

January 2016



## UNG Honors Commended by Representative Doug Collins

At a September 17, 2015, Georgia Congressional meeting, Georgia Representative Doug Collins commemorated the 50th anniversary of the National Collegiate Honors Council, and in doing so, commended his alma mater, the University of North Georgia, for its exemplary Honors Program. Collins acknowledged the program's focus on "excellence in academic performance, student research, student leadership, service learning, and study abroad programs. As an example of the program's success, Collins recognized Sara Brubaker, UNG Honors graduate of 2010. "Sara completed her Doctorate of Physical Therapy in 2013 and was one of just twelve physical therapists chosen for employment by the U.S. Navy. She now serves at the rank of Lieutenant as the Rehabilitation Department Head at the Naval Hospital in Beaufort, SC."



Sara Brubaker,  
UNG Honors Program graduate of 2010

## Honors Salon Event

November 18, at the Vickery House in Dahlonega, the Honors Program hosted community friends for a showcase of Honors student research and a reception. Heather Perona presented "Antibiotic Tolerance in *Neisseria gonorrhoeae*"; Margaux Usry, "Gene Expression Controlling Synaptic Plasticity Following Adolescent Exposure to ADHD-Medications in a Murine Model"; Rachel Glazer, an excerpt from "City of Gold," a play; and Timothy Bellows, "Real-Ass Speech: Why Colloquial Profanity is Just as Grammatically Complex as Formal Language."

The event was co-hosted by UNG Honors and University Advancement. Attending were Honors supporters, including UNG retirees, mentoring professors, and presenter parents. The Honors Program will host similar Salon Events this spring at Oconee and Gainesville.



Heather Perona, presenter (left), and Amy Brackett, Honors Development Officer (to Heather's right).

Right (l to r): Steve Smith, Dahlonega Honors Director; Bette Noble; and Dr. Steve Noble, Professor Emeritus, Psychology



Left, LTC (Ret.) Keith Antonia, Executive Director of Undergraduate Admissions; and his wife Angela Antonia

We welcome your 2016 gift to the  
**UNG Honors Program.**

Please make out your check to the  
**UNG Foundation**, memo line: **Honors Program**,  
and send to  
Kimberly Miller  
Office of Advancement  
PO Box 1599  
University of North Georgia  
Dahlonega, GA 30533

## Honors Mentors Program

For 2015-2016, the Honors Program paired thirteen participating Honors students—from the Dahlonega, Gainesville, and Oconee campuses—with professional mentors to advise them about preparing for and entering the job market in their field of choice. This year's mentees comprise majors in business management, biology, nursing, computer science, chemistry, psychology and Chinese. Mentors include a veterinarian, a Teradata executive, an obstetrician, and an energy engineer. Students met with their mentors at the Kickoff Reception on the Dahlonega campus October 16th, and these partnerships will extend throughout the academic year.



Khadene Scott (left), who plans to attend medical school and become an anesthesiologist, is mentee to Susie Verleger (right), obstetrician and gynecologist with ISIS Women's Healthcare, and UNG Honors alumna.

## Honors Advisory Council

The Honors Advisory Council met in the fall to consider plans for supporting the UNG Honors Program. This year's council members are (below, left to right) Kimberly Groves, President and UNG English Instructor, Dahlonega; Jenny Clifford, Vice President and Bethlehem Christian Academy Academic Dean, Bethlehem; Whitney Holcombe, Secretary and CVS Director of Pharmacy, Ellijay; and Sam D'Entremont, Dekalb County Assistant Solicitor General, Decatur. The Council plans to hold an Honors Job Preparation Fair February 13 on the Gainesville campus.



## Honors Highlight: Taylor Allen

A junior business management major, Taylor Allen (above, right) came to North Georgia from Brookwood High School, where she was valedictorian of a senior class of over 700 students. Expectations for her were quite high, but after five semesters it is clear that even those great expectations were no match for her potential. Taylor's outstanding all-around performance has included five semesters on the President's List, selection as a Cottrell Scholar, a study abroad trip to Andalusia (see photo), and a number of campus leadership positions. A member of the UNG golf team, she is an elected representative on the Student Athlete Advisory Committee, currently serving as the group's Treasurer. A three-year team captain on her high school team, Taylor earned the Nighthawk Athlete of the Week award on March 16, 2015, after finishing 7<sup>th</sup> out of 95 entries at the Hilton Head Lakes Invitational. The walking definition of a high achiever, she has already earned 26 Honors credits and began work on an Honors Thesis in the fall. She will likely complete this project a year in advance of graduation. Her work in the classroom has earned her respect and accolades from her professors, who refer to her as an "ideal student" whose presence elevates the performance of the entire class. In addition to being an active member of Delta Phi Epsilon sorority, UNG Serves, the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, and the StartUp UNG club, Taylor is fundraising chair of the campus chapter of Habitat for Humanity and the Service Chair of the Honors Program. As service chair, she inherited what was already a very large program and has expanded it significantly. Among her innovations are the addition of service connections to the Dahlonega Gold Museum, the Dahlonega WalMart (where student volunteers can assist elderly customers on rainy days), and the Backpack Buddies Program operated by Lumpkin Family Connections and designed to help provide meals to local food-insecure children.

## Honors Highlight: Charles Hall

Charles Hall (below, left), a sophomore management information services major at the Oconee campus, is a vibrant student scholar and a devoted member of the Honors community. Charlie has been President of the Honors Program at Oconee since August 2015 and set a great example of undergraduate scholarship for his peers. In addition to his help with the Honors Program, Charlie has worked with Habitat for Humanity, served at the Wesley Foundation, and led a small group of elementary age kids at Athens Church for over five years. Charlie is also an avid App developer, with a portfolio of over 50 unique applications for Apple and Android. His game *Jellyfish Jump* reached #6 on the paid charts of iTunes and was mentioned on *Forbes*. He is also a member of a team developing *Wild Light*, a PC/Mac video game.

Charlie's success outside the classroom is matched by his academic achievement. He has been on the Dean's list every semester, maintained a 3.82 GPA, and earned a place in Phi Theta Kappa, and he has done so while making A's in five Honors courses across three semesters. He also researches topics related to the practical and philosophical implications of gaming. He has delivered two undergraduate research presentations: "App Development, It's Simple" at the 2015 Southern Regional Honors Conference and "Is it Possible to Have a Virtual Self?" at the 2015 UNG Annual Research Conference. Equally impressive are Charlie's leadership and social skills. He is an enthusiastic collaborator, a great travel companion, and a kind friend. We are thankful to have Charlie in the program and look forward to his success in the world of tech.



## Honors Students Empower Others through Service

Gainesville Honors students Valerie Moore and Emile Phommavongsy are a point of pride for the Honors program because they lead not only academically but in the community, as well. They are important members of the UNG chapter of Enactus, a campus based international non-profit organization that aims to bring entrepreneurial skills and opportunities to underserved groups. Both students have been integral in obtaining Enactus partnership grants this year which directly help to implement service projects in the Northeast Georgia community.

Ms. Moore serves as the Enactus President as well as the lead on the Unilever Bright Future Project. The grant's initiatives aim at teaching healthy eating habits, particularly for children, and sustainable solutions to combat hunger. The grant also supports a proposed community garden, a collaborative effort with the Ink Museum and the RISE program. Through this project, students work with the Georgia Mountain Food Bank to provide food sources to areas with fewer healthy options.

Ms. Moore is also alternate lead for the Veteran Empowerment Project which is an Enactus partnership with Automatic Data Processing (ADP). This grant funds Gainesville campus career fairs and workshops, like "Boots to Business," which helps veterans to develop their entrepreneurial skills following military service.

Ms. Phommavongsy is the lead on the Women's Economic Empowerment Project, an Enactus partnership with the Walmart Foundation. This grant supports Gainesville's Angel House, which is a residential substance abuse facility for women. Enactus teams provide entrepreneurial training and resources in order to advance and empower these women toward a brighter future. Ms. Phommavongsy also plans to develop self-defense courses for women under this initiative.

Valerie Moore and Emile Phommavongsy (pictured together, left) are both active members of the Honors program. They are among the best and the brightest at UNG, but they also know their success means more when shared with others.



# ALUMNI NEWS

Class of 2007

**Annie (Sanders) Mendenhall** had her first child, Ian Michael, on September 30<sup>th</sup>.



**Lauren (Foust) Petro** just started graduate school at Walden University (online) in their mental health counseling program and is living in Augusta with her 3 year old daughter and husband. She's expecting her second child in July and is also running a photography business (Lauren Petro Photography) which specializes in family and children portraiture.

Class of 2008

**June (Koehler) Black** just accepted a new position as Associate Curator of Art at the Boise Art Museum. Her husband Carson's family moved to Boise several years ago and she reports that she fell in love with the city.

**Meghan (Lott) Caldwell** is expecting her second child in June.

Class of 2009

2LT **Nathaniel Shapiro** is in his 2<sup>nd</sup> year of med school on the HPSP (military) scholarship, doing research on granular cell astrocytomas (really bad brain tumors). He finished officer training this summer, and is currently president of the radiology interest group, plastic surgery interest group, military healthcare interest group, and "MCG handy helpers" volunteer organization.

Class of 2011

**Jesse Rockmore** was selected to be a member of the Student Constituency Board of the National Rural Health Association (NRHA) in the position of Student Outreach Coordinator; he is the only osteopathic medical student on the board.



Class of 2012

**Brittni Ragland** was engaged to fellow UNG biology alum Luke Kelley in December, and is making plans to go back to school for a master's degree in the fall.

**Katie (Pinkerton) Kerr** and her husband Alex are graduating from MCG in May, after which they will be MDs in pediatrics (Katie) and internal medicine (Alex). They are travelling to SE Asia for a medical mission trip next month.

**Eric Craig** will be graduating in May from UAB medical school. Since he's in the Navy, he already has his match results and will be starting his Obstetrics and Gynecology residency at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in July.

Class of 2013

**Kate (Martin) Hayes** completed her Masters of Engineering and has a job as a program assistant for the Scientist in the Classroom Program with the Vanderbilt Center for Science Outreach.

**Katie Hughes** just finished her first year of grad school at Brenau and has started her thesis project; she begins an internship at the Children's Center for Hope and Healing this month.

**Taylor Turner** is teaching 8th grade science at Russell Middle School in Winder, and says it has been challenging, but that she enjoys getting to focus on science all day.

Class of 2014

**Hilary Ference** has a new job at the Gwinnett County Solicitors office as a legal associate.

**Katherine Jones** recently had her one year anniversary with MarketSource. Besides that, she took an awesome trip to Egypt.



**Kathy Thompson** took a job as a substance abuse counselor at a MedMark rehab facility. She is also working on a Certified Co-occurring Disorders Professional certification.

## ALUMNI NEWS, continued

Class of 2015

**Ashley Hamby** is employed as a third grade teacher at Fair Street Elementary in Gainesville City Schools.

**Joshua McCausland** is halfway through his year of employment as part of his UGSP award from NIH, and contributed to a publication in the *American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine* on a protein toxin that staphylococcal bacteria use in fatal pneumonia. He is in the process of deciding on a biochemistry Ph.D. program, having been chosen for interviews with UAB, UNC, Johns Hopkins, and Yale, among others.

**Jordan Miller** reports that she “doing fine in 279” teaching 8th grade at West Hall Middle School.

**Jennifer Ward** completed her first semester of grad school (in forestry/natural resources) at UGA. She finally got to trap some coyotes, and most of her current fieldwork involves recovering satellite collars when the coyotes wearing them have died. She notes that this can be awkward when people shoot a coyote and keep the collar at their house.

Below: September 2015 Rafting trip on the Ocoee.

## Fall Honors fieldtrip to see *The Crucible* at the Shakespeare Tavern



From top, clockwise: Matthew Horton, Barry Strickland, Holly Williams, and Jenna Davidson



Left to right: Zoe Moore, Morgan Furbee, Shannon Foley, Seth Truax, and Mitchell Fariss

