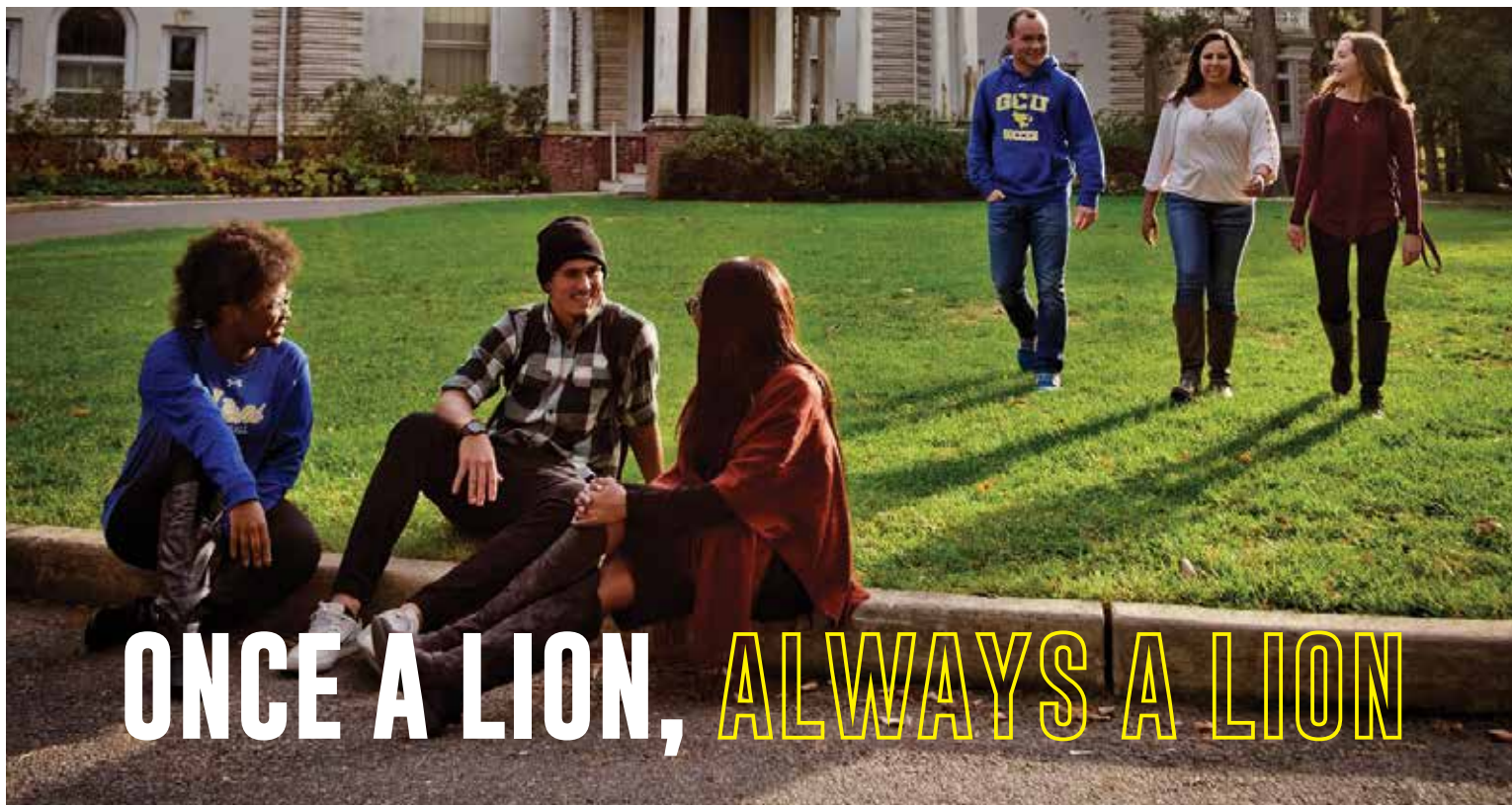
The Italian Garden is huge—roughly a fifth of a mile long. As such, it's difficult to gauge the full extent of its symmetry unless you're consciously looking for it. The floral urns, religious statuary, and other structures are all equidistant from the main path, placed in symmetrical rows.



WHAT'S THE BEST WAY TO APPROACH THE GARDENS?

That's a good question. There is a 16-page walking tour booklet featured on the arboretum webpage which guides readers through our gardens, one at a time, and features items of interest.

I also conduct free guided tours, which can be booked by contacting me at mgross@georgian.edu. I've facilitated more tours this year than I ever have before, and it's been a real joy.



Justice. Compassion. Service. These are just some of the qualities that make the Georgian Court University experience worthwhile. In the spirit of carrying these values forward, I want to share one way you can give back to your community and the people in your own life: writing a will.

GCU wants to ensure our entire community has what they need to plan for a successful future. That's why we partnered with FreeWill, a secure, easy-to-use, and free online tool that guides you through making your will to protect the people and belongings you cherish.

But your legacy doesn't have to stop there. With FreeWill, you also have the option to make a difference to future generations at GCU by planning a gift in your will. No matter its size, you can join us in inspiring the Lions of tomorrow!

Visit FreeWill.com/GeorgianCourtUniversity or scan the QR code to create your legacy with GCU:



Have you already included a gift to us in your will? GCU would love to thank you for your generosity. Please fill out the quick form at FreeWill.com/Record/GeorgianCourtUniversity or scan the QR code:



GEORGIAN COURT UNIVERSITY





FEATURED: *President Marbach and 18 of our 35 TRIO-SSS graduates at their Commencement Celebration on Tuesday, April 25th, 2023.*

TRIO-Student Support Services (TRIO-SSS) is a federally funded program providing a variety of services to foster students' academic achievement and personal success. More than 200,000 students are being served by 1,069 TRIO-Student Support Services programs at colleges and universities nationwide.

EQUITABLE PEDAGOGY INSTITUTE

Beginning in the Fall, six faculty & administrators—Dr. Vincent Chen, Caitlin Connelly, Dr. Denise Furlong, Dr. Jessica Keene, Dr. Michael Pawlish and Dr. Marny Requa—embarked on a yearlong journey that focused on developing equitable and inclusive practices in the classroom.



relevant teaching, and culturally responsive teaching.

In the Spring, each fellow chose a Problem of Practice to address over the Spring semester.

The faculty members met on a monthly basis, with support from Dr. Marci Mazzarotto and Professor Kristen Wedlock, two of last year's Equitable Pedagogy Institute (EPI) Fellows. The faculty group delved into Gloria Ladson-Billings and bell hooks' work on intersectionality, culturally

Their topics include:

- Dr. Vincent Chen: "Recognizing Diversity and Inclusion in Exercise Testing and Prescription"
- Caitlin Connelly: "Student Voices in the Library: Developing a Collection Based on Student Research Interests"
- Dr. Denise Furlong: "Infusing Culturally Responsive Pedagogy and Promoting Representation in Advanced Studies Course"
- Dr. Michael Pawlish: "Diversity of Perspectives in Leadership Courses at Georgian Court University"
- Dr. Marny Requa: "Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Intensive Courses at GCU: Proposing a Designation Process"

On Wednesday, April 26th, the EPI Fellows presented their work to the GCU Community at their Closing Reception. Attendees included President Marbach, Provost Warner, Dr. Paul DaPonte, and a host of department chairpersons, faculty, staff, and administrators. Dr. Stephanie Rahill spearheaded the initiative.

SCHOOL OF BUSINESS & DIGITAL MEDIA LAUNCHES INAUGURAL LION'S DEN PITCH & INNOVATION COMPETITION



Georgian Court's School of Business & Digital Media held its first annual Lion's Den Pitch & Innovation Competition on Friday, April 28th, 2023.

Five high school student teams from Manchester Township and Toms River South High Schools pitched their business ideas to address at least one of the Sisters of Mercy's Critical Concerns. Many teams pitched ideas that addressed the environment, while others addressed immigrants and women.

The competition's judges, Michael Clay, Ram Hegde, Stacey Kavanagh, and Theodora Sergiou, represent 50+ years of experience in or supporting franchising and entrepreneurship.

"Many of our students that integrate business and digital media go on to pursue entrepreneurial careers, and we felt it was important to directly engage high school students

who are considering that route," said Jennifer J. Edmonds, Ph.D., Dean of the School of Business & Digital Media. "We decided to develop a program that is unique to Georgian Court, open exclusively to high school students, and focused on the intersection of business and digital media."

Withum and New Jersey Natural Gas (NJNG) sponsored this competition supporting the next generation of entrepreneurs from Ocean and Monmouth County. Gary Azzolini at Toms River South High School and Nick Salvemini at Manchester Township High School, meanwhile, did an excellent job of preparing their students for the competition.

- The Withum \$2,500 first-place prize went to three graduating seniors from Toms River South who pitched a community resource center to serve underrepresented individuals and immigrants in Ocean County.
- The New Jersey Natural Gas \$1,500 second-place prize went to a graduating senior from Toms River South who pitched an environmentally friendly surf and skate-inspired clothing business.
- The Withum \$500 third-place prize was awarded to a group of Manchester Township High School freshmen who pitched an eco-friendly jewelry and accessories line with smartphone integration for emergency contact and emergency services notifications.

"The five participating teams were so well prepared and the judges asked hard-hitting questions that you couldn't have planned for. The event was such a success and we can't wait to do it again next year!", said Dean Edmonds.



GCU COUNSELING CENTER: TACKLING STUDENT STRESS AND ANXIETY

Stress and anxiety are a big part of life, and college students are not exempt. A recent survey by TimelyMD found that 71% of college students reported currently experiencing some form of mental illness, such as stress, anxiety, or depression.

The good news is that 70% of students said their institution was able to help meet their emotional needs through the school's mental health services.

Georgian Court is proud to offer all students free access to the GCU Counseling Center, which provides counseling, programs, services, and referrals to help students tackle any issues that might impact their overall well-being and academic success.

"Whether it's test anxiety, relationship anxiety, family issues, or learning about time management and other

helpful skills, the Counseling Center is ready to help students achieve success and become the very best versions of themselves," explained Robin Solbach, Psy.D., Director of Health and Counseling and one of the licensed professionals at the Center.

The Counseling Center works hard to break down the stigma of mental health and remove barriers to make sure students are aware of the many different services they offer. "They need to know we're here, that we're approachable, and that this is a confidential, safe place for them to come to," said Jeannette Orlando, the Counseling Center Administrative Assistant who is one of the first friendly faces students will see when they arrive.

The Center features a team of caring, dedicated staff that includes four licensed mental health professionals and a consulting physician (a GCU alumna) to assist students

taking, or who may benefit from, prescription anti-depressants or anti-anxiety medications. They also have an extensive referral network for outside services and programs and medical professionals.

According to the American College Health Association (ACHA), some of the most common mental health issues faced by college students include anxiety or depression related disorders, attention-deficit/hyperactivity and related disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder, and obsessive-compulsive disorder.

The Center is versatile and flexible, offering individual counseling, group counseling, and creating programs and workshops for student groups or even groups of friends. They also partner with campus departments including Athletics, EOF, TRIO, and New Seminary, to offer training, support, and informational programs to faculty and staff to increase awareness of mental health issues and warning signs.

“You don’t need to be in crisis to utilize our services,” said Julie Bond, MA, LMFT, a licensed therapist at the Counseling Center. “Mental and emotional wellness is a large piece of our overall well-being. Learning to practice skills that improve things like sleep hygiene, time management, tolerating distress, and emotional regulation are critical to maintaining physical health and academic performance.”

The GCU Counseling Center is truly a center for excellence, and is one of only four in New Jersey to be fully accredited by the International Accreditation of Counseling Services (IACS). The Center is very proactive in securing grants for additional services and technology to expand access to mental health services and meet evolving student needs.

This year, GCU students will have access to UWill, a telehealth platform that provides free mental health services as part of a one-year program funded by the N.J. Office of the Secretary of Higher Education (OSHE).

The program has three components:

- **UMatch: Virtual therapy for students**
- **UHelp: Crisis counseling for emergencies**
- **URise: Wellness services and information**

“UWill is designed to enhance and extend the therapeutic services offered by GCU’s Counseling Center,” said Dr.

Solbach. “UWill offers free 30-minute virtual sessions to students, including during evenings and weekends, when the Counseling Center is closed. Anything that helps to reduce barriers to students accessing care will be helpful in connecting students with the support they deserve.” The GCU Counseling Center has also received the Mental Health in Higher Education: Com-

munity Provider Partnerships Grant and Professional Development Grant. GCU will partner with the JED Foundation and The Steve Fund to bring new innovative programs to campus and create a new student mental health emergency assistance fund. The grant will also provide funding for training, education, and certification for counseling staff.

Counseling centers have become an integral part of a successful collegiate experience. A study by Penn State University’s Center for Collegiate Mental Health found that “counseling centers serve a critical role in supporting colleges’ academic mission as they routinely work with students experiencing a diverse array of complex issues,” and “students are more likely to stay enrolled when they improve during counseling services.”

“Once students are here, they get a good taste of who we are as people and the work that we do, so we keep them,” said Dr. Solbach.

“When you see somebody that you’ve known as a freshman and were told they’re never going to make it, and then you see them walk across that stage—that’s just a good day.”



IMPACTING LIVES AT THE COURT

The Georgian Court campus is filled with memorable features and incredible scenery. From the Apollo Fountain, to our Japanese Tea House, to the Formal Garden, GCU is a special place. And while these iconic locations make Georgian Court a unique space for our students, it is the people within the GCU family who truly shape the essence of our university.

This section of our annual magazine is dedicated to the hidden (and not-so-hidden) gems of our community: unsung heroes, devoted mentors, and trailblazers in their fields. You will discover inspiring stories of people who have been shaped by their experiences at Georgian Court—or played instrumental roles in shaping the lives of our students and the very fabric of our campus.

As we delve into these stories, please join us in celebrating these outstanding individuals who have made Georgian Court the unique, transformative, and welcoming community that we know and cherish.

PATRICIA BURKE '70

Patricia “Pat” H. Burke ‘70, a distinguished Georgian Court alumna and former adjunct professor, has made remarkable contributions in various fields. With a strong foundation in history, having graduated from both Georgian Court in 1970 and Villanova in 1972 with degrees in history and museum studies, respectively, Pat began her career at the Ocean County Historical Society.

Over the years, she has held prestigious roles, including serving as the executive director of the Toms River Seaport and working as an archivist for esteemed institutions like the Monmouth County Historical Society and the State Archives in Trenton. Pat’s career spans across history, museum direction, university professorship, and authorship, leaving an indelible mark in the academic and historical communities.

As a current Board member of the Bay Head Historical Society, she found inspiration to write her latest book.

Her dedicated research, spanning over a decade, focused on the life of artist and ornithologist Gerard Rutgers Hardenbergh (1856-1915), resulting in the publication of “Gerard Rutgers Hardenbergh, Artist and Ornithologist.” Descending from the first president of Rutgers University, Hardenbergh spent much of his life in New Brunswick and Bay Head, New Jersey, drawing inspiration from these locales for his artwork. His diverse subjects included birds in their natural habitat, fish, hunting dogs, landscapes, seascapes, and hand-painted porcelain plates. Released in 2017, the book beautifully curates over 180 of Hardenbergh’s works in one comprehensive collection.



In October 2018, Pat conducted a book signing at the Sister Mary Joseph Cunningham Library, where all three of her books are available. Apart from “Gerard Rutgers Hardenbergh, Artist and Ornithologist,” she is also the author of “Barnegat Bay Decoys and Gunning Club” (1996) and served as a co-author for “Along the Toms River” (2003).

A graduate whose journey with Georgian Court proved transformative, Pat’s deep-rooted appreciation for GCU is exemplified by her decision to include a substantial bequest to the university in her will. Her remarkable contribution stands as a testament to the profound impact that Georgian Court had on shaping her life’s trajectory.

As Pat explained after providing her generous gift, “GCU was a special place for this student to find their true path and thrive throughout their entire life.”

THE CUNNINGHAM FAMILY

Born in Camden, New Jersey, in 1921, Sister Mary Joseph Cunningham took her initial steps into religious life by joining the Sisters of Mercy in 1941. She dedicated herself fully to her calling and ultimately made her final vows in 1947. She completed her studies at Georgian Court College in 1953, earning a bachelor’s degree in business administration. However, her true passion lay in her roles as the Business Officer and later Treasurer of Georgian Court, which she cherished as her most beloved and fulfilling positions throughout her career.

For over 40 years, she helped thousands of students in financial need to achieve their dream of graduating from college. Over the years, multiple members of the Cunningham family have also proudly earned their degrees from Georgian Court, further highlighting her impactful legacy.



One of Sister Mary Joseph’s final accomplishments was overseeing the construction of a new library, which was subsequently named in her honor in September 1999, just two years after her passing. Shortly thereafter, a scholarship intended to support those facing

significant financial hardships was established in her name.

In the summer of 1949, Sister Mary Joseph decided to organize a college picnic that included her entire family. This initial gathering evolved into an eagerly anticipated yearly tradition. Over time, the family has flourished, now spanning six generations—and in 2023, they commemorated their 75th consecutive year of celebrating this tradition.

At the picnic held each year, family members gather to contribute donations in memory of Sister Mary Joseph which sustain the Sister Mary Joseph Cunningham Scholarship fund. These generous contributions have not only supported the Library but have also contributed to the Preservation Fund.



LARRY DOWNES H’01

Laurence “Larry” M. Downes H’01 served as Chairman of the Board of New Jersey Resources from September 1996 and Chief Executive Officer from July 1995 to September 2019.

As of October 1, 2018, as part of the company’s ongoing succession planning, Larry relinquished his position as President, but continued to serve as the company’s Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of the Board until the end of 2019. His understanding of issues facing utility companies as an officer and director was invaluable to the Board and the company for decades.

Larry served with distinction on the Georgian Court University Board of Trustees from 1994-2000. In his last two years (’99-’00), he assumed the role of Chair of the Board, exemplifying exceptional leadership during his tenure.

From 2001 to 2003, Larry held the esteemed position of Board Emeritus member. His significant involvement in the transition of University Presidents, from Sister Barbara Williams to Sister Rosemary Jeffries, established enduring bonds with both former presidents that persist to this day. Larry’s profound alignment with our Mercy core values is evident through his servant leadership approach, a quality that was recognized when he received an honorary degree in 2001. Recently, he made a generous contribution to endow the Lecture In Leadership, a touching tribute dedicated in loving memory of Sister Diane Szubrowski.

DR. JEAN FEDE ’94

Dr. Fede graduated from Georgian Court College as a triple major in mathematics, biology, and biochemistry. She garnered many

scholarships and awards in recognition of her academic achievements, including the American Chemical Society Award, the Sister Mary Grace Award, and the Veronica Gordon Spohn Class of 1966 Perpetual Endowed Scholarship.



Following her attainment of a medical degree from the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey School of Osteopathic Medicine in Stratford, Dr. Fede went on to successfully complete an internal medicine residency. She completed the remainder of her postgraduate training at the Pennsylvania Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania Health System in Philadelphia, serving a three-year internal medicine residency and a three-year anatomic and clinical pathology residency. While at the university, she took on several teaching responsibilities, serving variously as an instructor of internal medicine, anatomic pathology, and medical technology.

She is Vice Chair of the Department of Anatomic and Surgical Pathology at Penn Medicine Princeton Health. In this role, Dr. Fede exercises direct responsibility for managing and optimizing the department's daily functions, ensuring smooth and efficient performance at all times. She also serves as Medical Director of MedLife Diagnostic Laboratory, providing leadership and direction for the laboratory's daily operations. She has served concurrently as an Attending Physician at the University Medical Center of Princeton, where she has acted as the Director of Transfusion Medicine Services and Chairperson of the Blood Utilization Committee since 2010.

Dr. Fede's research efforts have yielded numerous articles and abstracts, several of which have been published by esteemed peer-reviewed medical journals.

NORA GALLO '87



Nora Gallo, a foster child who found a loving home with the Scott family, pursued her higher education journey after spending two years at Ocean County College. At Georgian Court University, she pursued her passion for education and successfully earned her bachelor's degree in 1987. Over the following nine years, Nora dedicated herself to teaching in New Jersey. She eventually moved to California, where she continues to thrive as an educator, now teaching in the Tustin School District near Irvine.

Nora's firsthand experience of foster care inspired her to become a foster parent herself. She now has a wonderful family and has even welcomed a granddaughter into her life through her experience as a foster parent.

Nora credits her experiences at Georgian Court as the inspiration for her decision to pay it forward to her children and students. Her faith, shaped by our Mercy core values, has always been a guiding principle in her experiences. Nora's life is the true embodiment of the goodwill and spirit that defines the Georgian Court community.

DR. MARILYN GONYO



Dr. Gonyo, a former Georgian Court faculty member and current member of our Board of Trustees, served as President of the Rutgers Club and the Rutgers Graduate School of Education's Alumni Association. Her significant contributions to the Rutgers Club included holding positions as Vice President, Secretary, and Trustee, and her impressive academic achievements include earning a doctoral degree from Rutgers' Graduate School of Education.

Having held various positions as the past state president of various organizations, including the New Jersey Association of Learning Consultants, the New Jersey School Women's Club, the New Jersey Chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma, and the New Jersey Council for Learning Disabilities, Dr. Gonyo's contributions to the field of education have been truly remarkable. Her dedication to inspiring the next generation of teachers extends to her generous efforts at Georgian Court.

At Georgian Court, she has established the Dr. Marilyn E. Gonyo Endowed Scholarship and the Dr. Marilyn E. Gonyo Endowed Student Award for Professional Development, both of which recognize the dedication of Georgian Court's future teachers, preparing them for their careers.

As a member of the Lambda Chapter of Alpha Zeta State—the New Jersey organization of the Delta Kappa Gamma Society International, a society of leading women educators—Dr. Gonyo connected her chapter to Georgian Court, establishing a partnership between the two entities. This partnership culminated in the Lambda chapter creating an Early Educator Award at Georgian Court, aiding non-member women educators to achieve success in their careers.

As a member of the board and friend of the School of Education, Dr. Gonyo remains committed to supporting Georgian Court and guiding its future leaders.

CHRISTINA HEWITT '96



As an Art History major at Georgian Court, Christina enrolled in a class led by Sister Christina Geis, who tasked her students with writing a paper about any building on campus. Christina ultimately wrote about the unfortunate state of the university's Japanese Tea House, located in the Japanese Garden.

Sister Christina took notice and left a thought-provoking comment on Christina's paper: "Well, maybe there is something you would like to do about that."

Inspired by her teacher's encouragement, Christina wholeheartedly embraced the cause and became a driving force behind the comprehensive restoration efforts for the Tea House. Her unwavering support has played a significant role in bringing the Tea House back to its former glory.

Takeo Shiota designed the Japanese Tea Garden, in which the Tea House is located, in 1910. The Tea Garden was a birthday gift from George Gould to his wife Edith, while the Tea House is believed to have been purchased by the Goulds from the 1910 Japan-British Exhibition in London.

Thanks to Christina's unwavering support, the Tea House is now open to the public, as well as current and prospective students. Traditional tea ceremonies are held in the Tea House throughout the year, preserving and educating the public on this special cultural heritage.

RENEE ORDINO '93



Renee Ordino is a renowned beauty industry product developer with a career that spans nearly 30 years. Throughout her journey, she has earned recognition for her groundbreaking work in creating innovative and market-leading color cosmetics, personal care, and fragrance products, and her contributions have resulted in seven patents for various cosmetic technologies. Her career began at Revlon, where she played a key role in inventing the legendary "first-of-its-kind" kiss-proof ColorStay Lipstick. Over the years, Renee's expertise has been sought after by numerous global brands, including Victoria's Secret, GAP, and Coty.

Among the contributing factors to her career achievements, Renee attributes much of her success to having obtained her bachelor's degree in Chemistry from Georgian Court University. Renee is the President of Mystic Beauty Group, a product development consulting company that she established eight years ago. She is also a co-founder of Marlo Hydroponic Skincare, an exceptional clean beauty brand that harnesses the power of active ingredients sourced from hydroponically grown plants. In the brand's early days, Renee took a hands-on approach, personally cultivating the active ingredients through meticulous hand-distillation in her kitchen. Her experimentation with facial cream formulas led to the creation of the brand's standout hero product.

As classmates and friends at Georgian Court, Renee and Dr. Jean Fede benefited from the generosity of Dr. Ralph Spohn, who established and dedicated a scholarship in honor of his beloved wife, Roni. Their stories of innovation and service celebrate the spirit of Veronica Gordon Spohn '66 and the tenets of our university.

AURORA RANDAZZISE '73

Aurora Randazzise established The Nightingale Endowed Nursing Scholarship, which will be awarded annually to a student pursuing a major in Nursing. To commemorate the 50th Reunion of the Class of '73, Aurora extends a special invitation to her fellow classmates, encouraging them to come together and create a lasting legacy for aspiring nurses in the future.

Aurora attended Mount Saint Mary Academy, a Catholic, independent high school rooted in the values and traditions of the Sisters of Mercy. Her experiences at Mount Saint Mary influenced her decision to enroll in Georgian Court, where she studied Elementary Education. She credits the Sisters of Mercy for inspiring her to exemplify the Mercy core values throughout her life.

Aurora's family, work, and life-changing experiences within the medical community highlighted an opportunity for action—and a nursing scholarship at Georgian Court, her alma mater was the perfect fit. Fortunate to have experienced an education leading to many incredible opportunities, Aurora knew she had found a lasting way to pay it forward.

With the class's support, The Nightingale Endowed Nursing Scholarship will provide our nursing students the greatest ability to serve our communities for years to come.

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