

columns



Giving Their All

Whether serving in the mission field or conquering the Appalachian Trail together, the Netteburg family doesn't hold back | page 12

Sparking Growth

Steven Oskins, '08 (left), adjunct instructor in Southern's Applied Technology program, oversees Tyler Starr, freshman auto service management major, as he practices welding. During the university's annual Giving Day this spring, Applied Technology in the School of Business raised nearly \$53,000, which in part will provide new welding equipment for these popular courses. Overall, generous contributions for Giving Day 2021 totaled \$1.1 million, setting a Southern record.

Photo: Ryan Pierce

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Photo: Contributed

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Photo: Contributed

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Photo: Ryan Pierce

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features

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Danae (Bland) Netteburg, '02, MD, and her husband, Olen—also a medical doctor—have never made it their goal to earn praise or set records. Instead, dedicated to following God's path for their lives, they have an internal drive to give their all, no matter if they are serving in the mission field or hiking the Appalachian Trail.

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Students at Southern get ample opportunities to benefit from nature, finding peace, fun, connection, and a break from routine as they explore the great outdoors.

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For 22 years, David Smith, PhD, has served Southern. He recently sat down for an interview with Joseph Khabbaz, vice president for Spiritual Life, to share some memories and thoughts as he prepares to retire this summer.

22 | Did You Know?

Founded in 1892, Southern has grown and changed significantly through the years. See how many of these facts and numbers are new to you!

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Cover caption: Together, the Netteburg family conquered the Appalachian Trail.

Photo Contributed

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Spring Is in the Air!

Photos by Calvin Serban, junior film production major

As winter gives way to spring and campus bursts into bloom, students gravitate outdoors to study, socialize, and soak up some sun. Clear blue skies, emerald green lawns, and abundant flowers create a restful, refreshing backdrop that brings to mind Solomon's words: "He has made everything beautiful in its time" (Ecclesiastes 3:11).

- 1:** The green lawn in front of Wright Hall is a popular place for students such as Mariana Velasquez, junior health science major; Gabrielle Newman, sophomore music major; and Kilah Runnels, sophomore social work major, to picnic and relax in the warming weather.
- 2:** A group of physical education majors on the soccer field work to develop performance and teaching techniques for sports during their soccer course.
- 3:** Clusters of blooming daffodils brighten many corners of campus.
- 4:** The commute between classes provides a refreshing moment to think and enjoy the spring breeze.
- 5:** Emily Carvajal, junior psychology major, opts to study outside of the student center in the mild weather.
- 6:** Light pink cherry blossoms announce the return of spring.
- 7:** Flowering trees and a wide expanse of inviting lawn greet visitors arriving at Southern.
- 8:** The student hosts and directors of Ignite, a School of Journalism and Communication production, interview freshman theology major Mauricio Jaldin for an episode on challenging spiritual questions.
- 9:** Jonathan Rodney, senior music major, greets those he passes on his way to class, reflecting the season's joy.
- 10:** Junior nursing major Hammy Hosteter catches some rays while remaining focused on his academics.
- 11:** New picnic tables in the Alcove are perfect for students such as Karina Genstler, senior nursing major, to transform into desk space for studying.
- 12:** Jared Armbruster, junior business administration major, and Jason Dubose, junior liberal arts education major, monitor their exercise under a cloudless sky at the track during Fitness for Collegiate Life.
- 13:** A canopy of white petals frames the promenade, including the mini red library that provides convenient access to free books as students walk to and from classes.



Ken Shaw Becomes Southern's 27th President

The Southern Adventist University Board of Trustees voted unanimously on February 28 for Ken Shaw, EdD, to become the 27th president of the university. He assumed office on June 1.

Shaw graduated from Southern in 1980 with a Bachelor of Arts in Mathematics and is the university's first alum to return as president. In fact, his entire family graduated from Southern: his wife, Ann (Kennedy), earned her nursing degree in 1979; their daughter, Kate (Shaw) Myers, earned her associate and bachelor's degrees in nursing in 2008 and 2009; and their son, Martin, earned his pastoral care degree in 2012.

"Ann and I cherish our memories from Southern," Shaw said. "Returning to campus is like coming home for us, and we're delighted to be part of this institution. I really admire that Southern is still fundamentally centered on its mission and on the core values that the institution has been about for 129 years."

For the past seven years, Shaw has served as president of Southwestern Adventist University in Keene, Texas. Previously he worked at Florida State University for 25 years in various capacities, from assistant professor of mathematics education to campus dean of Florida State University Panama City and academic dean of the College

of Applied Studies. His track record as a leader in higher education includes increasing enrollment, establishing new academic programs, and improving institutional financial stability.

"I am pleased that Dr. Ken Shaw has accepted our invitation to be the next president of Southern Adventist University," said Ron Smith, PhD, DMin, chairman of Southern's board and president of the Southern Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. "The unanimous decision of the board is strong evidence that the will of God has been executed. We thank the Lord for His providential leading and anticipate His blessing in the Southern community as a result of Dr. Shaw's acceptance."

Shaw succeeds David Smith, PhD, who announced in October 2020 that he would retire at the end of May after five years as president and 22 years of total service at Southern.

— by Staff Writer

A more in-depth feature article about President Shaw will be published in the Fall 2021 issue of COLUMNS.



Student Center Nears Completion

At the start of 2021, construction work on Southern's Bietz Center for Student Life transitioned from exterior to interior projects. This new hub of future activity on campus, fully funded by \$13 million in gifts from alumni and friends of Southern, is scheduled for completion in late spring. Employees will move into their new offices over the summer, and students will participate in a grand opening event this August as they return to campus for classes.



"My excitement is matched—exceeded, even—by our students who can't wait for the Bietz Center to open," said Dennis Negron, '85, PhD, vice president for Student Development.

Anchor tenants for the three-story building located between Hickman Science Center and McKee Library include: Campus Shop, Student Development, Office of Ministry and Missions, Student Association, CK2 (a new eatery), and Student Success Center.

For more photos and information about the building, visit southern.edu/bietzcenter.

— by Lucas Patterson

Adjusted Graduation Wraps Up School Year

Graduation is a special time for family, friends, faculty, and staff to celebrate a major milestone in students' lives. While the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic made certain adjustments to the ceremonies necessary this year, the goal of making the time meaningful remains unchanged.

Over the weekend of May 7-9, 415 undergraduate and 90 graduate students received their degrees from Southern. The university held five commencement services in Iles P.E. Center in order to reduce crowd size. Traditions such as caps and gowns, marching to "Pomp and Circumstance," and posing with the university president remained prominent—with the addition of masks. Clever photography angles maintained proper distance between the graduates and President Smith for photos, and in general, protocols were in place to encourage distancing between family groups.

Through these and other precautions, Southern aimed to keep participants and guests as safe as possible without sacrificing the in-person graduation experience.

"This is important to me, because after four long, hard years of work, I am grateful to have a day when I can celebrate my accomplishments alongside my family and peers," said Hannah Sbacchi, '21. "Southern has provided me with a superb education and life experiences that are applicable to my career. I feel proud of the work I have accomplished and am ready to conquer my next academic goal."

— by Staff Writer



In-person graduation services—utilizing various safety precautions—marked the end of a unique school year and celebrated the accomplishments of more than 500 graduating students.

New Adult Degree Completion Program Launches

Southern is working toward a new program designed specifically for adults who would like to complete an unfinished college degree. For individuals who have earned some college credits but not a degree, the program is an opportunity to fulfill lifelong goals and improve career opportunities.

The new Adult Degree Completion Program is set to officially launch in January 2022 and will include bachelor's degrees in business, journalism and communication, nursing, and integrative studies. It will feature shorter semesters and more online course options, providing more flexibility.

"These eight-week online courses will be customized to a specific course of study for adult learners who have busy lives, work full time, and want to complete their degrees in a shorter period of time," said Cynthia Wright, the program's director. "We want to meet the community's educational needs and help students meet their professional career objectives."

Tyson Hall, associate vice president for Academic Administration and dean of Graduate and Professional Studies, sees this as a perfect fit for the university's broader mission.

"The new program will allow Southern to extend our mission of equipping students 'to embrace biblical truth, embody academic and professional excellence, and pursue Spirit-filled lives of service' to a new student population," Hall said. "Our hope is that it gives adult learners the opportunity to accomplish their educational goals, celebrate their academic achievements, and thrive in the modern economy."

For more information, visit southern.edu/adultdegree.

— by Olivia Fisher



Cynthia Wright is director of Southern's new Adult Degree Completion Program.

» by the numbers

27

Presidents have served Southern, including incoming Ken Shaw, '80, EdD, who is the first alum to hold that position.

2,200

Cookies, homemade by First Lady Cherie Smith, have been given out to incoming students by Southern's 26th president, David Smith, PhD, since 2016.

17

Buildings on campus are named after exceptional people, including the Bietz Center for Student Life, named for the 25th university president, Gordon Bietz, DMin.

469

University employees, many working quietly in the background, have kept Southern running smoothly during the pandemic, gladly serving the student body.

\$2.96MIL

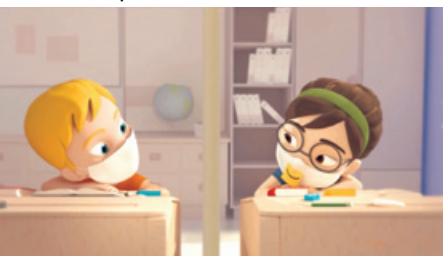
In COVID-19 relief funds has been distributed to Southern students, thanks to generous university donors and government aid.

1,592

Students have graduated from Southern during the pandemic, demonstrating perseverance and grit!

Students Create Inspiring Animation

Three animation majors from the School of Visual Art and Design created a short animation story about finding connection in a COVID-19 world. Starting during the Fall 2020 semester, junior Mugi Kinoshita, senior Avery Kroll, and senior Ruth Perez spent four months on “Knock Knock.” It tells the story of two masked elementary students who communicate by knocking on the plexiglass that divides them and by writing sticky notes to each other.



“Even with what is happening out there, we were able to still work together and create something that represented how it was for us in the beginning of all this,” Perez said.

The animation students chose this story because they wanted to reflect the current pandemic situation and express the importance of connection.

“Throughout this project, I found myself relating to the characters in ways that I didn’t expect,” Kroll said. “What makes this project meaningful to me is the fact that I see myself and part of my journey this past year reflected in the story. It is my hope that each person who watches it can also relate to ‘Knock Knock’ in some special way.”

Professors in the School of Visual Art and Design strive to teach their students a balance of artistic perspectives while firmly grounding them in their faith.

“Animation is a powerful medium for communication,” said Hendl Butoy, the animation professor who oversaw the project. “We encourage our students and give them the opportunity to combine excellence of craft with the higher calling of uplifting others through the talents they’ve been given. ‘Knock Knock’ is an excellent example of that vision coming to fruition in the students who made it.”

To watch the short video, visit southern.edu/columns.

– by Madison Reinschmidt

Enactus Team Places Third in National Competition

Southern’s Enactus team placed third in the nation at the Enactus United States National Exposition. Housed in the School of Business, the student team has previously ranked second in their league several times, but this is their first year to advance through the competition to the final round, which included the top four schools in the United States.

“It is validating to see how our time and effort over the last year has paid off in such big ways,” said Ashley Blake, senior accounting major and president of Southern’s Enactus team. “I hope that the team can continue to build on this year’s momentum and stay on track with the hardworking and high-expectation culture that we’ve created.”

Enactus is an international nonprofit organization that brings together student, academic, and business leaders who

are committed to using the power of entrepreneurial action to improve the quality of life and the standard of living for people in need. Guided by academic advisors and business experts, the student leaders of Enactus create and implement community empowerment projects around the globe.

This year’s exposition included 98 schools from across the United States, and due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the competition took place virtually. Each competing team submitted a 12-minute video and annual report to show why its projects are sustainable long-term and how they will have a positive impact on the lives and communities around them.

“Our success this year, I believe, has largely been due to great student leadership,” said Michelle Doucoumes, ’05 and ’10, assistant professor in the



Enactus student leaders and their sponsor, Michelle Doucoumes (second from left in the back), led the team in shattering the club’s previous records.

School of Business and Southern’s Enactus sponsor. “Each member of the team believed in the cause and has been tenacious in pursuing it.”

Additionally, Enactus honored Doucoumes with the 2021 Sam Walton Fellow of the Year award for her leadership, contributions to the team, and investment in students’ lives.

To learn more about Southern’s Enactus team and their community projects, visit southern.edu/enactus.

– by Madison Reinschmidt

Southern Introduces New Graduation Tradition

Students graduating from Southern this May helped launch a new tradition, with many opting to wear one of the university’s new cultural stoles as part of their graduation regalia. With an increasingly varied student population, Southern was ranked most diverse regional university in the South by U.S. News and World Report in its 2020 report, along with recognition by other ranking sites. The new stoles help celebrate the vibrant mix of students who make up the campus family.

At the request of President David Smith, PhD, Senior Advisor for Diversity Stephanie Guster, MSW, worked with presidents of the various cultural clubs on campus to develop six designs, which were approved by Academic Administration. Cultural club members then had the option to purchase a stole to wear for graduation.

“The stoles being based on our cultural clubs represent so much more than the

garment,” Guster said. “They represent the fabric of what makes us a diverse community and family. They represent the student leaders who serve, who advocate, who plan ways to showcase how God made us different, while at the same time expressing gratitude for the love that unifies us. I believe they represent the divine tapestry that God Himself created.”

This initiative is the culmination of efforts by students through the years, including Danielle Allen, ’18; Phillip Warfield, ’19; and many others. For example, during a student competition held in 2019 as part of a university project called Studying Our Attitudes Racially (SOAR), a team of students that included Warfield submitted a proposal for cultural graduation regalia, which was one of three winning ideas.

“Seeing the stoles being implemented is fulfilling to me,” said Issac Abraham, senior nursing major and Asian Club

president. “I was part of the SOAR competition, and when another team pitched the idea of having cultural stoles, I thought it was a great idea. Seeing this finally happen makes me believe that Southern is a great platform for cultural development.”

Guster explains that the project was heavily inspired by Revelation 7:9-10, which reminds her of how diverse God’s creation is while coming together in unity under Him: “After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: ‘Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.’”

– by Staff Writer



From left, student club members Soko Paongo, George Ambrose, María José Morán, Issac Abraham, and Julia Scriven model cultural stoles representing the Oceania Islander, African/Black Christian Union, Latin American, Asian, and European clubs. Not pictured is the Native American stole.

From Radio to Classroom

by Trisney Bocala, senior mass communication major

For Victoria Joiner, EdD, associate professor in the School of Journalism and Communication at Southern, radio broadcasting has been part of her life for 34 years. It all began as a freshman education major at Oakwood University in Huntsville, Alabama, when the campus radio station manager presented to her public speaking class.

“I raised my hand in the back and asked, ‘How do you work at the radio station?’” she said. “And the rest is history.”

Through the years, Joiner built a life in Huntsville. However, with a passion for Christian education, in 2019 she followed God’s call to Southern and is now inspiring students here with her expertise, stories, and faith.

The Dream Job

Coming from a family of teachers, Joiner began college as an education major before changing to communications. Soon after graduating from Oakwood, she returned to serve as program director at WJOU Praise 90.1, the same radio station where she had worked as a student.

“I always dreamed that one day I would be a radio program director. I could listen to music all day, and it would be great. And I got to do that at age 24,” Joiner said.

Shortly afterward, she became the general manager at the radio station, a position she held for 24 years.

“Miracles happened at that little beat-up college radio station,” she said. “Truck drivers on the road would call and say, ‘I heard something on your radio station, and I just wanted to tell y’all I appreciate it.’ People you would never think were listening, were listening.”



From her days as a college student starting out in radio work to her current efforts preparing the next generation of communicators, Victoria Joiner has felt God’s guidance at every step.

Transitioning to Education

One day, evangelist Edward Earl (E.E.) Cleveland invited Joiner to give a lecture for his religious communication class at Oakwood. He started asking her to co-teach regularly and gradually handed her the reins. Soon, Joiner was teaching a variety of communication courses.

Joiner continued to take on more responsibilities, earning her master’s degree through Regent University and beginning a doctorate degree through Fielding Graduate University. She also stepped into an administrative role at Oakwood as the assistant vice president for Advancement and Development.

Although she enjoyed the unique variety of experiences she was gaining, Joiner eventually realized she had to give something up. She stepped down from administrative work, completed her doctorate in educational leadership, and in 2013, traded her job as the radio’s general manager for being a full-time professor.

“I’ve seen over the years that education is a reciprocal learning experience,” Joiner said. “As a professor, I’m growing with my students. It’s exciting to be so influential in young people’s lives, and it warms my heart to see my students build careers in broadcasting.”

Joining Southern’s Team

Joiner’s former Oakwood colleague, Rachel Williams-Smith, PhD, now serves as dean of Southern’s School of Journalism and Communication and invited her to teach at Southern. After serving nearly 30 years in Huntsville, near her family and alma mater, Joiner became part of Southern’s faculty in Fall 2019. Her students quickly recognized her passion and expertise.

“Dr. Joiner is so enthusiastic,” said Julia Scriven, junior public relations major. “It’s impossible not to be captivated by what she’s saying. Her passion is contagious, and she has a way of making her students feel heard and appreciated. I look forward to any class I have with her.”

No matter what challenges come her way, Joiner praises God for His hand in her life.

“I talk, I write, I teach, and I love doing so many things,” Joiner said. “I used to worry about being too scattered because of this, but God will make room in your life for all the gifts He has given you. Almost everything that I’ve dreamed of doing, I’ve been able to do. It has really been an amazing career.” ■



Professional Preparation

Students interested in entering a field of research or medicine will need to master professional lab techniques, and Southern’s Ecotoxicology class helps them do just that. This semester, students such as Daniel Woo, who graduated this May with a Bachelor of Science in Biology, studied the effects of various toxins on fruit flies. This upper-division, hands-on lab course builds a strong portfolio, which has landed students full graduate scholarships even before they take final exams.

Giving Their All

By Kermit Netteburg. Photos contributed.

Danae (Bland) Netteburg, '02, MD, and her husband, Olen—also a medical doctor—have never made it their goal to earn praise or set records. Instead, dedicated to following God's path for their lives, they have an internal drive to give their all, no matter if they are serving in the mission field or hiking the Appalachian Trail. Olen's father, Kermit Netteburg, shares their story.

Left to right: Olen, Juniper, Danae, Addison, Lyol, and Zane Netteburg



As a biology major at Southern, trekking across campus to get to her science classes, Danae never dreamed she'd hike the entire Appalachian Trail. But last year, that's exactly what she did, accompanied by her husband, Olen, and their children Lyol (11), Zane (9), Addison (7), and Juniper (4).

In fact, 4-year-old Juniper hiked every step of the trail on her own, becoming the youngest person ever to hike the entire trail, finishing it at the age of 4 years, 340 days.

For some perspective, the elevation gain/loss of hiking the trail is the equivalent of climbing Mount Everest 16 times. It was quite a feat for the family's feet, which went through three or four pairs of shoes each.

It's a tradition that people who hike the full Appalachian Trail get trail names, and Juniper earned hers—"The Beast"—on one of the first big climbs. Danae took Juniper's backpack to make it easier for the child, but no more than 100 yards up the trail, Danae found her crying.

"Uh-oh," she thought. "Juniper can't make it." But the truth came out when Juniper whimpered that she wanted to carry her own backpack, and "The Beast" was born!

However, the hike wasn't really about getting into the record books. It was about filling the family's emotional and spiritual energy tanks so they could return to mission work at Béré Adventist Hospital in Chad, Africa.

From Student to Mission Doctor

Danae's passion to be a missionary physician developed during her year as a student missionary in Zambia while she was attending Southern.

"Working at Riverside Farm Institute, where we often went into the bush to provide medical care, I realized that women rarely saw a doctor," she says. "That year convinced me that I'd return to Africa as a missionary doctor."

The next few years were a flurry of finishing college, medical school, and residency. Along the way, she married another medical student who'd spent time as a student missionary in Africa and wanted to return. (Not by coincidence, their first date was a group camping trip during medical school. Danae knew Olen was a "keeper" when he loaned her his warmer sleeping bag and used her lightweight one.)

In December 2010, the doctor couple arrived at Béré Adventist Hospital. Béré has no electrical grid or water/sewer system, and oxcarts outnumber cars. As the only two physicians for a service area of 200,000 people, Danae and Olen got busy right away.

While Danae is an OB/GYN and Olen is an emergency physician, "in Béré, you're a little bit of everything," Olen explains. It pushed the couple out of their comfort zones.

"We learned that God asked us to fill a need, and He supplied the skills to meet the need," Danae adds.

In the mission field, every day presents new challenges. It might be a child who fell out of a mango tree and suffered a depressed skull fracture (Danae—the OB/GYN—did cranial surgery, and he lived), or a pregnant woman who had been in labor for days but couldn't afford to come for care (Danae sees dozens of such women every year). And of course, they treat endless cases of malaria, malaria, and more malaria.

"We see stuff in Chad that physicians don't in America," Olen says. For example, Danae has fixed more than 70 fistulas in the past three years, a higher number than virtually any American OB/GYN would see in a lifetime.

A Bigger Calling

Danae's training at Southern gave her a strong sense of God's leading, and the couple felt impressed that medical work was not their only calling.

"We are missionaries, not merely physicians," Danae says.



So, every Sabbath the Netteburgs pack the kids into the truck—along with a group of Chadians—and drive out into the bush. They find a mango tree, park the car, spread plastic mats on the ground, and soon village children show up and sit on the mats. Olen teaches them Bible songs. Danae tells a Bible story. Someone talks about how to pray. Adults hang around the edges, in the shade of the tree, and soon the group is 50, 80, or 100 people. After a few weeks, it's a church.

The missionaries have started more than a dozen of these bush churches, and most now have Chadian leadership. Some of the churches have survived; some haven't.

"No matter what, two things have happened," Olen says. "People have heard about Jesus, and we've had a genuine Sabbath rest."

How do they keep up the pace, with six days a week in the hospital and then the seventh out under the mango trees planting churches? The work is exhausting, and the couple knew they couldn't keep it up indefinitely. Thus, they came up with the idea of a nine-month sabbatical to hike the Appalachian Trail, trading one hectic pace with its constant challenges for a totally different pace and new challenges.

Danae and Olen planned the trip three years ago, but it didn't work out. Then, in early 2020 they realized: "We have an exceptional staff at the hospital. We've got time. We should think about doing this now!"

They left Africa five days later, and their first day on the trail was four days after that.

Unexpected Challenges

The family completed the hike between March and October of 2020, trekking through snow, sleet, rain, biting winds, thick fog, clouds, and summer heat. Addison figured out the best way to dry wet clothes: "I just sleep in them, and they get dry."

But a complication they hadn't anticipated was the COVID-19 pandemic, which forced them to get creative.

"We ended up hopscotching around the Appalachian Trail in order to hike where it was safest, and where the states permitted hiking," Olen says. He remembers their first brush with the rising challenge. "March 19 was the day

things started to close. We had hiked only 44 miles of the trail to that point. I bought fresh supplies, which made each pack heavy, and then we hiked 8.2 miles to the hut where we had planned to stay—our longest hike so far. However, when we arrived, the shelter had a sign that said 'Closed for Coronavirus.'"

The next place to stay was 3 miles away, and they'd be pushing dark to get there—something they'd never done before. The family decided to go for broke and made it to camp just as the daylight was fading.

"We were eating Ramen noodles by headlamps, and nobody was complaining. Instead, the kids were practicing their 'Katahdin' poses—how they'd mug for a camera at the northern terminus of the trail!" Olen remembers. That night he smiled to himself, figuring they had a chance to complete the trail.

On the Trail

"It was amazing to watch the kids hike—30 miles one day and more than 25 miles on several days—with no complaint," Olen says. "We would stop for nature lessons and to watch the wild animals. And occasionally for ice cream or pizza."

Zane remembers his first encounter with a wild animal, almost sitting on a rattlesnake. The family coached him on how to slide away slowly and leave the snake undisturbed.

They saw bears, deer, birds, and ponies. They also found a host of small critters and took a couple days off from hiking to mount some of the insects.

"It was their classwork; we tried to make sure they continued learning while we hiked," Danae explains. According to Lyol, "It was pretty fun school."

None of the children got tired of hiking. Day after day, the routine was similar. Get up. Start a fire. Make breakfast. Break camp. Start hiking. Eat some snacks midway through the day. Stop for the night. Pitch camp. Cook supper. Tell stories around a campfire. Turn in.

Olen and Danae slept in a double hammock, while the four children shared a two-person tent.

"We did that to save weight," Olen explains. "We started out carrying about 160 pounds of gear. By the end, we had stripped that down to under 100 pounds. Every ounce mattered on some of the big climbs."

Renewed Peace

The Appalachian Trail stretches approximately 2,200 miles from Georgia to Maine, and most people hiking the entire trail end at the northernmost point, Mt. Katahdin. However, because the pandemic forced the family to jump around and hike sections of trail out of sequence, their last segment was Springer Mountain in Georgia.

"We wanted to be very respectful and obey health regulations," Olen says, although it wasn't easy. Throughout the trip, they carefully documented their progress to make sure they completed every mile of the trail. In the end, the family hiked for 177 days and took 54 days off to drive between trail segments, do laundry, or rest a bit.

On top of Springer Mountain, after eight months of adventure, the family celebrated their completion of the final section of the trail by creating the number 2,193 with marshmallows, representing the total number of miles hiked.

"I thought I might be overwhelmed with emotion," Olen said. "But I wasn't. I simply felt pride and joy. My kids had accomplished something no four kids that young had ever done. We just celebrated the moment as a family."

Now the Netteburgs are off the trail and back at the hospital in Chad, bringing medical care and the gospel to the bush country of Africa.

"Being out on the trail for that long helped me rediscover a sense of peace," Danae says. "Living in Chad, we deal with a lot of illness and death. You start to carry that weight around. This trip was God's way of getting us ready for more service in Chad." ■

In 2019, Danae was recognized as Southern's Alumna of the Year.



Discovering Creation Through SOAP

by Madison Reinschmidt, junior mass communication major

Throughout the school year, students at Southern have the opportunity to go on their own mini-adventures through Southern Outdoor Adventure Programming (SOAP). Run by the university's Outdoor Leadership team in the School of Physical Education, Health, and Wellness, SOAP was created in 2009 with the goal of instilling in students the desire to spend time in God's creation and introducing them to recreational activities that they can continue long past their college experience. In a typical year, SOAP offers 20 trips, including activities such as backpacking, caving, rock climbing, whitewater rafting, skiing, and more.

"I thoroughly enjoy offering SOAP trips and giving students opportunities to go on exciting, safe, and Christ-centered adventures," said Mike Harris, adventure programming director and Outdoor Leadership professor.

"The SOAP trips have taught me so much about teamwork and have given me opportunities to enjoy activities I would never have experienced otherwise, such as caving," said Destini Hufnal, senior nursing major. "My favorite memories come from a camping trip where my friends and I got to canoe on the lake at night, which was super fun and adventurous. I especially enjoyed the worship and conversation we had around the firepit. It was a refreshing experience to reconnect with my friends and God. I love that SOAP anchors me to God through nature and gives me opportunities to encourage others and bond with people I may not know well."





GEORGE WASHINGTON CARVER ONCE SAID, "READING ABOUT NATURE IS FINE, BUT IF A PERSON WALKS IN THE WOODS AND LISTENS CAREFULLY, HE CAN LEARN MORE THAN WHAT IS IN BOOKS, FOR THEY SPEAK WITH THE VOICE OF GOD." STUDENTS AT SOUTHERN GET AMPLE OPPORTUNITIES TO BENEFIT FROM NATURE, FINDING PEACE, FUN, CONNECTION, AND A BREAK FROM ROUTINE AS THEY EXPLORE THE GREAT OUTDOORS.

All photos contributed.

DEVIN VAUDREUIL
senior outdoor leadership major

"Often people get stressed about something if they're not in control," said Devin Vaudreuil. "Part of de-stressing is allowing yourself to intentionally release that control, and when you get outdoors, nature just does what it's going to do. If it rains, it rains."

He values the slower-paced, nonconforming character of the natural world, enjoying kayaking, canoeing, and any other outdoor activities where he can be around water.

"I like water because it's going to move whether you like it or not," he said. "Rock climbing is another great activity. You can't control the rock. It's just there, and you have to figure out how to get around it."

While doing an internship at an academy, Vaudreuil was inspired by the fact that many classes were held outdoors, regardless of the weather. Now he is pursuing an outdoor leadership career in education at Southern.

"I've learned a lot about how people learn, and the best methods aren't necessarily a quiz or PowerPoint," Vaudreuil said. "It's important to take the time to use an experiential approach to teaching students who learn by doing. The adventure therapy courses I've taken here have helped me understand how to serve people better and meet their needs."



DWIGHT REY
senior film production major

Growing up in Toronto, Canada, Dwight Rey made urban exploration (urbex) his hobby. However, his time at Southern has introduced him to a new kind of adventure, and he has channeled his passion into discovering nature.

"Coming to Southern showed me more ideas for exploring," Rey said. "For example, getting to rappel in vertical caving piqued my interest; we don't have that stuff in the city. The closest thing in urbex is sewer exploration, which is also fun and exciting, but it's not the same."

Rey got involved with the university's Outdoor Leadership



adventure programs and has taken a variety of courses, such as whitewater rafting, canoeing, kayaking, and more. He even carried his film equipment on some backpacking, caving, and mountaineering trips to incorporate his love for outdoor exploration into his senior film project.

"I like that every day is different, depending on the weather," he said. "Nature is a nice change of scenery, and when you're doing activities such as hiking or biking, you're actually aware of where you are."



KIRSTEN LORELLE CLARK
senior marketing major

Kirsten Lorelle Clark calls the Pacific Northwest her home and has always loved the outdoors. Besides camping, hiking, and roller blading, she particularly enjoys practicing landscape photography.

Clark's father encouraged this hobby over the years. As a photographer himself, whenever he updated his camera gear, he gave his older equipment to his kids. The family would go out together, and while Clark's parents and siblings focused on birding and photographing wildlife, she captured the beauty and variety found in landscapes.

Southern has been a good fit for Clark. She enjoys hiking on the weekends and fondly remembers camping with her friends the first week after arriving on campus.

"When they invited me, I was pretty excited because I knew there were cool places to go around here," she said. "It just cheers me up to be outside hearing the birds sing, doing something completely separate from electronics, homework, or other stressful responsibilities."

VICTOR O'DALA
sophomore business administration major

One of the factors that influenced Victor O'Dala's decision to attend Southern was its vicinity to a variety of beautiful places where he can get outside and spend time in nature. His favorite activity is rock climbing, but he also seizes on any opportunity to go backpacking or hiking.

O'Dala has always prioritized spending time outside, but in college it has taken on even more importance for him. On the weekends, nature becomes his refuge from the routine academic pressures of his Monday-through-Friday schedule.

"Getting outdoors lets me de-stress from the chaos in my life," he said. "Nature is a place to get away from all of the stuff that makes me anxious. There I can reconnect with myself and with friends."



MARÍA JOSÉ MORÁN
senior mass communication major

As a city girl growing up in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, María José Morán didn't begin spending time outside regularly until she came to Southern.

"Because I was unfamiliar with being around nature and didn't have access to it before, I felt like I needed to get outdoors here," Morán said.

She soon discovered that she did not like hiking. However, she realized that running outside was more enjoyable than doing a gym workout, so she made jogging on the university's trail system part of her morning routine.

"It's definitely become a priority, because the fresh air puts me in a great mood," Morán said. "While I'm in nature, I have time to think, organize, and plan. After I spend time outside, I feel much more focused."

In addition to running, Morán enjoys sitting outside to paint or journal. She also values nature for its impact on her spiritual life.

"Nature helps me reflect on God's power," she said. "It personalizes who God is for me and reminds me that 'intangible' God is still physically close." ■





God-Centered, Student-Focused

For 22 years, David Smith, PhD, has served Southern. He began his first 17 years in 1981 as an English professor and then department chair, followed by his term as president from 2016-2021. Smith recently sat down for an interview with Joseph Khabbaz, vice president for Spiritual Life, to share some memories and thoughts as he prepares to retire this summer.

The following conversation has been edited for length.

Joseph Khabbaz: As you look back over 22 years at Southern, what is your favorite memory?

David Smith: I have two favorite collective memories. The first is teaching in the classroom at Southern. I got to do that for 17 years, and I loved every minute of it, having such an amazing experience with students. It was so fun to walk into a room and together create a world and live in it. That's what we did year after year as we became part of each other's lives. My heart is filled with memories and really powerful, positive emotions whenever I think about Southern students and the fun we had learning together, growing together, and helping each other.

The other memory is having students pray with me. Both when I was a teacher and since I've become president, periodically students have come by for the express purpose of asking, "Can we pray with you?" That has always deeply moved me.

One time when I was teaching, a student stopped by and said: "You look tired. Can I pray for you?" I happened to be exhausted that day, and after that student prayed, wow, I was filled with energy! Life was good. I think the prayers of students for those of us who are here to serve them mean so much more than they could ever know.

JK: With your background as an English professor and pastor, I know words are important to you. Can you share a word that you particularly associate with Southern, and why?

DS: The word that comes to mind is "life." When I began teaching college, I discovered that this is when students make their biggest decisions. This is when they set the course that many of them will be on for the rest of their lives.

Southern is about living life for God. It's about God shaping a life that He's had a plan for from before that person was born, and guiding it in a way that has brought that student to this place. And He has moved on those of us employed here to work with that student as partners with God and the Spirit, to let that life become what it's supposed to be.

It just doesn't get any better than being part of that process.

JK: As you have lived life with the students and employees here for more than two decades, what is your favorite meal at the Dining Hall?

DS: My answer will disappoint probably all of the careful eaters around me, but it is Worthington Skallops. When they serve Skallops, I'm just one really happy person. I couldn't tell you why. It's probably not good for me, but I love the taste of them. So when the cafe has them, I try to show up.

JK: And do you get it with the extra tartar sauce?

DS: Absolutely. The more tartar sauce, the better.

JK: When you became our university president five years ago, what was your main goal, and how has it progressed? Has the outcome surprised you in any way?

DS: Five years ago, I actually declined the invitation to serve as president at first. Having been president elsewhere, I knew what the job entailed, and I wasn't sure it was God's plan for me. But through a personal process, He convicted me that it was what He wanted me to do.

I had only one goal when I started, and I have only one at this point: to do whatever it is that God wants me to do, whenever He calls me to do it. He didn't speak to me from the mountain and say: "This is what I want you to do. And when you're done with that, you're done." At each step along the way He simply said, "This is what I want you to do right now."

From the beginning, I sensed the importance of building on Southern's strong spiritual vision. The outcomes in this area are probably my most pleasant surprise during my time as president. I see the campus coalescing around things that involve surrendering ourselves to God, asking Him to transform us, asking for His love to fill us to overflowing, and pushing all of the selfishness out of us.

I think in the last five years, God has continued to help and bless this place in remarkable ways that

I had only one goal when I started, and I have only one at this point: to do whatever it is that God wants me to do, whenever He calls me to do it.

have positioned the university for a strong future. I totally lift Him up for that and thank Him. It has been a privilege to partner with Him.

JK: Of all that you have accomplished at Southern, what do you feel is the most significant?

DS: I'm not sure what I have accomplished, but I can share what God has done. And that includes bringing about the new role of vice president for Spiritual Life and calling you, Joseph, to that position. I think in some ways God created you to fulfill this influential role and prepared you for it.

Of everything that has happened, the thing that means the most to me personally—and I think it is significant to many employees—is that we are centered, absolutely centered institutionally, on the love of God and its power to transform not only our lives but also the lives of those we serve as God works through us.

To the degree that we pursue that goal, to the degree we experience it, and to the degree we pass it on to future generations, I believe to that same degree, Southern will be all that God intended it to be. And I couldn't be more pleased with that prospect.

JK: As you retire from Southern and your wife, Cherie, retires from her pastoral work at the Collegedale Church of Seventh-day Adventists, what do you most look forward to? And what do you anticipate missing?

1: With a heart for young people, Smith (center) has enjoyed praying with, serving, and doing life together with students through the years.

2: As president, Smith served as the face of Southern, including this photo shoot for the Campaign for Excellence in Faith and Learning, which was completed last year.

3: At the beginning of every school year, President Smith gave out Cherie's homemade cookies to incoming students.

4: Cherie and David Smith have been a dynamic team for 49 years of marriage.

5: President Smith models support of the Annual Giving sock campaign that provided tuition assistance to help students attain a quality, Christian education at Southern.

6: During graduations for the last five years, Smith has celebrated with every student participating in this academic milestone.

7: As an English professor, Smith worked with Southern's Destiny Drama company, pictured in 1982.

8: Smith hosted the finale of Southern's 2016 Giving Day.

DS: I've worked in education for just a hair short of 50 years, and it's been so embedded in my life. It's been my calling, what God wanted me to do. And I've enjoyed it. You don't just walk away from something that's so people-centered, relationship-centered, and God-centered and not miss it. So, I know I'll miss the people, especially the students.

I will miss the cycles of the school year. I've always enjoyed that. The fresh beginning of the semester, the middle where you might get just enough of a break to get you through, and then when you're really, really tired, you're done. And you realize, "Hey, God got me through that again!" I know I'm going to miss that.

But what I absolutely won't miss: committee meetings, virtual or in person! When I was in the classroom, I could love every minute of it, and it would energize me. Committee meetings don't. I do my best by them, but they're not the kind of thing I eagerly anticipate.

Generally speaking, in retirement I'm looking forward to spending more time on things that do energize me. I'm an outdoors person by nature, and wildlife photography is my biggest hobby. I will be spending a lot of time enjoying God's creation, taking lots of pictures, and just enjoying nature as I always have.

One thing that I know both Cherie and I really look forward to is not having locked-in appointments that fill our days. Having some options and maybe not doing the same thing every week at the same time. But both of us also look forward to what God has for us next. We don't believe that

in retirement He's letting us off the hook from serving other people, nor would we want Him to. So we know we'll be serving others; we just don't know what that means yet. We're looking forward to finding it out.

JK: What is your hope for everyone who has attended or graduated from Southern during your time as president?

DS: That's almost too easy, Joseph. And maybe it shouldn't be. I guess, as a university president, I should entertain deeper thoughts than I'm about to express. But I think my hope for every student I ever taught, every employee I've ever worked with, every constituent or alum I ever served, would be that someday very soon we would meet in Heaven. Period.

I pray every day that God would prepare our hearts and our lives for what He has had in store for us from before He created the world. I've allowed my imagination to run freely enough to try to visualize what a world done God's way would be like, compared to the world I'm living in right this moment. And it makes me so eager, so eager for Heaven.

As much as I value human relationships and human love and a lot of really positive, wonderful things in my life here at Southern, I can't think of anything greater than to see you, my family, all those I've known here, to see you all in Heaven. And having the realization: "You know what? There's no time; there's no clock. We've got forever to enjoy a perfect world." I say, let's get at it and let's do it. ■

From the beginning, I sensed the importance of building on Southern's strong spiritual vision.



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Did You Know?

Founded in 1892, Southern has grown and changed significantly through the years. See how many of these facts and numbers are new to you!

Student jobs have been a mutually beneficial arrangement since Southern was founded. Today, the university employs more than **1,500 student workers** and offers several work-related scholarships.



Lynn H. Wood

Lynn Wood Hall, named in 1945 for Lynn H. Wood (Southern's 8th and 11th president, serving 1914-1915 and 1918-1922), was completed in 1924 and is the oldest building in use on campus.



Students from all **50** states attend Southern, along with representatives from **37** countries.

OUR 1,300-ACRE CAMPUS



has nearly **40 miles** of hiking and biking trails.



More than **2,500 students** are enrolled at Southern, engaged in the university's **81 undergraduate degree programs** and **nine graduate programs**—not counting numerous concentrations.

Southern's tuition and fees are **34% lower** than the national average for private colleges and universities.



In the last five years, **6,920 people** have been baptized following student-led evangelistic meetings in **14 countries**.

In an average year, nearly **300** students serve on long-term and short-term mission trips.



More than **1,200 students** participate in approximately **100 LifeGroups** at Southern—an opportunity to worship and fellowship with a small community of friends each week.



With **eight intramural sports** to choose from during the school year, more than **50% of students participate** in one or more.

The Bietz Center for Student Life—the students' new “living room”—will feature **42,200 square feet**

of space, with options for fun, worship, food, and more when it opens this fall.

Each year, students receive nearly **\$18,000,000** in Southern-based scholarships.



Come See for Yourself!

Are you or someone you know interested in attending Southern? We invite you to schedule a visit to see for yourself what makes this university special. In-person and virtual visit options are available. Simply go to southern.edu/visit to get started.

Reaching Out to Christ

by Madison Reinschmidt, junior mass communication major

When Collegedale Church of Seventh-day Adventists transitioned to online services in 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic, Nathan McKee, '14, felt inspired to get involved with outreach. While reading about God's call in Isaiah 58 to help the less fortunate, he realized the need to assist those living in the local area without basic necessities, such as food or shelter.

According to the Chattanooga Regional Homeless Coalition, the number of unsheltered individuals in the county increased by more than 80% during the pandemic. After speaking to various local organizations, McKee and his friend and fellow Southern alum Raymond Liu, '13 and '16, partnered with the church to establish a small group called Isaiah 58. The group's goal is to visit, witness, and provide goods to people living in homeless camps in the surrounding community.

In Our Backyard

McKee and Liu began visiting a camp in Ooltewah last August and have tried to return every two weeks since then, inviting family and friends to join. During each visit, the group makes note of what the inhabitants need and returns the next time with supplies, such as sleeping bags, hats, gloves, soap, hygiene products, food, and drinks.

"Every time we approach the camp, we shout 'outreach' to let them know that we are there to meet their needs," Liu explained. "This one word is so special to me, because we want them to know that we will not harm them or steal from them as others have. It has been a very cool experience to become friends with them—to understand who they are and what has brought them there."

The people living in the camp also have a desire to be close to Christ. They want to be prayed for and are often found reading their Bibles or listening to Christian radio programs.

For Kris Eckenroth, '99, associate senior pastor at the Collegedale Church, visiting the homeless camp



Nathan McKee, '14 (left), and friend Cody McElroy, '15, prepare to share food during a Sabbath afternoon visit to a Chattanooga area homeless camp.

in the woods is a peaceful and serene time to connect with God.

"Whenever I leave after spending time there, I have a lump in my throat," Eckenroth said. "I feel as if I have been in the presence of Christ. These people are right in our backyard. Everyone who lives in the Collegedale area probably passes by them every day. It's easy to be unaware, but Jesus—in the form of someone who is homeless—is literally within arm's reach. If people are looking for a real experience with Jesus, it is available."

The Shirt Off His Back

In the course of their visits, the Isaiah 58 group has been struck by the selflessness of those living in the camps. As the group has returned regularly, the inhabitants have become excited about their visits and look for ways that they can give back.

Once, McKee noticed that a man was wearing a shirt with a Bible verse on it. To start up a conversation, McKee said, "Hey man, I love your shirt!"

To his surprise, the man responded by offering it to him and starting to take the shirt off. McKee quickly stopped him but was touched by the selflessness demonstrated in this experience and many others.

"Some of the people will say: 'I have enough stuff. Look through what I have so you can give it to others who need it more,'" Liu said. "Seeing how giving the people are has truly softened my heart."

One day, McKee and Eckenroth encountered a man who had nothing but the clothes he was wearing. The man needed a tent, but they had only one tent left to give, which was already promised to another couple. Unprompted, the couple told the outreach group to give the tent to the other man instead. Although their tent had holes and was falling down, they put their needs aside for a stranger.

This is what Christ asks His followers to do—to give to those less fortunate in all situations.

"He is calling us, in a dark time in Earth's history, to be light," Eckenroth said. "Light shines in the darkness when we treat people as if they are Jesus." ■

The History Nugget

God Has Seen Us Through

"We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history"

(*Life Sketches of Ellen G. White*, p. 196).

by Janell Hullquist, '05

Measures to fight COVID-19, such as masks, quarantine, and adjusted school calendars, may feel unprecedented, but they have been used to fight illness for decades, even at Southern. In the years before vaccines were available, diseases such as smallpox, measles, and yellow fever frequently infected communities across the country and made their presence known at Southern, as well. During at least one smallpox epidemic, the small building known as the Doll House—the oldest structure on campus—was used to house quarantined students.

Influenza also disrupted campus life at times. The most well-known instance was the 1918 flu pandemic, which reached Chattanooga in October of that year. Thousands in the area became sick, including about 85 Southern



In 1965, 83 students and teachers became ill from hepatitis, and the county health authorities were unable to discover its source. To stop further infection, approximately 1,000 individuals received preventative injections from the college health services team.

students, and community members banded together to sew masks.

Despite several severe cases on campus, there were no student or employee fatalities. The spirit of service was strong, however, and several students volunteered to help ill families nearby.

Lesser-known influenza epidemics hit the area in 1928 and 1934, and both times Southern made adjustments to the school calendar in response. Exams were delayed, Christmas vacation was extended, and the start of second

semester was postponed in order to minimize illness.

Throughout its history—including during the COVID-19 pandemic—Southern has taken precautions to reduce infections while relying on prayer and God's grace, and He has blessed. As Ellen White expressed, "We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history" (*Life Sketches of Ellen G. White*, p. 196). ■

Alumni Notes

'50s Clifton Keller, '58, lives in Lebanon Junction, Kentucky. After graduating from Southern with a bachelor's degree in education, he earned advanced degrees at Washington University in St. Louis and Notre Dame University in Indiana. He recently learned that his book *Doing Science, Learning Life: Activities with Spiritual Lessons* is a free resource available online through Andrews University. Keller also co-wrote two college-level physics books, *Electromagnetism* and *Mechanics*.

'60s ¹ Jerry, '69, and Linda (Hallock) Rickaby, '70, met at Southern and have been married for 51 years. They raised three children, a girl and two boys, but lost their daughter to cancer when she was age 7. Their sons have brought them untold joy and three grandchildren.

'70s ² Richard and Coleen (Seitz) Stanley, '71, met their junior year at Southern in Jerome Clark's American History class while sitting side by side alphabetically. They became engaged after Richard was accepted to Loma Linda University School of Medicine in California and will celebrate 50 years of marriage in August. They have two children and three grandchildren and are happily retired in New Smyrna Beach, Florida, just a few blocks from the ocean, after Richard practiced family medicine for nearly 40 years.

Linda Nielsen, '72, passed the CPA exam in 1977 and graduated from the University of Maryland at Baltimore with a master's degree in social work in 1986. She lives in Silver Spring, Maryland, and retired from the Adult Behavioral Health Clinic at Walter Reed National Military Medical Hospital in 2017.

'80s ³ Kathy Lord, '75, lives in Altamonte Springs, Florida, and retired in April last year after 40 years of working in home health care, oncology, and IV therapy. Within the last decade, she obtained national certification as a geriatric care manager. She is forever grateful for the wonderful education she received at Southern and advises others to "always lead with your knowledge and love with your heart."

'80s Andrea Kiture, '86, owns the Satellite Center, an online learning platform. She lives in Bedias, Texas.

'80s ⁴ Angela J. Henry (attended) is a certified public accountant with Alegna Financial Management Inc. in Atlanta, Georgia. She leads the highly respected boutique firm of accounting professionals providing financial, tax, and business advisory services to clients in the entertainment, media, and professional services industries. Angela completed her undergraduate degree in 1990 and her MBA degree with a concentration in finance in 1995 at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga.

'80s ⁵ Becky (Rempher), '87, and Jim McCurdy, '08, pastor a small, three-church district in the northeast corner of Washington. They recently celebrated 33 years of marriage, which has been blessed by eight children: daughter Clarissa died in a car accident in 2005 at age 8; four are married; two are planning weddings this year; and the youngest, Susanna, plans to attend Southern this fall. The growing family now includes six grandchildren, and the couple praises God for His goodness.

Stephen Lake, '88, works as a senior physical therapist for outpatient rehabilitation in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

'80s ⁶ Bo, '88, and Tina (Frist) Smith, '89, met on campus more than 30 years ago and now live in Apison, Tennessee. Tina has been part of the Marketing and University Relations team at Southern for the past nine years, and Bo is in IT security governance at Blue Cross Blue Shield in Chattanooga. Their son, Tré, is a junior at Southern, studying math education and planning to serve abroad next year as a student missionary in the Republic of Palau. Their daughter, Carolina, is a freshman at Andrews University in Michigan, pursuing an animal science/pre-veterinary medicine degree. As empty nesters, Bo and Tina continue to love boating and spending time with friends.

'80s ⁷ Marcus, '89, and Deanna (Darbo) Dekle, '83, and their family live in Hamburg, Pennsylvania. Their daughter, Autumn, is enrolled in the nursing program at Southern.

'90s Jannett Myrie, '97 and '00, earned an MSN degree from Grand Canyon University in Arizona. She lives in Apopka, Florida.

'00s ⁸ Tron, '01, and Kristie (Young) Wilder, '03, are professors at Southern. Tron teaches in the School of Education and Psychology, and Kristie teaches in the School of Social Work. They have two sons: Ace (7) and Jude (5).

Daniel and Rebecca (Lauritzen) Kuntz, '02, live in Ukiah, California, with their two sons: Nathan (12) and Samuel (9).

'00s ⁹ Boaz, '04, and LaRae (Coleman) Papendick, '04, continue to serve as missionaries in Senegal, West Africa, along with their four children: Bashir (13), Lika (9), Litsa (6), and Bashaar, born in September 2020.

Elvis Rodriguez (attended) graduated from Antillean Adventist University with a Bachelor of Arts in Physical Education. He lives in Puerto Rico and plans to attend medical school to specialize in sports medicine.

'10s ¹⁰ Detra Betts, '12, graduated from Southern with a family studies major and then earned a master's degree in human services counseling from Liberty University in Virginia in 2014. She has held positions assisting victims of crime as a victim advocate and currently is a certified health coach. She launched Delight in Your Health LLC in February 2020 and lives in Reidsville, North Carolina.

'10s ¹¹ Caleb, '08 and '13, and Brenda (Monchez) Fischer, '12 and '13, welcomed their first daughter in May 2020. The family lives in Ooltewah, Tennessee.

'12 Janelle (Lockwitz) Edmondson, '12, '14, and '17, is an ANCC board certified nurse practitioner with more than seven years of professional mental health experience. She also is the founder and director of Phoenix Health PLLC in Chattanooga. As the critical incident support specialist for Tri-Community Volunteer Fire Department, she provides support and trauma processing to members following critical incidents. Janelle serves as an adjunct professor for mental health nursing within Cleveland State Community College's Associate Nursing Program. She is active with the Tennessee Disaster and Mental Health Strike Team, Blue HELP, the First Responder Suicide Prevention Task Force, and Firefighter Behavioral Health Alliance.

Seth Daly Stennis, '15, and his wife, Ashley, live in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Seth is a resident physician in psychiatry at Massachusetts General Hospital.

'13 Lexie Center, '16, lives in Florida and works as a social media manager for the Women's Tennis Association. Previously, she traveled all over the world, including New York, Paris, and Miami, assisting with tennis tournaments. She works more behind the scenes for now, because of COVID-19 travel restrictions, but hopes to return to traveling soon. She manages all of the WTA's social media accounts, covers matches, sends tennis players content from their matches, and posts sponsored content, among other responsibilities. She was part of the team that created *Tennis United*, a show that began airing after tennis tournaments stopped due to the pandemic and won the Content Creation award from Leaders Sports Awards.



Family Additions

Elaina (Holway) Eustache (attended) and her husband, Guy, welcomed their son, Judah, on November 29, 2020. They live in Fremont, New Hampshire.

1 Brittney (Jacobson) Thorp, '11, and her husband, Chris, welcomed their son, Jacob, on January 21, 2021. The family lives in Laurel, Maryland.

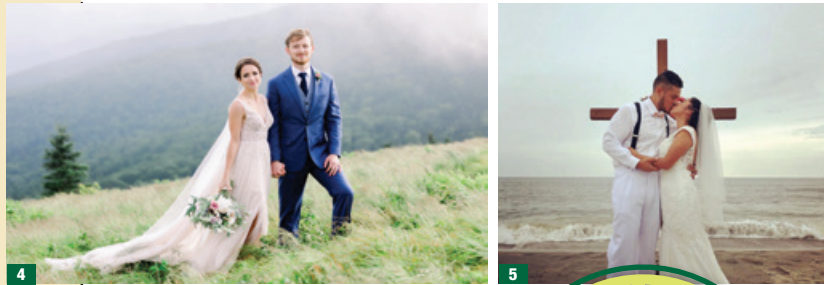
2 Tony, '13, and Jolene (Sparks) Messer, '12, welcomed their son, Liam Alexander, on December 17, 2020. Tony serves as a pastor in the Michigan Conference.

3 Sam, '13, and Satara (Johnson) Nadarajan, '09, welcomed their daughter, Ainsley, on September 16, 2020.



We'd love to hear from you, and so would your classmates! Send updates about additions to your family, accomplishments, marriage, professional recognitions, or other news you'd like to share to:

alumni@southern.edu
Alumni Relations • P.O. Box 370
Collegedale, TN 37315-0370
southern.edu/alumni/updates



Weddings

1 Ryan, '05, and Mindy (Jamieson) Trott, '06, were married on June 7, 2020, during a small "COVID-cautious" wedding. They hope to celebrate with their family and friends when it is safe to gather. The couple lives in East Ridge, Tennessee, and Mindy serves as an assistant professor in the School of Visual Art and Design.

2 Vanessa (Duncan) Matthews, '14, married Michael Matthews on August 8, 2020. The couple lives in Merced, California, and plans to settle there for a few years before moving east to start their family. They enjoy the beautiful scenery that the West Coast has to offer and try to visit new places whenever possible.

3 Andrew, '16, and Ashley (Mitchell) Anobile, '15 and '16, were married on December 6, 2020. The couple lives in Lawrenceville, Georgia. Andrew is an associate pastor at a local church, and Ashley is a NICU nurse in Atlanta.

4 Benjamin, '20, and Jessica (Kovach) Lawson, '19, were married on June 29, 2020. Their wedding was originally scheduled for the week after graduation, but COVID-19 changed their plans, and they eloped to Roan Mountain, North Carolina, with their family and best friends. Benjamin is currently attending Andrews University School of Divinity as he works to complete his master's degree before beginning ministry as a pastor in the Carolina Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Jessica works as a fourth-grade teacher while also pursuing a career as a wedding photographer. Their love for travel has them itching for the pandemic to end, so they can visit Scotland for a delayed honeymoon.

5 Efileni (Perez-Ortiz) Ofisa, '20, married Alexander Ofisa II on August 23, 2020, on the beach in North Carolina. The couple lives in La Palma, California. Alexander will graduate with a theology degree from Pacific Union College in June 2021. Efileni plans to complete a master's degree in marriage and family and start her own business. The couple shares the goal of starting a YouTube ministry to help expand God's everlasting kingdom.

Celebrating Southern Sweethearts



More than 3,500 married alumni couples have joined their hearts and lives! Alumni Relations is excited to launch Southern Sweethearts, a new program designed to celebrate newlywed alumni couples and their new journey together with a special gift. Visit southern.edu/sweethearts to enroll in this complimentary program.

*A Southern Sweetheart couple is defined as an attendee/graduate married to another Southern attendee/graduate.

Lifelong Friends



Southern is proud to recognize two alumni centenarians who have been friends since the 1930s. Last fall, **Pierce J. Moore**, '39 (left), who turned 101 on March 12 this year, was honored by his Asheville, North Carolina, community for service as a World War II army surgeon. November 11, 2020, was proclaimed by city officials as "P.J. Moore, MD Day," and he was the keynote speaker for the ceremony. **Coyne Knight** (attended), who turned 100 this past December, roomed across the hall from P.J. at Southern, and later the two were roommates while they completed medical school at Loma Linda University. The two old friends now live near each other in Florida, where they recently reconnected.

Remembrance

1 John "Warren" Gepford (attended) was born on September 8, 1928, in Ardmore, Oklahoma, and passed away on January 7, 2021, in Hendersonville, Tennessee. Warren attended elementary school and graduated from Collegedale Academy. In 1945, his family moved to Lincoln, Nebraska, so Warren's father could oversee the broom shop at Union College. During high school, Warren met Frances "Frankie" Hester Gepford (attended), who later joined him at Union. Following graduation, they were wed and settled in Nashville, Tennessee. The couple celebrated 67 years of marriage before Frankie passed away in 2016. Warren is survived by daughters **Donna Hines**, '74, and **Patricia Parks**, '62 and '74; four grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren.

Doris (Tipton) Pierce, '51, passed away at the age of 92 on December 5, 2020, at Coffman Nursing Home. Born March 10, 1928, in Johnson City, Tennessee, Doris was a graduate of Collegedale Academy as well as of Southern. She received an alumni award from the university in 2002. Doris began work at the Library of Congress in 1952 in the aeronautics division and later in the personnel office of this oldest federal cultural institution in the United States, located in Washington, D.C. She was appointed chief of the Employee Relations office in 1967 and worked there until 1983. Moving to Hagerstown, Maryland, she served as assistant to the president of the Review and Herald Publishing Association. Preceded in death by her husband, Bruce Alfred Pierce, Doris is survived by daughter Judith Lynn Pierce and 13 nieces and nephews.

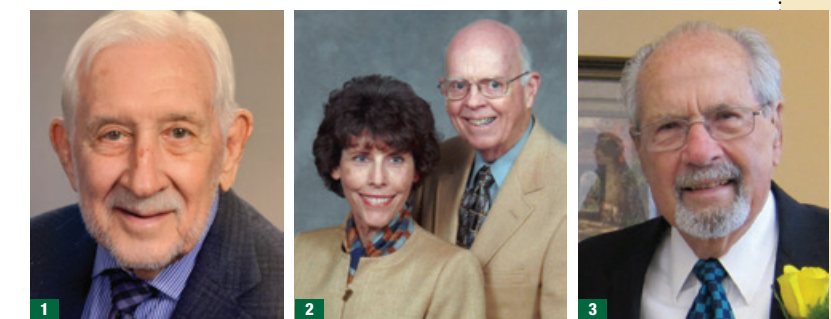
2 **Richard Chesney**, '53, of Cleveland, Tennessee, passed away peacefully at home on Friday, May 22, 2020, at the age of 89 following a brief illness. Richard was born March 4, 1931, in Greeneville, Tennessee, grew up in Knoxville, and graduated from Southern in 1953 with a bachelor's degree in chemistry. He served in the U.S. Army as a lab technician until 1955 before returning to work at the College Press on Southern's campus. Richard enjoyed a long career in the printing industry; 33 years with Preston Printing Company in Cleveland, Tennessee, followed by 15 years at Starkey Printing Company in Chattanooga. He enjoyed working on cars, playing ukulele, watching Atlanta Braves' baseball games, and mowing on his John Deere tractor. A former member of the Chattanooga Area Model Railroad Club, Richard also enjoyed camping with his family and working with Pathfinder youth while attending the Ooltewah Seventh-day Adventist Church. He was a long-time member of the Bowman Hills Seventh-day Adventist Church in Cleveland and known for his generous heart and saying only kind words about others. Richard was preceded in death by his parents, Darrell and Florence Chesney, and his first wife, Ruby. He is survived by his wife, **Daryl (Andersen) Chesney**, '66; children **Evan Chesney**, '83, **Sharon (Chesney) Jenkins**, '82, **Duane Chesney**, '90, Douglas Mayberry, and Doreen (Mayberry) Frost; and two grandsons.

3 **John F. Harris**, '55, of Loveland, Colorado, passed away at home on December 25, 2020, surrounded by family members. He was born December 19, 1931, in Nashville, Tennessee, and was a lifelong member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. He graduated from Highland Academy in Portland, Tennessee, in 1950 and then from Southern with a degree in religion. He graduated from the Potomac Seminary in Maryland in 1957 and from Andrews University in Michigan in 1966 with master's degrees in religion and religious education. In 1959, John and his family accepted a call to be missionaries in Thailand. He learned to speak, read, and write the Thai language, which he said was the most difficult task he ever accomplished. He was a member of the King's Heralds Quartet Thailand, often singing on the *Voice of Prophecy* radio broadcast. In 1969, he moved to Singapore with his family and taught religion at Far Eastern Academy. In 1973, the family returned to the United States, and the last North American churches John pastored were in Gunnison and Nucla, Colorado. His final call came from his beloved Thailand in 2002, when he was asked to pastor the Ekamai Seventh-day Adventist Church in Bangkok for two years. John continued preaching until September of 2016 and was a member of various singing groups throughout his life. He was preceded in death by his parents; sister Margaret Francis (Harris) Osborne, and brother William Nelson Harris. He is survived by brother Charles P. Harris Sr.; wife Donna R. (Jones) Harris; sons John "Rick" F. Harris Jr., William Daniel Harris, and Ruben Gerald Harris; daughters Elizabeth Argie (Harris) Kresge and Laura Jane (Harris) Adair; bonus children Donald Norman, David Norman, and Nicole (Norman) Watson; 10 grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren; and many nephews and nieces.

4 **Norman Bernal**, '68, passed away on September 7, 2020, at the age of 75. Born in Lima, Peru, he was awarded a music scholarship at age 7 for the National Conservatory of Music in Lima to study violin with Harold Franken. After graduating from high school, Norman came to the United States to attend Southern, graduating with a bachelor's degree in violin performance. He earned a master's degree in music education at Andrews University in Michigan and was awarded a doctoral fellowship at Ball State University School of Music in Indiana. During that time, Norman began studying the art of making fine, handcrafted, stringed instruments. He served for five years as orchestra director and violin teacher at Pacific Union College in California, developing the orchestra into a well-respected performing ensemble. Norman moved to Atlanta, Georgia, in 1979 and lived there for the remainder of his life. He opened Bernal Violins and began performing as a violinist with the Atlanta Virtuosi Chamber Orchestra while also performing and conducting throughout the Southeast. From 1987 to 2012, when he retired, Norman taught at several middle and high schools. Throughout his life, Norman toured around the world, performing for public figures as well as

royalty, including Prince Albert of Monaco. Norman is survived by children Alex and Janeen; a grandson; sister **Hazel** (attended) and brother-in-law **Wolfgang von Maack**, '72; nieces **Edelweiss von Maack**, '93 and '94, and **Jennifer von Maack Baker**, '89; and a nephew.

5 **Kenneth Ray Wynn**, '82, of Moore, South Carolina, passed away on September 15, 2020, at the age of 85 at Spartanburg Medical Center with his beloved wife of 62 years, Montie "Ruth" Phillips, by his side. Kenneth was born on October 9, 1934, in Fletcher, North Carolina, as one of six children. He attended elementary school in Fletcher and graduated from Forest Lake Academy in Florida. From 1953 to 1956 he majored in pre-dental studies at Southern, and the university granted him a medical science degree in 1982 in recognition of completing the Doctor of Dental Surgery degree from Loma Linda University in California in 1960. Kenneth and Ruth married in 1958 and following graduation relocated to South Carolina, where Kenneth practiced dentistry in York, Woodruff, and Spartanburg for 42 years until he retired in 2002. He served as secretary/treasurer and later as president of the Southern Chapter of the National Association of Seventh-day Adventist Dentists and was a member of several other professional associations and societies. A member of the Spartanburg Seventh-day Adventist Church, Kenneth held a variety of offices and devoted much of his life to serving his community. He was chair of the Finance Committee when the current church was built and was instrumental in co-founding its first Pathfinder youth club. His hobbies included writing poetry, photography, painting, sculpting, woodturning, woodcarving, and baking. Kenneth was known for his untiring love and devotion for his Savior, family, and his many friends who remember his wit, wisdom, kindness, and ever-present smile. He was preceded in death by his parents; brothers Irving Wynn, Wilton Wynn, and Lowell Wynn; and sisters **Elouise (Wynn) Smith**, '44, and **Eileen (Wynn) Cranford**. In addition to his wife, Kenneth is survived by daughters **Deborah Wynn**, '81, **Diane Thurber**, '81, and **Denise Hagerty**; four grandchildren; two great-grandchildren; and many nieces and nephews.



Working to Defeat COVID-19

by Angela Baerg, '06

From a very young age, Mark McKenzie, MD, '91, was insatiably inquisitive. His parents, who were both teachers, encouraged his quest for knowledge and often sent him to the dictionary or encyclopedia to find his own answers. Little did McKenzie realize that one day his critical thinking skills would be needed to help fight a global pandemic.

In 1986, McKenzie enrolled at Southern as a biology major with a focus on medical technology. His adviser, the late Professor Ray Hefferlin, PhD, went above and beyond to help him conduct an independent study and find hospitals around the country where he could complete his research. Through his studies, McKenzie learned how to develop a theory, put it into practice, and gather data to evaluate his conclusions.

"I got a strong science background from Southern," McKenzie said. "Later, when I decided to study medicine, I was quite pleased to discover how well they had prepared me for my career choice."

McKenzie became a doctor of internal medicine and worked in private practice for 16 years. In 2009, he began to collaborate with a friend, Richard Krause, MD, at Clinsearch, an independent clinical research center in Chattanooga, Tennessee. In 2018, Krause retired from the company he had founded, and McKenzie began to run Clinsearch full time.

As COVID-19 swept across the globe, many pharmaceutical companies approached Clinsearch to test products that could potentially combat the virus. In 2020, Krause lost his life to

COVID-19 complications; his memory inspired McKenzie and his team to do all they could to fight the disease. McKenzie became one of the 100 principal investigators in the United States for the Moderna mRNA vaccine, which eventually received emergency-use authorization by the Food and Drug Administration in December 2020. Clinsearch also ran a trial for the Novavax vaccine, which had 116 North American trial locations, with McKenzie monitoring more than 750 volunteers.

Additionally, Clinsearch conducted a trial for Regeneron, an antiviral antibody treatment that can be used to treat those who have contracted the virus, or it can be used to help those who have been exposed to remain healthy and uninfected. The trial showed that the treatment reduces viral levels and improves symptoms in nonhospitalized COVID-19 patients.

McKenzie remains focused on his goal to test products that can help save lives and bring people back together with their loved ones. He particularly misses his own parents, who live in Canada, so he has not been able to see them in more than a year due to health precautions and travel restrictions.

"We are encouraged as we see things starting to turn around, as more people get vaccinated and we learn more about how to combat this virus," says McKenzie. "As a Christian, I believe that Matthew 25 calls us to do something for those around us. It's inspiring and humbling to know that the work we are doing is making a difference." ■

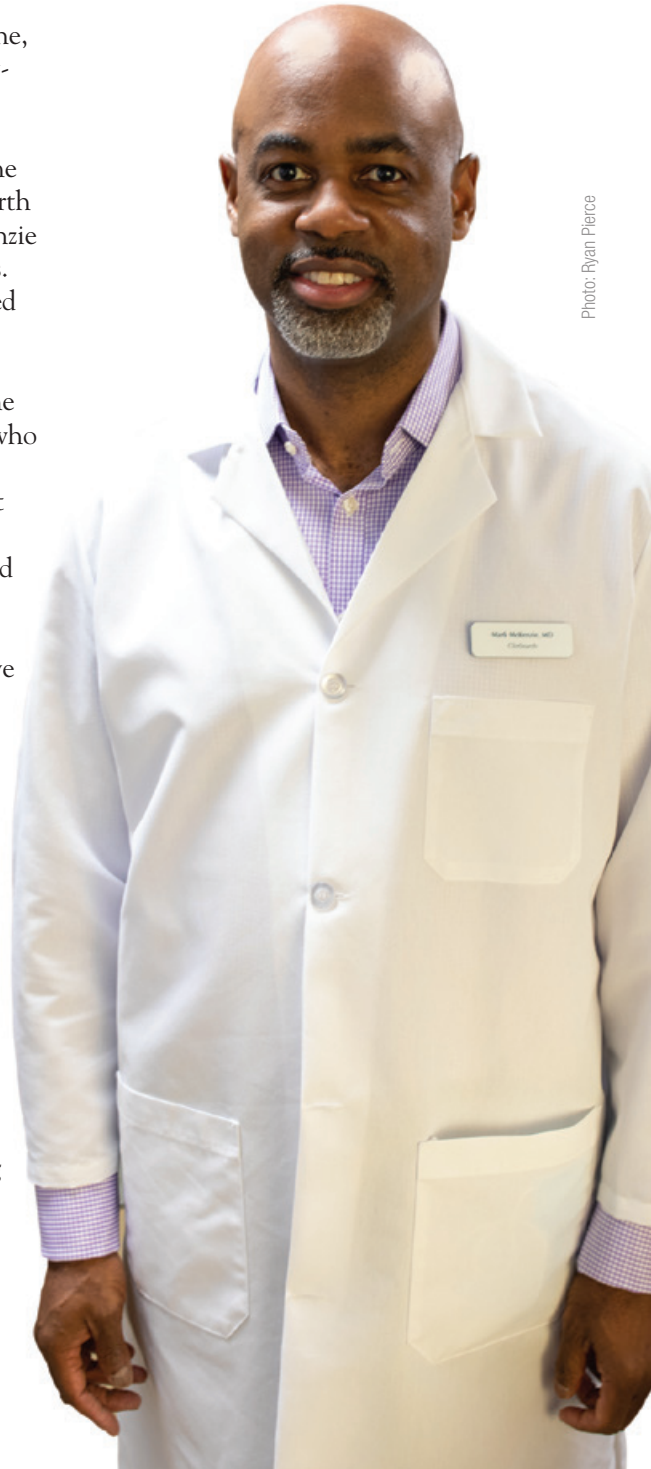


Photo: Ryan Pierce



Photo: Ryan Pierce

Turning Clay Into Art

The School of Visual Art and Design provides numerous courses where students can explore various hands-on skills. Laiza Fuhrmann, a May 2021 fine arts graduate, sampled a wide range of creative media, deciding to specialize in bringing beauty out of "mud" as she forms works of art at the potter's wheel. To see some of Fuhrmann's finished work, visit southern.edu/columns.

HOMECOMING WEEKEND 2021

October 28-31 • southern.edu/homecoming

SAVE
THE
DATE

Honor Classes:


1941, '51, '61, '71, '76, '81, '91, '96, '01, '11



Southern Adventist University continues to recognize the responsibility for providing a safe environment for alumni, students, employees, and the local community during the COVID-19 pandemic.


While the overwhelming desire is to welcome our extended Southern family back to campus, public health and safety remain the priorities. Homecoming Weekend will be hosted virtually with decisions to be made over the summer about possibilities for including some socially distanced, in-person activities with limited attendance.

View updated Homecoming Weekend information online or contact Alumni Relations directly.

 southern.edu/homecoming

 facebook.com/SAUalumni

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