

GRAND CANYON UNIVERSITY'S MAGAZINE

GCU today

MARCH 2015

Fresh Connection

Anthony Pérez and other GCU grads are strengthening the student-teacher bond





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GCU Today Magazine is a quarterly publication of the Office of Communications and Public Affairs at Grand Canyon University.

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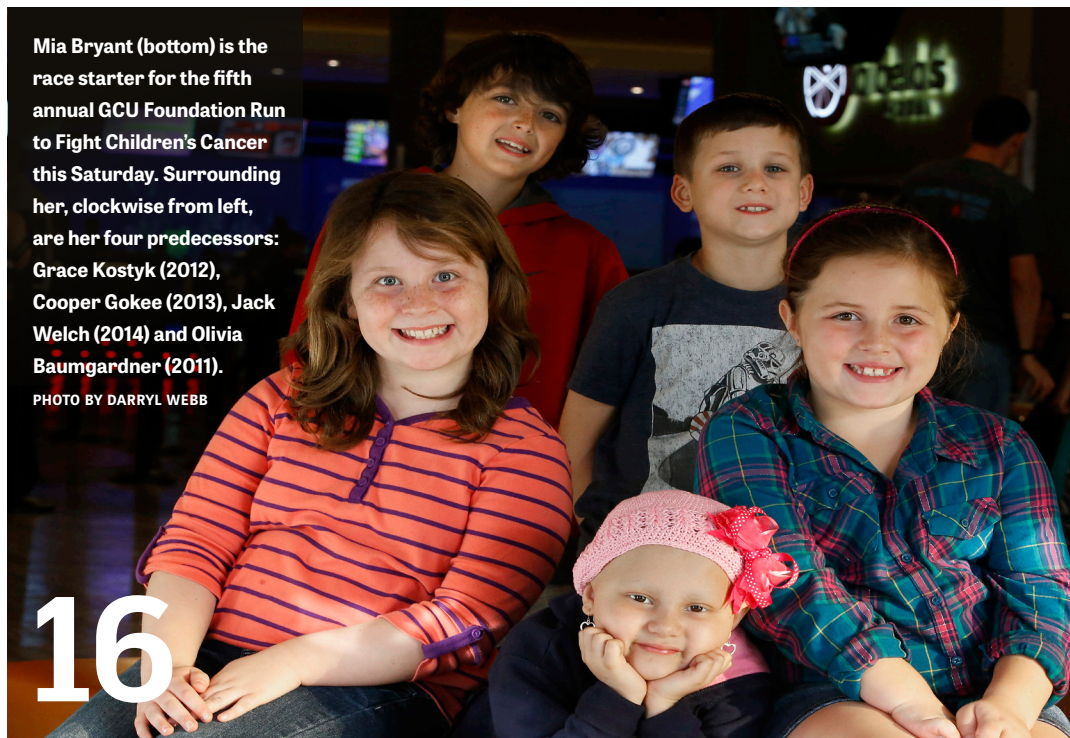


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Mia Bryant (bottom) is the race starter for the fifth annual GCU Foundation Run to Fight Children's Cancer this Saturday. Surrounding her, clockwise from left, are her four predecessors: Grace Kostyk (2012), Cooper Gokee (2013), Jack Welch (2014) and Olivia Baumgardner (2011).

PHOTO BY DARRYL WEBB

16

Features

6 Making School Cool
GCU is collaborating with the Rodel Foundation of Arizona to help put elementary school students on the same page with their teachers.

12 'Worshipology' Rocks
The new Center for Worship Arts, where students learn to produce Christian music, has gotten off to a resounding start.

14 A Lot to Wade Through
GCU swimmers from Ukraine and Egypt are thankful to be here but fearful about what their families and friends are facing back home.

18 Finding the Right Blend
Incorporating a blended learning format into general education classes introduces undergraduates to a growing trend in education.



In Every Issue

- 4 Lopes Up**
- 20 Special Feature**
- 22 Online**
- 24 GCU Alumni**
- 30 Parting Shot**

ON THE COVER: Anthony Pérez, who grew up in west Phoenix and earned a master's degree from GCU, interacts with students in his classroom at Sunset Elementary School. Pérez is a product of the Rodel Foundation of Arizona's Promising Student Teacher Program, which aims to refocus the futures of children. PHOTO BY DARRYL WEBB

Sound Bites

What's your favorite Easter memory?

In childhood, Easter was a time for a new outfit, dress, shoes and hat. I was taught this reminder each year of how our belief in Christ created us new on the inside and was like putting on a new outfit on the outside.

Rita Shipman,
GCU graduate student

Every year (since before I was born), my family has climbed Mt. Rubidoux in Riverside, Calif., on Easter.

Started by Frank Miller in 1908, the Mt. Rubidoux Easter Sunrise Service is the nation's longest-running outdoor Easter sunrise service. I get to spend time with my family and hundreds of others listening to the story of Jesus' resurrection and worshipping together.

Amy Hop,
GCU senior

My favorite is watching my paternal grandmother's face light up as she played the hymns for Easter service on the church's big pipe organ.

Dale L. Parkhurst,
GCU doctoral learner

The black-and-white pictures of my sisters and me dressed in our Easter finest: new dresses, white gloves and black patent-leather shoes. Completing the picture are little Bibles with pictures of Noah's Ark and the words of Jesus in red tucked under our arms as we head to church together.

Patsy Root,
GCU enrollment counselor

BE THERE

March



7

GCU FOUNDATION RUN TO FIGHT CHILDREN'S CANCER

Join 4,500 cancer survivors and their families and supporters in a buoyant wave of purple at the fifth annual race at GCU.

runtofightcancer.com

Details on Pages 16-17

20-22/27-29

RODGERS AND HAMMERSTEIN'S 'OKLAHOMA!'

This Pulitzer Prize-winning musical was Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein's first collaboration and a smash Broadway hit. Now, the wind comes sweepin' 'cross the stage in Ethington Theatre. Six shows are sold out, but extra matinees are being scheduled. Call the box office at 602-639-8880.

24

CANYON CHALLENGE

The fourth annual event, a chance for entrepreneurs to showcase their ideas before a panel of judges and compete for a \$7,000 first prize, is in GCU Arena for the first time since its inaugural year. 1:30 p.m. idea.gcu.edu



April

3-4

ROBOTICS

High school teams compete in the FIRST Arizona West Regional. GCU Arena.

www.gcu.edu/FIRSTRobotics

19

CHRIS TOMLIN CONCERT

The Grammy award-winning Christian worship artist stops here on his Love Ran Red Tour, with Tenth Avenue North and Rend Collective. 7 p.m., GCU Arena. gcuarena.com

Chris Tomlin



23-25

COMMENCEMENT

Nearly 9,900 traditional and online students in the Class of 2015 are eligible to don their caps and gowns for graduation. 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. each day, GCU Arena

17-18

SPRING DANCE CONCERT

Boogie through several eras of inspired dance, from swanky jazz to urban contemporary, as the Ethington Dance Ensemble presents "Ballet to Broadway." 7:30 p.m., Ethington Theatre. 602-639-8880,

www.gcu.edu/ethington

Opt In



What's your favorite recurring GCU event?

- ☐ Chapel
- ☐ Athletics
- ☐ Plays/concerts
- ☐ Fall Festival
- ☐ Run to Fight Children's Cancer
- ☐ Move-In
- ☐ Commencement
- ☐ Serve the City

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

Results from the last poll



What school would you like the GCU men's basketball team to play?

| | |
|------------------|-------|
| Arizona State | 30.2% |
| Arizona | 15.2% |
| Duke | 15% |
| UCLA | 11% |
| Gonzaga | 9.4% |
| North Carolina | 6.8% |
| Northern Arizona | 6.5% |
| Stanford | 5.9% |



PHOTO BY DARRYL WEBB

5 ON 5 WITH

Barry Regan, College of Humanities and Social Sciences

The ability to speak confidently to a mass audience is a natural gift, but communications instructor Barry Regan understands the science of public speaking — and his gift is the ability to convey those skills to students. Under Regan's direction, GCU's speech and debate team earned four first-place finishes at major collegiate tournaments during the fall semester following an award-winning inaugural year. GCU Today picked his brain for more details.

1 Describe the last time you got into a debate on campus. Who won?

I was arguing with communications instructor Jessi Farmer about whether "American Sniper" avoiding the politics of the Iraq War was intentional and, therefore, a political statement or if it was unintentional and apolitical. There was no winner or loser, but I'm going to selfishly say I won because she conceded my point that not addressing the politics of the war was in itself a political statement.

2 How do you coach students to address the various angles of a hot-button issue?

I encourage them to avoid letting emotional views overwhelm the evidence on polarized issues. They're in a better position to navigate those issues by looking at more objective sources, such as statistics and empirical facts, and let that support the argument rather than using personal biases or viewpoints.

3 How do you train students to be compelling public speakers?

To be a good public speaker you have to know what makes us human, such as socialization and telling stories. When it comes to impromptu or extemporaneous speaking, it's important to use a movie, book or story — a narrative — as a lead-in to a speech to connect with that human nature.

4 What's the preparation like for your team before competition?

On the speech side, it's intense memorization of their pieces and having all nonverbal techniques planned out in advance. Every strategic pause or break in a speech is purposeful. For debate, we focus on intense, intuitive understanding of current events and having significant resources from which to draw.

5 What's the biggest misconception about competitive collegiate speech and debate?

That it has to be aggressive and domineering, or that the best debaters just yell and scream and break the will of their opponents. The best debaters never raise their voices, yet their evidence is so good, their arguments are so logical, and the audience stays with them, that they're unbeatable.

MICHAEL FERRARESI

Got Your Number

The GCU Foundation Run to Fight Children's Cancer on Saturday will raise money to support young cancer patients and their families and bolster research on better diagnostic tools and treatments. Here's why the fight matters:

1 Childhood cancer is the No. 1 cause of death from disease among U.S. children over age 1.

4 percent of government funding that goes to childhood cancer research

10 average age at which a child is diagnosed with cancer

36 number of children diagnosed with cancer every day in the U.S.

3,000 number of runners anticipated on campus

\$150,000

fundraising goal for the beneficiaries, Phoenix Children's Hospital and Children's Cancer Network



Oh, Yeah?

momentum. After the January kickoff, which included 200 volunteers working on eight houses, three more contracts were signed immediately and several more were pending as the University

It didn't take long for GCU's partnership with Habitat for Humanity Central Arizona to build

began renovating up to 700 homes in GCU's neighborhood. Habitat's David Bunzel said several homeowners were so impressed with the work, they signed up for additional improvements, and word spread quickly to other residents. "They realize this is not going to be just for a year or two, it's going to be a multiyear project," said Todd Rogers, Habitat's chief strategy officer. "It's a relationship that's going to continue to blossom."

Learni



GCU alumnus Anthony Pérez, a graduate of the Rodel Foundation of Arizona's Promising Student Teacher Program, often reminds his Sunset Elementary School students that they have one job: learn and be prepared for college.

ing a New Way



College of Education alumni, partners team up to reshape, refocus, re-energize Arizona classrooms

STORIES BY MICHAEL FERRARESI

PHOTOS BY DARRYL WEBB

As his second graders sat cross-legged in front of a colorful interactive assignment board, Anthony Pérez cautiously monitored the lesson. His eyes darted from student to student to examine their varying responses. This time, though, he wasn't the teacher.

A girl in a pink hoodie held that title for the moment, at the request of "Mr. Pérez." It was her turn to lead her Sunset Elementary peers — kids in braids, camouflage fleece jackets and well-worn sneakers — through multiple exercises in the cinder block room. She directed the class with a cartoonish rubber finger.

Pérez learned early that this method allows students to feel what it's like to guide their own classmates to the correct answers and digest the material with ease. The 32-year-old Grand Canyon University alumnus and west Phoenix native grew up on the same side of town as his students — many who come from immigrant families and low-income homes and are part of a district with a higher than average number of children who qualify for free or reduced-cost lunch.

In Arizona, a statewide teacher shortage, struggles with funding for public schools, and a low national rank for overall quality of education have left universities looking for innovative solutions. One example is the GCU College of Education's partnership with the Rodel Foundation of Arizona to refocus the futures of children by developing more teachers with the heart to help. Pérez is a Rodel graduate who sees those challenges as an opportunity to serve his community.



Like many elementary school teachers, Pérez is required to bounce between math and vocabulary lessons, following carefully crafted schedules to keep the class on track. His strategy stems from what he learned during his Rodel assignment. At one point, he shouted, “CLASS, CLASS!” and a cacophony of well-trained student voices replied, “YES, YES!” The brief din of antsy conversation was quieted.

“I love how you followed the expectation, put everything away and that it was done quietly,” Pérez said in an even tone that washed over his Phoenix classroom.

So much of Pérez’s routine is patterned after his Rodel Exemplary Teacher mentor, Raquel Mendoza, whose second-grade classroom at Glenn F. Burton Elementary in Glendale was his final checkpoint to becoming a professional teacher. Like Mendoza and other mentors who have dedicated their lives to public school children, Pérez believes the future of public schools in his native state is as bright as a student’s face when — after all the patient, repetitive coaching — the proverbial light bulb is flicked on.

After coming to GCU to earn a master’s degree in elementary education, Pérez quickly emerged as a leader among his peers and accelerated his career through the 16-week Rodel placement. The program is intended to immerse future teachers in settings designed to overcome challenges facing underperforming schools.

Back at the interactive learning board, known as “Number Corner,” Pérez guided the class through math, money, time-telling and basic geometry, using displays with coins in plastic holders, clocks with adjustable hands and charts to help the students understand material on which they will be tested.

Sunset Elementary second grader Kyle Ward, 8, works through a book in the school library. In many Arizona classrooms, reading is a challenge for both students to learn and teachers to instruct.

“When I was a kid, I was thrown into the classroom, sink or swim,” said Pérez, whose working-class parents spoke Spanish in their home. He picked up English in school and watched his mother struggle to understand his teachers during after-school conferences.

“Teachers have more tools at their fingertips now in the classroom,” Pérez said. “To me, it’s rewarding, especially with the changes going on in education.

When I was in high school, they were barely phasing out typewriters and introducing computers. That’s how I learned keyboarding. There were no smart boards.”

Some of Pérez’s students still read at the kindergarten level. Others have improved their reading skills more quickly. When he joined the Cartwright School District and accepted the job at Sunset, five miles west of GCU, Pérez knew he’d have to juggle a wide range of needs in the class. Special ed teachers and reading and math specialists come in and out most of the day, diverting students to other rooms for extra help on speech or reading when schedules allow.

Solutions for a teacher shortage

Dr. Marjaneh Gilpatrick, GCU’s executive director of educational outreach, said Pérez — a graduate student at the time — approached her in 2009 to suggest that GCU partner with Rodel, since the College of Education’s conceptual framework and mission and that of the foundation aligned so well. With support from the dean and GCU’s executives, she established the partnership.

“It’s expected of them as student teachers that, when they become part of the Rodel program, they’re committing to a full, semesterlong job interview,” said Gilpatrick, who is responsible for recruiting,

interviewing and sometimes supervising the Promising Student Teachers, a program that prepares GCU students to be placed in Arizona classrooms.

“This is their responsibility, their job ... and they’re representing GCU,” she said. “They learn what a professional teacher looks like — how they’re in their classrooms before the students arrive, how they’re prepared, how they’re good colleagues and how they interact with parents.”

The student teacher is exposed to a high-needs environment by working closely with a mentor who has been recognized for success in that classroom. This semester, the College of Education placed three Promising Student Teachers through the Rodel program.

Dr. Kimberly LaPrade, dean of the College of Education, said the University places more than 100 ground campus students into student teaching assignments each year. Additional students are placed each semester into local schools to meet their field experience assignments, such as shadowing and interviewing of teachers.

“This (fall) semester, any student who wanted a job had a job,” LaPrade said. “There’s such a shortage in Arizona, there are more than 700 classrooms that do not have highly effective, certified teachers.”

Last year, the Arizona Department of Education reported the state had about 95,000 certified teachers, though only about 52,000 were teaching.

Experts cited factors such as low entry-level salaries and lack of professional development opportunities.

“You have to love kids, love what you do and want to make a difference in the lives of kids,” said GCU alumnus Dr. Randy Watkins, a former Rodel Exemplary Principal who is assistant superintendent in the Buckeye Elementary School District. “(GCU) instilled that in me. I remember by Year Two I couldn’t wait for my student teaching experience.”

Education reform has come in a variety of measures. While the state has its mandates and successes, private organizations such as Rodel have helped plug some of the gaps with resources for seasoned educators, classroom math training programs and the frequent placement of student teachers.

Rodel’s charitable foundation was established more than 15 years ago with the goal of developing more Arizona educational leaders to strengthen public schools and improve student outcomes amid budget cuts. Schools qualify to receive teachers and other resources from Rodel if 70 percent or more of their students are part of free or reduced-cost lunch programs.

“GCU students could easily go to any school, Christian schools or wealthier areas to serve their communities as teachers,” said Howard Paley, the Rodel Foundation’s chief operating officer, who also serves on GCU’s Education Advisory Board. “But what I’ve learned is that Grand Canyon reaches out to all students, including high-needs students. The University wants to support them all.”

Rodel is just one example of how students shape their professionalism and passion for teaching children. While there’s a lot more handholding at the start of a semester, LaPrade said, the mentor teacher eventually loosens control and allows the student to lead.

“So the goal for the second half of the semester,” she said, “is to let



Dr. Kimberly LaPrade



K-12 PROBLEM-SOLVING

GCU's innovative contributions to Arizona K-12 education include:

Learning Lounge

What began as a way for GCU students to tutor underprivileged or struggling students from neighboring Alhambra High School has expanded to reach others. Of the 92 Alhambra students who passed Arizona’s Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS test) this fall, about 40 had studied with GCU tutors at the Learning Lounge. The sessions increased their confidence and focus going into the test, said Principal Claudio Coria.

STEM Scholars

As part of a White House national education summit in December, the University announced it has partnered with the Peoria Unified School District on a tuition-free program for high school students to earn college STEM credits. The goal is to extend the benefits to 650 students across 10 Valley school districts.

Lopes Leap to Teach

The College of Education initiative unveiled in October aims to link school districts with open positions to qualified student teachers and alumni. The University plans to continue hosting campus education job expos.

Policy paper

GCU visiting professor Dr. Gerald Tirozzi, a former assistant secretary of elementary and secondary education at the U.S. Department of Education, published “Addressing a Shortage of High Quality Teachers: An Escalating Dilemma for Arizona Schools” in April 2014 through the College of Doctoral Studies. Tirozzi has provided a variety of commentary on the issue.



the student really fly along to the point where they're doing the planning, the grading — they're managing the classroom.”

Stirring the underachievers

The sixth graders in Jorge Ontiveros' class at Palomino Intermediate School make up the bottom 25 percent of their grade's academic performance. Many of the students are still learning to read at their own grade level, and some have Individualized Education Programs, or IEPs.

“I should hear talking. My room shouldn't be quiet,” Ontiveros warned the class, firmly yet compassionately, while presenting an assignment on the roots of Hinduism, part of a world religions unit.

Palomino and its neighboring elementary school are nestled between one of the newest Boys and Girls Clubs in the Valley and a park once threatened by gangs and drugs. But neighborhood partnerships with the police and other stakeholders have helped improve the overall quality of life in the square-mile Palomino area, known in north Phoenix as “the Square.” The schools have played a major role.

Ontiveros, a Rodel Exemplary Teacher who is working on a master's degree in educational leadership from GCU, mentored GCU alumna Hannah Lasley during her Rodel Promising Student Teacher placement last fall.

The school's Rodel Exemplary Principal, Jenny Robles, wanted to hire Lasley before she completed the program but had to settle for bringing her on board in December. The school had an opening in a fifth-grade

Palomino Intermediate School teacher Jorge Ontiveros (far left), a Rodel Exemplary Teacher, coaches students with GCU student Emily Wagner, his Rodel Promising Student Teacher for the spring semester.

class, and the principal was so sure of Lasley's poise that she had her start immediately.

This semester, Ontiveros is mentoring GCU senior Emily Wagner. She and two other seniors, Reyannin Haggard and Jessica Wood, make up the current Rodel Promising Student Teacher class.

Wagner, 22, experienced many firsts in her first few weeks at Palomino. She recently met for the first time with a parent about a critical issue with a student.

“It made me remember why I wanted to teach in the first place,” she said.

During the Hinduism assignment, Wagner floated among groups of students, stopping once to define pilgrimage. “It's like a religious journey,” she told the students and showed them how to search online for the foundational values of the Hindu faith, as they had for Judaism and other faiths earlier. Wagner encountered resistance but eventually had them willing to follow directions.

“Once they get it, their whole attitude changes and they're completely different people for the rest of the day,” she said, recalling one moment when a girl in the class connected with the material and spent the rest of the day grinning ear to ear.

Wagner has learned that Ontiveros tries to make her feel comfortable and allows her to make mistakes. For Ontiveros, it's about infusing the student teachers with the confidence to “let them fail, let them try.”

“Whether it's good or bad, we always reflect,” he said. “There's always an opportunity to improve.”



Adyerine López Ayon, 7, enjoys a book before returning to “Mr. Pérez’s” classroom at Sunset Elementary.

‘Not just a job’

As Pérez high-fived a student during a recent class, his red prayer bracelet with a red cross slid down his wrist. He is constantly trying to boost their morale and give them recognition for doing well and honest criticism when they’re not.

“We want students who are going to be committed to the classroom, who want to be teachers,” said LaPrade, who came to GCU with an inner-city Phoenix teaching background. “I think our Christian heritage also gives us a leg up there because this is a way to live out our faith — to teach. It resonates as a calling or vocation, not just a job.”

The Rodel placement taught Pérez effectiveness and consistency. He worked directly with Mendoza, his mentor teacher, on specific methods to manage a class. Now he strategically pairs students and configures seating based on specific needs, as she taught him.

Pérez said he remembers Mendoza’s first words to him, something like, “Whatever fairy tale ideas you have, you will quickly learn the reality of what it takes to get these kids to be successful and ready.”

GCU helped him refine his classroom practices, but that even tone of voice that has made him successful with children was developed in a Rodel classroom, by observing Mendoza and practicing in her presence.

“I really credit a lot to GCU, to Rodel and especially to her,” Pérez said, adding that he also has been conditioned to be an encourager.

When his students need guidance, he considers his response more out of personal duty than doing a job. He’s unfailingly honest, as difficult as that can be with children who have had tough lives.

“I always put it back on the choices they make and remind them that they’re only here for one reason — to learn,” Pérez said. “That helps motivate them to meet my expectations and to succeed.” **G**



RODEL’S MEASURE OF SUCCESS

GCU’s College of Education places well-trained student teachers across the U.S., but local efforts are intensified through a partnership with the Rodel Foundation of Arizona. Initiatives include:

Exemplary Teacher Initiative

It began in 2004 as a way to recognize teachers in low-income communities who exceed expectations and use limited resources to help students excel. Principals nominate top teachers, and Rodel confirms nominees by reviewing years of achievement records and other data.

The 2015 cohort of Exemplary Teachers included three GCU grads — Martha Daniels (Ruth Fisher Elementary, Tonopah), Stephanie Lund (William C. Jack Elementary, Glendale) and Sylvia Miller (Western Valley Elementary, Phoenix). They are among 168 teachers statewide, including other GCU alumni, to earn the honor.

Promising Student Teacher Program

Since 2004, the Rodel Foundation has placed nearly 700 student teachers in Arizona schools. The 16-week placement in the classroom of a Rodel Exemplary Teacher, who serves as a mentor, occurs in the last semester of the undergraduate or master’s program. Student teachers earn a \$1,000 waiver toward college tuition and a \$5,000 award from the Rodel Foundation after completing the program and teaching in a qualifying school for three years after graduation.

GCU placed seven students in the program this year, although the College of Education has been approved to provide scholarships for up to 20 in the Rodel program in 2015-16 and beyond. Three GCU Rodel student teachers this spring are among 23 previously selected.

MORE INFORMATION: www.gcu.edu/College-of-Education or www.rodelaz.org



Worship Arts students begin their weekly "Summit" by singing Christian songs.

PHOTO BY DARRYL WEBB



Watch a video about the process students use to try to "catch lightning in a bottle" (that's code for "write a hit song") at news.gcu.edu.

Divine Guidance on the Road to 'Worshipology'

Worship Arts students get into the spirit of new Theology program

BY RICK VACEK

Think about some of the meant-to-be moments in your life. You can recount some extraordinary coincidences that got you to those destinations, but you may not have explanations for them outside of divine intervention.

Such is life these days in Grand Canyon University's new Center for Worship Arts, which seeks to turn students into performers who can lead everything from a church service to a Christian band. Worship Arts leaders say that things they can't quite fathom keep happening. Years from now, they no doubt will look back on these times with a sense of amazement, but for now, as the story is still unfolding, they are embracing the joy of being part of events that sometimes defy explanation.

One such occurrence came on the first night this semester of Worship Arts Summit, a two-hour weekly class in which students, many in their "Worshipologist" T-shirts, write their own Christian music. They often

are guided by visiting experts — including center director Bart Millard, lead singer and founder of the band MercyMe. On this night, Millard brought along former touring partner Tim Timmons, a prominent Christian songwriter who was visiting campus.

John Frederick, the center's worship coordinator, had planned an evening built around the theme "Union with Christ," focusing on how the spirit that brought Jesus back from the dead is alive in us and we need to completely trust Him.

Frederick didn't know Timmons was going to be there until just a few hours earlier. He had met him only once, at a conference years ago, and he hadn't shared with Timmons his plans for the program.

And yet when Millard started the class by introducing Timmons and asking him to say a few words, Timmons offered a passionate discourse about his 10-year-plus battle with cancer and proceeded to talk about the precise topic Frederick planned to cover, emphasizing that "the cross is a door."

"That's what we were going to do tonight!" Frederick said from the front of the room.

"I was just writing down some of those very same thoughts on New Year's Eve!" Millard said from the back of the room, and he felt so moved that he, like Timmons, gave an equally long, equally impromptu talk centering on, "You don't have to be perfect. You just have to trust." It felt therapeutic to Millard because during a concert he never gets more than two or three minutes between songs to talk about his faith. The brutal honesty was riveting.

"I was the overachiever trying to make sure God was OK with me," Millard said afterward. "Everything was kind of in chaos. I hit this wall that was like, 'There has to be more or I'm done.' I was just done. It couldn't keep up. And then a friend came back into my life and said, 'Hey, just in case you've forgotten, there's nothing you can do to make Christ love you more than He already does. There's not one ounce more you can do.'"

"So it's like I'm trying to get God to be OK with me and the whole time He's screaming, 'I've been OK with you since the day you called My name. I've never stopped.' I don't know how I missed that after all these years."

Days later, still shaking his head about the experience, Frederick said, "When something like that happens, you see that there is a deeper spiritual governance to this. That's the cool thing about teaching theology — you're on the journey yourself. It creates a sense of camaraderie with the students."

Positively together

That togetherness was evident in the first Worship Arts Showcase, during which students performed 20 songs they had written during the fall semester. When they weren't performing, the participants and other students clearly had a good time cheering on their peers.

"I'm blown away by how close they've gotten," Millard said. "At the end of the night they were all together saying, 'This was one of the greatest semesters of my life.'"

One of the students who performed was Caleb Keck from Newark, Ohio, who sang a solo, "The Love You've Shown," and said of the experience, "I'm speechless just to be in the program and to be able to perform for people like Bart." Keck left active duty in the U.S. Air Force after seven years to come to GCU. "Something I've told people lately is, 'This is the most unsure thing I've ever been so positively sure of,'" he said.

Frederick is sure of one thing: He wants the students to write music that is authentic, reflecting the journey they're on with the people leading them — and, down the road, the people they'll be leading. The way Frederick put it to them in one session was "Create from a place of 'I don't care if anyone likes this.'"

"It's easy, actually, to make people excellent musicians and to manipulate lights and sound to make people feel good," he said. "But I think all of us on the faculty feel like it needs to come from a real authentic place, what Eugene Peterson calls 'A Long Obedience in the Same Direction.' It's almost like marriage — that's your commitment to a local people. It's not just incidental. And I think the students are



Bart Millard, director of the Center for Worship Arts, says he's "blown away" by the students' togetherness.

PHOTO BY DARRYL WEBB

starting to breathe that air. A lot of them are walking that path already." Newcomers certainly can see it.

Kim Nielsen and her high school daughter Michaela, visiting from Omaha, Neb., made the Worship Arts Summit part of their campus tour and were taken aback by the spirit of it. Earlier in the day, Michaela felt gratified to see several male students reading the Bible when she walked into the Student Union.

"You feel such unity — it's safeness," she said.

Kim was moved by the talks Millard and Timmons gave and also liked what she heard at Chapel, where Brian Mueller, the University's president and CEO, was the speaker that day. "Just to hear the heart of the people in leadership has been impressive to me," she said.

Timmons picked up right away on what Millard, Frederick and Dr. Jason Hiles, dean of the College of Theology, bring to the table: "They're so focused on the students that it's as if they're being changed themselves. I love their knowledge and heart and spirit. I think it's exciting just being friends with these people."

Studio will be great addition

So what now? Continued growth, obviously. "We have people left and right trying to sign up for it," Millard said. The effect of the Worship Arts program can be seen in tangible ways on campus, such as the fact that a third Chapel band is performing this semester.

Millard and Frederick both talk excitedly about the new recording studio for the program being built on the fourth floor of the University's new classroom building facing Camelback Road. It is scheduled to be ready in August.

But one lesson they have learned in this first year is how much they can accomplish anywhere with the right group of people. Frederick thought back to the time, years ago, when he was shopping at Target and came across one of Millard's first albums. He bought it, took it home and loved it. Now he's working with him.

"I feel like his heart is in the same exact same place as Jason and mine and all of us involved with this program, which is to make really authentic, intentionally disciplined worshippers and to leave legacies in the church for Jesus," Frederick said.

The road of faith? Sometimes you need a map, and sometimes you intuitively know you're headed in the right direction ... and you can't explain why. You just know. **G**

A photograph of four young men swimming in a pool. They are all smiling and looking towards the camera. The water is clear blue with some ripples. The men are positioned in a row, with their heads and shoulders above water.

Swimmers from Ukraine,
Egypt find solace at GCU, but
worries about their countries'
strife still hit home

Peaceful Waters

BY COOPER NELSON

When Illya Glazunov wants information on the crisis in Ukraine, he'll turn on the news or check Facebook. But he tries not to think about his war-torn home.

A year ago, fighting broke out between pro-Russian separatists and the Ukrainian military over the Crimean Peninsula to Ukraine's southeast, which had voted to join Russia. The United Nations reported that more than 5,300 people had died in the conflict by the end of February.

Glazunov's mother lives in the eastern Ukrainian city of Donetsk, where some of the heaviest combat has occurred. For him, remaining oblivious to her plight and the fate of his homeland can be difficult.

"I don't like to talk about home," said Glazunov, a junior finance major at Grand Canyon University. "When I call my parents, they're always talking about war and people dying. It's always in your head."

Glazunov, 22, is one of five GCU swimmers from Ukraine. GCU is home to 72 international student athletes from 33 countries, ranging from Australia to Kazakhstan to Canada, but few understand the strife of the Ukrainians.

Glazunov arrived at GCU in advance of the 2013 season, just a few months before the fighting and protests began. His busy schedule and poor Internet connection between Phoenix and Donetsk make communications with his family difficult. He is able to talk with his father in Russia every couple of weeks but hears from his mother and

GCU swimmers Mazen and Youssef Elkamash (far left and far right) of Egypt lived through the 2011 Egyptian Revolution and understand the strife of teammates Illya Glazunov (second from left) and Stanislav Saiko of Ukraine, who are dealing with the current crisis in their home country.

PHOTO BY DARRYL WEBB

younger brother less often. Anxiety over their safety is a daily reminder of the turmoil at home.

Last summer, Glazunov was living in Seattle when he received Facebook notifications of bombings in Donetsk. Separatists were attempting to take control of the city's airport, near where his mother lives. He frantically tried to reach her but couldn't get through. Eventually, his friends in Ukraine contacted her and relayed the news she was OK. Glazunov said it was the scariest moment of his life.

Four other Ukrainian athletes — juniors Stanislav Saiko and Iegor Lytvenok, sophomore Iryna Glavnyk and freshman Fedir Bolychev — spend days or weeks unaware of what is happening to their country or families. They rely on one another, sharing news from home, helping with English and homework assignments and offering support when one of them feels overwhelmed by the uncertainty.

Saiko, 22, came to GCU the same day as Glazunov and Lytvenok. His family lives in Kirovograd, a central Ukraine city that is farther from the



fighting, but the distance hasn't made coping any easier. Some of his friends have been killed while he has been at GCU, and he knows of another who was abducted and has been missing for months.

Americans, he said, don't understand the worry that weighs on Ukrainians' minds every day.

"It's hard for people here to understand what we're going through because what they see on the news isn't what it's really like. Being there and seeing it in person, it's much worse," said Saiko, a sports management major who goes by "Stas."

"I don't really even know what's happening there. I'm not home, I'm here, 6,000 miles away."

Egyptians know the feeling

When Glazunov, Saiko and the other Ukrainians need advice, they don't have to look far.

Mazen and Youssef Elkamash, twin brothers from Alexandria, Egypt, joined the GCU swim team the same year as the Ukrainians and know what it feels like to live through war. Bloody protests that eventually forced President Hosni Mubarak to resign erupted across Egypt in February 2011. More than 860 people died in the monthlong revolution.

The twins, 19, remember tanks in the street outside their home and looters robbing buildings during the night. The government shut down Internet and cable lines to prevent further uprisings.

"You could hear people shooting outside when you slept," said Mazen, who like his brother is a sophomore business major.

Youssef said, "You couldn't make a call, you couldn't watch TV, you couldn't do anything, just sit like you are in a cave. We weren't really scared, but it was tough."

The Elkamash brothers rarely left their house during the revolution.



Mazen (left) and Youssef Elkamash show their GCU pride with swim coach Steve Schaffer at the Giza Necropolis outside Cairo. Schaffer traveled to the twins' homeland to watch them swim for the Egyptian national team.

PHOTO COURTESY
OF MAZEN ELKAMASH

"I don't really even know what's happening there. I'm not home, I'm here, 6,000 miles away."

They swam when they could and occasionally joined protests to stave off boredom. They visited their older brother, a swimmer at the University of South Carolina, in December 2012 and decided they wanted to attend college in America.

They found GCU online and contacted coach Steve Schaffer to join the swim team. Leaving Egypt was

difficult — they dodged bullets and passed tanks on their way to the airport and almost didn't make it out.

The situation in Egypt has since calmed. The twins talk with their mother often and don't worry about her safety. They offer to talk to the Ukrainians about their experiences when they need support.

"It's different for Youssef and me than with the guys from Ukraine," Mazen said. "We were there with our family and friends. There were still tanks and stuff when we left, but it was normal."

"We know what it's like and are here to talk when they need it," Youssef said.

Team's success helps

Schaffer said he can tell by the Ukrainians' body language when news at home is bad. But they never complain or take practices off, he said.

"I think in one way or another all swimmers use swimming as an escape from what's going on in their lives," said Schaffer, who swam at UCLA and has been GCU's coach for seven years. "They're some of our best swimmers. The reason we wanted to bring those types of guys in is because they're fast, and they've helped us this year."

Glazunov agrees that the team's success — and preparing for the recent Western Athletic Conference championships — provided some relief. He and Saiko are simply happy their families are alive. For now, they try to focus on swimming and school and block out everything else.

Glazunov and Saiko have urged their parents to leave Ukraine but know there is nothing they can do. They haven't been home since moving to Phoenix and don't know when or if they can return.

They don't worry. Maybe it's better that way.

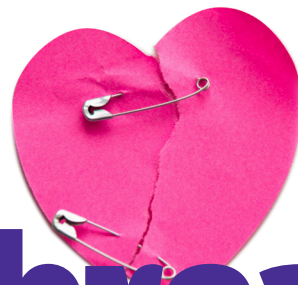
"I didn't bring anything to remind me of home except clothes and my (swim) suit," Saiko said. "I don't worry about it. After what's happened there, I just cannot go back." **G**



Swimming is a helpful distraction for Glazunov when news from home gets tough.

PHOTO BY DEB SCHAFFER

Healing from the Heartbreak



How a sister,
a mom and a
survivor deal with
childhood cancer

BY JANIE MAGRUDER

Life was too short for McKenzie Monks.

A born performer, youngest child of Denise and Richard Monks and part of a mutual admiration society with her two older siblings, McKenzie was diagnosed with kidney cancer at age 3. Despite aggressive treatments, she died before she could get to kindergarten.

"She went through so much and her life was taken far too soon," said sister Mandy Monks, a student at Grand Canyon University. "The lessons she taught us — to always be grateful for your blessings and tell the people you love — changed our entire outlook on life. We wanted to do something to have her name live on."

Ten years ago, the family started the McKenzie Monks Foundation, which has donated \$1 million to open the Kenzie Center in Phoenix Children's Hospital's (PCH) Center for Cancer and Blood Disorders and has given 2,000 wheeled suitcases filled with age- and gender-appropriate toys and comfort items to children diagnosed with cancer there. Called Kenzie Kases, the suitcases are patterned after McKenzie's pink Hello Kitty bag that she took to the hospital for every treatment.

The Monks plan to join an estimated 4,500 people on GCU's main campus for the fifth annual GCU Foundation Run to Fight Children's Cancer this Saturday. In its first

four years, the event raised nearly \$275,000 to benefit PCH and the Children's Cancer Network (CCN), a nonprofit organization that helps Arizona families battling childhood cancer. The fundraising goal this year is \$150,000.

"The run has helped to increase awareness

GCU student Mandy Monks (left) and her sister, Michelle, have kept alive their little sister's spirit through Kenzie Kases. McKenzie was diagnosed with cancer at age 3 and died less than two years later, in 2003. PHOTO BY DARRYL WEBB



of childhood cancer and put CCN on the map as a valuable resource for families from the moment of diagnosis, throughout treatment and into long-term survivorship,” said CCN executive director Patti Luttrell, an adjunct faculty member in GCU’s College of Nursing and Health Care Professions. “Thanks to the run, we have been able to respond to the increased need for basic necessities for these families — gas and food cards, bus and cafeteria passes, beds and linens, household items and more.”

Filling a gap for families fighting cancer

Luttrell, of Tempe, never wanted to be an expert on childhood cancer. Her son, Jeff, was diagnosed with leukemia in 1993 at age 5, and he has since gone nine rounds with cancer, including four with a secondary cancer of the mouth.

“It seems like his whole life has had some component of cancer, almost at every turn, and it’s heartbreaking,” she said. “And yet it’s important not to let cancer control you, and Jeff’s courage and resilience and amazing determination to get through the next steps have been so helpful. He gives me inspiration to not let it control us.”

Luttrell, her husband, Steve, and their daughter, Jenny, are fortunate to have had the financial wherewithal and insurance coverage to care for Jeff over the years, and they had a good support network. Many families they met, however, didn’t have those advantages, and that’s why CCN was created. It gives financial assistance, education and encouragement to families in every stage of cancer, from diagnosis to long-term survival, and it funds research for better diagnosis tools and treatment options.

Jeff, 26, is back in school this semester, following his most recent surgery in December, and is working on a degree in graphic design from The Art Institute of Phoenix. As he has grown, CCN’s goals have expanded into smoothing the transition that cancer patients face as young adults, where medical and support services seem less collaborative than in pediatric oncology.

“... it’s important not to let cancer control you ...”



Sarah Maurer lives with the after-effects of years of cancer treatments.

Powering through adversity

When Sarah Maurer turned 26 and was aged out of her parents’ health insurance, she turned to the state Medicaid system for coverage. She had no choice: Maurer has multiple appointments every year with nine physicians who track the health of her heart, lungs, brain, kidneys, bones and endocrine system, among others.

In 1992, just before her eighth birthday, Maurer was diagnosed with Wilms’ tumor, the same cancer that killed McKenzie. She endured intense radiation and chemotherapy

and, as a result, her health must be closely monitored for the rest of her life.

During Maurer’s treatment, she often was angry or upset, and the only time she would cooperate or open up about her feelings was when she was with the hospital’s pet therapy rabbit, Thumper. The care she received from the staff made such an impression that she now works as a child-life specialist at PCH.

“I want them to know to never give up, to find something that they enjoy doing and can do and run with it. They should keep living life and never let

it hold them back,” said Mauer, 30, of Phoenix.

McKenzie Monks’ time on earth was brief but well-lived. When her hair fell out, she refused to wear a wig, instead rubbing her bald head with glitter. “She never noticed she was different,” said Mandy Monks. “She just wanted to sparkle, which she did.”

McKenzie’s death not only changed her sister’s outlook on life, it’s having an impact on her future. After earning a degree in family and human development at Arizona State University, the 24-year-old Phoenix resident is enrolled in GCU’s undergraduate nursing program.

“Cancer definitely changes you once you see the other side of it.”

Pushing for better tools

When Jeff was 12, during a follow-up visit after his bone-marrow transplant at a Tucson hospital, the Luttrells wandered into a playroom and saw a live donkey there. Seeing no one else in the room, they approached the animal to pet it, and to their surprise, a small hand with an IV in it reached around from behind.

“‘This has got to stop,’ Jeff said to us when he saw the child,” Luttrell recalled. “He was talking about the next generation of cancer patients, not his own.”

In 2013, when Luttrell asked Jeff if he wanted to speak at a fundraiser that CCN hosts annually, a large springtime fashion show and silent auction

at The Phoenician, he again declined.

“And he said, ‘When you all get serious and start funding research, then I’ll talk,’” she said.

Last year, CCN announced a \$100,000 pledge to PCH’s Ronald A. Matricaria Institute of Molecular Medicine to search for improved treatment methods for Acute Myelogenous Leukemia. The eventual hope is for early diagnosis, prevention and cure of this aggressive blood cancer.

“Hope is the root of all of it,” Luttrell said of her 21-year road with cancer. “It’s what gives us the courage to move forward. Jeff has never lost that hope, and I want other families to find hope, too.” **G**

5th Annual GCU Foundation Run to Fight Children’s Cancer



When: Saturday, March 7 (10K at 7 a.m., 5K at 7:45, Cancer Survivors’ Walk at 9)

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 children and families affected by the disease. Proceeds also fund research at PCH’s Center for Cancer and Blood Disorders, where young cancer patients benefit from new developments in molecular medicine.

Also: A variety of family entertainment, including arts and crafts, music and jump castles. Free parking in the GCU parking garages on Camelback Road and 35th Avenue, plus free shuttle service from the lot at 27th Avenue and Colter Street.

Registration: runtofightcancer.com

Donate: Text “fightcancer” to 41444



Blended Learning is in the Mix

University weaves elements of traditional and online formats into key classes

BY COOPER NELSON

During his Tuesday afternoon Math 134 class, Grand Canyon University professor Dr. Filippo Posta lectures on algebra and calculus to more than 80 freshmen and sophomores. Many of the concepts he covers are refreshers from high school classes.

On Thursday, a fraction of the students attend class, trickling in late and staying for a half-hour at most. Many spend time doing homework on laptops. But Posta doesn't seem to mind. He floats around the room, answering questions.

Posta's class is among several traditional undergraduate classes that are part of a new blended learning format that GCU, as it explores ways to combine elements of traditional and online courses, piloted this year. In the format, students meet for ground classes once or twice a week and complete homework assignments online, using the extra class day for tutoring or study time. Other blended courses include Psychology 102, Physics 111, Biology 220 and Biology 483.

Through the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, the blended learning concept was first introduced over the summer in Posta's Math 110 course as a way to reinvent 100-level classes to be more engaging and valuable as core degree courses. GCU is a leader in online education with more than 55,000 students and 200 online full-time faculty members and

also has a burgeoning traditional enrollment of nearly 11,000.

Provost Dr. Hank Radda said the blended program may not apply to every class. But the University hopes to use the concept to improve the quality of general education courses and provide students a greater depth of online learning.

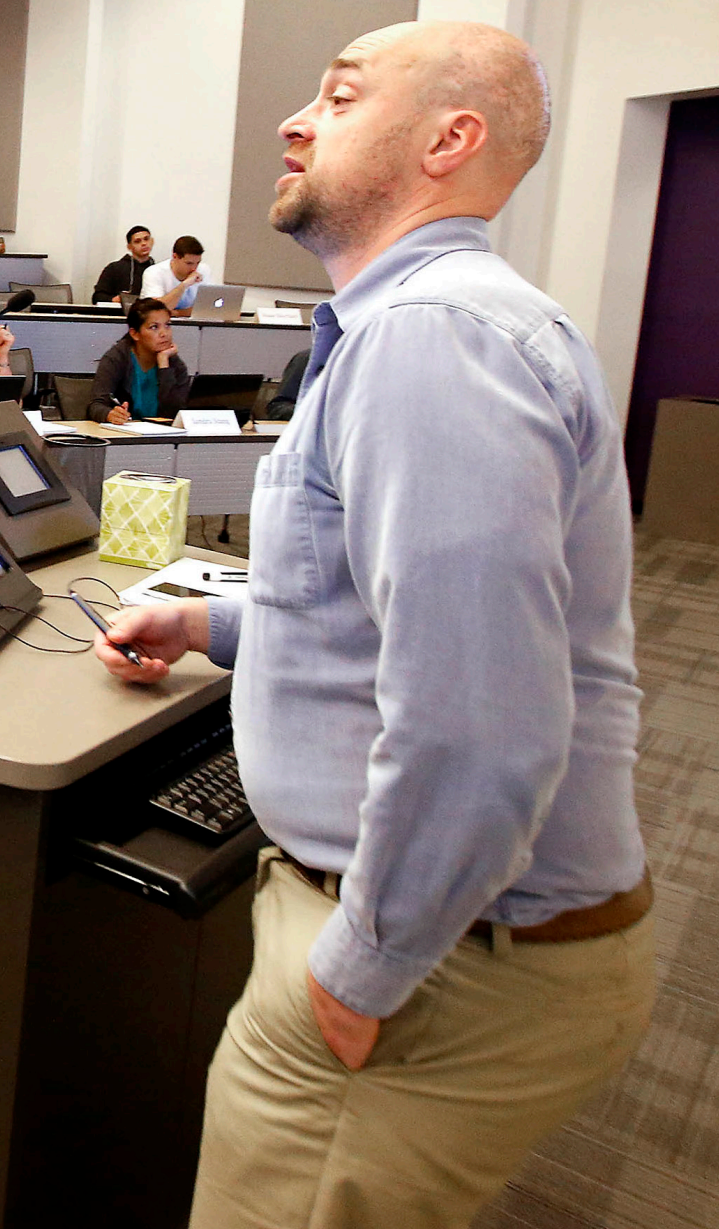
"We're always trying to do our best to improve learning and learning outcomes for our students," Radda said.

"We have experienced teachers who have a willingness to explore blended learning and a desire to improve the pedagogical experience and make learning better for students. GCU is the perfect laboratory because it is essentially already a blended university, being a pioneer with online and ground."

Better work habits, application, grades

In blended courses, students receive the same lectures as they would in 100-level classes but are given personal online assignments, called asynchronous learning experiences. These assignments cater to students' careers or post-college life.

Posta's 20-student summer math class met for lectures Monday and Friday and received online assignments Wednesday to be completed by Friday. The aim was to curb procrastination among students and prevent



GCU professor Filippo Posta lectures to students during the Tuesday “ground” day of his spring Math 134 class. On Thursdays the students work online, although a few come to class to receive tutoring. Posta led the first blended learning class last summer. PHOTO BY DARRYL WEBB

“Giving each student a way to explore algebra in their career, I found that students embraced that,” he added. “They were happy they didn’t have to come to class one day, but they were also more engaged in class and actually working harder.”

Blended learning helped GCU sophomore Francisco Quijada, a health care administration major, readjust to school after four years away and two military tours in Afghanistan.

Quijada, 23, entered the Marines after high school and took his first semester of college classes last summer. He said the personal application of the blended class helps him better understand unfamiliar math concepts.

“I like that it is applicable to my career. Basic math sometimes doesn’t always apply to what you want to do after college, but with this it does,” he said. “It is a helpful way to readjust. The teachers are there to help you, but you can pick it up as you go.”

A national trend

Blended education. Flipped classroom. Hybrid learning. Blended learning is known by many names and is widely misunderstood.

In elementary classrooms and college lecture halls, the concepts are the same — applying technology and online learning and interaction in the classroom — but the application varies. Students submit assignments online and often have online discussions while also meeting daily in class to hear lectures and view notes on PowerPoint.

GCU biology professor Tina Salata asks her Biology 220 students to research their carbon footprints online and present their findings to the class. Physics 111 instructor Klaus Mortensen posts sample problems and narrates PowerPoint presentations for students to review during online class days.

Instructors meet monthly to discuss best practices and compile data to apply to future classes and determine where blended applies and where it doesn’t fit.

Dr. Sherman Elliott, dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, said the University is encouraging students to bring laptops to class.

“Our students grew up with smart phones in their hands, tablets, PCs, Macs. So instead of trying to keep those things out of the classroom we’re encouraging them to bring them in,” Elliott said. “Everything is done on computers now, so why not learning, too?”

“This is the best of both worlds.”

Radda said more GCU classes could have a blended element, but future application will be based on the results of the pilot programs, which extended to English and marketing courses this spring.

“What we’re finding is that blended can be as good if not better than traditional and online and better in certain areas,” Radda said.

“We’re always questioning what we are doing well and what can we improve. That’s just who we are.” **G**

them from having assignments due on the weekends.

In one assignment, Posta asked students to calculate their expected annual incomes based on their careers, then deduct federal and state taxes. Other assignments involved Excel problems, such as creating spreadsheets for hypothetical financial positions or recording and compiling information from database searches.

Students in the blended summer course received 60 percent more A’s than in previous summer classes, and there were no failures or dropouts. Posta credits the stronger grades to the personal application of blended learning practices.

“The way general ed math classes are set up, there is a lot that is asked of the student to do procedurally but there aren’t as many concepts,” said Posta, who teaches three ground classes, including the blended class, and one online course. “Blended provides a better approach because we are able to cover the procedural stuff in the lecture and expand on the concept by providing applications to the future careers of the students.

“GCU is the perfect laboratory because it is essentially already a blended university, being a pioneer with online and ground.”



Lauren Graham (center)
graduated from GCU with
top ROTC honors in 2013.

PHOTO BY DARRYL WEBB

Common Goals, Extraordinary Achievements

Two nurses from GCU named distinguished military graduates by the U.S. Army

BY JANIE MAGRUDER

They grew up worlds apart, one in Swaziland with missionary parents and four siblings, the other in a smaller military family that over the years lived on more than a dozen Air Force bases in the United States.

Their paths to Grand Canyon University's College of Nursing and Health Care Professions also were divergent. The science enthusiast toured GCU's campus as a high school student, was intrigued by the cadaver lab and enrolled as a freshman, while the athlete transferred as a college senior after the future of her school's track and field program became muddy.

But once they met, Bekah Hansz and Lauren Graham discovered they had much in common. They were the same age and came to GCU from the same city, Colorado Springs. They shared career aspirations in nursing and were interested in the military, specifically, Army ROTC.

And now, the two women share the honor of being named distinguished military graduates — Graham in 2013 and Hansz in 2014 — by the U.S. Army. As such, they were among the top 10 percent of cadets in their respective classes, competing not only with other

students around the country earning bachelor's degrees in nursing, but also those in business, engineering and other sciences.

"Lauren and Bekah have a sense of selflessness and patriotism and, as nurses, they are truly committed to the general care of people and defending their country, too," said Major Michelle Bravo, executive officer of the ROTC Sun Devil Battalion, which trains GCU and Arizona State University students to become leaders, then commissions them as second lieutenants in the Army. "They were very good cadets and they will be exceptional lieutenants."

Nursing, military in the genes

That's already proving true for Graham, who graduated from GCU 15 months ago and was assigned to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Md. She works on a medical/surgical ward, caring for wounded American soldiers in one of the world's best rehabilitation facilities for veterans.

"I love working there — it's such an inspirational place," said

Graham, 23, whose mother, grandmother and great-grandmother were nurses. “Mentally, the soldiers are so strong, and physically, they want to get better and get back to serving their country.”

Graham is no stranger to the military. Her dad, Glenn, is a colonel in the Air Force, and she was raised on air bases around the country. She discovered an interest in and knack for pole vaulting in high school and joined ROTC, which offered her a full-ride college scholarship. She enrolled at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs to compete in pole vault and pursue a nursing career.

At UCCS, she managed a packed schedule of classes, meets and training until 2012, when her coach left and it became apparent the school was not going to replace him. Graham connected with Todd Lehman, an assistant track and field coach at GCU, who coaxed her to Phoenix. GCU’s nursing faculty and admissions staff helped transfer her credits and set up her courses.

“It was definitely an act of God,” said Graham, who arrived on campus in August 2012 and met Hansz, a GCU junior and ROTC cadet.

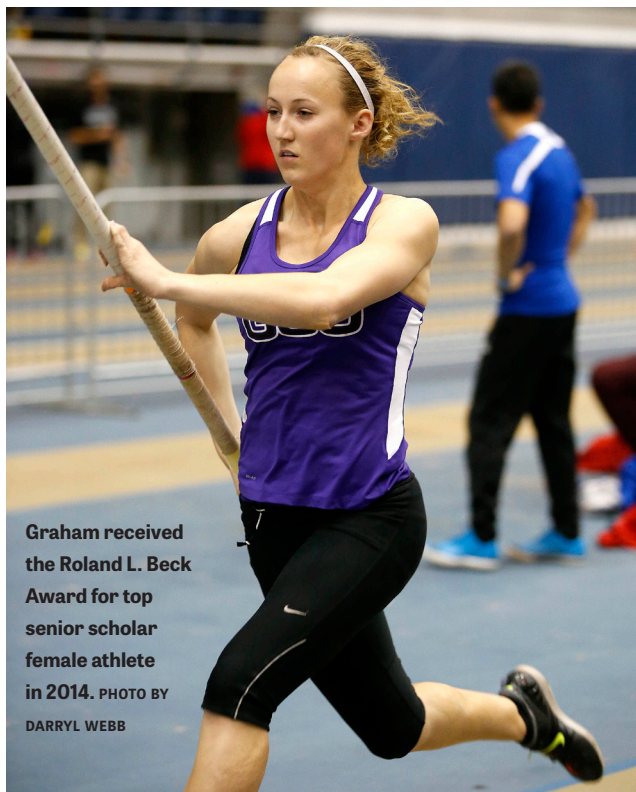
Nursing and the military bloomed on Hansz’s family tree, too. As a child growing up in Africa, she learned from a neighbor who was a nurse how to remove stitches and reduce fevers.

Years later, she visited Phoenix during Destination GCU in 2010 and imagined the hands-on training she would get in the University’s cadaver lab. She signed up for 23 college credits and, looking for a way to pay for college, ROTC.

“I enjoyed the discipline, the exercise, the whole experience,” said Hansz, 23. “The people in it made it all worth it, and the prospect of coming out of college debt-free, well, I was quite happy.”

By the time Graham arrived, Hansz understood ROTC culture and helped Graham make the transition. They were in the same military science class, prepared for summer training and went to Hawaii together once.

The CONHCP arranged for Hansz and Graham to earn credit for



Graham received the Roland L. Beck Award for top senior scholar female athlete in 2014. PHOTO BY DARRYL WEBB



Bekah Hansz enrolled at GCU with many pre-nursing course credits earned in high school.

PHOTO BY DARRYL WEBB

doing clinical work at Tripler Army Medical Center in Honolulu when they weren’t training with the Army’s 25th Infantry Division at Schofield Barracks. They worked 12-hour hospital shifts and visited Pearl Harbor and the beach, just briefly.

“Every night, I would pick them up from Tripler in the van after their shift and I would get all these wonderful stories — ‘I helped deliver a baby!’ — ‘I helped amputate a toe!’” Bravo said. “They were so excited about the nursing they were doing.”

GCU’s will-do attitude

Bravo credited GCU’s nursing faculty, including Dr. Cheryl Roat, with helping students make room for everything in their schedules.

“Dr. Roat is so supportive of our program, and she loves the Army nurses that come to her because she knows they’re going to be qualified, committed and dedicated,” Bravo said. “And there’s a difference in our GCU kids, too. They bond and stay in touch.”

Army nursing students tend to be bright, driven and busy, and you can’t help but want to see them succeed, said Roat, the nursing college’s director of regulation and compliance.

“Time-management priorities, self-discipline and servant leadership are essential to both the military and to the field of nursing,” she said. “We value what these students are striving for, and we’re so proud to be part of this program.”

Graham was named the University’s top senior scholar athlete in 2014 and set the GCU record for women’s pole vaulting with a 4.03-meter vault in 2013. “I made such wonderful friends in ROTC, and I could see by going through training with them how much the camaraderie, teamwork and discipline helped me in my sport,” she said.

Hansz had her own brand of adventure as a ROTC cadet, traveling to South Korea for a summer internship and to Romania to teach English to Romanian Naval cadets. And she got engaged, to GCU alumnus Gavin Wilcox who proposed after their graduation on Dec. 12. Graham also is engaged, to Jake Greenwald who plans to be a chaplain in the Army. Wedding dates are pending.

Hansz and Graham are modest about their national military distinction for academics. “I’m very honored because there are so many smart and amazing nurses who also graduated with me,” Graham said.

Added Hansz, who awaits her Army assignment, “I did my best in nursing school just to do my best. But the icing on the cake is this.” **G**

Degrees of Difficulty

Sisters in doctoral program show what hard work, discipline are really all about BY RICK VACEK

You think you're busy? The story of Kim Guillory and Joi Alicea, two highly motivated sisters who entered Grand Canyon University's doctoral program together, makes the most fervent workaholic look like a slacker and could inspire the most passionate preacher.

Guillory, 46, grew up as the oldest female child in a single-parent home, which meant the responsibility of helping raise the other four children fell to her. She then had six children, the first at age 18, and raised them largely on her own.

That didn't stop her from getting a

leadership skill instructor for six years for the United Association for Labor Education, and has lectured at four universities: Penn State, Rutgers, Massachusetts and Cornell.

She is the founder and past president of the Greatness of NW Spring affiliate of the National Council of Negro Women. She was voted Humanitarian of the Year by United Airlines and was listed in Who's Who in Black Houston. She is on so many different committees, has lectured in so many places and has attended so many conferences worldwide, it would take another page to list them all.

also is working on a doctor of education in organizational leadership with an emphasis in organizational development that she aims to earn from GCU in 2016.

And she does all this even though her kidneys operate at only 33 percent of capacity because of focal segmental glomerulosclerosis, a scarring of the kidney that has plagued her since childhood.

Mother knows best

How do they do it? Where do they get the energy? Talk with their mother, Brenda Guillory, and you get an education, just as they did. Both daughters make it clear that they're simply cut from the same cloth — Mom is the one who provided the sturdy fabric as she raised her two daughters and three sons in south-central Los Angeles.

"I gave them values, and it's all based around God," she says. "If you have belief in the living God, you do things differently from the rest of the world."

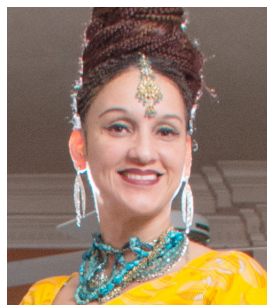
There were lots of rules. Clothes had to be "intelligent," which meant the girls couldn't wear pants. They couldn't wear makeup, either. There was no alcohol, no sugar, no drugs except aspirin. No smoking, of course. There sometimes was no hot water, either, although that wasn't by choice. They didn't eat meat. And they spent parts of Wednesday and Friday and all day Sunday in church.

"That's where I got my backup — in church," their mother says. "You don't go home and live another life."

The sisters talk fondly of those times, including the long Sundays in church, where Alicea did some preaching.

"It was just a way of life for us," she says. "It wasn't that we were forced to do it. I wouldn't change a thing."

Guillory's memory is that "we had a very nurturing, loving environment built around family."



Kim Guillory (left) is pursuing her doctoral degree even though she is an international flight attendant, teaches in a variety of venues and has six children. Her sister, Joi Alicea, has nine children and two jobs but nevertheless joined Guillory in the doctoral pursuit. LEFT PHOTO BY LEN BENNETT, THE LENNZ PHOTOGRAPHY; RIGHT PHOTO BY DARRYL WEBB

How do they do it? . . . "If you have belief in the living God, you do things differently from the rest of the world."

bachelor's in business management from LeTourneau University in Longview, Texas, and a master's in human sciences from Our Lady of the Lake University in San Antonio, where she also did Ph.D. coursework in leadership. Sometime this year, she plans to complete work on her doctor of philosophy in general psychology with an emphasis in cognition and instruction from GCU.

Guillory lives in Spring, Texas, near Houston, and has been a flight attendant for United Airlines for 24 years, the last 19 flying internationally. She has been a sociology adjunct professor for eight years, an advanced

Alicea, 41, and her husband, Edgard, have a baseball team in their Litchfield Park, Ariz., house — nine kids, all boys. Seven of them played football last fall, and two are in band.

Even though she was pregnant through most of her higher education, she still found a way to get a bachelor's in liberal studies from Xavier University in Cincinnati and an MBA from Thomas More College in Crestview Hills, Ky.

Alicea has been a Maricopa County adult probation officer for 12 years, and she has been in real estate for eight years and owns a brokerage that manages 64 properties. She

'Hustle mentality'

Brenda Guillory was so determined to make sure her children didn't get caught up in the street culture, her eldest daughter was home-schooled after she was assaulted by some local girls.

"When you have God in your life, you have extra energy to do the right things," Mom says, adding that the "right things" included how her children were expected to act in public: "We respect the law ... and it was enforced."

That energy, and all the positive qualities that went with it, rubbed off on both sisters.

"It was a hustle mentality, but more in a good way," Alicea says. "You do what you have to do to survive, but legally."

"I don't like to say much about it — my sister is more outspoken than I am. We were raised to be very modest. As my husband says when we watch some of those reality TV shows, 'That can't possibly be true.' But what we've done is true. It's just life."

Guillory is a walking, talking disciple of her mother's determination and makes it clear that, while getting her education required her to do things that most people would never even attempt, it was worth it — all of it.

"Having to suffer as a child and not being able to get the amenities others had motivates you to provide the very best for your children," she says. "I was able to get past the statistical issues and decide what I wanted to do as a woman and as a mother."

So what advice do the sisters have for anyone with a family who wants to go back to school? Alicea is quick to point out that the support of her husband has helped her get past the obvious obstacles and says modestly, "If I can do this, anyone can."

Guillory says, "Anything is possible through self-discipline. Don't believe what other people say about you. Believe in yourself. They can take from you physically, but they can never take your knowledge."

We saved the best for last. Brenda Guillory has 34 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren, and her 70th birthday party — a campout in Pomona, Calif., that grew from three days to five because they were having such a good time — included more than 100 people. She shuttles from her Los Angeles home to keep tabs on her family.

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Less than a month after graduating last fall from GCU, Marla Booker moved to Doha, Qatar, joining health professionals from around the world who are building a new hospital for women and children.

PHOTO BY HASSAN SHEIKH, SIDRA MEDICAL AND RESEARCH CENTER

Have Diploma, Will Travel

GCU graduate turns master's degree into an adventure in Qatar for her and her family

BY JANIE MAGRUDER

There are no tiny patients born too early for their own good, no new mothers wrung out with worry over their babies' ragged breaths, no nurses rushing to respond to jarring alarms in Marla Booker's new workplace.

In fact, the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) at Sidra Medical and Research Center, which Booker has been hired to help staff and run, isn't open yet. But there's still plenty for this Grand Canyon University alumna to do in a place that could not be more different from where she spent her entire adult life, as a wife, mother, nurse and hospital administrator.

In November, not 30 days after walking across the GCU Arena stage to accept her diploma for a master's degree in health care administration, Booker moved 6,600 miles from her longtime home in Connecticut to Qatar, a small, oil-rich nation on the coast of the Persian Gulf. Ending a 25-year career

at Connecticut Children's Medical Center in Hartford, she is helping create a state-of-the-art hospital for women and children in the capital city of Doha.

It was a bold move for anyone but especially for someone who, at age 47, never had traveled outside North America other than on a backpacking excursion to Thailand six years ago.

"That trip was the beginning of my realization there is so much out there I have not been exposed to that I really would like my kids to explore," she said. "I wanted to open up the world to them."

And Booker wanted to use her new degree. So, three days after Christmas Day, Marla, her husband, Jason, and three of their four children, Evan, 16, and 14-year-old twins, Ally and Liam, relocated to Qatar, the richest country in the world, according to Forbes. Son Kyle, 17, joined them in early February, days after meeting criteria for an

early high school graduation.

The family lives in a fully furnished, four-bedroom villa in a compound for Sidra employees, most of whom are from Australia and the United Kingdom. The Bookers are getting to know their new homeland, basking at the beach in early spring temperatures 30 degrees warmer than back home and marveling at the bustle of new construction. They've even ridden camels.

Such an adventure never would have been possible without GCU.

Finding a global purpose

Booker's nursing degree from the University of St. Joseph in West Hartford, Conn., gave her sufficient knowledge and skills to rise in her career over two decades, from nurse to assistant nurse manager to nurse manager to NICU director. But as health care began to change with technological advancements,

access and population growth, Booker knew she also needed to keep pace with innovation.

An Internet search led her to GCU's College of Nursing and Health Care Professions and an online degree that would accommodate her life and courses that would quench her thirst for learning. Booker enrolled for the fall semester in 2012 and studied hard for two years, taking only one two-week break.

"I felt the need to be prepared to understand and face the challenges of the future, and I felt this degree would open the door for opportunities within health care," she said.

Booker was right: Nine months into her program, she was contacted by a recruiter regarding the Sidra position, which required a master's degree. About a year later, after talking with her family and thoroughly investigating the schools, housing, culture and, well, life in Doha, she accepted the job. Her family was on board, as was the U.S. Secretary of State's office and the Qatari embassy, which had to sign off on her degree and background check.

But there was something special Booker wanted to do before heading east and that was go west, so she came to Phoenix in October to walk with her classmates at commencement.

Now that she has started her job, Booker is discovering the applicability of those GCU courses, in which she studied emerging health-care delivery models, the industry's policies, economics, legal and ethical principles, workforce management, leadership styles, business analyses and more.

"It's given me a very global perspective of health care and some very good basics in change theory, leadership models, the economics foundations," Booker said. "I'd say I use every day a bit of every course that I took through GCU. For example, we looked at international health care, which allowed me to get a big-picture glimpse at developing a whole new health-care model here."

She literally is helping build the hospital from the ground up, Skyping with nurses around the world (190 whom eventually will be hired by Sidra into the NICU and brought to Doha) and ironing out the differences in a global management team whose members possess myriad perspectives on health care.

"When you think about building a hospital, you have to think about the population you're going to serve, the equipment you're going to need, the team members you want to hire,

the infrastructure you need to have," she said. "People from different areas of the world all believe they do the best, the right thing. So a lot of what we're doing now is coming together to arrive at the best practices internationally and integrating them into our hospital."

Finding their place in a foreign land

The work week in Doha is Sunday through Thursday, and the day begins early, at sunrise. Booker and her husband, part of a Sidra team establishing the center's physical therapy department, walk outside their home in a gated compound to catch a bus to work.

The couple arrives at work at about 7 a.m. and is back home in time to have dinner with their children, something that rarely happened in Connecticut because of their schedules. They often swim together in a compound pool or go to the gym.

Sidra provides a stipend not only for the family's housing but also for the Booker children to attend a private school, Compass International. The school offers a rigorous curriculum, an ultramodern library with new computers and after-school activities such as soccer, boating and swimming. The Booker children have access to field trips that their mother could have only dreamed of, to mystical places such as Tanzania and Turkey, for example.

Qatar has many malls, with familiar stores such as Sephora and Gap, and markets, where the Bookers stock up on Coffee-mate and Eggo waffles. The malls are alongside traditional markets, or souqs, where goods have been traded for centuries.

Doha parks and beaches are beautiful, and the Bookers have jumped into Qatari culture. They attended a color run in January, when participants wore all white clothing and were doused with colored paint by organizers. And they've held falcons, which are very much part of Qatari culture.

"When I started talking about doing this, I got many different reactions from people. But now that we're here, you meet other like people who have transported their whole families or still have families back in the U.S., among other countries, and you suddenly feel like this is the norm, that what you're doing is normal," she said.

One thing that, for Booker, has taken a little getting used to is seeing the different ways that people dress, from black and white



About Qatar

This sovereign Arab state in southwestern Asia is nearly surrounded by the Persian Gulf. Qatar's population, which has almost tripled in 10 years, is estimated at 2.1 million with a majority living in the capital city of Doha. Arabic is the official language, but English is commonly used as a second language. Qatar's priorities, according to its emir, Sheik Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, are to advance health care and education and build infrastructure in preparation for hosting the 2022 World Cup. Falconry is a popular hobby in Qatar. The birds are allowed to travel in the cabins of many Middle Eastern airlines, usually hooded and tethered to their handlers' gloves.

(SOURCES: THE CIA WORLD FACTBOOK, QATAR STATISTICS AUTHORITY, DOHA NEWS)



robes to colorful abayas, outer robes worn by local and Muslim women. It is culturally sensitive for women to not show their knees and elbows in public, but in the Bookers' compound and similar places the restrictions are relaxed, and shorts and bathing suits by the pool are the norm.

The heat will be an adjustment, too, but as temperatures spike to 115 degrees in July and the Booker children get out of school, the family will take a multiweek "annual leave," a Qatari custom. They most likely will return to the U.S. to visit family and friends. Before that, however, a two-week spring break-like trip most likely will include a visit to Sri Lanka, 2,300 miles to the southeast near the tip of India.

"I never thought in a million years that I would be here, looking at these international places for travel," she said. "But here I am."

★ ★ ★ Hall of Fame ★ ★ ★

The University recently inducted into its Alumni Hall of Fame eight new members who were nominated by the colleges and athletics. Here's a snapshot of each:



The Smarts to Aid Global Health

Dr. Stephen Hall

Class of 1990

College of Science, Engineering and Technology

Dr. Stephen Hall studied chemistry at GCU back in the late 1980s, long before the Human Genome Project rocked the science world and molecular medicine became a field.

Since his graduation, Hall has become a pioneer in his field. He has started several biomedical companies and was part of a team at The Scripps Research Institute that invented and patented vaccine technology used to immunize people against Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and anthrax. Now he has a GCU Hall of Fame award.

"I'm flattered that people have followed my career and that I was chosen. I'm very thrilled and honored," said Hall, 59, of Lafayette, Ind.

He is the founder and chief executive and scientific officer at Pentamer Pharmaceuticals, which conducts research and develops

products in the areas of vaccines and biomaterials. Hall has a Ph.D. in biological sciences from Purdue University and completed post-doctoral training in molecular and structural biology at Scripps.

When he's not working on solutions to global health issues, Hall competes nationally in martial arts and is co-owner of a CrossFit and martial arts facility.

The U.S. Army veteran is the single father of three children and has a young grandchild.

He has fond memories of GCU. "I'll always cherish the times I spent there. New and Old Testament classes, Chapel twice a week, the ethics and strong, moral character of the people. There was a sense of community. Canyon was and always will be family."



Calvin Baker

Class of 1973

College of Education

Calvin Baker began his teaching career in an overcrowded room of fifth graders in Arizona's Peoria Unified School District. At age 26, he started his administrative career as principal of a school for Inuit children in northwestern Alaska.

Baker has come a long way in his 42-year career in education. He has been superintendent of the Vail (Ariz.) School District for more than 26 years.

Baker was president of the Arizona School Administrators Association. He has been recognized as Arizona Superintendent of the Year and Mentor of the Year by the Arizona Daily Star and received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Tucson/Pima Metropolitan Education Commission.



Horacio Llamas Grey

1994-96

Athletics

Horacio Llamas Grey was born in Mexico and moved to the United States as a teenager. After playing two years at Pima Community College in Tucson, Ariz., he played for GCU, where he was named NCAA Division II Player of the Year in his senior season.

Llamas Grey also earned First Team All-California Collegiate Athletic Association (CCAA) honors when he helped GCU win the CCAA Postseason Championship Tournament and a spot in the NCAA Division II Regionals.

After college, Llamas Grey played two seasons with the Phoenix Suns and in the top professional basketball league in Mexico. He is an assistant coach with the Pioneros de Quintana Roo, a pro team based in Cancun, Mexico.



Michael Kary

Class of 1998

College of Fine Arts and Production

Michael Kary is an instructor in the College of Fine Arts and Production at GCU. For the past 17 years, he also has worked as a professional actor and writer in New York, Los Angeles, San Diego and Phoenix.

Kary began his professional acting career at several theatres in Phoenix and San Diego and was accepted into The Old Globe, a Tony Award-winning theatre with a training program for actors.

He has performed in and around New York City and most notably as an original cast member in the musical "Fame on 42nd Street." He also cofounded Nobody in Particular, an award-winning production company, and has written and produced three television pilots, "Deal With It," "Little League" and "Surviving Out of Doors with Louis."



Watch a video about the new Alumni Hall of Fame members at gcu.edu/alumni and read more at news.gcu.edu.



A Heart for the World's Children

Maggie Kigen

Classes of 2010 and 2014

College of Nursing and Health Care Professions

Maggie Kigen was living in western Kenya 20 years ago when she came home from work one day and found a baby on her doorstep. His mother had died during the AIDS epidemic, and he was among many children orphaned by the disease.

Kigen wanted to care for all of them and felt called to start an orphanage, Eldama Ravine Children's Home. There was overwhelming support and the local government gave her the land to build it. Today, about 30 children live in the orphanage, and Kigen visits when she can.

Referring to her Hall of Fame honor, the 44-year-old Phoenix mother of five children and stepchildren said, "How does this happen with all the great people who have made so

much more of a difference than me? I count it a blessing."

Kigen is a nurse in the Intensive Care Unit at Maryvale Hospital in Phoenix, where the best part of her job is showing compassion for people at their most vulnerable. She also has worked with homeless ministries in downtown Phoenix and at South Peoria Baptist Church.

Kigen held three jobs in college and helped translate for GCU students from east Africa at the same time as she was raising her children. She said she will always be grateful to GCU for awarding her a scholarship to help her become a nurse.

"I came here by faith, and I had a lot of support," said Kigen, who plans later this month to visit Kenya to educate nurses there.



Mitchell Laird

Class of 1972

Colangelo College of Business

Mitchell Laird is owner and president of the law firm Laird & Associates, P.C. He is also the owner and CEO of MCL Enterprises, Inc., the largest Burger King franchise in Arizona.

Laird has a Juris Doctor from Arizona State University and an honorary Doctor of Law degree from GCU for his years of service as the University's general counsel, president of the Alumni Association and other roles. He is CEO of the nonprofit Canyon Institute, which awards grants and gifts to Christian organizations.

Laird has testified before Congress about Arizona immigration law and federal immigration reform. He is on the board of directors of the Arizona Chamber of Commerce & Industry and a commissioner on the Citizens Clean Elections Commission.



Dr. Timothy Sieges

Class of 1975

College of Humanities and Social Sciences

Dr. Timothy Sieges is clinical director of counseling ministries for Wycliffe Bible Translators, an international mission organization that translates and delivers Scripture to people around the world in a language and form they understand.

Since 1987, Sieges' work at Wycliffe has included counseling, consulting, leading workshops and seminars, conducting post-trauma debriefings and supporting the work of international missionaries.

He holds a master's degree in counseling from Montana State University and a doctorate in counselor education from the University of South Carolina. Sieges attributes his passion for God's Word, world missions and service to Christ to his undergraduate experience at GCU.



Dr. James White

Class of 1985

College of Theology

Dr. James White is director of Alpha and Omega Ministries, a Phoenix-based Christian apologetics organization.

White is an elder of the Phoenix Reformed Baptist Church and a professor, having taught Greek, systematic theology and various apologetics topics.

White has written or contributed to more than 24 books and is an accomplished debater, having participated in more than 140 moderated public debates, in places such as Australia, South Africa, Canada and England. He has debated alongside leading proponents of Roman Catholicism, Islam, Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormonism as well as critics such as Bart Ehrman, John Dominic Crossan, Marcus Borg and John Shelby Spong.

LOPE LOVE

A special edition of Class Notes

Eyes only for each other

No matter the day of the week nor the time of year, L.E. “Sharky” Baker never gets tired of sitting at the breakfast table, reading from the Bible and working the Jumble. Best of all, it is there that he has gazed, most every day for nearly 58 years, at the beautiful face of his beloved.

“It’s just a good feeling to get up every day and sitting across from me is the woman I love,” said Baker (Class of 1956) who has been married to his sweetheart, Leona (Class of 1962), since Aug. 3, 1957.

When the pair first met in 1954 at Grand Canyon University, then known as Grand Canyon College, Sharky was enrolled on a basketball scholarship, wrote a sports column for the school newspaper, worked on the yearbook staff and was a janitor in the dorms. He was the oldest of six children and the first in his family to go to college.

Leona (Wood) came from Colorado and wanted to become a missionary. She worked in the cafeteria, one of a handful of buildings to accommodate 600 students, including a dorm each for the men and women. It was outside Leona’s dorm that Sharky spotted her. He was smitten.

“It took awhile for her to come around,” he said.

“The Lord changed my direction,” she said. “I realized that I could be a missionary anywhere I could share Christ’s love. Through prayer, I just knew it was OK.”

They married, and Sharky began a career in education, starting as a teacher, then advancing to principal and superintendent. He is a past president of the GCU Alumni Association and in 2012 was named “Alumni of the Quarter.” Sharky credits his success to having Leona, who has a degree in elementary education, by his side.

Leona said his best qualities are patience, generosity, honesty, dependability and love. Sharky describes her as supportive, sacrificial and “most of all, beautiful.”

They have enough memories to last another lifetime, having raised two children, and enjoying four granddaughters (all are GCU alumni) and three great-grandchildren, with two more on the way. What they started apparently is contagious: To date, more than 70 Bakers and members of the extended family have graduated from GCU.



L.E. “Sharky” and Leona Baker



Charles Baker, B.S. in Elementary Education, '57, and Alice Baker, B.S. in Elementary Education, '54, met at a GCU basketball game. Charles was sitting on one of the benches and Alice and her friends sat behind him and visited throughout the game. Charles asked Alice to attend the Sweetheart Banquet with him on Valentine’s Day in 1953, and that’s when they became sweethearts. A year later, on Valentine’s Day, Charles asked Alice to marry him. They were married in 1955 and are celebrating their 60th anniversary this spring.



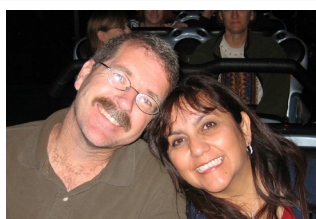
James Carter, B.S. in Physical Education, '57, and Ginger Carter, B.S. in English and Physical Education, '58, knew each other as friends until January 1955, when James asked Ginger on a date. In March, after James had been away with the basketball team in California, Ginger missed him. When the team returned and Ginger saw him again, she realized she wanted to be a part of wherever he might be going. James asked Ginger to marry him at the Sweetheart Banquet, and they were married in March.



Watch a video about the Bakers and read other Lope Love stories at www.gcu.edu/classnotes.



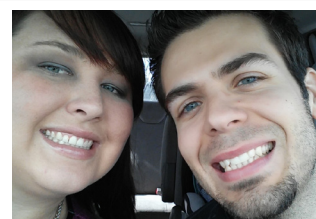
Douglas Baker, B.S. in Physical Education, '59, and Patsy Baker, B.S. in Elementary Education, '59, met in 1956. At first, Douglas wasn't really Patsy's type, but she grew to like him as an athletic, tall and "really good looking, however, too witty" guy. Patsy watched Douglas play baseball and basketball games at GCU and they attended campus events and church together. Eventually they fell in love and shared their vows on Feb. 21, 1957. They have three children, including GCU alumni Robin Baker, '80, and Keith Baker, '82.



Alan Merrill, B.S. in Business Administration, '84, and Patricia Merrill, B.A. in Behavioral Science, '86, met in 1981 at a GCU baseball game. Patricia was sitting at the end of the bleachers with some friends when Alan tripped on his flip-flop and landed on Patricia. Patricia jokes that's when he truly "fell for her." They had a lot of the same classes and study groups and became friends, played sports, went to church and hung out. They were married in August 1984 and are the parents of three kids.



Steven Heller, B.S. in Corporate Fitness and Wellness, '98, and Kelly Heller, B.S. in Corporate Fitness and Wellness, '98, met at freshman orientation. Steven saw Kelly standing in line getting her photo ID and tried to time it so they took their photo at the same time. He eventually got to meet her, asked her on a group date and, fortunately for Steven, no one else showed up. They married in 1998 and have two boys who love coming to the alumni tailgates and GCU basketball games.



Brandon Hays, B.A. in Graphic Design, '06, and Makyla Hays, B.S. in Mathematics, '05, met at GCU Preview Days in 2002 when they were seniors in high school. Brandon was from Tucson, Ariz., and Makyla was from Sacramento, Calif. They hit it off the first night and spent the whole time together. They kept in touch and emailed for the next six months until they became GCU freshmen. They began dating in October and were engaged in June 2003. They have been married almost 10 years and have twin boys.



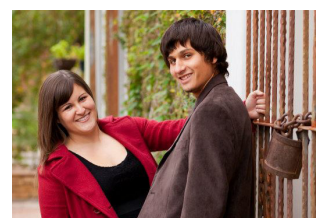
Keith Henze, B.S. in Business Administration, '82, and Lori Henze, B.S. in Nursing, '84, met when Lori complimented Keith on his 1978 blue Firebird Formula 400. Keith tossed her the keys and invited Lori to drive it. Lori declined, but Keith insisted, saying, "How about tomorrow before Chapel?" The next day, Lori went on a ride with Keith and fell in love with the car. They married on Aug. 20, 1982. Keith is now restoring another 1978 Firebird Trans Am. Keith and Lori are still madly in love.



Len Keso, B.A. in Communications, '87, and Michelle Keso, B.A. in Communications, '87, met during freshman orientation week. They dated the first two years of college and as juniors took a class that included a trip to the Grand Canyon. They hiked down the canyon, and Len took Michelle to a spot by the Colorado River to propose. They married the following January and enjoyed the rest of their time on campus as a married couple. Their son is a GCU student, and their daughter is enrolling in the fall.

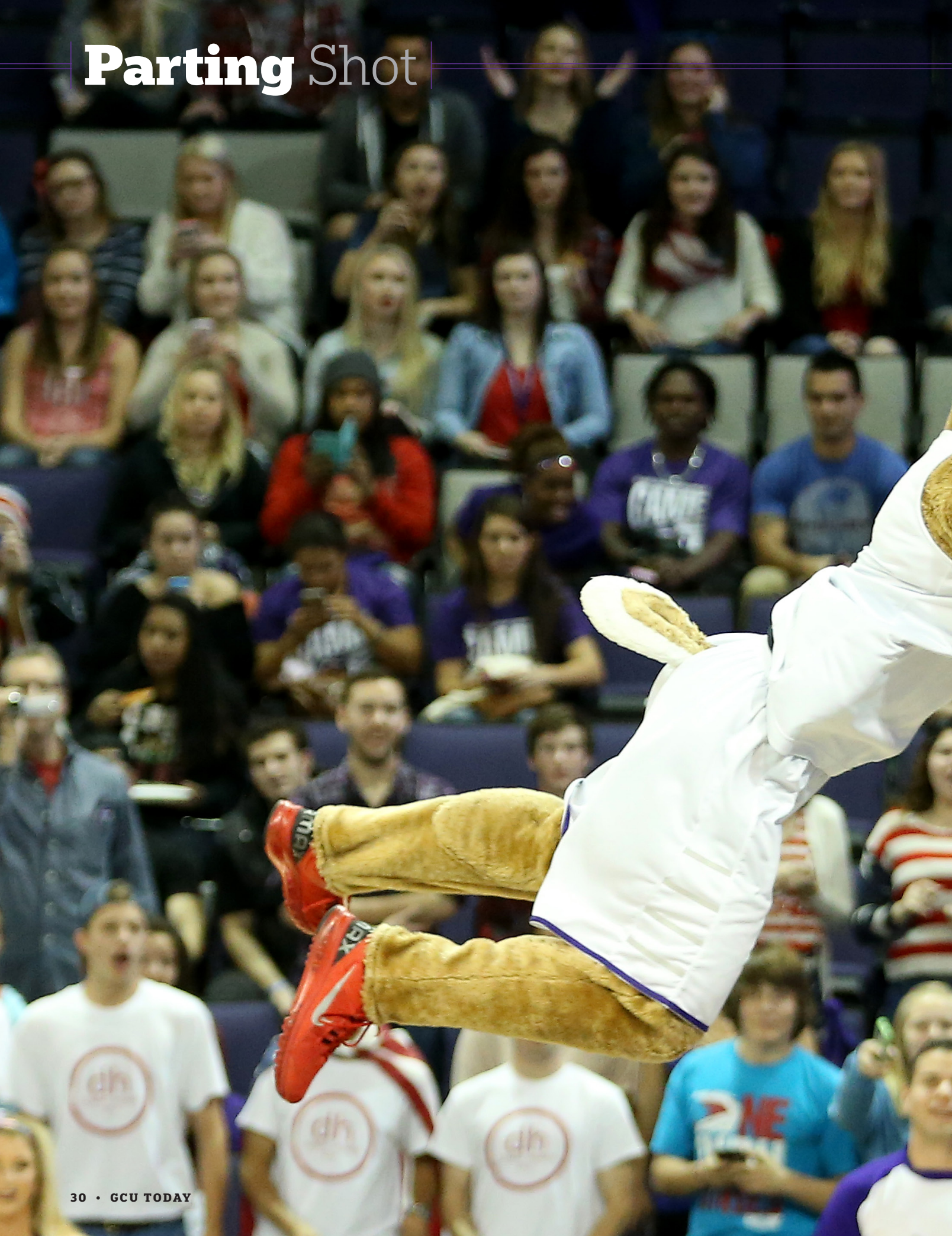


Nathan Johnson, B.S. in Secondary Education, '03, and Emily Johnson, B.A. in International Studies, '02, met during a GCU baseball game. Emily was taking photos of the baseball team, and they introduced themselves by the dugout. Nathan later saw Emily in the library and they talked about her trip to a crocodile farm in South Africa. The next week, Nathan sat down next to her and pulled out the photos from when he, too, went to a crocodile farm in Kenya. They married 10 months later.



Anthony Whitlatch, B.A. in Christian Studies, '12, and Karissa Whitlatch, B.S. in Athletic Training, '11, played for the GCU men's and women's soccer teams and met during strength and conditioning practice. Karissa was discussing a skiing trip she was taking over spring break and invited Anthony to go along with her and her family. A week after the trip, they started dating and married in 2012. They have taken mission trips around the world, including to India, China, Mexico and Kosovo. They are in classes together at Phoenix Seminary.

Parting Shot





Thunder in the heavens

We already knew that GCU has a mascot who's anything but average, but Thunder took his game to another level during a basketball game this season in the Arena. While there's no truth to the rumor that our favorite Lope registered on local radar screens, witnesses will attest to the fact that, for the first time in their lives, they saw an antelope fly.

PHOTO BY DARRYL WEBB



UPCOMING EVENTS



2015
Arizona Karate Championship
and USA National Qualifier
March 8

Tales from the
Dugout

*Personal inspiring stories
of encouragement,
hope and faith from
Major League Baseball Stars*

March 15

GCU GUILD
Gala

Dinner Theatre
Silent and Live Auctions
*Proceeds benefit
GCU students*

March 22 | 3 p.m.

LAUGH 4 HOPE

Bringing Hope to the Community through Laughter
a comedy night fundraiser

April 11

PROMISE  **KEEPERS**

April 17 - 18

CHRIS TOMLIN
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WITH SPECIAL GUESTS
TENTH AVENUE NORTH
& REND COLLECTIVE

April 19
7p.m.



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WEAVE

May 14



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