

The Journey

from the **Center for Diversity and Inclusion**
of the *University of West Georgia*

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Veterans Community at UWG



This issue of the *Journey* is dedicated to veterans, their families, and supporters. Veterans have played an instrumental role in the history of the United States for centuries. The efforts of their service have a prolonged positive impact on the lives of citizens for years to come. For this, we are extremely grateful. Valor. Commitment. Service. Sacrifice. Noble. Loyal. Admirable... are just a few attributes that showcase the spirit of veterans. "As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them." - John Fitzgerald Kennedy



President Dr. Kyle Marrero shares...

By: *Jessica Ramirez Rios*

How has your transition been since you went West?

It's been great! We landed and met the moving truck on June 26th and started July 1st so we started settling in right away, finding the stores and restaurants, meeting our neighbors and folks in the community. The people in Carrollton and the surrounding area have been so warm, welcoming and generous - just great to us. We have a 3-year old daughter, her name is Lily, and she is amazing and wonderful and everyone seems to enjoy meeting her, too. From the first day we arrived, the community has really embraced us holistically.

As far as the university, I did a lot of research in advance and throughout the interview process. I've always had an attraction to this institution, or I wouldn't have applied for the job and I can honestly say that UWG has been everything I hoped it would be. I believe I've been able to truly get to know the people and the institution. I've met the students, gotten to know the student leadership. I've interacted with the faculty and staff across campus and found that they are not only highly qualified professionals, but also people who care about this institution and the success of our students. It's been a great transition; no real surprises. And there's a tremendous spirit of wanting to propel UWG to the next level.



UWG President Dr. Kyle Marrero

What is your favorite part of living in Georgia?

I love the seasons. In Florida we didn't have seasons. We are starting to see the leaves fall, and we will get to finally use our fireplace! As far as Carrollton, it's big enough to have everything you need from the unique restaurants, to the square to the university, but small enough to feel like you're in a town where you know people well enough to call them by name. There is close-knit feeling to it. Also, it is 45 minutes from Atlanta where you can find additional entertainment such as restaurants, the zoo, the aquarium, etc. Carrollton provides easy access to the metropolitan area, while also creating an atmosphere of safety that comes with a hometown. We love Florida, but Georgia is beautiful, and being in Carrollton provides us a unique position in the state. We really love it.

How does having a background in Music help you in your leadership positions?

I can honestly say that I didn't begin my career thinking my path would lead to becoming the president of a university. It wasn't on my radar. Looking back, a whole agglomeration of experiences has taken me to this point. As a performing artist, I was essentially CEO of my own company. I was handling marketing, managing my own website (really doing everything and working with my agent to make things happen). I was completely responsible for my own financial well-being and the successful development of my career along the paths I wanted to take. That experience helped me evolve professionally, not just as a performer, but as a business manager and promoter and all the other kinds of roles that make organizations succeed. I was able to earn the opportunity to run arts organizations, which provided experience and on-the-job training that I use every day in my role as President of UWG.

Managing a non-profit arts organization taught me the importance of understanding the market you serve. You'd better be in tune with that, or they are not going to buy tickets. You have to be able to market and capture your audience based on the demographics that you're going after and you must have the ability to raise a certain amount of money every single year, year after year. As I tell my advancement staff here, you don't know what is like to raise money unless it's actually to pay the bills, to keep the doors open, to pay salaries, and to stay in business. There is a sense of urgency, a special feeling of commitment and responsibility. And while arts organizations, like institutions of higher education, write grants proposals and work for outside funding, much of the working capital to run the organization comes selling tickets, seats that goes away after the performance. It's similar, in some ways, to a place or seat in our classrooms. Our students are here for a limited time and what they take away with them is what they learned and experienced during their time with us. Whether you are an opera house or a university, you have to make an investment of time and money just to get people in the seats, to get them to believe that their lives can be transformed by spending their time with you.

So all those business practices that made me successful in running arts organizations (and doing it during some of the worst financial times in our history) really applies so much to where we are in higher education right now. We have to market properly so that people understand how we can make their lives better, we have to serve our customers so that they succeed and thrive, and we have to fundraise so that we can continue to expand scholarships and programs and opportunities across campus. We need to communicate our message in a way that makes sense and excites people about the university and we need to invest in the patronage that we have already established, which, for us, is our student population.

I have been blessed throughout my career to always have opportunities to learn new things. There was a period of three years where I was running two opera companies and serving as full-time faculty at Louisiana State University. One of the companies was at Albuquerque, NM, and the other in Pensacola, FL, so I was traveling a lot, but it taught me how to multitask, to be organizationally sound, to work with people, and to get things done. Then my career evolved into the administrative and higher education area and I was able to use and adapt all the skills I have gained. When I first began as the director of the School of Performing Arts at University of West Florida (UWF), I had already been raising significant dollars each year for the Pensacola Opera. I knew the community and I was supporting opera in that community. I was able to transition to raising money for the arts at the university largely because of my connections with the community. And because I was able to impact the school, I was able to move up to the Vice President position at UWF. It was a natural evolution, but it happened because I had invested my earlier career in gaining solid skills and experience and because I'd learned to listen to my audience. Whenever we had a major initiative or a new idea, I always posed certain questions. "What would this mean to the students?" "Will this have a positive impact on the students?" "If it doesn't, why are we doing it?" It was a blessing to have that opportunity to be the voice for the students and to be in a place where that voice really counted. I was able to help write the strategic plan for the institution and led other major institutional efforts. The trajectory all lined up for my current position and I really believe that my experiences through the years came together perfectly to fit me for taking UWG into its next evolution.

It's important to note that this was the only position that I applied for. I was not out in the market looking to become a university president; I wanted to be UWG's president. UWG was a great fit, it left a great impression and here I am! And I am still involved with music; I do some consulting work for Pensacola Opera. It's really an amazing place for me to be.

What will be your message to upcoming graduating students with a background in performing arts?

Interestingly enough, somebody with a performing arts background usually understands right out of the gate that it's going to be tough. Having a career solely based on performing, or playing an instrument, or being an actress or actor, going out and trying to make a living is incredibly competitive and tough. It better be your passion. I always tell people who are graduating and entering arts professions to remember that there is more to the arts than performing. You can work as an administrator in an arts organization or teach or find other ways to have an impact on your community while still doing what you love and making a living. It may not be that career that you had envisioned – everyone dreams of being a big star—but understand that your impact and effect can be really great wherever you decide to focus all your efforts. In most cases, people with a performing arts background can do just about anything because they have had to multitask and think within given parameters while maintaining a sense of creativity. That's how business and virtually everything else operates in the world. So, a lot of times musicians and artists are problem solvers, critical thinkers, creators of implementing things within guidelines and structure. Those skills can make an incredible leader within any business environment. If you apply what you've learned and how you have learned to think and act, you can be successful in almost anything.

What do you think of the diversity of students, faculty, and staff here at University of West Georgia?

First, I will talk about the students. I'm very proud of the fact that our range of diversity continues to expand. The picture we project of who and what we are very much resembles our population within the region. We are continuing to grow our African American population. It's incredible and wonderful.

Student-wise, however, I am concerned when I see self-selected segregation within student organizations, though I'm very pleased to see that we can have dialogue about it. If I have concerns on the student level, I can talk to Dana Jones, our Student Government Association president and ask: "What can we do?" We must do something about the self-imposed divisions between our student populations. We have wonderfully active and talented young African American students, but they are all associating together within a particular organization. Then we also see young talented Caucasian students also loving UWG, loving their experience but self-selecting and staying together in *their* groups. And so on. I understand the history of Greek organizations being PanHellenic or National PanHellenic, but I think in this time, and in this age, we need to do better than that. We need to figure out ways that we can all work together. If we find a way to do that, and to understand other people's cultures and backgrounds, and truly embrace the idea that our differences can actually make us a stronger, more unified group, we can change our students' perspective and they can go out into the world and be great examples and leaders in the effort to bring folks together.

There is a bigger issue with faculty and staff. We do have diversity within our faculty and staff, but it is certainly not representative of our population. There are reasons for that, like educational attainment, history, etc. I am certain there has been no concerted effort – at least not in recent history -- to actively make decisions intended to decrease diversity within our faculty and staff. But I can tell you that I have already had many discussions at the leadership level of this institution, and we are actively looking to increase diversity while still maintaining our high standards of professionalism, quality, and educational training. Going forward, our job posting advertisements will be placed in specific diverse advertisement publications so that those that are qualified and capable will at least know about opportunities at West Georgia. I want diversity in the search committee and hence diversity in our candidacy pools because, with every hire, we strive to further diversify our faculty and staff. For example, we have a great opportunity and responsibility right now to seek a candidate that is highly qualified to be our provost in academic affairs, as well as one who will diversify our table. Encouraging diversity will be an active engagement and a vital part of my strategic direction for the institution.

This issue of the *Journey* focuses on veterans. In addition to what may be currently available, what services and resources should be offered to further support veteran students at UWG?

This academic year UWG is creating a new Adult and Veteran Student Services Center. The center will coordinate services and programs for Adult and Veteran Students and manage collaborative relationships with other functional areas and campus services to support the success of Adult and Veteran students. The center would have a full-time Director, an Assistant Director for Veteran's Services, and an Administrative Assistant. In addition, we are developing and implementing a support system to improve the recruitment and graduation of Adult and Veteran Students, based on a market study designed to assess their needs. Publications and resources are being developed for offices involved in the "Stop-Out" initiative (admissions recruitment; degree audit, financial aid support, etc.) combined with the Office for Adult and Veteran's Services.

What is your mission and vision for University of West Georgia for the upcoming years?

We are in the process right now on working on a plan for the next several years. I have tasked the institutional leadership with creating an academic master plan first. It is the core document of our vision, of who and what we are, of where we are headed as an institution, and of the type of programs relevant to both work force development and well-educated holistically successful students.

We are preparing our students to thrive beyond our doors. This concept will be embodied in the strategic plan we create to guide the institution from 2014-2020. This plan will look at what we do as an institution to create student success, retention, and progression with how we equip students with everything they need to be qualified, competent, and ready to join the work force within their chosen area of study. We want our students to be critical thinkers, problem solvers, and qualified beyond the classroom through experiential learning and internships. We are going to look at all the manners in which we can deliver flexible course options, so that we not only address our traditional students, but also the adult learners who are coming back and improving their lives.

We will focus on those quality programs we believe have the greatest relevance and we will continue to invest in quality faculty and high-level technology within our classrooms. We don't want our students to power down once they walk in to the classroom. Faculty need to use the technology and speak the language of the younger generation.

We will be looking at the different modes of delivery like face-to-face and online -- all the different areas we know can reach the most number of students and have the greatest impact. In addition, we will be looking at advancing athletics' mission and vision.

Then, we will be looking at valued partnerships between our region, with industry, businesses, and the community. We will focus on community service and engagement to help build a stronger region and network. We want to make sure that our community, not only Carrollton but Carroll County and the whole region, feel the positive impact of our presence here, through both our \$442 million of annual economic impact and the significant quantity of hours of community service that we will provide directly from our students and faculty.

Finally, we will be looking at a fourth component of our strategic plan: operational quality and excellence, including infrastructure, police, human resources, parking, housing, auxiliary services – all the components that make UWG the place where you want to be and where you will be safe. These facility infrastructure initiatives are not easily noticed, but create a direct effect when they are not effective or adequate.

These four components, student, faculty, partnerships, and infrastructure, will be the form of our strategic plan.

“Encouraging diversity will be an active engagement and a vital part of my strategic direction for the institution.”

- Dr. Kyle Marrero

Ms. Judith Horne shares with us her role with veteran students

By: Jessica Ramirez Rios



*Ms. Judith Horne
VA Certification Official at UWG*

“It’s significant to note that most veteran students bring a wealth of experience and maturity to the college environment.”
- Judith Horne

How long have you been with the university?

I have been affiliated with UWG since 2005 as a student, an involved parent and now as an employee.

Tell us about your career path?

I’m a retired Navy Veteran with over 26 years of active duty time. Pre-military, I was a working college student and post-military I’ve worked in Corporate America for some time and now here at University of West Georgia. My career path has been heavily administrative as an admin/officer and flag (speech writer) while in the military to being an executive assistant in Corporate America. Both experiences have served me well in the performance of my current duties here at UWG.

As an undergraduate student, what was your major?

Sociology.

As the VA Certification Official in the Enrollment Services Center, what are some of your duties?

My main duty here is the university’s liaison with the Veterans Administration and the Department of Defense. I manage all activities related to certification of enrollment for student veterans and their family members. And that ties into subsequent payment

disbursements from the VA to students receiving GI Bill benefits as well as tuition or fees payments to the university.

What led you to become the Veterans Certification Official?

There was a need here at the university as my predecessor had retired suddenly. And having recently retired from the military, my experience or knowledge base in dealing with veterans issues made me a good fit for this position.

Given the situation that a child with deceased parents wants to attend college, how is this person able to afford it without the financial support of his or her parents?

If they are a family member of a deceased veteran or their veteran sponsor is 100% disabled, then they may be eligible for a type of GI Bill called the Defense Educational Assistance Program. Although this is a stipend only program, it does help as long as they are attending school.

What has been your most rewarding experience as staff here at UWG?

My most rewarding experience here at UWG has been to witness the increase in veteran student enrollment, which I hope will translate into increased student veteran graduation rates shortly. Secondly, to be involved with the process of student progression and retention in terms of helping them to succeed in college by connecting them with resources that offer help on their quest for academic success.

Coming from a veteran community, have there been any challenges that you had to overcome as a staff member here at UWG?

Well, the level of camaraderie was not there and the unified team concept/purpose that I was used to was lacking. However, due to my extensive military background, exposure to diverse communities as well as my involvement with Corporate America it was just a matter of adjusting and adapting to my new environment.

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What do you think is very significant of the veteran community in a university?

It's significant to note that most veteran students bring a wealth of experience and maturity to the college environment. Most are non-traditional students juggling jobs, school, and family commitments. Failure is not an option for them, and they have the utmost desire to succeed.

Besides the support that you offer the prospective student with a veteran background at UWG, what do you think are some other programs that should be offered to these students?

For the student veterans here at UWG, I think programs that foster greater understanding by faculty and staff to better support veteran students is definitely a plus. I would love to see a section of orientation that is veteran student specific because it has been my experience that, (a) veteran students tend not to live on campus, (b) usually do not have meal plans, or (c) get involved in PanHellenic councils so the traditional orientation is often seen as a time waster to them. Also, an actual veteran space and/or center to better address/access their needs as well as help facilitate the transitional aspect of returning to an institution of higher learning.

Professor Advocates for Veteran College Students

By: Robert Brice

How long have you been with this university?

This is technically my 4th year here at the University of West Georgia, and I came on as a temporary assistant professor. Well, we had a number of name changes in the College of Education; it was Educational Foundations, I think is what it was originally called. I was teaching graduate courses as well as undergraduate courses, which included educational psychology and in this department I was teaching graduate courses in counselor education. Then, for the past three years, I have been a tenure track assistant professor working in this department, Clinical and Professional Studies, in the Counselor Education and College Student Affairs programs.

What made you get interested in doing research on counseling in the military community and development?

Actually, I was in the service for a few years in the active Army and reserves in North Carolina, and trained in military intelligence, but I served in psychological operations. It really gave me an understanding of the importance of making a connection with others. So after I got out of the service, I went into education. I was a high school teacher for about 5 years and a school counselor for four years at a K-8 school, and another year in a



*Assistant Professor,
Dr. Michael Keim*



high school in North Carolina. Because of what I was seeing from the children who had family members being deployed to military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, I became interested in how we can assist these children of deployed military parents. So that ended up becoming my doctoral thesis at Auburn University and from there I tried to connect my experiences as a school counselor, as an educator, and as a veteran toward helping others understand veterans and the military community. Now, here at the higher ed level, we have a lot of veterans that are coming back after their experiences in the service and are seeking their college degrees for the first time, and so helping the university community understand veterans and their needs and issues that are important to them is kind of where I am right now.

You are an assistant professor of counselor education and college student affairs. What courses do you teach?

Our program is counselor education and student affairs, so we teach those students, but my training is not necessarily in student affairs. Although, past experiences helped me understand college student affairs. I was a residence advisor for two years, and I worked with freshman orientation one year. So I have some ideas about college student affairs and how it has changed in the past 25-30 years. Huge differences, it has gone from services that are available for students to now a much more professional collaborative approach which is impressive to me, that did not exist in the past. I teach the Intro to Counseling Practice (CEPD 6140), which is our basic skills course and a special topics course, CEPD 7185 (Counseling Military Families).

Tell us about your education. What are some of the challenges you faced?

My father worked for the university I attended for my undergraduate degree, so they had what was called tuition remission back then, which covered tuition. I still had to pay fees, but if not for this assistance, I probably would not have been able to attend college. I was first generation for college, so that was a huge boost. That was why I was a resident advisor for two years and night guard in a hall for a year. All those things kind of helped me pay for and get my education as an undergraduate student. I have my Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and Russian Area Studies from Wittenberg University (1988), Master of Arts in School Counseling from Western Carolina University (2003), and Doctor of Philosophy in Counselor Education and Supervision from Auburn University (2009).

What has been your most rewarding experience as a professor here at the University of West Georgia?

I have extremely enjoyed working with students here, they are very friendly. Because I have worked with mostly graduate programs, they have career jobs out there and are trying to balance their career with being a full-time student, some work part-time or are part-time students as well. Just trying to balance and work that out, I can relate to that, because I went through the same thing when I was going through my doctoral

program and my master's program, as well. I really have a feel for what they are going through and how they are trying to improve their lives, and I enjoy just working with them because of that. They have their own stories and I get the opportunity to get to know them more personally.

What are some of the issues faced by students whose parents are veterans?

A lot of them are veterans themselves or they have brothers or sisters who have served in the service, just remembering the service and sacrifice of those individuals and parents. We do not hear a lot about it on the news on a regular basis, but there are still a number of people who are serving in Afghanistan and other places putting them in harm's way. So, just remembering what their continued contributions are to this country.

What about issues for veterans returning to college?

Understanding how to access their benefits, learning who their points of contact are on this campus, such as the veterans' certification official – Judith Horne. But also understanding the admissions process and financial aid process, because they tend to be nontraditional students, and have a different life experience. So connecting with the campus may take longer, because it is a slightly different experience for them, due to the fact that they are used to going in and getting the job done and want to come to campus and go to class to get their degrees and be gone. They need to understand that there are other things as well such as being involved on campus, doing community service, things of that nature. They need to understand it is not just about getting the degree, but rather what other things they have been involved in and what can those things tell us about who you are as an employee.

What are some of the initiatives or programs that are being taken on campus to assist student veterans?

We organized the Student Veterans Association as of February 2012, in which I am the Faculty Advisor. We have campus recognition now, and actually have a budget, which is great. Now we are trying to spread out and get more involved on campus. The College of Social Sciences along with Veteran's Heart Georgia have formed Just Listening Groups, for veterans in the

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Carrollton community and also West Georgia community, so we are trying to get the word out about that community. Also, the university is in the process of developing an adult learning and veterans center here for the upcoming year to help connect student veterans with the campus.

“...helping the university community understand veterans and their needs and issues that are important to them is kind of where I am right now.” - Dr. Michael Keim

Student Shows Her Passion by Leading the Student Veteran Association

By: Amanda Wilkins



Mary Lewallen,
Student Veteran
Association
President

What is your role within the Student Veteran Association (SVA) and why did you decide to join?

I'm the president of the SVA. That wasn't my intention. I went to the first meeting as an angry and frustrated student. I figured the only way to voice my frustrations was to show up and actually make someone listen to me. I got there and they liked my ideas and my opinions so much they asked me if I wanted to be president or vice president. They said they needed leadership to get the program up and running again and I said yes I'd do it. My role as president right now mostly is to get more members.

We're looking for more students to become active in our group. Once that happens, my role will be to trickle down the information I get from other departments and other offices about things that are happening.

What is the purpose and mission of the SVA?

The purpose of the SVA is to organize and help charity organizations, and to provide community service. But, we also have a purpose to the West Georgia student. Our purpose for the students is to help them understand what is available to them as a veteran, what kind of funding they get as a veteran, and what kind of opportunities they have here at West Georgia, because a lot of students don't know that. A lot of people don't even know that we exist. Our main goal right now is assisting the students.

Why is it important to have an organization like SVA here on campus?

It's very important for the students because once again, a lot of them don't know what is allowed and what isn't allowed. For example, a lot of students don't know if you're on the GI bill like I am, and some classes aren't covered. It's very important students understand that they have somewhere they can go to answer these kinds of questions and that they're not left on a limb trying to figure out these things on their own. Somebody has done this before so it's important to let students know that someone knows.

What are the SVA's short term and long term goals?

Our short term goal is to get more members. Our long term goal is to be big enough of a community that we can dedicate ourselves to explaining our organization to incoming freshman, helping them become better students, and become a community family that a lot of times veterans miss. You're growing up on a base, you've lived that life and you become best friends and family with the people you work with.

That's something that you miss on this campus. It's very important to gain that familiar feeling. It's very important to get that back. So our long term goal is to become a family and offer our family to other students.

Who can join SVA? Describe your current membership.

We have about fifteen members right now and all of our members currently are veterans or reservists. Anyone can join who has an interest in veterans, is a veteran, is married to a veteran, is active duty, reservists, National Guard, etc. Anybody who has an interest in student veterans or the SVA on campus can join.

What are some of the challenges veterans face on campus?

A lot of the time, it involves tuition and financial aid, but overall college is a whole different ballgame. Each person handles it differently. It's almost like you hit culture shock. You come from a very structured, very timed community into college life. You get to pick your own times and it can be very unstructured if you don't know how to handle it. It can be very overwhelming. I think a lot of the time it's mostly getting your foot in the door. I think the transition period is hard before you actually start classes. That interim period of having to actually move down here, start all the paperwork, and figure out how to take classes and which classes to take. I think that's probably the harshest time for veterans coming back because it's not an easy process and it takes a while.

Why did you decide to join the military? How was your experience?

I have two older brothers in the Marine Corps so it's very much a part of my family. I also have a brother in the Army, my grandfather was in the Army, my other grandfather was in the Air Force, and both my parents were police officers so this is very much our lifestyle.

I loved every bit of it. I have no regrets about joining the Marine Corps, no regrets about the job I picked, it was a blast. It was everything that you could ever imagine. I went to Parris Island, SC. I got stationed at North Carolina and three months after boot camp I got orders to Afghanistan. And that was great. I loved Afghanistan. I would go back in a heartbeat. I originally joined the Marine Corps as an ammunition technician. But when I arrived in Afghanistan, we were very much a culturally diverse military. Our priority was to rebuild and help different civilizations. When I got over there, they were just organizing female engagement teams, the girls that get to go in with the grunts and assist them in their patrols. Our men cannot talk to Afghan females. It's against their culture. We're in their land and in their home. The least we can do is be respectful to their culture. We lived in this outpost called *kadisheen* castle with the grunts. We went out on patrol with them, saw many families, and got to talk to the women to see if there was anything we could do for them. We opened up a medical tent for them and talked about their injuries and provided free healthcare. These are the kind of things that we do. That was the best experience of my life. Getting to see another culture firsthand was an amazing experience.

“The purpose of SVA is to organize and help charity organizations and to provide community service. But we also have a purpose to the West Georgia student.”
- Mary Lewallen

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Students with a Veteran family background share their stories

By: Amanda Wilkins



*Travonne Williams
Senior, Marketing major*

Which of your family members were in the military?

My father and grandfather.

In which branch of the military did they serve? For how long?

My dad served in the Air Force for seven years. My granddad served in the Air Force as well. He was on the police force. He retired from the Air Force after serving over twenty years.

Which war did your grandfather fight in? How was that experience?

He fought in the Vietnam War. My grandfather and I are best friends, so we talk about everything; but I don't really ask him about war. He has shared how he got the opportunity to travel to a lot of countries. For instance, my mother was born in Bre, which is outside of Germany. He knows how to speak six or seven languages fluently including German, Dutch, and Thai. Although my granddad never went to college, he is one of the smartest people I've ever met.

What values did your grandfather learn from the military?

Definitely, responsibility and how to carry yourself as a person. I've learned a lot from my granddad. The military isn't for everybody but it does have many benefits, teaches you many things, and helps you gain a lot of experience in life.

Did you travel frequently growing up? If so, what were some of the advantages and disadvantages?

Yes, every summer I lived with my dad. I've traveled throughout thirty states in my life. It's cool, but it was also lame because every summer you have to make new friends which could get aggravating. Some of the advantages were going to different places and seeing different cultures. I learned how to adapt to different people and environments at an early age.

What was your favorite place to live and why?

Texas. I stayed in Texas for almost a year. It was close to my granny, and the people were similar to people in [my hometown] Warner Robbins.

What challenges do you think veterans face on campus?

If they've been to war, dealing with the effects of war can be difficult (i.e. death). Coming back to school in itself could be a challenge and encountering people who don't respect the military or fully understand what veterans face. Also, it may be difficult finding a job; I hear that's real hard.

Students with a Veteran family background share their stories

By: Robert Brice



*Alex Hazelwood
Freshman, Political Science major*

Which of your parents was in the military?

My father was in the military.

Which branch of service?

He was a Marine, non-commissioned officer E-5 drill instructor.

How long did he serve?

My father served as a Marine for 10 years.

Did you have to travel often growing up as military child?

My mother traveled often with my father, having lived in places like Philadelphia as well as spending time in Europe. However, by the time I was born, my family was pretty much settled in Washington, DC.

How likely are you to join the military?

Zero percent. Although I am grateful to those who serve, I have seen what it does to people and I have seen people that have gone and did not come back. I just do not think it is for me.

Do you have a family history of those serving in the military?

Yes, my grandfather. He served as a Marine, one of the first 500 African American Marine men.

What values did your father learn from the military?

I would have to say the most important value is always being prepared and work ethic. My dad always said to live by the 5 p's; proper, preparation, prevention, poor, performance, and my dad is probably one of the hardest working men I know.

What challenges do you think veterans face on campus?

I think veterans not only have it hard on campus, but they have it hard in everyday life. I mean the adjustment is very difficult to go from being a soldier and knowing what you should do as a soldier and having every minute of your life scheduled and then to be a civilian and adjusting to no longer being in a war zone or on a base somewhere, which is very stressful.

Which war did your father fight in? And how was that experience?

My dad fought in the first Gulf War and that experience is one no one who wasn't in war would understand. I mean sleeping with a gas mask on and having people just want to kill you because of the letters of your country on your uniform. War in itself is an experience that us civilians can't understand, which is why the military is such a brotherhood. You are with a group of people who have been through what you've been through and understand you, and that makes you become closer.

Voices of UWG Wolves

By: Morgan Patterson and Jordan Legree



Quinton Washington



Edward Slaughter



Rebecca Whitley



Taylor Strom

Taylor Strom
Freshman, Undecided

What is your definition of diversity? Is it important to have diversity here on campus? Why or why not?

I would define diversity as a place, or in this case campus, having people of many different races and beliefs. It's important so that people who attend UWG get to know a lot of different people.

What do you think are some of the challenges veterans face during their transitions back into college?

I would assume veterans struggle because they have probably been out of school for a long time, so it would be hard to get back into it and the things that come from attending college.

What do you think about "twerking"?

I think twerking is an odd dance that has become very popular.

What is your favorite aspect of student life here at UWG and why?

My favorite thing about student life is all the different types of events they offer and that there are so many.

They decided to...



Quinton Washington
Junior, Marketing

What is your definition of diversity? Is it important to have diversity here on campus? Why or why not?

Different cultures, different backgrounds, and different people. Of course diversity is important to have here on campus. I look at Historical Black Colleges, and it is good to know where you came from and support the history; but people at all black schools don't get the chance to interact with foreign exchange students from China or different cultures. We have a Latino fraternity here and I'm almost sure that Historical Black Colleges don't have that. Just being able to get involved with that is important.

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What do you think are some of the challenges veterans face during their transition back into college?

Adapting to the real world. Veterans go out into the field and experience some things that we have no idea about. College life is different from where veterans were at prior to the transition back into college. Veterans have to understand that college students are young adults, and they might not be as mature as the veterans who served in his/her line of work.

What do you think about “twerking”?

In the right hands, twerking is acceptable. It’s a new generation of dancing, but it’s a mature dance to say the least. If the younger generation begins to do the dance and use it to their advantage, then that will not help us as a whole. It will lead to young teenagers becoming pregnant and sexual active. I think twerking is for the mature audience.

What is your favorite aspect of student life here at UWG and why?

Greek life. Even though I have just recently become a member, I have been involved with Greek life in the past. Seeing how Greeks leave their mark on campus and the student population, they truly do make a difference. Believe it or not, they have an impact on how people choose to carry themselves. They attract a certain type of people.

Edward Slaughter
Senior, Undecided

What is your definition of diversity?

Diversity is an assortment of other people with different cultures and ideas.

Is it important to have diversity here on campus? Why or why not?

Yes, it introduces us to the rest of the world outside of our "bubble."

What do you think are some of the challenges veterans face during their transitions back into college?

Honestly, I have only met a few, but it seems they transition well back into the college flow of things.

What do you think about “twerking”?

I think nothing of it... (laughs)

What is your favorite aspect of student life here at UWG and why?

I spend little time on campus other than going back and forth to classes, so considering that I would say the campus is well built to every student’s convenience.

Rebecca Whitley
Graduate, College Student Affairs

What is your definition of diversity? Is it important to have diversity here on campus? Why or why not?

It is very important to have diversity here on campus because that is West Georgia. We wouldn’t be West Georgia without diversity; it’s what we stand for. Also, when a student comes to college, not a lot come from diverse backgrounds. They may not have had diverse interaction if they came from a specific high school where there wasn’t diversity. With diversity on campus, this is their opportunity to meet different people from all the different walks of life. Students can get the interaction, knowledge, and growth from the different people they meet.

What do you think are some of the challenges veterans face during their transition back into college?

Usually veterans are typically older, and I think that brings a cultural change. Veterans will be the minority in their class, as far as age is concerned. There may also be technology difficulties. The entire adjustment process of figuring out what they need as opposed to what the other students may already have or need.

What do you think about “twerking”?

I have heard of twerking. I have never participated in twerking, so I can’t offer too much insight. I know that it is a popular dance, and I know that Miley Cyrus is known for it.

What is your favorite aspect of student life here at UWG and why?

I attended the University of West Georgia as an undergraduate student, and my favorite thing as an undergrad was the abundance of involvement you can have. You can be as busy as you’d like. I was involved in Greek life, and orientation which led to my graduate assistantship. There are so many opportunities to do what you want.



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Center for Diversity and Inclusion

Upcoming Events

February 18

7 pm at Lower Level Z6

Controversies of Culture Series

Topic: Disbanding the Myths of Greek Life

February 19

7 pm at Campus Center Ballroom

Controversies of Culture Series

Topic: Human Trafficking

February 24

7 pm at the Campus Center Ballroom

AAMI Lecture Series

Topic: Fulfilling Your Birthright, Promise, and Destiny

Mr. Dwayne A. Crawford—100 Black Men of America, Inc.

February 27

7 pm at the Campus Center Ballroom

2nd Annual Living Legacy Series

Topic: Integration in Carroll County

March 3

7 pm at the Campus Center Ballroom

Sista' Soldiers: Documentary

Film and Panel Discussion

March 10

7 pm at the Campus Center Ballroom

State of the African American Male

Topic: Negative Stereotypes Affecting the Success of African American Male at UWG

March 12

11:30 am -1:30 pm at Z6 Hubbard Dining Hall

Speaker: Ms. Keri Burns, Director of Career Services

Topic: Women & Careers— Skills, Education, &

Competitiveness in the 21st Century

Multicultural Conversations Series

March 13

12 noon—5 pm at the Campus Center Ballroom

5th Annual Multicultural Festival

Theme: Working Together to Make a Difference

March 25

7 pm at the Campus Center Ballroom

30th Annual MAP Awards

March 27

7 pm at the Campus Center Ballroom

Women's History Month Celebration

Speaker: Felicia Mabuza-Suttle

March 31

7 pm at Bonner Lecture Hall

Diversity in the Work Place

Speaker: Roshaunda Green, MBA - Diversity

Program Consultant Turner Broadcasting System, Inc.

April 2

7 pm at Ingram Library Nook

Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Program

Speaker: Jackson Chang

President of Atlanta Dragon Boat Festival

April 2-28

Annual Older American's Month Sock Drive

Donate NEW socks and bring them to Row Hall 2nd Floor East Wing

M-F 8:30 am - 5:00 pm

April 4

12 noon at Row Hall East Wing 212

Multicultural Book Discussion

Cybertypes: Race, Ethnicity, and Identity on the Internet

By Lisa Nakamura

April 23

Annual World Book Night

Co-sponsor: Ingram Library

May

Asian Pacific Heritage Month

Older Americans Month—Sock Delivery to Nursing Homes

***All events are Free**

