

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH GEORGIA MAGAZINE

Spring/Summer 2023

CELEBRATING

150
YEARS

**UNG celebrates 150th
with event at Capitol**

**NGHS helps launch
accelerated BSN**

UNG staff, cadets, alumni and Student Government Association leaders celebrated UNG's Sesquicentennial on March 7 with Gov. Brian Kemp and legislative leaders. Kemp presented UNG President Bonita Jacobs with a commendation and the House and Senate presented her with resolutions honoring UNG's 150th anniversary.

Photo by Alyssa Annis





Features

16 Event marks UNG's 150-year legacy

UNG held a community celebration Jan. 6 marking exactly 150 years since the university's first day of classes.

20 Governor, chancellor help celebrate UNG's 150th

UNG continued to celebrate its 150th anniversary with a Corps of Cadets review by Gov. Brian Kemp in Atlanta on March 7.

34 NGHS helps launch accelerated BSN

A partnership between Northeast Georgia Health System and UNG is addressing the nursing shortage through an accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing program.



Departments

4 **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

5 **AROUND UNG**

12 **CORPS OF CADETS**

14 **SPORTS ROUNDUP**

37 **CLASS NOTES**

40 **IN MEMORIAM**

41 **UPCOMING EVENTS**

University of North Georgia Magazine is published semi-annually by the University of North Georgia.

EDITORIAL STAFF

Clark Leonard, editor
Denise Ray '11, '14, writer
Agnes Hina, writer
David Folds, art director
Alyssa Annis, '15, photographer
Blake Poppell, photographer

CONTACT

Division of University Relations
82 College Circle
Dahlonega, GA 30597
706-864-1950
universityrelations@ung.edu

Thank you for **150 years** of generosity!



UNIVERSITY of
NORTH GEORGIA™
FOUNDATION
THE MILITARY COLLEGE OF GEORGIA
unggive.org



“This momentum is propelling us toward even greater prominence in the future as a leading public regional university in Georgia and the nation, and I am proud to be a part of this remarkable community.”

Momentum creates bright future

Dear UNG Community,

As we approach the end of this academic year and my planned retirement in June, I am pleased to reflect on the tremendous growth and success that the University of North Georgia has experienced in recent years. For 150 years, we have produced civic, professional and military leaders who make a positive impact in their communities and beyond.

Today, we serve about 19,000 students through our five campuses and online, and this year, U.S. News & World Report ranked UNG as the No. 1 “Best Value School” and the top “Best Colleges for Veterans” school among public regional universities in Georgia. We were also named a national top-producer of Fulbright students for the sixth consecutive year. These are just a few examples that demonstrate our commitments to educational excellence, student success and leadership development — all hallmarks of the UNG experience across the generations.

This momentum is propelling us toward even greater prominence in the future as a leading public regional university in Georgia and the nation, and I am proud to be a part of this remarkable community.

I am deeply grateful to our faculty and staff, who are amazing teachers, researchers and mentors who help our students identify and develop their potential and prepare them for leadership wherever life takes them. To our students, I am confident that the foundation you have received through UNG will be a catalyst to your future success, and you will add value and meaning to the lives of others around you.

Finally, I want to thank our alumni and community supporters. Your enthusiasm for our mission, your loyalty to UNG and your unwavering commitment to students have been critical to our success and will inspire generations of future supporters. I am honored to have served as your president and look forward to seeing all that you will accomplish as you shape the future of this great university.

Sincerely,

Bonita C. Jacobs, Ph.D.
President

UNG a national top Fulbright producer for 6th time

UNG made a national list of four-year institutions for sending the most students abroad through the Fulbright U.S. Student Program for 2022-23. The list, released by the U.S. Department of State on Feb. 10, showed that UNG tied for fifth among 16 master's institutions to make the list. UNG, the University of Georgia and Emory University are the only universities in Georgia on this year's list.

UNG has earned the designation as a national top producer of Fulbright students for six consecutive years. It received the distinction based on five alumni being selected as Fulbright finalists for the 2022-23 academic year. UNG has produced 27 Fulbright finalists in five years.

"This recognition is a testament to the quality of our students and their desire to seek out global experiences that will shape them into dynamic leaders in our diverse society," UNG President Bonita Jacobs said. "Our faculty and UNG's Nationally Competitive Scholarships Office continue to offer strong guidance that makes these opportunities possible."



13 earn Fulbright semifinalist status

Thirteen students and alumni from UNG have been selected as semifinalists for the 2023-24 Fulbright U.S. Student Program, a competitive fellowship.

The Fulbright program enables graduates to pursue research activities, become English Teaching Assistants, or enroll in graduate school in other countries. It is designed to increase mutual understanding between U.S. citizens and residents of more than 160 foreign countries, according to the Fulbright website.

UNG's 2023-24 semifinalists are Michelle Alvarado, Ashley Fish, Karen Garcia, Jenny Gault, Madeline Grasso, Anna Kubas, Phillip Ly, Norma Martinez, Morgan Mauldin, Grace Maurer, Evelyn Tello-Mendoza, Emelia Thompson, and one graduate who asked for their name to be withheld.

Teacher residency program get \$399k in federal funds

UNG's College of Education received \$399,000 in federal funds to support future teachers as they begin their professional careers.

Participants in the teacher residency program are full-time teachers of record with their own classrooms, receiving half the salary of a full-time educator. They are not eligible for full salary because they do not have a baccalaureate degree. They do receive benefits, including admission to teacher retirement.

The funding is designated for seniors pursuing bachelor's degrees in elementary and special education, middle grades education and secondary education.

Students applied in spring 2022 to participate in the program and underwent vetting and committee selection and had to have recommendations. Once accepted into the program, the future educators were interviewed.

Dr. Sheri Hardee, College of Education dean, began the proposal prior to the establishment of the current research team and worked with Forsyth County and Bourdeaux to get the funds.

In addition to Forsyth County, the Gwinnett, Hall and Stephens county school systems and Gainesville City Schools are also participating.



Teacher residency participant Tiffany Henry works at Settles Bridge Elementary School.

UNG breaks ground on Cumming Campus expansion



UNG broke ground Nov. 3 on a Cumming Campus expansion that will allow for the addition of bachelor's degrees in Cumming.

UNG broke ground Nov. 3 on a 27,300-square-foot addition to its Cumming Campus. Lt. Gov. Geoff Duncan, state Sen. Steve Gooch, and Cumming Mayor Troy Brumbalow joined UNG President Bonita Jacobs and other state, Forsyth County, and university leaders for the ceremony.

The new space will allow for the addition of bachelor's degrees in Cumming and provide a capacity for future enrollment of 2,200 students, particularly in health care and technology-centric programs in demand along the growing Ga. 400 corridor. Construction will begin in early 2023 with the new space set to open in fall 2024.

The \$14.5 million expansion will enhance the current 36,000-square-foot Cumming Campus building, after the project received funds in both the Fiscal Year 2022 and Fiscal Year 2023 state budgets.

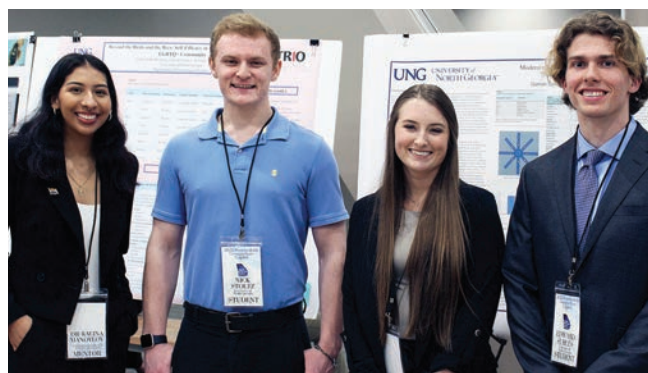
The Cumming Campus has grown 175% since opening in 2012 and currently serves 1,373 students.

Students present research at Capitol

Four UNG students presented their research at Posters at the Capitol in Atlanta on Feb. 27. Posters at the Capitol is a yearly event put on by the Georgia Undergraduate Research Collective to promote undergraduate research to legislators.

The students who shared their work were:

- Gerran Collins and Edward Surles: "Moderating Effects of Motivational Learning with Incentive Following Perinatal Exposure to Ethanol."
- Nick Stoltz, "The Effects of Specified Gendered Colonies on *Laricobius nigrinus* Rearing Efficiency in a Lab Setting."
- Evelyn Tello-Mendoza: "Beyond the Birds and the Bees: Self-efficacy in Sex Practices within the LGBTQ+ Community."



Evelyn Tello-Mendoza, Nick Stoltz, Gerran Collins and Edward Surles represented UNG at Posters at the Capitol.

The presenters were selected from 90 competitive proposals from students at public and private universities in Georgia.

Cronan gains research opportunity in Canada



UNG junior Anna Cronan will participate in the summer 2023 Fulbright-MITACS Globalink Program and is the first UNG student to do so.

Cronan, a biology major, will spend 10-12 weeks between May and August at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. She will join a faculty member there in research

on the impact of cover crops in conventional no-till canola and wheat production.

Dr. Anastasia Lin, assistant vice president of Academic Affairs and director of UNG's Nationally Competitive Scholarships office, has worked with Cronan on multiple scholarship applications and found her latest success as no surprise.

"Anna's academic and research excellence is unparalleled, and yet she continues to pursue competitive opportunities to grow her research skill set and develop as a scientist," Lin said. "She represents the highly motivated, intellectually curious, and whip-smart student UNG is known for."

"She represents the highly motivated, intellectually curious, and whip-smart student UNG is known for."

— Dr. Anastasia Lin

Group wins student pitch competition



Pictured, from left, are Dian Kriel, Parker Whitton, Dr. Mariangela Vecchiarini-Piazza, Justin Burgess, Freddie Pellini, and James Porter after the students took first place in innovateUNG Pitch Challenge.

A group of five students won the fifth annual innovateUNG Pitch Challenge held Feb. 21 at UNG's Dahlenega Campus. The pitch competition highlights the innovativeness and entrepreneurial spirit of individuals and teams composed of full-time degree-seeking undergraduate students from UNG's five campuses.

Justin Burgess, Dian Kriel, Freddie Pellini, James Porter, and Parker Whitton comprised WoodTek, a company that revealed the first item in a line of eco-friendly wooden items: a white oak chalice designed to enhance the experience of sipping whiskey. The group received a check for \$2,000 and will receive guidance from mentors, startup training, feedback on their product, and professional connections.

Second place, with a check for \$1,000, went to Anna Markvartova for Unique Models Inc., an agency that would scout and hire models, paying attention to the mental health of its employees, including body dysmorphia issues. Markvartova, a women's tennis student-athlete, was also the people's choice award recipient and received an additional \$500. Ideas were judged on five criteria: innovativeness, marketability, market size, inventor passion, and the probability of becoming a successful business.

Fifteen students selected for study abroad through Gilman Scholarships

Fifteen UNG students were selected in December for the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship, which provides up to \$8,000 enabling U.S. undergraduate students who are eligible for the Pell grant to study or intern abroad and gain skills critical to national security and economic competitiveness.

The Gilman recipients included Susana Olivo Sandoval, Nahetzy Filomeno, Hunter Mauldin, Cassandra Canakis, Diana Davenport, Haley Menees, Hannah Menees, Savannah Miles, Cody Parker, Abbey Fuchs, Jenny Gault, Audrey Gleason, Olivia Harden, Juan Linares, and Maria Jose Lopez Vincero.

Anabella Miranda and Jennifer Ramirez were alternates.

 Gilman Scholarship.

Sultan-Dadon visits UNG to explore collaboration



Anat Sultan-Dadon, Consul General of Israel to the Southeastern United States, visited UNG on Feb. 13. Pictured, from left, are Dr. Tamirat Abegaz, associate professor of computer science; Karen Isenberg Jones, director of government & political affairs for the Consulate General of Israel to the Southeastern U.S.; Sultan-Dadon; Dr. Mary Gowan, dean of UNG's Mike Cottrell College of Business; and Dr. Luay Wahsheh, department head of Computer Science and Information Systems.

Anat Sultan-Dadon, Consul General of Israel to the Southeastern United States, visited UNG in February to meet with a variety of campus leaders, faculty and students and discussed UNG's cybersecurity and military programs. They also explored future opportunities for collaboration.

"It was a pleasure and a privilege to be able to visit and meet with President Jacobs and so many impressive faculty and students," Consul General Sultan-Dadon said. "We see great importance in working together to identify opportunities for collaboration in areas of mutual benefit such as cybersecurity."

Sultan-Dadon assumed her role as Consul General to the Southeastern United States in 2019. She joined the Israeli diplomatic corps in 2004. She has extensive experience working for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and has held various posts and positions in Israel and abroad.

Through this relationship, UNG computer science faculty members Dr. Bryson Payne and Dr. Tamirat Abegaz presented at the Cybertech Global Tel Aviv conference earlier this spring in Israel.

New K-9 officer joins campus police force

Officer Dustin Singleton describes his partner, the newest member of the UNG Police Department, as "sweet, loves everyone and wants to work all the time."

Rex, a 2-year-old German Shepherd-Belgian Malinois mix K-9, joined the UNG Police force in October.

UNG partnered with the Georgia Emergency Management Association (GEMA) to get the K-9 officer, and Rex will train alongside the Hall County Sheriff's Office's K-9 officers.

"The dog was acquired through GEMA at no cost to the university," Greg Williams, UNG police chief, said. "His certification and ongoing certification will also not cost UNG anything."

Among Rex's duties is searching for explosives at UNG's convocation center prior to major events, a service that previously required support from other agencies.



Rex, a 2-year-old German Shepherd-Belgian Malinois mix K-9, joined the UNG Police force in October. He's shown here with his handler, Officer Dustin Singleton.

Blue Ridge Campus adds chemistry lab

UNG's Blue Ridge Campus made history as the spring 2023 semester began by holding its first chemistry class.

Taught by Dr. Lori Wilson, Survey of Chemistry I is the first class and lab of its kind on this campus, which due to its small size has limited programs and courses. There are 12 students enrolled in the class.

"This is significant because it opens up a course that had only previously been available in Dahlonega or Gainesville for students," Sandy Ott, Blue Ridge Campus executive director, said. "This opportunity opens up accessibility and opportunity for students pursuing health science and education degrees because it is a required course."

The resource will be used for additional lab science courses including environmental science, biology and geology, exemplifying UNG's commitment to providing access to this community and region, Ott said.



Ethics Bowl teams shows skill at national competitions

A pair of UNG student groups gained valuable training through ethics bowl competitions.

For the first time since 2015, UNG's Ethics Bowl team competed at the National Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl competition held this year in Portland, Oregon. From March 4-5, six UNG students and their coaches Dr. James Grindeland, lecturer of philosophy and Dr. Rose Procter, director of the TRUIST Center for Ethical



Leadership, competed as one of the 36 qualifying teams and the only University System of Georgia school. The team presenting was made up of UNG students Jessica Kagansky, Estacia Lawhorn, Anna Møller, Taylor Mullikin, Luke Robinson and Daniel Yarman.

UNG competed against four teams with a win against the University of Baltimore, a tie with the University of California – San Diego, and losses against the University of Mississippi and the national champion U.S. Naval Academy.

UNG cadets Jaelyn Baker, David Collins, Justin Tamburo, Sophia Thacker, Dale Wanner and Jared Windsor competed against the other five senior military colleges in the first Senior Military College Ethics Bowl on March 25. Launched with inspiration from the Respect and Ethical Dilemma Initiative training all UNG Cadets undergo, the virtual event aimed to start deep ethical conversations across all military branches.

GPB highlights Hometown Harvest, Food Pantry community partnerships



The University of North Georgia's Hometown Harvest partnership with the Lumpkin County School System and its Dahlonega Campus Food Pantry were highlighted in "A Fork in the Road" on Georgia Public Broadcasting. It was the opening portion of a 30-minute episode Georgia Grown produced by David Zelski to put a spotlight on Dahlonega.

Dr. David Patterson, an associate professor of biology who leads UNG's portion of Hometown Harvest, expressed gratitude for being able to share the story of the collaboration.

"Hometown Harvest is very excited about our participation in 'A Fork in the Road,' and we're gearing up for another spring/summer garden season," Patterson said. "Last year we produced almost 400 pounds of fresh vegetables for the Lumpkin County School System, so we're hoping to top that this year. We've also had incredible community and UNG involvement over the past year."

National TRIO Day event comes to campus

UNG hosted Georgia's National TRIO Day celebration Feb. 25 at UNG's Dahlonega Campus, welcoming almost 300 high school students and TRIO professionals. UNG's TRIO programs include the McNair Scholars Program, Upward Bound and Educational Talent Search Program.

The TRIO programs are federal outreach and student services programs designed to identify and provide services for individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds. TRIO includes eight programs targeted to serve and assist low-income individuals, first-generation college students, and individuals with disabilities to progress through the academic pipeline from middle school to post-baccalaureate programs.

The day included video messages from U.S. Sen. Raphael Warnock and Gabby Watts, senior director of student services for the U.S. Department of Education. It also featured a panel of five TRIO students sharing their college experiences. An Aztec dance, Mexican ballet, a Black History Month presentation, and a demonstration by the Blue Ridge Rifles, a cadet specialty unit, rounded out the day's events.



Sophomore named Miss Georgia Teen USA

UNG sophomore Denim Lovett was crowned Miss Georgia Teen USA 2023 on Nov. 19. The competition took place in McDonough, Georgia, where Lovett ran on the platform “involvement counts,” which emphasized the importance of student involvement in schools and communities.

Lovett is pursuing a Bachelor Science in Nursing.

She is the CEO and founder of Involvement Counts, an organization aimed at lowering the high school dropout rate.

“My job is to let students know what involvement can do for them after graduation,” the Bonaire, Georgia, native, said. “I have been able to speak to over 7,000 students, and that number grows daily. Hopefully one day I can help eradicate the statistic of high school dropouts.”

Lovett, a student on the Dahlonega Campus, encourages her peers to get involved and build community. She is involved in Revive, Surrender All, and Baptist Collegiate Ministries.



UNG wins award for technology innovation

The University of North Georgia was honored as the winner of the Atlanta Technology Association of Georgia’s (TAG) Innovative Driven Company of the Year in the Government, Nonprofit and Education sector at a March 29 banquet. The award application focused on the Cottrell Center for Business, Technology & Innovation, home to the Mike Cottrell College of Business, and the programs in the college.

“We are honored to be recognized by Atlanta TAG for our investment in ensuring that students not only know the theory behind technology and business practices, but also that they learn to apply that theory in labs and workspaces in the Cottrell Center for Business, Technology & Innovation that mirror corporate spaces,” Dr. Mary Gowan, MCCB dean, said.

The North Georgia region’s knowledge economy faces a shortage of adequately trained technology workers. Companies occupying this premier innovation hub rely on specialized skills such as advanced programming, systems design, cyber operations, or technology leadership to maintain competitiveness. Such human capital is expensive to acquire, difficult to



UNG’s Dr. Mohan Menon, Dr. Wendy Walker, Dr. Russell Teasley, Kim Vickers, Dr. Mary Gowan, Dr. Ellen Best, Dr. Luay Wahsheh were on hand as UNG received the Atlanta Technology Association of Georgia’s Innovative Driven Company of the Year in the Government, Nonprofit and Education sector award.

maintain, and requires ongoing learning opportunities to maintain currency.

The new MCCB building supports a growing number of students majoring in computer science, cybersecurity, information systems, logistics, and finance. Donors and grants have provided funds for access to premier software, such as the McLeod Software for logistics and Bloomberg terminals for finance and analytics students. The Institute for Cyber Operations, funded by the Department of Defense, enables the use of NetLab+ for the cyber range.

Eleven are Distinguished Military Graduates

Eleven UNG cadets have been named Distinguished Military Graduates (DMG) for 2022-23, finishing in the top 20% of Army graduates on the national Order of Merit List by achieving superior grade-point averages, strong performance in the Army Combat Fitness Test, and proving their worth as exceptional leaders in their college ROTC training. The DMG designation will remain on their Army record throughout their military career.



UNG's DMG honorees are William Allen, Jordan Armstrong, Michael Blumthal, Andrew Flournoy, Quinn Griffith, Chase Grover, Jacob Hughes, Noah Isley, Anthony Linatoc, Phillip Ly, and David Vinci.

Four Taiwanese cadets at UNG for four years

For the first time, UNG has four full-time Taiwanese cadets enrolled and seeking a college degree as full-time members of the Corps of Cadets.

Li-Hung Chang, a senior, is anticipating a May 2023 graduation with a degree in criminal justice with a forensics concentration. He began his experience with Freshmen Recruit Orientation Group Week in 2019.

Yung-Han Chou is a junior, pursuing a degree in information systems and a minor in computer science. He graduated from a military high school and was interested in UNG because he would be able to really focus on his studies.

Chen-Chih Yuan, a sophomore, pursuing a degree in mathematics, said he was surprised to see so many civilians and to have unstructured time.

Freshman Pei-Yun Tsai is the first Taiwanese female cadet at UNG for four years and is pursuing a degree in interdisciplinary studies.

The four are required to serve in the Taiwanese army for 14 years and can then embark on civilian careers.



Olmsted grant supports cadets' overseas learning



UNG received a \$22,000 grant from the Olmsted Foundation for 2023 to support international opportunities for cadets from UNG, Morehouse College, Spelman College, Clark Atlanta University, and Georgia State University. These trips, typically one to three weeks in length, take place in non-English-speaking countries.

UNG plans to send cadets to eight professional development experiences this semester in Wroclaw, Poland; Turin, Italy; Gori, Georgia; Riga, Latvia; and Sibiu, Romania. Turin is hosting three of the events and Wroclaw has two of them.

The Olmsted Foundation's latest grant brings its total gifts to UNG to \$162,500 over seven years, including \$30,500 for historically black college and university (HBCU) cadets. Through the end of 2022, more than 40 UNG cadets and nine HBCU cadets have been part of the overseas immersion opportunities.

Cadets raise \$32K for suicide interventions

UNG's Corps of Cadets raised more than \$32,000 for Armed Forces Mission's suicide intervention efforts through the Courageous Challenge pushup competition Sept. 17, shattering its goal of \$25,000.

The cadets brought in \$32,243 from 376 donors.

"The Courageous Challenge is another way cadets are showing service to others and campus leadership," retired Col. Joseph Matthews, UNG commandant of cadets, said. "I am very proud of their amazing hard work and caring for others."



Alpha Company raised the most money with \$8,268 and Charlie Company did the most pushups. Cadets raised money by asking for donations to support their participation in the event.

Armed Forces Mission, led by UNG alumnus Lt. Col. Ken Koon, conducts suicide interventions and teaches first responders and military members to do the same. The Courageous Challenge also offered training to UNG cadets to know how to help if a friend or loved one is considering suicide.

Walter finishes fifth nationally in air rifle

UNG freshman Elysa Walter made history with her fifth-place finish in the air rifle event at the NCAA championships March 11 at the University of Akron in Ohio. She became the first UNG rifle student-athlete to reach the NCAA individual finals, which include the top eight, in an event.

“Elysa is incredibly mentally resilient. She has maintained her composure through many hardships and struggles and has surpassed all of them,” Tori Kostecki, UNG’s head rifle coach, said. “This ability to stand strong in the face of adversity allows her to be a very strong athlete, especially in high-pressure situations.”

Rifle is a sport that puts all competitors — including mostly Division I shooters — together at the NCAA championships.

“It was exciting to be in the presence of Olympians and top schools,” Walter said. “You get to meet interesting people and see how they have different processes for preparation and competing.”

Walter finished qualifications with a score of 596, using 53 center-shots and two 100 series to finish tied for sixth and move onto the finals. Walter scored a 205.5 in the finals, finishing fifth out of 47 of the top air rifle shooters in the NCAA.



Men’s basketball team makes first NCAA tournament

The UNG men’s basketball team punched its first-ever ticket to the NCAA Division II tournament and also added its first NCAA tournament victory.

Fourth-year head coach Dan Evans’ men’s basketball team (21-8) made history in a variety of categories in 2022-23, including the most wins in UNG’s NCAA era (21) and its best conference record in the NCAA era (13-5). UNG joined NCAA Division II ahead of the 2005-06 season. Frank Champion earned Peach Belt Conference (PBC) Player of the Year honors, and A.J. White was PBC Freshman of the Year.

“It was very special to have a moment like the selection show. We weren’t promised anything, so everyone was on edge. No one knew what was ahead,” Evans said. “The joy of hearing our name called is something we will all remember for the rest of our lives. In truth, we are an example of the success that can be achieved when everyone is committed to the success of the group over their own personal gain.”

The UNG men’s basketball team continued to make history at the NCAA Southeast Regional in Augusta, Georgia. The seventh-seeded Nighthawks defeated second-seeded UNC Pembroke 76-58 in the first round March 11. Giancarlo Bastianoni paced UNG with 25 points, with Champion adding 17 and White chipping in 13 in the victory.

UNG dropped its NCAA Southeast Regional semifinal against Lincoln Memorial University by an 84-74 score March 12.

Women's basketball team earns sixth straight NCAA bid

The UNG women's basketball team earned its sixth consecutive NCAA Division II tournament berth, wrapping up a 19-11 season with a 71-53 first-round loss to Wingate University.

"It's an honor to get back to the NCAA tournament. It's no secret we lost a lot of key ingredients off last year's Final Four team, so to see this team put in work and earn a bid has been rewarding," women's basketball head coach Buffie Burson said. "We stuck together all year and were battle tested. I was very proud to coach this group."

It was the 15th time Burson led her team to the national postseason in 29 years at UNG, including seven of the past 10 NCAA tournaments.

Junior guard Caroline Martin garnered first-team All-Peach Belt Conference (PBC) recognition and made the PBC all-tournament team, while senior guard Josie Earnhardt was third-team All-PBC.



6-year-old joins Nighthawk Nation

The UNG Department of Athletics signed 6-year-old Hudson Carpenter to the Nighthawk Nation family as part of its Feb. 11 Make-A-Wish Day at the men's basketball team's home victory over Lander. "Huddy" signed his name to the dotted line during a pregame signing ceremony supported by his family and the team.

Nighthawk Nation welcomed Carpenter back from Huddy's wish, a weeklong trip to Disney World.

Huddy signed a one-day contract for a roster spot on head coach Dan Evans' team and was announced as an honorary starter. Throughout the day, he met student-athletes from the school's 13 sports teams and received a gift basket filled with UNG memorabilia.

Led by the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, UNG Athletics provides the perfect example of the commitment to Division II's long-standing relationship with the Make-A-Wish Foundation, which grants wishes to children with life-threatening illnesses.

Men's soccer team wins PBC Sportsmanship Award

The UNG men's soccer team earned the Peach Belt Conference's (PBC) Sportsmanship Award for 2022 along with two league rivals. The UNG men's soccer program last won the award in spring 2021.

The UNG Department of Athletics has won 26 total Sportsmanship Awards and three of the last four in men's soccer. UNG, Flagler College, and USC Aiken all tied for the men's soccer award in the fall. The three-way tie in men's soccer was the first in the history of the awards program.

The program presents an award following each championship season to the team in that sport that best exemplifies the spirit of sportsmanship and generally conducts itself with a high degree of integrity, character and class. The team award is selected by other teams who compete in that sport.





Interpretive historian Ken Johnston portrayed David Lewis, the university's first president when it was known as North Georgia Agricultural College, based on entries from Lewis' journals and correspondence.

EVENT MARKS UNG'S 150-YEAR LEGACY

By Clark Leonard

PHOTOS BY ALYSSA ANNIS

The University of North Georgia hosted a community celebration on Jan. 6 to honor the 150-year anniversary of the school's first day of classes. It was one of many special events held during UNG's yearlong Sesquicentennial celebration to reflect on the university's heritage and celebrate its achievements.

President Bonita Jacobs thanked alumni, faculty and staff for their contributions to UNG's 150-year legacy of scholarship, leadership and service during the celebration in the Library Technology Center at UNG's Dahlonega Campus.

"Our history is a rich and colorful tapestry woven by talented and creative scholars, teachers and mentors; bright and successful students; and graduates who have distinguished themselves personally and professionally as leaders with character," Jacobs said. "Together,

we will continue to build upon our proudest traditions and our legacies of scholarship, leadership and service that are the hallmarks of

the University of North Georgia — and there is no telling what we will accomplish in the next 150 years."



UNG President Bonita Jacobs addresses the crowd at the Jan. 6 celebration of UNG's 150th anniversary.

Interpretive historian Ken Johnston portrayed David Lewis, the university's first president when it was known as North Georgia Agricultural College, based on entries from Lewis' journals and correspondence.

Allison Galloup, an associate professor and special collections and digital initiatives librarian, also shared information about Sesquicentennial exhibits on display in the Dahlonega library. Galloup has led development of exhibits featuring UNG's historical artifacts for the yearlong Sesquicentennial celebration.



TOP: UNG President Bonita Jacobs prepares to cut the ceremonial cake alongside Sesquicentennial Celebration Co-Chairs Jimmy Faulkner and Pat Guthrie. Co-Chair Wayne Baird isn't pictured. **LEFT:** Dr. Katherine Adams, Doctor of Education in higher education leadership and practice program coordinator at UNG, speaks about the book celebrating UNG's 150-year history. She served as one of three editors on the book. **ABOVE:** State Rep. Will Wade, '01, speaks with retired Col. Tom Palmer, who served as commandant of cadets for 20 years, and Dahlonega Mayor JoAnne Taylor.



The Jan. 6 celebration included a series of artifacts from UNG's history for visitors to peruse.

"I learned about President Lewis' sense of humor from his journal when he seemed so stoic and steadfast in photos and meeting notes. I had a front-row seat to young love through a cadet's letters to his girlfriend," Galloup said. "I was able to look back on the building and evolution of an institution that has stood for 150 years."

The Jan. 6 event also marked the release by UNG Press of "The University of North Georgia: 150 Years of Leadership and Vision," a collection of essays that celebrates UNG's growth from its establishment as North Georgia Agricultural College in 1873. Dr. Katherine Adams, coordinator of UNG's Doctor of Education in higher education leadership and practice program, edited the book along with faculty members Dr. Michael Lanford and Dr. Jason Mayernick. It has a total of 36 contributors from UNG.

"This book not only encompasses the stories of UNG, the people who make up our university, the commitment

"I learned about President Lewis' sense of humor from his journal when he seemed so stoic and steadfast in photos and meeting notes. I had a front-row seat to young love through a cadet's letters to his girlfriend."

—Allison Galloup

to students and communities of UNG, but also its very creation through collaboration serves as a further representation of UNG's vision and mission for today and tomorrow," Adams said.

Lumpkin County Board of Commissioners Chairman Chris Dockery and Dahlonega Mayor JoAnne Taylor presented proclamations marking UNG's 150th anniversary.

The event wrapped up with a reception that included a birthday cake. UNG is continuing the Sesquicentennial celebration throughout the spring semester, to include a time capsule installation at the Dahlonega Campus and commemorative trees to be planted at the Blue Ridge, Cumming, Gainesville, and Oconee campuses.

To see more photos and a video of the event, visit UNG's Sesquicentennial website at ung.edu/150.

Platinum Sponsor



Gold Sponsor



Silver Sponsors



Where I Lead:

Helping through health care



Jared Oenick will graduate in May 2023 with a degree in biology with a minor in neuroscience. The Sharpsburg, Georgia, native plans to go on to medical school and a career in research.

How has undergraduate research shaped your academic opportunities?

I was one of 12 students to participate in a project funded by UNG's Faculty Undergraduate Summer Engagement research grants in 2022. I focused my research on phages, a virus that kills antibiotic-resistant bacteria, and, under the guidance of Dr. Alison Kanak, assistant professor of biology, and Dr. Ryan Shanks, professor of biology, I was able to create a novel protocol for obtaining and isolating phage from the environment. This protocol uses resources from the current method and is intended for use in Honors introduction to biology and possibly other courses.

What has inspired your studies and career aspirations?

When I transferred from Clayton State University to UNG after my freshman year, I was set on becoming a nurse anesthetist, which I thought would be a good gig. But after dialysis, I realized I wanted to do something along the lines of nephrology (kidney disease) or transplantation. Ideally, I'd like to do research in xenotransplantation, the transplantation of a genetically modified organ into humans, while practicing as a nephrologist.

I saw all these people hooked up to these machines, and I thought we should have a cure for this or a solution to this organ shortage crisis by now. That's what inspired me to go from nursing to pre-med.

I remember the moment vividly when I decided to change majors. I was in a room of transfer nursing majors and the question was asked if anyone was in the wrong room, and I raised my hand saying I should be with biology majors.

Sometimes, I look at my life and wonder how I got here. I always knew I wanted to do medicine, but I never thought I'd be applying to medical school. Dialysis was a turning point. When they told me I needed another kidney and a liver, I had to stop and evaluate my future plans. For some reason, instead of wallowing in getting down about it, it energized me even more. It's been quite the journey.

What are some of the benefits of being a leader at UNG?

I was searching for scholarships to help cover my final semester at UNG and applied for the inaugural Scientist.com STEM Research NIL Award on a whim. I was one of 10 students nationally to receive the \$5,000 award, and I will serve as a Scientist.com ambassador in 2023. My role as a lab teaching assistant for biotechnology and my participation in undergraduate research qualified me to apply for this opportunity.

Who are some of your role models?

I could never have made it this far without the encouragement and guidance from my family, friends, research colleagues, and professors, especially Dr. Alison Kanak, Dr. Ryan Shanks, Dr. Margaret Smith, Dr. Royce Dansby-Sparks, and Dr. John Leyba. The students and faculty of UNG have made an incredibly positive impact on me that I will never forget.



 Columbia

GOVERNOR, CHANCELLOR HELP CELEBRATE UNG'S 150TH

By Clark Leonard

PHOTOS BY ALYSSA ANNIS

UNG continued to celebrate its 150th anniversary with a Corps of Cadets review by Gov. Brian Kemp at Liberty Plaza across from the State Capitol in Atlanta on March 7. Lt. Gov. Burt Jones, University System of Georgia Chancellor Sonny Perdue, Maj. Gen. Dwayne Wilson, and Senate Majority Leader Steve Gooch also participated in the event.

"We need more young minds like you in our society, and that is why I'm glad to know the University of North Georgia will continue to grow and thrive in its next 150 years," Kemp said. "It is a place of patriotism, and today we celebrate not only that great history, but also its exciting future."

Perdue lauded the way UNG develops leaders through its Corps of Cadets.

"I'm delighted that we still have young men and women who are committed to the safety of our nation," Perdue said. "The culture of leadership development at UNG is one of the best in the nation."

UNG's yearlong Sesquicentennial celebration, highlighted by events like the one at Liberty Plaza, has served as an opportunity to honor the university's heritage, celebrate its present achievements, and focus on where it will lead next.

UNG President Bonita Jacobs received a commendation from Kemp and Georgia Senate and House of Representatives resolutions in honor of the milestone.

"As we seek to produce future generations of military leaders, I am very grateful to the University System of

Georgia Board of Regents, to our state legislators, and to Governor Kemp for their ongoing support and commitment to our plans to expand and modernize our Military Leadership Center so that we can continue to support our outstanding cadets," Jacobs said.

A day before UNG's visit, legislative leaders approved \$1.3 million in design funds for a new UNG Military Science Center in the amended Fiscal Year 2023 state budget. Gooch, who earned a Bachelor of Business Administration in management and a Master of Public Administration from UNG, helped secure the funding and has seen first-hand the university's impact in his district.

"UNG has made a difference in our region for generations," Gooch said.

Wilson, a 1993 UNG graduate, serves as commanding general for the Georgia Army National Guard. About 200 UNG cadets serve annually in the Georgia Army National Guard while in college, and 40 of them per year commission as second lieutenants when they graduate. Wilson noted that more than half of the Georgia Army National Guard's company and battalion commanders are UNG alumni.

"Thank you for your willingness to serve and to lead," Wilson said. "I know you are up for the challenges ahead."

Jacobs noted that, for 150 years, UNG's Corps of Cadets has been a signature element of the university, and that the military education program still is an essential part of the university's mission today.



UNG President Bonita Jacobs received a commendation from Gov. Brian Kemp celebrating UNG's 150th anniversary.



Some of UNG's cadets who serve in the Army National Guard met with Maj. Gen. Dwayne Wilson, commander of the Georgia Army National Guard.

UNG's Color Guard marches in the March 7 review at the Capitol.

The Blue Ridge Rifles Drill Team prepares for a demonstration at the event on Liberty Plaza.





State Sen. Steve Gooch, a UNG alumnus, addresses the cadets and audience. He helped secure funding for UNG's Military Science Center expansion in the Fiscal Year 2023 amended budget.

"Our graduates continue to serve in some of the most demanding and complex state, national and global assignments," she said, as she recognized three alumni in attendance who are among the more than 60 general officers UNG has produced.

The three alumni, all from Georgia, who are flag officers and were members of the stage party are: retired Maj. Gen. Bil Johnson, '72, retired Lt. Gen. Burke Garrett, '81, and retired Gen. Stephen Townsend, '82.

A large contingent of state legislators attended the celebration on Liberty Plaza. Among those lawmakers were Sen. Max Burns, former dean of UNG's Mike Cottrell College of Business; Sen. Shelly Echols, '02; Rep. Stan Gunter, '81, and Rep. Will Wade, '01.

For more information on UNG's 150th anniversary, including photos and video from the event at the Capitol, visit the Sesquicentennial Celebration website at ung.edu/150.

Cadets grateful for experience at Capitol

About 50 University of North Georgia (UNG) cadets embraced the opportunity to take part in a review by Gov. Brian Kemp marking UNG's 150th anniversary at Liberty Plaza across from the State Capitol in Atlanta on March 7.

Retired Col. Joseph Matthews, UNG commandant of cadets, expressed gratitude that UNG's Corps of Cadets was able to shine on such a high-profile stage.

"The 150-year history of the UNG Corps of Cadets was possible due to the unwavering support of our state leaders. Because of their support, the Military College of Georgia will continue to have the resources to educate and train the best leaders for our state and nation," Matthews said. "The sampling of cadets who formed on Liberty Plaza did an excellent job of representing the entire Corps of Cadets. Their discipline and professionalism reflect the quality of military and civilian leaders UNG will continue to produce for the next 150 years."

Cadet Capt. Bellana Bradley, a senior from Powder Springs, Georgia, pursuing a degree in biology as a pre-med student, said it was an honor to meet Kemp; University System of Georgia Chancellor Sonny Perdue; and Maj. Gen. Dwayne Wilson, '93, commanding general of the Georgia Army National Guard.

"It was a day to absorb all my surroundings, make connections and open my eyes more in regard to the bigger picture," Bradley, Golf Company commander, said. "Social events, especially, are out of my comfort zone, but it's important to get uncomfortable. Being uncomfortable is the best way to develop yourself because you get to try new things that may develop you personally and as a leader."

Cadet Col. Warren Walker, a senior from Cumming, Georgia, pursuing a degree in cybersecurity, serves as the Corps of Cadets brigade commander.

"It was an honor to lead our cadets in front of such a prestigious audience that included Gov. Kemp, Chancellor Perdue, and Maj. Gen. Wilson," Walker said. "It is truly a blessing to have such strong support from our state officials, and it is important for our program to keep a strong relationship with those who directly impact our lives as students, cadets and Georgia residents."

About 200 UNG cadets serve annually in the Georgia Army National Guard while in college, and 40 of them per year commission as second lieutenants when they graduate. Wilson noted that more than half of the Georgia Army National Guard's company and battalion commanders are UNG alumni.

HAPPY 150th TO UNG!

UNG held celebrations with birthday cake at each of its five campuses Jan. 9-11 to mark the university's 150th anniversary.

PHOTOS BY ALYSSA ANNIS





FARMER MAKES HISTORY AS RANGER SCHOOL GRAD

By Clark Leonard

PHOTO BY STEVE SHEPHERD

University of North Georgia alumna 2nd Lt. Hayley Farmer, '22, on April 7 became the first female to graduate from Ranger School after commissioning as an officer from UNG.

It isn't the first time Farmer has made history, either. In May 2022, she was the first woman to commission into the Army infantry branch as her first choice from UNG, and only the second woman overall to commission into the infantry from UNG.

"Ranger School is a physically and mentally grueling combat leadership course designed to push Ranger students to the limits of their endurance often under extreme and hazardous conditions approaching that of actual combat," Retired Lt. Col. Keith Antonia, UNG interim vice president for leadership and global engagement and a Ranger Hall of Fame member, said. "Despite a high attrition and recycle rate, Lieutenant Farmer made it straight through the 62-day course. That takes a lot of heart, guts, determination, and stamina."

Farmer earned a litany of honors during her time at UNG. She was a part of three top-four Ranger Challenge teams at the Sandhurst Military Skills Competition, each of which won the ROTC title in the event at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. Ranger Challenge is the varsity sport of Army ROTC, and teams compete against other colleges in events such as patrolling, marksmanship, weapons assembly, grenade assault course, Army Combat Fitness Test, land navigation, and road march.

"2nd Lt. Farmer's success at the U.S. Army's premier small-unit leadership school, Ranger School, is a testament to her determination and mental and physical strength, as well as her demonstrated capability and leadership," Col. Bryan Kirk, UNG professor of military science, said. "The Corps of Cadets and senior ROTC program at UNG set conditions for her to grow and succeed, but her personal grit and focus on excellence enabled her to achieve this milestone."



Farmer also earned the USAA Warrior Ethos Award for outstanding performance at Advanced Camp at Fort Knox, Kentucky, the summer before her senior year, and after completing Advanced Camp, she helped mentor younger cadets at Basic Camp, also at Fort Knox.

Farmer earned a degree in criminal justice and was a Distinguished Military Graduate. The Griffin, Georgia, native was Golf Company commander during her senior year.

Retired Maj. Richard Neikirk, assistant commandant of cadets, recalled Farmer telling him her junior year she wanted to branch in the infantry and go to Ranger School. Now, it's all unfolding.

"From the start, she was focused on succeeding and achieving something great here in the Corps of Cadets," Neikirk said. "She's a very smart young lady. She's physically fit. She has a great head on her shoulders. She has grit, and she knew she could do it. She's doing a great job for herself, her family and her school. She will be an outstanding leader for the U.S. Army."



ALUMNI ASSOCIATION HONORS '20 UNDER 40'

The University of North Georgia Alumni Association's inaugural "20 Under 40" class recognizes leaders in business, healthcare, education, criminal justice, and more. Alumni Relations Officer Jared Patterson and the Young Alumni Board created the new recognition program to honor UNG young alumni for extraordinary accomplishments, significant professional achievements, or distinguished service to others.

"The '20 Under 40' program allows Alumni Relations to highlight the quality of the outstanding graduates UNG is producing with every graduating class," Wendi Huguley, '90, director of Alumni Relations and Annual Giving, said. "These individuals will do great things in their communities and around the world, and we couldn't be more delighted to highlight their work and their intelligence. They are a mere representation of the quality of so many of our graduates."

The following individuals, in alphabetical order, are inaugural honorees:

- Maxwell Z. Bentley, '19, founder and executive producer for the Bentley Media Group.
- Jennifer Cantor, '08, co-owner of Rivers Academy in Alpharetta, Georgia.
- Michele A. Dugan '13, coordinator of resource development for Forsyth County Schools.
- Jacob Elliott, '10, software developer for Dark Wolf Solutions.
- Emma El-Shami, '16, Emory University Hospital nurse.
- Christie Gribble, '08, president and CEO of the Fannin County Chamber of Commerce & CVB.
- John Hayes, '13, head distiller at Cotton & Reed, a rum distillery in Washington, D.C.
- Megan Huggins, '15, founder and operations manager Key Title & Escrow, which is based in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

- Rachael Lacey, '17, civilian physical therapist and clinical director for the 11th Air Defense Artillery Brigade, working within Holistic Health and Fitness.
- Brandon Lowell, '06, co-owner and chief strategy officer of Keller Interiors, LLC, a national flooring installation contractor.
- Mark Pettitt, '17, UNG WORC Program grant coordinator and Hall County Board of Education member.
- Ashlee Pollard, '22, director of Student Solutions & Momentum Center at the University of West Georgia.
- Jordan Rowland, '11, senior director of fundraising and events at The Sassafras Group, LLC in Gainesville, Georgia.
- Rajpal Sagoo, '16, partner at MDD Holdings and chief information officer and a minority partner in Rugby ATL, the Atlanta franchise of Major League Rugby.
- Ashley E. Simpson, '05, '06, '09, Georgia Heart Institute of Northeast Georgia Medical Center nurse.
- Tyler Smiley, '10, senior pastor at Lakewood Baptist Church in Gainesville, Georgia.
- Ashlee Todd, '10, Gwinnett County Public Schools special education department chair for the Assisting Developing Adults with Productive Transitions program.
- Josh Walker, '10, owner and operator of North Georgia Wine Tours in Cleveland, Georgia.
- Andrea Wells, '04, North America regional investigations manager for Facebook/Meta.
- Cody Williamson, '12, crime scene specialist for the Georgia Department of Corrections.

To nominate alumni for UNG's 20 under 40 program, visit ungalumni.org/20-under-40.

WOMEN OF UNG HONOR STUDENTS, ALUMNAE



By Denise Ray

PHOTO BY ALYSSA ANNIS

Ten female students and five alumnae were recognized by the Women of UNG, a shared-interest group of the university's alumni association, for their leadership on March 5.

Among the honorees of the Women of UNG 2023 Female Student Leadership Award are UNG cadets and a Rhodes Scholarship finalist.

Student recipients were:

- Michelle Alvarado, a fall 2022 graduate from Cornelia, Georgia, with a degree in English with a concentration in literature.
- Cadet Laurana Bradley, a senior from Powder Springs, Georgia, pursuing a degree in criminal justice.
- Cadet Courtney Brewer, a senior from Fort Wayne, Indiana, pursuing a degree in chemistry.
- Cadet Isabelle Clark, a senior from Davenport, Florida, pursuing a degree in nursing.
- Ashley Espinoza, a senior from Gainesville, Georgia, pursuing a degree in middle grades education.

- Madeline Grasso, a senior from Cumming, Georgia, pursuing a degree in modern languages with a concentration in Arabic language and literature.
- Danielle Humphrey, from Lynn Haven, Florida, pursuing a Master of Business Administration degree.
- Anna Møller, a senior from Copenhagen, Denmark, pursuing a degree in psychology and a minor in organizational leadership and a 2022 Rhodes Scholarship finalist.
- Cadet Allyson Smith, a junior from Nashville, Tennessee, pursuing a degree in mathematics.
- Clare Stevens, a senior pursuing a degree in information systems.

The alumnae honorees were:

- Sarah Draper, '87
- The Honorable Angela Duncan '91
- Dr. Judy Cason Forbes, '72
- Dr. Robin Davis Jones, '96
- Mary Helen Mashburn McGruder, '68

LEWIS SOCIETY RECOGNIZES OUTSTANDING WOMEN

By Denise Ray

Highlighting accomplishments of alumnae, the Women of UNG inducted 26 women into the first class of the Lewis Society in March.

In 1873, then-North Georgia Agricultural College welcomed its first class of students, including 98 men and 79 women, among them Willie B. and Mary Lewis, daughters of President David Lewis. Willie became the first woman in Georgia to receive a bachelor's degree from an institution of higher education.

"The purpose of the Women of UNG Lewis Society is to be a welcoming, inclusive community of like-minded women, gathered to create a network of support, recognizing women who have worked toward the advancement of women at UNG and in their careers and communities throughout the world," Karen Frost, founding chair of the Women of UNG, said.

The idea for the society came from Alumni Relations Executive Director Wendi Huguley, '90.

"I have been quite passionate for some time about creating the Lewis Society, and Karen Frost, Gay Lang and Donna Scott and the Women of UNG Board were super supportive in giving assistance to make it happen under their umbrella, which only made sense," Huguley said. "I was on their founding board before I joined the Office of Alumni Relations. When I was at Auburn, I was inducted into the Katherine Cooper Cater Society, honoring their former dean of women, Dean Cater. It is a very prestigious organization. Since NGAC was the first to admit women into public higher education in Georgia, I felt it only made sense."

Among those "firsts" for UNG as an institution include being the first of the six senior military colleges to accept women in the Corps of Cadets and the first in Georgia to award a basketball scholarship to a female athlete. UNG alumnae have been the first to serve on the Executive Board for Coca-Cola, and the first to serve as chair of the Georgia State Transportation Board.

"These are the 'firsts' that we know about, but there is no doubt that we will discover more as time goes on," Frost said.

In the pioneering spirit of Willie and Mary Lewis, the first class of alumnae were inducted at the Women of UNG Leadership luncheon March 5 and include:

- Betty Chapman, '58
- Lorraine Payne, '63
- Mary Ann Robinson, '63
- The Honorable Judy Helton, '67
- Mary Helen McGruder, '67
- Dr. Judy Forbes, '72
- Judy Palmer, '74
- Sue Malone, '77
- Donna Scott, '81
- Laura Croft, '85
- Sarah Draper, '87
- Ann Hammel, '89
- The Honorable Angela Duncan, '91
- Elizabeth Rosner, '92
- Jenny Muller, '94
- Dr. Robin Jones, '96
- Holly Jones, '03
- Ann Alexander, '63
- Patricia Powell, '72
- Rochelle Schneickert, '72
- Beth Brownlee, '79
- Emily Dunn, '93
- The Honorable Kimberly Childs, '94
- Col. Greta Railsback, '99
- Lt. Col. Rebecca Wood D'Angelo, '02
- Jacqueline Daniel, '04

"It is our desire that they will continue to be an example of strong leadership, mentoring and encouraging our students at UNG. It has been said, 'We should study the past to effectively prepare for our future.' With that thought in mind, these women are now in a unique position of being able to pass the torch of strong leadership to colleagues and future beneficiaries of this great university," Frost said.

Where I Lead: In the art world



Brittany Fanning, '14, earned a degree in studio art. Based in Los Angeles, she has had collections in galleries all over the world and her first American solo exhibition opened in late 2022.

What are you currently working on?

I'm currently working on a collection, called "Savage Gardens," a series of garden paintings, sometimes working with figurative paintings. There are predators and graves or creepy little places. The pieces have gone up in New York, in Chelsea, and there were 17 paintings altogether. Most of it has sold out. I also have several pieces going to London for a gallery collection. There's a group show in Paris I'm participating in with three of my own pieces. I began this year with an art fair in Seoul and a solo show in Kyoto.

Who is your favorite artist and what inspires you?

I have a few. I really love Hernan Bas, Andy Dixon and David Hockney. I love their painterly style. I think in art school you learn how to draw and paint realistically. After you graduate, you can use those skills to go in another direction, making your work more your own. I love Hernan Bas' work because looking at it up close it can appear like a huge mess of brush strokes and different materials, but I love that far-away view of seeing this great painting. I love the bright colors of Dixon's and the vivid palette of Hockney.

What advice would you give to upcoming artists?

Always look at other artists. There are so many great websites now that you can read and keep up with the art world. Those resources will help you get a better understanding of what you're getting into. You don't have to be in New York or LA; you can truly be anywhere. Follow artists that do similar work and work that you like. Read about them and see how they got to where they are. Work a lot. I paint 10 hours a day five days a week. If I was in college again, I would tell myself to do a lot more. Most importantly, don't worry about not having a style. That comes later. Just paint.

Do you see yourself as a leader, and how do you show leadership?

I don't see myself as a leader in the traditional sense, because I work alone, but I do take my career and its direction very seriously. After I moved to LA, several galleries visited my studio. It became difficult to tell who was right to work with. I figured the best way to learn would be to talk to artists, so I started an LA artist supper club. There are 20 local artists in the group, and we meet once a month to chat about the art world and galleries.





Northeast Georgia Health System

NGHS **helps launch** **accelerated BSN**

By Clark Leonard

PHOTOS BY ALYSSA ANNIS



Abigail Gibson and Ronny Wilson are two of the students in UNG's first accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing cohort.



The University of North Georgia's first cohort for its accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing (ABSN) developed in partnership with Northeast Georgia Health System (NGHS) track started in January 2023, and UNG is already actively recruiting for its second cohort, which will launch in January 2024. The deadline to apply is Aug. 15.

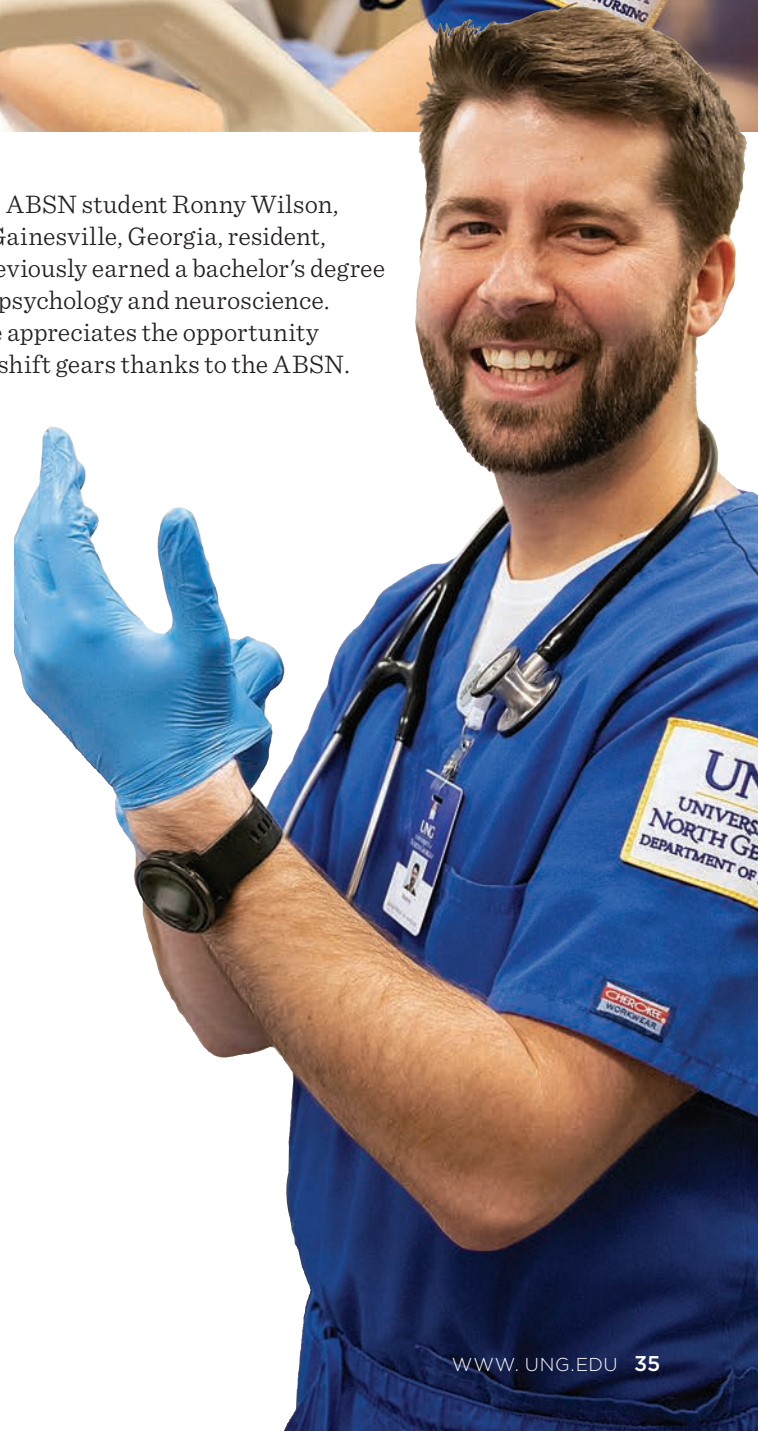
Students who already have a bachelor's or master's degree in another subject are able to enroll in the ABSN track, complete their new degree in only 15 months, and enter the nursing field quickly.

"We know there is an enormous nursing shortage that is putting a burden on the health care system. We need help, and these students in the ABSN track can provide that assistance," Dr. Sharon Jones, assistant professor of nursing and ABSN coordinator, said.

"You're always on your feet. You're always moving. I didn't want to sit behind a desk anymore."

— Ronny Wilson

ABSN student Ronny Wilson, a Gainesville, Georgia, resident, previously earned a bachelor's degree in psychology and neuroscience. He appreciates the opportunity to shift gears thanks to the ABSN.



"I really wanted to pursue something that gave me the opportunity to have a tangible impact with people face to face," Wilson said. "You're always on your feet. You're always moving. I didn't want to sit behind a desk anymore."

UNG's nursing program has a 98% percent success rate on the National Council Licensure Examination test for nurses to become certified and a 100% job placement rate.

Dr.Carolynn DeSandre, dean of UNG's College of Health Sciences and Professions, said the ABSN provides an ideal path for people seeking a career change.

"I love it. The professors are great. There are a lot of hands-on activities we do in labs."

—Abigail Gibson

"We're truly grateful to Northeast Georgia Health System for understanding how this program can have an impact on the nursing shortage in the north Georgia region and supporting it," DeSandre said. "We are able to get these students out more quickly to work as nurses, and they will graduate with high-impact clinical experience with Northeast Georgia Health System."

NGHS also expressed gratitude for the partnership.

"Northeast Georgia Health System is excited to partner with UNG to increase our current workforce," Dr. Melissa Rouse, executive director of nursing excellence and research at NGHS, said. "This accelerated BSN program gives students the opportunity to start working as a nurse quicker than if they were to go through a traditional BSN program, which creates more health care workers to help us meet our mission of improving the health of our community."

Abigail Gibson, a Buford, Georgia, resident, graduated from UNG in 2021 with a bachelor's degree in accounting, though she initially was planning to pursue a Bachelor of Science in Nursing. Not satisfied working in the accounting field, she didn't want to keep thinking "what if" about nursing, and she is glad she took the leap.

"I love it. The professors are great. There are a lot of hands-on activities we do in labs," Gibson said. "They create an environment where we can learn safely. Mistakes are expected and can help prepare us for the future."

ABSN faculty members are intentional in making sure to help students feel connected with faculty members, fellow students and their traditional BSN counterparts.

"Nursing is a community, and we depend on each other," Jones said. "It's important they have the socialization with traditional students, as well."

Wilson is grateful for that approach.

"It is such a tight-knit group," Wilson said. "It helps me feel like I'm building connections that are going to last beyond one class. These instructors are mentoring us through the whole program."

Gibson knows the decision to enroll in the ABSN is a major commitment, but she encourages others to give it a chance.

"People can be hesitant to change majors or get another degree," she said. "It's OK to change your mind. There's nothing wrong with that."



CLASSNOTES

1960s

John Douglas Sr., '64, was proclaimed “Esteemed Veteran of Roswell” by the Roswell, Georgia, mayor and City Council. He served in Vietnam and received his Honorable Discharge from the U.S. Army in 1966 and continued to serve in the Army Reserves. Douglas has been a leader in the Atlanta business community, local Vietnam Veterans groups, and the UNG Alumni Association.



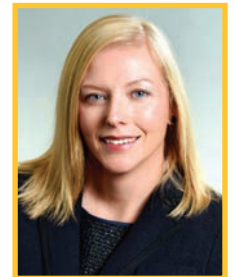
Christopher J. Watkins, '07, was named partner with Hall Booth Smith. He earned his Juris Doctor from the University of Oklahoma College of Law and his Master of Public Administration and Bachelor of Arts from UNG.

1990s



Tony Ferguson, '95, was appointed to the Board of Directors for Georgia Northwestern Technical College. He currently serves as the northwest regional director for Georgia Power.

Brittany Young, '07, joined Maxis Advisors, a Foundry Commercial company, as managing director based in Atlanta. She most recently served as the chief operating officer of the Georgia Department of Economic Development.



2000s



April Brown, '00, was promoted to chemistry section assistant manager of the crime lab at the Georgia Bureau of Investigation Headquarters. In her new role, Brown will be responsible for supervising scientists, scientist trainees, and laboratory technicians in the Chemistry Section.



Elizabeth Andrews, '08, was named director of the Child Victim's Unit within the Medical Examiner's Office of the Georgia Bureau of Investigation. Andrews earned a Bachelor of Science in biology from UNG.

Chris Grimes, '09, was named senior manager for LaFayette Group after serving as director of the Emergency Management Agency for Forsyth County for 10 years.

Dominique Dieujuste, '06, was named financial professional and CEO of Dieujuste Financial LLC after three years of financial services at MetLife and National Financial Service Group.



Elizabeth Davis, '06, '08, was designated 2022 Georgia Independent School Association Lower School Teacher of the Year. Currently a second-grade educator at Lakeview Academy in Gainesville, Georgia. Her first 12 years of teaching were in Lumpkin County Schools.



2010s

Dr. Gregory Morgan, '13, took a role as primary care physician with Anderson Family Medicine, an affiliate of Dawson County Northside, in Dawsonville, Georgia.

Alexander Popp, '16, was named reporter for the Dunwoody and Sandy Springs Crier newspapers at Appen Media Group.



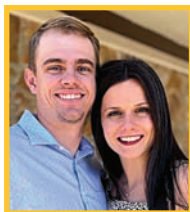
To submit a class note or update your contact information email the Office of Alumni Relations at alumni@ung.edu.

CLASSNOTES



Mark Pettitt, '17, was named interim director of state government relations at UNG. Prior to that, he worked in business development and was a supervisor for UPS for several years. He is a director for the Gainesville Jaycees, UNG WORC Program grant coordinator and Hall County Board of Education member.

Shelby Ventura, '17, was named 2022-23 Teacher of the Year for Robinson Elementary School in Dawsonville, Georgia.



Cris Lopez, '19, Chick-fil-A franchise owner/operator, opened the company's first restaurant in Springfield, Ohio. He started with the company in 2012 as a team member in Dahlonega, Georgia, where he later became the senior director of operations. Lopez was

selected as an owner/operator after completing the company's Leadership Development Program.



Otley part of Miami run to Final Four

Tommy Otley, '20, is the physical therapist and sports scientist for the University of Miami men's basketball team, which reached the 2023 Final Four, and the Miami women's basketball team, which reached the Elite Eight. Otley earned his Doctor of Physical Therapy from UNG in 2020. He previously worked at Duke University for two years, one for a residency and one as part of the prestigious Duke Division I Athletics Fellowship.

Mixon, Lord join ROTC Hall of Fame



Two UNG alumni were inducted into the Army ROTC Hall of Fame in the fall. The induction of retired Lt. Gen. Benjamin "Randy" Mixon, '75, and retired Col. Gerald Lord, '61, means UNG now has nine alumni who have received this honor since the ROTC Hall of Fame started in 2016.

After serving as the UNG Corps of Cadets' brigade commander as a senior, Mixon (pictured, right) served 36 years on active duty and had numerous combat deployments. His Army career included command positions from platoon to theater level, serving in the 82nd Airborne Division, 3rd Infantry Division, 101st Airborne Division, and 75th Ranger Regiment.

Lord (pictured, left) served in the Army for more than 30 years, including a stint as professor of military science and commandant of cadets at UNG from 1984-1988. He also served combat tours in Vietnam. His final active-duty assignment was as commander of the Army Garrison in Fort McPherson, Georgia, from 1988-1991. Lord served another stint as UNG commandant while also serving as director of Auxiliary Services from 1997-1999 and was associate vice president for business and finance from 2001-2008.

Alumnus Ralston, House speaker, passes away

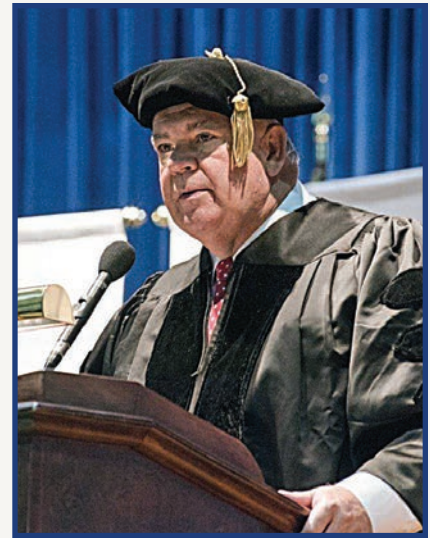
Georgia House of Representatives Speaker David E. Ralston, '76, of Blue Ridge, Georgia, passed away in November 2022, at 68.

"Speaker Ralston was committed to expanding opportunities for quality higher education for students in rural Georgia, and he was instrumental in the creation of UNG's Blue Ridge Campus," UNG President Bonita Jacobs said.

Ralston was born March 14, 1954, in Ellijay, Georgia. He graduated from Gilmer High School in 1972.

Ralston graduated from UNG in 1976 and went on to earn his law degree from the University of Georgia in 1980. He operated his own law firm in Blue Ridge, Georgia, practicing in the Appalachian Judicial Circuit for more than 40 years.

First elected to the Georgia Senate in 1992, Ralston was later elected to the Georgia House of Representatives, where he served his district for more than 20 years and guided the chamber as Speaker of the House for 13 years.



Emeritus faculty member Noble passes away

Dr. Steve Noble, professor emeritus of psychological science at UNG, passed away Feb. 27, 2023. He was 79. Dr. Noble was a beloved longtime professor and colleague who had a tremendous impact on so many students, many who are thriving in the field today.

Originally from Indiana, Noble earned a Ph.D. from UGA and he taught at UNG for 47 years. He was awarded professor emeritus of psychology and sociology upon his retirement in 2008; he continued to teach for the department until 2018.

The Steve Noble Undergraduate Research Fund was established in his name as an emeritus faculty member and lifelong proponent of undergraduate research. Each year, the Charles Steven Noble Research Award is granted to a student that has engaged in and contributed to research of the highest caliber.

His encouragement and mentorship impacted the lives of many departmental alumni who never regretted the long hours spent in the lab and have much to show for the lessons they learned therein.



Dodd, who helped found GTA, passes away

Rosemary Wood Dodd, who served the UNG community in multiple capacities, died March 29 at age 87.

Dodd worked with Ed Cabell to found the Gainesville Theater Alliance in 1979. GTA is a one-of-a-kind, nationally recognized departmental

collaboration between UNG and Brenau University. Emphasizing ensemble and collaboration between programs, GTA's cross-campus union supports an extraordinary production program rivaling the largest theatre schools in the country.

She also served as the first executive director of the Gainesville College Foundation.

Dodd served as the executive director of the Ed Dodd/Mark Trail Foundation that became a part of Elachee Nature Science Center, where she served as a co-founder of the organization. She was also a co-founder of the Gainesville Ballet, Children's Theater and the North Georgia Community Foundation. She was instrumental in the founding of Lakeview Academy in Gainesville.

Known for her bold colors in her paintings as well as her trademark multi-colored hair, Dodd was celebrated for her creativity, as a lover of all things Gainesville and as a master story teller with a wicked sense of humor.

In Memoriam

ALUMNI

Mr. Gregory Anderson, '80
December 9, 2022

2LT David Balkovetz, '21
January 16, 2023

BG (ret.) Joseph Breedlove, '59
December 5, 2022

Mr. Gordon Brewer, '65
October 1, 2022

Mr. John Brewer, '61
February 28, 2023

Mr. James Browning, '74
November 11, 2022

Mr. William "Bill" Bryan
January 29, 2023

Mrs. Helen Von Miller Buckelew, '02
October 11, 2022

Mr. Walter Butler, '49
February 1, 2023

Mr. John Carlton, '69
January 15, 2023

Mr. Bill Carpenter, '56
March 1, 2023

Dr. William Cobb, '61
October 1, 2022

Mrs. Cornelia Spight Copelan, '68
December 29, 2022

Ms. Mary Cordell, '81
January 5, 2023

Mrs. Sara Mote Cronan, '41
December 28, 2022

Mrs. Edna Bruce Davenport, '54
February 14, 2023

COL (ret.) Willys Davis, '53
November 1, 2022

Mrs. Gloria Craig Denton, '76
February 3, 2023

Mr. Jamie Dunlap, '91
December 3, 2022

Mr. Cuyler Dupree, '70
October 14, 2022

Ms. Elise Corry Edmonds, '42
October 24, 2022

Mrs. Marie Webb Faulkner, '76
December 16, 2022

Mr. E. Michael "Eddie" Fortner, '78
February 21, 2023

Mrs. Charlotte Shelton Fowler, '89
October 9, 2022

Ms. Linda Gooch, '66
September 25, 2022

Mr. Mitchell Green, '98
January 16, 2023

Mrs. Lucile Mann Hayes, '65
October 12, 2022

Mrs. Madelyn Anthony Henderson, '43
November 6, 2022

Mrs. Linda Burns Hill, '63
November 9, 2022

Mr. Caleb Jackson, '16
October 7, 2022

Mr. Charles Dean Jeffries, '50
February 16, 2022

Mr. Albert Jolly, '61
February 21, 2023

Ms. Barbara Peters Jones, '54
December 24, 2022

Ms. Brenda Jones, '78
March 2, 2023

Mrs. Cheryl Mitchell Jones, '71
December 10, 2022

Mr. Thomas Jones, '57
November 1, 2022

Mr. John Kelley, '49
November 17, 2022

Ms. Carolyn Krauss, '16
January 15, 2023

Mrs. Eleanor Edwards Littleton, '56
October 21, 2022

Mrs. Susan Bowling Luthi, '71
March 2, 2023

Mrs. Cheryl Ann Mitchell, '95
December 10, 2022

Ms. Lillie Mann, '78
January 4, 2023

Mr. Earnest Mason, '08
December 2, 2022

Mrs. Ramona West Nichols, '58
January 23, 2022

Mrs. Judith Evan Nixon, '62
February 6, 2023

Mrs. Bobbie "Bunny" Rucker Oxford, '53
November 19, 2022

Mr. Evans Palmour, '66
January 29, 2023

Ms. Dora Shaw Pate, '77
October 20, 2022

Mrs. Willifred Earnest Petteway, '50
December 11, 2022

LTC (ret.) James Robert Pierce, '54
October 18, 2022

Mr. Eli Benson Plunkett, '56
December 31, 2022

MAJ (ret.) John Prosch, '80
January 2, 2023

Rep. David Ralston, '76
November 22, 2022

Mrs. Mary Ware Rhodes, '84
January 18, 2023

Mr. Carl Newton Richardson Jr., '60
January 12, 2023

Mr. Eugene "Gene" B. Roberts II, '68
November 30, 2022

Mr. Neal Rumble, '49
December 30, 2022

Mrs. Evelyn Riden Sheffield, '50
November 14, 2022

Mrs. Judy Dale Spain, '70
November 7, 2022

Mr. Jason Michael Stowe, '95
October 25, 2022

Mr. Samuel Charles Tanner, '66
January 5, 2023

Mr. Blake Thompson, '82
January 18, 2023

Mrs. Catherine Samples Thurston, '64
October 16, 2022

Mr. Miles "MT" Tipton, '65
March 6, 2023

Ms. Kay Jones Vaught, '84
March 18, 2023

Ms. Katelyn Wallace, '21
January 23, 2023

Ms. Ashley Whirrell, '10
February 23, 2023

Mrs. Joyce Aaron Wilson, '82
February 13, 2023

Mrs. Trina Thomas Wingo, '09
February 14, 2023

FACULTY/STAFF/FRIENDS

Mr. John Barnes
February 21, 2023

Ms. Rosemary Wood Dodd
March 29, 2023

Dr. Markus Hitz
January 17, 2023

Mrs. Joan Kasdorf Kraft
January 15, 2023

Mr. Richard Negley
December 8, 2022

Dr. Steve Noble
February 27, 2023

Dr. John Mauldin Paget Sr.
January 10, 2023

Mrs. Carol Ann White
October 6, 2022

Upcoming Events

STARLIGHT CELEBRATION & FIREWORKS

AUG.
26



SEPT.
9

MAY

May 11

Backyard Bash
Cumming Campus

May 25-31

NCAA Division II Softball
Championship co-hosted by
UNG
Chattanooga, Tennessee

JULY

July 4

Holiday

AUGUST

August 4

Summer Commencement &
Commissioning Ceremonies
Dahlonega Campus

August 19

FROG Week Graduation
Dahlonega Campus

August 21

First Day of Classes

August 26

24th Annual Starlight
Celebration & Fireworks
Gainesville Campus

SEPTEMBER

September 9

UNG Night at the Atlanta Braves
Truist Park

September 14

Annual Athletics
Hall of Fame Ceremony
Dahlonega Campus
Convocation Center

September 15-16

Georgia Film Festival
Gainesville Campus

September 15-17

Boar's Head Weekend
Dahlonega Campus

September 28

Tomato Sandwich Supper
Blue Ridge Campus

OCTOBER

October 10

UNG Scholarship Gala
Dahlonega Campus
Convocation Center

October 19

Oconeefest
Oconee Campus

October 21

Annual Gold Rush All-Alumni
Mixer
Dahlonega Campus
Alumni House Patio

NOVEMBER

November 3-5

National Leadership Challenge
Dahlonega Campus

November 4

NCAA Division II
Men's and Women's
Cross-Country
Southeast Regional
Gainesville Campus

November 20-25

Fall Break

DECEMBER

December 15-17

Fall Commencement
Dahlonega Campus

Visit calendar.ung.edu
for times and other
details, as well as
additional event
opportunities.
Visit ungalumni.org
for updates related
to alumni events.

Thinking of a New Career?

The Accelerated Bachelor of Science In Nursing
developed in partnership with Northeast Georgia Health System

In as little as **15 months**, you can begin a new, exciting,
and rewarding career in nursing with **100% job placement**.



go.ung.edu/absn

UNG
UNIVERSITY of
NORTH GEORGIA™


Northeast Georgia
Health System



Learn more at
www.ung.edu/news



Find us on Facebook at
[/UNG.UniversityofNorthGeorgia](https://www.facebook.com/UNG.UniversityofNorthGeorgia)



Follow our tweets for the
latest UNG news:
[@UofNorthGeorgia](https://twitter.com/UofNorthGeorgia)



Follow our pics for
the latest UNG news:
[@UofNorthGeorgia](https://www.instagram.com/UofNorthGeorgia)



Join our community:
University of
North Georgia



Find our latest videos at
[/UofNorthGeorgia](https://www.youtube.com/UofNorthGeorgia)