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New faces to come to Warnell with faculty retirements

As I write to you, we’ve recently graduated the spring graduates, and this week closed the Maymester where we hold so many important field courses. Another successful and productive academic year is in the books. As always, that success is due to our terrific faculty and students as well as our supportive alumni and friends. We recently enjoyed seeing many of you at spring alumni and friends receptions in Columbus, Washington, Richmond Hill, Valdosta and Mobile.

We will remember the 2018-19 academic year for the many faculty retirements. Key departures include Dr. Doug Peterson (fisheries), Dr. David Moorhead (silviculture), Dr. Ben Jackson (forest harvesting), Professor Tom Harris (forest business), and Dr. Larry Morris (forest soils). We thank them for the years of service to the Warnell School and the legacies they leave that inspire those who stood on their shoulders. We have profiles in this issue highlighting the service of several of these retiring faculty.

While we had faculty departing, we also had nearly constant search committee activity to fill these vacated positions, plus a couple of new ones. I deeply appreciate the diligent work performed by our faculty and external stakeholders who served on these committees. And we have made what I think are some great hires that will continue the success of our programs for years to come.

Since our last issue we have also lost nearly 30 alumni, two-thirds of whom earned the old BSF degree from Warnell. These include some very beloved and colorful characters, most of whom also served our country in uniform.

Looking ahead to the coming academic year, the Warnell School will be developing a five-year strategic plan to chart our course through 2025. This is part of a coordinated campus-wide effort to prepare UGA for our next accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. I have enjoyed serving as one of six deans helping lead this process at the university level this year. I’m excited about this opportunity since we are about mid-way through our plan written in 2016 and one-third of our current faculty were not here when we wrote it. As always, we will reach out early and often to our alumni and external stakeholders as we consider the course ahead. Don’t be surprised when we contact you.

Have a great summer, football season is just a few weeks away, and cooler weather can’t be far behind. As always thank you for all you do to help keep your school among the best anywhere. It remains an honor to serve you all as Dean.

Go Dawgs.
On the Cover:
There has been a changing of the guard at Warnell. Over the past few years, a number of professors have quietly retired after teaching and researching for many years, in some cases decades. The faculty has a number of fresh faces, as Dean Dale Greene works to expand and diversify Warnell’s programs, teaching and research. Cover illustration by Wade Newbury.

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The annual Herp Day on the Lawn has become a fun spring-time event that always draws a crowd. People across campus come to check out the animals on display and learn about these fascinating creatures. Photos by Wade Newbury.

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Green receives highest UGA honor for instruction

Dr. Gary Green has once again been recognized for his passion and commitment to teaching by being named a Josiah Meigs Distinguished Teaching Professor, the highest honor from the University of Georgia for excellence in instruction.

Green, who has received numerous honors over the years for his teaching at Warnell and across campus, was one of just five University of Georgia faculty members to be named a Meigs Professor during Honors Week this past spring semester.

“Dr. Gary Green is well known across the Warnell School and the UGA campus as someone who is not only passionate about teaching in the classroom, but who is also willing to mentor other faculty who wish to improve student learning in their courses,” said Dean Dale Greene. “He has also been generous with his time serving on campus efforts to improve student learning and instructional methods across campus. This is a well-deserved recognition for his continuous efforts on behalf of our instructional mission.”

Green teaches courses related to parks, recreation and tourism management, and seeks to ignite students’ interest and facilitate their learning through real-world examples and service-learning approaches. For example, students in his “Environmental Interpretation” course engage with natural resource agencies to apply their knowledge to present-day problems.

Green also created an online version of the large, popular “Natural Resources Conservation” course that many faculty members use as a template for their own other online courses. Green, who joined the faculty in 2004, has received awards from the forestry honor society Xi Sigma Pi, the UGA Student Government Association and the Warnell School. He is a recipient of several university awards, including the Richard B. Russell Undergraduate Teaching Award, a First-Year Odyssey Seminar Teaching Award, the Graduate School’s Outstanding Mentoring Award and a UGA Teaching Academy member.

The Meigs Professorship was established to underscore the university’s commitment to excellence in teaching, the value placed on the learning experiences of students and the centrality of instruction to the university’s mission.

Green also joins other Warnell faculty members who have received this distinguished honor: Drs. John Maerz and Michael Tarrant, and Emeritus Professor Bob Warren.
Questions with CJ Tsai

CJ Tsai

Current Position: Winfred N. “Hank” Haynes Professor and Georgia Research Alliance Eminent Scholar in Forest Biotechnology

Education: Michigan Technological University (Ph.D.), Taiwan University (M.S. and B.S.)

Classes teaching: FANS/GENE/BINF 8140, Functional Genomics

Personal Info: enjoy traveling, gardening and hot yoga

Your research heavily focuses on making better trees through DNA research. What’s the importance of genetics research to both forestry and agriculture?

Both forestry and agriculture depend on product quality and quantity, of course. But, in addition, genetic traits underpin how trees and crops deal with major stresses such as drought and pests. Beyond our research, DNA analysis is also integral to biodiversity, conservation and invasive species surveillance and monitoring. I recently read a report on DNA tracking for illegal logging and associated trade. So DNA applications are widespread in our profession!

Your lab has been a world leader in the development of genome-edited trees. Tell us about this project.

We were actually the first to publish using CRISPR for genome editing in trees, which is making headlines these days for its potential applications in biomedicine, agriculture and beyond. We applied this technology to nullify a lignin gene and achieve 100 percent mutation with poplar—much more efficient than what has been reported for many agricultural crops and animal systems! This is huge for tree research because null mutants are rare and previous technologies could not achieve complete gene silencing, making it difficult to study gene function.

You’ve also done studies on improving plant defenses by increasing salicylic acid levels, while avoiding growth stagnation. Talk about these.

We are still investigating the basis for how poplar trees tolerate elevated levels of salicylic acid while sustaining normal growth. In addition, using Arabidopsis (mouse-ear cress) as a model, we have identified several salicylic acid responsive genes with stress protective functions. These genes usually switch on under stresses such as cold and drought to confer protection, but high levels of salicylic acid can interfere with this process. We successfully engineered plants that are more stress-tolerant without the growth penalty, and are currently testing the system in agriculture crops.

Another project focuses on parasitic bromrapes. How did you get involved with parasitic plants?

This is another tree-inspired project. While working on the salicylic acid project, we discovered that it can be synthesized from two pathways, including one that is also utilized for vitamin K biosynthesis. Vitamin K is important for photosynthesis in plants, but its high levels in soybean seeds suggested a novel function not related to photosynthesis. This is how we turned to bromrapes since they are non-photosynthetic. Long story short, we found a novel vitamin K pathway in those holoparasites! This is taking us in a whole new research direction, with the exciting potential for discovering new strategies to combat the devastating weeds.

You’ve got a joint appointment between Warnell and the Franklin College of Arts and Sciences’ department of genetics. What are some of the challenges with this split role?

It’s been wonderful to be able to interact and work with diverse colleagues and graduate students from multiple programs. The challenges are to keep up with all the meetings and get to know all colleagues, especially when my lab and office are located in a different building, which limits chance meetings with many colleagues.

Kris Irwin has been named associate dean for outreach, taking over for Dr. Mike Mengak.

Mengak, who had been associate dean since 2014, opted to return to his previous role on the outreach faculty.

“I appreciate the opportunity to work with Dean Dale Greene and my colleagues on the administrative team to develop and carry out the goals of the strategic plan and improve the outreach program in the Warnell School,” Mengak said. “The outreach faculty are a highly energetic and motivated group of professionals and they were a lot of fun to work with for the past five years. I am looking forward to returning to my role on the faculty and focusing on my outreach program with wild pigs, wildlife damage management and the Georgia Master Naturalist Program. I will be picking up one or two additional classes, and I am excited to be able to participate in the senior project course.”

Irwin, who has been a senior public service associate at Warnell since 2012, said he’s honored and privileged to be named associate dean. “I want to thank Dean Greene for giving me this opportunity, and I am looking forward to this exciting new chapter in my career. I also want to thank Dr. Mengak for helping me transition into this new role before he steps down.”

Irwin, who earned his PhD from UGA in 2010, will be responsible for supporting Warnell outreach faculty, facilitating new opportunities with state natural resource agencies and organizations, exploring new funding opportunities, nurturing existing partnerships, and expanding collaborations with UGA Cooperative Extension across the state.

Irwin has taught several UGA courses, including study abroad classes, during his time at Warnell. He has also been honored with a number of accolades, including winning the 2018 Warnell School Faculty Award for Outstanding Outreach. He has also been recognized by UGA for his public service and outreach work, was twice named Facilitator of the Year by Georgia Project Learning Tree, and won the National Project Learning Tree Educator of the Year by the American Forest Foundation. Irwin has also authored or co-authored dozens of publications, teaches continuing education classes, and conducts Project Learning Tree, Project WILD, and Project WET Professional training classes.

Irwin said the Warnell outreach faculty “are truly a dream team. The diversity of technical expertise we represent affords us the ability to address the needs of Georgia citizens and our natural resources. One of the biggest challenges ahead of us is the need to address the recovery of forestlands in Southwest Georgia that suffered catastrophic damage caused by Hurricane Michael last October.”
School News

**WARNELL NOTES**

- **Cassidy Lord** (BSEH ’17, MS ’20) took second place in the Capturing Science Context, held by the UGA Libraries and the Office of Research. This contest challenged UGA students to communicate STEM concepts using any media or genre. Judges evaluated submissions based on clarity of expression, creativity and appeal to a broad audience. Lord’s submission, “Where’s My Creek?” educational guide, landed her a $250 prize.

- PhD candidate **Angela Burrow** won a PEO Scholars Award. This highly competitive international award for women in science earning doctoral degrees helps pay for study and research. PEO Scholars have demonstrated their ability to make significant contributions in their chosen field of study, having assumed leadership positions in university academe, scientific research, medicine, law, performing arts, international economics, history, literature, government and other demanding fields.

- **Joe Conrad** was recently honored by the Forest Resource Association’s Southeastern Region with a second place technical writing award. This award recognizes the best technical releases published and posted on the FRAs website. Conrad was honored for his release, 18-R-13, Summary of Changes in Eastern US Logging Businesses, 1980s-Present. It highlights many interesting results from his study of trends in logging businesses in various regions of the United States. Two of the most notable findings from his study: while the number of logging businesses and total number of logging workers has declined in most regions of the country since the ’80s, that decline has been offset by the increasing productivity of logging businesses. The trend, says the FRA, “is for fewer but larger, more productive logging businesses.”

- **James Beasley**, who we share with Savannah River Ecology Laboratory, has been named a 2019 Ecological Society of America Early Career Fellow. “Early Career Fellows are members within eight years of completing their doctoral training (or other terminal degree) who have advanced ecological knowledge and applications and show promise of continuing to make outstanding contributions to a wide range of fields served by ESA,” according to the ESA. Beasley has been making a lot of strides in researching the effects on wildlife the Chernobyl nuclear accident had, discovering that wildlife is rebounding in the exclusion zone. But he’s also been making outstanding contributions internationally by studying invasive species ecology, carnivores, scavengers and wildlife populations.

- **Cassidy Lord** (BSEH ’17, MS ’20) and **Kristen Lear** (PhD ’21) were winners in the 2019 Art of STEM competition, held annually by the University of Georgia Office of STEM Education. Bunch won the Award of Excellence for her “Side-Scan Sonar,” and Lear won a Special Merit Award for “Channeling Andy Warhol for Bat Conservation.”

- **Pete Bettinger** and **Jacek Siry** have won a USDA National Needs Grant to support six American Indian students to study in the Langdale Center for Forest Business’ graduate forest business management program. Siry attended the 45th annual National Indian Timber Symposium at the Seminole Nation in Fort Lauderdale as part of this recruitment effort, which is supported by the InterTribal Timber Council (which hosted the conference).

- **Joe Conrad** was recently honored by the Forest Resource Association’s Southeastern Region with a second place technical writing award. This award recognizes the best technical releases published and posted on the FRAs website. Conrad was honored for his release, 18-R-13, Summary of Changes in Eastern US Logging Businesses, 1980s-Present. It highlights many interesting results from his study of trends in logging businesses in various regions of the United States. Two of the most notable findings from his study: while the number of logging businesses and total number of logging workers has declined in most regions of the country since the ’80s, that decline has been offset by the increasing productivity of logging businesses. The trend, says the FRA, “is for fewer but larger, more productive logging businesses.”

- **Jesse Abrams** has been named a 2019-2021 UGA Lilly Fellows cohort. This is a program through the UGA Center for Teaching and Learning that helps tenure-track assistant professors develop effective teaching skills, help them balance teaching with research and service, link them to a faculty support system and mentors, and overall offer them help to strengthen their teaching methods. Abrams is an assistant professor of natural resource policy and sustainability and joined Warnell last fall.

- **The deer research group traveled to Louisville, Kentucky, for the 2019 Southeast Deer Study Group Conference this spring, and several UGA students swept the awards for research posters. Adam Edge (left) and Zach Weinert (right), tied for first place, and Jordan Youngmann (middle) won second place.”

- **The Georgia Water Coalition honored Warnell this year for our modification of the White Dam behind Flinchum’s Phoenix, making us a Clean Water Hero. It’s a great feeling to be recognized for this project, says the professor who spearheaded it all, Jay Shelton. “It is a great honor for us to receive the Clean 13 Award,” he said. “This was truly a team effort, and our achievement was only possible with the help of our many partners including Duncan Elkins, Justin Vining, Sara Gottlieb with The Nature Conservancy in Georgia (who nominated us for the award), American Rivers, Tripp Bolin with the USFWS, Hal Jones and Ricky Campbell with the Pvt. John Allen National Fish Hatchery, Derek Little and Lisa Perras-Gordon with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 4 (Southeast Region), Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership (SARP) and Molly Dawson with the Natural Resources Conservation Service in Georgia.” Warnell accepted the award at a ceremony earlier this year.”

- The Log
The Warnell School of Forestry’s forests just became officially sustainable. The majority of Warnell’s forestlands across Georgia gained certification from the American Tree Farm System late last year after proving that the school’s management meets the organization’s standards.

“We did this to demonstrate our commitment to sustainable forest and natural resource management,” said Mike Hunter, Warnell’s director of facilities.

The American Tree Farm System will certify woodlands under a management plan that addresses air, water, soil quantity, wildlife, invasive species and pests that meets its standards of sustainability. An ATFS inspector visits the properties and verifies these stipulations.

“Now that we have it, we need to continue to practice sound forest management as we have always done,” Hunter said. “We will be subject to third-party audits to insure we are meeting our indicators.”
A professionals perspective
Alumni plug their careers through classroom visits

When the students in Joe Conrad’s wood procurement class settled in at their desks this past spring, they didn’t always see the Warnell professor standing at the lectern ready to start teaching.

Instead, they frequently found Joe Parsons and Kim Lloyd at the front of the class. Powerpoint already cued up, and the procurement pros ready to start talking. The two Warnell alumni tag-teamed teaching duties this spring, giving students the unique chance to learn directly from those working in the field.

This arrangement meant that several times per month, Parsons and Lloyd came to Athens to teach, and hopefully inspired students to pursue careers in procurement. Where opportunities are plentiful for motivated students with a good work ethic, business savvy and interpersonal skills.

“There’s a wave of retirements coming in wood procurement over the next few years,” Lloyd said. “Opportunities are there for those with an interest in a wood procurement career.”

Warrell’s wood procurement management course is unique for Southern universities and colleges, because very few teach a full class on the subject, he said. Most offer just one-hour seminars or a timber cruising exercise.

“We focus on management of wood procurement systems,” Greene said. “Bringing in professional managers not only adds to how Professor Harris structured the class, but now students also directly benefit from experts.”

Lloyd was particularly committed, driving from Louisiana for their class sessions. Parsons said he had fun being back on campus and working with students. “Warnell students are extremely bright and quick to grasp the ideas we are presenting,” he said.

Lloyd and Parsons said they hope that students took away more than just the nuts and bolts of wood procurement. “During your career, there will be jobs that others may not want to be involved with,” Parsons said. “If you are willing to tackle those, many times you will gain a tremendous amount of knowledge and also respect from the people you work with.”

Lloyd had more advice for the next crop of professionals: “When in the work force, don’t become stagnant,” he said. “Step outside your comfort zone. Volunteer for projects. Be creative and offer ideas. Be willing to relocate, especially early in your career. It will make your job much more satisfying and improve your career opportunities.”
Strong support for preservation, expansion of Appalachian mountains

A new study by Warnell researchers has found strong support for the preservation and expansion of wilderness areas among public land visitors living within a half-day drive of the Southern Appalachian Mountains. The new report reveals 89 percent of respondents across the Southeast support the preservation of wilderness areas and 88 percent of those who had visited a wilderness area thought more wildlands should be protected.

The Appalachians are an iconic American mountain range with more than half of the U.S. population living within an 8-hour drive of its southern region. The wildlands located here offer one of the East’s greatest opportunities for escape, exploration, adventure and have been instrumental in shaping the region’s rich history for centuries. Despite this, researchers studying human to outdoor interactions have known little about how Southerners perceive, use, or view these protected areas.

Warnell researchers Kyle Woosnam; Samuel J. Keith, doctoral research assistant; Bynum Boley, assistant professor of parks, recreation and tourism management; and Gary Green, professor of parks, recreation and tourism management, authored the study.

This Southern Appalachian region is also home to nearly 50 wilderness areas that span almost half a million acres, stretching from Alabama to Virginia. Researchers surveyed 1,250 residents in Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee who had visited a protected natural area (ex: wilderness, state park, national scenic area, etc.) in the last five years, with questions focusing most closely on residents’ perceptions of and experiences in the Southern Appalachians. The research was funded by a grant from Southern Environmental Law Center and The Wilderness Society.

Highlights from the study include:

- People most often visit wilderness areas for day hiking, photography, swimming and camping
- Positive perceptions of wilderness spanned across the political spectrum
- Word of mouth was the top way people found out about wilderness areas
- Participants expressed a high level of emotional attachment to wilderness areas visited
- The protection of water quality and wildlife habitat were the most important wilderness benefits identified

A scavenger study that used fish carcasses as bait provides additional evidence that wildlife is abundant in the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone, UGA researchers found.

A one-month camera study prompted the sighting of 10 mammal and five bird species, according to James Beasley, associate professor at the Savannah River Ecology Laboratory and the Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources.

“These animals were photographed while scavenging fish carcasses placed on the shoreline of rivers and canals in the CEZ,” he said. “We’ve seen evidence of a diversity of wildlife in the CEZ through our previous research, but this is the first time that we’ve seen white-tailed eagles, American mink and river otter on our cameras.”

Beasley is referring to a 2015 study that provided the first evidence that wildlife—including gray wolves—exists in abundance in this ecological zone of about 1,000 square miles that was abandoned by humans after the 1986 nuclear accident.

The new results, published in the journal Food Webs, provide evidence that aquatic nutrient resources can flow to terrestrial landscapes and become available to terrestrial as well as semiaquatic wildlife, like otter and mink.

Lead investigator Peter Schlichting, an SREL post-doctoral researcher at the time of the study, said previous studies reported that scavenging activity can connect various food webs, but scientists don’t fully understand how this occurs.

In the current study, fish carcasses were placed at the edge of open waters at the Pripyat River and in nearby irrigation canals, mimicking the natural activity that occurs when currents transport dead fish carcasses to the shore, according to Schlichting, now a postdoctoral research associate at Arizona State University.

The results show that 98 percent of the fish carcasses were consumed within one week by a multitude of scavengers.
Snake's snack adds interesting twist to bobwhite quail study

A Warnell graduate student’s research project on bobwhite quails got a little more interesting this year, when the radio-tagged bird was eaten by a timber rattlesnake. Researchers went looking for the bobwhite collar (the round object) when it started giving off a mortality signal. Instead of finding the collar, they found the rattlesnake.

Rachel Gardner, who is advised by Drs. James Martin and John Maerz, has been studying how movement and space use of timber rattlesnakes, black ratsnakes and Northern Bobwhites are affected by supplemental feeding.

The bobwhite collar (the round object seen in this photo at right between the two other objects) was giving off a mortality signal, and the technicians who went to collect it found a rattlesnake instead of just a collar.

The rattlesnake was then brought in for surgery to implant it with a radio-transmitter (the largest of the objects seen inside the snake) and implanted with a PIT tag (the smallest of the objects).

Forest health not always a priority at federal level, Warnell analysis finds

Warnell researchers looking at existing federal policies and the role that federal agencies play in forest health found that natural resources managers need to advocate for more resources and stand-alone policy tools to deal with current and future threats.

Warnell’s Kamal Gandhi and Jesse Abrams, along with Faith Campbell with the Center for Invasive Species Protection, published “Current Status of Forest Health Policy in the United States” in the journal Insects this year.

“Overall, our review showed that relatively few national policies directly address forest health as a stand-alone objective, as most of them are embedded within forestry bills,” they write in the study. “Federal funding for forest health issues and the number of personnel dedicated to such issues have declined dramatically for some agencies.

Concomitantly, native species continue to gain pestiferous status while non-native species continue to establish and cause impacts in the US.”

Although there have been major policies embedded as part of larger farm and forestry bills, “it is also clear that these few policies are not enough—and much more are needed especially under variable climatic conditions to empower scientists and managers at all levels. Even in the wake of devastating pest outbreaks such as those by bark beetles on federal lands, the federal policy response was quite weak. Many forest policies, in fact, appear to be static, and changes are made largely to budgetary allocations.”

They say there needs to be a push for stand-alone major policy and funding just for forest health. “That would help natural resource managers respond to insect and disease outbreaks in real time.

Identifying African American forest landownership outlooks can help them reach management goals, Warnell researchers say

Breaking down the different outlooks African American forest landowners have about forest management will improve efforts to help them meet their objectives, a Warnell study says.

“Exploring Diversity in Forest Management Outlooks of African American Family Forest Landowners for Ensuring Sustainability of Forestry Resources in the Southern United States,” published this year in the journal Human Ecology, says African American forest landowners shouldn’t be considered a homogenous group. Instead, the authors argue, they can be seen as having five distinct outlooks on forest management: Sustainable Harvesters, Back 40ers, Land Use Pragmatists, Recreationalists, and Indecisive.

The article was authored by Noah Goyke and Puneet Dwivedi from Warnell, Sarah Hitchner at the UGA Center for Integrative Conservation Research, John Schelhas with the U.S. Forest Service’s Southern Research Station and Marc Thomas with Fort Valley State University’s Cooperative Extension.

“Our findings provide important insights into African American forest landowners’ outlooks and how to serve their forest management objectives in an effective manner,” they write in the study.

It defined the five outlooks:

- **Sustainable Harvesters** focus on balanced land use with a long-term outlook
- **Back 40ers** appreciate the presence of forests on their property but focus on alternative land use
- **Land Use Pragmatists** are also interested in alternative land use and primarily view forest as an economic resource
- **Recreationalists** value their forestland not for economic value but as a place for personal use
- **Indecisive** landowners are not sure about how to best manage their forestland

In Georgia, about 3,000 African American families own 2.9 percent of land and 1.7 percent of family forestlands, but research has shown that they often have different management objectives from those of their white counterparts. But African American forest landownership is also often complicated by the prevalence of “tenancy-in-common” among them. Tenancy-in-common, or heirs’ property, is the result of real property left intestate upon the death of the landowner. All heirs of the original owner own a fractional interest in the entire property, including rights of exclusion. This situation sometimes referred to as the “tragedy of the anti-commons,” adversely affects the ability to manage forests, discourages investment, and excludes heirs’ property owners from leveraging their land as capital or enrolling the land in government programs.

Also, “nationally, land loss is of growing concern for all small landholders and is particularly acute for African Americans” the authors write. Economics of scale, migration out of rural communities and discrimination have all played a role in African American land loss.”

Summer 2019
RETIREMENT ON THE HORIZON

When Sharon Swagger (BSFR ’04, MS ’07) walks into Flinchum’s Phoenix at Warnell parties, she’s always thrilled to see someone whose class she sat in all those years ago. These professors, she said, not only helped shape her career, but they also helped forge that long-lasting connection to Warnell that has made her so enthusiastic about staying involved with the school.

While a graduate student, the house Swagger and a roommate lived in burned down, and they lost everything. Their professors, she said, not only helped shape her career, but they also helped forge that long-lasting connection to Warnell that has made her one of Warnell’s most engaged alumni—Swagger’s been on one of Warnell’s advisory committees every year since she graduated, including the Young Alumni Committee and Alumni Steering Committee.

But Swagger’s not alone. “Our peer institutions around the country are facing the same thing,” he said.

Since Greene became dean four years ago, he has hired 20 new faculty members to not only replace retirees, but to also fill some new positions created to help expand Warnell’s diverse disciplines. He’s focusing on the upside of losing experienced talent: Fresh faces that will not only bring in new perspectives to teaching and research, but also further diversifying Warnell’s faculty.

“It’s been hard to see so many respected faculty members leave, Greene said, especially when they’ve had such powerful impacts on natural resources research and the students who’ve passed through Warnell’s halls.

But Warnell’s not alone. “Our peer institutions around the country are facing the same thing,” he said.

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“It’s been very fortunate to serve as dean during strong state budget years that allowed us to fill vacancies and also add some new positions as well,” Greene said. “And I am delighted with the people we’ve added to our faculty.”

RETIREEMENT ON THE HORIZON

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While a graduate student, the house Swagger and a roommate lived in burned down, and they lost everything. Their professors, she said, really went above and beyond in helping with donations. That kind of family-type connection made her one of Warnell’s most engaged alumni—Swagger’s been on one of Warnell’s advisory committees every year since she graduated, including the Young Alumni Committee and Alumni Steering Committee.

But she doesn’t always see those familiar faces at parties anymore, she said. “I graduated just 12 years ago, and I don’t know half the faculty now,” she said.

That’s just a reality for Warnell now.

In the past few years, the list of professors who have retired looks like a Who’s Who of UGA faculty: Bob Warren, Dick Daniels, Bob Teskey, Dave Moorhead, Mary Ann McGuire, Jon Caulfield, Doug Peterson and Ben Jackson have all called it a day.
Tom Harris and Larry Morris retired this past semester, and Langdale Center for Forest Business Director Bob Irlaz and longtime wildlife Professor Karl Miller have already announced that they’ll also be retiring in the next couple of years. Their careers were not short: Teskey and Harris spent 35 years at Warnell, Jackson retired after a 29-year stint, Warren and Morris both did a 33-year tour, and Moorhead topped them all at 36 years. Both Irlaz and Miller have spent their entire teaching careers at Warnell.

Many of those who are now enjoying the retired life had a long list of accolades, awards and internationally recognized and often groundbreaking research.

“When people come here, they stay here because of the strength of the program,” Greene said. They may be hard to replace, but Greene’s found no shortage of qualified applicants for not only the positions vacated by retirees, but also for the new faculty jobs created as Warnell’s program expands. Warnell also offers a stable school budget and a very competitive start-up package for new faculty.

“We’re one of the top programs,” he said. “When we advertise positions, people who already have faculty jobs elsewhere apply here.”

**STRATEGICALLY PLACED**

Back in January, the University’s president’s office announced that it had created a committee to develop a five-year strategic plan to expand UGA’s impact around the world. To be put in place between 2020 and 2025, this plan will focus on teaching and learning excellence; increasing research, innovation and entrepreneurship at UGA; and strengthening the University’s relationships with communities in the state and around the world.

Each college at UGA has been tasked with helping create this strategic plan, and the new faculty at Warnell will have a hand in this, Greene said. “It’s exciting that we have new folks who are going to help write this plan,” he said. “We’ve got a lot of people from a lot of different places who’ll bring new ideas to the table.”

UGA’s not the only one looking to the future, however. Over the past couple of years, Warnell has taken a hard look at its curriculum and whether what the school teaches is still relevant to today’s natural resources management and industries. And in a couple of cases, the answer was “no.”

So Warnell made some changes: The school revamped two majors—natural resources recreation and tourism became parks recreation and tourism management, and water and soil resources became natural resources management and sustainability—and added relevant areas of emphasis. Expanding Warnell’s program not only lines up with what employers look for in graduates, but it also attracts more students.

New additions to the program include community forestry and arboriculture (COFA) and geospatial information science, while transforming water and soil resources into an area of emphasis under the new NRMS major. Losing faculty can be a hindrance, said Associate Dean for Academic Affairs Robert Bringolf, but it can also bring new opportunities.

“Recent retirements of many of our most well-respected, beloved, and established faculty posed significant instructional challenges for supporting our expanding academic programs across the school,” Bringolf said. “However, we’re very excited about the depth, breadth, energy, and diverse perspectives the new faculty hires bring to Warnell.”

Jason Gordon has already settled in at Warnell as part of the COFA discipline, and he’ll be joined by Rebecca Abney on Aug. 1. Holly Campbell joined Warnell on July 1, and all three “will contribute to existing programs, like forestry and water and soils, as well” said Bringolf.

“Marty Hamel adds expertise in large river biology to the fisheries program,” he added, “and Michel Kohl’s experience in wildlife outreach and extension adds to the already strong wildlife program.

“We’re also very pleased to have a new instructor position in the school that will be dedicated to enhancing data literacy for all Warnell students,” said Bringolf. “Dr. Duncan Elkins will work with students starting in their first semester in the professional program, through their majors, and in senior project/thesis, to introduce and reinforce topics related to data collection, analysis, interpretation, and presentation. No doubt these new hires have some big shoes to fill, but we’re confident that the combination of their experiences and commitment to excellence in instruction will help grow our programs to new heights.”

Teaching won’t be the only area at Warnell influenced by the new hires. Associate Dean for Research Scott Merkle predicts that Warnell’s research prestige will only grow with new professors.

“The researchers who have joined our faculty in 2018 and 2019 are not only continuing Warnell’s traditional research strengths in the broad fields of tree biology, sustainability, fisheries science, silviculture and soil science, but are expanding the school’s research expertise into new, specialized areas within these broad fields,” Merkle said. “Some of these specialized areas include fish population dynamics (Hamel), invasive species and hardwood silviculture (David Clabo), phytoremediation (Lori Sutter), fate of pyrogenic carbon in soil (Abney), water transport properties in trees (Dan Johnson) and the dynamics of rural community engagement with natural resource stewardship and conservation (Jesse Abrams).”

One retiree might be a little sadly nostalgic when he comes back to visit and sees all new faces, but he’s also thrilled that the faculty has had an injection of new blood. When Bob Warren was a fresh-faced professor back in the very early 1980s, the school didn’t even have wildlife as a major, and non-Warnell students were forbidden from taking classes in the school. When he and some others argued that opening up some of the classes to other UGA students could bring in new students and spread the importance of conservation to the rest of campus, the older faculty members put up a fight, he said.

“That’s why we need to change faculty every few decades,” Warren said. “So we can bring those new ideas in.”

Warren also applauds Greene for doing something few Warnell deans have done in the past: Aggressively filling vacant faculty positions, often with an overlap between retiring professor and the replacement. There were times, Warren said, that saw faculty jobs left vacant for years.
When Gino D’Angelo came on board just as Warren’s retirement loomed, the two had three months of overlap that allowed Warren to help D’Angelo get settled and maybe pass on some tips.

“It maintains program continuity,” Warren said. “You don’t get that drop in productivity.”

NEW PROFESSORS, NEW CONNECTIONS

Swagger may not be that familiar with the new faces on Warnell’s faculty, but she’s already seen the effects they’ve had on the school. “By hiring a wide variety of faculty that have such a diverse skillset, it’s really rejuvenated the program,” she said.

She’s optimistic that as time goes on, they’ll forge the same kind of connections with students that have kept her so active as an alumna—but she’s hopeful they’ll also duplicate that relationship with alumni they never taught.

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Her favorite professor from her undergraduate years, she said, was Warren. But she witnessed him not only enthusiastically engaging with students at events, she said, but also other alumni. “He was so active,” Swagger said. “He came to alumni events, and he made us alumni feel that we were still part of the family.”

For his part, Warren said it does feel strange to walk into Flinchum’s Phoenix only to see a slew of strange faculty faces. But it’s for the best, he said, not only for the new ideas, but also to meet the changing needs of Warnell’s curriculum.

“I walk into Warnell, and I don’t recognize the place anymore,” Warren said. “But that’s important. We need to make sure the school moves ahead and maintains an active, vibrant and productive faculty. The students are always going to change. Technology advances, and science advances. We have to move senior faculty members into retirement so we can get the new wave of faculty in to get that best education, research and extension efforts that our students and citizens of Georgia deserve.”

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The fifth floor of Building 4 seems a little emptier somehow these days. Professor Tom Harris, a fixture at Warnell, retired at the end of April, ending a prestigious 35-year career at the University of Georgia.

Harris said he’s looking forward to having the time off, and jokes that he’s going to spend his retirement designing “fireworks displays.”

In reality, Harris plans to putter around his home in Oglethorpe County and spend time with his wife, Marybeth, their six children and two grandchildren.

A man of few words, Harris said he decided to retire now to seek out new challenges, but he’s going to miss all of his Warnell friends.

Dean Dale Greene said Harris will leave a hole at Warnell. “Having people on our faculty like Tom with industry leadership and management experience helped create the strong reputation of our forest business MFR program,” Greene said. “And what Tom did with TimberMart-South since it came to UGA has simply been remarkable.”

Harris earned his bachelor’s degree in forest management and forest resources in 1965 from North Carolina State University and followed that up in 1969 with a master of business administration from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania.

His career started in 1970 with Container Corporation of America, where he served as the vice president of timber and timberlands, but in 1984 he joined the forestry faculty at UGA. In the past 35 years, he has taught numerous forestry courses at Warnell, authored or co-authored dozens of publications and served on many master’s graduate committees.

He has served on the board of the Forest Resources Association as well as the Frank W. Norris Foundation. And since 1995 he served as the managing director and publisher of TimberMart-South, the South’s leading, timber price reporting service.

Jonathan Smith, executive director of Timber-Mart South, has taken on leading the service, although Harris will continue to serve in an advisory role throughout a transition period.

“Tom Harris has been the name primarily associated with TimberMart-South since it was purchased from Frank Norris in 1995,” Smith said. “His hard work, dedication and knowledge have grown TimberMart-South from a one-man shop to an internationally recognized service. As we look beyond Tom’s retirement and transition at TMS, it is difficult to envision our products and publications without his input. However, as hard as he has worked to grow TimberMart-South, he has also been building and preparing our staff to independently maintain our quality and consistency. We wish Tom all the best as he continues into the next part of his journey.”

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Changes on the horizon for Langdale Center for Forest Business

When the first modern era University of Georgia Timberland Investment Conference wrapped up in 2004, organizers counted 160 attendees.

It was a great start.

Fifteen years later, 600 people packed the conference halls of the Ritz-Carlton on Amelia Island. Coming from around the world, they flocked to Florida for what has become the world's premiere timberland conference.

Bob Izlar, director of the Harley Langdale Jr. Center for Forest Business, won't be in charge for the 2021 conference however, as he can proudly and without question say the international success of the conference is one of his biggest accomplishments during his career at Warnell.

Izlar, who has been director of the Langdale Center since its inception in 1998, plans to retire in 2020. It's not the only change for the Langdale Center—or Warnell's forestry program, either. Longtime Professor Tom Harris Jr. has retired as well (see page 23), and Warnell is searching for an associate director, someone who will one day take over for Izlar.

Why retire now? “Cause I’m old and the Bulldogs don’t wear leather helmets anymore,” Izlar jokes. That story, he says, will come later.

The Langdale Center continues to do what it does best: Educate, research and serve the forestry community in Georgia, the South, the U.S. and the globe. Not only does the Langdale Center offer the conference every two years, but Warnell's master of forest resources, master of science and PhD programs in forest business have become so esteemed that its alumni are known for their many positions and expertise throughout the timberland investing community and their success in senior management roles.

All the Langdale Center’s students attended the conference this year, Izlar said, allowing them to mingle and network with the high-level industry professionals and organizations they’ve been learning about in class.

“What other forestry school in the world offers its students that kind of exposure?” Izlar said. “There isn’t one.”

Current students also listened to the 31 speakers who presented at the 2019 conference, including the closing panel of all former Langdale Center students who are now in senior management positions throughout the timberland investing community. “They talked about the influence Warnell had on their careers, their education, as well as the networking they established here at Warnell,” Izlar said.

The conference was organized by Langdale Center faculty members Izlar, Tom Harris, Jacek Siry and Richard Mei. Izlar said the Langdale Center’s conference has a unique advantage over other similar conferences: it comes from an educational institution. “We’re not out there looking to anybody for client contacts or anything like that,” he said. “We are an information provider to the timberland investment community, but we’re not selling anything. Several of the other conferences do that. I think people respect our conference because we’re doing is providing a service as part of the land grant mission, and that service just happens to cover the world now.”

Being held just once every two years helps as well, he added. “Not a whole lot might change in one year, but in a two-year timeframe a lot changes. So you get a fresh perspective that hasn’t been hashed over as the same topic the last three years. We also vary the concentration of topics, and we have a different theme every time.”

Other changes are on the horizon for the Langdale Center besides Izlar and Harris’ retirement. There are plans to hire new faculty, and Warnell also has a program in place that grants Langdale Center students seats in master of business administration classes in the UGA Terry College of Business.

“The Terry College of Business has been our strongest partner at UGA,” Izlar said. “The professors there like the students we send them because they are well prepared and add significant diversity to the typical MBA class section.”

But because of the popularity of the Langdale forest investment science degree programs, Izlar said he believes they will have to limit future enrollment to slightly below current levels.

Izlar is confident about the Langdale Center's future. “When I got here, the only money we had for grad students and operations is what Dean Arnett Mac seeded us with,” he said. “The Langdale Center faculty and Board of Advisors have worked hard to secure the Langdale Center's financial stability. By the time I'm out, the Center's endowment will be over $5 million.”

That is quite a change from no money and leather helmets. ✨
Hudson Jordan

‘Warnell seemed to be a perfect fit’

Degree you’re earning
BSFR in forestry

Hometown
Saint Marys, Georgia

Expected graduation
Fall 2019

Personal information
I have a 1-year-old golden retriever named Oakley, who is named after Jane Oakley, the first female forestry student at UGA.

How did you find Warnell?
By researching online for schools offering degrees in natural resources. Warnell seemed to be a perfect fit and UGA seemed to be the perfect school. (And they were!)

Post-graduation plans:
I plan on continuing my education in Warnell by pursuing my MFR degree and focusing on timber procurement.

How’d you choose your field?
Some careers in forestry allow you to not only spend a lot of time outdoors and appreciate our natural resources, but also to dive into the competitiveness and rush of the business world. For me, it’s the perfect balance. Also, the people in the timber industry are generally genuine and personable, which creates a comfortable and enjoyable work environment.

What area of interest are you passionate about?
Spending time outdoors. Preferably in a boat on the coast, fishing.

What is your best UGA memory?
Spending Saturdays in the fall cheering on the Dawgs with 92,746 of my closest friends!

Angela Burrow

GRADUATE PROFILE

How’d you choose your field?
As an undergrad, I was fortunate to have supportive mentors who recognized my interest in ecology before I realized where my own heart lay. They recommended me for two research experiences, one in the Mojave Desert and another at Miami University in Ohio, which solidified that wildlife ecology was the place for me.

What research/area of interest are you passionate about?
I am broadly interested in the role that vegetation plays in mediating population dynamics in species with dual habitat requirements, particularly when these habitats are managed differentially. My current research focuses on examining how forest succession and restoration affect threatened amphibians across wetland-to-upland habitat within the longleaf pine ecosystem. I am also interested in fostering active learning within STEM fields, particularly introductory science courses. I am also passionate about communicating scientific understanding to professional and general audiences, and working to protect vital systems with this knowledge.

What is your best UGA memory?
Anytime I am working with my colleagues—either my lab-mates, who are fantastic, or volunteering with WiSci or EcoReach, both organizations that seek to expand the reach and diversity of science.

What’s something interesting people may not know about you?
Probably that I like to quilt even though I’m not very good at it! But it is fun, relaxing and creative so it is a great way to unwind.
Wildlife, forestry conclave teams make strong showings at competitions

Conclave season at Warnell never fails to disappoint, as our student teams continue to make strong showings at the wildlife and forestry competitions—representing the school with professionalism and enthusiasm.

The student chapter of The Wildlife Society continued their conclave dominance this past spring, winning overall first place for the 10th time in 11 years, as well as the fourth consecutive first place finish.

Competing at the Southeastern Wildlife Conclave (held at Abraham Baldwin Agriculture College this year), the conclave team also placed first in the team field competition and Quiz Bowl. Several students also took top honors in individual competitions: Seth Cook (first place, lab practical), Emma Houpt (second place, GIS practical), Ben Williams (second place, dendrology), and Mischa Schultz (third place in both drawing and painting).

“We all know that Warnell has great students and they demonstrated it once again during this conclave,” said Steven Castleberry, who is the club’s adviser.

The TimberDawgs also did Warnell proud, finishing sixth overall out of 14 schools at the Southern Forestry Conclave held in Baton Rouge this past week. Levi Baker took home first place in log birling. The TimberDawgs also placed sixth in technical events and eighth in physical events.

“I was very impressed with how our students acted professionally and cheered on all of the competitors during the events,” said team coach Joseph Dahlen.
Alumni have a blast at annual Sporting Clays tournament

After a stormy morning in April, the skies cleared for 75 Warnell alumni, students, faculty, staff and friends to enjoy a round of sporting clays. Hosted by Warnell’s Young Alumni Committee, the tournament provides opportunities for students and alumni to network.

New shooters are encouraged to attend after completing a training provided by Georgia R3’s program. Special thanks to tournament co-chairs Charles S. Evans and Jackie Sherry of the Young Alumni Committee, as well as tournament sponsors Georgia R3, Quality Timber & Wildlife Management, Inc., AgGeorgia Farm Credit, Mossy Oak Properties of Augusta Inc., NRA, Nutter & Associates, Ervin Industries, AgSouth, Branch Farm & Timberland, Georgia Wildlife Federation and Alexandra Nicole.

Warnell is fortunate to have some of the most passionate alumni at the University of Georgia. One of the questions I am asked most often is “how can I stay involved with Warnell?” To answer that question, we worked with our alumni committees to come up with a top 10 list. I hope you’ll start at no. 1 and work your way through:

1. Update your contact information. Keeping your email, mailing address and phone number current allows us to stay in touch with you. Every alumni should receive emails and mail from Warnell, if you are not, email aprilmc@uga.edu to update or confirm your information.

2. Stay up-to-date with Warnell news. You can find out what’s happening at Warnell by reading The Log, The Branch, and social media posts. Follow @warnelluga on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. The Log magazine is published twice a year and The Branch quarterly by email.

3. Make an annual gift to the school. Participation rates matter, so you help the school by giving annually at any level. Visit warnell.uga.edugive.

4. Attend an event. Homecoming in October and Warnell Alumni Weekend in April are great times to come back to campus, and Warnell travels around the state to host regional events as well. Visit warnell.uga.eduwel for more information. It’s also helpful to complete the follow-up survey after attending an event or send new ideas to aprilmc@uga.edu.

5. Submit a class note. Email warnellis@uga.edu to share any life updates: new job, marriage, baby, retirement, or checking something off your bucket list.

6. Keep in touch with classmates. Share updates you’ve seen on upcoming events or Warnell news and make sure their contact information is up to date as well. Share Warnell posts on your own social media. Make plans to attend an event together!

7. Mentor a student. Starting this summer, UGA is offering a campus-wide mentor program, and we encourage Warnell alumni to participate at mentor.uga.edu.

8. Recruit for Warnell. Share your experience with potential students and encourage them to reach out to Carol Casee, Warnell student recruiter, at carol.casee@uga.edu.

9. Hire Warnell graduates. Send job postings to Whitney Jones at whipjones@uga.edu or reach out to her about other recruiting options.

10. Serve on an alumni committee. If you’re doing all of the above, consider serving on the Alumni Steering Committee or Young Alumni Committee. Serving on a committee is selective and one of the highest levels of advocacy for the school. Email aprilmc@uga.edu or reach out to a current committee member whose information can be found at warnell.uga.eduwel.
Creating sound forest policies

Lauren Ward’s path diverted from litigation when she realized the effect empirical research could have

Tell us about your career path— from graduation to where you are now.

Like many of my fellow Warnellians, I have always loved spending time in the woods. One year after earning an English major at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., I returned to Georgia to pursue a law degree. While there, I became increasingly interested in environmental law and natural resources law. After practicing for a few years, I decided to go back to school to pursue a non-thesis master’s degree in natural resources, with the intent of becoming a natural resources litigator. However, during my time at Warnell, I saw that I could have a greater impact on forest policy and management through teaching and research than I could in a courtroom, where bad facts have a tendency to make bad law. My career path took an unexpected turn, and I decided to stay at Warnell to pursue a Ph.D.

My Ph.D. research was a testament to the fact that empirical research can drive science-based forest policy: I studied the impact of the Endangered Species Act on private forest landowners across the United States. My research provided scientific evidence to support the idea that incentives are more effective than disincentives in conserving rare species on private lands. Forest Landowners Association was a partner in that research, ultimately selecting me as their inaugural Rob Olszewski Fellow in Forest Policy and Analysis. When I graduated with my doctorate, Forest Landowners Association hired me to continue my work in forest policy, with a particular focus on listed and at-risk species that depend on private forests for their habitat.

What’s a typical day like for you?

My role at Forest Landowners Association encompasses a wide variety of projects and duties. One day, I may be on Capitol Hill advocating for federal legislation to help forest landowners who host endangered species on their land, and the next day I may be trekking through the woods as I lead a field tour to demonstrate common forest management practices to officials of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. I also serve in leadership roles across several collaborative initiatives, including the Longleaf Partnership Council, Conservation Without Conflict, and Keeping Forests as Forests. In addition to representing the forest landowner perspective in these coalitions, I also work at the grassroots level, facilitating the dialogue among landowners and various stakeholders to build trust and collaboration between regulatory agencies, conservation groups and private forest landowners. Conducting research and engaging diverse partners to develop game-changing solutions to the problems that private forest landowners face is at the center of my day-to-day duties.

Is there a particular project you’re working on right now that really excites you?

We are working with a broad array of stakeholders to help preclude the need to list the gopher tortoise (Gopherus polyphemus) under the Endangered Species Act.

The gopher tortoise is currently a candidate to be listed under the act, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is set to make a final listing decision within the next three years.

We are working now with the service, state wildlife agencies, other forestry associations and conservation groups to show that private landowners are already conserving this keystone species. For example, we are developing a multi-species Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances in South Carolina. This type of agreement puts conservation measures in place on the ground for species that may be listed under the Endangered Species Act in the future. In exchange, it provides forest landowners with regulatory assurances that deliver certainty and predictability for their forest management.

How did your experience at Warnell prepare you for what you’re doing now?

My experience at Warnell not only prepared me for what I’m doing now, but it inspired me to dream of this unique career path in the first place. Instead of litigating natural resources conflicts in a courtroom, where one side wins and one side loses, I was inspired to conduct research that would drive better policies for all.

My professors at Warnell opened the doors for me to be creative and dream of new, science-based solutions to old, politically-entrenched problems. Under the guidance and mentorship of my major advisor Gary Green and my doctoral committee members Bob Warren and Bob Islas, I was given the opportunity to conduct novel research, with results that continue to have a direct application to real-world problems for forest landowners.

I could not imagine a better academic environment, better leadership, or better support for the type of applied, interdisciplinary research project that we were able to achieve.

What advice would you give current students who’ll soon be looking for jobs?

I teach a class at Appalachian State University once a year, and I also give guest lectures at Warnell from time to time. I tell my students to pursue what inspires them, to work hard and to do their very best even when they think no one is watching—because someone usually is. When you do good, honest, hard work, people will notice, and opportunities will always follow.

I also tell students not to worry too much if they don’t know what they want to be “when they grow up.” I use my own career path as an example. I encourage my students to think of their career as a journey, rather than a destination. Be a lifelong learner and develop new skills. Strive to learn from experience and use those experiences guide you as you make choices on your career journey.

Education:

- AB in English, Georgetown University; JD, University of Georgia School of Law; MNR, University of Georgia Warnell School of Forestry & Natural Resources; PhD, forest resources, University of Georgia Warnell School of Forestry & Natural Resources

Occupation:

General counsel and director of regulatory affairs for the Forest Landowners Association

Hometown:

Atlanta, Georgia

Personal:

“The mountains are calling, and I must go.”

This classic quote from John Muir turned out to be true for my family. I live in Boone, North Carolina, with my husband John and our sons, Johnny (5) and Charles (2).
This past April, the Warnell School celebrated its 88th annual Spring Awards Banquet in front of almost 250 students, parents, faculty, staff, donors, supporters and friends. Always a highlight, the banquet applauded the achievements of students and faculty and recognized the outstanding generosity of our donors. In 2019, more than $200,000 was awarded to 100 students through 56 separate scholarships and graduate fellowships. We are incredibly appreciative of the generous support from our donors who make this night possible. Scholarships help students with costs such as tuition, professional development, living expenses and more. Graduate fellowships help Warnell recruit the best and brightest to our programs in order to maintain a high standard of excellence. The Spring Awards Banquet also served to recognize students and faculty members earning achievement awards. Warnell proudly celebrates our students, who are the first to express their gratitude for the scholarships made possible by Warnell’s most supportive donors, and all their past, current and future successes.

“I am the person I am today because of the relationships I have formed and the education I have received over the last few years in Warnell. Thank you, Warnell faculty, staff, donors and special friends. We are so fortunate at Warnell to have the support of generous donors like you. I would also like to sincerely thank my parents and others who have personally supported me along the way. I would not have gotten this far without you.”

– Camille Bennett

Alumni News
Warnell hits the road

Every year, the Warnell School hosts a number of regional events to visit alumni and friends who might not be able to make the trek back to Athens.

In 2019, we traveled to Columbus, Washington, Valdosta and Savannah in Georgia, as well as Mobile, Alabama, and we are excited to travel to new locations next year. Look for events in Macon, Atlanta, Northwest Georgia and the coast in 2020. These receptions were made possible by generous sponsorships from MaxRecall Technologies and Forest Resource Consultants.
Alumni Steering Committee

Members of the Alumni Steering Committee work together to support events, programs and philanthropic initiatives that help the school accomplish its mission. The 13 members serve a three-year term and assist with planning regional events, advising engagement strategies and nominating Warnell alumni for UGA’s Bulldog 100, 40 under 40 and other awards. By encouraging Warnell alumni and friends to remain involved and support the school, this committee is actively involved in bringing Warnell together in a spirit of fellowship.

Young Alumni Committee

Comprised of 10 alumni who graduated within the last 10 years, members of Warnell’s Young Alumni Committee serve a three-year term and work to support school activities and encourage alumni participation. This committee hosts the Parker Memorial Golf Tournament in October and Sporting Clays Tournament in April of each year. Through their fundraising efforts, this committee named the Alumni Legacy Classroom at the Warnell School. They also created the Young Alumni Endowment for Leadership Training, The Young Alumni Undergraduate Scholarship and the Warnell Young Alumni Georgia Commitment Scholarship. Since 2004, they have raised over $300,000 to support Warnell.

Dean’s Advisory Board

In 2017, Dean Greene assembled the Dean’s Advisory Board to replace our former External Advisory Committee. This group works alongside our two active alumni committees with a specific focus on assisting the dean with strategic planning and networking across disciplines to help support private giving to the Warnell School. We thank all of these accomplished and talented people for their longstanding support of our program and their willingness to serve the school in this vitally important role.
1970s

William Wylder (BSFR '75) shared some historic photos with Warnell showing the school from yesteryear. These fascinating pieces of Warnell history show Williams’ parents, Charlotte and Henry (BSF '49), participating in the crosscut saw event, his dad competing in knife throwing and the program for the 1948 annual Field Day for the UGA School of Forestry. These days, Williams owns a 1300-acre tree farm and is a registered forester.

1990s

Tim Lowrimore (BSFR '98) attended the 31st annual Georgia Chamber of Commerce Quail Hunt recently, where he ran into a fellow Warnell alum, Jason Dunn (BSFR '98), who was one of the event hosts. The two spent some time with Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp, who attended the event to network, support and encourage continued business investment in the state. Lowrimore, who is the public affairs manager for Interfor, said Interfor attended because “we have nearly $200 million of planned capital investment in Georgia over the next couple of years.”

2000s

Garrett Mack (BSFR '09, MFR '11) married Kelley McLaughlin (AB '12) on April 17, 2019, in Athens, Georgia. The ceremony was held at Young Harris Memorial United Methodist Church with the reception following at The Taylor-Grady House. Garrett and Kelley honeymooned in Seaside, Florida, and the newlyweds now reside in their new home in Atlanta, Georgia.

2010s

Josh Goodman (BSFR ’10) and wife Lauren welcomed their second child, Brooks Cleveland, on May 19, 2018. The Goodmans live in Marietta, Georgia, where Josh is employed with Georgia Power.

Tiffany (Williams) Woods (MS '11) and husband Nate welcomed their first child, Deacon Robert Woods, on May 3, 2019. Tiffany is the southeast director of private lands forestry for the National Wildlife Federation in Atlanta, Georgia.

Danielle (BSFR '12, MFR '13) and husband Daniel Atkins (BSFR '12, MFR '13) just grew their family a little bigger. Son William turned 1 in January, and he got promoted to big brother when his sister, Elliott Mae, was born May 31.

Angel Fouché (BSFR '19) is working in Joe Nairn’s lab this summer and is applying for wildlife tech jobs for the fall. But she certainly made one family member proud when she graduated this past May: Grandfather J.H. Langley (BSF '55) wrote in to say that “our profession just got better” when she joined the ranks.

Melissa Keneely (BSFR ‘17) has taken a job as a fisheries biologist at Aquatic Environmental Services in Ball Ground, Georgia.

(continued on next page)
Two Warnell alums, Patrick Honan (BSFR ’12) and Ani Popp (BSFR ’13) have been working together on the newly listed Trispot Darter (*Etheostoma trisella*). Honan is a conservational specialist with the Pelican Coast Conservancy, where he assists with the implementation of conservation easements and identifying conservation values on eased property. Popp is with the Georgia Wildlife Resource Division as the Coosa River aquatic biologist who assists in the collection of eDNA water samples to locate potential critical habitat. eDNA sampling is considered a new science that analyzes water samples to detect for aquatic species.

The Trispot Darter was thought to be extinct until 2008 in Alabama due to habitat fragmentation, water impoundments and land conversion. It was listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act in January.

Honan and Popp sampled one of two known populations in Alabama, with other populations found in the Coosa watershed of Georgia and Tennessee. They also sampled for the Trispot Darter in Ballplay, Alabama, and detected three unique individuals. This was in partnership with the Atlantic Coast Conservancy, Alabama Department of Environmental Management, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Tennessee Aquarium and GA DNR.

The UGA Alumni Association revealed the rankings of the fastest-growing companies owned or operated by UGA alumni during the 10th annual Bulldog 100 Celebration in January in Atlanta. And three companies owned by Warnell alumni were on the list. M&W Commercial Flooring LLC (John Martin, BSFR ’98, MS ’01) was No. 24, Baseline Surveying & Engineering (Jason Lawson, BSFR ’00, BSAE ’02) was No. 43 and PharmD on Demand (Andy Barrs, MFR ’02) was No. 78.

Jason Little (BSFR ’00, MFR ’03) and Daniel Atkins (BSFR ’12, MFR ’13) have been chosen for the 2019-20 class of Advancing Georgia’s Leaders in Agriculture and Forestry. They join 23 other professionals for the program, which educates and empowers Georgia’s agricultural leaders to become effective advocates for the largest economic drivers in the state—Georgia’s agriculture and forestry industries.

Little and Atkins beat out dozens of other nominations for the program, organized by the UGA College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences and Warnell.

The AGL program can be intense—over the next 16 months, participants will “help one another grow through personalized leadership development training geared toward understanding themselves as leaders, analyzing issues facing their industries, and strengthening connections to become catalysts for positive change.”
Warnell alum honored in France for WWII bravery

A village in France has erected a memorial and named a school after Warnell alumnus Lt. Col. George Merritt (BSF ‘35), to honor his sacrifice during World War II. Merritt was killed in action while flying near Roiffe, France, on June 7, 1944. A fighter pilot with the 361st Fighter Group, Merritt had 11 victories before his death.

Roiffe, located in the Loire Valley, began honoring Merritt with a special ceremony in 2009, and the village named a school after him in 2016. The village held another ceremony honoring Merritt in 2019 on the 75th anniversary of D-Day.

The school naming ceremony drew a large crowd to see the tribute that included 34 flags, a brass band, several Americans and a number of veterans. According to local French news reports, during the ceremony organizers paid homage to the fallen soldier, and children lay wreaths in Merritt’s honor. Then the president of a local veterans group told the story of Merritt’s final flight. Merritt, commanding a group of P-51 Mustang fighters, spotted a number of Nazi supply trucks stationed in Roiffe. He and his group opened fire on the supply line, causing heavy damage, but German forces returned fire and Merritt was shot down.

Roiffe Mayor Didier Baillargeau then unveiled the plaque at the school bearing Merritt’s name, Josée Penot, who lives in Atlanta, acted as an intermediary between the village and Merritt’s family. “I had met his sister who was almost 100 years old,” he said. “She was proud of this tribute.” Merritt had won the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Purple Heart and other honors for his service. Before he joined the U.S. Army, he had worked for the U.S. Forest Service. Merritt is buried at Epinal American Cemetery in France.

Carlton Gill

Carlton Gill (BSF ’62, MS ’63), of Richmond Hill, Georgia, died Feb. 18, 2019. He was 78. Born on Dec. 22, 1940, in Savannah, Georgia, Gill’s family wrote in his obituary that he was known as “a kind and gentle man with big hands and a big heart who gave the best hugs. As husband, father and Papa he served, loved and provided for his family well. His life is a legacy of faithful service to his God, family, church and community, of generosity that he shared with so many, and of integrity that was evident in all that he did. He was known as a man of big stature, big love, big generosity, big values and big fields to plant and harvest. He loved God’s creation and enjoyed many rides on family land, looking at and checking on birds, flowers, trees, roads and his cattle.”

Gill graduated from UGA in 1963 with his master’s degree in forestry, and he played basketball for the Georgia Teacher’s College, Georgia Southern College and UGA. He served as a county commissioner of the 20th GMD for two terms, as county commissioner chairman for three terms and as the ACCG President from 1982-1983. He was employed at S.A. Allen for 37 years (1964-2001) as a procurement forester. A portion of I-95 in Bryan County was dedicated to him in 1998. He served in church leadership as a deacon and elder at Compassion Christian Church, and he was a member of many other civic organizations and leadership boards.

Gill was preceded in death by his parents Louis C. Gill Sr. and Ella H. Gill; a sister, Mary Gill; and a nephew, Freddie Bevill. He is survived by his wife of 55 years, Joy B. Gill; daughters Zandy Wilbanks, Carlyn Longgrear and Heather Gill; grandsons Tripp and Lance Longgrear; and granddaughters MAddie and Lexie Wilbanks and many extended family members.

Patrick L. ‘Pat’ Reddish

Patrick L. ‘Pat’ Reddish (BSFR ‘77) of Jesup died May 31, 2019. He was 63. The Wayne County native was a member, past deacon, Sunday school teacher and much-loved Christian leader with Calvary Baptist Church. A lifelong Bulldog supporter, his family said Reddish’s most precious time was “spent with his family.”

Reddish was a wood procurement manager with Newport Timber/Interstate Paper Corp. He was predeceased by his parents, Lester and Marjorie Watters Reddish, and his father-in-law and mother-in-law, the Rev. W.D. and Mary Johnson. Reddish is survived by his wife of 40 years, Melissa Johnson Reddish of Jesup; two sons, Ryan Reddish (BSFR ’08, MFR ’10) and Dylan Reddish of Jesup; and several cousins, nieces and nephews.
Leon Neel

Leon Neel (BSF ’50) of Thomasville, Georgia, died May 13, 2019. He was 92.

Born to Nelle Howell Neel and Wallace Heard Neel on March 20, 1927, Neel was a renowned leader in the forestry field, and was respected across the Southeast for his conservation methods and theories as one-half of the team who developed the Stoddard-Neel system of forest management.

Neel married Hazel Julia Greene in 1948 before graduating from UGA in 1950, after which he returned to Southwest Georgia and began working for Herbert Stoddard, one of the founding members of the modern wildlife biology discipline. Together, the two refined a system of forest management based on ecological principles that integrated wildlife, timber, prescribed fire, aesthetics and conservation.

At one time, the two managed around 300,000 acres of longleaf pine forests in the premier quail plantations of South Georgia and North Florida. Today, those lands represent some of the best remaining examples of the longleaf pine ecosystem synonymous with the Red Hills region.

Neel published a book on the system he developed with his long-time friend, “The Art of Managing Longleaf: A Personal History of the Stoddard-Neel Approach.” It details their system that calls for prescribed burning, highly selective logging, a commitment to a particular woodland aesthetic, intimate knowledge of the ecosystem and its processes.” Neel wrote in his book that one of the most important tenets of his method is “a deep appreciation born of the woods that one is managing, and appreciation born of intimate experience working and being in the woods.” The Stoddard-Neel Approach uses a unique system that produces economic gain through timber management while creating game populations for hunting and maintaining a pleasant aesthetic. It eschews traditional methods of clear cutting.

Neel won the Florida Conservationist of the Year Award in 1995, the Georgia Conservationist of the Year Award in 2001 and the UGA Warnell School’s Distinguished Alumnus Award in 2009.

Neel was also a co-founder of Tall Timbers Research Station in 1958 and also served on the Board of Directors for the Joseph W. Jones Ecological Research Center at Ichauway in Newton, Georgia.

Neel’s family said “he had a heart for all of God’s creatures big—like gopher tortoise big—and small, like a nest of baby fox squirrels. His appreciation for nature was not limited to land—he loved fly fishing and saltwater sports and was a founding member of the Beachton Yacht Club, in which he served as the first vice commodore. He loved things he could see obviously, like birdwatching from his favorite birdwatching chair, next to his favorite birdwatching girl. He loved things equally obscure, like collecting the Hairstreak butterfly, and today his collection can be viewed at the Carnegie Museum in Philadelphia. But what he loved most was joking with his family and educating them on the land and how to take care of her.”

Neel is survived by his wife of 70 years, Julia Neel, his two daughters, Julie Neel Horne and Susie Neel Campbell, and several grandchildren and great grandchildren.

William F. ‘Bill’ Miller III

William F. ‘Bill’ Miller III (BSFR ’71) of Fernandina Beach, Florida, died Monday, February 25, 2019. He was 70.

Born May 10, 1947, in Atlanta, Georgia, Miller was the son of the late William Flynn Miller Jr. and Carolyn Morrison Miller. He moved with his family to Fernandina Beach as a baby, and he grew up there and graduated from Fernandina Beach High School in 1966. After graduating from high school, Miller attended Abraham Baldwin Agriculture College, then graduated from UGA with his bachelor’s degree in forestry. Miller created a family legacy when he graduated from UGA: his father, Miller Jr. earned his bachelor’s in forestry in 1947. His son, William Flynn Miller IV, also graduated from Warnell, earning his bachelor’s degree in 2006.

Miller met Nancy Ritch in 1972 in Jesup, Georgia, and the couple married in 1973. As a forester, his employment took him and his family all over the Southeast. For 33 years, Miller worked for Union Camp Corp. and International Paper in various roles, including regional manager in Alabama, South Carolina and Georgia. He had most recently been the vice president of forest operations for F&W Forestry Services.

Miller had served as president of the Georgia Forestry Association as well as of the UGA Warnell Alumni Association. He was the Big Jayhook for the UGA Warnell Jayhole Club, and he was also chair of the Langdale Center for Forest Business Advisory Board. He was a member of the Society of American Foresters and was elected an SAF Fellow in 2012. Miller was inducted into the Georgia Foresters Hall of Fame in 2012, and he had also served as an officer in the Georgia Army National Guard.

The Millers returned to Fernandina Beach in 2011 where he enjoyed “semi retirement” playing tennis, watching any and all sports and Georgia Bulldog football. He was a member of the Kraft Tennis Club and the “Council Group,” which consisted of gentlemen from “old” Fernandina who would gather together every morning for coffee at the high school baseball field. He was an active member of First Baptist Church and the Joy Sunday School Class.

Miller is preceded in death by his parents. He leaves behind his wife, Nancy R. Miller of Fernandina Beach; children Carrie Miller Molinari, Katie Miller Bennett and Flynn Miller IV; grandchildren Drew, Dean and Kate Molinari, Libby and Davy Bennett and Will and Doss Miller; sisters Marilyn Miller, Marcia Vincent, Jan Henning and Julia Burch; and several nieces, nephews, great nieces and great nephews.
In Memoriam

1940s


Lawrence A. McDonough (BSF ’49) of Seneca, South Carolina, died June 1, 2019.

1950s


Robert Nash (BSF ’52) of Vestavia, Alabama, died March 27, 2019.

Clarence C. Canada (BSF ’57) of Camden, South Carolina, died Dec. 8, 2018.

Kenney P. Funderburke (BSF ’50) of Summerville, South Carolina, died March 9, 2019.

Randy L. McQuaig (BSF ’55) of Perry, Georgia, died March 28, 2019.

Harry A. Houghton (BSF ’58) of Alpine, California, died March 22, 2019.

Carlis J. McLeod (BSF ’51) of Palatka, Florida, died April 24, 2019.

James M. Meadows (BSF ’56) of St. Simons Island, Georgia, died Jan. 21, 2019.

Roy C. Land (BSF ’58) of Gray, Georgia, died April 8, 2019.

1960s

Louis G. Benson (BSF ’60) of Eufaula, Alabama, died May 14, 2019.

Joel I. Canada (BSF ’61) of Alpharetta, Georgia, died Jan. 13, 2019.

Gerald W. Green (BSF ’67) of Statesboro, Georgia, died June 12, 2019.

Melvin T. Huish (PhD ’68) of Brevard, North Carolina, died April 6, 2019.

Charles S. Helton (BSF ’60) of Spring, Texas, died Feb. 1, 2019.


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