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SPRING 2018

THE LAKER

CONNECTION

A Publication of Clayton State University



ON THE COVER: Photo collage of the many things we love about Clayton State. By Haute Couture Media.



6

COVER STORY

We ♥ Clayton State

From the positive impact we make on students' lives to our role in the community, there's no shortage of things to love about Clayton State University. So, we reached out to our Laker family to find out why Clayton State is a beloved school.

FEATURES

24 **Brave Heart**

Shennay Fowler had been going about daily life until she was struck with a heart condition that instantly changed her life. It also helped her begin a journey to personal wellness and finding purpose in her career.

26 **That's the Way Love Goes**

Your palms get sweaty. You blush. Those little hairs on your arm stand on end. Yeah, those are the signs you may be in love. What causes us to be attracted to someone? Some professors say it's a battle of nature vs. nurture.

28 **Brotherly Love**

Mentoring young people to give them a strong start in life is what Big Brothers Big Sisters of Metro Atlanta does best. So, it made sense that marketing and film students from Clayton State would partner up to share the organization's love for happy, healthy children to the rest of the community.

30 **More Than Just a Game**

For many, basketball is life. But for Natalie Taubert and David Viti, basketball is love – a sport that brought two athletes together to form a loving, lifelong marriage.

PRESIDENT Dr. Thomas J. Hynes Jr.

"By working to strengthen the brand of the University. We have a great brand and we want more people to know about it!"

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"When I take part in all that Clayton State offers—from working out in the gym to hitting up Pizza Hut for a yummy meal—I find that I love this University more and more."

"By taking great care in the efforts that directly impact our student-athletes, staff, Department and institution and serving as a caretaker of the tremendous history of Clayton State Athletics."

"By sharing with my family the benefits of going back to school and signing up for our continuing education programs."

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"Every time I'm on campus, I make a point to stop and sit by the lake and take in all of Clayton State's beauty and wonder. I try to take a little piece of that with me everywhere I go."

DEPARTMENTS

- 5 Letter from the President**
- 32 Campus Updates**
- 37 Profiles**
 - 37 Student**
 - 38 Staff**
 - 39 Faculty**
- 40 Advancement**
- 42 Forever a Laker**
 - 42 Alumni Profile**
 - 45 Milestones**

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.

A unit of the University System of Georgia where dreams are made real, Clayton State University is located 15 miles southeast of Atlanta, Georgia.

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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

Our Fall 2017 issue was a hit! Thank you for the positive feedback on our stories and edgy new cover style.



Mayor Joy B. Day
City of Jonesboro, Georgia

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.



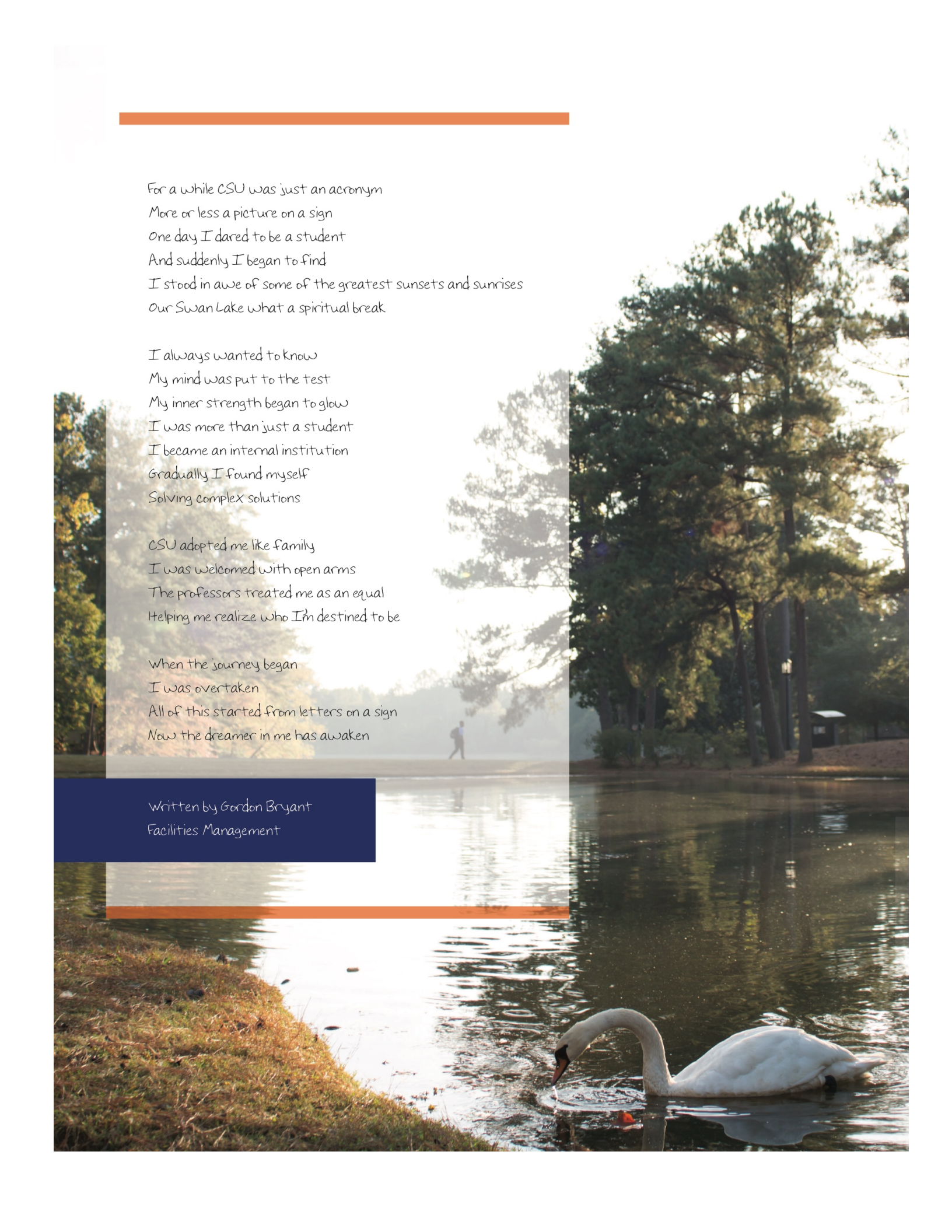
CORRECTIONS

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: No. 2: Fall 2017.

Student Name

Delilah's last name is Fils-Aine, not Filzain, in the student profile on page 35.



For a while CSU was just an acronym
More or less a picture on a sign
One day I dared to be a student
And suddenly I began to find
I stood in awe of some of the greatest sunsets and sunrises
Our Swan Lake what a spiritual break

I always wanted to know
My mind was put to the test
My inner strength began to glow
I was more than just a student
I became an internal institution
Gradually I found myself
Solving complex solutions

CSU adopted me like family
I was welcomed with open arms
The professors treated me as an equal
Helping me realize who I'm destined to be

When the journey began
I was overtaken
All of this started from letters on a sign
Now the dreamer in me has awoken

Written by Gordon Bryant
Facilities Management

Message from the President

It has been more than fifty years since the arrival of the Beatles to western popular culture. Even now, social critics continue to debate the cultural importance, and implications, of the Beatles' music in general, particularly John Lennon's music and lyrics for "All you need is Love."

Ian McDonald described how some critics have dismissed Lennon's lyrics as reflecting the abandoned idealism of an earlier era. Yet even in our present, sometimes cynical times—or perhaps because of these cynical times—a reflection on love that creates dedication, affection, support, and passion merits the attention of our institution.

For many Clayton State students, faculty, and staff, their everyday efforts constitute for them experiences of love. You will read later the results of a survey done among students, alumni, faculty, and staff reporting items that reflect love of the sights and sounds of campus—the sight of the lake in the early morning as the sun rises, a glimpse of a swan or a turtle, or just the quiet of the lakes or a smile and a greeting from a colleague on campus.

Again, from John Lennon, "There's nowhere you can be that isn't where you're meant to be—it's easy."

There are many other stories of work and actions reflecting a passion and a love of place and learning. You will meet a student whose love of a paralegal class project moved from a thoughtful service action for members of the south metro Atlanta community, to a much more personal experience when she discovered a need for an emergency open heart procedure.

You will get a chance to meet with colleagues here who love scientific exploration—ironically in their case, the science of human attraction. And you will meet on these pages other colleagues who work with students

DR. THOMAS J. HYNES JR.

to bring care and love for metro Atlanta area boys and girls—reaching out for connections so much a part of the Big Brother Big Sister programs.

Among other stories, you will find tales of the love of discovery—through enriching learning experiences students uncover their passions and future career paths. For one alumna, a love of animals was nurtured in the biology program, which in turn has allowed her to work with some of the world's most famous pandas housed at the Atlanta Zoo.

Or again from John Lennon, "Nothing you can do, but you can learn how to be you in time—it's easy. All you need is love, love, love is all you need." Please enjoy this edition of Laker Connection.



DREAMS. MADE REAL.



THINGS WE LOVE ABOUT CLAYTON STATE

*We hope these **LOVES of Clayton State**, compiled and recorded from students, staff, and faculty, present and past, will fill your heart as they do these pages. Thank you to everyone who contributed to the survey and sent us your thoughts and stories! Did we leave out something that you love?
Email us at marketing_communications@clayton.edu.*

By Erin Fender '05, Maritza E. Ferreira, Kelly Petty, Heidi Weathersby

No 1

The Firsts

Clayton State University has always set itself up to be on the precipice of higher education in Georgia. From the vision of our first president, Dr. Harry S. Downs, Clayton State has transformed itself from a junior college to a full-fledge university serving south metro Atlanta. We've had other firsts since we opened in 1969—from being the first public university in the Southeast to issue notebook computers to all students in all majors, to being part of the establishment of the first joint state and federal archives buildings, which are located next to campus. We love to lead - it's part of who we are.



Green Campus

We love that Clayton State is a picturesque campus and we want it to stay that way. That's why we've implemented several green initiatives to ensure the University shines bright. We launched a single stream recycling program to reduce waste on campus. Our electric car charging station supports faculty, students, and staff who like a clean commute. And the Lakeview Discovery and Science Center is Georgia Peach Belt Green Building Certified for its energy performance.

No 3 Students

There's no better feeling than being a student at Clayton State. Thousands of individuals have come to the University over the years seeking a top notch education that will prepare them to be leaders on their jobs and in their community. Our students are contuiously making Clayton State proud--at conferences, doing field research, winning championships, and stepping across the stage at commencement.





No 4 Greek Life

Scholarship, leadership, and service. These are the principles that Clayton State's Greek-letter organizations live by. Built on a rich history and cloaked in brotherhood and sisterhood, our eight fraternities and sororities make it their mission to be a positive influence on campus. Greek Life may be young at Clayton State—but it's forging a long-lasting legacy on campus.



No 6 Fried Chicken Thursdays

Clayton State would not be Clayton State without Fried Chicken Thursdays. The popular lunch that reminds us of mom's home cooking is as much a part of our University traditions as our mascot. Started a few years ago to satisfy the hungry bellies of those seeking some Southern comfort food, Fried Chicken Thursdays got revamped in 2017 with a twist—baked chicken (don't worry you still can get fried chicken). Eat up!



Dental Hygiene Clinic

One of Clayton State's values is to engage with our local community. Our dental hygiene clinic does just that. The clinic offers safe, affordable dental hygiene treatment to Morrow, Georgia residents, while providing dental hygiene students opportunities to practice what they've learned in the classroom. The combination of friendly service and expert care means patients leave with a beautiful smile.

A promotional poster for the movie 'Captain America: Civil War'. The background is a close-up, profile view of Captain America on the left and Iron Man on the right, both looking intensely at each other. The image is split vertically down the middle, with the left side being blue and the right side being red. At the top, the text 'DIVIDED WE FALL' is written in a white, distressed font. In the center, there is a white text box containing the number '7' and the word 'Ya'llywood' in a blue, stylized font. Below this, there is a paragraph of text in a smaller, black font. At the bottom, the 'MARVEL' logo is in red, followed by 'CAPTAIN AMERICA' in red and 'CIVIL WAR' in large, white, block letters. The release date 'MAY 6' is at the very bottom in white.

DIVIDED WE FALL

No 7 *Ya'llywood*

From action flicks to young adult television dramas, Clayton State has served as a go-to spot for Georgia's \$9 billion film industry. We're also training the next-generation of filmmakers and production workers to fill the jobs coming down the pipeline in this booming entertainment business. Now, let's name-drop just a few of the projects our campus has been featured in: Marvel's "Captain America: Civil War," "The Boss," and "The Vampire Diaries."

MARVEL

CAPTAIN AMERICA
CIVIL WAR

MAY 6



No 8

Jazzman's

A warm latte or a refreshing smoothie hits the spot when you're about to head to class. Thanks to Jazzman's Cafe, the campus gets to indulge in yummy baked goods and flavorful brews from 100 percent sustainable-sourced coffee. They also sell sandwiches, wraps, salads and fruit so you can eat lunch on the go.

No 9

Bent Tree

Known as the "tree of knowledge" because of its question mark shape, The Bent Tree stands as a reminder to our students to be curious in their academic pursuits. The tree's namesake is carried on by our student newspaper and by The Bent Tree Society, a group of individuals who support our beloved campus. The cast of the original tree sits near the University Center, and you can occasionally catch a student rubbing it for good luck, especially before finals.



Outdoor Fun

Lakers love to have fun! And there's no better way to have fun than to get outside. Clayton State's Recreation and Wellness department offers challenge courses and team building activities on campus. You can also head off site for rock climbing, skiing, and white water rafting!

No 11 *We are the Champions*



Since Clayton State Athletics launched its inaugural season in 1990, we've seen the program show up and show out producing top athletes. Our Lakers have earned a total of 62 titles and every program has had at least four championship wins. Women's basketball has delivered an amazing 17 title victories, including the only NCAA Division II title in the history of the Southeast Region!

No 12 *Loch*

Loch is the heart and spirit of Laker Nation, forever supporting our teams, bringing smiles to young and old, and continually uplifting all who meet him with a friendly hug or high five. He motivates our hardworking student-athletes from the sidelines at games, and you can see him making appearances around campus. Loch brings excitement to all our campus events!





→ No **13**

World Class Education

It's no surprise that Clayton State has been called one of Georgia's best value institutions by James Magazine. We're proud to offer a place where students are supported and empowered to be actively engaged learners. From our state-of-the-art research labs to award-winning faculty, Clayton State can take anyone's dreams and help to make them real. It's why we've been ranked no. 8 among the top public colleges in the south twice by U.S. News and World Report.



No **14**

Location, Location, Location

Twenty minutes from Atlanta. Six miles from the world's busiest airport. Clayton State University is the place to be. We're a suburban campus with urban neighbors. And we love it that way. Our campus is close to the nightlife, entertainment, and dining Atlanta is best known for. And we have relationships with major companies near our campus so students can get a front-row seat to Georgia's top industries after they graduate.

No **15**

Professors

Students can't succeed without dedicated individuals supporting them throughout their academic journey. That's why our professors are so special. As alum Tijah Sikes puts it, "At this university you were not a number to the professor, and it has never been an issue to have a one-on-one meeting for tutoring or discussing personal issues that would affect your school work." Let's also not forget their accomplishments- our faculty have created mobile apps, written books, and even become a Fulbright Scholar!



No 16

PACE (Partnering Academics and Community Engagement)

Clayton State loves providing students with engaging experiences that connect them to the community. Our PACE courses get students and professors outside of the classroom and into the community to apply course content to service learning projects. Our students have had opportunities to create marketing content for local non-profits, help lead Spanish reading hours at local libraries, and assist with creating legal wills, to name a few.



No 18 Stay Connected

Our Laker Nation spreads far and wide. It's a well-established network of people who have been positively impacted by Clayton State in some way. Our active alumni support each other and reach back to mentor our current students. Our donors are family who support Clayton State with a big giving heart. And our partnerships with major companies and corporations mean our students can access engaging real-world experiences and meet individuals who will inspire them to be greater. We are connected—to industry, to employers, to alumni, to faculty, to staff, and most importantly, to our students.

No 19 Alumni



No 17 We are Family



We love our alumni because they represent the best of who we are—from military veterans to business owners to health practitioners and even coaching in the NBA, our alumni are leaders in their field. At 25,000+ strong, we love that as alumni you are ambassadors of Clayton State, showing your Laker pride each and every day.

There's no shortage of laughter or warm greetings when faculty and staff get together. We lift each other up and work as a team to make sure the dreams our students have are realized. That's probably why we've been voted one of the "Top 100 Best Workplaces in Atlanta" by the Atlanta Journal-Constitution six consecutive times.

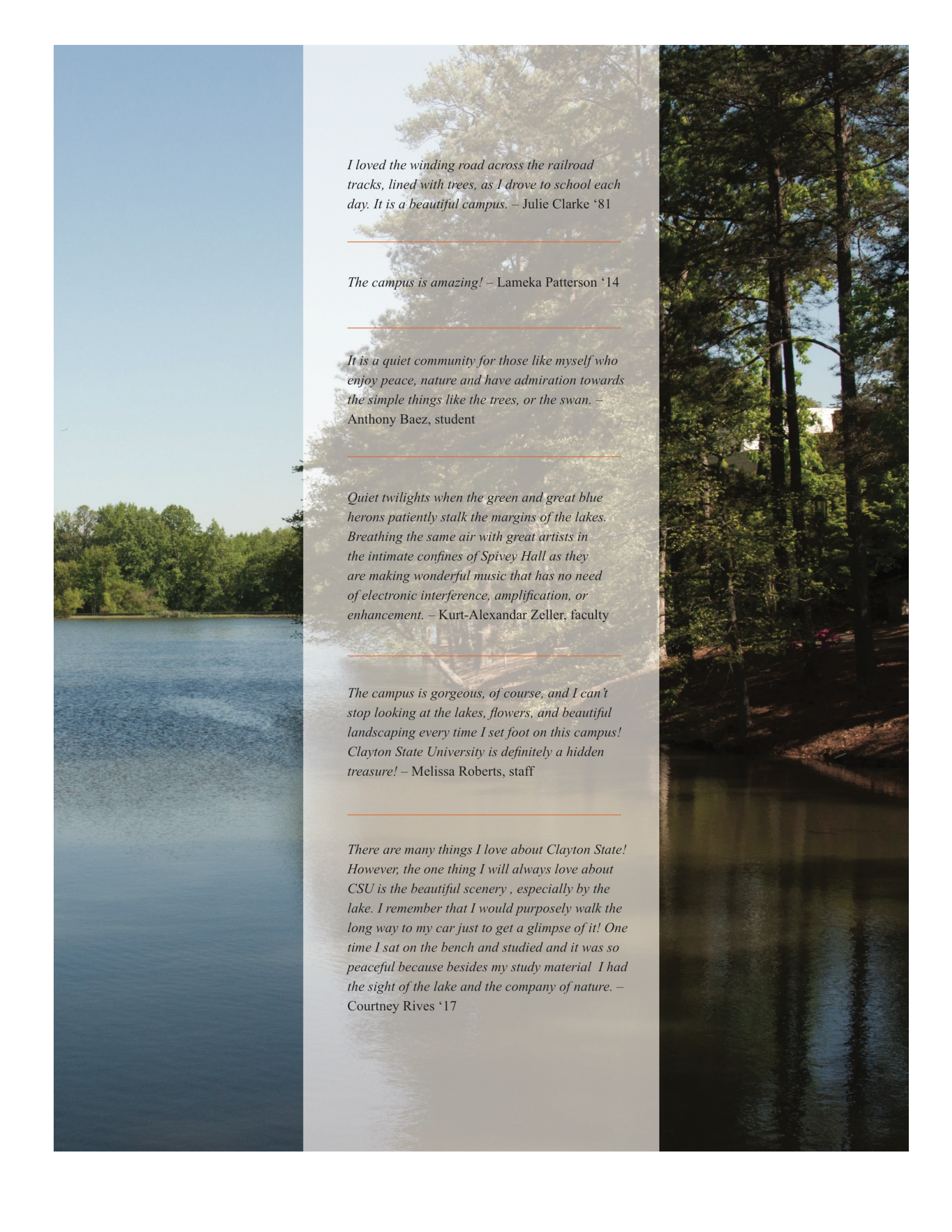
Career Services staff member Melissa Roberts sums it up best, "I love Clayton State because as a new employee, I have been welcomed by everyone I've met, with a warm handshake or a smile! The students are so friendly and engaging, and faculty and staff have been wonderful to make me feel at home. My department has been wonderful and I love being a part of the Clayton State University family!"



No 20

A Beautiful Campus

From the lush green trees that dot the pathways to the still lakes that surround our campus, faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community all agree Clayton State University is one beautiful campus!



I loved the winding road across the railroad tracks, lined with trees, as I drove to school each day. It is a beautiful campus. – Julie Clarke '81

The campus is amazing! – Lameka Patterson '14

It is a quiet community for those like myself who enjoy peace, nature and have admiration towards the simple things like the trees, or the swan. – Anthony Baez, student

Quiet twilights when the green and great blue herons patiently stalk the margins of the lakes. Breathing the same air with great artists in the intimate confines of Spivey Hall as they are making wonderful music that has no need of electronic interference, amplification, or enhancement. – Kurt-Alexandar Zeller, faculty

The campus is gorgeous, of course, and I can't stop looking at the lakes, flowers, and beautiful landscaping every time I set foot on this campus! Clayton State University is definitely a hidden treasure! – Melissa Roberts, staff

There are many things I love about Clayton State! However, the one thing I will always love about CSU is the beautiful scenery, especially by the lake. I remember that I would purposely walk the long way to my car just to get a glimpse of it! One time I sat on the bench and studied and it was so peaceful because besides my study material I had the sight of the lake and the company of nature. – Courtney Rives '17

No 21

Nessie

She cheers us on from the sidelines at games and encourages our students at events like our tutoring blitz each semester. Nessie supports us in all that we do! We love her spirit and giving nature.



No 22

A Word of Advice

Trying to stay on track to graduation can be tough sometimes. But that's why we love our academic advisors. They guide and track the progress of our students to make sure they're getting the most out of their educational experience at Clayton State. They've got a cadre of tools and resources to support academic and professional goals. As Blaire Rawle says, "There are many reasons I love Clayton State, but our advisors who actually care are at the top of my list."



To Serve and Protect

With resounding acknowledgment from students, faculty, and staff alike, Public Safety earned the "Making Things Better" Award in 2017 for providing safety and security across campus. And why wouldn't they? The department does it all! From retrieving keys locked in your car to patrolling campus, our public safety officers make safety their number one priority.

→ No 24

Geese Poo Shuffle

It's no secret that we love our campus. Everything from the flowers to the trees and the turtles and even our feathered companions, these all make our campus scenic. This beauty comes with a small price though—our sidewalks are often dotted with little reminders from our avian friends that have us shufflin' to class!



Ordinary Differential Equations

Clayton State is not only a lovely campus, it's a supportive community. From the moment students step onto the campus of Clayton State, they are met by caring faculty and staff that want to see students make their dreams real. Be it a professor, an advisor or even a public safety officer, we love to create a safe environment where students are empowered to reach their goals.

"To have the one-on-one attention from the faculty, whether it was Dr. Susan Hornbuckle for organic chemistry, Dr. Joshua Dyer for Physics or Dr. Lila Roberts for a self-taught Ordinary Differential Equations class was amazing. It was truly a phenomenal experience and made me the enthusiastic life-long learner that I am today." – Joseph Holak '09

No 26

Hey, Elizabeth!

An iconic feature of our campus beauty is our ever-present swans. The first pair, Scarlett and Rhett, were introduced in 1995. Currently our lakes are graced by Elizabeth, a royal mute swan that was introduced in 2010. You can find Elizabeth strutting along the paths near the lakes. If you're lucky, she just may pose for you to take a photo!



No 27

Study Abroad

Want a lifechanging experience? Signing up for one of Clayton State's study abroad programs is the answer. Our University places a premium on offering enriching cultural experiences that expose students to new people and new perspectives. Bahamas, Greece, Korea, Spain, Italy, Mexico—there's nothing like learning abroad.



No 28

#Give4Dreams

We love to give back in a big way. #Give4Dreams, Clayton State University's annual day of giving, helps make dreams real for the students. For 24-hours straight the University raises dollars for scholarships, student travel, conferences, and other resources and activities that support student success. Join us on March 1, 2018 to support #Give4Dreams!



No 29 Leadership

Much of the success of Clayton State can be attributed to the individuals on our campus who shape our University's present and future. And the example they set encourage students to be active leaders.

From the top, our University president, Dr. Tim Hynes, has worked to transform Clayton State into a national model for community-based learning. His goals have been made possible by other leaders in University Advancement, Academic Affairs, Business and Operations, Student Affairs, Information Technology, and other deans and administrators who collaborate with their teams, create welcoming environments where faculty and staff can innovate and promote academic excellence so our students can make their dreams real.

Dr. Gary May, retired professor, makes it clear, "The leadership at all levels of the University - knowledgeable, accessible, and caring."



Nº 30

A Linear Figure

A 14-foot stainless steel lone figure that embodies a human form elicits the curiosity of many who pass by it when walking through the University's quad. It, along with three adjacent benches, were installed in 1997 when the University's art department commissioned Ayokunle Odeleye, an Atlanta-based artist, to create the sculpture. Entitled "Linear Figures," the bold metal sculpture is one of several unique works of art that grace our campus.

No 31 Service

With nine University sponsored programs and 40+ student organizations, volunteerism is strong among Lakers. Being a part of a service program or organization gives students experience in addressing social issues and community needs to make a difference both on and off campus.



No 32 Graduation



Each year, hundreds of students take the first step in the journey toward shaping their careers and lives during commencement. Pride. Family. Joy. Friends. Celebration. What's not to love about achieving this amazing step in reaching your dream!



No 33 Diversity

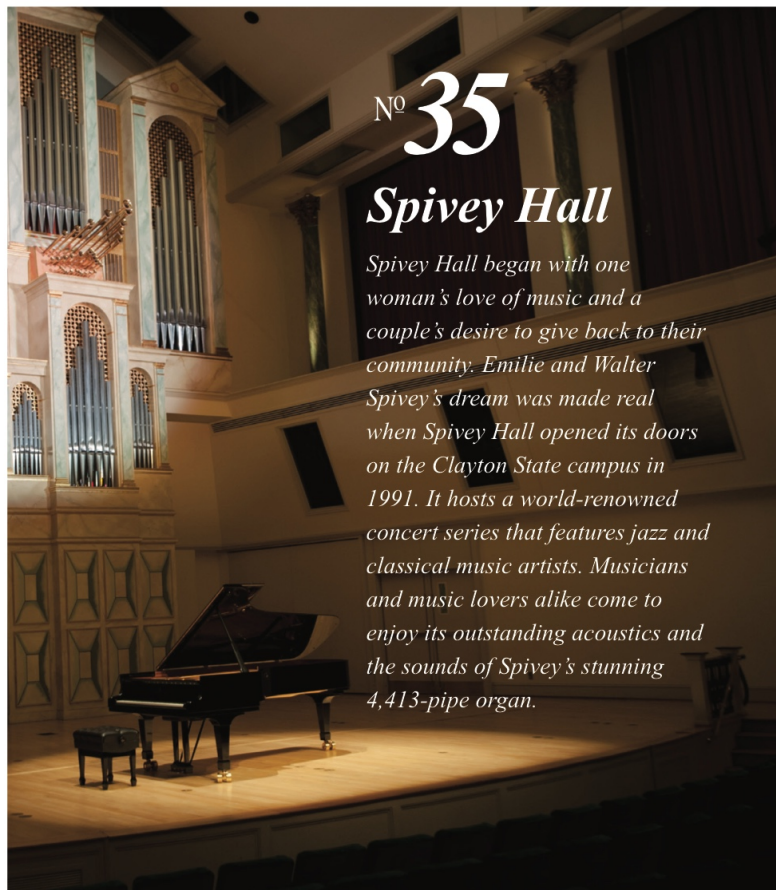
Diversity for Clayton State is about individuals bringing their varied perspectives and life experiences together to create an inclusive campus. With a student body made up of students from 44 countries, all ages, various ethnicities, religious, and political affiliations, we celebrate everyone who makes up our Laker family. Diversity is not just who we are, but how we act. Be it our commitment to service during the annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. holiday or our focus on discussing and finding solutions to the most pressing social issues during our Diversity Leadership Institute, Clayton State is a place where anyone's voice can be heard.



No 34

Homecoming

Originally called Fall Frolics, Homecoming at Clayton State has taken many forms over the years, with talent shows, parades, and soccer matches. Today, we hold Homecoming in the spring, during basketball season. Every year, alumni and students come together to celebrate Laker spirit and pride. We put on our Clayton State orange and blue and spend the week with one another getting reacquainted with campus.



No 35

Spivey Hall

Spivey Hall began with one woman's love of music and a couple's desire to give back to their community. Emilie and Walter Spivey's dream was made real when Spivey Hall opened its doors on the Clayton State campus in 1991. It hosts a world-renowned concert series that features jazz and classical music artists. Musicians and music lovers alike come to enjoy its outstanding acoustics and the sounds of Spivey's stunning 4,413-pipe organ.



No 36

Happily Ever After

For Rob Taylor, a former professor and director emeritus of student life, Clayton State holds a special place in his heart. More than 40 years ago, he and his wife were just two typical Clayton Junior College students who were making their way through school and embarking on a new milestone. It was May 1, 1977, and the couple became the first to get married on campus.

On the bank of Duck Lake, where the Judge Eugene Lawson Amphitheater now sits, the two exchanged their vows. As Taylor recalls, "Our reception was created by Clayton's food services staff (there was a full-time baker working there at that time) and we had 125 guests which included students, faculty, staff, family, and friends. For our 10th anniversary we had a pizza delivered to campus and spread a blanket, where we said our vows, and celebrated the occasion! I was blessed to be able to frequently visit our wedding location for 19+ years."

While times have changed, the tradition they shared that day hasn't, and many happy couples have since tied the knot on campus over the years.



Alma Mater

Written by Dr. Brigitte Byrd, with music by Dr. Richard Bell, "Walking in Love and Strength" is inspired by the ceaseless spirit of students, faculty, staff, and alumni, and the lifelong community we gain when we come here.

*Walking through your majestic pines,
We embrace your simple splendor;
Our hearts and spirits full of hope,
Our minds wide open and ready.
O our dear alma mater,
You give us love and strength.*

*Walking by your beautiful lake,
We find a new community
Of people from all nations
All joined as one in learning.
O our dear alma mater,
You give us love and strength.*

*Walking proudly among our peers,
We wear your colors true.
Now shaped and prepared by Clayton State,
We are ready for our future.
O our dear alma mater,
You give us love and strength.*

*Walking through our unfolding lives,
We take you on the path,
Knowing that the years will change us
And your standard will remain.
O our dear alma mater,
You give us love and strength.*



Laker Strong

One thing is for sure, the Laker family loves to show its pride. It can start with a single t-shirt from the Loch Shop and before you know it, you and your car are top-to-bottom covered in Clayton State blue and orange. It's okay, you're among friends.



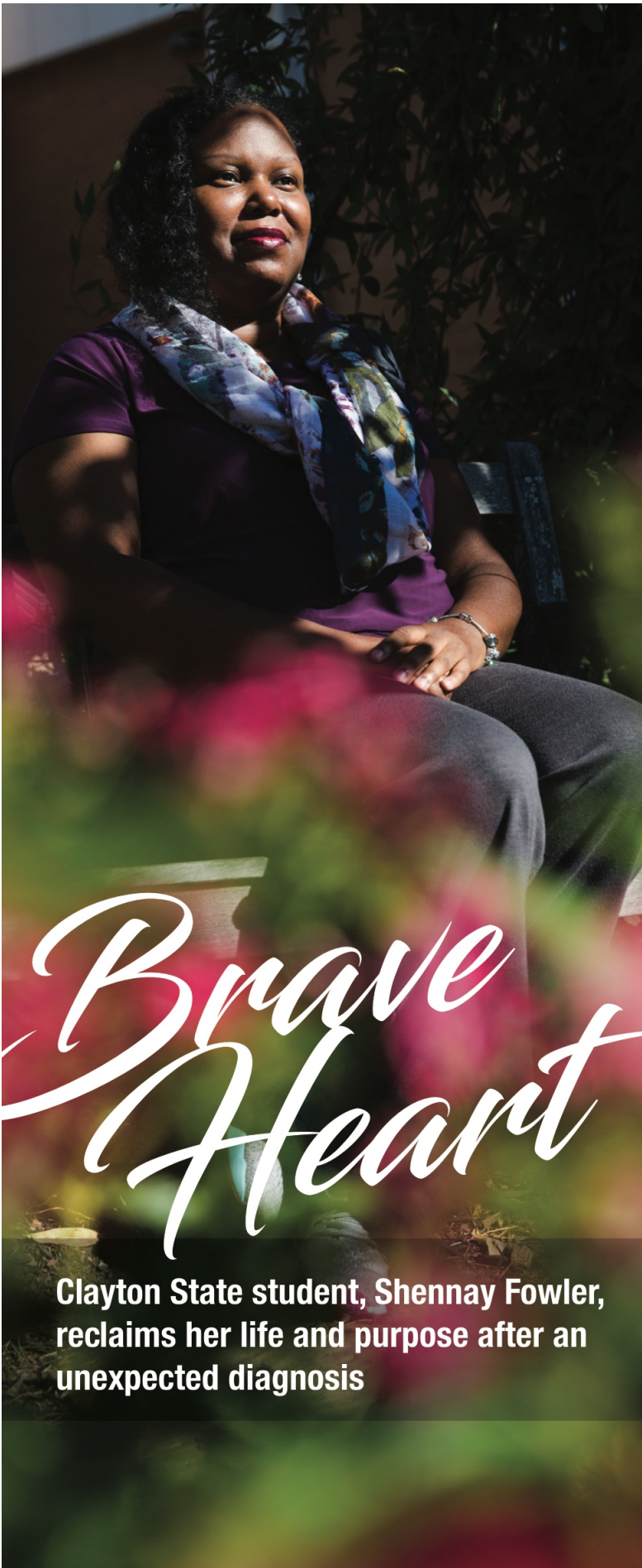
Trees & Trails

To love Clayton State is to love its trees. The Clayton State University Tree Committee along with Landscape Management work to maintain, renew, and protect the trees on the University's campus. Their tireless commitment to tree preservation is the reason why Clayton State has earned the Tree Campus USA designation by the Arbor Day Foundation four years in a row. Student, faculty, and staff can enjoy the plethora of trees while walking along the 2.5 miles of trails that wind across campus.

No 40 Dreams

At Clayton State University, dreams are not ethereal illusions, they are very concrete and attainable goals that students, alumni, faculty, and staff are working on every day to make real. And everyone, from our Laker family to donors and even the local community, is dedicated to empowering us all to achieve our dreams.

DREAMS.
MADE
REAL.



Brave Heart

Clayton State student, Shennay Fowler, reclaims her life and purpose after an unexpected diagnosis

By Shennay Fowler '17

A year ago, I began the start of a new life for me literally and figuratively.

I was taking a Friday walk with my co-worker to grab some lunch, when I realized my health was in serious danger. While walking, I began to sweat profusely. I had shortness of breath and I was starting to feel dizzy.

It was an unusual reaction to a casual stroll downtown and my co-worker was very concerned for my health. It was then I knew I had to visit a doctor soon.

Just a few days before, when I attended an awards ceremony where I was being recognized for my five years of service, I started experiencing symptoms of a stroke.

I was about three quarters of the way to my car, when I began to feel bad. I somehow was able to make it back to the building and take a seat in the lobby area to process what was happening.

When the ambulance arrived, the paramedic was quite shocked that I had suffered a mini stroke. "This is not normal for someone your age," he said. "This is something you need to follow up on."

Unfortunately, I didn't heed his advice right away. I was taken aback by the incident but still not totally aware of how serious of a threat it was to my health.

The following Monday, I visited the doctor's office and had to undergo a series of health tests. The results were more shocking than I could have ever fathomed. My cardiologist diagnosed me with left atrial myxoma. This meant that I had a tumor in my left heart valve that had to be removed immediately. The tumor was the reason behind the mini stroke and why I had felt so fatigued lately.

If not removed, the tumor could result in my death.

I was stunned to say the least. My blood pressure was normal. My cholesterol levels were normal and I had no major health issues up until this point. In fact, I had been a bit of a health nut in my younger years, subscribing to a vegetarian diet and exercising frequently. Yet, here I was being told that I needed emergency open heart surgery in less than a week.

The doctors told me that I had to get my affairs in order immediately.

Like many people, I did not have a will.

*“Upon waking from surgery, I said to myself,
I didn’t go through all of this to be miserable, and I vow to
be happy from this day forward.”*

Because of the intensity of the surgery, I had to prepare a last will and testament in the event of my death. The surgery was taking place so abruptly that I only had time to send an e-mail to family members with instructions on what to do if I didn’t make it out.

On May 17, I underwent open heart surgery, and mercifully made it through without any major complications.

Upon waking from surgery, I said to myself, “I didn’t go through all of this to be miserable, and I vow to be happy from this day forward.”

Prior to my surgery, I had been attending Clayton State and pursuing an associate’s in paralegal studies. I’ve always had a curiosity about law. I was a fan of People’s Court growing up and I like watching forensics shows.

Part of the reason I applied to Clayton State’s paralegal program was to fulfill a lifelong dream of becoming a screenwriter. I felt the program would help me understand the legal research process, as well as study cases that could inspire writing.

So, I decided to continue the program and found myself taking a class covering wills, trusts, and probate in the spring of 2017.

What a moment. I was learning about the very thing that I had to quickly pull together just before I went into surgery. Needless to say, I knew firsthand why it is so important to have a will.

Imagine me, months later, sitting with a retired local public school employee, helping put together her will as part of a pro bono estate planning assistance project. The class project was part of the Partnering Academics and Community Engagement (PACE) program at Clayton State.

This woman was the matriarch of her extended family, which included her daughter and two teenaged grandchildren.

Remembering what I went through, I was concerned about her grandchildren, and considered what would happen if her daughter, the next of kin, pre-deceased her.

I was so honored to give her peace of mind by assisting her with developing a will that met her needs.

The PACE project reinforced to me that it’s never too early for estate planning, and planning is not only about the person making the will; it’s also about the loved ones they leave behind.

*“Now I celebrate two birthdays:
my date of birth and the day of
my surgery.”*

I also loved the PACE project because it also gave me a chance to provide an unpaid service to support the community.

I still have a passion for storytelling, and my dream is still to pursue writing.

I plan to finish my paralegal studies degree in the fall and begin pursuing a bachelor’s degree in English.

After graduation, I plan to work as a paralegal while pursuing my master’s degree in school counseling.

I plan to use my bachelor’s degree in English to become a screenwriter, so you might see my name flash across your television screen one day.

Quite a few people have noticed a change in me since undergoing cardiac surgery. I am more ambitious and daring. I have a sense of eagerness to learn and try new things. Also, I have a more positive outlook on and appreciation for life.

Now I celebrate two birthdays: my date of birth and the day of my surgery.

Dr. Matthew Cornick, professor of legal studies at the University, jokingly labeled me a “hopeless optimist”.

And why shouldn’t I be? I’ve been given a second chance to live a happy and purposeful life and I plan to do just that.



By Kelly Petty

That's the Way Love Goes

Professors explain the science of attraction

The 90s told us “men are from Mars, women are from Venus.” The 2000s said compatibility is as easy as logging online. And today, we just swipe right to find our match.

You would think the answer to finding chemistry with someone would be easy.

But love seems to trigger all sorts of questions about how to find it, how to keep it, and how not to fall out of it.

So, are we hardwired to develop an attraction for others? Or is love about our own preconceived notions of what relationships should look like?

Professors at Clayton State say it's a bit of both—our brains responding to our innate desire to bond with someone.

“Bonding between individuals seems to be a pretty big part of what our brains are good at,” says biology professor Dr. Stephen Burnett.

From birth, humans are meant to connect. Newborns experience their first social interactions when they latch onto their mother.

What makes this possible is oxytocin, a hormone that affects social behavior and sexual reproduction. It acts as a neurotransmitter—a chemical mess-

enger that sends signals from our brain to other parts of our body to encourage bonding, aid in childbirth, and trigger lactation.

“[The mom] is getting this oxytocin that says this person I'm interacting with is someone I should be developing an attachment to,” Burnett says.

Our brains also respond to pleasure and rewards. Hormones like dopamine and serotonin trigger our mood, appetite, and sexual desire.

It's the reason why we sometimes feel anxious, happy, or depressed. Alternatively, these hormones can spur addiction in some people.

“Especially when you’re first dating someone, and spending time with them, you can almost get addicted to it, it seems like,” he explains. “Those same hormones can be involved in some kinds of addiction. So, they’re stimulating the same areas of the brain, but in this case, through the bonding you’re getting with this person.”

“We’re clearly evolved to do that sort of thing,” Burnett adds.

“Bonding between individuals seems to be a pretty big part of what our brains are good at,” Burnett says.

In fact, a group of Harvard professors in 2005 conducted a radical study at the time, analyzing the brain scans of 2,500 college students to compare their reactions to photos of people they were attracted to versus acquaintances.

The researchers found that when participants viewed photos of people they had romantic feelings for, parts of the brain loaded with high levels of dopamine were activated giving off those feel-good senses.

But love can’t be simply summed up by what happens between our ears.

How we define relationships, what makes someone a good partner, and even our notions about sex can be shaped by our environment and societal perceptions.

“The broad sense of the idea is that attraction is just evolutionarily our way to replicate ourselves, to put more humans on the earth,” says psychology professor Dr. J. Celeste Walley-Jean. “But the absoluteness of that has come under some scrutiny.”

Instead, Walley-Jean says, our social cues can be born out of learned cultural and societal norms, typically falling across gender lines.

Whether that be men appearing as strong and dominant, or women being coy and not so assertive, individuals can exhibit attitudes commonly associated with their sex to attract others.

Yet, people can break from those traditional views in search of a partner that fits what they want in a relationship.

“Are there women out there who want a man because he’s sensitive and not because he has a lot of money? Absolutely,” Walley-Jean says. “But our gender norms constrain the woman’s ability to find that because that man would have to be going against gender norms, and that’s challenging to do.”

Even in homosexual relationships, Walley-Jean notes, the principles of attraction remain despite who the partners are.

“We have gendered the conversation around attraction. So, we say this is what men are looking for and what women are looking for,” she states. “Who the two partners are doesn’t change these dynamics, it just might change how they’re presented.”

On the whole, familiarity and closeness is more the norm when relationships develop.

“If I live next door, or we go to the same school, or we are in the same class—there’s a higher likelihood that we will be attracted to someone who’s near us. It’s called the proximity effect,” Walley-Jean says. “That’s why workplace affairs happen.”

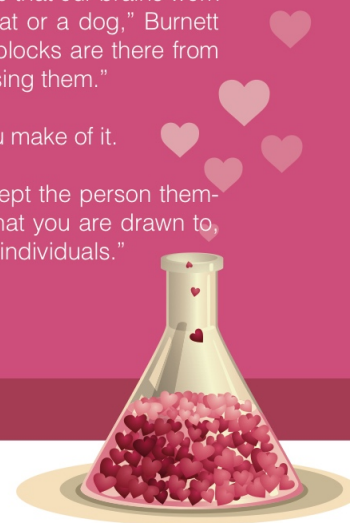
“No one can define attraction except the person themselves,” Walley-Jean says. “It’s what you are drawn to, what pulls you. That varies across individuals.”

And for much of the emphasis we put on human complexities to explain why people are attracted to each other, we’re no different than other animals when it comes to the birds and the bees.

“We evolve from animals that do these sorts of things, which shouldn’t come as a surprise that our brains work the same way as a mouse or a cat or a dog,” Burnett says. “A lot of the basic building blocks are there from other animals, and we just keep using them.”

So, what is attraction? It’s what you make of it.

“No one can define attraction except the person themselves,” Walley-Jean says. “It’s what you are drawn to, what pulls you. That varies across individuals.”



Brotherly LOVE

By Erin Fender

Four videos, endless hours of work, and two classes collaborating all for one community cause—recruiting more volunteers to serve as mentors with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Metro Atlanta.

The organization is known for providing children who are struggling with adversity one-to-one relationships with adult role models to create long-lasting, positive influence in their lives.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Metro Atlanta serves over 2,000 children from ages six to 18 years old. Many of these children come from low income and single-parent households, with 48 percent having a parent incarcerated.

The benefits to the children are rewarding. Of those that are matched with a mentor, 97 percent graduate high school on time and 87 percent enroll in post-secondary education. On top of that, 99 percent of children in the Big Brothers Big Sisters program never encounter the juvenile justice system.

Yet, as meaningful as the organization is to the local community, the Clayton County area is currently facing a shortage of Big Brothers to meet the needs of the children.

That's where Dr. Susan McFarlane-Alvarez's introduction to advertising course and the T.R.U.S.T. agency at Clayton State comes in.

T.R.U.S.T., which stands for Transforming Relations Using Student Thinkers, was formed in 2013 as part of the corporate communications minor.

The agency gives students real-world experience in public relations and communications collaborating with clients both on- and off-campus.

"Our contact at Big Brothers Big Sisters was the recruiting manager for the organization and he needed to produce videos to increase interest in volunteers, but was particularly interested in developing videos to increase engagement with "Big Brothers," young men in the Clayton area, where there was a waiting list of Little Brothers waiting to be matched. Our students were very enthusiastic to get started," says McFarlane-Alvarez.

With that goal in mind, the class set forth their advertising plan beginning with project management. The students were assigned roles from copywriters to account executives and visual designers.

To create the videos, the class assessed in-class talent and soon realized they needed to "outsource" video production by partnering with the University's film production program.

Enter Shandra McDonald's introductory field production course. At the same time the Big Brothers Big Sisters project was ramping up, her class of film majors was beginning work on a documentary/non-fiction project.

The timing was perfect.

"Our classes worked seamlessly through all aspects of production from pre-production through post production. Conference calls and cloud storage were a wonderful resource, since our classes met at different times and different locations during the week," McDonald says. "This was an amazing teaching tool for the students in preparation for the one-day shoot. Both groups were extremely organized."

The film shoot featured the Big Brothers and their Little Brothers sharing their personal stories about the need for more mentors to volunteer for the organization.

For some students, the production was eye-opening and gave them insight as to how ordinary people react to the bright lights of a film shoot.

"Watching the Little Brothers overcome the stresses of being interviewed touched me the most. Each Big Brother explained that their Little Brothers did not have the ideal up-

"Each Big Brother explained that their Little Brothers did not have the ideal upbringing, but that they were working hard toward overcoming their situations," says Jenkins.

bringing, but that they were working hard toward overcoming their situations,” says Brianna Jenkins '17, who wrote the scripts for the videos. “The Big Brothers were there to coach them, much like what they do in the program.”

Students from spring and fall semester classes in 2017 successfully produced four videos, one of which has already been released to the public.

The students' work also caught the eye of the Big Brothers Big Sisters corporate office and was highlighted and promoted to other regional areas.

“PACE courses, such as this, enhance the educational process because it allows students to learn more about what they want to do after college while being in a real community environment giving them hands on experience,” says Jenkins.

“One of the things this project has made me realize, is that by linking the two areas (communications and film) our students got to see the extent of talent and knowledge each area has, as well as the technicality and creativity of the film students,” Mcfarlane-Alvarez says.

Mcfarlane-Alvarez also used her advertising course as an opportunity to engage in Clayton State's Partnering Academics and Community Engagement (PACE) program. As a PACE project, the film production gave students the ability to use their classroom knowledge in the real world.

“PACE courses, such as this, enhance the educational process because it allows students to learn more about what they want to do after college while being in a real community environment giving them hands on experience,” Jenkins says.

To view the student produced videos, visit the Laker Connection publication online at www.clayton.edu/laker-connection.





More than just a game

Clayton State Athletics plays pivotal role in life after basketball

By Joshua Darling

Clayton State Athletics is a family that continues well beyond the arena of competition and even grows years down the road.

Not only have longstanding relationships come from the experience of being a Laker, it has helped to form families, with a number of former student-athletes marrying following their time at the University. One such couple dates back nearly to the very beginning of athletics at Clayton State University.

The institution had just completed its first year of athletic competition when Natalie Taubert and David Viti both came to what was then a fledgling program to play basketball in the fall of 1991. Viti was a member of a second-year men's team coming off a 3-24 inaugural season, while Taubert, was part of a group of players making history as the first women's basketball team at then Clayton State College.

"We both loved basketball and wanted to keep playing," Viti said. "The basketball programs were both relatively new – the girls' was brand new. Individually, we thought it would be a good experience to help start a program and get it going in the right direction. The scholarships were nice too. Being able to go to school and get a degree without going into debt was a great opportunity."

As it turned out, their decision to become Lakers would impact their lives far beyond basketball and play a pivotal role in Natalie and David finding each other.

"We first met at Clayton State, in the gym, in October of 1991," said Taubert (now Natalie Viti). "I was a freshman and David had transferred from Gordon Junior College. He was rehabbing a knee injury so he was unable to begin playing until the next year."

“Individually, we thought it would be a good experience to help start a program and get it going in the right direction. The scholarships were nice too, being able to go to school and get a degree without going into debt was a great opportunity.” – David Viti

While Viti redshirted for a team that improved to 9-18 in 1991-92, Taubert averaged just over six points and four rebounds and nearly two assists for a Laker squad that put up a respectable first year record of 8-16.

The following year, Viti was able to get on the court and rarely left it, playing 30 games. He averaged over eight points and shot better than 80-percent from the foul line in helping Clayton State to a seven-win improvement to 16-15. Meanwhile, Taubert had a similar impact for the women as they also posted the first winning season in program history, going 14-13.

As their careers progressed, so too did their relationship as they grew closer through basketball.

“We dated almost the entire time, except for the first few months,” said Taubert. “With both of us being in the basketball program, we spent a lot of time together.”

In 1993-94, Natalie took on a larger role with the women’s team, playing in all 29 games while David continued to help the men make history in what would be his final season. That year he averaged just over seven points and played in all 32 games for a club that went 25-7, still the best record in program history.

The record setting achievements wouldn’t stop there as Taubert, who had been on that first team, helped guide the 1994-95 team to its first postseason berth. The Lakers went 21-13 and qualified for the NAIA National Tournament in a season that saw her play 31 games.

It would be a season that was impactful for more than one reason, as the couple became engaged during that year as well. They married on July 6, 1996 and have been together ever since.

In that time, they have raised a son, David Viti Jr., who has committed to play basketball at Division I Georgia Southern, and a daughter, Sara, who is a freshman and member of the basketball team at Buford High School. Taubert currently teaches math at Buford Middle School and Viti owns his own business and sells property with RE/MAX.

Not only did Clayton State Athletics, in particular basketball, help to bring together two individuals that might otherwise not have met, it also led to a family that has continued to impact both their community and the sport that helped make it possible.



CAMPUSUPDATES

SHRM student chapter earns Superior Merit award



Clayton State's student chapter of the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) earned the 2016-17 Superior Merit award designation by the organization for providing superior growth and development opportunities to its student chapter members.

Clayton State helps "Stuff The Bus" for children in need



Clayton State University helped make dreams real for deserving public school students in the metro Atlanta area by giving back during WSB-TV's annual "Stuff The Bus" school supply drive in July.

Health and fitness management program first in state to receive NSCA recognition, COAES accreditation

The University's health and fitness management program is the first in the state to obtain recognition from the National Strength and Conditioning Association, as well as accreditation in exercise science under the Committee on Accreditation for the Exercise Sciences.



Clayton State University unveils new website design

Clayton State University launched its newly redesigned website on Friday, Dec. 15, completing a two-year project to update the site to meet the University's strategic goals. The new website includes improved layout and navigation, consistent brand voice, enhanced accessibility for disabilities, and optimized conversion for increased prospective student inquiry pools.

Clayton State's Film and Digital Media Center names winners of Atlanta Metro Studios' James D. Brubaker Film Scholarship

Five deserving Fulton County High School students and graduates were recipients of the film scholarship developed to support the next generation of Georgia film industry professionals. The scholarship covers the cost of completing the Georgia Film Academy Certification through Clayton State University's Film and Digital Media Center.

College of Arts and Sciences announce Hatfield Award winners



Three faculty members were recognized for scholarship, service, and teaching excellence during the 2017 Gene Hatfield Annual Service Awards. Dr. Patricia Smith, professor of English, was named Teacher of the Year; Dr. Mandy Lusk, professor of special education was awarded Scholar of the Year; and Dr. Mari Ann Banks, assoc. professor of multicultural education, earned the Service Award.

Faculty, students offer relief aid during Hurricane Harvey and Hurricane Irma



Faculty and students support Hurricane relief efforts in September to help victims of Harvey and Irma. Nursing professors and students rendered medical aid to displaced Savannah residents. Psychology Professor Mark Daddona worked with the Red Cross to provide mental health services to victims in South Georgia and Florida.

U.S. News & World Report ranks Clayton State among top 140 universities in the South

The University was ranked among the nation's top 140 universities in the South for a second time, according to the 2018 U.S. News & World Report Best Colleges rankings.

Nursing program named among top 10 most affordable in Georgia

Clayton State's undergraduate nursing program ranked no. 9 for its bachelor of Science in nursing program and online RN-BSN program in *College Choice's* top 10 list for "Most Affordable Nursing Degrees in Georgia".



CAMPUS **UPDATES**

Coca-Cola gives \$500,000 to Clayton State toward scholarships for first-gen students

Coca-Cola generously gave Clayton State \$500,000 to support scholarship for first-generation students, as well as students interest in STEM and Supply Chain. The funds targets students who are high achievers and demonstrate a financial need.

Students tackle social justice at annual Diversity Leadership Institute



Built around the theme “The Stay Woke Tour,” the Diversity Leadership Institute was designed to promote self-awareness, self-identity, and develop an understanding of diversity and multiculturalism.

AT&T gives Clayton State \$12,000 to support Early Start program

AT&T has supported Clayton State’s goal of giving freshman a strong start with a gift of \$12,000 for the University’s Early Start program. The funds will allow 24 students to participate in the summer program that offers academic coaching, support, and other student services to help them integrate into college life easily.

Clayton State hosts Math and Science Day to get middle school students interested in STEM



More than 200 students from Kendrick Middle School participated in Math and Science Day at Clayton State University in October. The annual event aims to encourage STEM interest among young students, as well as expose them to a college environment in hopes they will be encouraged to attend.

Winners of “Making Things Better” awards highlight leadership, service on campus



University President Dr. Tim Hynes recognized faculty, staff, campus departments, and organizations that go above and beyond to make the campus and the community better at the annual Presidential Making Things Better awards. The winners were Donna Taffer, Jeri Trenova, Jillian Jones, Dr. Joshua Meddaugh, Alpha Phi Omega, and the Public Safety department.

Clayton State earns top 10 spot for largest business school, high MBA enrollment



Clayton State ranked no. 8 for both high enrollment in its MBA programs and for having one of Atlanta's largest total enrollments for a business school in the Atlanta Business Chronicle's Book of Lists.

Clayton State named a "Great College to Work For" by The Chronicle of Higher Education

Clayton State was recognized for putting its employees first as it was named one of 79 higher education institutions across the nation in *The Chronicle of Higher Education's* list of "2017 Great Colleges to Work For." The University was noted for its collaborative governance, respect and appreciation, and work/life balance.

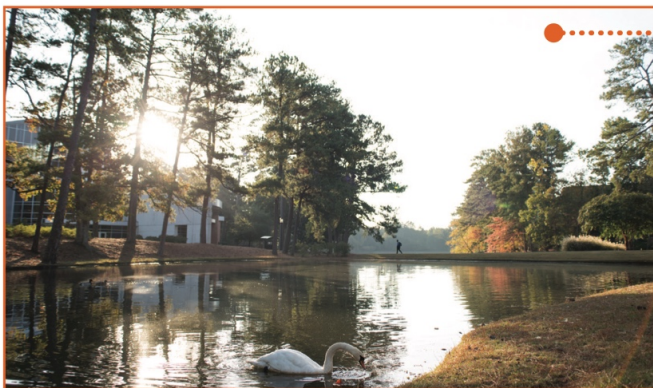


Clayton State ranks no. 4 for affordable online marketing degree

Clayton State was ranked no. 4 among universities for offering one of the most affordable online bachelor's degrees in marketing in SR Education's "2018 Most Affordable Colleges for Bachelor's in Marketing" list.

Clayton State's economic impact on South metro Atlanta region reaches \$275 million

Clayton State University generated more than \$275.9 million in local economic impact in the surrounding region for fiscal year 2016, according to a report released by the University System of Georgia (USG).



Clayton State tops list for best value university in Georgia

The University was ranked no. 1 in 2017 for offering the best value among higher education institutions in Georgia by James Magazine. The University earned the top spot in 2015 and 2016.

CAMPUS UPDATES

Clayton State's management, supply chain programs named 'most affordable'

Clayton State's online bachelor's program in supply chain topped SR Education's list of "2018 Most Affordable Online Colleges." The University's online management degree programs ranked no. 3 on the list.

Clayton State University named participating institution for national archival studies fellowship



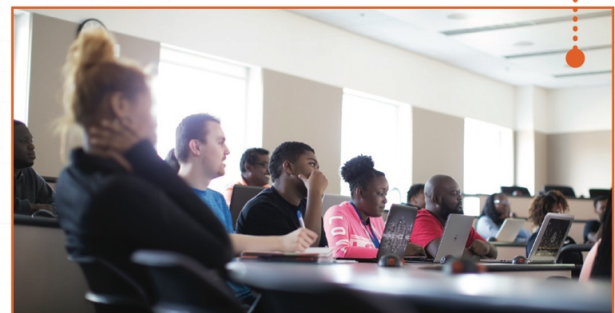
Clayton State University was named one of several U.S. higher education institutions to participate in Public Broadcasting Preservation Fellowship awarded to Boston public media station WGBH. The fellowship is part of the Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program grant by the Institute of Museum and Library Services.



Clayton State receives significant supply chain software gift

Clayton State University received a gift of two supply chain software programs from JDA Software, a leader in global supply chain solutions for large and enterprise companies. The gift consists of Warehouse Management System and Supply Chain Pro software systems.

Clayton State sees growth in fall 2017 enrollment numbers



Official fall 2017 enrollment numbers released by the University System of Georgia showed that Clayton State University grew to 7,003 students. This is a slight increase from 2016 of 6,996 students.



Family ties: A close bond helps brother and sister complete their academic journey

Hung Dinh, 30, and his sister Chau Dinh, 27, both graduated on Dec. 9 with their MBAs. The siblings have always been close, and decided to move to the United States from Vietnam to pursue graduate studies and embark on a new journey together.

Clayton State awarded \$4,000 grant for young adult driver safety program

Clayton State University was awarded a \$4,000 grant to participate in the Governor's Office of Highway Safety (GOHS) Georgia Young Adult Program to promote driver safety. This is the eighth year the University has received the grant. The GYAP program at Clayton State offers students educational often surrounds events such as National Collegiate Alcohol Awareness Week in October, Safe Spring Break, and graduation.

For Allison Higgins'17, interning at IT giant Cisco during the summer of 2017 was the fulfillment of a dream she had since high school to make computer programming life.

The computer science student rounded out her senior year in sunny California, working in the heart of Silicon Valley alongside professional engineers on software development projects.

But Higgins said that her love for STEM—science, technology, engineering, and mathematics—came later in life, and she's determined to see girls develop a passion for this budding and lucrative career field early on.

Like many African American girls, Higgins was not interested in STEM and there were no programs targeted toward someone like her.

It wasn't until she participated in the International Hour of Code, a nationwide program that teaches students to code using video games, during her senior year of high school that her curiosity for computing was sparked.

"It took me finding it on my own and discovering how great it was for me to get into it," she says.

Higgins was already enrolled in Clayton State's dual enrollment program and decided to continue her studies at the University.

After taking a few computer science classes, Higgins said she began to second-guess her career choice. But a brief encounter with computer science instructor, Jillian Jones, helped her realize she was on the right path.

"It's encouraging to see people that look like you are making it in what you're trying to do. Representation matters so much," Higgins says.

At Clayton State, Higgins made it her mission to get more young women and minorities aware of the opportunities a career in STEM can bring.

She volunteered at Rex Mill Middle School teaching students robotics and programming. She also served as the president of WiSTEM, Women Interested in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics. The student-led organization helps female and minority students engage in STEM through scholarships, internships, and career advancement.

"With the lack of representation in STEM, students may not always know about all of the great opportunities that are out there for them, so WiSTEM is a springboard for that," Higgins says.

Her efforts are what led her to earn an internship with Cisco. After interviewing with the company representatives at the annual Grace Hopper Celebration for Women in Computing conference, she received a call to pack her bags and head to San Jose to spend her summer with the company.

While there, she developed a chat bot for Cisco's messaging app to help new hires and interns get familiar with the company.

"During orientation, we had a lot of info just thrown at us, and when it came time to do payroll or how to set up a meeting through email, a lot of us had to figure it out later," Higgins said. "This chat bot goes into the internal Cisco messaging app, you ask it questions, and it returns answers."

Her original idea was well-received by her coworkers. And her performance during her internship scored her a full-time job with Cisco.

Higgins said besides starting her new job, she hopes to teach computer science one day and launch her own startup. More importantly, she wants to help more women and minorities enter the tech industry.

"That's what I'm really about," Higgins says. "Pushing the door open."





IVÁN SEGOVIA

StaffProfile

By Brionna Pinkney

When Iván Segovia was just three years old, he, his American mother, and his Venezuelan father moved to Clayton County from Venezuela in 1987.

As he began to get acclimated with his new home in Georgia, Segovia began to develop a passion for another language—music. Thanks to his mother, it would become something that would shape his life and career.

“The American side of my family is very musical,” he says. “My mom and my aunt sing. We were always part of the church choir. My grandfather taught me beginner piano when I was little, and then I started taking lessons from my aunt.”

Segovia’s talent for singing progressed as he joined chorus in middle school, performed in musicals in high school, and participated in the Allstate Chorus and Governor’s Honors Program for voice.

Knowing he wanted to study music and voice in college, Segovia was drawn to Clayton State University.

“Spivey Hall has a high school honor choir that I participated in for two years, and Spivey Hall was just so beautiful a place to sing that it really sold me on coming here,” he says.

Segovia enrolled in Clayton State’s music degree program in 2002. He studied voice under Dr. Maya Hoover, accomplished mezzo-soprano singer and voice instructor at Clayton State. Segovia credits Hoover with inspiring him to take up opera.

“I never thought I would be interested in opera,” he recalls. “She [Dr. Hoover] showed me that there was a career path here [in opera], and she also helped me to just appreciate the craft itself”

Segovia joined the opera program at Clayton State under the direction of Dr. Kurt-Alexander Zeller, director of opera and vocal studies, which also fueled Segovia’s fascination with opera.

“You never know what life is going to bring. I would have never have expected to be here, for instance, but I’m thrilled that I am.”

With encouragement from Hoover, Segovia began working professionally as an operatic baritone while he was still a student.

“I auditioned for the Atlanta Opera Chorus and got in fairly young. I think I was 22,” says Segovia. “From there, I was part of their chorus for a few years and started doing their touring shows. I started working with several opera companies in the area and now that [performing opera] is what I do.”

Segovia has enjoyed working full time at Spivey Hall and interacting with all kinds of people. One memorable moment still brings a smile to his face.

“Recently, I was able to meet and work with Bryn Terfel. He is my favorite baritone ever,” Segovia says. “We had a reception after his concert that I was able to set up and he signed a C.D. and we talked for a while.”

Segovia remains active as a musician. He is currently singing in the Atlanta Opera Chorus production of *The Flying Dutchman*. He is also an opera improv performer for Dad’s Garage Theatre in Atlanta.

In addition to performing, Segovia teaches piano and voice at Tune Studio in Grant Park and Music After School.

Segovia plans to pursue a master’s degree in business at Clayton State in the near future, but tries not to predict too much where life will take him.

“You never know what life is going to bring. I would have never have expected to be here, for instance, but I’m thrilled that I am.”

By Brionna Pinkney

Women continue to break the glass ceiling as leaders in business, and Dr. Margaret Thompson, professor of management, knows a thing or two about that.

Since joining Clayton State in 2004, Thompson has seen the Human Resource Leadership program that she spent 10 years developing, rank as one of the top 10 master's programs in the nation.

And, she's been able to find several platforms to advocate for the equality of women in the work place, an ongoing passion of hers, including her Women in Leadership course.

"I recognized it as something that our women on campus needed. 70 percent or so of our students at the time were women and a lot were first generation college students," Thompson says. "I felt like there was a disconnect between what was possible for these women and what they could see at the time. By the end of the course, I hope that the students can understand some of the challenges women have in the workplace and how they can be successful."

Launched in 2006, the course was an immediate hit among students, as it touched on issues related to gender equity in the workplace. In addition to exploring ways to maximize a woman's potential in society, the course has served as an opportunity to discuss issues surrounding sexual harassment at the workplace.

Thompson recalls feeling silenced as a woman in the workplace and has experienced instances of sexual harassment.

"There a lot of things that happen that are painful and confusing and meant to keep you quiet, but that's not what you have to do," she states. "And that's where the Women in Leadership course comes from. Giving women a safe space to talk about some of those things is important. I do encourage men to take the class as well. I call them the smartest men on campus."

Thompson's own journey into business has been an unlikely one.

She comes from a highly artistic family. Her father was a music professor, her mother was a visual artist, and a grandmother was an accomplished writer.

"Music and art was always valued in my family," she says.

Following in the footsteps of her family, Thompson took up an interest in theater as a young child.

"I had two younger brothers and I would get them to be in plays with me," she says. "I would direct plays and we would all play dress up. It was a lot of fun."

After briefly pursuing theatre at Mississippi State University, Thompson decided to graduate with a degree in communication arts.

She eventually earned a master's in organizational communication and a Ph.D. in human resource development, while teaching at Clark Atlanta University.

She also worked as an independent consultant for several businesses, including Equifax and UPS.

"I always had a leg in academia and a leg in corporations," she says.

Having taught in the College of Business for the past 13 years, Thompson has no plans of stopping any time soon.

"Clayton State is a good fit for me because we have a very diverse group of students," she says. "It's not just one demographic and I'm very comfortable in that kind of environment. I feel like I can honestly, actively, and intentionally make conversations around that diversity that can be helpful."



\$1M

SCHOLARSHIP CHALLENGE

At Clayton State University, we honor our mission of welcoming, challenging, and preparing students of all backgrounds and circumstances.

Therefore, as part of the University's comprehensive campaign, Greater In Mind, we have announced a one-million-dollar scholarship challenge so we can help more students complete their education.

HELPING OUR STUDENTS

Many Clayton State students continue to face significant obstacles. Some are personal, but many are financial – they simply don't have the funds to get to the finish line.

Each year, hundreds of students withdraw due to insufficient funds. Often times, this amount is no more than a \$1,000. By supporting the Challenge, you are not only impacting the life of a student, you are contributing to something even greater. You are helping to prepare a new generation of civic-minded, community engaged citizens.

JOIN US IN THIS CHALLENGE

There are various ways to be a part of this challenge such as funding an annual scholarship or endowing your own. Either way, your support not only will bring more students to Clayton State, it will also help current students who need help at a critical point in their journey.

To learn more about Clayton State's first campaign and how to be a part of the \$1M Scholarship Challenge, visit www.clayton.edu/GreaterInMind.



Ty Wilson

**Logistics Industry
Sales Executive**

**Bennett International Group
McDonough, Georgia**

Scholarship Recipient

“ I didn't know how I was going to pay for my last semester. I had maxed out the federal student loan, which left me one semester shy of completing my degree. Five years to the day after my dad passed, I got an email – I was awarded a scholarship that would take care of it.

I didn't apply for the scholarship. Someone in the program knew I was struggling. I found out later it was a supply chain scholarship from the Taylor Family Foundation.

My dad's biggest thing was for me to finish college. It was the only thing he asked of me. So I became the first in my family to graduate from college. Rather than turn a blind eye or think of me as a number, Clayton State helped me finish. ”

GREATER MIND

The Campaign for the Future of
CLAYTON STATE UNIVERSITY

\$9,176,734 TOTAL

Greater In Mind, Clayton State University's first comprehensive fundraising campaign, launched in April of 2017.

With a goal of raising \$12 million in support of students and academic programs, we have already surpassed the halfway mark. This is in large part due to the generous gifts made by individuals. Thank you!

Corporations and foundations are also playing an important role.

The Coca-Cola Foundation awarded the University a \$500,000 grant to establish scholarships for first-generation students and women pursuing STEM programs.

AT&T has gifted \$12,000 for the University's Early Start program. The funds will allow 24 freshman students to participate in the summer program that offers academic coaching, support, and other student services to help them integrate into college life easily.

JDA Software, a leader in global supply chain solutions for large and enterprise companies, gifted two supply chain software programs to the College of Business to teach students about supply chain, Warehouse Management System and Supply Chain Pro software systems.

But the work is not yet finished. There are still many more dreams to make real for our students.

DREAMS. MADE REAL.

GOAL

\$11 M

\$10 M

\$8 M

\$7 M

\$6 M

\$5 M

\$4 M

\$3 M

\$2 M

\$1 M

\$0 M

\$4,370,000
PLANNED GIFT
COMMITMENTS

\$4,806,734
GIFTS AND
PLEDGES

Standing on one side of the glass wall, you can hear the sound of giggling and “aww” from children and adults alike as they watch, star-struck. On the other side are the objects of their fascination and Zoo Atlanta’s most popular attractions, giant pandas Lun Lun, Ya Lun, and Xi Lun.

The trio adorably wander around their habitat while their keeper, Clayton State University alumna Jen Webb ‘10, prepares their next bamboo meal.

Though she only had fish and frogs growing up, Webb always loved animals and knew she wanted to work with wildlife since she was a little girl. She came to Clayton State as a biology major, but was uncertain as to exactly what she wanted to do after graduation.

“Clayton State’s biology program is fantastic! I felt having an undergraduate degree in a broad field would give me more options,” Webb says.

It was not until after a research internship through her biology professor at Clayton State, Dr. Christopher Kodani, and her internship at Zoo Atlanta, that Webb realized she wanted to become a zookeeper.

Webb did not initially have a desire to work with giant pandas. Her favorite animal is the cheetah, and though Zoo Atlanta does not have any, she wanted to eventually transition to the big cats. Seven years on, she happily prefers being with the giant pandas.

“Giant pandas are such quirky, weird animals, and I love quirky and weird,” says Webb with a laugh.

Leave the glamour at the door

Being a zookeeper is not an easy job. It involves a constant cycle of feeding and cleaning after the animals. Webb makes sure all the animals are healthy when she arrives each day and then feeds them for the first of five times. Giant pandas must be continuously fed because, while they are of the mammalian order Carnivora, they only eat bamboo.

“They have a polycyclic cycle, which means they are constantly eating, sleeping, eating, sleeping so they can get enough caloric intake to live,” says Webb.

After feeding the giant pandas in the morning, she then cleans the mess made overnight. She’ll have to clean again later in the morning. And clean again. And again. And again.

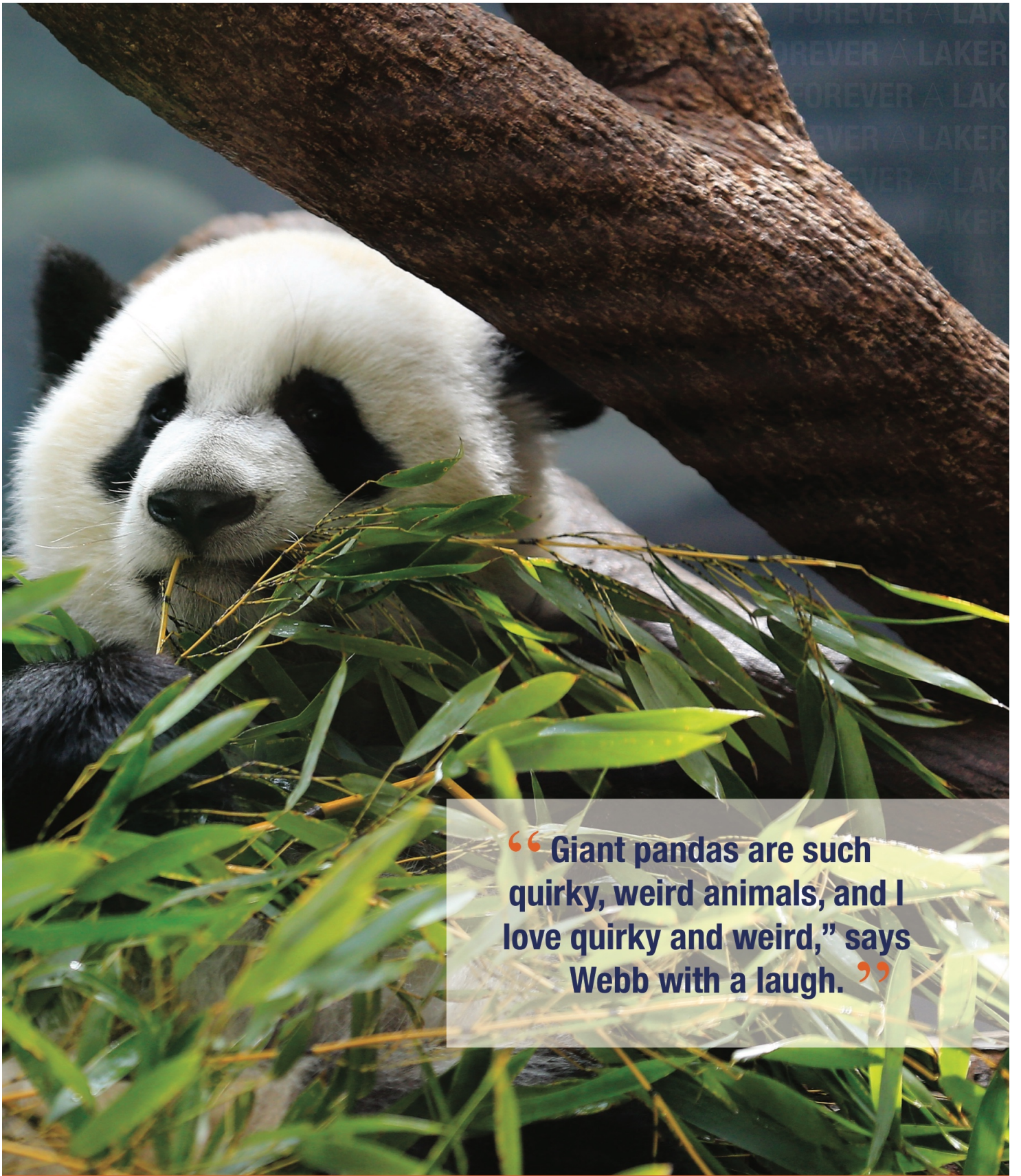
“You have to really love working with the animals. Most zookeepers are not there for the paycheck,” she says. “You do it for the passion of the animals and protecting the environment.”

Making a difference

Giant pandas are considered an endangered species due to forest destruction and poaching. However, the wild giant panda population has increased to over 1,800, and programs like the one at Zoo Atlanta have played a major role. The zoo is one of only four in the United States with giant pandas, all of which are on loan from China.

“Everything we do helps protect the species as a whole. The hope is we will be able to build up a stable, captive population and then start reproducing that captive population to reintroduce them back into the wild,” says Webb.





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Her favorite moment working at Zoo Atlanta came when Ya Lun and Xi Lun were born. Zookeepers were aware that their mother, Lun Lun, was pregnant after conducting an ultrasound. However, the twins were a surprise.

She was part of the overnight team taking care of the cubs initially, since baby giant pandas are blind, deaf,

and unable to regulate their body temperature for the first month. It's the reason, she says, why there are almost no cases of both pandas born as twins surviving in the wild—the mother has to choose to which cub she will give the necessary continual care.

Though giant pandas are wild animals and not their pets, zookeepers build

an emotional bond with the animals. The twin panda cubs, Ya Lun and Xi Lun, will be returned to China to be released in the wild after they turn three years old, and that will be bittersweet.

“It's sad to see them go,” Webb says. “But, at the same time, it's kind of like watching your kids go off to college.”



MILESTONES:



Asia Green

B.B.A. Accounting, 2015
Celebrated the birth of her first child. Kayden B. Wilson was born on January 1, 2017.

Lisa Austin

B.S. Healthcare Management, 2012
Started her career in cardiology in December 2016. She is a cardiac monitor technician at Emory Healthcare, as well as a cardiology technician at DeKalb Medical Center. She looks forward to continuing her education and helping hearts one day at a time.



Christelle D. Watkins & Jordan Watkins

B.S. Healthcare Management, 2014 and B.B.A. Business Administration, 2015
Were married in September 2017 and moved to Birmingham, Alabama. Jordan recently accepted a new job.



Natalie Atkinson

B.S. Political Science, 2007
Recently graduated from the Miami School of Law in May 2016. She has started working as an assistant solicitor in the Fulton County Solicitor General's Office prosecuting misdemeanors in State Court.

Karen Sue Langford

B.B.A. General Business, 2015
Promoted in June 2016 to the position of staff accountant at Purchasing Power. She wants to thank all the faculty and staff at Clayton State for always encouraging her to reach her dreams.



Marcus Dickerson

B.S. Political Science, 2010
Graduated from John Marshall Law School and has launched his own firm, The Dickerson Firm, specializing in personal injury, civil and criminal defense.



Mikaela Thomas

B.A. Communication and Media Studies, 2013
Recently started her own social media brand, Mikaela Thomas TV, on Facebook and Instagram focusing solely on sports news.



Deja N. Mackey

B.S. Healthcare Management, 2013
Started a new job with Equifax as the Benefits/Leave Specialist in July 2017. She also had a baby girl on September 26, 2017.

Oluwatobi A. Tokoya

M.B.A., 2015
Accepted a position as client relations executive at Peach State Integrated Technologies.



Roodgine Bray

B.S. Criminal Justice, 2008
Named a member of The National Black Lawyers Top 40 Under 40 by the National Black Lawyers Association. She is a litigation attorney with the Davis Bozeman Law Firm. She is married to Earl Bray and the mother of two daughters, Elise and Elisabeth.

Jameson Mason

B.A. English, 2012
Accepted a job as a founding teacher at The Bara School, a new community-based Christian Montessori school in Clayton County.

WE  OUR ALUMNI
and WANT YOUR OPINION!

The Alumni Association will be conducting an important **alumni survey in March** that we hope will transform the way we engage and support you. The survey will be sent via email. To have your voice heard, **update your email** address today.

Please visit www.clayton.edu/update



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



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THE DATE
MARCH 1ST
2018

A DAY OF GIVING FOR
#GIVE4DREAMS

CLAYTON STATE UNIVERSITY