

GCU TODAY

MAGAZINE

DECEMBER 2013
Volume 3 – Issue 4

CROSSROAD of CULTURES

Grand Canyon means
the world to Phoenix



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GLOBAL CITIZENS



Multinational, multicultural:
GCU is a school of the future

As Richard Conaway sits in his modest office on the Grand Canyon University campus, he imagines what might be going on around him.

Hindus and Muslims from other countries sharing their beliefs in a Christian Worldview class. Students from Canada, home of publicly funded health care, studying nursing. A Slovakian and an American getting to know each other over lunch.

"They are so jazzed to be here," Conaway says of GCU's international students. "It's an honor for their family. They try to do everything they can to stay.

"They love the United States, but they also love GCU."

Conaway should know. For more than a year now, the former English teacher has been the University's international student coordinator. His primary responsibility is to manage the student visa program, under which international students are granted a visa to study on a U.S. campus.

Unofficially, he's like a stand-in uncle, taking students on everything from trips to the Grand Canyon to errands at Wal-Mart. He conducts orientations that explain the nuances of bank accounts and driver's licenses. His office sees a steady stream of drop-by visitors during a typical weekday.

"We try to get them connected," Conaway says. "That's the biggest challenge. When they try to go it alone, their grades suffer. But there's a community of support here, and once they realize that, they're star students."

In 2011, approximately 50 international students were admitted to GCU as part of the student visa program. In two years, that number of admissions doubled.

The University now has 210 new and continuing international students – not a large percentage out of 8,500, but still an important part of a multinational, multicultural campus that is nearly 40 percent minorities (26 percent identify as Hispanic/Latino).

GCU Today Magazine decided that it was time to tell the stories of some of these students and to highlight the impact they are making.

Dr. Timothy Larkin, an associate professor of sociology who has been at GCU for four years, also has a firsthand perspective. He says his classes are enriched by international students and an even larger population of undocumented students, estimated to be more than 300.

"In my Cultural Anthropology class, I made a statement about how the military component of the DREAM Act is significant, with (U.S.) citizenship being gained through that," Larkin says. "And three students raised their hands and said that it's no longer part of the DREAM Act, that it has been taken off the table. They're keeping me current."

Conaway, who lived in the Czech Republic for three years, says the welcome mat needs to remain out at GCU for all nationalities and ethnicities.

"At the end of the day, this supports GCU's mission to graduate global citizens," he says. "What better way than to bring the world into our classrooms?" ■

– Doug Carroll

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« ON THE COVER

Senior **Jesse Villegas**, who lives among refugees, and junior **Suji Shin**, president of Grand Canyon University's student government, are two prominent examples of a growing multicultural presence on campus. *Photographed outside GCU Arena by Darryl Webb*

'JUST GO FOR IT'

Washington, D.C., internship a dream job for high achiever

– by Janie Magruder



Adriana Garcia-Maximiliano is working in the office of U.S. Rep. Raul Grijalva, D-Ariz., where she interacts with constituents, performs research and attends Congressional briefings.

Adriana Garcia-Maximiliano is both a DREAMer and a dreamer.

As a child who in 2000 crossed the border with her parents, Garcia-Maximiliano never felt comfortable sharing her past until she enrolled at Grand Canyon University last year and joined the Latino Student Union. "It was like a family, and they made me feel better than I ever did at my other schools," said the 21-year-old marketing major, a junior. "This is the first time I've been able to be who I am."

As an adult with a bright future, Garcia-Maximiliano is absorbing Washington, D.C. She is one of two interns in Arizona Congressman **Raul Grijalva's** office this semester, and among 24 Latino students selected from across the country by the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute (CHCI) to learn about the legislative process and strengthen their professional and leadership skills.

Her introduction to politics – and with the federal government shutdown and debt-ceiling crisis, what a baptism it has been – has Garcia-Maximiliano rethinking her future.

"My mind was set on getting my MBA and doing international marketing for a Fortune 500 company," she said. "But everything that's involved with making policy is interesting to me. For now, I'm keeping my options open."

Born outside of Mexico City, Garcia-Maximiliano has early childhood memories of family, attending Mass and frolicking at the beach, and the exquisite fragrance of her grandmother's bakery. When Mexico's economy slumped, her parents, seeking opportunities, brought their 8-year-old to Arizona.

She learned English watching PBS' "Arthur," and in ESL classes, where she and her best friend, a girl from Japan, practiced their new language together. Garcia-Maximiliano was an honors student in middle school, and joined art club and Girl Scouts in high school, from which she graduated with an International Baccalaureate diploma.

But the Peoria teen had a secret she couldn't share with anyone: She wasn't an American citizen.

"A lot of doors were closed to me, like not being able to drive, and I had that feeling that my family could be separated at any time," said Garcia-Maximiliano, whose two younger sisters were born in the United States. "I never talked about visiting family back home. I was both ashamed and afraid."



GCU junior Adriana Garcia-Maximiliano (front row, second from right) poses with other interns chosen by the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute to spend the semester in Washington, D.C., learning about the federal government and honing their leadership skills. Photos courtesy of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute

She enrolled at Glendale Community College in 2011 and became politically active for the first time, volunteering for **Daniel Valenzuela's** Phoenix City Council campaign. She started classes at GCU in 2012, shortly before being granted legal immigration status as a "childhood arrival."

In the nation's capital, she has found Congressman Grijalva "welcoming and accessible" and enjoys doing constituency services, answering phones and emails, and attending CHCI's special programs. She loves living in the Beltway.

Garcia-Maximiliano has advice for the undocumented, DREAM Act population who came to the country as children and who may not know yet how to pursue their dreams. "Just go for it! Don't be afraid of being who you are and taking the next steps. Take on a challenge that you didn't think you could do," she said. "I'm really proud and happy of where I'm at, but I know this is just the beginning." ■



GOD'S MARKED MAN

GCU senior decides to move off campus –
and into the lives of refugees

The tattoos on **Jesse Villegas'** body appear as crisp and clean as the flat brims of the baseball caps he usually wears backward.



– by Michael Ferraresi

On the 25-year-old's right forearm, a blindfolded Lady Justice clutches a sword in one hand, her truth-telling scales in the other. A world map on the underside of his arm includes the phrase "Pray for the Nations" in Spanish, Swahili, Arabic and Portuguese. It's a constant reminder to ignore boundaries and borders in the name of God.

Earlier this year, the Grand Canyon University social-psychology senior felt called to a leap of faith in the spirit of serving the nations. Villegas turned down a \$10,000 scholarship this year in GCU's prestigious Servant Scholars program. Rather than using guaranteed money to live among friends in the comfy confines of GCU's residence halls, he leased a ground-level studio apartment at the nearby Serrano Village Apartments.

The low-income complex, just a few blocks east of the University on Camelback Road, is home to refugee families from 23 countries. Most residents are so new to the United States that they speak little to no English and need help navigating daily life in America.

Villegas, a first-generation Guatemalan-American, wanted to live among the Iraqis, Burmese, Nepalis and other immigrants he felt called to serve. Now dozens of GCU students assist him with weekly tutoring and mentorship of Serrano youths through after-school programs. >>



TOP LEFT:

Jesse Villegas faces a busy Camelback Road from the Serrano Village Apartments, the refugee housing complex where he elected to live during his senior year at GCU.

ABOVE:

Villegas organized after-school programs at Serrano Village to help refugee children from countries such as Myanmar and Bhutan assimilate to life in America.

BOTTOM LEFT:

Unrelated to his ministry work, Villegas won the "Mr. GCU" all-male pageant in the spring of his junior year.

Photos by Darryl Webb

“I’m not saying what I’m doing (at Serrano) I couldn’t do here living on campus, but ... I feel it,” Villegas said. “When you eat, sleep and breathe it – it becomes you.”

Traveling to Thailand over the summer with a GCU mission trip solidified Villegas’ decision to move to Serrano. The trip was his first outside of the United States. The exposure to Thai culture revealed to him that God has a heart for everyone, regardless of social status or geography.

“I get that feeling, I get that yearning here at Serrano, because I see the nations,” said Villegas, who lives next door to an Iraqi. Around the corner, in the community courtyard, groups of Bhutanese men play cards on an Aladdin-like carpet as African women cook in an apartment overhead.

“I see people from all over the world, so I see (God’s) kingdom there,” he said.

Children of the nations

On Wednesday afternoons, GCU students volunteer to help children with their homework at a cramped meeting room at Serrano’s leasing office.

While older refugee children ponder the difference between speed and velocity, or how to articulate their responses in English, others fail to understand how to pronounce basic words such as “cat” or “dog.” Unlike their American classmates, they are unable to turn to a parent or sibling for help.

“It has a lot of potential. If Jesse’s able to get a few more students to come a few times each week, you’re going to start seeing the kids flourish – and in their schools, too,” said **Anna Sepic**, a Phoenix refugee advocate whose family owns and manages Serrano.

“The fact that Jesse is bringing in students and working that commitment is filling a huge void,” Sepic said.

Thursday afternoons are a little looser at Serrano. GCU students make it a weekly routine to play games with refugee kids and organize activities to make them feel connected to their American neighbors.

Edgar Toledo, 20, a sophomore who grew up in Tucson after emigrating from Mexico with

his family when he was 7, said he volunteered at Serrano to help make a positive impact in the lives of children.

“It’s all about doing the right thing ... just being friendly and nice to them, getting to know them a little bit more,” Toledo said.

Like many GCU students, Villegas was inspired by learning about the struggles of Serrano residents. The stories of escaping civil wars and religious persecution, of surviving refugee camps, seemed even more compelling than those of at-risk Americans he ministers to in other programs.

Dr. Timothy Larkin, a GCU sociology professor whose Social Problems course first introduced Villegas to Serrano, described the complex as a “port of entry” into the country for refugees. It offers students a glimpse into global justice issues and provides opportunity for meaningful volunteerism.



GCU TODAY
VIDEO



25:10 / 70:10

Tour the refugee community at Serrano Village, near GCU on the west side of Phoenix, and learn about the cultures Jesse Villegas is serving in a mini-documentary video on GCU Today’s YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/GCUTodayNews.

“When a student moves from knowledge to social responsibility, that’s exciting to me,” Larkin said. “This (campus) can be our lab. Community life spills over into it. We have an amazing community around us, and I think we’re just figuring out how to interact with it.

“We’re not in a bubble (at GCU), which is the case with some Christian universities. We have a lot of ‘real world’ here.”

Going beyond handouts

Jacob Page, who oversees GCU’s local and global outreach, said Villegas has one of the more remarkable faith stories on campus.

Villegas, a longtime Young Life leader, decided about three years ago to focus more on his love for Jesus than his desire to emulate neighborhood friends caught up in gangs in his native Phoenix. He saw people arrested and watched his stepfather sentenced to prison for trafficking drugs.

After arriving at GCU three years ago, Villegas emerged as a leader – not only in Spiritual Life efforts, but on campus in general. He is active in intramural sports and won the coveted title of “Mr. GCU” in a popular all-male pageant last spring.

Page said he was initially apprehensive when Villegas suggested leaving Servant Scholars to live at Serrano. He supported the idea once he discovered how God had put it on Villegas’ heart.

“I hope it will be an inspiration to other students, to see that there are opportunities to serve through GCU in the community – not only to serve, but to be leaders,” Page said.

Villegas said the programs he spearheaded at Serrano are “not a handout, not an event, not a one-day workshop” and are designed “to really invest in the potential that’s there” to help residents become more self-sufficient.

“I think people are more receptive to what you have to say and to take what you have to offer when they know it’s genuine,” he said.

It’s a matter of being consistent and remaining present in the lives of Serrano’s residents.

Now he’s just a few doors down. He’s a familiar face. An American they can trust. ■

FROM ADVERSITY to UNIVERSITY

Student-body president learned to love a new country

— by Cooper Nelson

Suji Shin, president of Associated Students of GCU, says God brought her through a difficult time of learning a new language and customs. Photo by Darryl Webb



An emotional transition to the United States helped Suji Shin become a leader at Grand Canyon University.

Shin grew up in an agnostic home in Seoul, South Korea, but preferred the Christian morals and family atmosphere she found at friends' churches. She watched her peers leave Korea to study abroad in middle school, and she moved to Manitowoc, Wis., in 2008 through a Christian student exchange program in her sophomore year of high school.

Cultural assimilation and language proved difficult. Shin could speak only broken English after her first year in the United States. The language barrier made her feel like an outcast and caused her to lose her personality in a way, holding her back from serving in student government leadership, as she had throughout school in Korea.

Shin, now 21, often ate lunch alone in the high school hallway during her first year and cried through the frustration. She spent long hours studying English, becoming fluent by the end of high school.

"I can't imagine where I would be now if I hadn't gone through that process," said Shin, a junior business major who also works on campus as an enrollment counselor for prospective students.

"God literally brought me back from rock bottom," she said.

Shin emerged this year as president of the Associated Students of GCU student government. In her role, she serves the largest ground-campus student population in University history.

Shin and running mate **Samara Carlon**, a native of Mexico, were elected by an overwhelming majority of student votes last spring. Their efforts to improve student life and outreach on campus include organizing a Thanksgiving airport shuttle service for out-of-state students, donating surplus cafeteria food to St. Mary's Food Bank and increasing communication with commuter students.

After two years in public school in Wisconsin, Shin transferred to a Lutheran high school to earn her diploma. She was diligent in learning English to the point of refusing to speak her native language to other Korean exchange students.

Shin chose to stay in the country under a student visa to attend college and was "adopted" by **Kris and Nick Doneff**, her exchange parents in Wisconsin. Shin said she has two sets of parents, describing the Doneffs as her "mom" and "dad" and her Korean parents as her "mom-mom" and "dad-dad." Her American parents moved to Colorado in 2010 to be closer after she enrolled at GCU.

"Suji came here ready to assimilate and make a difference and help people, and she has accomplished that," said Kris Doneff, who has housed more than 20 exchange students from several countries. "It has been a joy to watch her grow because the real Suji is free now."

This year is Shin's sixth in the United States. While she still calls South Korea home, she said she could see herself living in the States to pursue an MBA or serve in a leadership role at a college or university after graduation.

"I have come a long way and I'm very humbled by that," Shin said. "I always ask myself if I would go back and do it again with all the crying and years it took, but yes, I would do it all again." ■



CONTINENTAL DIVIDE

George Ngugi and Chiamaka Akaraiwe share an interest in international affairs and pay close attention to what's happening in their native countries of Kenya and Nigeria. Photo by Darryl Webb

African students know the U.S.,
but how well do Americans
know them?

— by Doug Carroll

The first step toward a better understanding of **George Ngugi** and **Chiamaka Akaraiwe**, two African students at Grand Canyon University, requires a world map.

Go get one. (They'll wait.)

Now, find Africa. You know, the world's second-largest *continent*, which includes 54 *countries*. Ngugi, who is from Kenya, and Akaraiwe, from Nigeria, are amused when Americans refer to Africa as a *country*.

Furthermore, they're not exactly neighbors back home. Their respective cities of Nairobi and Lagos are more than 2,300 miles apart.

Anyone for a little Geography 101?

"It gets ridiculous sometimes," says a smiling Ngugi, 37, a sociology major who is a senior in more ways than one on a campus of students in their late teens and early 20s. "Most (Americans) have seen Africa through National Geographic magazine or the Discovery Channel."

Akaraiwe, 31, a physical therapist who is working toward her MBA with an emphasis in health systems management, speaks several Nigerian languages. But English is her first language, and it is her country's official language. No one should be surprised, then, that she speaks it perfectly.

"People think we live in huts, and that's the only thing they have in their mind," Akaraiwe says. "The war-torn areas aren't a picture of Africa."

The image that the two students carry around with them, thousands of miles from home, is much less monochromatic. And both freely admit that they have had to put to rest their own preconceived notions about Americans.

Ngugi, a world traveler, was stunned the first time he saw a white man begging on the streets in the United States because he never had seen a poor white man in Africa. Akaraiwe says that a person with a tattoo would be viewed as "irresponsible" in Nigeria and had to change her perception.

"People are just people," she says. "I had to start looking at them from the inside out. (A tattoo) is just an idiosyncrasy, and I had to learn that."

Dr. Moronke Oke, an associate professor in GCU's Ken Blanchard College of Business, is a native of Nigeria who has lived on three continents. She says cultural differences shouldn't be underestimated as a challenge for international students.

"In my culture, when you respect someone, you *don't* look them in the eye – you just listen," she says. "There is a lot of respect for authority. You do not overtly challenge those in authority, because of deference in the culture. Back home, as a student I could never challenge a grade. ..."

"When I was a graduate student in England, class participation and the ability to challenge a grade were new to me. There was an adjustment, and I had to actually step outside my comfort zone."

Oke, who goes back to Nigeria every other year with her husband (also Nigerian) and their two sons, says it's important for international students to know there are people on campus who understand them.

"If you lose your culture," she says, "you've lost everything. My default is my African culture. My values come from that, and I adapt to other cultures. ... My children take pride in their cultural heritage and sense of identity."

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AT GCU

GCU's campus is home to students from 63 countries. Here are the top non-U.S. countries represented, with the number of student visas:

Canada: 28
India: 16
Vietnam: 13
United Kingdom: 12
South Korea: 10
Jamaica: 9
France: 7
Japan and Ukraine: 6
Croatia and China: 5

Source: GCU Center for International Education



Ngugi, whose hearty laugh draws people to him like a magnet in his part-time job at the campus mail center, also tries to keep his homeland close. He is a self-described "news addict" who makes it a point to keep up on world events.

When nearly 70 people were killed in a September raid by militants on a Nairobi shopping mall, it reminded him of the bombing of the U.S. embassy 15 years ago in the same city, which killed more than 200 civilians.

"You're apprehensive," he says of such times, "wondering when will the call come saying someone was lost (from your family)?"

He has found a kindred spirit in Akaraiwe, another deep thinker who ponders the worldwide implications of events in the United States. The two of them recently had a lively discussion about the monetary policies of the Federal Reserve Bank.

"Everything is global," Akaraiwe says. "What happens here affects what goes on back home."

She says that someday she plans to go back to stay, although friends and family apparently refuse to take her seriously.

"They laugh and say I'll never come back," she says. "You kind of taste this life (in America) and it makes you comfortable. You pay for things here, but at least you have them. Back there, you don't have them."

She is outspoken about racial inequality in Nigeria, saying it is difficult for blacks to get ahead because of a mindset from colonial times that sets them back – and that they help perpetuate.

The result, Akaraiwe says, is a culture of racially based discrimination. "This is us doing it to ourselves, so people don't want to go back (to Nigeria). It's sad, and it needs to change."

Ngugi, a devout Christian who plans to earn a master's degree, says he's not sure what God has in mind for his future, although he is interested in policymaking. For now, he appreciates the experience of working and studying on an American college campus.

"Nowhere have the cultures melded as well as they have here," he says of the United States. "I'll give America that. Whatever America does, it does well." ■

TALKING POINTS

WORLD VIEWS COME INTO PLAY ON NEW SPEECH AND DEBATE TEAM

– by Michael Ferraresi

Photos by Darryl Webb



Jasmine Richardson, a senior from central Phoenix, says storytelling is her passion.



C.J. Sodikov, a senior debater from Uzbekistan, grew up Muslim and is fluent in Russian.



About a week before her team's first-ever competition, **Jasmine Richardson** strolled confidently to the front of a classroom to practice a speech.

On paper, the subject sounded interesting. But Richardson's delivery was gripping, bringing to life the biographical piece about a woman who witnessed her family murdered in the 1994 Rwandan genocide. The student's voice shifted between characterizations of victims and killers, demanding attention as it boomed to the corners of the room.

Richardson, 21, a Grand Canyon University senior, went on later that week to take first place in the open prose event at a collegiate speech and debate competition in San Diego. The October tournament marked the first of several in this inaugural year for the GCU speech and debate team. Sponsored by the College of Arts and Sciences, the team is composed of 12 students who earned \$2,000 scholarships to compete on behalf of the University.

"I feel so connected to it," said Richardson about her Rwandan piece, which focuses on the restorative nature of forgiving war crimes.

"I love being a storyteller ... that's my passion," she said. "It's not only an opportunity to tell a story, but it has a message behind it that everyone can relate to because it's a story of forgiveness and hurt."

Richardson excelled in speech and theatre at Central High School in urban Phoenix. She elected to major in communications at GCU. She also volunteers in community programs, plays the saxophone, performs in a local black theatre troupe, and is actively involved in the small Phoenix church where her father serves as a deacon.

Her friends sometimes wonder why she's so passionate about advocating for minority rights through her speech and debate club. She tells them "it's like competitive theatre without the stage."

This year, the College of Arts and Sciences hired **Barry Regan**, a communications instructor with a background in coaching public speaking, to manage the new team. Regan drills students on the foundational principles of everything from extemporaneous and impromptu speaking to more traditional, parliamentary-style debate strategy. Students are required to read and discuss current events through sources such as *The Economist* and BBC News to prepare thoughtful, comprehensive arguments.

Regan said he and his students, whose majors range from business to Christian studies, welcome the idea of competing in national tournaments against larger public universities. He said the experience gives them "more confidence to speak publicly in any situation," which is transferable to just about any profession.

The team includes **Javohir "C.J." Sodikov**, a senior who transferred from an international university in his native Uzbekistan. While Richardson and several other students specialize in the speech side, Sodikov is one of those who focuses on debate.

Sodikov, 22, said debate competitions require that students use the most effective arrangement of words to make points. In today's world, that is a lost art, he said.

"Actions are important. But to get the action going, you need to be able to express yourself," said Sodikov, who grew up Muslim, is fluent in Russian and majors in accounting.

"It's a lot of pressure, a lot of responsibility," Sodikov said. "But since it's our first time going to other states for competitions ... we're excited how it's going to be." ■

BORN INTO BATTLE

Freshman athlete recalls bombs, panic of Balkan childhood

— by Cooper Nelson

Towering over most students at 6-foot-11, Grand Canyon University men's basketball player **Miroslav Jaksic** rarely goes unnoticed on campus.

Although the Serbian-born center was one of Michigan's top high school prospects and is considered important to GCU's NCAA Division I basketball future, few people know his path from his Balkan homeland to Phoenix.

Jaksic was born in Belgrade, Serbia, during the civil wars that tore apart the former Yugoslavia. When he was 7, he moved to Canada with his family to escape the violence.

The family planned a move to Michigan, to be near relatives, but post-9/11 restrictions made immigration to the United States a difficult and lengthy process. They opted to move to Canada instead, settling in Windsor, Ontario, five miles north of Detroit.

After 11 years away from Serbia, the freshman remains shaken by memories of his childhood home.

"I remember seeing the bombs explode and people panicking. The sky was like fireworks," said Jaksic, who goes by Miro.

"We lived in a one-room apartment on the ninth floor and I remember my mom taking us down to the bunker at nights," he said. "I'll never forget that."

Jaksic, 18, took English classes in school in Serbia, much like Americans who take Spanish or French language classes. But he understood little English when he first arrived in Ontario. He and his mother — who goes by **Grace**, an easier English pronunciation than her Serbian name — mastered the language through rigorous study and repetition from an English language book.

"Coming to Canada, I only knew 'dog' and 'cat,'" Jaksic joked. "I couldn't communicate with that. I learned the whole language in one summer. It wasn't hard, just a lot of work."

Grace Jaksic began teaching Miro and his younger siblings English the first day they arrived in Canada. But she made sure they spoke Serbian at home in order to maintain ties to their roots and relatives in Serbia.

"I always pushed (my kids) to learn English, and everyone was amazed at how fast Miro learned it," Grace Jaksic said. "Without knowing the language, he couldn't do anything or be successful."

Jaksic overcame the language barrier and excelled in the classroom in junior high. With his basketball career already taking off, his parents sent him to live with his uncle in the Detroit area and attend a school that could earn him more exposure in American sports.

Jaksic became a star at Walled Lake Western High School and was named Michigan's top high school center prospect and fifth-ranked overall prospect in 2013. He quickly garnered attention from Division I universities across the country, but chose to sign with GCU and its new head coach, **Dan Majerle**.

He plans to redshirt his first year as an Antelope and dreams about a career in pro basketball after graduation.

While Jaksic considers himself Serbian, Canadian and American, he is still looking for his permanent home.

"I don't really mind it. I like to travel," he said. "I guess you could say I'm a journeyman." ■



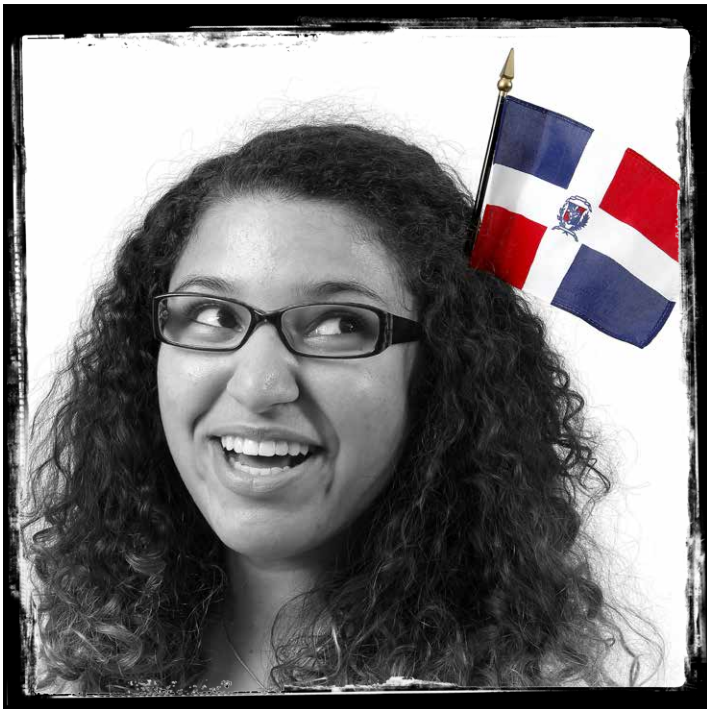
Miro Jaksic (right) plays keep-away with Akachi Okugo during a photo shoot for the GCU men's basketball team. Photo by Darryl Webb



I AM GOOL



CANADA



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

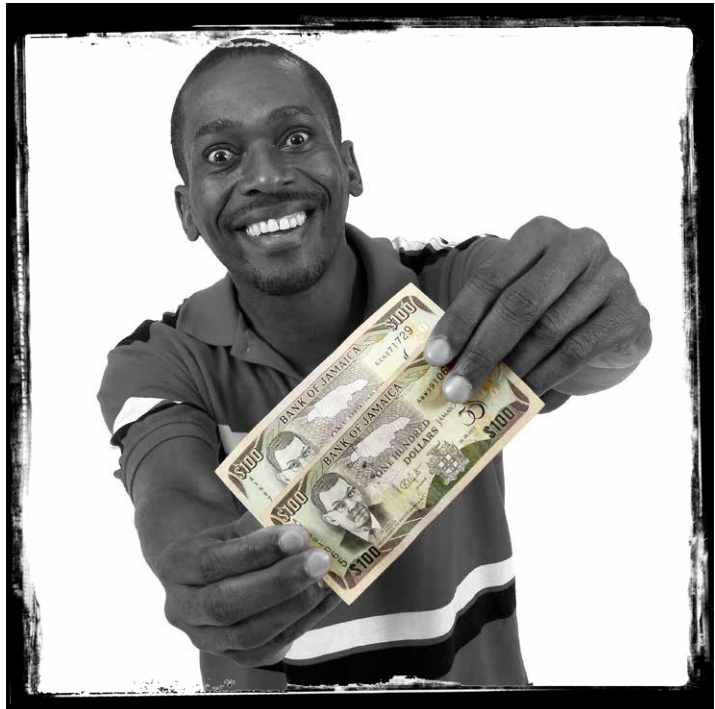
CANADA (from left): Dakota Daykin, freshman, health and fitness, Victoria, British Columbia; Taylor Maclver, sophomore, psychology, Barrie, Ontario; Carson Barton, senior, physical education, Edmonton, Alberta

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC: Alexia Joubert, sophomore, Web design, Santo Domingo

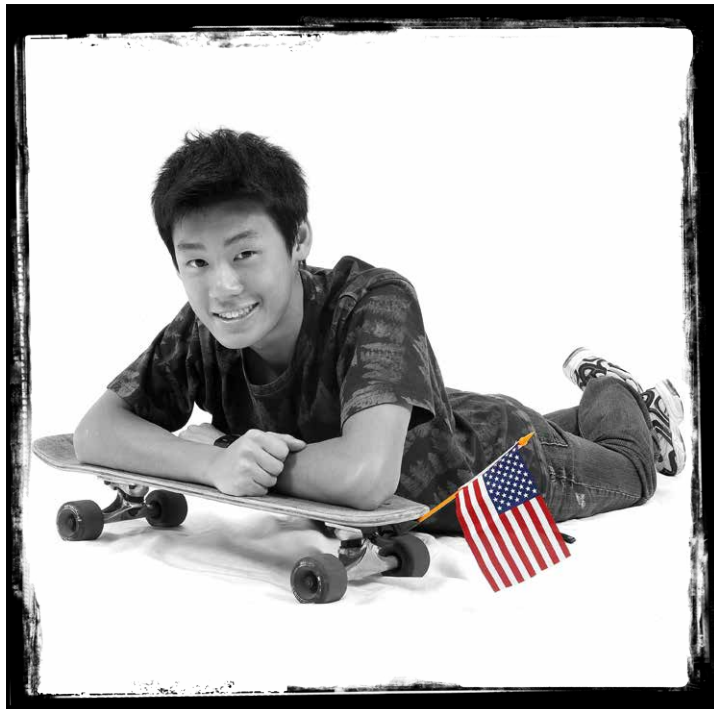


SERBIA

SERBIA: Miroslav Jaksic, freshman, major undecided, Belgrade



JAMAICA



CHINA

JAMAICA: Kenton McPhie-Easy, graduate student, public administration, Falmouth (holding Jamaican currency)

CHINA: Run Hong Thomas Lee, freshman, biology, Hong Kong

For more photos of international students, go to news.gcu.edu
Photos by Darryl Webb



IS FOR ALHAMBRA

With tutoring program staffed by GCU students, multicultural high school is aiming for excellence

– Stories by Janie Magruder



Cyrus McMullen wheels his bike to the door with great aplomb, wavy brown hair flapping in the breeze, fists deftly steering the handlebars, legs moving the back wheels in a half-circle-skid along the sidewalk. Setting the lock and grabbing his backpack, the teen enters the building, shows his ID and strides confidently to a break area at the back, grabbing a cup of water and a granola bar.

DeeSember Corrales smiles and calls hello to Cyrus from her work station, where a white eraser board and slim markers await. He plops down across from her, yanks his binder and homework from his backpack, and they get down to business: Algebra I. Soon, DeeSember is recording his goals and progress, setting his appointment for the next day, and sending him on his way.

Cyrus is among an estimated 130 students – many American-born like he is, but also refugees from the Congo, Kenya, Mexico, Myanmar, Somalia, Thailand and elsewhere – who have received free tutoring at Grand Canyon University's Learning Lounge since its Sept. 16 opening.

Operating at the start in a large space just off campus, the center is staffed by GCU student tutors who help students at nearby

Alhambra High School learn math, reading and writing well enough to pass Arizona's high school graduation test. Perhaps as importantly, the tutors help Cyrus and others think ahead to college, careers and community.

Cyrus comes to the Learning Lounge nearly every afternoon, and in just a few short weeks, he and DeeSember have built a rapport. Outwardly, they don't have much in common. But as freshmen in their respective schools, each has faced the angst of unfamiliarity. They share a social generation as Millennials and a birth order as the eldest in their families. They're both from west Phoenix and have been moved around in their short lives.

GCU student DeeSember Corrales tutors 15-year-old Cyrus McMullen in an after-school session at the Learning Lounge, a partnership between the University and nearby Alhambra High School. Photo by Darryl Webb

And there is this: "I know what it's like to have a hard day," DeeSember says with a shrug after a tutoring session in which Cyrus seems distracted and frustrated.

Tutor learned the hard way

DeeSember never entered a classroom until she was 7. She was helping to raise her younger brother for their mother, who was divorced from their father and then had five more children, leaving them mostly in DeeSember's care. Several times, her father, **Robert**, had asked her and her brother to come live with him, but she felt guilty about leaving her stepsiblings. DeeSember finally agreed to go. It was the last time she saw her mother.

Her father's friend, **Sarah Anaya**, got DeeSember into school. "She was like my mother, and she treated me like her daughter," DeeSember said. "She hugged me at night and told me everything was going to be OK. We would spend hours studying, learning our colors, the alphabet, doing addition and subtraction, worksheets, reading aloud."

DeeSember read "The Cat in the Hat," "The Rainbow Fish" and "The Very Hungry Caterpillar." She passed a test to get into second grade and soaked up learning, even after being bounced to two new schools in third grade and yet another in fifth grade. She had her own room and her own bed for the first time, and life was good.

Seventh grade brought another new school and an upheaval when her father and Sarah split up. The children stayed with their father, but there were many disappointments and struggles for DeeSember. "I was losing too much at one time. I didn't care anymore, and I just wanted someone to be there with me," she said.

That someone was Sarah, who became the children's legal guardian when DeeSember was a junior. The teen again blossomed, taking college prep courses, editing the yearbook and working on the student newspaper as a senior. And her potential was noticed by **Arlin Guadian**, a GCU alumna who worked in high school outreach. Guadian, now the Learning Lounge's program coordinator, persuaded DeeSember to visit campus before she graduated from North High last May.

"I loved it there – we got to stay in the dorms and they had food for us, and the student workers were really cool," she said. "I got to meet people at GCU and experience what it's like on a university campus. I knew this was where I wanted to be."

In August, DeeSember started classes at GCU, and she landed her first job ever as one of 30 Learning Lounge tutors, working four afternoons a week.

"I love it," says the 19-year-old business major, whose brown eyes are as shiny as her black curls. "I love my friends here. We are not just friends, we are family."

She sees herself as a role model of success for high school students who don't see that in themselves. "I'm not afraid to say I'm a proud college student who did it, and to let them know that, no matter what you're going through in life, you can still be successful," DeeSember said.

Gently encouraging Cyrus, her most regular student, she says, "You've got this. It's OK. I'll help you."

Student tries to keep focus

Cyrus, 15, is the eldest of four children who live with their parents in a home in west Phoenix. Before that, his family moved from one cramped apartment to the next. But Cyrus is among the fortunate at Alhambra High – his primary language is English, and he has had relative stability in life.

He's bright and funny, saying he likes school and his teachers. Although his early first-semester grades indicate success in Reading Fundamentals, Cyrus is struggling in Algebra I, Health Education I and Ecology, and he is failing English I. "When I get lost in what the teachers are saying, I zone it out," he said.

He heard about the Learning Lounge and came in a week after it opened. His first tutor was **Emily Benzing**, who remembers him as shy and unwilling – or unable – to make eye contact, until she started talking about weight training and football. And then they did his math homework,

solving for algebraic equations, negative and positive slopes, ratios, probability, order of operations and the like.

The next day, Cyrus' teacher at Alhambra asked if anyone in the class knew how to do a problem.

"My teacher was shocked – it was the first time I had raised my hand in class," he said. "I went from a student who didn't do anything to volunteering to get up to do a problem. I did a problem, and I did it correct on the first try. It felt kind of good."

He's young enough that Alhambra and the Learning Lounge have time to help him stay on track for graduation and apply to college.

"This is the first time I'm actually working hard to get my grades up. Before, I used to never try to do homework, and I was failing all my classes, and I always had lunch detention. But now I'm struggling to work hard," Cyrus said. "Hey, I don't want to retake this next year. I don't want to be a fifth-year senior."

A tutoring session with Cyrus can be 40 minutes of sporadic productivity. When he's on task, he works quickly, asks pointed questions and grasps his mistakes. "My teacher said I could be in the top of my class when I graduate," he says. "I've been told I'm a quick learner."

At other times, teenage braggadocio wins out.

"Oh, you missed it!" he tells DeeSember, relaying the gory details of his bike accident and displaying a bruised hand and scuffed chin.

"There was a fight at the flagpole today between two girls!" he announces between fractions. "I'm sorry to hear that," DeeSember replies calmly, steering him back to matrices.

Cyrus can't play football next fall unless his grades are better, but that matters less than his long-term game plan: Get good enough grades to enroll in automotive classes at Metro Tech High, graduate from high school, enlist in the Marines, attend college on the GI Bill, open a mechanics shop, be happy.

At Cyrus' age, DeeSember didn't have that detailed vision. She's glad he does.

"I'm already imagining how successful he will be. I can already see how committed he is to going to school," she said.

It's paying off for Cyrus, too, whose next report card is a motivator.

"A friend came by to see if I wanted to play (a game of touch) football today, but I told him no, I gotta go study at the Lounge," he said.

"And my mom told me I was (being) responsible." ■ >>



Address: 3839 W. Camelback Road, Phoenix

Year opened: 1961

Principal: Claudio Coria

Enrollment: 2,884

Attendance rate: 94.2 percent

Four-year graduation rate: 79 percent

Annual dropout rate: 3.3 percent

School composition by percentage:

Hispanic, 77.6; African-American, 7.2; Asian, 6.9; Anglo, 6.0; Native American, 1.6

Teacher education: 64 percent have master's degree or above

Teacher experience: 10-plus years, 61 percent; four to nine years, 31 percent

Source: Phoenix Union High School District



University's ties to school extend way back

Claudio Coria, Alhambra's principal since 2011 and a naturalized citizen from Mexico, has set the bar high for the school, saying, "We can't be mediocre." Photo by Darryl Webb

When **Dr. Jim Rice** was a freshman at Alhambra High School in 1963, the student body was mostly white, the teachers – even the one who taught Spanish – were white, and people moved into this primarily single-family neighborhood in Phoenix and stayed.

"Doctors, lawyers, teachers and builders were born here," Rice said. "It was the place to be. You went to Alhambra with the same people you went to grade school with. Then you grew up and stayed in the community."

Five decades later, most everything has changed at and around Alhambra.

Surrounded by blocks of apartment complexes that house refugees from Asia and Africa, Alhambra has 100 refugee students, the largest population among schools in the Phoenix Union High School District. New students arrive on a regular basis, lacking identification cards, birthdates, English and skills, said Principal **Claudio Coria**. Family stability is a problem, and students often leave school without warning.

Ten percent of Alhambra's students are learning English for the first time. Half of all students come from homes in which the primary language is Spanish, but three dozen other languages, from Arabic and Burmese to Swahili and Vietnamese, are spoken in the school's aging hallways.

Alhambra's demographics are an opportunity and a challenge, said Rice, a Grand Canyon University alumnus and a former superintendent in the Alhambra Elementary School District.

"The greatest change we have made in our community is we have been introduced to other cultures from around the world," he said. "Multiculturalism is good for a school, good for the faculty and its students. Our students don't see color. 'Guess who's coming to dinner' is long gone."

But what many Alhambra students lack is proficiency in English, reading and writing – making math, science, social studies and other subjects arduous, too. That impacts graduation, prospects for college and employment.

"My job has gone from making doctors and researchers to trying to create community contributors, people who won't be on food stamps, who will be adding to the economic base and not taking from it," said **Jenny Kaiser**, a GCU alumna and Alhambra math teacher for 25 years.

Coria's job is to improve that trajectory. A naturalized citizen from Mexico, he became principal in 2011. At that time, Alhambra was a "D" school by Arizona Department of Education standards, and its sophomores had performed worse on the AIMS test, which measures student achievement, than did the average Arizona 10th-grader.

"It felt D-ish because kids were falling through the cracks, and there was nothing in place to help them," Kaiser said. "There were so many discipline problems and absences, and there were low-performing kids who weren't in math or reading classes at all."

The gap in test scores still exists today, according to 2013 data, but it is closing, and Alhambra now is

a "C" school. Coria praises the community for going all-in on educating students, faculty, staff and parents.

"When I came here, I saw an enormous asset of tremendous people," he said. "What was needed was a level of organization where we could harness one another's talents and passion and help shape the outcome for students."

Education for all

Kaiser is among 160 Alhambra teachers who infuse literacy, vocabulary and numeracy development into their lessons. Even art and gym curricula have reading and math components: Students in weight training calculate maximum repetitions, and volleyball players determine their serving accuracy. Art students read and create projects mirroring the content and feeling in Edgar Allan Poe's writings. They learn about proportion and enlargement and build large pieces related to Poe and his work.

Myriad learning opportunities for students exist outside class, too. There's tutoring before and after school, during lunch and on Saturdays, and evening school on weeknights. In October, more than 200 students spent part of fall break learning English, boosting their grades or practicing for the AIMS.

GCU, less than a half-mile to the east, is one of Alhambra's primary educational partners. Last summer, 900 summer-school students visited campus to see that college is for them, too. And since September, when GCU opened an after-school center called the Learning Lounge, 130 Alhambra students have received free tutoring in math and English from GCU students.

"GCU students are inspiring Alhambra students with their own stories and building a motivation within them to grow and develop their own leadership capacity," said Rice, who might not have gone to college but for a basketball scholarship.

Kaiser said the best thing Coria has done is create learning opportunities for Alhambra parents. They learn English, attend programs on topics ranging from bullying and illegal drugs to nutrition and social media, and learn to be involved and to communicate with teachers.

Nuggets of success

Alhambra is on its way to "A" status, Coria and others say. It's a medical magnet school where students prepare for careers in healing professions, a place where AIMS reading scores rose 11 points, to 62 percent, in two years. Nine teachers have gone the extra mile, completing a rigorous certification and applying for advanced credentials from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

And in a paying-it-forward example that has Coria beaming, nearly 30 juniors and seniors have begun tutoring nearby middle-school students in the basics.

"We've got something going here, and we're building on that energy," he said. "But we can't be mediocre. We have to be better than that." ■



Learning Lounge symbolizes K-12 outreach effort



Arlin Guadian and Dr. Joe Veres are the GCU staffers who make the Learning Lounge happen for Alhambra students. Photo by Darryl Webb

The Grand Canyon University Learning Lounge, the crown jewel of an innovative private-public partnership in education, provided an estimated 800 hours of instruction to dozens of high school students during its first 10 weeks.

The Lounge, as it is known by the 30 GCU student tutors working there and the Alhambra High School students receiving free one-on-one help in math, reading and writing, is part of the University's K-12 outreach program. Since the Lounge opened on Sept. 16, more than 130 teenagers have come through the doors to study, read, listen to music, and make friends in a safe and welcoming environment.

"It's a true ministry and wonderful opportunity to help our neighbors," said **Dr. Tacy Ashby**, vice president of GCU's strategic educational alliances. "It was important to us, as we aligned this project with the Phoenix Union High School District's mission of college and career readiness, that this wasn't a separate entity planted on top of the district, but one that works alongside the district."

In November, the Lounge expanded to include nearby Bourgade Catholic High School and Faith Christian School in Mesa, participants in GCU's Canyon Christian Schools Consortium.

The Lounge is open afternoons to students of the three schools, and tutors also visit the Faith Christian campus weekly.

Ashby credited **Dr. Joe Veres**, director of K-12 outreach, and program manager **Arlin Guadian** with hiring GCU students who are natural teachers and role models.

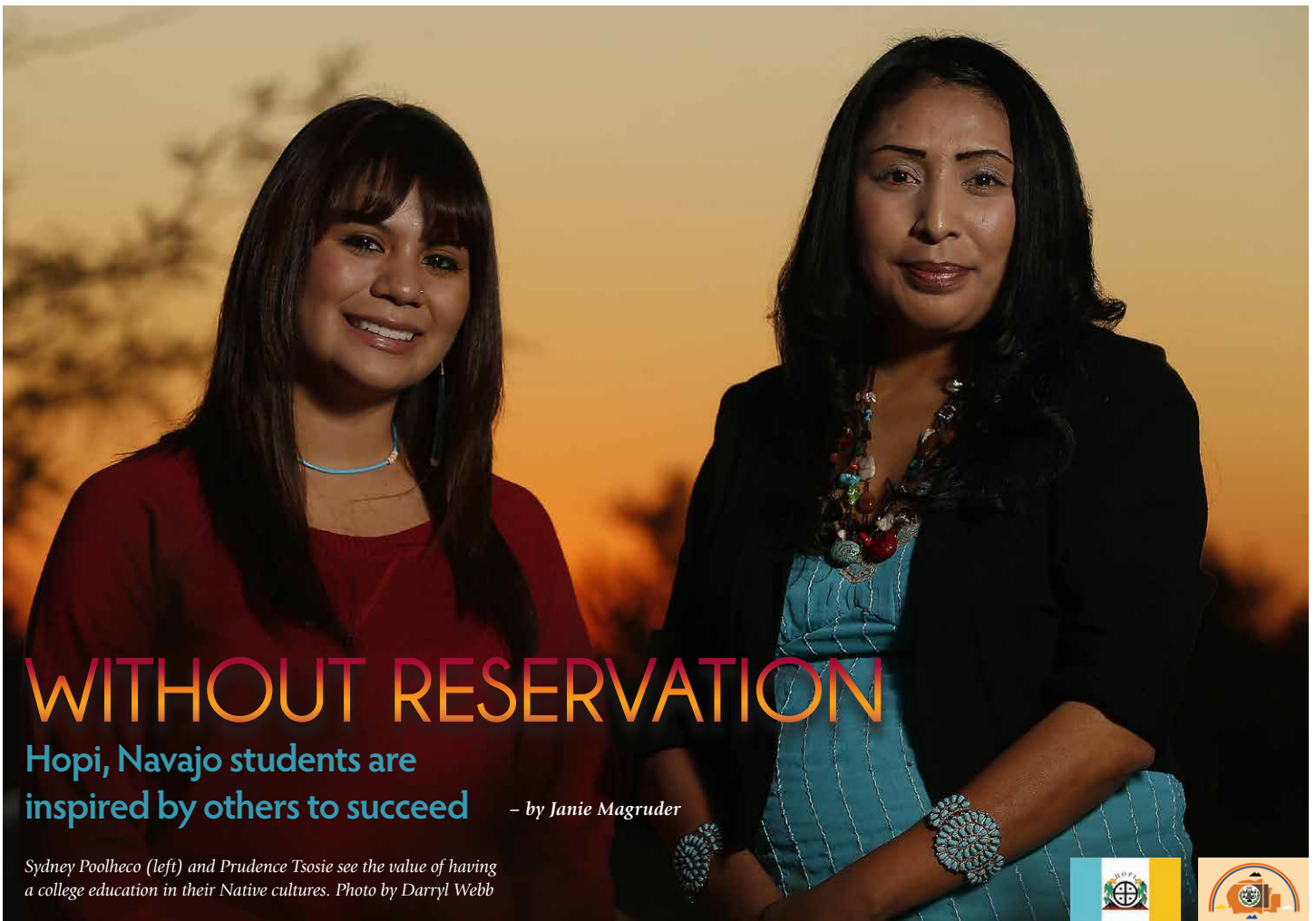
"The rallying behind this has been amazing," Veres said.

Other components of GCU's K-12 outreach:

Concurrent enrollment – Nearly 50 Alhambra students take classes at GCU, the most popular being Crime and Criminology, Philosophy and Ethics, and a Saturday course in public speaking for Alhambra's Academic Decathlon team.

Professional development – **Dr. Ted Coe** of the College of Education meets quarterly with six Alhambra master teachers on strategies to fulfill new math standards. These teachers then train the rest of the math faculty.

On-campus opportunities – From summer school and Health Sciences Day to the Fall Festival and athletic events, Alhambra students come to GCU to check out college life and careers. ■



WITHOUT RESERVATION

Hopi, Navajo students are inspired by others to succeed – by Jamie Magruder

Sydney Poolheco (left) and Prudence Tsosie see the value of having a college education in their Native cultures. Photo by Darryl Webb



Sydney Poolheco and **Prudence Tsosie** grew up a decade and 200 miles apart in or near Indian Country, nurtured by large communities that valued education.

Each took a different path to Grand Canyon University, which has a Native American student population of nearly 750 on campus and online. Both found encouragement, guidance and friendship in their new homes.

Poolheco, an 18-year-old Hopi from Winslow, Ariz., visited GCU during high school. "I grew up being told I was going to college whether I liked it or not," said the freshman pharmacy major. "When I got on campus, students just came up to say hi, and I felt like I could fit in here."

She had traveled to the East Coast on middle-school trips, so homesickness wasn't expected. Two weeks into the semester, however, she felt overwhelmed and tired, and she went home to see her mother, **Stephanie Poolheco**, two brothers and other relatives. It was the right medicine.

Poolheco, who lives on campus and has grown close to her three roommates, knows that **Kim Judy**, a GCU tribal liaison, "has open arms if I need to talk." Poolheco meets periodically with Hopi officials

wanting to ensure her well-being, as the tribe funds part of her education.

"They want Native American kids to go to college and succeed, to become known as doctors and lawyers in the world, and to know they can become anything they want," she said.

Tsosie, an education major, studies online and lives in Phoenix with her two children and their father, **Spencer Dan**. She grew up in Shiprock, N.M., on the Navajo Nation, and her father, **Larry**, was a school principal. Education was the family's priority.

Armed with an associate's degree from Diné College, Tsosie, 32, moved to Phoenix in 2005, planning to attend Arizona State University. "Coming from reservation land with three stores and nothing else to the city was a huge transition for me. I didn't know how to get on the bus, I didn't know the major cross streets. Everything was so cluttered."

She put her education on hold and found a job, working her way up at a local carpet-cleaning company from receptionist to office manager. In 2010, she noticed a GCU billboard near the freeway.

"Something told me later on that this was going to be in my future," she said.

That future was 2011.

"When I started out years ago, I didn't have a purpose," said Tsosie, who will graduate next October. "I have that now, and I like what GCU says: 'We are going to be here for you from the start to the finish.'"

Poolheco and Tsosie are inspired by family members who, in contrasting ways, have spurred them to succeed. Poolheco is her family's intermediary with doctors for an elderly, diabetic aunt. She wants to be that for her family and tribe, possibly from Flagstaff. Tsosie wants to return to Shiprock to teach.

"I don't see a lot of Natives becoming teachers," Tsosie said, "and many teachers back home are older and retiring. And I want my daughter to know her relatives."

There's another reason. In June, Tsosie's nephew, **Damian Yas Chee**, was struck and killed by a motorist on a highway in northeastern Arizona. At 9, the boy already knew he wanted to be a school principal.

"I am motivated to do well and finish for him," she said. ■


'GOD NEVER FAILS'

Catherine Herron's CD is available on iTunes, Amazon.com and eMusic. Her book, "Not Your Journey but Your Destiny," is available on Amazon.com, Barnesandnoble.com and Xlibris.com.

A HERITAGE of *Music*

Chicago-born grad student has roots in gospel

– by *Rachelle Reeves*

Catherine Herron says late-night messages from God led her to publish her first book and record her first gospel CD. Photo by Kara Davidson/Special to GCU Today Magazine

Catherine Herron awoke in 2006 in the darkness of her Mississippi home.

She felt the voice of God encouraging her to write a gospel song. Another night, Herron said, God urged her to write a book about faith.

The experiences led Herron, a Grand Canyon University online graduate student, to publish "Not Your Journey but Your Destiny" and to release her first gospel CD, "God Never Fails," earlier this year.

While she grew up singing in her family churches and developed her soulful gospel voice as a child through youth music programs in her native Chicago, Herron wondered if God had the right writer in mind.

"Oh Lord, you've made a mistake," Herron recalled thinking. "I don't know anything about writing a book.' But God wouldn't let me go to sleep and He was very persistent."

Chicago is known for its roots in music stemming from the Great Migration, the period after the turn of the 20th century when African-Americans brought the music of blues and jazz from the South

to northern industrial cities where they hoped to find work. After Herron married, she moved her family to Mississippi to care for her grandparents – bringing her love of gospel to the South.

Herron, a mother of two who works as an administrative assistant for the Hattiesburg Public School District, said GCU's online program through the Ken Blanchard College of Business provided her the chance to maintain her interests while working toward a master's in business administration with an emphasis in leadership.

"Whatever road God leads me on, I want to be successful," Herron said. "GCU has helped me do this without a lot of stress and making the online atmosphere open and friendly."

Herron said her book is a biographical portrayal of her late mother and spiritual lessons learned from her sudden death. **Avienell La Vern Armstrong-Patterson** was 27 when she died in the arms of a pastor from an apparent heart attack.

"I think that's what has just carried on in my life, along with my mother's heart for singing," she said. "It's in my blood to sing."

Herron and her husband, the **Rev. Robert Herron**, opened a church in the den of their home nine years ago. The congregation developed into what is now the New Fellowship Baptist Church in Hattiesburg.

Despite working at the University of Southern Mississippi for 12 years and serving seven years in Mississippi public schools as an administrative assistant, Herron said she focused on an MBA over an education degree. The affable singer-songwriter felt her degree would help her reach others through Christian media.

Chris Rock, a GCU online enrollment counselor, said he wondered about how Herron's busy schedule with church and gospel choirs might impact her studies. But she emerged as a top student.

"She's that model student, not just in the classroom, but in her community, too," said Rock, adding that Herron helped her Hattiesburg neighbors recover from a February tornado that leveled parts of the city.

Herron, too, knows about skepticism. But she heard the call from God and is looking forward to using her degree to spread the Good News. ■



A PRO AMONG PROS

Discipline took football executive Kevin Warren to the top

– by Cooper Nelson

Kevin Warren was an Ivy League basketball champion as a freshman at the University of Pennsylvania. He won a Super Bowl ring as an executive with the NFL's St. Louis Rams. And he is currently the highest-ranking African-American business executive working for an NFL team as a member of the Minnesota Vikings' front office.

And yet, Warren said the best decision he ever made was to attend Grand Canyon University, which was then Grand Canyon College.

"I had an absolutely incredible educational experience at GCU," said Warren, vice president of legal affairs and chief administrative officer for the Vikings. "Professors encouraged me to get into business. They changed my life."

Warren, 49, transferred to Grand Canyon after two years of playing NCAA Division I basketball at Penn and a brief stint at Arizona State University, earning a bachelor's degree in business administration in 1986. He played two seasons for the then-NAIA Antelopes and was inducted into the GCU Hall of Fame in 2012. He scored 1,118 points in his career.

Encouragement from professors to pursue higher education, with an ultimate goal of blending business, law and sports into a career, and advice from his parents to choose a career based on passion, not money, led to a career as a sports agent, which opened the door to the NFL. Warren took his studies seriously during college, with a textbook rarely leaving his side. He currently serves on GCU's corporate board of directors.

"Kevin was an individual who was very disciplined with everything from basketball to school," said **Rod Monteverde**, Warren's teammate at Grand Canyon. "He would take his books into the bathroom stall with him or would highlight terms while getting his ankles taped before practice, and we would say to him, 'Kevin, what are you doing?'"

"He took advantage of every opportunity he had, and that is why he is where he is today."

After graduation, the Tempe native earned both an MBA from ASU and a law degree from the University of Notre Dame in four years. He began his NFL career in 1997 as vice president of player programs and football legal counsel with the Rams and was with the team during its Super Bowl title season of 1999. He later served as senior vice president of business operations and general counsel for the Detroit Lions, where he was named one of the top 40 Detroit business leaders younger than 40.

Warren acted as the lead negotiator during the acquisition of the Vikings by current owner and president **Mark Wilf**, prior to joining the executive team in 2005. Wilf characterized Warren as a valued adviser to the team and an



Kevin Warren, who has had a lengthy administrative career in the NFL, was inducted into the GCU Hall of Fame in 2012. Photo courtesy of Minnesota Vikings

asset to the sports community in Minnesota. In 2014, Warren will have spent a decade with the Vikings and 16 seasons in the NFL.

Eric Grubman, executive vice president of the NFL for the last decade, has worked with Warren on business and legal issues pertaining to the Vikings.

"(Kevin) has been in a lot of tough situations where he has been able to bring people together and get things done," Grubman said. "What he is able to do for the Vikings is invaluable."

Looking back at his path, Warren said he felt blessed with the opportunities GCU provided.

"I thought I was going to (GCU) to continue my basketball career, but it turned out to be much more," he said. "It was about obtaining an exceptional education, meeting great people and really revealing to me to do the best I could do every day that God blesses me with another day on earth." ■



GRAND OPPORTUNITY

University ideally positioned for influence, Will Gonzalez says

– by Doug Carroll

The renaissance of Grand Canyon University speaks for itself, but **Will Gonzalez** is always eager to add his testimony.

There's a simple reason, he says, that the campus is thriving: Compassionate, service-minded students are gravitating to it and "exporting excellence."

"These are kids who volunteer because they find purpose and meaning to it," says Gonzalez, 50, a two-time alumnus who graduated from Grand Canyon with a bachelor's degree in history and behavioral science in 1987 and a master's degree in leadership in 2004. He is chairman of the University's board of trustees and also an adjunct business instructor.

"This University is trying to elicit a spark," he says, "and that's the reason employers want our nurses and teachers and business students. We're different. We don't look just to get through life. We want to change lives, and that's profound."

Gonzalez, a first-generation Cuban who grew up in central Phoenix, says he was a "floundering fish" until he discovered a greater purpose for himself through Monte Vista Church of the Nazarene in Phoenix. With a law degree from Texas Southern University, he is an assistant city prosecutor for the City of Phoenix, focusing in that position on community redevelopment.

He knows what makes neighborhoods work, and he says GCU is situated perfectly in west Phoenix. The Alhambra High School tutoring project (see Page 14) is a prime example.

"Why aren't other universities doing the same thing?" he asks. "Why not invest in your neighborhood? (With the Alhambra project) you have kids helping kids. What does that tell the high school students who are involved? GCU's payback will be that they do the same thing down the road."

"We don't need to be in the most affluent neighborhood.... Find me those neighborhoods that are underperforming, and that's where we need to be."

Gonzalez says an increasing multinational, multicultural presence on the GCU campus reflects 21st-century Phoenix.

The school "was more homogeneous when I was (a student)," he says. "Phoenix is more international now. But even when I was (at Grand Canyon), the expectations were that you would get a degree and do something with it. The kingdom of God is built with the giving and not the taking."

Aaron Carreon-Ainsa, Phoenix's chief prosecutor, says Gonzalez lives those words.

"He is one of those folks who became lawyers to change the world, and he truly means it," Carreon-Ainsa says. "Will is always building community, bringing people together to pool their talents to make Phoenix a better place."



Will Gonzalez, a two-time alumnus, remains tied to GCU as a trustee and adjunct instructor. Photo by Darryl Webb

Gonzalez contrasts GCU with other urban schools that have cordoned themselves off, saying GCU doesn't have "the 20-foot brick walls" that tell the community to keep out. He says the welcome exists in a figurative sense, too.

"I have a friend with the City of Phoenix who is Jewish and is doing her doctoral work with GCU," he says. "She recently lost her father, and GCU has helped her connect back to her faith."

"We invest time, energy and commitment. The caring humanity is what we bring." ■



Briefs ...

1950s

Stanley Hawkins, Bachelor of Science in Physical Science '56, served as president of the Association of School Business Officials International in '88. Hawkins taught for five years in two districts and served as assistant superintendent for finance in three districts for 46 years. He retired in '96.

1970s

Joseph Jackovich Jr., Bachelor of Arts in Religion '76, rides his motorcycle with the Patriot Guard Riders, doing veteran and active-duty funerals, welcome-home's and sendoffs. In addition, he makes and sells clock faces—Arizona, Olympic and anniversary themes. Jackovich married 32 years ago.

William Reed, Bachelor of Arts in Religion '78, spent 33 years on active duty in the military as a Navy chaplain and retired in 2011 from the Pentagon, where he was the deputy chaplain of the Marine Corps. He and his family have lived and traveled all over the world and are currently working together in missions—specifically in the Democratic Republic of Congo, India, Thailand, Bosnia and the Philippines.

1980s

Keith Boepple, Bachelor of Arts in Speech/Theatre '85, recently was hired as the speech and creative writing teacher at Reed Middle School in Duncanville, Texas, and is currently one of the speakers for the fall conference of District 25 Toastmasters in north Texas. He and his wife have started a communications outreach and ministry, Sword and Key Communications.

1990s

Christine Dunn, Bachelor of Arts in Theatre and Drama '95, has taken quite a journey since graduating from GCU. Last year, she traveled to Tanzania to volunteer and upon her return started the nonprofit Kilimanjaro Children's Project to open a new school for underprivileged children. She is excited to see how her GCU family can join her on this adventure.

Neil Stafford, Bachelor of Science in Psychology '98, won the 2012 Mentor of the Year Award from the Arizona Psychological Association. He also has been voted to the association's governing council. Stafford and his wife had their first child in February 2012.

TAILGATE WITH GCU ALUMNI BEFORE MEN'S BASKETBALL GAMES!



| DATE | WAC OPPONENT | GAME TIME |
|--------|----------------------------|-----------|
| JAN 2 | Texas-Pan American | 7:00 p.m. |
| JAN 4 | New Mexico State | 7:00 p.m. |
| JAN 23 | Idaho | 7:00 p.m. |
| JAN 25 | Seattle | 7:00 p.m. |
| FEB 6 | Utah Valley | 7:00 p.m. |
| FEB 8 | Cal State Bakersfield | 7:00 p.m. |
| FEB 27 | Missouri-Kansas City | 7:00 p.m. |
| MAR 1 | Chicago State (Homecoming) | 7:00 p.m. |

Contact: Nick Knudson, Alumni Events & Promotions Manager, 602.639.6802

GCU Alumni Mall Commemorative Bricks for Sale



Commemorative bricks are now on sale to be placed in the beautiful new Alumni Mall walkway. Bricks are available for only \$50 (an additional \$6 will be charged to add clip art or a business logo), and proceeds go to the Spiritual Life Foundation to provide benevolent support and help defray the cost of mission trips for students.

To order your brick visit www.polarengraving.com/GrandCanyonUniversityAlumniRelations



2000s

James Anderson, M.B.A. '02, has taken his education at GCU and used it to design and deliver cost-effective, high-performance technology solutions to the rapidly growing health care information system. His support has ultimately improved the revenues, margins and productivity of various workplaces.

Robert Miranda, Bachelor of Science in Public Safety Administration '09, received the Military Service Medal from the Tucson Police Department. Upon his return from Afghanistan, Miranda attended his first live GCU basketball game in Riverside, Calif., against Cal Baptist. The 'Lopes won in overtime, and Miranda says he "can't wait to attend more GCU events."

2010s

Joanne Lee, Master of Science in Professional Counseling '11, received her full licensure as a LCAS in May and has opened a private practice in Wilmington, N.C., called Hope for a Brighter Tomorrow. Lee works with high-risk youths and their families, doing both individual and family counseling. She also works with the substance abuse population, conducting comprehensive clinical assessments and individual and group therapy.

Julio Ibeh Agbanyim, Master of Science in Psychology '11, is currently working on his Ph.D. in industrial and organizational psychology. In 2012, Agbanyim's newfound confidence and knowledge from his field of study led him to publish a book, "The Power of Engagement: How to Find Balance in Work and Life." He recently opened a new business consulting firm and is "delighted to be part of this group to share the awesomeness of God."

WHAT'S YOUR LATEST?

GCU's Office of Alumni Relations wants to know what you've been doing with your life for inclusion in future editions of the quarterly GCU Today Magazine.

Email Nick Knudson at nick.knudson@gcu.edu, and attach a high-resolution photo if you like.



NOW ACCEPTING 2014 HALL OF FAME NOMINATIONS!

The alumni office is accepting nominations for the 2014 GCU Academic Hall of Fame. Eligible are those who: (1) graduated from GCU at least five years ago, 2) have lived a life reflecting the GCU spirit and Christian ideals, 3) have distinguished themselves in their chosen field, 4) reflect honor on the college in their personal and professional activities, and 5) have contributed to the college or to humanity in a significant manner.

Nominations will be accepted until Dec. 31; email Nick Knudson, Alumni Events & Promotions Manager at nick.knudson@gcu.edu.

Help us Celebrate HOMECOMING on MARCH 1!

Spend time with classmates and faculty while sharing in the day's festivities: Hall of Fame awards presentation, tailgate on the lawn before the men's basketball game, tours of campus and a 50th reunion for the Class of 1964!

Contact Nick Knudson at 602.639.6802 or nick.knudson@gcu.edu.

Grand Canyon University
3300 W. Camelback Road
Phoenix, AZ 85017



GCU ARENA

UPCOMING EVENTS

3rd Annual
Handel's Messiah
Dec. 5 | 7 p.m.
Featuring: The Phoenix Symphony
GRAND CANYON UNIVERSITY

DEC. 5, 2013*

At: 2013
HOOP HALL WEST
PHOENIX, AZ
HIGH SCHOOL INVITATIONAL
DECEMBER 13TH & 14TH
GRAND CANYON UNIVERSITY ARENA

DEC. 13-14, 2013

TIM HAWKINS
LIVE COMEDY
SUNDAY DEC 15 2013 7:00PM
GRAND CANYON UNIVERSITY ARENA
PHOENIX AZ
GCUArena.com
WIM WILLY
GRAND CANYON UNIVERSITY

DEC. 15, 2013*

GUNGOR
I AM MOUNTAIN
TOUR
JAN. 31 | 7:30 p.m.
GRAND CANYON UNIVERSITY
GCUARENA.COM | 602-639-8999

JAN. 31, 2014*

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Music Festival
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