


SPOTLIGHT

Summer/Fall 2016

On South Georgia State College

A professional headshot of Virginia M. Carson, Ph.D. She has short, curly brown hair and is smiling warmly at the camera. She is wearing a bright green blazer over a white top. The background is a soft, out-of-focus grey.

SGSC REFLECTS:
The Presidency of
Virginia M. Carson, Ph.D.



South Georgia
State College

SPOTLIGHT

Vol. 1, Issue 4 Summer/Fall 2016

SPOTLIGHT is produced for alumni and friends of South Georgia State College by the Office of External Affairs.

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South Georgia State College is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to award associate and baccalaureate degrees. Contact the Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097 or call 404-679-4500 for questions about the accreditation of South Georgia State College.

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Presidency in Review 2008-2016

From The Editor

Greetings, alumni and friends of South Georgia State College!

It's my pleasure once again to bring you the newest issue of SPOTLIGHT – one in which we recognize the leadership and service of our retiring president, Dr. Virginia Carson.

Since her 2008 designation as interim president of the former South Georgia College, Dr. Carson has expanded SGSC's presence not only in the local region but throughout the state of Georgia. Through her leadership, SGSC now offers three bachelor's degrees.* The first cohort of Bachelor of Science in Nursing students received degrees in 2014, followed by the Bachelor of Science in Biological Sciences students in 2016. The first cohort of students in the Bachelor of Science in Management program will begin work this fall.

In addition, SGSC remains in good standing with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). No compliance recommendations were cited by the visiting committees whose jobs were to evaluate SGSC's offering of bachelor's degrees, the 2012-2013 consolidation,

and the 2016 decennial accreditation as a new institution.

Finally, renovations to the Douglas Campus Dining Hall and Engram Hall have been completed during Dr. Carson's tenure, and the renovation of Davis Hall is well underway. Davis Hall is a legacy building on the Douglas Campus, dating back to 1906.

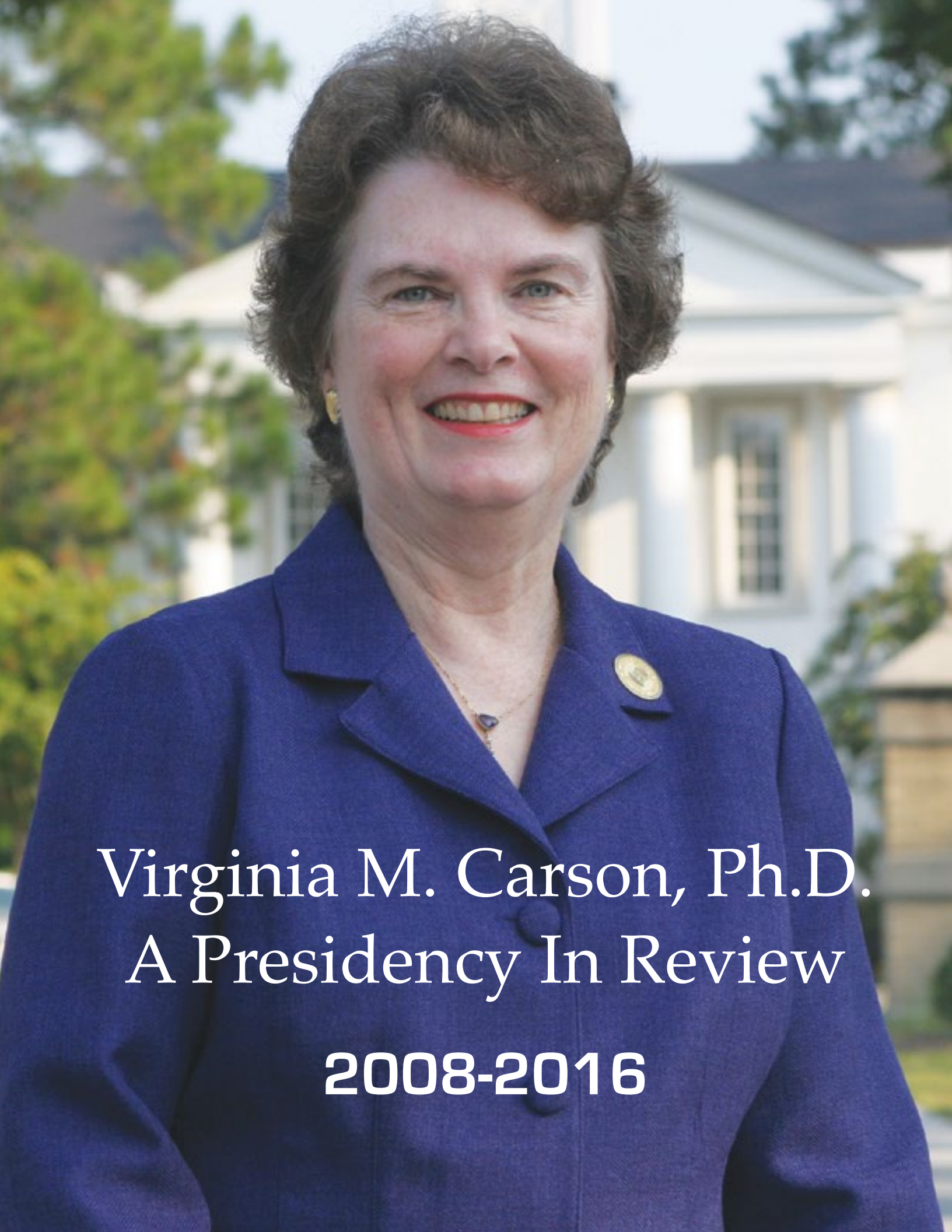
Dr. Carson's service to SGSC will always be remembered, and we hope you enjoy recalling some of the highlights from the last eight years of her presidency – most of them benefitting the College with a dash of some of her significant, personal accomplishments.

Your feedback is always welcomed so that, together, we can make SPOTLIGHT better. Don't hesitate to give me a call, send me an email, or drop an old-fashioned note in the mail to let me know what you'd like to see in future issues. I'd love to hear from you.

Enjoy the magazine! Go Hawks!

Sincerely,
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*Pending SACSCOC approval



Virginia M. Carson, Ph.D.
A Presidency In Review

2008-2016

“A Privilege And Honor”

Dr. Virginia Carson Remembers Her Time At SGSC

By: Amy Hancock

The saying goes, “Change is inevitable, but progress is optional.” Eight years ago, Dr. Virginia Carson stood at the window of her office in Thrash Hall overlooking the campus of South Georgia College. She knew there would be some change as she led the College in a new direction, but little did she know the legacy of progress and accomplishment that would follow. Dr. Carson’s standard of excellence quickly was recognized, and in so doing, elevated the role of the College in the community and the region.

Thinking back, Dr. Carson said she did not have her sights set on being a college administrator when she began her career. Her path was that of a mathematics teacher. She became a math major and started teaching soon after obtaining her degree. Her educational goal was to obtain a doctoral degree, which she did, and then she experienced a pivotal turning point in her career. She began teaching mathematics at DeKalb College, now known as Perimeter College at Georgia State University. Standing in front of the classroom brought her great joy. While her three degrees in mathematics and her role as a faculty member taught her critical thinking, persistence, and patience, she also learned there was more than one way to solve a problem, which became useful in the years that followed.



Dr. Carson and former Florida State head football coach Bobby Bowden. Bowden was the head football coach at South Georgia College from 1955-1958.

As it often does, life has a way of opening a door when it is least expected. A mathematics chair position became available at DeKalb College, and Dr. Carson was asked to fill it. During that time, the president of the college nominated her to become part of the American Council on Education (ACE) Fellows program. After careful thought and consideration, and with the blessings of her family, Dr. Carson moved to Virginia for a year and was mentored by Dr. Belle Wheelan, who became and has remained an integral part of her personal and professional life. Dr. Carson states, “Being in the ACE Fellows program was an incredible and significant experience for me. It was eye opening to see what we consider the other side of higher education from an administrative standpoint.” During her ACE Fellowship year, she had opportunities in strategic planning, organizational development, and institutional management from

the broad spectrum of higher education across the United States. She spent the last month of her fellowship at the University System of Georgia office in Atlanta being mentored by the then Senior Vice Chancellor for Capital Resources and Treasurer of the Board of Regents. In this capacity, she learned about fiscal and facility management and audit processes within the System.



Dr. Carson celebrated with Mykissinee (left) and Cornell Bussey, father and daughter who graduated together at the 2016 Douglas Campus Commencement.

As a natural progression, Dr. Carson returned and was moved from faculty member to dean for academic services at the Clarkston campus. She would then take the role of vice president for academic affairs at Georgia Highlands College, formerly known as Floyd College. She would remain at Georgia Highlands until she received the opportunity to take the helm as interim president of South Georgia College in Douglas. With her children grown and out on their own, Dr. Carson and husband, Francis, packed up their belongings and made the 275-mile trip south.

Once at South Georgia College, Dr. Carson’s focus remained on students. She began making decisions that would positively impact students and move the College and its faculty and staff forward. After almost a year behind her as interim, Dr. Carson was named president in April 2009. She had already made significant strides in the accreditation process, but with this new and more permanent title, she was prepared to move even more in the direction of positive growth.

Dr. Carson has led the College through significant and progressive development, but it was not without serious challenges along the way, many of them related to state funding. She had known throughout her career that stressful times were a part of the work, but when things became challenging, she could face the problem and use her training and experience to move past them. Faced with budget cuts and accreditation deadlines, Dr. Carson looked at the immediate issues as well as the long-term perspective and set plans in motion. She supported dreams that were already in place and brought new ideas to the forefront. The community’s wishes to bring bachelor’s degree programs to the College were realized in 2014 as the first cohort of nursing students walked across the stage with a Bachelor of Science in nursing degree. Since then, two more bachelor’s programs have been added.*

* Bachelor of Science in Management launches Fall 2016 pending SACSCOC approval.



Dr. Carson and members of her family stand in front of a special tree following the 2016 Douglas Campus Commencement. The tree was planted during the week of Dr. Carson's inauguration in 2009. (L-R) Kristen Carson, Reed Carson, Ricks Carson, Frank Carson, Davis Carson, Francis Carson, Dr. Virginia Carson, and Bryan Carson.

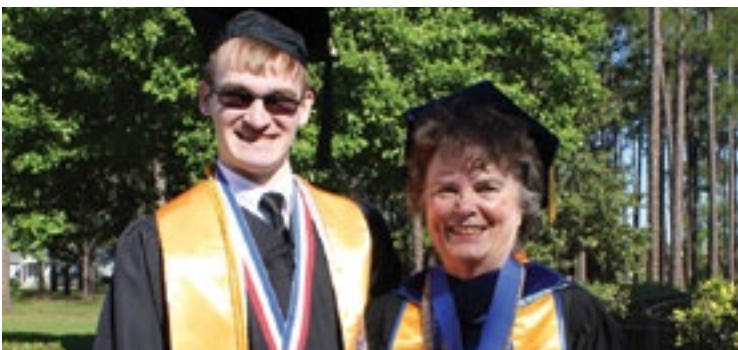
Dr. Carson also noted a number of additional milestones of her presidency, including:

- approval by the Board of Regents for South Georgia to become a state college
- three successful accreditation site visits from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges for the level change from two-year to four-year college, consolidation and decennial accreditation as a new institution and a successful nursing accreditation site visit
- consolidation and the shaping of the new South Georgia State College
- strengthening of faculty offerings and credentials
- improvements to the campus facilities, including SGSC's Douglas Campus being placed on the National Register of Historic Places



Dr. Carson with Governor Nathan Deal

Thinking about the future of SGSC, Dr. Carson is looking forward to seeing the momentum of growth continue. It has always been about the students, and she hopes that will continue to be the focus. She will miss meeting outstanding students and celebrating with them on special occasions such as graduation. "There is no substitute for seeing students blossom and grow. To see that on a regular basis is something I treasure and will miss," she says.



Dr. Carson celebrated with Charles Pridgen following the 2016 Douglas Campus Commencement. A Move On When Ready student, Pridgen graduated from SGSC with his associate's degree the same year he graduated from high school.

Dr. Carson will leave her footprint in many areas of the College and community. Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society has been near to her heart, and she has received honors and awards from the local chapters and the national organization, even serving as the Georgia representative on the Presidential Advisory Board. She has been a member of Rotary, served on Chamber boards, received numerous local awards, and even played the role of Ada Ashley Slater in a historical performance for the City of Douglas. She has become a part of the Waycross community as president of the consolidated institution and has been a driving force in forming partnerships between the College and places such as the Okefenokee Swamp Park.



Dr. Carson with Dr. Belle Wheelan (left), president of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges

As much as Dr. Carson enjoys the time she has spent in south Georgia, she is not the only one in the family that is looking forward to her retirement. She and husband Francis who has already retired after a career as an engineer, plan to move back to the middle Georgia area to be closer to family. Their son, Frank, and wife Kristen live in Winder, Ga. He is an IT manager in Tucker; she is a nurse in an intensive care unit at Athens Regional Medical Center. They have three boys: Ricks (4) and twins, Davis and Reed (18 months). The Carson's daughter Camilla and husband Lee live in Madison, Ga. Lee is an attorney in Madison, and Camilla is a speech pathologist. They have two daughters, Elle (11) and Carson (9). The Carson's son, Bryan, and his wife Laura live in Swansboro, N.C. He is a former Marine, and she is a supervisor in material accounting for the United States Navy.

Dr. Carson credits her successes along the way to her family. "There has not been an important decision made that did not include input from my family," she says. "I have always put family first, and they have been there to guide me and support me. I look forward to giving back to them in my retirement as they have given to me in the past."

As she stands at that same window in Thrash Hall, eight years after arriving at SGSC, Dr. Carson reflects on the successes and accomplishments during her tenure. Looking out at the legacy buildings in front reminds her of the historical significance and role the College has played in this community since 1906. Seeing the trees planted at various spots around campus as memorials causes her to remember the lives of those who have touched her in some way and of those who remain behind to carry on the pressing work that is yet to be done. She notices that the beauty of the campus remains as it did eight years earlier.

As she turns and prepares to walk away from that window one last time, the memories Dr. Carson has of SGSC and the confidence in the institution's future will remain with her. In the words of Dr. Carson, "It has been a privilege and honor to be at this institution, and it will always hold a special place in my heart."

COMMENCEMENT SPEAKERS: 2008-2016

2008

James A. (Jim) Bishop
Member, Board of Regents
of the University System
of Georgia



2009

Dr. Belle Wheelan
President, Southern
Association of Colleges and
Schools Commission on
Colleges



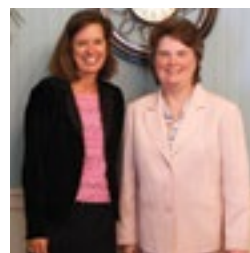
2010

**Dr. James A. (Jim) Cottingham
(SGC '74)**
Vice President for Student
Affairs (Retired),
South Georgia College



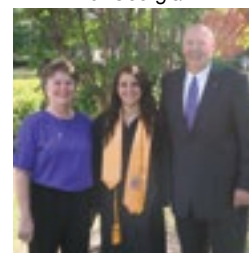
2011

Susan Driscoll
(standing with Dr. Carson)
Co-founder, ignition



2012

Willis J. Potts, Jr.
(standing with Dr. Carson and student
Sarah Snipes)
Member, Board of Regents
of the University System
of Georgia



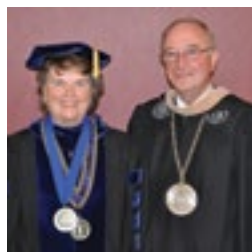
2013

**Douglas Campus
Peter Bragan, Jr.
(SGC '69-'70)**
President (Retired),
Jacksonville Suns



2013

**Waycross Campus
Henry "Hank" M. Huckaby**
(standing with Dr. Carson)
Chancellor, University System
of Georgia



2014

**Douglas Campus
Dr. Dennis B. Blanton
(SGC '78)**
Assistant Professor of
Anthropology, James Madison
University



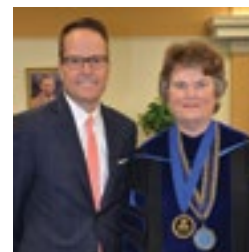
2014

**Waycross Campus
Dr. Scott Thigpen
(SGC '85; WC '87)**
Dean, SGSC School of Nursing



2015

**Douglas Campus
Chris Clark**
(standing with Dr. Carson)
President/CEO, Georgia
Chamber of Commerce



2015

**Waycross Campus
Senator Tyler Harper**
Georgia State Senate, District 7



2016

**Douglas Campus
Dr. Garland Gudger (SGC '67)**
Hughston Clinic



2016

**Waycross Campus
Larry Walker**
Member, Board of Regents
of the University System of
Georgia



2008

Dr. Virginia Carson Named Interim President of South Georgia College

Rob Watts, chief operating officer for the University System of Georgia, announced in February his appointment of Dr. Virginia Carson to the position of interim president of South Georgia College effective March 1. Prior to her appointment to SGC, Dr. Carson served as vice president for academic affairs at Georgia Highlands College.

"We are extremely fortunate to be able to call on Dr. Carson's strong leadership skills during this transition," said Watts. "South Georgia College will be in good hands."

Editor's Note: South Georgia State College was officially created in January 2013 as the result of the consolidation of South Georgia College and Waycross College. Stories published between 2008-2012 reflect pre-consolidation.

Dr. Virginia Carson Named President of NACCTEP

Dr. Virginia Carson, interim president of South Georgia College, has been named president of the National Association of Community College Teacher Education Programs (NACCTEP) for the 2008-2009 year. The NACCTEP is an organization of community colleges and students involved in teacher education programs, universities involved in teacher education programs and industry partners and professional associations who work as partners with community college teacher education programs.



University System of Georgia Chancellor Erroll Davis speaks to Dr. Virginia Carson during the ceremony inaugurating Dr. Carson as the eighth president of South Georgia College.

Dr. Virginia Carson Inaugurated As President

Dr. Virginia Carson was inaugurated as the eighth president of South Georgia College April 23, culminating a week-long schedule of events to commemorate the occasion.

Frankie Snow kicked off the week with a Bird Lecture and Exhibit April 20 in the William S. Smith Library. A joint concert by the Coffee High School Show Choir and the SGC Chorus was held in McGouirk Auditorium the same evening.

The 16th annual Student Support Services Awards were presented April 21 in the Peterson Hall Art Gallery, followed by an SGC Art Showcase and a repeat performance of the Coffee High Show Choir-SGC Chorus concert.

April 22 featured an Administrative Professionals Day luncheon with Susan Driscoll of ignition, Inc. The afternoon also included a showing of *Waiting for Godot* and a tree planting ceremony in Dr. Carson's honor in conjunction with Earth Day.

The official inauguration ceremony commenced on the afternoon of April 23 followed by two additional showings of *Waiting for Godot* on Thursday and Friday evenings.

SGC Enrollment Hits 2,000 Students

Enrollment at South Georgia College reached 2,000 students for the first time in SGC history during the fall 2009 semester. The enrollment number represented a 7.5 percent increase compared to fall 2008 and included the Douglas Campus, online classes, entry programs at Valdosta State University and Georgia Southwestern State University, and the nursing students at Waycross College.

Clower Center Renovation Recognized at State Level

SGC was honored by the Georgia Association of State Facilities Administrators with the 2009 Innovations Award for the adaptive renovation and repurposing of the Clower Center.

Built in 1936, the Clower Center served as a gymnasium, recreation area, and storage facility. It was named for T.A. Clower, who taught education and other classes at SGC from 1928-1954. Clower also coached several tennis teams that won state titles.

Funding for the completion and operation of the facility was passed through a student fee referendum by the SGC student body, and the center officially opened during the fall 2007 semester. This is the second award given for the Clower Center project. The Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation presented its Preservation Award for Excellence in Rehabilitation in May 2009.



(L-R) Bryan Carson, Francis Carson, Dr. Virginia Carson, Camilla (Carson) Moss, Lee Moss, Kristen Carson, and Frank Carson.

2010



Representatives from SGC, the SGC Foundation, and the Douglas community celebrate the official opening of the Tiger Village II residence hall.

Tiger Village II Residence Hall Opens

SGC celebrated the opening of the Tiger Village II residence hall with a ribbon cutting in August. Construction of the 292-bed facility was completed in just over a year, and it was the second residence hall to be completed on campus since 2007. The architecture of the building is consistent with that of other Douglas Campus buildings. The brickwork matches the style found across campus, and certain features of the facility pay homage to Thrash Hall and other historic campus buildings.

A part of SGC's strategic plan, the completion of Tiger Village II shifted the center of student life to the southwest side of the campus, which includes the Tiger Village I residence hall and the Clower Student Center. The \$14.5 million Tiger Village II project was made possible by a public-private partnership among the University System of Georgia Board of Regents, the SGC Foundation, and the Atkinson-Coffee County Development Authority.

Dr. Carson Receives Douglas-Coffee County Leadership Award

SGC President Dr. Virginia Carson was honored with the Jackie Wilson Women in Leadership Award at the Douglas-Coffee County Chamber of Commerce annual banquet in January. The award was presented as a result of Dr. Carson's tremendous initiative and vision she has exhibited during her time as president of SGC.

Dr. Carson was pleasantly surprised at being chosen for the award, and she saluted Wilson during her remarks.

"To receive something with Jackie Wilson's name on it is perhaps the highest honor anyone in this county could aspire to," said Dr. Carson.



(L-R): JoAnne Lewis, executive director of the Douglas-Coffee Chamber and EDA; SGC President Dr. Virginia Carson; and Douglas Mayor Jackie Wilson.

SGC Selected By Carnegie Foundation For Mathway

SGC was selected by the Carnegie Foundation as one of only eight two-year colleges across the United States to participate in a new mathematics initiative, Mathway. The goal is to develop a new learning support mathematics course for students of non-STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) programs of study. The three-year, \$60,000 grant supported a five-person SGC team in the development, piloting, and fine-tuning of the course.

The new course was piloted in three sections beginning fall 2011. Full implementation was planned for spring 2012. Students pursuing a non-STEM program of study were able to complete both the learning support mathematics course and the college-level mathematics course in only two semesters.



Representatives from SGC, the SGC Foundation, and the Douglas community join SGC President Dr. Virginia Carson and University System of Georgia Board of Regents Chair Benjamin J. Tarbutton (center) to officially open the newly renovated SGC Dining Hall.

SGC Becomes State College; BSN Degree Receives Approval

The University System of Georgia Board of Regents at its June meeting approved a mission and sector change for SGC, which allowed the College to receive state college status. As a result of the Board's actions, the College's bachelor's degree in nursing was also approved.

"Nursing is one of our most popular (programs of study), so this is a logical next step in supporting the health care needs of our region," said SGC President Dr. Virginia Carson. "Many community, business and government leaders have expressed support for this move, and all of us at (the College) are very appreciative and believe this is a win-win for our students and community."

The associate's degree program of study in nursing, which began over 40 years ago, will continue to be offered by SGC. The bachelor's degree program is available to those students who have obtained an associate's degree in nursing and hold a registered nurse license.

Editor's Note: The bachelor's degree program launched in the fall of 2013.

Douglas Campus Dining Hall Opens

The 15,000 square feet space is a blend of old and new architecture and offers students a variety of dining options. It features cafeteria-style dining, which includes a pizza bar, grill area, soup and salad bar, quick service counter, and other features and services.

"A project like this sends an important message to students. It shows that this institution cares," said SGC President Dr. Virginia Carson during the ceremony. "It shows we recognize the needs of our students, and we are willing to go the extra mile to make sure those needs are met."

The \$6.5 million project took 10 months to complete and was a public-private venture between the SGC Foundation and the Atkinson-Coffee County Economic Development Authority. Ambling University Development Group, Hendessi and Associates, Juneau Construction Company, and Lord, Aeck and Sargent architecture firm were the development partners involved in the project.

Ralph C. Moor Classroom Dedicated



(L-R) Dr. Ralph Carl Moor, Jr., Michael Moor, Larry Moor, Julia Moor, Ralph Carl Moor, SGC President Dr. Virginia Carson, and SGC Foundation Vice President Shelly McLean at the Oct. 7, 2011 classroom dedication of Collins 123 in honor of Ralph Carl Moor.

Approximately 20 members of the SGC Foundation as well as faculty, staff and students gathered in Collins Hall in December to dedicate Classroom 123 in honor of Mr. Ralph C. Moor of Atlanta.

During the ceremony, SGC President Dr. Virginia Carson shared the following, "Mr. Moor has been a dear friend to (the College), and his generosity over the years has helped make a positive impact on countless students. We are delighted to have an opportunity to recognize him in this way and thank him for the important role he has played in our institution."

At the ceremony, Moor stated, “Even though my physical presence isn’t here anymore, my heart certainly is.”

Moor served as Academic Dean at South Georgia College from Sept. 1948 – Oct. 1951. Afterwards, he served with the U.S. Office of Education and then spent much of the rest of his career employed by Georgia State Merit System of Personnel, from which he retired in 1975 as Commissioner of Personnel.

Moor received his undergraduate degree from Georgia State University in 1937 and his master’s degree from George Washington University in 1947.

Editor’s Note: Moor passed away in April 2015 at the age of 102.

Romeo Reyes Named First Alumnus Of The Year At A Night To Shine Gala



(L-R): SGC Foundation Vice President Shelly McLean, Satilla REMC President/CEO Romeo Reyes

Satilla REMC President/CEO Romeo Reyes received the first-ever Outstanding Alumnus of the Year award at the A Night to Shine Gala, which celebrated the 40th anniversary of the SGC Foundation.

An emotional Reyes accepted the award and expressed a heartfelt thank you to Satilla REMC and his family for their support while he attended college as a non-traditional student.

“I would not have been able to accomplish all of this without their encouragement. They believed in me and made this possible,” said Reyes.

A 1996 alum of South Georgia College, Reyes began his career with Satilla REMC as a lineman. He decided to return to school in order to obtain an engineering degree. He was married with a young family and had numerous financial obligations when he went back to school. Through the help and support of his family and employer, Reyes graduated from SGC in 1996 and Mercer University in 1999. After serving as an engineer and district manager, Reyes now leads the company.

In addition to the Alumnus of the Year award, charter members of the SGC Foundation were recognized at the gala – Dick Worrell, Wendell Sears, and Myles Greene. Coffee Regional Medical Center received recognition as the largest corporate donor of endowed funds, and the family of the late Herman McGouirk was acknowledged as the most generous individual donor. A long-time faculty member, McGouirk created a significant planned gift to the College, and the Douglas Campus auditorium inside Peterson Hall now bears his name.

SGC Baseball Advances To JUCO World Series; Sims Receives Coaching Awards



SGC Head Baseball Coach Scott Sims



SGC President Dr. Virginia Carson (center) with the baseball team prior to the trip to the JUCO College World Series.

South Georgia College’s baseball team reached the JUCO College World Series in Grand Junction, Colo., for the first time in 35 years after finishing the East Central District Tournament undefeated. The Tigers were second in the Georgia Collegiate Athletic Association Region XVII Tournament and joined tournament champion Georgia Perimeter College in the district tournament. SGC defeated Columbia State College and Walters State College to advance to the JUCO World Series.

As a result of the team’s season, head coach Scott Sims was named the East Central District Coach of the Year. In addition, Sims received the W. Homa Thomas Sportsmanship Award at the JUCO World Series. Sims retired from coaching following the 2011 season.

“Coach Sims has had a remarkable career at South Georgia College,” said SGC President Dr. Virginia Carson. “He has emphasized academic excellence, civic responsibility, and integrity both on and off the field. His players know what it means to play baseball the right way, and this sportsmanship award validates everything he has done over the last 21 years here. I can think of no one more deserving of this honor.”

A renovated Engram Hall opened in 2012.

SGC Admits First-Ever Junior Class

SGC admitted its first-ever junior class July 19. The 29 students were admitted into the College's new Bachelor of Science in Nursing program (BSN).

"The new level of academic clout the Bachelor of Science degree in nursing brings to our College and the healthcare of our region will be crucial for the well-being of our area. I am optimistic about the many benefits we will see as a result," stated Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr. Carl McDonald at the time of the program's launch.

"This milestone is the result of a longstanding vision for the growth of this institution and decades of hard work and commitment by (the College's) community partners and its faculty, staff and students. Transitioning from an associate's degree granting college into a bachelor's degree granting institution is an ongoing process, and I applaud each team member who has helped us achieve this significant accomplishment," stated SGC President Dr. Virginia Carson.

Dr. Virginia Carson Receives Distinguished Citizen Award

SGC President Dr. Virginia Carson received the Distinguished Citizen Award from the Alapaha Area Council Boy Scouts of America. According to Matt Hart, scout executive, the award is presented to "someone who lives their daily life by the Scout Oath and Scout Law," and the law says, "A scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent."

Dr. Carson accepted the award at the Alapaha Area Council's annual Distinguished Citizen Banquet, a fundraiser for the Boy Scouts.

"We are here tonight because I am part of the South Georgia College team," Dr. Carson told the audience. "The many people in this room who are so much a part of the South Georgia College legacy know what a valuable, complicated, and rewarding job I have. The South Georgia College team works together so well and is responsible for making things happen, and I owe everything to my team members."



(L-R) SGC President Dr. Virginia Carson and Alapaha Area Council District Chairman Chris Tuten

SGC Celebrates Engram Hall Ribbon Cutting

Engram Hall was built in 1970 and named after Irby Dell Engram, who served South Georgia College from 1946 to 1972. Engram began his career at SGC as professor of social science as well as acting dean and registrar in 1946, and he retired in 1972. He was awarded the title of Academic Dean Emeritus and Professor of Social Science Emeritus in 1972.

The \$4.9 million project is a "one stop shop" for enrollment services - admissions, financial aid and the registrar. The building also includes the bookstore, meeting rooms and a large multi-purpose room.

A number of distinguished guests and friends of SGC were on hand for the ribbon cutting. William “Dink” NeSmith, vice chair of the University System of Georgia Board of Regents, delivered the keynote address for the event. NeSmith stated that the goal of the Board of Regents – creating a more educated Georgia – was happening at SGC. “I’m especially proud when I see institutions refurbish existing buildings and preserve their legacy for future generations,” stated NeSmith.

SGC President Dr. Virginia Carson commented during the ceremony, “Words cannot express how excited and grateful I am to be standing in this fabulous new space and celebrating this special occasion with so many friends of the College. Engram is a milestone for our students and us. The project is the first in several years in which we have received state funding. It is also extra special, because it will be the welcome mat for prospective students and will allow us to better serve our students.”

Among the other guests in attendance at the ceremony were Douglas Mayor James Dennis, SGC Foundation President Shelly McLean, State Senator Greg Goggans, and Michael Moor, son of Ralph Moor, a friend and colleague of Engram’s. Also in attendance was a very special guest of the College, Tye Engram, Engram’s son.

Davis Hall Renovation Project Announced

The University System of Georgia Board of Regents at its August meeting approved \$2.5 million in funding to renovate Davis Hall.

Davis Hall is one of three original structures on the SGC campus, and as such, is one of the most prominent buildings on the campus. Initially built as a dormitory in 1907, the building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places but has not been renovated since the 1970s. Through this renovation, Davis Hall will be enhanced to create state of the art and flexible classroom and academic support space. In addition, the project will provide an opportunity to update the electrical and utility systems, all while preserving the historic integrity of the facility.

“Davis Hall is vital to our institution. As we strive to be good stewards of our facilities, it is important to modernize this space. The interior is not conducive to the modern learning environment, and older structures require more maintenance and utility costs. It’s a win-win for our institution,” said SGC President Dr. Virginia Carson.

SGC Inaugurates First Class Into Athletic Hall Of Fame, Names Alumnus Of The Year



(L-R): Ann Crider, Emma Lou Auginbaugh, Billy Crider, and SGC President Dr. Virginia Carson

During the 2012 SGC Foundation President’s Gala, SGC inaugurated the first class into its Athletic Hall of Fame, which included 10 former athletes and coaches. The former athletes are as follows: Susan Cady Brooker, a two-time All-American basketball player from 1977-1979; Jason Childers, a former Tiger baseball player in 1994 and 1995 who won a national title at Kennesaw State University and later played with the Tampa Bay Rays; Pete Cox, who played football, baseball and basketball at the former South Georgia College and later became one of the top amateur golfers in Georgia; Jesse Finch, a former baseball and football player who played with Team USA in an exhibition game at the 1956 Melbourne Olympics; Larry Hinson, a member of the PGA Tour who won the 1969 Greater New Orleans Open and has over 30 top 10 PGA finishes to his credit; and Eric Soderholm, an All-American baseball player who won two state championships (1967, 1968) and played nine years in Major League Baseball.



Seated (L-R): The late Scotty Perkins and Jesse Finch. Standing (L-R): Larry Hinson, Jason Childers, Susan Cady Brooker, Mrs. George Cook, Eric Soderholm, Mrs. Vince Gibson, Pete Cox, and Bobby Bowden.

The former coaches that were inducted include: Bobby Bowden, who coached at the former South Georgia College from 1955-1958, won two national championships at Florida State University, and is a member of the College Football Hall of Fame; the late George Cook, a four-time NJCAA Coach of the Year and back-to-back winner of the Southeast Coach of the Year Award who led the Tigers to a pair of Junior College World Series Appearances (1969 and 1970); the late Vince Gibson, who served as Coach Bowden’s assistant and was later head football coach at Kansas State University, Louisville and Tulane; and Scotty Perkins, men’s basketball coach from 1959-1985 who won six state championships, was five-time Junior College Coach of the Year, and two-time GJCA Regional Coach of the Year.

In addition to the Athletic Hall of Fame ceremony, SGC recognized William A. “Billy” Crider, Jr. as Alumnus of the Year. Crider was born and raised in Douglas and moved with his family to Metter in 1977 after a very successful career in the poultry industry. Following his attendance at the former South Georgia College and the University of Georgia, Crider started Crider Poultry in 1965 and was followed by Crider Inc., another poultry processing facility, some years later. Crider, Inc., is recognized around the world as one of the market leaders not only in poultry products but also canned turkey, ham and beef.



Board of Regents Finalizes SGC-WC Consolidation, Dr. Carson Appointed President

On January 8, 2013, the University System of Georgia Board of Regents approved the consolidation of eight institutions into four, one of which was the consolidation of the former South Georgia College and the former Waycross College. After adopting four separate resolutions authorizing the new institutions, the regents appointed Dr. Carson president of SGSC.

“I am humbled to be chosen to lead this new institution,” said Dr. Carson at the time of her appointment. “I look forward to the many new and exciting opportunities our College has to enhance student learning and the well-being of the communities we serve; it is indeed an exciting time for South Georgia State College and our region.”

University System Chancellor Hank Huckaby announced his consolidation plan in September 2011, and the regents approved six principles for consolidation in November of that year. At its January 2012 meeting, the regents approved the recommendations to consolidate the eight institutions.

The regents approved SGSC’s new mission statement in May 2012 and the College’s name in August 2012. In December 2012, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges gave its approval of the consolidated institution along with the other three consolidations.

Dr. Carson Receives PTK’s Shirley B. Gordon Award Of Distinction

SGSC President Dr. Virginia Carson was among 21 college presidents/campus CEOs who received the 2013 Shirley B. Gordon Award of Distinction at Phi Theta Kappa’s Annual Convention in San Jose, Calif. Selection for the award is based on outstanding efforts given toward promoting the goals of Phi



Theta Kappa. The award is named for the late Dr. Shirley B. Gordon, Phi Theta Kappa’s longest serving Board of Directors Chair and President Emeritus of Highline Community College in Des Moines, Wash. Phi Theta Kappa has 1,285 chapters on college campuses in all 50 of the United States, plus other countries and territories around the world. SGSC is

proud to provide student opportunities through two Phi Theta Kappa chapters - Kappa Sigma on the Douglas Campus and Alpha Rho Omega on the Waycross Campus.

Engram Hall Renovation Receives Award

The Engram Hall renovation project on SGSC’s Douglas Campus received a Sustainability Award at the University System of Georgia’s 2012 Facilities Officers Conference. Engram Hall was constructed in 1970 and served as the Douglas Campus Student Union. The \$4.9 million project was completed in time for the fall 2012 semester and is a “one stop shop” for enrollment services - admissions, financial aid and the registrar. The building also includes the bookstore, meeting rooms and a large multi-purpose room. Sustainability Awards are presented to an institution, project, or individual who demonstrates a significant impact to the institution or system in the areas of historic preservation, energy efficiency, operations, technical innovation or environmental stewardship.

2014



Representatives from SGSC and the Okefenokee Swamp Park (OSP) Board of Directors join SGSC President Dr. Virginia Carson and OSP Board Chair Dr. William Clark (seated right) during the signing ceremony officially creating the SGSC-OSP educational partnership.

SGSC's Bachelor Of Science Degree In Biological Sciences Approved By Board of Regents

The University System of Georgia's Board of Regents approved a new bachelor's degree in biological sciences for SGSC during its April meeting.

"This is a landmark day for our institution," said SGSC President Dr. Virginia Carson. "This new degree program will not only help our students be well-positioned for success in a number of growing fields, but it will also provide highly qualified professionals to support the workforce needs of industries throughout our region."

The biological sciences degree offers two tracks designed with student interests in mind. The nature and ecology track is geared towards individuals who may seek advanced graduate study or employment in a variety of governmental or private sector jobs, such as ecotourism and natural resource management. The pre-professional track prepares students for entry into a number of professions such as dentistry, pharmacy, or other health-related fields. Curriculum in both tracks is aimed to cultivate personal responsibility for the environment and foster the importance of stewardship.

SGSC offers top-notch field experiences and hands-on learning opportunities through partnerships with several unique ecological sites in southern Georgia, such as the Okefenokee Swamp Park and the Nature Conservancy's Broxton Rocks Preserve. Dr. Charles Johnson, chair of the Division of Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Physical Education, says, "SGSC's geography and partnerships with area ecological sites make our program very beneficial to students. Plus, our faculty are well-credentialed and can provide one-on-one attention, which helps boost student success in a four-year degree program."

SGSC, Okefenokee Swamp Park Announce New Partnership

SGSC and the Okefenokee Swamp Park (OSP) announced a new educational partnership in January with the signing of a "Statement of Strategic Alliance."

Since the announcement, SGSC science faculty have utilized the Park's resources as an outdoor laboratory, further enhancing the classroom experience of SGSC students. Dr. Carson said having access to an ecological site such as the Okefenokee Swamp has reinforced the College's mission "to create a diverse, globally-focused, and supportive learning environment."

"It is becoming more evident that partnerships are win-win's for



(L-R) Georgia Trust President and CEO Mark McDonald; Gita Hendessi Gardner, president of Hendessi & Associates, LLC; SGSC President Dr. Virginia Carson; Jackson Kane of LAS Jackson; SGC Foundation President Barry Bloom; and Georgia Trust Vice Chairman Bill Peard.

institutions of higher education and the communities they serve,” said Dr. Carson at the signing ceremony. “I’m excited to know that our students and faculty will have hands-on access to such an amazing natural resource as the Okefenokee Swamp as a result of this partnership.”

The Okefenokee Swamp Park opened its doors on October 8, 1946 as a non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization that has attracted visitors from around the world. Its mission is “to promote ecological tourism and education by providing a convenient point of entry into the Okefenokee offering an authentic opportunity for learning about wildlife, culture and natural beauty of the ‘Land of the Trembling Earth.’”

School of Nursing Adds New Simulation Lab

SGSC’s School of Nursing added a lab in June 2014 featuring new learning simulators. The SimMom is a full-body birthing simulator that helps facilitate obstetric training of delivery management. The SimJunior provides realistic pediatric training. Each simulator has many features including the ability to talk and breathe, heart and lung sounds, and pulses throughout the body. The ability to manipulate blood pressure, heart and respiratory rates, and oxygenation is also available. Each simulation experience is digitally recorded, allowing for a debriefing or reflection of the performance. According to Dr. Scott Thigpen, dean of SGSC’s School of Nursing, the simulation lab gives students the chance to handle different situations in a safe environment while developing critical thinking and decision skills.



(L-R) Mayor of Douglas James Dennis, SGSC President Dr. Virginia Carson, SGC Foundation President Barry Bloom, and SGSC Dean of the School of Nursing Dr. Scott Thigpen.

Dining Hall Receives Award From The Georgia Trust

The Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation presented its Excellence in Rehabilitation Award to SGSC for the renovation of the Douglas Campus dining hall. Located in the center of the Douglas Campus, the building was originally constructed in 1927 and served in its initial capacity until the 1970s. Following ten months of construction during the 2010-2011 academic year, the \$6.5 million renovation now includes over 15,000 square feet of space. It features cafeteria-style dining, which includes a pizza bar, grill area, soup and salad bar, quick service counter, and other features and services.



Representatives from SGSC, the Douglas-Coffee County Chamber of Commerce, and the Douglas community celebrate the official opening of the newly renovated Alumni House on the Douglas Campus.

SGSC Officially Opens Newly-Renovated Alumni House

SGSC held a ribbon cutting ceremony in August to celebrate the opening of the newly-renovated Alumni House on the Douglas Campus. What once served as the living quarters for past college presidents and their families, the Alumni House now houses office space, multi-purpose meeting spaces, a catering kitchen, and a VIP guest bedroom suite to house visitors while they are on campus conducting college business.

Originally built in 1953 for former SGC President William S. Smith, for whom the Douglas Campus library is named, the Alumni House was where Smith's daughter, Diana Smith Highsmith, grew up. Highsmith regaled guests at the ribbon cutting with stories of what it was like to grow up on the campus of the former South Georgia College.

SGSC President Dr. Virginia Carson said she is pleased with how the renovations turned out. She feels that the Alumni House is going to serve the College well in the future.

"The Alumni House is a part of SGSC," she said. "Many presidents were housed here, and our alumni hold it fondly in their hearts. Many were invited to meals at the home of the president over the years, and they have come to see it as part of SGSC's heritage."

SGSC Foundation Hosts 2015 President's Gala

The SGSC Foundation hosted a President's Gala in April to showcase key accomplishments at the College and honor the 2015 Alumnus of the Year. The evening's keynote speaker was Douglas native Kirby Thompson (SGC '74), senior vice president of community and government affairs for SunTrust Bank, Atlanta Division. Thompson currently serves as a board member for the Georgia Council on Economic Education, Eagle Ranch Foundation, Georgia 4-H Foundation, and University System of



The family of Maudine Wright (front row holding award) gathered for a group photo to celebrate Wright's receipt of the Alumnus of the Year award at the SGSC Foundation President's Gala.



Kirby Thompson (center) was greeted by Joe Sports (right) and his wife Ronda at the SGSC Foundation President's Gala reception.

SGSC President Dr. Virginia Carson shared some important successes for SGSC and announced the newly created Eames Speaker Series. She also announced the completion of the Douglas National Bank – Gene Chambers Memorial Scholarship. Six newly endowed scholarships from William A. (Billy) Crider and Frank Hanna, Jr. were also announced. The scholarships honor the Crider and Hanna families and assist students from Coffee County who are majoring in STEM fields and plan to return home to pursue their careers.

The evening culminated with the 2015 Alumnus of the Year presentation to Ms. Maudine Wright. Wright has been a cheerleader for SGSC since her time as a student in 1972. Co-owner of Douglas Electric & Plumbing, Wright has been involved in many local and statewide causes over the years, including a term as a trustee for the SGC Foundation (2000-2003). Since 2008, Wright has endowed three scholarships and made several one-time awards to help honor loved ones and assist academically deserving students in the region.

Davis Hall Renovations Underway



(L-R) Matt Hart of Studio 8 Design, Bill Weldon of Allstate Construction, Bruce Smith of Studio 8 Design, Douglas-Coffee Chamber and EDA Executive Director JoAnne Lewis, SGSC President Dr. Virginia Carson, State Senator Tyler Harper, daughter of President William S. Smith Diana Highsmith, Douglas Mayor James Dennis, SGSC Vice President for Operations Keith Newell, and Hal Slade of Allstate Construction.

SGSC held a groundbreaking ceremony in August to signal the official start of renovations of Davis Hall. Built in 1906 as one of the original three buildings of what was then an A&M school, Davis Hall has served its purpose as a dormitory to students, both male and female, functioned as a home to dorm parents and their families, housed college presidents and their families, and served as classroom and office space. The building was last updated in the mid-seventies.

Studio 8 Design of Valdosta, Ga., is overseeing the project and will maintain the historic accuracy of the building. At the same time, Davis Hall will have all modern technologies and amenities: faculty offices, large, open classrooms, a Technology Enabled Active Learning (TEAL) classroom, a conference room that can also be used as classroom space, and a large, auditorium-style classroom perfect for today's technology-based student.

McSwain Scholarship Announced; First Recipient Named



(L-R) SGSC President Dr. Virginia Carson and Charles Kyle Meeks

The SGSC Foundation hosted its annual scholarship reception for scholarship donors and current recipients in October. One of the Foundation's newest endowments, the Horace McSwain, Jr. Scholarship, was announced at the reception. The scholarship was created by SGSC President Dr. Virginia Carson and her family to honor her father, who was a registered professional land surveyor. The first recipient of the McSwain Scholarship was Charles Kyle (Ky) Meeks, a 2015 honor graduate of Coffee High School. Meeks is pursuing a program of study in biology while at SGSC and is considering a profession as a veterinarian.

SGSC, Satilla Riverkeeper announce educational partnership



(L-R) SGSC President Dr. Virginia Carson and Satilla Riverkeeper Executive Director Ashby Nix

The Satilla Riverkeeper and South Georgia State College Education and Training Alliance was officially launched during the 2014-2015 academic year. SGSC science faculty are utilizing the Satilla River as an outdoor classroom as a result of the Alliance, particularly in conjunction with SGSC's Bachelor of Science Degree in Biological Sciences. In return, SGSC faculty and their students are helping the Satilla Riverkeeper maintain the river's viability for years to come. The Alliance follows the SGSC-Okefenokee Swamp Park partnership that was announced in 2014.



SGSC President Dr. Virginia Carson is recognized by University System of Georgia Chancellor Hank Huckaby during the May 2016 Board of Regents meeting.



Dr. Carson Announces Retirement, Receives President Emerita Status

SGSC President Dr. Virginia Carson announced in January her plans to retire from the College effective June 30.

“I am proud of the opportunities created for current and future South Georgia State College students during my time and have them in my heart. It has been a signal honor to be a part of the traditions of this important institution and to strengthen it for the future,” said Dr. Carson.

University System of Georgia Chancellor Hank Huckaby stated, “President Carson has been an instrumental leader for South Georgia State College. Her steady leadership through such tremendous change has been critical to the successful consolidation and shaping of South Georgia State College. On behalf of the Board of Regents and all of us in the University System, I thank President Carson for her service and wish her and her family the very best in the new chapter ahead.”

The Board of Regents surprised Dr. Carson at its May meeting by designating her as President Emerita of SGSC.

“I am very touched by the award you give me today. It means a lot to me and my College,” Dr. Carson told the regents during the meeting.

Dr. Carson successfully led the consolidation of South Georgia College and Waycross College into South Georgia State College

and has seen it through a long-term strategy to foster student achievement.

In one of many developments in support of students, the Peterson Scholars program on the Douglas Campus and the Dye Scholars program on the Waycross Campus for outstanding new freshmen were established.

Since 2012, SGSC has had three successful accreditation site visits from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges for the level change from two-year to four-year college, consolidation and decennial accreditation as a new institution. In June, the SACSCOC Board of Trustees approved decennial accreditation for SGSC as a new institution.

The Douglas Campus have also seen change through the renovation and preservation of several historic buildings and construction of new housing.

Dr. Carson holds an undergraduate degree from the University of Georgia, and a M.Ed. and Ph.D., all in mathematics education, from Georgia State University.

Dr. Carson Receives Michael Bennett Lifetime Achievement Award

Phi Theta Kappa National Honor Society presented SGSC President Dr. Virginia Carson with a Michael Bennett Lifetime Achievement Award at the 2016 national convention in April in National Harbor, Md. The award is presented to college presidents at two-year or senior institutions and state community college directors who have been supportive of Phi Theta Kappa and are retiring from their careers. The awards are named in honor of the late Dr. Michael Bennett, longtime president of St. Petersburg College in Florida.

Bachelor Of Science In Management Degree To Launch Fall 2016*

The University System of Georgia Board of Regents at its March meeting approved a third bachelor's degree for SGSC. A Bachelor of Science in Management degree will be available to students beginning fall semester.

"Business is one of the top desired paths of study by current students at the College; thus, we are very pleased to be able to expand our academic offerings and enable students to complete this new four-year degree at SGSC," commented SGSC Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr. Rob Page.

The Bachelor of Science in Management degree is designed to target both traditional students and working adults who are in or aspiring to be in middle management roles or small business owners with multifaceted roles. The curriculum has been created to pair the management coursework with either organizational behavior or marketing.

The degree, to be offered on the Douglas Campus initially, is designed as a two-year completion program for students who have already earned an associate of science degree in business or who have completed the necessary prerequisite courses.

SGSC President Dr. Virginia Carson stated, "SGSC is committed to providing access to quality education for southeast Georgia, thereby enhancing the region's economic vitality and quality of life while fulfilling the College's mission. We look forward to what this new bachelor's degree will mean for our students as well as our business and industry partners."

**Pending approval by SACSCOC*

James M. Dye Foundation's 40th Anniversary Celebrated At President's Club Dinner



SGSC President Dr. Virginia Carson and guest Phyllis Cochran enjoyed the James M. Dye Foundation's President's Club Dinner.



Students serving as hosts and hostesses for the James M. Dye Foundation's President's Club Dinner included (L-R) J. D. Hyers, Logan Lee, Lane Rowell, Mallory Helms, and Will Meadows.

The James M. Dye Foundation hosted its 2016 President's Club Dinner in February on the Waycross Campus. The dinner recognized the faithful support of those donors who made major contributions to the Foundation during the 2014 and 2015 calendar years. The Foundation also celebrated its 40th anniversary during the dinner by recognizing those who helped create the organization and those who have held leadership positions over the past 40 years. Two Dye Foundation scholarship recipients thanked those in attendance for their financial support, and all enjoyed a catered meal and entertainment from the saxophone quartet of Ware County High School. The Dye Foundation is grateful to the following dinner sponsors: Waycross Chapter of the Georgia Society of CPAs, the SunTrust Foundation, and the Georgia Power Company. The Dye Foundation provides financial assistance to students on SGSC's Waycross Campus and supports SGSC through initiatives not funded by the State of Georgia.

SGSC Swimming Earns National Runner-Up Honors; Jenkins Named Women's Swimming Coach Of The Year

SGSC men's and women's swim teams earned NJCAA runner-up honors at the 2016 NJCAA Swimming and Diving Championships in Fort Pierce, Fla., and swim coach CM Jenkins received the 2016 Women's Swimming and Diving National Coach of the Year award.

"I am extremely honored to have our teams experience this much deserved recognition for their hard work and effort throughout the season," said Jenkins. "Nobody realizes how hard these student athletes work to get to this point and how dedicated they have been to accomplish this goal."

SGSC President Dr. Virginia Carson commented, "I am so proud of this significant accomplishment. These young women and men have worked so hard and are so deserving of the national second-place finish. I want to offer my personal thanks and congratulations to Coach Jenkins as well."



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Thank You, Dr. Carson!



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