

# FRONTIERS

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SPARTANBURG METHODIST COLLEGE

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Fall 2018

HISTORY IN  
THE MAKING:

SMC Creates  
its First

**Bachelor's  
Degree**

## ■ PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

# A Message *from* President Scott Cochran



**W**hat a year it has been at SMC, and what a year we have ahead of us! The pace of campus growth has not slowed since last year's issue of *Frontiers* arrived in your mailbox. In fact, it's increasing. But what hasn't changed, and what will never change, is our core mission to serve our students. Everything we do as a campus is focused on better educating and preparing our students to achieve their goals.

A significant part of providing a better experience for our students is keeping them at SMC longer. For that reason and others, our faculty created the first bachelor's degree program in the College's history. I hope you'll read the full story on page 6. As you'll see, our bachelor's degree will be different from any other in the country, and I believe it will give SMC's students a significant advantage in the workplace. Soon, we'll launch a new academic advising program to better prepare students to take control of their degree planning.

This issue includes updates on our new online Associate in Criminal Justice Degree program, which launched in March and is thriving. You'll see photos of SMC Studio, our new meeting and events space in Spartanburg's booming downtown area. On campus, we've added a new building to house SMC's fitness center, which will open in November.

If it's been a while since you've visited campus, I encourage you to make plans to return. Our Alumni Relations Office has a number of events planned for the coming year (there's a calendar in this issue). We'd love to see you at Homecoming or one of the events happening around the state. There are athletic events happening nearly every afternoon or evening on campus, and they are open to the public. Or drop by any time and simply walk the grounds. I think you'll be extremely pleased with what you see.

We welcome your continued interest in and love for SMC. Share information about SMC with students who will benefit from what we offer here. Tell your friends about your alma mater and how special it is. Get your company, church, or business involved in our mission to provide students with an affordable, unmatched college experience. Most importantly, feel the pride of being part of the SMC family. Everything we have been, and will continue to become, is because of you.

All the best,

*Scott*



## FRONTIERS

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EXECUTIVE EDITOR  
Lisa Mincey Ware

MANAGING EDITOR  
Katherine Waters

DESIGNER  
Julie Miller

### CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Alisa Harbison '18  
Miranda Kozman  
Baker Maultsby  
Elva Ramirez  
Samantha Wagner  
Lisa Mincey Ware  
Katherine Waters

### PHOTOGRAPHERS

Teresa Cochran  
Susannah Coleman  
Jack Darwin  
Carroll Foster  
Wendy McCarty

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for alumni and friends of  
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The Marketing Office  
Spartanburg Methodist College  
1000 Powell Mill Road  
Spartanburg, SC 29301

Email us: [frontiers@smcsc.edu](mailto:frontiers@smcsc.edu)

SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO:  
Office of Institutional Advancement  
Spartanburg Methodist College  
1000 Powell Mill Road  
Spartanburg, SC 29301  
[snowb@smcsc.edu](mailto:snowb@smcsc.edu)  
864-587-4000 | fax 864-587-4355

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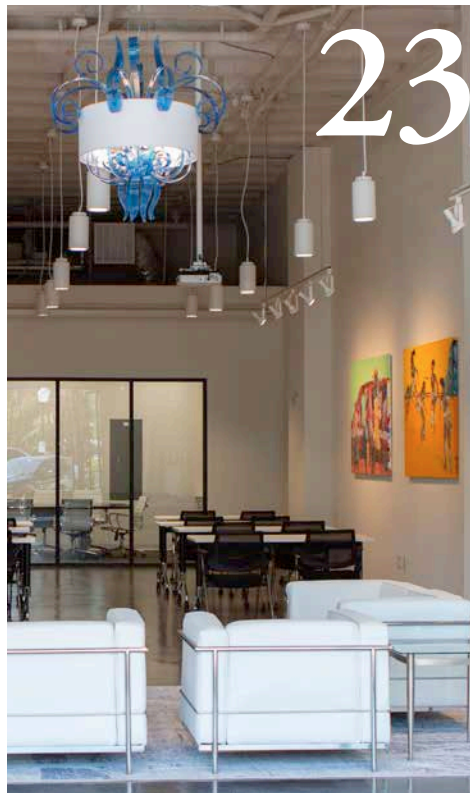
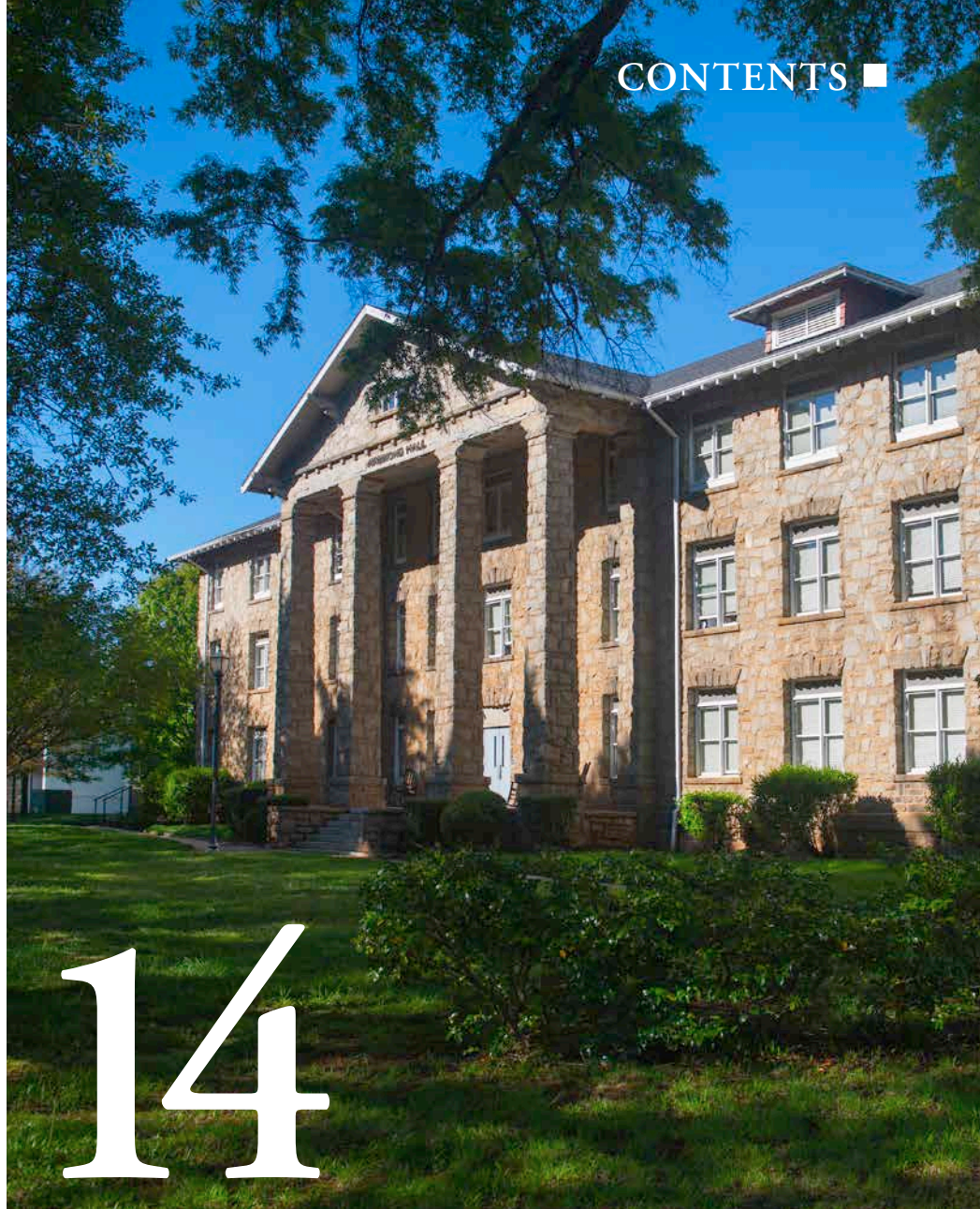
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# NEW Faculty



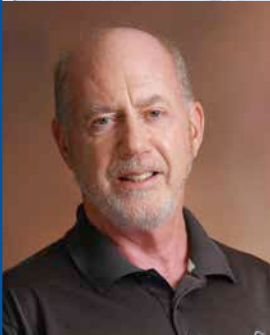
## Brian Kinnaird, *Director of the Criminal Justice Program and Professor of Criminal Justice*

Kinnaird comes to SMC from Bethany College, where he was Chair of the Criminal Justice Department and Associate Professor of Criminal Justice. Before, he taught at the University of the Incarnate Word and at Fort Hays State University, where he received both his Master's Degree in Liberal Studies and Bachelor's Degree in Sociology, specializing in criminal justice. Kinnaird also holds a doctoral degree in human services from Capella University.



## Pamela Hutto, *Professor of Sociology*

Hutto returns to SMC, where she worked as professor of sociology from 2008 to 2010. Before beginning at SMC in 2008, she taught as a sociology instructor and an academic tutor for athletes at Florida State University, where she also received Master's Degrees in Sociology and Family, Child, and Consumer Services, and a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology. She also holds a Doctorate in Education Degree from Liberty University, specializing in Higher Education.



## Bob Coyle, *Professor of Computer Science*

Coyle was appointed professor of computer science after serving as an adjunct professor since 2017. He has over 30 years of industry experience in software analysis, design, development, and testing and has previously taught as an adjunct in Computer Science at North Carolina State University, where he received a Master of Science in computer science. He also holds a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering from Fairleigh Dickinson University.



## Tonya Miller, *Professor of Computer Science*

Miller brings both work and military experience to her new role; she has 30 years as a computer science practitioner and scholar under her belt, as well as six years in the Marine Corps, where she attended numerous Marine Corps and Navy RADAR, computer, and electronic technology schools. She obtained her Master's Degree in Technology Management with an E-Business Concentration from the University of Maryland University College. She received a Bachelor's Degree in Mathematics with a Concentration in Computer Science from St. Mary's College.



## Jericho Williams, *Professor of English*

Williams recently completed a Ph.D. in English from West Virginia University, where he also taught courses in introductory English, American literature to 1865, and science fiction and fantasy. Before that, he received a Master's in English from the University of Alaska - Fairbanks and a Bachelor's in English from Winthrop University. He has taught primary and secondary school as well as university-level courses, covering topics from journalism to science fiction and fantasy.

# FACULTY *Awards*

by Katherine Waters



**JILL COYLE**  
*Professor of English*

In April, Dr. Jill Coyle received honorable mention in the 10th annual Nazim Hikmet Poetry Competition. The competition is part of the Nazim Hikmet Poetry Festival, an annual celebration of poetry organized to honor the late poet of the same name. The winners and honorable mention recipients were invited to read their poems at the festival in April in Cary, North Carolina, and had their poems published in the 10th annual Nazim Hikmet Poetry Festival book.



**KELLY NEIL**  
*Professor of English*

During SMC's graduation ceremony, Dr. Kelly Neil was presented with the Archie Vernon and Margaret Wannamaker Huff faculty prize. The award is given annually to a faculty member who exemplifies outstanding professional qualifications, teaching ability, and service. All faculty members nominate one full-time faculty member who they believe is a model of the award requirements, and the nominees are voted on by the Faculty Steering Committee. The Huff Award includes an \$800 stipend for further study, travel for professional purposes, or to defray the cost of publication expenses for scholarly work.



**COLE CHEEK**  
*Professor of History  
and Anthropology*

On April 12, Dr. Cole Cheek was awarded the South Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities (SCICU) Excellence in Teaching award at a banquet dinner in Columbia, South Carolina. Award recipients are dedicated and committed professionals who work long and hard to be the best in their particular academic discipline in order to instruct and guide future generations as their life's work. The award includes a \$3,000 professional development grant. SCICU represents 20 South Carolina liberal arts institutions.



**DAVID GIBSON**  
*Professor of Math*

The SMC math team, led by Dr. David Gibson, placed second in the 24th annual North Georgia Mathematics Tournament. The three students who competed, sophomore Fabian Salinas, freshman John Smoak, and sophomore Daniel Sabillon, placed second, sixth, and seventh, respectively. The tournament takes place over an entire day, with a 90-minute competition in the morning and a 2 1/2 hour competition in the afternoon. Despite its size, SMC's team beat many teams with 10 or more students.

**FROM LEFT TO RIGHT:** John Smoak, Fabian Salina, Daniel Sabillon, and Dr. David Gibson.

## Featured Board Member

# Kathy McKinney

by Baker Maulsby



When Kathy McKinney was a child, her father was a dedicated reader of the stock market report in the daily newspaper. She was intrigued by the various abbreviations and symbols and data, and her father helped her to make sense of it all. “By the time I was 8, I could read and understand the stocks page,” she said.

A strong grasp of financial markets has served McKinney well. An attorney with Haynsworth Sinkler Boyd, in Greenville, she works with hospital systems, colleges, and other institutions on mergers, expansions, and capital projects. She has particular expertise in the issuance of bonds.

McKinney brings her considerable understanding of financial management and institutional growth to Spartanburg Methodist College, where she serves as vice chair of the Board of Trustees and chair of the audit and finance committee. Her committee works closely with the administration on budget issues, including tuition and salaries.

McKinney takes her role as a trustee seriously, giving careful consideration to the areas where Board members should — and should not — be directly involved. “An

effective board keeps its focus on strategic planning and the fundraising needed to implement that strategy,” she said.

The SMC board is not the first to benefit from McKinney’s skill and judgment as a leader. She has served on the boards of organizations ranging from professional associations to museums. She was a founder of the Upstate SC Alliance, an economic development organization that promotes the Upstate as a destination for growing companies. McKinney is also the former chair of the Furman University board of trustees.

Her experience with Furman provided key insights on higher education leadership, and she developed a special interest in opportunities for students who come from challenging circumstances. She pointed to a program called Bridges to a Brighter Future. Based at Furman, the program selects Greenville County teenagers who show academic promise but face economic and social barriers to attending college. Participants

benefit from frequent exposure to the Furman campus as well as intensive academic support.

Bridges to a Brighter Future has informed McKinney’s perspective on SMC, where nearly 40 percent of those who enroll are first-generation college students. She believes it is critical that these students and others who face challenges to graduation — such as the need to manage work and an academic course load — receive a layer of support that might not be as necessary for young people from more affluent backgrounds. Providing that support is integral to SMC’s mission, McKinney said.

“SMC offers a high-touch approach where a student won’t get lost,” she said. “We have professors who I think are truly committed to the success of first-generation college students and providing the extra attention that requires.”

McKinney believes that SMC’s commitment to the achievement of students overcoming economic and cultural disadvantages forms

“We have professors who I think are truly committed to the success of first-generation college students and providing the extra attention that requires.”

the basis for an important niche in the higher education marketplace. It also puts the College in a unique position to contribute to the economic vitality of the region.

As McKinney explained, the Upstate is becoming more demographically diverse, a larger number of first-generation students are attending college, and companies increasingly demand higher levels of education and training.

“SMC is ready to handle that,” she said, pointing to the College’s higher-than-average graduation rate among two-year institutions.

SMC students, of course, take a variety of paths following graduation. Some attend a four-year college or university, while others pursue jobs or the military.

McKinney is excited that SMC is exploring the viability of an additional option — a four-year degree in targeted programs that she believes promise marketable experiences and skills as graduates seek employment or start their own businesses. The plan is in keeping, she said, with the College’s founding and the philosophy of Dr. David English Camak.

“When I read the biography of our founder, Dr. Camak, I was struck by how forward-thinking his concept was for his time and how our board’s decision to prepare for a four-year degree is totally consistent with Dr. Camak’s view that our students need the skills to succeed in the workplace,” she said.

McKinney has enjoyed an illustrious career as an attorney and as a civic leader. Widely respected in her field, she has worked to help community institutions grow so that they can serve more people. Her work has resulted

in capital investments that have boosted the region’s economy. And her support of nonprofit and philanthropic organizations has enhanced the culture of the Upstate while advancing important social causes.

McKinney is pleased to have the opportunity to contribute to the continued success and growth of SMC. A member of the search committee process that led to the hiring of President Scott Cochran, she’s impressed by his leadership and the energy he has brought to the institution.

“I think he has put together a highly motivated team of educators and other professionals who are willing to think outside the box, who aren’t looking for SMC to just be another school on the college landscape,” she said. “And most importantly, they are attuned to what our SMC students need.” ■

# LARGEST-EVER

## *freshman class*

**M**ove over, sophomores. At 499 strong, the new freshman class at Spartanburg Methodist College took the record for the largest group of new first-time college students since SMC’s founding in 1911. Their ranks helped swell the total number of students (*freshmen and sophomores*) to 837, which is the largest enrollment since 2001.

The increasing number of students is consistent with the College’s plan to grow SMC’s enrollment to 1,000 by 2020. By then, the College will have launched a new bachelor’s degree program. In the meantime, SMC faculty and staff have been preparing for more students since 2016, when the College created a master plan that includes new classroom and housing facilities. ■



PI♥NEER

GIVE

Day

Feb. 14

A day for individuals, communities, and organizations around the world to unite for one common purpose:  
**to celebrate and encourage giving.**

★ \$35,000

Have a ♥ for SMC!

Your Annual Fund gift will go to work immediately to fund things like **scholarships, student initiatives, study-abroad opportunities,** and outfitting classrooms with the **latest technology.**

*More information coming soon!*



# Study Abroad:

## The Wakefields in PRAGUE

by Katherine Waters

MC Pioneers Landon and Brady Wakefield spent three weeks in Prague over the summer. The siblings acknowledged their adviser, Professor Neely, for making the trip possible: “I have a love for traveling and I always wanted to see as much of the world as possible. So, I asked Professor Neely about studying abroad,” explained Landon

Wakefield. Her brother decided to join in on the opportunity. An anonymous donor accepted the students’ proposal, and the two siblings got to experience Prague together. Landon clarified, “We could not have done this without Professor Neely. He is the one who thought of the idea, and he helped Brady and me plan the trip in so many ways. I can’t thank him enough!”

Brady described the trip in a few words by saying, “I loved the trip. The experience of traveling to a new place and looking at the architecture and how the people lived was amazing. Visiting all the different towns and cathedrals was one of my favorite parts of the trip. Also, walking around the city at night was extremely fun!”

**TOP LEFT:** The town of Český Krumlov, located in the South Bohemian region of the Czech Republic, about an hour outside of Prague. The town is surrounded by the Vltava River.

**ABOVE:** View from the Old Town Bridge looking out over the Vltava River and Prague Castle.

**RIGHT:** Statue of Franz Kafka, depicting the author in a scene from his short story “Description of a Struggle”

**LEFT:** The view from the tower of the astronomical clock in the Old Town Hall.

**BOTTOM:** St. Vitus Cathedral, on the grounds of the Prague Castle. Construction of the cathedral began circa 930 and was completed in 1299.

Landon stated, “My favorite part about Prague was the architecture and the history. It is incredible to realize that you are standing next to or inside of a building that has so much history! The detail on the walls, ceilings, and exteriors of the buildings were unbelievable. I also enjoyed visiting the coffee shops and bakeries. Plus, you cannot go wrong with a fresh, baked pastry and a latte from Europe. I instantly fell in love with Prague, and it was not hard to do.”

The anonymous donor encouraged more Pioneers to take advantage of the opportunity and study abroad! ■

Student

by Katherine Waters

# Travel

The gardens at the Real Alcázar in Seville, Spain.

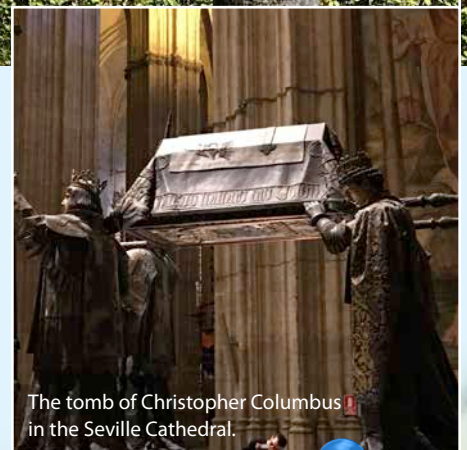
## Spring Break *in Spain*

Five SMC students studied art, history, and culture in Spain for spring break, with Spanish professor Michael Burriss, art professor Kris Neely, and VP for Institutional Advancement Jennifer Dillenger. The group covered Madrid, Toledo, Cordoba, Ronda, and Seville over 10 days.

Burriss modeled the trip on a similar one that he took with a joint high school/college program when he was 15 years old. The tour focused on the castles and palaces in Andalusia (where all cities on their tour, other than Madrid and Toledo, are located). When Christians took the area over from the Moors in

1492, they added some of the Moorish architecture, culture, and traditions to their own, which is still visible today. Burriss noted that the trip was “a good introduction to Spain as a whole.”

Two of the students who journeyed to Spain, Lexi Wright and Susannah Coleman, both say that the trip pushed them out of their comfort zones — which, according to Burriss, was a common notion during the trip as the travelers experienced many firsts. Coleman commented on the cultural differences, saying “When you’re surrounded by a new culture and language you begin to appreciate little things, such as easily communicating with others,” while Wright added, “I think that this trip has definitely made me more open-minded and extroverted.”



The tomb of Christopher Columbus in the Seville Cathedral.

## Washington, D.C. Trip

The History, Culture, and Exploration Club, accompanied by history professors Cole Cheek and Kirk Hansen, traveled to Washington, D.C., in May after the spring semester ended.

The group focused on museums and other monuments during their trip, visiting the Smithsonian, the Holocaust Museum, the Udvar-Hazy Center (a companion facility to the National Air & Space Museum), and the National Zoo. They also visited Mount Vernon and saw other famous D.C. attractions, such as the Capitol and the Washington Monument.

Freshman student Leah Acker enjoyed the diversity of the sites the group visited, as well as the rigorous itinerary: "I would recommend the D.C. trip for any student because there truly was something for everyone. Just be sure to bring excellent walking shoes."

Freshman students Susannah Coleman (left) and Amanda Cannon in Spain.



## The "Trep Club" goes to Charleston

SMC's Entrepreneurship Club, nicknamed the Trep Club, made a trip to Charleston, South Carolina, over spring break to learn about what it takes to start and run a business.

The club was restarted by economics professor Jonathan Keisler in the 2015-2016 school year after being inactive. Since then, the club has hosted multiple guest speakers, visited Charlotte on a spring break trip, and started a weekly entrepreneurship seminar called Launchpad.

On the way to Charleston, the group stopped in Columbia to meet with Scott Middleton, an entrepreneur with multiple businesses, including a restaurant, upscale bowling

alley, fitness center, and the Agape Healthcare communities. Carmilla Jackson, one of the students who went on the trip, said that the range of industries that Middleton's businesses spanned was impressive.

The club members on the trip took advantage of the Charleston attractions and used the coffee shops, restaurants, and other businesses to get an inside look at their operations. They visited the McAlister-West Funeral Home in West Ashley the morning of their first day, then headed to the Charleston Tea Plantation in the afternoon to see the tea-harvesting process and learn about the plantation's history. Other businesses visited include Bitty & Beau's, a coffee shop run by people with intellectual and developmental disabilities; the Port of Charleston; and the Charleston Aquarium.

Entrepreneurship Club students visiting the Harbor Entrepreneurship Center in Charleston. **FROM LEFT TO RIGHT:** Alex Alecxih, Brent Dawson, Jake Williamson, Dr. Jonathan Keisler, Jason Wall, Hugh Bailey, Brian Robinson, Carmilla Jackson, Amanda Rosa, Camera Moore, and Center Director Alex Cottingham.



# Summer Internships

by Alisa Harbison '18  
*Summer Marketing Intern*

SMC is preparing Pioneers for greatness by helping them gain internships. Instead of spending their summer in front of the television, SMC students Piper Adan-Bedley, Garrett McKinney, Kendevon Stenhouse, and Landon Wakefield spent their summer as interns, gaining professional experience in their fields of study.

"Internships help expose students to a variety of industries and either confirm their interest in a career field or let them know — early in their decision-making process — that they would like to pursue another field," says Courtney Shelton, Vice President for Professional Development and Design. "We want to expose our students to a variety of options for their future careers, to help inform them about different professions, and to help them experience a variety of options ensuring their continual progress toward their future goals."

## Check out these hardworking Pioneers!



"It's extremely hard to find an electrical engineering internship, but I used networking skills to reach out to SMC staff and professors. The next day I had numerous emails from people who were telling me about internships they knew about."

– Garret McKinney  
*Power Engineering Technologist, Pike Electric*

"SMC taught me how to be professional and how to present myself in a professional manner. They prepared me for the real world."

– Kendevon Stenhouse  
*Credit Analyst, AgSouth Farm Credit*



"I would have never had the opportunities that I have without SMC. I took the professional development class taught by President Cochran and Courtney Shelton. They had a deep desire to help us achieve success. President Cochran introduced me to the idea of applying for the internship at McMillan Pazdan Smith Architecture. After applying, he contacted them and paved the way for me to schedule an interview. Courtney Shelton provided me with a ton of helpful information about how to create a resume and worked with me to finalize my resume."

– Landon Wakefield  
*Summer Intern, McMillan Pazdan Smith*



"One of the professors at SMC got me interested in landscape design and urban planning. I got the internship by using the networking skills I learned in my professional development seminar."

– Piper Adan-Bedley  
*Social Media Intern, Heather Homes*

# SUMMER *research* GRANTS

by Katherine Waters



In the summer of 2016, new faculty member and professor of chemistry Adam Siegfried won a \$5,000 Furman University Research Experiences for Undergraduates Program grant to conduct solar cell research. He and two SMC graduates, Bret McAbee and Austin Miller, both members of the class of 2016, spent the summer working to increase the energy output of solar cells by speeding up the movement of iodine crystals within the cells.

Each year since, Siegfried has applied for and received additional funds to continue the research, and each year, new students have joined him. Research has focused on creating new iodine crystals, or “materials,” to determine if there’s a better energy conductor than typical iodine atoms. This past summer, Fabian Salinas ’18 and sophomore Lindsay Fowler worked with Siegfried to take the research in a new direction.

“We’re trying to do some new things with the same materials, just to have some variety,” said Siegfried. “We currently don’t have a lot of new materials, but we have a lot of samples that could potentially be new materials. Last year, Fabian made five new materials. We’re hoping to add to that this year.”

Salinas spent his time making a fluorescent sensor — a solution that would glow when the correct chemical processes occurred. This sensor, says Siegfried, could have a number of different applications in medical and commercial spheres.

Fowler used more solid materials in her research, as she grew crystals in an attempt to understand the structures of specific molecules.

Interestingly, neither Salinas nor Fowler are chemistry majors. Salinas, who graduated from SMC in May, will pursue a four-year math degree. Fowler is actually a history major. She learned about the research opportunity as a student in Siegfried’s introductory chemistry class, which she took to fulfill a general education science requirement.



Professor Adam Siegfried (center) with Fabian Salinas ’18 (far left) and Lindsay Fowler at Furman University.

“I have always loved finding the how and why of things, so science has always interested me,” says Fowler. “I never would have had the opportunity if it wasn’t for SMC or Dr. Siegfried, especially since I’m not a science major. I was able to explore things I love and learn much more than I would have in a classroom. I’m beyond grateful for the opportunity.” ■

SMC student

# PHOTOGRAPHERS

*take shots* at  
balancing school  
and **BUSINESS**

by Katherine Waters



Kimberly Wynn

Freshman **Kimberly Wynn** plans to one day become an art therapist, with a little help from her psychology degree and her experience working in photography.

“Photography has been a really good way for me to have an outlet,”

says Wynn. “If I’m feeling sad or angry, I can go get my camera and take some self-portraits and there’s art in that. I’ll definitely recommend it to patients that like photography. I’ll try to tell people that if they can’t really understand their emotions to just go take some pictures and it really helps.”

Wynn’s love of photography, which she says started when she was around 6 years old, has morphed

into her own business. Her first clients were some friends from her homeschool community who offered to pay her for photo shoots.

“A lot of my friends really liked to take pictures, so we would take pictures of each other, and then some of them said ‘I’ll pay you if you’d take pictures of my family,’” recalls Wynn, “and I thought ‘that’s actually a really good idea,’ so I started doing it and really loved it.”

Freshman **Amanda Cannon**, fine arts major, also fell in love with photography at a young age, but her business focuses on showcasing her perspective on the world.

“I was obsessed with National Geographic. I love to watch planet earth and things like that,” says Cannon. “I grew up with a Christian background, and I liked how photography can show people how I view the world.”

Census data show that 52% of college students work at least 27 weeks each year, but there is no data showing how many own their

own businesses. A part-time student may have an easier time working while in school, even with a full-time job, but full-time students have to balance a busy course schedule on top of any working time.



Amanda Cannon

Susannah Coleman



**Susannah Coleman**, SMC freshman and future cinematography major, says that time management is by far the most difficult part of being a full-time student and part-time photographer and videographer. Her Spartanburg-based business, Hub City Visuals, keeps her running between classes and work assignments.

When Coleman's Spanish teacher told her she needed to spend more time outside of class working on the course, the straight-A student says she realized her business was taking too much time away from her studies.

"I had a miniature meltdown," she says. "I knew I had to figure out time management. Students should manage their time well, but don't let studies stop you from doing both, because you can."

But even if schoolwork and photography can be balanced, owning a business is itself difficult for a young student. Planning and developing a business — including setting prices, finding clients, and marketing — is a burden all on its own.

“I knew I had to figure out time management. Students should manage their time well, but don't let studies stop you from doing both, because you can.”

– Susannah Coleman

Mentors and role models can serve a vital role to a business owner, especially a college student who may not yet have formal education in their field. Wynn attributes much of her knowledge to Michael Lamb, a professional photographer located in Spartanburg who has taught her everything from how to use a camera to tips on running her business.

"I took some classes with him, and he recommended that I charge more than \$25 per shoot, because I was cheating myself," she says. "So I looked at what other people charged. I definitely want to be a cheaper option because it would allow me to gain more customers."

SMC's Vice President for Professional Development and Design, Courtney Shelton, says that college allows for flexibility with time and money, and students have the least at stake in case their ideas fail or take some time to get started, making it the perfect environment for a student to start their own business.

"College students literally spend every day at an incubator full of experts in every field if they choose to see it that way and have the self-discipline to use their free time like an investment," says Shelton.

“I would say just go ahead and go for it. A lot of people will say ‘I want to do this kind of business’ and then never end up doing it, so my best advice would be to run with it.”

– Kimberly Wynn

According to a survey conducted by Citi and Seventeen Magazine, only 18 percent of students who hold jobs while in school use the money that they make to pay for their education. Wynn says that she has used photography money for school-related items, particularly books and gas to commute, but doesn't limit her earnings to tuition.

"Sometimes I'll use the money for eating out with friends or going to a movie, but I'm more of a saver than a spender. I do have business-related expenses such as flash drives, editing software, and camera equipment."

Despite the challenges, Wynn wouldn't discourage a student from starting their own business.

"I would say just go ahead and go for it," she says. "A lot of people will say 'I want to do this kind of business' and then never end up doing it, so my best advice would be to run with it." ■



# HISTORY IN THE MAKING: SMC Creates its First Bachelor's Degree

by Lisa Mincey Ware

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**B**aseball legend Yogi Berra once said hitting a home run wasn't about swinging hard but about timing. "If you got the timing," he said, "it'll go."

Timing has played a significant role in SMC's decision to begin offering a four-year degree, says President Scott Cochran. In May, the College's Board of Trustees approved a faculty proposal to grant a Bachelor of Arts Degree with Concentrations in Business, English, History, and Religion.

It will be at least a year, possibly two, before students can begin enrolling in the degree program. The College's accrediting organization, the Southern Association



“There’s a lot of excitement on campus; we’re ready for this.”

– Scott Cochran, *President*

of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, must first approve the degree. Then, the Department of Education must give its stamp of approval.

The timing of the approvals are out of the College’s hands, but there’s every expectation the new degree will be endorsed by both organizations. In the meantime, faculty and staff are preparing the College to serve upper-level students for the first time in its history.

“There’s a lot of excitement on campus,” Cochran says. “We’re ready for this.”

In a way, the College has been getting ready for nearly 30 years. The idea of granting a four-year degree has been explored, on and off, since 1991. “Each time the idea was looked at, things just didn’t line up perfectly,” says Cochran. “There were always good reasons to stay a two-year degree school.”

By 2017, those reasons were under threat by changes in demand for associate degrees. In that year’s May Board of Trustees meeting, discussion centered on new and compelling reasons to expand the college’s degree offerings, including growth in the numbers of students graduating high school with enough credits for an associate degree and the projected effects of a decade-long reduction in the numbers of high school graduates. Both forces had the potential to decrease future

“ Everything we heard from the leadership team and faculty convinced us that to do this right, it had to be done differently. But also in a way that was consistent with our mission.”

– James Fletcher Thompson,  
*Chair of the Board*

enrollment. Offering a four-year degree would attract students who wouldn't otherwise choose a two-year college.

“Those market forces are significant, but there has also been the belief among our faculty and staff that we were stopping short of our mission when we sent our students off to finish their education somewhere else,” Cochran adds.

Dr. Bethany Perkins, Professor of English, says keeping students on campus for all four years of their education is something faculty are looking forward to. “We pride ourselves on close connections with students. After getting to know them both academically and personally for two years it's often hard to see them leave the nest,” she says. “Continuing those relationships into the junior and senior years will be an exciting way to influence their intellectual development, career choices, and character even further.”

The work of creating the new bachelor's degree program began shortly after the May 2017 Board of Trustees meeting, where a request to allow faculty to create a degree proposal was approved. James Fletcher Thompson, Chair of the Board, acknowledges the decision to move forward with developing a plan for four-year degrees was an emotional one for many Trustees. “Some of us were students here or have strong family ties to the College. We love this school and what it's always stood for, and seeing it change means a part of your history is going to change. That can be tough.”

Despite those feelings, Thompson says, the Board felt certain that adding a four-year degree made sense at this time in the College's history. He says they were also assured that it could be done in a way that would continue to set SMC apart from other colleges. “Everything we heard from the leadership team and faculty

convinced us that to do this right, it had to be done differently. But also in a way that was consistent with our mission.”

Following the Board's approval, faculty created an ad hoc committee, made up of representatives from all academic areas of the College, to develop a vision and outline for the degree. “Our goal was to be very intentional in how the degree was designed and about who SMC wanted to be as a bachelor's degree-granting institution,” says Courtney Shelton, Vice President for Professional Development and Design and the committee chair. “We wanted to offer a four-year degree, not necessarily become a four-year college.”

Part of the committee's visioning process for the new degree included developing a program that would fit well with the College's existing associate degrees, which were still going to be offered. Those degrees are at the heart of the College's mission to serve students who might not otherwise have access to college. For some of these students, their career plans may only require a two-year degree. Others like the idea of breaking a four-year degree into two more easily achievable pieces. And for some, says Shelton, family crises or a lack of funds can interrupt college progress before degree completion. “37 percent of our students are the first in their families to attend college, and over half receive federal Pell grants for low-income students,” Shelton says. “Students in these groups are often at the highest risk of dropping out before finishing college. For them, getting the associate degree can still help them earn more income during their lifetimes, even if they never finish a bachelor's degree.”

Among alumni, there's considerable support for continuing to offer the associate degree. Brent Poynter, who graduated from SMC in 2005 and then went on to complete a B.A. in graphic design at Campbell University, says most

people have friends who didn't make it all the way through college for one reason or another. "SMC fills a critical niche for so many young people," he says. "If you're not sure college is for you, you can give it a try for a couple years and walk away with a degree you'll be proud of."

When she heard the news about SMC's four-year degree, Ann Hewatt '82 says her first thought was concern it would drop associate degrees. She'd been hoping her son, a high school junior, might one day attend. "He's looking into becoming a game warden, and the Associate in Criminal Justice Degree would be perfect for him," she says. "Not everyone needs a four-year degree to do what they want. He can get two years of college, which will help him later in his career."

To design a four-year degree that would be as practical and valuable as the College's associate degrees, the ad hoc committee spent nine months researching higher education models. It also examined the needs of students and employers — two groups that expect college to prepare graduates for the workplace. The committee read dozens of articles and studies, many of which revealed a growing gap in how students and employers define workplace readiness. One of the most recent, a March 2018 survey by the National Association of Colleges and Employers, revealed that only about 40 percent of employers believe recent college graduates are workforce ready, compared to roughly 80 percent of students who believe their job skills are adequate at graduation.

That disconnect, says Shelton, can delay or impede job success for students, many of whom graduate believing their college degree has prepared them to be career winners. "In the classroom, students learn the knowledge they need to be well-informed, engaged members of a society,"



Shelton says. "They don't necessarily learn how to problem-solve or think independently, or even communicate effectively, when they start a job. They're unable to meet an employer's expectations but may have no idea what they're doing wrong or how to get better."

Whether or not it's the role of higher education to prepare students for employment is a topic of intense debate between industry; higher education; and, increasingly, government. But for

the members of the ad hoc committee, creating a new degree gave SMC the chance to do something few liberal arts colleges are currently doing: *requiring* students to become workplace ready.

“Providing our students with the content knowledge without equipping them with the knowledge of how to use that information in a professional environment is irresponsible,” says Litasha Dennis, Professor of English and a member of the ad hoc committee. “What they know is important, but so is how they manage and channel what they know into being good citizens of the work environment. It’s our job to teach both aspects.”

The committee proposed that the new bachelor’s degree include 18 hours of

professional development courses and experiences — along with traditional classroom work. They decided to call it the “Camak Core,” after SMC’s founder David English Camak, who believed the purpose of education was to create community and industry leaders.

“Camak was a very practical person,” Cochran says. “He believed in the social benefit of a broad, liberal arts education for the textile mill workers SMC served when it was founded in 1911, but he also knew an education led to jobs that would improve their lives and the lives of their families. The ad hoc committee did an incredible job of envisioning an innovative way to serve the needs of modern students while remaining absolutely true to SMC’s original mission. I think Camak would be

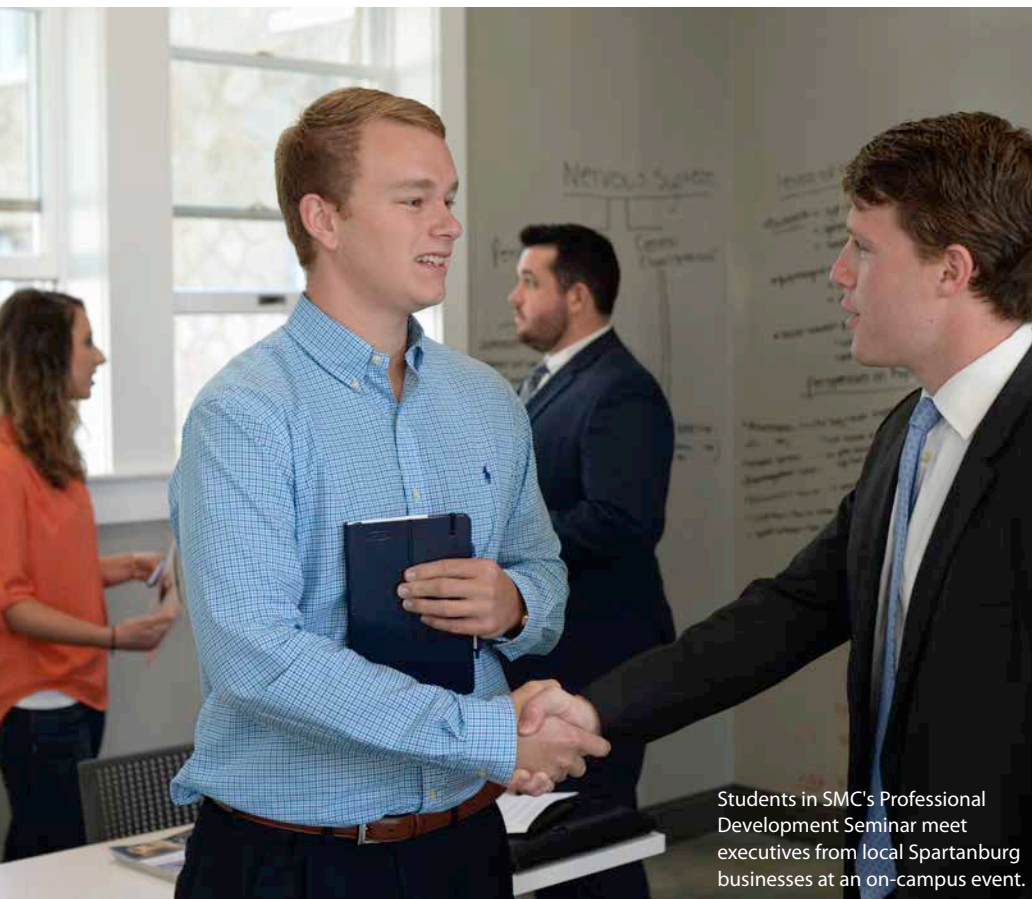
proud, and I wouldn’t be surprised at all to see other colleges follow SMC’s lead.”

Proposed courses for the Camak Core include classes in professional communication, applied technology, leadership, and community engagement (which will emphasize identifying and solving problems in the College’s immediate areas). Students also will be required to complete at least one internship where they will put their workplace skills into action in a real-world setting.

“Traditionally, soft skills such as communication, project management, and teamwork have not been formally taught,” notes Adam Siegfried, ad hoc committee member and Professor of Chemistry. “Students were expected to learn how to interact with others in the workplace on their own. We know most of them will learn these skills eventually, but it will greatly benefit them to learn before they start work.”

After a decade of work experience, Poynter says he supports providing workplace training as part of the new degree. “Most graduates quickly realize that their college degree opened a door for them, but now the real learning begins,” he says. “You have to figure out how to practically apply your education and skills to a specific profession. Future generations of four-year SMC graduates may not even realize how much the professional development training will help them and set them apart from the crowd.”

In March 2018, the ad hoc committee recommended the creation of a Bachelor of Arts degree with the Camak Core. The College’s Academic Affairs and Curriculum Committee (AACC), a standing faculty committee, then took up the work of deciding which majors would be offered within the degree.



Students in SMC’s Professional Development Seminar meet executives from local Spartanburg businesses at an on-campus event.

The decision to offer concentrations in business, English, history, and religion was based on which existing subject areas at SMC were most popular and had enough faculty to immediately offer junior- and senior-level courses. However, like the Camak Core, the decision to require students to choose two of the four concentrations was based on student and employer needs, says Perkins, who chaired the committee. “Most people no longer have one lifelong profession; they change fields more than once over the course of their careers,” she says. “And employers sometimes find college graduates well-educated but too narrowly focused in one discipline. Our B.A. provides a broad education that allows graduates to pursue many different types of professions both immediately after graduation and later in their careers.”

“We also want students to have the flexibility to combine diverse interests in creative ways,” Dennis adds. “For example, a student’s pure passion might be in religion, so they choose that concentration. There is also the option for them to learn the economic aspects of running a church, which could be gained from pairing the religion concentration with the business concentration.”

Within two months, the AACC had a complete course design for the four areas of concentration. Perkins credits faculty enthusiasm for the speed at which the degree curriculum came together. “Faculty have seen the value of a four-year SMC degree for quite a while, so there have been great ideas waiting in the wings. Excitement about the new degree really fueled our work, because faculty believe the expansion will be an enormous benefit to our students.”

Expanding with the goal of serving students — rather than just for the sake

“Our B.A. provides a broad education that allows graduates to pursue many different types of professions both immediately after graduation and later in their careers.”

– Dr. Bethany Perkins, *Professor of English*

of expanding — makes sense for SMC, says Jason Wall, who graduated this past May with an Associate Degree in Business. “At first, I was hesitant about the idea of a four-year program because I thought SMC would lose its small-school charm,” he recalls. “After talking it over with some friends and faculty I realized that just because SMC will become a four-year school doesn’t mean it will be just *any* four-year school. It’ll continue being the school that I grew to love over my two short years here.”

On May 7, SMC’s faculty voted unanimously to approve the AACC’s Bachelor of Arts Degree with Concentrations in Business, English, History, and Religion. On May 17, the Board of Trustees also gave the new degree its unanimous approval. There’s a possibility that approval could come from SACSCOC as early as December, which would mean students might be able to enroll for the following fall.

Among prospective students, interest in the new degree has been strong, says Admissions Counselor Jordan Crosby. “We’re doing something no other college or university is doing. It takes some time to explain it, but once I do, the prospective students and their parents understand its benefits,” he says. “By allowing them the opportunity to

have flexibility in their course of study, while also learning valuable skills from the working world, the students see a multifaceted program that will allow them to reach their full potential and accomplish their goals, rather than a program that makes them fit a certain mold.”

Crosby adds that parents seem also to appreciate knowing that their children who might be more interested in studying courses in the arts and humanities would also gain business skills if they choose it as one of their two concentrations.

It’s still too soon to know if all the hard work and good timing will make the new degree a home run for the College. The excitement on campus is tempered with the understanding of the hard work facing the College to get the new degree up and running. “The baccalaureate degree’s unique design will be unfamiliar to some potential students, but we believe in the importance of a broad-based, practical degree,” Perkins says. “The sheer amount of new materials, courses, and the innovative professional development core will be a challenge, but it’s one our professors look forward to.” ■

# SMC Commits to Transforming Academic Advising

by Miranda Kozman

The campus of Spartanburg Methodist College will see major changes as the institution undergoes the process of reaffirming its accreditation with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). This might sound like a bureaucratic process, but it has put exciting changes in motion that will impact SMC students, faculty, and staff.

## The Impact of Accreditation

The reaccreditation process happens every 10 years and has major implications for the College. According to Dr. Ann Bowles, Executive Vice President of Academic Affairs, “Accreditation is an important measure of quality for any institution. It signifies that an external body, approved by the U.S. Department of Education, recognizes that we are conducting business in ways that meet standards set by an entity outside of campus.” Without this accreditation, SMC would not be able to offer financial aid to its students, and the College would not have the same reputation for excellence in the region.

Over the past few decades, major changes have been made to the accreditation process. Institutions must now show that they are continually improving the academic experience for their students,

not just maintaining the status quo. So in order to keep its accreditation, SMC must choose a specific area of the academic experience to enhance and outline the proposed changes in a document called the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP).

## Academic Advising Emerges as SMC’s Focus

After a series of surveys, interviews, and town-hall meetings with faculty and staff, SMC’s QEP committee identified that improved academic advising would have the biggest impact on student learning. SMC will now focus on revolutionizing academic advising resources and facilities starting this fall.

“It was essential that the community work together to choose the focus for the QEP organically,” says Kathleen Brown, Executive Director of Quality

“We listened to ideas from our community, and then the QEP committee took the three most frequently mentioned areas back to the community for a vote. Academic advising emerged as the clear winner.”

– Kathleen Brown, *Executive Director of Quality Enhancement Programs*



Faculty advisers working with students to plan their degrees.

Enhancement Programs. “We listened to ideas from our community, and then the QEP committee took the three most frequently mentioned areas back to the community for a vote. Academic advising emerged as the clear winner.”

Those who have been on campus long enough will remember that SMC’s previous QEP during the last round of accreditation focused on increasing student engagement by building Spartanburg Methodist College Pioneer Learning Communities (SMCPLC) — a program that is entering its 10th successful year. Because the program was so successful in building community and connection on campus, SMC decided to keep the learning communities in place past their original five-year window. This shows that, when done correctly, the QEP is an opportunity for long-term institutional change.

## Vision for a New Pioneer Advising Center

After hearing from the community about suggested changes to the academic advising process at SMC, the QEP committee put together an ambitious plan to transform the academic advising process. SMC will open a new Pioneer Advising Center, staffed with four academic advisers dedicated to helping all incoming freshmen better understand and take ownership of the college process.

Currently, there are no dedicated academic advisers at the College. SMC's faculty members serve as both instructors and advisers. "The result is some inconsistency in the experiences of incoming freshmen because we don't really have a standard advising process," notes Brown. "Some students walk away from their first advising sessions without fully understanding their degree program, their degree options, or the kind of coursework needed to complete their degree."

Improving academic advising is especially important for first-year students. Freshmen simply need a more robust support system to navigate campus culture, map out their degree requirements, and understand transfer agreements with other colleges. So under the new QEP's advising plan, new students will be assigned an academic adviser who can answer their questions and help them acclimate to the expectations and responsibilities of college.

However, the ultimate goal of the new advising plan is to give students the tools and knowledge to take ownership of their own academic journey. This end goal is a high priority for the QEP committee and Brown: "With the support of the new advisers, we want students to be able to track their progress toward their degree, register themselves for classes online, and make adjustments as they move through their courses."

Building autonomy is especially important because many of SMC's students go on to four-year institutions where they are expected to function independently, including registering for their own courses and tracking their own degree requirements.

After the first year, SMC students will still have access to faculty advisers who will mentor them and ensure they are on track to complete their degree. However, the community hopes students will be much more independent as they leave their first year.

## A More Supportive Environment Starting on Day One

The new advising system established under the QEP also opens the door to improving the student orientation process. Brown heard from several groups on campus who were unsatisfied with the first-year orientation, so the QEP also makes improvements to those programs.

"Better advising isn't just about giving students ownership over their own learning. It's also about establishing better personal connections with students when they first get to campus," says Brown.

As part of the new advising plan, students and their families will have scheduled appointments with staff and advisers when they arrive on campus. During these appointments, they will be able to take care of the onboarding process, registration, and paperwork. That will allow SMC to design a more productive agenda for the student orientation and family orientation that focuses on preparing for college success.

## New Advising Plans Share Widespread Support

The community is eager to implement the changes. Dr. Kelly Neil, Director of Academic Advising, believes the new advising system will have tremendous benefits for both faculty and students.

"Because students will have dedicated academic advisers, it will allow our other faculty to spend more time mentoring students about their career and life choices more broadly. Faculty and students will develop deeper, more meaningful professional relationships. This is important because research shows that students are more likely to graduate if they have a trusted faculty member to mentor them. I can also tell you from personal experience that developing these kinds of relationships with students is what makes faculty members' jobs so rewarding."

Litasha Dennis, Professor of English, also sees the improvements as a way to make SMC more competitive. "This new approach to advising better aligns with what other schools are doing. In the event that our students transfer, they will have a smoother transition. And a new advising center will simply add another element that makes our campus more attractive to prospective students and families."

## High Stakes and Big Rewards

The QEP process and the larger accreditation process are nearing completion. SMC submitted the completed QEP plans to SACSCOC on August 1, 2018. Representatives from the accreditation board visited campus in mid-September to review the plans and conduct interviews. The College will receive its official accreditation status by June 2019. If the QEP is approved, a search for the new academic advisers will occur this fall, followed by the opening of the Pioneer Advising Center in January 2019.

Dr. Bowles, is especially excited about the plans. "A goal of our advising process has always been to demystify the college experience so that students can successfully navigate the process. So the new academic advising program and Pioneer Advising Center are on point for achieving that goal." ■

# SMC's *first* ONLINE DEGREE

by Lisa Mincey Ware



In March 2018, classes began for students enrolled in SMC's online Associate in Criminal Justice Degree program. The new program is the first completely online offering in the College's history.

SMC created the program for working adults who are already employed, or who would like to be employed, in criminal justice or law enforcement fields and who need or want a degree to start or advance their careers. The 29 students currently enrolled range in age from 25 to 55 and most come from South Carolina, says Angelia Turner, Director of the program. Online students take the same courses as



Angelia Turner

those enrolled in SMC's classroom-based criminal justice degree program, but all course materials, discussion, and assignments are managed in a virtual

environment. Students can access course resources at a time that's convenient for them.

Jennifer Johnson of Enoree, South Carolina, enrolled in the online Associate in Criminal Justice Degree program to pursue her dream of working as a crime victim's advocate. Between her work as a caregiver for disabled adults and her family responsibilities, there's not much time left in her day to take classes. Online courses not only give her flexibility to learn on her own time, but she prefers online classes to a traditional classroom. "It's hard to learn with a teacher saying, 'Okay, students, turn to the next page,' when you're barely through the page you're on," she says. "The best part of taking online classes is that I've got the internet and an online tutor, as well as tech support,

right at my fingertips if I need some extra help, and if I'm on a tight schedule."

Turner says that, like all degree programs, some students are more motivated than others and that it can be a challenge to make the online environment as engaging as a live classroom. "We want to create an atmosphere where students feel absolutely connected to the program, to one another as students, to their instructor," she says. "This is not cookie-cutter or one-size-fits-all. We're constantly working with faculty to create an environment that's both academically rigorous but also fun and engaging."

Johnson, who expects to finish the program in 2020, has found camaraderie among the other students, even though she's never met them. "Coming from the medical field, I'm the rookie of my classmates, but I really don't mind. It gives me a chance to learn from them while I'm growing with them," she said. "My professors are just an email or phone call away, as are most of my classmates."

Turner's plans for the fledgling program include broadening recruitment efforts among the armed forces, many of whom seek careers in law enforcement after leaving service. She also wants to strengthen the program to ensure it serves the needs of communities in South Carolina. In July, she hosted leaders from 14 local and state law enforcement agencies on SMC's campus to discuss forming an advisory council for the online program.

"The advisory council has opened the dialogue so that we will gain additional tools to move the online program forward and make it more accessible to adult learners across South Carolina and the southeastern region," Turner says. ■

## The Online Associate in Criminal Justice Degree Program at a Glance

- Degree length: 18 months. Terms are eight weeks long, and students take two courses each term.
- Tuition is \$395 per credit hour and includes all e-books and a laptop computer.
- Financial aid is available.
- All coursework is completed completely online.
- New classes start every eight weeks.

Learn more at <http://online.smcsc.edu/> or contact Angelia Turner, Director, via email at [turnera@smcsc.edu](mailto:turnera@smcsc.edu) or 864-278-6277.



# SMC STUDIO

## OPENS *in* Downtown Spartanburg

New creation, education, and collaboration space is available for public use.

On Wednesday, May 2, SMC Studio, the College's new meeting and event space, officially opened for business in downtown Spartanburg. SMC Studio will be available to the public to rent for a fee, with nonprofits receiving a 50 percent discount. SMC students, faculty, and staff use SMC Studio for college-related events free of charge.

SMC Studio is located in the historic Aug W. Smith Building (174 E. Main St.), which was built in 1926 and housed department stores for most of its 92 years. Blue Wall Real Estate, based in Greenville, South Carolina, purchased the building in 2017 and invested \$10.5 million to transform it into luxury apartments and two retail storefronts. The College will lease space for SMC Studio for five years, using generous gifts from Phyllis Buchheit DeLapp, a former Board of Trustees member and longtime SMC supporter; Scott and (Board of Trustees member) Evelyn Middleton; and the JM Smith Foundation. Gift funds also were used to outfit the Studio with a conference room, classroom area, and seating area.



Phyllis Buchheit DeLapp, former Board of Trustees member, at the SMC Studio opening reception in May.

In the short time the Studio has been open, the approximately 1,200-square-foot space has been used for a number of College events and meetings. It has also been used by local nonprofit organizations, churches, summer day camps, and numerous for-profit companies. "We're making great contacts in the community, which, we hope, will lead to opportunities such as internships and jobs for our students," says Courtney Shelton, Vice President for Professional Development and Design. "People walking down Main Street will stop in to see the gorgeous art on the walls or ask about using the space, and they learn about SMC at the same time."

"We wanted SMC Studio to be a multipurpose space for the SMC community, to let our students experience and participate in the entrepreneurship hub that downtown Spartanburg has become," says Jennifer Dillenger, SMC's Vice President for Institutional Advancement, who led the development of SMC Studio.

"And, because SMC is located off the beaten path, a storefront in the heart of downtown gives us a visible presence alongside Spartanburg Community College, Converse College, Wofford College, and USC Upstate."



**LEARN MORE** about SMC Studio and how your organization can use it at [studio.smcsc.edu](http://studio.smcsc.edu).

To boost awareness of the Studio and to kick-start collaborations with local organizations, the College offered SMC Studio rent-free for one year. However, demand proved so great that the College was unable to meet it without incurring unexpected operating expenses. To offset costs, the College now charges a usage fee.

"The cost is lower than many event spaces in Spartanburg," says Dillenger. "We've discovered there is a great need for free or low-cost meeting space downtown, and we're sharing what we've learned with the Chamber of Commerce." ■



OPENING IN  
NOVEMBER:

The  
**Moore Family**

*Fitness Center*

by Alisa Harbison '18  
*Summer Marketing Intern*

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During the fall of 2018, SMC will open a brand-new fitness center. This fitness center will emphasize that the health of the Pioneers is important, and that the campus is dedicated to making our community better. Funding for the center was led by gifts from SMC Board of Trustees members John Moore, Marianna Habisreutinger, James Fletcher Thompson, and W. Guy Spriggs. SMC also won a grant of \$100,000 from the Foundation for the Carolinas. “These funds will be used primarily for the capital expense of building the fitness center,” said Jennifer Dillenger, Vice President for Institutional Advancement.

The College hopes the facility will be a way to build a stronger sense of community for students.

Freshman student Skylar Lim is excited about the new center. “It’ll give us an opportunity to get in shape, plus we won’t have to pay for Planet Fitness anymore,” says Lim.

Professor Barry Ward, who teaches health and physical education classes, sees the fitness center as promoting a healthy campus. “Living better and longer is not a mystery: You must move more and eat fewer non-nutritional foods,” he says. “The two best natural medicines are a healthy diet and exercise.”

Currently, students and student-athletes share a weight room in Bridges Arena, which is open from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. The new fitness center will be open 24 hours a day and will include aerobics machines, free weights, weight machines, and an aerobics classroom.

John Moore, whose father, William S. Moore, attended SMC and also served on its Board of Trustees,

“We believe education should feed the mind, spirit, and body. This new facility will make it easier for our students to stay healthy while they pursue their college goals, and they’re extremely excited about it.”

– Scott Cochran, *SMC President*

believes his father would have been proud of the new fitness center.

“My father always credited the school for providing him with the foundation he needed to be successful,” he said. “It is my hope that students will view this new facility as a key part of their overall SMC education and one day look back on their experience as fondly as my father did.”

The new fitness center will be completed by November 1 and named for

Moore’s family. The Moore Family Fitness Center will stand next to the William S. Moore Student Athletic Activities Building, or “Moore Gym” as it’s more commonly known.

“SMC is always striving to create the best environment for students to have the opportunity to grow and develop. The new fitness center fits perfectly into the plan to further develop that environment,” Moore says. ■



# Meet Athletic Director

**MEGAN  
AIELLO**



**M**egan Aiello, formerly head volleyball coach at SMC, was announced as the new athletic director in the spring.

## What was the process of becoming Athletic Director?

After submitting my resume, the interview process started in January 2018. I had an on-campus interview with just the committee, and then from that they narrowed it down to four candidates. I also had a question-and-answer session with the coaches. I allowed them to ask questions of me, talked to them about what I wanted to do as athletic director, and presented a strategic plan to them that had nine goals in it that I'd really like to focus on. It was a long process, but I was excited when Scott told me I had been named athletic director.

## What is your background in athletics?

I have been coaching for 17 years. I have experience as the Region 10 women's director. At Huntington College, before I came back to SMC, I was the associate athletic director of compliance and the senior women's administrator. Then I came back to SMC, and I've been here for five years coaching.

## What are your responsibilities as AD and in your other roles with the College?

AD covers a little bit of everything, so the biggest part of my job is probably going to be making sure of the eligibility for our sports and making sure that we're in compliance with the NJCAA. I'm also a cabinet member, and I have some supervisory responsibilities with the physical education classes. I wear a lot of hats as athletic director.

## What has the transition from coach to athletic director been like?

As of right now, it's kind of been a whirlwind. It's a matter of learning all of the different responsibilities that I'm going to have. I'm still learning day to day, a lot of on-the-job experience.

## How many women have held this job in the past?

Just one, and she actually hired me my first time here as a volleyball coach.

## What's it like to be in a role/field that is so male-dominated?

It's difficult at times, but you're seeing a lot more women lately becoming athletic directors, which is awesome. You're going to have that mentality that you always do with athletics, or with women in any job, but I really think that we're starting to shatter the glass ceiling and starting to break through and show that we're great leaders who are able to lead a group of coaches and student-athletes.

## What plans do you have so far for the athletic department?

Because athletes spend so much time with their coaches and teammates, it's easy for them to feel like they're part of an exclusive club. I want to make sure they're working to create strong relationships with everyone on campus, including other students, faculty, and staff. That's good for the College, but it's also good for our athletes. We want them to be well-rounded so that when they leave SMC, they can point to a record of solid work on the field, but also in the classroom and in the community. ■

# SPORTS *Results*

## Cross-Country

Ken Roach led the men's and women's teams to a Region X Championship. Both teams ran the Half Marathon Championship. The men finished eighth out of 11 teams, and the women finished seventh out of 12 teams, with a national rank of 28.



## Baseball

Coach Tim Wallace finished his 27th season with a 28-24 overall record and 11-9 in Region X — finishing 3rd in the regular season. The team competed in the Region X tournament, where they made it to the 8th game.



## Men's Basketball

First-year head coach Nori Johnson led his team to a Region X Championship for the regular season with a record of 21-8 and a Region X record of 11-1. Coach Johnson was Region X Coach of the Year.



## Women's Basketball

Head coach Briana Clark led her team to an 18-7 overall record this season, winning the Region X regular-season championship as well as the Region X Tournament. Coach Clark reached a milestone of 100 career wins at SMC. She was also named Region X Coach of the Year. Deja Marshall was Player of the Year for Region X as well as an NJCAA All-American.



## Golf

Arran Setro returns as head coach of both the men's and women's golf teams. The men's golf team won the SCC Collegiate Invitational and finished ninth in the district tournament. Megan Thompson and Haley Grooms both qualified for Nationals, with Thompson winning the title and Grooms finishing third.



## Men's Soccer

Coach Kyle Hughes finished his first season 12-6-2 overall and 7-6-2 in Region X. The team finished third in the regular season. The team fall GPA went up from a 2.1 to a 2.69.



## Women's Soccer

The women's soccer team finished 14-4 overall, going 11-3 in Region X and finishing second in regular-season play and in the Region X tournament. In the United Soccer Coaches National Rankings the team finished 17th. It was the fourth straight year the team has finished in the Top 20. Dan Kenneally had his 200th career win for the women's team, moving him into the Top 10 of active coaches and Top 15 All-Time.



## Softball

Head coach Ashlie Layman finished second in Region X in her first season, with a Region X record of 11-4 and an overall record of 28-22. The team made it to the championship game and finished second in the tournament. Coach Layman won Coach of the Year for Region X.



## Volleyball

Head coach Megan Aiello led the team to a 20-10 record, bringing her career record to 149-89. They won the Region X Championship. Coach Aiello was named the new athletic director on April 30.



## Wrestling

Third-year coach Matt Oliver led his team to the National Duels for the second time in the team's history in January. The wrestling team finished the season ranked 20th in the nation, and won the NJCAA District Tournament for the first time in the school's history. Coach Oliver was named District Coach of the Year. Tramon Jenkins was named to the All-America team and placed eighth in the National Tournament. Two players, Tramon Jenkins and Brandon Harris, made the NWCA All-Academic team.



# CAMP of CHAMPS

by Katherine Waters



**TOP:** Coach Gregg Nibert speaks to campers during the camp's opening ceremony.

**MIDDLE:** Piedmont High School basketball players huddle up during one of their first games.

**BOTTOM:** Campers hang out in a residence hall room after checking in to camp.

For the first time in its nearly 30-year history, Coach Gregg Nibert's Camp of Champs basketball camp was held on SMC's campus.

The summer camp, held each June and open to high school and middle school basketball teams across South Carolina, North Carolina, and Georgia, needed to find a new location after Nibert's retirement from Presbyterian College in 2017.

Camp of Champs is known for being the largest team camp in the Southeast, bringing in around 700 campers for two weeks. Campers begin playing games first thing in the morning, after breakfast and an optional devotional, and continue to play until after dinner, each playing a total of three games per day. They also have the chance to participate in a question-and-answer period with Nibert and hold smaller contests with the entire camp at the end of the day.

Many basketball teams are drawn to the camp because of the competition that it provides. Even rival teams, such as Dorman and Byrnes or Lexington and Irmo, have the opportunity to play against each other.

"We have championship winners and runners-up, so they want to come to camp to get better and to find good competition and good coaching," explained Nibert. "That's why we have the best competition in the Southeast."

The camp's popularity also provides an opportunity for SMC to market itself to the campers who will be attending college in the near future. Nibert noted that the faculty and staff showed their excitement about the camp and worked to make its move to the campus successful.

"We're so excited to be on SMC's campus. Everybody on campus — from the president to admissions and marketing — wants the camp to be a success and puts their best foot forward. We're so appreciative." ■

# MISSION U

by Elva Ramirez



In July, SMC welcomed the United Methodist Women's Mission U, a three-day event focused on study, worship, and fellowship. Around 250 guests came to SMC from across the state and the South to take part in daylong events, such as singing and worship, panels on a range of topics, and special projects.

This year's Mission U topics included "Embracing Wholeness," which "challenges readers to work toward stronger and healthier relationships with creation, their communities, themselves and God," according to organizers. A second study, "What About Our Money?" looked at issues of money and faith against the context of biblical teachings, practical money management, and charity.

"This is an opportunity for women from all over South Carolina to experience what SMC has to offer," Rev. Tim Drum, SMC Chaplain and Director of Church Relations, said. "They will see our hospitality, eat in our cafeteria, sleep in our residence halls, and worship in our chapel."

"I also look forward to learning alongside the attendees, worshipping with them, and reconnecting with new friends I made last year," he added.

"We have been coming to SMC for 20-plus years," Jean Doscher, Mission U Dean, said. "Many years ago, we alternated between SMC and Columbia College. But then the decision was made to attend SMC exclusively."

"Where else do women have the opportunity to come together for worship and study for three days?" Doscher added. "The

beauty of our connectional church is that women across the country are all studying the same topics."

SMC has long welcomed Mission U's guests and worked to make their stays as comfortable as possible. Mission U organizers meet with SMC several months ahead of the conference to work out logistics, plan for room bookings, and request meal services. While any large group poses challenges to a small campus like SMC, Mission U visitors have cultivated a reputation over the past 20 years as being an empathetic and respectful group.

For many SMC staff, these longtime visits forged real personal connections to the yearly conference.

"I have been involved with supporting the UMW's visit for the last six years," Scott Deskins, SMC Facilities Event and Administrative Coordinator, said. "My grandmother was a member of this wonderful group. I enjoy being reminded of her as I work with them to make their visits successful." ■



# GOOD THINGS

*come in threes*

by Katherine Waters

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**D**avid Clyburn, Jr.'s wife, Eloise, answered the phone when I called for an interview. She told me that he was outside working, but that she could take a message. I introduced myself, told her about the article, and said I'd call back at a better time. "No," she said, "Let me go get him. This is important."

It is important because the Clyburn family has played as vital a role in Spartanburg Methodist College as SMC has in their family. Patriarch David Jr. served as Vice President of Student Affairs for over 20 years, then as chaplain for a few years before retiring. He also taught psychology at a time when it was common for administrators to teach classes.

"When working here, most of the faculty and staff lived on or close to campus, everyone from the president to the maintenance director," said David Jr. "We shared the space, our children grew up together, and everyone was very close. It wasn't unusual for children of faculty and staff to attend SMC as students for two reasons: It's close and convenient, and children of employees got additional scholarships to attend."

The Clyburns certainly took advantage of the benefits given to children of faculty. David Jr.'s son, David Clyburn III, began attending SMC in 1985, before graduating and transferring to UNC Asheville for his master's degree. He now works in Spartanburg as an audio engineer, at the same company that did audio and video for certain buildings on campus. While attending SMC, he also lived on campus with his father.

"I was proud to be able to go to SMC while my father worked there," said the younger David Clyburn. "He encouraged me to begin my education at SMC. It gave me a solid education and taught me how



Three generations of Clyburns. From left to right: Jacob Clyburn, David Clyburn Jr., and David Clyburn III.

to learn and what would be expected of me in college. SMC provided a good stepping stone between high school and college."

David III feels the same way about his son, Jacob, a sophomore at SMC. Both David Jr. and David III acknowledged Jacob's enthusiasm about being a student at SMC and his excitement about the school's plans to begin a four-year program.

"I chose SMC because it was really close to home," said Jacob. "I grew up in Spartanburg and I wanted to stay. I really liked the school when I first came here in October to tour. What my grandfather did here also influenced me to go here. A lot of my professors know about his career at SMC, and I wanted to keep the tradition going."

"I'm glad that my son can have the same solid foundation that I did after graduating high school," adds David III. "The transition to college can be difficult, but SMC makes it easier. I like the way that SMC fits him and provides a good education with individual attention. Students don't get lost in the shuffle like they would at a larger university."

“SMC provided a good stepping stone between high school and college.”

– David Clyburn III

But the family hasn't only contributed to SMC by attending; the Clyburns have established three scholarships in memory of their parents to provide financial aid to future students. Rev. and Mrs. David Clyburn Jr. started the David A. Clyburn Sr. Memorial Scholarship in memory of Rev. David A. Clyburn Sr. (the grandfather of David Clyburn III and great-grandfather of Jacob Clyburn), who served the

SC United Conference from 1930 to 1955. They also established the Franklin and Mary McMeekin Memorial Scholarship in memory of Eloise's parents and the Louis

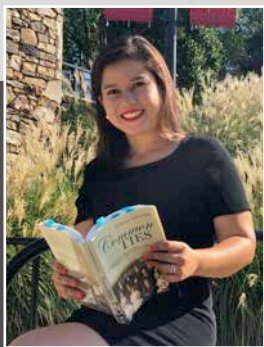
Clyburn Scholarship, named after David Jr.'s paternal uncle.

David Jr. cites the mission of SMC to make a quality education more accessible as the primary reason why he wanted to start the scholarships. When recalling the purpose of the scholarships, he explained that his wife's parents strongly supported both of their educations, and his own parents connected to SMC's mission as well. He in turn wanted the scholarships to give the same assistance to students that they had, keeping the family's legacy alive while furthering the mission of the school that they all love so much. ■

# One Student's Goal to *Donate* \$10 Million to SMC

Once an undocumented student, Laura Morales is now one of SMC's most committed young supporters.

by Elva Ramirez



within her lifetime, and she's well on her way to meeting it.

But it hasn't been an easy ride, especially in Morales' early days at college.

As an undocumented immigrant, Morales was barred from access to all loans and scholarships; she was also unable to be hired for part-time jobs to help pay for education and living costs.

Laura Morales was an undocumented student when she entered SMC in 2011. She's now one of the College's most committed young donors. She has set herself a personal goal of contributing over \$10 million

within her lifetime, and she's well on her way to meeting it.

She lived with a host family freshman year, but she was on her own for the rest of day. "I didn't have a meal plan," Morales recalls. "I would eat one dinner at my host family and then survive on granola bars." Morales also couldn't afford to buy books. Showing an early entrepreneurial streak, she offered to be an unpaid student tutor in exchange for borrowing books from her peers. She never paid for a single book while at SMC, she says.

Aware that she had no money to return to college, Morales knew that she would probably have to drop out after her first semester. But instead of giving up that fall, she aimed to make the most of her experience. She contributed over 200 hours of community service while maintaining a 4.0 GPA.

“The things I do today not only affect me but also people I’ve never met or will meet.”

“Pressure creates gems,” she says. “I was under so much pressure to succeed.”

It was during a volunteer event for Habitat for Humanity that Morales had a chance meeting with SMC’s Executive Vice President for Business Affairs, Eric McDonald. After hearing her story and learning of her high grades and commitment to volunteerism, he helped arrange for a student meal plan and access to student housing. He also worked on her behalf to lobby for scholarships for the rest of her stay at SMC.

“Those experiences fundamentally shaped me as a human being,” Morales, now 25, says. The scholarships and the willingness of strangers to give her money to attend SMC became “a foundation of how I need to be as person. Because someone did something so unimaginably nice for me. Now, it’s my turn.”

Morales says it’s her moral responsibility to return the favor to her alma mater. She set herself a goal to eventually donate over \$10 million to the school, and she’s already started.

“You don’t need a million dollars to make a difference,” Morales says. “You need a willing heart and an open mind.”

Sometimes she’s donated \$1,000, sometimes it’s \$100, she says. She gives as she can; even so, she’s the biggest donor to the College in her age bracket.

She’s set a lofty goal on purpose, she says. “Everyone wants to donate a million outright,” Morales says. “How can you know what it’s like to donate a million if you don’t know what it’s like to donate \$100 or \$1,000? I am

reminded that drips fill the ocean, and it is the same for the case of giving.”

Morales continues to work toward her goal of \$10 million. She has her own company, LM Field Services and Sales, which helps companies relocate foreign employees from major corporations such as Bosch, GE, and John Deere to cities in the South, including Spartanburg and Augusta. She also runs audits and sales for small businesses in South Carolina. Morales says that her experience as an SMC student ambassador directly contributes to the public speaking and sales tactics that she uses to make her business thrive.

She now owns two properties in Anderson, South Carolina, and is working on a third deal. The two properties are paid for, and have been written in her will to be deeded to the College when Morales dies, “no questions asked.”

Since graduation, Morales has obtained a green card through DACA. In a strange way, not having a green card in her early days at SMC contributed to shaping who she is today. “Sometimes the worst things we face are the best things in the long term for our life experience as a human being,” she says.

As an undocumented student in financial duress, she was under immense pressure to make the most of her SMC education, which led to new opportunities.

Although she’s now legally allowed to stay in the country, Morales remains motivated to help students like herself. She wants to aim big, she says, because so much is at stake. “I need to think bigger, even if I fall short,” she says. “If my goal is to donate \$10 million and I



**TOP:** Morales with Don Tate, Director of Development at SMC. Morales was acknowledged for her support of the College at a recent dinner.

**BOTTOM:** Morales poses with Bruce Yandle, noted economist and founder of an SMC fund that helped pay a portion of her college expenses.

fall short, and I only get to \$5 million? That’s better than having a goal of \$1 million and only giving \$500,000.”

A goal of \$10 million is just a number, but it’s something that’s written all over her house, on her goal board. “It’s my lifetime goal to donate that money,” Morales says. “It doesn’t have to be donated at once, and it doesn’t all have to be my money. I have to get creative with it because I am aware that all problems are solved with nonlinear thinking.”

“The things I do today not only affect me but also people I’ve never met or will meet, and that keeps me accountable and inspired to take massive actions with my daily actions,” she adds. ■



# Paul Callahan *and the* Little Farm that Could

by Samantha Wagner

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SMC alum Paul Callahan '94 never wanted to be a farmer. An Ohioan by birth and a South Carolinian since college, he dreamed of playing soccer for a Division I school. While D1 didn't work out, his experiences brought him to Spartanburg Methodist College, where his work-study program led him to the soccer team. At school he found a place where a young man intent on athletics could begin to thrive in the world of academia. "It was a place that taught me how to study and gave me individualized attention," Callahan says. "I was a kid who struggled with school, and SMC helped me focus and learn, while ultimately giving me the foundation to move on."

Encouraged by professors, Callahan graduated from SMC and then the College of Charleston with a B.A. in Political Science. Far from his soccer days, his adult life led him to policy work in Washington, D.C. It was there, in a city of brick, mortar, and concrete, far from the green fields of a sports complex or the rich earth of South Carolina and Ohio, that the farming life found him.

His wife was the first to convert to shopping at the local farmers market. "At the time," Callahan says ruefully. "I had no interest in farming outside of the paperwork I did for Congressman Joe Wilson regarding agribusiness policy." That reality changed, however, when a

fateful business trip took him to a South Carolina farm for a week of tours and education. In his own words, it was a "life-changing event" that moved his heart and mind from the office into the field. After returning from his trip, Callahan began looking for ways to make farming his full-time reality. He contacted farmers from the Shenandoah region in Virginia to the state of South Carolina asking about job opportunities and offering his unique skill set. In an economy still hurting from the recession of 2007-2009, however, no one needed help and no one believed he was serious about changing his career. Determined, Callahan ran the numbers and came up with a gutsy plan. "I came home one night



“ I was a kid who struggled with school, and SMC helped me focus and learn, while ultimately giving me the foundation to move on. ”

– Paul Callahan

Shamrock Croft became a regular offering at local farmers markets and interest in the farm’s offerings began to grow.

They enjoy sharing the story of the little farm that could, while also encouraging shoppers to support local farms.

and asked my wife, ‘What if we did it? What if we returned to South Carolina, bought land, and started our own farm?’ She agreed, and they did, by purchasing acreage in Duncan, South Carolina — a place familiar to both of them and close to their families. They named their farm the Harp & Shamrock Croft. “Farming is not a part-time job, it’s a full-time job,” Callahan says. “Harvest days take all day, and then you’re still staking tomatoes and caring for the animals when the sun has set.” Those early years were hard, requiring much effort as even the land proved a challenge. “This is not the right land,” Paul comments. “We didn’t know that at the time, but now we understand. There are too many trees, too much shade, and not enough room to expand.” Still, these natural challenges did not deter the family. Instead they prompted creative thinking, efficient planning, and improvisation. Callahan and wife, Jenni’s, dedication and focus soon reaped rewards as the Harp &

Now, five years past its inception, the Harp & Shamrock Croft has a reputation for high-intensity farming. It produces approximately 5,000 pounds of produce annually on 1 acre of land. Every inch of space is used efficiently to maximize the potential of the land to produce. Chickens roam in large open pens, and beans, cucumbers, tomatoes, and squash grow in healthy garden plots. In the middle of May, the greenhouses are transitioning from winter kale and leafy greens to the plants of summer. Everywhere there is green growth, and evidence of the hard work and determination of a farmer and his family.

The farm now serves two main purposes. The first is a source of income and vocation. The second is a way to educate others about localism, farm-to-table living, and the wonders of a small-business economy. It seems that spirit of learning Callahan gained at SMC continues to thrive. He and his family of seven welcome visitors to their farm eagerly.

Ironically, interest in local produce has seasons. “Traffic is great in summer but dies away when school starts. Perhaps because people don’t know about winter garden offerings or they just get busy,” Callahan says. Many times shoppers are unaware of what items are naturally in season. Part of his job is educating shoppers about the produce they purchase and the specifics of natural farming. Many customers offer to volunteer during harvest times, and Callahan’s intro to gardening classes capture the attention of would-be gardeners looking to start their own patch of paradise. “I say go big or go home,” Callahan laughs. “If you want to go for something, then go for it with all you have.”

That same spirit of daring and dreaming is taught to every visitor to the farm and every curious new-garden beginner. Callahan’s ever-watchful, ever-curious children also learn lessons through living on a farm, including biology, business, economy, and the power of “sweat equity.” Even Callahan himself never stops learning. “My background is in criminal justice and political science, not biology,” he says. “We learned when we first started from books, videos, and other farmers.”

At the very beginning one sage farmer commented, “Try everything, but not all at once.” The Callahans have taken this advice to heart. From crop rotations to gravity-fed water lines, Callahan and his family continue to do just that. ■



# Friends since the '50s



by Baker Maultsby

**T**hey live in four different states. They long ago settled into their own distinct lives — working jobs, raising families.

But the friendship they formed more than six decades ago as college students in the early 1950s has endured, even grown, through the years. And on a late August afternoon, these four women gathered, as they do once a year, to reconnect. There were lots of laughs, a few tears, and a good deal of reminiscing about their time together at what was then Spartanburg Junior College.

The four friends had this photo taken as SMC students. They've had a similar photo taken each year they've reunited.  
**SEATED, LEFT TO RIGHT:** Margaret Gibbs, Judy McClure.  
**STANDING, LEFT TO RIGHT:** Janie Faust, Iona Richardson.



Margaret Gibbs '54, who hosted the group at her home in Spartanburg, talked about the two-week-on, two-week-off schedule of classes that allowed her to work at Craft's drugstore and earn money to pay for school.

Judy McClure '55, who grew up in Massachusetts and learned about SJC from a pastor at her church, described the "culture shock" she experienced after coming south for college. "Oh, boy," she said. "I'd never had grits or sweet tea or biscuits."

Iona Richardson '54 doesn't remember exactly how she learned about SJC when she was a high school student in Ahoskie, North Carolina, but she spoke of coming to a place where the rules were strict — especially for girls. "I don't know if there's a word for how strict it was," she said, noting that female students weren't allowed to drive cars and that romantic hand-holding was off-limits on campus.

Janie Faust '54, a Florida native, didn't dispute Richardson's recollection but reminded the group that when they "went to the canteen, you could meet boys. I think you could even dance," she said.

Faust, Richardson, McClure, and Gibbs arrived at college in Spartanburg from diverse parts of the country and from different family backgrounds. They have

gone on to lead full and unique lives. But their time together at SJC remains a source of deep respect and kinship.

It was a formative time in their lives. Each left home with dreams of a better life. They came to SJC in the early 1950s. The college designed a program to support students who needed to work — and even helped them find jobs with local Spartanburg businesses.

There was a strong sense of community at the college, said Faust. "The students had an innocence, and we were all poor," she said. "There was nobody who was above anybody else."

The rules, as Richardson recalled, were tough — perhaps intended to be particularly protective of female students who worked off campus. But they managed to have fun — at the canteen, in the small dormitory for girls, on the occasional road trip to visit friends from other colleges.

Richardson and Faust lobbied for permission to start a cheerleading squad. They got their way but had to make their own outfits.

Overall, the experience was special. "It was truly the best two years of my life," McClure said.

The four young women spent a great deal of time together at SJC, and their friendship was further solidified when Faust was married in Florida after the four graduated. "They all came, and they took care of planning my wedding," she said.

One by one, they got married and started families. Faust settled in Tampa, Florida. Richardson moved several times before ending up in Fort Worth, Texas. McClure made her home in Raleigh. And Gibbs returned to Spartanburg, where she currently lives in the Roebuck area.

During the busy years of working and raising children, the four friends didn't see each other on a regular basis. They stayed connected through phone calls and letters.

Eventually, time allowed for them to plan vacations together. Their husbands became friends, and everyone looked forward to annual get-togethers.

Gibbs, McClure, Richardson, and Faust are all widows now. But their yearly visits remain an important part of their lives.

While in Spartanburg, the group was looking forward to visiting the SMC campus. They understand that much has changed at the College but are pleased to know that SMC continues to be a place where first-generation college students thrive and those with financial need find support.

"I want SMC to keep providing opportunities for those who need it," Richardson said.

And they hope it remains a strong community where deep and lasting friendships are made possible. As Faust put it, "I have had groups of friends over the years — but nothing like this." ■

# Alumni PROFILES

by Baker Maulsby and Samantha Wagner

## Brandon Williams '13

When he enrolled as a freshman at Spartanburg Methodist College, Brandon Williams thought he might become a pharmacist. He had an interest, though, in engineering, and Williams says SMC physics professor Mark Holycross gave him the confidence to pursue a degree in the field.



“He told me that I possessed the necessary skills in physics and mathematics to become a successful engineer. ... And I thank him for that,” he said.

Williams is now a graduate student in the mechanical engineering program at Clemson University. He is working on a project supported by the U.S. Army that aims to equip military vehicles — from helicopters

to tanks — with the ability to provide real-time data on wear and tear. The “smart skin” technology will help guide operators as they make costly decisions on replacing or upgrading key military equipment.

Williams, who grew up in Greenville and attended North Greenville University after graduating from SMC, enjoys his math-focused work in the lab at Clemson. He’s excited about milestones in his ongoing research and about plans to pursue a Ph.D., and he remains grateful for the support he received at SMC. “It was a good place for me, because the faculty and staff were so nurturing at a critical time in my life when I needed it the most.”

## Wayne Casasanta '69

Wayne Casasanta’s voice is rich and warm as he talks about childhood piano lessons, his college band, and the volunteer work he does now. Since youth, music has featured prominently in his life, allowing him to connect with others and give back to his community. “As a teenager I visited my grandmother in the nursing home and played for her,” Casasanta reminisces. “Many of the other residents would gather around and listen as I played old hymns I knew from church.”

When he enrolled in Spartanburg Junior College, he continued to play the piano,

becoming part of a band called the Toy Factory. Together they traveled, playing jazz, blues, and other tunes. When the Toy Factory eventually disbanded, Casasanta finished his bachelor’s degree and started what would become a 32.5-year career with the South Carolina Commission for the Blind. Music stayed a part of his life, but when the Toy Factory re-formed as the Marshall Tucker Band he was not a part of that group.

Today, Casasanta is in the choir at his church. He also sings and plays the piano for patients at the Spartanburg Regional Hospice Home, as well as residents at many assisted living and memory care facilities. Many patients cannot leave their



rooms, so Casasanta brings the music to them — playing hymns, jazz songs, and even some B.B. King and Marshall Tucker Band songs upon request. He is constantly aware of the people he serves. “If a patient has just met with a doctor, it might not be the best time to visit. In other situations I am asked

to play and patients — even ones with memory loss — sing along.” His music is an extraordinary gift that offers peace, stress relief, and even joy in difficult moments. Casasanta, however, views his work in light of a bigger calling. “It’s not me. I am not the most talented, but God can use all our efforts for the good.” When looking at his life and his music, it is easy to see the truth of his belief.



# Lane Lovegrove '96

**L**ane Lovegrove appreciates the liberal arts ethos and the space college provides for self-development. “Colleges teach the broad strokes that prepare students to do what they want with their career. When you enter college you know what you are interested in, but you don’t know what you want to spend your energy doing.”

For Lovegrove that interest was the theater, and Spartanburg Methodist the place he learned to embrace his “acting bug.” At SMC Lovegrove was involved in a variety of projects under drama professor Kent Newberry. He performed in works such as “The Absent-Minded Professor” and “The Little Shop of Horrors,” and fondly recalls partnering with Converse on various projects. “The College was a unique place that nurtured creativity while preparing students to venture into the adult world,” he says.

Since his time in theater class, Lovegrove has completed a degree from Winthrop and worked for the College in its social-behavioral science lab. He also launched his own freelance acting career. His first opportunity came with the movie “Dear John,” where he was cast as a background actor. He remembers the experience vividly. It was around Thanksgiving. He filmed during the holiday break, ate a rushed dinner with his family, and returned to the Upstate of South Carolina for work on Monday.

Since then, he has done a variety of different projects. He has performed as Robert Joyner in “Paper Towns” and has

appeared in multiple TV series, including “Murder Calls” and “Final Appeals.” Lately, his acting has focused on small independent films and commercial work for companies in Charlotte and Atlanta. Some of his latest projects include an independent feature film made in Columbia called “Azrael” and a horror film called “What Becomes of Us,” which is currently circulating the film festival circuit.



Lovegrove’s acting career has taught him much about life, career management, and the importance of family. He encourages young actors to pursue acting classes or a business degree. “As an actor you are your own small company. You need to know how to manage your skills and create a good headshot, castability sheet, and demo reel. It’s important to know how to market who you are to interested casting groups.”

Lovegrove’s advice extends to an emphasis on work-life balance. Right now, he prioritizes time with his fiancée and young family as they build a life in North Carolina. He recognizes that travel to the larger cities, which have more frequent acting roles, would take away from precious daily moments at home. Instead of living life on the road, he stays sharp by attending classes, networking, and continuing to learn all that he can about the trade. As he says, “You never know when the next opportunity will come around.”

“Colleges teach the broad strokes that prepare students to do what they want with their career.”

# Jeff Bannister '85

Jeff Bannister has enjoyed a good deal of success in his career: He has worked as a state patrol officer, owned a legal services company, and become something of an Upstate celebrity as a grill master. He credits his story of achievement, in large part, to Spartanburg Methodist College.

As a youngster, Bannister struggled with dyslexia. "In the 1970s no one really knew what to do



with a kid that had dyslexia," he said. "SMC was the only college that accepted me. Because of its small size and the help they gave me, I was allowed to grow and start over without being judged."

SMC looms large for Bannister for another reason: He met his future wife, Olga, at the College. "Every success I have had in life I feel started at SMC and with meeting my wife there," he said.

Bannister is a self-taught cook who has become renowned for grilling whole animals — hogs, goats, even cows. His annual culinary event, Bovinoche, has earned regional acclaim and even drawn attention from the Wall Street Journal. Meanwhile,

he has appeared on numerous TV programs, including the Food Network's "Chopped: Grill Masters."

Bannister explained, "I have always been a cooking enthusiast, as I think all real Southern men are."

Over the years, SMC has held a special place in Bannister's heart. He said he enjoys stopping by the campus when he's in the area and having lunch in the cafeteria. "The food is much better now!" he declared.

But the character of the College is, in important ways, constant. "A large percentage of the students at SMC are first-generation college students," Bannister said. "The decision to attend SMC can affect many generations of (a student's) family for the better by opening new opportunities that would otherwise not exist."

# TaKima Butler '11

TaKima Butler calls it "an honor" to serve as a police officer in Aiken, South Carolina — the town where she grew up. The 2011 Spartanburg Methodist College graduate feels a special connection to Aiken residents and strives to build positive relationships between law enforcement and the community. She's especially eager to make a difference for Aiken's young people. "I want them to know they can be anything they want to be," she said.

When she was a teenager, Butler was a golfer. She had hopes of playing the sport in college, and SMC gave her that opportunity. The College was also great fit for her academically and socially. "I liked that SMC is a small campus and everyone pretty much knew each other," she said, adding that faculty and staff members were welcoming and supportive. "It made the transition from high school to college very easy."

A future in law enforcement was on Butler's mind during her years at SMC. She was a criminal justice major at the College and continued her studies in the field after enrolling at The Citadel, where she also played golf.



She was hired by the City of Aiken Department of Public Safety just two weeks after graduating from The Citadel. In a feature video for the City of Aiken, Butler said she jumped at the opportunity: "I was ready to get going and be part of this community. It's something I always wanted to do."

Butler, who earned a Master's Degree in Professional Counseling from Liberty University earlier this year, remains grateful for her time at SMC and says she would encourage high school students to give the College a serious look: "I would tell any young person who is considering SMC to go for it. ... It's a great atmosphere."

# Young Alumni Fabian Salinas '18

by Katherine Waters

During his time at SMC, Fabian Salinas was known on campus as being something of a Renaissance man.

“It’s really just me going after whatever it is that I enjoy,” he says about his variety of interests. “Some days I just really want to do math, which might sound weird to some people, but that’s just what I want to do.”

A math major at SMC, Salinas became interested in chemistry and decided to pursue it to an extent as well, assisting professor Adam Siegfried on a solar cell research project at Furman University. He plans on transferring to Furman, where he has received a full scholarship, to major in math (with a possible double major in chemistry) and hopes to continue working on the same research project that he has the past two summers.

During his time as an SMC student, Salinas joined the math team, led by Dr. David Gibson. In the spring, the team placed second in the 24th annual North Georgia Mathematics Tournament, winning against teams that were more than double their size. Salinas individually placed second overall. Gibson notes that Salinas was an exceptional student when it came to math.



“In my 43 years of teaching mathematics at SMC, of all the thousands of students I have had the privilege of connecting with in my classes, several stand out as especially outstanding for various reasons,” says Gibson. “But none has been

more special than Fabian Salinas. During his two years at SMC, Fabian probably taught me more math than I taught him. On the rare occasion that I happened to introduce him to an idea or concept he had not thought of or been exposed to, that really made my day. I definitely want to stay in touch with Fabian and follow his destiny from here on.”

Salinas credits SMC with being an affordable and flexible option for his first two years of college.

“Going through SMC and completing my two years there definitely opened up a lot of financial opportunities that I wouldn’t have been able to get to just applying to a different college,” he says. “I’m now able to finish out my two years at Furman with a full ride.”



In addition to being a STEM whiz, Salinas plays guitar, piano, and saxophone. He participated in SMC’s talent competition, SMC Idol, in 2017. “I’d like to join some kind of music group at Furman. Music is something I’ve thrown

on the back burner, and I want to be involved in it again.”

Salinas says that he is interested in possibly becoming a math professor after receiving his bachelor’s degree, although if he adds a chemistry major, he doesn’t know how that may affect his plans. Whatever path he chooses to take, he will surely be following his passions.

“I think that continually learning is something enjoyable. I feel like you can’t really say that you’re living if you’re not gorging yourself on some sort of knowledge.” ■



## Young Alumni Lexi Wright '18

by Katherine Waters

Lexi Wright, who graduated SMC in May, is the first student to enroll in SMC's transfer program with Sherman College of Chiropractic (Spartanburg). She will start courses toward a Doctor of Chiropractic degree in October.

"I first started at SMC as a business major and didn't really know what direction I wanted to take," Wright says. "After a semester I realized that chiropractic is something I wanted to pursue. So I talked to my adviser, Dr. Gibbs, and he told me that they had the program, and if I was interested I could start the next fall following the plan."

Wright will complete 14 quarters, or 3 1/2 years, before receiving a doctoral degree. The transfer agreement shaves a year off of the total time that a student is in school, saving money and allowing them to begin practicing in states that do not require bachelor's degrees, including South Carolina.

Although the majority of SMC students attend for only two years, a student in the Sherman transfer program must complete three years to obtain the 90 prerequisite hours. Wright says that it wasn't difficult to add on one more year at SMC.

"I only had to take two classes during my third year as prerequisites for Sherman, and the rest of my schedule was filled up with more enjoyable classes. I took some art classes and really enjoyed the third year. I felt older than all of the other students, but I really got along with the staff and made good relationships with them."

Tarsha Hamilton, Assistant Director of Enrollment Services at Sherman, believes that the chiropractic field is becoming more popular among students in health care.

"People want less invasive methods, something more holistic versus taking medications,"

says Hamilton. "I think some students are attracted to the chiropractic field because they start with preventive health so that the body can heal itself and function at its very best."

For any future SMC students who are interested in chiropractic, Wright emphasizes that they should understand that the workload is heavy. "It's a lot of science classes," she says. "I know a lot of students want to get their required classes knocked out, but they need to know that they're going to have to work hard in those classes."

As the first SMC student to participate in the transfer agreement, Wright wants to set a precedent for future students and help to make the program more popular. Now that one student has led the way, SMC may

anticipate a larger number of students bound for the medical field taking the more streamlined route to a Doctor of Chiropractic Degree. ■



# 2018-2019 Alumni

# CALENDAR

## Columbia Family Night

October 14, 2018

5-7 p.m.

Join SMC President Scott Cochran for a fun-filled, casual, family night at The Grand in downtown Columbia. Come join SMC alumni families and friends for a night of bowling and comradery. We also invite all potential students and United Methodist Youth to join. Reconnect with classmates, enjoy family time, and have an opportunity to hear from SMC President Scott Cochran and Enrollment Officers.

No charge to attend. Please RSVP to  
Becky Snow at [SnowB@smcsc.edu](mailto:SnowB@smcsc.edu).

## HOMECOMING

November 9-10, 2018

Join us for a fun weekend as we celebrate being Pioneers.

### DECADE PARTY

Silent Auction

Alumni Awards Luncheon

*See the full schedule of events  
and register to attend:*

*[www.smcsc.edu/homecoming](http://www.smcsc.edu/homecoming)*

## Alumni & Friends CHRISTMAS PARTY

December 7, 2018

6-8 p.m.

Bring your family and friends to enjoy a complimentary barbecue dinner with cash bar (beer and wine). Casual dress.

Forevermore Farm in Moore, South Carolina

RSVP to [SnowB@smcsc.edu](mailto:SnowB@smcsc.edu).

## ANNUAL OYSTER ROAST

February 22, 2019

6 p.m.

Enjoy oysters from a Charleston favorite! \$10 per person. Cash bar and casual dress.

Bowens Island Restaurant  
Charleston, South Carolina

Visit [www.smcsc.edu/bowensisland](http://www.smcsc.edu/bowensisland) to register.

*Space is limited, so register early!*

See additional events at [www.smcsc.edu/alumni-and-friends](http://www.smcsc.edu/alumni-and-friends)

# Class Notes

**1949**

**MRS. ALMA JOLLEY RILEY**

Mrs. Riley is 87 1/2 years old. She attended Spartanburg Junior College for one year. She later went to Gardner-Webb University and The Ohio State University. She is very grateful for all of her education experiences.

**1952**

**MRS. MARILYN BLAKELEY HATZENBUHLER**

Mrs. Hatzenbuhler is appreciative of the opportunity SJC gave to her to begin her college career. Memories of the special friends she made and leadership opportunities afforded to her are still strong. She has had a full life.

**1954**

**MR. HOYLE EDWARDS**

Mr. Edwards is 83 years old and still teaching at Fruitland Baptist Church. His wife had a stroke and is still recovering. Please remember her in your prayers.

**1955**

**MR. WENDELL J. LEE**

Mr. Lee is married with three children and six grandchildren.

**1955**

**MRS. CAROLYN FERGUSON PATTERSON**

Mrs. Patterson taught English in high schools in Greenwood, South Carolina, for 31 years and was also an administrator in the same area for eight years.

**1958**

**MRS. PEGGY WHITE BELLAMY**

Mrs. Bellamy met her husband, Jimmy, the day they registered on January 23, 1956. They became sweethearts and graduated in 1958. They married on April 25, 1959. They enjoyed their time at Spartanburg Junior College. She was a school librarian for 37 years. Jimmy retired from the United States Postal Service after serving for 42 years. They have one daughter and three grandchildren. They have many fond memories of their time at Spartanburg Junior College. They still like to visit campus.

**1963**

**MR. WEDRELL W. LEE**

Mr. Lee enjoys dividing his time between home and the beach. He enjoys activities with his 12 grandchildren and six great grandchildren. He is very pleased with the work going on at the College and has many good memories of SJC.

**1967**

**MR. ROBERT B. GIBBONS JR.**

Mr. Gibbons has been a member of the Clarendon County Planning Commission since 1991 and is currently serving as the Chairman. He is also the Past Department Commander for the State American Legion and is currently the American Legion District 19 Commander. He also serves on the New Zion United Methodist Church Pastor Parish Committee as Chairman.

**1967**

**MRS. BRENDA C. LIBNER**

Mrs. Libner retired from the University of South Carolina Sumter Campus on June 30, 2017, after working over 15 years as an Administrative Assistant in Admissions Services. She traveled to the Holy Land in November 2017 for 10 spiritually uplifting days. She hopes to travel to Sicily and Italy in October 2018.

**1969**

**CHAPLAIN COL. SAMUEL J. T. BOONE**

Col. Boone is retired from the Army after 38 years as Cobra pilot, infantry officer, and chaplain. He worked seven additional years as a civilian at Army Chaplain School (Fort Jackson) and retired on March 31, 2018. He is currently doing volunteer work with multiple groups in the Columbia area.

**1970**

**MR. WAYNE BERNARD WELBORN**

Mr. Welborn is living in Sun City Summerlin in Las Vegas, Nevada. He is playing golf every day and enjoying life to the fullest. Mr. Welborn thanks SMC for the education and opportunities that were provided to him. He says they have enhanced his life. Mr. Welborn says "May God bless this school and all the good things it does!"

**1972**

**THE REV. DR. FLOYD VERNON CHANDLER III**

The Rev. Dr. Chandler completed a two-year postgraduate program in Spiritual Direction at Sarum College in Salisbury, England. He and his family reside in Ansbach, Germany.

**THE REV. DR. WILLIAM RUTLEDGE CHILDS**

Dr. Childs retired from active ministry in the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church in June 2018.

**1976**

**MRS. GLORIA GREER ELLEDGE**

Mrs. Elledge has retired and is enjoying her grandchildren. A granddaughter, Kayla, is graduating from Clemson this year. Another granddaughter, Jennifer, graduated from Anderson University this year. Mrs. Elledge enjoys sewing, painting, planting flowers, and going on senior citizen trips. She is so thankful to have been able to graduate from Spartanburg Methodist College. She used her degree to teach at Christian Academy in Duncan, South Carolina. She is glad to have been able to get her degree by taking Saturday and night classes.

**2010**

**MR. ROBERT DAVID WALL**

Mr. Wall recently graduated with his MBA from Liberty University.

Share your news with Frontiers readers!

Visit [www.smcs.edu/alumni-and-friends/update](http://www.smcs.edu/alumni-and-friends/update) to send a note for publication in Frontiers.

# In Memoriam

**Ms. Evelyn Stanley Long '41**  
of Conway, SC  
*died February 19, 2018.*

**Mr. Fletcher D. Thompson '41**  
of Spartanburg, SC  
*died December 17, 2017.*

**Mrs. Ruth Bishop Jones '42**  
of North Abington Township, PA  
*died July 12, 2017.*

**Mrs. Ruby Bishop Pagano '42**  
of East Brunswick, NJ  
*died in 2017.*

**Mrs. Mary Todd Thompson '42**  
of Kingstree, SC  
*died June 1, 2017.*

**Mrs. Ruth DeLoache Thompson '42**  
of Spartanburg, SC  
*died August 5, 2018.*

**Mr. Louis W. Rolen Jr. '44**  
of Inman, SC  
*died April 3, 2017.*

**Mrs. Sara Flynn Calvert '45**  
of Eatonton, GA  
*died February 11, 2017.*

**Mrs. Jean Casey Brittain '47**  
of Myrtle Beach, SC  
*died February 7, 2018.*

**Mr. Benjamin R. McClimon '48**  
of Greer, SC  
*died January 15, 2017.*

**Mrs. Mary Wilburn Waddell '48**  
of Aiken, SC  
*died February 11, 2018.*

**Mr. Bobby L. Scott '49**  
of Taylors, SC  
*died November 7, 2016.*

**Mr. James Pinkney Huskey '50**  
of Marion, SC  
*died October 31, 2017.*

**Mrs. Juanita Guthrie Rogers '50**  
of Greer, SC  
*died January 31, 2018.*

**Mrs. Maxine Spence Fowler '51**  
of Waynesboro, VA  
*died May 31, 2018.*

**Mrs. Arlene Will Rhodes '51**  
of Elkridge, MD  
*died June 24, 2018.*

**Mr. Kenneth Samuel Holt '53**  
of Conway, SC  
*died January 14, 2018.*

**Mr. Richard E. Huggins '53**  
of Murrells Inlet, SC  
*died August 4, 2018.*

**The Rev. Robert Williams Tanner '53**  
of Orangeburg, SC  
*died December 20, 2017.*

**Mr. Ralph D. Vaughan '54**  
of Galax, VA  
*died May 29, 2018.*

**Mr. Donald Edward White '55**  
of Spartanburg, SC  
*died January 22, 2018.*

**Mrs. Beverly Salley Dowler '56**  
of Columbia, SC  
*died June 14, 2018.*

**Mr. Franklin M. Mann '56**  
of Fairforest, SC  
*died November 20, 2017.*

**Dr. Hugh A. Hayes, DVM '58**  
of Spartanburg, SC  
*died February 12, 2018.*

**Mr. Ralph M. Kesler '58**  
of Anderson, SC  
*died October 22, 2017.*

**Mrs. Sara Mitchum Hall '61**  
of Charlotte, NC  
*died September 28, 2016.*

**Mrs. Helen Harmon Harrelson '61**  
of Spartanburg, SC  
*died April 19, 2018.*

**Mr. Nicholas A. Rabickow '63**  
of Las Vegas, NV  
*died February 16, 2018.*

**Mr. Steve D. Grissom '64**  
of Clover, SC  
*died September 2, 2017.*

**Mr. Robert MacInnes '64**  
of Charlotte, NC  
*died April 23, 2016.*

**Mr. James Joseph McAndrew II '64**  
of Charleston, SC  
*died February 15, 2018.*

**Mrs. Lynne Atkinson Berry '66**  
of Charlotte, NC  
*died December 30, 2017.*

**Mr. Ross Martin Fox '66**  
of Tryon, NC  
*died September 27, 2016.*

**Mr. Erik Fred Anderson '71**  
of Moore, SC  
*died December 30, 2017.*

**Mr. Phillip A. Compton '71**  
of Spartanburg, SC  
*died September 1, 2017.*

**Mrs. Margaret Benton Jones '71**  
of Moore, SC  
*died January 6, 2017.*

**Mr. John H. Hall Jr. '74**  
of Spartanburg, SC  
*died October 28, 2017.*

**Mr. Wayne Williams Federline '74**  
of Mauldin, SC  
*died on September 5, 2018*

**CDR Dan R. Kimberlain Jr. '74**  
of Arlington, VA  
*died July 12, 2017.*

**Mr. Henry Franklin Hall '76**  
of Woodruff, SC  
*died April 27, 2018.*

**Ms. Virginia H. Harmon '76**  
of Pacolet, SC  
*died May 29, 2017.*

**Mr. Michael Laurens Pruitt '76**  
of Spartanburg, SC  
*died May 24, 2018.*

**Mr. George Wesley Grice Jr. '77**  
of Marion, SC  
*died August 13, 2017.*

**The Rev. James Otis Harper '77**  
of Union, SC  
*died January 18, 2018.*

**Mr. Francis L. Hutto Jr. '77**  
of Charleston, SC  
*died November 29, 2016.*

**Mr. Richard B. Osborne III '77**  
of Greenville, SC  
*died February 29, 2016.*

**Mr. Rudy Laverne Knight '78**  
of Drayton, SC  
*died March 10, 2018.*

**Mr. Michael DeWitt Fields '79**  
of Spartanburg, SC  
*died August 23, 2017.*

**Mr. Dale Clark Bramlett '80**  
of Greenville, SC  
*died April 15, 2016.*

**Mr. Tracy LaMar Littlejohn '98**  
of Gaffney, SC  
*died January 23, 2018.*

**Mr. Michael Orlando Slaughter '09**  
of Dublin, GA  
*died May 21, 2018.*



*Spartanburg Methodist College*

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**SMC**  
2018

# HOMECOMING

NOVEMBER  
9 & 10

All alumni, their families and friends are invited to attend SMC Homecoming!

Visit [www.smcsc.edu/homecoming](http://www.smcsc.edu/homecoming) for full details and to register to attend!

