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GCU today

MARCH 2014

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PHOTO BY DARRYL WEBB

Features

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In late 2003, the University was on the verge of closing until an investment group rode to the rescue. The acquisition changed everything.

14 Christ Over Crime

David White was headed the wrong way in life until he saw the light and caught a break. He's making the most of the opportunity at GCU.

12 Racing vs. Cancer

GCU's Run to Fight Children's Cancer brings into focus a way of using genetic information to determine the right cancer treatment for any child.

16 The Art of Worship

When GCU's worship arts program debuts in the fall, its students will need to plug into the Gospel while they plug in their guitars.



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ON THE COVER: An aerial view of Grand Canyon University gives an indication of how much the west Phoenix campus has changed since early 2004, when it began the transition to the institution it is today.

PHOTO BY DARRYL WEBB

Sound Bites

Why I Run to Fight Children's Cancer

"I run to raise awareness of Diffuse Intrinsic Pontine Glioma, which my 7-year-old, Hailey, fought so hard. It is inoperable, and there is no known cure. Hailey died on Oct. 15."
Michelle Ruiz, Phoenix

"God has called me to run. After the stillbirth of our daughter, Melanie Jasmine, in July, I made a commitment to do more things that my wife, Marlen, enjoys. I never run, and this will be my first race this year. I hope this is the start of something new for our family."
GCU employee Marty Smith

"March 8, 2010, is the date my son, Jack, was diagnosed with Stage IV Neuroblastoma. He was successfully treated at Phoenix Children's Hospital, and the timing is perfect because you want to celebrate that day more than mourn it."
Laurie Morton, Chandler

"I want to raise money so kids with cancer can receive the same treatment I did and have the same opportunity to go to PCH's Camp Rainbow. The camp lets kids enjoy life for a little while, instead of being sick all the time and wondering why they can't be normal."
Amelia Crane, Mesa

BE THERE

March



01

CANYON DAY/HOMECOMING
Men's basketball plays the final home game of its inaugural Western Athletic Conference season against Chicago State. 7 p.m., GCU Arena. Tickets at www.gcuarena.com. The annual GCU Hall of Fame inductees also will be presented.

08

RUN TO FIGHT CHILDREN'S CANCER
Join thousands of cancer survivors and their families and supporters in a spirited wave of purple at the fourth Phoenix race at GCU. runtofightcancer.com. (See Pages 12-13 for details.)

11

BRAHMS' "GERMAN REQUIEM"
This "grand hymn to life," which made Johannes Brahms famous, will be performed by GCU's Canyon Choral Society and the Canyon Symphony Orchestra. 7 p.m., First Southern Baptist Church of Phoenix, 3100 W. Camelback Road. Free.



14-15

ONLINE COMMENCEMENT
More than 9,000 students from all 50 states, the District of Columbia and 14 countries will graduate. 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. both days.

27

CANYON CHALLENGE
This year's student entrepreneurial competition, sponsored by the Ken Blanchard College of Business, is slated for 1:30 p.m. on campus. idea.gcu.edu

April

04-06/11-13

"INTO THE WOODS"
This Tony Award-winning musical will be performed by the College of Fine Arts and Production in Ethington Theatre. Show times and ticket info at 602.639.8880.



24

TRADITIONAL COMMENCEMENT
A record number of students will receive their diplomas at ceremonies at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m., Veterans Memorial Coliseum, 1826 W. McDowell Road, Phoenix.



Watch a video on why others run at www.youtube.com/GCUTodayNews.

Opt In



GCU plans to launch the Center for Integrated Science, Engineering and Technology in the fall, which will prepare students for careers in STEM-related fields. What other colleges should the University consider creating in the future?

- ☐ Medicine
- ☐ Law
- ☐ Architecture
- ☐ Journalism
- ☐ Sustainability
- ☐ Dental
- ☐ Culinary arts

Vote for two and check results at news.gcu.edu.



PHOTO BY DARRYL WEBB

5 ON 5 WITH...

Matt Hopkins, Residence Life

GCU Today Magazine sat down with Matt Hopkins, new director of residence life, to chat about his plans for keeping the University student-friendly at a time of great growth, and about his life before GCU. Here's what he had to say:

1 How can GCU build new campus residence halls while maintaining the small-school vibe many students enjoy?

As the population grows, the role of the residential directors and residential assistants will become more important. They help foster community in the middle of a large campus and make it feel more like home. The staff shines at events held in the dorms – that's where their impact is the greatest.

2 Less than two years ago, you moved to Phoenix and worked at Costco before coming to GCU. How's it feel to be here?

I am incredibly grateful – God has been good to me. After moving here from Chicago for family health reasons and not having any work lined up, I started pushing carts at Costco as a seasonal employee. God met my family's needs and kept opening doors for us. So when I shop at

Costco – especially in July or August – I'm reminded of how good God is.

3 In the nearly two years you lived in Kenya, what was the most important lesson you learned about your faith?

God opens doors. He proved Himself as the "Master Door Opener" in experiences such as us being just miles away from the United States embassy in Nairobi when it was bombed in 1998, our first of two sons being born there, and making friends in the midst of different cultures and languages.

4 What campus events do you enjoy most?

For my family, it is definitely the GCU basketball games. After that, the Move-In part of Welcome Week is right up there. Meeting new students with excitement in their eyes and parents who have mixed emotions is always a blast.

5 What's on your iPod right now?

I'm not a huge music guy. But I do have ESPN Radio's "Mike & Mike" and Andy Stanley, founder of North Point Ministries, on my iPhone.

MICHAEL FERRARESI

Got Your Number



GCU is sending a record number of students around the world to spread the love of God during spring break in March and this summer. Check out these stats:

25 mission trips

32 faculty and staff

346 students

17 countries

7 new countries (China, Cambodia, Nicaragua, Haiti, Uganda, South Africa and the United Kingdom)

137 churches, orphanages, homes and schools that will be reached

SOURCE: GCU SPIRITUAL LIFE



Oh, Yeah?



Three faculty members in the College of Theology are literally going inside baseball this spring. Numa Gomez, Bob Greene and André Mooney will team up as chaplains for the Milwaukee Brewers, who train at Maryvale Baseball Park, not far from campus.

Read more about their upcoming adventure at news.gcu.edu.

Other GCU connections to the big leagues:

Cody Ransom, drafted by the San Francisco Giants in 1998, played for the Chicago Cubs and the San Diego Padres in 2013. Tim Salmon, drafted by the California Angels in 1989, was the American League Rookie of Year in 1993.

And another:

Five GCU film students, including GCU News Bureau student workers Katrina Palmisano and Cassandra Hawk, shot a documentary at Brewers spring training last March. A highlight was the popular sausage race.

TEN YEARS AFTER

Holding on for dear life in 2004, GCU began a new chapter in a unique story that's still being written

BY DOUG CARROLL





PHOTO BY DARRYL WEBB

A

AS THE STUDENTS, faculty and staff of Grand Canyon University adjourned for Christmas break near the end of 2003, few of them had much knowledge of the financial health of the sleepy, west Phoenix campus where they studied, taught and worked. They were in the dark, and that was not a bad place to be.

Like many private institutions of higher education, Grand Canyon had endured its share of struggles since its humble beginnings in 1949, after three Baptist pastors each had plunked down a silver dollar to start Grand Canyon College in Prescott. Lacking either the taxpayer support of public universities or the substantial donor base of successful private colleges, the school depended primarily on tuition-paying students, of whom there were about 1,500 on campus and a similar number taking classes online in 2003.

Budgetary surgery was a way of life.

"Every few years, there was a financial crisis," recalls Dr. Charles Maxson, then in his 20th year on the faculty at Grand Canyon. "That's how it was, and how most small colleges still are."

In 1997, the University's lenders had pressured the governing board for a change in leadership. After a brief restructuring, the banks backed off, and Grand Canyon wobbled on down the road. Athletes still competed, future nurses and teachers still graduated, and instructors and staffers somehow never missed a paycheck.

However, like a gravely ill hospital patient, the University's internal organs were starting to shut down. Some of those who were trained in making health assessments kept a wary eye on the heart monitor — their pay.

"I was making less than when I started," says Dr. Cheryl Roat, who had been with Grand Canyon's College of Nursing for 17 years, recalling an increase in her teaching load paired with a 6 percent reduction in salary. "That was an indication of problems. We knew there were issues."

Those issues were enormous, and they added up to an inarguable conclusion by the University's board and the school's president at the time, Dr. Gil Stafford.

Grand Canyon University was in intensive care — on life support, even — and its prognosis was grim.

"Grand Canyon, from its first day, was on thin ice," says Stafford,

(continued)

Brent Richardson was part of a group of investors that acquired GCU in 2004, and he became the University's chief executive officer that year.

PHOTO BY DARRYL WEBB

who had put in 20 years at the school, including several as its highly successful baseball coach, before becoming president in 2000. "The institution was always in dire straits."

The vital signs were much worse than anyone on campus knew, with the exception of Stafford and a few administrators and deans. The school was losing \$16 million a year while taking in only \$4 million in revenues. Its endowment was a paltry \$4 million, and potential donors had disappeared over the collapse of the fraudulent Baptist Foundation of Arizona in 1999. The bleak situation had caught the attention of federal regulators, who were concerned about Grand Canyon's ability to meet its financial obligations.

"We had no idea things were that bad," says Keith Baker, then GCU's associate director of athletics. "We were told that some consultants were

"When you're an entrepreneur, you go by your gut on a lot of things, and you build around that."

—Brent Richardson, former University CEO

coming on campus. They were basically looking under the hood of the car and getting ready to buy it.

"Most of us didn't know what that meant. How do you buy a university?"

December 2003: The art of a deal

Brent Richardson, the entrepreneurial son of a K-12 school superintendent, had an idea of how it might be done. Richardson and his brother, Chris, were part of a small group of investors, Significant Education LLC, that spent the tail end of 2003 sizing up GCU.

Richardson, then 41, took a shine to Grand Canyon, seeing possibilities where others (including his innovator father) saw only problems. He already had been successful at marrying

Turnaround Timeline

2004

In January, trustees authorize sale of GCU to Significant Education LLC. Brent Richardson becomes CEO and University begins transition to for-profit institution. Ken Blanchard College of Business introduced. Enrollment on campus approximately 1,500.

2005

U.S. Department of Education requires letter of credit from GCU. Endeavour Capital invests \$18 million in growth funds.



2006-07

Makeover includes Promenade, swimming pool and Kaibab Enrollment Center.

2008

In July, Brian Mueller (CEO), Dr. Stan Meyer (COO) and Dan Bachus (CFO) join GCU from Apollo Group. In November, \$230 million initial public offering launches new era of growth.

2009

After leasing campus land for five years, GCU buys it back for \$50 million.

technology to education, a concept that in its early days was like striking oil. He and Chris had started Masters Online, an online curriculum company, and had learned of GCU's struggles while doing work with that company for the University's College of Education.

The rescue operation came with considerable risk, but the Richardsons trafficked in risk. Although GCU's \$20 million debt wasn't sufficiently scary, it came close.

"When you're an entrepreneur, you go by your gut on a lot of things, and you build around that," Richardson says. "We were looking for schools to do this with. When I walked the grounds for the first time, I had the feeling we could really build something that hadn't been done here, a model for what a traditional university could be."

In early December of 2003, the board agreed to sell, but only if an agreement could be struck by Jan. 5, 2004, the Monday when classes resumed. Otherwise, the school would close. The investors, who had yet to see even one document from GCU, went into hurry-up mode, hunkering down at a local hotel and working around the clock, even on Christmas Day, to hammer out a deal.

Then, right on time, came the Jan. 5 bombshell: In a one-page memo, Stafford officially announced his resignation as president to enter the Episcopalian priesthood, adding that "a very highly qualified educational management corporation" would oversee the school for an interim period. In a second memo, this one from board chairman Don Pewitt, the period was defined as 30 days. The outside firm, Pewitt said, would "provide money, management and marketing to stabilize the school and position GCU for significant long-term success."

American history was being made on three fronts: higher education, business and religion. Grand Canyon would become the first regionally accredited nonprofit university to convert to for-profit status. It also would become the first for-profit Christian college, although it had dropped its Southern Baptist Convention affiliation in 2000.

A month later, the structure of the new GCU became clear. A board of trustees would oversee the nonprofit side of the University, the Canyon Institute for Advanced Studies (today's GCU Foundation). And a board of directors under Significant Education would administer the for-profit side, owning the accreditation, programs and lease on the 100-acre campus. The acquisition of the accreditation was crucial.

The Richardsons had their school now, and Brent Richardson officially became Grand Canyon's chief executive officer. On his first day on campus as CEO, a hot-air balloon landed near the main entrance and

he saw a woman break her leg while chasing after a dog.

The adventure was only beginning.

"I thought, 'What have I gotten myself into?'" Richardson says.

2004-08: Pursuing progress

Although boosting online enrollment was the key to shoring up the University's shaky finances, Richardson met with students, faculty and staff and made two things clear, to their relief: The new management team would not abandon either the traditional campus or GCU's Christian heritage.

Despite being a money loser, the athletic program was deemed worthy of retention, as a way of maintaining a sense of normalcy. Baker was asked to take over as interim director of athletics, and he remembers a conversation with Richardson in early 2004.

"I'm risking everything I've got on this," Richardson told him, "and I'm not sure if this will work. But if it does, it will really be a fun place to work."

Athletics had its own mess to deal with. GCU already had decided to leave NCAA Division II and return to its original NAIA membership, and NAIA schedules for several sports had been finalized. But the NAIA, now skeptical of the school's acquisition, dumped GCU, citing a bylaw (since changed) prohibiting the admission of for-profit institutions.

Ironically, the NCAA had no such problem with GCU, saying there was nothing to keep it from being in Division II. Nevertheless, presidents of institutions in the California Collegiate Athletic Association refused to consider the University's petition to rejoin the league, so eventually the fledgling Pacific West Conference agreed to give the Antelopes a D-II home.

"We were an anomaly, and people didn't know how to take us," Baker says.

That was true even on campus. Dr. James Helfers, then dean of the College of Liberal Arts, remembers a first year under the new management that was "both unnerving and exciting." But by the end of 2004, when Richardson awarded Christmas bonuses on the front lawn of campus and many were moved to tears by the gesture, believers outnumbered doubters.

"Everybody was doing extra, going the extra mile, and Brent had told them he'd pay them back," says Faith Weese, then in public relations for the school. "They just trusted him so much."

It wasn't perfect. Tensions rose in May of 2005, when the University

(continued)



2010

Canyon Hall, Student Recreation Center and College of Education building open. Performing arts program returns to campus.

2011

GCU Arena, Thunder Alley and Prescott Hall open. Colangelo School of Sports Business introduced. Run to Fight Children's Cancer starts.

2012

Camelback Hall, Sedona Hall, College of Arts and Sciences building and Camelback Road parking garage open. Student Union dining hall renovated.

2013

Chaparral Hall, Saguaro Hall and new library open. GCU begins Division I play after winning Division II Directors' Cup for two years. Plans told for Mesa campus. K-12 outreach launches with Alhambra H.S. GCU named No. 2 Best Small Company by Forbes.

2014

Apartment-style residence hall, classroom building and second parking garage to open in fall. Technology programs to debut. On-campus enrollment of 10,500 expected (50,000 online).



Brian Mueller, who became GCU's chief executive officer in 2008, has overseen an era of unprecedented growth for the University.

PHOTO BY DARRYL WEBB

decided not to renew the contracts of 17 full-time faculty members, five of whom had tenure. A partnership on a teen center with rock star Alice Cooper didn't pan out after receiving national media coverage in 2006. Students sometimes left the University bitter and disillusioned when treasured programs, such as music and theatre, were shuttered to slash costs.

"To see the music program crumble was devastating," says Amanda (Gardner) Mutai, who left in 2005 but returned in 2010 when the arts were reinstated, graduating last December.

After the third year under the new regime, GCU was in the black. In 2008, it had a robust enrollment of 12,000 online but only 1,000 students on campus. Its future wasn't yet secure, and the stage was set for the next big thing.

2009-13: Booming and building

Unlike Brent Richardson, Brian Mueller was not a natural-born entrepreneur. Throughout high school and college, all he wanted to be was a teacher and a basketball coach — and that's what he was, at Christian high schools and colleges, until he decided to move to Arizona with his young family to pursue a doctoral degree from Arizona State University.

Mueller and his wife, Paula, had three children with a fourth on the way and struggled to make ends meet while living with a relative. He was teaching philosophy at ASU for \$5,000 a semester and driving a broken-down car. He realized that something had to change, and in 1987 he found work at the University of Phoenix as an enrollment counselor.

Something did change — and the arc of Mueller's career along with it. The University of Phoenix tapped into a growing demand for working-adult education as no one had before. Mueller moved up through the ranks of its parent company, the Apollo Group, in a career of 20-plus years, eventually running the company's online operations and later becoming president.

Although he never had taken a business course, he grasped how higher education and business could be fused. The Richardsons had taken notice, and they invited Mueller and Dr. Stan Meyer, who also had experience in Christian education, to a meeting at a cigar store on 44th Street in Phoenix to discuss Grand Canyon and the University's next step: taking the company public.

After two more meetings involving other representatives of GCU, Mueller was beyond intrigued.

"Sounds to me you're ready to say yes to this," Brent Richardson said to him.

Mueller recognized a unique opportunity for a private Christian university with an investment model of funding. Grand Canyon was positioned to offer a faith-based college education at low cost to students and no expense to taxpayers while providing a reasonable return to investors. The Richardsons had saved the school, and now he could be the architect of its renaissance, with a goal of building the "city on a hill" of which Christ spoke in the Sermon on the Mount.

This was more than higher education for him. This was a higher calling.

"I now understood God's purpose for my life," Mueller says.

He joined GCU as its CEO in July of 2008, bringing with him Meyer as chief operating officer and Dan Bachus as chief financial officer. An initial public offering in November by Grand Canyon University Inc. — traded on the Nasdaq exchange as LOPE — resulted in an infusion of \$230 million.

"The IPO was the smartest thing," Maxson says. "It got us square (financially) and gave us extra money to keep going."

A dizzying, five-year transformation of campus was under way. The funds enabled a massive renovation and expansion, ushering in new classroom buildings and labs, residence halls, a food court, a Student Recreation Center and GCU Arena. The arts program was restored, and athletics began a transition to NCAA Division I. Community outreach efforts intensified.

"Brian came in gently," Baker recalls. "He didn't puff himself up. He was a work-ethic guy who got to know the people and the operation."

Mueller says the biggest challenge was "putting in place what was necessary to scale this in a high-quality way," along with convincing the Christian community of the merits of the investment-supported model. For two years, he says, the work was "very, very hard."

Those who had been along for the entire ride, who had been through so many twists and turns, could only marvel at what was happening. Many of them saw God's hand on the wheel. How else to explain such a miracle?

"When Brian was brought on, that was the true birth of the Grand Canyon we have now," Helfers says, "and the rebirth of us as a Christian university. It put us back on the path that I know the board of trustees wanted when we went for-profit in the first place. This is a grand experiment in what it means to be a for-profit, Christian institution."

"Now I can say I know why I was supposed to stay here. What energizes me is the way we are putting together lives of faith and learning."

Roat, who was first attracted to the school for its Christian heritage, says she never considered in 2004 that GCU might fail.

"When I knew there would still be a Christian focus, I trusted," she says. "I'm glad I stuck it out. I believe in the University. If anything, the Christian and community focuses have improved."

"I feel like I belong to a family here."

2014 and beyond

What will the next 10 years hold for a healthy Grand Canyon University, the little school that refused to die?

Mueller, 60, now GCU's president as well as its CEO, is thinking about that — and plans to be around for it. Technology programs are

Then and Now...



This view of GCU's main entrance, at Camelback Road and 33rd Avenue, has changed dramatically in only seven years. TOP PHOTO FROM GCU ARCHIVES/ BOTTOM PHOTO BY DARRYL WEBB

ready to launch in the fall, engineering programs next year. A campus in Mesa also will open in 2015. A K-12 partnership that already includes nearby Alhambra and Maryvale high schools is seen as part of an economic catalyst for west Phoenix.

By 2025, GCU could have 30,000 traditional students between its Phoenix and Mesa campuses, plus an additional 100,000 (mostly postgraduates) studying online.

"This is mission-oriented," Mueller says of the road ahead. "I could get offered the job to coach the New York Knicks or UCLA Bruins, and I'd turn it down. This is exactly what I want to do."

Stafford, who had an up-close view of the worst of times, likes what he sees from GCU and says the school's heartbeat, faint for so long, is now strong.

"I'm extraordinarily proud of all the things that have made Grand Canyon what it is today," he says. "Brian Mueller is a wonderful leader. I'm thankful to God that Grand Canyon is alive and well and meeting the needs of the community as only it can do." **G**



Molecular medicine could help
customize treatment for children

BY JANIE MAGRUDER

CANCER'S CUTTING EDGE

A thief lives in the home of every child with cancer. It steals play dates from the little girl too drained to go outside, favorite ice cream from the teenager too nauseous to keep it down and carefree days from siblings whose parents are barely surviving the cruel journey thrust on their family. It holds hostage happiness, promotes job loss, wrecks marriages and wipes out bank accounts.

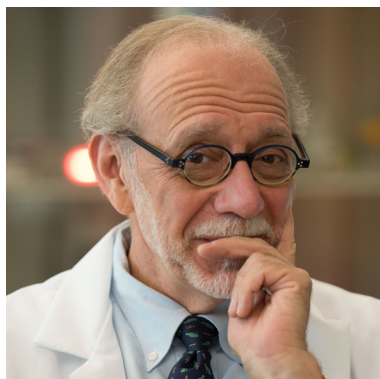
All this, and yet the ultimate crime of cancer is even more unjust. At its worst, cancer robs a child of nearly 70 years of life.

"I think cancer is pretty lousy no matter what age you are," said Dr. Robert Arceci, medical director of the Center for Cancer and Blood Disorders at Phoenix Children's Hospital, a beneficiary of the March 8 GCU Foundation Run to Fight Children's Cancer. "But children's cancer is a horrible thing. The profound trauma and tragedy of cancer in the very young is that it reverses the age progression. It cuts people short."

Childhood cancer must be caught earlier, treated better and, ultimately, eradicated, and the way to do that is to understand it. Arceci and other prominent oncologists are working to unlock the genetic code of cancer, using the most cutting-edge science available: molecular medicine. It employs genetic information to determine the right treatment for the right patient at the right time.

Under a broad umbrella of expertise and resources at PCH, the University of Arizona College of Medicine – Phoenix and the Translational Genomics Research Institute of Phoenix, the Ronald A. Matricaria Institute of Molecular Medicine was formed 15 months ago. The institute's goal is to learn the structure and function of disease cells, beginning with cancer, and develop more targeted, less debilitating therapies for young patients. Early detection and cancer prevention could eventually result, but the work is laborious and complex.

"A cell has about 25,000 genes and many more parts of the genome that we don't know what it does yet," Arceci said.



Dr. Robert Arceci: "For every 100 children, one to three will die just from our treatment." PHOTO COURTESY OF PHOENIX CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

The team's first clinical trials involve children with acute myeloid leukemia (AML), a fast-spreading cancer in which bone marrow makes a large number of abnormal white blood cells. Survival rates are low among young AML patients who haven't responded well to chemotherapy.

Over the next 18 months, as many as 60 scientists in the lab will collect and compare samples of AML tumors to healthy cells, and feed the data into a new hypothesis-generating computer module developed by the institute. The computer will make recommendations for better drugs.

"We have to get smarter," Arceci said. "But the fact of the matter is that first patient you treat might respond, and you say, 'Well, we're pretty smart,' and then the next four patients won't respond, even though they have the same mutation."

The institute has received grants from various organizations, including \$100,000 over four years from Children's Cancer Network (CCN), formed 10 years ago by Steve and Patti Luttrell of Tempe to assist Arizona families battling childhood cancer. The Luttrells' son, Jeff, was diagnosed more than 20 years ago with leukemia and has since undergone numerous rounds of chemotherapy and radiation and multiple surgeries. Jeff also has survived two recurrences of a secondary cancer. Patti Luttrell is an adjunct faculty



Bernadette Kesler and her daughter, Jazmine "Jazzy" Ramos, who had nine months of chemotherapy for an aggressive bone cancer in 2009, hope molecular medicine will find ways to better treat, diagnose and, someday, cure children's cancer. PHOTO BY JANIE MAGRUDER

IMAGE OF CANCER CELL ©ISTOCK.COM/ERAXION

member in GCU's College of Nursing and Health Care Professions.

"In so many of the kids who go through this, including Jeff, the level of toxicity in the drugs is severe and the late effects can be profound. If the institute's research can impact that toxicity, these kids will be so much better off 10, 15, 20 years down the road," Steve Luttrell said. "At the same time, the level of financial, educational and psychosocial services that CCN provides to our families will not change with this contribution."

Most young AML patients get the same cancer treatment, Arceci said.

"A majority of them will go into remission. A bunch won't. And we don't know which ones will and which ones won't," he said. "All of them get the same toxicity, which is profound. They may spend a month in the hospital, and a large number go to the intensive care unit. For every 100 children, one to three will die just from our treatment."


Jazmine "Jazzy" Ramos, 17, a junior at Mountain Ridge High School in Glendale, got three commonly prescribed drugs during her chemotherapy for osteosarcoma, an aggressive bone cancer, in her left shinbone. Diagnosed in the sixth grade, Ramos had surgery and underwent nearly 10 months of treatment, losing her hair, two semesters of school and, doctors say, the ability to conceive.

Ramos' cancer relapsed two years ago, when tumors were found in her right lung. Doctors are monitoring nodules that have developed there. After years of physical therapy, Ramos walks normally but wears a brace from her left foot to her knee, and likely has more surgeries to endure.

But the Phoenix teen has an unwavering faith in God and, through speaking engagements and fundraisers for the Purple Society and HopeKids, has become a source of encouragement to children.

"People ask me, 'What if your cancer comes back or you get another cancer?'" Ramos said. "If God's taken me this far, He's going to stand by me the rest of the way."

Her mother, Bernadette Kesler, imagines what molecular medicine could mean for the next generation of cancer victims.

"If cancer could be detected before it's aggressive or even before stage one, if children no longer had to endure bone marrow transplants and horrible chemotherapy, wow, what an amazing thing," she said. 



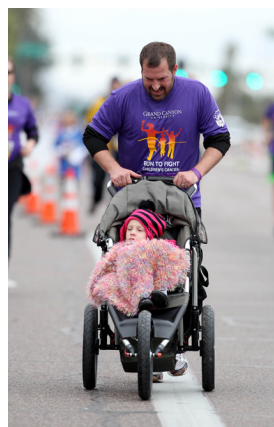
Watch a video on the support available to children with cancer and their families at www.youtube.com/GCUTodayNews.

Facts About Childhood Cancer



- Childhood cancer is the leading cause of death by disease among children ages 14 and younger in the United States.
- Of those diagnosed, one in five does not survive.
- The average age of death for a child with cancer is 8.
- Leukemia is the most common form of childhood cancer.
- Mortality rates have declined by 68 percent over the past 40 years, largely because of improvements in treatment and high rates of participation in clinical trials.
- Every day, 36 children are diagnosed with cancer. That's about 13,500 each year.
- Three out of five children who do survive will suffer devastating late effects, such as secondary cancers, muscular difficulties and infertility.
- The average age of diagnosis is 6.
- More than 40,000 children undergo cancer treatments each year.
- The causes of most childhood cancers are unknown and, for the most part, they cannot be prevented.
- In 80 percent of children, cancer already has spread to other areas of the body by the time it is diagnosed.

SOURCES: CHILDREN'S CANCER NETWORK (WWW.CHILDRENCANCERNETWORK.ORG), CURESEARCH FOR CHILDREN'S CANCER (WWW.CURESEARCH.ORG), NATIONAL CANCER INSTITUTE (WWW.CANCER.GOV), AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY (WWW.CANCER.ORG), THE TRUTH 365 (WWW.THETRUTH365.ORG), KIDS V CANCER (WWW.KIDSVANCER.ORG)



GCU Foundation Run to Fight Children's Cancer

When: Saturday, March 8 (5K at 7:30 a.m., 10K at 7:50, Cancer Survivors' Walk at 8:45)

Where: GCU campus, 3300 W. Camelback Road, Phoenix

Why: To raise awareness of pediatric cancer and funding for the Children's Cancer Network and Phoenix Children's Hospital, which support families and children affected by the disease. Run proceeds also will benefit research at PCH's Center for Cancer and Blood Disorders,

where young cancer patients will be the first to benefit from new developments in molecular medicine. Nearly \$200,000 has been raised by the three previous GCU cancer runs in Phoenix.

Also: A variety of family entertainment, including arts and crafts, music and a jump castle. Free parking in the GCU parking garage and other campus lots. Free shuttle from a lot at 27th Avenue and Colter Street.

Registration: runtofightcancer.com



David White hoists his daughter, Gabriella, into the air as his wife and fellow GCU student, Macarena, watches. White is a community outreach leader on the main campus. PHOTO BY DARRYL WEBB

Turned Toward Truth

Given another chance,
David White lives out his
faith in student outreach

BY MICHAEL FERRARESI

David White recalled several instances where he could have quit “slinging” drugs, where he ignored what he later recognized as warning signs from God.

There were threats from rival dealers, including those with guns pointed at his face. Once, a highway patrolman with a drug-sniffing dog pulled White over near the Oregon-California state line, although the cop never discovered the 10 pounds of marijuana in his vehicle.

As a high school dropout, White faced slaps on the wrist for drug-related offenses in his native state of Washington. But a routine traffic violation in 2009 in the Tacoma suburb of Gig Harbor permanently altered his path in life. Officers discovered 18 plastic bags of marijuana and a loaded .38-caliber pistol. He faced a felony charge of possession with the intent to distribute, and the possibility of being locked away in prison for five years or more.

Suddenly, White got the message. The Grand Canyon University junior credited God for sparing him and leading him to Phoenix, where he has emerged as one of GCU’s most motivated local outreach leaders.

The affable 26-year-old said prison “would have been a blessing.” He admitted that the angry, arrogant “thug” of his youth deserved to be locked up. But White took advantage of a chance to recover from drug and alcohol addiction. He got clean, enrolled in a community college and joined local Christian programs to aid homeless youth.

White discovered he wanted to study at a Christian university where he could make an impact in the lives of the less-fortunate. He hoped to connect

with the brokenhearted in the same way that mentors had led him to Jesus around the time that prosecutors, to his surprise, dismissed his drug charge and allowed him to avoid prison.

"It was just like God's grace in such a tangible way," said White, who now lives with his wife, Macarena, and their 7-month-old daughter, Gabriella, at an apartment complex one block from campus.

"It changed my heart," White said. "It changed my way of thinking, it changed my world view, it changed my motives and how I wanted to live life."

White and his wife, both Christian studies majors at GCU, married in Washington and packed their belongings in a Ford Ranger to drive to Phoenix three days after the wedding. Now White said he's studying Christian servant leadership, both in his classes and through his job organizing many of nearly 30 student leaders who work for GCU's Office of Spiritual Life.

Aside from coordinating regular outreach programs for the neediest and most marginalized of Phoenix residents, White was instrumental in bringing a national faith-based justice conference to campus in February.

Relating to at-risk youth or homeless adults has always come naturally to him. White couch-surfed and slept in his car at times. He was unemployed and considered unfit to work, based on his criminal record. He was a recovering addict. But while he knew how to connect with people on the streets, he said GCU has taught him how to manage larger outreach efforts.

"My heart is really to be hands-on, but to be a mobilizer," White said. "The aspect I was lacking was teaching others how to be servant leaders in their communities."

People who knew White from the streets and churches in the Tacoma

area said his transformation was stunning. Local minister Steve Martin said White's path to enlightenment was marked by an impromptu baptism in a bathtub in the basement of a church youth center.

“He knew that God spared him ... he didn't stray from his faith at all.”

—Minister Steve Martin

"He was on fire from the very beginning," Martin said. "He knew that God spared him ... he didn't stray from his faith at all. He went right at it."

Erik Bauer, the attorney who represented White in his drug case, said he has seen plenty of suspected criminals make empty claims to judges and juries about being saved by God. With White, the lawyer saw a young man who genuinely wanted justice in the community where he witnessed drugs and violence ruin friends' lives.

The odds were not in White's favor. Struggles with male role models, his lack of education, unemployment and addiction issues put him in a desperate spot where many young American men end up dead or behind bars.

"A lot of people faced with the pressure (White) was faced with would have rolled over and given up," Bauer said. "But he did what he needed to do to go forward with his life."

GCU alumna Liz Martin said White's testimony about transcending life on the streets resonates with young people of all walks of life.

While GCU has its share of students who have spent their entire lives with strong mentors and youth pastors who have helped them understand their faith, White figured it out on his own.

"As he was working in (Washington), he was still in this area of rebuilding his life and learning," said Liz Martin, who oversees outreach ministry for the Office of Spiritual Life.

"He was honest and humble," she said. "That's what we try to implement here, especially in our local outreach program." **G**

White directs students during a GCU Serve the City outreach event last year. He narrowly avoided prison time for dealing drugs in Washington state before he made his peace with God. PHOTO BY JAK KEYSER



A 2009 traffic stop led to White being charged with possession with the intent to distribute marijuana. The charge was later dropped.

PHOTO COURTESY OF PIERCE COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT



Watch a video on GCU students helping at-risk people in inner-city Phoenix at www.youtube.com/GCUTodayNews.



The Message in the Music

New worship arts program to put Scripture before song

BY DOUG CARROLL

David and the whole company of Israel were in the parade, singing at the top of their lungs and playing mandolins, harps, tambourines, castanets and cymbals.

— 2 Samuel 6:5 (Message translation)

Never mind his big victory over Goliath or his 30-year reign as Israel's king. David was a worship leader with one rocking resumé.

As the Eric Clapton of his time, young David played the harp so beautifully that he chased away the blues of King Saul. He was a prolific lyricist, credited with writing approximately half of the 150 psalms in the Bible. His dance moves, displayed on one occasion while wearing a tight-fitting garment of questionable taste, disgusted his status-conscious wife, who then received a stinging rebuke from him: "In God's presence I'll dance all I want! I'll become even more undignified than this!"

With such a rich heritage of making a joyful noise to the Lord, it's no wonder that Christians place a king-size emphasis on worship. On Sundays in American churches, a sizable portion of most services is

devoted to music, although the harpist/psalmist/mosher of old wouldn't recognize today's tools: electric guitars and amplifiers, wireless microphones, soundboards, computerized lighting, video screens, PowerPoint software, social media and more.

"A lot of it nowadays is very technical," says Tim Rahman, 27, a worship pastor and percussionist at Christ's Church of the Valley, a megachurch with four campuses in metro Phoenix and weekly attendance of about 22,000.

"As a worship pastor of any size of church, you need to know that — and how it all works together. More times than not, people getting hired can't just play one instrument and sing."

Grand Canyon University will plunge into this high-tech wonderland in the fall with the introduction of the Center for Worship Arts, designed to prepare undergraduate students for careers in worship ministry.

The program was rolled out recently with short video presentations at all 22 cities on the Roadshow, one of the biggest Christian music tours in the country. GCU has been a sponsor of the Roadshow, formerly known as the Rock & Worship Roadshow, for four years and has built strong ties in the music industry through Scott Fehrenbacher, the University's



Worship or concert?
In this case, it's a service at Christ's Church of the Valley, a megachurch with four campuses in metro Phoenix.

PHOTO COURTESY OF TODD CLARK/CHRIST'S CHURCH OF THE VALLEY



Worship or concert? It's the Phoenix stop of the Roadshow concert tour, sponsored by GCU, which played to large crowds in nearly two dozen cities this winter. PHOTO BY ALEXIS BOLZE

senior vice president for faith-based marketing.

Bart Millard, lead singer for the band MercyMe, has been a consultant on the project. The Center for Worship Arts will be part of the College of Theology, although certain aspects will involve the College of Fine Arts and Production and the Ken Blanchard College of Business.

Other institutions with a similar program in place — such as Liberty University, Azusa Pacific University and Southwestern Baptist

Theological Seminary — normally assign it to their music school. GCU will require 48 credit hours of theology across four years of study.

"All students in the program will be trained for ministry," says Dr. Jason Hiles, GCU's theology dean, a former sculptor with a keen understanding of how the arts, culture and faith intersect. "This sort of training will develop the skills necessary for church-based ministry or service in Christian organizations.

"The public nature of the role of worship leader requires a depth of theological knowledge, for clarity in communicating the Gospel message."

Worship leadership will be one of four degree emphases. The others are production, digital media and business management. According to Millard, 41, students will learn things that it took him years of trial and error to get a handle on.

"Bart gets who we are in a profound way," Hiles says. "He understands we're very much engaged in the

culture, and he senses there's an authenticity about us. He wants to ground students in the Word and teach them to communicate that through music."

The program also will include a series of worship "summits" in areas such as songwriting, performance and marketing. These are expected to bring top industry talent to GCU and to utilize the nightclub-like Thunderground venue that opened on campus in 2012.

Guests might include Tai Anderson, bass player for Third Day, who completed his college degree online with GCU along with Mark Lee, the band's lead guitarist. Anderson, 37, told a group of high school students before the recent Roadshow stop in Phoenix that he had to choose between a music career and his schooling in 1993 when he joined Third Day.

"How cool would it be, while already doing music ministry, to get the educational support behind it?" he said to the group.

Jeanette Plasencio, 22, who will graduate from GCU this spring with a major in Christian studies and a minor in music, says she heard about the possibility of a worship arts program before she even enrolled at the University. She is disappointed to have missed out.

"I'm graduating right before it happens," says Plasencio, a worship leader at Catalyst Church in Phoenix who also has been a mainstay of GCU's Chapel band. "This program will teach the tools you don't know right away."

Even so, Rahman says, there is no substitute for learning by doing. He says he hopes the program will provide an abundance of those practical opportunities.

"As much hands-on experience as you can give students at putting things together," he says, "that's extraordinarily important to their being hired."

In other words, David, bring your head, heart and harp to class — and let's see what you've got. **G**



5 Trends to Watch in Worship Music

Music styles will change (think folk-rockers Mumford & Sons).

More churches will write their own music.

Websites and apps will become more important in planning services.

Traditional worship (hymns, liturgy) will see renewed interest.

The use of strings will increase, as it has with secular and Christian acts.

SOURCE: DR. ROGER O'NEEL, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF MUSIC AND WORSHIP, CEDARVILLE (OH) UNIVERSITY, WWW.WORSHIPBLOGGER.COM



When Virtual Is Reality

GCU's full-time online faculty emphasize engagement

The command-center setup at Dr. Meredith Rae DeCosta's workplace at Grand Canyon University's Tempe office resembles something out of NASA or the FBI, although it's actually the virtual hub for online freshman English composition classes.

DeCosta, a full-time faculty manager who oversees 14 English professors, communicates with hundreds of students across her several classes by manning a spread of four computer monitors at her desk. She grades papers and provides feedback like any college professor, only it's written into online forums or shared

with undergrads over the phone, rather than in a traditional lecture hall. And the discussions are constant.

GCU professors and curriculum developers emphasize the need for a discussion-based, interactive experience in the virtual classroom. While many universities are still developing their online courses, GCU faculty have authored journal articles and presented at academic conferences on subjects such as how to refine online coursework through classroom assessment techniques.

"We work with counselors very closely to make sure that our students are successful and

their needs as learners are being met," said DeCosta, who turned down faculty positions at other universities because she felt GCU had the most progressive online education model.

Currently, GCU offers 128 academic programs online, ranging from prerequisite undergraduate courses such as Christian Worldview and English Composition to graduate- and doctorate-level courses. Since 2010, the University's full-time online faculty increased from only six professors to 180 across its seven colleges. Most full-time online professors, including DeCosta and her English team with the College of Arts and Sciences,



Teamwork is part of the daily routine for GCU faculty manager Dr. Meredith Rae DeCosta (center) and her full-time online English professors. DeCosta said their shared space at GCU's Tempe office allows them to quickly address classroom or curriculum issues. PHOTO BY DARRYL WEBB

are based at GCU offices to foster daily collaboration on course development.

"I've worked as an online adjunct before, where you're mostly reacting to problems," DeCosta added. "(At GCU) we can pinpoint the problems and address them before they become major issues."

Online full-time faculty add another dimension to teaching first-year students, as GCU's freshmen include both teens and adult working professionals who may not have been in a classroom for years. With key courses, that dynamic is essential to provide students with the critical feedback they need to progress through their degrees and encounter a variety of instructors with different teaching styles.

GCU's provost, Dr. Hank Radda, said the University aims to provide a more comprehensive online learning experience than the "distance learning" model of the past, which

required balancing its online adjunct ranks with more full-time professors based at GCU to avoid the faceless, rigid communication of digital classrooms of the past.

"They create a professional learning community here, so they're not at a distance," Radda said. "What's really interesting is you get into a number of levels of conversations (in online classrooms). People still think you post to a message board and wait several days for responses."

Kelly Sanderson, GCU's vice president for academic operations, shared details of the University's online academic growth at an April conference of the Sloan Consortium's International Symposium of Emerging Technologies for Online Learning. She was stunned at the response from many university leaders whose online programs appeared to be years behind GCU's.

"The scale is often overwhelming but it also gives credence to our research because we have huge population sizes," Sanderson said. "When (other universities are) doing studies, they're looking at maybe two semesters' worth of classes, but we're looking at 99,000 lines of data."

Sanderson, GCU President/CEO Brian Mueller and Jean Mandernach of GCU's Center for Innovation in Research and Teaching (see box) used GCU data to explore the varying impact of adjunct and full-time faculty in online classrooms in an article in the September 2013 edition of the Journal of Online Learning and Teaching. The article revealed that "while integration and utilization of an increasing number of full-time online faculty may be desirable, the reality for most universities is that economic and administrative constraints mandate ongoing reliance on adjunct online faculty."

While GCU prides itself on cultivating experienced online adjunct faculty from dozens of professional disciplines, the authors noted that students who study under full-time online faculty are more likely to successfully complete their courses, earn better grades and provide more positive reviews of their online experiences. The University aims for a mix of full-time faculty based at "unified teaching centers," where they're surrounded daily by peers, and adjuncts who often juggle teaching assignments with their full-time jobs. There are benefits to learning from either group, although full-time online faculty can certainly



CIRT Reviews Online Ed Trends

By 2013, GCU's enrollment had increased to 52,300 students. With more than 85 percent of those enrolled in online programs, the University continues to refine how it evaluates and improves the online learning experience.

The Center for Innovation in Research and Teaching serves as a hub for that discussion. Led by director and research professor Jean Mandernach, the center provides teaching tips, research resources, forums for faculty to share ideas, and searchable journal articles related to online education.

To learn more, visit cirt.gcu.edu.

manage larger groups of students more directly than adjuncts plugging in from their homes or offices around the country.

Academic teams such as Dr. Mike Richardson's from GCU's College of Theology appear to be ahead of the curve. The former pastor teaches as many as 500 students each year for the undergraduate Christian Worldview course and other online courses.

"Having that many students to interact with on the materials gives you a tremendous opportunity to think through the issues in the online classroom," said Richardson, who collaborates daily with fellow full-time online theology faculty based at GCU's Peoria office.

"You can always do some tweaking and revising," he said. "If someone has a need, an issue, a question about a student problem — we talk about it and try to figure out how to do it better."

MICHAEL FERRARESI

Q&A

Kimberlee Marlow hit the ground running after being named director of GCU's alumni office, traveling locally and around the country to nurture existing relationships with graduates and to make new connections. PHOTO BY DARRYL WEBB

Meet Kimberlee Marlow

GCU's new alumni director is about making connections

Kimberlee Marlow traveled overseas as an undergraduate, but she doesn't need to go to such lengths to know Grand Canyon University graduates. She has been making notes on them — in Phoenix and out on the road — since being named as the University's director of alumni relations in late 2013.

In January, she was in Dallas one weekend for the

GCU-sponsored Roadshow concert tour and in Chicago the next week for an Antelope men's basketball game. Both events drew strong alumni participation.

She's no stranger to GCU, having joined the staff in 2007 as an event planner in the marketing department. We caught up to her recently for an interview, and here is what she had to say:

Tell us about yourself and how you came to GCU.

I'm originally from Orange County, Calif., and I graduated from Pepperdine University in 2003 with a major in psychology. I moved to Arizona for what I thought was my dream job, at a treatment center for women with eating disorders. The clinical environment wasn't what I thought it would be, and then I worked in marketing with a

medical-device company. I had various positions in marketing at GCU before becoming alumni director.

From your impressions so far, what do GCU alumni want most?

I think alumni want to feel connected, to be informed of the growth, development and successes of the University. They want to feel a relationship with GCU even after they have left school, and that

e-communication. They'll get a digest of what's going on at the University, and a website that is updated to provide a central place for resources. We'll partner with GCU's Office of Career Services to make sure they have all of the tools — resumé services, job boards, LinkedIn. We also plan to launch local alumni chapters across the country to create community.

What are GCU's alumni numbers?

In Arizona alone, we have nearly 19,000 traditional and online alumni. Our total is nearly 68,000, with more than 71,500 degrees granted.

Will you make a distinction between traditional and online graduates?

Once you become an alumnus, we don't differentiate between the two. Many online alumni chose GCU for its traditional, brick-and-mortar campus and for its Christian mission. They still want the same types of information, and they care the same way about the University. Online students still want to know what's happening with our basketball program, and they love coming to campus for graduation.

How important is it to get alumni to campus for a visit, if they haven't been in a while?

It's important to get our alumni reconnected to

campus. Many of our alumni haven't been on campus in years, and it's exciting for them to see all the growth and change that's happened since they left. Inviting them out to basketball games and events like homecoming are great ways to bring them back.

We are also focusing on going out to alumni to reintroduce ourselves. Many haven't heard from us in a long time. With GCU's athletic teams traveling as they do, and with the sponsorship of something like the Roadshow tour, we're inviting local alumni to come out and support GCU and get a little bit of the campus experience right in their hometown.

With GCU's investment-supported financial model, you're not twisting arms for donations. That has to be a plus.

Our phone calls are a lot less intimidating because of that. You'd be amazed at how many people are taken off-guard that we have no motive other than to make a personal connection. They don't have to worry about seeing a "602" area code and being hit up for money.

These are people who need to feel valued, and we need to earn that back after years of not hearing from us. But more than 350 alumni bought season basketball tickets. They're starting to re-engage.

DOUG CARROLL



Toys to Trowels

KBCOB alumni make a difference

It has been anything but hibernation season for the Phoenix alumni chapter of GCU's Ken Blanchard College of Business. Chapter volunteers played Santa before Christmas, helping the Salvation Army collect and distribute toys to 435 underprivileged families.

Shortly after, as part of a "Paint the Town Purple" community service project, chapter members spruced up the yard of Larry and Maxine Wilson, a Phoenix couple married for 45 years. The pair recently has been saddled with health issues that made yard work difficult.

"It bothers us to ask for help because we've always been the ones to help others," Maxine Wilson said. "Not having the yard work done adds to our stress, and letting go of stress helps us to heal."

When the weeding was done, everyone joined hands in a prayer circle, giving thanks for their many blessings. A thank-you letter from the Wilsons said it all:

"You gave us a 'medicine' that could not be found in any bottle or drugstore, the medicine of caring, loving people. The prayers that were said in our family room will live forever in our hearts and help us to keep traveling this road that He has given us."

The feeling was mutual. Said chapter president Linda Tapley: "Amazing experience how God put the people and the plans together so beautifully to share the love of Christ."

applies to campus and online graduates. They want their degree to mean something to their career, as well.

How do you plan to build that connection?

I think you can do so much in communicating to alumni. I intend to develop communication tools that include monthly



GCU's Office of Alumni Relations wants to know what you've been doing with your life for possible inclusion in future editions of GCU Today Magazine. Upload your information and a high-resolution (300 dpi) photo to www.gcu.edu/classnotes.



Class Notes 1971 to 2011

What's new with you? Send your class notes and a high-resolution photo to www.gcu.edu/classnotes.

1970s

John Lantz, B.A. in History, '71, is retired from the military and is currently self-employed, residing in Arkansas. Lantz began surveying land while he was still in the military in 1973 and has been the sole proprietor of his business since 1996. He met his wife, Susan, while both were still students at GCU, and they married in 1970. They have eight children, two of whom occasionally help with their father's land surveying. The Lantzes also have 18 grandchildren.

Kenneth Greely, B.S. in Mathematics, '78, is recently retired, having previously worked for multiple companies, including Northrop Grumman, Raytheon and Texas Instruments. He currently resides in Arizona and actively supports projects related to the successful deployment of those in the military. Greely was a member of the VP47 Squadron C out of Washington state. For three years, he helped search for submarines off the coast of Washington. Greely met his wife, Alice, in 1981 and they have four daughters.

1980s



Alice (Waddell) Harper, B.A. in Applied Music: Vocal Music, '81, lives in Washington state, where she is the CEO and physician of a naturopathic practice. She began her career as the owner and operator of PRN Transcription in Phoenix from 1987 to 2002.

1990s



Ronald Gaschler, B.S. in Business Administration: Marketing, '99, is a director at Ashford University. He recently was appointed to the Professional Standards Committee for the National Association of Colleges and Employers.

2000s

Kevin Arndt, B.S. in Athletic Training, '00, has been an adventurer since receiving his degree from GCU. Arndt taught at an international school in South Korea and is currently furthering his journey into Baku, Azerbaijan. He taught secondary mathematics in Azerbaijan at another international school.



Keslie Kattau Halonen, B.A. in Communications: Public Relations, '03, recently was

awarded the Keller Williams Culture Award for sales and is currently the realtor and owner of the KKH Squad within her brokerage. Her husband, Nick Halonen, choir director at Trevor Browne High School in Phoenix, is part of Grand Canyon's Hall of Fame Class of 2014. They have two children, Isaiah and Lilyana, who plan to walk with the GCU graduating classes of 2030 and 2031. She remembers when they would play "OOZE ball" on campus, a modified game of volleyball played on the flooded lawn.

Robson Cassefo, M.B.A., '08, took the skills he learned from his time at GCU back to his home in Latin America. He began his career as the owner of a company in Brazil that imported and distributed medical equipment to local institutions. Cassefo is the sales manager for a medical equipment manufacturer.

2010s

Donna Johnson, M.E. in Education Administration, '10, is one class away from receiving

her doctorate in Education: Organizational Leadership and is so excited for the opportunities before her. Grand Canyon "just makes it possible." Johnson teaches multiple subjects in the Clayton County School District outside Atlanta. She believes that "life is what you make it" and is thankful for how God used her education from GCU as a blessing in her life.

Terri Anderson-Schlader, M.E. in Special Education: Cross Categorical (IR), '11, recently received a promotion to teach in the Social Learning Classroom at Huron Middle School in South Dakota. She received a technology grant from the state to integrate progressive technology into the classroom. Because many of her students are visual learners, she looks to "level the playing field for learning" by using new technologies to bring up test scores and overall academic levels. Anderson-Schlader and her husband have two children, one of whom is disabled but "perfect the way he is." Their other son, 13, received his black belt in taekwondo last year and is the youngest person in the state to receive that honor.

GCU Hall of Fame Class of 2014

Samantha Murphy heads group of seven to be honored

Gone but not forgotten. It's an overused expression, but it never fit anyone better than it does Samantha Murphy, arguably the best student-athlete in Grand Canyon University history.

Few have distinguished themselves on the basketball court as she did, scoring 2,147 points in four years as an Antelope and leading the team to a 29-3 record in 2010-11. During that memorable senior season, the fiercely competitive 5-foot-8 guard averaged 24.6 points and was named NCAA

Division II Player of the Year. The retirement of her No. 20 at GCU is a foregone conclusion.

In the classroom, she was no less of a star, making straight A's as an Academic All-American before going off to Midwestern University and the goal of becoming a physician assistant.

Murphy is this year's athletics nominee for the University's Hall of Fame. She will be honored along with six other GCU alumni at a campus induction ceremony on Saturday, March 1. The other inductees are:



Stephen Barnes
*Ken Blanchard
College of Business,
Class of 1981*
Stephen Barnes

has been in the financial services industry for 30 years, thriving through four major market declines. A chartered financial analyst and certified financial planner, he owns Barnes Investing Advisory Inc., Phoenix, where he specializes in portfolio management and supervision. Barnes writes about and discusses financial topics for media outlets and professional associations, and is a member of the Desert Schools Federal Credit Union Board of Directors, the CFA Institute and the Financial Planning Association.

two nonprofits: Uplift Ministry, providing free Christian counseling to teens and at-risk families, and Helping Hands for Single Moms, helping single mothers obtain financial independence through college education. Coffman has been recognized by Best Lawyers in Arizona, Best Lawyers in America and Arizona's Finest Lawyers.



Michelle Gilman
*College of Nursing
and Health Care
Professions,
Class of 1984*

Michelle Gilman has contributed significantly to regional programs focusing on improved patient outcomes through innovative delivery systems. Gilman is director of education and founder of the Learning Institute at St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center, Phoenix. Her background is in intensive-care nursing, organ-donor recovery, hospice and adult education. Gilman was instrumental in implementing the first Arizona nursing education/practice partnership model with GCU and currently leads development of a nursing simulation center and

American Heart Association training center.



Nick Halonen
*College of Fine Arts
and Production,
Classes of 2004
and 2008*

Nick Halonen believes God has called him to be a role model for teenagers. For 10 years, he has been the choir director at Phoenix's Trevor Browne High, a socio-economically disadvantaged school, where he also offers emotional support and encouragement. Students chose Halonen as 2013 Teacher of the Year, and staff named him Employee of the Year in 2009. He is an assistant director of the Phoenix Children's Chorus and, with his wife, GCU alumna Keslie Kattau Halonen, leads worship at Spirit Song United Methodist Church in Peoria.



Dr. Paul F. Kinnison
*College of Theology,
Class of 1978*
Dr. Paul Kinnison

has done some grand things in his life: He was pastor of Grand Canyon Baptist Church in Grand Canyon National

Park and has taught at GCU. Today, as associate pastor of First Baptist Church, Sun City West, he focuses on Christian discipleship, pastoral care and mission ministries. A graduate of three institutions of higher learning, Kinnison has studied the needs of people in physical, emotional and spiritual crises, and worked with families grappling with domestic violence, grief and death.



Natalie Wilcox
*College of Education,
Class of 1988*
Natalie Wilcox

learned to care for the heart of every child in her sphere of influence during her education at GCU. Wilcox, principal at Echo Mountain Primary School in Phoenix, has worked with orphans in Mexico and Romania, and is involved in programs that meet the needs of less-fortunate children. She has been a principal for 14 years and previously taught grades 5-8 for 10 years. Wilcox was named Arizona's Gifted Principal of the Year in 2006, and has taught at GCU and Arizona State University, among other institutions.



D. Samuel Coffman
*College of Arts and
Sciences,
Class of 1980*

Samuel Coffman, an employment law attorney at Dickinson Wright/Mariscal Weeks of Phoenix, uses his degree to help those who cannot afford or otherwise cannot access legal services. He is a longtime board member of



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

THUNDER GROUND

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Thunderground is a nationally known music club at Grand Canyon University hosting some of the biggest names in Christian music throughout the year. This underground venue is a great place to unwind and enjoy uplifting concerts from your favorite Christian artists.

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