



UNIVERSITY OF WEST GEORGIA

Tribute to Retirees

July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023

Fall, 2023

Sponsored by the Association of Retired Faculty and Staff,
University of West Georgia University Advancement,
Office of Human Resources,
and University of West Georgia Foundation
Meg Cooper & Francesca Taylor (Eds.)



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ARFS Coordinating Council Members (2022-2023)

- Anne Richards (President, USGRC voting member, GA-HERO secretary, ARFS Listserv Manager, Bylaws Committee, Newsletter Committee, Nominating Committee, Programs/Events Committee), Psychology
- Meg Cooper (Past President, USGRC alternate member, GA-HERO representative, Bylaws Committee chairperson, Newsletter Committee, Nominating Committee chairperson, Programs/Events Committee), Special Education
- Frank Pritchett (Vice President, Newsletter Committee chairperson, Nominating Committee), Alumni Relations
- Francesca Taylor (Secretary, Bylaws Committee, Programs/Events Committee), Academic Testing Services
- Sally Roberts (Treasurer), Publications and Printing
- Micheal Crafton (At-Large Member, Bylaws Committee, Nominating Committee), English and UWG administration
- Tricia Durrrough (At-Large Member), Business and Finance
- Kevin Hibbard (At-Large Member), Music
- Cecilia Lee (At-Large Member), Spanish
- Ross Miller (At-Large Member), Education
- Anita Thomas (At-Large Member), Richards College of Business
- John von Eschenbach (At-Large Member, Scholarship Committee chairperson), Curriculum and Instruction
- Nancy Watkins (At-Large Member, Nominating Committee), Center for Diversity and Inclusion
- Alice Wesley (At-Large Member, Programs/Events Committee), Graduate School

UNIVERSITY OF WEST GEORGIA
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT



Colleagues,

I am honored to congratulate you on your retirement and share the depth of appreciation and admiration I have for you as you begin this new chapter in your life.

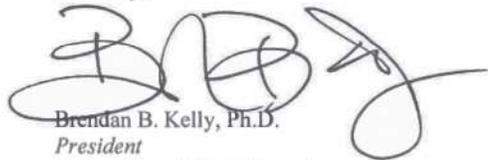
Your years of dedication to our university have made a positive and lasting impact, and your quality of work has ensured generations of students will have the opportunity for a first-choice higher education experience – and the post-graduate outcomes we help them create – at the University of West Georgia.

Because of your service, UWG is a destination university in Georgia, and I am grateful for the role you played in that achievement. Your loyalty and commitment have not gone unnoticed, and I am humbled and honored to have served alongside you.

You will always remain an important part of the UWG community. It is my hope that you will stay in touch with us, so that we may share in your new experiences and adventures. Please consider participating in the Association of Retired Faculty and Staff as a way of keeping up with news about UWG and your fellow retirees.

May this new era in your life bring endless joy and great prosperity. Wherever life takes you, I hope UWG holds a special and enduring place in your heart and mind.

Sincerely,



Brendan B. Kelly, Ph.D.
President
University of West Georgia

The Association of Retired Faculty & Staff (ARFS)

was established in 2004 as a voluntary association of the university's retired faculty and staff who joined together for several purposes: to promote the well-being of its members; support the University of West Georgia retiree community; foster continued involvement of retirees in the mission of the university; facilitate communication between the university and its retirees; seek to promote the scholarly, social, and cultural interests of the retiree community; and address matters related to benefits and resources for retirees.

Membership in ARFS is free and members decide for themselves how much involvement they wish to have in the organization and its activities.

Each year, ARFS recognizes persons from the faculty and staff who have retired from full-time employment at the university. A fall reception for recent retirees is combined with an annual retiree reunion and the ARFS annual meeting. Participating retirees receive a medallion from the university with their name, department, and years of service engraved on it. Those attending the reception will have a formal picture taken when they come onstage to receive the medallion at the reception. Retirees may also choose to be included in this commemorative booklet.

Many activities in which ARFS members have been involved in the past were curtailed due to lingering concerns about COVID-19, as well as the need to focus on activities previously implemented by UWG personnel on behalf of the organization and on concerns related to changing policies and procedures of the university impacting retirees. In the past, ARFS has sponsored programs featuring adventures of our traveling colleagues, and members have participated in various activities, including campus tours, off-campus trips, service projects, parades, plays, and concerts. Recently, participation has focused on sharing information through the ARFS listserv, problem solving for retirees requesting information, and publishing our newsletter, *The Rejuvenator*. We are planning an information session related to cybersecurity and health benefits as a supplement to this year's annual fall event (retiree reunion, recognition of recent retirees, and ARFS annual meeting). If you have suggestions about activities you would like to see us organize in the future, please do let us know.

About nine years ago, ARFS joined a national organization of retiree organizations in higher education, known as AROHE (Association of Retirement Organizations in Higher Education -- <https://www.arohe.org/>). Through a state subsidiary of that group, GA-HERO (<https://ga-hero.org/>), some of us have attended meetings with retirees in higher education from all around Georgia. In the meetings, we have learned a lot about what other retiree organizations are doing. Any of you are welcome to join those who attend these meetings. Meetings/events have been organized as in-person or online gatherings.

In 2015 the University System of Georgia created a retiree council (USGRC) to advise the Chancellor's Office and the Board of Regents on matters of consequence to retirees. The president of the ARFS Coordinating Council is our "official voting member" at USGRC meetings, and we are also allowed a designated "alternate member" in the event our official voting member cannot make the meeting. Currently, Anne Richards is serving as the official representative of UWG and also takes notes

to pass along to others. Meg Cooper is serving as the alternate member. While the USGRC continues to have a focus on Medicare-eligible retirees' use of Alight Retiree Health Solutions (formerly the Aon Retiree Healthcare Exchange), it is also looking at many other issues of concern to retirees, including access to library resources on system campuses, faculty emeriti status, well-being resources/services for retirees, and communication matters.

To become a member of ARFS is easy. Just contact Meg Cooper (mcooper@emeriti.westga.edu, 770-880-5078), Anne Richards (arichard@emeriti.westga.edu, 770-834-8143), or Lauren Niedringhaus (lniedringhaus@westga.edu, 678-839-1034) to let us know you want to join. We will need contact information. An e-mail address will help most since we use the ARFS listserv to share a variety of information. However, our newsletter, *The Rejuvenator*, is also distributed by postal mail when necessary. We invite you to become an active member of this organization, especially as we are able to get back to more in-person events.

We also hope you will take advantage of some or all of the benefits available to you as a retiree. There are a lot of them, such as a courtesy parking hangtag, eligibility for free membership to utilize all facilities in the Campus Center (secured in 2017), participation in well-being activities, eligibility to check out books from the Ingram Library, reduced rates on West Georgia Theatre Company performances, free admission to UWG athletic events, and a 10% discount at the University Bookstore. We continue to look into the possibility of securing other benefits as well.

UWG Retiree Legacy Scholarship

ARFS is pleased and proud to announce that the current recipient of the UWG Retiree Legacy Scholarship is Madeline Wentworth, a sophomore majoring in Early Childhood Education and the granddaughter of retiree Jimmy Agan. We hope to hear from Madeline as part of our annual reunion.

Eligibility Criteria:

- Recipients will be full-time graduate or undergraduate students who are retirees of the institution or who are direct descendants or an immediate family relation of a retired faculty or staff member (with a minimum of 10 years of service to the institution).
- Recipients will have a minimum cumulative GPA 2.5, with preference given to applicants with a higher GPA.
- Preference will be given to applicants with a demonstrated financial need as determined by the UWG Financial Aid Office.

For Future Applicants:

Students may apply by going to the University of West Georgia Scholarship Portal ([westga.edu/scholarships](https://www.westga.edu/scholarships)) and following the instructions. The UWG Scholarship Application will open annually in October. The scholarship deadline for incoming students is February 1st. Priority will be given to students who apply before February 1st, but applications will be considered until a candidate is selected.

If you would like to make a gift to help fund this scholarship, check out <https://www.westga.edu/give/how-to-give> for ways you can contribute, including through an online giving form. Be sure to designate the “UWG Retiree Legacy Scholarship” if you wish to support this scholarship. Another option is to go directly to <https://giving.westga.edu/arfs/> where you can choose to donate to ARFS or to the UWG Retiree Legacy Scholarship online. You could also contact Ketty Cusick, Senior Director of Development, at kcusick@westga.edu or 678-839-6501, if you have any questions about giving to UWG.

Retired Faculty & Staff Tribute Booklet

July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023

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Note: If you are aware of retirees who have been inadvertently left out of this booklet, please let us know so we can recognize their service in a subsequent year.

Blaise J. Bergiel

Position held: Professor

Department: Marketing

Years of Service: 2010-2023



Tribute Statement:

We applaud Captain Blaise Bergiel, the military man who served as part of Special Forces in Vietnam, and thank him for his service. We applaud Professor Blaise Bergiel for his decades of service as an academic man at UWG and several schools prior to that. We applaud Dr. Blaise Bergiel for his great service as an administrator.

Blaise was one of the Marketing Department's shining stars. He still is a shining star; he's just not part of the department. Officially, that is. His wisdom and his presence will stay with us for a long time. His exceptional teaching and rapport with his students are legendary. His frequent visits to Starbucks for one-on-one conversations with students may have declined a bit recently, but his passion for taking care of students was unabated. He frequently would stick his head in my door and impart some words of wisdom (always needed by me and always welcome), share some stimulating thoughts, or ask some profound questions. While he will always be admired for his many and varied professional accomplishments by his colleagues and while I personally will miss him tremendously, the biggest loss will be to the students of UWG and the Richards College of Business.

[Beheruz N. Sethna, President Emeritus and Regents' Professor of Business, Richards College of Business, UWG]

Plans for Retirement:

- traveling both in the United States and abroad
- enjoying his grandchildren
- taking a welding class

Jami Payne Bower

Position held: Associate Vice President

Departments: University Communications & Marketing, University Advancement

Years of Service: 2010-2022



Tribute Statement:

Few individuals embody the Go West spirit at the University of West Georgia more comprehensively than Jami Bower. Indeed, it was under Jami's visionary leadership that UWG adopted the award-winning Go West brand, electrifying a plateaued university identity with a rallying cry that continues to resonate with students, alumni, faculty, staff, and other members of the university community.

Jami's time at UWG capped off an already luminous career as an executive in marketing and advertising firms in Atlanta and Houston. Following a decade of service as Associate Vice President of University Communications and Marketing - in which she oversaw the development, planning, and execution of UWG's holistic marketing and communications strategy - Jami transitioned into a new role as Associate Vice President for Constituent Relations and Engagement. In this position, Jami leveraged her impeccable skillset to drive a comprehensive stakeholder engagement program, enlivening the award-winning Go West brand through unique, meaningful experiences. The distinctive engagements she designed inspired advocacy, connection, philanthropy, and service to UWG for countless key constituents.

[Colton Campbell, Executive Director of Communications, University Communications and Marketing, UWG]

Plans for Retirement:

"I am already in the midst of retirement, and I am savoring time with family and friends - while growing my faith, garden, culinary skills, physical and mental wellness, and throwing in a little travel!"

Brandy James Chambless

Positions held: Senior Lecturer in English,
Director

Department: General Education Department,
First Year Writing Program

Years of Service: 1998-2023



Tribute Statement:

Brandy earned her Bachelor's and Master's degrees in English at UWG. When she began teaching First Year Writing in 1998, she quickly established a reputation as an excellent teacher, one whose innovative classes and student-centered approach drew praise from students and colleagues alike. Yet Brandy's most impressive accomplishment was her role as founding Director of UWG's First Year Writing program. Under Brandy's steady guidance, the program grew to become a cornerstone of the core curriculum. She served as Director for fifteen years, reprising that role for several years after she first stepped down. Brandy's colleagues recognize her unwavering integrity, her genuine collegiality, and her commitment to excellence inside and outside of the classroom.

Upon her retirement, Brandy will continue work with Hickory Level Hound Rescue, focusing on Siberian Huskies. She also will be working on grant writing with Summit Quest, a nonprofit providing support to children affected by cancer in the Rome, Georgia area, and serving as contributing editor to *Voices Over Cancer*. Finally, she will continue writing her memoir, *My Life In Pieces*.

Her friends and colleagues in the FYW program will miss her terribly but are thrilled for her as she embarks on the next chapter of her life.

*[Bonnie Jett; Director, Academic Transitions Program; Coordinator,
First Year Writing Program; Senior Lecturer, University College; UWG]*

Plans for Retirement:

- spending time with family
- continuing work rescuing Siberian Huskies

Matthew Clay

Positions held: Director of Ed. Technology Services, Manager of Computer Operations, Executive Director, Associate Director

Departments: College of Education, Instructional Technology Services, UWG Athletic Foundation, Athletics

Years of Service: 1992-2022

Tribute Statement:

Matthew began his UWG career starting and directing the College of Education's Education Technology Services unit. He implemented many initiatives, allowing the college to be a campus technology leader. Matthew also served on the university Technology Planning Committee and led the project commemorating the centennial celebration for UWG in 2006.

Moving to ITS when IT units were consolidated, Matthew managed the ITS data center and led development of a master plan to institute major improvements that are in place today and laid the foundation for UWG's high-quality data center.

Matthew is a valued colleague who worked with me to help grow the technology base for the Colleges of Education and Arts & Sciences. I'm thankful for the many years we served together and know he will be missed at UWG.

[Dale K. Driver, retired Assistant VP of IT/Chief Information Officer, Information Technology Services, UWG]

Matthew was the right person at the right time for West Georgia Athletics. He started off as a volunteer member of the West Georgia Athletic Booster Club, then was an integral part of the creation, establishment, and management of the University of West Georgia Athletic Foundation (UWGAF). The UWGAF remains a critical part of the growth and success of UWG Athletics. Matthew became the first Executive Director of the UWGAF. With his leadership, Athletics saw enormous growth in revenue generation and philanthropic support. After his time with the UWGAF, Matthew became the Associate Athletic Director for External Relations.

Many thanks go out to Matthew from all who those associated with UWG Athletics and the UWGAF. We all wish him the very best in his next chapter of life.

[Daryl Dickey, former Athletic Director, UWG]

Plans for Retirement:

- traveling, especially when his wife retires
- building a new house in Carrollton
- spending more time with children and grandchildren
- fishing and golfing



Eilis Crean

Position held: Professor

Department: Art

Years of Service: 2001-2022



Tribute Statement:

Eilis's teaching career began in Dublin, Ireland. After moving to the USA, she came to the UWG Department of Art as a limited term instructor.

The impact of her teaching was immediate and visible. She accepted a tenure track position in painting in 2003. With a productive studio practice and extensive knowledge of the contemporary art world, Eilis reinvigorated the painting curriculum and aided in the design of new courses that continue to inspire and inform students. A consummate artist, she introduced her professional experiences, taught students artistic discipline, and supported and encouraged students.

Eilis worked with her colleagues to keep the Department of Art a viable, critical, and comprehensive place within the university and beyond. She was an essential member of many committees and a mentor to students and new faculty. In a multi-disciplined department, she shared her expertise and never ceased brainstorming and collaborating with colleagues to encourage their success. Her wisdom and friendship will be greatly missed.

Eilis continues to expand her studio practice and professional career, as she is represented at Spalding Nix Fine Art and preparing for other professional shows, including an exhibition reflecting on the pandemic at the Center for Disease Control at Emory University in 2024.

[Debrah Santini, Professor of Art, UWG]

Plans for Retirement:

- delightedly devoting time to her studio practice

Janet Donohoe

Positions held: Professor and Dean (2015-2023)

Departments: Philosophy and Honors College

Years of Service: 1998-2023



Tribute Statement:

Dr. Janet Donohoe's career at UWG exemplifies the blend of teaching, scholarship, and leadership to which we all aspire. Her contributions to UWG are multifold, all demonstrating her dedication to her students, to her fields of expertise (Phenomenology, Existentialism, and Hermeneutics), and to the academic community. Her three books and numerous articles attest to her productive, focused scholarship, just as her many conference presentations exemplify her commitment to scholarly communities. Her dedication to the intersection of teaching/scholarship was a foundational part of her career—her numerous publications on the Phenomenology of Place, for instance, informed her courses at all levels.

Her service to the university community, likewise, embodied these principles. She served three years as Program Director of the department, enhancing opportunities for student engagement (perhaps most notably, the Meeting of the Minds program which fostered students' intellectual curiosity and investment in their major). During the last eight years, she served as Dean of the Honors College, an apt culmination of her career-long dedication to student achievement. With principled leadership, Dr. Donohoe initiated new curricula, a university-wide Undergraduate Research conference, and numerous opportunities for Honors students to create and foster community. She inspired students and colleagues alike throughout her career and is greatly appreciated.

[Lisa Crafton, Professor Emerita, English Department, UWG]

Plans for Retirement:

- traveling
- volunteering in her local community regarding food insecurity issues and in the public library

Rolanda Farmer

Positions held: Stacks Manager, Multimedia Graphics Specialist (ITS), Instructional Designer (CTL)

Departments: Ingram Library, Information Technology Services, Center for Teaching & Learning

Years of Service: 1996-2022



Tribute Statement:

Rolanda Farmer joined the UWG family in July of 1996, working for the Ingram Library as a Circulation Assistant and transitioning to Stacks Manager. She joined the ITS family in August 2002, working for the Learning Resource Center as a Graphics Technician and then transitioning to a Multimedia Specialist in 2019. During that time with ITS, she provided a broad range of graphic and multimedia services including format conversions, media duplications, custom graphics (creation and restoration), printing and mounting posters, animated graphics, training students/faculty/staff, ITS website management, and editor for ITS' TechWest bulletin. Along with the many services she provided, she completed her Master of Education degree in Media and Instructional Technology, as well as an Educational Specialist (Ed. S.) degree. She also taught XIDS classes on emerging technologies.

In October of 2020 Rolanda joined the Center for Teaching and Learning team, where she used her experience to help faculty integrate technology into their pedagogical practices.

After 26 years with UWG, Rolanda retired in October of 2022. One of her top goals was to complete her plan to visit all 50 states of the USA, with trips to Alaska and Hawaii to fulfill that goal.

[Brian McCrary, Director of Academic Technology Services, Information Technology Services, UWG]

Plans for Retirement:

- traveling

John Frevert

Positions held: Counselor, Assistant Director of Training

Department: Counseling Center

Years of Service: 1991-2022



Tribute Statement:

A Licensed Professional Counselor, John worked in UWG's Counseling Center for 31 years. He held the title of Assistant Director of Training when he retired, but tirelessly served the Center and campus in various roles. Besides providing personal counseling services, he taught two graduate classes, provided supervision and clinical training for interning counselors, and made numerous presentations to campus groups and professional conferences.

The effectiveness of the Counseling Center was enhanced by his work with the Myers-Briggs Personality Inventory, introduction to the campus of a Biofeedback system, and implementation of other innovations. When Hurricane Katrina brought many displaced New Orleans residents to UWG, he was in charge of social services provided during their extended stay.

Active in professional organizations, John served as President of the Georgia College Counselors Association (GCCA). He received many awards, including recognition from ACCA (the national counselor's organization), GCCAA (as Counselor of the Year and Supervisor of the Year), and from UWG (as Employee of the Year) for his outstanding contributions to the University.

John's service at UWG was vital and pivotal over many years. He will be missed as a counselor, a colleague, and a friend, but we wish him the best in the next chapter of his life.

[Ann Phillips, retired Associate Director of the Counseling Center/Student Development Center, UWG]

Plans for Retirement:

- continuing to explore his interests and skills – as a pianist, bassoonist, gardener, and cook
- looking forward to developing new recipes

William L. Gates

Positions held: Custodial Staff and Maintenance Crew

Departments: Housing and Facilities & Grounds

Years of Service: 1996-2023



Tribute Statement:

William Gates worked at the University of West Georgia for over 25 years. Not only did he mentor me when I first started at UWG, but he also served as a good mentor to the other members of our team.

William set a good example of what a mentor should be. He was a positive influence on his co-workers, not only professionally but personally as well. His contributions to our team's success are greatly appreciated. I know I speak for everyone in our area when I say that having William as a mentor made working at UWG more enjoyable. He not only cared about the work we did but was also concerned about our well-being. That mentorship was truly what we needed at the time.

My team and I will be grateful forever for the investments William made in our work and in our lives. A good mentor is hard to find and impossible to forget. I thank him for everything he has taught me over the years, and I wish him the very best in his retirement, which he absolutely deserves.

[Alvin Paige, RFS Custodial Supervisor, UWG]

Plans for Retirement:

- having time for vacations and travel
- working part-time
- sharing my faith and witnessing to people about Christ

Lisa L. Gezon

Position held: Professor

Department: Anthropology, Psychology, &
Sociology

Years of Service: 1996-2022



Tribute Statement:

From the moment Lisa stepped foot on the campus of UWG she made an indelible impact as a teacher, a scholar, a mentor, and a leader. Coming to UWG in the Fall of 1996, she immediately proved herself to be a teacher of excellence. Everything that Lisa did in her classroom was done superbly and was often used as an example of what all faculty should be doing. In addition, Lisa's work as a scholar made unique contributions to her field of study and reached audiences from the local level to the international level. Through her more than 40 publications and more than 75 presentations, Lisa earned a national reputation as a highly respected anthropologist. However, her contributions to the academic community did not end with her teaching and research. Rather, Lisa grew into a leader and mentor while at UWG, serving the Department of Anthropology as Chair for eight years, tackling hard issues, mentoring both faculty and students, leading with a positive and cheerful attitude, and adding a strong voice to the leadership team. No doubt the legacy that Lisa has left behind at UWG will empower the next generation of students, staff, and faculty to strive for excellence.

[N. Jane McCandless, Retired Professor of Sociology, UWG]

Plans for Retirement:

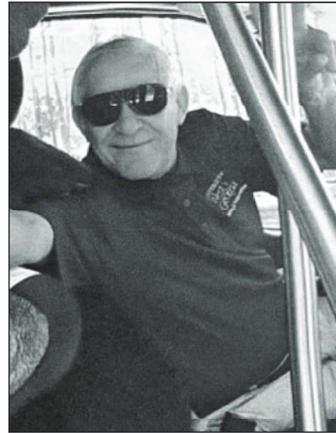
- working as chair of the Anthropology Department at UAB
- looking forward to real retirement in the future

Arturo Gonzalez

Position held: Bus Driver

Department: Parking and Transportation
Services

Years of Service: 2005-2022



Tribute Statement:

Arturo was a congenial and beloved bus driver who drove fulltime for West Georgia and part-time for the city of Carrollton for 17 years, routinely working 60 hours a week even when undergoing - and surviving - treatment for cancer. His UWG co-workers found him a joy to work with, the students he transported (elementary, middle, high school, and university ages) really liked being around him, and he was well-known and appreciated across campus and throughout the city of Carrollton for his personable and engaging presence. People are still asking where he's at and are sorry to learn about his retirement.

He never complained about anything, had a really sweet and mischievous disposition, clearly enjoyed his work responsibilities, and had an extremely positive outlook about West Georgia.

When he retired from driving a bus for the city of Carrollton, he intended to continue driving for West Georgia, but a serious case of COVID and additional health-related issues prevented him from doing so.

He is definitely remembered fondly, dearly missed by his co-workers and the countless individuals he has driven to classes over the years, and admired for his work ethic and commitment to the best interests of the persons he served.

[Christie Stevens, Transportation Specialist Shift Lead, Parking and Transportation Services, UWG]

Plans for Retirement:

Given Arturo's work ethic and love for animals, he will be focusing on taking care of the animals in his care while staying busy with whatever he finds meaningful and enjoyable.

Brian Lee Henderson

Position held: Director of Infrastructure and Operations

Department: Information Technology Services (ITS)

Years of Service: 2012-2023



Tribute Statement:

Brian's involvement in several projects resulted in significant enhancements to the student, faculty and staff experiences at UWG, including the migration to Google, modernization of the data center, implementation of the redundant fiber ring, and the transition to several virtual and cloud services. He sat on several committees including Health and Wellness and many Engage West Subcommittees. He was also a graduate and later a mentor in the Engage West Fellows Program.

Even though he held the title of Director, most outsiders would never have known because he was a servant leader and always worked with and for his team. He supported his staff who pursued college degrees, industry standard certifications, and leadership opportunities. He trained and supported the next generation of leaders in information technology.

Most importantly, he had a sympathetic ear, a kind heart, and a personality that elevated the spirits of everyone around him. He would often ask about your family and would always listen if you were frustrated about something at work or you needed to express your ideas or thoughts on a solution or project. He set a great example of what a leader should be.

[Kirk Inman, Chief Information Officer, ITS, UWG]

Plans for Retirement:

- fishing, kayaking, and cruising on his pontoon
- enjoying life on Lake Martin
- expanding his airbnb business (lakelifeescape.com)

Dianne L. Hoff

Positions held: Professor, Dean

Departments: Department of Educational Leadership, Research, & School Improvement; College of Education

Years of Service: 2009-2022



Tribute Statement:

Dr. Hoff came up through the ranks. She worked in K-12 systems in various positions, including high school teacher in Indiana and principal at a performing arts school in California.

At UWG she began as associate dean and a committed faculty member. She taught graduate courses in education law and policy for doctoral programs in education. She was principal investigator for two of UWG's largest grants, both from the National Science Foundation. Her research focuses on the social/political context of schooling, especially how various factors can influence discrimination and marginalization.

Her greatest impact for most of us at UWG was certainly as Dean of the College of Education. She oversaw enrollment growth, reorganized the College, and developed a workload policy. She was committed to modernizing the College, leading it to be a state powerhouse in technology and innovation. She oversaw new program development, including the undergraduate program in Health & Community Wellness and the doctoral program in Higher Education Administration.

I have worked with four deans in the COE and have observed and respected their strengths, weaknesses, insights, and blindspots. Dean Hoff now stands proudly as the tallest of them all. Her accomplishments are many and did not all come easily. She faced challenges in personnel, budget, policy changes, and accreditation changes, but she conquered them in the way she always does, with a fierce intelligence and overwhelming charm and grace.

*[Micheal Crafton, retired Professor of English, Vice President for Academic Affairs/
Provost, Interim President, UWG]*

Plans for Retirement:

"When I was working I often wondered what I would do in retirement. Would I be bored? Lonely? Uninspired? What I am discovering, however, is just the opposite. There are endless paths of inquiry to be explored, and retirement affords me the time to follow as many as possible. My goal going forward is to lead my best life, take advantage of every day, and be thankful for this new chapter in my life."

Alan Jones

Position held: Grounds Supervisor

Department: Facilities & Grounds

Years of Service: 2007-2023



Tribute Statement:

While I knew Alan casually for several years beforehand, it was not until he came to UWG to work in Facilities and Grounds that I got to know him well.

As the grounds supervisor, Alan oversaw a team of five employees. They were responsible for the daily maintenance of the grounds, including mowing, edging, trimming, and pruning. Their work has helped to make the UWG campus so attractive.

Alan's personality made him a good employee. He was upbeat and always in a good mood, approaching his duties as work to be enjoyed; he made every effort to keep those around him in a good mood by joking, laughing, and kidding with them.

Alan was the type of person who made the best of an adverse situation. When Custodial Services was experiencing difficulty as a department due to leadership issues, it was Alan who transferred to Custodial Services for a year in order to get the department back on track. He cared about that department the same way he cared about his own department, and his goal was to be sure each department was the best it could be.

We miss his positive attitude and wish him well in his retirement.

[Marshall Lott, Landscaping and Grounds Superintendent, UWG]

Plans for Retirement:

- coaching ball for the Parks and Recreation Department
- spending time with his four grandchildren
- fishing, camping, and traveling with his family
- working with his church

Greta K. Kirby

Position held: Assistant Mail Supervisor

Department: Post Office

Years of Service: 2001-2022



Tribute Statement:

Greta and I started out working together at the Carrollton Post Office. Then we both ended up at the University Post Office, with me starting there a couple years after Greta. So, we have worked together at UWG for close to twenty years. It has been an honor and a pleasure to work with her.

The main thing I will always remember about working with Greta is that she never met a stranger. She could strike up a conversation with anyone who came to the post office window - student, faculty, or staff member. She just knew everyone! We also socialized outside of work, getting together with work colleagues for supper at a local restaurant, for example. We celebrated each other's birthdays. Because Greta is a breast cancer survivor, each year we did a breast cancer tree in her honor.

We have missed Greta at UWG. But I am sure she is enjoying greater freedom to travel and spend time at their lake house. And to socialize with friends. Greta is blessed with friends, and I am glad to be one of them.

[Sonja Pitts, Assistant Postal Head/Operations Manager, Mail Services, UWG]

Plans for Retirement:

- "doing whatever we want to do"
- enjoying more time at Lake Wedowee
- reading lengthy books for which there was no time while working
- doing craft projects, including crocheting and quilting
- participating in activities in her church and volunteering in her community

Teresa Leslie

Position held: Professor

Department: History

Years of Service: 2006-2023



Tribute Statement:

Teresa Leslie originally came to UWG as a student. She had triple-majored at the University of Kentucky (in English, History, and Classical Civilizations) and followed that with a degree in Library Science. After a spell as a stay-at-home mom, she earned a master's degree in History at UWG in the late 1990s. She then entered the History doctoral program at Emory University, receiving her Ph.D. in 2005.

While working on her doctorate, Teresa taught part-time for the UWG History Department. She then began a two-decade stint as a full-time instructor in 2003. Principally assigned World History survey classes, Teresa also offered an impressive variety of upper-level courses in Medieval and Ancient History, with a focus on women, family, and religion. Whatever the course, whatever the level, she was a natural in the classroom. Students routinely expressed appreciation for her kindness, her passion for the material, and her vivid lectures. One stated on a course evaluation that Teresa had "perfected teaching!"

Outside the university, Teresa has devoted countless hours to the Carroll County Humane Society. Given her dedication there and the fact that she's considering writing a historical novel, I am certain that she'll enjoy a busy and meaningful life post-retirement!

[Dr. Steve Goodson, Professor, History Program, UWG]

Plans for Retirement:

- volunteering with the local humane society
- traveling with family
- spending time with Seymour, her 16-year-old dog, happy to have her home

Ann E. McCleary

Positions held: Professor; Founder and Director (CPH)

Departments: History; Center for Public History

Years of Service: 1997-2022



Tribute Statement:

Ann joined UWG after earning her PhD in American Civilization from Brown University. Her fields of specialization included Public History, Museum Studies, Southern History, Heritage Tourism, History of American Foodways, Folklife, and Early American History. From the time she first stepped on campus, her work in building a Public History program and ultimately a Public History Center was relentless. It was never easy in the beginning since the whole concept of public history was relatively new to both the faculty and the university.

Nonetheless, Ann persisted.

We are all the beneficiaries of Dr. McCleary's amazing work, which often resulted in large regional and federal grants to support the numerous projects she appeared to effortlessly juggle. As if her successful directorship of the Center for Public History was not enough, Ann also organized several trips for students, such as a Study Abroad trip to South Africa. Dr. McCleary's direction of community projects included the West Georgia Textile Heritage Trail and Regional Music Project, in addition to the Along the Ridge project at UWG. In the many students she mentored and projects she created, Ann has left a legacy of public history work here that we can all take pride in.

[Pauline Gagnon, Professor of Theatre and Dean of the College of Arts, Culture, and Scientific Inquiry, UWG]

Plans for Retirement:

- continuing to work as a public history consultant and working on some history projects of her own
- enjoying more time with family (including four grandchildren!), traveling, reading, gardening, and just appreciating life!

Jo Ann Morgan

Position held: Administrative Assistant

Department: Athletics

Years of Service: 2002-2023



Tribute Statement:

Since January of 2002, visitors to UWG's Athletics offices were greeted by the smiling face of Jo Ann Morgan. From the old days at the Murphy Building to the modern Athletics Operations Building, Jo Ann was the first person you saw when you entered the building.

Jo Ann brought her brand of organization, preparedness, and friendly customer service to UWG for 21 years as the Executive Assistant to the Director of Athletics. Over the years, she was instrumental in planning special events such as Super Night and the Hall of Fame. Many student-athletes who returned for these events flocked to "Ms. Jo Ann," whom they remembered as a fixture when they wore the Red and Blue.

Jo Ann took on the task of managing Ticket Operations for football and basketball, showing members of the community her professionalism and dedication to the success of Wolves Athletics. Even the young Junior Wolves got a chance to hang out with her when she added management of that program as well. Jo Ann's retirement leaves all who worked with her sad to see her go. But, even so, she is wished the happiest and most fulfilled days ahead as she begins this next chapter in life.

[Laura Clayton-Eady, Associate Athletic Director, University Athletics, UWG]

Plans for Retirement:

- traveling in and out of the USA
- woodworking, crafting, sewing
- flower arranging
- gardening/yardwork (not for hire!)
- cycling
- playing pickleball

Denise Overfield

Positions held: Professor, Associate Dean,
Associate Vice President

Departments: International Languages and
Cultures, Colleges of Arts & Sciences/Arts &
Humanities, Academic Affairs

Years of Service: 1997-2022

Tribute Statement:

Over the span of a 25-year career, Dr. Overfield positively impacted the lives of countless students, staff, and faculty. Initially hired to start UWG's teacher certification offerings in French and Spanish, she quickly built a program recognized around the state for the quality and dedication of its graduates, many of whom teach to this day in surrounding counties. She became an important leader for language education, serving as President of the Foreign Language Association of Georgia. In the mid 2000s, she began a career path in administration, serving as chair of Foreign Languages and Literatures before moving to a role as Associate Dean in the College of Arts and Sciences and later the College of Arts and Humanities. Dr. Overfield then served as Associate Vice President for Research and Sponsored Operations and Dean of the Graduate School, implementing new procedures and incentives to support faculty research and student success. Two of the many areas where she distinguished herself are in mentorship for junior colleagues and advocacy for women in higher education, notably through work to help create a parental leave pool. First proposed while she was a member of the Women's Caucus, the leave pool concept was finalized and implemented when she was chair of the Barriers team. In sum, Dr. Overfield has left an enduring legacy that will continue to make UWG and the surrounding communities great for years to come.

[Robert Kilpatrick, Professor of French; Interim Chair, Department of Anthropology, Psychology, and Sociology; UWG]

Plans for Retirement:

- traveling
- spending time with family

Sandra Pollard

Position held: Lecturer

Department: History

Years of Service: 2008-2022



Tribute Statement:

Sandy Pollard's mutually enriching relationship with UWG began in 2001, when she enrolled in the university as a nontraditional student majoring in History. (Never a fan of free time, Sandy ran a personal chef service while an undergraduate!) Her intelligence and warm personality made her a favorite among her professors and peers, and after receiving her bachelor's degree in 2004, she entered History's graduate program. She earned her master's degree in 2007, along with a certificate in Museum Studies.

In 2008 the department wisely chose to hire Sandy in a teaching position. Here she faced the daunting task of offering all four of the department's core classes in World and U.S. History. She performed splendidly. Students praised her love of the material, her kindness, and her desire to see them succeed. Sandy has a passion for travel, and she routinely shared her experiences with her students, helping broaden their youthful horizons.

Somehow during this busy period, Sandy found the time and energy to pursue a doctoral degree at Georgia State University. And she is currently providing piano lessons to a full slate of students. Given her extraordinary range of talents and interests, I don't see Sandy slowing down anytime soon!

[Steve Goodson, Professor, History, UWG]

Plans for Retirement:

- traveling
- spending time with grandchildren
- doing research

Mark Reeves

Positions held: Senior Associate Vice President for Auxiliary Services & Business Services, Chief Business Officer

Departments: Auxiliary Enterprises and Campus Services

Years of Service: 2004-2022

Tribute Statement:

Mark joined the UWG family in 2005. His prior management experience at UPS and his two Master's degrees, Finance and Business Administration, positioned him extremely well for his role as Assistant Director of Auxiliary Services within the Division of Business and Finance. Over the years, he was given increasingly responsible positions culminating with the position of Senior Associate Vice President for Auxiliary Enterprises and Business Services. His span of responsibilities in these roles included Parking and Transportation, Dining Services, University Bookstore, Townsend Center, Publication & Printing, Coliseum, ID Card Services, Telecommunications, Student Housing, Summer Camps and Conferences, Trademark Management, Recycling Services, and Sales and Solicitations.



A major achievement under his leadership was the transition from a third-party contracted Dining Services program to a completely in-house operation, achieving significant cost savings and vastly improved quality and service. Mark also led the total transformation of the campus bus fleet to the state-of-the-art bus fleet that serves the University today. Both milestones are indicative of Mark's forward-looking leadership style. Beyond this, he was the consummate personnel manager, inspiring employees and helping them achieve the highest level of efficiency, effectiveness, and customer service.

Mark and his wife, Tina, enjoy lengthy road trips to see the vast natural beauty this country has to offer, and in retirement you can be sure this activity will increase.

[Jim Sutherland, retired Administrative Vice President, Business and Finance, UWG]

Plans for Retirement:

- working part-time (maybe consulting)
- spending time with family, especially grandkids
- doing hobbies
- working around the house

Debrah Santini

Position held: Professor

Department: Art

Years of Service: 1994-2023



Tribute Statement:

Once upon a time....Debrah Santini arrived at West Georgia College in 1994 from Massachusetts and immediately recorded her impressions of southern landscape, animals, and daily environment in her brilliantly detailed, layered, and complex drawings, printmaking, and book illustrations. She has been widely recognized for this creative work, showing in numerous exhibitions and winning 14 awards. Her 20 illustrated children's books, magazines, and journal covers include Abby's Chairs, The Baby Who Would Not Come Down, and Cricket Magazine.

Her talent for teaching and her compassion have been apparent in the studio classroom, from the animal and human rights artwork on the walls to the instruction and mentoring she imparted --and always with her signature sharp humor. The many former students who are successfully creating and teaching others and who frequently dropped by the studio to see the Great Santini are her legacy.

Debrah's dedication to the University spanned many roles as she moved to full Professor. She was Interim Chair of the Department of Art, Assistant Chair, coordinator of NASAD reaccreditation, and designer of the printmaking studio for the Visual Arts Building.

Her creativity, talent, humor, and collegiality will be greatly missed by the Art program and especially by me. Print on Debrah!

[Stephanie Smith, Senior Lecturer, Department of Art, History, Philosophy, UWG]

Plans for Retirement:

- spending more time in her studio

Wanda Walker

Position held: General Merchandise Manager

Department: College Bookstore

Years of Service: 2010-2023

Tribute Statement:

Wanda Walker served for thirteen years at the University of West Georgia Bookstore.



Ms. Walker was steadfast in her commitment to the store, its customers, and staff. While Ms. Walker's primary responsibility was to research, order, and display (sell) General Merchandise and Spirit Wear, she was also a key member of the broader Bookstore team. She supported her partners not only at the registers, but also in shipping and receiving, textbooks, and the Newnan campus. She also assisted with commencements and ball games, employee training, and much, much more.

Wanda's maturity, care, and integrity made lasting impressions on so many of the Bookstore's customers as well as its student employees. Her presence at the Bookstore will be missed greatly; however, her years of positive influence and encouragement will last for years to come.

We are all so grateful to have had Ms. Walker as a member of the UWG team.

*[Mark Reeves, Deputy Chief Business Officer and Strategic Projects Manager,
UWG]*

Plans for Retirement:

- catching up on gardening
- traveling to Iceland in 2024

In Memoriam (2022-2023)

Patricia (Trish) Causey – Assistant/Interim Director of Housing, Assistant Dean of Students

Thomas J. Crawford – Professor Emeritus, Geology

Van Andrew (Andy) Davis, Jr. – Assistant Director, Community Services, Continuing Education, and Public Services

Mary Jo Ellis – Custodial Services

Dr. Richard (Dick) Folk -- Associate Professor, History; Director Emeritus, Budget & Research Services

Dr. Willie Gunn – Assistant Professor, Biology (USG System retiree)

Ernest William Henderson, Jr. – Director of Planned Giving, Development & Alumni Relations

Dr. Randy Hendricks – Professor/Chair, English; Dean, College of Arts & Sciences; Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs

Violet “Eileen” Vaughn Lambert – Accounts Payable Clerk, Business Office

Mary O’Neill – Assistant Professor, Nursing

Dr. Bobby Powell – Professor and Chair, Physics; Director Emeritus, UWG Observatory

Dr. George E. Rolle, Sr. – Professor Emeritus, Counseling & Educational Psychology; Assistant Dean, College of Education

Dr. Robert M. Sanders – Professor, Political Science

John H. Vines – Technician, Maintenance

Burdett Wantland – Assistant Professor, Philosophy

Herbert H. Whitton – Facilities

Charles Wilson – Chair, Developmental Studies and Affirmative Action

Inadvertently omitted from the 2021-2022 booklet:

Martha Stewart Abernathy – Senior Secretary, Development & Alumni Relations



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