

the magazine of Southern Adventist University

spring 2023

# columns



## Changing the World

Alumni teachers lay strong foundations in young lives, one school day at a time | page 12

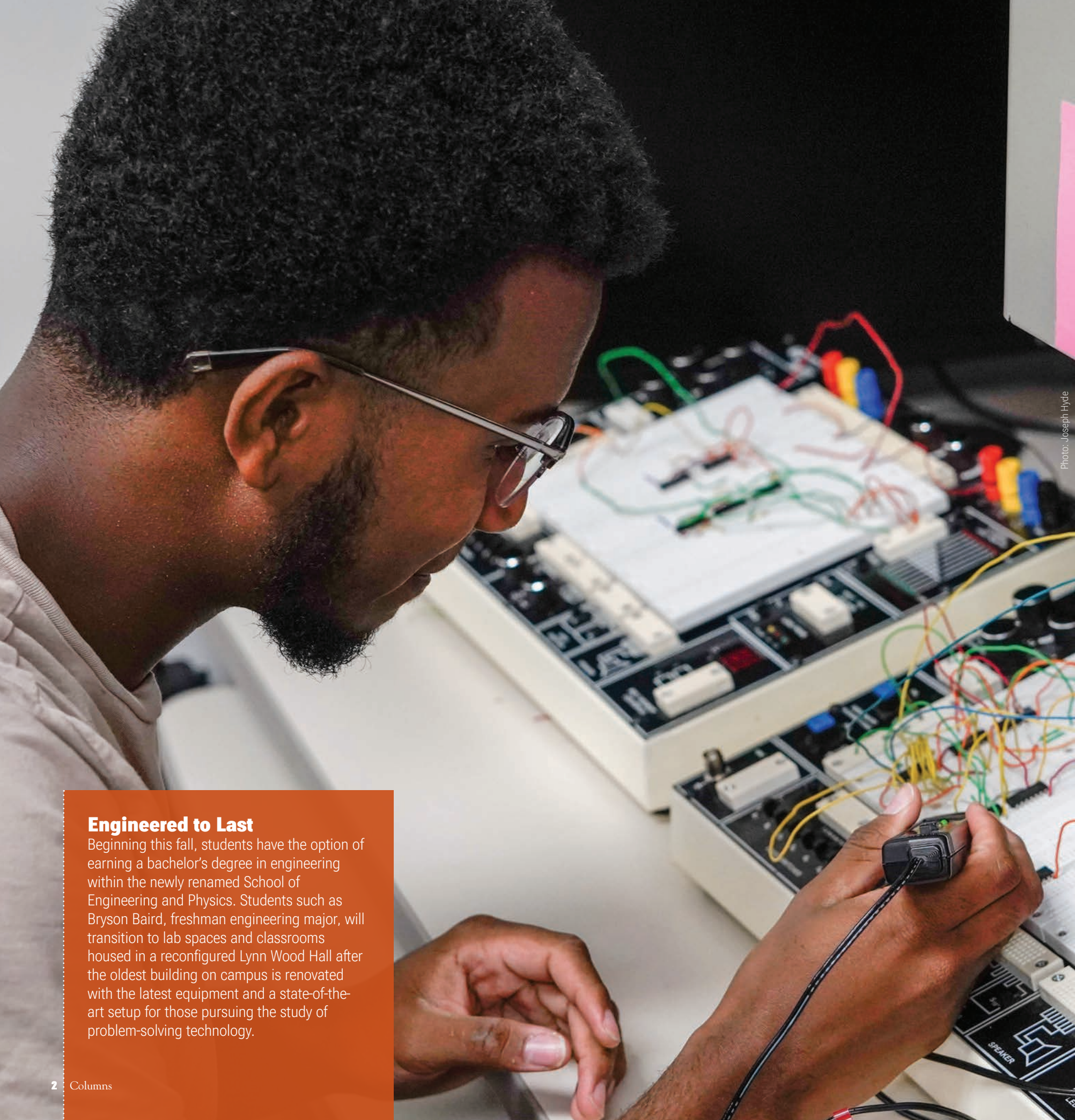


Photo: Joseph Hyde

### Engineered to Last

Beginning this fall, students have the option of earning a bachelor's degree in engineering within the newly renamed School of Engineering and Physics. Students such as Bryson Baird, freshman engineering major, will transition to lab spaces and classrooms housed in a reconfigured Lynn Wood Hall after the oldest building on campus is renovated with the latest equipment and a state-of-the-art setup for those pursuing the study of problem-solving technology.

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Photo: Joseph Hyde

Photo: Nick Evenson

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Cover caption: Kay (Rozell) Sutherland, '82, enjoys working with the students of her Leap FROG Montessori Forest School.

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## Making Memories

The 2022-2023 school year has been packed with fun, learning, service, and meaningful spiritual moments. As summer begins, we look back at a few snapshots of campus life and celebrate Southern's exceptional students.

**1:** Bridgette Oh, freshman allied health major (front), moved into Thatcher Hall for fall semester with help from Sandra Delgado, annual giving manager, and other We-Haul volunteers.

**2:** Southern's annual Black Christian Union Night showcases students' creativity, skill, and heritage through music, cultural dance, and skits.

**3:** Steady rain and cold temperatures on Easter weekend set an appropriately somber tone for the 26th SonRise Pageant on campus with more than 5,500 attendees and 575 volunteers, including Hana Brown, freshman medical laboratory science major.

**4:** Asian Night Vespers included a musical performance of "Tribes" by (from left) Jennifer Chang, junior biology major; Charlynneth Dizon, sophomore psychology major; Natalie Jensen, junior music education major; Jayden Anggornas, sophomore theology major; and Ethan Jiao, senior nursing major.

**5:** Senior computer systems information major Elizabeth Matos networked with Jonathan Pinero, '22, and other business professionals during the semiannual Meet the Firms event.

**6:** Student participation in Southern's eight intramural sports is higher than ever, bringing together both spectators and players such as Rexy Hutubessy, junior nursing major, pictured setting up to take a shot during a basketball semifinal game.

**7:** Eden Otatti, junior finance major, joins her LifeGroup in prayer during an intimate weekly gathering focused on fellowship and spiritual growth.

**8:** Sophomore nursing major Diego Gonzalez (front) and juniors Logan Famutimi, psychology major; Aunya Anderson, biology major; and Joseph Park, health science major, hold plank positions during an exercise class at Hulsey Wellness Center.

**9:** Morgan Wilcox, sophomore physical therapist assistant major, preps meals for The Garden at KR's Place, the university's new plant-based eatery.

**10:** Continuing the tradition of promoting positive lifestyle choices, the Gym-Masters wrapped up the year to "Finish Strong" in two homeshow performances with acrobatics and gymnastics honoring the perseverance of 2 Timothy 4:7.



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## Students Commit to Baptism During Religion Class

Sixteen Southern students requested baptism after their professor, David Hartman, '82, DMin, gave a heartfelt appeal to his Christian Beliefs class.

"I praise God for this!" Hartman said. "This doesn't happen by accident. I print out thumbnail pictures of the students and pray for them by name throughout the semester. On the day of an appeal, I pray earnestly for God to move hearts, and He does! Every semester there are students who resolve to follow Christ and be baptized."

Hartman accepted Jesus as his Savior 40 years ago while studying at Southern. Now, as a professor in the university's School of Religion, his mission is to help a new generation of young people do the same. His Christian Beliefs course covers the 28 Fundamental Beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, with their scriptural support. During the class discussion on baptism, he distributes response cards and asks each student to consider starting a new life with Christ.

This semester, eight students responded with a desire for baptism and eight others for rebaptism. Over the next few weeks, Hartman met with the 16 individuals to facilitate their journeys toward spiritual renewal.



Throughout the semester, Professor David Hartman prays for each of his students by name.

"There were many times during Christian Beliefs class when I was reminded of God's power, how much He loves me, and how He has always drawn me to Him," said Lia Narikawa, a sophomore health science

major who plans to be baptized. "Those reminders made me want to fully give my heart to Jesus."

— by Amanda Blake

### » by the numbers

**73,750**

people visited Southern's extensive, wooded trail system during the last year.

**1,200**

attended the inaugural R. Lynn Sauls Lecture featuring Watergate journalist Carl Bernstein.

**7**

works of art by Adventist painter Nathan Greene, titled "The Seven Days of Creation," were recently hung in Hickman Science Center.

## Cutting-Edge Microscope Supports Collaborative Research

This semester, Southern's Chemistry Department installed a scanning electron microscope (SEM), the newest model available with the highest resolution to date. This state-of-the-art tool will further the education and research of students and faculty at Southern, including chemistry professor Nuvia Saucedo, PhD, who collaborates

with academics around the world.

Previously, Saucedo partnered with Professor Ashok Mulchandani, PhD, of the University of California-Riverside, on electrode construction research resulting in two published papers listing Saucedo as first author. She also teamed up with Founder and CEO Duncan Griffiths of Hyperion Analytical USA to develop a new

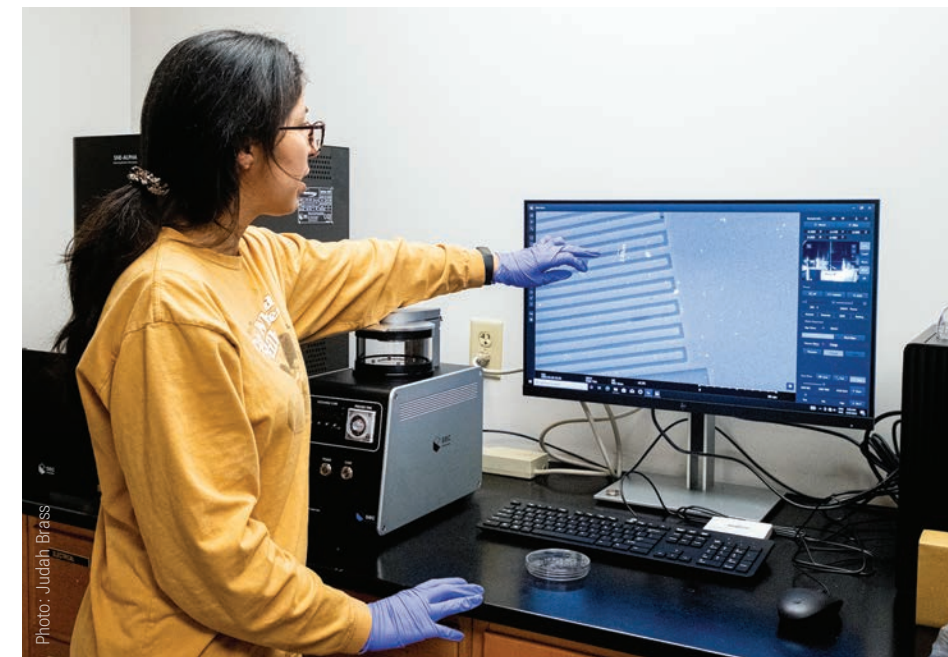
instrument for viewing nanoparticles. Saucedo's current work with Professor Sira Srinives, PhD, of Mahidol University in Thailand, involves development of a new type of nanoparticle for use in space-based applications. Each of these technical projects required a specialized SEM.

The SEM aims a beam of electrons at a sample and translates the back-scattered electrons from the sample into an image that is much clearer than one produced by a light microscope.

"Having this instrument as a companion to our other tools is a big deal, and everybody's excited," said Brent Hamstra, PhD, Chemistry Department chair. "Along with giving our research students new opportunities in the growing field of nanochemistry, we are committed to ongoing joint efforts with colleagues and partnerships with researchers at other academic institutions and in the chemical industry."

In addition to chemistry majors, the new microscope also will provide students who are studying biology and physics with new educational experiences and the ability to explore connections between different scientific fields.

— by Anaya Miller



Professor Nuvia Saucedo demonstrates the Chemistry Department's new, state-of-the-art scanning electron microscope.

**34,583**

words are turned in by students in the School of Journalism and Communication's News Reporting class in a typical semester.

**3,464**

flowering annuals were planted by Southern's Landscape Services team over the last year.

**80**

student vendors participated in the Student Association's semiannual 423 Night Market this spring, showcasing their creativity and skills.

## Southern Dedicates Land for Future School of Business Facility

Southern students, employees, donors, and community members gathered in February to dedicate land for a new building to house the School of Business. The group formed a large circle around the future facility's location and prayed together over the land.

"We're very grateful that many have stepped up with their donations, time, and energies to make this project possible," said Franklin Farrow, '93, chairman of the fundraising campaign for the School of Business. "Southern is in the business of changing and equipping hearts, and as we take on this challenge of creating a new building, let's remember that it's more than bricks and mortar. It is a place that will shape characters for generations to come."

The School of Business is the second-largest academic area on the university's campus, with a 10% increase in its enrollment over the last five years. At



Southern students, employees, donors, and community members gathered to dedicate land for the new School of Business building.

approximately 42,000 square feet, the new building will house a large, multipurpose auditorium, and its investment lab will include 12 Bloomberg Terminals—computer software systems on which students can analyze real-time financial market data.

Thanks to alumni, donors, and other friends of the university, more than \$16 million of the \$20 million campaign, which also includes an endowment, has been raised through donations and

commitments. Groundbreaking for the new facility is planned for early Fall 2023.

"God has anointed our students to be kingdom builders in the marketplace," said Stephanie Sheehan, PhD, dean of the School of Business. "He has called and will continue to call many students here, and we are thankful they will soon have a new facility to call home."

For more information, visit [southern.edu/gobusiness](http://southern.edu/gobusiness).

— by Amanda Blake

## Professor Calls for Help Spotting Invasive Spider in Southeast

The proliferate Jorō spider, an East Asian species that is currently spreading rapidly in Southeast regions of the United States, is the elusive subject of a research team that includes David Nelsen, PhD, Southern biology professor. These researchers are appealing to communities in Tennessee, Georgia, and South Carolina to be on the lookout and report any sightings.

"More eyes in the field will contribute immensely to our research efforts and results," Nelsen said. "Anybody can be a scientist in this case, and photographs can give us strong data for tracking and measuring this ongoing invasion."

In 2021, four sightings of the yellow, red, and silver-blue arachnid—harmless



to humans—were reported in the Chattanooga area, including one on Southern's campus. Last year, sightings increased to approximately 20, along with the presence of males, which suggests a stable breeding population.

Nelsen has involved Southern's ecology students in the research by incorporating the project into labs and educational

outreach. For example, students taught several young outdoor adventure groups about spiders, including the Jorō spider.

"Research brings what the students are studying to life," Nelsen said. "This work helps them answer the questions: 'How do I take what I'm doing as a biologist and give back to the community? How do I get people excited about the wonders of God's creation?'"

The project will continue for several more years in order to determine whether or not the arachnid newcomer is harming native species. If you spot what appears to be a Jorō spider, email [dnelsen@southern.edu](mailto:dnelsen@southern.edu) and include a photo of the findings.

— by Amanda Blake

## Symphony Orchestra Hailed for Performance at National Conference

Southern's Symphony Orchestra received emphatic applause from a crowd of talented musicians and professional conductors during the National Conference of the College Orchestra Directors Association in Jacksonville, Florida, this spring.

"When you get an instantaneous standing ovation from a room full of conductors from across the country, you know you've made a good impression," said Laurie Redmer Cadwallader, director of the 75-member troupe. "People approached over the next couple of days to say how great our orchestra was."

Cadwallader applied for the event in Spring 2022, unsure of what to expect, as the ensemble had never attended a national conference before.

"I knew the competition would be fierce, so I was thrilled to learn we had been chosen," she said. "It was an honor to showcase our students in such a public way."

The students were elated, especially at the opportunity to give an hour-long performance in an actual concert hall. Cadwallader described the orchestra's superb performance as a manifestation of their pursuit of excellence.

"It is rare for a school our size to have the opportunity to attend and perform at a national-level conference. The students recognized this honor and rose to the occasion," she said. "When you challenge yourself to strive for something new, it makes you better. The students sound different now, more confident. I am very proud of each member."

— by Amanda Blake

## Exhibition Featuring Student Work Opens in Southern's Archaeology Museum

A riveting new exhibition, titled "Peace and War: The Assyrian Conquest of Lachish," is now open in Southern's Lynn H. Wood Archaeology Museum. Members of Southern's campus excavated a number of the artifacts from Lachish, the most important city in ancient Israel after Jerusalem.

Visitors can view significant seal impressions from King Hezekiah, the prophet Isaiah, and biblical nobles; stroll by a replica of a house overlooking Lachish; and study an artistic display commissioned by the Assyrian king Sennacherib celebrating his victory over the royal city. The diverse collection will immerse guests in the Assyrian conquest and miraculous deliverance of Judah, a story of hope that is vividly described in the Bible.

Almost all of the objects on display were uncovered during the Fourth Expedition to Lachish, a multi-disciplinary field project that occurred from 2013 to

2017 and was sponsored by Southern's Institute of Archaeology and The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. More than 200 Southern students and employees helped excavate the city and investigate its Iron Age history.

"This exhibit is the culmination of a decade of excavation and analysis," said Michael G. Hasel, PhD, director of Southern's Institute of Archaeology. "I am so pleased for the diligent work of my students and other staff to be recognized and seen in public for the first time."

The museum, located in Hackman Hall, is free and open to the public during the school year, allowing visitors to explore one of the most important periods in Near East history. The exhibition, in cooperation with the Israel Antiquities Authority, will remain at the museum until May 31, 2025. For more information, visit [southern.edu/archaeology](http://southern.edu/archaeology) or call 423.236.2030.

— by Amanda Blake



The new exhibit in the Lynn H. Wood Archaeology Museum features numerous objects uncovered in Israel by Southern students and employees.

# Standing Tall in All Circumstances

by Tina (Frist) Smith, '89, communication manager

Theology major Seth McKelvey appears to be navigating his first year on Southern's campus ahead of the curve. An outdoor enthusiast, he relishes the weather and easily traverses the many steps between buildings, but he does miss the snow in Michigan. His childhood desire to become a pastor is even stronger as that calling sharpens through his studies and work responsibilities. Even the curiosity of passersby doesn't faze this freshman, who has walked on two prosthetic legs since age 2.

"What others see as a handicap is normal for me, since I've never known anything different," McKelvey said. "I don't miss my 'actual' legs because these *are* my legs."

## Learning to Thrive

McKelvey was born in China with fibular hemimelia (a shortened or missing fibula) on each side. Following his adoption by an American couple, both lower legs were amputated and fitted with artificial limbs.

Because his adoptive parents' first biological child was born with a clubfoot, the McKelvey family developed a strong, positive relationship with an orthopedic specialist. As they began praying about adoption, they felt impressed to request a toddler with special needs who could benefit from their established medical connections.

Instilling a strong sense of positivity, McKelvey's parents never treated him as a child with limitations. He credits them and God for the gift of perseverance that resulted from learning to thrive in whatever circumstances come, knowing that things will continue to work out in the future as they have in the past.

"My amputations were below the knee, which means a significantly easier path compared to removal above the joint," he explained. "Everyone is struggling with something; I'm not special in



Photo: Judah Brass

that way. For another student, it's different, maybe more emotional than physical. I often watch people walking around campus and wonder how many feel completely overwhelmed by the burdens they are carrying."

## Finding His Calling

McKelvey visited Southern while still in high school and was immediately impressed with its hallmark friendliness, even being invited to join an outing by someone he'd just met. Now, he frequently hikes and bikes in the surrounding area, coordinating camping trips to the Great Smoky Mountains with friends as often as possible.

Southern is just one of several places, jobs, and connections that helped shape McKelvey's interest in serving as a minister someday. When he began asking spiritual questions around age 10, his pastor was always willing to talk, and his academy chaplain continued that mentoring as McKelvey wrestled with thoughts about his future.

Initially registering under a different college major, McKelvey led an early-morning prayer session during family camp the summer before moving to campus. While participating, he heard God speaking so clearly that he called the university to officially change his area of academic focus to theology.

Currently serving as a chaplain for Talge Hall, the men's residence hall, McKelvey works closely with the Office of Ministry and Missions.

"I'm being exposed to all kinds of leadership and lessons that I can use in my own pastoral ministry—fostering community, planning events, building teams, organizing dorm week of prayer, leading a LifeGroup," he said. "One of my favorite initiatives is our goal to pray with every student in Talge Hall before the end of the year."

## A Shared Disability

Looking ahead, McKelvey plans to serve as a student missionary or taskforce volunteer sometime soon. Organization and leadership come naturally to his outgoing personality, but he dreams of excelling in more intimate dialogue with church members. He also envisions a transition into youth ministries at some point in his career.

McKelvey believes that all humans share a specific disability: being born into sin. As handicapped but redeemed followers of Jesus, our role is to share the good news that every person has a place in the family of God, and each is destined to know and follow the One who will restore body and soul to perfection someday soon. ■



Photo: Nick Evenson

## Congratulations, Graduates!

Pomp and circumstance was the order of the day for students such as Kaitlyn Deaux, who graduated *magna cum laude* with a Bachelor of Social Work degree during Spring 2023 Commencement in Iles P.E. Center. In total, 316 students earned undergraduate degrees, 30 completed master's, and two earned doctorates. The Biology and Allied Health Department joined the School of Business and the School of Nursing in conferring the largest number of degrees during two services on campus, and five graduates met special honors curriculum requirements to be named Southern Scholars.

by Angela Baerg, '06

# CHANGING THE WORLD, One School Day at a Time

Early childhood education lays a foundation for young minds, making a lifelong impact on students who will grow into the next generation of leaders. Graduates from Southern's School of Education, Psychology, and Counseling are on the frontlines of this work, nurturing their students with a caring, Christ-like approach that goes beyond book learning.

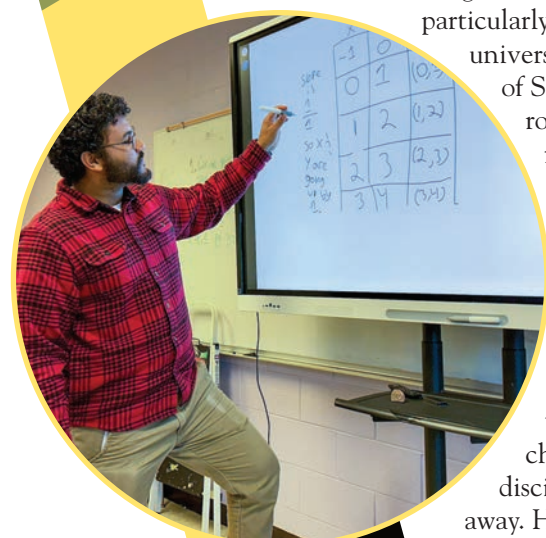
## Gabe Ballesteros, '22 Adventist Christian Academy

Tiny hands are clasped in prayer, with young heads bowed throughout the classroom. The students are preparing to take a test and asking God for His wisdom, led by their teacher, Gabe Ballesteros, '22. Although Ballesteros had grown up Seventh-day Adventist, he attended public schools throughout his pre-college education. For him, entering an Adventist elementary environment as a teacher was like discovering a whole new world.

"I enjoy seeing the presence of God and getting to be a part of that loving community," Ballesteros says. "I love how the children have the mindset that God is there with you in learning, as well as everything else."

Ballesteros is one of many graduates from Southern's School of Education and Psychology who is eager to inspire and encourage students in an uncertain world. He is particularly grateful for the partnership between the university and the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists (NAD), which routinely coordinates a series of interviews for all education graduates. This process helped Ballesteros find a job immediately after graduation, teaching at Adventist Christian Academy in Raleigh, North Carolina.

"It's literally a mission field, probably one of the most important mission fields ever," Gabe says. "We're there to serve God by impacting these children. Look what Jesus says to the disciples when they try to shoo the children away. He says that, 'the kingdom belongs to such as these' (Mark 10:14). I'm teaching the next generation the character of Christ alongside their education."



## Rachel Mikottis, graduate student Free Haven Forest School

At age 16, Rachel Mikottis pursued her bachelor's degree in education at a public university, but it was an uninspiring experience. She entered a traditional educational environment as a teacher at age 20, but it didn't feel like a good fit for her.

When her school shut down during the COVID-19 pandemic, Mikottis began to explore other options for education. In 2021, she became certified by the Forest School Teacher Institute and founded her own educational institution: Free Haven Forest School, one of the first forest schools in Illinois. Since then, Free Haven has served more than 500 students.

"The more I learned, the more I realized that this was everything I had been missing in my career up until now," Mikottis says. "It was a night-and-day difference in the children. I couldn't go back."

In forest school, nature is the classroom and children are the explorers; they learn outside in all types of weather, using all of their senses. Mikottis believes that by removing the walls of a classroom, the learning opportunities are endless. At Free Haven, children develop many skills beyond academics, including fishing, harvesting honey, and identifying native animals and insects. Every day, students are immersed in hands-on experiences, feeling, smelling, and tasting everything around them.



“The brain makes about 300 neural connections a day, but in this setting those connections are even deeper,” Mikottis says. “I’ve had students who were nonverbal. After a year of forest school, they just will not stop talking.”

Forest school was a concept started in Europe, but Mikottis is advocating for new legislation in Illinois and the rest of the United States to train teachers on how to make use of the outdoors to educate children. She hopes within her lifetime to make forest school accessible to all students, including those in public schools.

“Children today are expected to change the world, but many are not given the opportunity to have a relationship with nature and with the planet,” Mikottis says. “If we really want to see things change in the future, we have to get kids outside.”

To deepen her knowledge, Mikottis is pursuing her Master of Science in Education (with an emphasis in outdoor education) at Southern, **the only Adventist university to offer this degree.** There she met classmates who uplifted and encouraged her, as well as professors who went above and beyond to make the content relevant and hands-on.

Monty Murdoch, PhD, professor in Southern’s School of Education, Psychology, and Counseling, loves every aspect of outdoor education—“after all, nature was Adam and Eve’s first classroom”—but he especially loves teaching students how to connect with God through nature. In a world full of worry, studies show that students who spend time outside are less anxious, less depressed, and have better focus.

“No other program has ever done something like this for me before,” Mikottis says. “Dr. Carl Swafford and Dr. Murdoch are the best professors I’ve ever had. They model what a good teacher is in a way no one else has ever been able to for me.”



## Kay (Rozell) Sutherland, '82 Leap FROG Montessori Forest School

The daughter of two teachers, Kay Sutherland inherited their love of teaching and of Southern. As a student at her parents’ alma mater, Sutherland especially enjoyed the close relationships she built as a member of Southern’s gymnastics team. Their coach invited them into his home for worship and encouraged them spiritually, as well as helping them excel physically.

“We prayed for each other and lifted each other up. I still try to do that with my students today,” Sutherland shares. “My professors did an amazing job preparing me for the classroom. My training was so practical. It did an incredible job of helping me be prepared, with everything from which books to buy to how to garden.”

After graduation, Sutherland taught at Ozark Adventist School in Arkansas and in a one-room K-8 school until she and her husband, Greg, '82, decided to start a family. Eventually, she returned to Ozark, while pursuing her master’s degree in education with an emphasis in Montessori training from Oklahoma City University.

Maria Montessori was Italy’s first female physician, and she pioneered a revolutionary system of education that empowered children to be independent, to be skilled in practical life activities such as cooking and gardening, and to use concrete, hands-on learning tools whenever possible. Children are allowed to follow the curriculum at their own pace and to move freely within the classroom. Sutherland loves exploring the similarities between Ellen White (1827-1915) and Maria Montessori (1870-1952).

“They were contemporaries,” she says, “and they were talking about education at the same time. They both talked about nature and the importance of following the children and listening to their needs.”

Sutherland introduced to her classroom hands-on Montessori work, such as sewing, cooking, and other practical life activities. She also shared her Montessori knowledge as she partnered with her colleagues to create NAD curriculum such as “A Reason for Spelling, Stairway to Reading,” and the kindergarten curriculum presently in use, “Stepping Stones.”

Most recently, Sutherland embarked on her newest adventure, launching Leap FROG Montessori Forest School. “FROG” stands for “Fully Rely on God” so that she will never forget the true motivation behind the school.

After the pandemic, Sutherland was shocked to see a wider range of needs from children than ever before. Some had received excellent homeschooling and were excelling in their



studies, while others had spent much of the pandemic in front of a screen and were really struggling. She felt that combining her Montessori strategies with spending time in nature was the only way that she could truly meet all of their needs.

“That’s what pure education really is,” Sutherland says. She is especially inspired by Ellen White’s statement that “Nature testifies that One infinite in power, great in goodness, mercy, and love, created the earth and filled it with life and gladness” (*Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 8, p. 256).

Students at Leap FROG spend four days a week in a well-equipped classroom following the Montessori model of learning. The children also participate in service activities; they volunteer every Tuesday at a community kitchen run by Sutherland’s church and this winter made more than 70 valentines for a local nursing home.

To wrap up each school week, Forest Fridays are spent out of the classroom at a facility owned by the Sutherlands that includes a large kitchen, a pool, several miles of paths, and a shallow creek. Most of every Friday is spent outside, but the day also includes special activities, such as visits from a local artist who teaches the children about watercolor. Hands-on activities include making pumpkin soup, baking apple pies, and grinding flour to make bread and crackers from scratch.

“My goal for these kids is that they will have a personal relationship with Jesus, love other people, and go out and serve,” Sutherland says. “I want to help them have the peace of Jesus in their hearts so that they know they can always rely on Him.”

To learn more about the programs run by Mikottis and Sutherland, visit [southern.edu/columns](https://southern.edu/columns). ■

## Southern Combats National Teacher Shortage

Jasmine Johnson had an MBA and a great corporate job, but after two weeks of volunteering in a Seventh-day Adventist elementary school, she knew she had to make a major life change.

“I knew I wanted to be a teacher, and this was my calling,” Johnson says. “Getting my Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) degree gave me the skills and the tools that I needed to be a teacher.”

Johnson went on to earn her doctorate in education and currently serves as director of Southern’s MAT program. Students can pursue a degree in teaching without having previously studied education, which is key to offering a solution to the current national teacher shortage. In addition to being useful for people who are making a complete career change, as Johnson did, this program also benefits teacher’s aides and substitutes, who are already in schools but not licensed or able to work full-time.

The MAT program at Southern is especially accessible, because it is offered entirely online. While students complete this program, Southern helps them arrange field experience opportunities at schools in their areas. Options are also available for students to begin working as teachers while completing their clinical hours.

Johnson is excited to help others who share her passion for education enter the field.

“The MAT provides an opportunity to truly answer God’s call to teach the gospel as He did,” Johnson says. “Educators are changing the world, one school day at a time.”

To learn more about Southern’s MAT program, visit [southern.edu/graduatestudies](https://southern.edu/graduatestudies).



## See You in Phoenix

If you’re attending the NAD Educators’ Convention, August 7-10, we’d love to see you at Southern’s booth, #501. Alumni are invited to a special dinner during the convention. RSVP at [southern.edu/education-alumni](https://southern.edu/education-alumni).

We ♥ our educators!



# GETTING DOWN TO BUSINESS

Many Southern students get a jump on their futures through small-business endeavors while in college. Whether snapping cap-and-gown pictures, searching for vintage tees, or sharpening scissors, these three savvy entrepreneurs are embracing lessons in administration, marketing, and client satisfaction in preparation for careers in the working world.

Photo: Judah Brass



Photo: Joseph Hyde



Photo: Judah Brass



Photo: Judah Brass

BY VICTORIA MILLS, senior mass communication major

## Le Marché du Soleil

Needing a little extra income, Elise Deschamps, senior journalism major, began her business as a freshman in Fall 2019. She decided to mark up and sell vintage T-shirts that she found at local thrift stores. She set up in the Thatcher Hall lobby, and Le Marché du Soleil—translated “the Market of the Sun”—was born.

Over the years, Deschamps has launched an Instagram page for her business, facilitated photoshoots showcasing the thrifted clothing she sells, and coordinated markets and pop-up sale events of her own.

Her favorite part of her business is the freedom that it gives her. She appreciates both the flexibility and the social opportunities that have come her way since starting Le Marché.

“The business connects me to a lot more people than I think I would have met organically,” she said.

Despite her van breaking down occasionally and the physically exhausting process of handling bins and racks of clothes, Deschamps loves her business and wants to continue running it after graduation.

“I’m actually really excited about being able to focus my full attention on it,” she said. “If I can figure out a way to make it more sustainable, that would be really cool.”

## Judah Brass Photography

Senior English major Judah Brass was a junior in high school before he began to take an interest in photography. Even then, it was merely a hobby until 2020, when his father, Matthew Brass, ’97, a professional photographer, let him borrow a high quality camera during the pandemic lockdown. Once the younger Brass had a good camera in his hands, nothing could stop him.

“I wanted to learn as much as I could about photography during a time in my life when there wasn’t much else to do, because everything was closed,” Brass said.

After landing his first portrait client, dozens more quickly followed. Throughout the process, his father has been a source of encouragement and mentorship, contributing to Brass’ photography knowledge as well as offering business management tips.

Brass makes most of his profit during the graduation and summer seasons. Sometimes clients are rude or try to give unsolicited advice, and others inadvertently allow their insecurities to cloud their portrait experiences. Despite these challenges, Brass still loves his job.

“My favorite part is establishing genuine connections between people,” he said. “I love seeing the personalities of my subjects through the pictures I take.”

Brass’ career goal is to be a professional wedding photographer, so he plans to continue his business after he graduates.

## Myint Fades

As a junior in high school, Htet Myint, now a junior medical laboratory science major, began cutting hair for his friends. His father had been the barber at home while Myint was growing up, and when he went off to academy, he took Dad’s clippers with him. Eventually, much of his free time involved cutting his peers’ hair. He treated the service as a hobby, not charging anything.

Arriving at Southern in 2020, Myint noticed a lack of competent, affordable barbers around campus.

“I decided to open up shop and charge a reasonable amount,” he said.

Now, Myint averages six to seven clients per week, even though he doesn’t have much free time to dedicate to the business, due to classwork and his position as the executive vice president of Southern’s Student Association. He offers a variety of services through Myint Fades, including haircuts for men and women as well as color treatments. He manages all of his clients and their appointments through his website.

Myint is grateful for the loyalty of his clientele. Because his only business expense is equipment, he feels the venture has been quite profitable. Although he doesn’t see himself cutting hair professionally in the future, he wants to continue this side business for as long as possible.

“I love helping people look their best,” he said. “We’ll see where God takes me from here.” ■

# Hands and Feet: CHRISTIANITY IN ACTION

by Victoria Mills, senior mass communication major

Southern's commitment to serving others is highlighted in its mission statement, which notes the university's aim to equip students to "pursue Spirit-filled lives of service."

A variety of opportunities exist for students, often joined by employees, as they cultivate the habit of being the hands and feet of Jesus.

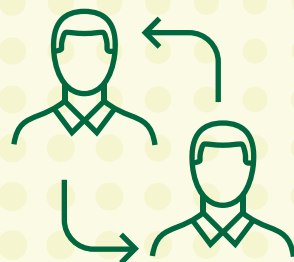
## FREE COUNSELING

Active for  
**25**  
YEARS

Offered by the Professional Counseling graduate program in the School of Education, Psychology, and Counseling

Supervised graduate students confidentially address issues related to anxiety, grief, stress, self-esteem, wellness, and depression.

This service is used and recommended by both Southern students and community members, including members of area churches.



*"The practicum experience is one I will never forget. It is where knowledge and skill combine to face the need of another. What we have worked so hard to gain is given to another, and healing happens for all involved."*

– Wendy Harris, clinical mental health counseling graduate student

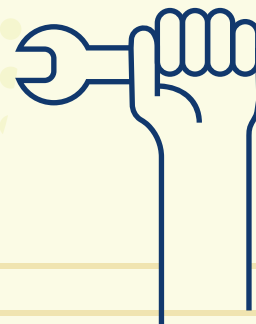
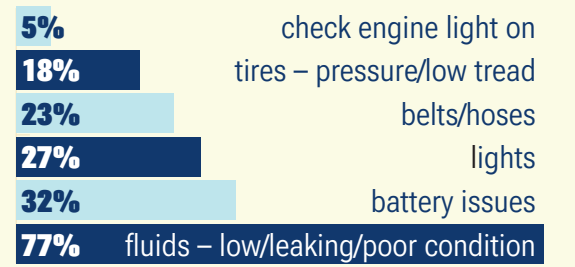
## FREE VEHICLE INSPECTIONS

Offered by the Automotive Service Management and Technician programs in Applied Technology, part of the School of Business



Offered once or twice each year  
**SINCE 2006**

TALLY OF PROBLEMS IDENTIFIED ON 22 VEHICLES CHECKED IN ONE DAY:



Student and staff volunteers check community members' vehicles for common maintenance issues.

*"I really enjoyed the car checks. It taught me some customer service techniques that I can use in the future. I'll be excited to participate again next year."*

– Skyler Pangkey, sophomore automotive service management major

## FREE ASSISTANCE TO FILE TAX RETURNS

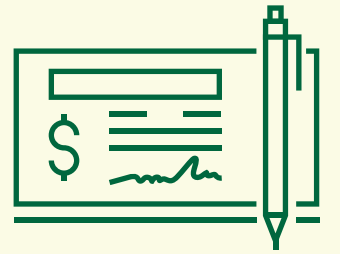
Offered by the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program run by the School of Business

*"I loved helping with VITA. It was a great opportunity to use skills we've picked up from internships and the classroom to impact the community in a meaningful and practical way."*

– Jake VanBeukering, senior accounting major

Began in  
**SPRING 2014**

**IRS-certified**  
Southern volunteers provide basic preparation for income tax returns.



Available to those who make \$54,000 or less annually, people with disabilities, the elderly, and taxpayers with limited English-speaking skills

To date:  
**2,494**  
tax returns completed,  
**\$3,334,005**  
secured in refunds

## SACRAMENT OF PRAISE

Outreach choir in the School of Music

Music majors, voice students, & OTHER volunteers



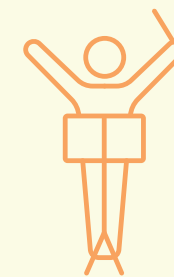
ONGOING FOR  
**13**  
YEARS

The ministry of music is provided for shut-ins and others who are often neglected in the community.

*"It's priceless! We enjoy the group dynamic and the memories being made. There isn't any other way to say it; you just have to experience it."*

– Professor Julie Penner

**DIRECTED BY**  
School of Music professor Julie Penner, PhD



## MLK SERVICE DAY 2023

Campus-wide event serving the local community, organized by the Christian Service program

Annual January event since  
**1993**



**42** PROJECTS in partnership with community organizations, including packing and distributing food, caring for animals, helping local schools, leading activities for the elderly, and more

*"I praise God for this service to our community!"*  
– Cheryl Craven, director of Christian Service

**785** volunteers served a combined  
**2,355** hours in a single day

VALUE OF TIME:  
**\$61,277.10**

(per Tennessee's hourly volunteer rate reported by Independent Sector)



Members of the animal kingdom lend support and foster joy in the lives of students and employees at Southern. Representing the variety in creation, these creatures also provide a different kind of education not common to classrooms. Here is a sampling of student and employee pets who are instructing, protecting, and spreading humor across the campus and beyond.



# fur, feathers, AND FROGS

By Tina (Frist) Smith, '89, communication manager



**Justin Moore, '06**  
Executive Director for Risk Management

Living on Maple Hill Farm in Dalton, Georgia, with 13 goats, a donkey, a flock of chickens, two dogs, and a cat, Justin and his wife, Megan, '04, '07, and '11, delegate as many barnyard tasks as possible to their children

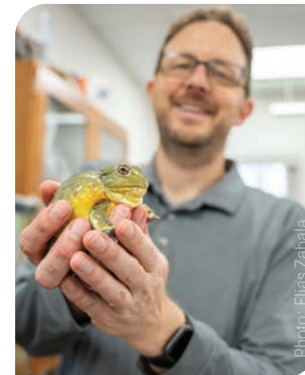
Elizabeth, 7, and Pierson, 2, including feeding animals and gathering eggs. The entire menagerie coexists peacefully, continually teaching life lessons and the importance of having responsibilities. Justin says, "It's like a dream to watch our kids growing up with the privilege of spending more time outside than in." His favorite experience on the land: rehabilitating an injured baby goat by keeping the kid inside the house and diapered.



**Kyla Slaughter**  
Senior Social Work Major

As a visually impaired student, Kyla relies on her guide dog, Cherish, to help her to navigate Southern's campus. The Golden Retriever/Labrador mix ensures the safety of her mistress, especially on daily walks from campus

housing to academic and social destinations that sometimes involve crossing a street. A wind chime hanging on the front porch of Daniells Hall, home to the School of Social Work and many of Kyla's classes, provides an additional tool for the pair, whom staff and students in the building have adopted as family. Cherish finds her own water bowl upon arrival and knows where her treats are stored in the front office. She lies quietly beside Kyla's seat in each classroom and takes all of the extra petting and words of affirmation in stride.



**Aaron Corbit, PhD**  
Biology Professor

Accurately dubbed "the keeper of pets" within Hickman Science Center, Aaron oversees care for African bullfrogs Pipsqueak and Rancor, turtles Shelly and Ocean, and a tank full of Madagascar hissing cockroaches in one of the biology classrooms on campus.

His own Pueblan milk snake, Rex, lives in Aaron's office. Daily cuisine in the second-floor lab ranges from frozen mice, meal worms, and crickets to specialized commercial food and even a chopped carrot for the insects. Students help to keep water fresh and enclosures clean. Since a very young age, the professor has been chasing reptiles and bugs while finding endlessly diverse and fascinating revelations of God through nature. Aaron insists, "The stranger an animal seems, the more interesting it tends to be." Even less-than-cuddly crawlers need attention.





**Chase Rodriguez**

*Freshman Religious Studies Major*

When Chase was given his first horse at age 12, he sought out a nearby trainer. Eventually becoming the instructor's apprentice on a 700-acre ranch just minutes from his home in the

Colorado foothills, Chase has logged upward of 5,500 hours in a saddle working with barrel, roping, trail, dressage, and hunter/jumper horses. During summer months, he handles six or seven horses a day, and currently he's training one local equine while studying at Southern. Many of the animals he trains have faced extreme stress or been rescued from traumatic conditions, so seeing the behavioral transformation from fearful retaliator to loving pet makes his work more than worthwhile.



**Katie Scott**

*Senior Public Relations Major*

For three years, Katie practiced the art of persuasion while convincing her parents about the advantages of adding goats to their backyard. Her dad finally conceded, and they worked together to build fencing and an

enclosure. Upon graduating from high school, Katie was gifted two Nigerian Dwarfs, and her small herd has since doubled in size. Whenever Katie calls for Ms. Grissom, Otis, Eugenia, and BillLee, they all come running. While they love hay, alfalfa, ginger snap cookies, oranges, bananas, and popcorn, the picky kids turn up their noses at cucumbers, lettuce, broccoli, and carrots—disproving the myth that goats will eat anything. “Caring for them reminds me of how my heavenly Shepherd looks after me,” Katie says.



**Ken, '80, EdD, and Ann (Kennedy) Shaw, '79**

*President and First Lady*

Keeping things lively in the Shaw residence, Bentley is an active but cuddly 8-year-old Maltese who is a mere 8 pounds when soaking wet. Referred to by the university president as a “psycho,” the dog carries around

an overused squeaker toy that no longer makes noise, and Bentley must know where this pacifier is at all times. He begins to howl whenever Ann sits down to play the piano; the louder she plays, the louder he seems inspired to lift his voice. Whenever Ken is holding a plank form during an exercise session, Bentley runs underneath him and offers encouraging licks to the face. Staying close to Ann whenever she's baking cookies and bread for Southern students, Bentley waits for stray morsels to fall to the floor. Scrambled eggs and cheese are favorite treats, and he listens for Ken's car to pull into the garage, knowing a game of chase is just around the corner.



**Janell (Pettibone) Hullquist, '05**

*COLUMNS Editor*

A self-titled “crazy cat lady,” Janell and her husband, Eric, '97, currently enjoy a clowder of four cats, ranging in age from 1 to 18 years old. “Each cat chose us,” she explains.

“We'd originally capped our furry family at two, but during the pandemic, a pregnant little feral cat adopted us, so what could we do?” After the couple gave away her kittens, Quora joined resident furballs Tofu and Milo. The most recent addition, Pippin—the son of another feral cat—balances high energy with lots of snuggles. “I can't count the times I've burst out laughing because of these silly cats. God knew what He was doing by putting animals in our lives!” To enjoy more Southern pets, visit [southern.edu/columns](http://southern.edu/columns).



# FAITHFULLY CONTINUING A LEGACY OF MISSION

by Amanda Blake, senior journalism major

As a student missionary in Bolivia, Zachery Kirstein, senior finance major, helped nurture a group of 15 boys, ages 2 to 10, alongside a local married couple.

## DESCENDANT OF AN ADVENTIST LEGEND

Kirstein's family is honored to be descended from Andrews, considered a pioneer of Adventism. The evangelist worked as the General Conference (GC) president; served as editor of the *Review and Herald*, the denomination's first publication, now known as the *Adventist Review*; intrepidly and skillfully defended the seventh-day Sabbath; and spread the gospel in the United States and Europe.

In addition to speaking often of their heritage, Kirstein's relatives also own various heirlooms. Recently, during dinner, Kirstein learned that the drinking glasses his family was using belonged to Charles Andrews, the son of J.N.

"It's so neat to think that these glasses are connected to J.N. Andrews," Kirstein said. "He might have even drunk out of them—that's so cool!"

For generations, Kirstein's family has continued Andrews' legacy. Several of his relatives are Adventist pastors, and his grandfather, Bill Kirstein, worked as art director for the *Adventist Review*.

## LEARNING FAITH IN BOLIVIA

Kirstein's overseas mission experience began in August 2021. He arrived at Familia Feliz thrilled and terrified, but instant hugs from the children dissipated all doubts. He knew his purpose: to love the kids, some of whom were abused or neglected by their biological parents.

For a year, Kirstein helped nurture 15 boys, ages 2 to 10, alongside a married couple who ran the home, which was one of six homes on campus. He also taught the first and second grades, instructed kids of all ages in music, and worked as director of fundraising.

"My experience gave me a firm understanding of what it means to rely on God," Kirstein said, "to have no idea what's going on at times, and yet to know that God is present."

Each morning, the small family sang for worship. This daily routine remains embedded in Kirstein's mind and heart; he is awed by the boys' passionate faith.

"I often think back to those moments when the kids were just belting out hymns and absolutely loving it," Kirstein said. "These young boys were praising God in the purest form when they had every right to think, 'I don't like God because of what I've gone through.' Instead, they sang songs such as 'How Great Is Our God' and 'I Surrender All,' and it's just beautiful to see their love for Jesus."

While singing in church, Kirstein learned to identify his kids' voices amid the crowd. He decided that their trust in God, resilient and innocent, is the kind he desires.

Since returning to the United States, Kirstein has stayed connected with his boys. Despite unstable internet where they are, he calls them using FaceTime whenever possible.

## A NEW PERSPECTIVE

Back at Southern to finish his degree, Kirstein works as the assistant to the director of Student Missions.

"It's been an amazing opportunity," he said. "I was a student missionary, and now my job is to create more student missionaries. It's so fun talking to people, telling them about my experience, and watching that lightbulb go off in their heads as they think, 'Oh, my goodness! I want to do this.'"

After graduating, Kirstein hopes to start a career in hospital administration, a years-long ambition strengthened by professional connections he's made through Southern. After serving in Bolivia, however, his motivation has shifted. Now, instead of working to attain financial success or status, he wants to help people.

"I did an internship last summer with AdventHealth, the same company I've worked for before, but after Bolivia, it was



### "HAPPY FATHER'S DAY!"

The phrase pierced Zachery Kirstein's heart. Lovingly, with tears beginning to form in his eyes, he looked down at the group of young boys.

"I'm not your father, but thank you."

Confidently, they replied, "Yes, you are."

They embraced, and he was amazed again, not by their words but by the truth behind them.

"I thought: 'Wow! This is wild. In a way, I *am* these kids' father,'" Kirstein recounted a year later. "That is probably one of my favorite memories from Bolivia."

Kirstein, now a senior finance major, spent a year as a volunteer houseparent at Familia Feliz, a Seventh-day Adventist orphanage and boarding school on the outskirts of the Bolivian village Rurrenabaque. The experience not only changed his life, but also continued a legacy of Christian service in his family. Kirstein's great-great-great-great grandfather, John Nevins (J.N.) Andrews, was the first official overseas missionary of the Adventist church.

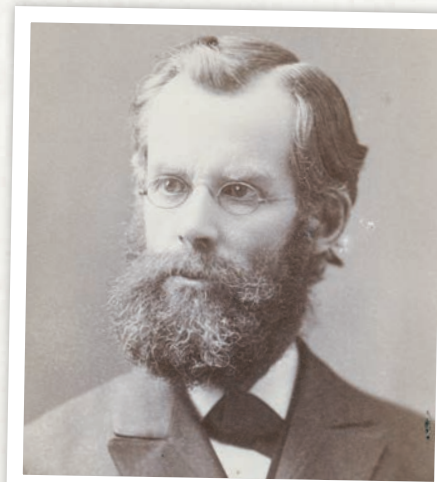


Image of J.N. Andrews courtesy of the Center for Adventist Research, James White Library, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan



so much more than just a job," Kirstein said. "I loved it. I felt like I was making a difference. It's crazy how my mission experience impacted how happy I feel throughout the day and how I view purpose."

Last summer, Kirstein was also invited to speak at the 61<sup>st</sup> GC Session in St. Louis, Missouri. While there, he described his time abroad to thousands of attendees and was also interviewed by Bill Knott, editor of the *Adventist Review* at the time. Knott asked him about the connection between his heritage and his service in Bolivia.

"While at Familia Feliz, it was fascinating to know that people in my family have done this very thing," Kirstein recounted while describing his GC testimony. "I, too, played a part in continuing the tradition in our family, the mission work that J.N. Andrews started." ■

# Alumni Notes

**'60s** **Gilbert Burnham**, '64, recently received the Carl Taylor Lifetime Achievement Award at the annual convention of the American Public Health Association in Boston for his leadership and innovation in international health. Gilbert continues to teach and conduct research as professor emeritus at Johns Hopkins University in Maryland. Before joining Johns Hopkins, he served as medical director at Malamulo Hospital in Malawi for 14 years.

**'70s** **1 Gary**, '77, and **Ellen (Ramsey) Eldridge**, '78, moved to Idaho in 2017 when he retired from television production, managing a studio for a large community college near Washington, D.C. At that time, Ellen was a vice president for Adventist Risk Management, but now she is a healthcare data analyst for Blue Cross of Idaho. Gary continues to take occasional freelance television assignments for the Hope Channel and the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists. The couple—along with their dog, five cats, and large white cockatoo—enjoys their hilltop home with a view, as well as hiking in the many wilderness areas of Idaho and Utah.

**'80s** **2 Victor Czerkasij**, '83 and '00, completed his Doctor of Nursing Practice at Graceland University and last year celebrated 20 years of working with Skin Cancer & Cosmetic Dermatology in Tennessee. A Ukrainian, he is also part of a surgical reconstruction team in

Ukraine for soldiers wounded in the current war. He and his wife **Rene**, '82, live and volunteer in Cleveland, Tennessee, which has the highest per capita Ukrainian refugee population in Tennessee. They have two grown sons.

**3 James**, '08, and **Becky (Rempher) McCurdy**, '87, moved from Republic, Washington, where they pastored a small three-church district, to South Dakota, where they are pastoring the growing Hermosa Seventh-day Adventist Church and ministering to the surrounding communities and the Pine Ridge Reservation. They are also involved in starting a small Pathfinder Club and are eagerly looking forward to attending the 2024 International Pathfinder Camporee in Gillette, Wyoming. They enjoy time with their large family. Their youngest daughter, Susanna, currently lives near Collegedale and is working part-time at the Village Market on Southern's campus; she plans to take art classes at Southern. Their oldest son, Michael, shipped out to Kuwait with the National Guard in 2022.

**4 Kelly (Bishop) Bolton**, '87 and '88, was hired in June 2022 to oversee the Glens Falls Foundation, a multimillion-dollar charitable grant foundation with multiple donor-directed sub-funds. Kelly is responsible for coordinating grants made from the general fund and administering several dozen scholarship funds. She was among those honored by a local museum at its annual gala this past fall.



**'00s** **Amanda Van Lanen**, '01, works as a history professor at Lewis-Clark State College, and she was the 2022 winner of the Innovative Educator for Social and Behavioral Ways of Knowing at the Idaho Gem Innovative Educator awards ceremony. Teaching at LC State since 2013, she oversees High Impact Practices and New Faculty Orientation for the college's Center for Teaching & Learning and is the General Education Committee chair for the LC State Faculty Senate. In 2019, Amanda received the Fernandez Faculty Excellence Award, which recognizes a faculty member who meets the highest standard of academic excellence in instruction, leadership, or scholarship. Additionally, she recently published a book on *The Washington Apple: Orchards and the Development of Industrial Agriculture*.

**5 Courtney Herod**, '09, will be celebrating his ninth anniversary as the associate communication director with the Carolina Conference of Seventh-day Adventists this year. In October 2022, he was asked to serve on the board of advisers for the Society of Adventist Communicators, a professional organization for communication and public relations professionals who are members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the North American Division. In August, he will be starting his doctorate in strategic communications at Regent University.

**6 Kenny Lee** (attended) hired on as a technical writer at Apple, Inc., in August 2022.

**'10s** **7 Eric Louw**, '13, was ordained on September 17, 2022, by the Texas Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. He and his wife, Esther, live in Berrien Springs, where he is earning his PhD.

**8 Mario Reategui**, '17, was ordained on June 11, 2022, by the Michigan Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and completed his master's degree in pastoral ministry in December that year. He began serving as pastor of the Crossville Seventh-day Adventist Church in Tennessee this January.



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

[alumni@southern.edu](mailto:alumni@southern.edu)  
**Alumni Relations • P.O. Box 370**  
**Collegedale, TN 37315-0370**  
[southern.edu/alumni/updates](https://southern.edu/alumni/updates)



## Weddings and Family Additions

**1** DeMeisha (Banks) Edwards, '04 and '17, and her husband, Kevin—along with older sister Hadassah, 16—welcomed Keilah to their family on June 12, 2018. They live in Greenville, North Carolina.

**2** Josh, '09, and Ellen (Luchak) George (attended) welcomed Caleb to their family on November 10, 2021. They live in Billings, Montana.

**3** Caleb, '09 and '13, and Brenda (Monchez) Fischer, '12 and '13, welcomed Emma to their family on May 29, 2020, later joined by Ezra on May 23, 2022. They live in Rogers, Arkansas.

**4** Alejandro, '10, and Amy (Abbey) Mejias, '22, were married on January 18, 2018.

**5** Ross, '12, and Meggan (Johnson) Knight, '14, welcomed Elizabeth to their home on April 15, 2022, and finalized her adoption that July. The couple is excited to watch their little one grow. They live near Spartanburg, South Carolina.

**6** Ryan, '14, and Kayla (Fogg) Tidwell, '17, married on May 29, 2022. The couple resides in Orlando, Florida, where both work for AdventHealth. Ryan works in the clinical setting, while Kayla works on the business side. They enjoy trying new restaurants, spending time with family and friends, and traveling abroad. In their first few months of marriage, the couple traveled to four new countries, and they plan to visit three more before their first wedding anniversary in May 2023.

**7** James, '14, and Ana (Lewkowicz) DuVall, '16, welcomed James Jr. on August 21, 2019, and then on August 11, 2021, Bianca joined their family. They live in the Chattanooga area.

**8** Zachary, '16 and '17, and Alexandra Uttinger, '17 and '18, welcomed Kohen to their family on June 1, 2021. They live in the Chattanooga area.



## Celebrating Southern Sweethearts

**9** More than 3,500 married alumni couples have joined their hearts and lives! For example, Kade, '20, and Abby (King) Ackerman, '19 and '21, were married on September 19, 2021. She says, "We met through a mutual friend. My roommate worked at camp with him and introduced us. We shared a lot of the same classes, since we both studied marketing. After we both graduated, he proposed, and we got married a year later. Neither of us were originally planning to attend Southern, but God led us both there."

Alumni Relations invites attendees and graduates who are married to each other to participate in Southern Sweethearts, a program designed to celebrate newlywed alumni couples and their new journey together with a special gift. Visit [southern.edu/sweethearts](https://southern.edu/sweethearts) to enroll in this complimentary program.

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

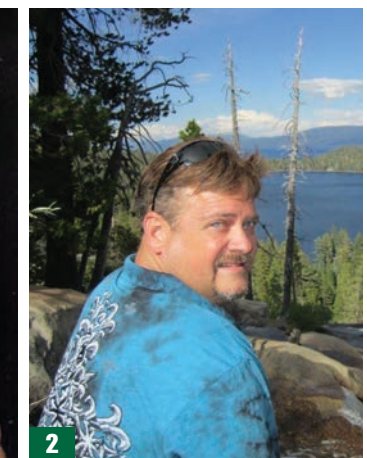


## Remembrance

Lawrence "Larry" Charles Brooks, '73, passed away on January 29, 2023, in Mishawaka, Indiana, after complications from a stroke. He attended Little Creek Academy in Knoxville, Tennessee, before coming to Southern, and later attended DePaul University in Chicago, Illinois. He became a CPA, and his favorite jobs were when he worked as president of Health Care at Home in Stevensville, Michigan, and most recently at Scotland Memorial Hospital in Laurinburg, North Carolina, where he was the controller for many years. Larry met the love of his life, Sharon, in 1973 when they both worked at Hinsdale Hospital, and they married in 1974. Larry was a kind, quiet, calm, and good-natured man who enjoyed reading, listening to music, spending time with his family, watching his grandchildren grow, and singing. In addition to his wife, he is survived by his sons, Timothy and Christopher; daughter, Heather; four grandchildren; his sister, Sheryl; and two nieces.

**1** Kenneth Emory Rogers, '78, passed away on March 17, 2023, in Calhoun, Georgia. Ken attended high school at Auburn Adventist Academy in Washington before attending Southern to study theology. After graduation, Ken interned in the Carolina Conference, then earned a Master of Divinity degree at Andrews University in Michigan. He ministered in the Carolinas, California, Tennessee, Washington State, and most recently served as the Youth and Young Adult Ministries director for the Southern Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. He served as the chaplain at Southern in the early 2000s and is remembered for his exuberant kindness to students and his team and for his ability to build relationships centered on Christ. Ken is survived by his wife, Cheryl, two sons—Brandon and Brock—as well as his stepson, Jeff Olson (attended), and stepdaughter, Kristy Emery, '05 and '06.

**2** Kevan John Evans, '86 and '99, passed away on December 14, 2022, in Tampa, Florida, at 58 years old. He was born at Glendale Adventist Hospital in Los Angeles, California, and grew up in Vicksburg, Mississippi. He attended Laurelbook Academy in Tennessee and Bass Memorial Academy in Mississippi before coming to Southern, where he received his bachelor's degree and Master of Business Administration. He met his wife, Diane (Klischies), in nutrition class at Southern in 1984, and they were married in Orlando, Florida, in 1987. Kevan's career with AdventHealth spanned more than 30 years, most recently serving as the regional supply chain director for AdventHealth West Florida Division in Tampa. Kevan had a passion for life and enjoyed activities such as hiking, boating, traveling, going to concerts, and being with his family and friends. He is survived by his wife of 35 years, with whom he has three children: Kevan II, '12; Matthew; and Cassie Evans-Giampa (attended); five grandchildren; his parents, John and Virginia; and his brothers, Clarke and Carlton.



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

## Honoring the Lives of Two Southern Adventist University Professors Emeriti

Ruth Williams, PhD, professor emerita of psychology at Southern, passed away in the fall of 2022 following a courageous battle with cancer. She was a legend who touched and greatly enriched the lives of many students, faculty, and staff in the School of Education, Psychology, and Counseling. She was an amazing leader, serving as the director of the psychology program for many years and, at some point, taught every course in the program. She challenged her students in ways that fostered incredible growth while she formed lifelong relationships with them. She is greatly missed.



Clifford Warren Olson, PhD, professor emeritus of business, passed away on March 13, 2023. He was born on December 14, 1950, in Missouri to the late Gene and Vivian Olson. He was a professor of business at Southern Adventist University for 28 years. Cliff is survived by his wife of 51 years, Susan (attended); son, Clint, '13; daughter, Elizabeth Pennell; seven grandchildren; brother, Gary; sisters, Kathy Reeves and Penny Fryer; and several nieces and nephews.



# Always Growing

by Lori (Pettibone) Fletcher, '94

As a student at Southern, Ruben Covarrubias, '07 and '11, remembers hearing then-president Gordon Bietz, PhD, encouraging students to become lifelong learners. Covarrubias didn't realize it at the time, but that's exactly what he would become.

"You feel like when you're done with college, you should have all the answers," said Covarrubias, who now serves as capacity development adviser for the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), "but I've learned that it's a process; it's a constant growth process. God is with you every step of the way, but there is growth happening. It's exciting to know there's always growth opportunities. That's why I do the job I do."

## Growing Leaders

At ADRA, Covarrubias helps leaders continue their journey of personal and professional growth. For 40 years, the organization has been aiding in development and responding to disasters in 107 countries worldwide. Having coordinated 1,600 projects, ADRA has impacted 25.3 million people.

In his position, Covarrubias holds training seminars in regional offices, as well as individual coaching sessions. His travels with ADRA have taken him around the world, including Thailand and Belgium. The soft skills that Covarrubias helps ADRA leaders attain allow them to achieve maximum success when coordinating development projects or responding to disasters, such as the recent earthquake in Syria and Türkiye (Turkey).

A couple of years ago, Covarrubias became a certified emotional intelligence coach. With this skill, he is able to help ADRA leaders expand their emotional intelligence and apply it to their work. For example, Covarrubias was able to help a director work successfully with the various personalities on his staff by encouraging the director to ask, "How can I help?"

"Saying that to team members has shifted his mindset," Covarrubias said, noting that these words help to convey care and empathy for one's team while also showing self-awareness.

## Lasting Connections

Covarrubias says that he learned many of the skills he uses in his current job while he was a student chaplain at Southern during the 2007-2008 academic year. In this role, he mentored students and organized vespers and worship events.

After his year as a student chaplain, Covarrubias completed an AdventHealth internship before returning to



In his role at ADRA, Ruben Covarrubias travels around the world, helping leaders on their journey of personal and professional growth.

Southern to work as a recruiter. In 2011, he finished his MBA and was promoted to associate director for recruitment at the university. In 2015, he started at ADRA as a recruitment officer, finding the right candidates for positions ranging from interns to directors.

As a business administration and religion double major at Southern, Covarrubias was most impacted by religion professors Donn Leatherman, PhD, and Stephen Bauer, PhD.

"Dr. Leatherman opened the Old Testament to me as I hadn't seen it before," Covarrubias said.

Though Covarrubias only had one class—Christian Ethics—from Bauer, the methods he learned in that class are ones he still uses to this day.

"I really enjoyed how he had us talk about things and then think about them, rather than just giving us the answers," Covarrubias said.

Today, Covarrubias co-hosts a show on the Hope Channel called "Bible Help Desk." In it, viewers send in questions to be answered by a panel of theologians, pastors, and other Bible experts. Bauer is a repeat guest on this show, sharing insights on salvation, the Sabbath, Bible study, and more.

In addition to his work with ADRA, Covarrubias serves as an elder and founder of the District Community Campus of the Beltsville Seventh-day Adventist Church in Maryland. He and his wife, Sabrina, will be celebrating their five-year anniversary in November and enjoy spending time with their 2-year-old daughter, Adrianna.

"Ruben is a great speaker, presenter, husband, and dad," said DC Campus Pastor Joanne Cortes. "He has a heart for God and for people and helps foster a safe space within our church community." ■



## A Joyful Song

Gabrielle Newman, '22, accompanies members of Southern's select chamber choir, I Cantori, on MLK Service Day. The group gave back to the community by raising their voices in song for patients, staff, and visitors at Erlanger Medical Mall in downtown Chattanooga. Throughout the year, six musical ensembles, plus additional smaller groups, serve as ambassadors for the university by showcasing students' talents and enriching the lives of audiences locally and around the world.



# SAVE THE DATE

Honor Classes: 1943, '53, '63, '73, '83, '93, '98, '03, '13



## Weekend Highlights

- Musical Showcase
- Cooking Demonstrations
- Agriculture Workshop
- Leadership Seminar
- Archaeology Presentation
- And much more!

Featured Speaker: **Dwight Nelson, '73**



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