

VOLUME
13
ISSUE 1
SPRING 2019

THE LAKER

CONNECTION

A Publication of Clayton State University

get local!

CLAYTON STATE UNIVERSITY
MAKES ITS MARK AROUND
METRO ATLANTA





ON THE COVER: An illustration of all the ways Clayton State has made an impact locally.



6

COVER STORY

GET LOCAL Clayton State University has stretched its footprint all across greater Atlanta. From entrepreneurs to researchers to history buffs, Laker spirit can be found in the local places where current students, faculty, staff and alumni are making a big impact.

FEATURE

24 A New Lead

In August 2018, Ryan Erlacher was officially announced as Clayton State University's new Director of Athletics, making him the fourth in the program's 29-year history. Just a few months into his tenure, the Florida native reflects on his experience so far and sets his sights on a new vision for Athletics at Clayton State.



What's your favorite local thing to do near Clayton State?

PRESIDENT Dr. Thomas J. Hynes Jr.

"When I'm in the mood for some Jamaican food, I like to visit Jamrock South Bar & Grill. They serve up yummy Caribbean delights!"

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"La Oaxaquena! it's an amazing local Mexican eatery. A true culinary hidden gem!"

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"I love going to the Farmers Market and also trying new restaurants in the area. Surprisingly you can find some delicious tacos at local Mexican restaurants around CSU!"

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"One of my favorite spots near campus is the State Farmers Market. I enjoy everything, from the fresh produce to seasonal items like pumpkins and Christmas trees!"

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"Hanging out at North 2 South Cider Works with co-workers after a day at the office."

"The Reynolds Nature Preserve in Morrow. My family hiked it last summer and it was great."

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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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A photograph of a commencement ceremony in a gymnasium. In the foreground, graduates in blue caps and gowns are seated, some looking towards the camera and others towards the stage. In the background, a large crowd of spectators is visible, many with their arms raised. An American flag is on the left, and a banner for the 2007 NCAA Women's Basketball Final Four is on the right. A dark blue banner with white text is overlaid on the top left, and an orange banner with white text is overlaid on the middle left.

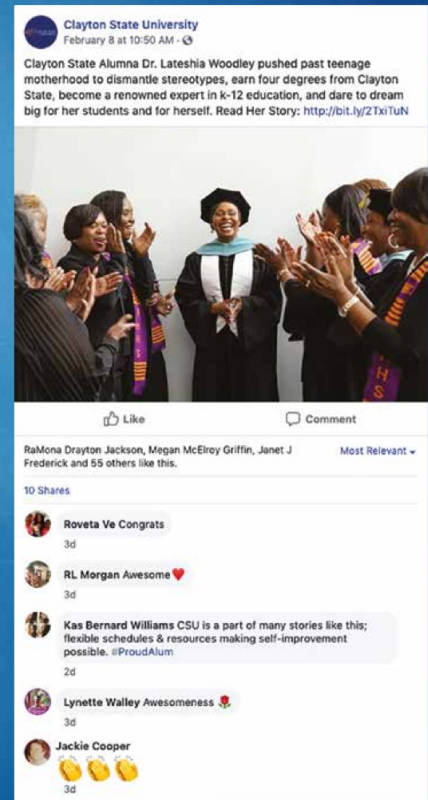
9 a.m. Dec. 8, 2018

Undergraduates during the fall 2018 commencement ceremonies shout out their family and friends who have supported them along their academic journey.



Letter to the Editor

Many of you were thrilled to read the moving story about Clayton State alumna Dr. Lateshia Woodley '03 and her remarkable journey to becoming a top education leader in the nation.



THE LAKER LOUNGE

official podcast of Clayton State University

Tune into Clayton State University's new podcast, *The Laker Lounge*. We'll talk about timely topics and little-known stories featuring the best and brightest minds at Clayton State.

February's Topic
Dr. Jelani Favors, assistant professor of history, discusses his new book, *Shelter in a Time of Storm*, and how HBCUs have educated African Americans beyond the standard curriculum to start movements for freedom and justice for nearly two centuries.

thelakerlounge.clayton.edu



Message from the President

As a part of the institution's Strategic Plan 2020, the university-wide planning process distinguished as an institutional vision that we would strive to be identified as "...a national model for university-based community engagement and for equipping students with the knowledge, skills and motivations for learning and success." This volume of the Laker Connection highlights just a few of many examples of programs, students, and alumni whose work demonstrates that this vision for engagement and education is a dream for Clayton State being made real.

Very often, the idea of applying classroom learning to community-based issues seems to be reserved for students and graduates of service-related professions taught at Clayton State—nursing, law enforcement, accounting. But as the examples included in this issue demonstrate, the connection of learning to the communities we serve are wide-ranging and significant.

Faculty and students in our Health and Fitness Management program, for example, have assisted local fire departments in the region to improve their fitness levels so they can continue to provide a public service to the community. Students from our archival studies program have participated in the national Public Broadcasting Preservation Fellowship (our program is one of only five archival programs nationally to participate). The digital preservation of Georgia Public Broadcasting's Georgia Gazette not only contributes to student learning, but serves to preserve important components of the stories of Georgia's people.

Two other examples in the magazine of community engagement among our students and alumni provide food for thought, as well as food for other purposes. Alumnus John Starr is owner/operator of the Snellville Chick-fil-A, and applies his own lessons of leadership to support the work of young employees and community members.

DREAMS. MADE REAL.

DR. THOMAS J. HYNES JR.

Dr. Richard Singiser introduced students last fall to the chemistry of food. I know this from personal interactions with students in the class. Two of those students shared with me (in an informal conversation) their own theories in the leavening of bread and the effects of various sweeteners upon the fashion in which yeast could contribute to bread rising.

These and other stories shared in this volume provide a glimpse of the ways in which Clayton State weaves its mission and vision into the learning activities happening every day here on campus.

Please enjoy this work. And as we embark on preparing to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the founding of Clayton State University, feel free to share with us events or memories in which Clayton State contributed to making real some of your own dreams.



get local



CONNECTED. GROUNDED. HOMEGROWN.

CLAYTON STATE UNIVERSITY IS ALL OF THESE AND SO MUCH MORE.

WE'RE MADE UP OF VASTLY UNIQUE PEOPLE EACH WITH THEIR OWN PERSONAL STORIES.

READ ON TO FIND OUT WHAT LOCAL MEANS TO OUR LAKER FAMILY.



TACOS

and a touch of community

By Kelly Petty

For Katy Bell '14, the restaurant business has been a part of her life since she could remember. Growing up in a small town in Colorado, she would watch her dad and mom run their family-owned restaurant.

"I'd walk to kindergarten and then after school, I'd walk to my dad's restaurant," she says.

As she got older, Katy took on waitressing jobs, but it was her oldest brother who attended culinary school and became a chef. Katy, a high school graduate, eventually moved to Georgia to support her other brother, serving in the military, and his family.

She worked her way up from being a mail clerk at a corporate office in Atlanta to becoming a property tax consultant, then ending up at Home Depot, where she headed up the corporate property tax department.

Still, Katy knew she had a passion for the food business.

"I thought it would be cool to have my own little restaurant," she says.

Her big break came in an unusual way. After 15 years with Home Depot, Katy got laid off in January of 2013. It was quite a time for her, she recalled, because she was a newlywed and learned a month after losing her job that she was pregnant.

Unsure of what her next move would be, Katy's husband encouraged her to go to college. He had graduated with both an undergraduate and graduate degree from Clayton State University and thought it would be a good fit for her. He signed her up to start in the summer of 2013.





“Everything I’ve learned in school is being put into place,” Katy says. “From marketing, to networking, to management, to hiring, to the HR classes—everything I took at Clayton State has given me more of a foundation to do this project.”

“I was too ignorant to know the difference, but he loaded me up with five classes that summer,” she laughed.

As a nontraditional student, going to college was a huge change. Katy had to enroll as a freshman and get use to the rigors of college.

Sometimes, it proved tough.

Her baby was due in September of that year, and she had to miss two weeks of class. To make matters difficult, her newborn son struggled with a number of illnesses in his first two years, including a clogged tear duct and a dislocated hip that required a hospital stay and a full-body cast.

“It was my professors who kept encouraging me. I was putting forth the work and putting forth the effort, so they were okay with me emailing my assignments than having to be in class,” Katy says.

“Otherwise I wouldn’t have done it. I would have given up.”

In spite of the circumstances, Katy persevered and was awarded Clayton State University’s Women’s Forum Scholarship. The funding pushed her to finish her degree.

“I can’t quit because I’ve earned a scholarship, and someone believes in me,” she says.

Within months before completing her degree, Katy went on a few job interviews. She quickly realized that entrepreneurship was her path.

A friend told her about a vacant storefront on the McDonough Square in McDonough, GA. She went to Facebook to poll

her friends and family on the food concept. Tacos and ice cream were the winners.

By the summer of 2018, she began renovating the space, tapping into the local business community to help with the design of the restaurant, which includes a colorful mural painted by a local artist.

Macon Street Tacos officially opened its doors in August of 2018, serving up made-to-order tacos and fruit sangrias using the freshest ingredients. An assortment of homemade ice cream flavors tops off the menu.

“Everything I’ve learned in school is being put into place,” Katy says. “From marketing, to networking, to management, to hiring, to the HR classes—everything I took at Clayton State has given me more of a foundation to do this project.”

And it’s paying off. Katy’s customer base is growing and she’s thrilled to be a part of the revitalization happening on the square.

Her cantina space in the back of her restaurant has become a great social gathering spot and has welcomed guests like the local rotary club and the Henry County Players. She’s also struck up a deal with the camera museum nearby for a date night deal for couples looking to have a fun night on the town.

Katy has truly come full circle from those childhood days of watching her dad serve locals a warm meal. With her own business, she hopes to continue the legacy.

“I would love to be a destination on the square—to be somewhere fun and festive, and community focused,” she says.

Chicken

with a side of dreams



**"He who is faithful with
little, more will be given."**

**— John Starr, Owner/Operator
Chick-fil-A Snellville, Georgia**

By Erin Fender

Some would say that for John Starr '16, his path toward a career at Chick-fil-A began at 14-years-old with a little faith.

"I was in Truett Cathy's Sunday school class and he asked if I wanted to work for Chick-fil-A to start earning money," says John. "My parents also thought it was a good idea, so I could learn how to work as a team, learn responsibility and be in a good working environment."

By the time John was 18 and graduated from high school, his thoughts turned toward becoming a franchise owner. His passion for listening to others' stories and serving caught the eye of his operator at the Chick-fil-A.

"Chick-fil-A has always been known for developing people," John says. "I stayed with them because for the first time at 20 years old, I had a franchise owner believe in me and show me the gifts and talents I had. He helped me see my value and purpose in life and made sure I had the tools to succeed."

That owner's vote of confidence gave John the push he needed to make entrepreneurship, education, and mentorship the core of his professional and personal values. He quickly realized to achieve his dreams, he had to go to school.

"No one in my family had ever gone to college and I wanted to set the bar for my family. I wanted to have a better life for my kids and show them not to ever give up on your dreams," John says.

He chose Clayton State to achieve his dreams because it was affordable and close to home.

"I also heard the professors were top notch and would be able to get me to my next step in my career," says John, who graduated in 2016 with a bachelor's degree in Organizational Leadership from Clayton State.

Upon completion of his degree, an opportunity to become a Chick-fil-A Owner/Operator was within reach. In fall of 2017, he officially began running the Snellville, Georgia location.

"No one in my family had ever gone to college and I wanted to set the bar for my family. I wanted to have a better life for my kids and show them not to ever give up on your dreams," John says.

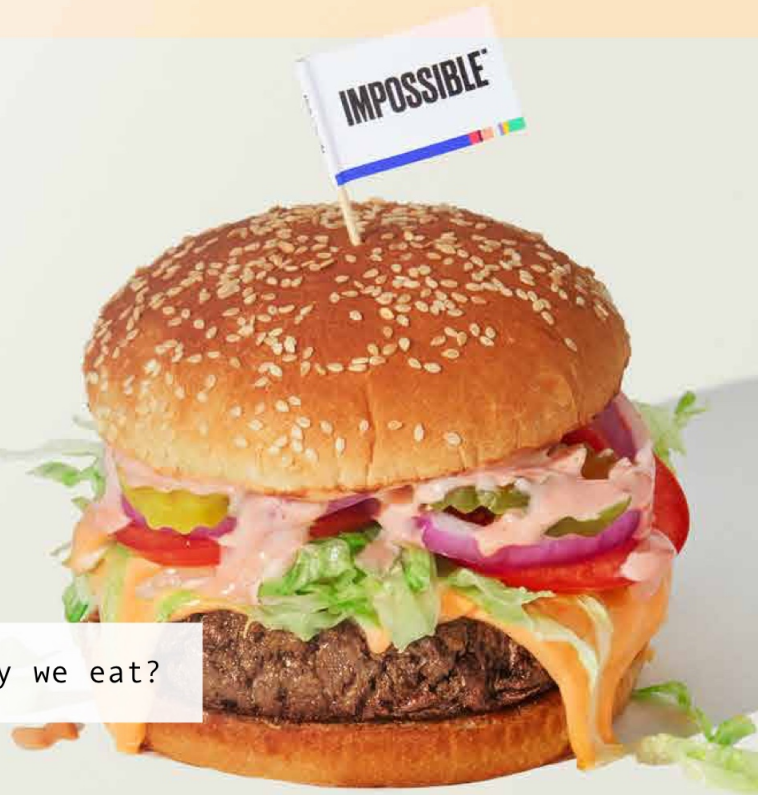
"My passion is people. When I talk to people and hear their stories, it motivates me," says John. "And now I get to be in a position where not only do I get to hear their stories, but I am also able to help them make their dreams come true or help them through a tough situation."

Besides running a restaurant, John mentors 25 to 30 local high school students who have the potential to become a future Owner/Operator. It is a two-year program through Chick-fil-A that allows him to get to know each person to better enrich their lives and support their entrepreneurial spirit.



"I teach them skills such as servant leadership, teamwork, and how to better use their talents and gifts. I also teach them things in my journey that I have learned and what it means to be a good steward of your time, money and resources," John says. "He who is faithful with little, more will be given."

Impossibly *Delicious*



Can engineered food change the way we eat?

By Kelly Petty

When the Impossible Burger debuted in July of 2016, scientists had set out to create the meatiest, juiciest burger completely made out of plant derivatives.

The mission was simple: find a plant-based alternative to the farm-raised protein that could feed people, while at the same time eliminating the environmental effects that animal agriculture poses.

Yet, the Impossible Burger raises questions on the future of food production. Could we be at the next frontier of engineered food that could drastically change what we eat and how it impacts the planet?

At the onset of the agricultural age, humans found numerous ways to preserve and prepare animal meat for human consumption.

Salting, smoking, pickling, and fermentation were ways that ancient societies preserved food and avoided spoilage. By the 19th and 20th centuries, thanks to science, techniques including canning, freezing, pasteurization, and dehydration gave food a longer shelf life and improved food safety.

Those food preservation methods not only changed the way people kept food, but it increased the availability of different foods to the public. It also signaled a shift toward more processed foods coming onto the market.

“When we look at ingredients in more modern, mass-produced foods, we notice some changes. While many meats were traditionally smoked or salted to preserve them, freezing and better refrigeration methods allowed for less salt,” says Dr. Richard Singiser, associate professor of Chemistry. “However, mass production and profit margins cause other changes in ingredients.”

Mass produced “meat products,” for example, have substantial quantities of fillers added to give the customer the illusion of a larger meat portion in the packaged food, Dr. Singiser says. As a result, the nutritional quality of the product is reduced in an effort to keep costs down.

The greater demand for less-expensive food among consumers has created some unintended consequences for our food supply.

“Scientists try to mass produce food to deal with that,” Dr. Singiser says. “They engineer foods to have specific nutrients or be resistant to weeds and pests, but it can make scientists question whether they are doing a good thing.”

Even now, as the popularity of organic food continues to grow, it comes at a cost, Dr. Singiser notes.

“Healthy food, food access, and mass production are not equal and unlimited supplies,” he says. “There are many economic, social, and technological challenges that will need to be worked out.”

“When people are accepting of the knowledge of science and knowledge of chemistry and how it’s put together, it can definitely be a step in a direction toward a lot more people having access to healthier foods.”

–Dr. Richard Singiser, associate professor of Chemistry

Those uncertainties about the food supply and the future needs of a worldwide population that is 7.7 billion and counting, is what led Stanford University biochemistry professor Patrick O. Brown to start his company Impossible Foods in 2011 and create the Impossible Burger.

Brown and his team discovered the secret ingredient to making a plant-based burger taste like meat that could attract more meat-eaters in an effort to reduce their consumption of animal-based protein.

Heme, a component of a protein molecule that gives blood its red color and is an oxygen carrier in living organisms, could also be found in plants and legumes. The Impossible Burger’s heme is sourced from the leghemoglobin molecule found in soy plants.

To replicate the texture and greasiness of a burger, coconut fat, textured wheat, and potato proteins were added to the mix.

“I think it can be a much healthier alternative for people, especially people who have health implications with eating meat,” Dr. Singiser says.

Chemistry and biology students at Clayton State University studied the chemical structures of meat from different animal sources as part of a new food science course offered in the fall of 2018.

Taught by Dr. Singiser, students explored the different protein structures of various animal sources—cows, poultry, pork, and fish—comparing how their chemical compounds affect texture, aroma, flavor, and spoilage. The lesson in

meat culminated in a taste test experience that looked at plant-based versus animal-based meats.

Students who tried the Impossible Burger had mixed feelings about the taste and texture of the burger.

“It was interesting because I really like actual meat. I’m always kind of wary of alternatives,” says biology major Jordan Daniel. “But it was actually really good. The texture of it was a little bit different from the real burger, but it was still close enough.”

Others felt while the Impossible Burger was tasty, it still didn’t match the flavor of a real burger.

“I think it’s a great imitation,” says Linda Ibarra-Almodovar, a chemistry and biology major.

Dr. Singiser says further study into creating food sources that move people away from traditional animal farming could have long-term positive effects on the environment, including a reduction in land area use as growing plants takes less resources than cultivating animals that eat the plants for nourishment.

“As soon as society can get on board with understanding that [the Impossible Burger] actually is kind of a synthetic product, nothing is fake if you will,” Dr. Singiser says. “All of the molecules and plant binders are real; they come from a lot of different sources and are mixed together. When people are accepting of the knowledge of science and knowledge of chemistry and how it’s put together, it can definitely be a step in a direction toward a lot more people having access to healthier foods.”



Here are some local spots where you can try an Impossible Burger:

Hamburger Mike’s
1533 Jodeco Rd Suite A
Stockbridge, GA 30281

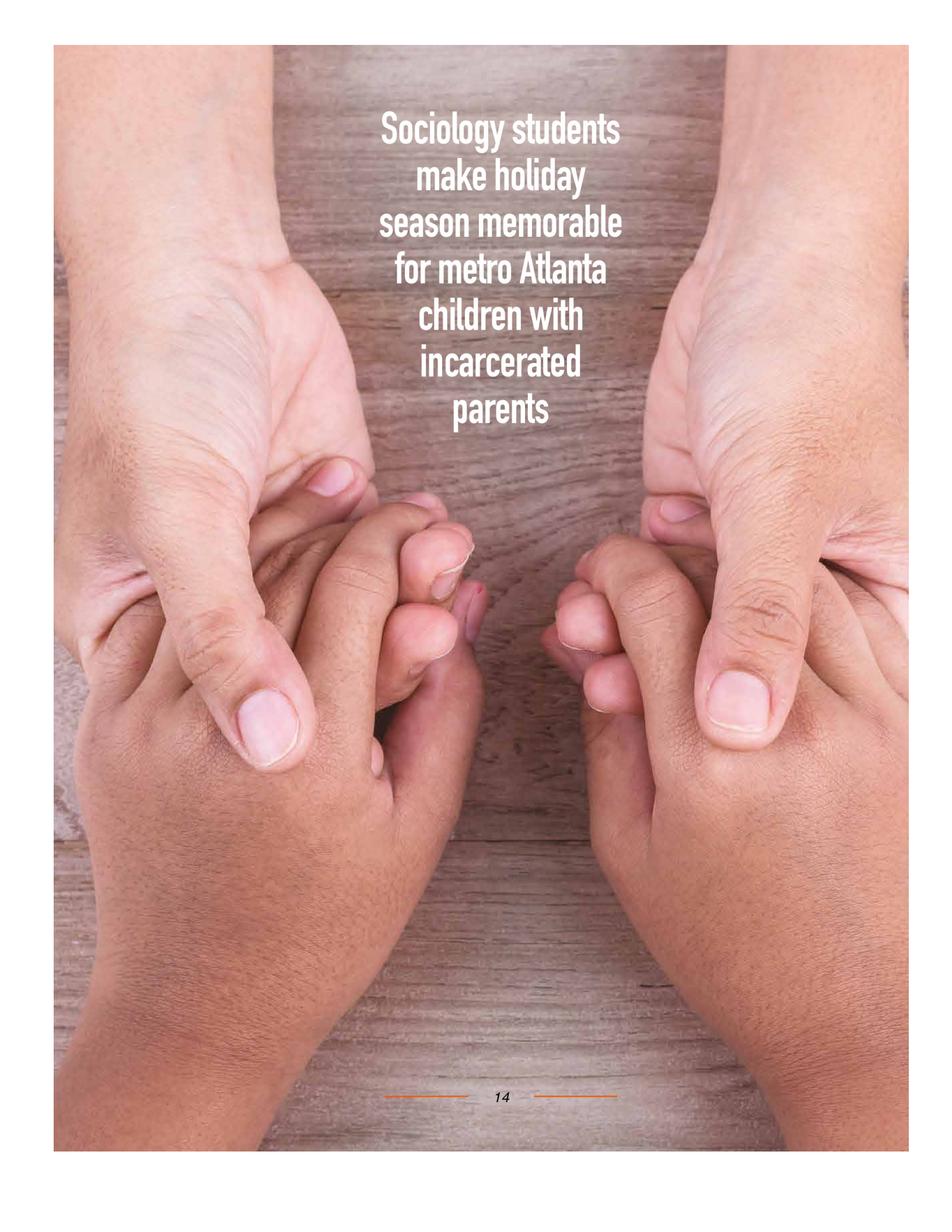
Kirby G’s Diner & Pub
45 Macon St
McDonough, GA 30253

That Burger Spot
3966, 723 GA-138
Riverdale, GA 30274

Your Pie
140 Pavilion Pkwy
Fayetteville, GA 30214

Green Soma Cafe
626 S Central Ave
Hapeville, GA 30354





**Sociology students
make holiday
season memorable
for metro Atlanta
children with
incarcerated
parents**

By Erin Fender

An unintended victim of individuals who are incarcerated is children. In Georgia alone, more than 240,000 children have had a parent be jailed or imprisoned, according to a 2016 report from the Annie E. Casey Foundation. The effects of incarceration on children can disrupt a child's social and emotional well-being leading to behavior problems, poor outcomes in school, and potential severed relationships with the parent.

To help Clayton State University students understand how metro Atlanta families with incarcerated parents cope, sociology instructor Taralyn Keese partnered with nonprofit organization Foreverfamily to complete a service learning project for her Social Problems course.

"The objectives for our work with Foreverfamily were to provide services to children with incarcerated parents and their families," Keese says. "To ensure that no matter what the circumstances, all children have the opportunity to be surrounded by the love of family."

Foreverfamily provides services, resources, and support to children and their parents affected by incarceration. Children have an opportunity to visit their parent, while parents are given the tools they need to parent from jail or prison, as well as maintain their parental rights upon re-entry into society. Caregivers for their children are also provided a support system to manage taking care of a child whose parent is incarcerated.

Keese's classes volunteered twice during the fall 2018 semester to help Foreverfamily prepare for the holiday season, a difficult time for families dealing with incarceration.

"Based on feedback I have received from students, many indicated they learned how resilient many of the children with incarcerated parents were," says Keese. "This opportunity gave students the chance to learn and understand how sociologists define, study, and

respond to social problems, with special attention to those that influence human behavior in the United States."

Just before Thanksgiving, students assisted with creating baskets for the families based on their needs. On another day, the students helped the children get ready for visitation at detention centers around Atlanta. Students made breakfast and prepped holiday gifts. Each year, local churches request wish lists from the children so that church members may gift needs and wants to these families.

"Seeing the kids come back from the trip full of joy was the best part of the experience," says Tiffany Perez, a junior criminal justice major at Clayton State. "I love Foreverfamily and everything they do. I look forward to volunteering with them in the future."

The service learning component of Keese's class is part of Clayton State's experiential learning initiative, Partnering Academics and Community Engagement (PACE). The program offers students opportunities to gain hands-on, real world experience outside of the classroom that connects their in-class learning to the needs of the community.

Students develop and sharpen their problem solving, research, and communication skills. In turn, community partners like Foreverfamily benefit from the additional assistance and student knowledge the program brings.

"By deepening the connections between our campus and our communities, Clayton State can provide instrumental and meaningful service to our partners in the community while supporting our students' learning," says Dr. Antoinette Miller, professor of psychology and PACE director. "Engaging with our communities also enriches our students' and faculty's experiences both as members of the Clayton State community and as citizens."

"The objectives for our work with Foreverfamily were to provide services to children with incarcerated parents and their families," Keese says.

"To ensure that no matter what the circumstances, all children have the opportunity to be surrounded by the love of family."

PROTECT THIS HOUSE

A Clayton State alumnus tackles security for NFL's biggest Sunday

By Michael Little

While most fans are still reliving the memorable moments from Super Bowl LII, those that worked the big game are closing a chapter on months of preparation leading up to NFL's most important Sunday.

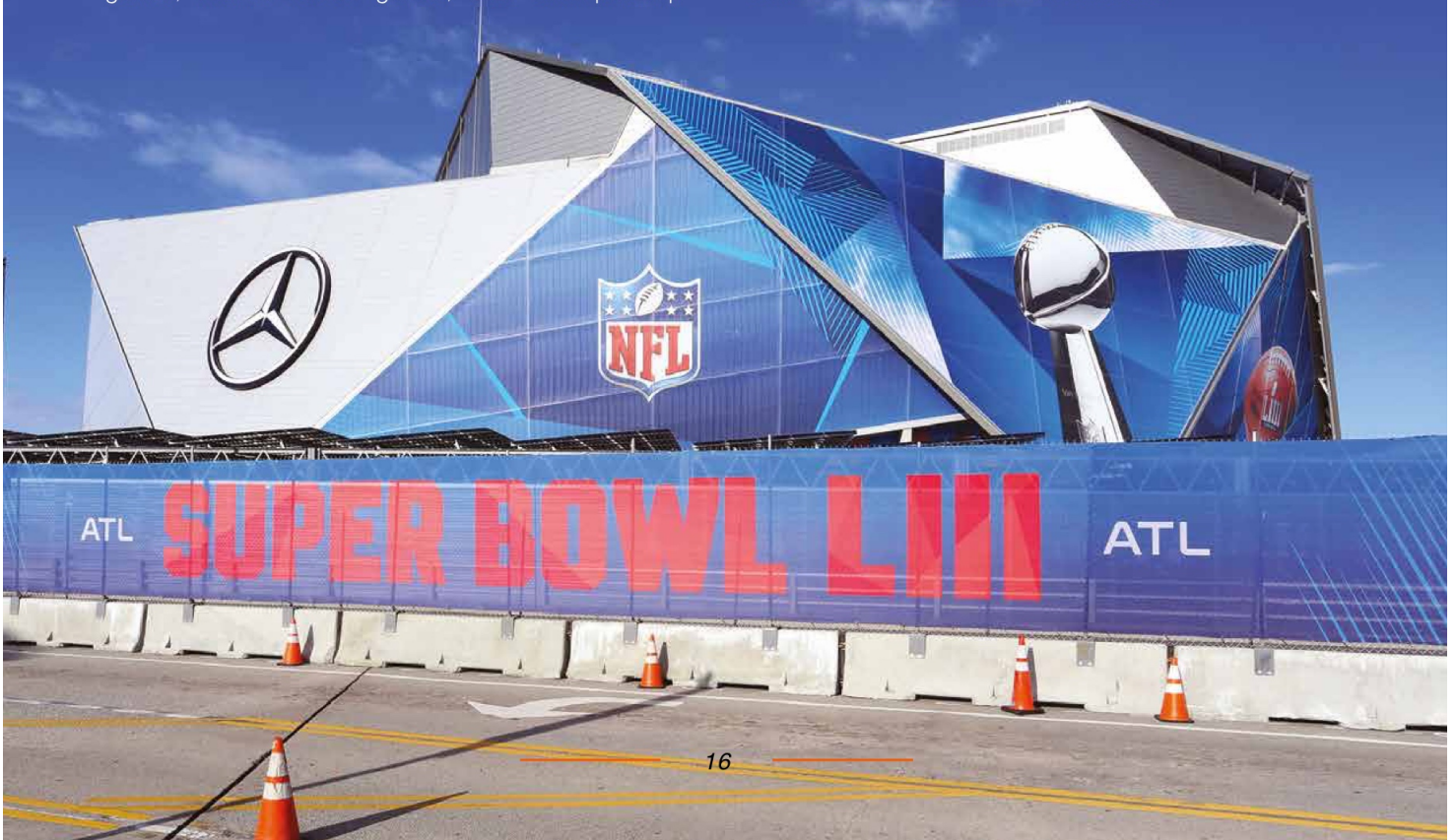
Clayton State alumnus Scott Ashworth '15 is one of those people. As the director of security for Atlanta United FC, Scott earned the opportunity of a lifetime to serve on the security team at Mercedes Benz Stadium for this year's Super Bowl.

"In the short time I have worked in the sports and entertainment security industry, my goal was to be a giant sponge, soaking up as much information and experience as humanly possible," Scott says. "In this short time, I found myself on security teams working Atlanta United games, Atlanta Falcon games, SEC Championship

games, an MLS Cup Championship game, an MLS All-Star game, Super Bowl 52, and other large-scale events. These experiences have helped me hone the abilities necessary to be an effective team member and leader for an event such as Super Bowl 53."

Preparing for the 53rd championship game was a year-long effort for Scott. As a contracted member of the security for last year's Super Bowl, Scott had the opportunity to go to Minneapolis and get an up-close look at operations for game day and pre-Super Bowl events.

That meant managing security around the NFL Experience and the NFL Tailgate Party, as well as being responsible for post-game on-field security between the Patriots bench and the Patriots end zone.



“The cooperation between security, NFL security, national guard units, and law enforcement from every level work together to provide a high level of security.”

-Scott Ashworth '15

“During this time, I observed how the Super Bowl and surrounding events truly take over a city,” Scott remembers. “The events draw thousands of fans every day to exhibits, concerts, attractions, meet and greets with celebrities and athletes, and other fun activities. With all this, there is a great need to keep everyone safe. The cooperation between security, NFL security, national guard units, and law enforcement from every level work together to provide a high level of security.”

With so many high-profile sporting events to his name, it's easy to forget the journey it took for Scott to be where he is professionally.

His educational career began at another university where he was studying business. After discovering business was not his passion, Scott spent some time soul-searching for the right path for his career. It took recalling his dreams as a child to decide where he would go next.

“I remembered my days as a child and how I idealized police officers,” Scott says. “I took some advice from my five-year-old self and set my sights on being an officer.”

Pursuing this new journey in law enforcement, Scott joined the Forest Park Police Department as a reserve.

“There is simply no more rewarding feeling after a long day of work than the feeling of making a positive difference in someone's life,” he says.

While serving with Forest Park PD, Scott began to think about returning to complete his college degree. He knew this would not be difficult as he was working nights as a crime scene investigator, and he wondered to himself how it could be done. However, after approaching his chief and Clayton State adjunct professor Dwayne Hobbs, Scott knew Clayton State would be the right fit for him.

As a non-traditional student with a full-time job, Scott faced the challenges many Clayton State students face. However, also like many students, he had professors who were empathetic to his hectic work/school schedule and

walked him through the plan to complete his degree.

As Atlanta began preparing for the first season of Atlanta United soccer, a close friend of Scott's told him about the position of team security manager. With his aforementioned love of sports and the skill set he had built on the police force and at Clayton State, he applied and began working with the organization in September 2017.

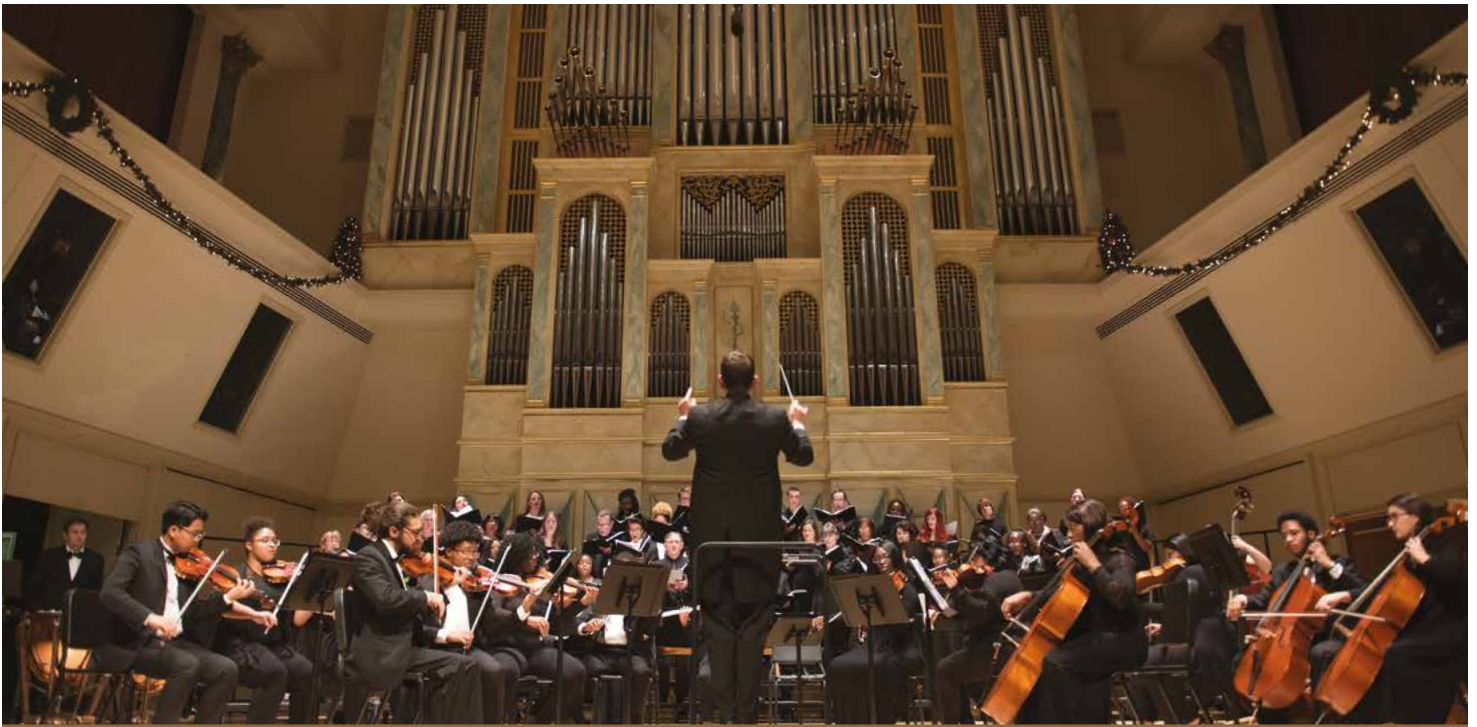
“With as many moving parts as a professional sports team has, it's a huge responsibility to ensure the safety of not only the players, but staff, fans, and assets of Atlanta United,” Scott notes.

That same sentiment was quite true for this year's Super Bowl where it was estimated that more than 150,000 guests were expected to be in Atlanta with over one million people attending various events, according to the Atlanta Journal-Constitution.

But if you ask Scott, his team is ready for any challenge—even the Super Bowl.

“The security team at Mercedes Benz Stadium has hosted major events, multiple celebrities, and even sitting presidents,” Scott says. “I work with what I believe to be the best team in venue security around the world.”





VOICES UNITED

By Erin Fender

At its heart, the Masterworks Chorus at Spivey Hall is about community. It's comprised of a diverse group of vocalists with varied backgrounds that come together to perform and bring the sounds of classical works alive to music lovers in the Southern Crescent both near and far.

But for those who participate in the choir, the Masterworks Chorus is more than just a performance ensemble—it's a lesson in the art and technique of vocal expression.

"The consumption of art that we put on is important in any community," says music education major Brian Adams. "Everybody can enjoy it, take part in it, and sing with the group."

The Masterworks Chorus is headed up by Dr. Harris Ipock, a new face at Clayton State University this academic year, currently serving as interim director of Choral Activities.

Dr. Ipock discovered his passion for singing early in his college career, having joined four choirs by the end of his freshman year.

"I realized it was something very much in my DNA and I just had to pursue it as a career," says Dr. Ipock. "That is the main motivating factor. As a job, it is completely a dream job to be able to make music with other human beings for a living. I cannot imagine doing anything else."

Indeed, Dr. Ipock has turned his love for vocal performance into a full-fledged career. Prior to Clayton State, he served as conductor of the Conservatory Choir at Shenandoah Conservatory and the Harvard Glee Club.

As conductor of the Masterworks Chorus, Dr. Ipock works to make the learning process a positive experience.

"I think with the overall pedagogical approach, I try to teach broad and simple skills early on in the process, so they get a sense when I use a certain term or color, they know exactly what to do," says Dr. Ipock. "This makes sure I am always consistent with specific direction, a consistent way of bringing it up. The fact that in just a few short weeks of rehearsal we can put something together so beautiful is infinitely inspiring."

**“THE CONSUMPTION
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MAJOR BRIAN ADAMS.
“EVERYBODY CAN
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THE GROUP.”**

Being a member of the Masterworks Chorus takes time and dedication. In fact, the choir ensemble spends a whole semester learning, rehearsing and performing together. Often, they collaborate with other choirs and orchestras from the surrounding community or within the University.

“I’ve learned a lot since day one. I came from a performing arts school, so I have been singing in the choir forever,” says Jamie Gray, a music education major at Clayton State. “I have had great mentors and chorus teachers, but when I met Dr. Ipock, it just completely changed my whole idea of what is a choral educator.”

For others, singing with the Masterworks Chorus gives members an opportunity to perform alongside seasoned talent in a supportive, encouraging environment.

“This is not your average church choir,” says Mark McPherson, a community member and local educator. “We have real professionals who by their own right are excellent musicians who have been selected by the University to lead and to instruct. We get the best training as well as the best place to do it.”

The Masterworks Chorus combines high musical standards with an emphasis on building community and enriching the lives of chorus members and audiences alike. With upcoming performances in April 2019, the choir is currently open to new members. Please contact Dr. Harris Ipock at harrisipock@clayton.edu for more information.



Health and Fitness Management students team up with Riverdale fire department on fitness initiative



By Kelly Petty

Every 24 seconds, a U.S. fire department responds to a fire, according to the National Fire Protection Association. In 2017 alone, public fire departments responded to more than 1.3 million fires. It's no wonder that firefighters have a high-stressed job.

To improve the physical condition of firefighters, fire departments across the country are making it a priority to develop health and wellness initiatives to ensure firefighters are at their healthiest both on- and off-duty.

"There's a high mortality rate for firefighters," says Sterling Jones, fire chief of the city of Riverdale fire department. "Typically, within 3 to 5 years after retirement, that's when death hits."

Be it bad eating habits or lack of exercise, Jones says firefighters can suffer from health issues that can affect a firefighter long after their career is over.

Early in 2018, Jones partnered with Clayton State University's Health and Fitness Management (HFMG) department to develop a firefighter fitness initiative. Jones had experience developing wellness programs working with the cities of Atlanta and Augusta.

Through the Clayton County Chamber's Leadership Clayton program, Jones reached out to Dr. Melanie Poudevigne, director of the university's Health and Fitness Management program to create a fitness initiative for Riverdale's firefighters.

The fitness initiative is based off the National Fire Protection Association standard on how fire departments should establish medical programs that will reduce risks and improve the health and safety of firefighters.

HFMG students tested a number of factors including muscle endurance, flexibility, oxygen consumption, agility, in addition to calculating a more accurate account for body fat percentage.

"It is important for the firefighters to have proper cardio endurance along with muscle endurance to perform their job. This way they are able to wear their equipment and gear and endure the fires longer," says senior Christina Day.

Day said many of the firefighters she spoke to complained of poor nutrition and lack of sleep.

Jones said his firefighters work 24 hours and then take off for 48 hours. Workdays can vary, with the fire department answering 2-3 fires a night. Trying to eat can be a challenge, especially with someone dealing with diabetes, weight issues, or high blood pressure.

"You go 12 hours without eating or taking your insulin shot—you can't take time out to go back to station to get insulin," Jones says. "You may get a snack in but have to get back to work."

Adding to the demands of the job, firefighters wear heavy fire equipment and carry large tools, which puts further stress on their bodies.

"With our jobs, it's almost like an athlete. We wear about 75 pounds of weight on our back when we go into a working fire," Jones says. "We're doing a lot of things that take a lot of strength and endurance and effort to do it."

"We saw significant changes in the firefighters that stayed consistent outside of just coming to work with us," says recent graduate Matthew Smith.

More than 30 firefighters participated in the initiative, which started in September of 2018 and finished in December. Students conducted one-hour sessions with the firefighters weekly.

"We saw significant changes in the firefighters that stayed consistent outside of just coming to work with us," says recent graduate Matthew Smith. "Diet is an important component in any fitness regimen, so the people that decided to change theirs saw better results."

Data is still being compiled, but Jones is optimistic about what his firefighters will feel like after a full year of participation.

"What I'm really looking forward to is...they'll start to do those workouts on their own," Jones says. "I'm really proud of the program. I think it's a one-of-a-kind thing that we're doing."



Preserving a piece of homegrown Georgia

By Kelly Petty

What do you do with a box of old tapes from the 1990s that highlight daily life and culture in Georgia? That was the question Virginia Angles and Riley Griffin had to answer this past year.

The students, who are in the master of archival studies program, were each selected to participate in the Public Broadcasting Preservation Fellowship funded by the WBGH Boston's Educational Foundation.

Clayton State University was one of five universities across the nation to host fellows.

"This was a real-world practical experience doing a complex digitization project," says Dr. Joshua Kitchens, director of Clayton State's archival studies program. Students also received great training on metadata creation, digitization, equipment, and maintenance."

Both Virginia and Riley spent time at the Georgia Archives just around the corner from Clayton State, digitizing tapes from a notable radio show recorded by Georgia Public Radio called the Georgia Gazette.

"You got to hear from everyday Georgians about festivals, things that they were inventing, books they were writing—a lot of small-town stuff," says Virginia, the spring 2018 fellow.

One of the longest-running Georgia-centric radio shows from 1992-2000, the Georgia Gazette was a weekly show that featured segments about history, politics, public figures, news, and consumer information.

"If you want Georgia pride in a single show, that's what it was," Riley says.

Both students were tasked with taking digital audio tapes, known as DAT, tapes and converted the audio to a digital file. The tapes, which look like cassette tapes, had been sitting in a box in the corner of an office for a long time.

"People were eyeing it wondering if they could throw it away," Virginia says. "[But] digitizing that information and making it globally available is big a step forward for us."

Virginia and Riley spent hours listening to each tape, adjusting the audio levels and ensuring the final product was of good quality for a listener. At times, it was a balancing act for Riley, the summer 2018 fellow, because it was important to not edit the audio in a way that could affect its context.

"If I change and edit that material, it's not the same material that I received," he said. "It's the material I received with my own influence on it. And I'm not archiving me."

Creating metadata about each show episode proved difficult for Virginia. Often, she noticed that the radio hosts would not mention the date or year they were recording for the episode, instead using words like "today" and "tomorrow."

What helped was listening for when a reporter would read the local headlines. Virginia could use Google to find information related to those news items.

"I couldn't do it for every DAT tape," she says. "But if the news headline was important enough on a national level, I might be able to find it online and at least get a decade on when the DAT tape was made."

Some of the tapes Riley archived also included other programming on them. So not only was it necessary to archive the Georgia Gazette, he had to make sure any additional shows or recordings were filed on the metadata.

“After Georgia Gazette, it would have a little bit of another show,” xe says. “So, I have a lot of tapes that are the Georgia Gazette plus an extra hour of jazz.”

Overall, Virginia and Riley archived nearly 100 tapes.

For Riley, a New York transplant, the experience opened xir eyes to the shift in the racial and political landscape at the time for Georgia. Xe noted that some stories on the episodes revealed still-lingering racial animosity among citizens with issues related to race and education.

“You can see much more blatant racism still alive in Georgia,” xe says of some of the episodes. “It was something they would talk about and dance around in the tapes.”

Virginia found that the tapes provided a glimpse into the ordinary—and sometimes eccentric—lives of Georgians. One episode in particular, included an interview from a citizen offering tips on an unusual form of weed-killer for a garden—beer.

“It was very homegrown,” she says.

For both students, the experience gave them the necessary knowledge and skills in digital archiving that employers are currently seeking.

Riley is working on a video game archiving project and serves as the community archivist for the Atlanta Freedom Bands, a queer pride visibility marching and concert band organization in the city.

Virginia just secured a job as archivist for Waffle House.

“I learned an entirely new skillset from this fellowship,” Virginia says. “I’m not as scared of this type of archiving anymore.”

Editor’s note: Riley Griffin uses gender neutral pronouns xe/xir.



Riley Griffin holds an Emmy found in the archives at the Georgia Public Broadcasting studios.



A New LEAD

**New Clayton State Director of
Athletics, Ryan Erlacher, sets
bold vision for university
Athletics program**



By Joshua Darling

On August 29, 2018, Clayton State Athletics named Ryan Erlacher as the fourth full-time director of Athletics in the program's 29-year history.

Now more than six months into his time as the face of the Lakers, www.ClaytonStateSports.com sits down with him to get his take on what he has experienced so far, learn a bit more about him and his family, and discuss where he sees Laker Athletics going in the near future.

ClaytonStateSports.com (CSS): What drew you to Clayton State Athletics?

Ryan Erlacher (RE): A combination of things attracted me to Clayton State University. First and foremost, everything the University had to offer was extremely appealing to me. On my interview, I was absolutely amazed by the pure beauty of the campus. I could see why so many members of Laker Nation take such pride in their University. I was also impressed with President [Dr. Tim] Hynes and all he was doing for the University. Fast forward a few months, now I know I couldn't have asked for a better boss.

My wife Kellie and I have two children; our son Austin is five, and our daughter Isabelle is three-and-a-half. When considering making the move to Atlanta, we thought there were so many benefits to living in a big city. We have had a blast getting out on weekends and exploring all that Atlanta has to offer a young family.

Last, but certainly not least, the opportunity to run a major DII athletics program was always a career goal of mine. The ability to remain in the PBC was also a big draw for me.

I am incredibly grateful for the confidence Dr. Hynes and his staff have shown in me by making this appointment.

So, all in all, the opportunity at Clayton State for my family and I was something we were very excited about, and we are thrilled to be a part of Laker Nation!

CSS: What are the most important things Laker fans should know about Ryan Erlacher?

RE: I am a servant leader who believes in putting the needs of our student-athletes, athletics department, and University first.

Those who have worked with me in the past would tell you I truly care. I care about the well-being of everyone in our department, their development, and presenting them with opportunities to be successful. I am also someone who believes in transparency, being intentional when others are unintentional, building a championship culture, and working smart. I look for ways to be creative, different, and I like to think outside the box to give our department the best opportunity to be great.

I have worked with some incredible people throughout my career who have helped shape who I am. But no one has had more of an impact on my life than my family. From my mother, Janet, and father, Tim, to my wife and children, I am truly blessed to have such a wonderful and supportive family who understands the demands of a career in college athletics. Working in college athletics is a lifestyle, not just a career, and my family loves living this lifestyle.

On a side note, some fun facts most people don't know about me are I have a mild sweet tea addiction, I am a BIG Darius Rucker fan, huge BBQ lover, and enjoy golfing and fishing when I can find the time.

CSS: Having now been at Clayton State for several months, what are your goals for the program?

RE: My goals for the athletics program are the same now as they were on day one. In everything we do, we want to put the needs of our student-athletes first and ensure they are having a great experience. In addition, our priorities are achieving academic success, engaging the community, fielding nationally competitive teams, and developing our external giving plan to supplement our existing budgets.

Having been in the position for several months now, other priorities have presented themselves. In addition to the items above, we are also prioritizing our branding and messaging efforts, facility enhancements, and determining how our department can become more efficient and effective. We have also begun the conversation of how our department can intentionally build and improve our culture and how we can distinguish ourselves from other programs across the country. Our drive as a department is to think differently and reach our potential.

CSS: What are the greatest challenges facing the Department and how do you plan to overcome them to drive Clayton State Athletics forward?

RE: Like most small college athletics programs, our major challenges are lack of staffing and resources. There are several key positions we are lacking, along with some vital support positions that would help our department continue to excel. Additionally, our operating budget is not funded at a level to position us to be one of the best NCAA DII programs in the country. But the good news is we see these challenges as opportunities, opportunities we want to make significant strides toward.

For starters, we are implementing an ambitious development plan, focused on casting the biggest net we can in terms of a comprehensive fundraising program. Casting a big net will allow us to leverage all of the University's available resources and should prevent us from leaving available opportunities on the table. Bottom line, we need to supplement our budget with external funding.

At the end of the day, we need to make sure our product is a great one and that is where branding and messaging can play a vital role in our success. We want everyone associated with our program to take tremendous pride in Laker Athletics, feel that they play a role in our success, and are excited to be a member of OUR TEAM!

CSS: What are your expectations for the department and how should fans start to see things change in the near future?

RE: I certainly have some high expectations and goals for our department, along with ways we can hold ourselves accountable to accomplish those goals; however, the mission and goals of our department aren't solely mine, they need to be those of our department.

As a team, we need to be 100-percent invested in our department and work together to achieve our goals. As a department, we will determine what our mission, core values, and culture will be, along with how we want to go about conducting business, who we are, and where we want our program to go.

The most noticeable difference [fans will see] will be the way Clayton State Athletics represents the institution. We want to set a standard of excellence in all that we do and offer programs that represent the University with class and distinction, on and off the field. To quote an old friend, Clayton State Athletics is working to be different, noticeable, and appealing. We know if we work smart, create a culture of excellence, and trust one another, we can be one of the top athletics programs in NCAA Division II. Clayton State Athletics has a bold vision and bright future.

A man with a shaved head, smiling broadly with his eyes closed, wearing a bright red zip-up jacket. The jacket has a logo on the left chest that says "CLAYTON STATE LABERS" with a stylized "C" above it. He is wearing a silver watch on his left wrist. His arms are crossed. The background is a solid blue gradient.

“ We know if we work smart, create a culture of excellence, and trust one another, we can be one of the top athletics programs in NCAA Division II. ”

- Ryan Erlacher

CAMPUS **UPDATES**

Clayton State University welcomes new vice president of Student Affairs

Clayton State University announced in July the appointment of Dr. Sha-keer Abdullah as vice president of Student Affairs. Abdullah oversees the Division of Student Affairs, which supports student learning and success through quality programs, services, and initiatives.



Clayton State helps “Stuff The Bus” to help children in need get school supplies

Clayton State’s Marketing and Communication office, along with the Office of Alumni and Annual Giving Programs, have partnered to produce a podcast to bring listeners a new perspective about Clayton State’s impact in the community. Named Laker Lounge, the podcast has already featured several alumni including a beauty queen, a lobbyist, and a veteran.



Clayton State ranks no. 1 for most affordable online bachelor degrees

Clayton State topped the list for colleges and universities with the most affordable online bachelor’s degrees, according to BachelorsDegreeCenter.org. The University ranked no. 1 for offering a variety of degree programs online, including Bachelor of Applied Science, Bachelor of Business Administration, Bachelor of Science in Dental Hygiene, Bachelor of Arts, and Bachelor of Science.



New podcast launched covering all things Clayton State

Clayton State’s Marketing and Communication office, along with the Office of Alumni and Annual Giving Programs, have partnered to produce a podcast to bring listeners a new perspective about Clayton State’s impact in the community. Named Laker Lounge, the podcast has already featured several alumni including a beauty queen, a lobbyist, and a veteran.

The College of Arts and Sciences recognizes winners of Gene Hatfield Award

Four faculty members were acknowledged for embodying the spirit of Dr. Gene Hatfield, former Professor Emeritus of History who taught at Clayton State University for 32 years before retiring in 2008. Dr. John Meyers was named Teacher of the Year; Dr. Christopher Ward was awarded Scholar of the Year; Dr. Ann Showalter earned the Service Award; and Dr. Erica Dotson was honored as the first-ever winner of the Diversity Leadership Award.



Clayton State ranked among top 20 for best online English degree

Clayton State University was just named among the top 20 colleges and universities in the country for its online bachelor's program in English. The university ranked no. 17 for Best Online Bachelor's In English Programs by BestColleges.com. The online English degree was recognized for offering three tracks—writing, literature, and secondary English education—to prepare students for graduate study or serve as a foundation for careers in journalism, editing/writing, and law.

Let's eat! Clayton State launches major changes to DineCSU

Clayton State University's Auxiliary Services department announced for the beginning of fall 2018, Aladdin Food Service would operate all dining services on campus. The University switched from Sodexo this past spring.

Antonio Long hired as Clayton State's new chief of police and director of Public Safety



Clayton State University is announced the appointment of Antonio Long as Chief of Police and director of Public Safety in August. Long oversees efforts to maintain and enhance campus safety, implement new initiatives, improve security, and advance the University's commitment to law enforcement and community policing.

Indie movie produced by film professor debuts at SXSW, earns awards

Assistant Film Professor Shandra McDonald served as an executive producer of the film Jinn, a film that debuted this spring at the 2018 South by Southwest Film Festival and won Best Narrative Feature Screenplay and the NBC Spotlight Actor Award at the American Black Film Festival.



CAMPUS UPDATES

Campus renovation project focuses on enhancing student learning



Construction is well underway on several campus buildings as part of Clayton State University's Academic Core renovation project. Upon completion, the \$14.96 million state-funded project will feature structural renovation and building enhancements to improve the academic and athletic experience on campus for students, faculty, and staff.

Clayton State surpasses fundraising year-end goals with \$4.1 million in donations

Clayton State University surpassed any other fundraising year in its history by raising a record \$4.1 million in private gifts and pledges for the fiscal year ending in June 2018. This is the second consecutive year the University has topped its annual goal, doubling the goal set for the year.

Student Activities Center celebrates 10 years of health, wellness, and fun

The Student Activities Center celebrated its 10th birthday on Sept. 17 with anniversary celebrations hosted by Campus Life and Recreation and Wellness. Faculty, staff, students, and alumni gathered in front of the Center for food, music, games, and to recognize the significance of the Student Activities Center on campus.

Former U.S. Ambassador and Atlanta Mayor Andrew Young speaks at commencement

Former Atlanta Mayor and U.S. Ambassador Andrew Young, Georgia State Rep. Calvin Smyre of Columbus, and Dr. Celeste Walley-Jean spoke to more than 500 graduating students during December commencement ceremonies.

U.S. Attorney BJ Pak to talk U.S. law during Constitution Day



Byung J. "BJay" Pak, U.S. attorney for the Northern District of Georgia, served as the guest speaker for Clayton State University's annual Constitution Day lecture on Sept. 17. His lecture, entitled "Bill of Rights – A Federal Prosecutor's Perspective," focused on the role of the Constitution in U.S. law.



Library receives national award for World War I programming

The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History awarded Clayton State Library an award for quality programming for its role in presenting “World War I and America” last year. The programming series, which ran from September 2017 to February 2018, consisted of panel discussions, film screenings, and writing workshops designed to explore the transformative impact of the First World War.

Clayton State University named one of best regional universities in south by U.S. News & World Report rankings

Clayton State University has been once again named one of the best regional universities in the south, according to the U.S. News & World Report 2019 Best Colleges rankings. The University was named among the top 141 best universities in the south.

Nursing faculty a finalist for March of Dimes award

Dr. Victoria Foster, director of the undergraduate nursing program, was selected as one of the finalists of the 2018 Atlanta’s Women of Distinction Award sponsored by the March of Dimes. Foster joined 45 other women healthcare professionals who are being recognized for their dedication to community service.

Clayton State University recognized for online learning excellence

Clayton State University is ranked no. 16 for Best Online English and Humanities Programs, no. 18 for Best Online History Programs, and no. 31 for Best Online RN to MSN Programs, according to AffordableCollegesOnline.org.

Mailchimp and Clayton State University partner to create Launchpad Academy



Mailchimp, a leading marketing platform for small business, has partnered with Clayton State University to train the next technology leaders. The company has invested \$300,000 — over the course of three years — to establish Launchpad Academy, a leadership academy designed to prepare students and faculty to adapt to a rapidly growing digital economy.

Indie movie produced by film professor debuts at SXSW, earns awards

Assistant Film Professor Shandra McDonald served as an executive producer of the film Jinn, a film that debuted this spring at the 2018 South by Southwest Film Festival and won Best Narrative Feature Screenplay and the NBC Spotlight Actor Award at the American Black Film Festival.



History professor earns archival award for World War I project



Dr. R. B. Rosenberg, professor of History and associate dean in College of Arts and Sciences, was honored with the Award for Advocacy by the Georgia Historical Records Advisory Council (GHRAC) for documenting the deaths of Georgians while in military service during World War I. He received the award during the 16th annual GHRAC Archives Awards ceremony at the Georgia Archives.

Clayton State Library hosted National Voter Registration Day

The Clayton State Library teamed up with the Political Science program to participate in National Voter Registration Day on Tuesday, Sept. 25. The library partnered with The Action Network to get students registered for the upcoming midterm elections, which historically have lower turnout numbers.

University president recognizes individuals, groups “Making Things Better” on campus



Faculty, staff, and campus organizations were honored during the annual Making Things Better Awards on Oct. 31. The annual awards are given out by Dr. Tim Hynes as a way to say “thank you” to and to honor colleagues who honor the university by making things better each day.

Commitment, sacrifice of military remembered during annual Veterans Day ceremony

Military veterans of various branches, backgrounds, ages, and occupations gathered on Monday, Nov. 12, to celebrate those who have served the United States in the Armed Forces during Clayton State University’s annual Veterans Day Ceremony. This year marked the 100th anniversary of Veteran’s Day.



StudentProfile

NKARRA THOMPSON

By Jessica Merriman

Nkarra Thompson has big plans for her future. As one of the newest students to be accepted to Clayton State University's nursing program, she will join a special group of healthcare professionals whose careers are centered around a philosophy of care.

Nkarra's passion for caring for others was fostered from an early age. Growing up, the Stone Mountain native would hear her grandmother's stories of working as a registered nurse. To many of her patient's, Nkarra's grandmother was a hero. Inspired, Nkarra decided to pursue the career herself.

"I always knew in my heart that I always wanted to be in the medical field," she says. "The human body is a fascinating thing to learn about."

In high school, Nkarra volunteered in nursing homes to gain experience. She also obtained her certification to become a certified nursing assistant (CNA) through the Georgia Work Ready program for Dekalb County high school students.

"To me being a nurse means that you have to be dedicated to what you are doing, and you have to have people be able to trust you with their life," she says.

But it was a lifechanging setback for Nkarra's family that solidified her desire to be a nurse. Her mother became ill with Lyme disease, a tick-borne illness that results in a bacterial infection and a rash. Nkarra had to quickly become responsible for her mother's care.

"This particular part of my life was very challenging, especially at a young age," Nkarra says. "But through prayer, we were able to overcome this challenge. This taught me that caring for someone can be tough, but if you are passionate about what you do then others will see it too."

Those experiences, coupled with her grandmother's advice to "follow your dreams and never give up on your true passion," helped Nkarra to see nursing as a serious profession with a rewarding future. Not only did she finally find something she was good at, but nursing became something she loved doing.

"To me being a nurse means that you have to be dedicated to what you are doing, and you have to have people be able to trust you with their life," she says.

Ultimately, Nkarra enrolled at Clayton State University, where she has found a supportive learning environment and professors who are committed to seeing students get into their chosen professions.

So far, she has been an active student on campus, earning the National Engaged Leader Award as part of the National Society of Leadership & Success. She also makes time between her studies to work an on-campus job in the University Advancement office.

"It's important to stay involved on campus because later on in the future it can open up opportunities," Nkarra says. "Also, what you do on campus can be very helpful to put on your resume to give yourself a good look. College is all about making memories with those around you."

Nkarra will graduate in 2020 with a Bachelor of Science in nursing. Her mission in life, she says, is to be able to touch as many lives as possible and offer a positive outlook to her patients and their families.

"As a nurse, I want to be able to make everyone feel that they can trust me to take care of their issue," she says.





DR. JOSHUA MEDDAUGH

FacultyProfile

By Jessica Merriman

Since working at Clayton State, Dr. Meddaugh has made it his mission to ensure his students are well-versed in the political system and active participants in government. Be it reading a newspaper or attending a civic event, Meddaugh combines classroom work with real-world experiences.

"It is important for our students to see government in action, regardless of which party is in charge," he says.

"I loved the notion that if you are passionate about an idea for your community, work tirelessly to achieve your goal, and never let the naysayers thwart you from achieving your intended purpose, you can accomplish whatever you set out to do," he says.

Dr. Joshua Meddaugh will tell you he was bit by the political bug as a young boy. The Frank Capra classic film "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington" of a young man fighting for his small town was intriguing to the assistant professor of political science and associate chair for the social sciences department.

"In a time where being a government outsider is lauded, we need our future generations to be educated in civics in order to keep our democracy thriving," Meddaugh says.

"I loved the notion that if you are passionate about an idea for your community, work tirelessly to achieve your goal, and never let the naysayers thwart you from achieving your intended purpose, you can accomplish whatever you set out to do," he says.

With that ideal in mind, Dr. Meddaugh attended Elmira College in New York to major in political science and economics. Soon after earning his bachelor's, he went on to earn a master's and doctorate's in political science.

"I choose to study political science because I am interested in understanding people's voting behavior," he says. "Particularly, I am interested in understanding why citizens vote the way they do. People are fascinating, and I am always interested in what makes them decide to cast a ballot."

Each year, he makes it a point for his students to take part in Clayton State Day at the Capitol, a university initiative that allows students to see first-hand how state government operates with a visit to the Georgia Capitol. Students get a chance to sit in the legislative chambers, as well as meet and network with lawmakers.

Dr. Meddaugh says Capitol Day is one of his favorite events of the year because students get to see legislators in action and be introduced to careers in public service and community activism.

"In a time where being a government outsider is lauded, we need our future generations to be educated in civics in order to keep our democracy thriving," Meddaugh says. "Regardless of partisanship and ideology, a better-informed governing body can only help our country and by promoting events like CSU Capitol Day, we as an educating body, are helping prepare our future leaders."

Dr. Meddaugh encourages everyone to make community involvement a daily part of their lives, whether it be volunteering at a library, joining the chamber of commerce, shopping locally, or picking up trash on sidewalks. These actions, he says, ensure communities remain stable and invest in a better governmental system where democracy thrives.

"By investing in your community, you will become aware, and hopefully passionate about, the issues affecting your everyday life and will seek to find solutions to problems that will both solve the matter and support the greater goal of the community," he says.

Beaming with a bright smile and a welcome greeting, it's not hard to miss Julie Coile in the Loch Shop. As senior director of Auxiliary Services Operations, she wears many hats—from managing the bookstore to supporting the daily operations of the LakerCard Center and Dining Services.

Julie says each day gives her a chance to engage with students and give back to the school that has given so much to her.

"Clayton State has changed my life and made more than one of my dreams real," she says. "I really enjoy my work with Auxiliary Services. We try to enrich the students' lives while they're on campus by providing the services that they need in an environment that makes them feel at home. I believe that when students feel connected, they perform better in their academic classes."

Julie's journey to Clayton State started 15 years ago when the economic recession hit. Julie was working for a community bank, but in the middle of the recession it was shut down by the FDIC. Not deterred, she re-enrolled at Clayton State to finish her degree.

"The more effort we put into connection and engagement, the stronger our community grows!"

"The market was flooded with bankers at the time, so I thought to look at the job postings at my alma mater and saw a posting for the LakerCard manager," Julie says. "Since the LakerCard has transactional functionality, it really wasn't much different from banking."

Julie got hired in September of 2011. She parlayed her experience in teaching, information technology, marketing, and owning a restaurant to managing a customer-driven department important to a university. About six years later, she moved up to manage daily operations of the bookstore, a challenging but fun experience.

"I've learned so much and it has afforded me the opportunity to engage with the campus community in a bigger way than before," Julie says.

In the time she has been at Clayton State, Julie has made it her priority to get involved on campus. Be it increasing engagement among faculty, staff, and students with discounts and dining events, or by developing relationships with students through the work opportunities and internships the LochShop provides, Julie is committed to seeing Clayton State thrive.

"It's the 'put your money where your mouth is' principle. I think if you believe in something, you should support it with all your resources—time, talent, and treasures; and in this case, treasure is our financial resources," Julie says. "I think it also sends a great message to our student body that we really do believe in them."

Most recently, this mantra was put to the test when Julie was selected to serve as the staff co-chair for the annual Faculty and Staff Fund Drive. The experience gave her a chance to get out of her office and meet faculty and staff across campus. It also gave her an opportunity to promote the University's culture of giving to mobilize people to participate in the fundraiser.

"I'm a former cheerleader, so rallying and encouraging come natural for me," Julie says. "It takes time and deliberate action to cultivate a culture that feels connected to each other enough to mobilize their financial resources for the common good."

For Julie, her mission each day is to make sure everyone on campus, especially students, feel connected to the University. It's what drives her to be a part of the Laker family.

"Go to a basketball game, eat in the Dining Hall, dress up for the annual Loch Shop costume contest, see a performer in Spivey Hall," she says. "In order for a family to thrive, they need to engage with one another. We all need to be deliberate about connecting with one another. The more effort we put into connection and engagement, the stronger our community grows!"



A GREATER REASON TO GIVE

By Chase Moore

One evening a few weeks ago, I was traveling back to Atlanta along Hwy. 236 looking to merge onto I-285 when, suddenly, I took notice of one of the digital billboards along the on-ramp. It just so happened that as I crested the ramp, the billboard flickered to an image of a Clayton State student in medical gear and our tag line—DREAMS. MADE REAL.

It is fair to say that I was rather taken aback by this seemingly simple billboard. For one, I wasn't expecting to see it that far from campus and, two, the moment was punctuated by a beautiful sunset. The moment lasted no more than a few seconds, but it felt as though it had greater meaning. And indeed, it did have greater meaning.

For those who are reading this, Clayton State already occupies a special place in your heart and you know how impactful the institution is in people's lives. But for those that don't already know—Clayton State University is a transformative place. Like the billboard I saw, this institution is where a person's dreams of becoming someone greater than they currently are can be made real. And the university continues to be important to Atlanta and the state of Georgia, well beyond its physical presence south of I-20.

Clayton State University is at a place of significant growth and we hope that you've taken note of our expanded presence in the region, billboards included. If you haven't, stay tuned because we have amazing stories to tell of impact and personal transformation. The pride that is growing in the 18,000 strong alumni is palpable as they see the reputation of their alma mater rise. In many ways, the increased presence has felt like an awakening of Laker Nation as the potential juggernaut it is becoming in Metro Atlanta.

Each alumnus has a life changing story of how Clayton State helped them achieve a step in their life journey. Most of these stories were influenced by someone they didn't know investing in their future—be it giving to a scholarship or supporting the greatest area of need with a gift.

Giving can begin now. Clayton State University will be hosting #Give4Dreams on March 14, 2019, the university's third annual day of giving. This important day is dedicated entirely to gathering the investments that ensure our students have the necessary resources to reach a degree and, ultimately, employment.

Whether it is a membership to the Alumni Association, an investment in a scholarship, supporting Athletics or Spivey Hall, please consider the greater meaning and role that Clayton State has played in your life or that of someone you care about. We ask you to consider investing in the future of someone you probably don't know by making a gift to an area where you wish to impact.

With your support, Clayton State can continue this important work of changing lives and creating the environment where dreams are made real.

GREATER MIND

DREAMS. MADE REAL.

\$11,250,000 TOTAL

GOAL

\$10 M

\$9 M

\$8 M

\$7 M

\$6 M

\$5 M

\$4 M

\$3 M

\$2 M

\$1 M

\$0 M

\$5,625,000
PLANNED GIFT
COMMITMENTS

\$5,625,000
GIFTS AND
PLEDGES

New program links students to alumni professionals

The Alumni Association and the Office of Career Services recently partnered to create the Laker Link Career Mentoring Program. Laker Link brings students preparing for the professional world together with alumni and industry leaders who, as mentors, can share their experiences.

The program is an online, easy-to-use platform designed to cultivate meaningful mentorship opportunities for the Laker community. Mentors can sign up to review resumes, answer industry-specific questions, and share their professional experience and advice.

Students seeking mentors can see their recommended mentors in the directory, as well as search for potential mentors by major, region, company, and other criteria, and then reach out to them to start the conversation. They can also discuss opportunities such as job shadowing, joining a board, and volunteering.

This mentorship program has the power to mutually benefit both mentors and students. Students and alumni mentees have the opportunity to receive advice, guidance, and perspective from their mentors. Mentors have a chance to share their story and experiences and invest in a rewarding relationship with a student who is eager to learn from them.

If you would like to become a mentor and make a difference in the life of a current Clayton State, you can do so at www.clayton.edu/career/mentoring.



Antavius Thompson
2010 Graduate

Being able to share knowledge and aid students through Laker Link has been incredible. I strongly encourage other alumni and students to try out the mentoring platform. Let's continue to add value to each others' lives by sharing the wealth of knowledge.



Justine Barnes
2013 Graduate

Mentoring is the capacity to share your experiences and knowledge with those who are receptive. I am serving as a mentor because I enjoy being a resource for those in need. Its a remarkable feeling when you see the knowledge that you've shared be put to work.



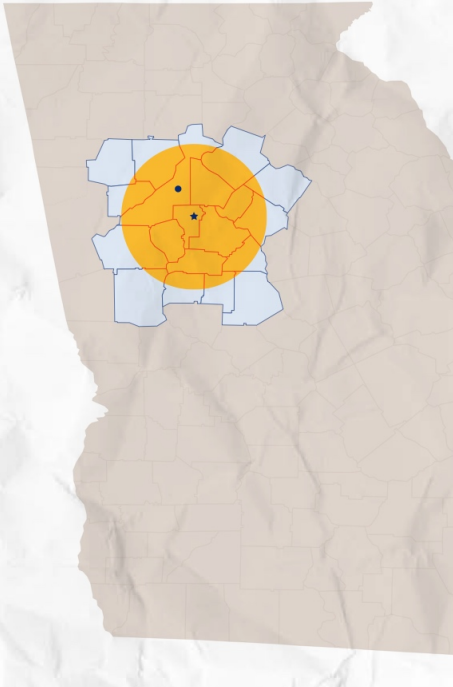
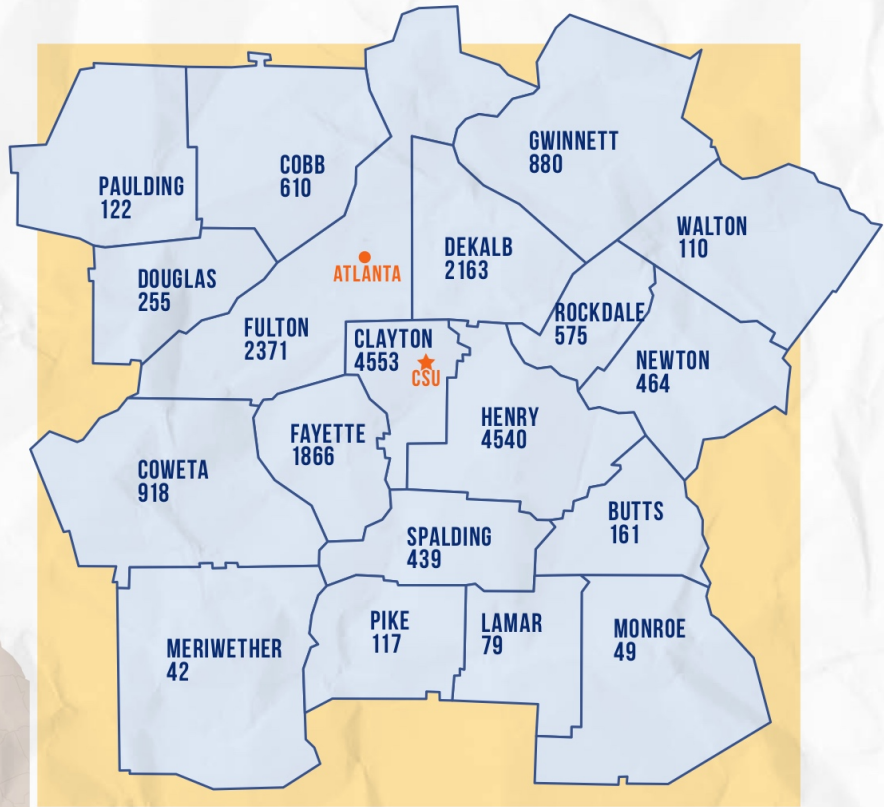
Sasha Anthony
Class of 2020

The Laker Link was a great experience. My mentor had a lot of good pointers for me and gave me an assignment to help me narrow down some of the goals and accomplishments I was contemplating. We even scheduled the next consultation for two weeks later to give me time to take her advice. It was really helpful and I am looking forward to speaking with her again in the future.



Laker pride swells in Atlanta

The Clayton State University family continues to grow each year. Our alumni have made Atlanta home, impacting the community through service, leadership, and by helping grow the economy in the Peach state's capital city. See how far our footprint spreads in the metro Atlanta area.



NUMBER OF ALUMNI WITHIN A 35 MILE RADIUS OF CLAYTON STATE UNIVERSITY – 20,314

TOTAL NUMBER OF **GEORGIA** ALUMNI – 21,850

TOTAL NUMBER OF **ALL** ALUMNI – 23,905



SHARE YOUR *Memories*

As Clayton State prepares for our 50-year celebration during the 2019-2020 school year, we would like to hear from alumni and friends about your memories and how Clayton State has made an impact on your life journey. Send your memories to alumni@clayton.edu.

MILESTONES:



Angela West-Brown

M.A. Liberal Studies, 2013

Recently published a new book titled *Lost and Found: Educating Parents of Intellectually Disabled High School Students How to Navigate Through College and Beyond*. She shares her perspective as the sibling of someone with special needs and offers advice to others that she wishes she was given years ago before her sister finished high school.



Shawn "Patrick" Moore

B.S. Legal Studies, 2016 and M.B.A., 2018

Married Assad Little in April 2018. Transferred with current law firm, Greenberg Traurig, from Atlanta office to Orlando office. Began classes at Florida A&M Law School in August 2018.



Mark Lawrimore

B.A.S. Administrative Management, 2001

In 2013, opened small business in Stockbridge, GA called Lawrimore Productions. He films and produces weddings and special events on the south side of Atlanta. He is also active in his church and creates short, fictional, faith-based videos for YouTube.



Carla Dennis

B.S. Psychology & Human Services, 2016

Published her first book in June, *Hurt Unspoken*, which can be found on Amazon and other digital outlets. She is also an independent consultant with Traci Lynn Fashion.

Matthew Trice

B.S. Political Science, 2018

Upon graduation, gained employment as a field organizer for the Democratic Party of Georgia. He has also taken a position with Talent Inc. as a certified resume writer and professional career profile developer. In the Spring of 2019, he will commission as an officer in the U.S. Air Force.

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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**SAVE
THE DATE
MARCH
14, 2019**

A DAY OF GIVING FOR
#GIVE4DREAMS

CLAYTON STATE UNIVERSITY