

the magazine of Southern Adventist University

spring 2024

columns



A Lineage of Care

Families in Southern's nursing program are connected by care and united in their calling to serve. | page 12



Photo: Joseph Hyde

Congratulations, Graduates!

After the Spring 2024 Commencement at Iles P.E. Center, master's degree graduates from the School of Education, Psychology, and Counseling gather around Tami Navalón (attended), PhD, assistant professor in graduate counseling. Overall, 343 students earned undergraduate degrees with 15 students completing two majors or degrees. Another 31 students earned master's degrees with seven having two emphases or degrees. Pictured (from left): Wendy Harris, Nozomi Tajiri, Tami Navalón, Keli Alvarez, and Candace Drake.

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Cover caption: Working together in nursing has strengthened the bonds between Professor Cindy Johnson and her daughters, Ashley Finley (left), '22 and '23, and Jessica Weber (right), '17 and '18, as they care for those they serve. Photo by Judah Brass.

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Southern's Strengths

Southern's record enrollment shows that students love it here. For the Winter 2024 semester, undergraduate enrollment was up 10% and graduate enrollment was up 19% compared to last year. Our fall-to-winter retention rate has also increased for the third year in a row, meaning that more students are choosing Southern and that once they come here, they love to stay.

1: Service and missions are important aspects of life at Southern. More than 70 student missionaries and task force workers are serving this year, and nearly 100 students participated in mission trips over Spring Break.

2: Professors such as Stephen Ruf (attended) associate professor in the School Journalism and Communication, make learning fun.

3: Across campus, we partner with professionals in the workforce to help students prepare for their careers. At Meet the Firms and Graduate Schools, students connect with potential employers and learn about opportunities for the future.

4: We're friendly! It's one of the main reasons students choose Southern. Students visit campus and find an environment where people are warm, welcoming, and approachable. President Ken Shaw, '80, often enjoys giving out snacks and drinks to students on the promenade.

5: Our faculty and staff are here to support students. Kroania Huskins, '15, (left), website design manager, prays with student workers after a departmental devotional time.

6: Our quality academics encourage students to become lifelong learners, master critical thinking, and engage creativity so they can face the future with confidence.

7: Keeping a spiritual focus on everything we do is at the heart of Southern's mission. Amelia Zimmerman (right), senior communication major, leads song service for a small-group devotional time on campus.

8: With more than 100 academic options to choose from, Southern offers a wide range of degrees so students can find their passion and pursue it in their career.

9: Friendships are the foundation of young adult life, and Southern is a great place to meet new people, find common bonds, and build friendships that can last a lifetime.

10: With more than 30 clubs and organizations, students are able to find groups that pique their interest. Several cultural clubs also host special events, such as Latin American Club Night, which gives a glimpse into Latin American cultures.



Chemistry Department Collaborates With McKee Foods

In late September of this school year, McKee Foods Corporation contacted Southern Adventist University's Chemistry Department for a potential collaboration. Southern's chemistry lab has some equipment and instrumentation that McKee Foods does not have, according to Bruce Schilling, PhD, professor of chemistry.

Jared Freeman, '23, an analytical chemist at McKee Foods, said the equipment at Southern can help them identify issues and find solutions. "The instrumentation that Southern has is incredibly helpful for troubleshooting; that's the big thing," he says. "We have an issue, we don't know why, and we can take it over here [to Southern]."

Brent Hamstra, PhD, professor and chair of the chemistry department, feels that this collaboration with McKee Foods is a great opportunity for students to see how chemistry works in the real world. Hamstra shares that chemistry students sometimes have a hard time realizing that a chemistry degree is beneficial for a lot of jobs; going into medicine is not the only option. He believes that inviting chemists from McKee Foods to use Southern's instrumentation for real-life problems will help open the students'



Chemists from McKee Foods visit a lab in Southern's Chemistry Department where they can use equipment to troubleshoot.

eyes to more career options.

McKee Foods offers an internship to a chemistry major each year, and Freeman was the first chemistry major from Southern to intern at McKee Foods. Nathan Dickerhoff, senior chemistry major, is currently interning at McKee Foods. Hamstra shares that the interns have had great opportunities to see how chemistry can be applied off-campus

and used to solve problems outside of the classroom.

Both Southern's Chemistry Department and McKee Foods have expressed that they want to continue the collaboration in the future, because it is a benefit to both sides. "We want to benefit the department, because they have been a big benefit to us," Freeman says.

— by Alexis Dewey, senior mass communication major

» by the numbers

92%

of students in LifeGroups say they have experienced a meaningful sense of belonging.

1,827,713

files have been downloaded from Knowledge Exchange, Southern's institutional repository of research, scholarly output, and special collections.

70

student missionaries are serving this year.

New Research Hub Advances Innovative Education

After a grand opening and dedication in January, the new Center for Learning Innovation and Research (CLIR) at Southern has set the goal of fostering research collaboration between teaching faculty and university students at both the graduate and undergraduate levels across the entire campus. Currently, 12 faculty-led research

studies span more than a third of the school's academic disciplines.

"We are student-focused," says Matthew Tolbert, '01 and '05, PhD, professor in the School of Education, Psychology, and Counseling, who serves as part-time director for CLIR. "From concept to completion, our student research assistants are

benefitting from hands-on learning about effective research as they partner with faculty to gather and analyze data, identify literature, code information, write reports, keep records, apply for approvals, and request grants. As a secondary responsibility, they also tutor other students who are enrolled in classes with a research component."

Space on the second floor of Summerour Hall on campus was outfitted with \$20,000 in technology—a large screen monitor, 15 laptop computers, and research software. Also, the center hired several students as research assistants. One of those is Brielle Grant, senior psychology major, who says, "Working at CLIR, I'm gaining excellent preparation for graduate school, where research experience is looked at very favorably."

Southern's strategic plan includes the goal of expanding research endeavors, and research is one of the durable skills that the university is committed to developing within all students prior to graduation, helping to establish the marketability and positive contributions of alumni in the workplace.

— by Tina Frist Smith, '89 and '23, communication manager



Matthew Tolbert speaks about the goals of the Center for Learning Innovation and Research during the grand opening and dedication service this year.

19%

more graduate students enrolled in Winter 2024. There was also a 10% increase in undergraduate winter term enrollment this year.

7,500

square feet were added to McKee Library with the recent renovation (see p. 9).

10

years of Giving Day at Southern have brought in \$3,148,131. This year, we had 1,113 donors and raised \$314,701. Thank you!

Symphony Orchestra Reaches 100-Member Milestone

This school year, Southern has the largest Symphony Orchestra in its history with 100 members, including the conductor, Laurie Redmer Cadwallader.

"I think it's reputation," Cadwallader said when asked about the growth. "Once you show students what the possibilities are...they follow through."

Emily White, junior music theory and literature major, says, "My favorite part

of orchestra is not only performances and rehearsing, but tours." She explains that the orchestra is "something that I'm privileged to be a part of. ...It's been a fantastic experience."

The orchestra tours regularly and has participated in several high-level performances. Last year, it performed for a crowd of conductors during the College Orchestra Directors Association National

Conference and earned a standing ovation. This year, the group played with Grammy Award winner David Phelps, tenor from the Gaither Vocal Band, at A Taste of Southern, a yearly fundraising gala for the university.

White says, "Joining orchestra was one of the best decisions I've ever made."

— by *Chehalis Eno*, junior English major



The Symphony Orchestra performs at Collegedale Church on Southern's campus earlier this year.

Southern Wins AHA Award for Employee Health

The American Heart Association (AHA) awarded Southern the Gold Level Workforce Well-Being Scorecard for 2023. The designation measures multiple areas of employee physiology and was created to help employers determine the health of employees in balance with the progress of an organization.

"This honor speaks to Southern's administration and the Board of Trustees who fund our Employee Wellness program to encourage both faculty and

staff to live healthier lives," says Judy Sloan, PhD, dean of the School of Health and Kinesiology. "Expenses are fully covered for employees to have blood work and health assessments onsite; otherwise, many likely would not do it on their own."

The university offers incentives to motivate both employees and their spouses, such as prizes for completing a variety of wellness challenges. Simply completing the health assessment at

the beginning of the school year makes each eligible for a \$25 gift card to the campus' Village Market, a popular vegetarian and natural foods store in the Chattanooga area.

Sloan feels strongly that encouragement pays off. "Our leadership believes in the importance of health and wellness and is committed to partnering with employees to ensure positive lifestyles and the resulting benefits, including longevity."

— by *Alexis Dewey*, senior mass communication major

McKee Library Renovation Enhances Study Spaces

Southern's McKee Library was recently renovated to update the entryway and increase useable space throughout the facility. The improvements include an enclosed front entrance, a windowed reading room on the second floor, and a remodeled third floor with new spaces for the Tutoring Center, the Writing Center, the Center for the Study of 19th Century America, and an additional classroom.

"This dramatically improved the physical presence of the McKee Library, which is a legacy building for the university," says Marty Hamilton, associate vice president for Financial Administration. "Students are very active in these spaces, and the addition really reflects the appropriate modernization of the library."

"It's a beautiful structure. I enjoy all the windows at the front, where you can look out at the trees," says Jack McKee (attended) whose family was instrumental in supporting the renovation and original effort to build the facility in 1970.

Deyse Bravo, director of McKee Library, shares that the library's mission is to equip leaders and learners through instruction, resources, and spaces for lifelong academic and professional growth. "Our library has undergone a remarkable transformation, aligning perfectly with our mission," she says. "The new spaces provide an environment that fosters learning, creativity, and exploration, with enhanced services that are tailored to meet the diverse needs of our students and faculty."

The renovations are part of the Campaign for Excellence in Faith and Learning, a fundraising effort that included construction of the Bietz Center for Student Life and increased endowments for scholarships and research, among other undertakings.

— by *Becky Brooks*, '03, editorial manager



The new front entrance and additional improvements inside the building give McKee Library a new look and increase its useability.



The new reading room on the second floor of McKee Library provides plush chairs and a quiet, light-filled space for students.

Preparing for a Career That Counts

By Chehalis Eno, junior English major

Southern strives to provide students with exceptional learning experiences that equip them to thrive in a fluid, global job market. Kevin Brown, '94, PhD, professor and chair of Southern's Mathematics Department, says, "Due to student feedback several years ago, we have increased our departmental efforts to help students find the next step in their career paths."

Exploring Opportunities

The Mathematics Department took several current students to the first Actuarial Day organized by local insurance company Unum. While visiting the office in downtown Chattanooga, Tennessee, students had the opportunity to talk with actuaries and learn what they do in various areas of the company.

"It's the math side of insurance," explains Hannah Shull, senior math major. Students were given a tour of the facility and walked through what each aspect of actuarial work entails. She learned more about the many niches of actuarial work, such as pricing and research. Some of her prior misconceptions about the work atmosphere have shifted.

Contrasting her original idea of an isolated work environment, Shull shares, "Many of [the actuaries] said that it's actually a lot of working together. I'd have the opportunity to brainstorm with other actuaries to find creative solutions to problems."

Emma Clark, junior math major, enjoyed learning about Unum's rotational program. "Every couple of years, you get rotated to a new department, so you're always learning new things," she says.

One of the departments that stood out was modeling. "It's where actuaries model hypothetical events—stuff for the future based on probability



Emma Clark (left), junior math major, and Hannah Shull, senior math major, prepare for careers in mathematics.

and past events," Clark describes. She has not decided yet on a career as an actuary, but she did like Unum's focus. "Disability insurance seems to be really helpful for people who are at a low point in their lives. I want to help people in my work," she says.

Continuing Research

Sarah Klingbeil, '22, studied mathematics and English at Southern. The summer after she graduated, encouraged by her Southern professors, she participated in Lafayette College's Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) summer program, which is an annual eight-week intensive providing undergraduate students the opportunity to work with a team of several students and a mentor to investigate open problems in mathematics and statistics. As part of the program, she got to present at the 2023 Joint Mathematics Meetings, one of the largest mathematics gatherings in the world.

"It was an incredible feeling to be in a conference where there are so many people interested in mathematics," she says. "People would walk around a big hall full of posters and talk to the authors. I talked to a lot of people about our research, and one person ended up asking us questions for 40 minutes!"

"The research process helped me choose to study for a master's degree in statistics," Klingbeil says. She is currently pursuing a Master of Science in Statistics at Johannes Kepler University in Linz, Austria. She says the research opportunity "was a perfect experience for me to learn about researching and the expectations."

"Sometimes we can think that math is a closed-system subject, but there is still so much to discover," she says. "In mathematical research, we go to the edges of what we know and don't and see if we can push back the unknown a little bit more."

Sharing job options and research opportunities with students is essential to preparing them for their future careers, according to Brown. "We believe these experiences are a vital part of serving our students and are grateful for the opportunity to help them be successful after they graduate." ■



Celebrating Culture

Black Christian Union Cultural Night this year focused on the civil rights movement with the theme "Riding Through Time: A Journey to Justice." Held on February 24, the event featured various sketches along with several musical showcases. Southern's cultural clubs encourage students to celebrate culture, appreciate history, and learn from each other, both on campus and as they prepare for the future. Shown here, Malachi Cushion (left), sophomore mass communication major; Ayinel Patterson, '23, who is pursuing a master's in accounting; and Edward Backer, senior psychology major, perform a skit illustrating perceptions of African Americans.



A LINEAGE of CARE

by **Chehalis Eno**,
junior English major
and **Gracelyn Lloyd**,
senior communication major

FAMILIES GO THROUGH MANY DIFFERENT SEASONS IN LIFE AND SOMETIMES FIND THEMSELVES IN UNIQUE SITUATIONS. SEVERAL STUDENTS AND FACULTY IN SOUTHERN'S SCHOOL OF NURSING RECENTLY HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO SEE EACH OTHER IN NEW CONTEXTS—A MOTHER AND DAUGHTER GRADUATING TOGETHER, A PROFESSOR TEACHING HER DAUGHTER, AND A WHOLE FAMILY USING THEIR TRAINING AS THEY WORK IN TANDEM IN THE MEDICAL FIELD.

GROWING TOGETHER: THE COOPER FAMILY

Strains of “Pomp and Circumstance” serenaded a mother and daughter as they both marched down the aisle to receive their Associate of Science in Nursing degrees during Southern Adventist University’s Commencement on December 14, 2023.

CALLED TO NURSING

While in high school on the West Coast, Rachel Cooper,

'23, dreamed of attending Southern, but her family preferred she remain close to home. As she began college nearby, her mother, Jennifer Cooper, '23, considered re-entering the workforce as an occupational therapy assistant. When the two participated in a group project at a nursing home, Rachel was inspired by how the nursing staff interacted with patients and found her own career calling.

Jennifer also felt drawn to the field of nursing after participating in the project. Later, while going through a divorce, she realized she needed to find a reliable career to provide for herself and her family after nine months of

intense job searching turned up no opportunities in her previous field. She was additionally influenced by the book *Counsels on Health* by Ellen White, which describes how medical personnel will have opportunities to share the gospel with those whom the church cannot otherwise reach. “I decided that if the Lord could help me understand His good news, I needed to become a nurse as a way to offer that message of hope to others,” she says.

Around the same time, Rachel discovered Southern scholarships that opened doors for her transition to Tennessee to join the university’s nursing program. Meanwhile, Jennifer was applying to nursing programs at community colleges in California and Washington, where seats for the programs are given out on a points-based lottery system. After applying for multiple cycles without success, a friend suggested that Jennifer join Rachel at Southern.

MAKING THE MOVE

After an exciting discussion with Rachel, Jennifer applied, was accepted into the same nursing cohort as Rachel, and began preparing to move herself and her family, including her 14-year-old son, across the country before the start of the winter semester.

Even though the pair attended the same classes, they rarely studied together. “We needed to make sure that we each understood the content on our own,” Rachel explains, while adding, “although, it was nice to have someone to remind you about a forgotten assignment and to be project partners with.”

Early semesters were quite difficult for Jennifer, as she was dealing with the emotional trauma of major life events and had been away from college for 25 years. She often found herself crying out to God. “Thankfully, He’s been faithful to bring information back to my memory. I’m grateful His grace is so good and so big!”

The familial relationship fostered friendly competition on test scores. Jennifer remembers earning higher marks on the first semester exams but shares that Rachel “pulled into the lead after that.” For other activities, such as designing crazy holiday sweaters for a department contest, the two would join forces and, in that case, win second place.

SEEING IT THROUGH

“I’m just really glad that I got the chance to do this with my daughter and have a precious memory,” Jennifer shares. “My son attends Collegedale Academy, right across the road, so it’s become a new home for us all. God really knew what He was doing in bringing us here.”

Reflecting on the ceremony, Rachel says, “Graduating with my mom was exciting, and I couldn’t stop smiling as



Jennifer Cooper (left) and her daughter Rachel Cooper strengthened their relationship as they pursued their Associate of Science in Nursing degrees.

we walked in. I could hardly believe it was happening all the way up to that point. I was so proud, seeing her walk up on the stage. It was a wonderful day that nothing could take away from.”

Jennifer feels similarly. “My heart was full of gratitude to God for bringing us to that day together, and it was also bubbling over with the pride He gives. Oh, how good it was to see that nonstop, beaming smile on Rachel’s face—and I was privileged to have an up-close view. I treasure this opportunity to walk this part of our journey side-by-side.”

Jennifer and Rachel both passed their NCLEX-RN exams and received their RN licenses this spring. They plan to remain in Southern’s School of Nursing to complete their bachelor’s degrees, hopefully by the end of Summer 2024. As the Coopers continue on life’s journey, they rest in the certainty that God will be faithful in guiding them every step of the way.

MOTHERING AND MENTORING: THE SHOWALTER FAMILY

AS Christy Showalter, '93, '03, '08, a nursing professor at Southern, introduces herself to the students of her Adult Health I class, just as she has for the last 14 years, her slideshow presentation includes a photo of herself with her family. If you look closely in the dimly lit room of students, one pupil in particular bears a striking resemblance to the young woman on the screen—Christy's second child and only daughter, Maddie Showalter.

ALLEVIATING THE PRESSURES

Working together can put the pressure of additional expectations on any family. When asked about the first day teaching her daughter, Christy laughs. "Maddie would probably be surprised to know that I was really nervous. Students don't realize how jittery the first day is for professors, but Christina Shrode, another nursing professor who has also had a daughter in our program, happened to be passing by. She spoke with me and prayed for me. It didn't take long to settle in and do what I normally do." Both Christy and Maddie were sensitive to keeping their professor-student relationship in the classroom separate from the parent-child one. Christy remarks, "By God's grace, it seems to be working really well."

Maddie admits there have been times when it's been a challenge to their filial relationship. "Sometimes she may think I'm her biggest critic, because I'm her daughter," says Maddie. "When I ask her a question, I want her to know that it is as a student who's genuinely looking for answers and not that I'm critiquing her. There's a barrier between 'mom' and 'teacher' sometimes, which can be hard to navigate. But we've definitely worked out the kinks and are doing great now."

Maddie says these moments have improved their communication as adults. "There's growth for sure. We're seeing different sides of each other."

Christy does worry about disappointing Maddie. "I also want to avoid favoritism," she adds. "In trying to be fair, I learned that I need to be patient and not defensive. That was a turning point for me; remembering that she is like the other students."

MEANINGFUL MOMENTS

Christy is enjoying this rare seat from the front to watch her child's academic and personal growth. "Most parents don't get this experience. They might only be able to ask how classes are going. I do recognize that I have this amazing vantage point. It's pretty special when I see light bulbs turning on for her, and I'm so, so proud of her!"

Having parents who understand firsthand how rigorous the nursing program is has given Maddie encouragement. "They told me that if my heart is in it, then I can do it. They've been very supportive." Her mother, as a mentor, has inspired her. "It's a beautiful thing that I get to see my mom in this



Photo: Mila Bales

Christy Showalter (left), nursing professor, and her daughter Maddie Showalter, sophomore nursing major, found new appreciation for each other in the classroom.

place where she thrives and to learn from her. She is my role model, and I strive to be like her."

The shared profession has bonded mother and daughter in a special way. Maddie says, "We always have things to talk about, even on an intellectual level. When I learn from what she's passionate about, it makes me feel more confident of my decision to be in this program."

However, Maddie is clear on what she appreciates most about being in her mother's class. "I can see that she is not only so passionate about nursing, but also so passionate about the Lord. That inspires a lot of people in my class, including me, to grow deeper in our faith in God. Her passion for that just shines, and it's really beautiful!"

FROM CHILDREN TO COLLEAGUES: THE JOHNSON FAMILY

Cindy Johnson, '84 and '07, DNP, is another parent in the School of Nursing who has had the pleasure of wearing two hats—professor and mother. Her more than three decades as a nurse in the emergency room, intensive care unit, and post-anesthesia care unit inspired her daughters, Jessica and Ashley, to enroll in Southern's nursing program, where Cindy coordinates and teaches in the simulation lab. Cindy enjoyed the additional privilege of working alongside her children when they became her colleagues at Erlanger Health System.



Photo: Judith Brass

Cindy Johnson (center), nursing professor, and her daughters Jessica Weber (left) and Ashley Finley (right) discovered their shared interests as they now work together in the medical field.

Jessica (Johnson) Weber completed her associate degree in 2017 and her bachelor's in 2018, while Ashley (Johnson) Finley finished her associate degree in 2022 and just graduated last spring with her bachelor's.

A FAMILY AFFAIR

Cindy began her own career as a nurse at Erlanger Health System in Chattanooga in 1989. When she started teaching at Southern in 2007, she continued working a few days each month in the post-anesthesia care unit. While seniors in high school, her daughters were each selected to join Erlanger VolunTEENS, a hands-on summer program in which students help hospital staff and patients in clinical and non-clinical settings while exploring their interests in the medical field.

"The experience cemented their desire to work in healthcare, particularly nursing. Later, both Jessica and Ashley worked as nurse techs at Erlanger before their final semester of nursing, then transitioned into nursing roles," Cindy explains.

"I always knew that I wanted to do something in the medical field. We were surrounded by it," Ashley shares. "Then, after shadowing as a teen at Erlanger, I fell in love with the hospital setting. Now, as an ICU nurse, I've learned to use critical-thinking skills quickly."

LEANING ON EACH OTHER

The passion for medicine runs deep in the hearts of the Johnsons. Cindy and her husband, Tim, met while volunteering at the Tri-Community Fire Department in

Collegedale, where all four have since worked on the medical team—Ashley and Tim as emergency medical technicians, and Jessica and Cindy as emergency medical responders.

"There were plenty of nights when all four of us were on the same truck," Ashley states. The pressure of being the first responders to a call has gelled them as a team. Jessica reflects, "When we worked together to heal wounds or do CPR, we fell into natural roles, with mom or dad leading on the scene." Ashley adds, "It was a benefit to have learned from their medical knowledge. We work well together, and then, after a call, we debrief with the team and as a family."

The family's service to the community carries on into the hospital. Both daughters practice nursing at Erlanger Health System—Jessica as a specialized "Red Shirt" on the trauma critical care team and Ashley in the shock intensive care unit. Although assigned to different departments, there are times when the sisters' jobs intersect, especially since they both work the night shift.

"Over the years, we all have been on many scenes together providing medical care," Cindy states. "More recently, on several occasions, I have ridden into the hospital on the ambulance, assisting the paramedic, before turning over patient care to Jessica, who has then taken the patients to the trauma unit and handed them off to Ashley."

LOVE OF LEARNING

The family's work includes equipping the next generation of healthcare workers. Cindy, Jessica, and Ashley have taught credentialing courses for the critical care areas of the hospital, including Basic Life Support. Their collaboration has also returned them to the classrooms of Southern, where they are Basic Life Support instructors for nursing students, resident assistants, and deans on campus. In addition, Jessica is an Advanced Cardiac Life Support instructor and helps Cindy teach this course for the Leadership nursing students each semester. "It's been a fun experience to come back and teach at the university where I graduated," muses Jessica.

Education remains a powerful motivator in their own lives. Cindy earned her master's degree in nursing at Southern and completed her doctorate in nursing education. One of the greatest pleasures, Cindy says, is watching her daughters continue to grow. "They have a love of learning! Their education didn't stop at Southern, but it is where they embraced it, and it continues to blossom."

LEAVING A LEGACY

Jessica and Ashley say that if they have children one day, they will provide the same example as their parents. "We were never pressured to go into the medical field or even nursing," says Jessica. "It felt like a very natural course, because we observed the ways Mom treated others at school and work. I love my job of helping people and would share that with my kids as Mom did. If they choose that, it would be awesome." ■

Read about a set of cousins pursuing nursing degrees at southern.edu/columns.

Once Samir Khalil realized his passion for helping people, Southern's School of Social Work taught him what he needed to know. Hired by ADRA to respond to the Ukrainian crisis, he's now providing aid as people deal with natural disasters and the effects of war.

PASSION

BY TINA FRIST SMITH, '89 and '23, communication manager

Samir Khalil, '20 and '21, hadn't planned to attend Southern nor to follow in his father's footsteps as an employee of the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), but God showed him an alternate path through connections and opportunities beyond his imaginings.

Feeling what he describes as a "divine push," he arrived on Southern's campus three days before classes began in 2015. Still undecided about a major, he considered studying psychology, education, or physics, but then a conversation with Annette Heck, '01, social work professor and Bachelor of Social Work program director at the time, led him to declare an area of study and quickly find his niche. He completed both his bachelor's and master's degrees through the School of Social Work, and, shortly after graduation, began serving as an emergency response assistant at ADRA International based in Silver Spring, Maryland.

"I realized after watching my dad in his work for ADRA that I, too, was passionate about helping people," Khalil says. As part of the emergency management unit, Khalil and his teammates are responsible for providing immediate support following global disasters due to natural elements—hurricanes, earthquakes, tornadoes, drought, and famine—as well as manmade conflicts and war zones in the Americas and Ukraine. In fact, ADRA invited Khalil on board to respond specifically to the Ukrainian crisis.

Khalil's current responsibilities are focused on background support, including coordinating the acquisition and distribution of funds for areas in need. He also assigns individuals to support financial needs, communication, human resources, project implementation, logistics, and other areas of help on the ground.

Samir Khalil is responsible for providing immediate support in the wake of global disasters.



ADRA workers and volunteers, along with Khalil, deliver supplies to a distribution site.

FOR HELPING PEOPLE

"I am certain that my work is helping the people who need it most, because all of our efforts are focused on the beneficiaries," Khalil adds. "Southern's School of Social Work taught me that the people being served are always the experts who best understand their needs in any trying circumstance." In addition to asking questions, he explains that listening to clients is key. "I may notice that someone doesn't have shoes so I decide to buy him shoes, but maybe that person really needs a shirt."

During his years on Southern's campus, Khalil discovered that he enjoys looking for people's strengths and empowering each one to improve. His experience with a group of first

responders to clear debris and assist local churches following Hurricane Florence in 2018 was the catalyst that sparked his interest in countering traumas and emergencies. He was also inspired to search for advocacy efforts on a larger scale, including preparation and response, as well as how to champion effective policies.

Khalil's assigned practicum placements in Chattanooga were at locations providing services to refugees, managing county government, and counseling students in elementary schools. These complemented his classroom learning and taught him about the inner workings of systems. He worked as a graduate assistant in the School of Social Work and later served as an adjunct instructor for undergraduate classes after completing his master's degree. Citing what he believes are the highlights of Southern's program, he notes that he's now putting into practice the core principles he learned, whether about developing programs, working with individuals and groups, or thinking critically on his feet.

He offers specific praise of the social work program at Southern, giving the school credit for his understanding of how to "reach the most vulnerable without marginalizing other groups, embrace differences without stepping on toes, lead with empathy, take a strengths-based approach, and coordinate with local offices whose ideas often mesh best with the culture. My teachers in the program were the best I've ever had, going above and beyond my expectations."

His advice for current students? "Branch out, ask for help, and talk to people, including your professors. Sometimes, all it takes is one person to either turn you off or hook you. Also, be willing to do something you don't necessarily enjoy, just for the experience and to help confirm your long-term goals." ■



Khalil works out the logistics of helping those who need it most after an earthquake in Morocco.

Alumni in Business

Business management requires self-discipline, determination, and leadership ability—skills that Southern imparts to students across all disciplines. Many Southern alumni use their skills and talents to manage their own business endeavors. From flower arranging to software development, these alumni discovered a need and used their creativity and innovation to fulfill it. Hear from a few Southern alumni about how they are making a difference through their businesses. To find other alumni-owned businesses or to learn more about these, visit southern.edu/alumnibusiness.



A THOUSAND RAYS Raamiah Hupp, '14

"A Thousand Rays is a clothing and design company that provides positive apparel as well as graphic design and photography services. A Thousand Rays originated from meeting the needs of people in search of artwork and motivational shirts that represent them. One thing I love even more than creating art and design is sharing it." athousandrays.com



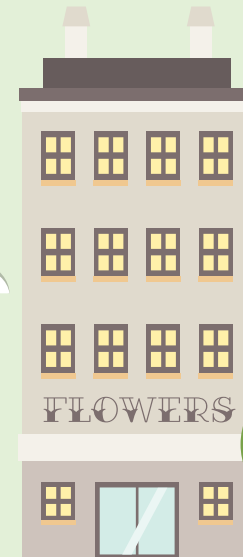
ACGink Jeff, '94 and '08, and Shawna (Fulbright) Wood, '94

"ACGink creates custom screen-printed and embroidered apparel and digitally printed products. The idea for the company started with a conversation at a Friday night Bible study. We were looking for a part-time business opportunity that could utilize our creative talents and provide flexibility in our lives. A friend suggested we try screen printing! That led to the creation of Atlanta Custom Graphics, now ACGink, and full-time careers for both of us. We absolutely thrive in helping customers turn their ideas into high-quality products." acg-ink.com



LOT EAGLE Braxton Young, '18

"Lot Eagle is a Software as a Service and Data as a Service company, using satellite imagery, computer algorithms, and machine learning to detect, classify, and geo-locate construction and land clearing anywhere in the world. We provide timely, accurate, and affordable market analytics to help companies make informed decisions." loteagle.com



BLLUUM Christine (Jenkins) Waldrop, '92 and '14

"BLLUUM offers floral and event design services and retail. Blluum started in my garage and grew into a brick-and-mortar location in 2020. It has served the Ooltewah and greater Chattanooga area since January 31, 2020, and travels nationwide for event and floral services." blluum.com



STAR MOUNTAIN TRAVEL Gerald, '69, and Kathleen (Johnson) Martin, '69

"Europe enchanted us during our years of working in Germany in the early '70s. After returning to the United States, we started planning and hosting occasional European trips for friends and family, and then student, teacher, and pastor groups started calling. In 2000, we left our other jobs and have worked full-time in tour operations, travel planning, and consulting." starmountaintravel.com



CAMPLIFE Jackie (DeGrave) Duffy, '01

"Since 2006, CampLife has created reservation and park management software exclusively for the campground and RV park industry. As RVers, my husband and I noticed that many private campgrounds and their guests would benefit from a streamlined reservation and payment process. This inspired a quest to help campground owners improve their businesses with intuitive software." getcamplife.com



HUMBLE LAMB Daniel Arroyo, '12

"Humble Lamb provides premium Bibles made to deepen your relationship with God and your desire to read the Bible. I was looking for the best Bible for my life. As I searched, no Bible met all of my requirements, so I decided to make my own. Humble Lamb was born out of the desire to make something that would inspire others, as well as myself, to read more of God's Word." humblelamb.com



John Willis (left) and Kevin Pride formed friendship that grew from a shared love of sports to a shared kidney transplant.

Photo: Joseph Hyde

SIDE BY SIDE

by Clifford Goldstein (attended)

Kevin Pride and John Willis worked together—with offices side by side—at Southern from 2012-2020. But their friendship extends far beyond those years and experiences. They have a life-saving bond, strengthened through Kevin's health challenges and the help that John could offer.

Both Kevin Pride, '90, and John Willis remember when they first met. It was in 2006 at an Adventist Student Personnel Association (ASPA) conference at Atlantic Union College in Massachusetts. Every year, the conference ends with a banquet. Kevin arrived shortly after the banquet officially started, looked around the room for seat availability and a familiar face or two, and spotted his friend Tim Nelson. Tim was sitting at a table with another man and his kids. When Kevin sat down in the one seat available, he met the other man, John Willis, and his kids.

John, Tim, and Kevin began talking. Eventually, the conversation turned to basketball. John and Kevin learned they both were high school coaches, and Tim played at Columbia Union College, now Washington Adventist University.

Much to Kevin's astonishment, 6-year-old Kassi, daughter of John, could engage the table in an intelligent discussion about the sport.

"Here I am," Kevin recounts, "in a conversation with a 6-year-old about basketball. And I was amazed. How did this kid know so much about it?" Thus began Kevin's tie to the Willis family.

Besides their shared love of sports (even though Kevin was a University of Alabama fan and John was a Boise State fan), Kevin and John spent time over the years conversing about professional and college sports, politics (though they never argued), religion, life, and future hopes. Kevin would meet up with John (and sometimes his entire family) at the ASPA conventions.

When they both wound up at Southern as associate deans in Talge Hall, Kevin soon became like part of the Willis family, despite Kevin turning John's kids into Alabama football fans. The team's fight song says, "Go, roll to victory, hit your stride! You're Dixie's football pride, Crimson Tide! Roll Tide! Roll Tide!" When they would see Kevin, the kids, now four of them, would cry out, "Roll Tide, Dean Pride!" an affirmation of affection for their beloved family friend.

While working at Southern, the men would sometimes talk late into the night or early morning. Jennifer, John's wife, would text him, wondering if everything was alright but also assuming the cause of the delay: "Talking to Kevin again, huh?"

Then Kevin had a heart attack.

IN THE HOSPITAL

Kevin was born in 1967 in Birmingham, Alabama, to a loving and close Seventh-day Adventist family. There were four siblings. His father was a postal worker, and his mother was a teacher in Adventist church schools. Kevin graduated from Southern in 1990, and early on he loved sports. Growing up, he played basketball, baseball, softball, and flag football. He also worked with athletics at summer and basketball camps and coached academy basketball. So great was his love of sports that he earned a master's degree in sports psychology.

The blow came in his 20s when Kevin was hit with Type 2 diabetes, which ran in his family. Uncles had it, as well as some siblings, though not as severely as he did. He had to adjust but kept playing sports and coaching. Later on in their friendship, John learned about Kevin's disease and genetic history.

The 2016 school year had just gotten underway when Kevin was feeling sick one day. With diabetes, he had to be careful, so he drove himself to the Erlanger East emergency room on Gunbarrel Road in Chattanooga, Tennessee. On the way over, though, he stopped at a Chili's restaurant to eat. Feeling better, he decided he didn't need treatment, skipped the ER, and returned home. However, the next morning, he could not get from the



Kevin's donor (front), John (back), and Kevin meet after the surgeries. Kevin says: "I was there because of a need. The others were there because of a gift that they voluntarily gave me. How could I not think about the cross and what Jesus suffered for us so we could live—eternally?"

bedroom to the couch without falling and gasping for air. His doctor instructed him to go to the ER right away. A short time later, some student deans, who had heard that he was sick called to check on him, quickly drove to his house, and rushed him to the ER.

Kevin had suffered a mild heart attack. He was in his late 40s. John and Kevin both know this happened in 2016, because Alabama's Crimson Tide football team pulverized the University of Southern California 52-6 in a season opener, on September 3 that year. Kevin had been in the hospital for a week and watched the game from his hospital bed.

Of course, the Willis family often visited him. John recalls his kids saying every day, "Dad, can we go see Dean Pride again?" Several other co-workers also visited him in the hospital and brought him food once he returned home.

THE KIDNEY SITUATION

In the hospital, Kevin was forced to confront his kidney situation, the harsh fact that he would need three stents for the three clogged arteries in his heart, and eventually dialysis and a kidney transplant. He kept the details from others, except his family, thinking he could beat the prognosis.

However, he soon realized how serious it was as he overheard bits and pieces of conversation between the doctors. One said, "If you give him the stents, the dye will negatively affect his kidneys. His kidneys will fail, then he will need dialysis and a new kidney." Another replied, "If I don't give him the stents, he won't be able to breathe."

"I was in denial," Kevin admits. "I was not ready for that. I was depressed. I had an uncle who went on dialysis, and he died anyway."

While Kevin was still in the hospital waiting for the first heart surgery, he was receiving visits from John and his kids. Kevin's sister had noticed the frequency of their visits, and she said quietly to Kevin, "This man is going to be your donor." Kevin was astounded, because he was not planning on going that route.

The compromise made by the doctors was to put in one stent immediately, the second stent when needed, and not to touch the third artery because it was small enough to be insignificant. This would cut down on the amount of dye at one time. The stents were placed a year apart, and both were successful. Kevin's kidneys had not gone into failure.

However, the nephrologist insisted on dialysis immediately. Kevin eventually switched nephrologists, changed his diet, got in better shape, and spent time at an Adventist lifestyle center near Southern. There he learned a lot about managing his health.

But still, sooner or later, he would need dialysis and a new kidney.

SEARCHING FOR A DONOR

Though John knew that Kevin had been sick, he knew nothing about the severity of the situation or his need for

a kidney. This is why, in 2018, John was stunned to read a concerning Facebook post.

"HELP KEVIN FIND A KIDNEY. We are searching for a living donor for Kevin Pride. A live donor offers the best success rate and avoids 3-5 years on a kidney transplant waiting list. For more information or to start the screening process, visit..." and it gave the website for Emory University's kidney transplant and living donor program.

"What? Help Kevin find a kidney? What is going on?" These questions raced through John's mind as he wondered what was going on with his best friend.

"Kevin is a very private person," John says. "He never told me about what was happening. It wasn't until the Facebook post that I knew. I was stunned."

John immediately offered to be a donor. However, they were not a match. Kevin's father offered but was too old; his nieces offered but were too young; other family members, with their own health issues, couldn't do it either. So, Kevin got on a list for recipients at Emory University Hospital Kidney Transplant Center in Atlanta, Georgia, and continued with his life.

Moving forward included two significant changes: transitioning to Orlando, Florida, for a new job, and getting more and more sick until he went on dialysis. Kevin had to convince his family the move was smart, because Emory had

Kevin (left), John, and Kevin's donor practice walking as they recuperate from surgery.



provided excellent care. AdventHealth in Orlando also had a stellar transplant reputation, and Kevin envisioned that after the transplant, his caregivers (his sister and brother had already decided to care for him when the time came) could stay with him at no extra cost. At Emory, housing after the transplant would have been very expensive.

While continuing to work in Orlando, his kidneys were getting worse and worse, but Kevin was hiding it: throwing up, dry heaving, nausea, vertigo, and all of the other symptoms that accompany those issues. He was still in denial. Later, the office staff for Kevin's primary doctor told him that his glomerular filtration rate was the lowest they had seen for someone who was still working and not on dialysis. Kevin was added to the donor list at AdventHealth Transplant Institute before his kidneys failed. A donor was found but then fell through, so Kevin was back to waiting.

THE KIDNEY CREW

It was in May of 2021 at Kassi's wedding (yes, the little girl who had befriended Kevin at the banquet when 6 years old) that John and Kevin talked about a different option: donor-pairing, which is when two or more pairs of living donors and recipients exchange kidneys. Hence, everyone receives a compatible match. Though John wasn't a match for Kevin, he would donate his kidney to someone else, freeing another person who was a match for Kevin to donate to him.

One Sabbath morning in 2022, Kevin was rushed to the ER for kidney failure. AdventHealth in Orlando had the pairing program and the suitable matches, and after extensive testing, the four operations took place on January 18, 2023.

Despite the risks of major surgery for all of the recipients and donors, John never hesitated.

"Central to my faith in Jesus," he says, "is this sense of community. We are called to help those around us. If you are to love your neighbor, even the stranger within your gates, then how much more so your friend? Especially your best friend?"

He adds, "I know that Kevin would have done the same for me."

Thus, Kevin and John went to surgery on the same day. The operations lasted two to four hours each. Recovery, of course, took a lot longer. When John's boss asked how long he'd be out, John naively answered, "About two weeks, I think." It was more like six weeks, with incredible pain at times.

"With each sneeze or cough," he said, "I'd double over. Glad that's behind me now."

Except for feeling more tired at night, John has pretty much recovered. Kevin, whose situation is more complicated, is nevertheless doing very well. He started a boys' basketball team at Bass Memorial Academy in



Kevin (left) and John plan to be lifelong friends. John says, "Central to my faith in Jesus is this sense of community. We are called to help those around us. If you are to love your neighbor, even the stranger within your gates, then how much more so your friend? Especially your best friend?"

Mississippi and is planning to return to Southern as a dean in Talge Hall in Fall 2024.

"As I was in bed, just after having received my kidney," Kevin recalls, "I was thinking about the donors, those who suffered that I might live. We were all on the same hospital hall, relearning how to walk and dealing with the pain. But I was there because of a need. The others were there because of a gift that they voluntarily gave me. How could I not think about the cross and what Jesus suffered for us so we could live—eternally?"

As part of the transplant program, it is a policy that the donors and recipients remain anonymous to each other. However, Kevin, John, and the other donors and recipients kept running into each other in the waiting rooms. They soon figured out what they were each doing there and became friends. Even today, they call themselves "The Kidney Crew" and stay in touch.

Kevin's friendship with John has remained strong, as well. When John's children see Kevin, they still call out, "Roll Tide, Dean Pride!"

And Kevin, for sure, is thankful to hear it. ■

BUILDING SKILLS AND COMMUNITY THROUGH BRANDING

by Tina Frist Smith, '89 and '23, communication manager

From orphaned children to families facing food insecurity, students at Southern are meeting clients' branding needs while gaining real-world experience in the classroom through the Branding Systems course.



THE CHATTANOOGA COMMUNITY CO-OP

Each fall, graphic design majors, along with students studying business, journalism, and public relations, enroll in the Branding Systems course at Southern. During the semester, the entire class focuses on one local organization and its need for a distinctive design for promotional purposes. In addition to developing a landmark and supporting elements, such as letterhead and other stationery items, classmates work together to design websites, signage, and even uniforms.

Brainstorming individually, each student provides dozens of branding thumbnail sketches as potential ideas to be reviewed by classmates under the direction of Randy Craven, '99, MFA, professor and dean of Southern's School of Visual Art and Design. Forming teams, the group then develops the top concepts to pitch to the client, who weighs in and helps narrow it down to the best option.

"It's common for an ad agency to start with as many as 100 thumbnails, so I strive to follow a similar approach with each class," Craven explains. "The effective filtering process of refine-cull-repeat allows students to see the rationale behind selections and get on board with the fine-tuned result at the end.

"One of the biggest takeaways for students is a better understanding of what it's like to work directly with companies—and that means the good and the



bad in client management. I'm very deliberate about debriefing after each interaction, so students can begin to develop the special skills needed to help people feel heard while also keeping focus on the effectiveness of a brand and the reasons behind specific elements within proposed designs."

Over the years, clients benefitting from the class's efforts have included the first Seventh-day Adventist orphanage in Cuba; self-supporting Seventh-day Adventist schools; pop-up clinics offering medical, dental, and vision services to the underserved; and Brand New Day Outreach Ministries, a reintegration program for formerly incarcerated men and women.

One recent benefactor of the creativity of Southern students is Chattanooga Community Co-op (CCC), which offers food at discounted prices, nutrition classes, and other services for low-income families living within food deserts in the area.

Natalie Rouse, a 2023 graduate with a bachelor's degree in graphic design, credits the class with shaping the direction of her future career by bringing her passion for branding to light. "Under Professor Craven's guidance, we followed the process from start to finish, thoroughly researching CCC to understand the organization's values, personality, and goals. The thought of one of our designs being released into the world was exhilarating! To my surprise and delight, the company chose my original concept, and I felt honored to have my work selected to represent their brand."

Key takeaways from the class for Rouse included a stronger understanding of her own identity as a designer and ways to apply branding principles personally. She learned to navigate differences among team members and reach a consensus, and she found a new appreciation for file management and organization that is essential for client-friendly work environments. The importance of setting boundaries while still ensuring customer satisfaction is another lesson consistently on Rouse's mind as she builds her reputation as a designer.

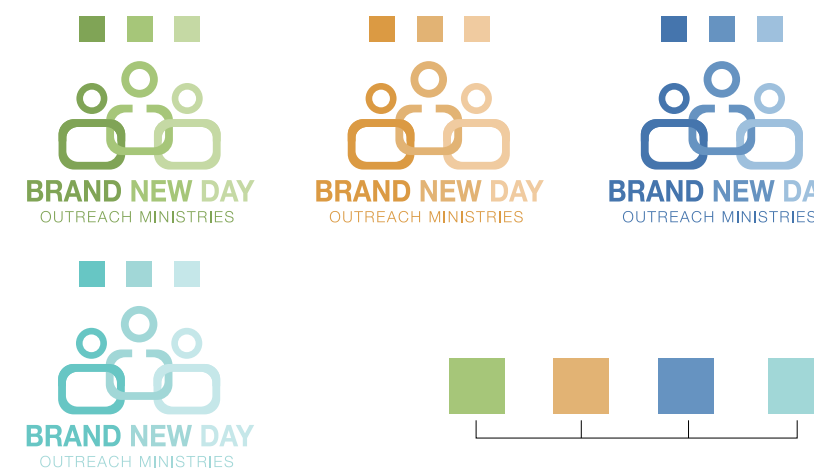
"Following the example of Joseph from the Bible, I decided to commit to doing my best in whatever work lay before me, trusting that God would lead me to other opportunities. Now, between part-time employment and contract work through my freelance business, I'm staying busier than I ever imagined!" Rouse says.

Southern's branding course includes service-learning credit, counting toward a graduation requirement for all students to achieve a set number of hours integrating faith and learning while also preparing to contribute to their churches and communities. Craven notes that "the skill of clear communication, coupled with the ability to take feedback and direction, are invaluable for collegiates entering the working world and also giving back." ■



In Southern's School of Visual Art and Design, Randy Craven teaches students skills they will need for working with clients.

PREVIOUS PROJECTS



Alumni Notes

'60s ■ **Terry McComb**, '63, pastored for 59 years before taking early retirement to work with *Creation Illustrated*, and he has been doing a Creation ministry found at gospelcreation.com and another ministry called Supergoodnews.org. He and his wife, Jean, have co-authored five books for children through TEACH Services: *The Gospel According to a Dandelion*, ...*Blade of Grass*, ...*Trees*, ...*A Snowflake*, ...and *Thornless Blackberry*. Terry is thankful for the many ways God has blessed him.

'70s ■ **Gary**, '73, and **Carol (Adams) Swinyar**, '73, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in August 2023. They retired to Chino Valley, Arizona, where they have lived for the past 10 years after Gary served 41 years in Adventist education. Carol, a music education graduate of Southern, is still teaching music as a volunteer at Prescott Adventist Christian School. They have two grown children, Ted and Cara, and four amazing grandchildren.

After graduating with her BSN, **Lucretia (Moore) Pintacuda**, '78, moved to Loma Linda University to work in the medical center. While there, she enrolled in the nurse anesthesia program and graduated with a BS in 1984. Her medical career gave her opportunities to volunteer, and she went to Thailand in 1981 to work with refugees from Cambodia for a short stint. She eventually moved back to the area of her birth, in the mountains of Western North Carolina. She went on three trips to Honduras to provide anesthesia services for medical trips. Each of these opportunities had a big influence in her life, and she received a blessing much beyond what she gave. In 2020, she retired from her career as a CRNA. Needing a purpose in her life, she started a hiking group and planned hikes about once weekly for members of her group. This past summer she took her passion to serve and to hike to a new level. She joined the Michael J. Fox Team of Athletes and climbed Mt. Kilimanjaro in Tanzania to raise funds for research and development of a cure for Parkinson's Disease. Her group of nine all made it to the summit and collectively raised more than \$150,000. She shares more of her story at trekkingupward.com.

'80s **David Howell** (attended) retired in 2019 from a 37-year career in federal civilian service. He was the assistant deputy chief of financial management for the U.S. Navy Bureau of Medicine & Surgery.



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'90s ■ **Eric Aakko**, '93, is excited to be the new director of the Master of Public Health (MPH) program at Union Adventist University in Lincoln, Nebraska. On a good day, he can see the Colorado mountains to the west. And his hiking boots are always in the trunk.

'10s **Daniel Salazar**, DDS, '14, earned his doctorate in general dentistry from Loma Linda University in 2020. He is practicing dentistry in Fontana, California.

Mario Reategui, '17, was ordained on June 11, 2022, by the Michigan Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and completed his master's degree in pastoral ministry in December that year. He began serving as pastor of the Crossville Seventh-day Adventist Church in Tennessee this January.

'20s **Jamia (Simmons) Cole**, '20, was promoted to nurse manager at Regional One Health, where she is managing a 21-bed Critical Care Unit. She's received multiple Daisy Awards and has earned her CCRN Certificate. Sadly, she is grieving for her 18-year-old son, James Kennedy Cole, who passed away on September 30, 2023.

■ **Zachary Hagen**, '20, just completed his master's degree in educational leadership from Liberty University in December 2023. Additionally, he has authored four Christian novels that are allegories for the Great Controversy. His fifth is expected to come out this July and will be focused on the Second Coming.



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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

Celebrating Southern Sweethearts



1 Eddy, '95, and Anita (Gonzales) Caballero, '94, met in the summer of 1991 on the steps of “Rachel’s Ladder” when he boldly introduced himself to her as she was walking from the girls’ dorm to the cafeteria with a mutual friend. They dated for a bit at Southern and then went their separate ways. Many years later, they reconnected and then married on July 23, 2023. They are both very grateful for their time at Southern and are happy that the university will always be a part of their love story! They live in British Columbia, Canada.

2 Nicholas (attended) and Heidi (Toppenberg) Hays, '10, were married on September 18, 2022. The couple now lives in Cherry Valley, California.

3 DJ, '10, and Alyssa (Graham) Sommerville, '10, were married on July 20, 2023, at Lake Lure Inn and Spa. They live in Pensacola, Florida, on the Naval Base as DJ, now a second lieutenant of the Marine Corps, is in school to become an aviator. Alyssa is enrolled in a master’s program to continue studying literature.

4 Nathan, '23, and Christina (Coston) Norris, '21, married on August 6, 2023. The couple resides in the greater Atlanta area. Nathan is an estimator for Fox Building Company, and Christina is the associate communication director for the Southern Union Conference.



More than 3,500 married alumni couples have joined their hearts and lives! Alumni Relations invites attendees and graduates who have recently married each other to participate in Southern Sweethearts*, a 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.



Family Additions

5 Brian, '13, and Camille (Harr) Beck, '17, welcomed Nicholas Beck to their family on April 30, 2023. Brian and Camille now live in Ooltewah, Tennessee.

6 Branden, '15 and '16, and Krystal (Campos) Bruzese, '15 and '16, welcomed Desmond Bruzese to their family on October 15, 2023. Branden and Krystal now live in Knoxville, Tennessee.



Remembrance

1 Marilyn (Downs) Bottomley-Coggin, '61, passed away on December 17, 2023, at the age of 84. She was born to Charles and June Downs on February 11, 1939, in Wayne County, Indiana. After graduating from Highland Academy, she attended Southern Missionary College and received her BS in Nursing in 1961. Following graduation, Marilyn married L. Neall Bottomley, DDS (attended) and moved to Orlando, Florida. Initially, she stayed at home raising their two boys, Flip and Chuck. When the children were both in school, she went to work as a nurse for the Family Practice Residency department at Florida Hospital Orlando (now AdventHealth) from 1981-1991. Following this she worked for Robert T. Hoover as his nurse in his OB/GYN practice.

Upon their retirement, she and Neall bought a farm in Greeneville, Tennessee, and split their time between the farm and their home in Orlando. Following Neall’s passing in 2005, she sold the farm and returned to Orlando full time to be near her sons and grandsons. A few years later, she reconnected with and married her college friend, Julian “Butch” Coggin, '57, in 2011. For the next six years they spent summers in Virginia and winters in Orlando.

She loved the mountains of Tennessee and Virginia and enjoyed gardening and being outside, as well as traveling, quilting, cooking, and baking. She did not like to be idle, so she volunteered at church thrift shops while in Greeneville, Virginia, and Orlando. Most of all, she loved spending time with her family and friends.

She leaves behind her sons, Flip Bottomley (Carolyn, '84), '84, and Chuck Bottomley, '88, as well as two grandsons and six nephews and nieces and their children.

Cindy (Davis) Caldwell, '69, passed away September 11, 2023, in Winter Park, Florida. She was born November 28, 1947, in Elizabethton, Tennessee, and lived in Bryant, Alabama, for most of her childhood and youth. After graduating from Little Creek Academy and then Southern Missionary College, she moved to Winter Park, where she worked in accounting and finance for her entire career. She retired in 2012 as vice president of finance and operations for an educational furniture and curriculum corporation. She is survived by her husband, Richard Caldwell, '69; two children, Heather Kerby and Hugh Tompkins; and three grandchildren.

2 Frank “John” Smith, '72, passed in peace at the age of 71 at his home in Tri-Cities, Washington, on November 3, 2021. John was born on November 19, 1949, to Belle and William Hall and raised by Belle and Fred Smith. John was the beloved husband of Alice and father of Stephen, Paul, and daughter-in-law Lindsey. He is survived by his mother, siblings, grandchildren, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, and friends. He was preceded in death by William Hall, Fred Smith, and brothers Chet and Jeffery.

John truly loved being a physician. He worked in emergency medicine at Kadlec Regional Medical Center for 23 years, for the Department of Corrections for 18 years, and for a short unit in urgent care. He was fortunate to always work with wonderful people. John will be fondly remembered as a loving husband and father; a godly man; a compassionate physician; an avid gardener; a backpacker, mountain climber, skier, and all-around outdoorsman; and a maker of pies. He loved teaching his Sabbath School class and giving Bible studies.

3 Kevin Ferguson, '13, passed away on January 7, 2023, at the age of 37. He was born on June 24, 1985, in Loma Linda, California. He graduated with a BA in Religious Studies from Southern Adventist University, then earned his MS in Chaplaincy from Loma Linda University in 2016. Kevin was an ordained elder at his Azure Hills Church in Grand Terrace, California, and served in the Media Department at the Loma Linda University Church. He found his calling as a Hospice Chaplain with Destiny Hospice and Palliative Care. His calm demeanor and listening ear enabled him to truly be present with his clients during their last days. He was a model employee and was loved by his co-workers, clients, and their families. Kevin is survived by his wife, Normie Joy Ibanez Ferguson; parents, Robert and Ethel Ferguson; siblings, Robin Ferguson, Erwin Ferguson; his two nieces; and a world of family and friends. He will be remembered for his quiet spirit, his funny wit, his profound words of advice, and his great love for God and his community.

All memorial gifts may be mailed to Southern Adventist University, Advancement, P.O. Box 370, Collegedale, Tennessee 37315, or shared online at southern.edu/give.



God Builds a Path

by Gabriella Grundy, senior business-public relations major

As the COVID-19 pandemic spread across the country, Justin Rogers, '20, grew nervous about being able to find a job. On the cusp of graduating from Southern Adventist University in May 2020 with a bachelor's degree in construction management, he watched more and more industries enter lockdowns. His career options seemed slim, and he began questioning what he believed was his God-ordained path.



How it Began

Rogers grew up in Memphis, Tennessee, and was involved in gymnastics throughout his childhood. His love for the sport ultimately led him to attend Southern and join the university's Gym-Masters acrobatic team. Originally choosing to major in pre-physical therapy, Rogers found his attention shifting to landscaping, his campus job at the time, and then transitioning to construction management during his sophomore year, after realizing how the discipline fit his analytical personality and expertise in solving problems.

In the meantime, Rogers was invited to use his aptitude for gymnastics to coach at a gym not far from Southern's campus. He enjoyed coaching so much that he considered doing it full-time after he was given the option to purchase and operate the gym. However, Rogers decided to "try God" by praying about the decision and asking Him if this was the right direction.

"I had never really prayed about anything that big before in my life," Rogers explains. "I soon felt that God was telling me not to move ahead with the gym, so I declined the offer."

Called to Construction

When Rogers' last semester shifted to virtual learning due to COVID, he felt frustrated that God had seemingly put him in a tight spot by impressing him to pass up coaching, but he continued trusting that God would provide. He prayed and fasted, but still he got no job leads through April 30. The next morning, Rogers received a call from Chattanooga-based P&C Construction. He interviewed that day, which included taking an intensive exam to demonstrate his knowledge in the field. When he was halfway through the test, the CEO of the company came into the room and told Rogers, "You're hired!"

As a superintendent, Rogers manages multiple projects, organizes subcontractors, and interfaces with clients. The company did not know he was a Seventh-day Adventist, so his first assignment at Southern's sister school, Oakwood University in Huntsville, Alabama, further affirmed to him that he was in the right place at the right time.

"There is no way you can convince me that God didn't orchestrate all of this," Rogers says. "He showed up above and beyond in every situation." ■

Justin Rogers prayed about what direction to take then saw God build a path for him in construction management.



Photo: Clarissa Alberto Rosano

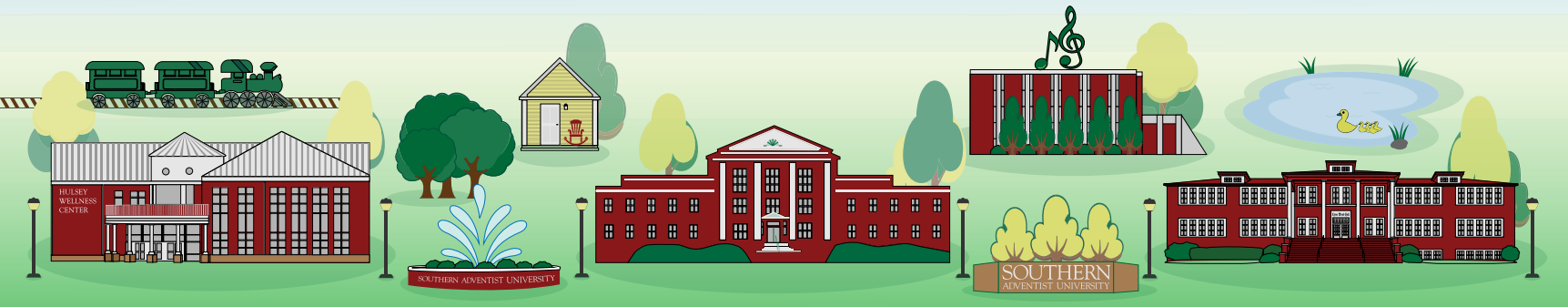
Mission to Mexico

During Spring Break, a group of students participated in a mission trip to Mexico. Coordinated by Southern's Evangelistic Resource Center, the students had the opportunity to hold evangelistic meetings in several different communities. The Evangelistic Resource Center's aim is to train, mentor, equip, and empower students to share the good news about God. Students also traveled with mission groups to Peru, Bolivia, and Puerto Rico with the Evangelistic Resource Center and Southern's Vision Trips.

HOMECOMING WEEKEND

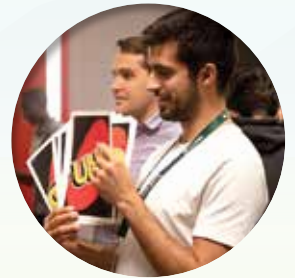
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