125 Years of Changing the World
Meet 125 Southern alumni who have made a difference  |  page 10
More than 50,000 individuals have attended Southern, and each has uniquely impacted the world. In honor of Southern’s 125th anniversary, here are 125 Southern alumni who made a difference in the world.

16 | Whatever You Do
From pulling weeds to grading papers, student workers are an integral part of Southern. Not all jobs are glamorous, but each one gives students the opportunity to gain valuable experience.

18 | How Birding Took Flight
One of the fastest-growing hobbies in North America, birding wouldn’t be what it is today without the influence of several Southern alumni.

22 | Unlocking Their Futures
Southern is able to offer scholarships to a majority of students, thanks to a variety of generous gifts—from estate planning and endowed funds to corporate sponsorships.
Nursing Simulations Provide Real-World Experience

Beginning last year, Southern’s School of Nursing added an additional type of simulation to its curriculum: an intensive care unit (ICU) multipatient interprofessional collaborative practice simulation. This learning experience includes undergraduate students from nursing, theology, and pre-med, as well as social work and acute care nurse practitioner graduate students.

“Simulation is an excellent way to provide real-life experiences in a safe environment,” said Barbara Davis James, PhD, ‘75, dean of the School of Nursing. During this interprofessional simulation, students take what they learned in the classroom and apply it in the skills lab, which is transformed into an eight-bed ICU with mannequins and volunteer “patients.” To make the experience as real as possible, additional chaos and complexities surrounding the patients’ “families” is integrated into the training.

Students complete three-hour shifts, which include an orientation, the hands-on simulation, and a thorough debriefing. During the hands-on segment, nursing students provide care for their “patients” while the acute care nurse practitioners and pre-med students make rounds and order diagnostic tests and treatments.

Social work graduate students act as case managers, patients, and family members, and theology majors offer spiritual support.

“The simulation was critical to my development of rapid assessment and critical thinking skills in an ICU setting,” said Katie Mayfield, junior nursing major. “Working in a hospital environment can be intimidating because you’re handling the lives of real people, while the simulation lab allows for a helpful ‘time out.’”

After conducting two simulations of this kind, the School of Nursing hosted the local chapter of the Tennessee Organization of Nursing (TONE) and showed a video of the simulation. The group congratulated Southern on this innovative and high-tech teaching methodology.

“I was greatly impressed by the operation, the multiple layers of complexity and people, and the depth of the disease processes covered,” said William Crowe, president of TONE. Southern’s nursing faculty plan to continue these simulations every semester due to the positive outcomes and the rave reviews from students.

“Simulation-enhanced intra- and interprofessional education provides a powerful opportunity for students to engage in patient care in cooperation with other health professionals,” James said. “We are pleased and proud to provide such relevant interactive experiences for our students.”

The full-accredited School of Nursing enrolls more than 1,200 students pursuing degrees ranging from associate to doctorate.

—Oksana Wetmore

Southern Offers New Political Science Major

Students interested in law and government careers will soon have a major tailored for them. Southern’s History and Political Studies Department will begin offering a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science this fall.

Professor and chair of the department, Kris Erskine, PhD, said many students have expressed an ongoing interest in the major.

“The department as a whole is excited,” Erskine said. “This is such a fundamental part of what a department like ours should offer.”

Political science was previously available only as a minor. This new major will equip students with a wide range of skills, not only sharpening their critical thinking and analytical aptitude, but also advancing their ability to communicate verbally and through writing.

Students will engage in core political science classes while further enriching their learning in a specific area of their choice, including political theory, American politics, comparative politics, or international relations.

Shannon Martin, assistant professor of both political studies and global community development, said the areas of focus are designed with the students’ futures in mind. After graduation, students will be equipped to work nationally and internationally or to further their education through graduate school.

Martin said the department conducted extensive research while creating and developing the degree. By comparing political science programs offered at other private and public universities, the faculty sought to create a competitive and holistic program for Southern students.

—Sujei Raym

School of Social Work to Train Police Officers

Southern’s School of Social Work recently acquired a $15,000 grant, that will enable its faculty to train 200 local police officers in the practice, values, and ethics of social work. A cooperative spirit and learning posture demonstrated by law enforcement personnel lessens tension between the community and officers and increases officers’ ability to protect and serve.

Southern Begins Arboretum Process

Thanks to a donation from an anonymous Southern alumni, the university is identifying and tagging trees on campus with the goal of creating a flourishing arboretum in the next three years. Labels on each tree will be interactive, linking to photographs of the tree in different seasons and the location of similar trees on campus. The project supports Southern’s Vision 2020 strategic plan and the Campaign for Excellence in Faith and Learning, both of which include an emphasis on the greening of campus.

Music Students Represent Tennessee at Convention

Over spring break, students from Southern’s School of Music choral ensembles represented the state of Tennessee at the National Conference of the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) held in Minneapolis, Minnesota, by singing in the ACDA Collegiate Honor Choir. Three senior education majors — Jeffery Dean, Daniela Monzon, and Deysha Williams — along with Steven Stobbs, ‘16, and Gennavieve Brown-Kildee, professor and director of choral activities, participated.

Students Assist Mayor’s Office with History Project

Chattanooga Mayor Andy Berke asked area educators and nonprofits for help honoring the 100th anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment, which gave women the right to vote. History students from Southern and other local colleges are collecting 200 oral histories of women who have made the city a better place. Southern students have conducted 60 interviews, including 10 that were either Southern faculty, staff, or alumni.

by the numbers

| Total graduates and attendees of Southern Adventist University since 1892 | 58,124 |
| Boxes of Cracker Jacks handed out on January 25 (1/25) in celebration of Southern’s 185th anniversary | 216 |
| Hours of service given during Southern’s MUK Community Service Day | 3,850 |
| Varieties of vegetarian meat substitutes served on campus | 36 |
| Student check-ins at Huley Wellness Center during the month of January | 9,654 |
| Hours spent reading the entire Bible out loud during Ancient Words Marathon | 72 |

[news briefs]
More Than Diapers
by Abigail King, sophomore marketing major

Interactions with David Nelsen, PhD, assistant professor in the Biology Department, leave an impression on students. Inspired by the care he showed them, both in and out of the classroom, a group of six junior biology majors—Pablo Huerfano, Aaron Keiser, Nicholas McCall, Gus Moretta, Alphie Rotinsulu, and Gus Suarez—found a way to give back to the professor who had given so much of himself to them.

Student Guide
While in the classroom, Nelsen views himself as a guide rather than a teacher. He believes that students learn the most during quiet study time and, therefore, the professor’s job is to provide the student with the necessary tools to succeed.

“I present the information with plenty of examples and connect new knowledge to previous knowledge using practical application,” Nelsen said.

Prior to teaching at Southern, Nelsen studied at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, where he received a degree in biology. He then studied at Loma Linda University (LLU), where he received his doctorate in biology. While at LLU he focused his attention on the study of spiders and venom, particularly black widows and how they utilize their venom. Nelsen developed a love for research that he hoped to one day share with his students. Shortly after graduating from LLU, Nelsen accepted a job at Southern.

“It was a dream come true,” Nelsen said.

Making Connections
During his first year at Southern, Nelsen taught general biology as well as a general biology lab. He believes that students learn the most during quiet study time and, therefore, the professor’s job is to provide the student with the necessary tools to succeed.

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Giving Back
As Huerfano, Keiser, McCall, Moretta, Rotinsulu, and Suarez talked with Nelsen at the beginning of this school year, they learned that his wife would be having a second child in January of 2017. They decided that they wanted to give him a very special gift.

“We wanted to show our appreciation for him as well as congratulate him on his new baby girl,” Keiser said. As college students without much money to spend on a gift for the baby, they decided to give him the gift of their time, as Nelsen had previously done for them.

The young men stopped by Nelson’s office, bringing with them a box of diapers and a card. Inside the card was a coupon book with vouchers for two free hours of babysitting from each of them.

“It was really cool of them to do that,” Nelsen said. “My wife was very happy and excited, since she knows most of the guys who offered their child-care services.”

As Nelsen has become more involved in the Biology Department at Southern, he is thrilled to not only get to know students and fellow professors, but also to share his passion for science and research. He recently started a medical toxicology class in which he and his students study venom and poison. Nelsen continues to show Christ’s love through his interactions with students, and in return, they are paying it forward.
125 Years of Changing the World

More than 50,000 individuals have attended Southern, and each has uniquely impacted the world. From working in the White House to teaching first-graders, from serving as healthcare administrators to building tiny homes, each has left an important mark. In honor of Southern’s 125th anniversary, here are 125 Southern alumni who made a difference in the world.

**Rochelle (Philm) Kilgore, 1904**
A pioneer in Adventist elementary education in the South and in Nebraska, she also spent 25 years at Atlantic Union College, where she guided the English Department, directed the school’s job placement service, and worked closely with its alumni association.

**George Gentry Lowry, 1908**
Inducted in taking the Adventist message to India as a pioneering missionary pastor, he founded Spicer Memorial College in 1915 and later led the Southern Asia Division. He remained in India until he died suddenly in 1942 at the age of 57.

**John Francis Wright, 1911**
First a minister and evangelist, he became a lifelong church leader, serving as president of the Alabama and North Texas conferences, president of the Cape Conference in South Africa, president of the Southern African Division, and later as a vice-president of the General Conference.

**Robert Ellsworth Cowdric, 1923**
With many years of experience in horticulture, he served on the committee that created the Adventist hymnal that debuted at the 1985 General Conference Session. He also contributed to the Companion to the Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal.

**Robert Leo Odom, 1924**
He authored the Amazing Facts, a media ministry known for its nationwide radio and television programs that begin with an attention-grabbing historical scientific fact followed by a related biblical message.

**Anna Ruth (King), 1926**
An accomplished musician and vocalist, she performed with the Education Hall of Fame in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

**Pansy (Parker) Dameron, 1944**
For her dedication as a teacher and principal, she was elected to the Education Hall of Fame in 1990 and was inducted into the National Hall of Piano Teachers Hall of Fame.

**William Kuester, 1929**
He ran in the Los Angeles Marathon many times and won two gold medals for placing first in his category.

**Lettie (Sibley) Collins, 1935**
She was a chef, music educator, and a world-class scholar who translated into English and published many books, ranging from literature for the uneducated to profound scholarly works. A world-class scholar of Gabriel’s history and the history of calendars, she learned more than 10 languages.

**Robert H. Pierson, 1933**
For 46 years he ministered around the world in various church roles, including as the General Conference president; he also wrote hundreds of articles and about 30 books.

**Charles E. Abeorsold, 1930**
As a public educator, he traveled to 49 states and 79 foreign countries.

**Pierce Jones Moore, Jr., 1939**
The governor of North Carolina honored him with The Order of the Long Leaf Pine Award in 2011 for his record of extraordinary community service.

**Elise (Landon) Buck, 1941**
As dedicating her life to music education, she championed the use of music as part of multicultural education in Russia and China. She was also president of the International Adventist Musicians Association (IAMA) from 1992 to 2009 and was elected to the National Guild of Piano Teachers Hall of Fame.

**Ruth (Risetter) Watson, 1949**
Her book, Backwoods Girl, is told through the eyes of a child growing up in Eastern Tennessee in the late 1920s and then facing the Great Depression.

**Charles Pierce, 1951**
The first Southern Missionary College music graduate to earn a doctorate in music, he taught at four academies and three colleges. Nearly half of his career was spent at Adventist colleges in Brazil and Canada. A frequent piano recitalist and active singer, he also played organ and directed choirs in churches of different denominations throughout his career.

**Wilbur “Buddy” Brass, 1951**
As a new Adventist who had just completed naval service during World War II, he earned his theology degree at Southern and then pastor for 10 years. Next, he followed his dream of full-time evangelism. God blessed his efforts over the next 36 years with more than 3,000 baptisms.

**Mary Elam, 1951**
As the registrar at Southern from 1953 to 1993, she established the department of Institutional Effectiveness and Research on campus and advocated for women in leadership and management positions.

**P. William “Bill” Dysinger, 1951**
After working with Native Americans in Montana and Arizona, he served the U.S. State Department in Cambodia. He then spent 28 years in teaching and administrative roles at Loma Linda University, where he helped found the School of Public Health. He was the first physician to advise the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) on its health programs around the world, and he has visited more than 160 nations.

In the spring of 1892, 23 students took their seats in a rented room above the post office in Grayville, Tennessee, for the first time. Though small, this class marked the beginning of what is today Southern Adventist University. Many things have changed in the last 125 years, but the core values of placing God first, nurturing students, and serving others have never wavered.

To read a short history of the school by President David Smith, PhD, visit southern.edu/columns.
Chester Damon, 1957

Well known as “Uncle Dan” from the Adventist radio program “Your Daily Outlook,” he also served as a missionary in the Far East and gave convincing costumed portrayals of Abraham Lincoln.

Robert E. Bowers, 1957 – Recognized by the Chattanooga Troll Law Attorneys for his “outstanding and unselfish contributions” to improve public health and access to healthcare in his community, he created a program that provides healthcare services donated by more than 70 doctors to the underserved and uninsured in Hamilton County. A retired obstetrician, he was president of the Tennessee Medical Association and the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Medical Society.

Harold Johnson, 1958 – For decades he served as a volunteer chaplain at Florida Hospital in Avon Park, Florida, and for Civil Air Patrol units. He also produced a weekly evangelistic radio program that aired in his community for a number of years.

Juanita (Jones) Hamil, 1958

She published an inspirational book, From a Nobody to the Daughter of the King: As a child’s book, Feel Flowers. Her work as an author, artist, graphics technician, and fine-arts painter appeared in a magazine, books, and syndicated columns for many years.

Donald Hall, 1961 – After earning a doctorate in physics and a master’s degree in medicine, he blended the two passions and became a recognized expert in acoustics, the physics of sound; he wrote two textbooks on the subject. Now a professor emeritus at California University in Sacramento, he has taught courses in relativity and astrophysics since 1974.

James “Jim” Tucker, 1962 – Founder of the American Birding Association, he launched the journal Birding (see page 18 for the full story).

Gerald Kovaleski, 1963 – He influenced Adventist education, first as an academic principal and then as Education Department director in several Southern Union Conferences, books, as well as the North American Division.

Darleen (Davis) Sanford, 1964 – She has been a Disney cast member in Florida as well as a news correspondent in Clarksville, Maryland.

Gilbert Burnham, 1964 – A professor at Johns Hopkins University School of Public Health, he is an internationally renowned researcher for treatments and cures of tropical diseases and has been honored by Johns Hopkins, Loma Linda University School of Medicine, and the American Public Health Association.

Des Cummings, Jr., 1965 – President of Florida Hospital Foundation, he authored several books on healthcare in the 21st century.

Kenneth “Ken” Spears, 1966 – During the 36 years he worked at Southern, Ken helped lead the development of the building City of College- eden, serving eight years as city councilman and vice mayor, be- sides volunteering on numerous boards in the community.

Bill Wood, 1966 – He directed youth camps throughout the North American Division before serving as the NAD Youth Ministries director.

Robert Potts, 1966 – An influential figure in higher education, he served as chancellor of Arkansas State University, chancellor of the North Dakota University System, and president of the University of Alabama.

Susan (Rozell) Pettibone, 1966 – She taught in India before serving as a missionary in Africa for 32 years with her husband, Don.

Allen Steele, 1967 – After pioneering Adventist World Radio, he was elected chairman of International Communications Research for Evangelization, a consortium of Christian broadcasters.

Gary Cencelly, 1967 – Besides providing pastoral care for more than 1,000 members scattered in 12 military worship groups, he also served as a director in the office of the Chief of Chaplains at the Pentagon in Washington, D.C.

Jim Herman, 1967 – He established and organized the Student Missions program for Southern and served as a pastor for many years.

Edwin M. Shafer, 1968 – With more than 30 years as a practitioner of his craft, he was named Outstanding Fundraising Executive of 2013 by the Association of Fundraising Professionals Greater Wichita Chapter.

Richard Gorey, 1968 – As the featured performer for Bermuda’s 40th anniversary celebration, he did the show “Mark Twain at His Best” at the request of Bermuda’s governor. He performed as Samuel L. Clemens regularly in his own theater, near the Mark Twain Boyhood Home & Museum in Hannibal, Missouri.

Annie (Robinson) Brown, 1968 – The first African American graduate from Southern, she was a nursing professor for many years and a director of nursing.

Jackie (Niser) Tucker, 1969 – She hosted a television program with her husband called “Windows of Hope” and served as the mixed reality coordinator for The Quiet Hour.

Jim Davis, 1969 – As a North Carolina state senator, he focuses his life on serving others.

Mary Jo “Joie” Davis, 1970 – As a pediatric nurse practitioner, she worked at the Department of Health, Southeast Region, as nursing coordinator of Crippled Children’s Service, and later at the Laboratory of Clinical Infectious Diseases. She also spent two years serving in a combat support hospital during Operation Desert Storm and then worked for the National Institutes of Health.

Phil Garver, 1970 – At 40 years of denominational service as a health and physical educator including teaching at Southern for 37 years, he is the dean of the School of Physical Education, Health, and Wellness.

Vikki (Health) Murphy, attended “Outstanding Business Woman of the Year” in 2004, she also received the “Good Scout” award from the Boy Scouts of America.

Jim Ingersoll, 1973 – He served as an educational associate director for secondary education at the Southern Union and aided in the development and implementation of the Adventist EDGE initiative.

Dwight Nelson, 1973 – He is senior pastor of Pioneer Memorial Church in Berkem Springs, Michigan.

Carole Herman, 1974 – As a medical missionary at the Pentagon, he ministered to the nation’s top military commanders, regardless of denomination or beliefs.

Dave Wiegley, 1977 – He is president of the Columbia Union Conference and chair of Washington Adventist University’s Board of Trustees.

Terry Cantrell, 1985 – He has traveled the world as an international producer/director for “Making Waves,” producer/director of ASAP Video Magazine, and line producer for its Written Television, Breath of Life, Lifestyle Magazine, Voice of Prophecy, and many other programs and events.

Jeffrey Kuhnman, 1983 – He worked as a White House physician, serving George W. Bush and Barack Obama.

Ron Bunch, 1983 – As a student at Southern, he began faking computers, eventually opening ComputerConnection in Chattanooga.

Phoena Duerrksen-Hughes, 1982 – As a medical missionary in Kigali, Rwanda, for two years.

Lars Gustavsson, 1979 – He serves as Chief Futurist for World Vision International.

Alberto Valenzuela, 1978 – In 1999, as executive director of the General Conference, he led a communication campaign in Italy that put the Adventist Church in every major publication and led to millions of dollars for development and relief work.

Kevin Rice, 1986 – With more than 20 years of experience, he runs his own ophthalmol- ogy practice in Memphis, Tennessee.

Glen Avard, 1983 – As a pediatric heart surgeon in Canada, he developed pediatric heart surgery.

Darryl and Cheryl (Stuyvesant) Edmonds, 1985 – Partner in the civil defense firm of Wagner LLP in Portland, Oregon, where she defends physicians, nurses, dentists, chiroprac- tors, naturopathic doctors, and other healthcare providers in malpractice lawsuits.

Penelope Kenet, 1982 – She is renowned for founding a cutting-edge breastcancer research at Loma Linda University School of Medicine.

Dwight Nelson, 1973 – He is senior pastor of Pioneer Memorial Church in Berem Springs, Michigan.

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Dave Wiegley, 1977 – He is president of the Columbia Union Conference and chair of Washington Adventist University’s Board of Trustees.

Tom Fogg, 1977 – With more than 40 years of denominational service, he is currently the principal A.W. Spalding Elementary School in Collegedale.

Robert Benge, 1977 – Currently dean of Southern’s School of Physical Education, Health, and Wellness, he has served for 40 years as a health and physical educator.

Becky (Norskoy) Wiegley, attended “Outstanding Business Woman of the Year” in 2004 by the American Business Women’s Association and “City of Orange Citizen of the Year” in 2004, she also received the “Good Scout” award from the Boy Scouts of America.

Steve Darmody, 1978 – He is an inter- nationally renowned Christian music evangelist, recording artist, and World Vision advocate.

David Canther, 1979 – As of 2012, artistic director for Discovery (World) World Ballet, which he founded, had given $66 million in emergency supplies and medicine, served 1.1 million hot meals, removed 5,640 pounds of debris, and utilized 90,100 volunteers.

David Kay, 1979 – After the Berlin Wall fell down in 1989, he was one of the first U.S. officers to cross into the interno- rman’s land to coordinate arrangements with East Germand guards. He also served as vice consul at the U.S. embassy in Kigali, Rwanda, for two years.

Lars Gustavsson, 1979 – He serves as Chief Futurist for World Vision International.

Alberto Valenzuela, 1978 – In 1999, as director of video production for the General Conference, he led a communication campaign in Italy that put the Adventist Church in every major publication and led to millions of dollars for development and relief work.

Deirdre (Rivera) Martin, 1987 and 1990 – She co-founded dream*VISION Ministries, dedicated to empowering young people in Christian lifestyle and leadership, and was a co-presenter with her husband for marriage conferences sponsored by NBA Family Ministries. She celebrated her 50th birthday while training for the ROMMAN triathlon this year.
A. Allan Martin, 1990

Bob Folkenberg, Jr., 1987

Franklin Farrow, 1993 – Co-founder of Independent Healthcare Properties, LLC, he was named Chattanooga’s “Outstanding Philanthropist” by the Association of Fundraising Professionals.

James Dittes, 1993 – One of 80 education nationals to be named as a national fellow with America Achieves Fellowship for Teachers and Principals, he served a 2014-2015 fellow with Teachers for Global Classrooms and blogs regularly about teaching ideas, the paperless classroom, and education issues.

Luc Sabot, 1993 – He recently served as ALAPO country director in Laos and has also served that role in Georgia and Timor-Leste.

Paul Evans, 1993 – Director of the Intelligent Systems division at Southwest Research Institute, he helped develop a robotic device for a NASA project called SEPTOR, which aided scientists in exploring what is beneath the ice layer on Europa, the sixth moon of Jupiter.

Joseph Eunkwan Choi, 1995

Joseph Kcola, 1996 and 1997 – While studying computing at Southern, he helped develop and generate cellular phone system for Lucent Technologies. Later he mentioned eight teams of programmers to upgrade the ground control system for the Hubble Space Telescope.

Daniel Wollcot, 1997 – President and CEO of Lodi Health, he has also been an administrator at Takoma Regional Hospital and Florida Hospital Memorial System.

Crystal Candy, 1999 – As the official on-air presenter for Lynx, Inc., she was responsible for all live demonstrations of the company’s products on the Home Shopping Network. She also worked for several years as a TV host/producer and news reporter in Orange County, Florida.

Jennie (Dee) Janssen, 1991

Now managing changing exhibits at the National Aquarium in Baltimore, Maryland, she also worked as an exhibit at Ripley’s Aquarium in Gatlinburg, Tennessee, and the Georgia Aquarium in Atlanta.

Khalid Sorenson, 1999 – He co-founded GlobalVision Cranes, a robotic crane company that provided technology to companies such as Caterpillar, General Motors, and Hyundai.

Criselle Shank, 2000 – For seven years he served as director of Malambo Adventist Hospital in Malabo, Africa.

John P. Sterner, 2001 – Northwestern Mutual honored him multiple times for helping clients achieve financial security.

Gary Roberts, 2001 – An Adventist Aviation Indonesia pilot, he has flown around the world in a small aircraft by lines of longitude and previously served as a missionary in Africa.

Brad Mills, 2002 – He is the president and general coordinator of Amazon Lifestyles Ministry, bringing health education and care to the jungles of Brazil with his wife, Lisa (Kater), 102.

Kyle Warren, 2002 – He was one of the first 3-D animation modelers for Three-Angels Broadcasting Network.

Aaron Adams, 2002 – Besides working at Walt Disney Animation Studios, he has also taught at Southern and used his technical skills in ministry work for Marboro Studios.

Esther (Kim) Liu, 2002 – The first to graduate with biophysics from Southern, she is now the chair of Pediatrics at University of Maryland Baltimore Washington Medical Center.

Steven Baugham, 2003 – Presented with the 2011 Excellence in Teaching Award from the national Alumni Awards Foundation, he was commissioned by the Southern Union and the North American Division to write subject-area standards for its secondary curriculum system.

Sarah (Matthews) McGugan, 2003

As a Hollywood brand strategist, she wrote the book, One Face: Shed the Mask, Own Your Values, a book.

Matthew Mundall, 2003 – He serves as fire captain at 44th Community Volunteer Fire Department in Cadillac, Tennessee.

Rob Robert, 2003 – Previously a writer and editor for the Korea Herald in Seoul, he also served as chief editor for news and features at North Kimsa News.

Alan Darmody, 2004

He began Magic Hour Foundation, a nonprofit that provides those fighting cancer with the ability to celebrate the truly important things in life through photographs of themselves and their loved ones.

Kelly Razzouk, 2005 – She serves as an advisor to Ambassador Samantha Power at the United Nations.

Charity (Matandiko) Smith, 2006

As a character technical director at Walt Disney Animation Studios, he has contributed to movies including Winnie-the-Pooh, Big Hero 6, and Moana.

Marinela Osorio, 2006 – She became a CEO at age 22, hired straight out of college, and is now an administrator at Florida Hospital.

Troy Churchhill, 2006 – Received the 2016 New Administrator Award from the American College of Healthcare Care Administrators for his exceptional commitment and potential as a leader, innovator, and motivator in long-term healthcare.

Thomas Wentworth, 2006 – As senior director of production at NBOUniversal, NBC, Skyrocke, his recent work includes branded content for the 2016 Rio Summer Olympics and Super Bowl 50.

Maraanatha Hay, 2007 – She received the Elly Emmy, won “Best Documentary” at the 2008 SONYcren Film Festival, and became the first American to win the World Nomads Travel Documentary scholarship.

Sharon Smith-Hensley, 2007 and 2011 – As social services director at The Samaritan Center in Ooltewah, she received the 2016 Advocate of the Year Award from the Tennessee Conference on Social Welfare’s Southeast region.

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Natalia Lopez-Thompson, 2008

After working for the Miami Heat basketball team, ACRA, the National Communication Association, and La Sierra, she is now an assistant professor at Southern.

Jason Neufeld, 2010 – While a student at Southern, he created live phone applications to teach music theory and skills. He sold more than 40,000 apps, including a popular fretboard trainer app that reached the top 150 overall paid apps distinction. He now works at Google as a senior software engineer.

Julie Vincent, 2012 – She is the chief nursing officer for Kettering Adventist HealthCare.

Hans von Walter, 2012 – While a biochem-istry major at Southern, he placed third in the Jeopardy! College Championship, tak-ing home $25,000 in cash winnings. Later he was a successful contestant on both Who Wants to Be a Millionaire and Wheel of Fortune. He graduated in 2016 from Loma Linda Medical School.

Hal Vo, 2014 – He is a senior Android developer for DJI, a leading consumer electronics company.

Jeremy Weaver, 2010 – While a student at Southern, he created five phone applications to cheer music theory and skills. He sold more than 40,000 apps, including a popular fretboard trainer app that reached the top 150 overall paid apps distinction. He now works at Google as a senior software engineer.

Julie Vincent, 2012 – She is the chief nursing officer for Kettering Adventist HealthCare.

Hans von Walter, 2012 – While a biochem-istry major at Southern, he placed third in the Jeopardy! College Championship, tak-ing home $25,000 in cash winnings. Later he was a successful contestant on both Who Wants to Be a Millionaire and Wheel of Fortune. He graduated in 2016 from Loma Linda Medical School.

Hal Vo, 2014 – He is a senior Android developer for DJI, a leading consumer electronics company.

Jeremy Weaver, 2010 – While a student at Southern, he created five phone applications to teach music theory and skills. He sold more than 40,000 apps, including a popular fretboard trainer app that reached the top 150 overall paid apps distinction. He now works at Google as a senior software engineer.
From pulling weeds to grading papers, student workers are an integral part of Southern. The university employs at least half of the student body in approximately 1,250 jobs. Not all jobs are glamorous, but each one gives students the opportunity to gain valuable experience.

Sierra Emilaire
Southern Accent Editor

While most people on campus are asleep at 2 a.m., Sierra Emilaire is usually actively editing articles, catching the latest news, and finalizing content for the Southern Accent. Emilaire, junior English major, is editor-in-chief for the Accent. As such, she manages a team of student writers, editors, designers, and photographers as they produce the weekly student newspaper. Emilaire aims to capture and report the moments that people might otherwise miss. “It is worth the stress and the sleepless nights because we are the student voice,” Emilaire said. “This is also laying a foundation for my future career.”

With Emilaire’s passion for news editing and her strong work ethic, she has poured herself into the editor role. “As head ledger, Harris’ duties include watching those in the pool and on the deck, maintaining the facilities, and interacting with visitors,” Harris also enjoys swimming lessons. “I like watching people’s faces light up when they learn a new stroke,” Harris said. “The responsibilities of that job have taught me leadership skills and so much more.”

Delaney Harris
Head Lifeguard at Hustle Wellness Center

Unlike many college students, Delaney Harris, sophomore psychology and missions double major and lifeguard at the Hustle Wellness Center, has had the same job since her junior year of high school. Her interest in water safety began at the age of 8. Harris was on her cousin’s back in a pool and, without warning, he tossed her off. Harris thrashed around and quickly figured out how to keep herself afloat. Her mother then arranged for Harris to learn how to swim. “I am the head lifeguard at the pool, and I love my job,” Harris said. “It’s so much fun!”

As head lifeguard, Harris’ duties include watching those in the pool and on the deck, maintaining the facilities, and interacting with visitors. Harris also enjoys swimming lessons. “I like watching people’s faces light up when they learn a new stroke,” Harris said. “The responsibilities of that job have taught me leadership skills and so much more.”

Stephen Wade
Software Programmer for CIRC

Every day Stephen Wade, senior computer systems administration major, gains real-world experience as he writes software for Southern’s Center for Innovation and Research in Computing (CIRC). The center’s goal is to enhance student learning by engaging in development projects for actual clients. With his laptop, Wade could work from anywhere, but he mostly chooses to work in the School of Computing with his boss, Michael Babienco, CIRC lead programmer and analyst.

“I appreciate that CIRC allows me to learn on the job,” Wade said. “When I run into a snag, I am able to look up and quickly figure out how to help myself. My mother then arranged for Harris to learn how to swim. “I am the head lifeguard at the pool, and I love my job,” Harris said. “It’s so much fun!”

As lead programmer, Wade’s duties include writing those in the pool and on the deck, maintaining the facilities, and interacting with visitors. Harris also enjoys swimming lessons. “I like watching people’s faces light up when they learn a new stroke,” Harris said. “The responsibilities of that job have taught me leadership skills and so much more.”

Jeremy Holt
Talge Hall Student Dean

“Sometimes it’s not fun to clean up trash and other ‘dirty’ items,” but that’s part of life,” Eargle said. “Nothing wrong with it. I can plug in my ear buds, turn on the vacuum, run out the world, and just take a breath,” Eargle explains. Although working as a janitor is often overlooked, Eargle finds this job brings a much-needed reprieve. “I can plug in my ear buds, turn on the vacuum, run out the world, and just take a break,” Eargle explains.

Deladem De Guzman
Tutor at Spalding Elementary School

Tutoring at A.W. Spalding Elementary School may refer to her as an “angel,” but Diadem De Guzman is just doing her job. As a junior elementary education major, she tutors second-grade and third-grade students. This job not only provides De Guzman with opportunities to put her college classes into practice, but it also prepares her to work in the education field after graduation. For example, the math methods course that she is currently taking teaches her different strategies to effectively explain math problems to students.

Interacting with the children is De Guzman’s favorite part, especially answering their questions. Their appreciation is her greatest reward. “It makes me happy to know that I am inspiring children and am able to help them,” she said. “There is a second-grader who comes to me as soon as I enter the room. She’ll sit next to me and give me a big hug. It is very touching.”

Jeremy Holt
Talge Hall Student Dean

“Sometimes it’s not fun to clean up trash and other ‘dirty’ items,” but that’s part of life,” Eargle said. “Nothing wrong with it. I can plug in my ear buds, turn on the vacuum, run out the world, and just take a break,” Eargle explains.

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Back in the 1960s, students Jim Tucker, ’62, Nat Halverson, ’63, and Benton Basham, ’66, worked alongside each other in the broom factory on Southern’s campus. They were paid by the piece, not by the hour, and over time they developed a friendly rivalry to see who could be the most productive. Then one day something happened that gave their competitive spirit a new focus.

A flock of birds landed outside the window, and Basham eyed them through his binoculars. “See those birds?” he murmured thoughtfully. “What are they?”

“I don’t know,” Halverson shrugged. “Some kind of sparrow, I guess.”

“Just look!” Basham pushed the binoculars into his hands. Halverson peered through them, first reluctantly and then with increasing interest. The birds’ were a beautiful gradient of color, ranging from reddish-brown at the head to a purplish-blue with a bright yellow band at the tail.

“They were the most remarkably dressed birds I’d ever seen,” Halverson remembers 40 years later. “Those Cedar Waxwings were my first sighting. After that, I was hooked.”

Birdwatching Breaks

From then on, breaks at the broom factory became birdwatching bonanzas. The three students would dash off to the woods along the nearby creek to see who could spot the most birds before their agreed-upon time was up. As the son of two birdwatchers, Tucker’s first childhood memory was of watching a White-breasted Nuthatch on a birdfeeder. He was thrilled to find two new friends who shared his interest. The three friends’ love of the game pushed them to improve their skills, and soon they were good enough to recognize the birds around them just by their calls.

Tucker, Halverson, and Basham became deeply involved with the Chartanoooga Chapter of the Tennessee Ornithological Society, meeting friends from all over the area. Several times a year, the members would divide the county into various sectors, split off into groups, and birdwatch all day. Then in the evening they would regroup for what they called “the countdown” to list the birds they had observed and, for fun, determine who had spotted the most.

After the three friends graduated from Southern, they went their separate ways. Basham pursued further education and became a nurse anesthetist, and Halverson and Tucker went on to teach in the Seventh-day Adventist school system. But there was one thing they never left behind: their insatiable, contagious love of birdwatching. Through their passion and dedication, each would help to mold the birding world as we know it today.

Inspiring Young Bird Lovers

The broom factory was not just a job for Halverson; it was also where he met his wife, Margaret (Richardson) Halverson, ’70. In Margaret, he found not only an amazing life partner but also a fellow bird lover. She assisted her husband as he became deeply involved in many scientific bird-banding research projects that involved catching birds, marking them with an identifying band around the leg, and then releasing them to be tracked in the future. The Halversons spent many years teaching at Standifer Gap Seventh-day Adventist School and integrated their avian knowledge into the curriculum there. They gave their students the opportunity to have tactile involvement with bird banding, an experience that resonated with many, including Carl Swafford, ’75, now dean of Graduate Studies at Southern, who never thought he would be interested in birds.

“I loved bird banding because I could hold the bird in my hand,” Swafford remembers. “We tagged birds and tracked their travels throughout the seasons. Many of them were
The Next Inspiring Starting his graduate research and in between.

Edgar Grundset became a birding icon at Southern. As a biology professor, he spread his passion for nature and birding to his students for nearly 40 years. Through his ornithology class and spring break birding trips to Florida (during which students routinely identified at least 150 bird species), many people caught his enthusiasm for the sport. In his honor, Southern hosts the annual E.O. Grundset lecture series.

The love of birding is still being nurtured at Southern. When David Hollie, ‘14, arrived on campus to study biology, he already had an interest in birds. However, as a student he spent two summers in the Smoky Mountains doing research and discovered that he wanted birding to be more than a hobby; he wanted it to be his career. Since earning his biology degree, Hollie has combined his two favorite things: travel and his two favorite things.

Big Days and Even Bigger Years

Although Basham was a nurse anesthetist by day, the rest of the time he was 100 percent birdwatcher. Even after graduation, Basham and Tucker stayed close, spotting birds together when they could and collaborating on what birders call a “Big Day.” In a Big Day, one attempts to see as many bird species as possible within a 24-hour period.

Basham, Tucker, and the other three members of their team attempted one Big Day so elaborate that it was profiled by Sports Illustrated Magazine in 1979. The day started at 2 a.m. in east Texas at the marshes of Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge, moving next to the local hardwood and pine forest, and then to Galveston. From there they were whisked off to Rockport by Learjet, where they watched the ducks of Copano Bay and the shorebirds of Mustang Island and Oso Bay. After that, they flew to the Mexican border to see the birds of the Río Grande Valley. Next they went to the Huachuca Mountains in Arizona before their grand finale in San Diego and Mount Palomar. Their goal was to beat the U.S. record of 231 sight-ings and perhaps the world record of 288; unfortunately, bad luck left them at 183.

Still, they had a thrilling and memorable time trying.

Basham’s ambitions didn’t end there. In 1998, he set out to break the “Big Year” record. With 711 sightings that year, Basham surpassed the world’s previous high mark by 18 sightings. Still, at that time and with the resources Basham had, his achievement was incredible. Even now he remains a hero of the birding community.

The Birth of the American Birding Association

Tucker always loved fellowshipping with other bird lovers. For him, shared interest easily overcame age barriers. While at Southern, he was the youngest member of the Ornithological Chapter of the American Society and became president at age 21. When he moved to Florida to teach, he joined the Florida Audubon Society and became president of the Orange County chapter. There he continued doing counts with his new friends and also became deeply involved with the movement to save the forests, swamps, prairies, and lakes. The members of the Audubon Society had a wonderful talent together but faced a recurring challenge: they could not always agree on how to get the youth on board.

In 1968, Tucker moved to Texas to pursue his doctorate. He missed his buddies back East, so on a whim he put together a little newsletter chronicling the adventures of his birdwatching friends around the country. He cranked out 12 copies on a ditto machine and mailed them with a letter asking for feedback and suggestions. Not long afterward, he was bowed over by the enthusiastic response he received—both in ideas and names to be added to the mailing list.

“I laughingly called it Birdwatchers Digest, Volume 0, Number 0,” Tucker recalls. “One of the best suggestions I received was to change the newsletter’s name to ‘Birding.’ A friend of mine had heard the term used in England, but it hadn’t been used in the United States up to that point.”

After its debut as the title of the next issue of the newsletter, the term “birding” rapidly entrenched itself in popular U.S. vocabulary. Birding had the foundation for what would later become the American Birding Association (ABA).

Its goals were to informally connect passionate birders, to communicate the latest bird identification techniques, and to establish the name for birders. Unfortunately, bad luck left them at 183.

Even, with the help of rare-bird internet blog updates, his record was surpassed. Still, at that time and with the resources Basham had, his achievement was incredible. Even now he remains a hero of the birding community."

E.O. Grundset, a true legendary teacher of ornithology, has inspired generations of birders since the 1960s. His students have gone on to become leaders in the birding community, including the late David Hollie, ‘14, who passed away in 2019. Hollie’s passing was a tragic loss for the birding community, but his legacy lives on through his contributions to the field.

In honor of Hollie, Southern has established the E.O. Grundset Lecture Series, which features talks by birding icons and leaders. The series is a testament to the enduring legacy of Southern’s birding tradition. The series is open to the public, and all are welcome to attend.

Southern Birders

Jessica Winters Clifford, ‘00

Clifford’s favorite sightings were the Elegant Trogon in Southeast Arizona and the Himalayan Monal, the national bird of Nepal, while she was overseas as a student missionary. She has started taking her two young children on birdwatching expeditions, as well. In 2016 they visited Argen- tina, where they saw Magellanic and Gentoo penguins and got to watch them roost.

Carl Swafford, ’75, graduate dean

One of Swafford’s favorite expeditions was to the Bering Sea, where he saw Emperor Geese soaring against the backdrop of the Aurora Borealis. Another was his birding trip to the Yungas Road in Bolivia, the “most dangerous road in the world.” In 1981, Swafford and Chris Haney, ’81, set the record for a Big Day in Tennessee, sighting 154 bird species in a single day. They held the record for 10 years.

Cathy Lockwitz, ’15

In the 1980s, Lockwitz worked as Basham’s executive secretary and had no interest in birds. Over time, however, due to the influence of Basham, her son Jeff, and Haney, she became a serious birder and eventually served as treasurer of the Tennessee Ornithological Society, Chattanooga Chapter, for 12 years. Her favorite sightings include the White-collared Seed-eater, Willow Ptarmigan, Blue-footed Booby, and even one bird that Basham didn’t have on his list—the Red-footed Falcon!

Jasmin Duanu, senior biology major

Taking the ornithology class taught by Keith Snyder, PhD, chair of the Biology Department, was Duanu’s first exposure to birding. In the past, most birds looked the same to her; viewing them through binoculars has opened her eyes and helped her learn to distinguish their differences. Her favorite sighting so far has been the Eastern Bluebird.
Unlocking Their Futures

Southern is able to offer scholarships to a majority of students, thanks to a variety of generous gifts—from estate planning and endowed funds to corporate sponsorships. Donors and students alike receive blessings from witnessing how these tools of financial grace help build educational bridges for the next generation of church and community leaders.

by Lucas Patterson, communications and foundation relations

When a visitor burst into tears in her office recently, Student Finance Counselor Faith Anderson felt like joining in.

“There was no one around, so it was just long enough to consider both the past and the future, and thinking about the last four years, she revisited moments from university student preparing for graduation in May. While committed to doing so as affordably as possible.” Anderson said. “She told me that because of Southern, her life would never be the same.”" Anderson said. “She came by to check up on her finances one last time, Hen a visitor burst into tears in her office recently, Student Finance Counselor Faith Anderson felt

Renewed Emphasis

Although the details are always unique, like the students themselves, stories of transformation and gratitude resonate with faculty and staff on campus. That’s why Southern’s Board of Trustees voted in February to make Southern’s endowments the largest component of the university’s $50 million Campaign for Excellence in Faith and Learning (see details, page 23), boosting the endowment by $14 million. “Southern is focused on how we can increase our scholarships to help students access the tools that unlock their future,” said President David Smith, PhD, “and we are committed to doing so as affordably as possible.”

Currently, 80 percent of Southern students receive financial aid, with more than $12 million awarded each year in scholarships and grants from Southern. While that is a lot, additional funds are needed. The $14 million boost to the endowment will help more students pursue an Adventist education with less reliance on student loans.

Serve Others, Help Yourself

Jordan Morris, sophomore computer science major, came to campus in a leap of financial faith. He knew he wanted to study computing but had no idea how to fund his education. The energy and enthusiasm were there—he applied for multiple jobs and scholarships—but the numbers still weren’t adding up. Around that same time in 2015, Southern was pilot testing the Promise Grant program. This work-study scholarship, fully funded through the generosity of local businesses and friends of the university, gives Southern students every possibility to stay enrolled, thanks to the program’s above-average hourly wages. After a rigorous selection process, students work in a Chattanooga nonprofit at no charge to that organization and put 80 percent of the earnings toward their tuition. This relationship benefits the students, nonprofits, and donors who have a passion for seeing the community thrive.

Morris works for La Paz, a small organization with a mission to empower and engage Chhattanooga’s growing Latino population through advocacy, education, and inclusion. His database work and other contributions there have evolved beyond program expectations, both in terms of time commitment and emotional connection.

“The money from Promise has been a huge help, but what has had a larger effect on me was seeing firsthand all of the good things that are being done for the community,” Morris said. “I actually volunteer with La Paz now even when I am not getting paid, because it is such a blessing. This experience will always stay with me, and it has also opened my eyes to new career possibilities. As a computer science student, I knew I wanted to work in a technological field, but now I

Campaign for Excellence in Faith and Learning

Expanding horizons in the classroom, connecting with friends on the Promenade, having philosophical discussions that deepen faith—every day, students are shaping their futures here, and Southern recognizes that the quality of these experiences matters. In addition to boosting the endowment, Southern’s Campaign for Excellence in Faith and Learning aims to continue improving students’ experiences by addressing the changing needs of campus. Announced publicly in April 2016, the $50 million goal—the university’s largest to date—is allocated for the project areas shown here. The remaining funds will cover campaign expenses. More than $36 million in cash and pledges have already been raised during efforts that began in 2013. Chris McKee, ’88, campaign chair, attributes the campaign’s encouraging progress to a tight-knit Southern community that connects around a common goal.

“Fundraising is simply the process of sharing the university’s vision with people who care about it,” McKee said. “I praise God that so many people care deeply about Southern, support the university’s values, and believe in the vision for the school.”

Visit southern.edu/webelieve to learn more.
know I want to do that in a way that interacts with and helps as many people as possible.”

**It Takes a Village**

Although the overwhelming majority of students on campus are Seventh-day Adventists, corporate sponsorships from local businesses have provided a significant boost to scholarship funds. SouthEast Bank—with 11 locations in Middle and East Tennessee, including one in Ooltewah—provides four $7,000 scholarships to Southern students annually. Over the years, its contributions have totaled approximately $350,000. When the partnership began, bank administrators envisioned the funds freeing up students to experience college more fully, with less time spent working and worrying about finances. Testimonies show that to be true.

“I was prepared to work a lot on campus and take out student loans, but because of this scholarship I have not needed to borrow any money since I started at Southern,” said Caitlyn Bartlett, senior marketing major. “You can imagine the reaction at my house when I found out about it. My family and I tried and thanked the Lord for His blessings!”

Linda White, senior vice president for SouthEast Bank, views the scholarships as a natural fit with her organization’s mission as a community bank.

“The university’s reputation of nurturing and advancing students in our region helps contribute to the success of our local economy and workforce,” White said. “SouthEast Bank is proud to support Southern in awarding scholarships that help keep our future leaders right here in Tennessee.”

**Supporting Each Other**

Students employed in Southern’s Call Center spend a lot of time talking on the phone with alumni. The stories they hear of how God continues to lead in graduates’ lives, along with the generosity that donors often display, has proven inspirational. Student workers recently created the Advance with God Scholarship, a $7,000 scholarship for one of their peers.

“My family can hardly believe the reaction at my house when I found out about it. My family and I tried and thanked the Lord for His blessings!” said Caitlyn Bartlett, senior marketing major. “You can imagine the reaction at my house when I found out about it. My family and I tried and thanked the Lord for His blessings!”

VICTOR DE ROSE, junior marketing major

**Her True Self**

Sonya Reaves, ‘07, loves her work in Cambodia, which is the latest of many places God has called her to serve since graduating from Southern.

**Prepared to Serve**

“I thought I was done with international work after leaving Tanzania in 2012,” Reaves said. “But I think God knew I needed to work as a principal and teacher for four years so I could have the skills to do my current job. Not a day goes by that I don’t thank God for his wisdom in having me work in California for those years. God’s timing is incredibly perfect.”

Now Reaves works for a company called Raw Impact, headquartered in Australia, and lives in Cambodia. She is the “head of education,” a position similar to superintendent in which she provides support to many schools in her surrounding area. “I love my job because there is no normal,” Reaves said. “I am constantly busy, challenged, and having to figure out ways to teach things.”

Reaves routinely encounters many diverse tasks, from helping lead service trips, to coming up with research ideas and managing budgets. “I love Cambodia,” Reaves said. “I have lived in many places, but this one almost instantly felt like home. The people are incredibly friendly, quick to laugh, and peaceful by nature.”

Ever since her mission dream came to life as a student missionary in Honduras, Reaves has devoted her life to serving others. To her, it is God’s way of helping her see her true self.

“I feel like I am having a mirror held up to my life, and I am seeing my own flaws,” Reaves said. “Often when working in a new culture, I see myself differently and have to readjust, but I am seeing God work in my life in big ways.”

**Future Value**

As debates continue on a national level about student loan debt and the value of higher education, it’s comforting to know that a tight-knit Southern community is working to simplify this critical decision-making process and remove financial roadblocks. Increasing scholarship opportunities is a natural fit with her organization’s mission as a community bank.

“In this world’s economy, people struggle, and I think God knew I needed to work as a principal and teacher for four years so I could have the skills to do my current job. Not a day goes by that I don’t thank God for his wisdom in having me work in California for those years. God’s timing is incredibly perfect.”

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**Expanding Horizons**

Service became a way of life for Reaves. She volunteered at Ground Zero in New York in 2002, helping people displaced by the events of 9/11, and in Louisiana in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. After graduating, Reaves traveled to Chad, Africa, and worked at Bere Adventist Hospital for a year.

“Giving as much joy in being able to serve others through missionary work, she has also experienced many struggles. “There are always hardships—everything from language barriers to cultural differences,” Reaves said. “I think that being in another culture magnifies everything. It shows you your personal flaws, but it also shows you beauty.”

After returning from Chad, Reaves spent the next eight years doing a variety of jobs: serving as a chaplain at Georgia-Cumberland Academy, being a cook, working at an orphanage in Tanzania, and expanding her comfort zone as a teacher and principal at the Oakhurst Adventist Christian School in California.

**SUPPORT THE SCHOLARSHIP FUND**

Every gift makes a lasting difference. Visit southern.edu/endowments to contribute.

**Photo: Ryan Pierce**
Hands-on in Tanzania

After Robert “Breck” Lang, ‘14 and ‘17, graduated from Southern with a bachelor's degree in nursing, he knew that he wanted to go further in his education and explore the field of global community development through a master's degree. Lang said, “I was really interested in refugee migration, so Sharon Pittman helped me find opportunities and prepare me for the field work. They can also do the program either part-time or full-time.”

Southern’s goal is to make the program more accessible for working professionals and internationals. For example, students can complete the hybrid learning program online before doing the short-term field work. They also can do the program either part-time or full-time. Because of this flexibility, Alexon Mwasi, ‘15, was able to pursue his dreams. As a young boy growing up in rural Kenya, Mwasi discovered his passion for community development when a non-governmental organization came to his village and gave the community the necessary skills to undertake development projects. Eventually Mwasi was given the opportunity to join World Vision Kenya as a senior program manager. During this time, Mwasi pursued his master's degree in global community development and, thanks to Southern’s online graduate program, was able to earn the degree without leaving Kenya. His dream is to influence governmental policies and initiate development that will alleviate poverty—a goal that he is now better fit to accomplish.

Southern’s global community development graduate program equips students around the world with skills to impact international societies. The program’s multicultural learning opportunities, practical application, and globally grounded curriculum contribute to its uniqueness. Students work through nine specific, practical skills and competencies, followed by six weeks in the field assessing the innate resiliency of marginalized people and groups and constructing a plan to further build the group’s capacity. This puts the students’ book learning into practice while making a tangible difference to a community in the process.

“Were easier for our church to be professionally prepared and ready to meet the real and urgent needs of our neighbors and communities, both in the United States and abroad,” said Sharon Pittman, PhD, Global Community Development Department director.

Current students are spread around the world, doing internships with organizations such as ADRA Mozambique, the American Red Cross, and World Vision International in Kenya, as well as locally in Chattanooga.

Opening Opportunities

Southern’s goal is to make the program more accessible for working professionals and international residents. For example, students can complete the hybrid learning program online before doing the short-term field work. They can also do the program either part-time or full-time.

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Students have done their field work mostly in East Africa, but the Chattanooga area has also been chosen as a future site for a field school. Sites in Lebanon and the Dominican Republic are also being explored.

The global community development team continues to find new ways to accommodate students. This year they began a bridge program that allows undergraduates to complete some coursework before they graduate and then apply for an abbreviated three-semester master’s degree. Southern has partnered with Union College and Walla Walla University, offering other undergraduate programs this same accelerated option.

With these changes and initiatives, the Global Community Development Department continues to empower the next generation of professionals to do the work of Jesus while fostering growth and building sustainable and thriving communities.

Kahlilia Morris Blanco, ’08, PhD

Postdoctoral Research Fellow in the Department of Neurological Surgery, School of Medicine and Public Health, at University of Wisconsin-Madison

Where has your career taken you since graduating from Southern?

After earning a PhD in neuroscience from the University of Miami in 2014, I entered the world of biomedical brain research. I am currently a postdoctoral scientist conducting research in the Neurological Surgery Department at the University of Wisconsin Hospital.

What do you research?

My work as a neuroscientist is focused on finding cures and therapies for neurodegeneration following stroke, brain injury, and diseases of the brain. I analyze the ability of the brain to protect itself at the cellular and molecular level by researching how genes involved in protecting brain cells can be turned on or off. My research is supported by fellowships and grants from the National Institute of Health, the American Heart Association, and the United States Veteran’s Administration.

What do you appreciate about working in such a dynamic and demanding field?

One thing that I love about my career is that I am constantly challenged. There is always something new to learn, and new discoveries are constantly being revealed about how genes and cells function within the brain. The more we learn about the brain, the more we realize how much we don’t know. This can be frustrating, particularly when researching cures, but also exhilarating with each new finding or breakthrough. I don’t think that being a neuroscientist could ever become mundane.

As a researcher, what discoveries have you made that are most memorable to you?

Probably discovering how the brain has an innate ability to protect itself from injury. It has been fascinating to investigate how to further amplify and harness this natural “brain power” to ‘disease states in hopes of finding therapies and cures.

How has your career pushed you out of your comfort zone?

Transitioning from being a student at Southern to a secular, atheistic science environment in graduate school was a big change. I went from professors praying at the beginning of class at Southern to professors who openly criticized Christians and Christianity in science. These situations required me to be strong about my faith.

You originally planned to study occupational therapy in Orlando, why did you change course?

I realized that I wanted to learn more about the brain and body than what occupational therapists study. I applied to Adventist university with a psychology major, which allowed me to study in depth neuroscience and the brain. At a bonus, Colledgeadale was already home for me; my mother, Ruth Williams, is a professor in psychology at Southern, and my other brother also attended. Southern was not only a very familiar place but also the best choice for my academic pursuits.

Beyond the academics, what did you take away from your time at Southern?

The support I received and continue to receive from my former professors is a testament to how God uses Southern beyond the classroom. I hope that in my own career I can mentor students and young scientists in the same way.
In the Fall 2016 issue of COLUMNS, I shared my passion for alumni getting involved in building bridges that benefit students. I’d like to share the story of a Bridge Builder™ I met recently in Southern California who is helping students by building bridges.

Karen Williams ’96, is an academy religion teacher. This young alumna ambassador introduced Southern to her students as a place where they can get a great education and develop authentic Christian relationships. She shares personal stories about her time at Southern and how her experience strengthened her ever-deepening relationship with Christ. When her students showed interest in visiting Southern last year, she took the time and made the effort, with the help of the Alumni office, her student’s registration, to transport the group across the country for a campus visit. She also helped arrange an on-campus experience. Williams recently brought yet another group of prospective students to campus this semester.

She shared with me her appreciation of the bridges that were built for her before she came to Southern—bridges built by Lisa (Clark) Diller, ’96, and Mari Oskins, ’01. The Alumni Association recently brought yet another group of prospective students to campus this semester. Williams, who helped arrange their on-campus experience, strengthened her ever-deepening relationship with Southern.

Jessica Williams, ’05, is an academy religion teacher. In 2013, she returned to the classroom and began pursuing her master’s in educational leadership. She and her husband, John, are teachers at Adena Academy. Together they continue to build bridges for female students who have eclipsed specific wealth management classes.

Myron Madden ’16, is working as a staff writer for the Chattanooga Times Free Press. He covers local government, business, and development stories in East Hamilton County and Republic Mountains for the Chattanooga Times Free Press section. He also writes for the magazine under the Times Free Press banner: Get Our Chattanooga and Chattanegot Magazine.

Ben McArthur, ’75, passed away on April 10, 2017, after battling cancer. With a doctorate in American history, he taught history at Samford University for 37 years with occasional intermissions in 1988 when he was at the Pacific Union College and from 2009 to 2012 when he served as an academic dean at Samford’s Southern Adventist University. For most of his career, he served as an academic dean at Samford but was forced to cut teaching due to his condition. Ben was passionate about his students’ success and encouraged them to do what they could to help others.

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Spanning the Generations

Comprising professor Tyson Hall, PhD, and his sons run to catch a tractor hayride on the promenade as Southern launched its 125th anniversary celebration on January 25. Vintage display tractors, hayrides, and Cracker Jacks—a snack born the same decade as Southern—gave a festive nod to a bygone era. Participants, both young and old, enjoyed the nostalgia as they reminisced about what life would have been like so long ago.

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Strolling down the famous Las Vegas strip for the first time, he observed the spectacular hotels, heard the loud music, and saw the shiny automobiles. He witnessed the casino games and heard coins spilling from slot machines. Billboards announced famous entertainers, and restaurants showcased exotic foods.

When he returned to his room, he left the light off and opened the curtains. In the stillness of his room, he knelt by the window and looked down at the Vegas strip. Then he gazed into the more impressive lights of the heavens and prayed: “God, I thank you that tonight I haven’t seen anything I want more than I want you.”

What do you want most in life? In Psalm 27:4, David reflects on what the object of our passion should be: “One thing I ask from the Lord, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple.”

Living in Anticipation

In his book Not a Fan, Kyle Idleman tells of a missionary returning to the United States after 30 years of serving overseas. Taking a bus to his daughter’s home, he had to spend a night in Las Vegas.

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Total Commitment

The lives of those whose greatest desire is to be in God’s presence are defined by their passion. Jesus’ true followers live extraordinary lives, risking and doing all for His sake.

In his book Radical, David Platt recounts meeting secretly with a small group of Christian leaders in an Asian country where worshipping God is prohibited and severely punished. Such a meeting could cost them their land, jobs, families, or even their lives. They shared tales of being threatened by the government for gathering and studying the Bible and of their congregants being tortured. One lay pastor said: “I need to know how to lead my church to follow Christ even when it costs them everything.”

The leaders fell to their knees, moved to tears as they prayed: “O God, thank You for loving us,” “God, we need You,” “Jesus, we give our lives to You and for You.”

How is it possible to so fully seek one thing—to be in God’s presence and to serve Him no matter what? The answer is simple yet significant—God’s amazing love ignites an all-consuming passion for Him. Being in God’s presence and experiencing His love changes us.

As David states in Psalm 63:3-4: “Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you. I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands.”

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Living in Anticipation

In his book Not a Fan, Kyle Idleman describes visiting his grandfather’s gravesite with his grandmother. Beside the grave was a marker engraved with his grandmother’s name and day of birth, ready for her date of death to be added. Idleman wrote: “If she were honest she would say she is ready for that day right now. She hasn’t been the same since my grandpa died. They were married almost 60 years. She misses him so much. We stood in front of his gravesite and she talked about feeling lonely. She told me of how she still reaches over for him at night. Sometimes she finds herself calling to him in the other room, just out of habit.

“We stood in silence for a few moments and then she said this: ‘I’m ready. I’m ready to go home and be with...’ and I knew what she was going to say next. She was going to say ‘...your grandpa.’ Of course she was going to say that. He was the love of her life. She loved him more than she loved anything. But she didn’t... What she said was, ‘I’m ready to go home and be with Jesus’” (Not a Fan, pp. 139-140).

Is your greatest passion a longing for God’s presence? If you do not have more passion for knowing and serving God than you do for everything else in your life, ask God to reveal Himself to you, to touch you with His love.

Pursue Him each waking moment. Give Him your all. Delight in His presence, and you will be able to resolve, along with Paul in Romans 8:38-39: “For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

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HOMECOMING WEEKEND
NOVEMBER 2-5, 2017

HIGHLIGHTS

EARLY HIGHLIGHTS
>> 125th anniversary of Southern’s 1892 founding in Graysville
  > Time-capsule opening ceremony
  > Recognition of the flagpole’s original site

>> Missions Emphasis Weekend
  > Reunion for former student missionaries and alumni who have served as missionaries around the world
  > International food fair
  > Vespers – Parade of Nations pageant featuring international costumes and flags
  > Missions Expo – opportunities to mentor students considering mission service
  > Southern Serves – Join alumni and students on Sunday morning for a hands-on service project to help relieve local and global hunger

>> Golden Anniversary Class of 1967 Reunion