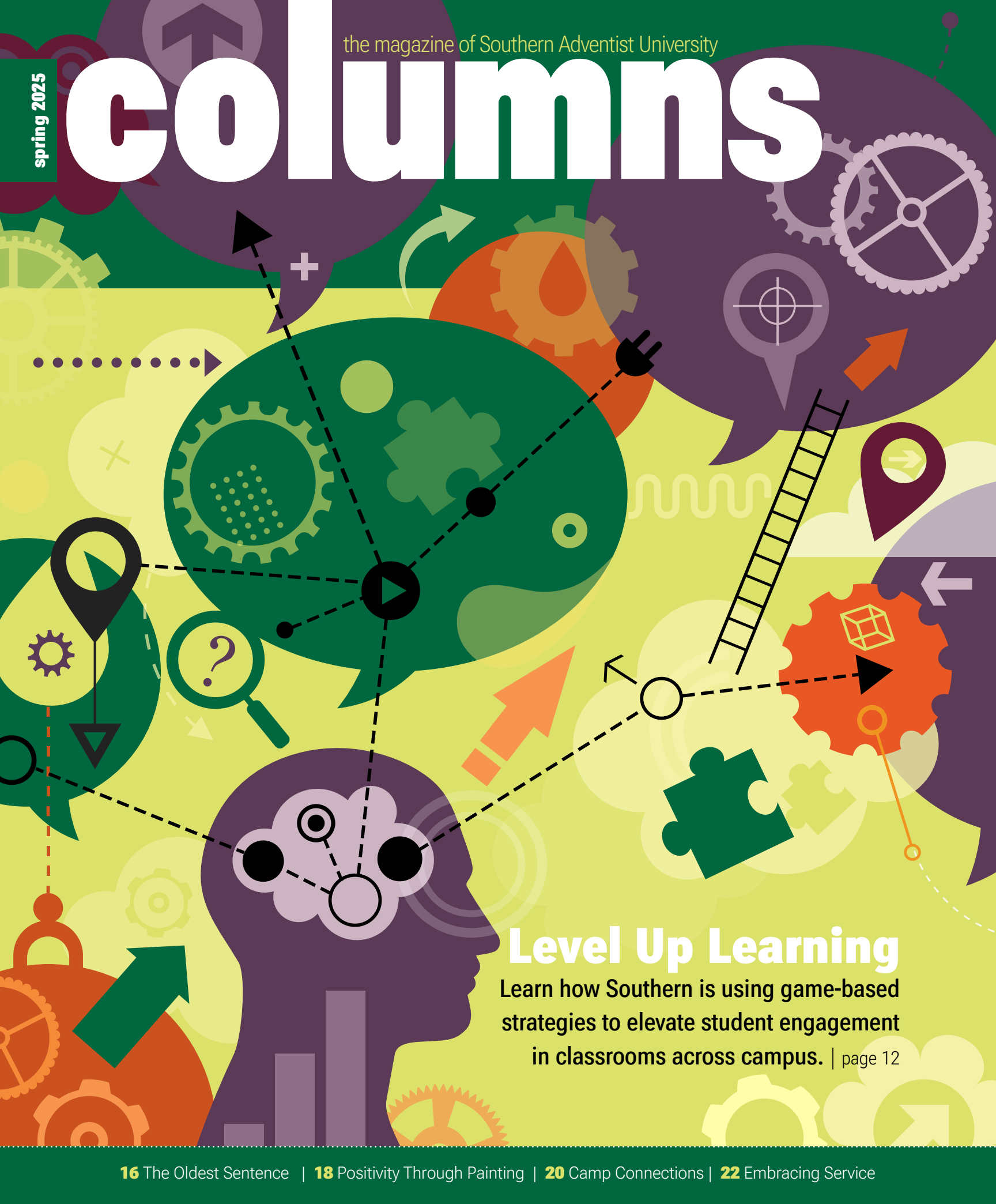


spring 2025

the magazine of Southern Adventist University

columns



Level Up Learning

Learn how Southern is using game-based strategies to elevate student engagement in classrooms across campus. | page 12



Photo: Mila Bales

Record Undergraduate Enrollment

Southern has experienced record growth for the past several years. Last year marked the induction of the largest freshman class in Southern's history, and this academic year, the university hosted its largest undergraduate class, totaling 2,929 students in Fall 2024. "Our reputation of excellent faculty, robust academic programs, and a vibrant Christian environment has attracted students from far and near," shares Ken Shaw, '80, EdD, president. "We are excited to see so many desiring to grow academically and spiritually, and we know God will use them in His service."

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Cover: Games tap into people's natural desires for achievement, making these tools a fun and effective method for learning. Illustration: istockphoto.com.

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A Day of Impact: Scenes from MLK Service Day 2025

Approximately 1,000 Southern students, employees, and alumni continued the university's long-standing tradition of honoring Martin Luther King Jr. through service to the community in January. The tradition began in 1993 with the university's first MLK Service Day and continues to garner enthusiastic support.

1: Southern volunteers gather for a group photo before dispersing to assist nearly 50 organizations in the Chattanooga area on January 20.

2: President Ken Shaw, '80, EdD, works constructing beds at the Sleep in Heavenly Peace warehouse in Chattanooga for children in need of a place to sleep.

3: Amelia Canale, freshman social work major, portions out bags of pet food for animals at McKamey Animal Center.

4: Jon Aitchison (center), junior computer science major, and Catarina Falcao (center right), senior social work major, stuff envelopes for Child Impact International, a local nonprofit helping fight against the exploitation of children.

5: Joseph Manzanillo, senior web and new media design major, stocks shelves at the Feed My Sheep food pantry on campus, which is run by the School of Social Work.

6: Tiara Palar, sophomore health science major, visits with a senior resident at Morning Pointe Senior Living in Collegedale, while giving her a manicure.

7: Cason Marr, junior business administration major, sorts through clothes at the Samaritan Center in nearby Ooltewah.

8: Isabel Adams, freshman psychology major, colors a card with a cheeful note inside that will be shared with someone who needs encouragement.

9: Pedro Rodrigues (left), freshman nursing major, and Julian Mancebo, freshman accounting major, sort through books as part of library renovations at the AIM Center, a nonprofit offering community for adults with mental illness.

10: Despite chilly January temperatures, volunteers still braved the cold to help with some landscaping at Chambliss Center for Children in Chattanooga.



Photo: Joseph Hyde

1



Photo: Daniel Zhao

2



Photo: Mila Bales

3



Photo: Preston Waters

4



Photo: Preston Waters

5



Photo: Mila Bales

6



Photo: Daniel Zhao

7



Photo: Mila Bales

8



Photo: Laron Matheson

9



Photo: Laron Matheson

10

Giving Day Unites Generations to Support Students

From April 2–3, Southern celebrated its annual Giving Day, with more than 1,000 alumni, parents, employees, students, and friends rallying to make a difference. Together, they raised \$333,585 across more than 30 campaigns, all with one purpose: to enrich the student experience.

Giving Day was more than just a fundraiser; it was a movement of joy, generosity, and shared purpose. Alumni from across the country wrote in to share why they gave. One donor, a 1994 graduate, says, “Giving back is one way I can thank Southern for shaping who I am today.” Another alum, giving from overseas, shares,

“Even far from campus, I’m still part of the Southern family.”

Academic departments rose to the challenge, competing for bonus prizes based on donor participation. The School of Nursing claimed first place, earning a \$6,000 prize with 164 donors and raising \$17,775 to help purchase state-of-the-art simulation equipment. Applied Technology came in second, securing an additional \$4,000 with 144 donors and raising an impressive \$78,861 to support hands-on learning and innovation. Other standout performers included Student Missions, which saw a remarkable 253% increase in donors compared to last year.

Uniting people of all ages and backgrounds, Giving Day is proof that no matter where you are in life, you can make a difference for Southern students. Whether a student is giving for the first time or a long-time supporter is returning to invest once more, every gift tells a story of commitment to Southern’s mission.

During Giving Day, the Southern community came together to write the next chapter of this meaningful tradition, one filled with purpose, promise, and blessings for Southern students. ■

— Sandra Araújo-Delgado,
associate director of Annual Giving



» by the numbers

448+

gifts and pledges have been contributed to the School of Business Leadership and Innovation Campaign.

4,422

appointments were held at the Tutoring Center during the Fall 2024 semester.

23

consecutive years is how long Southern has been identified in the U.S. News & World Report “Best Colleges” rankings.

98%

of full-time undergraduate students at Southern are receiving financial aid.

17

Canaanite letters make up the oldest sentence showcased in the Lynn H. Wood Archaeological Museum this semester (see p. 16-17).

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full-time faculty dedicate their time and energy to the spiritual growth and academic success of our students.

Southern Students Wave Biology Flags Worldwide

Students and alumni in the Biology and Allied Health Department at Southern are creating community by photographing its biology flag in locations around the world. As many travel the globe, they take a flag along, then upload and share a photo with the flag and a description on a dedicated webpage, creating a fun way to connect and share stories.

Professor Ben Thornton, PhD, began the photo webpage in 2023 as a creative way to showcase the department and promote belonging among students and alumni. “There are so many fun stories we can share,” Thornton says. “It’s great to see our students and alumni holding the department flag in so many diverse locations. We’ve had amazing participation so far, and it’s also been a beneficial way to connect alumni with the university and spread the word about Southern.”

Friends of Southern have joined students and alumni in posting more than 260 photos with the flag in many countries—Canada, Jordan, Ireland, and the Republic of Korea, to name a few—with more being uploaded frequently.

In one entry, Ethan Vitorovich, sophomore biology major, poses with the flag in a recently discovered ice cave in Vatnajökull National Park in Iceland.

In another, Minha Yang, senior biology major, holds the flag along with friends at a meetup of former and current student missionaries in Bolivia.

Dalton Baldwin, junior biology major, visited Chiricahua National Monument in Arizona, which is home to beautiful rock formations and the Southwestern Research Station, a biological field station for scientists and students.

Esther Cruzado, freshman biology major, shared a photo of herself and friends Natalie Pak, sophomore chemistry major, and Laura Prado, freshman biology major, with the biology flag during a March 2025 medical mission trip to Peru.

“During our mission trip, we had the privilege to provide both medical and dental care to the people of Peru,” Cruzado writes. “Not only did we bring physical healing, but we tried to bring spiritual healing as well by praying with each patient and hosting Vacation Bible School for the kids and teaching them about the love of Jesus. This trip was truly a memorable experience, a tremendous learning opportunity, and a great reminder to me of why I want to be a doctor one day!”

Thornton shares, “Our students and alumni travel widely, and this initiative allows them to share their journeys with the department and highlight the places



Ethan Vitorovich, sophomore biology major, poses with the flag in a recently discovered ice cave in Vatnajökull National Park in Iceland.

they’ve visited around the world. It’s really a fun social thing that helps to tie alumni and others into the department. It’s fun to see ‘Southern Biology’ displayed across the world.”

Thornton is also willing to send flags to community members. Simply email benthornton@southern.edu to request one once travel plans are set.

Find more photos of the biology flag at southern.edu/columns. ■

— Anaya Miller,
senior English and art double major

Southern Partners With Community College in Georgia for Adult Learning

Southern Adventist University and Georgia Northwestern Technical College (GNTC) have developed an academic and educational partnership for GNTC students to enroll in the online Adult Degree Completion (ADC) program at Southern.

"We are thrilled to provide this opportunity to students at GNTC, equipping them to thrive in a fluid job market," says Ken Shaw, '80, EdD, Southern president. "This partnership creates a smooth pathway for entering our online ADC program, allowing students to seamlessly pursue their educational goals."

The five-year agreement, which went into effect March 1, will allow GNTC students who have not previously completed a four-year program to earn a bachelor's degree online through Southern's ADC program, which is specifically designed to be fully online with flexible learning options for working adults.

Additionally, students may be eligible to earn college credit through an assessment based on prior work and learning experience.

"Southern's program gives adult learners the opportunity to achieve their goals by completing their degrees,

enabling them to secure better-paying jobs and provide a better life for their families. We are excited to partner with GNTC in this endeavor," says Cynthia Wright, director of the ADC program.

Bachelor's degrees available through the program include business management, communication, integrative studies, nursing, and psychology.

Wright shares that new offerings in the future would be based on student needs, "because they are the reason this program exists." ■

— Becky Brooks, '03, editorial manager



Pamela (Krishingner) Burchard, '88 and '24, receives her diploma from President Ken Shaw, '80, as she graduates from the Adult Degree Completion program with a bachelor's degree in business management.

Photo: Joseph Hyde

Enrollment Jumps for Master of Arts in Teaching



Photo: Staff

Jasmine Johnson is an associate professor and the program director for the Master of Arts in Teaching graduate program.

Southern's Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program has grown quickly since its introduction in Fall 2022, attracting students from across the country who are seeking certification and excellence in the art of teaching.

Beginning with three students, enrollment in the MAT program jumped by 15 students the following fall semester. In Fall 2024, 34 students were exploring classroom management techniques while fine-tuning a philosophy of teaching, far exceeding projected numbers.

"In response to the nationwide teacher shortage, our program is one of the best methods for teachers to become certified," shares Jasmine Johnson, EdS, EdD, program director and associate professor in Southern's School of Education, Psychology, and Counseling. "Paraprofessionals, substitute teachers, and those switching careers can all learn to

manage and support their own classrooms." For previously certified teachers, the MAT helps meet continuing education requirements and can lead to new opportunities and wage increases.

Johnson explains how being fully online is one of the benefits of Southern's MAT. "Graduate students often have families and full-time jobs. Having access to a degree that individuals can work into their schedule is super convenient," she says.

Another key element that sets Southern's program apart is its Christ-centered focus. "Students learn how to become the teachers God has called them to be," Johnson says. "We encourage each other to emulate God's role as Master Teacher while also desiring to walk in His ministry and purpose. Our students are equipped not only with the knowledge of best practices in the classroom but also with the tools to teach others about Christ." ■

— Chehalis Eno, senior English major

School of Business Students Excel

Students in Southern's School of Business have been working hard in competitions and tackling projects simulating real-world business scenarios, both regionally and worldwide. Take a look at some of their most notable recent rankings below.

• 99th Percentile in Marketplace

Simulation: In a startup company simulation for the International Business course, a Southern team placed first out of the five locally competing teams and finished in the 99th percentile of more than a million teams worldwide.

• Three Top 50 Performers in Business

Strategy Challenge: Out of 685 teams from 58 colleges and universities worldwide, three Southern student teams earned the ranking of Global Top 50 Performers for their GLO-BUS business strategy simulations during the week of June 17-23, 2024.

• Second in CFA Institute Research

Challenge: Southern's finance students placed second among the 10 participating colleges and universities in the Greater Tennessee Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) Institute Research Challenge in 2024.

• **Battle of the Brains Finalist:** At the Hispanic-Serving Institution Battle of the Brains, Southern made it to the finals along with six other teams after formulating and presenting strategies to solve a business challenge presented at the start of the event.

Southern's \$24 million School of Business Leadership and Innovation Campaign will support a new building and program endowment that benefits students in endeavors like these. You can stay current on construction progress at the Ruth McKee School of Business and watch a livestream of the building site at southern.edu/gobusiness. ■

Running God's Marathon

By Alexis Dewey, '24

Cameron Guild, sophomore nursing major, has pursued two long-standing interests: athletics and mission work. At 11 years old, he knew that God wanted him to be a medical missionary. In high school, he got involved with athletics. With an intense training routine, he completed several half-marathons and one half-Ironman. He had also begun training for the Boston Marathon when he realized that God wanted him to run a different race—one of strengthening his faith, which prepared him for unexpected health challenges and his goal to become a missionary.

Surrendering to God

Guild was marathon training when he went on a medical mission trip to Bolivia in 2021. On New Year's Eve during the trip, he went to a chapel and prayed, "Lord, is there anything you want me to surrender? I'm willing to surrender anything to You." As Guild was praying, still wearing his running shoes after finishing several miles, he heard God asking him to give up running and devote that time to Him. "It was almost like an arrow hit my heart," Guild says. He remembers thinking, "I can't do that. It's too hard."

"I was sitting there shaking, but I knew I had just told God I would give Him anything. So, I took off my running shoes, laced them up, and handed them to God. It was that moment when I realized God had something more for me than I could have planned myself," he says.

The next morning, instead of going for a run, Guild dedicated his time to studying the Bible. "All this time I was seeking a deeper faith experience because I knew that God needed to grow in me a stronger reliance in Him and not in myself," he says. "I realized that when I surrender, God empowers me to live a life of faith and power I never knew I could live." Little did he realize how important this would become during the following year.



An avid runner, Cameron Guild decided to devote to God the time he spent training for races.

Relying on God

In the summer of 2022, Guild decided to work as a colporteur, canvassing neighborhoods with books to introduce people to God. Halfway through the summer, he was praying and again surrendered everything to God. Only 15 minutes later, he had a medical emergency, became paralyzed, and was rushed to the emergency room.

"I was laid on the CT scanner thinking, 'Okay, is this the end?'" Guild recalls. Then he felt something hit him in the heart, similar to the feeling of an arrow back when he had surrendered running to God. After feeling those pangs, he was able to walk again and released from the hospital.

Later that weekend, he had three strokes and three seizures, becoming paralyzed once more. "I was in very critical condition, and we didn't know what was happening," Guild says. Thankfully, he improved and regained control of his body, though he has had ongoing care for medical concerns.

Guild credits his recovery to a miracle of God and his resilience to a cultivated faith in God. "If I hadn't given up running back then, I wouldn't have been able to accept those feelings of helplessness," he shares, believing his faith has helped him deal with precarious health.

Growing With God

"God continues to convict me to remove things from my life and replace them with ministry opportunities and people who will help me grow into a godly man," Guild says. His passion for evangelism and desire to be a missionary led him to the Soul-winning And Leadership Training (SALT) program, a collaboration between Southern and It Is Written.

"It was a launch pad for me, both academically and spiritually," he shares. "Southern has inspired and equipped me with experiences, opportunities, and mentors who have led me closer to God. I've grown so much mentally, spiritually, and physically by studying here. When I graduate from Southern, I know I will be confident, competent, and at my full potential."

With the experiences and life lessons he has learned, Guild now feels that he is running the race God wants him to complete. "The reward at the end of this marathon is so much greater than a trophy or a medal," he says. "It will be a heavenly crown." ■



Topping Out Celebration

Staff, alumni, students, and community members participated in a topping out ceremony on March 5 by signing one of the final beams for the new Ruth McKee School of Business building. President Ken Shaw, '80, EdD, signs his name along with Stephanie Sheehan, '05, PhD, dean of the School of Business and AdventHealth Chair for Business Administration. The School of Business is the second-largest academic area at Southern, with 465 students currently enrolled. The new building will increase its space from 9,000 square feet to approximately 53,000 square feet, providing valuable room for students to learn.

LEVEL UP LEARNING

by Chehalis Eno,
senior English major

gamification *noun*

/gā-mə-fə-'kā-shən/

the process of adding games or gamelike elements to something (such as a task) to encourage participation

PROFESSORS AT SOUTHERN HAVE BEEN IMPLEMENTING GAME-DRIVEN APPROACHES IN CLASSROOMS ACROSS CAMPUS, FINDING THAT THESE HELP STUDENTS REMEMBER EDUCATIONAL CONTENT MORE THOROUGHLY, ENCOURAGE HEIGHTENED PARTICIPATION, AND ADVANCE LEARNING EXPERIENCES.

Professors at Southern regularly incorporate best practices into their curriculums, including innovative tools such as game-based learning, gamification, and other techniques that harness the intrigue and fun of games, encouraging students to commit their full attention to their academic pursuits.

“Game-based learning puts the game first and includes learning as part of it, while gamification puts learning first and incorporates game elements second,” explains Matthew Tolbert, '01 and '05, PhD, professor in the School of Education, Psychology, and Counseling and director for the Center for Learning Innovation and Research (CLIR). For example, using the board game Settlers of Catan to teach supply and demand would utilize game-based learning, while incorporating competition into a course learning activity would gamify it.

“It was something I looked forward to because the game aspect meant it didn’t feel like homework.”

“These methods can be implemented to increase student engagement, getting them invested in the content beyond the classroom,” Tolbert says.

Crafting a Unique Narrative

Tolbert is all in on game-based learning and has built an entire world for his Psychology of Personal and Social Adjustment course. At the beginning of the semester, students are divided into competing teams in the world of Psychovia. They travel to the lands of Resilience, Insight, and Empowerment, completing assignments branded as trials to build a weapon capable of taking down the world’s villain. In the game, students earn points separate from their grades that can be turned in for hoodies, stickers, and other prizes. Each aspect of the experience increases student engagement based on the tools used by industry game developers to increase retention.

“Because it’s a different world, the game has given a different perspective to many of the issues we’ve talked about in class,” shares Maddy Brower, freshman communication major. “As someone who enjoys writing and inventing worlds of my own, this class is a delight.”

“Students still learn all of the content they need, but I’m able to generate interest beyond ‘book learning’ by crafting this unique narrative,” Tolbert explains. Each student earns a traditional grade for completing assignments and assessments.



Creating Possibilities

More and more professors at Southern are recognizing the merits of game integration. Marc Boyson, associate professor in the School of Visual Art and Design, uses Minecraft, a popular sandbox video game, to emphasize both the structural and performative aspects of his course 3D Foundations–Form and Time.

“There are a variety of materials we get to explore in Minecraft that we don’t have access to physically,” Boyson says. “We can’t just go out and build a giant structure, typically, so the game’s building project raises unique questions about art for us to consider.”

Marcus Henry, sophomore graphic design major, explains one aspect of the course: “Professor Boyson wants to see how our brain interprets his prompts as an exercise of creativity.” For example, students used Minecraft to represent a deconstructed cube and to record a creative presentation of their build. “The project made me stretch my thinking in ways I hadn’t previously,” Henry recalls. “It was something I looked forward to, because the game aspect meant it didn’t feel like homework.”

In another course, Boyson asked students to probe the capacity and boundaries of artificial intelligence’s imaginative abilities. “If it’s a tool, I want students to use it,” he says. “I expect them to test the limits of what is available.”



Costumed students reenact history in class as part of the Reacting to the Past game-based learning activity in the History Department.

“These methods can be implemented to increase student engagement, getting them invested in the content beyond the classroom.”

"I've found that students gain and retain more from in-depth interactive games than they do from conventional surface-level lectures."

Teaching the Next Generation

Teacher education director and assistant professor Chanda Daggs, PhD, shows her students how to incorporate games into their future classrooms in the course Teaching with Technology.

"We learn about the psychological factors behind a game's success, such as motivation, rewards and punishments, and instant gratification," she explains. "Technology is one of the key resources for implementing gamified elements in a classroom."

Students practiced by designing a game for fifth-graders who tour Southern's Lynn H. Wood Archaeological Museum. Samantha Fullmer, senior English major, took Daggs' class and visited the museum when the featured exhibit was *Peace and War: The Assyrian Conquest of Lachish*.

Through a matching game, she taught elementary students about the tunnel that was dug by hand under the Israelite city of Lachish during a siege waged by the Assyrians. "The museum project was one of my favorites in the class," she says. "Seeing how engaged the kids were was super fun, and it was great knowing they were also learning the history on display."

Changing the Dynamic

Michael Weismeyer, '03, PhD, recent chair of the History and Political Studies Department, has been a proponent for game-based learning on campus, regularly using the award-winning game series *Reacting to the Past* in his classes. In these games, students act out historic events in

groups during class, leading them to focus more acutely on what they are learning and to bring history to life.

"Reacting to the Past allows students to step into the shoes of different historical figures to learn how and why history happened," Weismeyer shares. "I've found that students gain and retain more from in-depth interactive games than they do from conventional surface-level lectures."

Mikaila Santana, junior graphic design major, participated in a *Reacting to the Past* game about the plague in Norwich, run by Lisa (Clark) Diller, '96, PhD, interim chair of the History and Political Studies Department, in the History of England course. "The game made the history much more memorable while keeping it fun," Santana shares. "I made connections with classmates while playing it, and I felt much more comfortable in the classroom."

These games add a unique personal element, allowing students to step out of their traditional academic roles and reenact history. "I've seen students—who otherwise would have been sitting quietly in the back—present really impressive speeches prompted by games," Weismeyer adds. "Gamification

changes the dynamic of a class by requiring students to get invested, and that also brings them closer together."

Scott Kabel, '08, adjunct instructor in the English Department, also believes in the power of games to augment education. "They are the perfect veil for learning," he quips. "But games go much deeper than academic content." Kabel has seen games provide opportunities for healthy debate where "the feelings are real, but the stakes are lower at the table. We can work through those issues and feelings together and still be friends when the game is over."

Exploring Connections

In 2024, Wiesmeyer asked CLIR to conduct a study on the impact of classroom games on students' religious perspectives. He and Tolbert both noticed a gap in research regarding the impact of playing games on spiritual viewpoints, creating the perfect opportunity for a new research project.

Weismeyer's course Introduction to the History of Science was chosen as the arena for the research, because it utilizes two naturalistic *Reacting*

"They even applied the games to their personal lives in ways that we had not expected."

to the *Past* games allowing students to reenact important debates between faith and science.

To gather the study's data, students in the class were separated into focus groups that conferenced with a professor about how each game session had impacted their thinking on its themes. CLIR then processed the data and analyzed it for trends.

The results of the study clearly affirmed the benefits of game-based learning, showing that it helped students grasp the concepts more thoroughly—in this case strengthening their faith and prompting deeper study of their beliefs. "Students expressed how the games had made them think critically about their beliefs and really engage with their faith," Weismeyer



Maps and illustrations help increase engagement as students journey through a game-based land in one of Tolbert's psychology courses.

notes. "They even applied the games to their personal lives in ways that we had not expected."

Integrating Gamification

In partnership with the Center for Innovation and Research in Computing and the School of Visual Art and Design on campus, Tolbert's team at CLIR is helping create a game-based engagement management system for Southern students.

The new software will integrate with the university's learning management system, eClass, and allow students to view their grades, take quizzes, and turn in homework within a game environment. Tolbert has received several grants for the project totaling approximately \$85,000.

"We're basing our strategies for the system on solid research and science," Tolbert says. "The goal is that the game dynamic will result in higher engagement and encourage students not only to complete basic tasks such as turning in homework but also to learn at a deeper and more sustained level."

Learning for a Lifetime

Education is an evolving field with new methodologies constantly emerging, and Southern's professors are committed to recognizing proven new methods. By incorporating game-driven strategies into their classrooms while validating the effectiveness of the tools, faculty are teaching students to seek knowledge outside the standard classroom, creating learning habits that will last a lifetime. ■

Visit southern.edu/columns to listen to a podcast episode from Southern's Center for Innovation and Research in Computing about integrating game-based learning into an academic environment.



THE OLDEST SENTENCE

by Michael Hasel, PhD, professor of archaeology and director of the Lynn H. Wood Archeological Museum

Southern's campus is the only place in the United States where visitors were able to see the oldest complete alphabetic sentence ever found.

Uncovered by Southern archaeologists, the inscribed ivory lice comb was featured in *The New York Times* and *Smithsonian* as well as by CNN and BBC. This small but linguistically valuable artifact was also named the No. 1 discovery in biblical archaeology by *Christianity Today* in 2022. In partnership with the Israel Antiquities Authority and The Israel Museum, the comb dating to approximately 1700 B.C. was on display in the Lynn H. Wood Archaeological Museum this semester, offering a unique glimpse into the history of literacy and ancient life.

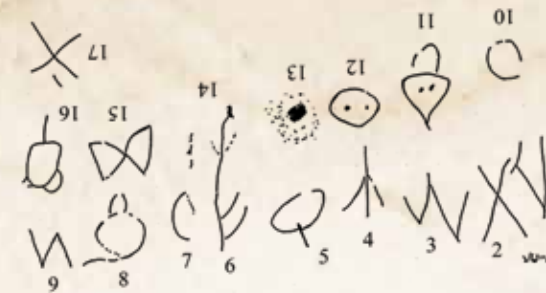


THE DISCOVERY

In 2016, Southern archaeology student Katherine Hesler, '19, was supervising her square in Tel Lachish, Israel, along with three other Southern volunteers (pictured at left: Hesler; Catalina Hannah, '18; Edwin Reynolds, PhD, research professor in the School of Religion; and Megan Weingardner, '18). A small object that looked like a bone was found in a pit created just before the Babylonian destruction by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C. That afternoon Edward Maher, the expedition's zooarchaeologist, identified the object as a comb carved from luxurious, elephant tusk ivory.

FORM AND FUNCTION

In December 2021, Madeleine Mumcuoglu, a biochemist and archaeologist, was tasked with investigating the comb's function. She suspected that the small object was used to remove lice, since the comb had six thick teeth on one side for untangling hair knots and 14 fine teeth on the other for removing lice and their eggs. She examined the comb under a Dino-Lite digital microscope and discovered the outer chitin membrane of a nymph-stage louse. It would become the oldest remains of a louse ever found.



THE INSCRIPTION

Once the microscopic examination of the ivory comb was completed, Mumcuoglu took general photos with her new iPhone 13. She pulled over a lamp to produce an angled light across the comb and began viewing it through her iPhone. That is when she noticed tiny scratches that looked like inscribed letters. Excitedly, she texted the pictures to Daniel Vainstub, an epigrapher, who confirmed it was a three-line inscription. But what did the inscription say, and could it actually be deciphered?

THE FIRST ALPHABETIC SENTENCE

Deciphering the comb's inscription required careful analysis and expertise in a number of cognate languages. Vainstub compared the shapes of the letters with other known inscriptions from Canaan, Sinai, Egypt, Ugarit, and South Arabia. Letter 11 had no resemblance to any letter known from other Canaanite inscriptions. Intense detective work led Vainstub to conclude that this was the first attestation of the Canaanite letter S. Putting together the letters, he deciphered the comb inscription: "May this ivory (tusk) root out the lice from the hair and the beard."

DATING THE IVORY COMB

The comb's location dated to a very late context in the Iron Age. Due to insufficient amounts of carbon, samples sent to the radiocarbon lab at Oxford University failed to produce a date. The only way to date the inscription was based on the development of the alphabet and how the shapes of letters changed over time. The writing indicates that the inscription may be older than even the Sinai inscriptions, dating to around 1700 B.C.



LITERACY SIMPLIFIED

Prior to this time, the language systems of the ancient world included Egyptian hieroglyphs or cuneiform, with hundreds of pictographic glyphs or signs. Now, for the first time, only 21-30 letters could be used to compose thousands of words. The alphabet was adapted for multiple languages including Phoenician, Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. The first books of the Bible were written using this alphabet to convey a message that would change the world, and today more than 75% of the world's population uses the alphabet to communicate globally.

ONLY AT SOUTHERN

After being hand-carried from Israel, the comb was installed in the exhibit "The Ivory Comb: Lice and Literacy at Lachish" in Southern's Lynn H. Wood Archaeological Museum in January 2025. The grand opening for the exhibit was celebrated with a banquet, tours for special guests, and a symposium featuring internationally recognized archaeologists who spoke about the comb's discovery and significance. The exhibit was open to the public from January 27 to May 2. ■





Positivity Through PAINTING

By Alexis Dewey, '24, and Tina Frist Smith, '89 and '23, communication manager

Artist Pablo Picasso once said, “Art washes from the soul the dust of everyday life.” This sentiment proves true in Southern’s School of Nursing, where students are learning how to use art to help relieve pain, foster positivity, and encourage a sense of peace for long-term care patients. As students create inspirational paintings, they experience firsthand how art and scripture can be beneficial, and they learn important aspects of patient care during the process.



For nearly two decades, hundreds of students at Southern have inspired positivity in long-term patients through thousands of bright, creative works completed during a simple art class.

Introduced by alum and adjunct instructor Dana Krause, '80 and '82, who began teaching in the School of Nursing in 1992, Creative Arts is a one-hour, elective nursing course offered during fall and winter semesters each school year. Enrolled students paint acrylic canvases with verses of scripture, nature scenes, and other inspirational themes, and the completed pieces are donated to nursing homes, hospitals, and other healthcare facilities in Chattanooga and surrounding communities. Bible verses often reflect the native languages of the artists who come from abroad to study at Southern.

Krause started the class in 2006 after brainstorming about ways to involve her students in lightening the hearts and lives of people who require advanced nursing and medical care for months or even years at a time.

“In a way, it’s a community service class,” she explains. “Art can help decrease pain by shifting a patient’s focus to a creative, interactive activity. Similar to forming new brain pathways, we are using positive reactions to increase serotonin while also reducing constant activity at pain sites.”

Open to non-nursing majors as well, the course can include up to 20 students per semester. Most of the aspiring painters are nervous to try something new, so initial pieces often require several class periods to finish. Subsequent paintings take half the time.

“I urge students to tap into their creativity while thinking about what might encourage or lift up another person.”



Students such as Mia Sabela (top), senior nursing major, learn the health benefits of painting in the Creative Arts nursing course.

“Art comes naturally to me and has been part of my life for a long time,” Krause adds. “It is where I find joy, as others do in cooking or sewing or singing. But a student in this class doesn’t have to excel at painting to achieve the curriculum’s goals; instead, the main objective is to explore a new form of expression that serves to alleviate others’ pain and bring a little peace into their lives.”

Paintings are initially hung in AdventHealth Hall, the campus building that houses the nursing program, before finding permanent places to be displayed. An estimated 2,000 completed pieces have been shared locally, and some from Krause’s very first class can still be found hanging on the fourth-floor walls of Memorial Hospital in downtown Chattanooga today. ■



CAMP CONNECTIONS

By Alexis Dewey, '24, and Chehalis Eno, senior English major

Ministry at Seventh-day Adventist summer camps across the United States allows Southern students to cultivate a closer relationship with God, mentor campers, and form lifelong friendships. On Southern's campus, this growth, connection, and community are fostered through a thriving spiritual environment with abundant opportunities to continue the mountain-top experiences of camp.



There's something special about summer camp, and Southern students know it. More than 350 university students worked at many of the approximately 60 Seventh-day Adventist camps across the United States during the summer of 2024 alone. The overall appeal is not summer pay or even the resulting eligibility for scholarships but, rather, the chance create connections with God, campers, and friends. Following these June and July experiences, Southern fosters a thriving, growth-focused atmosphere where students can extend the transformative moments of camp.

GLIMPSES OF GOD

According to Southern alum Jonathan Montes, '99, youth director for the Georgia-Cumberland Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and director of Cohutta Springs Youth Camp, more than half of his 109 staff members this past summer were Southern students. Among them were Sarah Moody, '24, and Alli Davis, junior physical therapist assistant major.

For three years, Moody served as a girls counselor at the North Georgia camp, which was chartered 45 years ago and has served more than 1,400 youth to date. "I loved seeing my campers grow closer to Jesus," she says. "When the kids are excited about Him, they have a joy that affects everyone around them, and they helped improve my spiritual life."

Davis was tasked as Girls Village director for Cohutta Springs. "Camp is a fantastic opportunity to minister to children and help them understand why we live for God," she explains. "For some campers, staff give them those first glimpses of what God can do."

Crediting her time on staff at Cohutta with sparking her journey with God, Davis shares, "The staff modeled what a true relationship with Him looks like, and I wanted that for myself." Back at Southern, she often stays late after vespers programs to catch up with those same camp alumni who impacted her so profoundly.



Sarah Moody, '24, (front center right) spends time with friends at Cohutta Springs Youth Camp.



In addition to weekly Friday evening vespers, Southern organizes morning meditations, student-led small groups called LifeGroups, on-campus worship services, opportunities for community service, and other ways to foster fellowship with God.

FRIENDSHIP FOUNDATIONS

Brandon Westgate is the Rocky Mountain Conference youth director and director of Glacier View Ranch, which has been welcoming campers since 1951. He appreciates having Southern students as members of his staff, sharing, "We always love the positive spirit and enthusiasm for learning that our Southern students bring with them to camp."

Several of his student staff members started a LifeGroup at Southern this school year to continue the spiritual atmosphere of camp with friends on campus. "After growing closer at Glacier View Ranch, we found a way to continue the focus of our friend group on things that really matter," says Matthew Taylor, junior mass communications major and LifeGroup leader. "The small-group atmosphere makes our discussions feel more personal."

SPIRITUAL SURROUNDINGS

Nathan Jaquez, junior engineering major, spent his second summer at Glacier View Ranch serving as a senior counselor. "As camp staff, we get to participate in the biblical process of 'training up a child' and potentially changing the trajectory of a camper's life,"



Left: Nathan Jaquez (far left) enjoys his summer at Glacier View Ranch along with fellow Southern students Leilani Darnell, senior nursing major; Richard Ramont, senior engineering major; and staff member Charles Metz.

Right: Peyton Meadows (front right) bonds with campers at Nosoca Pines Ranch.

he says. "My favorite thing about camp is watching kids make decisions for Christ."

This semester, Jaquez transferred to Southern from a public university, and he's found the spiritual environment a welcome change. "Camp is really conducive to growing spiritually, because it's our primary focus over the summer," he explains. "I've found Southern to be similar. I'm surrounded by students who have the same goal as me—to get to know Jesus."

Peyton Meadows, junior business administration major, finds spiritual fulfillment in Southern's focus on service. In high school, he began working at South Carolina's Nosoca Pines Ranch, a camp and retreat center established 55 years ago. He shares, "I came to Southern my freshman year and really missed camp, but because Southern intentionally prioritizes service, I found it easy to get involved in the community to continue doing children's ministry."

CAMPUS COMMUNITY

The 2024 summer marked Meadows' third year at camp, where he was a boat driver and a counselor. "A lot of campers come from rough home lives," Meadows explains, "and they spend 51 weeks of the year looking forward to this one week at camp when they find compassion and patience in a safe environment."

As camp staff and leaders of young people, Southern students often find that their time working at summer camp creates connections that help them grow as mentors, friends, and disciples of God—and Southern helps strengthen those connections back on campus by offering an atmosphere that values spiritual growth, service to others, and community. ■

EMBRACING SERVICE

By Chehalis Eno, senior English major

Service is part of life at Southern. Through opportunities to serve on campus, in the community, and overseas, students experience the fulfillment that serving others brings. These experiences stay with them even after graduation, as they make decisions about how they want to live their lives. Letting God lead, both students and alumni have found the joy in embracing service.

Southern embraces wholistic Adventist education, and many students take advantage of all the school has to offer beyond earning a degree. Through service opportunities big and small, Southern students craft a lifelong love for serving, using their God-given talents to change lives. Students showcase how empowering it can be to create a lifestyle rooted in Christ's mission, balancing work, school, community, and service with distinctive joy.

STUDENTS SERVE

Each year, several students receive financial assistance through the Rita Vital Endowed Scholarship for Faith and Service Learning, which enables each to continue prioritizing an others-centered lifestyle. The three 2025-2026 recipients, Jordaine Broyer, Charlynneth Dizon, and Logan Johnson, are living testimonies of how serving not only benefits the receiver but also can shape the giver's own life.



Pictured from left: Ken Shaw, '80, president; Charlynneth Dizon, recipient; Logan Johnson, recipient; Greg Vital, '14, family representative; Jordaine Broyer, recipient; Cheryl (Martin) Craven, '99 and '21, Christian Service director; and Robert Young, senior vice president for Academic Administration.

JOY IN SERVING

Jordaine Broyer, senior English major, feels service has always been an undertone in her life. "I was raised in a military family," she says. "Looking out for fellow families was the culture."

When Broyer was 12, her grandmother was diagnosed with Alzheimer's and moved in with the family. Over the next four years, Broyer spent hours each day caring for the cherished matriarch. "Sometimes I was upset, because I couldn't do things I wanted," she admits. "But my attitude eventually shifted to recognize the joy in serving. How many have an opportunity to provide that much care for someone they love?"

After enrolling at Southern, Broyer got involved in mission trips through Maranatha Volunteers International, a nonprofit organization that partners with the Seventh-day Adventist Church. For three summers, Broyer visited the same school, Kajiado Adventist School and Rescue in Kenya, Africa, which offers refuge for girls escaping childhood marriage, mutilation, and abuse. She aided in student supervision as well as construction of the school that was inaugurated last July.

"My first summer, I met two shy little girls who immediately latched onto me," she reminisces. "Watching them become more confident over time has been incredible." Both plan to become lawyers, just like Broyer, who notes, "It's deeply moving to connect with the ambitions of young women on the opposite side of the globe who have been through more than I can imagine."

Broyer describes the "ultimate blessing that Jesus allows us to be His hands and feet," and she's constantly struck by the happiness she sees and experiences through service. "Here at school, it's easy to get stuck in the 'life is hard' mindset," she reflects. "But then I go abroad and see mothers who were married with kids by age 14, who dance in church and have such joy and gratitude for life, even with so little to be joyful about."



Jordaine Broyer visits Kajiado Adventist School and Rescue in Kenya.



Charlynneth Dizon says her passion for ministry drives her service.

SAY "YES" TO GOD

Charlynneth Dizon, senior psychology major, moved to the United States from the Philippines at age 15. "Getting involved in church reminded me of home, so I started serving to stave off homesickness," she says. The practice became a staple of her high school experience.

As graduation approached, Dizon felt strong impressions from God to attend Southern. "I wrestled with the Lord but also knew He answers prayers, so I trusted Him," she says. Through a series of extraordinary events, she found herself enrolled at Southern.

In college, Dizon continued the same pattern of service. First, she became a Soul-winning And Leadership Training (SALT) mentor, which led to volunteer roles on the General Youth Conference Southeast's media team and committee board. Back at Southern, her friends studying theology asked her to be part of the Student Ministerial Association, and other peers nominated her as the Asian Club spiritual vice president. Eventually, she became spiritual vice president for the Student Association, and she currently serves as its social vice president.

Balancing her many responsibilities has been easier than one might expect. "My passion in ministry really drives me," Dizon explains. "As long as you say 'yes' to God, He can do miraculous things."

Each role has impacted her growth and maturity because, as she illustrates, "Without the smaller ingredients, I can't make the cake."

Service for Dizon has become synonymous with her belief system. "My life is encircled with ministry, which helps me keep my eyes focused on the main goal in life: to follow in the footsteps of Christ," she adds. "It does require faith, but when I step out of my comfort zone, I'm able to accomplish seemingly impossible tasks."

DISCOVER PURPOSE

Logan Johnson, junior biology biomedical major, spent much of his life serving for the wrong reasons. “It all felt like a task to be completed,” he says.

Once he came to Southern, Johnson realized something needed to change. “My freshman year, I found myself devoid of purpose,” he explains. Through a series of miracles, Johnson went to Kendu Adventist Hospital in Kenya as a student missionary during the 2022-2023 school year.

Outside the hospital gates was Nyaburi Integrated Primary School, a learning center and orphanage for disabled children. Johnson first visited to help with vespers and quickly recognized a deep need. The children at the orphanage struggled to get consistent meals, and their beds were soiled by bats that lived in holes riddling the ceilings. “The kids had no showers and crawled into bathroom stalls, because there was no wheelchair accessibility,” he says.

Immediately after visiting, Johnson and fellow student missionary and senior biology major Gabriel Brown decided they needed to step in. “There was no hesitation,” Johnson says. “When you’re the only chance someone has for reasonable living conditions, the responsibility is unavoidable.” The two young men created a short documentary showcasing the children’s testimonies and needs. (Watch the video at southern.edu/columns.)

Returning home, Brown and Johnson showed the video in churches with the goal of raising \$30,000. “More than \$50,000 in donations came in,” Johnson reports. “It was truly a miracle.” Through a contractor willing to do the work for the cost of materials, Nyaburi Integrated Primary School got a full facelift.

“I felt like I was working side-by-side with God throughout the process,” Johnson shares. “Everything lined up perfectly to make the project possible, and I know He had a hand in it.”

Now back on campus, Johnson feels called to become a mission doctor and says, “Service gives me a purpose on this Earth.”

At Southern, every student’s journey is unique, but the common thread of service means learning to find passion as well as joy in helping others.



Above: Logan Johnson volunteers at Kendu Adventist Hospital and nearby Nyaburi Integrated Primary School in Kenya, where he discovered a sense of purpose.

Left: Fellow Southern student missionary Michaela Lohr (center) bonds with students at Nyaburi Integrated Primary School.

ALUMNI SERVE

The Christian Service program at Southern encourages students to form habits of helping others through school-wide service days, mission trips, club outreach events, and more. “The goal is to connect students with meaningful opportunities that foster a love of assisting and benefitting those in need, which will continue beyond their time at Southern,” says Cheryl (Martin) Craven, ’99 and ’21, director of Christian Service.

Success stories include Eric Davis, ’13, and Iliana Dialectakis, ’22, two alumni whose experiences at Southern led them to seek careers and churches oriented around service.

“Even before college, my parents instilled the value of service in me,” Davis says. Southern’s intentional opportunities allowed him to continue the cycle. “Literally the day after I graduated from Southern, I went on a mission trip with the Evangelistic Resource Center to the Philippines, where I preached 19 sermons.”

Dialectakis had a similar experience. “Service is a major part of my life,” she shares. “I was part of a LifeGroup at Southern, and through that, I was able to play music at nursing homes.” Dialectakis also served as a student missionary in Hong Kong for six months.

Graduating with a bachelor’s degree in computer systems administration, Davis now works at AdventHealth in Florida as a senior collaboration engineer. He explains, “I wanted to work for a company that shared my values and had a large impact on the community around it.”

Dialectakis graduated with a bachelor’s degree in finance. As a coworker of Davis, she chose AdventHealth because “the mission ‘extending the healing ministry of Christ’ really resonated with me,” she notes.

Both individuals attend the Spring Meadows Seventh-day Adventist Church in Sanford, Florida. Davis has been a part of four mission trips organized by the church since he became a member.

In June 2024, both Davis and Dialectakis participated in the church’s trip to Honduras. They volunteered at an Adventist school on the island of Utila. “The school ran into issues getting accreditation, because they needed updates to the library, bathrooms, and science lab,” Dialectakis explains. “We fundraised to buy and ship nearly 10 tons of material to the school to help with renovations.”

Davis helped set up the school’s newly painted and tiled computer lab, ensuring each computer had the needed software. Dialectakis was a leader-in-training, aiding with trip logistics and helping the two dozen volunteers stay organized and efficient. In addition to construction efforts, volunteers hosted a Vacation Bible School, decorated and organized classrooms, and taught courses in art, music, and sports that were not typically offered.

“I didn’t initially realize the impact I had,” Davis shares. “One of the teachers at the school told me he’d been praying for a computer lab since 2017. It’s times like this that give me



Alumni Eric Davis, ’13, and Iliana Dialectakis, ’22, participate in a mission trip to Instituto Adventist Utila in Honduras, where they set up a computer lab, helped with construction projects, and hosted a Vacation Bible School program for the children.

a perspective of the world and help me recognize the many blessings God has given me.”

Dialectakis also felt the impact. “The school is known for being the best on the island,” she says. “Parents send their kids to this school, because they know they will get a good education with strong values, so it functions as a real ministry for the church.”

“In Mark 10:45, Jesus said that the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for men,” Craven shares. “Here at Southern, we’re always glad to see students and alumni align themselves to Jesus’ life of service.” ■

Celebrating Southern Sweethearts



1 Caitlyn (Bartlett), '15 and '18, and Michael Babienko, '15, were married on September 29, 2019, then moved to Berrien Springs, Michigan, where they worked for four years, both remotely and in the area. In November 2023, after four years of marriage, they moved to Japan as long-term missionaries (six to eight years minimum) with the plan of staying longer in Japan as God led. They have lived in east Japan near Yokohama for close to a year and have been studying the Japanese language. They next plan to move to Yamaguchi Prefecture (west of Hiroshima) to work toward helping plant Seventh-day Adventist churches in that area, as they continue to learn the language and culture of the people of Japan. Michael continues to use the computer/programming knowledge he gained at Southern to help the Japan Union Conference and a variety of other entities with the gospel work.

2 Raphael Rodriguez, '15, and his wife, Catherine, met at church and have been married since January 17, 2020. They got engaged in Driggs, Idaho, and were married in Chattanooga, Tennessee, at the downtown courthouse. Raphael works as a head personal trainer in Ooltewah, and Catherine is the events and catering sales manager at the Westin Hotel in downtown Chattanooga. They live in Ringgold, Georgia, with their dog and three cats.



More than 3,500 married alumni couples have joined their hearts and lives! Alumni Relations invites attendees and graduates who have recently married each other to participate in Southern Sweethearts,* a program designed to celebrate newlywed alumni couples and their new journey together with a special gift. Visit southern.edu/sweethearts to enroll in this complimentary program.

*A Southern Sweetheart couple is defined as an attendee/graduate married to another Southern attendee/graduate.

Family Additions

3 John and Sarah (Graham) Domanski, '17, welcomed Benjamin to their family on November 14, 2024. They live in the Chattanooga area.

Gordon and Leslie (Flynt) McWatters, '03, welcomed Geneva to their family on April 2, 2023. They live in Florida.

4 Cole and Kelly (Gustrowsky) Sandel, '22, welcomed Sybil to their family on January 15, 2025. They live in Pennsylvania.



Alumni Notes

5 Steve, '69, and Kristin (Petersen) Thompson, '69, have been together 58 years. From Southern, the couple went to Andrews University in Michigan, where Kristin earned her master's degree in education and psychology. She also earned a master's degree in counseling, and during her career, she worked as a school counselor and as a counselor in private practice offering play therapy to children. The couple later moved to Australia and have since retired. In reminiscing about her time at Southern, where Kristin was an international student from Norway, she remembers the culture shock and how welcoming everyone was, her first experience with pumpkin pie, and being elected vice president for her class.

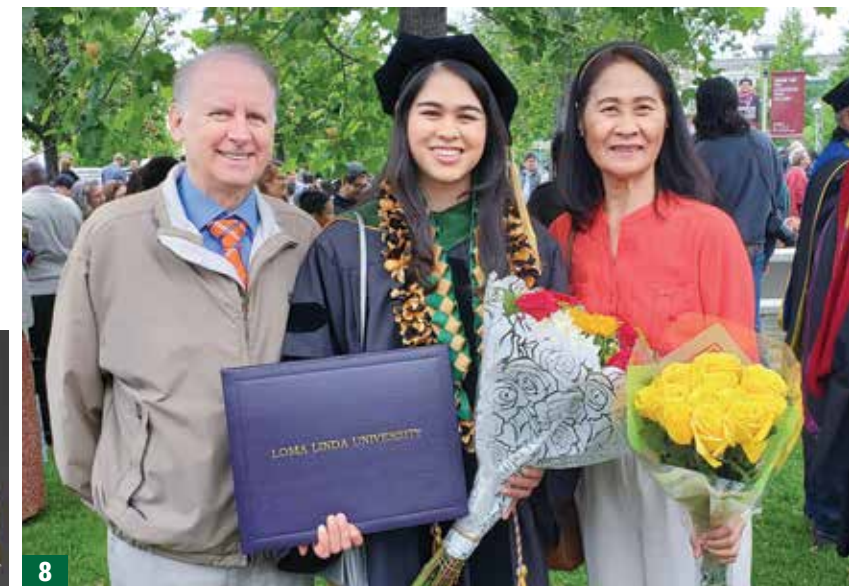
Michael Monroig, '00, works for the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists as an associate director. He is an endorser for the armed forces, corrections, and community chaplains.

Delfina Rose, '04, has been in the Chattanooga area since 2017 with her three daughters: Abigail, Amanda, and Cheyenne. She currently lives in Ooltewah.

6 Erin (Grube) dos Santos, '15, works at Life Care Center of Ooltewah as an occupational therapist. She rehabilitates adults after illness or injury to help them achieve their goals and received recognition as the Eastern Division Whatever It Takes Champion in 2023.

7 Celine Weber, '19, went on to further her education at the University of Prince Edward Island Atlantic Veterinary College in Canada and earned her Doctor of Veterinary Medicine. With her new degree, she plans to work as a camelid veterinarian, focusing on llamas and alpacas.

8 Jedel Butoy, '19, graduated from Loma Linda University School of Medicine with her doctorate in May 2024. She is doing her residency at Loma Linda in physical medicine and rehabilitation. Her parents, Jette and Hendel Butoy, professor in the School of Visual Art and Design at Southern, are also pictured.



We'd love to hear from you, and so would your classmates! Send updates about additions to your family, accomplishments, marriage, professional recognitions, or other news you'd like to share to:

**Alumni Relations • P.O. Box 370
Collegedale, TN 37315-0370
southern.edu/alumniupdates**

Remembrance

1 On October 4, 2024, **Helen (Case) Durichek**, '56 and '58, passed to her rest at 88 years old in her home of 55 years in Collegedale, Tennessee. She earned a bachelor's degree in business with an emphasis in accounting at what was then Southern Missionary College. She also met the love of her life, **John Thomas Durichek Sr.**, '58, of Chicago, Illinois, while she was studying here. The couple married in 1958 and moved to Highland Academy in Portland, Tennessee. Returning to Collegedale in 1969, she became the treasurer of Collegedale Seventh-day Adventist Church and the Greater Collegedale School System. In 1986, Durichek returned to her alma mater as the associate vice president for Financial Administration. Her design and artistic talents were seen through facility renovation and historical preservation at Southern. Her organization and planning were displayed as she spearheaded the design and completion of new buildings on campus. Durichek retired in 2005 and continued to volunteer at Southern for as long as she could to help preserve the university's history. She freely shared her vast knowledge of the school and was instrumental in developing and curating the Heritage Museum that was then located in Lynn Wood Hall. She loved God's beautiful nature and was very active in her church and community. Her passions were researching family ancestry and traveling to and corresponding regularly with her 78 first cousins, along with family and friends. Survivors include children **Deborah**, '82, (**James**, attended) **Duerksen**; **John Thomas Durichek Jr.**, '85, (**Rebecca (Hartnett)**, '85); and **Betty**, '86, (**Chris**) **Farley**; as well as several grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

2 **Jack Blanco**, '97 honorary alumnus, former dean of the School of Religion and professor emeritus at Southern, passed peacefully to his rest on Sabbath, January 11, 2025. After a fruitful career in pastoral ministry, mission service, teaching, academic administration at Columbia Adventist University, and editorial work at the Review and Herald, Blanco was called to Southern in 1982. Having been part of the university family for 18 years, he retired in 2000 and continued teaching as an adjunct instructor until 2010, when he stopped to care for his wife Marion, who passed away in 2012. Blanco is survived by his daughter Cheri Blanco Jones and her husband, Geoff; his grandson; and three great-grandchildren: Connor, Emily, and Hailey. His son, **Steve Blanco Ross**, '82, a physician in Nashville, passed away in 2009 and is survived by his wife, Kelly Ross-Wilkenson, and his daughter, Chelsea Ross.

3 **Erin Michelle Lundquist**, '05, a cherished daughter, sister, aunt, and friend known for her kind spirit and humorous personality, passed away on September 10, 2024, after a long battle with cancer. Born on July 3, 1981, to Cathy and Keith Lundquist in Walla Walla, Washington, she was the middle child between siblings **Benjamin**, '04, and **Keri (Lundquist) Gillig**, attended. After graduating from Georgia-Cumberland Academy in Calhoun, Georgia, she earned a Bachelor of Science in Corporate and Community Wellness Management at Southern. Between her junior and senior years of college, she volunteered as a student missionary for five months at the European Bible School in Skotselv, Norway. Lundquist, who loved adventure and connecting with people, fell in love with Norway. After college, she returned, accepting a full-time communications job at the school and settling into her new country. She later taught in a preschool setting, and in recent years, she worked as a rehabilitation and fitness trainer in Vikersund Kurbad, where she was well-loved by both her patients and colleagues. She was active and energetic throughout her life, playing basketball and volleyball on school teams and setting several school records in various track and field events. In the last few years, her greatest accomplishment was becoming the head coach of the Norway Women's National Softball Team. All who knew Lundquist valued her joy for life and her readiness to have fun, making even the most mundane of activities more interesting and enjoyable for everyone. A Renaissance woman, she played the cello, enjoyed wakeboarding, was an avid sailor, wrote scripts and manuscripts, turned her backyard into a



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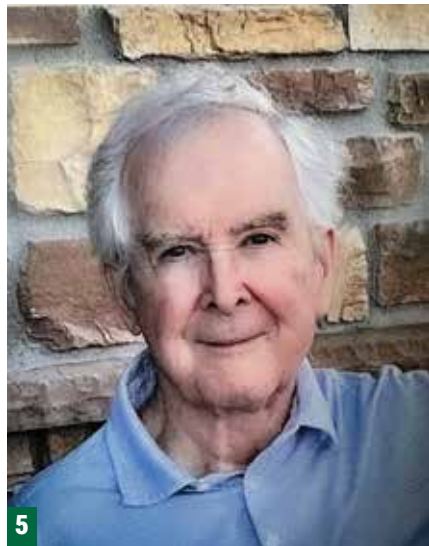
garden, traveled at every opportunity, enjoyed sampling restaurants and foods, and lived every moment to the fullest. She was also a resilient figure in the face of adversity and gave her all in everything she took on. Her unassuming and disarming smile could put anyone at ease—from newborns to the elderly. Her sense of humor was second to none, and she was as compassionate as she was funny, always ready to help, serve, and uplift others, no matter what she was going through. Even when ill, Lundquist was never angry, sad, or depressed—she could find the silver lining, often with a joke to keep pushing forward in any situation. Lundquist is survived by her parents and siblings, nieces and nephews, and the countless friends and people she touched.

4 **Donald Clark**, '61, passed away on October 6, 2024, and his wife, **Shirley (Kurtz)**, '62, passed to her rest just one week later on October 13. They are survived by their daughters **Cynthia (Clark) Brockway**, '90, and **Sherri (Clark) Hatch**, '86, along with their grandchildren.

5 **Richard "Dick" Kenfield**, '59, MD, was born to Frank and Mary Anne Kenfield in Peoria, Illinois, on March 2, 1936. The young family settled in Hastings, Michigan, where he spent his youth. He immersed himself in his hobby of "magic" until his grandmother gave him the opportunity to attend Southern Missionary College. There, he met his wife, **Sandra (Busbin)**, attended. They married following his graduation in 1959. The couple relocated to California for him to pursue a career in medicine. He received his Doctor of Medicine from Loma Linda University. Following post-graduate training, he began a short practice period before being drafted by the Army and serving as a field doctor in Vietnam. He served with honor and was awarded the Bronze Star. In 1968, the couple settled in Yorba Linda, California, where he enjoyed a thriving medical practice until his retirement in 2000. The joys in his life included his family, reading avidly, managing his yards—including a much-loved Lake Arrowhead home—game nights with beloved friends, and visits with his two grandchildren. He and Sandra moved to Germantown, Tennessee, in 2021. He passed away on November 1, 2024, and is survived by his wife, their daughter and grandchildren, and four siblings.

6 **Fred E. Wilson**, '54, was born on September 18, 1928, in Eastover, South Carolina, to John and Cleo (Nunnery) Wilson. He passed away on November 10, 2024, in Chattanooga, Tennessee. A devoted Seventh-day Adventist minister for most of his life, Wilson was deeply committed to sharing the gospel. His faith journey began in a cotton field in South Carolina when a literature evangelist visited him. This encounter led him to embrace the Adventist faith and complete his high school education at Mount Pisgah Academy, where he met **Barbara Jean (Kelley)**, '54. They married on June 9, 1948. The couple attended Southern Missionary College, where he earned a degree in theology and served as president of his senior class. After graduating, they pastored various churches throughout the Southeastern United States. In 1958, they were called to serve as missionaries in Africa, first in the Belgian Congo and then in Kenya, where they started a girls' school near Lake Victoria. Later, the couple moved to Malawi, where he served as president of the Southeast Africa Union. The Blantyre Adventist Hospital was established under his leadership, and it is now one of the leading hospitals in Malawi. During a 1974 furlough, Wilson earned his master's degree in theology. After 23 years of dedicated service in Africa, the couple returned to the United States and settled in the Orlando, Florida, area, where he pastored and served as the ministerial secretary and vice president for the Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. He retired in 1997 but remained active

in ministry. In 2005, Barbara passed away. Fred later married **Marilyn (Ferciot) Michals**, attended. Together, they returned to Africa, serving the people at Lakeview Seminary and throughout Malawi until 2019. Their commitment led to numerous building and improvement projects, including those at Mantadani Mission Station. They returned to the United States in 2019, ultimately settling in Collegedale, Tennessee. Wilson is survived by his wife, Marilyn; daughters **Rheeta (Wilson) Fitzpatrick**, attended, and **Linda (Wilson) Higgins**, '91; stepchildren **Debbie (Michals) Daniel**, '80 and '82, **Cherie Michals**, attended, **Joylynn (Michals) Scott**, '90, **David Michals**, attended, and **Cynthia Michals**, '17; grandchildren; a sister-in-law; and nieces and nephews.



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

Is Your Child a Future Alum?

Sign up your child or children for Southern's complimentary Future Alumni program. We send special birthday gifts every two years to the kids of alumni who sign up! Learn more at southern.edu/futurealumni.

7 **Adeline Martinez**, 8, daughter of **Juan Martinez II**, '11, and **Vanessa Ruiz-Martinez**, '11, shows off her Future Alumni birthday swag.

Reconnect With Fellow Alumni!

Did you know you can connect with long-lost classmates? On our new alumni resource hub, you can access our Alumni Finder.* Get in touch through the platform to renew past friendships. Visit southern.edu/promenade or scan the QR code to access the Alumni Finder.

*Alumni Finder access is available upon registration and verification.



7

Divinely Driven

By Chehalis Eno, senior English major

Mamie Pruitt, '79, knew she wanted to be a physical education teacher in fifth grade, when she was inspired by her own teacher. "She taught me about sports but also about fitness and cooperation," Pruitt shares.

Pruitt, who has taught physical education in the Atlanta metro area for 39 years, believes it is a critical aspect of a child's development. "I was privileged to teach young people the proper way to keep their bodies safe and healthy while having fun," she explains. "I want kids to know how God intends for their bodies to work."

Fostering a Passion

Faith and passion go hand in hand for Pruitt, who considers her health a testimony to God. She says, "When we look happy and feel good, that lets everyone know that the God we serve is happy and good."

Pruitt attended Oakwood University in Alabama before transferring to Southern. "I knew I'd be teaching kids of all cultures and all communities," she says, "so I wanted to experience multiple ways of teaching at different schools to better reach different demographics."

"God and I had a contract when I first realized I wanted to teach," Pruitt says. "I told God that

I wanted to be the best teacher in the whole wide world, and He has allowed me to do just that." Her divinely driven impact on physical education in the most populated city in Georgia has been nothing short of profound. She opened four K-5 schools and fostered impactful relationships with hundreds of students.

Mamie Pruitt, '79, has taught physical education for 39 years.

Gaining Recognition

Pruitt's efforts have not gone unnoticed, and many organizations and individuals have awarded her achievements. She especially remembers receiving Michelle Obama's Let's Move award in 2014. "It was really personal to get an award from the First Lady of the United States," she reflects. Pruitt had created and implemented a program based on Obama's initiative that encouraged kids and the community to be active outdoors.

Other recognitions championing Pruitt's philosophy of teaching are Community Leader of the Year from the National Council of Negro Women, Super Teacher of the Year for Metro Atlanta from SWB-TV, and 2023 Advocate of the Year from the Georgia Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance.

Community involvement has long been another important aspect of Pruitt's life. She volunteers with the American Red Cross, Metro-Atlanta Girls Club, United Way, and her church's food pantry. "If I can provide a small spark of hope by helping people, then I'm going to find a way to do it," Pruitt shares.

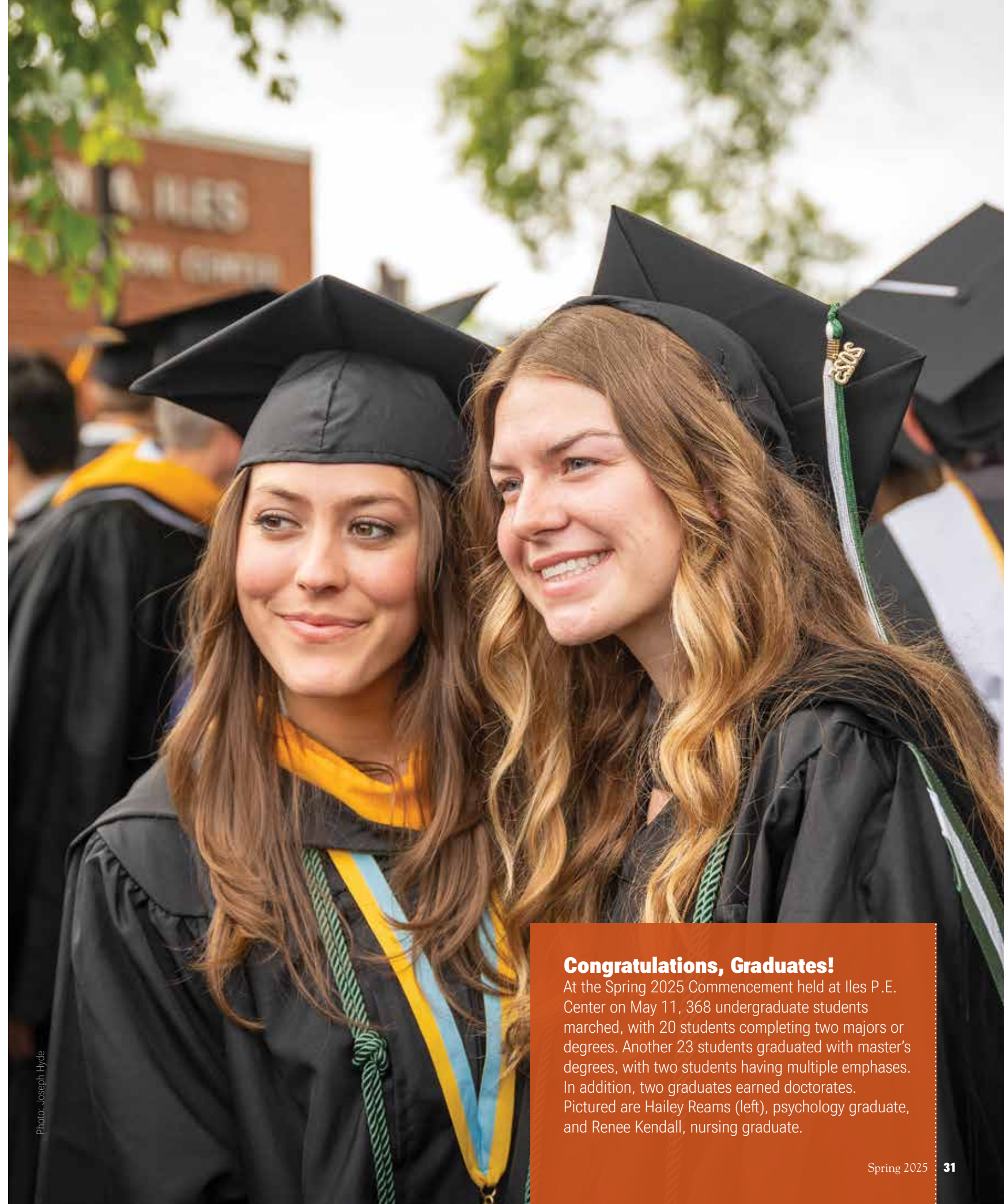
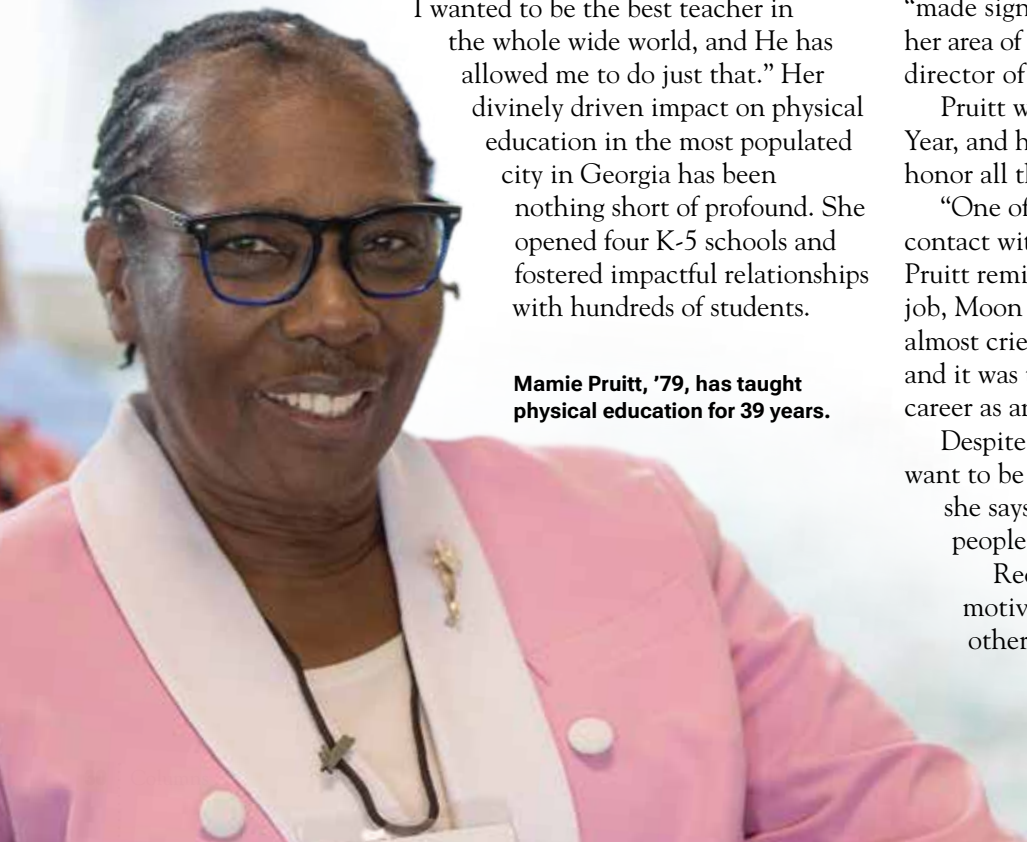
Each year during Homecoming Weekend in October, Southern Adventist University honors an alum who has "made significant contributions above and beyond in his or her area of expertise," according to Cheryl (Fuller) Torres, '05, director of Alumni Relations.

Pruitt was recognized as Southern's 2024 Alumna of the Year, and her fond memories from time on campus make the honor all the more meaningful.

"One of my professors, Don Moon, and his wife kept in contact with me, even after I graduated from Southern," Pruitt reminisces. After she was hired for her first teaching job, Moon showed up to her classroom to surprise her. "I almost cried," she says. "It meant so much to have him visit, and it was the best thing I could imagine for kicking off my career as an educator."

Despite her achievements, Pruitt remains humble. "I just want to be an example, both for myself and for young people," she says. "I'm not perfect, but I want to be able to point people to God and show them what He wants for us."

Recognition for her passion and faith keeps Pruitt motivated in her field and open to collaboration with other professionals to improve their schools' programs. ■



Congratulations, Graduates!

At the Spring 2025 Commencement held at Iles P.E. Center on May 11, 368 undergraduate students marched, with 20 students completing two majors or degrees. Another 23 students graduated with master's degrees, with two students having multiple emphases. In addition, two graduates earned doctorates. Pictured are Hailey Reams (left), psychology graduate, and Renee Kendall, nursing graduate.

Photo: Joseph Hyde

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southern.edu/homecoming