The Mercerian, Spring 2019

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In Our Lens

The Macon-Bibb County Superior Court Clerk’s Office, Mercer University Library and the Department of Africana Studies have teamed up on an ambitious project to digitize historical documents from 1823 to 1865 related to slavery. The project got off the ground last summer, when funding from the University’s Research That Reaches Out Office allowed for the employment of two student researchers — Tiffany Alexander and Addison Robinson — who spent 10 weeks reading records and taking notes at the courthouse. The project’s partners are focusing on Bibb County first but hope to later expand the project to other counties in Middle Georgia. FULL STORY ON PAGE 10. (Bekah Howard photo)

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resident William D. Underwood recently announced a multimillion-dollar commitment to the University from Mercer College of Pharmacy alumnus William A. “Tony” Moye, retired pharmacist and founder of Moye’s Pharmacy in McDonough.

The gift represents the largest financial contribution in the College’s history and will help fund the construction of a new building for the College of Pharmacy and other health sciences programs on Mercer’s Atlanta Campus. The new building will bear Moye’s name.

“Tony Moye is a devoted alumnus and ardent supporter of Mercer who has been extraordinarily generous in honoring the role Mercer played in preparing him for success as a pharmacist,” said Underwood. “Tony’s gift demonstrates his confidence in the College of Pharmacy, and I am grateful for his investment in the College’s future and the future generations of students who will benefit from a pharmacy education at Mercer.”

Since the College of Pharmacy relocated to the Cecil B. Day Campus in northeast Atlanta in 1991, enrollment has nearly doubled without seeing a significant increase in available classrooms. The $20 million construction project will provide 60,000 square feet of new teaching space, student study areas and faculty offices.

“Mercer is very important to me. My experience at Mercer gave me a strong foundation for success in my profession, and I am privileged to be able to make a contribution that will continue to attract and prepare future pharmacists and other health professionals for success,” Moye said.

As I’ve become friends with Tony, I’m inspired by his passion for Mercer, the College of Pharmacy, our student pharmacists and the profession,” said Dr. Brian L. Crabtree, dean of the College of Pharmacy and a 1980 graduate of the College. “His gift will enable us to continue to provide the best possible educational experience to prepare graduates to make a difference in the communities where they serve.”

Moye received his Bachelor of Science in Pharmacy degree from Mercer in 1973. In 1977, he established Moye’s Pharmacy and Home Health Care, which today includes six community pharmacies and one durable medical equipment store, along with a home health care division, which operates under the name Mobility Warehouse.

Through the years, Moye has been a loyal supporter of Mercer and the College of Pharmacy. He is a member of the Board of Trustees, currently serving his fourth term and chairing the board’s Executive Committee. He also served on the College of Pharmacy’s Board of Visitors and its Alumni Association Board of Directors, of which he served as president, and worked as a preceptor. In addition to the endowed scholarship he established for deserving pharmacy students, he and the current owner of Moye’s Pharmacy, Loren Pierce, who received his Pharm.D. degree from Mercer in 1991, also endowed the College’s Pharmacy Practice Laboratory.

A native of Henry County, Tony is married to Nancy, a retired media specialist for the Henry County public school system. Currently a member of the advisory board of the south metro United Community Bank Board of Directors, Moye also received the Bowl of Hygeia national award from the American Pharmacists Association. The Moyes are members of McDonough Presbyterian Church and affiliate members of First Presbyterian Church of Highlands, North Carolina.

In addition to his pharmacy degree from Mercer, he holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of West Georgia, which he received in 1970.
Riggs Ward selected to plan, design and install Mercer Music at Capricorn® Interactive Exhibits

Mercer has selected Riggs Ward Design of Richmond, Virginia, to plan, design and install interpretive exhibits at Mercer Music at Capricorn®, which the institution is renovating into a multi-purpose music production and tourism venue in downtown Macon. The University is planning a Dec. 3 dedication, which will coincide with the 50th anniversary of the founding of Capricorn Records and the Allman Brothers Band.

The University’s vision is to put the historic Capricorn Sound Studios in downtown Macon — credited by many as the birthplace of Southern Rock — back to work, not as just a museum, but as a tool to advance a more vibrant music scene in Macon and leverage Macon’s music heritage to shape Macon’s music future.

Mercer Music at Capricorn® will feature a two-story interpretive area that tells the story of Capricorn Records and Macon’s music heritage through historic artifacts, static exhibits and interactive digital kiosks featuring photos, music, video and other memorabilia.

Capricorn Sound Studios is most closely associated with the Allman Brothers Band, which recorded significant portions of three albums there, as well as Gregg Allman’s solo album Laid Back in 1973 and Dickey Betts’s solo album Highway Call in 1974. Others who recorded at Capricorn include the Marshall Tucker Band, the Charlie Daniels Band, Wet Willie and Elvin Bishop.

In addition to more than 1,200 square feet of static and digital interactive exhibits, Mercer Music at Capricorn® will feature a music incubator with 13 rehearsal spaces for aspiring young musicians; a restored historic recording studio and an additional, larger recording studio; offices, co-working space and conference rooms for nonprofit arts organizations; and venues for small concerts and special events. Mercer Music at Capricorn® will also offer educational programs through Mercer’s Townsend School of Music.

Over the past 20 years, Riggs Ward Design has provided exhibition and interactive design, strategic master planning, research, content analysis and storyline development for established, new and emerging museums, visitor centers and cultural institutions. Among the company’s clients are the Library of Congress, the George W. Bush Presidential Library, the Smithsonian Institution, the Atlanta History Center, the National Park Service, the University of Texas, the University of Virginia and Virginia Tech.

Serving as Mercer’s project liaison to Riggs Ward is Jared Wright, who researched and wrote the interpretive plan for Mercer Music at Capricorn®. Wright has previously worked as an archivist for the Ora Reldon Foundation, the Allman Brothers Band Museum at the Big House and the Atlanta History Center, and as a curator at the Georgia Music Hall of Fame. Wright has an undergraduate degree in history from Mercer and earned his Master of Arts in history from the University of West Georgia with specialties in public history and museum studies.

More information on Mercer Music at Capricorn® is available at capricorn.mercer.edu.

Proposed entrance murals by Riggs Ward Design

Mercer University Press

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF PUBLISHING EXCELLENCE

Mercer University Press offers a new season of books rich in Southern history, literary criticism, philosophy, religion and more. Highlighted titles include:

- Tales from Georgia’s Gnat Line by Larry Walker, a collection of essays on the South; “The Shady Town of Savannah”: The Politics of Memory in Williamsburg by John D. Duncan and Sandra L. Underwood, a biography of an Englishman and his influence on the early 19th-century South; Power and the People: Thaddeus’s History and the American Founding, a collection of essays from the 2017 A.V. Elliott Conference on Great Books and Founding; and a group biography of the most eminent American natural scientists of the 19th century who discovered and collected unknown plants, animals, fossils and artifacts of ancient peoples.

- Florida Explored: The Philadelphia Connection by Thomas Peter Bennett, a self-introspection and self-examination; and poetry which takes the reader on a journey of self-examination and a French philosopher and an American fiction writer; and Discipline: A Comparative Study of the Intersecting Thought of Doering and Ruthann Knechel Johansen, a cross-disciplinary study of the intersecting thought of a French philosopher and an American fiction writer.


- Disciplinary Study of the Intersecting Thought of Doering and Ruthann Knechel Johansen, a cross-disciplinary study of the intersecting thought of a French philosopher and an American fiction writer; and Philosophy and Fiction Meet: A Conversation with Philosophy and Fiction by E. Jane Flannery O’Connor and Simone Weil.

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WE ARE ESPECIALLY PROUD TO PARTNER WITH AN ORGANIZATION COMMMITTED TO DEFENDING NOT ONLY OUR LIVES AND PROPERTY, BUT DEFENDING THE TIMELESS IDEALS ON WHICH THIS NATION IS FOUNDED.

“Those of us who wear the uniform have the privilege of being stationed at different places across the country, and I can guarantee you that Educational Partnership Agreements are signed all over,” said Brig. Gen. John C. Rabinsek, commander of Warner Robins Logistics Complex. “But I would venture to say that we don’t have these kinds of elected officials and senior leaders in the community who want to come out and be a part of a signing ceremony like this. That’s how special this relationship between the Air Force and Mercer is to Middle Georgia and how important Robins Air Force Base is to the DNA of Middle Georgia.”

In 1985, Warner Robins Air Logistics Center (WRALC) Commander Maj. Gen. Cornelius “Newt” Nugteren and Mercer’s then-President Dr. R. Kirby Godsey developed a plan to remedy a shortage of engineers on base by providing a local source of engineers and engineering research.

“In December 1984, Mercer’s Board of Trustees approved plans for an engineering school, and the University welcomed its first class of engineering students in the fall of 1985. Less than two years later, Mercer Engineering Research Center (MERC), the applied engineering and research arm of the University, opened in Warner Robins. To date, Mercer has awarded more than 2,000 degrees to engineers in a variety of fields, and MERC has received nearly $500 million in research and contract support for 20 different models of U.S. Air Force aircraft and one Navy submarine. The School of Engineering has provided more entry-level engineers to Robins Air Force Base than any other school, and nearly half of the School’s living alumni reside in Middle Georgia. Currently, the relationship between Mercer and Robins Air Force Base goes well beyond the School of Engineering and MERC. In 2012, Mercer’s Francis W. Jordan School of Business and Economics launched a cohort-based Master of Business Administration degree program specifically for engineering and technical management coded positions at the WRALC. The program is still operating today, and more than 100 MBA degrees have been awarded since its inception.”

Mercer’s Penfield College, which serves post- traditional learners, is currently providing leadership training to the 78th Air Base Wing’s (ABW) Comptroller Squadron with plans to expand to other functional areas of the ABW.

The Department of Computer Science in Mercer’s College of Liberal Arts and the Mercer Innovation Center are aiding in the development of a new Air Force Innovation Hub at the base. "We envision new opportunities for collaboration, and we’re building on a strong foundation as this partnership grows and develops,” said Dr. Penny Elkins, senior vice president for enrollment management at Mercer. “We really envision here a national model of collaboration between an institute of higher education and a military installation.”

“Mercer Engineering is synonymous with Robins Engineering,” added Thomas F. Fischer, director of engineering and technical management/services for the Air Force Life Cycle Management Center at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio and a member of Mercer’s National Engineering Advisory Board. “A graduate of Mercer Engineering is technically ready to step on the first day, ready to join the engineering profession, is a leader dedicated to a life of service, mission-focused, innovative, and inspires and grows others. That’s the kind of people we want to hire.”

In addition to the signing of the renewal agreement, the University also held a formal signing ceremony in September on the Macon campus to renew their existing Educational Partnership Agreement.

“This partnership is central to the University’s mission of preparing men and women for more than 200 years.”

The working relationship between the two entities predates the founding of Mercer’s School of Engineering in 1985. More than three decades later, this renewal agreement seeks to establish the partnership between the University and the two entities decades later, this partnership is central to the University’s mission of preparing men and women for more than 200 years.”

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“We are especially proud to partner with an organization committed to defending not only our lives and property, but defending the timeless ideals on which this nation is founded.”
Mercer and Shorelight Education held a formal signing ceremony in October to announce a new partnership that will expand the number of students from abroad pursuing undergraduate and graduate degrees on the University's Macon and Atlanta campuses.

Mercer Global, a groundbreaking new partnership, will provide international students the opportunity to pursue degrees at Mercer’s two major campuses and will offer the technology-enabled support services and resources they need to thrive.

The undergraduate accelerator program and postgraduate programs will expand the University’s global footprint and its efforts to educate top students from around the world in a wide range of fields including science, technology, engineering, math and business.

“We are pleased to join with Shorelight to share our commitment to liberal learning, professional knowledge and discovery with top international students from across the world,” said President William D. Underwood. “We welcome this opportunity to bring even more diverse and global perspectives into our classrooms and laboratories and on our vibrant campuses in Macon and Atlanta.”

“Mercer University is an exemplary partner for Shorelight. Its world-class academic offerings are in high demand globally, and its university culture welcomes international students with open arms,” said Shorelight Co-Founder and CEO Tom Dretler. “Our team is excited to use our global reach to further introduce Mercer to the world and ensure that international students choosing Mercer for their studies are supported and successful.”

“We believe we can leverage our global reach to further introduce Mercer to the world and ultimately impact students, faculty, staff and the broader communities of Macon and Atlanta,” said Shorelight Co-Founder and CEO Tom Dretler. “Our team is excited to use our global reach to further introduce Mercer to the world and ensure that international students choosing Mercer for their studies are supported and successful.”

“This year’s pool of fellowship applicants was the most competitive to date, and we are excited to support this group of incoming startups,” said Stephanie Howard, deputy director of the Mercer Innovation Center. “Four additional fellowship applicants were selected as companies-in-residence and will receive support from the MIC. They include luxury natural hygiene company Lux Lenos, founded by Mercer business professor Dr. Ania Rynarzewska; gourmet Virginia peanut company Bear Food Co., founded by Mercer junior Mac Brydon; e-commerce brand for outdoor enthusiasts Traveler Camper, founded by recent Mercer graduate David Doleman; and handcrafted leather goods company Kingfisher Leatherworks, founded by Mercer business professor Dr. Ania Rynarzewska. These seven promising new and developing companies will maintain operations in Macon, with two relocating from Atlanta.

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Dr. Jeffrey A. Waldrop, currently assistant provost and director of the David Allan Hubbard Library at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California, has been named dean of the University Library at Mercer, effective July 1.

“The search committee, led by Dr. Anita Gustafson, dean of the College of Liberal Arts, did an excellent job in bringing forward a strong candidate to lead the University Library,” Mercer Provost Dr. Scott Davis said. “Dr. Waldrop has an excellent track record as a scholar and library administrator and he embodies Mercer’s mission. I believe he will reinforce the University’s tradition of superior library and research support.”

Dr. Waldrop has held various leadership positions at Fuller’s library since 2007, and has been director since 2015. He also serves as assistant professor of church history at Fuller. Prior to joining Fuller, he served as library circulation supervisor at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary Library in Mill Valley, California.

Dr. Waldrop earned his Ph.D. in church history and theology from Fuller in 2012. He also holds a Master of Library and Information Science degree from San Jose State University, Master of Theology and Master of Divinity degrees from Golden Gate Seminary, and a Bachelor of Science from LeTourneau University in Longview, Texas.

He has held faculty positions at Nepal Theological Academy, Codizea Christian University and Golden Gate Seminary.

Dr. Waldrop has written numerous articles and essays and is author of the book The Emergence of Religious Toleration in 16th Century New England Congregationalists, Baptists, and the Contribution of John Callender.
A chilling discovery
Bibb County Superior Court Clerk Erica Woodford, who earned bachelor’s degrees in African American studies and political science at Mercer, said she discovered slave records within the deed books during her inventory after taking office in January 2013. Soon after, she shared her findings with Dr. Chester Fontenot Jr., director of Mercer’s Africana studies program and Baptist Professor of English.

“It was very interesting just to see the actual conveyance of a human, a slave, in writing right here in Bibb County,” Woodford said. “We learned about it in school, and we all know and were taught that it happened, but to actually see it in writing in the office … I knew that it was important to give access to these documents to the public.”

These historical documents, stored in the mezzanine area of the records vault at the Superior Court Clerk’s Office, are only available to the public for viewing, but the project will preserve the collections in their entirety in a digital format, she said.

“Typically, online resources don’t provide all that extra material. It’s not just the records, it’s also not the history that was either taught wrong or wasn’t taught at all,” said Robinson, an Africana studies major and journalism minor who is set to graduate in May. “I just feel like going back to these documents is showing respect and bringing these people to life who otherwise we would have never known about.”

This semester, the two students are continuing this research as a senior seminar project. They spent two hours a week at the courthouse, in addition to working on a series of podcasts. The podcasts focus on the project’s findings and importance, said Alexander, a double-major in Africana studies and media studies.

“This is part of history that is extremely segregated sometimes. A lot of times, we don’t have adequate access to the truth. This project allows people to get first-hand experience of looking at what happened,” Alexander said. “I’ve been extremely grateful to be a part of it, and I can’t wait to see where it goes.”

They presented a poster on the project at the library in early fall. They will exhibit their research at the University’s BEAR Day in the spring and have applied to take it to conferences at academic year. The team hopes to be able to involve more students and is looking into grant funding to propel the project forward.

Forgotten chapters
“Essentially what we’re doing is building a digital database … that literally paints a portrait of what life was like for African-Americans during that era in Bibb County,” Dr. Fontenot said. “Throughout the country, you don’t have many projects like this.”

It’s rare to have these records on hand, since many courthouses lost their historical documents to fires or floods, Woodford said. The research team is lucky to have a superior court clerk on board who recognizes the value of this research and has made the records so accessible, Dr. Fontenot added.

This is cutting-edge research, nationally, lost to Africana studies. The field doesn’t have the historical collections that other subject areas do, and this online database will provide a vital resource that’s currently missing. These documents provide proof that things happened in Middle Georgia just like they did in other parts of the South, which people sometimes don’t realize, Dr. Fontenot said. “There’s so much history that’s been covered up and forgotten, and that’s kind of what we’re hoping to do … uncover those things,” Griggs said.

“The human toll, the human cost, is it right there in those documents. This was out in the open. This was legal. It is shocking, but it is also not surprising at all. It’s what you would expect, if you can see it, but it is beyond distressing to actually see it.”

A project by Dr. Matt Harper, assistant professor of history and Africana studies, and Dr. Michele Prettyman Beverly, assistant professor of media studies, to tell the stories of slaves who worked at a historic Jarrell Plantation in Jones County will be incorporated into this larger digitization project.

“There were slaves, but we didn’t really know who they were or what happened to them or what contributions they had made to the area,” Dr. Harper said. “We’re hoping that in working with the plantation historic site and working with this larger project of digitizing black life in Middle Georgia we’ll find the right avenues to get those stories out to the general public.”

While the larger project is finding stories through the close examination of a few kinds of slavery, the Jarrell Plantation project takes a different approach by using a variety of records to tell the story of people at one particular site. Mercer students have pulled together documents from the county courthouse, state archives, census records and interviews and shared their reports with the plantation site.

“We’ve got the digital tools that can not only make that account, but we can also make it accessible to people,” Dr. Beverly said. “Part of our job is to add some context to what Dr. Fontenot’s larger project is, and that’s to give people a much broader sense of what life was like in this region, going back through slavery, reconstruction and more contemporary contexts.”

Meaningful research
It’s important for future generations to be able to look back on the history of what happened in Macon, Woodford said. These digitized resources will make it easier for people to learn about their families and heritage, trace their property or see just what life was like back then. Bibb County residents and Mercer students, as well as people outside the city, state and country, will be able to access it in a convenient format.

“I am aperson that some people won’t receive it as well as I did, but I am equally excited because I feel like the impact that will be made will be greater than the criticism,” Robinson said. “I want whoever it reaches to feel as impacted and as moved by this whole initiative as I was.”

The project is a huge endeavor that is going to take a while, Dr. Fontenot said. The team hopes to complete the first phase of the project — on the property deeds collection — within the next three years. The database “will be a living, breathing thing we can continuously update,” Griggs said.

This work is already generating buzz outside Bibb County, Dr. Fontenot said the Library of Congress has expressed interest, and he has received calls and emails from people around the country who want to know more about what the project entails and how it’s being done.

“The kind of people, the kind of resources that we’ve been able to marshal is very unique, and speaks well of the kinds of things that Mercer wants to do and promotes itself as. Yes, we want to do research, but we want to do research that means something,” Dr. Fontenot said. “In terms of scholarship, it’s probably the most meaningful research that I’ve ever developed and worked on.”
John S. Knight Journalism Fellowship for the 2017-2018 academic year at Stanford University and was named editor for McClatchy’s South Region in June 2018. As interim director, Blankenship managed media partnerships with Georgia Public Broadcasting and The Telegraph in Macon and integrated new partner WMAZ into the Center’s programming. She also was tasked with meeting the requirements of the CCJ’s second director, following Tim Regan-Porter, who accepted a position at the Carnegie African Diaspora Fellowship Program for three years.

Blankenship previously served as visiting assistant professor and journalist-in-residence at Mercer since 2013. Prior to that, Blankenship served for nearly eight years as a congressional aide to U.S. Rep. Jim Marshall and for more than three years as a reporter at The Telegraph focusing on the courts and criminal justice system.

She earned her bachelor’s degree in psychology with a minor in graphic communications from Clemson University. She went on to earn her master’s degree in mass communication from the University of Georgia, where she also served as news editor of The Red & Black. Established in 2012 with $5.7 million in funding from Knight Foundation and the Peyton Anderson of Georgia, where she also served as news editor of the CCJ in July 2017 to expand the Center’s efforts. Blankenship is the CCJ’s second director, following Tim Regan-Porter, who accepted a position at the Carnegie African Diaspora Fellowship Program for the 2017-2018 academic year at Stanford University and was named editor for McClatchy’s South Region in June 2018. As interim director, Blankenship managed media partnerships with Georgia Public Broadcasting and The Telegraph in Macon and integrated new partner WMAZ into the Center’s programming. She also was tasked with meeting the requirements of the CCJ’s second director, following Tim Regan-Porter, who accepted a position at the Carnegie African Diaspora Fellowship Program for three years.

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completed a term as president of the Fulbright Association’s Georgia Chapter, will serve a two-year term as chair of Mercer’s Conference Planning Committee. To advance education in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) fields, APLU founded a National Science Foundation grant prizet to create a national network of STEM Education Centers. NSFC currently links 201 STEM education centers across the country. NSFC committees, including the Steering Committee and Conference Planning Committee, provide support to the participating schools to help them promote student success throughout campuses and in local communities.

NASH, TESSEMR NAMED TO ALL-SOUTHERN CONFERENCE FACULTY AND STAFF TEAM

The Southern Conference named its All-SoCon Faculty and Staff Team in December, with Dr. R. Scott Nash and Jim Tessmer serving as Mercer’s selected representatives. Each member of the All-SoCon Faculty and Staff Team was presented a plaque and honored at a basketball game at his or her institution. Dr. Nash is Columbus Roberts Professor of New Testament in the Roberta Department of Religion and director of the Mercer On Mission program in Greece. After earning his undergraduate degree in religion and political science from Centre College, he earned his master’s and doctoral degrees from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Dr. Nash, who has done additional study at the University of Kentucky, Brown University, Harvard Divinity School and the American School of Classical Studies in Athens, Greece, received the Spencer B. King Jr. Distinguished Professor Award in 2002. “Teaching,” Nash said of the University’s athletics staff in 2006 and currently serves as the department’s event coordinator. His work contributes to developing a positive experience for Mercer student-athletes in their athletics competitions.

Tessmer served as a front office staffer for the Atlanta Hawks from 1996 with support from the Peyton Anderson Foundation as a nonprofit, public-private partnership focused on restoring and reestablishing downtown Macon as a thriving center of economic, cultural and social activity.

Dr. MELANIE PAVICH AWARDED NEW GRANT FOR PROJECT TO DOCUMENT AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORY IN COASTAL GEORGIA

Dr. Melanie Pavich, associate professor of interdisciplinary studies and history in Pfeifel College, has been awarded a grant of nearly $2,000 to support continuing research and service by Mercer students and faculty focused on preservation of African-American heritage and history sites on the Georgia coast. The grant was awarded by Georgia Humanities, in partnership with the Georgia Department of Economic Development, through funding from the Georgia General Assembly.

This is the second Georgia Humanities grant that Dr. Pavich has received for her seven-plus-year research-based, service-learning based faculty project, titled “This is My City: Stories of Saint Simons Island,” based on oral history interviews conducted by students with residents of the island located off Georgia’s coast in Glynn County.

Dr. Pavich earned her undergraduate degree in history from Agnes Scott College, her master’s degree in history from Clemson University and her Ph.D. in social foundations of education from the University of Georgia.

Her research is focused on race and gender in the South during the 19th and early 20th centuries and includes the study of African-American education and teachers. She has developed research-and-service-based courses for undergraduate students centered around the study of African-American communities and schools in Georgia. She is the author of Atlas: The Letters of a Simons Island Plantation Mistress, 1817-1859, published by the University of Georgia Press, and is currently working on a biography of Proctor Schields, a teacher of African-Americans in South Carolina from 1865 to 1816.

MERCER RECLASSIFIED BY CARNEGIE AS DOCTORAL UNIVERSITY WITH HIGH RESEARCH ACTIVITY

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As part of the Rangel Program, he will work for a member of Congress on issues related to foreign affairs this summer. In the summer of 2020, the U.S. Department of State will send him overseas to a U.S. Embassy to get hands-on experience with U.S. foreign policy and the work of the Foreign Service.

"Kyle’s commitment to promoting positive change and his outstanding academic and professional background deeply impressed our selection panel. We are proud that he will be a 2019 Rangel Fellow and are confident that he will effectively represent both Georgia and the United States as a U.S. diplomat. I look forward to seeing all that he will accomplish in his career," said Patricia Scroggs, director of the Rangel Program.

Bligen is a native of Peachtree City and graduated magna cum laude from Mercer in 2018 with a bachelor's degree in politics, philosophy and economics. He served as captain of the University's debate team and developed his communication skills by researching domestic and international issues and crafting communication strategies for competition. He and teammate Jaz Buckley became the first Mercer student nationwide to win the National Parliamentary Debate Association Championship in 2018. Since August, he has served as assistant director of Mercer’s Debate Association Championship in 2018. Since August, he has served as assistant director of the Mercer Debate Association.

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Earlier this year, Mercer alumna Amy Griswold Martin (EGR '05) planned to sell an item her son outgrew, and in order to figure out how much she should charge for it, she headed to Amazon to compare prices. “Now I’m getting all kinds of ads for baby products on Facebook,” she said, “but there’s no baby here!”

**BIG DATA** is a term most experts use to describe inconceivable amounts of information gathered from a variety of sources, including smart phones, internet searches, barcode scans, electronic health records, social media usage, online purchases, debit and credit card swipes, smart watches and more. If a device is connected to the internet, it’s most likely sharing information, which is then stored in databases too large for typical data software and computational systems to handle. 

This is just one small example of big data in action — a rapidly growing digital power tool changing the way nearly every industry operates.
The growth of big data is leading to an explosion in the use of data science, marketing, and business analytics. These fields are playing an increasingly important role in almost every sector of the economy, from healthcare to finance to retail. Because of their importance, there is a growing demand for people who have the skills to work with big data.

For more information: merceradmissions@mercer.edu

**Big Data and Health Care**

Big data is transforming the healthcare industry. Data science can help researchers determine the cost of specific diseases and help decision-makers develop new initiatives to improve health outcomes. Big data can also help health insurers reduce costs and improve the quality of care. As the amount of health data continues to grow, the need for health informatics professionals will continue to increase.

**Students in the Master of Science in Health Informatics program learn how to use data to improve the patient experience.** "Health informatics is about acquiring, storing, retrieving, and using health and healthcare data — big data — to foster better collaboration among patients' various providers," said Dr. Awatef Ben Ramadhan.

Healthcare data can be acquired from a variety of sources, such as electronic medical records, sensors, medical devices, telehealth and mobile-home health technologies, to name a few. When an entire population's healthcare data is combined, it creates profiles that can have a transformative effect on patient care in areas such as risk assessment, accessibility, policy development and budgeting.

"These profiles can be used to define the high-risk population of specific diseases or health events and could be used to guide public health professionals and policymakers in developing new initiatives to help improve accessibility to specific services, reallocate resources and reduce health, social and economic disparities, which in turn can improve the health of people," Dr. Ben Ramadhan said.

When made public, the findings from big data analyses can be used to educate and inform. "All of this will affect the lives of community members in a positive way, especially if the data will be presented to the public with adequate explanations and supplemented with acceptable recommendations," she added.

Dr. Samuel K. Peasah is an assistant professor of pharmacy practice and director of the Center for Clinical Outcomes, Research and Education in Mercer's College of Pharmacy. He said big data is invaluable in pharmacy research. His interests include health economics, and he said big data can help researchers determine the cost of specific diseases as well as help decision-makers — including pharmacists and therapeutics committees — plan formularies or inform them about the best drugs to include in their hospitals.

"Maybe I want to research the cost of diabetes, for example. The cost is much more than just the cost of the drug," he said. "Big data could help me know how many people visited the doctor’s office while diabetic, how many people were admitted to the hospital due to diabetes and how much they spent on medication in a given year."

Dr. Peasah said pharmacy students get exposure to big data through courses such as the "Managed Care Pharmacy" elective as well as research electives where they work one-on-one with faculty members who have access to big data.

Dr. Silky Beatty is a 2015 graduate of the College of Pharmacy and works as the scientific and real world data alliances lead for the Neurology Patient Value Unit at UCB Inc. She handles big data professionally and said she believes it has streamlined healthcare. "Before [big data], we had a very disjointed healthcare system," she said. "And with the disjointed system, where we

Students in the Master of Science in Health Informatics program learn how data impacts health care, said Dr. Awatef Ben Ramadhan, assistant professor of health informatics in Penfield College. "We are teaching them about the U.S. healthcare system and how health information should be managed and utilized," she said.

**Big Data and Related to Big Data**

**Mallory G. Osterhaus, Social Science Strategist**

**Master of Science in Health Informatics**

The Master of Science in Health Informatics program combines well-grounded computer programming and statistics with a broad range of healthcare knowledge to foster better collaboration among patients’ various providers, said Dr. Awatef Ben Ramadhan.

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hen it comes to big data, “big” is an understatement. In its sixth edition of “Data Never Sleeps,” DOMO — a leading cloud-based operating system provider — reports more than 2.5 quadrillion bytes of data are created each day, and, according to the same report, “90 percent of the world’s data was produced in the last two years.”

Mercer recognizes big data’s significance, which is why data science, data analytics and big data are being explored in a variety of disciplines. In the College of Liberal Arts, the Computer Science Department is currently developing a data science program where students will learn how to gather insights from big data. The department is also growing its cybersecurity program, which provides security knowledge for maintaining big data.

But the buck — or byte — doesn’t stop there. Students across several disciplines, including business, health informatics, biology, pharmacy and medicine, are exposed to the subject matter.

Dr. Craig Byron, associate professor of biology and assistant chair of the Biology Department, said he uses R — a computer programming language that analyzes big data — in his coursework. In 2017, he started Mercer’s R Users Group, where faculty members meet once a month to share how they’re using R in their classes.

Even students in the Center for Collaborative Journalism are introduced to big data. In a course titled “Hacking the Media,” future journalists and media professionals learn the techniques used to process and analyze data as it relates to reporting.

At the graduate level, the Eugene W. Stetson School of Business and Economics as well as Penfield College offer master’s degrees that prepare students for careers involving data.

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**Big Data and Health Care**

Penfield College’s M.S. in Health Informatics focuses on how to use data in order to improve the patient experience. “Health informatics is about acquiring, storing, retrieving and using healthcare data — big data — to foster better collaboration among patients’ various providers,” said Dr. Ben Ramadhan.

Healthcare data can be acquired from a variety of sources, such as electronic medical records, sensors, medical devices, telehealth and mobile-home health technologies, to name a few.

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**Mercer Degrees Related to Big Data**

**Bachelor of Science in Health Informatics**

Mercer’s Bachelor of Science in Informatics program combines well-grounded computer programming and statistical techniques into a broad range of healthcare knowledge to foster better collaboration among patients’ various healthcare stakeholders.

Professionals in this field improve patient care and outcomes through the integration of information systems and healthcare. For more information: admissions@mercer.edu

**Master of Science in Business Analytics**

The Master of Science in Business Analytics is a 15-month program for students who want to pursue or advance their career in the field of business analytics. Business analytics focuses on understanding the performance of an organization through data and statistical methods. Students learn to become skilled analysts and quantitative decision-makers by developing a deep understanding of data, including statistical modeling, data management, data visualization, information security, optimization, online analytical processing (OLAP) and data mining and presenting with statistics.

Students come from diverse backgrounds such as financial services, marketing, communications, healthcare, manufacturing enterprises, education and IT. Graduates of the program are prepared for positions such as credit analyst, data scientist, quantitative market analyst, web analyst, social media strategist and more. For more information: admissions@mercer.edu

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**“Worldwide, big data market revenues for software and services are projected to increase from $12 billion to $103 billion in 2027, attaining a compounded annual growth rate of 10.98%.”**

— Forbes
weren’t sharing information, it made it very hard for a physician to have all the information needed to make the best decision. The more data our providers have, the better chance they are able to manage our diseases.

**Big Data, Big Business**

When Martin noticed advertisements for products on her Facebook page, she knew exactly what was happening, because she uses big data professionally. She graduated from Mercer with a degree in technical communication and now works in marketing automation as an account director for IBM. There, she provides strategic guidance on marketing practices and teaches them how to use IBM’s marketing automation platforms. “Data collection helps marketers reach you where and when you’re most likely to engage,” she said.

In the 14 years since Martin graduated, Mercer has incorporated big data into several disciplines, including the School of Business, where there are currently a number of courses that approach data on some level.

Dr. Ania Rynarzewska, professor of sports marketing and analytics, teaches research, analytics and marketing courses in the business school and is a former director of its Master of Science in Business Analytics (MSBA) program. “The spring of 2018 was the first year I taught marketing analytics for undergrads here at Mercer,” Dr. Rynarzewska said. “It’s a new course, and now it’s become part of our regular offering.”

Jeff Gilbert, associate professor of economics in the School of Business, currently directs the MSBA program. In its fourth year, graduate students in the program learn the business aspects of big data, including how to analyze data and manage big data programmers. “We teach students how to talk to the programmers and explain what they need and how to present the data,” he said.

Dr. Rynarzewska said her students graduate knowing how big data can help them understand consumer behavior and spending patterns. She said businesses use data to improve operations and become more efficient.

“If you can actually make decisions on how to meet customer needs, they will say, ‘We can literally analyze [decisions] in real time and make a change if it doesn’t work. It reduces loss of any resources, both time and money,’ and helps safeguard from making really bad decisions,” Gilbert said.

Big data is also used to help set up and run stores. “When you go to a retailer’s website, they have algorithms — using all the data they’ve collected — to determine how sensitive you are to price, and then they adjust the price based on your behavior,” he said. “[Big data] is great for businesses, because they are able to charge higher prices for people who are willing to pay for it.”

Consumers, not just businesses, are reaping the benefits of big data. It can lead to more accurate search results and improved customer experiences. “Our goal as businesses or marketers is to build relationships with customers,” Dr. Rynarzewska said. “Thanks to data, I think we have almost taught customers to expect more from us.”

But with the convenience of connecting big data comes some downsides, including what seems to be disappearance of consumers’ privacy. “Every time you go on your computer and go on the website of a retailer or an airline, they’re gathering information on you,” Gilbert said. “They know the computer you use. They know your location. They’ll go to your computer to see what you’ve bought in the past or what websites you’ve visited, so they know a lot about you.”

Martin’s professional experience has led her to be more cautious about what she shares. “Since I work in the industry, I find it fun to see how data is being used,” she said, “but I am very cautious about what information I share and with what brands.”

**Big Data or Big Brother?**

At the beginning of each semester, Jody Blanke, Ernest L. Baskin Jr. Distinguished Professor of Computer Science and Law in the School of Business, requires students in his “Legal and Ethical Issues Affecting Big Data” course to read the privacy policies of Apple, Google, Facebook and Amazon.

He has written several journal articles on the topic of privacy in the digital space and said his exercise is an eye-opening experience for his students. “About 90 percent of the students are somewhere between surprised and shocked,” he said. “A few of them had suspicions that something strange was going on, but to the vast majority of them, it is a revelation.”

Blanke said most people assume privacy policies protect consumers, but actually the opposite is more often true. As soon as consumers click to say “agree” they are signing over their information, and whether they like it or not, everything from their location, to what they buy, to their musical tastes, to health vitals is being collected, stored, interpreted and even sold. Consumers have become the buyers and the products.

“Every time you click ‘ok,’ you’re entering into a contract giving [companies] permission to use the data however they want to,” Blanke said.

In January, a Motherboard investigation found major cell phone companies, such as T-Mobile, Sprint and AT&T, are selling their customers’ location data to third parties. Eventually, this information can end up in the hands of individuals not authorized to have it, including bail bondsmen and bounty hunters, to name a couple.

**The number of jobs in computer and information technology occupations will increase by 13% by 2026, adding more than 537,000 new positions.**

— Bureau of Labor Statistics

**Right Patient, Right Medicine**

Dr. Silky Beaty Uses Big Data to Improve Access and Affordability

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And it’s not just retailers using this information. Last summer, National Public Radio reported that health insurers mine data for information about patients, including personal interests and hobbies, in order to set rates.

Dr. Vikraman Baskaran, assistant professor of health informatics in Penfield College, said while big data can be used for good — especially in healthcare — consumers should also know their information can be used for nefarious purposes.

“When the information is sold to people who might have malicious intent, it becomes much more dangerous,” he said. “It’s unimaginable what kind of damage could happen to individuals. It’s incomprehensible.”

Currently, the European Union has the strictest privacy laws thanks to the 2016 passage of the General Data Protection Regulation, which gives EU citizens tighter control of their personal data.

The U.S. is lagging significantly behind the EU when it comes to digital privacy due in part to lobbyists who promote self-regulation among private industries, said Blanke. While there is currently no formal legislation on a federal level regulating the use of consumer data, he does see signs that privacy winds might be shifting in the U.S. thanks to momentum in law, business and evolving societal norms.

“All … is not doom and gloom,” Blanke wrote in his Idaho Law Review article titled “Top Ten Reasons to Be Optimistic About Privacy.” “While technology and societal changes have radically altered the environment in which privacy must survive, the same basic human needs and values continue to transform it into a new shape.”

For example, in June 2018, California passed a digital privacy law giving its citizens more control over their digital information. According to The New York Times, the legislation, which will go into effect in 2020, is one of the most substantial data collection regulations in the country.

Professor Blanke also said companies are beginning to consider privacy protections in their business models, and of the four big tech companies — Google, Amazon, Facebook and Apple — Apple is the most pro-privacy. “I think we’re reaching a point where not only are people calling for this, but businesses are realizing this is something people care about,” he said.

What can consumers do to protect their information in the meantime? Dr. Baskaran said social media is a big source of big data. “Anything you post — whether it’s text-based, photos or videos — can all be analyzed by computers,” he said. “Keeping a low profile should be your objective.”

More broadly, concerned citizens should consider supporting legislation that protects consumer privacy, Blanke said. “Georgia is not very proactive with [privacy] legislation, but states such as California and New York will likely be the ones passing legislation. We will be the beneficiaries of some of it,” he said, noting some companies will most likely opt to change their policies on the whole instead of having separate rules for different states.

Looking Ahead

Big data isn’t going away. By 2020, a predicted 1.7 megabytes of data will be generated every second for each person on the planet, according to DOMO.

Due to this enormous amount of growth, Mercer is continually evaluating ways to incorporate data science and big data into curricula across the University. There are currently nearly 70 courses dispersed among seven of Mercer’s 12 schools and colleges that explore big data or data analytics in some way, with more being considered regularly.

Dr. Ania Rynarzewska, professor of sports marketing and analytics, teaches research, analytics and marketing courses in the business school.

“Atlanta is home to more than 200 health IT companies employing more than 16,000 professionals.”

— Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce
n March of 2018, the only primary care medical center in Plains, Georgia, the hometown of President Jimmy Carter, closed. Nearly 800 residents in the City of Plains and hundreds others in surrounding communities lost access to a local physician and services that would dramatically improve the quality of health care in their community.

“While Plains and its surrounding community has a population of only about 1,500, the people there have the same healthcare needs that you would find in a big city suburb,” said Kimberly Kennedy, head pharmacist at Plains Pharmacy. “Plains is more like a large family than a small town, and we treat our customers as we would members of our own families.”

President Carter, a Mercer Life Trustee, saw a need in this tight-knit community where he was born, raised and still resides, one that he felt the University’s School of Medicine (MUSM) could fulfill.

After all, MUSM’s mission is to prepare physicians to practice in rural communities, serving the underserved throughout Georgia. MUSM is working to address the need for rural health in every possible way. The School’s accelerated track program allows students to graduate in three years with a commitment to practice primary care in rural Georgia, and its Nathan Deal Scholars Program covers up to full tuition for students who commit to rural primary care in the state.

Mercer Medicine Plains, the University’s first rural clinic of its kind, is yet another example of MUSM’s innovative programming aimed at carrying out its mission. Such clinics provide the perfect opportunity for these accelerated track graduates and scholarship recipients to learn the art of rural primary care and, hopefully, one day join the effort to change the climate of rural health care in Georgia and beyond.

“Our role, in a big sense, is to provide a service to the community,” said Charles Duffy, chief operating officer of Mercer Medicine, the University’s primary care practice and division of MUSM’s faculty practice. “We’re a model of what we’re asking our medical students to do — go into a rural community and meet the needs there.”

Duffy said that nearly a year ago University and MUSM leaders began a conversation about how they could better help underserved areas. The conversation resulted in Mercer Medicine Plains being decided upon as the pilot for future primary care clinics in rural and underserved Georgia.
“It’s not just a clinic, it’s a Mercer clinic”

“These clinics would give our students experience and also give us an avenue to really practice what we preach,” said Jo Songer, FNP. “It’s not just a clinic here. It’s a Mercer clinic. That says so much more about the quality of care and also the specialties available.”

Director of Plains Better Hometown Program Ruth Sanders said the clinic is the best thing that could’ve happened to the community. “We are in a very low income area,” Sanders said. “We have many people here who don’t have transportation or the funds. Having Mercer here is huge.”

Ruth Sanders said that the University and the School of Medicine are able to provide Mercer Medicine Plains with a number of resources that a standalone clinic would have to provide for themselves.

“We can set up a clinic in Plains and handle a lot of the business here in Macon,” he said. “By taking those burdens off, we make the physician happier and more able to focus on the community’s needs.”

With four exam rooms and on-site services including X-ray, echocardiograms and ultrasound, the clinic has been accepting patients at 107 Main St. in downtown Plains since July.

“We have more patients than we had slots available for patients, which is amazing and really speaks to the need for the clinic,” Duffey said. “We were scheduling patients well into October and November before we even opened the doors.”

Feedback from the Plains community and the patients who have been served has been positive. Plains City Councilman Eugene Edge said he visited the clinic and came away impressed. “We didn’t have a doctor here, and we really needed one,” Edge said. “I think the clinic is going to grow significantly as more people learn about it. As the word spreads, the clinic will sell itself.”

Jo Songer — who along with physician Michael Raines, M.D., are the primary providers at the clinic — has had the opportunity to interact with the majority of the people who utilize the services in the clinic and also attests to the satisfaction of the patients. “We haven’t just replaced having a clinic, we’ve brought a higher level of quality of care,” she said.

Duffey said Mercer’s objective wasn’t simply to go into Plains and provide medical services, but to redefine how to practice medicine in a way specific to the community’s needs. “When we set up this clinic, we were very intentional about becoming a part of this community,” Duffey said.

“People are very intentional about becoming a part of this community,” Duffey said.

Duffey said that the clinic has been accepting patients at 107 Main St. in downtown Plains since July.

“The physician in Plains won’t feel isolated medically in that community.”

In addition to telehealth, Mercer has called upon many of the University’s resources to support the Plains clinic and ensure that a sense of isolation, which can be a barrier for physicians who would like to set up a rural practice, is not an issue.

MUSM’s Department of Community Medicine conducted a community health assessment to inform operations of the clinic.

School of Medicine faculty participate in provision of care in the community, and the medical school will also begin offering a rural rotation for its students in Plains.

The University’s Georgia Baptist College of Nursing will add two dedicated family nurse practitioner student rotations at the clinic to work alongside other nurse practitioners and members of the healthcare team.

The College of Pharmacy has added two rotations for Doctor of Pharmacy students at the Plains Pharmacy, and the College of Health Professions, which educates physical therapists, physician assistants, public health professionals, clinical psychologists and athletic trainers, plans to participate in care, research and training at the clinic.

“The fundamental premise behind this clinic is that folks in rural Georgia put food on our table. They’re the backbone of our state, and they deserve the same access to quality health care as everyone else in the state of Georgia. That’s the mission of our medical school, and this clinic in Plains represents part of a broad-ranging initiative by the University to transform access to health care in this state,” said Mercer President William D. Underwood at the grand opening of Mercer Medicine Plains last August.

“It’s truly an honor for Mercer to work with the good people of Plains and President and Mrs. Carter to increase access to quality health care in this area,” added MUSM Dean Joan Sumner, M.D. “Successful rural communities are a testament to leadership, partnership and a commitment to service. Mercer Medicine Plains is an example of this community’s leadership, effective partnerships and a commitment to rural communities. The University School of Medicine made this to state.”

Sanders said she is looking forward to watching the clinic and the partnership between Plains and Mercer grow. “Merger has been so incredible to work with,” she said. “The people who have been a part of this from the University have been so kind and very enjoyable to make those things happen. It was definitely the highlight of 2018 for Plains.”
Homecoming 2019 planning is already underway. You will swell with pride when you see all of the change and progress on our Macon campus. Thousands of alumni and friends will converge for one epic weekend and we hope you will be part of it.

Save the Date

Tentative Event Schedule:
- 8th Annual Alumni Career Speakers Series
- 5th Annual Alumni Awards Dinner
- 50-Year Reunion - Undergrad Class of 1969
- Friday Night Pep Rally and Fireworks
- Half Century Club Celebration
- Tailgating... so much tailgating!
- Football Game – Mercer Bears vs. Wofford Terriers... and much more! Watch your mail, email and social media for more information. Registration begins in late summer at HOMECOMING.MERCER.EDU.
Winningest Class in Program History Completes SoCon Play Unbeaten With Tournament Championship

Amanda Thompson, Keke Calloway, Rachel Selph, Linnea Rosendal and Ally Welch was destined to achieve a level of success unmatched by any previous senior class. Not only did they finish the 2018-2019 season unbeaten in conference play again and earned another regular season championship, they also won their second consecutive SoCon tournament championship and earned another trip to the NCAA tournament. This senior class would accumulate 104 wins since they suited up as freshmen and extended their SoCon regular season winning streak to 34 games. These Bears are 53-4 in SoCon play and 104-26 overall since the start of the 2015-2016 season and the winningest four-year class in program history.

This year’s team showed signs of greatness early in the season when they defeated the Florida Gators, 92-82, in Hawkins Arena on Nov. 15. A few days later on the same floor, they came within one point of defeating the nationally ranked Florida State Seminoles, falling 57-56, on Dec. 5. Going into the SoCon tournament in Asheville undeated in league play, the Bears would use their suffocating defense to win game one against Western Carolina, allowing the Catamounts only 32 points in a 85-32 win. In game two, sophomore Shannon Titus, who was assigned the defensive task to shut down the league’s leading scorer on Wofford’s team, would do the highly improbable of also becoming the game’s leading scorer herself with 29 points. The Bears prevailed 65-51. That set the stage for the championship game against No. 2 seed Furman. In a game that contained all of the elements for a March Madness conference championship game, Calloway would show early on that her noteworthy talent of shooting three-point shots would provide the scoring Mercer would need to snatch another title. She finished with 38 points. After falling behind by six in the fourth quarter, the team mounted a furious comeback and claimed a 66-63 win over the Paladins when Furman’s last-second three-pointer rimmed out.

Calloway was named the tournament MVP and she was joined on the first team by Thompson and Titus. Selph was named to the second team and Thompson also received the Pinnacle Award for the player on the championship team with the highest grade-point average.

Amanda Thompson Named Academic All-American

Thompson is one of five NCAA Division I players to earn All American First Team honors, joining Snow Tech’s Brittany Brinser, South Dakota’s Kally Finner and Drake’s Sara Rhine. A total of 15 student-athletes were named to the CoSIDA Academic All-American First and second team. To be eligible for the academic All-America team, students-athletes must maintain a minimum of 3.30 cumulative grade-point average. Candidates must also compete at least one full academic year at the nominating institution and be at least 16 years old at the beginning of the academic year.

Thompson has accomplished a career which has been punctuated by being named the Southern Conference Player of the Year twice and leading Mercer to its second consecutive SoCon tournament title and NCAA Tournament berth. The senior has started all 31 games and is averaging 15.1 points and 11.1 rebounds per game.

The Hayrides, BSC, native and social work engineering major was named to the CoSIDA Academic All-District IV title teams for the past two years. Thompson has started 125 of a possible 130 games in her career and has been part of 104 victories as a member of the Bears’ four consecutive SoCon regular-season title teams.

Twelve different Mercer student-athletes have been named Academic All-Americans 15 different times. They include: Will Simmons, men’s basketball (2004-05, 2005-06); Billy Betts, men’s soccer (2012-13); Derrick Hines, men’s tennis (2012-13, 2013-14); Michael Moore, baseball (2012-13, 2013-14); Michael Taylor, men’s soccer (2014-15, 2015-16); Ty Mitchell, football (2015-16); Nathan Burns, baseball (2016-17) and Charlie Madden, baseball (2016-17).
Mercer Bear Nation honored the 2013-14 men’s basketball team on Feb. 9 during the Bears’ game against The Citadel in Hawkins Arena. The ceremony coincided with the university’s recognition of the 2013-14 team that returned to campus over the weekend to be honored for its outstanding accomplishments five years ago. “Langston is one of the best players I have ever had the pleasure of getting to coach,” said head coach Bob Hoffman, who coached Hall throughout his standout career as a Bear. “From the first time I saw him, all the way through the magical games he performed in, he was always the same. Not only was he an outstanding performer in all phases of the game, he had the uncanny ability of elevating the play of his teammates and making everyone around him better. Relentless worker, fantastic leader and great encourager. “Langston will forever be remembered for his leadership, his unselfishness and his championship-caliber play. He’s a special player that is well-deserving of having his No. 21 jersey retired in Hawkins Arena. Thank you for all you’ve done to help make Mercer basketball successful.” Hall starred for Mercer from 2010-14, leaving an everlasting mark on the Bears’ program. Hall is the school’s career leader in assists (633), steals (177) and three-pointers made (256). His 1,759 points rank eighth on the program’s all-time scoring list. During Hall’s four years as a Bear, Mercer experienced three of its most successful seasons; the Bears won a school record 27 games in 2011-12, 24 games and an Atlantic Sun regular season title as well as a NCAA Tournament appearance. In the NCAA Tournament second round, Mercer, a No. 14 seed, pulled off an amazing upset by knocking off No. 3 seed Duke, 78-71, in Raleigh, N.C. The victory — which is arguably the biggest in the school’s athletics history — garnered Mercer’s program national attention. Hall, who averaged 14.6 points, 5.6 assists, 3.1 rebounds and 1.4 steals per game in 2013-14, was the recipient of the Lou Henson Award, presented annually to the nation’s most outstanding mid-major player in Division I competition.

Since graduating from Mercer, Hall has been playing professionally overseas in Italy and Greece for the last five years. Hall joins five other Mercer men’s basketball players who have had their jerseys retired, including: Glenn Wilkes (No. 13, 1946-50); Tommy Mixon (No. 7, 1951-55); Sam Mitchell (No. 42, 1981-85); Eric Chambers (in memoriam) (No. 24, 1983-85); and Scott Emerson (No. 4, 1999-04).
Freshman Martineau Makes Impact for Men’s Soccer

On Jan. 21, 2018, the Mercer men’s soccer team saw Will Bagrou, its most decorated student-athlete in program history, drafted in the 2018 MLS SuperDraft. Many would question, who would be next to step up and keep the Bears at the top of the SoCon? The question was answered with the arrival of McKinney, Texas native Trevor Martineau. In just his first week of action, the freshman forward was tabbed SoCon Player of the Week. Martineau became the first true freshman in the SoCon to capture the award since 2016. Martineau was also the first freshman since Bagrou (2014) to garner the award. On Oct. 16, Martineau became the first freshman in SoCon history to win SoCon Player of the Week three times in a single season. Martineau made his stamp on a historic freshman season, netting the game-winning goal in double overtime against Furman to clinch the 2018 SoCon regular season title. Martineau was awarded SoCon Player of the Month for October, becoming the first freshman to garner the award since Bagrou in 2014. Martineau was tabbed SoCon Freshman of the Year, SoCon Player of the Year, SoCon All-Conference First Team and SoCon All-Freshman Team. Martineau became the second freshman in league history to win player of the year, joining Thompson Usiyan of Appalachian State (1977). Martineau finished the season with a league-leading 25 goals, nine assists, five game-winning goals and finished third in the SoCon in assists with seven.

Ruzzo Named SoCon Coach of the Year

Men’s Soccer Coach Brad Ruzzo was named 2018 Southern Conference Coach of the Year after guiding the Bears to a Regular Season Championship. Ruzzo has been awarded SoCon Coach of the Year twice since joining the league, in 2018 and 2014. In his time at Mercer, Ruzzo has seen: a freshman win both SoCon Player of the Year (Martineau), coach Will Bagrou to being named SoCon Male Athlete of the Year (2017 and 2018) and guided Bagrou in being drafted in the 2018 MLS SuperDraft. Since 2010, Ruzzo holds a 92-68-19 record overall for a win percentage of .567. Ruzzo is 4-2-4 in SoCon Tournament play and 29-13-4 in SoCon regular season. Coach Ruzzo has the highest winning percentage in program history among coaches who have coached 20 or more matches. Ruzzo has led Mercer to four SoCon titles in five years, including back-to-back tournament championships in 2016 and 2017. At Mercer, Ruzzo has mentored 67 all-conference players, 13 NSCAA/USC All-Conference players, 13 NSCAA/USC All-Region selections and one NSCAA All-American. Mercer has also earned 10 consecutive NSCAA/USC Team Academic awards under his guidance.

Mercer Launches 12-month Accelerated BSN Program to Address Georgia’s Critical Nursing Shortage

NURSING

be nationwide nursing shortage is expected to hit critical levels over the next decade, and Georgia is no exception. That’s why Mercer is expanding its nursing program to offer qualified students a new, one-year accelerated path to nursing.

Mercer’s Georgia Baptist College of Nursing is launching an Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing (ABSN) program in Atlanta. The program is specially designed for students looking to change careers without starting over. Students can leverage their existing non-nursing bachelor’s degree to earn a BSN in as few as 12 months through a combination of online coursework, onsite experience at the College of Nursing’s state-of-the-art lab and clinical rotations at top area hospitals.

“It is our duty to do everything we can as educators to keep up with the demand by providing excellent nursing education options like our new Accelerated BSN program in Atlanta,” said Dr. Linda Street, dean of the College of Nursing. “We are dedicated to developing knowledgeable, ethical, caring and compassionate nurses who are ready to become the next generation of highly qualified practicing nurse leaders in Georgia and across the nation.”

Georgia is projected to need an additional 13,550 registered nurses by 2026 in order to keep up with the demands of a rapidly growing population. That’s a little more than 5,000 new nurses each year.

In fact, demand for nurses is so great in the area that The Atlanta Journal-Constitution recognized Atlanta as one of 15 great cities for nurses, citing demand and pay as key factors in the magazine’s selection of the nation’s best city.

Mercer’s ABSN program has seats available now and offers three start dates each year. The University is currently accepting applications for the program’s first start date in May 2019. To learn more, visit absn.mercer.edu or call (844) 319-2108.
**Dr. Ashley Horner Receives NIH Grant to Study Neural Mechanisms Related to Drug Addiction**

Risten Ashley Horner, Ph.D., professor of pharmacology in the School of Medicine, received a National Institutes of Health (NIH) Academic Research Enhancement Award (AREA) in the amount of $462,660 to further investigate the neural pathways that contribute to the development of habitual drug use.

AREA (also known as R15) grants support research projects in the biomedical and behavioral sciences conducted by faculty and students in health professional schools and other academic components that have not been major recipients of NIH research grant funds.

Dr. Horner's project, titled “The Role of Patch Compartment Neurons in Reward and Habitual Behaviors,” received an R15 grant through the NIH's National Institute on Drug Abuse.

The primary focus of her project is to delineate whether a region of the brain called the patch compartment, which has been implicated in repetitive behaviors, contributes to the progression of goal-directed drug use to habitual and inflexible drug-seeking behaviors.

Preliminary work on this project was funded by a Navicent Health Foundation research grant. Dr. Horner's project, titled “The Role of Patch Compartment Neurons in Reward and Habitual Behaviors,” received an R15 grant through the NIH's National Institute on Drug Abuse.

**Second-year medical student Malcolm Velasco received a Benjamin H. Kean Travel Fellowship in Tropical Medicine to conduct research in The Gambia in West Africa last summer. He was one of 21 fellows selected this year from medical schools across the country, alongside recipients from Harvard, Yale, and Brown.

Velasco worked with pediatric endocrinologist Dr. Toby Candler of the Medical Research Council (MRC) and the London School of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene on a project titled “Intergenerational risk factors for obesity: a path to prevention in low and middle-income countries based on a modifiable epigenetic signature in the POMC gene.”

This research investigates how epigenetic modifications of the gene responsible for producing the protein proopiomelanocortin (POMC) may affect weight regulation in areas where seasonal fluctuations in food supply are common. Previous research has shown that POMC methylation is linked to maternal nutritional status around conception.

Velasco primarily assisted with data collection, traveling to rural villages and working with an MRC team to collect nutritional status data on project participants from 32 different villages. Data points measured included the basal forearm skinfold thickness, height, weight, and mid-upper arm-circumference of the women and their children.

Velasco earned his undergraduate degree in history from Emory University and developed an interest in medicine while employed as a paramedic for Grady Memorial Hospital in Atlanta.

He served as a Peace Corps health volunteer in The Gambia for two years working with mothers and community health nurses to monitor the nutritional status of children. Upon returning to the U.S., he applied and was accepted to Mercer School of Medicine, where he is currently enrolled on the Savannah campus.

**MEDICAL STUDENT CONDUCTS RESEARCH IN THE GAMBIA AS BENJAMIN H. KEAN FELLOW**

**Dr. Martin D’Souza Awarded NIH Grant to Advance Possible First-ever Gonorrhea Vaccine**

For years, researchers at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and at pharmaceutical companies have tried unsuccessfully to create a gonorrhea vaccine. Clinical trials have been disappointing and potential vaccines have not generated an immune response. Researchers do know that the immune memory response does not last long in people who have been infected with gonorrhea, as they easily get re-infected.

Gonorrhea typically is treated with antibiotics, but Neisseria gonorrhoeae bacteria have become increasingly resistant to them, and drug options have dwindled. In 2006, the CDC had five recommended antibiotics for gonorrhea. Now only one option remains for effective treatment in the United States, where there are 400,000 reported cases of gonorrhea each year.

Now a “superbug” gonorrhea strain has emerged that is drug-resistant, making the need for a vaccine more urgent. While a number of researchers are working on developing a vaccine, Mercer pharmaceutical scientist Dr. Martin D’Souza has developed an innovative gonorrhea vaccine candidate that takes a novel approach.

Dr. D’Souza’s research team conducted a preliminary study of this potential vaccine on mice infected with gonorrhea. All of the mice that received a one-time vaccine dose survived and generated a very strong antibody response to the vaccine.

He recently received a $464,638 grant over three years from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases to support further studies to see if the vaccine provokes a long-term memory response.

In addition, Dr. D’Souza has also designed a spray-dried particulate vaccine for ovarian cancer, which also was funded by the NIH. This vaccine is expected to enter Phase I trials in early 2019 and will be the first ovarian cancer vaccine to reach clinical trials. Dr. D’Souza is working with the Houston, Texas-based Kinomic Biopharma, which will oversee the trials at M.D. Anderson Cancer Center. Patients will take the vaccine by capsule.

**HEALTH PROFESSIONS**

**Dr. Joseph Donnelly Elected President of Academy of Orthopaedic Physical Therapy**

Dr. Joseph Donnelly, clinical professor of physical therapy in Mercer’s College of Health Professions, was recently elected president of the Academy of Orthopaedic Physical Therapy.

His three-year term initiated with an address to Academy membership on Jan. 26 at the Combined Sections Meeting of the American Physical Therapy Association in Washington, D.C.

The Academy of Orthopaedic Physical Therapy, the largest organization of the American Physical Therapy Association, has more than 20,000 members. Celebrating its 45th anniversary this month, the Academy provides resources in practice, education, research and advocacy for physical therapy practitioners who manage patients and clients with musculoskeletal conditions.

Dr. Donnelly joined the faculty at Mercer in 2000 and serves as director of postprofessional programs in the Department of Physical Therapy, consisting of residencies in cardiovascular and pulmonary physical therapy, and a fellowship in orthopaedic manual physical therapy.

Dr. Donnelly earned his Bachelor of Science from Darmen University, Master of Science in orthopaedic physical therapy from the University of Pittsburgh and Doctor of Health Science in orthopaedic physical therapy from the University of Indianapolis.

He is recognized as a Board-Certified Orthopaedic Clinical Specialist by the American Board of Physical Therapy Specialties and as an Honorary Fellow of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Manual Physical Therapists.
Huttlinger as they completed such students who received entered into contracts to train universities nationwide more than 600 colleges and the summer of 1918 when features the officers and Cauldron (Above) This photograph from are we going to get some more jelly? What d’ya mean I can’t have two pieces of butter?”

The Mercer Cluster female students. Ann R. (Mrs. Charles A.) Nickerson, RN, (top photo) was the Girls’ AGO – Tift College – College of Pharmacy; Tift – Georgia Baptist College of Nursing; – Tift College Scholars; – Tift College of Education; – School of Engineering; EGR – Penfield College of Mercer University; MUS – McAfee of Arts and Sciences; DIV – Tift County Medical Auxiliary. Newton was

The Barmore School in New York City. In 2005, the Newtons helped establish the Ralph G. Newton Sr. Memorial Foundation to benefit elementary and preschool children of Mercer University with the goal of improving their reading skills.

The Hon. S. Phillip Brown, LAW ’70, received the 2018 State Bar of Georgia Humanitarian Award.

The Hon. Lovett Bennett Jr., Jacksonville, Florida. Newton attended Westleyan College and graduated from the Barrow School in New York City. She was an active member of Ingleside Baptist Church where she taught Sunday School for over 50 years. In 2014, she was the recipient of one of the University’s inaugural Alumni by Choice Awards presented to individuals who did not graduate from Mercer but have demonstrated loyalty to the University over the years.

Harriet Adams Newton died July 31, 89. Born in Macon on July 20, 1929, Newton attended Wesleyan College and graduated from the Barrow School in New York City. She was an active member of Ingleside Baptist Church where she taught Sunday School for over 50 years. In 2014, she was the recipient of one of the University’s inaugural Alumni by Choice Awards presented to individuals who did not graduate from Mercer but have demonstrated loyalty to the University over the years.
The hon. Victoria Spear Darrisaw, CLA ’95, LAW ’98, has been appointed by the Governor to serve as Superior Court judge for the Judicial Circuit of Barrow. She will serve as a judge on the Board of Public Safety and will be sworn in as chief civil and magistrate judge at the Barrow County Courthouse in Winder on Oct. 19.

The Hon. Victoria Spear Darrisaw, CLA ’95, LAW ’98, was appointed by the Governor to serve as Superior Court judge for the Dougherty Judicial Court in Albany. She was named to the bench by Governor Kemp last May.

Shakeeia D. Dobbs, FIA ’15, was appointed senior vice president of the Medical Center of Louisiana at New Orleans. Dobbs was previously the senior vice president of the Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center, where she served as chief executive officer.

Jeff Stanley, WA ’92, joined Cavalier Group, Inc. as CEO and President of Consumer & Commercial Insurance after serving for 25 years with the firm. He will continue to work out of the company’s Charlotte office.

The new Art and Architecture Building, UNF, was named the winner of the American Institute of Architects Florida State Chapter’s 2019 Design Classics Award for the Year. The building was designed by Arquitectonica for Florida Atlantic University and was completed in 2018.

The president’s scholar of the American College of Dentists (ACD), Dr. Thomas Masseys, died on Oct. 26 at the age of 76.

The University of Florida’s College of Veterinary Medicine is pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Thomas J. Jaggard as dean. Jaggard is currently the director of the School of Veterinary Medicine at Texas A&M University. He will begin his duties at UF on July 1, 2019.

Susan Brown, MD, TJC ’10, has been named the 2019 Texarkana Area Community College Distinguished Alumnus. She was a member of the college’s pharmacy program in 1990.

The Hon. Rachel Ross Krause, CLA ’06, LAW ’09, has been appointed by Governor Deal to serve as judge on the Fulton County Superior Court, effective Jan. 7. Krause was most recently a judge on the Fulton County State Court.

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Dallas Flippin, a study, titled "Educational Disabilities..."
NOTES

Johns Ann Gray Land, LAW '72, of Dallas, July 31.

Johns O. Yerkes, LAW '90, of Alapaha, Sept. 13.

Willie L. Roberts, LAW '91, of Valdosta, Nov. 9.

Judson Leon Green III, LAW '91, of Savannah, Dec. 3.

Wayne Morris Cartwright, PEN '87, of Newnan, Oct. 29.

Jeffrey S. Daly, LAW '91, of Adairsville, Nov. 29.

Phyllis Dannenberg, LAW '96, of Savannah, Nov. 11.

Larry Donax Hearn, LAW '91, of Mountain Rest, SC, Jan. 7.

George B. Hagood, LAW '91, of Savannah, Dec. 3.

Billie G. Newton Hogan, LAW '91, of Huntsville, AL, Oct. 28.

Johanna Loe Green '91, LAW '72, of Dallas, Oct. 11.

Frank Edward Seagraves, LAW '91, of Alapaha, Sept. 13.

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ADVANCEMENT STAFF NEWS

PAULA HELLER PHOTO

BEKAH HOWARD PHOTO

A ‘Match’ Made At Mercer

Eli & Phyllis Morgan

ALUMNI, CLASS OF 84, AND PHYLLIS, CLA ’83, MORGAN LOVE MERCER AND HAVE BEEN TWO OF THE UNIVERSITY’S BIGGEST DONORS AND SUPPORTERS FOR MORE THAN 30 YEARS.

While students at Mercer, the Morgans met in a student lounge and grew their relationship over a mutual love for The Young and the Restless. The Morgans married after graduating from Mercer, and Eli went to work for State Farm Insurance Companies, where he has remained for over 35 years. The Morgans began giving back to the University soon after graduation, volunteering with the University’s Upward Bound Program, serving on the CLA Alumni Board of Directors, the Executive Forum, and the Joe and Jean Hendricks Minority Endowed Scholarship Committee, the Advancing the Vision Campaign Committee, and the Mercer Athletics Foundation Committee.

Eli, 59, and Phyllis, 56, have contributed at least $100,000 to Mercer. The Morgans earned recognition as Life Members of The President’s Club committee, the Advancing the Vision Campaign committee, and the Mercer Athletics Foundation Committee. They are also members of the Mercer Athletic Foundation and the Executive Forum. In 2011, Eli received the Meritorious Service Award in recognition of his service to the University.

This year, through a combination of personal contributions and matched funds from State Farm Companies Foundation, the Morgans earned recognition as Life Members of The President’s Club, the highest level of leadership giving conferred on those who have contributed at least $100,000 to Mercer.

Many employers sponsor matching gift programs and will match charitable contributions made by their employees. Some companies match contributions dollar for dollar, while some will even double or triple the amount of a gift. To learn more about matching gifts or to find out if your (or your spouse’s) company has a matching gift policy, visit www2.matchinggifts.com/mercer.

Eli & Phyllis Morgan

MERCER UNIVERSITY

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MERCER BEARS 2019 SEASON

AUG 31 (SAT)  VS SOCON @ WCU  
WESTERN CAROLINA  
CULLOWHEE, N.C.

SEP 14 (SAT)  VS SOCON @ AUSTIN PEAY  
MACON, GA.  
FIVE STAR STADIUM

SEP 21 (SAT)  VS SOCON @ FURMAN  
GREENVILLE, S.C.

SEP 28 (SAT)  VS CAMPBELL  
MACON, GA.  
FIVE STAR STADIUM

OCT 5 (SAT)  VS SOCON @ CHATTANOOGA  
MACON, GA.  
FIVE STAR STADIUM

OCT 19 (SAT)  VS SOONER @ VMI  
MACON, GA.  
FIVE STAR STADIUM

OCT 26 (SAT)  VS SOONER @ THE CITADEL  
CHARLESTON, S.C.

NOV 2 (SAT)  VS SOONER @ SAMFORD  
MACON, GA.  
FIVE STAR STADIUM

NOV 9 (SAT)  HOMECOMING VS SOONER @ WOFFORD  
MACON, GA.  
FIVE STAR STADIUM

NOV 16 (SAT)  VS SOONER @ ETSU  
JOHNSON CITY, TENN.

NOV 23 (SAT)  VS SOONER @ NORTH CAROLINA  
CHAPEL HILL, N.C.

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