

# FRONTIERS

SPARTANBURG METHODIST COLLEGE

[smcsc.edu/frontiers](http://smcsc.edu/frontiers)

FALL 2022

## CAMAK CORE: CREATING WORKPLACE-READY GRADUATES



# FROM THE PRESIDENT:

Another year is under way at Spartanburg Methodist College. Once again, we welcomed more than 1,000 students to our in-person and online programs for the fall semester.



We continue to see growth in the bachelor's degree and SMC Online, which are two of my goals. Another is the further integration of our professional development program into our four-year curriculum. We are fully committed to developing the most workplace-ready students in the Upstate.

In this issue of "Frontiers," you'll read more about the professional development and Camak Core courses and the advantages they provide our students. From professional communications to critical thinking to hands-on experiences, our students will be ready to face the working world with confidence.

You will also read about how we are helping students better adapt to and thrive in college with our new approach to advising. SMC students receive one advisor for academics, career advising, and success coaching. Our focus is to provide them the best service possible without having to turn to multiple people for direction and advice.

This issue also has some great profiles, including one on a family who has been a tremendous supporter of SMC, the Atchison family; a trustee spotlight on the Reverend Jerry Gadsden; and the touching story of Ephraim Butler, an SMC basketball player who has persevered to success on and off the court.

As always, you'll read about some of the incredible people associated with SMC. From alumni to faculty to staff to students, I'm always amazed by the stories and accomplishments of our entire Pioneer family. Sit back, relax, and enjoy a great read.

Thank you all for your continued support of SMC.

Sincerely,

*Scott*  
**W. Scott Cochran**  
President

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# FRONTIERS

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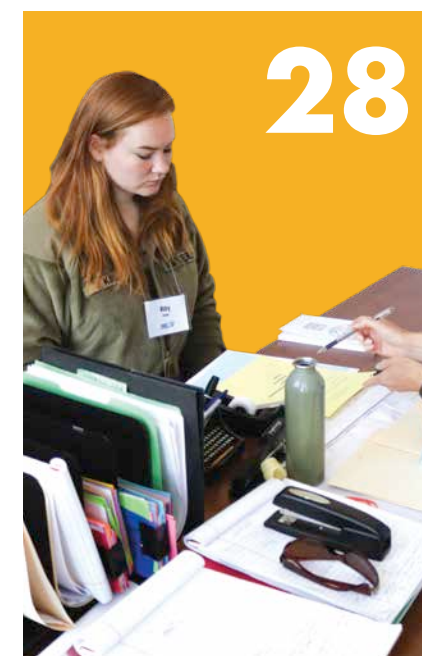
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ON THE COVER: SMC students  
participate in APEX Live, a networking  
event to present their Capstone Project.

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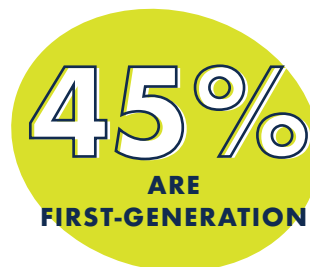


# OPEN DOORS UNLOCK POSSIBILITIES

## DID YOU KNOW?

- Bachelor's Degree graduates from low-income families earn about one-third less than graduates from high-income families
- A First Gen graduate's median household income is \$40,000 less than a second-generation graduate
- Black and Latinx students earn \$6,000-\$10,000 per year less than their peers following initial enrollment

### SMC STUDENTS



**OPENING A DOOR ISN'T ENOUGH** SMC equips students by providing career preparation education and a clear path to true economic mobility. Your financial support ensures we are able to provide students with manageable steps that lead from enrollment to employment.



# FACULTY AWARDS

## SMC'S HYDER RECOGNIZED WITH GBHEM EXEMPLARY TEACHING AWARD

Spartanburg Methodist College (SMC) biology professor Dr. Jennifer Hyder has been awarded the 2022 Exemplary Teaching Award.

The award is given by the General Board of Higher Education (GBHEM) of the United Methodist Church, with the recipient being selected by their colleagues. The award recognizes excellence in teaching, civility, and concern for students, institution, and the community.

"I am so honored to be the recipient of the GBHEM Exemplary Teaching Award," Dr. Hyder said. "It's a privilege and a blessing to be able to teach, inspire, and strive to make a difference both in the classroom and in the community."

According to her colleagues, the recognition is well-deserved.

"Dr. Hyder has a very strong work ethic and is very dedicated to her students," said Dr. Kim Duckett, a biology professor at SMC. "A perfect example that comes to mind is the annual participation of her anatomy and physiology class in the SC Upstate Research Symposium. This requires Dr. Hyder to spend hours inside and outside the classroom guiding her students through the process."

The Research Symposium is a forum where faculty and students from colleges and universities across the region can interact and discuss their research, scholarly, and/or creative endeavors. Dr. Hyder supported 12 students in presenting at the symposium this year. Dr. Duckett said students benefit from her commitment and walk away feeling accomplished and having learned important lessons in written and verbal communication.

"Dr. Hyder is also an ideal colleague. She is that wonderful coworker that everyone hopes to have," Dr. Duckett said. "She goes above and beyond to help any of us when needed and always has the science department's best interest in mind."

Dr. Hyder began teaching at SMC in 2017. Prior to that she taught at the University of South Florida, where she earned both her bachelor's and Ph.D. in biology. She has published several journal articles and presented her work at various conferences and seminars.



## SMC PROFESSOR SIEGFRIED RECEIVES BOTH HUFF AWARD AND SCICU EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AWARD



Connecting with students and continually seeking ways to improve his approach to the classroom are a couple of the leading factors colleagues mention about Dr. Adam Siegfried, who was named the 2022 Huff Award winner and Spartanburg Methodist College's (SMC) 2022 recipient for the South Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities' (SCICU) Excellence in Teaching Award.

"When I was notified of winning, I was surprised and happy," Dr. Siegfried said. "I am currently in my seventh year at SMC, and it is always nice to be recognized for the work I do, especially by my colleagues."

Dr. Siegfried has taught chemistry at SMC since 2015 and currently serves as the chair of the science department. Colleagues praise his commitment to perfecting his teaching craft through long hours and taking certification courses to learn new strategies and approaches to the profession.

"Adam brings to the department a genuine love of learning," said Dr. Judy Mirick, professor of physics and physical science at SMC. "He is a quiet leader, a good listener, and encourages all of us to share new ideas with each other about what works best in the classroom."

Dr. Siegfried is also committed to his field, having published several papers and journal articles. He has also given his time to SMC and the science department, including developing the physical science web pages for the College and serving on numerous committees ranging from new hire search committees to the faculty steering committee to the 10-year master plan committee for the school.

"The students adore him," Dr. Mirick said. "I have had the opportunity to see how receptive his students are to him. He does an outstanding job teaching a very difficult subject, and he has an open-door policy for students to come speak to him any time he is there. This strong rapport with students is what makes them really appreciate him."

*Continued on Next Page*

Continued from Page 3

The Huff Award honors an SMC faculty member who exemplifies outstanding professional qualifications and teaching ability. It was founded in 1970 as an endowed fund by Dr. A.V. Huff, Jr., a former member of the SMC Board of Trustees, and his wife, Kate, in memory of his parents, Archie Vernon and Margaret Wannamaker Huff.

SCICU is a charitable organization that represents 21 liberal arts institutions in South Carolina focused on strengthening the state's independent schools through collaboration, governmental advocacy, fundraising, and public engagement. The Excellence in Teaching Award is accompanied by a \$3,000 research grant funded by SCICU.

"I plan to do some research into how to blend chemistry and art into specific lessons and laboratory activities that allow students to better understand the interdisciplinary nature of most subjects," he said of his plans for the grant. "Science labs can be tough to instill intrinsic curiosity, but with a lesson and activity they view more as art and fun, it will help to bring out their curiosity about the world."

Dr. Siegfried has previously been awarded the Award for Exemplary Teaching by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM) of the United Methodist Church. ●

# SIX *NEW* PROFESSORS JOIN SMC FACULTY



## STACEY TODD, PROFESSOR OF BUSINESS

Stacey Todd brings more than 20 years of experience in various business, finance, and accounting roles in the corporate world to the staff of SMC's business department. She joined the faculty on a one-year assignment in 2021 and has been named to the full-time faculty for 2022. Prior to joining SMC, Todd most recently served as the plant controller for Sage Automotive Interiors, overseeing accounting and financial operations as well as accounting training for employees.

Todd received her Bachelor of Science in business with a concentration in accounting from the University of South Carolina Upstate and her Master of Accounting from Gardner-Webb University.

## KELSEA TURNER, PROFESSOR OF PUBLIC SPEAKING

Kelsea Turner joins the full-time faculty at SMC following a one-year assignment as a professor of public speaking in 2021. Turner brings nearly 20 years of teaching experience to the College, most recently as a Fulbright Distinguished Scholar in Teaching in Finland. She has published several articles and research on subjects such as education, crisis communications, and distance learning.

Turner received a bachelor's degree in history from Indiana University and master's degrees in communication from Austin Peay State University and learning and teaching from Harvard.



## MARIA KITHCART, PROFESSOR OF BUSINESS

Maria Kithcart brings 15 years of teaching experience to the faculty at SMC as a professor of business. Her experience includes business, marketing, consumer behavior, and other business essentials at several colleges, including North Greenville University, Limestone University, Southern New Hampshire University, and the University of Arizona online program. Kithcart also has experience developing curriculum and in college administration roles in admissions and as a registrar.

She earned her bachelor's degree in music education and Master of Ministry from Southern Wesleyan University, a master's in management and leadership from Webster University, an MBA from the University of Phoenix, and a Doctor of Ministry from North Greenville University.



## DR. JOHN COGBURN, PROFESSOR OF BUSINESS

Dr. John Cogburn joins SMC's faculty as a professor of business, bringing his more than 30 years of business and teaching experience to the staff. Dr. Cogburn is an experienced director who has led global organizations, including executive director of Amphion Asia, Co., and president of JohnCo Trading LLC. Prior to SMC, he also served as a professor of management and business at Keiser University – Shanghai Off-Campus Site and as a visiting professor at Keiser University's main campus.

Dr. Cogburn has a master's in ceramic engineering from Clemson University, a master's in counseling and human development from Liberty University, and a Doctor of Business Administration from Keiser University – Fort Lauderdale.



## DR. RICKY FARR, PROFESSOR OF MATHEMATICS

Dr. Ricky Farr joins the SMC faculty as a professor of mathematics. He brings experience in teaching several courses in math and has published numerous articles in the field. Farr previously taught at High Point University and the University of North Carolina Greensboro. He has a Bachelor of Science in math from the University of South Carolina Upstate, a Master of Science in math from Clemson University, and a PhD in computation mathematics from the University of North Carolina Greensboro.



## TERRY SELLERS, PROFESSOR OF BIOLOGICAL LABORATORY INSTRUCTION

Terry Sellers joins the full-time faculty after several years serving as an adjunct instructor in biology and human anatomy. He has more than 20 years' experience in the chiropractic field and as a business owner and has been teaching at the college level for more than a decade. He has taught at North Greenville University, South Wesleyan University, and Limestone University in addition to SMC.

Sellers earned his bachelor's degree from Lee University and a Doctor of Chiropractic from Logan Chiropractic College.



## DR. SARAH FREDERICKSON, PROFESSOR OF MATHEMATICS

Dr. Sarah Frederickson brings more than a decade of mathematics teaching experience to SMC for the new semester. She has a background in teaching at the K-12 level as well as in higher education. She has taught in various levels at the University of the Ozarks, the University of Arkansas, and Newberry College. Frederickson has several published papers and has presented at numerous conferences. She has a Bachelor of Science in mathematics from the University of the Ozarks, a Master of Science in education from the Arkansas State University, and a Doctor of Philosophy in mathematics education from the University of Arkansas.



# DR. CURT LAIRD NAMED NEW PROVOST AT SMC

By Jeremy Handel

Following a national search that turned up several qualified candidates, Spartanburg Methodist College selected Dr. Curt Laird as the new provost and executive vice president (EVP), replacing interim provost Kris Neely on July 1, 2022.

"I am honored and grateful to join Spartanburg Methodist College. I look forward to working with the faculty and administration to serve their amazing students," Dr. Laird said. "I'm excited to get to know the campus community and help to advance the goals of SMC."

When starting his search for a new position, he said he was interested in small, liberal arts institutions. SMC stood out to him because of the institution's focus on serving students of all backgrounds and placing high value on helping the students as individuals.

Dr. Laird comes to SMC with more than 20 years of experience in both faculty and administration roles at the college level. Most recently he served as the associate vice president for academic affairs at Columbus State Community College in Columbus, OH, one of his alma maters. He looks forward to bringing his leadership to SMC and getting involved with the campus community.

"I would describe my leadership style as participative," Dr. Laird said. "I place a high value on gaining the opinions of the team around me in leading. I do a lot of Management By Walking Around (MBWA) as a means of building rapport with people."

SMC began its search for a new provost and EVP in 2021, following a delay due to the COVID pandemic. Following the departure of Dr. Mark Gibbs, the previous provost who stepped down to return to the classroom, Kris Neely was named to the interim post and guided the College's academics until Dr. Laird was hired. Neely returned to the classroom to continue teaching art.



"We are extremely grateful to Kris for the tremendous job he did in the provost role. He helped lead continued growth in our academic programs, and we're grateful for his hard work," said SMC President Scott Cochran. "We are excited to welcome Curt to the position. I look forward to his leadership and ideas for continuing that academic growth."

Dr. Laird said he is looking forward to developing positive relationships with the faculty and leadership at SMC to collectively move the College in the right direction. He is excited to get involved with the day-to-day experiences and learn more about SMC and its varying stakeholders to have a positive impact.

"My first priority is to learn. There are people, processes, and histories that must be observed and respected if one is to integrate into a learning community," he said of his objectives in his first year. "There are so many intricacies at an institution of higher learning. I intend to dedicate substantial time to learn as much as I can about SMC."

Dr. Laird brings a wealth of experience to SMC beyond his role at Columbus State. He previously served as an associate professor and director of undergraduate sports management at Wingate University, assistant chair of the department of physical education, sport and human performance at Winthrop University, and assistant professor and program director at the University of Charleston, among other positions.

He has a Doctor of Philosophy from Ohio University, a Master of Science in sport management from West Virginia University, a Bachelor of Science in sport studies from Shawnee State University, and an Associate of Applied Science in sports and fitness management from Columbus State Community College.

The Groveport, Ohio, native enjoys spending time exercising, reading, and listening to music during his free time. ●

# DR. TONYA MILLER

## SMC PROFESSOR RECOGNIZED FOR AFFORDABLE LEARNING WORK

By Radhika Vaid, Staff Writer

Dr. Tonya Miller has been with SMC's math and computer science department for five years. Last year, she was recognized as the Professor for Affordable Learning recipient.



"I was ecstatic to receive the reward and to be recognized for an innovative way of assisting our students," Dr. Miller said.

The Professor for Affordable Learning (PAL) award recognizes faculty who have integrated affordable learning into their classrooms. These affordable course materials include Open Educational Resources, high-quality teaching materials that are free for people everywhere to use and re-purpose.

According to Dr. Miller, students benefit from the reduced materials cost by allowing them to better allocate their resources to other areas of their education.

The award is sponsored by the Partnership for Academic Libraries of South Carolina (PASCAL). South Carolina Affordable Learning (SCALE) is an initiative of PASCAL that seeks to reduce the overall cost of higher education for students by promoting the use of quality, low-cost and no-cost learning materials.

The CSCI101 course Dr. Miller teaches was redesigned and developed using content material from a free-to-use open education resource Computer Science textbook. The electronic textbook was integrated into the online course content so that students have access to the textbook from any location in which they have internet access. ●

# DR. ETHAN BIRNEY

## GRANT HELPS PROFESSOR ENHANCE HISTORY TEACHINGS

By Radhika Vaid, Staff Writer

History is one of the most important academic pursuits to any student's academic career. Earlier this year, History Professor Dr. Ethan Birney was awarded a \$2,000 Course Enhancement Grant from Boston University's African Studies Center to enhance his Modern World History course (HIST 112).

When Dr. Birney taught the course in Spring 2021, he recognized that non-Western history, particularly that of Africa, was not receiving due attention. To address this deficit, Dr. Birney took a course on Medieval Africa through the National Humanities Center. This course inspired him to broaden his teaching of African history and his subsequent grant application.

"Several students commented on their interest in African history because it's part of their heritage; the class excites the students, and they want to learn more," Dr. Birney said. In future semesters he plans to continue teaching African history and incorporating more diverse voices.

The award encourages teachers to design an inclusive syllabus which better incorporates African history. The grant will affect students' understanding in Dr. Birney's class by making them more aware of African history and promoting the understanding of primary sources.

The African Studies Center grant is set up to help educators increase their coverage of African-related materials in one of their courses. Dr. Birney applied with a letter of support from SMC's Associate Provost for Online Strategy, Dr. Toni Bennett. The \$2,000 grant is awarded in two halves, \$1,000 after being announced and \$1,000 upon submitting a revised syllabus. ●







# DR. ETHAN BIRNEY, DR. COLE CHEEK, DR. KIRK HANSEN

SMC FACULTY, STUDENTS GATHER,  
PRESERVE VETERANS' STORIES

By Radhika Vaid, Staff Writer



A group of SMC faculty and students have started a project to collect, preserve, and share the stories of the Upstate's veterans. The project was inspired by one professor's inspiration to preserve his father's story.

"When my veteran father was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, it became important to me to learn and record his story from his time in the service," said Dr. Cole Cheek, professor of history and anthropology. He said telling his father's story then easily expanded into the stories of other veterans in the area.

The Hub City Veterans Project was born and aims to collect and preserve the oral histories of veterans associated with Spartanburg County for the publication of a book. Dr. Cheek partnered with Dr. Kirk Hansen and Dr. Ethan Birney, fellow history professors, to expand the project. The group decided it would be a great research project for students as well.

The professors now conduct interviews and train students to conduct interviews as well. For students, the project teaches organizational, planning, and communication skills. Students are also responsible for transcribing the conversations.

Drs. Birney, Cheek, and Hansen choose students who are passionate about history and have a desire to work with the community. Once selected, the students are trained in style of recording transcriptions, using digital recorders, and conducting productive interviews.

The professors said they enjoy the project both for the preservation of the history of our veterans as well as the value it provides to students in learning proper research techniques. Drs. Birney, Cheek, and Hansen hope to honor the vets in Spartanburg County by writing this book and hope to achieve more history club trips for students. ●

*"When my veteran father was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, it became important to me to learn and record his story from his time in the service."*

Dr. Cole Cheek

# DR. KELLY NEIL

SMC PROFESSOR PUBLISHED IN TEACHING JOURNAL

By Radhika Vaid, Staff Writer

Publishing is a part of the life of a college professor.

Earlier this year, Dr. Kelly Neil, professor of English and British literature at SMC, published an article called, "A Life in 'Parcels': Shakespeare's *Othello* and the Digital Commonplace Book in the Literature Survey." The article was included in the April issue of *Pedagogy: Critical Approaches to Teaching Literature, Language, Composition, and Culture*, which is published by Duke University Press.

Dr. Neil, also the chair of the English and literature department, developed the essay out of the Shakespeare Association of America Conference in a workshop she led for other scholars and professors.

"As I developed and refined the essay, it went through many revisions and was rejected by journal editors several times before it was finally accepted for publication," she said. "I feel it's important that students know this: failure is part of how you develop and grow, even for professors!"

The essay looks at how instructors can use students' emotions and personal responses to literature to engage them in a

*"I feel it's important that students know this: failure is part of how you develop and grow, even for professors!"*

sophomore-level literature course. The essay reports students' experiences creating virtual commonplace books in ENGL 201: British Literature. A commonplace book was a popular genre in the 1500s-1800s where readers collected excerpts from literary texts, bible verses, recipes, etc., and arranged them in a book.

Dr. Neil had students maintain a commonplace book throughout the semester rather than a traditional final exam. In the commonplace book, students could "curate" excerpts from their course readings as well as texts or images from modern culture that connected to those excerpts. At the end of the semester, students thought about how their commonplace book reflected their selves and what matters to them, as well as how older literature connects to today's culture. The essay explains the science behind this approach and how it resulted in increased student success.

"This publication has helped me become more mindful of what it's like to be an undergraduate student experiencing new literary texts for the first time. And most importantly, it reminds me that I have a lot to learn from my students," Dr. Neil said.

She said publication of the article took many members of the SMC community to make happen. According to Dr. Neil, her colleagues had to approve the study she used in her classroom to ensure that she was using her students' work ethically and appropriately in a publication, while her students had to do the work and allow her permission to publish their work. "So, without my students and colleagues, this publication really could not exist. For that I am thankful!" ●





# 2022 COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY

By Jeremy Handel

Spartanburg Methodist College's 2022 commencement ceremony celebrated nearly 200 new college graduates this spring.

The ceremony featured commencement speaker Cyrus Birch III, Marvel actor and youth advocate who encouraged graduates to find their purpose and achieve it.

"The only reason I'm here today is to discuss one word with you, and that one word is purpose," Birch shared. "Everyone here has purpose, and it would be a shame if you left here, and that purpose wasn't realized."

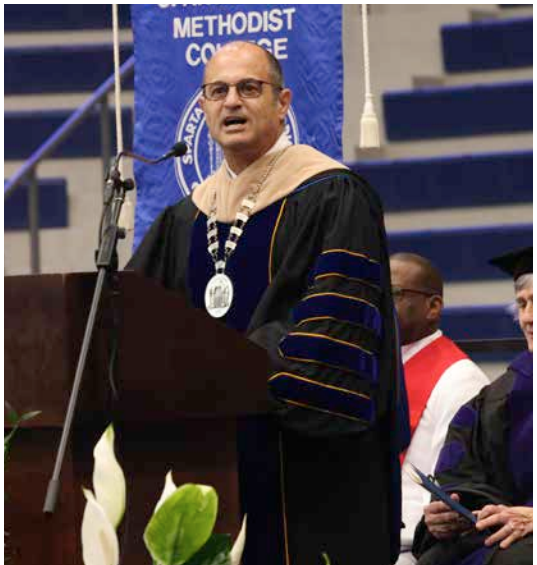
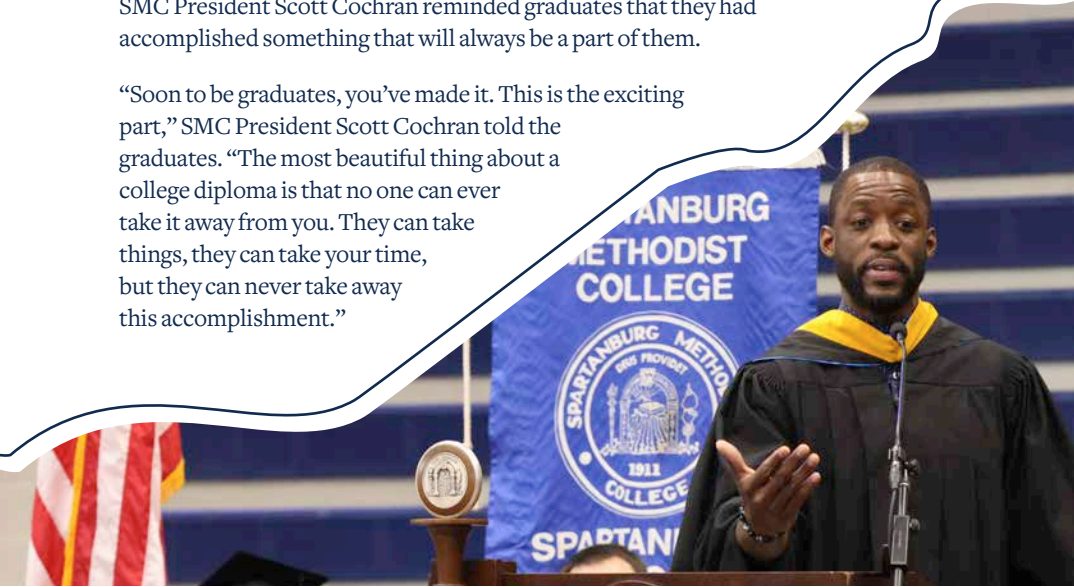
SMC President Scott Cochran reminded graduates that they had accomplished something that will always be a part of them.

"Soon to be graduates, you've made it. This is the exciting part," SMC President Scott Cochran told the graduates. "The most beautiful thing about a college diploma is that no one can ever take it away from you. They can take things, they can take your time, but they can never take away this accomplishment."

Candy Ortiz, the Yandle Class Leader for the class of 2022, was selected by her classmates to deliver the student address. Ortiz used her story of being the daughter of immigrant parents to encourage her classmates to pursue their dreams and never give up.

"Be brave. Set goals. Challenge yourselves," she said. "The sky is not the limit. There are literal footprints on the moon. Pioneers, have faith in your potential."

Spartanburg Methodist College's 111th commencement served as a validation of a goal achieved and an inspiration to go on and achieve more. ●





GRADUATE PROFILE:

# LEXI COBB '22

By Jeremy Handel

College is a place for students to grow, learn, and develop into working adults. Some enter college knowing exactly what path they want to pursue. Some rely on college to show them their path. And others, like recent Spartanburg Methodist College graduate Lexi Cobb ('22), start with a future in mind only to find a new career through their college experience.

"I am so thankful that I decided to attend SMC for college; it really helped me grow as an individual and as a student," Cobb said of her experience at SMC. She was excited and grateful to finish her bachelor's degree at the College.

But that wasn't the original plan for Lexi. She planned to attend SMC for two years to get her associate degree and adjust to college life before moving on to a four-year university. Her experience at the College and the addition of bachelor's degrees changed her plans and her future.

Lexi's mother, Leslie Cobb, said she noticed the evolution more and more throughout Lexi's time at SMC, saying that her daughter became more confident and presented herself more professionally when it came to pursuing internships and eventually a career.

Cobb's original career plan was to pursue a business degree and a career in human resources. But her experience in SMC's Camak Core professional development program led her down a different path.

She credits these courses and her professors for leading her to an opportunity that opened her eyes to a career in finance, which she secured with an internship at Gragg Financial.

Cobb said the things she learned in her Camak Core courses gave her the confidence to not only pursue an internship with Gragg Financial, but they also taught her key strategies in presenting her strengths in the interview as well as

*"The Camak Core helps you develop new skills for your future career... Most colleges don't have professional development as a required part of your degree. I am so thankful that SMC has this program that prepared me for the real world."*

critical software and technology tools that would apply directly to the position.

"My favorite courses were applied technology, professional communications, and my business classes," she said. "Professor (Victoria) Novak taught me so many great things that I use in my job at Gragg Financial today."

She originally reached out to the company to inquire about a new program they were starting called intern-to-perm. The program placed college students in an internship with the company that would lead to an offer for a permanent position upon graduation if they performed well.

Bryon Gragg, Jr., managing partner at Gragg Financial, said Lexi's grasp of the technical aspects of the internship was important, but it was her confidence and professional manner that really helped her get the position. Lexi credits this success to the lessons she learned in her Camak Core courses.

"The Camak Core helps you develop new skills for your future career," she said. "Most colleges don't have professional development as a required part of your degree. I am so thankful that SMC has this program that prepared me for the real world."

After graduating this spring, Cobb became a full-time employee at Gragg Financial and believes that the Camak Core professional development program was the difference maker for her. ●

## SMC RECOGNIZES EIGHT GRADUATES FOR PERFECT GPAs

By Jeremy Handel

Spartanburg Methodist College recognized eight graduates for achieving a perfect 4.0 grade point average (GPA) during the 2022 commencement ceremony.

Seven associate degree graduates received the Trustee Medal, given to the student(s) with the highest GPA. The following seven graduates earned a perfect 4.0:

- Whitney Craft
- James Kennedy
- Karly Kirkley
- Russell Noland
- Kiara Rodriguez
- Nathan Tipton
- Guy Vassoly

One bachelor's degree graduate earned the Dr. David English Camak Award, given to the bachelor's degree graduate(s) with the highest GPA. SMC recognized:

- Noa Tobin

GRADUATE PROFILE:

# SELENA SOTO '22

## OLIVER THE RABBIT MAKES A WISH AND GRANTS ONE, TOO

By Jeremy Handel

It's good to try new things but always remember to love and accept who you are. That's the message Selena Soto promotes in the new children's book she published to show young kids that they are loved for who they are and not what they do.

Soto, who graduated in May with a bachelor's degree in English and religion, said she's always wanted to feature her pet rabbit, Oliver, in a book. She decided there was no time like the present, even though she was in the midst of earning her college degree.

"I wanted to share what I was capable of," Soto said. "I discovered that I loved writing and thought a children's book featuring my rabbit was a good idea."

Her idea transformed into "Oliver the Rabbit Makes a Wish," a story about a rabbit who sees the elderly couple he lives with doing human tasks and wishes to become human so he can do them too. After his wish is granted and Oliver gets to do what humans do, he realizes he misses the rabbit things he can no longer do. In the end he realizes that he was just fine as a rabbit and that you don't have to change to be happy or be loved.

"I wanted to convey a message that goes beyond the typical 'be yourself' message. I also wanted to convey the message to accept yourself," Soto said of the story. "I want children to feel OK in trying new things, like how Oliver tried human things, yet to not grow up thinking they have to be 'better' for people to love them."

She said while she's always been interested in writing, her time at SMC helped her build confidence in herself to make the leap into writing and publishing the book.



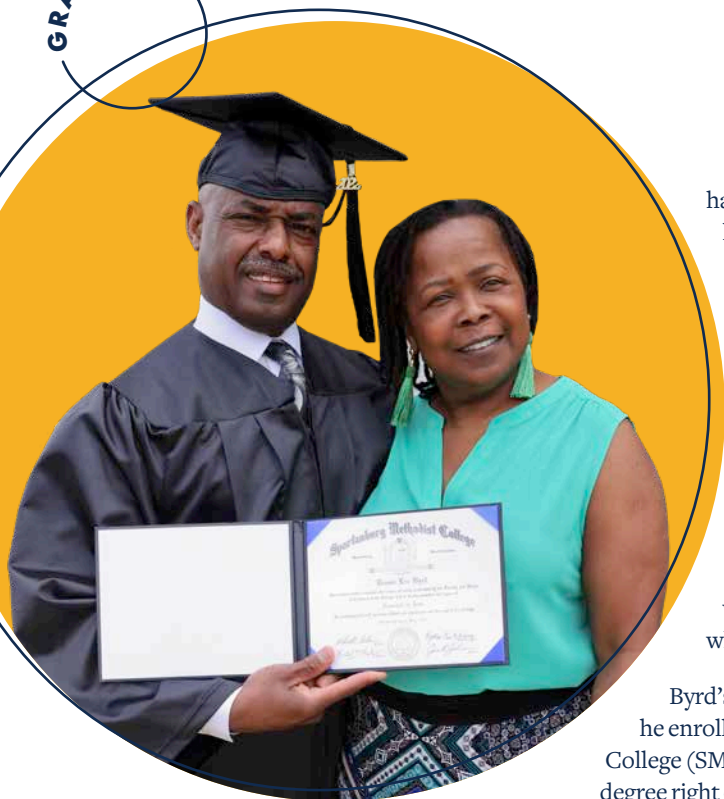
She credits Professor Victoria Novak for helping her be more confident in herself and her ability and to step out of her comfort zone. She also credits professors Jill Coyle and Kelly Neil for instilling in her that she is a good writer.

"Oliver the Rabbit Makes a Wish" was published in March 2022, and Soto says sales have been modest. She is already in planning to take Oliver's adventures into a series of children's books. The recent graduate, from Chesnee, hopes to some day be able to write full-time.

For now, she is focusing on taking Oliver on his next adventure. For his first outing, Oliver not only made a wish that was granted, but he also granted a wish to a writer who needed a little push to take her first step in the publishing world. ●

*"I wanted to convey a message that goes beyond the typical 'be yourself' message. I also wanted to convey the message to accept yourself."*





## GRADUATE PROFILE:

# BEN BYRD '22

## SMC STUDENT EARNS DEGREE AFTER 45-YEAR HIATUS

By Jeremy Handel

A college degree is an important accomplishment for many people. For some, that milestone is derailed when life gets in the way. For Ben Byrd '22, having to stop pursuing his degree more than 45 years ago could

have been a roadblock, but he was determined to make it just a speed bump.

"I had a dream before I ever decided to go back that I had graduated from Spartanburg Methodist," Byrd said of his return to college. That dream and his wife LaVerne's support convinced him that finishing his degree was important to him and what he really wanted to do.

Byrd's journey started in 1975 when he enrolled at Spartanburg Methodist College (SMC) to pursue his associate degree right out of high school. After his first semester, circumstances forced him to drop out and head into the workforce. Using the skills he learned in his vocational high school, Byrd pursued a career in welding, and eventually moved up the ladder to coordinating the entire shop, but he never lost the desire to finish his degree.

"It was always in the back of my mind to go back and finish," he said. Byrd even enrolled in night school to complete his course work, but with a family and a full-time job, it just didn't work for him.

A few years ago, as he started approaching retirement, the topic of college came back up. His wife brought up the subject and encouraged him to revisit finishing his degree. Unaware of the dream Byrd had experienced about graduating, she helped fuel a fire that was already sparked.

"I told him he had gone too far to leave his degree on the table," she said. "So, I encouraged him to, at least, reach out and see how many more classes he needed to finish."

*"When I first went to SMC, there was no such thing as the internet. It was a little tough at first, but after I got going, got into the rhythm, and learned how it worked, I liked the online classes."*

Byrd followed her advice and reached out to an old friend who worked at SMC to see what his options were. Steven Jeter, the tutor coordinator at SMC, worked with Byrd to determine he only had six more classes left to earn his associate degree. Two other factors helped make the decision easy for him: his employer offered 100 percent tuition reimbursement and SMC now offered online courses that provided the flexibility he needed in scheduling.

"School has really changed, and it took a while to make the transition," Byrd said of attending classes online. "When I first went to SMC, there was no such thing as the internet. It was a little tough at first, but after I got going, got into the rhythm, and learned how it worked, I liked the online classes."

And the transition went well, as Byrd achieved all A grades in his final six courses.

Byrd, after waiting more than four decades, walked across the commencement stage on May 7 and received his Associate in Arts degree from SMC President Scott Cochran.

While it may not be for the advancement of his career at this point, Byrd still says it was worth the effort and encourages others to do the same.

"If it's at all possible, I think it would be to their benefit to go back and finish," he said, "whether it's for enhancing your career or for your own feeling of accomplishment."

Following his success in earning his associate degree, Byrd has now decided to continue on to get his bachelor's degree in business. His story also inspired the Spartanburg Academic Movement to invite him to share his story with an academic task force focused on higher education. ●

## ALUMNI PROFILE:

# AMANDA ROSA BANCHS '21

## INTERNSHIP, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT LEAD TO PRESTIGIOUS PLACEMENT FOR SMC ALUM

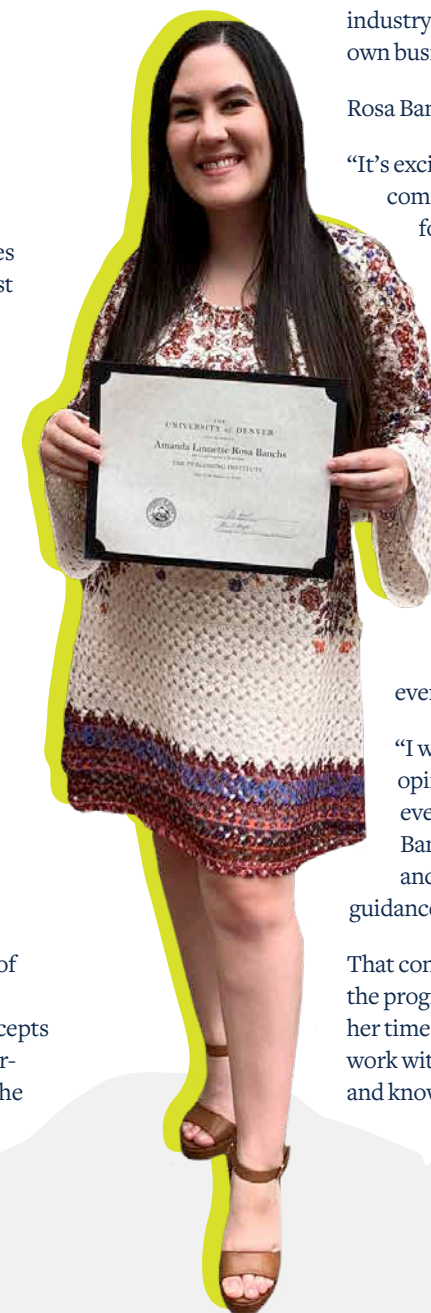
By Jeremy Handel

Amanda Rosa Banchs loves books. She likes reading them, selling them, and really just being around them. This love guided her to an internship with Hub City Writers Project during her senior year at Spartanburg Methodist College, which has now led her to a spot in the prestigious Denver Publishing Institute (DPI).

"On my first day at Hub City Bookshop and Hub City Press, I had an overwhelming feeling of belonging being surrounded by books," she said. "I enjoyed it so much, I joined as a part-time bookseller after my internship was completed." She has continued on to become a bookseller and social media coordinator for the bookshop since graduating.

Rosa Banchs wanted to learn all there was to know about the publishing process and continue her education to work in publishing. That's when a coworker, who had graduated from DPI, informed her about the prestigious program.

The DPI was established in 1976 at the University of Denver and is focused on teaching students every aspect of the publishing industry. The program accepts fewer than 100 students every summer for the four-week course. Its graduates are found throughout the



industry, from the largest publishing houses to their own businesses serving the publishing industry.

Rosa Banchs was thrilled to get into the program.

"It's exciting! It is an opportunity that is out of my comfort zone; nevertheless, I am still excited for this new experience, everything I will learn, and a new environment," she said.

She is especially looking forward to the hands-on learning process. From reading actual manuscripts to editing and proofreading to marketing strategies, Rosa Banchs is ready to learn it all.

She says SMC was important in her process for earning a spot in the program. She leaned on her lessons during her studies, including her professional development courses, to put together her application, resume, and letter of intent. She even leaned on some of her professors for help.

"I was able to contact them and ask for their opinion on my resume and letter of intent, even though I had already graduated," Rosa Banchs said. "Their feedback was very helpful, and it was through their encouragement and guidance that I felt confident in my application."

That confidence was rewarded, and she attended the program over the summer. Rosa Banchs said her time at SMC helped solidify her dream to work with books and give her the confidence and knowledge to pursue her dream. ●

*"It's exciting! It is an opportunity that is out of my comfort zone; nevertheless, I am still excited for this new experience, everything I will learn, and a new environment."*



## STUDENT SUCCESS:

# SUMMER INTERNS

By Josh Golden, Marketing Intern

The biggest lesson she [Tori] learned was “to be kind to your own ability.”

## TORI ROSE, STUDY BREAK

“What I did was write articles about various topics in music, tv shows, and work with other interns to workshop other articles.” Tori went on to say the biggest lesson she learned was “to be kind to your own ability.” Finally, she believes that this internship will help her on her career path as she learned how to “write and research journalistic articles and how to format them for online readers.”



She [Oshauna] said that the internship gave her “an understanding on what kind of person I’m dealing with during my career of being a criminal investigator.”

## OSHAUNA FERGUSON, TRADITIONS HEALTH HOSPICE

Oshauna was a volunteer and interacted with the people in hospice care. She learned during her internship that the resident “really remembers more than we think they would remember” and “to be patient with them and kind.” Oshauna said this experience will help her career path by understanding various types of elderly people who need assistance. She also said that the internship gave her “an understanding on what kind of person I’m dealing with during my career of being a criminal investigator.”

## AMAYA DUCKETT, KINLAW AND CUNNINGHAM

As a paralegal intern, Amaya executed administrative responsibilities such as scheduling appointments, drafting paperwork, and answering phone calls. “Everyone just wants a time to be heard,” she said. “As an attorney your job is to hear your client and be the bridge between their situation and the law.” Doing this internship helped Amaya realize that she wants to pursue a career in law as a Family Attorney. She has the vision that “she can make a difference in so many people’s lives.”

Doing this internship helped Amaya realize that she wants to pursue a career in law as a Family Attorney.



## JAKERRION TEAMER, FIERCE FLAMES DANCE COMPANY

Jakerrion Teamer did his internship at a small local dance company and stepped into the role as Assistant Coach. In it he “expressed ideas and came up with choreography for the girls who are on the dance team for entertainment purposes.” When asked what was the biggest lesson learned, Jakerrion said “It is okay to be yourself and have fun.” Jakerrion said that the experience was an eye opener “for me to be prepared for what I want to do in the future.”

## MEGAN HENDERSON, RELEVNT

Megan Henderson did a remote internship where she created a podcast. “The podcast is about ‘Doctor Who,’ as I host a show biweekly going through the show episode by episode,” she explained. She gives credit to consistency as the biggest lesson. She also noted that “the more I stick to the schedule I created for myself, the more Relevnt app users would listen and participate in the discussion.” As Megan prepares for her career as a biblical counselor, she believes this experience teaches her to come out of her shell.

As Megan prepares for her career as a biblical counselor, she believes this experience teaches her to come out of her shell.

“This experience has prepared me for my career as a pastor by showing me how to efficiently and effectively run a church.”

Jakerrion said that the experience was an eye opener “for me to be prepared for what I want to do in the future.”

## THOMAS CLARK, GROVE CHURCH

Thomas Clark had the opportunity to intern at the Grove Church. During the internship he had a triple role as intern, greeter, and prayer team leader. The church community and a sense of belonging played a major role in the lesson that Thomas said he learned, which was “how to help people become a part of the church as well as grow spiritually within the church.” As he wants to be a pastor, Thomas believes that the opportunity to intern here was beneficial: “This experience has prepared me for my career as a pastor by showing me how to efficiently and effectively run a church.”







## SMC TEAM EARNS TOP-15 FINISH IN FIRST TRY AT BUSINESS PITCH COMPETITION

By Jeremy Handel

Many successful entrepreneurs will tell you that one of the keys to their success is their willingness to take a chance and put themselves out there. One group of enterprising SMC students did just that and earned a top-15 finish in the SC Innovates statewide business pitch competition for their effort.

Six students from the SMC Trep Club – Pioneer Entrepreneurship Club – banded together to form Team Hypeman for the state competition. The team pitched their idea for Hypeman, a professional development program they could sell to colleges and individual students to better prepare graduates for life after college.

Their business plan and presenting skills earned them a trip to the semi-finals and a place among the top 15 programs from more than 70 teams across the state. The SC Innovates Statewide Student Pitch Competition is a program by the South Carolina Department of Commerce and the South Carolina Research Authority to promote entrepreneurship during Global Entrepreneurship Week.

“Our team was ecstatic to hear about our placement in the semi-finals,” said Kahleag Terry, an SMC junior. “We all worked long, hard hours to make sure every requirement was fulfilled.”

Terry, along with junior Kalista Pedersen, led the team and presented the Hypeman pitch to the judges. They were joined by junior Alberto Hernandez and three freshmen, Shameya Graham, Sergey Culbreath, and Hannah Autry in developing the idea.

*“Our team was ecstatic to hear about our placement in the semi-finals... We all worked long, hard hours to make sure every requirement was fulfilled.”*

Kahleag Terry  
SMC junior

“Everyone worked really hard to make Hypeman the best it could be, so I can say I was happy with our performance,” Pedersen said. “We did our best, exceeded our own expectations, and that’s what matters.”

Facing off against much larger schools and programs from around the state, the team was encouraged to pursue the competition through their Tep Club participation.

The Trep Club was revived in 2015 for students interested in business startups and learning more about the entrepreneurial spirit. The club meets every Wednesday at 7 a.m. for presentations, discussions, and now to plan for the next pitch competition. The club continues to encourage the members to innovate.

The members of the pitch team were so invigorated by the SC Innovates experience that they are planning to develop their own competition to encourage younger students to follow their passions. They plan to develop and host a competition for teams from high schools in Spartanburg County.

“We are very excited to host our own competition for multiple levels of education and the overall Spartanburg community,” Terry said. “We hope to use our experience at SC Innovates to create the foundation for SMC’s pitch competition to build on.”

And their dream doesn’t stop there.

“They are hopeful to create an ‘entrepreneurship festival’ with SMC at the center of it,” Dr. Keisler said. “The event would feature guest speakers, local entrepreneurs, and, of course, a pitch competition.”

Leave it to the members of the Trep Club to come out of a business pitch competition with an idea to create their own business pitch competition. With their success in their first try at SC Innovates, nothing seems far-fetched for this group of entrepreneurial Pioneers. ●

# SMC AWARDS

## SMC HONORS OUTSTANDING EMPLOYEES

Dr. Judy Mirick, Pam Ponder, and the SMCX Community Life team were recently honored by Spartanburg Methodist College for their contributions and efforts over the past year.

Each year, SMC recognizes two employees with the Dr. James S. Barrett Memorial Award and the J.L. Geddis Award. This year, the college also added the One House Award to recognize the efforts of a department or team on campus.

Dr. Mirick received the Dr. James S. Barrett Memorial Award in recognition of her commitment to giving and support of fundraising for the college. Dr. Mirick was noted for her continual financial donations to the school as well as her tremendous support of the events and efforts of Institutional Advancement at SMC.



The award bears the name of SMC’s fourth president, who was an early believer in organized professional fundraising. Dr. Barrett was responsible for launching the first major fundraising campaign in the College’s history. His efforts over the years helped provide the funding for several major developments, including the chapel, Kingman Hall, and the Barrett Learning Center.

The J.L. Geddis Award winner, who is selected by staff peers, is Pam Ponder, human resource and payroll specialist for SMC. Ponder’s years of service to the school were a major factor in her selection this year, along with her commitment to helping advance the campus, her colleagues, and the students in any way she can. She is an SMC alum and has worked in various positions in her 38 years with the school.



The Geddis Award recognizes an outstanding SMC staff member each year and is named in honor of J.L. Geddis, a long-time employee of the College. He worked at SMC for 41 years, serving in a number of functions, including business manager, vice president of business affairs, faculty member, and men’s golf coach. Geddis is a member of the SMC Athletics Hall of Honor and a graduate of SMC.

This year, SMC added a new staff recognition with the One House Award, recognizing the efforts of a department or team. The inaugural winner is the SMCX Community Life team. The team was honored for their efforts to maintain safety, security, and stability for students throughout the pandemic.

The team focuses on housing, wellness, diversity and inclusion, security, and more. Team members recognized include:

- Corey Bell, director of community life
- Allyson Brown, director of diversity, equity, inclusion
- Chris Carter, director of campus safety
- Keith James, director of Title IX & equal opportunity
- Dr. Mindy Bliss, director of health and wellness.

The One House Award is based on the original efforts of SMC Founder Dr. David English Camak to provide a stable and enriching environment to help students achieve their highest potential both in and out of the classroom, a mission he started in a single house.

Congratulations to the 2022 recipients! ●





## EMPLOYEE PROFILE:

# JERONE WILDER

By Jeremy Handel

**A**lzheimer's. It's a scary word and a difficult word for someone to hear. For many, it's a diagnosis that strikes fear in the knowledge that you will fade from your loved one's memory. For some it can be a call to action to fight for both your loved one and the loved ones of others.

Jerone Wilder, an area coordinator in the SMC community life department, chose the latter path when he learned of his father's diagnosis.

"When I learned of my father's diagnosis, I was shocked, and at the same time disappointed," Wilder said. "Alzheimer's is a life-changing disease that no one should have to battle alone. I was determined to learn more about the disease and help empower others to get educated."

His father was diagnosed in 2019, although they discovered he had started experiencing the disease two years prior. The diagnosis, and Wilder's mission to learn more and help his family, led him to the South Carolina Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association, where he began to volunteer and learn.

Wilder said the decision to volunteer helped him to better understand his father's condition and how he can help his father and his family through it. It also pushed him to get further involved to try to help other families facing the same situation. Beyond his own education, Wilder has gone on to become a certified community educator and support group facilitator for the organization.

"Recognizing that Alzheimer's disease affects many families and hearing and reading stories from others motivates me

to build positive relationships with other volunteers and professionals who have connections with the disease," he said. He now leads presentations on the "10 Warning Signs of Alzheimer's Disease" to help others identify and prepare for a potential diagnosis in their family.

The work has helped him with his relationship with his father. He says he cherishes every moment he has with his father, who is doing his best to manage the disease. Wilder says his father is taking medication and has good days and bad days.

Wilder says the situation has also impacted his faith.

"As I have recognized, and continue to recognize, the significance of Alzheimer's disease on my and family and on me, I value the necessity of daily prayer," he said. "When this disease first impacts your life, it is easy to ask God 'why'? Instead, I have learned to ask God 'how can I help?' and 'how can I become a better advocate for my father?'"

Wilder said he strives to put his faith in God to work.

He also works to bring the lessons learned from this experience to his life at SMC.

"I strive to approach my work at SMC as a way of serving the community," he said. "I strive to ensure that my work touches the lives of others, no matter how big or small."

Wilder said he will continue his work with the Alzheimer's Association and continue to cherish the time he has with his father. He encourages others to do the same.

"It is important for others to know that once someone is diagnosed with this disease, spending time with them does not have to end," he said.

He encourages them to get involved and reach out to others who have been impacted by Alzheimer's. He also recommends they get involved with the Alzheimer's Association by visiting [www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org).



EMPLOYEES

## SMC LANDMARK WINS NOBLE TREE CONTEST

**A** long-standing figure on the Spartanburg Methodist College campus was recently elevated from everyday fixture to nobility with the click of a shutter.

The deodar cedar tree near the center of campus that decades of SMC students have surely spent some time under – or likely in – took the grand prize in the Noble Trees Foundation's annual Nobel Trees of Spartanburg Contest thanks to a photo submitted by Dan Abraham, evening academic computer lab assistant at SMC.

"I have always admired that tree, from the first day I set foot on campus," Abraham said. "I could not think of

another tree that was more suited for the Noble Tree contest than this one."

The Noble Tree Foundation was founded in 1999 by Roger Milliken to promote education and activities relating to the knowledge and planting of Noble Trees in Spartanburg County. The Foundation's annual contest helps recognize the largest and most notable specimen trees in the county.

"I found the contest quite by accident when I was doing a little research about the tree," Abraham said. But he was convinced that the grand tree that sits outside SMC's Chapel was

worthy of the Noble Tree designation. "I was thrilled that the tree won."

The annual contest provides the Foundation with an opportunity to map out these grand trees, which they describe as tall, substantial trees that will endure for generations and become fixtures in a landscape. The cedar tree at SMC fits the description, as it's estimated to be more than a century old and is certainly one of the more memorable landmarks on the campus.

As the winner of the contest, the Foundation made a donation to Hatcher Garden in Abraham's name for \$2,500 to continue promoting conservation. ●



# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

## IS AT THE CORE OF AN SMC DEGREE

By Jeremy Handel



Dr. David English Camak had a vision when he founded the Textile Industrial Institute in 1911. It was a partnership between industry and community that would provide workers with the education and training they needed to advance their careers. It also provided the local textile industry with better educated and prepared workers.

The Institute has undergone a few changes over the years on its way to becoming Spartanburg Methodist College, but the vision of Dr. Camak to give students the tools for a better future remains. The College's professional development program and Camak Core courses were designed to enhance students' core coursework with the soft skills that hiring managers say are lacking in college graduates.

"In survey after survey, companies say college graduates need to have stronger skill sets like problem solving, communication, and leadership," said SMC President Scott Cochran. "We've built our professional development program around those key skills that help our graduates stand out among other candidates."

SMC has taken career preparation one step further than most other higher education institutions by making professional development a required part of the curriculum for its bachelor's degrees.

"We want students to leave SMC confident in the academic knowledge they gained in their chosen areas of study and just as confident in their ability to tackle problems organizations are facing, lead a group project, and communicate like a seasoned professional," said Courtney Shelton, vice president for student and professional development at SMC. "Whether they go into a job directly related to their field of study or decide to go another direction, these skills will benefit them on any path they choose."

*Continued on Next Page*



Continued from Page 23

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR FIRST YEAR AND SOPHOMORE STUDENTS

Professional development at SMC starts right away, with some coursework and academic advising in the first year that focuses on career skills. SMC 101 is a course that helps students acclimate to college life. It also provides a baseline for professional development.

During SMC 101, students learn time management, good study habits, how to register for classes, and other college life skills. What SMC adds to this typical orientation course is opportunities to enhance future career skills, like success tips, career panels, and a PathwayU career assessment.

The idea is to build students' mindsets early to focus on more than just getting a job out of college but also succeeding at that job right from the start. With the PathwayU

assessment, students can get an idea of what potential career paths would interest them based on what their life interests are.

"Many students aren't sure what they want to do when they first come to college. We inform them about various career options and show them a possible path," said Megan Georgion, dean of career and student success. "Then we provide experiences to explore those options further and connect with professionals in the field, which gives students the confidence to continue down that path."

In their sophomore year, students expand on the career and success focused lessons. SMC 201 picks up the professional development mantle, focusing on more specific skills like resume and cover letter writing, career exploration through career fairs and panels, and setting up and managing a professional LinkedIn account. Students also learn some basic networking and professional communication skills.

*The idea is to build students' mindsets early to focus on more than just getting a job out of college but also succeeding at that job right from the start.*

While many may see these skills and tasks as basic knowledge, many students have never been exposed to them. Most are learning for the first time what a resume is and why it's important to have one.

"What really makes SMC different is that we expose all students to these skills and experiences as part of their degrees," Shelton says. "At most, if not all, other liberal arts colleges, students have to go to a career center to gain these skills and experiences. That takes extra time that a lot of students just don't have because they're also working part-time or even full-time jobs while trying to fit in college."

By giving students these hands-on experiences early in their college careers, SMC provides basic professional tools to students who decide to pursue a career after their associate degree. It also provides a baseline to our bachelor's degree students who will then learn more skills for success.

## THE CAMAK CORE FOR JUNIORS AND SENIORS

As students move into their junior and senior years, they focus on classes in their chosen degree program. The professional development program also gets more specific and skills oriented. Students' final two years include six professional development courses called the Camak Core.

### Camak Core Courses

- Community Discovery and Engagement
- Professional Development and Leadership
- Professional Communications
- Applied Technology
- Semester Internship
- Capstone

An homage to the career preparation mission of the College's founder, the Camak Core teaches the skill sets employers say they want in graduates but not enough of them have when they



graduate. The courses are also flexible to allow them to evolve as techniques and technology change and new, desired skill sets are identified.

The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) surveys employers every year on the skills they are looking for in college graduates. With some minor changes from year to year, the list typically includes skills such as problem solving, teamwork, communication, and analytical skills at the top. It provides a general roadmap for the Camak Core curriculum.

"The NACE survey is a natural resource for us to use to guide the skills-based instruction of the Camak Core program," said Victoria Novak, director of online professional development and certifications. "If we want to make our students workplace ready, then we need to give them the skills the workplace is looking for."

*If we want to make our students workplace ready, then we need to give them the skills the workplace is looking for.*

## LEARNING COMMUNICATION AND LEADERSHIP SKILLS

In their junior year, students focus on learning the skills needed to succeed, including professional communication, common technology and software used in the workplace, working in a group setting, and more.

Communication will be critical in any workplace our graduates join. Understanding how to communicate both professionally and effectively is a cornerstone to success in most areas of the working world. Students learn how to communicate professionally and why it's important. From emails and reports to interpersonal communications and networking, they study and practice techniques to succeed.

The Camak Core also focuses on preparing students for getting a job, with more in-depth resume writing and interview skills. Students complete a full mock interview scenario – from researching the company to sending a thank you note and even salary negotiation.

Learning the common technology and software programs used in the workplace also gives SMC students an advantage. Learning basic skills in spreadsheets, presentation programs, social media, and web page creation provide a wide base of knowledge that can be used in almost any workplace.

Leadership is not necessarily something you can learn in a class. It's often something you have to learn over time and on the job, but understanding leadership styles and skills can put students on the right path to developing into effective leaders. Finding a mentor who can be a trusted guide and sounding board helps workers develop into leaders, and students work to establish such a relationship in the Camak Core.

"We want to give our graduates every advantage possible to put them on a path to success," said Clara Jane Hallar, director of marketing for the SMC Experience and a professional development faculty member. "Helping them find a mentor to guide them through their career also helps them start a strong network of professional contacts."

Studying different styles of leadership and discovering which style best suits the student helps guide their experience. They also study skills

# HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Developing workplace-ready students takes more than lessons in the classroom; we look to community partners to help us provide our students the knowledge and experiences they need.

As a friend of SMC, you can help us in our quest to provide students with those experiences. If you, or someone in your network, has opportunities available for our students, please let us know.

Opportunities to help SMC professional development students include:

- Providing internships
- Serving as a guest speaker/lecturer
- Partnering for a student consulting project
- Serving as a Capstone key partner
- Participating in SMC recruiting/job fairs
- Participating in mock interviews
- Posting open jobs on our Handshake portal
- And even hiring our students.

By partnering with you, we are able to provide our students with great opportunities and continue to learn what skills we need to teach our graduates to better prepare them for the workplace.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION** on how you can partner with SMC, visit [www.smcs.edu/hireexperience](http://www.smcs.edu/hireexperience) or contact Emily Lausier at [lausiere@smcsc.edu](mailto:lausiere@smcsc.edu) or 864-278-5823.





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that leaders will be responsible for, including finance and budgeting, giving and receiving constructive feedback, and conflict management.

After learning the skills that will help them succeed, the final year for most professional development students focuses on employing those new skills.

### PUTTING THE SKILLS TO WORK: CONSULTING PROJECT, INTERNSHIP, AND CAPSTONE

With the theory and understanding of the skills needed to succeed in the workplace, students then put what they've learned into action.

Community discovery and engagement gives students not only knowledge of how to work in groups to address problems, but it also gives them their first chance to take a hands-on approach in applying the skills they have learned. Students are engaged with a local company or organization in a consulting role to address an issue the organization is having. As a group, the students research the issue, develop a solution or several options for a solution, and present their findings back to the client.

*“The Capstone is an intensive project that allows students to show their entrepreneurial spirit and tests the skills they have learned... It combines time management, problem solving, networking, promotion, and more.”*

Courtney Shelton  
Vice President for Student and Professional Development at SMC

“Love it or hate it, group work is a part of most organizations,” Shelton said. “The consulting project allows students to discover their strengths and weaknesses in a safe place – before they’re on the job where failure has real consequences. They learn just how important every part of the team is in accomplishing a goal.”

Students are also required to complete an internship over the course of their final two years to gain career relevant work experience for their resumes, Shelton added. While many students have work experience, the internship program allows students to develop career relevant experiences that better position them to be competitive in the job market.

The culmination of the Camak Core comes in their senior year with the Capstone project. This final course has students establishing their own business, event, philanthropic effort, or other

venture that will put all of their skills to the test. It starts with a networking event in which the students present their idea to a group of attendees and seek feedback to better focus their project.

“The Capstone is an intensive project that allows students to show their entrepreneurial spirit and tests the skills they have learned,” Shelton said. “It combines time management, problem solving, networking, promotion, and more.”

As students establish and operate their project, they study the results to prepare for their final report. To close the semester, each student must build a presentation about their project, its success, and how they could improve it.

The students are then tasked with making their presentation to a panel of judges made up of faculty, staff, or local business or philanthropic representatives. The panel provides feedback to the student and their instructors, which can weigh into their grade. This comprehensive project is a great experience for students to test their abilities and put their education to work.

### BUILDING WORKPLACE-READY GRADUATES

With SMC’s history as a work-study school in its early days, building professional development directly into the degree programs just fits. Graduates leave SMC with the tools and knowledge to succeed in their first job and every other job they’ll have throughout their working lives. ●



# CELEBRATING OUR SUCCESS AT *Dueling Pianos* 2021

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# ONE VOICE: SMC ADOPTS SINGLE ADVISOR APPROACH

By Jeremy Handel

Navigating college can be a challenge. How do I sign up for classes and what classes do I need to take? What resources are there to find an internship? Who do I call if I'm struggling and just need some advice and direction? At many colleges, the answers to these questions lie with different people for each one.

SMC is helping take the guessing game out of where to find help navigating the road from enrollment to graduation with an all new approach to student advising with one advisor for academic, career, and success for each student.

*“Student advising should be more than just picking classes or providing a list of companies to contact for internships... We need to get to know the student's story and learn about them so we can provide them the best direction for them.”*

Megan Georgion  
Dean of Career and Student Success

“Student advising should be more than just picking classes or providing a list of companies to contact for internships,” said Megan Georgion, dean of career and student success. “We need to get to know the student's story and learn about them so we can provide the best direction for them.”

By providing a single first contact for students, SMC makes it more comfortable for the student to reach out, no matter what the issue is. They know that their advisor is familiar with their particular situation and can provide advice that is tailored to them.

“It's not just about being a traffic cop and pointing students in the right direction,” Georgion said. “We want our advisors to be seen as someone who knows the student's story and will be their advocate.”

Sometimes they also have to be like a parent to them as well. In addition to cheering them on, advisors are also expected to hold students accountable if they aren't doing their part. Advisors will reach out to students if they are missing class or their performance suddenly takes a wrong turn.

Georgion said this type of “intrusive” advising will help students

stay on the path to graduation. It also can help to identify if there are other issues that a student may be facing and to get them help if they need it.

“Students everywhere are facing mental health challenges from several different factors,” she said. “Getting to know them and their stories can help us notice changes in their behavior or performance that may be coming from some bigger issue and help them work through it if necessary.”

As a small, private college, SMC prides itself on providing students with a more personalized, well-rounded education. In addition to a top-tier classroom education, the College also focuses on providing students a healthy quality of life during their time on campus. With a single-source advising process, those confusing questions can be answered easily with a single call. ●

*“It's not just about being a traffic cop and pointing students in the right direction... We want our advisors to be seen as someone who knows the student's story and will be their advocate.”*

Megan Georgion  
Dean of Career and Student Success





DONOR SPOTLIGHT:

# CHARLES E. ATCHISON, SR., CHARLITA ATCHISON MOSS

## ATCHISON TRANSPORTATION SERVICES, INC.

NEVER GIVE UP ATTITUDE DRIVES SUCCESS FOR ATCHISONS

By Jeremy Handel

**H**ard work and perseverance were two key attributes of Charles Atchison's success in building a transportation empire. They're also two traits that the Atchison family encourages young students at SMC to use in pursuing their own dreams.

In 1949, Charles Atchison set out to chase his dream of building a successful business. With one car, he started a small taxicab service in the Upstate. Building a thriving business is never easy. For an African American man in the 1950s south, it was even more of a challenge, but Charles was determined, and his drive and ambition to overcome obstacles

helped him grow his one-car operation into one of the largest land transportation businesses in the state today. Now, Atchison Transportation Services boasts a fleet of motor coaches, shuttle buses, limousines, and other vehicles providing transportation to individuals, groups, and businesses across the state.

Atchison's granddaughter, Charlita Atchison Moss, joined the family business in 1995 and now serves as the Chief Operating Officer.

"It was very difficult for my grandfather in the early days," she said of the company's origins. "Loans, access to capital, and banking relationships were hard to come by. Fortunately, there were people in the community willing to help and mentor."

Atchison Moss credits a well-known community businessman for providing her grandfather with that mentorship and assistance, Steve Ashcraft, long-time owner of Craft's Drug Stores. She said the support and direction he provided helped build Atchison's reputation and provide access to more opportunities.

As his business continued to grow and succeed, Atchison also turned his attention to his community and how he could, in turn, give back and help others. One of the beneficiaries of that philanthropic focus has been Spartanburg Methodist College.

The Atchison family have been long-time donors to the school, helping open doors for others who face obstacles to their own success. Atchison Moss says their decision to support the school grew out of a relationship the elder Atchison developed with a former president of the College – Dr. Charles Teague.

Through that growing friendship, Dr. Teague developed a deep respect for Atchison and saw the value he could provide to the College on a higher level. He invited Atchison to join the Board of Trustees in 2000.

*"Study hard, do well and treat others fairly, and follow your dreams relentlessly... Instead of giving up, finish exactly what you have started to attain your own levels of success."*

She also credits the family's Methodist faith as having drawn them to the mission of SMC.

"Our family is of the Christian Methodist faith, and we are all members of Silver Hill Memorial United Methodist Church in Spartanburg," she said. "This connection further enlightened our motivation to volunteer and get connected with Spartanburg Methodist College."

The Atchisons also supported SMC's mission to provide all students the opportunity to get a college education.

"SMC is a local college serving a diverse group of students who may not be ready for a larger college or who cannot afford one," Atchison Moss said. "It is important that every student who wishes to pursue higher education has that chance. SMC offers that access and opportunity."

To continue the family's legacy of supporting SMC, Atchison Moss now serves on the Board of Trustees, providing her insight and direction to the College's mission. She said it's important to carry on their family legacy with SMC and to help pave the way for more students to benefit from a college education.

Outside of SMC, the family focuses philanthropic efforts on a number of entities that also work to provide opportunities to the youth of Spartanburg. They donate to other local colleges, the Boys and Girls Club, Brothers Restoring Urban Hope (BRUH), Bloom Upstate, and several other youth success agencies.

For them it's about giving others the kind of support that Ashcraft afforded Atchison in his early days and planting the seed of hope and success in the next generation.

The family has been recognized for their efforts and is highly respected for their accomplishments. In addition to SMC's Board, Atchison Moss has served on numerous boards in the

Upstate, including Ten at the Top, the American Red Cross, the Spartanburg Community College Foundation, and Oakbrook Preparatory School.

The elder Atchison has also served numerous organizations and has received countless accolades for both his business and his philanthropic work. He received the Legendary Businessman of the Year award from the Minority Economic Development Institute, the Lifetime Achievement Award at the Black Excellence Community Gala, the Legacy Award from the Motorcoach Association of South Carolina, and Minority Business Person of the Year from the Spartanburg Chamber of Commerce among others.

Atchison Transportation Services continues to face and overcome challenges associated with the COVID pandemic, which had a severe impact on the company and on transportation in general. Atchison Moss said the company lost more than 90% of its business early in the pandemic, but they have been able to survive and claw their way back in an industry that saw more than half of its companies shut down.

Through it all, their commitment to SMC has continued. Atchison Moss said they want to continue to give opportunities to those seeking higher education. When asked what advice she'd give students for their future success, it was all about that hard work and perseverance.

"Study hard, do well and treat others fairly, and follow your dreams relentlessly," she said. "Instead of giving up, finish exactly what you have started to attain your own levels of success."

That's the dedication that has afforded the Atchisons the success they have achieved and driven the opportunities they continue to support for others. ●





BOARD MEMBER SPOTLIGHT:

# REV. JERRY GADSDEN

## CALLED TO SERVE IN THE CHURCH AND ON CAMPUS

By Jeremy Handel

The Methodist Church has been an important part of Rev. Jerry Gadsden's life since he was a child. He knew it would continue to be important to him but not necessarily in leading a congregation until he received his calling from a higher power.

"I never really saw myself as being a pastor in a church. I wanted to get a degree in accounting or finance and work for one of the general boards," Rev. Gadsden said. "People always told me they thought I would grow up to be a pastor, but I wanted to make sure that calling came from God and not just the people around me. I answered that calling."

Answering that calling has given him the chance to share the Word and promote the church to a number of congregations, including two stints focused on college students. These opportunities have provided a strong perspective for his position on the Spartanburg Methodist College's Board of Trustees.

As a divinity student at Duke University, Rev. Gadsden honed his ministry skills on campus. It was his time serving at the Winthrop University Wesley Foundation from 2000 – 2006 that gave him a true understanding and appreciation for serving a college congregation.

"It was different than local church and was something I wanted to try," he said. "The congregation changes almost year-to-year, and that constant change was a challenge."

Rev. Gadsden's tenure wasn't just different for him; it was a change for Winthrop as well. When he got the position, he was replacing someone who had been there for 25 years. Risher Brabham is considered a legend at Winthrop and in the Methodist Church for his work in campus ministry.

It wasn't just replacing a long-time leader that was new for the university. As the first African American pastor in the position, Rev. Gadsden also brought a new perspective and some new ideas to the position.

"I had to make some difficult decisions going in and make my own way," he said. "A lot of times the majority didn't always like those decisions."

Working through differences of opinion for the good of the students and the congregation was the priority for him and the school. In doing so, Rev. Gadsden,

Winthrop, and the students benefited. He was able to enrich students' lives through the Word and mentor some into their own calling to the church.

"You get to be involved in the students' lives," he said of the campus ministry position. "I'm still in touch with many of them. They certainly impacted my life and I hope I was able to make an impact on their lives as well."

He said he knows of at least three students he mentored who are serving in the United Methodist Church to this day and is proud to have been a small part of their journey to their calling.

He also proudly recalls his work with students on the Tuesday's Child program at the university. The after-school program worked with children living in a women's shelter near campus. Students from the school would go to the shelter and help tutor the young children. Rev. Gadsden said it was rewarding to see the pride the Winthrop students took in helping at-risk youth grow and succeed.

His experience at Winthrop provided him an excellent base for his future work with the SMC Board of Trustees.

While not having a direct connection with SMC, Rev. Gadsden was familiar with campus having attended events held there by the United Methodist Church. It was during his time with Silver Hill Memorial United Methodist Church in Spartanburg that he was approached to join the Board of Trustees. Dr. Penny Fisher, who was chair of the SMC Board at the time and a member of his congregation, approached him with the idea.

"She nominated me, and I prayed on it. I thought it would be a good way to serve my community," he said. "It's been enlightening. I really didn't know what to expect but I've been really impressed with President Cochran's and his cabinet's leadership."

Since joining the Board in 2016, Rev. Gadsden said he is proud of the advancements the College has made, including taking the step to add four-year bachelor's degrees to the curriculum.

"That was a historic vote," he said. "It moved the college to another level. The work is being done by the faculty, staff, and administration, but for us to have taken that vote was a great opportunity, and it was great to be a part of that."

Since adding the four-year degrees, SMC has graduated two classes of bachelor's degree students. Rev. Gadsden is proud to have seen those students graduate. He said he looks forward to continuing his work on the Board of Trustees to further advance the College.

"I think we're all on the same page with continuing to improve SMC, including increasing the diversity of our faculty and staff to better serve our student base and help with retention," he said. "I think the college is moving forward on that, and we're on track."

He also said the Board continues to look at the infrastructure needs of the growing campus and wants to address the need for more buildings, classrooms, and facilities for students and faculty.

Rev. Jerry Gadsden currently serves as the pastor at St. Paul United Methodist Church in Kingstree, South Carolina. ●



*"I think we're all on the same page with continuing to improve SMC, including increasing the diversity of our faculty and staff to better serve our student base and help with retention... I think the college is moving forward on that, and we're on track."*



# THREE *NEW* TRUSTEES JOIN SMC BOARD

Jeremy Handel

Spartanburg Methodist College welcomed three new trustees to its board of directors following their approval at the South Carolina Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church in June.

Clint Settle ('04), Marcos Gomez, and Michael Allen were elected to join the board, filling seats that had remained vacant through the COVID pandemic.

"I look forward to welcoming our three new board members and begin working with them to continue the growth and success of SMC," said SMC President Scott Cochran.

The newly elected members will join the board for their first meeting in October.

Settle, of Spartanburg, is a project engineer with Universal Civil Construction. He is an active member of the Episcopal Church of the Advent. Settle is a graduate of SMC's associate degree program and served as student body president during his time at the school.

Gomez, of Spartanburg, is the founder and owner of Dellfrio, Inc., a commercial refrigeration importer and logistics provider. He serves on the board of the Cleveland Opportunity Foundation and is a member of the Saint Paul the Apostle Catholic Church.

Allen, of Greenville, is the CEO and architect for MAO architecture. He has served on numerous boards and councils, including currently serving on the Greenville Community Remembrance Project Monument Committee and the State Chamber of Commerce Diversity Council.

In addition to electing the new members, the Conference also approved the renewal of five trustees. Rev. Lane Glaze, Andrew Babb, Rev. Jerry Gadsden, Catherine Gramling, and Dr. Darryl Owings will all continue their service on the board. ●

*"I look forward to welcoming our three new board members and begin working with them to continue the growth and success of SMC."*

Scott Cochran  
SMC President

2022-2023

# ALUMNI

PLAN TO JOIN US FOR THESE EXCITING UPCOMING  
ALUMNI & FRIENDS EVENTS AND FUNDRAISERS.

More details at [www.smcsc.edu/resources/alumni-and-friends/alumni-organization/alumni-events/](http://www.smcsc.edu/resources/alumni-and-friends/alumni-organization/alumni-events/).

*Save the Date*

FRIDAY  
**NOV 18**  
2022

## AN EVENING OF DUELING PIANOS

SMC Campus, Spartanburg, South Carolina  
Live Music and Auctions to support SMC Students  
6:30 – 10:00 pm



FRIDAY  
**DEC 2**  
2022

## ALUMNI & FRIENDS CHRISTMAS PARTY

Forevermore Farm, Moore, SC  
Christmas Cook-Out and Cookie Decorating for Children  
Casual Dress, 6:00 – 8:00 pm



THURSDAY  
**FEB 16**  
2023

## PIONEER GIVE DAY

Open doors and unlock opportunities for students during this 24-hour virtual event

FRIDAY  
**MAR 3**  
2023

## OYSTER ROAST & LOW COUNTRY BOIL

Bowens Island Restaurant, 1870 Bowens Island Rd, Charleston, SC  
6:00 – 9:00 pm: Cash Bar Opens at 6:00 pm; Dinner at 7:00 pm  
Sponsored by: David Aylor Law Offices, Casual Dress



CALENDAR





ALUMNI PROFILE:

# CAMERON MARTIN '11

## BECOMING A HEALER, BOTH IN MEDICINE AND IN SOCIAL EQUITY

By Jeremy Handel

Cameron Martin has wanted to go into medicine since middle school after his cousin suffered an episode of diabetic seizures. His cousin recovered, and Cameron is now pursuing the dream that was born during that difficult time.

Through a unique partnership between the Morehouse School of Medicine and CommonSpirit Health, Martin earned his Master of Physician Assistant Studies this spring.

“After my cousin’s major life event, I took a strong interest in life sciences and medicine, which anchored me on this career path,” he said. “Medicine brings me excitement and joy to give patient-centered care and also advocate for health equity.”

Martin’s journey started with his associate in biology from SMC and took a trip through the U.S. Army on his way to fulfilling his dream to work in medicine. After SMC, he went on to earn his bachelor’s degree in microbiology (biomedicine) at Clemson University. Then it was on to serve his country.

“In the military I served in many roles. After leading a cavalry scout platoon, my squadron commander gave me the opportunity to lead the medical platoon,” Martin says of his continued journey toward a career in medicine. “I took this opportunity because I was interested in attending physician assistant school, and fortunately I excelled and earned several accolades.”

That success helped him in his return to school following his service. Martin learned of the program at Morehouse, an independent medical school formerly associated with Morehouse College. The uniqueness of the independent program and its commitment to diversity increased his interest.

“Medicine brings me excitement and joy to give patient-centered care and also advocate for health equity.”

“What piqued my interest was that Morehouse School of Medicine was deeply invested in health equity, increasing diversity among health care providers,” Martin said.

He enrolled in the program and took part in the More in Common Alliance, a partnership that had Morehouse students learn and work at hospitals in the CommonSpirit Health organization. The historic partnership is aimed at addressing the underlying causes of health inequities, including the lack of representation among care providers.

Martin was drawn to the program as it fulfilled two of his goals in the field of medicine. He completed his coursework and clinical rotations in several areas of medicine in facilities in Atlanta and Chattanooga, TN.

“Each rotation helped me learn more to be in tune with patients to provide the best care possible,” he said. “Additionally, clinical rotations bolstered my clinical skills, knowledge base, and strengthened my cultural aptitude with patients from various backgrounds.”

With his studies complete, Martin plans to go into orthopedic surgery while continuing his service in the Army and going on to earn his Ph.D. He also wants to help create a pathway for youth to learn about the physician assistant profession. ●

ALUMNI PROFILE:

# JASON PIKE '86

## SMC GRAD BATTLES COVID ON FRONTLINES WITH CDC

By Jeremy Handel

After a career of working in the Army to help prevent diseases in soldiers, Jason Pike ('86) decided to help his country once again and joined the team at the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in the fight against the COVID pandemic.

As a medical entomologist with a background in agriculture education and medical entomology, Pike spent much of his career studying the control and mitigation of pests. His work focused on controlling pests that cause disease in humans, helping to prevent sickness and death in soldiers.

“I had always been interested in the natural sciences and serving in the Army,” he said. “Many people wouldn’t believe these two fields would overlap, but they would be wrong.”

After serving on active duty for 22 years and in the National Guard and Reserve Officer Training Corp for nine years during college, Pike retired as a Lieutenant Colonel from the Army until the COVID pandemic hit. He felt the need to return to service to do his part to help fight the outbreak. He attempted to re-enlist, but with a large number of retired soldiers looking to do the same, he was turned down.

Pike still wanted to help, so he started looking for jobs in his field where his knowledge and talents could be put to use.

“I checked out a job website and found that there were hundreds of openings at the CDC, so I bombarded them with applications and took the first job they offered me,” he said. “To me at the time, COVID-19 was the enemy, and I had a strong desire to serve and take my fight to the outbreak.”

Pike has now been with the CDC for nearly two years and has been closely involved with combatting the pandemic. He is a part of the COVID-19 task force and is a member of the agency’s global rapid response team. These duties have sent him to various hotspots as part of the ground field deployment team, which he said he enjoys because he is able to help people.

“I learned, while on the ground deployments, that compassion and connecting with people can make all the difference in what you are doing and who you are helping,” he said.

Pike’s journey to his current calling got its start with an opportunity presented to him by Spartanburg Methodist College. He said when he applied to SMC, he wasn’t the best student in high

school and his test scores weren’t that great, but the College gave him a chance and he was determined not to waste it.

“For me, it was a second chance to see if I could further my education,” he said. “I remember shaking with anxiety walking into the side entrance of the Montgomery Sciences building on the first day of class. After the first semester, when I passed all my classes with a 4.0 GPA, I knew I was exactly where I needed to be.”

Not only was he ready for SMC, he flourished. Pike finished his studies in agriculture education and then went on to earn a bachelor’s and master’s in agriculture education from Clemson University and a master’s in medical entomology from Colorado State University.

Pike credits SMC for helping him improve his study habits and better focus on his studies while gaining more confidence. This improvement allowed him to continue on to a long, rewarding career in serving his country and helping others. ●



ALUMNI



## ALUMNI:

# PHIL GAINES '79

THE GREAT OUTDOORS WERE GREAT TO SMC ALUM

By Jeremy Handel

For nearly four decades, SMC alum Phil Gaines got up, put on his work clothes, and hiked to the office – that's right, hiked.

After graduating with his Associate in Liberal Arts in 1979, Gaines went on to earn his bachelor's in parks, recreation, and tourism management from Clemson University. From there, he went on to the great outdoors and lifelong career with the South Carolina State Parks, where he recently retired as the director of the entire state park system.

"As a child, I always camped, hiked, and utilized the parks in the upstate, and going into a career in the park system was always something I wanted to do," he said. "Being from Greenville, the mountains and the parks were always a special place to me, and they continue to be special and even spiritual for me today."

Gaines got his first job in the park system as an entry level ranger at Kings Mountain State Park right out of Clemson. Over the course of his 38 years, he had the opportunity to serve as the first superintendent at Lake Wateree State Park, as well as the superintendent at Dreher Island State Park and Santee State Park. After his stint at Santee, the system called him up to state headquarters, first

in operations and then on to assistant director and ultimately director.

Over the course of 38 years, Gaines says he saw incredible growth and advancement of the park system and was able to develop and advance various programs. He developed the "Discover Carolina Program," an educational program that continues to be used for school field trips and learning programs. He also oversaw growth of the park system through significant property acquisition for public lands.

Gaines is also proud of the work to restore and conserve the Civilian Conservation Corps building and facilities, including the lodge, at Table Rock State Park. Table Rock was a favorite park of his as a child.

Gaines is also proud of his effort to continue the success of the park system in the state.

"I'm particularly proud of the opportunity to inspire and empower a new



generation of park rangers to continue the legacy of state parks for future generations," he said.

Gaines said his time at SMC helped him on his path by giving him the confidence in his abilities to succeed. He said the SMC experience was the foundation that enabled him to succeed at Clemson and beyond. He encourages young students to look into SMC for their college careers because they will get a great learning experience and grow into their true potential. ●

*He [Gaines] said the SMC experience was the foundation that enabled him to succeed at Clemson and beyond. He encourages young students to look into SMC for their college careers because they will get a great learning experience and grow into their true potential.*

# ATHLETICS RECAP 2021-22

## FALL SPORTS



### CROSS COUNTRY

The women's cross country team advanced to the Women's Region 10 Championships where they won the title. Mikayla Wilson was named the Region 10 Division I Women's Runner of the Year.



### SOCCER

In men's soccer, seven student athletes were selected for All-Region teams including Youkendjy Pacius (first team); Vashone Aceves, Victor Captillo, Jason Hernandez, and Francesco Molinar (second team); Raquan Bryant and Jesus Acre (third team). Furthermore, Youkendjy Pacius also saw another honorable moment as he was named Player of the Year.

In women's soccer, the Lady Pioneers saw victory as the Region 10 Champions during the regular season and during the Region 10 tournament. Additionally, the ladies were runner-up in the South Atlantic District. Some of these Lady Pioneers received the honor of

being selected for All-Region teams including Angelica Gonzalez, Jasmine Mora, and Makenzie Quinley (first team); Reagan Chafin, Jordin Golden, and Carmen Pineda (second team); Ryley Karr (third team).



### INDOOR VOLLEYBALL

The indoor volleyball team won both the regular season and tournament Region 10 Championship titles. The team also finished runner up in the Southeast B District. Laura Lietzke, Taylor Reilly, and Meghan Scharpenberg were named All-Regional. The Player of the Year honor went to Laura Lietzke, and Katie Zimmerman was named Coach of the Year.

## WINTER SPORTS



### BASKETBALL

The men's basketball team saw Jamarvious Jones named to the First Team All-Region.

The women's basketball team was named the Region 10 Champions, both in the regular season and the

Tournament. Our Lady Pioneers, Tamerah Brown and Tarewyn Dawson, were named All-Region. Kelly Britsky was named Coach of the Year for the second year in a row.

## SPRING SPORTS



### BASEBALL

This season, the baseball team saw A'Shani McFarland, Dariyan Pendergrass, and Graham Edwards named First Team All-Region, while Jordan Young and Myles Daniels earned Second Team honors.

### SOFTBALL

The Lady Pioneers Softball team won the Region 10 championship in both the regular season and Region 10 Tournament. Additionally, they were the Mid-Atlantic District runner-up. Caitlyn Cox, Jenna Venturelli, Hannah Maddox, Tyeisha Gist, and Isabella Duron were selected First Team All-Region. Samantha Carver, Reine Wood, and Bailee New were selected as players on the All-Region Second Team. Caitlyn Cox also had another honor, being named Pitcher of the Year. Caroline Hill was named Coach of the Year.



### GOLF

The men's golf team qualified for the NJCAA National Championship Tournament, which was held May 10-12 in Odessa, Texas.

The Lady Pioneers also qualified for the NJCAA National Championship Tournament. Their tournament took place May 9-12 in Sanford, Florida.



### BEACH VOLLEYBALL

In the sport's second season, the Lady Pioneers finished third at the inaugural AVCA Small College Beach Championship.



# EPHRAIM BUTLER

## LOSS AND TRAGEDY COULDN'T DEFEAT DETERMINED SMC ATHLETE

By Jeremy Handel

For many who face adversity at a young age, sports can provide a refuge. They can be a place to escape the pain for a while or a place to find comfort among friends. For some, it can even be a place to find purpose and direction.

For former SMC Men's Basketball point guard Ephraim Butler, who lost both of his parents by age 11, sports was all of those things and a path to future success, with a few speed bumps along the way.

"I didn't really understand it at the time, but I don't think I'd be the person I am today if it hadn't happened," Butler said of losing his parents at such an early age. "I easily could have gone down a different path, but the gym was my safe space."

He credits his older sister Khayla, who stepped in to raise Ephraim and his four other siblings, with keeping him on the right path and providing him a strong example to follow.

"She never really had time to grieve, and as I got older, I could see my sister suffering," he said. "A lot of times we went without things, but she always made sure we knew we were loved and provided what she could."

Ephraim said his sister is the strongest person he knows, and he's grateful to her for what she provided their family. Khayla says it wasn't a hard decision to step in and be there for her siblings.

"I'm the oldest, and I was raised to always protect and take care of my siblings," she said. "I had always helped with them, so stepping in to raise them after our parents passed was the only choice."

This is when Ephraim turned to the gym and poured himself into basketball, Khayla said. "He was determined to make our parents proud by becoming successful at basketball." She remembers he was up early every morning practicing at the hoop in the backyard that his mother had bought for him.

*"I became a better person by coming here... You have a lot more access, and the professors are willing to work with you and help you."*

That hard work and the support of his family would pay off as Ephraim became a star at Berkeley High School in his hometown of Moncks Corner, SC. It was there that Ephraim met another big influence on his life and experienced more loss.

As a basketball coach in Moncks Corner, Donald Minor first noticed Ephraim for his talent on the court, then he got to know him and saw his need off the court. It wasn't long before Coach Minor also became a role model for Ephraim, providing a strong male influence. Ephraim called Minor a mentor and "second father" who motivated him to work hard to succeed both in the gym and in life.

And the success came, especially on the court. In high school, Ephraim became a star and led his team to three region championships, a 23-game win streak his senior season, and a second-place finish in the lower state championship that year. Ephraim was named the regional player of the year and an all-state player.

But, the challenges also came. During his junior year, Ephraim would once again face a terrible loss when Coach Minor passed away. Butler struggled to cope.

"I promised Coach Minor I would win him a state championship, and I was devastated that I wasn't able to achieve that," Butler said. He added that knowing Minor would have been proud of the team's success had helped him come to terms with not winning the championship.

"Losing Coach Minor was a very hard thing for Ephraim to accept," Khayla said. "I also noticed the impact that Ephraim had on so many young kids in Moncks Corner, and I encouraged him to use his celebrity in a positive way."

She suggested that Butler, who had become a local celebrity because of his basketball ability, start a youth basketball camp and teach local kids the game.

"I thought that was something you couldn't do until you made it to the NBA," Butler said of his initial reaction to his sister's suggestion, but he came around to the idea, and at age 17 he started the camp for local kids who looked up to him and shared his passion for basketball with them. He said it was a great way to both come to terms with the loss of Coach Minor and honor his legacy.

After high school, Butler struggled to find the right college fit. At the time, SMC didn't have a spot on its men's basketball team to offer him. Over the next couple of years, Butler played at schools in SC and Illinois, but academic difficulties, injuries and homesickness took their toll. Butler found himself ready to quit basketball and college. Unsure what to do next, Butler reconnected with SMC Men's Basketball Coach Nori Johnson.

"Coach Johnson convinced me to come to SMC, and he had a plan for my development," Ephraim said.

Johnson said that plan he had in mind was for more than just basketball. He wanted to develop Butler academically and personally to set him up for success beyond SMC.

Butler admits his academic record wasn't great. Coming to SMC and working with Johnson, as well as the faculty and staff, were just what he needed to turn things around.

"I became a better person by coming here," he said. "You have a lot more access, and the professors are willing to work with you and help you." Butler said he truly understood and embraced academics when he got to SMC.

Johnson agrees that the change in location was a big help for Butler.

"Being in a smaller atmosphere really helped him a lot," he said. "SMC is all about giving hope and giving opportunity. Ephraim is the perfect example of that."

Butler also took advantage of his SMC opportunity to grow on the court, Johnson said. He's watched Butler become a strong leader on the court and much more disciplined in his approach to the game. That success will once again take him to the next level as he moves on to play at Fayetteville State University, one of the storied Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU), in Fayetteville, NC, this fall.

But, he'll always have a love for SMC and what it's provided for him.

"I'm going to miss the hospitality and how everyone here embraces you," he said of his time at SMC.

Butler is focused on finishing his degree and achieving his goal of playing in the HBCU all-star game. He wants to play professionally in Europe for a few years before becoming a coach – maybe at his beloved alma mater in Moncks Corner.

Johnson's confident that Ephraim will succeed no matter what path he chooses.

"He's a continuous learner, and I love and respect people like that," he said. "I think he has a future in basketball. If he wants something, he pursues it like his life depends on it. That's why I think he'll be successful."

Ephraim chose not to let adversity defeat him. Like his efforts on the court, he chose to get back up and run down the court for the next play. SMC helped Ephraim see his potential and expand his horizons in basketball and in life. ●





# CURRENT Planned GIFTS

Number of Gifts Made  
in last 5 years:

19

Total Amount of Gifts Made in last 5 years:

\$1,127,598.41

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YOUR PLAN WITH US?

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EXCITED TO INCLUDE YOU  
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IN MEMORIAM:

## PHYLLIS BUCHHEIT DELAPP

LONG-TIME SMC SUPPORTER,  
BOARD MEMBER PASSES

The SMC family suffered a tremendous loss over the summer as one of its leading supporters, Phyllis Buchheit Delapp, passed away at the age of 86.

Her commitment and generosity to SMC has been extraordinary. Along with serving more than 20 years on the Board of Trustees, Phyllis was an avid supporter of the school and its mission. She was instrumental in the addition of the Phyllis Buchheit Board Room and Colleen's Fountain, a landmark on campus in honor of former president Dr. Colleen Keith.

In addition, the Buchheit Family Scholarship has benefited students in need since its establishment in 1978 and will continue to in the future. Her son, Andrew Babb, carries on his family's legacy as a current member of the Board of Trustees.

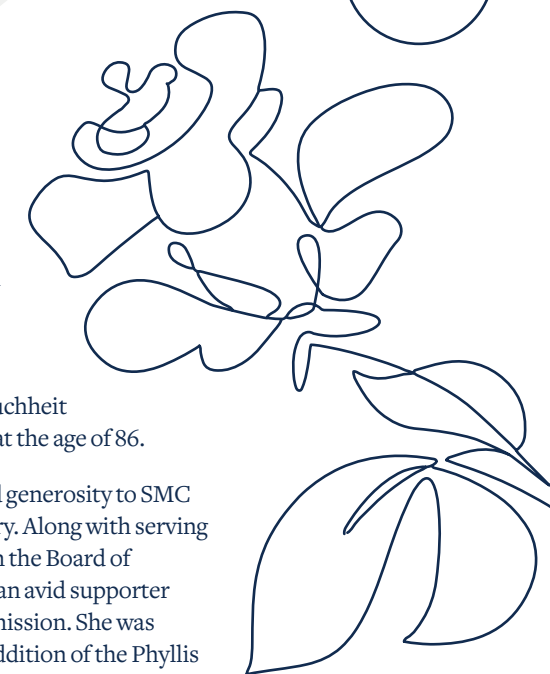
Phyllis was a long-time businesswoman, community leader, and philanthropist in Spartanburg. With her brother, Bill, she took over the family newspaper business after her father passed. Mid-South Management owned and operated 17 newspapers, including the Spartanburg Herald Journal at the time. She was well known for her philanthropic efforts in the Upstate through the Buchheit Family Foundation.

Phyllis is a member of the Order of the Pioneer, our highest recognition for donors. She also received the Philanthropist of the Year Award by the National Society for Professional Fundraisers for her work with SMC.

We will sincerely miss her passion for SMC and our students, including her regular visits to campus just to say hello. Our sincerest condolences go out to her family. ●



IN MEMORIAM





# In MEMORIAM

**Mr. Marvin A. Chapman ’39**  
*of Hickory, NC, died July 22, 2022.*

**Mr. Rex Johnson Smith ’40**  
*of Jacksonville, FL, died August 24, 2020.*

**Mrs. Martha Milner Buchanan ’42**  
*of Asheville, NC, died August 18, 2020.*

**Mrs. Beulah Burnes Witt ’43**  
*of Lumberton, NC, died December 23, 2020.*

**Mrs. Barnelle Williams Harsey ’44**  
*of Leesville, SC, died July 6, 2020.*

**Mrs. Betty Wilburn Huneycutt ’46**  
*of Columbia, SC, died December 20, 2021.*

**Mrs. Carolyn Stamper Kent ’46**  
*of Auburn, AL, died December 10, 2021.*

**Mrs. Katherine Steppe Hillman ’47**  
*of Charlotte, NC, died May 1, 2021.*

**Mr. William Ashmore Tinsley ’47**  
*of Lees Summit, MO, died December 1, 2021.*

**Mr. Charles Loy Dickson, Jr. ’48**  
*of Hendersonville, NC, died  
December 29, 2021.*

**Mrs. Willine Mauldin Littlejohn ’49**  
*of Greenville, SC, died February 23, 2021.*

**Mrs. Ruth King Eason ’50**  
*of Cornelius, NC, died August 4, 2021.*

**Mr. Robert P. Dempsey ’51**  
*of Lebanon, CT, died April 19, 2021.*

**The Reverend Charles E. McKinney ’51**  
*of Boone, NC, died August 18, 2021.*

**Maj. Ray Fischel Smith, USMC (Ret.) ’51**  
*of Greenville, SC, died October 30, 2020.*

**Mrs. Dorothy Layton King ’52**  
*of Camarillo, CA, died November 22, 2021.*

**Mrs. Edith McConnell Koon ’52**  
*of West Columbia, SC, died February 22, 2022.*

**Mr. Donald E. Langston ’52**  
*of Clermont, FL, died August 17, 2020.*

**Mrs. Glenda Ann Camak ’55**  
*of Folly Beach, SC, died August 18, 2020.*

**Mr. Dan Henry Mizzell, Jr. ’55**  
*of Charleston, SC, died April 7, 2022.*

**The Reverend Lonnie Lee Cook ’56**  
*of Sugar Grove, NC, died June 9, 2021.*

**The Reverend Dr. Richard Dean Dillingham ’56**  
*of Enoree, SC, died March 5, 2021.*

**Mrs. Barbara Norris Wilson ’57**  
*of Danville, VA, died March 7, 2020.*

**Mr. Harold Dean Gaddy ’59**  
*of Chester, SC, died January 23, 2022.*

**Mr. Glen R. Melton ’59**  
*of Moore, SC, died March 23, 2022.*

**Mr. Stephen Carl Rhodes ’59**  
*of Sunset Beach, NC, died March 24, 2020.*

**Mr. Harold D. Thompson ’59**  
*of Inman, SC, died October 22, 2021.*

**Dr. Ronald Edward Block ’60**  
*of Miami, FL, died March 26, 2021.*

**Mr. William Stephen Frey ’60**  
*of Canton, GA, died April 8, 2022.*

**Mr. Philip DuPre Greer ’60**  
*of Columbia, SC, died December 21, 2021.*

**Mr. Charles Aubrey Kelley ’60**  
*of Travelers Rest, SC, died November 5, 2021.*

**Mr. John Larry Porter ’60**  
*of West Columbia, SC, died July 25, 2022.*

**Mr. William F. Hannon III ’61**  
*of Inman, SC, died October 9, 2021.*

**Mr. James Calvin Linder ’61**  
*of Hanahan, SC, died November 26, 2021.*

**Mr. Richard Manning Rodgers, Jr. ’62**  
*of Fort Mill, SC, died October 29, 2020.*

**Mr. Roger Everett Tomlinson ’62**  
*of Acworth, GA, died February 19, 2021.*

**The Honorable James F. Ashmore ’63**  
*of Landrum, SC, died October 28, 2021.*

**Mrs. Sibyl Katsos Cooper ’63**  
*of Lexington, SC, died May 31, 2022.*

**Mr. James D. Green, Jr. ’63**  
*of Gaffney, SC, died November 22, 2021.*

**Mr. E. Cantey Pearce III ’63**  
*of Chesterfield, VA, died July 1, 2022.*

**Mr. Wilbur Calvin Pruitt ’63**  
*of Graham, NC, died January 11, 2021.*

**Mrs. Estelle McKinney Ridley ’63**  
*of Chesnee, SC, died June 24, 2021.*

**Mrs. Nancy Chernko Sproles ’63**  
*of Inman, SC, died October 29, 2021.*

**Mr. Neil D. Vaughan ’63**  
*of Charleston, SC, died January 4, 2022.*

**Mr. James Robert Chandler ’65**  
*of Winnsboro, SC, died February 16, 2022.*

**Mr. James Nesbitt Conner ’65**  
*of Tryon, NC, died April 4, 2021.*

**Mrs. Betty Ashley Dickert ’65**  
*of Clinton, SC, died October 20, 2020.*

**Mrs. Carolyn Watkins Poe ’65**  
*of Auburndale, FL, died January 22, 2021.*

**Mr. Carroll A. Belcher ’66**  
*of Spartanburg, SC, died March 8, 2021.*

**Mrs. Diane Holden King ’66**  
*of Spartanburg, SC, died December 11, 2021.*

**Mr. Walton Adonis Smoak ’66**  
*of Gaffney, SC, died June 2, 2022.*

**Mr. Loyless Thomas Wright, Jr. ’66**  
*of Spartanburg, SC, died June 1, 2022.*

**Mr. James Daniel Dantzler ’67**  
*of Orangeburg, SC, died June 29, 2022.*

**Mr. Frank Winton Martin ’67**  
*of Winnsboro, SC, died August 14, 2020.*

**Mrs. Cynthia Goldfinch Turner ’67**  
*of Conway, SC, died March 6, 2022.*

**Ms. Mary Sayer Bernard ’68**  
*of McCormick, SC, died November 29, 2021.*

**Mr. Paul K. Dewitt ’68**  
*of Saint Matthews, SC, died January 22, 2021.*

**Ms. Mary Lee Hembree ’68**  
*of Pauline, SC, died October 15, 2021.*

**Mr. Joe Newton Minshew ’68**  
*of North Myrtle Beach, SC,  
died September 3, 2021.*

**Mr. Lacoste E. Irwin ’70**  
*of Spartanburg, SC, died June 3, 2022.*

**Mr. Louis Utsey ’70**  
*of Advance, NC, died October 9, 2020.*

**Mr. Gerald Marvin Forrester ’73**  
*of Moore, SC, died April 7, 2021.*

**Mr. William Gary High ’73**  
*of Boiling Springs, SC, died July 7, 2020.*

**Mr. Farrell Eugene Hembree ’74**  
*of Atlanta, GA, died April 14, 2022.*

**Mr. Floyd Leonard Bright ’75**  
*of Lyman, SC, died January 8, 2021.*

**Mrs. Beverly Daniel Burch ’75**  
*of Greenville, SC, died January 11, 2022.*

**Mr. Harley Steve Butler ’75**  
*of Gaffney, SC, died March 23, 2022.*

**Mr. Edward Daniel Bowers ’76**  
*of Six Mile, SC, died July 10, 2022.*

**Mr. John Scott Adams ’78**  
*of Gastonia, NC, died December 4, 2021.*

**CDR Harold Dean Chestnutt USN(Ret.) ’78**  
*of Pensacola, FL, died January 24, 2021.*

**Mr. Isaac Abiola Coker ’78**  
*of Siler City, NC, died August 12, 2020.*

**Mr. William Mark Brock ’83**  
*of Troy, SC, died January 28, 2021.*

**Mr. John William Gilliam ’83**  
*of Moore, SC, died March 7, 2021.*

**Mr. John Dwight Smith ’84**  
*of Peachtree City, GA, died July 22, 2022.*

**Mr. Jeffery F. Lowe ’85**  
*of Spartanburg, SC, died May 22, 2022.*

**Mr. Steven Sluder ’86**  
*of Greenwood, SC, died May 19, 2022.*

**Mr. Michael Buffalo Smith ’86**  
*of Converse, SC, died August 24, 2021.*

**Mr. Douglas Boyd Guerry ’87**  
*of Jamestown, SC, died December 22, 2020.*

**Ms. Ruth S. Henry ’88**  
*of Spartanburg, SC, died January 13, 2022.*

**Ms. Kimberly Bailey Howard ’89**  
*of Tazewell, TN, died October 15, 2021.*

**Mrs. Lisa Transiskus Park ’90**  
*of Atlanta, GA, died November 13, 2021.*

**Mrs. Charlene Daniel Moore ’91**  
*of Newton, NC, died August 20, 2021.*

**The Reverend Thomas Richard Bailey ’95**  
*of Irmo, SC, died November 16, 2021.*

**Mr. Samuel Antonio Higgins ’95**  
*of Woodruff, SC, died November 4, 2021.*

**Mr. Johnny Dean Howard ’95**  
*of Honea Path, SC, died September 4, 2021.*

**Mr. Justin Barrett Gillespie ’97**  
*of Moore, SC, died December 31, 2021.*

**Mr. Tony J. Wright ’97**  
*of Spartanburg, SC, died March 31, 2022.*

**Ms. Kendra Leighan Garrett ’00**  
*of Simpsonville, SC, died July 4, 2022.*

**Mr. Dillon Dewayne Palencia ’15**  
*of Cowpens, SC, died November 19, 2021.*

**Ms. Mariah Breshay Blackley ’16**  
*of Chesnee, SC, died May 16, 2022.*

**Mr. Liam Payne Crowe ’17**  
*of Spartanburg, SC, died April 12, 2022.*

**Ms. MiAysha Brannon**  
*of Boiling Springs, SC, died December 19, 2021.*

**Mrs. Janice Bowers Dunkin**  
*of Joanna, SC, died November 17, 2021.*

**Mr. Hayden Pressley McCutchen**  
*of Bradley, SC, died December 23, 2021.*



## Class NOTES

1970

**MR. FREDDIE MICHAEL GAYMON**

Mr. Gaymon recently published a book entitled “A View from the Backhoe.” It is available on Amazon.

1972

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

Dr. Chandler has recently been inducted as a vowed member of the Wesleyan Contemplative Order, an ecumenical and inclusive spiritual community.





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**VIP TABLES \$550**

8 seats, closet to stage, includes beer & wine wristband

**RESERVED TABLES \$350**

6 seats, includes beer & wine wristband

**INDIVIDUAL TICKETS \$40**

additional \$10 for beer & wine wristband

**BANNER SPONSOR \$150**



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Dress*

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[CaldwellL@smcsc.edu](mailto:CaldwellL@smcsc.edu).

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