

VOLUME
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FALL 2017

THE LAKER

CONNECTION

A Publication of Clayton State University



COVER STORY

Clayton State takes on AI

Clayton State prepares next gen tech leaders as artificial intelligence grows **p16**



ON THE COVER: NAO Humanoid robot.
Photographed exclusively for Clayton State
by Haute Couture Media..



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COVER STORY

Artificial intelligence is no longer science fiction.

It's here and now. AI and machine learning dominate various aspects of our world, accelerating and improving human life. From chat bots to driverless vehicles, the possibilities are endless.

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SPECIAL INSERT: Clayton State launches \$12 million comprehensive campaign, Greater In Mind, a first for the University.

How do you personally connect with Clayton State University?

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"As staff and an alum, I stay connected by getting to know the next generations of Lakers through social media and photography around campus!"

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"Sharing the happy, interesting and compelling stories of the individuals that make up our Laker family keeps me connected to the University."

"I connect through our student-athletes, our tremendous staff and incredible athletic alumni. Buildings are buildings - it's the people that make Clayton State great."

"I connect with Clayton State University through the various projects I collaborate on with talented staff members and faculty."

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"I personally connect with Clayton State University through the people. At Clayton State, there is no shortage of people who are willing to go above and beyond to help you."

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THE OFFICE OF MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

publishes The Laker Connection twice a year. It is distributed to alumni, trustees, faculty, staff, retirees and friends. It is also published online at clayton.edu/laker-connection.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

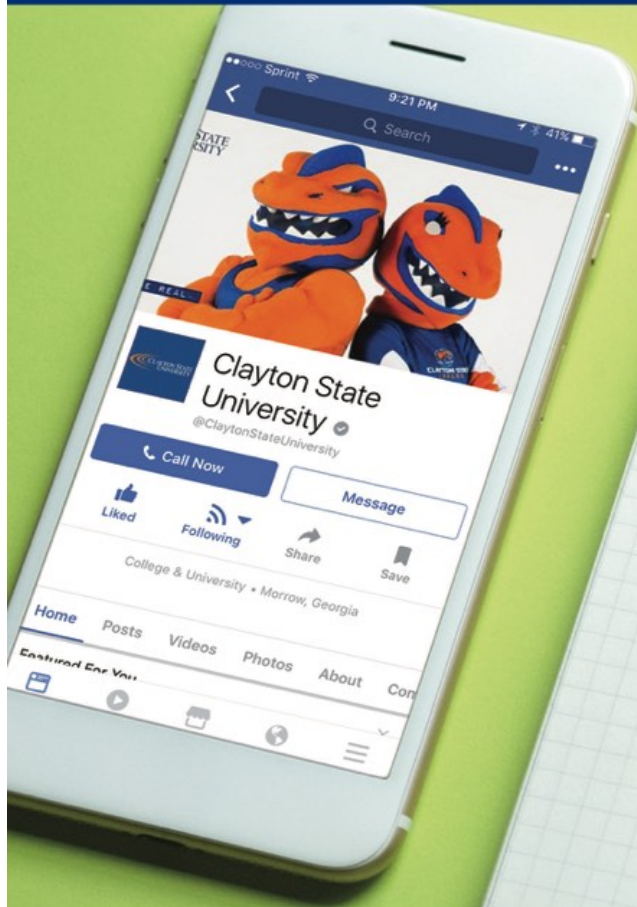
What are your thoughts about this issue of The Laker Connection?

We want to hear from you at marketing_communications@clayton.edu

Via letters and social media,
Laker Connection fans



our stories!



I loved your recent Laker Connection (Vol. 12, Issue 1, Spring 2017). The format is new and refreshing. I truly loved the featured article on supply chain management. It was very well done and very timely.

The article covered what we do in the industry and how important supply chain is to everyone. The chart reflecting the statistics by each mode of transportation was important for the article and added a good "punch" to it.

Supply chain management is dear to me and I know how important it is to world economics. Our program here at Clayton State for the study of supply chain management has been growing and successful in having our students get great positions in the supply chain and logistics industry.

-John Mascaritolo
Director, Center for Supply Chain Management

Top 3 performing stories from our last issue

#1 Next Generation Leaders Make their Mark on Campus

Social Media Reach: 2,975
Reactions, Comments, Shares,
Retweets: 204
Web Visits: 456



#2 Saving the Box Turtles

Social Media Reach: 2,758
Reactions, Comments, Shares,
Retweets: 178
Web Visits: 305



#3 Georgia Takes Position as Global Supply Chain Leader

Social Media Reach: 1,605
Reactions, Comments, Shares,
Retweets: 44
Web Visits: 369



Performance data as of July 7, 2017

DID YOU KNOW?

The Laker Connection Magazine is now published online! You can also subscribe to the e-newsletter version at clayton.edu/laker-connection.

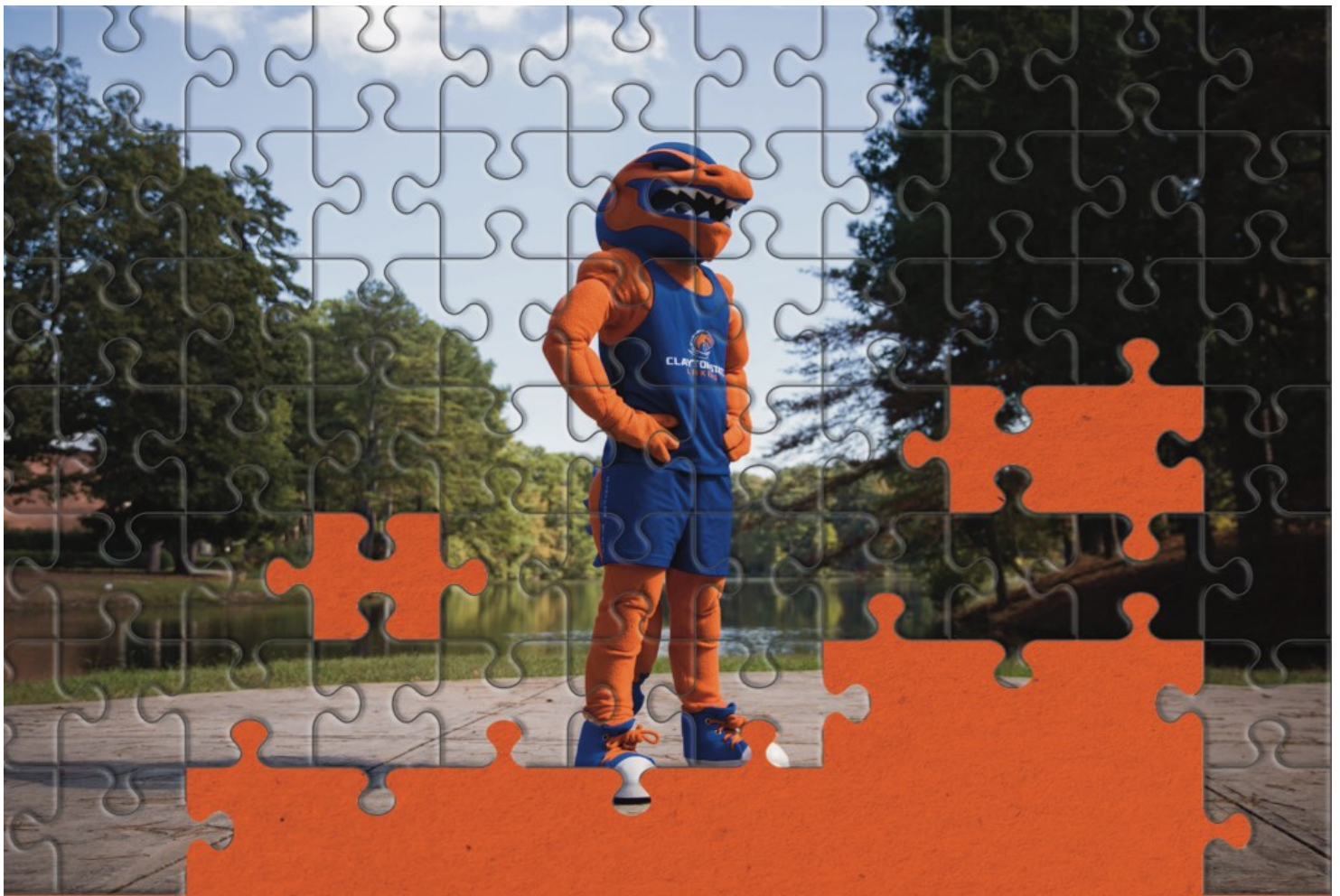
CORRECTIONS

The Laker Connection welcomes comments about errors that warrant correction. Messages can be sent to Marketing_Communications@clayton.edu.

The following corrections are for The Laker Connection Volume 12: Issue 1: Spring 2017.

Faculty Title

Dr. Scott Bailey's title is associate professor of mathematics, not assistant professor of mathematics as stated on page 7 in the "STEMulating Tech Careers" story.



“There are no extra pieces in the universe. Everyone is here because he or she has a place to fill, and every piece must fit itself into the big jigsaw puzzle.” - Deepak Chopra

Assemble Clayton State jigsaw puzzles online that showcase some of our hidden gems! Try out beginner, intermediate and advanced puzzles at <http://csuloch.link/2wjjVC0>.

Message from the President

During the mid-18th century, the citizens of the city of Königsberg, Prussia, were puzzled with a complex issue of connections. In a city of four land masses and seven bridges across a river, was it possible to traverse the city crossing each of the seven bridges once and only once?

The mayor of Königsberg posed the question to the mathematician Leonard Euler, seeking some solution. Euler undertook to solve the problem, one which he initially described as "...so banal, but seemed to me worthy of attention in that [neither] geometry nor algebra nor even the art of counting was sufficient to solve it."

Euler's proof that such a crossing would be impossible served as the foundation for what we now know as graph theory, and ultimately of network science—the science of connectedness.

One of many interesting elements of that episode in the history of mathematics is that the connection between the mayor's question and the development of a new branch of mathematics could not have been known. And yet network science sits at the juncture of web science, internet science, and the science of social networks. And those emerging frameworks of learning place us on the frontiers of new learning not previously seen as connected.

The Laker Connection was developed years ago to establish or continue connectivity between and among present activities at Clayton State University. In this Fall 2017 issue of Laker Connection, we share some connections that our faculty, staff and students are identifying today among people, things, ideas and communities.

To mention a few: students and faculty explore relationships between robots, computer science and artificial intelligence (AI). How AI will frame the future in which our students and all of us will live is a part of connectivity we should all ponder.

DREAMS. MADE REAL.

DR. THOMAS J. HYNES JR.

There are multiple examples of students connecting with community, and with each other. Some of the connections are with emerging businesses in the region, and Clayton State interns who work to learn about those businesses. The Children's Choir of Spivey Hall has been connecting with families of choir members for decades—and with vast members of the community through the Choir's performances.

We believe you will enjoy the exploration of connections and connectivity found in this volume. And we invite you to seek your own connections with the University and ideas just briefly mentioned. As I share with graduates each year, a degree has two essential names—the name of the graduate and Clayton State University.

Help us find the connectivity between your lives and ideas, and the present lives and ideas of our faculty, students and staff—and connect with me at <http://www.clayton.edu/president>.



A HOME *and a Legacy*



By Kelly Petty

In 2015, Rickita Burney's beloved grandfather had passed away. But before he died, she told him her goal was to give her children a home of their own.

That promise came to fruition a year later when Burney and her two children opened the doors to their new home thanks to Habitat for Humanity Southern Crescent and the Warrick Dunn Charities.

"I still come home and just say thank you," she says. "We are blessed beyond measure. This is our home and no one can take this away from us."

Burney, a sophomore legal studies major, underwent a comprehensive process to earn her home, including taking financial classes, volunteering at Habitat and helping to build parts of her home.

The educational experience coupled with the physical labor made getting a home more valuable, Burney says.

"Working with Habitat Southern Crescent, it's a hand up, not a hand out," she says. "Partner families put in blood, sweat and tears. I'm building something for the next generation, something to leave for my kids as a legacy."

In achieving her goals for homeownership, Burney did not go at it alone. In addition to the support from Habitat and the Warrick Dunn Charities, Clayton State University helped Burney make her dream real.

Students gathered in August of 2016 during Laker Service Day hosted by Campus Life to help build the walls of Burney's home. The event was part of freshman and first-year student activities at the beginning of the school year.



Warrick Dunn (left) welcomes Burney and her two children to their new home in Jonesboro, Georgia

"I like volunteering and seeing things get done," said Thomas Wragg, a sophomore studying supply chain management in the College of Business. "This is a humbling experience. I'm more fortunate, so I want to use whatever I have to help others."

Ciara Dunn '17, Clayton State alumna and a program coordinator at Habitat for Humanity, said owning a home makes a big difference in the lives of children.

"Statistics show that when kids are in a stable neighborhood their test scores are higher," Dunn said. "It's a big role to be a part of that and take pride in building a home and helping someone out."

Burney said it was exciting to see students take ownership in the project, especially knowing that they were helping a member of the Laker family.

“Working with Habitat Southern Crescent, it’s a hand up, not a hand out,” she says. “Partner families put in blood, sweat and tears. I’m building something for the next generation, something to leave for my kids as a legacy.”

"Knowing that they were helping a fellow student, it kind of like amped them up," she recalls.

Dr. Kemuel Kimbrough, former Habitat for Humanity Southern Crescent CEO and a social sciences professor at Clayton State, said in his few interactions with Burney during the process, he sensed her focus and determination.

"Like many Habitat partner families, her life's journey was very touching and her goals were laudable. While volunteering, she often talked of looking forward to sitting across from me at the closing table, when she would become a homeowner," he says. "Ultimately, we finished the home, and Rickita and I sat at the closing table together."

Dr. Kimbrough says that through the partnership between Habitat and the Warrick Dunn Charities, Burney

and her children were afforded the opportunity to gain an energy-efficient home, a reasonable mortgage and, more importantly, the ability to build a strong financial foundation for her family.

"Homeownership is building wealth versus merely providing housing," Dr. Kimbrough notes.

Since moving into her home last November, Burney has found that she has more quiet time for herself. Her kids have been able to run around and play in the yard, and she's enjoyed entertaining family and grilling.

Christmas turned out to be a blast when she hosted a pajama party with her family to play games and watch movies.

"My grandmother blessed the house," Burney says. "She was so excited for her grandkids and great-grandkids."



Clayton State students helped Burney on her journey to home ownership by building parts of her home.

Burney says the Warrick Dunn Charities team continues to check in on her, and she has taken several of their workshops, including one for retirement and financial planning, and another on healthy eating.

As for the future, Burney looks forward to finishing school and working in the court system. She also wants to see her children do well in school. And she hopes to get married again.

For now, Burney is just happy that she was able to tick one thing off her list of life goals and fulfill a promise to her grandfather.

“I can still hear him telling me what to do and what not do,” she says. “He may not be here physically, but he is here spiritually.”



“ I still come home and just say thank you,” she says. “We are blessed beyond measure. This is our home and no one can take this away from us.”



LAKER REWIND:

Former classmates
re-live Clayton
State College's
1982 production of

My Fair Lady

By Brionna Pinkney

It's 8:30 p.m. on March 2, 1982. The theatre at Clayton State Junior College is filled with 165 locals, quietly seated, awaiting the college's premiere production of the popular musical "My Fair Lady."

Backstage, a 21-year-old Teresa Reeves-Gilmer '01 and her close friend Jeff Pike '83, also 21, prepare to dazzle the audience in their roles as Eliza Doolittle and Freddy Eynsford-Hill.

The excitement of the moment was captured in an article about the play from *The Bent Tree*, Clayton State's student-run newspaper. It also helped Reeves-Gilmer and Pike to solidify their passion for a musical career.



Reeves-Gilmer is no stranger to musical performance. She has been songwriting and showcasing her skills at talent shows from a young age.

"I wrote my first song in 1974," she says. "I had an older brother who was a musician so I was always involved in it."

Reeves-Gilmer enrolled in Clayton State as an Early Childhood Education major, but soon became highly involved in her music and theatre courses.

"I'll be honest, I wasn't really focused [on other classes] because I was just so into music," she says. "I was just loving everything that had to do with the music program."

After some encouragement from her best friend, Reeves-Gilmer decided to audition for the college's production of "My Fair Lady" and was completely surprised when she scored the leading role as Eliza Doolittle.

"It was absolutely shocking," she says. "I was very flattered."

Her friend and fellow classmate, Jeff Pike, was to act alongside her as Freddy Eynsford-Hill. Much like Reeves-Gilmer, Pike had a strong musical upbringing. His mother, an exceptional musician, introduced Pike to music at an early age.

"I've always wanted to be a musician and I knew I was going to be one when I grew up," he says.

"It was the comradery that I really enjoyed," Reeves-Gilmer states while smiling, "That was really nice."

Pike pursued a bachelor's degree in voice with a minor in theater. He began his college journey at Shorter College, but transferred to Clayton State to live closer to home. He immediately fell in love with the professors and curriculum.

"They furthered my interest in music and in theatre too, which further cemented what I was going to do with the rest of my life," Pike states.

Clayton State's "My Fair Lady" was an instant success. Each evening's performance began with a full audience and concluded with a standing ovation.

Additionally, the cast and crew became more like family than peers and Reeves-Gilmer and Pike remain friends to this day.

"It was the comradery that I really enjoyed," Reeves-Gilmer states while smiling, "That was really nice."

After college, both Reeves-Gilmer and Pike established full-time music careers.

Reeves-Gilmer is the lead singer of her band Snowwolfstix and started her own record label. She has written over 400 songs and has worked with musicians across the world, including renowned Italian pianist, Paolo Negri.

"I had a great time at Clayton State," Pike says. "It was a wonderful time in my life."

Pike is the founder and lead vocalist/guitarist for the A1A band. He has recorded seven albums of original music and has produced albums for Atlanta artists. He's been involved in many musical productions, including touring alongside country music singer, Jimmy Buffett.

Still, when they look back on the old-school newspaper clip documenting their performance in "My Fair Lady," they cannot help but remember, with joy, their time at Clayton State.

"I had a great time at Clayton State," Pike says. "It was a wonderful time in my life."





The Little White Church

on Jacques Mountain

By Kelly Petty

To outsiders, La Gonâve Island, located off the coast of Haiti, may seem like a place of despair. Known as the “the land that Haiti forgot,” the people on the island suffer from immense poverty and harsh living conditions.

But at the top of the island’s mountain in a community named Trou Jacques, a little white church has become a beacon of hope for the residents, and has come to embody the resilient spirit of the Haitians who lean to their faith in hard times.

A year ago, Dr. Lisa Eichelberger, dean of the College of Health, and several other nursing professors took students to Haiti for a study abroad trip focused on public health.

The annual trip had been started by former professor Dr. Jennell Charles, who had first taken nursing students to the country in 2013 to work in the Bill Rice Clinic to do maternal infant medical outreach.

During this trip, 11 nursing and health care administration students conducted a mobile medical outreach clinic in

the village of Trou Jacques with staff from the Bill Rice Clinic, and worked alongside Haitian doctors and nurses in the island's only hospital, the Wesleyan Hospital.

The study abroad trips offered lessons in caring for the most needy, where health care and other basic resources, such as food and water, are often scarce. These trips, however, also revealed a little known Clayton State connection.

This was Eichelberger's first trip to Haiti. After taking a bumpy ride up the mountain in an open-air vehicle, Eichelberger and the group came upon a white church named Saint Philippe and Saint Jacques. It was unbearably hot, and the 200-capacity church was packed with parishioners in the middle of a church service singing hymns.

At the end of the service, the pastor thanked Charles for her work in helping the people on the mountain.

Afterward, the group headed to lunch with the pastor of the church. Eichelberger inquired why the pastor gave thanks to Charles.

He shared with the group that a foundational slab had been built 20 years prior and was left there after a group who promised to build a church could not finish the project.

Charles and her husband, who was the senior pastor of Central Presbyterian Church in downtown Atlanta, had visited Haiti and Trou Jacques several times with their church group.

The couple were actively involved in the work of La Gonâve Haiti Partners, a non-profit organization whose mission is to provide a "ministry of presence," and with the help of more than 25 partner organizations, work together to address the needs of the Haitian people in the areas of medical care, child and maternal nutrition, public health, water, education, agriculture, and economic opportunity.

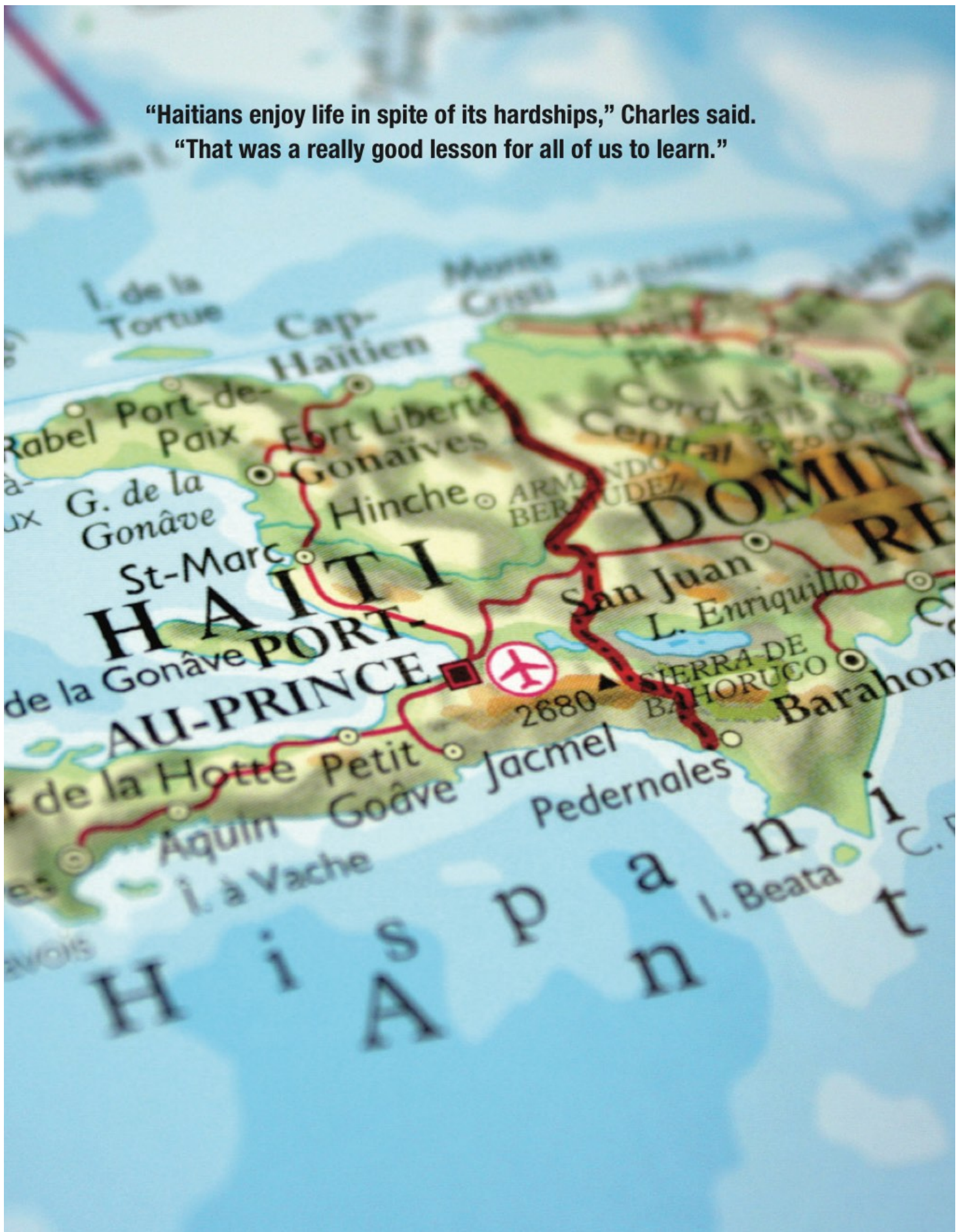
Charles said her church, along with two other Presbyterian churches, and numerous individual donors, worked together to raise funding for the construction of the church.

"Jennell is so humble that she hadn't even told anyone here at the school that she helped raise the money to

"It's a very vibrant church," Charles said. "It's really the heart and center of the village. It gives them great pride in themselves and in their community to have a place of worship."



**“Haitians enjoy life in spite of its hardships,” Charles said.
“That was a really good lesson for all of us to learn.”**





build the church,” said Dr. Charlotte Swint, former interim director of the undergraduate nursing program, who participated in the study abroad trip.

The construction of the church helped fulfill a promise that many in the village felt was lost.

“[Dr. Charles] remarked that the decades-old foundation of the church not only reminded the people of Trou Jacques of a broken promise, but at times they felt that even God had abandoned them,” Eichelberger recalled Charles saying.

The Haitian people on Trou Jacques completed the building of the church last spring. Charles’s husband attended the first worship service and baptism that lasted for four hours.

“It’s a very vibrant church,” Charles said. “It’s really the heart and center of the village. It gives them great pride in themselves and in their community to have a place of worship.”

“Faith is a central part of the community’s identity,” Charles said.

It makes sense when one visits La Gonâve Island.

Unemployment is roughly 90 percent, Charles said.

With incomes so limited, the people struggle to meet basic needs, including health care. The Bill Rice Clinic located in the mountains, and the hospital located in the island’s

city of Anse-a-Galet, are the primary health care facilities. Medical supplies and medications are limited. The rates of malnutrition, high blood pressure, and asthma are high, and maternal deaths from complications are among the highest in the western hemisphere.

Residents in Trou Jacques and other mountain villages must make lengthy and treacherous journeys up and down the mountain on rocky roads to get food, water, medical care and other necessities.

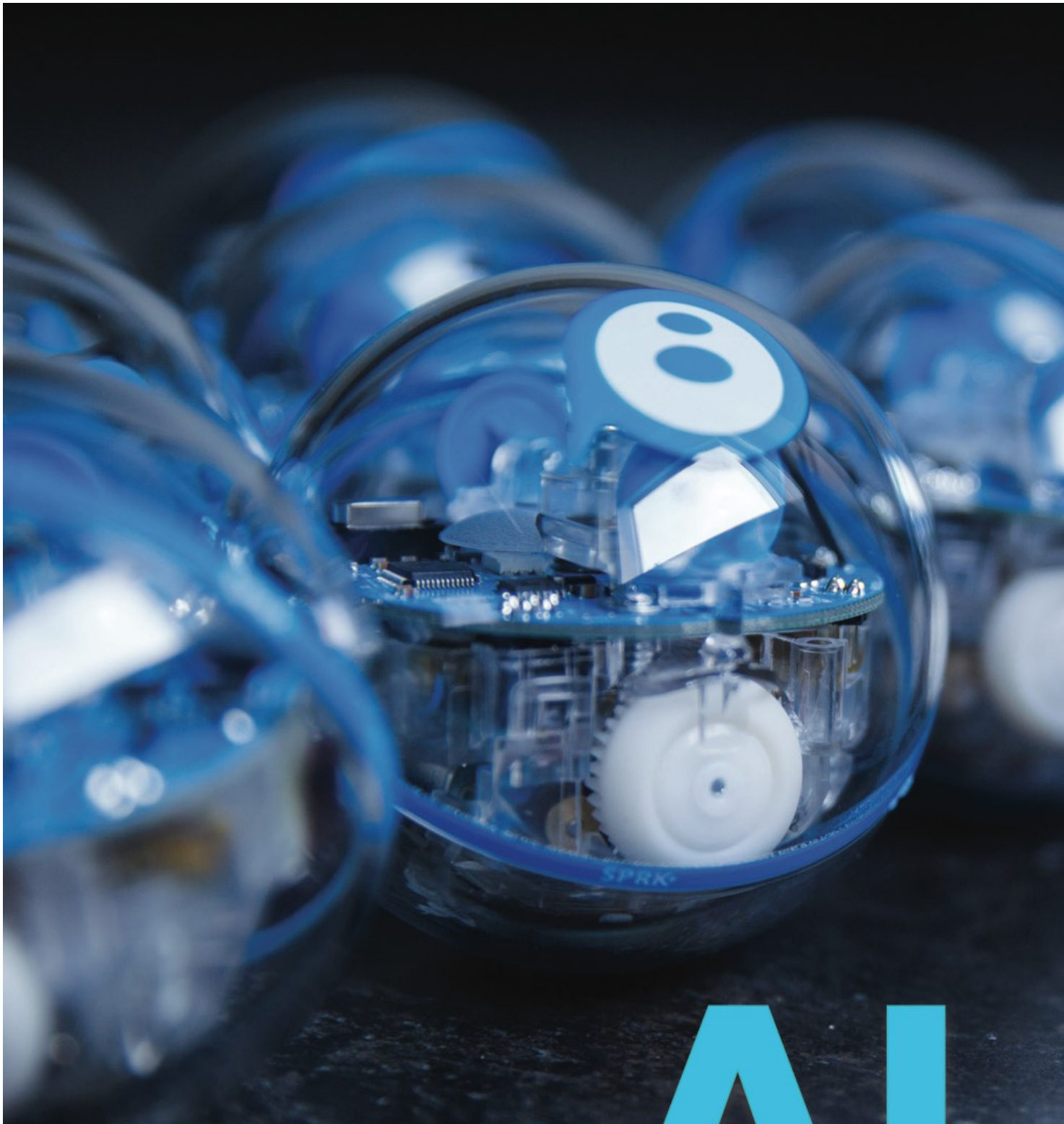
Swint said the students on the study abroad trip recognized how social determinants can affect the health of a community.

“It’s not just about care at the bedside, but it’s the community, the economic opportunities, the food supply, the clean water, the family structures,” Swint said. “All those things are important when you’re considering a person’s health.”

Charles said she hopes to return to La Gonâve in the fall. There are ongoing efforts to expand the maternal mobile clinic program conducted in 11 communities to a full island-wide program.

Regardless of the poverty and challenges for the people of La Gonâve, what has stayed with everyone who visited Haiti, is the joyful attitude of the people in Trou Jacques and its neighboring communities.

“Haitians enjoy life in spite of its hardships,” Charles said. “That was a really good lesson for all of us to learn.”



Clayton State takes on

AI

By Erin Fender

Artificial intelligence (AI) is no longer science fiction or part of a scientist's dream. It is here and now. From Alexa to Siri to the Facebook app, AI has become part of our daily lives.

It was only six years ago, in 2011, that Apple introduced the beta version of Siri with the launch of the iPhone 4s. That same year, IBM's Watson wowed audiences when he competed in *Jeopardy!*. He outperformed his competition to win the \$1 million first place prize. In 2012, Watson attended medical school at Case Western Reserve University.

At the time, many could not have imagined the impact these events would have on the evolution of AI and machine learning.

Today, Watson is assisting physicians with patient diagnosis and identifying best methods of medical treatment. Meanwhile, Siri is connecting with her users, tailoring recommendations and responding to their individual needs.

These question-answering computing systems have revolutionized how information is accessed and how it is used.

World domination

AI and machine learning dominate various aspects of our world, accelerating and improving human life. Large industries such as supply chain, marketing and communication, and healthcare are using AI to innovate their operations.

It is estimated that between 2020 and 2060, supercomputers will surpass human capabilities in most areas, according to *Scientific American*.

Whether it's virtual assistants, smart cars, online customer support through chat bots, or smart home devices that can dim your lights or turn on your oven, artificial intelligence has already begun to seep into the daily lives of consumers.

"Applications of AI have the potential to affect many aspects of our lives; medical diagnostics, identifying terrorists from social media posts, intelligent digital assistants like Siri and Alexa,

driverless cars, predictive analytics—the list goes on," says Dr. Lila Roberts, dean of the College of Information and Mathematical Sciences (CIMS).

To that end, Clayton State is taking steps to prepare students for this rapidly evolving technology and to be at the forefront of AI's emerging influence.

AI education starts at the micro level

Artificial intelligence is a branch of computer science that develops computers to simulate human-like intelligence and behaviors.

For artificial intelligence to operate, it must learn and develop dynamic algorithms, i.e. a sequence for a procedure or a series of actions a computer needs to solve a problem or reach a goal.

Clayton State students begin their study of AI coding using Sphero robotic balls.

"The robots allow the learning process to occur outside the normal setting of a computer monitor and keyboard," says Dr. Angkul Kongmunvattana, department chair for computer science and information technology. "When students can learn the basics of coding using their mobile phones and robotic balls, it shows that the learning process can be both valuable and fun."

As coding skills increase, students are able to solve fundamental problems of robot navigation similar to that of the driverless car. The goal is for students to make connections between their projects and real world applications.

"The pure logical thinking and systematical processes that go into programming are amazing. Going through a stretch of work and coming out with something functional fills you with this sense of accomplishment," says Ugonna Iheanacho, senior computer science major.

Besides Sphero robots, wheeled robots called Lego MindStorms, or the College's Nao (pronounced "now") humanoid robots are all used in programming classes, including upper level courses for research projects in the area of artificial intelligence.

Robots connect with students

Clayton State alum Zee Lee Mannah '17, was one of the first students to jump in and embrace learning the new humanoids a few years ago.

The Nao humanoid is equipped with two cameras as well as sensors that interpret the surrounding environment, like obstacles for walking or abilities to hand someone an object. The cameras also assist in facial and eye recognition.

“As with all new technologies, the initialization and configuration of the humanoids and their software dependencies proved some challenge,” says Mannah.

Mannah learned the complexities of artificial intelligence through the new humanoids, including voice and facial recognition, to create a project to demonstrate the robots' capabilities to younger students at local public schools.

“I wanted to do something simple, fun, and relatable. The vanilla bot had some interesting default interactions, including a tai-chi dance, which most people found enjoyable,” says Mannah. “I thought it would be fun to develop a different dance routine, something more directly catered to younger audiences. I choreographed a dance to Migos' song Look At My Dab and had it trigger on the phrase, 'Dab on 'em.' It was a hit at every event and the kids couldn't get enough. I heard 'make him dance again' over and over.”

Introducing robotics to younger audiences fosters an interest in STEM fields, which creates a pipeline for computer science to help meet the growing demand in programming skills needed among these career fields.

Coding skills are in high demand

Coding skills needed for AI are in high demand nationally. According to *Fast Company*, programming jobs are growing at a faster rate than market average, which include IT, data analysts, artists and designers, engineers, and scientists.

Programming skills are no longer just for those entering into IT positions.



“AI is one area where the substance is truly worthy of the hype.”

— Ken Simpson, enterprise product manager at The Coca-Cola Company.

To prepare students for this paradigm shift in the economy, Clayton State has developed a course that is open to all majors. New for the 2017-2018 academic year is the Computational Thinking and Coding course, which is a gentle introduction to computer programming that connects algorithmic thinking to concepts such as daily life routines.

“For example, we can start with a cooking recipe for making an omelet. Each step and its details in the recipe are the algorithm for making the omelet. The level of success by another person when attempting to execute your recipe depends on the level of details given in the recipe,” says Kongmunvattana. “This is also true in the computing world where good algorithms lead to the codes that function and produce correct outcomes. Using the robot as a medium for learning to code also provides students with intuitive feedback.”





Future of AI is worthy of hype

The idea of computer and digital technology shifting how humans interact with machines, and vice versa, has found friends and foes on both sides of the debate.

At a meeting of the National Governors Association in July, Elon Musk, CEO of Tesla, argued that AI poses a great risk to modern civilization without some government oversight of the technology.

"People should be really concerned about it," Musk said at the meeting. "AI's a rare case where we need to be proactive in regulation, instead of reactive. Because by the time we are reactive with AI regulation, it's too late,"

Musk went on to say, "AI is a fundamental risk to the existence of human civilization, in a way that car accidents, airplane crashes, faulty drugs, or bad food were not."

Yet, for all the concerns about potential mass job losses in the manufacturing sector, or the worry that robots could turn on humans to do harm, researchers say AI has the ability to make vast improvements to human life to benefit everyone.

Pedro Domingos, professor of computer science at the University of Washington in Seattle, said in a 2015 *National Geographic* article: "Machines can attend to vastly more



“Using the robot as a medium for learning to code also provides students with intuitive feedback.”

– Dr. Angkul Kongmunvattana, department chair for computer science and information technology.

information and more complex processes than human beings...In the short term, machine learning, like other technologies, will have winners and losers. In the long term, we will weed out the bad things and mainly have good consequences.”

As industry titans like Tesla, Amazon and Coca-Cola embrace artificial intelligence to shift how people conduct daily life, the global economy will continue to see tech startups populate and the need for developers rise.

“AI is one area where the substance is truly worthy of the hype. Given the scale at which Coca-Cola operates, efficiencies generated from AI have the potential to make significant impact,” says Ken Simpson, Product Manager, Artificial Intelligence and Cognitive Automation at The Coca-Cola Company and member of the CIMS advisory board. “If you want a programming skillset that can get you out of your desk chair and into a dynamic environment, robotics is the area for you.”

As artificial intelligence expands at an exponential rate and reaches into the deepest corners of our daily lives, the possibilities for the future are endless.

Additional contribution by Maritza E. Ferreira and Kelly Petty



In 2016, humans produced as much data as in the entire history of humankind through 2015.



Artificial intelligence has the potential to double the GDP growth rate of the U.S. by 2035.



U.S. employers will spend more than \$650 million on annual salaries for 10,000 jobs in AI in 2017.



3-D Printers could cut the cost of home-building using high-density resins, from today’s estimate of \$200,000 down to \$50,000 in the future.



Technology giant IBM is investing \$1 billion in its supercomputer “Watson,” which combines AI and sophisticated analytical software for optimal performance as a “question answering” machine.

Data compiled from Thomson Reuters, Accenture, Fortune and Scientific American.

Employers, students find booming market as sports and entertainment heat up Atlanta

By Kelly Petty

In May, Georgia's Department of Tourism posted a record-breaking \$61.1 billion in business sales in 2016 for tourism in the state, according to U.S. Travel Association and Tourism Economics.

"Georgia's tourism industry impact has shattered records once again. Not only do we welcome millions of visitors each year, but tourism supports employment across multiple industry sectors, employing an estimated 450,000 Georgians statewide," said Gov. Nathan Deal.

A big factor of the Peach state's tourism success is sports and entertainment. With recognizable sports franchises including the football, baseball, basketball and the newly minted soccer club, Atlanta United, the city of Atlanta has become a metropolitan hotspot for athletics events.

The development of the Mercedes-Benz stadium and the kickoff of the Atlanta Braves season at the newly-constructed SunTrust Park stadium in 2017 has signaled that the job market in Atlanta looks promising.

Cobb County officials expect major dividends from SunTrust Park that could spur job creation at public schools. Former County Chairman Tim Lee said at the stadium's topping off ceremony in 2016 that more than \$120 million in new revenues would be generated over the next decade from the public-private partnership between the Atlanta Braves and the county.

That money would cover the starting salaries for more than 290 teachers in the Cobb County School District.

"This is the greatest economic development in Cobb County in more than half a century," Lee said.

Neighborhoods around SunTrust Park, Mercedes-Benz Stadium and even Phillips Arena are already becoming hubs for retail, office and residential expansion as mixed-used developments spring up nearby.

Beyond commercial development, there's opportunity for job seekers to find careers directly in sports and entertainment.



The construction of Mercedes-Benz stadium means growing job opportunities for Clayton State graduates. (Right side): Clayton State alumna Krystle Carter meets with Clayton State MBA students on Falcon's Draft Day; Clayton State senior Jessica Charman interning at an Atlanta United game.

Clayton State University students and alums have already begun to make an imprint in the rapidly growing industry.

Jessica Charman, a senior communications major, landed an internship with sports marketing agency SCORE Atlanta this spring to do marketing and editorial writing for Atlanta United, as well as serve as a commentator for high school soccer games.

"I've learned that you have to be versatile in sports media. There are so many sports—baseball, softball, wrestling," Charman says. "I always imagined I'd be in sports, but I always thought I'd be in soccer. But it's about opening your brand to other sports."

Employers in the sports and entertainment field are seeking individuals who can bring new perspectives and can tap into an organization's target audience.

Krystle Carter '15, human resource specialist with Arthur M. Blank (AMB) Sports + Entertainment, says the company's internship program employs a variety of college students of all ages that bring their past experiences to the program to benefit the organization.

"I definitely think sports and entertainment in Atlanta is bright," Charman says. "This is the time to really be involved in sports."

"We have interns in various aspects of our organization, whether it be Atlanta United or the Atlanta Falcons," Carter says. "They're very eager to show what they learn and what they can do."

Carter says interns get a chance to work alongside company executives, often sitting in on staff meetings.

"It's almost like a job shadowing experience," Carter adds.

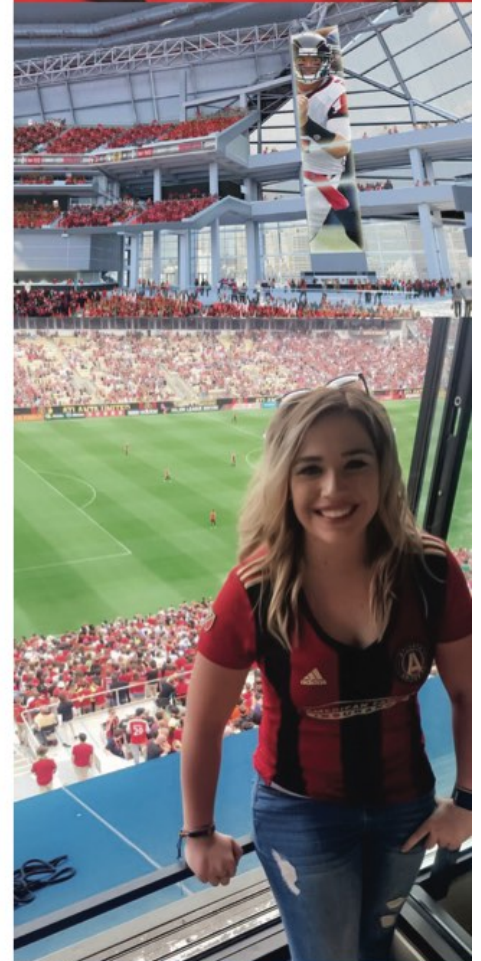
Those internships can also lead to job opportunities. Carter got an internship with AMB Group after doing internship stints in Henry County government and at a nonprofit. She eventually earned a job in the human resource department for the sports organization.

While a lot of candidates come across Carter's desk professing a love of sports, she says they must understand what they want to do in the industry.

"Passion is one of our internal core values," Carter says. "It's about honing it in and finding out what they really want to do."

As the Atlanta Braves continue to have a strong season at the new SunTrust Park in Cobb County, and the Atlanta Falcons prepare for the 2019 Superbowl, the capital city is poised to create more jobs and add greater investment to the cityscape.

"I definitely think sports and entertainment in Atlanta is bright," Charman says. "This is the time to really be involved in sports."



Spirited Voices:

Spivey Hall Children's Tour Choir brings music to the world

By Erin Fender

More than 50 voices harmonize, lifting their voices as one beautiful sound in concert halls and performance venues across the globe. From China to Scotland to Canada and the U.S., Spivey Hall's Children's Choir connects with music lovers through song.

The Tour Choir is the select ensemble of the Spivey Hall Children's Choir. Each year, the students undergo a rigorous rehearsal and performance schedule that culminates in a national, international or give-back tour in the summer.

As ambassadors for the state of Georgia and Spivey Hall, the choir packs its bags and embarks on an adventure that is as much about the cultural experience as it is about the music.

For many of the students who participate, performing in front of foreign audiences offers a chance for them to reach people from different backgrounds and create an emotional connection that transcends race, ethnicity and culture.

"Spain was probably my favorite international tour because of the emotional connection made with our audiences," says Madelyn Montgomery. "It really proved to me that music speaks beyond language barriers. Every single one of us poured our hearts into our performances and it paid off to see the tears, joy, and thankfulness of our audience."

Beyond the actual performance, international trips mean choir members can spend time sightseeing and learning about the country they are visiting. Whether it's going to the Great Wall of China or a cathedral in Europe, these trips offer memories that last long after the students return home.

"I'll never forget what it was like to experience a different culture and share our music with people across the world," says Hannah Pulliam.



The experience of being in Spivey Hall's Tour Choir is not limited to transatlantic voyages. The choir also sings in venues across the U.S., which offers students a chance to spread beautiful music throughout the country.

This past summer, the Tour Choir experienced a multi-day tour in San Diego, CA. The choir sang The Star Spangled Banner to military service members stationed on the USS Midway, which Cardell Smart, felt was the highlight of his trip.

"The men and women who have served on the USS Midway are one of the reasons we can call America 'the land of the free and the home of the brave,'" Smart says. "While we sang, I felt an overwhelming sense of pride as an American."

The summer of 2016, the Tour Choir was invited to perform as a solo ensemble for a ticketed concert at Carnegie Hall. The concert also featured a high school choir from New York as well as a select honor choir.

"We all had given that performance 100 percent of our effort, and it was an amazing feeling to be able to unite the thousands of people in the hall with a universal love language: music," says Elise Wendelburg.

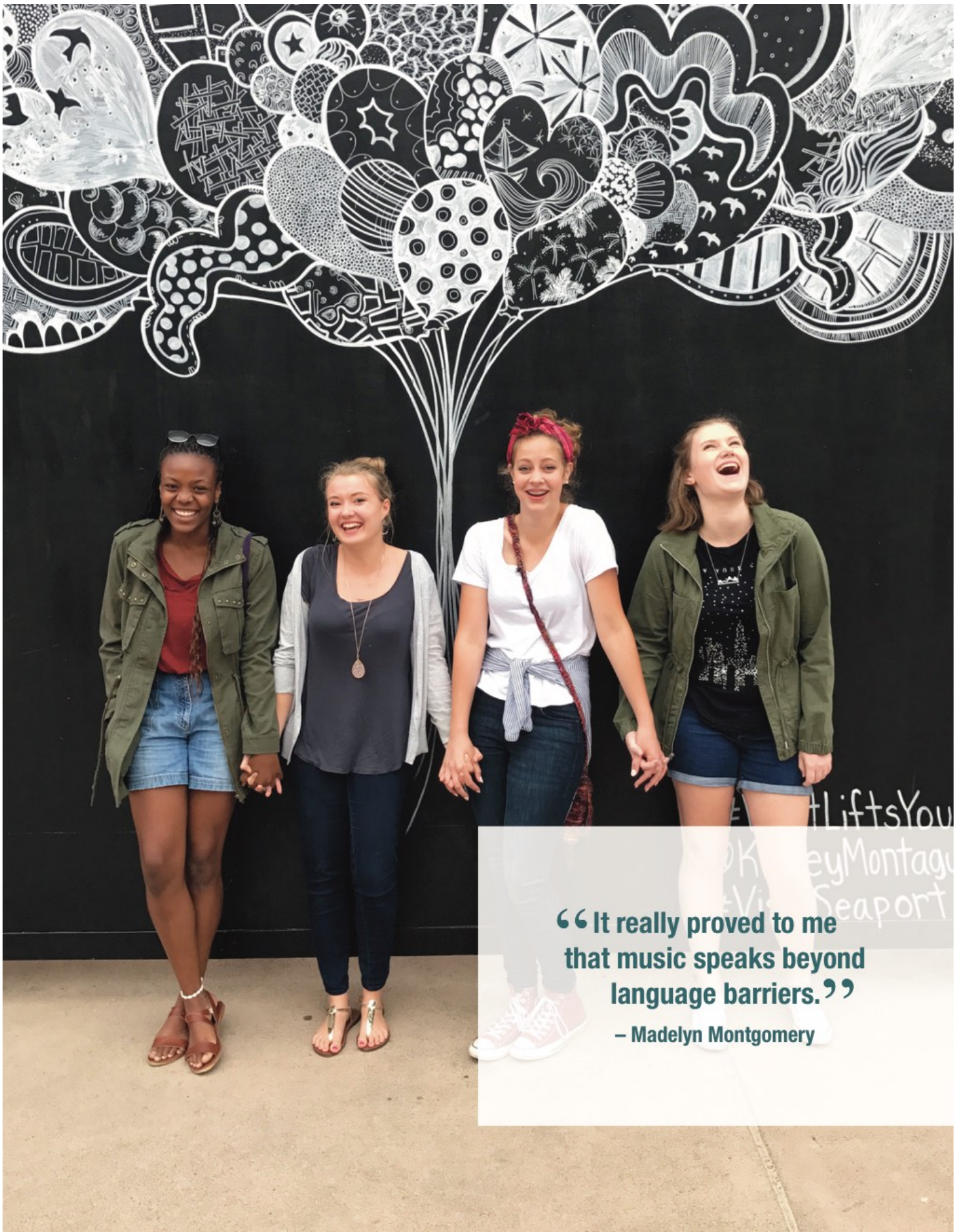
Even more rewarding for the Tour Choir is the ability to use the gift of music and song to entertain and connect with an older generation. Choir members overwhelmingly say the Give Back Tour is their most cherished experience.

During Give Back Tour, the Choir spends time in senior living communities bringing the joy of music to those no longer able to attend concerts. The choir spends time learning music from the audience's generation, creating a repertoire of pieces that seniors may sing along to, with choir members occasionally joining in to sing right next to them.

"The thing that makes Spivey Children's Choir tours so great isn't the places we go or the things we see. It's the people we get to experience it with," Wendelburg says.



The Spivey Hall Children's Tour Choir performing at Carnegie Hall in New York City.



“It really proved to me
that music speaks beyond
language barriers.”

– Madelyn Montgomery

"Performing for those beautiful people in the senior centers was both humbling and life changing as we 'gave back' music as a gift," Pulliam says.

The Give Back Tour not only is a memorable moment for the seniors, but also for the family, Shaw says. At a past performance, Shaw remembers, a family expressed their gratitude and said their parent lit up during the concert singing every word, marking it the first time in years they had said a word.

"The joy on the seniors' faces as we walk into the audience and start singing songs from their generation is indescribable," says Suzanne Rice. "There was never a dry eye in the house as we clasped hands with each other and the senior members around us."

For the students who participate in the Tour Choir, it's not about the extraordinary trips and the ability to perform for people all over the world. It's about sharing remarkable moments with a tight-knit group of people.

"The thing that makes Spivey Children's Choir tours so great isn't the places we go or the things we see. It's the people we get to experience it with," Wendelburg says.

The Tour Choir is looking forward to an international tour in Summer 2018 that will include a performance in the Vatican. For more information on the Spivey Hall Children's Choir and how you can be part of the choir or support, please visit: www.clayton.edu/spiveyhall/childrens-choir-program.





Clayton State Athletics seeks to harness greatness by reconnecting with athletic alumni

By Joshua Darling

A major part of the college experience for student-athletes is the connections that are made during one of the most formative and important times in their lives. Not only do they meet people from different parts of the country, but also around the world, who come to college seeking a great education and a chance to display their athletic prowess.

Beyond a “typical” college experience, student-athletes who have gotten up for those 6 a.m. practices, put in sweat equity in games and fought alongside their teammates to be champions have formed bonds that tend to be stronger than most.

That said, even those connections can fray and even break if not maintained over time, especially as individuals begin their adult lives, advance their careers and have families of their own.

In the spirit of “Once a Laker, Always a Laker,” Clayton State Athletics is taking steps to ensure that those bonds that exist remain strong, as well as help reconnect those that may have lapsed.

To that end, the Department has launched the Laker Alumni Student-Athlete Questionnaire, designed to bring together not just former teammates but Lakers of all generations.



“Out of the tragedy that precipitated that event, individuals who hadn’t been together in years found a way to honor their fallen teammate.”

Available online at www.ClaytonStateSports.com, the questionnaire provides information on an individual's time at Clayton State, be it as a student-athlete, coach or manager, basic contact info and the opportunity to share what they and their families have been doing since completing their studies.

In an effort to improve those connections, and even create new ones, individuals are given the opportunity to decide what information they would like to be made available to former student-athletes from just their sport, their class or all former student-athletes.

Why is it important to maintain these connections? People move on and start new chapters in their life, and, intentionally or not, leave behind the relationships they developed in the past.

A recent example of this can be found in the story of Sherrod Flono and his teammates.

A standout men's basketball player from 1995-99, Flono served as his team's enforcer, always having his teammates backs, and was well respected for it. During his four years, he played with 36 different individuals but not all were in touch with him after their playing careers came to a close.

On March 21, 2017, Flono passed away unexpectedly due to an ongoing illness. Led by his best friend and former teammate John Childs, a number of former teammates, managers and staff members were able to reunite for his memorial a few short weeks later.

Out of the tragedy that precipitated that event, individuals who hadn't been together in years found a way to honor their fallen teammate. Through reconnecting, they started the Sherrod Flono Coding Grant for Kids in his memory and created something that will benefit underserved youth in an area Flono was passionate about.

Clayton State Athletics would like to make sure that other great things can come about without an event such as this transpiring.

The goal is to use the information shared by athletic alumni to begin building a database of former Lakers that can eventually grow into an online, password protected resource on www.ClaytonStateSports.com and also help to reconnect individuals with Laker Athletics and the campus as a whole.

The Laker Alumni Student-Athlete Questionnaire can be found under the Laker Traditions tab on the official online home of Clayton State Athletics or by going to www.ClaytonStateSports.com/LakerAlumniQuestionnaire.



The 1995 - 96 men's basketball team. Sherrod Flono wears number 42.

CAMPUS **UPDATES**

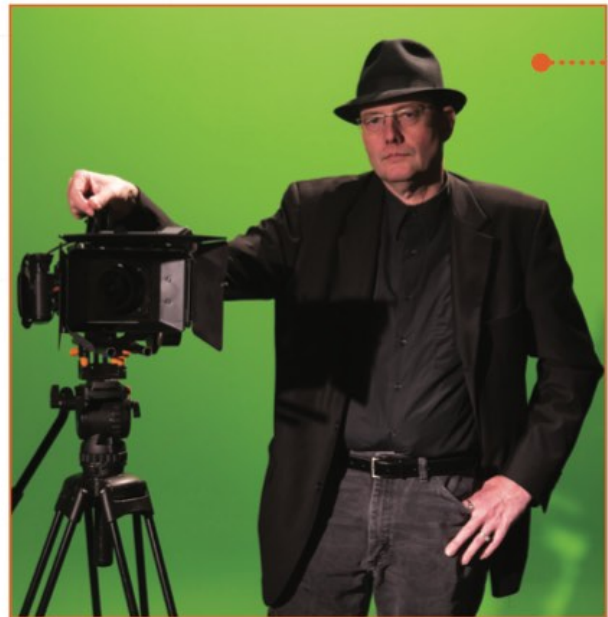
Clayton State announces new Dean of College of Business

Dr. Jacob Chacko became Dean of the College of Business, assuming his leadership role Aug. 1. Dr. Chacko first came to Clayton State in 1999 as an associate dean and was charged with leading the college through the AACSB accreditation process. His effective leadership in accomplishing this goal, and others, led to his appointment as dean in 2008.



Clayton State hires new Film and Media Center Director, launches certificate program

The University's Film and Digital Media Center announced the hiring of a new director and the launch a Film and Digital Media Certificate program for fall 2017. Glynn Beard will lead efforts to revamp the Center's film and digital media programming to be relevant for industry demands. The new program curriculum will allow students to study in one or more concentrations of writing, production and/or post-production.



Spivey Hall's "Clara" piano featured on new classical album

Spivey Hall's Steinway & Sons concert grand piano, "Clara," made its international debut through the recent commercially released album Impromptu. Israeli-born pianist Shai Wosner recorded a mix of classical pieces from Dvorak, Chopin, Beethoven and Gershwin during recording sessions at Spivey Hall in May 2016.



#Give4Dreams 24-hour giving tops goal with more than \$140,000 in donations

The University exceeded its goal during #Give4Dreams, the 24-hour day of giving that lasted from March 1-2, totaling \$143,641 in donations. Eleven projects including student travel, academic research, national competitions and scholarships earned generous support from 393 donors.

Clayton State named one of 30 most beautiful colleges in Georgia

Clayton State was ranked no. 18 in the list of top 30 Most Beautiful College Campuses in Georgia compiled by LendEDU, an online marketplace for student loans and student loan refinance. The University was noted for retaining a park-like feel and being a “tranquil campus away from the urban bustle.”



2017 University Professorship honorees share academic wisdom

Four professors were honored with the University Professorship Distinction on May 2nd during the annual Service Awards Ceremony. Established in 2014, the award recognizes the University’s most extraordinary professors for their continuous hard work and devotion towards the education and overall success of their students. The honorees will carry the title of University Professors for two years. The winners are Prof. Michiko Otaki, Dr. Susan Duley, Dr. Kelli Nipper and Dr. Margaret Thompson.

Clayton State announced 2017 Presidential Scholars



Clayton State University proudly announced its 2017 Presidential Scholars. These students are: Kayla Simone Bell, Chase Orion Joseph Dunbar, Gennisey Jones, Bless Loadholt, Meghan Michele Rieger and Paulina Yi Vang. All scholars will receive an annual tuition grant of \$3,000, University housing for four years and a textbook stipend.

Clayton State earns high ratings for affordable online business programs

Clayton State was named one of the most affordable colleges for online business degrees. The University was ranked no. 16 of the 2017 Most Affordable Online Colleges for Business by education publisher, SR Education Group. Additionally, Clayton State’s management degree was ranked #6 nationally.

Students reflect on “new dream” during MLK Commemorative celebration

The life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was remembered during Clayton State’s second annual MLK Commemorative celebration. Students, faculty and staff gathered in the Student Activities Center to hear spoken word and song in honor of the Civil Rights pioneer.



CAMPUS **UPDATES**

Clayton State faculty and staff recognized for their commitment to “Making Things Better”



On February 15, Clayton State University honored those who make a difference on campus and in the community. The annual President’s “Making Things Better” Awards recognized six winners from faculty, staff and campus departments who play an integral in the University’s success. The winners were Dr. Antoinette Miller, Dr. Tatiana Krivosheev, Sandra Starr, Dolores Cox, the Center for Instructional Development and the Office of Career Services.

Clayton State ranks no. 4 for affordable online English degree

Clayton State University was ranked no. 4 for offering an economical option for students seeking an online Bachelor of Arts in English degree. The University was listed among the 2017 Most Affordable Online Colleges for English by publisher SR Education Group.

Clayton State’s Master’s in Family Nurse Practitioner degree ranked no. 7 for affordable online MSN programs

Clayton State University’s Master of Science in Family Nurse Practitioner degree program was ranked among the top 10 most affordable online MSN-NP programs, according to NursePractitionerSchools.com. Clayton State’s MSN-FNP program is 100 percent online and can be completed in two academic years or four semesters of full-time study.

Clayton State makes AJC’s 2017 Top Workplace list for sixth consecutive year



Clayton State was recognized for being one of the best places to work in Atlanta. The University earned a spot on the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution’s* 2017 Top Workplaces list for the sixth year in a row. The University was recognized along with 150 other companies at a ceremony in the Georgia Aquarium on March 22.

Ceremony honored military service members for their academic achievements

The Veterans Resource Center held its first-ever veteran’s graduation ceremony on April 17 to commemorate the academic achievements of military students. More than a dozen student veterans and service members from nearly every branch of the Armed Services received a certificate commemorating their academic merit and military service.



Clayton State named one of the most affordable colleges for incoming freshmen with financial need

Clayton State was recognized for being an affordable college option for incoming freshman who demonstrate a financial need. The University was ranked no. 178 in the Student Loan Report's Most Affordable Colleges for Incoming Freshmen with Financial Need.

MBA in Human Resource Leadership earns Top 10 ranking for best HR MBA program

Clayton State University's MBA program was listed as one of the top 10 master's programs with an emphasis on human resources at the 2017 Leadership Excellence and Development (LEAD) Awards. The University ranked no. 4 for its MBA in Human Resource Leadership program.

Clayton State recognized for commitment to healthy campus



Clayton State University was recognized among 60 other colleges and universities for its participation in the EIM on Campus program sponsored by the Exercise is Medicine® organization. The awards were given out in May as part of the 2017 Exercise is Medicine® World Congress, held in conjunction with the American College of Sports Medicine's Annual Meeting.

Clayton State ranked no. 12 for the best college for adult education

The University was ranked no. 12 in Great Value College's 2017-18 ranking of "50 Best Colleges for Adult Education." Colleges and universities in the list were awarded a ranking based on the number of awards and recognition the campus has received; notable nontraditional student programs and services; online and graduate degree options; the student-faculty ratio; student retention rates and affordability.

Clayton State celebrates tree preservation with 2016 Tree Campus USA recognition and annual Arbor Day ceremony



Faculty and staff celebrated the beauty of Clayton State's natural landscape at the annual Arbor Day celebration on April 27. The event was sponsored by the Clayton State University Tree Committee, which had been recognized in February with the 2016 Tree Campus USA designation for its commitment to effective urban forest management.

Clayton State School of Nursing ranked no. 1 for the NCLEX-RN Exam program

Clayton State University's Bachelor of Science in Nursing program was ranked no. 1 in examination scores administered from October 2016 to March 2017. This recognition comes as a result of 100 percent of the University's nursing graduates passing the NCLEX-RN exam upon taking it for the first time.

CAMPUSUPDATES

Clayton State alum earns University System of Georgia's Academic Recognition Day honor

Aaron Panlilio '16, represented Clayton State at the Board of Regents meeting on March 15 for Academic Recognition Day. He graduated Magna Cum Laude in the fall of 2016 with a Bachelor's of Science in Information Technology and currently works in IT for a mid-sized company.

Commitment to excellence recognized at Alice J. Smith Awards



Faculty and staff were recognized for their commitment to academic excellence and service with the Alice J. Smith Awards during the 2017 Annual Service Awards on May 2. The winners were Dr. Craig Hill, Professor of Supply Chain Management of the College of and the Charles S. Conklin Endowed Chair, and Billy Evans, system support specialist in the Office of Financial Aid.

Local public school students get a taste of American folk music through Spivey Hall partnership



Husband-and-wife duo Mark and Maggie O'Connor of the O'Connor Band held a small workshop on March 16 for elementary and middle school students at Dunwoody Elementary School. The couple offer some lessons on strings and playing a few selections from Mark's practice books.

Academic achievement highlighted at spring commencement

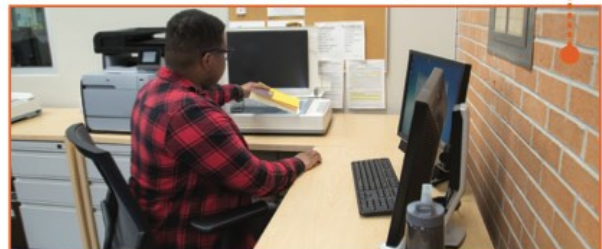


Hundreds of students took the first step in their journey toward beginning their lives and careers as Clayton State University celebrated spring commencement on Saturday, May 6. Board of Regents member Sachin Shailendra and Roosevelt Council, Jr., Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport General Manager, served as commencement speakers.

President Hynes honored for being a pillar in Clayton County

Dr. Tim Hynes was honored as an influential educational leader in the community. Hynes was one of five individuals to receive the Pillars of Clayton County at the Pillars Luncheon on March 21. The awards were created by the Good Shepherd Clinic, a nonprofit organization that offers primary medical care to low-income residents in Clayton County.

University Archives begins digitizing collection for online



The University Archives department is undergoing a massive project to digitize paper archives within its collection. Comprised of nearly 500,000 photographs, in addition to many papers, publications, object artifacts and old equipment dating back to 1965, the collection is smaller and more recent compared to other universities, but it provides a broad picture of Clayton State's early days up to the present.

What's good, what's good, what's good world!

That's how Delilah Fils-Aine, a.k.a Queen Delilah, welcomes her listeners each time they tune in to Hip Hop and Politics on Clayton State Internet Radio.

The Brooklyn-born, Miami-bred 30-year-old possesses an infectious personality and no-nonsense attitude that embodies her confident spirit.

But while Fils-Aine's life is filled with promise and the determination to become a positive force in her community, the journey to who she is today was fraught with hardship.

It all came to head when the seven-year abusive relationship with her ex began to affect her children.

"It was young love," she says through tears. "As a young woman, I felt I could forgive him...that's what love is."

**"I had to rebuild myself," Fils-Aine says.
"I had to build myself up because I had been broken down for so long."**

Her husband was physically abusive and, at one time, left her with a concussion while she was pregnant. Separated from her family and traumatized from the situation, her breaking point came when her husband hit her in front of their son and daughter.

"I remember when my son would see me get hit. I could tell he was hurting for me and that he was scared too," she says. "I knew it was bad when my son would hit my daughter. They were imitating what they saw."

After making her escape out of the relationship and staying with her mother, Fils-Aine says she has a newfound freedom she never experienced before. She also created a list of traits she wanted to have, such as being a good mother, and began to develop good habits to inspire her children.

"I had to rebuild myself," Fils-Aine says. "I had to build myself up because I had been broken down for so long."

Part of her new start was going to school. Fils-Aine was working at the Wellstar-Kennestone hospital neuro-ICU unit about three years ago. She often saw death in her job, and at the same time, her father passed away.

His death further pushed her to make school a priority.

"I said, 'I'm going to make sure that this time I go to college is going to be like no other time. I'm going to do everything I've been wanting to do,'" she recalls.

Clayton State University was a fitting place, Fils-Aine says, because of the beauty of the campus and the fact that she could be an active student in the community where she lives.

Now a sophomore, Fils-Aine is pursuing a bachelor's degree in political science.

She has already taken on leadership roles on campus, including promoting women's issues and literacy through the Organizing Women for Lifelong Success (OWLS) organization and Lochs and Literature Book Club.

Fils-Aine's future looks bright. Motivated by stories of injustice and police brutality that heavily affect minorities, she hopes to work in congress to make a significant impact on these issues.

"Be great. In anything and everything I do, just be great," Fils-Aine says.



DR. BRIAN AMSDEN

FacultyProfile

By Ashley Kekula



For Dr. Brian Amsden, a communications and media studies professor, his side hobby has become a successful academic course that teaches students to use the power of their voice to share their thoughts through online communities.

Three years ago, Amsden developed his own podcast, "Rhetorical Questions," that focuses on the question of "Why?"

"Why is this a thing?" Why are we even talking about this?" and "Why does this matter?" are the central questions that Amsden says he likes to base his topics on for each episode.

Guests range from subject experts to everyday citizens who come together to discuss everything from contemporary culture to current events.

"I always want the question to be something basic," Amsden says. "Something that you don't have to think too much about so if it's an interesting and relatable question, people will listen."

Amsden started his podcast career after taking a class on the medium and decided to create something fun he could share. Inspired by National Public Radio broadcast programming, he modeled his podcast after the media outlet's current-events style show format.

Some of Amsden's recent topics for "Rhetorical Questions" have explored the Atlanta Woman's March to Beyoncé's controversy over her song choice at the 2016 Super Bowl promoting a sense of black power.

"I like it because it's a way of combining the conceptual and artistic side of thinking...laying out a story and turning a lecture into a work of art," Amsden explains.

Amsden adds that the podcast form is a unique division from other media formats because you are grabbing the listener's attention by what they hear and not what they see. "They have to be able to follow you," he says.

Amsden recently took his passion into a full-fledged Audio Podcasting class at Clayton State. He launched the first semester of the class in the spring of 2017.

The course provides a comprehensive overview of how to properly construct podcasts. Students conceptualize a theme, conduct interviews and edit the audio in Adobe Audition to complete their personalized podcast episodes.

While the final podcast is an assignment, many students have already begun to prepare to publish their podcast for listeners.

"I really do hope that students take this opportunity outside of the classroom and maybe continue it on their own. It's a great way to showcase your work," Amsden says.

With the success of "Rhetorical Questions" and the Audio Podcasting class, Amsden has been able to turn a hobby into an opportunity to provide the skills students need to engage in new media forms.

But he makes it clear, that to have a successful podcast requires dedication. In fact, he finds that his own podcast has gotten better since the first episode.

"I definitely learned a lot by perfecting my own [podcast]. It takes time," Amsden says.



By Brionna Pinkney

Dressed in a bright navy blue uniform with gold badges, polished leather boots and a big smile, Clayton State police officer Lt. Gayron Taylor is unmistakable.

But he'll be the first to tell you that his job is not as glamorous as it may seem.

"A lot of the time, people think the uniform looks cool and we get to drive a police car," he says, "but it's a strange feeling when everyone is running away from danger and you're running to it."

Taylor has served as part of the University's Public Safety division for the past 14 years and risks his life every day to ensure the protection of those on campus.

"It's difficult, but rewarding as well," he says.

"A lot of the time, people think the uniform looks cool and we get to drive a police car," he says, "but it's a strange feeling when everyone is running away from the danger and you're running to it."

Taylor did not always want to be a police officer. In fact, as a young man growing up in Orlando, Florida, he didn't have the best interactions with law enforcement.

"My exchanges with police weren't that positive," he says. "They weren't very positive at all."

After being falsely accused of a crime, a run-in with a particular officer forever changed Taylor's outlook on the profession.

"He was willing to go the extra mile to prove I didn't do it. He was very fair, very consistent, not judgmental," Taylor recalls. "It was very refreshing to see someone different from the others. From that, I was inspired to take the public safety route."

Before working at Clayton State, Taylor served as a corrections officer. He was in the process of transferring, when a colleague recommended the University's Police Department.

"He said, 'give it a year and if you don't like it, you can always leave, but I guarantee you'll like it,'" Taylor recalls. "So I came and have been here ever since."

Taylor acknowledges that there is a growing lack of trust between officers and civilians, but he tries to change that notion by showing fairness and professionalism.

"Police officers are held to a higher standard," he says. "They should be fair when they pull you over—listen and be professional. They are there to help and assist you not to judge you."

Since he arrived in 2003, Taylor says the most fulfilling aspect of his job is to witness Clayton State students grow, graduate and step into their careers.

"You get to know the students," he says. "You see them later on, once they've graduated and you think maybe you did have some type of influence on what they are doing. You kept them safe."

After more than a decade on the University's police force, Taylor remains passionate about serving and protecting others. For him, it is a lifelong calling that he proudly accepts.

"I'm not quitting," he says, "Once I retire, I'm not even sure I'll quit then. I may work part-time."



Jack Hancock

named Chairman of the Board of Trustees for the Clayton State University Foundation

By Chase Moore

Jack Hancock, a member of the Clayton State University Foundation Board of Trustees since 2008, was selected to serve as Chairman of the Board. He began his term on July 1, 2017.

Over the course of his service, Hancock has watched the University grow from an institution focused on providing quality educational opportunities for the surrounding communities, to emerging as an educational and economic catalyst for the South Metro Atlanta Region.

Hancock has lived in Clayton County for most of his life. He has served in leadership roles in many organizations in the areas, including two terms as Chairman of the Board of the Clayton County Chamber of Commerce.

With over 40 years of legal experience, much of it as outside counsel for Clayton County, Hancock brings to his new role greater insight into the many opportunities ahead of Clayton State and the region.

In the time that Hancock has been involved with the Board of Trustees, fundraising has experienced tremendous growth, much of which has taken place during Hancock's time as the Chair of the Development Committee, which is dedicated to fundraising efforts.

In fact, contributions to the Foundation have doubled, Hancock notes, thanks to the Board and the work of the division of University Advancement under the leadership of Vice-President Kate Troelstra.

"You can witness the benefits of your efforts when a scholarship assists the University in attracting a student with exceptional skills to the campus, permits a student to complete their studies when they might not have been able to do so because of financial considerations or rewards deserving faculty members for their efforts in shaping young minds," Hancock says.

Hancock also takes over at a time when the University has just launched its first comprehensive campaign, Greater In Mind, an effort to provide more than \$12 million in additional support for our students.

"Clayton State's first comprehensive Campaign marks an important step for the Foundation in its primary goal of supporting the efforts of the University," Hancock states. "This is our opportunity to make a difference in the educational opportunities of men and women for a lifetime. In addition, it will establish the financial foundation to ensure that this institution will continue to provide a quality education that is relevant to the times in which we live, and well into the future."

Building on the strength of leadership from outgoing Chair Randy Hayes, as well as Strategic Plan 2022, Hancock is excited about Clayton State University's future.

"All of the building blocks have been carefully put in place to propel this University into a leadership role in the region and beyond," Hancock says. "President Hynes is a tireless advocate for both the University and the region. These are challenging times and it is exciting to have the opportunity to play a role in expanding the minds of the students as well as impacting the world in which they live and work."



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PLANNED GIVING: Building a legacy through philanthropy

By Chase Moore

"The greatest use of a life is to spend it on something that will outlast it." - William James

What a powerful idea. The same sentiment is applicable to philanthropy in examining what the impact of a gift is long after a donation was made.

Some possess the capacity to make sizable gifts during their lifetime, but for others, the opportunity to leave a legacy may not come until they begin estate planning.

Therein lies the power of planned giving.

By leaving Clayton State University in your will or other estate plans, you are guaranteeing that Clayton State University has the resources to pursue its mission while achieving your philanthropic goals into the future.

One recent retiree and his partner established a lasting legacy by creating the Richard Pearce-Moses & Frank Loulan Endowed Scholarship. Their scholarship will provide perpetual support to students seeking a degree in Archival Studies, a program that Richard loved as a faculty member.

Richard and Frank also have a deep appreciation for Spivey Hall and have made additional provisions via estate planning. Other donors have chosen to leave real estate, and yet others have named Clayton State University as the beneficiary of insurance policies.

There are any number of ways to leave an enduring legacy or honor a loved one through a planned gift. Endowing a scholarship with \$25,000 or more will ensure that the donor has impact into perpetuity. A large estate gift might be used to name a center for a donor or family.

Of course, gifts of this nature are sensitive and they can be made anonymously. But by informing the University of your intentions, it can allow us to honor and celebrate with you and your family during your lifetime through admittance to the Clayton State University Legacy Society, an exclusive membership of those who have included Clayton State in their estate plans.

As Clayton State University embarks on its first ever Comprehensive Campaign entitled "Greater In Mind," sharing your intentions may also allow your planned gift to be counted toward the campaign's total fundraising goal.

If you would like to discuss your philanthropic goals and learn how a planned gift might help you and your family achieve them, we'd welcome the opportunity to discuss the nuances and possibilities with you and your trusted advisors.

Including Clayton State University in your estate plans not only creates a legacy, but will have impact for generations to come.

Reach out to us at giving@clayton.edu.

Outgoing alumni president says innovation key to engaging students

Anyone that has ever worked with Shawn Nelson '04 will tell you her compassionate nature and love for Clayton State has helped increase alumni giving and engagement for years. Her go-getter attitude contributed to her appointment as president of the Clayton State Alumni Association board twice.

Currently, Nelson works as the Senior Branch Manager for Liberty Mutual Insurance and has been active on the Clayton State Alumni Association board for the last 12 years.

This is Nelson's final term as president, but she is very optimistic about the future of the board and the next generation of Lakers charged with carrying the torch.

We caught up with Nelson to share what it was like for her as a student at her beloved alma mater, her experience serving on the alumni board of advisors and her advice to future alumni leaders.

Clayton State University: What drew you to attend Clayton State?

Shawn Nelson: When I was a senior in high school, there was a program where you could finish your high school diploma by taking college level classes through Dual Enrollment. I started researching colleges. I chose Clayton State because it was close to home, had small classes

and a safe campus. I stayed at Clayton State after high school because I loved the small classes and personal attention that the professors provided. I always appreciated the care and concern that the advisors showed as well as the flexibility for class days/times/online.

CSU: What was the campus environment and culture like when you attended?

SN: When I first attended Clayton State, it was a very small school. It was still called Clayton College and State University. There wasn't a lot of focus on campus activities as the majority of students were non-traditional. I took a few years off before finishing my degree. When I returned, I was able to see the quick growth that Clayton State experienced. There were more on-campus activities and more emphasis on getting students involved. Despite this growth, the professors continued to show personal attention to students. It has always been a caring campus that felt like family.

CSU: Did you have a favorite professor?

SN: Dr. Michael Deis is amazing. He always took a personal interest in me and my family, asking about them by name. I remember a few times when I had to bring my young daughter to one of his classes. He always enjoyed seeing her and was very sweet to her. Dr. Deis was very passionate about getting business students involved in the Society for the Advancement of Management (SAM). He even convinced me to participate in the SAM competition. It was one of my best experiences in college. We had a two-person team that went all the way to number one. Dr. Deis was like a proud parent that day. I really enjoyed getting to know him and his wife on that trip.

CSU: You've been connected to and giving back to the school ever since you graduated 13 years ago. Why? What keeps you coming back?



SN: Clayton State gave me a great education. I appreciated the personal attention that many of my professors gave to their students. I feel it's important for everyone to know how special Clayton State really is. It's a great education with a family feel.

CSU: Tell me about your experience serving on the alumni board of advisors

SN: I've been involved with the Alumni board since 2005. I've met and worked with a lot of great people during that time. We've done a lot over the years. One of my favorite memories is when we did a pirate float for the Homecoming parade. Our alumni director at the time, Gid Rowell, dressed up as a Pirate. It was great! I've always loved the events where we get a chance to interact with other alumni (like C-squared). Things have changed a lot over the years. One of the best changes has been having a dedicated Alumni Director. This has taken a huge burden off of the Alumni board in terms of coordinating events and programming. Now the Alumni board can focus on serving in an advisory capacity which reduces the time commitment needed to stay involved.

CSU: Where do you think the association will be in 10 years? What do you hope will happen?

SN: I hope to see Clayton State alumni increase participation in on-campus events, mentoring, and supporting Clayton State. The alumni are the strength of our degree. The more we grow, the more prestigious our degrees become.

CSU: As you wrap up your final term as president, what is

“The alumni are the strength of our degree. The more we grow, the more prestigious our degrees become.”

the one thing you are most proud of?

SN: As the campus transitions from non-traditional to becoming more traditional, I'm proud that our young alumni are getting more involved. [The Young Alumni Council] is so involved, taking the lead in Homecoming for the last two years. In addition, they are more involved in the community, taking on Habitat for Humanity projects around Homecoming each year. I'm excited to see this group growing.

CSU: What piece of advice do you have for future alumni leaders?

SN: I think it's important to be flexible to change. As the world around us changes, things will change with how we communicate with our alumni, how we engage alumni, and what events alumni will attend. Since the main focus of alumni relations is to engage its members, we have to always be ready to try out new, innovative things. Be willing to suggest creative ideas. Most importantly, be proud of Clayton State and your degree. Promote Laker pride on campus with students (future alumni) and in the community. Take the lead in giving, whether it's volunteering or monetarily.





A Laker Family Bond: Alums leave a legacy

By Danielle Moore

Often, the relationship students develop with their alma mater creates a line of generations that attend the same institution out of tradition and love for the university.

The success of Clayton State's Dual Enrollment program, which allows eligible high school students to begin working toward their college degree while still pursuing their high school diploma, has done just that.

The Dual Enrollment program is student-centered and family-friendly, and it maintains a collaborative partnership with local school systems, private educational organizations and communities.

The program has created a pipeline for future Lakers, and has manifested into a deeply-rooted Laker family tree that will continue to grow in the future.

Meet the Panlilio Family

The Panlilio sibling connection to the University dates back to the '90s when their older sister was learning to play the violin by an instructor on campus.

"Clayton State started as a playground for my kids," says Cheryl Panlilio. "My husband and I would take our daughter for violin lessons and the other siblings would feed the ducks. It was a nice place for us."

Aaron '16 was the first child to dual-enroll at Clayton State. By the time he finished, he had all A's in his last semester and was on the dean's list. Seeing his

sisters attend Clayton State peaked his interest in the University; and he now credits his decision to attend Clayton State to getting a head start on his college education.

"It wasn't so much about my siblings doing it. It was more so about getting my collegiate career started, then once I was accepted it was about graduating," Aaron says. "Since we were homeschooled, college was much easier because we were self-taught and I enjoyed having face-to face contact with my professors.

Aaron graduated with his bachelor's in computer science and now works in IT for a mid-sized company. He, along with his sisters Aurora '10 and Adelene '12, round out the group of sibling alums in their family.

Adelene is the third born out of seven children, the third to graduate from college and the second to earn her degree from Clayton State. She currently works as a registered nurse for a global travel agency.

"Looking back...it's amazing that we all ended up going there," Adelene says.

Their family legacy will continue to live on through their younger sister who participated in the Dual Enrollment program for two years of high school and is currently enrolled as a junior at Clayton State. Following in their footsteps are two younger brothers who are presently in high school and attending Clayton State through the same program.

"Even if [my siblings] decide to go somewhere else after high school, we all at least started our college career at Clayton State," Aaron says.



Meet the Oliver-Patterson Family

On May 5, 2017 the bond between two Lakers was forever forever made even stronger because of one milestone. Graduation Day! Tasha Oliver '17 and her daughter, Cierra Patterson '17, graduated from Clayton State on the same day with their degrees in Healthcare Management

"She was literally two people ahead of me," Patterson says. "I got to watch her right before I walked right across the stage. It was definitely a once in a lifetime thing. There's not too many chances in your life where you get to walk behind your mom at graduation."

Oliver, 43, said she was 19-years-old when she had Patterson. She was a cook in the Army.

Despite a successful military career working serving her country along with her husband, Oliver realized she wanted more once she returned to civilian life.

"When I came out of the military, I realized that wasn't the career I wanted to be in," Oliver said. "I realized that if I could take care of my children, I could take care of people."

Oliver's mother, a registered nurse, helped her fill out the paperwork to become a certified nursing assistant. She has since worked in the medical field for more than 15 years, most recently as the patient access representative at Wellstar Atlanta Medical Center South.

Oliver initially enrolled and had been going to Clayton State since 2008. In 2009, she began to face the fight of her life when she was diagnosed with breast cancer. Her dream of earning her degree proved to be challenging.

"I wanted to quit," she said. "It takes a toll on your body. I sort of felt like a failure and felt like I was too old."

Luckily Oliver had raised a very encouraging daughter that would soon sit in the classroom next to her side cheering her on every step of the way.

"I always tell everybody, no matter what age they are, no matter what field they are in, or what they have accomplished. It's never too late. Keep going. You're never too old or too young or too successful to go back to school and do something that you love," says Patterson.

Patterson, a former Dual Enrollment student, returned to Clayton State in 2012, to get her pharmacy tech certificate.

In 2015, after earning an associate's degree in health information administration at Georgia Perimeter, the 24-year-old returned to the Clayton State to pursue a Bachelor of Science in Healthcare Management with a minor in Supply Chain Management.

Currently, Patterson is a certified pharmacy technician at Piedmont Healthcare.

Post-graduation, Patterson reflects on the time she shared her college experience with her mom and how it changed their mother-daughter relationship.

"It definitely made us stronger and it drew us closer together during finals. We tried to help each other and we spent a lot of time together. It has also encouraged us to go farther."

Patterson's cousin Asia Green '15 earned her accounting degree from Clayton State in the spring of 2015. With the addition of Oliver and Patterson as alumnae school pride continued to spread throughout their family.

"Anyway we can represent Clayton State we definitely do that. Anything we see on Facebook we share the same stories. We have the same morals the same goals, we share similar experiences from attending Clayton State," Patterson says.

As for graduating at the same time, Oliver and Patterson said it wasn't until a year ago that the two found out.

Oliver said, smiling, "It was totally an accident. We didn't plan it at all."

MILESTONES:

Talisa R. Clark

M.B.A., 2011

Named Chief Procurement Officer for DeKalb County by CEO Michael Thurmond. Served as interim since December 2015.

Emily Poole

M.B.A. International Business, 2016

Former vice president of Fayette County Development Authority recently named Fayetteville economic development director.

Nicole Clark

B.S. Integrative Studies, 2008

Featured on blog site, The Curvy Fashionista, in article titled, "You Oughta Know: Plus Size Fashion Designer Wole` Designs." She discussed her spring collection, her approach to creating her designs and her remarkable story making a name in the fashion industry.

Emmanuel Shepherd

B.A. Liberal Studies, 2015

Has joined the Goizueta Business School at Emory University as operations coordinator.

Jerald Butler

B.A. Communications & Media Studies, 2014

Promoted to multimedia communications specialist at Cox Media Group.

Gideon Oji

B.S. Health & Fitness Management, 2016

Takes 6th Place at the 101st Nathan's Famous Hot Dog Eating Contest, which aired Live on ESPN on July 4th. This was his 3rd consecutive year competing in the contest. He downed 36 hot dogs and buns, just two away from his personal best of 38 from last year's event.

Brianna "Bri" Jenkins

B.A. Communications & Media Studies, 2017

Started a new job as a Solutions Specialist at Cox Communications.

Breanna Mack

B.A. Communications & Media Studies, 2014

Started a new position as a digital project manager at WebTech Marketing Service.

Justine Barnes

B.S. Healthcare Management, 2013

Recently joined the University of Houston as a gift professor.

Have a special milestone you would like to share? Tell your Laker family about it now at clayton.edu/alumni/services.

In memoriam

Braggette "BJ" Johnson '16 April 13, 1971 - February 28, 2017



Passed away on Feb. 28, 2017. Services were held at Mountain View Baptist Church in Greenville, SC. For more than 20 years, BJ worked as a successful hairstylist. At the age of 40, she moved from Greenville and enrolled into Clayton State to pursue her dreams. Johnson earned a Bachelor of Arts in performing arts last December and graduated summa cum laude. She had a distinctive singing voice, starred in a play and became a playwright. She is survived by Barbara Beaty Sullivan and step-father, Leon Sullivan of Greenville, SC; brother, Jayvius Markeise Johnson of Greenville, SC; step-brother and sister, Cornelius Tate of Anderson, SC and Denise Blackmon of Greenville, SC; nieces, Angel and Jayuanna Johnson of Laurens, SC and a host of aunts, uncles, cousins, other relatives and friends.

Sherod Flono '99 March 12, 1977- March 21, 2017



Passed away unexpectedly on March 21, 2017 at the age of 40. Flono, a native of Augusta, came to Clayton State from Lovejoy High School and was a four-year member of the Lakers from 1995-99 under head coach Jimmy Hebron. During his time at Clayton State he played in 98 games, good for the seventh most in program history, currently ranks 10th in points scored with 891 and is also eighth all-time with 106 steals. He finished his four-year career with averages of 9.1 points, 5.3 rebounds and 1.1 steals along with a .460 shooting percentage. He graduated with a degree in Information Technology in 1999. He is survived by his wife, Chelle, and three children, daughters Domonique Clune and Dallas Flono and son Sherod L. Flono; and his parents Robert and Thelma Flono. His family, friends and teammates have chosen to honor his memory with the Sherod Flono Coding Grant for Kids.

#ORANGETASSELSQUAD By Danielle Moore

The May Class of 2017 took on the Senior Class Gift Challenge with one mission in mind—prove Lakers Give Back. Unless otherwise designated, the 178 seniors who donated \$20 or more to the Senior Class Gift challenge made contributions to the Dream Makers scholarship fund and joined the elite Orange Tassel Squad. Nearly 25 percent of eligible graduates from last May raised almost \$3,600 with the Dream Makers scholarship match from President Hynes. The total rises close to \$5,600!

The scholarship is awarded to eligible seniors who have exhausted all of their financial aid options and would otherwise be unable to graduate. For paying it forward, seniors are given an orange tassel to wear at graduation, special recognition by President Hynes, and become alumni members.

Congratulations May Class of 2017 and welcome to the elite #OrangeTasselSquad!



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