

# ECHOES

## 8 COMMENCEMENT 2014

Trisha Yearwood, '84, delivers inspirational message to graduates



## THE SPORTS ISSUE

The Mountain Lions officially made the move to the NCAA Division II—and YHC will never be the same.

12 A NEW ERA FOR ATHLETICS

18 LIFE IN THE BALANCE

22 WORK & PLAY ▶

44 FANDEMONIUM





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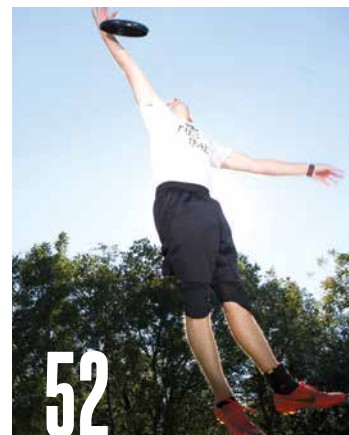
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# ECHOES

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Commencement speaker Trisha Yearwood, '84, (center) mingled with several graduates prior to the ceremony, including Lauren Chamblin, of Cumming, Brian Walker, of Powder Springs, Will Skelton, of Hayesville, N.C., Emily Espy, of Cumming, Travis Donahoo, of Knoxville, Tenn., and Sarah Puett, of Warne, N.C. **Check out the full story on page 8.**

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## Worth the Wait

On Sept. 1, Young Harris College became a full and active member of the **National Collegiate Athletic Association's (NCAA) Division II**. We sat down with YHC President Cathy Cox to find out more about the College's journey, which many have heard her say has been "the hardest thing we've done" in YHC's transition to four-year status.

**Q:** Why did YHC decide to pursue Division II athletics over its other options?

**A:** As you know, we had a robust junior college athletics program and a strong history of offering scholarships to student-athletes, but we nevertheless undertook a significant study of Division III and National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) options back in 2007 and 2008, and determined that Division II really fit us best.

**Q:** Why was this the best fit?

**A:** Several reasons. The division's "Life in the Balance" motto really fit our educational approach, and you can read more about that in this issue. Secondly, our coaches felt comfortable recruiting with scholarships rather than moving to a Division III model with no scholarships, and we would have

had to travel thousands of miles to find a Division III conference at the time. NAIA really didn't align with our educational model either. So from a number of perspectives, Division II really was a great fit for us.

**Q:** Why did it take us so long to get full membership?

**A:** Don't get me started! Seriously, we got misleading advice and had the rules changed on us at midstream on more than one occasion. We learned the hard way that the membership process has been made more arduous every year over the past five years as the NCAA has tried to manage the growing number of member applicants. It was, unfortunately, a very political process.

**Q:** Was the long road worth it?

**A:** Oh, yes! Division II still provides the gold standard for smaller college athletics. Our student-athletes will be able to compete at the highest levels and take advantage of many member benefits, including service and leadership

opportunities beyond the playing field, graduate scholarship opportunities, and a culture that emphasizes a balanced approach to life beyond athletics.

**Q:** What's the most exciting part about our first year as an active member of this division?

**A:** No question about it—the chance to compete for, and hopefully win, some conference championships. And maybe a national championship, too! We've certainly got that caliber of talent on our teams here at YHC.

**Q:** Are we at a disadvantage against big state schools in the Peach Belt Conference (PBC)?

**A:** No, not really. The conference sets the maximum number of scholarships a college can offer for each sport, and many of the public colleges honestly cannot afford to fund the maximum scholarships allowable. We are fortunate at YHC that, despite our small enrollment, we have the resources to provide the maximum level of scholarships in most of our sports—so we actually have somewhat of an advantage in recruiting. And the proof is in the pudding: we've already become the little David slaying the Goliath as we've gone on to defeat many of these larger universities in our first two years of PBC membership. So watch out for our Mountain Lions—this is going to be an awesome year!



Director of Athletics Randy Dunn and President Cox presented basketball standout Ladondra Johnson, '14, of Athens, with the Female Athlete of the Year Award during the College's athletics banquet in April.



President Cox and Dunn were on hand during the men's soccer Senior Night in October to congratulate Khurram Shazad, of Halifax, England, Ilija Ilic, of Belgrade, Serbia, and Samuel Mansour, of Paris, France, who helped their team score a second consecutive PBC title this season.



## YHC NAMED “College of Distinction”

YHC has been named to the prestigious “Colleges of Distinction” for the fourth consecutive year for providing students with the best learning experiences in undergraduate education. Fewer than 300 colleges and universities from across the country and only eight in Georgia earned the honor in 2014-2015.



## YHC BREAKS Enrollment Records

YHC recently welcomed its largest-ever entering class comprised of **500 freshmen**. Fall 2014 marks the largest enrollment in the history of the College with **1,216 students** on campus, continuing a trend of steadily increasing enrollment figures.

“We have broken overall enrollment records for the eighth straight year, and we are thrilled to have an outstanding class of new students here,” said YHC President Cathy Cox.

The previous freshman enrollment record of **464** set in Fall 2013 was surpassed by **more than 40** students this fall. Since the transition of YHC to a four-year institution began, the College’s total enrollment has increased by **101 percent**.

“This is the first year our freshman class size has reached **500 students**,” said Vice President for Enrollment Management and External Relations Clint Hobbs, ‘88. “When we saw an opportunity to exceed our original goal of **475 students**, plans fell into place and we did just that. It’s a remarkable accomplishment, and I’m proud of everyone who had a hand in it.”

In addition to surpassing the freshman class size goal, the College also reached its target of **1,200 total students** one year ahead of schedule.

YHC hosted five START Orientation sessions this summer that were attended by more than 1,000 new students and family members.



## YHC Expands Academic Offerings

This fall, YHC added three new bachelor’s degree programs in creative writing, environmental science, and interdisciplinary studies (IDS) that will prepare students for a variety of careers. The College also established three minors: art, popular culture and sport studies.

The bachelor of arts in creative writing provides innovative instruction in the theory and practice of writing poetry and prose. Students develop their voices and follow their literary ambitions under the guidance and mentorship of published authors.

The bachelor of science in environmental science prepares students who want to better meet the global problems associated with climate change, use of natural resources, and protection of the environment. Coursework takes students outside the classroom into natural laboratories that exist in local lakes, rivers, forests and fields surrounding campus.

The IDS degree allows students to independently invent their own programs of study with guidance from advisors or choose from several predefined programs that build on some of YHC’s most popular majors. Potential pathways include biomedical ethics, comparative literature and culture, education and management studies, gender and society, health administration, health communication and ethics, and human rights and diversity.



**TOP** Creative Writing Coordinator Chelsea Rathburn led a classroom discussion.

**BOTTOM** Dean of the Division of Mathematics and Science Dr. Linda Jones helped Genesis Newton, of Orlando, Fla., collect water samples near Cupid Falls.



## CHRIS CRAWFORD LEADS Division of Fine Arts

Chris Crawford has been named dean of YHC’s Division of Fine Arts. He also serves as chair of the Theatre Department, co-coordinator of the musical theatre program and assistant professor of theatre.

Crawford earned his M.F.A. in lighting design and theatre technology from Indiana University.

His design work has been seen in theatres across the Southeast including Theatrical Outfit, Theatre in the Square, Actor’s Express, True Colors Theatre, and dozens of fundraisers, festivals, and corporate and private events.

“The amount of dedication to the art, love of the theatre, personal character and perseverance required to succeed in the world of professional theatre is staggering,” said Crawford. “What amazes me most is that our students always resolve to succeed and then do so.”

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES WELCOMES Two Distinguished Alumni



**Bill Easterlin, '75**, has served as president and chief executive officer of Queensborough National Bank and Trust Company in Louisville, Ga., since 1995. He previously served as a vice president at First National Bank and Trust and a corporate loan officer and assistant vice president at Bank of America.

Easterlin has served as a trustee of the Georgia Bar Foundation since 2005 and director of Federal Home Loan Bank of Atlanta since 2008. He also served two terms as director at both the Georgia Bankers' Association and Community Bankers' Association. At YHC, he serves on the endowment and finance trustee committees.

After graduating from YHC, he earned a finance degree from the University of Virginia and a master of business administration from Emory University. He resides in Louisville, Ga., with his wife, Tish. His son, Frank, is a sophomore English major at YHC.



**Marlan Wilbanks, '81**, is a founding partner of the Atlanta-based law firm Wilbanks & Bridges, LLP. He previously worked with the firm Harmon, Smith, Bridges & Wilbanks after his graduation from the University of Georgia School of Law in 1986.

Wilbanks is involved in children's causes such as Prevent Child Abuse and was active in the Big Brothers Big Sisters of

America program for more than a decade. He is a member of Northside United Methodist Church and various community service organizations. As a YHC trustee, he serves on the academic affairs, athletics and student development committees.

Wilbanks resides in Atlanta with his wife, Diane. They have two daughters.

## Influential YHC Leaders Recognized

YHC trustee **René Diaz** and his wife, Barbarella, were featured on the cover of *Simply Buckhead* magazine's May 2014 issue for a cover story titled "Buckhead Power Couples." The article highlighted their family history and community involvement in the metro Atlanta area while running Diaz Foods, one of the nation's largest Hispanic food distributors.

Emory University's Candler School of Theology celebrated its 100th anniversary by awarding 56 Centennial Medallions that honor extraordinary service to the school, church and society over the past century. Recipients included YHC trustee and alumni **Rev. Dr. Don Harp, Jr., '61**, trustee emeritus **Bishop L. Bevel Jones III**, and ex-officio trustee **Bishop B. Michael Watson**, as well as generous benefactors of both the Candler School and YHC, the late **Margaret Pitts** and **O. Wayne and Grace Crum Rollins**.

YHC trustee and alumni **Jimmy Tallent, '70**, was featured on the cover of *American Banker* magazine's Sept. 2014 issue. The story, titled "Back from the Brink," chronicles his time "leading an impressive comeback" at United Community Banks, Inc., as the company's president and CEO.

YHC emeritus trustee and attorney **Jones Webb** was honored with the Salvation Army's William Booth Award and its Lifetime Membership during the "Doing the Most Good" luncheon at the Salvation Army of Gwinnett County where he's been a dedicated board member. Only four other Georgians have ever received this honor—the Salvation Army's highest award for distinguished service.

YHC trustee and alumni **Marlan Wilbanks, '81**, was named Taxpayers Against Fraud's (TAF) Lawyer of the Year for helping to recover over a billion dollars back to American taxpayers. He was recently recognized for the achievement during the 14th Annual TAF Education Fund Awards Dinner held in Washington, D.C.

## YHC HONORED AS Leader in Higher Education Marketing

YHC recently received several national and regional annual marketing awards for materials that vividly tell the College's story to prospective students, parents, and other audiences. The College received the **Silver Award** for the national Communicator Awards in both the parents' piece and outcomes brochure categories. The parents' piece also won the **Award of Excellence** in the Printing Association of Georgia's annual competition, as well as **Best of Category** honors for the viewbook. The College also earned the **Bronze Award** for billboards in the Higher Education Marketing Report's 29th annual Educational Advertising Awards, as well as the **Merit Award** for the senior search piece.



Outcomes Brochure



Parents' Piece



Viewbook



Senior Search Piece



Billboard



# New Rollins Campus Center Opens at YHC



On Oct. 1, YHC officially opened the new \$41 million, 121,000-square-foot Rollins Campus Center, the largest building ever constructed at the College which is designed to catapult the student experience into the 21st century.

Students, faculty and staff flocked to The Morning Paws, a new campus-wide coffee break each Wednesday morning that fosters a sense of community at YHC, before checking out every inch of the new center.

"I feel lucky that I have the next four years to explore and take advantage of this amazing building," said freshman mathematics major Garrett Nix, of Blairsville. "I know that my experience at YHC is going to be even better than I had imagined after seeing the center."

In April 2013, YHC broke ground on the Rollins Campus Center—the centerpiece of the College's master plan and the focal point of the *Investing in the Future* Capital Campaign. In March 2012, the College announced a \$22 million gift from the Atlanta-based O. Wayne Rollins Foundation that served as the lead gift for this new facility.

"We are thrilled that the new social and intellectual heart of campus is now open," said YHC President Cathy Cox. "We are grateful to the Rollins family for their unwavering support and generous gift that has made this building possible. Our students, faculty, staff and alumni will treasure this facility for years to come."

The 40,000-square-foot library is named for former U.S. Senator and Georgia Governor Zell Miller, '51, and his wife, Shirley, '54. The state-of-the-art facility features permanent and special collections, study rooms, reading carrels, computer stations, and a 24-hour study area.

The new Grace Rollins Dining Hall offers flexible food options with healthy, customized made-to-order meals plus grab-and-go options. The 500-plus seat space includes multiple platform grills, a salad station and dessert bar.

The elegant 350-seat Charles Edwin Suber

Banquet Hall enables the College to host large group gatherings, guest lectures and workshops. The space features a sound system, retractable screen, and portable stage, and will be available for rental.

Additional highlights of the facility include space for student activities and services in the third-floor Mary Ripley Warren Student Organization Loft, a multimedia theatre with stadium seating, a Chick-fil-A® Express, a Starbucks coffee shop, and a game room with a pool table, foosball table, big-screen televisions, and gaming consoles.

"We now have the perfect meeting place for residents and commuters to interact with each other, which is a big step for improving our growing community," said sophomore business and public policy major and Student Government Association (SGA) President Espen Myklebust, of Asker, Norway, who was excited to tour the new SGA chambers and offices in the building. "This will definitely be the most used building on campus."

The center optimizes the surrounding mountain views and maximizes outdoor space with numerous expansive porches that create a relaxing space for students to socialize and study.

The facility boasts many sustainable features, including the use of geothermal wells, and is expected to earn Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver certification.

**BELOW** The Zell and Shirley Miller Library features study space with impressive views. ■ Grace Rollins Dining Hall offers flexible food options. ■ Students frequent the game room located next to Chick-fil-A Express. ■ The Morning Paws, a new campus-wide coffee break each Wednesday, fosters a sense of community.







**TOP** Commencement speaker Trisha Yearwood, '84, mingled with several students prior to the ceremony including Lauren Chamblin, of Cumming, Brian Walker, of Powder Springs, Will Skelton, of Hayesville, N.C., and Emily Espy, of Cumming. **BOTTOM** The Recreation and Fitness Center arena floor was filled during the ceremony.



*"The one thing I would say is to be happy. If you find something you love to do, you'll be happy. Whatever that is inside of you, don't be afraid. Don't settle."* Young Harris College alumna and Grammy and Emmy Award-winning singer and author Trisha Yearwood, '84, shared these heartfelt and inspirational words with 167 graduates during the Commencement ceremony on May 10 in the Recreation and Fitness Center.

"When you're very young, you have the opportunity to go out and try anything. Do it now," continued Yearwood. "That thing you want to do, go do it. If you're happy in your life, you're going to attract happiness into your life."

One of the highest-selling female artists in country music history, Yearwood broke onto the Nashville music scene in 1991. She has recorded 12 albums and has had nine No. 1 songs and 20 top 10 hits. She has won three Grammy Awards, three Country Music Association Awards, two Academy of Country Music Awards, an American Music Award and a Pollstar Industry Award for touring.

Yearwood has also released three successful cookbooks, which earned her the status of two-time New York Times bestselling author. She currently hosts "Trisha's Southern Kitchen," a culinary series on Food Network that earned her an Emmy Award for "Outstanding Culinary Program."



#### CLOCKWISE FROM TOP

**LEFT** President Cathy Cox presented Trisha Yearwood, '84, with an honorary doctor of music after her speech. ■ Yearwood posed for photos with several graduates prior to the ceremony, including these communication studies majors. ■ Yearwood smiled with her sister, fellow YHC alumna Beth Yearwood Bernard, '81. ■ Yearwood's longtime friends and fellow 1984 alumni, dubbed the "Suches Seven," were on hand for the occasion. ■ Yearwood addressed the graduates.

## CAPTURING THE MOMENT

YHC graduates and students were excited to snap photos with Trisha Yearwood, '84, while she visited campus during the Commencement festivities.



So happy my grandmother and I could meet Trisha Yearwood! It was amazing to get three generations of Susan Bs in one picture. I pray my future can halfway compare to the lives and successes of these two women. **Grace Williamson, History, Athens**



I got to meet Grammy and Emmy Award-winning country music artist Trisha Yearwood. Her message to graduates to "be happy" was sweet and genuine. I'm so proud that she is a YHC graduate and that I had the pleasure of meeting her. **Wade Orr, Business and Public Policy, Bishop**



Here's Trisha Yearwood and I after the graduation ceremony. Her message for the graduating class was to seek happiness in all things. What an honor to have her with us! **Breann Lindsey, Outdoor Leadership, Lindale**



## VESPERS AND BACCALAUREATE SERVICES CELEBRATE YHC'S SPIRITUAL HERITAGE

Graduates gathered at the top of Brasstown Bald for the annual Vespers Service on May 8. Many students participated in the seven-mile hike up Bald Mountain before joining others to share in a meal catered by Jim 'n Nick's Bar-B-Q. Following a sermon by Dean of the Chapel and Minister to the College Rev. Dr. Tim Moore, titled "Encounter," graduates released environmentally friendly balloons into the clear sky over the Enchanted Valley.

On the eve of the Commencement ceremony, more than 130 seniors gathered to share in worship during the annual Baccalaureate Service. Rev. Dr. Teresa L. Fry Brown, who serves as historiographer and executive director of research and scholarship for the African Methodist Episcopal Church as well as professor of homiletics at the Candler School of Theology and director of black church studies at Emory University, delivered an inspirational message to the students. The ceremony also included a special senior class prayer, the ceremonial presentation of purple stoles to the graduates by mentors and the distribution of a Bible to each senior as a reminder of the College's spiritual heritage.



**TOP** President Cathy Cox presented Richard and Shirley McGinnis with the Young Harris College Medallion—the highest award bestowed by the College. **LEFT** Students beamed at family and friends as they processed into the ceremony.

While at YHC, Yearwood participated in musical ensembles, chorus, plays and operettas. She and her sister, fellow alumna Beth Yearwood Bernard, '81, of Tifton, who attended the ceremony, were both members of the Dorcas Society and each served as president of the Sigma Beta Sigma sorority.

"I made the best friends of my life at YHC. We have stayed connected to Young Harris; we haven't always been on the campus, but we have gotten together almost once a year since we graduated," Yearwood said. "There's a bond, and it's really hard to describe. People ask, 'What is so special about Young Harris?' It's the people who are here."

Yearwood mingled with many students before and after the big event, snapping photos and chatting about her days at YHC. During her speech, Yearwood referenced many memories with her group of longtime friends and fellow alumni, dubbed the "Suches Seven," who were on hand to cheer her on as she received an honorary doctor of music from President Cathy Cox.

The Young Harris College Medallion, the highest honor bestowed by YHC to alumni and friends who have made extraordinary contributions, was awarded to Richard and Shirley McGinnis, of Johns Creek. Richard joined YHC's Board of Trustees in 2004, and the couple has enhanced campus programming and student experiences for more than a decade by supporting the College in many ways. They recently expressed their enthusiasm for the fine arts with a \$4 million gift that is serving as seed money for the development and design of a new performing arts center.

President Cox presented the Algernon Sydney Sullivan Award to David Atwood of Waynesville, N.C., and the Mary Mildred Sullivan Award to Alyssa Lowery, of Conyers. Created nearly a century ago to honor the service leadership of their

**TOP** Graduating seniors released environmentally friendly balloons containing seeds during the Vespers Ceremony atop Brasstown Bald. **BOTTOM** Music education graduates Timothy Linley, of Cartersville, and Jeremiah Kersting, of Sugar Hill, received their stoles from Senior Instructor of Music and Director of Bands Mary Land during the Baccalaureate Service.





## COMMENCEMENT BY THE NUMBERS

**167** graduates

**63** Bachelor of Arts graduates  
(art, communication studies, English, history, music, musical theatre, theatre)

**8** Bachelor of Music Education graduates

**98** Bachelor of Science graduates  
(biology, business and public policy, education, mathematics, outdoor leadership, psychology)

**15** Honor's Program graduates

**16** students who graduated Summa Cum Laude



namesakes, the awards are given annually by the Algernon Sydney Sullivan Foundation to individuals whose nobility of character and dedication to service sets them apart as examples for others.

The Dr. Charles R. Clegg Outstanding Scholar Award, which recognizes graduating seniors with the overall highest grade point average, was presented to Sara Beaster, of Murphy, N.C., Tiffany Goebel, of Murphy, N.C., Mark "Aaron" O'Tuel, of Hartwell, Sarah Puett, of Warne, N.C., Jacqueline Tallman, of Hayesville, N.C., and Jeffrey Stewart, of Young Harris—all of whom achieved a perfect 4.0 GPA.

Ashley Cross, of Murphy, N.C., and Emily Espy, of Cumming, were presented with the Zell B. Miller Leadership Award for significant contributions to campus life at YHC as outstanding leaders and role models. Brian Walker, of Powder Springs, and Carol Raterman, of Lawrenceville, received the Young Harris Spirit Award for demonstrating personal integrity, friendliness, and engagement with the campus community.

After walking across the stage and turning their tassels, the Class of 2014 recessed through a line of faculty members who greeted and applauded them. The graduates headed outside into the sunshine to receive further congratulations from family and friends while reflecting on a memorable start to bright futures. ■

### CLOCKWISE FROM TOP

Graduates gathered outside for a group photo prior to the ceremony. ■ President Cathy Cox presented the Young

Harris Spirit Award to Carol Raterman, of Lawrenceville.

■ Representatives from the Class of 1964 marched with the graduates in recognition of the 50th anniversary of their own YHC graduation. ■ Zell B. Miller Leadership Award recipient Emily Espy, of Cumming, (center) chatted with YHC alumni Shirley Miller, '54, and former U.S. Senator and Georgia Governor Zell Miller, '51.

View more photos of the Commencement festivities @ [flickr.com/youngharriscollege](https://www.flickr.com/photos/youngharriscollege/).

Find out more about the Class of 2014 @ [yhc.edu/seniors](http://yhc.edu/seniors).

Watch highlights from the ceremony.





# A NEW ERA

# FOR ATHLETICS



BY KRYSTIN DEAN

WITH ADDITIONAL REPORTING BY MICHAEL MACEACHERN AND JENNIFER STEARSMAN

It all started on June 1, 2011. The campus was quiet as Young Harris College administrators gathered to give the final blessing to a document that would change the history of Mountain Lions athletics: the application for National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division II membership.

Five weeks later, the call came in. President Cathy Cox and Director of Athletics Randy Dunn were notified that YHC had officially been accepted as a candidate for membership, triggering a three-year process that included teamwork, triumphs, and some trying moments in between.

Like most good sport stories, this one ends—or rather begins—in victory. Instead of a buzzer in the last second of a big game, the sound of a phone ringing on July 10, 2014, is what signaled the win. We were in. YHC was a full-fledged member of Division II.

“That was truly a special day for YHC,” said President Cox. “Our entire campus community has worked extremely hard over the past several years to make this goal a reality.”

The acceptance process is set up to prepare colleges and universities for success. It includes probationary and provisional periods when the institution functions like a NCAA member—from completion of all necessary paperwork, to compliance with all rules and regulations, to following recruiting and scheduling guidelines.

“The process is very detailed and specific,” said Dunn. “The membership committee wants to ensure that the schools coming in as new members have everything in place. Getting all of the pieces together was truly a team effort by the College administration, coaches and student-athletes.”

According to Associate Director of Athletics for Compliance and Senior Women’s Administrator Jennifer Stearsman,

the NCAA emphasized early on that YHC’s Athletics Department wasn’t moving to Division II—the entire College was. “You had to show that your institution is in control of every aspect that happens in athletics,” she explained.

This means nearly every area of campus helped make the transition possible like admissions, academic advising, financial aid, the business office, and the registrar, just to name a few. “It’s been a shared responsibility,” noted Dunn, “which leads to better oversight.”

The membership process includes opportunities for education, assessment, and growth as institutions integrate the Division II philosophy, strategic positioning platform, and best practices.

“We had plenty of time to embrace the way the division’s structured, and we all felt



very prepared for the NCAA,” said Women’s Soccer Head Coach and Assistant Director of Athletics for Community Engagement Kathy Brown. “I love being part of the Peach Belt Conference (PBC) and can’t wait to climb to the top.”

The Mountain Lions began their third season as members of the prestigious PBC this fall with one major difference—they are now eligible for all NCAA postseason competition as well as all PBC postseason tournaments.

“We’re excited that YHC successfully completed the membership process,” said PBC Commissioner David Brunk. “YHC should become the benchmark for any institution moving into the NCAA ranks. Their dedication to meeting and surpassing every standard has been nothing short of inspirational. They are beginning their journey in NCAA with every piece in place to allow them to be competitive on the field and leaders in the division.”

YHC was one of eight institutions granted active membership in 2014, bringing the number of institutions in the division up to 300 strong. Each one strives to give student-athletes the opportunity to compete at a high level of scholarship athletics while excelling in the classroom and fully engaging in the broader campus experience.

According to student-athletes like cross country runner Nicole Smith, a junior from Ball Ground, Division II is the perfect place for YHC. “It’s the right mix of being able to concentrate on academics, compete in your sport and enjoy college life,” she said.

The Division II motto that promotes “Life in the Balance”—an equal emphasis on athletics and academics—is a big draw for YHC’s student-athletes. While they are high achievers in the classroom, they are still fierce competitors when game time rolls around.

For many upperclassmen like Kaycee Cash, a senior basketball player from Woodstock, knowing the College would eventually be a Division II institution “played a huge role” in choosing to attend YHC. She echoed the sentiment of nearly every student-athlete that the most thrilling part of membership is getting a shot at a national championship.

“I’m really excited for the underclassmen that get to start and end at this level of competition,” said Cash. “It’s a special opportunity that shouldn’t be taken for granted. That’s definitely something we’ve all learned over these last three years.”

## TRANSITION TIMELINE

Here are some of the highlights that defined the three-year process to becoming a member of the NCAA’s Division II.

### YEAR ONE

**JUNE 1, 2011:** YHC formally submits an application for NCAA Division II membership.

**JULY 12, 2011:** YHC is officially accepted as a candidate for membership in the NCAA at the Division II level.



**SEPT. 13, 2011:** Men’s soccer becomes the first sport to be ranked regionally since the Mountain Lions began competing at the four-year level. The National Soccer Coaches Association of America’s (NSCAA) NCAA Division II Southeast Region poll lists the team at No. 8, bumping up to No. 6 later that month.

**OCT. 3-4, 2011:** An outside vendor hired by the NCAA visits campus to evaluate the compliance systems and staffing as a requirement of Candidacy Year One.

**DEC. 1, 2011:** Goalie Wezly Barnard, ’13, of Boksburg, South Africa, is named to the Capital One NCAA Division II Academic All-America® Men’s Soccer Third Team. He is the first Mountain Lion to achieve this national honor.



**JAN. 9, 2012:** YHC is accepted as the 14th member of the PBC, with play slated to begin during the 2012-2013 season.



**FEB. 2, 2012:** Basketball standout Frank Adams, ’13, of Stone Mountain, becomes the first 1,000-point scorer in the modern era and is named to the Georgia Basketball Coaches Association’s NCAA Division II All-State First Team.



**FEB. 24, 2012:** The men’s and women’s basketball teams finish with impressive winning seasons (22-4 and 23-3, respectively) in only their second year of competition.



**JUNE 1, 2012:** YHC submits the annual report and institutional self-study guide required for completion of Candidacy Year One.

**JULY 10, 2012:** YHC receives notification from the NCAA that Candidacy Year One has been successfully completed, and Candidacy Year Two officially begins.



### YEAR TWO



**AUG. 1, 2012:** YHC begins its first year of play as a member of the PBC.

**AUG. 10-12, 2012:** YHC’s competitive cheerleading team makes its debut as an intercollegiate athletic program at the National Cheerleading Association (NCA) Cheerleading Camp. They take second place in two competitions and earn a Bronze Bid to the NCA Collegiate Cheer and Dance Championship.



**OCT. 20, 2012:** Cross country runner Nicole Smith, of Ball Ground, is selected as one of the PBC’s

Co-Runners of the Year and is the first student-athlete recognized as the conference’s Player of the Year.

# PLAYING IN THE PEACH BELT

This fall marked YHC's third season spent competing in the Peach Belt Conference after joining as the 14th member in Jan. 2012. The PBC has cemented its status as one of the elite NCAA Division II conferences in the nation since forming in 1990.

"Becoming PBC members was a big step for us," said Director of Athletics Randy Dunn. "This premier conference was the best fit for the College. It's given us a chance to play in cities like Savannah, Augusta and Atlanta where we are recruiting."

Starting with only two championships in men's and women's basketball, the conference has expanded to 15 sports—all of which YHC plays except volleyball and track and field. The only sports YHC offers that aren't in the PBC are its two newest additions, competitive cheerleading and lacrosse.

It took less than a year for the PBC to capture its first national championship since forming nearly 25 years ago. It's developed a consistent history of excellence that continues to this day with 33 national championships and 28 finalists.

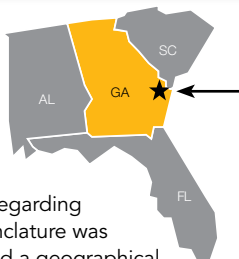
## ARMSTRONG STATE UNIVERSITY

**LOCATION:** Savannah

**ESTABLISHED:** 1935

**MASCOT:** Pirate

The school officially changed its name in 2014, dropping "Atlantic" to help minimize confusion regarding the school's location. Ironically, the watery nomenclature was added in 1996 because officials thought it needed a geographical identifier. The Lady Pirates have won an NCAA-best eight women's tennis national titles, tied with Lander for most by a PBC program.



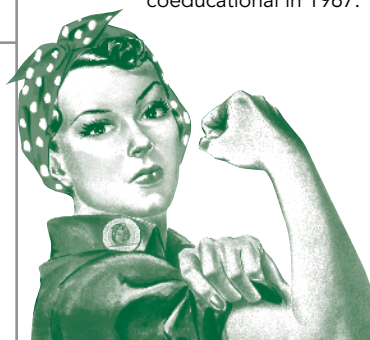
## GEORGIA COLLEGE

**LOCATION:** Milledgeville

**ESTABLISHED:** 1889

**MASCOT:** Thunder the Bobcat

It was chartered as Georgia Normal Industrial College with an emphasis on preparing young women for teaching and industrial work. It became coeducational in 1967.



## GEORGIA REGENTS UNIVERSITY AUGUSTA

**LOCATION:** Augusta

**ESTABLISHED:** 1828

**MASCOT:** Jaguar

This school merged Augusta State University and Georgia Health Sciences University in 2012. In addition to nine colleges, the university includes the Georgia Regents Medical Center, Children's Hospital of Georgia, outpatient clinics, a wellness center and medical education library.



## CLAYTON STATE UNIVERSITY

**LOCATION:** Morrow

**ESTABLISHED:** 1958

**MASCOT:** Loch

Clayton State is the only university in the U.S. adjacent to both state and national archives facilities. The Georgia Archives and the National Archives at Atlanta represent the first such model in the nation to combine these, providing centralized resources for researchers.

## COLUMBUS STATE UNIVERSITY

**LOCATION:** Columbus

**ESTABLISHED:** 1958

**MASCOT:** Cody Cougar

The school operates the Coca-Cola Space Science Center that presents student and public programming. The state-of-the-art facility houses the Challenger Learning Center, Omnisphere Theater and Mead Observatory. Students can also take classes at nearby Fort Benning.



## GEORGIA SOUTHWESTERN STATE UNIVERSITY

**LOCATION:** Americus

**ESTABLISHED:** 1906

**MASCOT:** Surge

Notable alumni include U.S. President Jimmy Carter and his wife, Rosalynn, who serves as president of the board of directors for the Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregiving.



## FLAGLER COLLEGE

**LOCATION:** St. Augustine, Fla.

**ESTABLISHED:** 1969

**MASCOT:** Lion

The school's centerpiece is Ponce de León Hotel that was built in 1888 as a luxury hotel. It features 79 Tiffany stained-glass windows, the world's largest collection in their original location. Famous guests include three U.S. Presidents, Will Rogers and Gary Cooper.

## LANDER UNIVERSITY

**LOCATION:** Greenwood, S.C.

**ESTABLISHED:** 1872

**MASCOT:** Bearcat

The state's second-smallest publicly funded baccalaureate institution, Lander's men's tennis team won eight consecutive NCAA Division II national championships from 1993 through 2000—tied with Armstrong for the most in the PBC.



## UNIVERSITY OF MONTEVALLO

**LOCATION:** Montevallo, Ala.

**ESTABLISHED:** 1896

**MASCOT:** Falcons

The oldest tradition here is called College Night, an intramural competition between the Purple Side and Gold Side that began in 1919. The Homecoming competition includes sport and spirit events, but the main focus is the two student-written, produced, and performed musicals.



## FRANCIS MARION UNIVERSITY

**LOCATION:** Florence, S.C.

**ESTABLISHED:** 1970

**MASCOT:** Patriot

It's named after the Revolutionary War hero General Francis Marion, who was nicknamed the "Swamp Fox" for using the South Carolina terrain to outfox the British.







## UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT PEMBROKE

**LOCATION:** Pembroke, N.C.

**ESTABLISHED:** 1887

**MASCOT:** Red-tailed hawk

Founded as the Croatan Normal School to educate American Indian teachers, UNC at Pembroke has been nicknamed the Braves since 1946 with the red-tailed hawk mascot added in 1992. The university has been named to several "military-friendly" lists and was the only public regional university to make the *U.S. News & World Report* list of "Best Colleges for Veterans."



PHOTO BY GREG HUME

## UNIVERSITY OF NORTH GEORGIA

**LOCATION:** Dahlonega

**ESTABLISHED:** 1873

**MASCOT:** Nighthawks

The result of a merger between North Georgia College & State University and Gainesville State College in 2013, the campus in Dahlonega has many long-standing traditions from bugle calls every day at 7 a.m., 5 p.m. and midnight, to several places students cannot walk—the Drill Field, the area around the Memorial Wall, and the Retreat Triangle that holds a cannon that's been fired daily for more than 50 years.



## UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA AIKEN

**LOCATION:** Aiken, S.C.

**ESTABLISHED:** 1961

**MASCOT:** Pacers

USC Aiken student-athletes adopted the Pacers as their mascot, named for their well-known status as an equestrian community. They have ranked in the top three public colleges in the South by *U.S. News & World Report's* "America's Best Colleges" for nearly two decades straight—including No. 1 for 2015. They were the second program in Division II history to win three straight national titles.



**OCT. 30, 2012:** The Mountain Lions secure another first—a PBC tournament game held on the YHC campus. The men's

soccer team defeats the University of North Carolina (UNC) at Pembroke, 2-1, marking the first tournament victory in YHC history.

**NOV. 2, 2012:**

YHC racks up awards at the PBC's soccer banquet. Niall McCabe, '14, of Dublin, Ireland, is named to the PBC All-Conference First Team, while Ilija Ilic, of Belgrade, Serbia, and Lewis Hilton, of Newquay, England, are Second Team picks. McCabe receives the Golden Ball Award as top goal scorer, and Hilton is named Freshman of the Year. Wezly Barnard, '13, earns the PBC Elite 15 Award.



**NOV. 16, 2012:** The men's soccer team earns the NSCAA's Team Academic Award presented to the squad with the highest GPA in the country, thanks to their cumulative 3.21 GPA.



**JAN. 12, 2013:**

Forward Ladondra Johnson, '14, of Athens, becomes the first women's basketball team member to score 1,000 points. She also leads the PBC in scoring and field goal percentage.

**FEB. 8-9, 2013:**

The men's and women's lacrosse teams debut in their first matches. The men's team trounces Point University, 23-2.



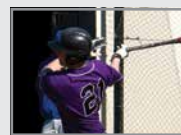
**MARCH 7, 2013:**

The Purple Reign pep band wins the PBC annual Spirit Competition, taking the title from three-time defending champions UNC at Pembroke.



**MAY 29, 2013:**

Outfielder Zach Bricknell, '13, of Woodstock, is named to



the American Baseball Coaches Association/Rawlings NCAA Division II All-America First Team—a first for the College in any sport.

**MAY 30, 2013:**

Outfielder David Atwood, '14, of Waynesville, N.C., is the College's first-ever student-athlete named to the NCAA Division II Academic All-America® First Team.



**JUNE 1, 2013:** YHC submits the annual report required for completion of Candidacy Year Two.

**JULY 11, 2013:** YHC sees 155 student-athletes named to the PBC Presidential Honor Roll, with 42 Gold Scholars—more than any other PBC institution.

**JULY 12, 2013:** YHC receives notification from the NCAA that Candidacy Year Two has been successfully completed, and Candidacy Year Three with provisional membership officially begins.

## YEAR THREE

**OCT. 26, 2013:**

The men's soccer team defeats UNC at Pembroke, 5-2, to clinch the PBC Championship—the first regular season PBC title in the College's history.



**NOV. 5, 2013:** The men's soccer team earns a No. 1 ranking in the NSCAA's NCAA Division II Top 25 national poll. They cracked the list for the first time earlier that season on Sept. 23, achieving the first-ever national ranking for the Mountain Lions.

## COACHES CORNER

The entire campus community can't wait to see YHC compete in NCAA Division II athletics for years to come—especially the coaches who worked tirelessly to make it all possible. Here's their take on making the move to the NCAA and PBC.

### **BARRY BROWN | MEN'S AND WOMEN'S CROSS COUNTRY**

**What's been the biggest challenge transitioning to Division II?**

"Although it's been a great challenge athletically, all the coaches are excited about the higher level of competition. We are competitors and know that if you don't show up to compete on any given day, you will not win. Yes, the NCAA will be a challenge, but certainly one we are all ready for."



### **KATHY BROWN | WOMEN'S SOCCER**

**How will YHC benefit from being a NCAA member?**

"NCAA status helps attract a very competitive level of student-athletes across the board. The games, matches, meets, and tournaments will become much more exciting both for the student-athletes to compete in and for the campus community to enjoy watching. Being a NCAA member also has benefits that people sometimes don't think about. For most of our student-athletes, their athletic careers end in four years and life begins. The NCAA opens doors for opportunities like postgraduate scholarships, internships and careers."



### **CHASE CARTER | COMPETITIVE CHEERLEADING**

**How would you describe the Division II dynamic and what it means for our fans?**

"Division II is a very exciting environment for all of our athletic teams. Now that we are competing for postseason titles, the fans have even more to be excited about. We cannot wait to cheer on the other sports in all of their successes, as well as compete for our own."



### **BARRETT ELKINS | MEN'S TENNIS**

**How does the PBC stack up against other Division II conferences?**

"It's the strongest conference in the country. Last year, 10 PBC men's tennis teams ended the season ranked in the top 35 teams nationally. We look forward to moving our way up the PBC standings and competing for a national championship."



### **PETE HERRMANN | MEN'S BASKETBALL**

**What's the level of competition like in the PBC?**

"This is one of the highest-ranking leagues in the country in basketball. They consistently get three or four schools into the NCAA tournament each year. The conference is as competitive as you could ask for as a Division II student-athlete."



### **TRAVIS HUFFMAN | BASEBALL**

**How will YHC benefit from being a PBC member?**

"The PBC is the most recognizable and competitive conference in Division II. Being part of such a great conference brings instant credibility to our athletic programs during the recruitment of student-athletes. Playing against this level of competition prepares programs to face opponents not only in our conference, but also at the national level."



### **KATIE ILOTT | WOMEN'S LACROSSE**

**How do student-athletes benefit from being in Division II?**

"It's the opportunity to have 'Life in the Balance.' They're able to compete in their respective sport at a high level, while achieving great success in the classroom. Now that we are in Division II, the student-athletes are eligible for postgraduate scholarships and conferences that will help their future careers."



### **CALEB KELLEY, '13 | MEN'S AND WOMEN'S GOLF**

**What was it like experiencing the move to NCAA and PBC athletics both as a student-athlete and coach?**

"The transition has been vigorous. As a player, you had to remain driven knowing there wasn't a chance of making it to postseason play or end-of-season awards. As a coach, you had to keep the team motivated with this same outlook. It's a testament to our teams that we all played hard, knowing we were working toward those championship opportunities. It was also an adjustment learning all the new rules and regulations of the NCAA, but that became easier with each year of the candidacy process."



### **MARK MCKEEVER | MEN'S SOCCER**

**Who is YHC's biggest rival in the PBC?**

"Armstrong State University won their second consecutive PBC Commissioner's Cup last season, so I think they are setting the standard right now. On the other hand, all our sports are becoming increasingly successful and I hope we can challenge them in the near future."



### **AILEEN MORALES | SOFTBALL**

**What sets Division II apart?**

"It allows for the true student-athlete to grow and flourish. It gives them a real opportunity to succeed in the classroom and their respective sport. This ultimately produces more well-rounded and balanced individuals upon graduation. In Division II, they are never just athletes—they are students first."



### **CAMMIE NIX | WOMEN'S TENNIS**

**What's the biggest challenge moving forward as a Division II program?**

"It's competing against Division I programs in regards to recruiting. The level of play is very high. In order to be competitive, we need to recruit elite players who will likely also be getting recruited by Division I programs. We will have to be able to explain to these top recruits what sets YHC and our programs apart and why they should choose us."



### **BRENDA PAUL | WOMEN'S BASKETBALL**

**How does YHC stack up in the PBC and on a national scale?**

"When you think about success in the NCAA's Division II, you think about the PBC. The PBC is the best of the best. I see YHC as the Division II equivalent to Division I Davidson College—a small liberal arts school with a strong academic reputation competing against state colleges and universities with success that's a result of support from the administration, alumni, faculty and staff, student body, and community."



### **KIRK ROGERS | MEN'S LACROSSE**

**How does being in Division II affect recruiting?**

"The basic principles remain the same: We still recruit the best players that are the best fit for YHC. The perception from recruits toward us is different though. The NCAA is a widely known and well-respected 'brand name,' bringing legitimacy to what we're selling. The NCAA also requires us to follow a bunch of new recruiting rules. Division I has a heavy focus on athletics, and Division III has a strong focus on academics. The Division II motto is 'Life in the Balance,' meaning we strive to make academics and athletics equally important. This makes for a better overall college experience and appeals to recruits."





# A BREAKDOWN OF NCAA DIVISION II

- Division II schools are located in **44 states**. The division also has one Canadian member and three schools located in Puerto Rico.
- Division II offers a **"partial-scholarship"** model for financial aid in which most student-athletes' college experiences are funded through a mix of athletics scholarships, academic aid, need-based grants and/or employment earnings.
- Division II features a **high championship-participant ratio**—one championship opportunity for every 7.54 student-athletes, which is the highest among all three NCAA divisions. There's also an emphasis on regional competition in order to reduce missed class time.
- Division II is the only NCAA division that conducts **"National Championships Festivals,"** an Olympic-style event in which a number of national championships are held at a single site over several days. Future festivals include a spring event in Denver, Colo., in 2016 and winter competition in Birmingham, Ala., in 2017.
- Division II student-athletes get their share of **television exposure**. CBS Sports Network has aired more than 60 games featuring more than 100 institutions in a regular-season national television broadcast. In addition, almost all championship finals are either broadcast live or streamed online.
- Student-athletes generally comprise a **high percentage of the student body** at Division II schools, which shows that athletics is an important component of the learning experience at these institutions.
- The Division II's **"Life in the Balance"** approach provides growth opportunities through academic achievement and learning in high-level athletics competition. The integration of these areas provides student-athletes with a path to graduation while cultivating a variety of skills and knowledge for life after college.
- The Division II Student-Athlete Advisory Committee initiated a fundraising campaign with the **Make-A-Wish® Foundation** and has partnered with the program for more than a decade.

**NOV. 8, 2013:** The PBC honors Men's Soccer Head Coach Mark McKeever as Coach of the Year, Ilija Ilic as Player of the Year and Paco Craig, of London, England, as Freshman of the Year. YHC becomes only the third team in PBC history to sweep these three categories.



Southwestern State University, 84-77.

**JAN. 9-10, 2014:** NCAA vendor The Compliance Group completes a Compliance Blueprint Review of YHC as part of Candidacy Year Three requirements.

**JAN. 25, 2014:**

Women's Basketball Head Coach Brenda Paul wins her 500th game as the Mountain Lions take a 59-45 win over Georgia College.



**FEB. 4, 2014:** The women's basketball team moves into first place in the PBC with a 78-74 win over No. 20-ranked University of North Georgia.

**MARCH 1, 2014:**

Ladondra Johnson, '14, becomes the Mountain Lions' all-time leading basketball scorer, male or female, with 1,598 points.



**MARCH 8, 2014:** The Purple Reign pep band wins the PBC Spirit Competition for the second year in a row.



**JUNE 1, 2014:** YHC submits the annual report required for completion of Candidacy Year Three.

**JUNE 19, 2014:** YHC sees 157 student-athletes named to the PBC Presidential Honor Roll, with 50 Gold Scholars—more than any other PBC institution for the second year in a row.



**JULY 10, 2014:** YHC receives notification from the NCAA that it has successfully completed the NCAA membership process and will begin competing as a full-fledged member during the 2014-2015 season.



**50/50**

Split between public and private institution members

**5**

Years between NCAA recertification periods

**24**

Active conferences

**4,209**

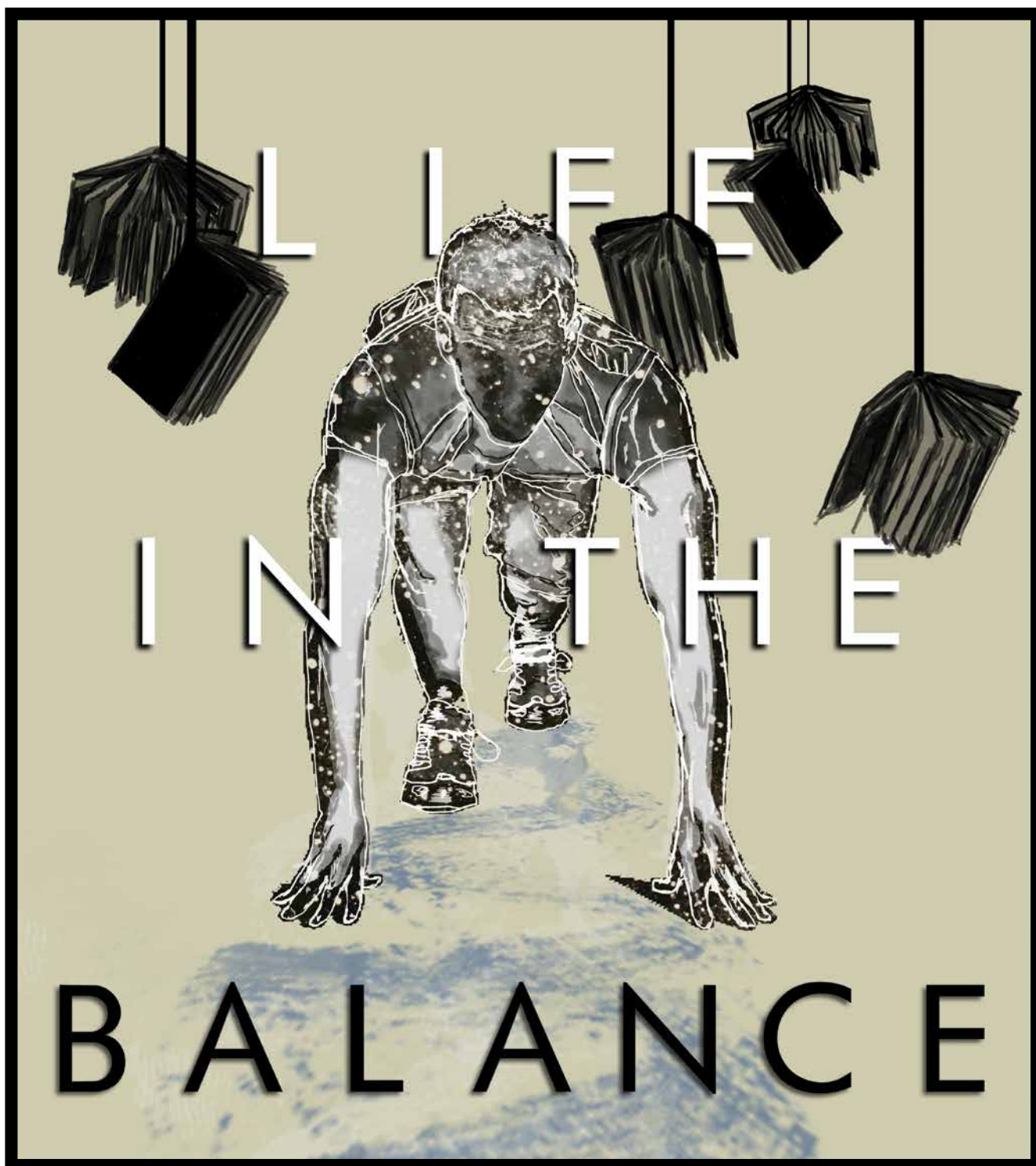
Average enrollment of active members

**300**

Active members

**110,000**

Approximate amount of student-athletes in the division



BY KRYSTIN DEAN AND KYLE HUNEYCUTT, '13  
ARTWORK BY JERILYN OQUENDO, '15

**"Life in the Balance."** This is the motto for the National Collegiate Athletic Association's (NCAA) Division II. But what does it really mean? We sat down with representatives from six sports to find out what it's like to maintain a standard of excellence both academically and athletically—and how Young Harris College is helping them make this mantra a reality.



## JOE APPOLONIA

LACROSSE, JUNIOR, HAMPSTEAD, N.J.

Biology major Joe Appolonia hails from New England, a lacrosse hotbed, and was a U.S. Lacrosse High School All-American. When looking for the right college, however, continuing to play the sport he loved was not his top priority.

"I looked at a lot of schools, but I wanted to go somewhere with a strong academic program," he explained. "My family has a motto: School comes first, and lacrosse is something that comes with school."

A high school chemistry course solidified Appolonia's choice to study the sciences at YHC. He's a hands-on learner, which is perfect for someone living in one of the most biologically diverse areas in the nation. "If you're not in the lab, then you're outside doing observation studies," he said. "Biology is truly the study of life. I love it because the possibilities are endless."

Appolonia has also enjoyed learning about everything from the Old Testament to American history at YHC—which he attributes to top-notch faculty. "The professors are always there to help. They will stay after class with you, tutor you and just be there if you need someone to talk to," he said.

Just as he is making connections in the classroom, Appolonia is also building relationships with his teammates as they continue to grow a lacrosse program that was founded just two years ago.

"Chemistry is a big part of the game," he said. "As we spend more time together as teammates both in practice and game situations, the more we understand each other and are able to work together to succeed."

While his team is thrilled about getting to compete on a national scale now, Appolonia was quick to note that the transition will not affect the way they compete. "We play to win every day," he said.

When life as a student-athlete gets hectic, Appolonia always stops and thinks about the family members up North who drive him to succeed. "I take a deep breath," he said. "I visualize my goals and how I will accomplish them. And then I move forward."

Balancing academics and athletics can be very hard, especially during the season—and when you are the kind of person who always has high expectations and goals. I've learned how to achieve this at YHC.

ILIJA ILIC

## KAYCEE CASH

BASKETBALL, SENIOR, WOODSTOCK

Biology major Kaycee Cash is a firm believer in writing things down. Calendars, sticky notes, phone reminders, and a planner that conveniently fits her class commitments and season schedule are how she navigates the life of a student-athlete.

"I'm driven by the fact that I have responsibilities to different facets of this campus, and it would kill me to let anyone else—and most of all, myself—down," she said.

Cash had her heart set on a big state school until she met Women's Basketball Head Coach Brenda Paul. The welcoming atmosphere and long-standing traditions on the small campus stood out and made her "fall in love" with the idea of being a student-athlete at YHC.

"I love my team, the support of my professors, the friendships I've made and all the ways I've been able to get involved," said Cash, who keeps busy as a member of Gamma Psi sorority and Dorcas Society. "These groups all make me feel like a part of their family."

Cash is working toward her goal of becoming a veterinarian through YHC's biology program while also minoring in chemistry and English. "I have a special connection to both the humanities and sciences, and the liberal arts education here lets me pursue the things I'm incredibly passionate about."

From "Comparative Anatomy" to "Native Flora" to "Study Abroad in Ireland: Finding Our Roots," Cash has a laundry list of classes she counts as favorites.

"I've been encouraged to think differently and harder, enjoyed small classroom discussions, and learned from approachable yet intelligent professors who are full of so much information and passion," she said.

That mentoring presence is equally true of her coaches who encourage her teammates in all facets of college life. "Coach Paul pushes all of us to ensure we succeed in the classroom and on the court, and I'm thankful to have that support system," she noted.

This bond has paid off during the NCAA transition—and Cash said her team "owes so much" to the class that built the basketball program in 2010 on faith, talent, and hard work.

Growing up, Cash "lived for" tournaments and watched them on television, hoping to someday emulate the women triumphantly holding up trophies on the court.

"I actually have that opportunity now. It blows my mind, and I know we have to work our tails off to get there," she said. "I'm so excited we have a chance to prove to everyone just how much talent our athletics programs have."

## CODY CHING

BASEBALL, SENIOR, TROUTDALE, ORE.

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Cody Ching starts his day at 5:30 a.m. when most students are still sleeping. He heads across the quiet campus to the weight room where he meets his teammates for conditioning. From there, every minute is mapped out—class, practice, meals, study hours.

“My days are pretty structured,” he said. “I pride myself on being organized. When I set out to do something, I make sure I see it through to completion. What drives me to succeed is knowing the decisions I make today directly impact my future.”

Ching has been playing ball since he was 5 and said his family “ate, slept and breathed baseball.” When he and his brothers weren’t playing or talking about the sport, they were watching highlights on ESPN trying to model the styles of their favorite pros.

“Through the years, I’ve been presented with incredible opportunities through baseball,” said Ching. “I’ve established long-lasting, genuine friendships with coaches and teammates. I’ve been taught discipline and life skills that will stick with me forever.”

The history major sought out a college that caters to student-athletes who want to succeed in the classroom and on the field. What sets YHC apart? According to Ching, state-of-the-art facilities paired with strong leaders like President Cathy Cox and Director of Athletics Randy Dunn.

“I’m so grateful for all they’ve done for YHC since I’ve been here and before I arrived,” he said. “It’s rare to find administrators who are so approachable and willing to meet the needs of the Young Harris family.”

Ching experienced firsthand the NCAA transition that began when he was a freshman. “To me, the journey represents perseverance and hope. Instead of hanging our heads, we saw it as an opportunity to show that we belong.”

When the Mountain Lions became full-fledged members of Division II, Ching was most excited about the opportunity to play for a national championship.

“That would be the icing on the cake of an incredible journey culminated by all of my experiences both on and off the field,” he said. “I want to play a role in creating a tradition of excellence that alumni can be proud to be associated with for years to come.”

When he looks back on his time at YHC, Ching will remember moments like being crowned Homecoming King in 2013, but it’s “the little things” he will truly cherish. “Meeting incredible people. Team hikes up to Brasstown Bald. Late nights. Early mornings. Those are the things I will miss the most moving forward.”

## DIANA DIMARCO

TENNIS, JUNIOR, ALPHARETTA

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When Diana DiMarco was encouraged by her tennis coach father to pursue the sport more than a decade ago, she wasn’t the biggest fan. All that changed as she got older and a competitive spirit kicked in.

“I started to enjoy it more and more until I became fascinated by it,” recalled DiMarco. “I was also a ballet and jazz dancer growing up. When I reached a point where I had to choose what to pursue seriously, I chose tennis because of my love for the game.”

At YHC, DiMarco decided not to choose between her academic passions and opted to double major in history and business and public policy. “I believe both of these fields are intertwined and learning from them can give us better insight into how our contemporary world works,” she explained.

After graduation, she hopes to attend law school and become an immigration lawyer. She’s preparing for these lofty goals by filling every spare minute off the court with extracurriculars like serving as president of the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee and Multicultural Club and working as a tutor.

“Even though my schedule is chaotic, I enjoy being as busy as I am,” she said. “Being occupied with a lot of productive activities gives me a sense of pride and joy since I am working hard toward my future.”

The life of a student-athlete is a physically taxing one, and DiMarco noted that outside of her two daily practices—the second followed by “the dreaded ice bath”—she also has a personal workout every day.

Exercising her mind is equally important, and DiMarco is grateful for the “relaxed and understanding” learning environment YHC provides student-athletes—from tutoring opportunities to faculty who are willing to meet with students outside of office hours.

“One of the main reasons I chose YHC was the people,” she said. “Everyone is supportive and welcoming. Professors take it upon themselves to help a student that’s in need of anything. We aren’t numbers to them.”

DiMarco said the coaching staff is equally encouraging. “They know our role as a student is just as important as our role within athletics,” she said. Another key source of support is the community. “They make my time at YHC—my home away from home—feel more welcoming.”

## ILIJA ILIC

SOCCER, SENIOR, BELGRADE, SERBIA

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Academics and athletics are intertwined for soccer forward Ilija Ilic, who chose to major in business and public policy because of the similarities it shares with his favorite sport.

“Before YHC, I wasn’t sure where I fit in and was undecided about my career path,” he recalled. “I was always attracted to business because it’s very competitive just like soccer—and soccer was always my favorite activity.”

Ilic grew up playing the most popular sport in his country, but he was excited to pursue it overseas on the collegiate level. “One thing I appreciate about the American education system is that you can follow your athletic dream and get a degree in a field you like,” he said.

Marketing, business ethics, leadership—these topics are some of Ilic’s favorites. “There is such a broad spectrum of possibilities for my career,” he said.

Outside of the classroom, Ilic is a powerhouse on the field. The 2013 NSCAA Division II All-American was named the Disney Sports/NSCAA Division II National Player of the Week twice after scoring several hat tricks to help the Mountain Lions claim the regular season Peach Belt Conference (PBC) championship for the second year in a row. He has twice received the Brine Golden Ball Award for most goals scored in the conference.



“I want to play a role in creating a tradition of excellence that alumni can be proud to be associated with for years to come.”

CODY CHING

What's more impressive is that he has accumulated just as many awards for his academic achievements. "I love YHC because it gives you the opportunity to play your sport at a very high level while studying in a very professional surrounding," he said.

The two-time PBC Player of the Year is also a PBC Presidential Honor Roll and PBC All-Academic recipient. He has been named to the Capital One NCAA Division II Academic All-America® First Team for the last two years and the Academic All-District III First Team in 2013.

Even with two conference championship titles under his belt, Ilic's favorite memory happened off the field last year when he was named YHC's Male Athlete of the Year and won the Male Life in the Balance Award during the annual athletics banquet.

"Balancing academics and athletics can be very hard, especially during the season—and when you are the kind of person who always has high expectations and goals," he said. "I've learned how to achieve this at YHC. Coming here was the best decision of my life."

## NICOLE SMITH

CROSS COUNTRY, JUNIOR, BALL GROUND

For the last few years, early childhood education major Nicole Smith felt like she was nearing a finish line—one that led to participating at the top level of NCAA Division II cross country competition.

"While I'm excited for our team, I'm also excited to see what I can do personally now that I have the chance to spread my wings," she said. "I know I have what it takes to compete at a higher level, and I'm more than excited to put myself to the test. It's been a long journey, but I'm so happy to finally be where we are."

Smith has developed a sense of camaraderie during the last few years not only with her teammates but also student-athletes from various sports. "All of YHC's teams love one another and encourage each other. It makes me want to try harder," she said.

As a member of the Honors Program who has already been named to the All-PBC Team twice, Smith has a perfect 4.0 grade point average and received the PBC's Elite 15 Award. "I see a lot of competition in the classroom, and that's what helps me keep my drive," she said.

The star runner's commitments include being a member of Dorcas Society, Sigma Beta Sigma sorority and Underground Bible Study's leadership group.

Time spent with friends has created fond memories—like hiking to Brasstown Bald on a cold, dreary day. "It sounds miserable, but it was a blast," she recalled. "I have had so many great adventures at YHC, but that was one of the best."

According to Smith, these experiences result from the "small, intimate" nature of YHC that reminds her of the small town atmosphere she grew up with and gravitated to when choosing a college. "I feel close to everyone and I don't feel like a number. I chose YHC because of that reason, and I stay here for that reason," she said.

Smith hopes to remain in the mountains and inspire young minds as a teacher. "It's so important that the people children meet set the stage for the kind of person they can aspire to be when they grow up," she said. "I want to set an example in all of my endeavors."

As she moves full steam ahead, one of those undertakings includes proving that a school's size is not a reflection of its capacity to succeed athletically.

"I'm excited to show what Young Harris has to bring to the table," she said. "You don't need a big campus with thousands of students to be good. I think some people have underestimated us, and they are going to find that out really soon." ■

## THE STUDENT-ATHLETE STANDPOINT



Meet the student-athletes profiled in these pages by watching this video. Find out what they think is the key to achieving "Life in the Balance" and what drives them to succeed at YHC.



# WORK & PLAY

Young Harris College has a long-standing history of shaping student-athletes into successful alumni who leave the Enchanted Valley ready to accomplish big goals and follow even bigger dreams. While motivated Mountain Lions have embarked on diverse career paths in countless fields, many of them—like the seven alumni profiled in the pages ahead—have sought out vocations that center on their love of sports. Their winning ways epitomize the tradition of excellence that truly defines the YHC experience.

BY KRYSTIN DEAN | PHOTOS COURTESY OF CLARKSON CREATIVE/COLORADO ROCKIES

Young Harris College alumnus Charlie Blackmon, '06, is a pro when it comes to multitasking. When he called in for this *Echoes* interview during the offseason this fall, he was simultaneously making plans—via a group text with more than a handful of former Mountain Lions.

"We're planning for our crew to meet up for a reunion," he explained. That gathering recently took place in Young Harris as Blackmon and his former teammate Cory Gearrin, '06, were inducted into YHC's Athletics Hall of Fame during Homecoming weekend.

The honor comes as no surprise to those who have followed his career since the Colorado Rockies drafted Blackmon in the second round of the 2008 draft.

He became one of baseball's breakout stars this season, which started off with a bang as he went 6-for-6 in the home opener with three doubles, a home run, five RBIs and four runs. Within weeks, Rockies Manager Walt Weiss was calling Blackmon "a weapon" in the lineup due to his power hitting and running ability and "invaluable" for excelling at all three outfield positions. By July, he was voted by fellow Major Leaguers to join the National League All-Star team.

His career has been defined by determination and drive. He has relentlessly aimed to improve various parts of his game. Following the 2013 season, Blackmon focused on training to run faster "because I didn't want to be limited to a corner spot in the outfield. I wanted to be qualified speed-wise to play center field." Weighted sled pulls and 40-yard sprints during offseason conditioning paid off.

Blackmon is no stranger to hard work, as evidenced by his early days as a Mountain Lion. "That was probably the best time I've ever had in my life. There was never a dull moment," he said. "Our coaches demanded the most out of us, and they made us all better players and better people."

He still recalled the sting of starting off one season 0-7 and then battling back to finish with a 52-11 record. "It was unbelievable how we turned that season around," he said. "I wouldn't trade memories like that for anything."

Blackmon had his heart set on playing ball at an institution with a strong academic track record. He found what he was looking for while visiting YHC during a baseball showcase that drew top-tier athletes and college scouts from all over Georgia and surrounding states.

He made the trip up from Atlanta and immediately noted the remoteness of the region, so much so that he wondered if he was in the right place when he hit Blairsville on his way to the campus.

"I said, 'Surely this must be the beginning of a bigger town'—and it wasn't. Young Harris was just a quaint little one-stoplight place," said Blackmon, who still remembers seeing Zell B. Miller Baseball Field for the first time. "It looked amazing, just so green. It was such an unbelievable backdrop."

He caught the eye of former Baseball Head Coach Rick Robinson during the showcase, which turned into a campus tour as Blackmon learned more about YHC. He was drawn in by the fact that he would receive an excellent education at a College that was also "very, very good at baseball."

"Charlie made it pretty clear from the very beginning that he was going to be here for two years," said Robinson. Georgia Tech recruited him after his freshman year, but Blackmon kept his word and returned for a second season as a Mountain Lion.

"I decided I had made a two-year commitment and I really liked the group, the coach, and how things were going," he said. "I figured if I had an offer to play after my freshman year, I'd have another one to play after my sophomore season."

Blackmon lived in Appleby West on the same hall as the rest of the freshmen baseball players. "Looking back, I don't know what they were thinking putting us all together," he said. "We were all part of this super close-knit group, and our RA who we nicknamed 'Dan the Man' was just one of the guys."





*Charlie Blackmon , '06* . . .

MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL PLAYER . . .

DENVER, CO . . .



This setup made for some memorable moments that started as soon as Blackmon arrived on campus. "We didn't go to sleep until around 4 a.m. the entire week because it was like being at summer camp," he recalled. The teammates soon found an inventive way to occupy their time.

"The tile hallways were just wide enough to fit a mattress through," Blackmon explained. "We would water down the floor and throw some soap on top, and then have slip-and-slide bowling tournaments." Another competition involved racing down the hill on the backside of their residence hall on another unlikely object: "I honestly don't know how we acquired those office chairs."

The team soon settled into the school year and the packed schedule that comes with being a student-athlete. One night, Blackmon returned to the room he shared with Boone Webster, '06, exhausted after spending hours in the weight room and library. To his surprise, it appeared to have snowed inside when he opened the door.

"Everything was covered in powdery white stuff—the computers, sheets, even my roommate," he said. "It turned out Boone had upset one of our other teammates who thought it was a good idea to grab the fire extinguisher and shove it under our door."

Blackmon was quick to point out that while these spirited shenanigans definitely added to his YHC experience, they were only part of it. "We actually did play baseball all day," he said earnestly. "We wanted to be really good, we wanted to work. Our personalities meshed and we pushed each other to become the best we could be."

The team practiced together off the field whenever they could—even in their residence hall, where they set up a pitching machine in the hallway. "We didn't use real baseballs—they were sort of harder foam," Blackmon explained. "We had the machine constantly running, so you had to be careful or a ball could get launched at you on your way back to your room."

While dealing with a demanding schedule on the diamond as a left-handed pitcher, Blackmon chose to make his classroom experience equally challenging. He knew he wanted to attend





Georgia Tech after graduation and asked his academic advisor to prepare him for that. "So basically I took all the really hard classes," he explained.

Ironically, Blackmon met his favorite professor in the "most challenging" math course he ever took—calculus with Dr. Bob Nichols, who also coached tennis and served as director of academic advising at the College.

"He has a great math mind, but that's not what his teaching was about. He was a coach at heart," said Blackmon, who keeps in touch with Dr. Nichols to this day. After agonizing over equations, the "real-life teaching" began. The inspirational messages made an impact.

"He told us not to be afraid to go out there and do whatever we wanted. He talked about how important it was to always try your best," Blackmon recalled. "He also stressed the importance of being a good person and treating others well."

Retaining these life lessons, however, didn't translate into better test scores. "I ended up getting better grades in calculus at Georgia Tech than I did from Dr. Nichols," he said with a laugh.

While the wisdom of faculty and coaches stayed with Blackmon through the years, the backdrop of the Enchanted Valley also made a lasting impression. "We did a lot of wandering in the mountains," he said of the days before he played baseball in another place known for its majestic peaks.

Each year, the baseball players raced to the top of Brasstown Bald as a team-building exercise—a feat he once accomplished in around 75 minutes. "I literally didn't stop running the whole time," said Blackmon, who also had fun golfing, fishing and four-wheeling with friends.

Today, the former teammates find different ways to stay connected. In addition to ongoing group texts, the friends play Fantasy Football together and plan get-togethers whenever possible. "When my team played in Atlanta last year, most of the guys were there to support me and Cory."

As a Braves fan growing up, it's a bit surreal for Blackmon to return to his hometown as the opponent. He tries to see as many family and friends as possible, which is difficult on game days when there's only a few hours of free time.

"Big league baseball is so different than high school when you're just having fun. The stakes are very high and there's so much competition," he said, noting that each season stretches for 162 games plus spring training. "It's important to try not to get distracted."

Blackmon credited his time spent as a Mountain Lion with figuring out how to navigate this challenge. "You learn how to manage your time. You learn what's important. You learn how to set priorities," he said. "I'm a better player having gone there."

The campus and surrounding area have developed substantially since Blackmon arrived on campus a decade ago when he was part of a student body comprised of around 600 students. "A lot of the things we considered luxuries, the students now have," he said.

Like having a Walmart close by: "We had to drive to North Carolina to get to one." Or having a Taco Bell down the street: "We used to drive 45 minutes to get some blue Mountain Dew. We'd put that on the calendar three days in advance." Or having a Chick-fil-A® right at their doorstep on campus: "The closest one was in Atlanta."

In addition to state-of-the-art facilities, Blackmon said student-athletes will benefit most from being part of an NCAA institution. "YHC is offering more kids the opportunity to play collegiate athletics and have an experience like I did, but in the more recognizable Division II. It's exciting that the College is growing, and I hope everything keeps moving forward."

## Life in the Big Leagues

Many alumni baseball players have had the opportunity to play professionally, and each one has a different story—from how they came to YHC to what they did after they arrived. In addition to Charlie Blackmon, '06, here are some successful athletes whose path to YHC helped them achieve their childhood dreams of playing ball for a living.



### BILLY BUCKNER, '03

**Hometown:** Decatur

**Bats:** R **Throws:** R **Position:** Pitcher

**Mountain Lions Highlights:** Buckner won 22 games on the mound for the Mountain Lions and is the College's all-time leader in strikeouts with 264 and innings pitched with 208. His 13 victories in 2002 are the most in one season by a Mountain Lions pitcher.

He led the team to one regional and two conference championships. He was named to the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) All-America Second Team in 2002 and was selected to the NJCAA All-District XVII team a year later.

**The Big Leagues:** He was drafted straight out of YHC by the Tampa Bay Devil Rays in 2003, but opted to play ball at the University of South Carolina instead. The Kansas City Royals drafted him in the second round in 2004, and he was called up to the big leagues in 2007. Buckner has since played for the Arizona Diamondbacks, Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim and San Diego Padres. He has logged 114 strikeouts to date.



### CORY GEARRIN, '06

**Hometown:** Chattanooga, Tenn.

**Bats:** R **Throws:** R **Position:** Relief pitcher

**Mountain Lions Highlights:** Gearrin holds YHC's best career ERA for pitchers who have thrown at least 80 innings at 2.14. He had an impressive five saves and 15 victories. In 2006, Gearrin won 12 games, tied for the second most in one season at YHC, and saved

four, tied for the fifth best single-season total. That same season, Gearrin appeared in 30 games, which is tied for the highest single-season total in the College's history.

**The Big Leagues:** He was drafted by the Atlanta Braves in 2007 while attending Mercer University in Macon. During a tied game against the San Diego Padres in 2011, Gearrin made his major league debut by retiring the side in order and getting a strikeout in both the bottom of the ninth and 10th innings. He attended spring training with the Braves in 2014, but missed the season due to needing Tommy John Surgery for his right elbow.

**YHC for Life:** Gearrin was inducted into YHC's Athletics Hall of Fame this November. He has remained an active alumnus, meeting with student-athletes on campus and joining the baseball team for a mission trip to the Dominican Republic in 2012.



### NICK MARKAKIS, '03

**Hometown:** Glen Cove, N.Y.

**Bats:** L **Throws:** L **Position:** Right fielder

**Mountain Lions Highlights:** The left-handed pitcher excelled both as a hitter and pitcher. He was named a First Team All-American NJCAA National Player of the Year twice and Georgia Junior College Player of the Year twice. He helped his team win one regional and

two conference championships.

**The Big Leagues:** He was drafted by the Cincinnati Reds in 2001, but chose to play baseball at YHC instead—a tough choice he made again after his freshman year. Markakis was drafted in the first round by the Baltimore Orioles in 2003 and earned a spot on the team's big-league roster in 2006, where he has remained to this day. He received the Golden Glove Award in 2011.

**YHC for Life:** Markakis was an inaugural member of YHC's Athletics Hall of Fame in 2013 and received the College's Young Alumni Achievement Award in 2011.





## Karin Wilson Best, '92

SAVANNAH ARTS ACADEMY HEALTH AND PHYSICAL  
EDUCATION TEACHER, SWIMMING HEAD COACH,  
AND TENNIS HEAD COACH

SAVANNAH, GA

BY ELIZABETH BRADLEY TURNER  
PHOTOGRAPH BY SCOTT DEAN

From inhibited to involved to inspiring—that's the journey YHC alumna Karin Wilson Best, '92, has taken in the realm of athletics throughout her life.

After spending her high school days as a "quiet" student in Atlanta, she knew she wanted to find a smaller college that would allow her to branch out and discover herself. "I found my voice at YHC, and I haven't stopped talking since," she said with a chuckle, noting that she owes a lot of that to her time as a student-athlete.

Best joined the College's inaugural softball team at the prodding of some of her friends. They were trying to get a team started, and she was willing to give it a shot. "We didn't win a championship that first year, but it was magical to us," she said. "My teammates became my family."

She enjoyed being a part of the softball team so much that when she was approached about joining the tennis team, she was equally game to give it a try. Best picked up a racket for the first time in her life and took lessons to improve her skills. She was a natural and went on to play tennis for Georgia College.

Best had found her calling and went on to coach "just about every sport there is." At Savannah Arts Academy (SAA), she led the girls' tennis team to the regional championship for the past three seasons and deep into the state playoffs for the last two. *Savannah Morning News* named her "Girls Tennis Coach of the Year" consecutively in 2013 and 2014.

A former lifeguard who still regularly competes in triathlons, Best loves coaching swimmers with various skill levels for all of Savannah's public schools. "It's very rewarding to see my non-swimmers become proficient and confident in the pool, and so much fun to see my experienced swimmers compete on the state level," she said.

She said her technique for being a good coach is "knowing your kids well and knowing when to have a sense of humor about things. While athletics does take a certain amount of focus and discipline, often the key to success is getting your athletes to lighten up and have a good time."

In addition to coaching, Best makes a difference in the classroom at SAA. "I rarely have a bad day at work," she said. "PE is less structured than most courses, so my class is an outlet for a lot of students. They get a chance to regroup their brains and just be kids—and I get to help them do that."

While Best spends most of her day inspiring students, she also finds time to encourage countless others as a professional running coach for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society (LLS).

Her husband, Mark, was diagnosed with Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma several years ago. "When his treatments were over and we found out he was in non-confirmed remission, we wanted to find a way to help others who are fighting to overcome this disease," she explained.

Best trains others to participate in half and full marathons to raise money for LLS. She also finds herself participating in athletic events like triathlons to raise money for the organization. "Running is cheaper than therapy, and that was a way for me to get through the challenges of my husband's illness," she said. "Now I can help others do the same while helping contribute to finding a cure."

Athletics have impacted Best's life in myriad ways, and she can still trace her roots to those first encounters with sports at YHC. "Without those early positive experiences at the College, I don't know if I would have continued to pursue athletics," she said. "I don't know if I would have found this outlet for myself or this career I love."



• *Allison Burnham, '14*

• GEORGIA MILITARY COLLEGE  
• WOMEN'S SOCCER ASSISTANT COACH

• GEORGIA COLLEGE  
• ART THERAPY GRADUATE STUDENT

• MILLEDGEVILLE, GA

BY KYLE HUNEYCUTT, '13 | PHOTOGRAPH BY SCOTT DEAN

During her time at YHC, recent alumna Allison Burnham, '14, pursued two very different passions: art and soccer. She excelled at both, and is now growing and developing each of these crafts as she pursues graduate school and a coaching career.

The Perry native credited the College with helping her prepare for her studies and also showing her the characteristics that make a great mentor.

"The challenging and positive professors and coaches paired with an amazing and supportive group of friends helped me become the person I am today and helped me pursue all of my goals and dreams," Burnham said.

She was a leader in both the athletic and academic arenas at YHC—from serving as soccer captain to being a founding member of the Scholars Consortium. She received the 2012 Richard Aunspaugh Award for Visual Art and took second place in the 2013 Student Juried Art Exhibition. She was named to the Peach Belt Conference (PBC) All-Academic First Team and the Capital One NCAA Division II Academic All-District III First Team.

"I developed a new love and understanding for artistic expression—and I was able to grow as an athlete which has helped mold me into the kind of coach I want to be," she noted. "I wouldn't be where I am now without those experiences."

Georgia College was an easy choice for her, as it's the only institution in the state that boasts a master's program in art therapy.

"I love the unexpected benefits of creating art and how the process

of expression can open up communication and healing," said Burnham. "I love serving and working with people. I'm a huge believer of restoration and healing for people in any situation."

From day one in the program, she was keen to explore using the field for social action—but she was equally eager to stay involved in soccer outside of the classroom.

Burnham actively sought out coaching opportunities in the region to keep her love of soccer alive. She began volunteering with Georgia Military College's soccer program and was soon approached to permanently fill the assistant coach position.

"It's such a blessing that I'm able to work at this level while pursuing my degree," said Burnham, who easily transitioned from player to coach. "It wasn't as difficult as I thought it would be. Being on the field for so long allowed me to gain so much knowledge about the game, and my prior experience coaching at camps was a big help."

A typical day consists of early morning practice followed by meetings with players and working on game strategy while attending classes in the evening with graduate research filling in any gaps. She noted that the time management skills she gained as a student-athlete at YHC have definitely come in handy.

"At YHC, I would show up at the art gallery decked out in my soccer gear. Other days, I would find paint all over my uniform," Burnham said. "Despite the challenging schedule, my coaches and professors encouraged me to succeed in all of my endeavors. That support system is what prepared me for this new stage of my life."



BY MASON MITCHAM, '14 | PHOTOGRAPH BY SCOTT DEAN

Sam Walker, '13, hit the ground running when he moved to the North Georgia mountains from his home in Epping, England. He took advantage of everything YHC had to offer, starring in theatrical productions while leading the men's soccer team to many victories.

"I was always busy and surrounded by fantastic people. Performing onstage and on the soccer field were by far the best times I had at YHC," said Walker, who noted that studying theatre prepared him to take on coaching duties for two local teams for 9-10 and 16 year olds.

"You have to become a character to keep kids entertained, especially the younger ones," he said. "The greatest joy you can have is making someone else laugh. If you can make a child smile and teach them new things at the same time, that is special."

Walker's career with Challenger Sports, the largest soccer camp operator in the U.S. and Canada, has been equally rewarding. He promotes and runs camps, tours, and tournaments for clubs, schools, YMCAs, and other soccer-based organizations.

"We have a fantastic soccer curriculum for kids of all ages," he said. "Seeing the happiness on their faces during our programs is exceptional. Impacting a young person's life, helping them grow as a person as well as be active and healthy, makes this job so rewarding."

Walker's time as a student-athlete with a time-consuming major jetting between classes, practices, rehearsals and performances—not to mention his job in the dining hall—not only made it easy for him to adjust to life after YHC but also have a positive outlook.

"YHC taught me that if you set your mind to something, you can do it. Nothing in life is impossible," he said. "Some things are very hard, but when you get to the other side there's a part of you that's so grateful that you would do it all again."

Men's Soccer Head Coach Mark McKeever greatly contributed to this mentality. Walker considers him one of the most influential people in his life and is thrilled to see the team's recent success as two-time PBC champions.

"There's no surprise that the team is where it is today and a massive part of that is down to Mark," he said. "They will continue to succeed in the future, and I will have so much pride knowing their hard work has paid off."

It's easy for Walker to keep up with all of YHC's advancements thanks to his wife, Kayla Jones Walker, '13, who works as an admissions counselor for the College based in the Atlanta area.

The pair met after a Theatre Young Harris production of *You Can't Take It With You*. "She said she thought I was funny, which was great because I thought she was very beautiful," he recalled. They bonded over a love of sports, as Kayla was a member of YHC's softball team.

"Marriage is a beautiful thing, and like everything else in life you have to work hard at it every day," said Walker, who recently celebrated their one-year anniversary. "Of all my successes in life, meeting my wife is the greatest achievement I have ever accomplished."



## Sam Walker, '13

CHALLENGER SPORTS REGIONAL DIRECTOR FOR NORTH CAROLINA

BUCKHEAD YMCA SOCCER COACH

ATLANTA, GA

Good coaches help turn talented athletes into great people. That's YHC alumna Laura Goldstein Heberling's, '04, philosophy toward her profession—one that was inspired by her own experiences as a Mountain Lion.

"The coaches at YHC taught me life lessons on a daily basis. They gave so much to their players. They taught us right from wrong and that life is about learning how to get back up after being knocked down," she said. "Professionally, I am where I am today because of the skills I learned from them—not just how to coach the sport, but also how to treat student-athletes with respect."

Heberling always aspired to play softball at the collegiate level, and realized YHC was the perfect fit for her the moment she toured the campus. "I knew it was going to be my home for a while," she recalled. "The softball field was amazing, and the intimate environment was a big draw. I was so excited to be able to play the sport I love and get my education at a top college."

As a student-athlete, Heberling helped the Mountain Lions win the regional title for two years in a row. She and her teammates also competed on a national scale, ultimately achieving an impressive No. 9 ranking in the country.

Heberling went on to pitch for Virginia Interment College in Bristol, Va., where she led the team with a .344 batting average, and the University of North Carolina at Pembroke. After her last season on the team, she still had one semester before graduation and was presented with an opportunity to serve as a student assistant softball coach.

"Through that position, I was able to give back to my coach and former teammates," she said. "In those few short months, I realized that was what I wanted to do for the rest of my life."

Heberling quickly made coaching her career, serving as a graduate assistant coach at William Woods University in Fulton, Mo., for two years, then as an assistant softball coach and instructor within the sports management program at Iowa Wesleyan College in Mount Pleasant, Iowa.

The University of South Carolina Beaufort (USCB) hired Heberling as assistant softball coach and associate director of athletic marketing, and she was promoted to her current role as head coach after two years.

"I knew after playing for such great coaches through travel ball and college that I wanted to be able to make an impact in other softball players' lives, just like my coaches did for me," she said. Now she's doing just that, along with her husband, Ed, who serves as women's soccer head coach at USCB.

"I'm so lucky to get to do what I do for a living," said Heberling, who noted that her career is based on much more than just winning games. "I always tell my players I want them to leave better people than when they started here. Seeing a student-athlete walk across the stage to get their diploma is why I do it."

Heberling has never forgotten the coaches who helped her succeed on and off the diamond at YHC, and often calls them to this day "just to say thank you." Based on her dedication to her own student-athletes, it's likely she will be on the receiving end of conversations like these for years to come.



*Laura Goldstein  
Heberling, '04*

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA BEAUFORT  
SOFTBALL HEAD COACH

BEAUFORT, SC







## Jay Brown, '06

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA  
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF THE GAMECOCK CLUB

COLUMBIA, SC

BY ELIZABETH BRADLEY TURNER | PHOTOGRAPH BY SCOTT DEAN

As the son of a high school football and baseball coach, sports were always a large part of Jay Brown's, '06, life. But while he was a talented high school athlete, Brown didn't consider himself "highly recruited" for college athletics. "That's why I was elated when YHC—a school highly regarded and known for launching athletes to higher levels—offered me an opportunity to play baseball for them."

Hailing from the far corner of the state in Brunswick, Brown wasn't very familiar with YHC as a whole but he was aware of the College's "fantastic track record in athletics." He accepted the offer to play ball for the Mountain Lions on the spot.

Brown credited those days in the secluded North Georgia mountains with providing him some of the best friends and most cherished memories of his life. "On weekends, my teammates and I would make the trek across the state line to go to Taco Bell and Walmart," he recalled. "It may sound simple, but we had the best time just hanging out together. Those are the memories that will last a lifetime."

In addition to having a close bond—and perhaps because of it, Brown and his teammates were also successful on the field. The team won 97 baseball games in two seasons. Brown served as team captain and earned All-Conference honors as a pitcher in 2006.

"Two of my seven suitemates made it to the big leagues. That's pretty incredible. It was such an honor to play alongside athletes of that caliber, and we still keep in touch to this day," said Brown, who was on hand when these friends—Charlie Blackmon, '06, of the Colorado Rockies, and Cory Gearrin, '06, of the Atlanta Braves—were inducted into YHC's Athletics Hall of Fame on campus in November.

Brown went on to play baseball for the University of South Carolina

(USC) in Columbia, where he earned a bachelor's degree in political science and a master's of public administration. He was honored with multiple awards during his time there, including the President's Award that's presented to the most deserving USC athlete in the areas of athletics, scholarship, leadership and community service.

Brown was recruited back to YHC to serve the baseball team as an assistant coach for pitching. "I started pursuing positions in state government after graduating from USC, but a career in athletics found me," he said.

Brown coached the Mountain Lions from 2010 through 2012, while his wife and fellow alumna, Lauren Hill Brown, '06, was a teacher in Union County. He returned to USC to take on a position with the Gamecock Club, which helps provide financial support to more than 500 student-athletes.

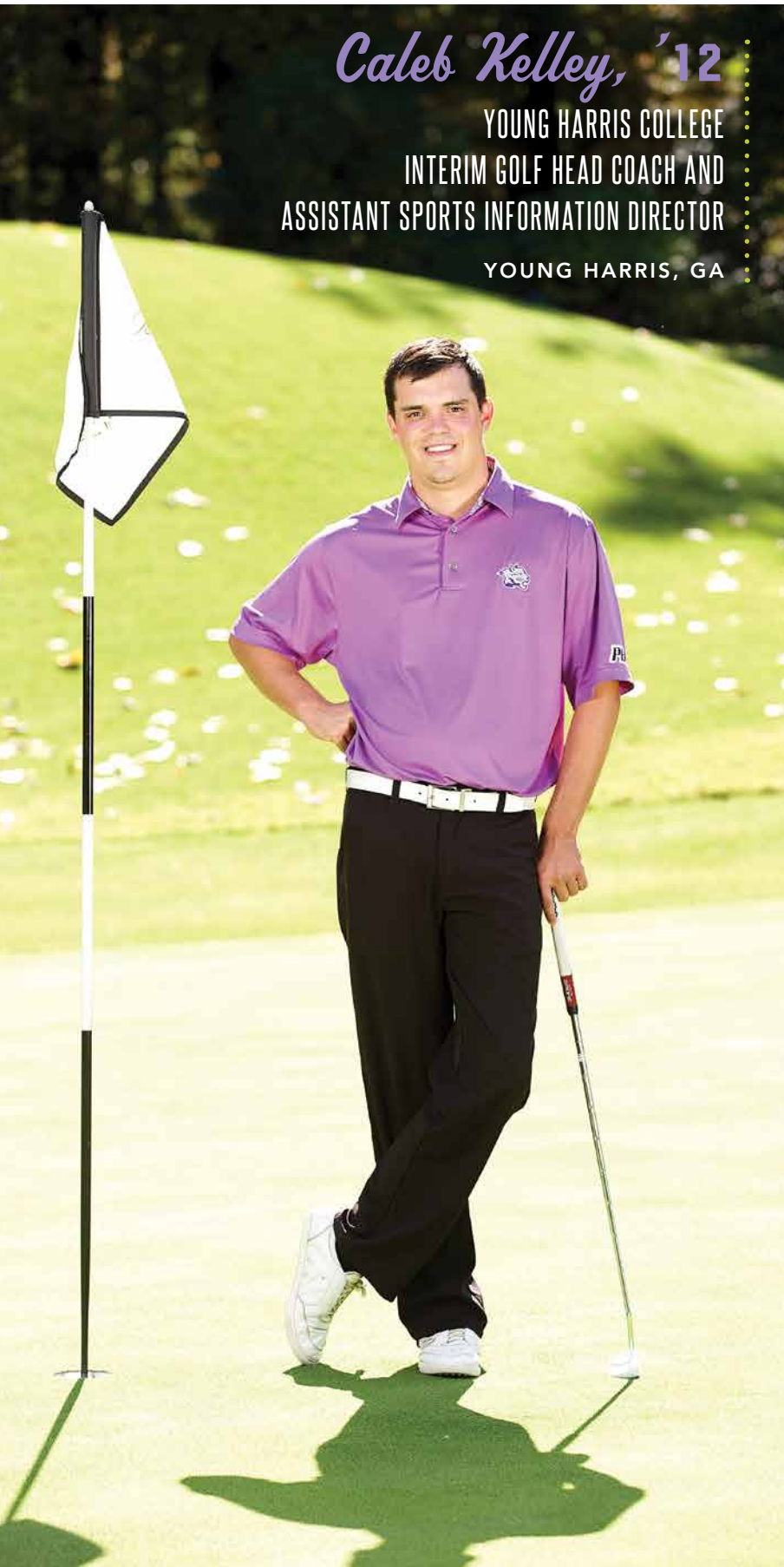
"I enjoyed coaching and recruiting, but I wanted a little more work-life balance than that career sometimes allows," he explained. "I still get to be around athletics on the administrative side, and I get to interact and help create a better experience for student-athletes."

Brown still finds time to visit Young Harris a few times a year and always catches a few games when he's in town. "The College has always been well known for strong academics, but competing in the PBC and Division II will allow YHC to be more broadly recognized for its athletics program as well," he said.

As for his own experience at YHC, Brown will always be grateful for his time at the College. "It's where I met my wife, it's where I found my best friends and it's where I had the opportunity to play college baseball," he said. "It's definitely a special place."



*Caleb Kelley, '12*  
YOUNG HARRIS COLLEGE  
INTERIM GOLF HEAD COACH AND  
ASSISTANT SPORTS INFORMATION DIRECTOR  
YOUNG HARRIS, GA



Blairsville native Caleb Kelley, '12, has always remained close to his roots. "I grew up with YHC in my backyard," he said. As he grew older, it became clear that the College was the best place for him because it allowed him to be near his family and play the sport he loves.

"I made lasting friendships and countless memories on some of the most pristine golf courses in the South," said Kelley. When a knee injury temporarily halted his time on the green, he got involved behind the scenes in the Department of Athletics—an experience that translated into a thriving career after graduation.

As assistant sports information director, Kelley helps with game-day statistics and maintaining the athletics website—a vital component to the overall success of an expanding athletics program that has seen the addition of three new sports in less than five years.

"This position allows me to work with all the programs we have now," he said. "I get to see firsthand what makes them successful, which will be very beneficial as I continue my coaching career."

Kelley recently took on the position of interim men's and women's golf head coach after an impressive two-year run as assistant coach. This fall, he said his teams "set a new standard" by shattering several school records. Accolades in the conference have followed, with golfers being named the first-ever PBC Golfer of the Week and earning a spot on an all-tournament team.

"There is nothing comparable to working for your alma mater," he said. "Being able to contribute to the success of the athletics program that contributed so much to the man I am today is a privilege and an honor."

His coaching duties include recruiting new team members and preparing both of his teams for matches while also mentoring each student-athlete to ensure they succeed on and off the golf course.

"First and foremost, the goal for my teams is that they receive a quality education," he said. "I also strive to help them develop into the best players they can be and learn to bring their individual successes together to create a championship-caliber team."

It helps that Kelley isn't so far removed from his years at YHC when, like all student-athletes, he had to figure out how to balance academics and athletics.

"I learned that hard work and dedication are vital to success," he said. "The educational experience at Young Harris forces you to think critically, which results in well-rounded individuals with skills that reach far beyond any specific field of study."

Kelley uses his history degree in inventive ways on the job, calling on times when he had to sift through vast amounts of information and draw his own conclusions. "This translates into my job as a coach where I'm able to utilize various methods while modifying them to fit the needs of our program," he explained.

His career trajectory has allowed Kelley to keep in touch with influential faculty and staff members while remaining part of the Mountain Lions family that has been close to his heart for so long.

"My favorite memories from YHC—both as a student and now—are all about the close relationships I've developed," he said. "Our tight-knit campus community is what makes the YHC experience so unique."

# The True Meaning of Sport

BY JIM THOMAS

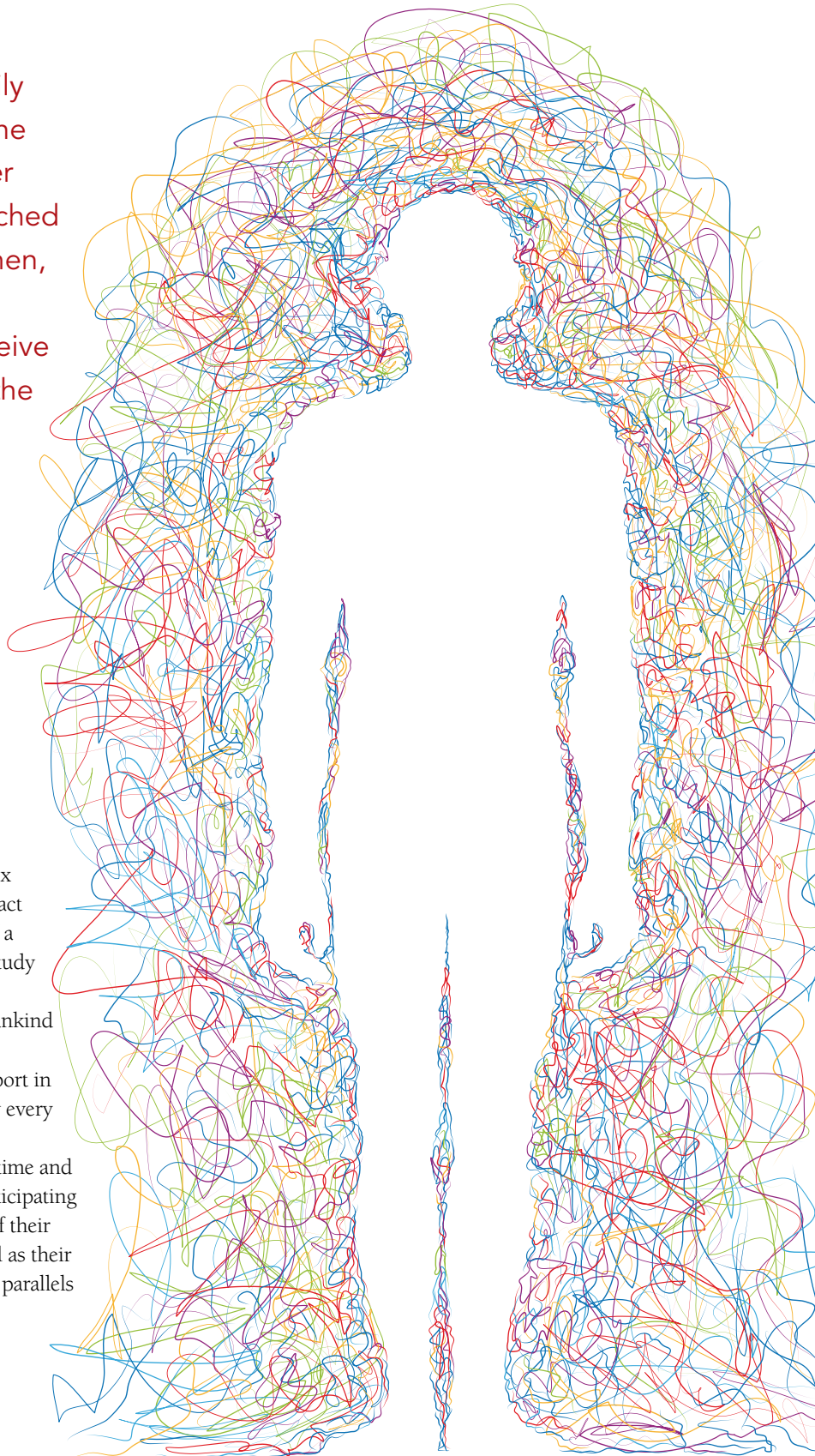
When I was 10 years old, my family gathered around the television one evening to view the 1968 Summer Olympics in Mexico City. We watched as two young African American men, Tommie Smith and John Carlos, stepped up to the podium to receive their gold and bronze medals in the 200 meter running event.

As our national anthem played, the two bowed their heads and each raised a black-gloved fist, staging a silent protest against racial discrimination in the United States. As they left the podium at the end of the ceremony, many in the crowd booed them. The International Olympic Committee president suspended Smith and Carlos from the U.S. team and the Olympic village. The event made headlines the following day and the two received numerous death threats upon returning home.

With my parents helping me understand the incident and its implications, it was at this early age that I first became curious about the complex role and social significance of sport and the impact it has on society. It was, in fact, the beginning of a lifelong love affair with sport and my desire to study it and impart to others my fascination with it.

Sport has had a significant influence on humankind for millennia and has helped to define us. Even though we often downplay the significance of sport in contemporary society, it pervades, in fact, nearly every aspect of our culture.

Evidence of our obsession can be seen in the time and energy we expend watching, attending, and participating in sporting events at all levels. In fact, because of their psychological and behavioral similarities, as well as their common reflection of our traditions and values, parallels between sport and religion are frequently noted.





By the way, I am often asked, “Why use the term ‘sport studies’ rather than ‘sports studies?’” My response is that while the term “sports” characterizes actual, concrete events and games, the study of “sport” examines the biophysical, psychosocial, and sociocultural aspects of sport.

In the early 1970s, the academic discipline known as “sport studies” was first developed at the University of Massachusetts. Since that time, as one of the fastest-growing disciplines, it has become a part of the offerings of many research institutions and liberal arts colleges.

Indeed, over the past several decades, sport studies has contributed to a wide range of graduate school and employment opportunities in such areas as social policy, journalism, administration, marketing, planning and development, education, psychology, and coaching.

In the summer of 2013, Young Harris College President Cathy Cox asked me if I would be interested in developing a sport studies minor. I couldn’t have been more excited about the opportunity to develop a program that would give students insight into the dynamic social phenomenon we call sport. In addition, I knew from the many student inquiries I’ve received over the years that sport studies would be a popular new discipline—one that would complement a number of majors at the College.

A student who minors in sport studies at YHC is required to take two foundation courses, “Sport Ethics” and “Sport in Society,” for a total of six credit hours. “Sport Ethics” allows the student to examine moral reasoning and ethical issues including the questions, dilemmas, and decisions that athletes, coaches, sports administrators, fans, and parents often face. “Sport in Society” offers the opportunity to analyze the historical roots of sport, giving students a solid basis for understanding modern society’s sport values as well as the current problems and controversies that exist in the world of sport.

In addition to these foundational classes, students select nine credit hours from a variety of other courses in areas such as kinesiology, communication and sport, youth sport, event management, and sport psychology.

At the completion of the “Coaching Principles and Theories” course, students are required to “sit” for the American Sport Education Program certification exam that can provide them with a general coaching certification. Seniors may also take a practicum course with opportunities for hands-on application of the knowledge and principles they have acquired in their coursework.

So, as we complete our first semester with the new sport studies minor, I’m excited that YHC students who have a passion for sport will be able to fully explore this new discipline. The program recognizes sport as a fundamental component of the human experience—as more than just activities and events that focus on competition and the physical body, but rather as a critical element of life that contributes to the positive development of the whole person.

After all, as Socrates stated, “Sport is not meaningful because so many people engage in it; rather, so many people engage in sport because it is meaningful.”



**Kinesiology and Sport Studies Program Coordinator and Associate Professor of Physical Education Jim Thomas** joined the YHC faculty in 1987. He earned his bachelor’s degree in physical education and recreation from Coastal Carolina University in Conway, S.C., his professional tennis certification from the Professional Tennis Registry in Hilton Head, S.C., and his master’s degree in physical education from the University of Tennessee.

## MY TOP 5: EDUCATIONAL SPORT FILMS

**Jim Thomas sometimes assigns films to his students in conjunction with class discussions on current sport issues. These are five of his favorite “teaching” films, in no particular order.**

### 1. Code Breakers (2005)

Based on a true story about the involvement of Army’s football team in the 1951 cheating scandal at West Point, this film covers ethical issues and decisions faced by college athletes.

### 2. Blue Chips (1994)

A principled coach—loosely based on basketball legend Bobby Knight—feels pressure to win at all costs. The movie provides a chance to talk about coaching styles as well as ethical issues and decisions faced by sport personnel.

### 3. Vision Quest (1985)

An athlete who feels he needs to do something meaningful in his life is distracted from his goals while preparing for competition against an undefeated opponent. It’s all about intrinsic motivation and self-discipline. Winning is secondary to the competition itself.

### 4. Green Street Hooligans (2005)

This offers a glimpse of football—or soccer, as we call it—“hooliganism” in Great Britain in this story about an American journalism major who gets caught up in the violent culture of London’s football “firms.”

### 5. Chariots of Fire (1981)

This classic film tells the true story of two young men who compete in the 1924 Olympics. It’s about determination, prejudice, and religious conviction in the face of athletic competition and national pride.

# INQUIRING MINDS: DR. JENNIFER HALLETT

PHOTOGRAPH BY SCOTT DEAN

While many Young Harris College faculty members support student-athletes, one professor in particular plays a vital role in the Mountain Lions' success. As Faculty Athletics Representative (FAR), Communication Studies Department Chair and Associate Professor of Communication Studies Jennifer Hallett, Ph.D., mixes her love of sports with a desire to see YHC's student-athletes succeed. In this multifaceted role, she oversees the academic integrity of the Athletics Department and makes sure all rules and regulations of the College, Peach Belt Conference (PBC) and National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) are followed. Her top priority is supporting student-athletes for academic and personal success at YHC and beyond. We sat down with her in the stands to find out more about what defines YHC's student-athletes, why traveling to away games is a must, and the reasons she is proud to be a Mountain Lion.

## HOW DID YOUR LOVE FOR ATHLETICS COME

**ABOUT?** My mom and sister wouldn't let me watch football because they didn't like it, but when I was 6, I would turn it on when they weren't using the TV. I learned the game without any help! I also have athletics in my blood. My grandfather was a Major League Baseball (MLB) pitcher in the 1930s and 1940s, and he played ball for the Navy during World War II. As a kid, I played softball and soccer. I stuck with soccer through high school and earned my varsity letter as a freshman. Professionally, I started working with athletics at the University of South Florida (USF) as a tutor, and then inquired to see if I could do more. I became an academic advisor for student-athletes while teaching a full load in interdisciplinary social sciences, and thus began my formal affiliation with intercollegiate athletics while also being a professor.





**WHAT MADE YOU WANT TO TAKE ON THE ROLE AS YHC'S FACULTY ATHLETICS REPRESENTATIVE?**

When I got to YHC, I asked to be put on the NCAA transition committee that was charged with finding out what we needed to do to gain membership and then do it. We learned that the College needed a FAR to oversee many aspects of the athletics program. Having knowledge of NCAA bylaws regarding student-athlete eligibility among other things is a big part of that responsibility, and I was uniquely qualified given my history at USF. I really wanted to be appointed because I knew I had that specialized knowledge, and I was thrilled when I was approached about it.

**HOW DO YOU THINK YHC STRIVES TO EXEMPLIFY THE NCAA DIVISION II MOTTO "LIFE IN THE BALANCE"?**

YHC fits this motto incredibly well, which is why we have always been a good fit for this division. Our environment not only offers but also fosters widespread involvement in all sorts of activities outside a given sport or curriculum. In addition, our coaches do a great job of recruiting student-athletes who want to be here. They want to take classes, play their sport and have the "college experience." In other words, our student-athletes are engaged in a variety of experiences and are balanced, active members of the campus community at large rather than being sequestered in either an academic program or their sport. They can have it all.

**WHAT DEFINES YHC'S STUDENT-ATHLETES?** I think all student-athletes are competitive and smart by nature. But what really sets ours apart is their attitudes. By and large, this group stands out because of their combination of smarts, skills, and good nature. The egos we see in other athletics programs just don't show themselves here. Sure, they all want to play—but they really do live by the old adage that "there is no 'I' in 'team.'" I hate to be cliché, but it's true: These student-athletes are here for their teams. I see this in my classes. Almost without exception, student-athletes are actively involved and often serve as informal leaders in class and with group projects.

**YOU CHEER ON YHC STUDENTS EACH SEASON. IF YOU COULD ONLY WATCH ONE SPORT FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE, WHICH ONE WOULD IT BE?**

I agonize over this question, because I truly love all sports. However, football was my first love and, of course, baseball is in my blood.

**ASIDE FROM THE MOUNTAIN LIONS, WHICH OTHER TEAMS DO YOU SUPPORT?**

I'm a loyal fan of whatever teams I've come to support, so they are lifetime affiliations. When push comes to shove, my alma mater Michigan State University will always be at the top of my list along with USF. In the pros, I support the teams I grew up with



despite the fact that they aren't powerhouses anymore. That includes the Cincinnati Reds and the Bengals. Of course, all the teams for which my grandfather played are also on my list—the White Sox, Giants and Pirates.

**YOU TRAVEL WITH YHC'S TEAMS TO SUPPORT THEM ON THE ROAD AS WELL AS AT HOME. WHAT STANDS OUT ABOUT THESE EXPERIENCES?** Last year, I got to support every team on the road with the exception of golf due to rain. I went everywhere from Tampa, Fla., to Charlotte, N.C., to Savannah. I love the interactions I get to have with student-athletes who don't have me in classes and aren't really sure why I'm there in the first place. They start to see me as their ally, as someone who is their fan—not just the person who keeps track of study hall. Last year, a number of the student-athletes who met me through these trips came to me later for help or support about both academic and personal matters—all things that were important to their well being. I'm proud to have the opportunity to assist them. Traveling with the teams is an important part of building relationships, and I will do it as long as I serve as FAR.

**WHAT'S YOUR MOST PRIZED PIECE OF SPORTS MEMORABILIA?** I have two. One is my grandfather's Jimmy Foxx Louisville Slugger. I doubt he played MLB games with it (he was a good hitter for a pitcher), but it was his and it makes me happy to have it. On a recent trip to Louisville, Ky., I discovered that my grandfather signed a contract with Louisville Slugger in 1935, which means he had a bat made to his own specifications. Only direct descendants can buy these bats, so I'm asking for one for Christmas! My other prized possession is a baseball signed by every member of the 2006-2007 USF baseball team. After the last game on a road trip, they all sang "Happy Birthday" to me on the bus and presented me with it. I really had to fight the urge to cry, and I think a tear may have fallen.

**IN THE LAST TWO YEARS, SIX STUDENT-ATHLETES HAVE SELECTED YOU TO BE RECOGNIZED AS THEIR MOST INFLUENTIAL PROFESSOR DURING FACULTY APPRECIATION NIGHT. WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO YOU?** I'm very proud of this, and the plaques are hanging in my office right above my computer so I can see them every day. To have a student single you out and say "you made a difference in my life" is the single-most gratifying, validating thing that can happen to a teacher. I care about my students more than they will ever understand and, while I won't affect all of them profoundly, knowing I can do it for some makes it the best job in the world.

**WHAT'S THE COOLEST SPORTS-RELATED LANDMARK YOU HAVE VISITED?** Seeing my grandfather's name on the wall in front of the Louisville Slugger Museum was pretty cool. Being there with my dad and watching him see it for the first time was out of this world. I was also able to watch the Giants play the Yankees in New York a while back. It was the first game between the two teams since the 1962 World Series, and I think the first game between them in New York since the Giants had left the city. It was a landmark occasion for sure.

## WHAT MAKES YOU PROUD TO BE A MOUNTAIN LION?

Building relationships with the coaches, staff, administration and mostly the student-athletes makes me very proud. To watch what they've built in the past several years and to have done it with such loyalty to the College and teamwork with each other is humbling. I have also seen student-athletes come in and struggle a bit as freshmen—but they really want to be here so they work hard and eventually become team leaders on the field, court, or trail as well as in the classroom. You can't witness that and not be proud to be affiliated with it. I've said it before and I'll say it again. This is my dream job and, at the risk of being cliché again, I'm just happy to be here and help out the team. ■



◀ Watch the photo shoot for this story.

## MY TOP 3:

### WAYS STUDENTS BENEFIT FROM YHC'S ACCOUNTABILITY PROGRAM

**A key component of Dr. Jennifer Hallett's role as Faculty Athletics Representative is leading 25 fellow faculty members in the College's accountability program. It's designed to provide an added layer of academic and personal support for student-athletes by getting them in the habit of communicating and making good choices. These are her three main pillars of the program.**

#### 1. Meeting with Mentors

Our student-athletes' academic success is not just their own—it applies to their team, coaches and Athletics Department as well. So I want them to build relationships with faculty who want to help then navigate their academic goals. They regularly meet with a faculty academic coach, who serves in the role voluntarily and with little to no recognition. These professors are so dedicated, and the program simply wouldn't exist without them.



#### 2. Creating A Calendar

The student-athletes create a master calendar with all of their many obligations and important academic due dates all in one place, so they can identify potential conflicts and deal with them early.



#### 3. Study, Study, Study

They must meet documented study time each week while in the program. It's important because they are visible ambassadors for their teams, coaches, department and the College. We want them to be at their best, and helping them do so helps us be at our best.





# MOUNTAIN LION LUMINARY: RANDY DUNN

BY KYLE HUNEYCUTT, '13  
PHOTOGRAPH BY SCOTT DEAN

Many influential faculty and staff members at Young Harris College help transform and shape the campus, but few individuals have had as much impact on the growth and development of the College as Director of Athletics Randy Dunn.

The challenge to transition a two-year athletics model into a world-class four-year program is what enticed Dunn to head north in 2010 after spending 28 years working at his alma mater, North Georgia College & State University (NGCSU), now the University of North Georgia.

"I was impressed with President Cathy Cox's vision and commitment to athletics along with her knowledge of what a respected and quality athletics program can do for an institution," explained Dunn.

His hard work, past experience and commitment helped YHC achieve membership in the Peach Belt Conference (PBC) as well as National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division II status.

"The College is going to receive a lot of well-deserved positive exposure and provide amazing opportunities for education and growth as the Division II philosophy and best practices are implemented," he said.

Dunn was no stranger to the long process involved in advancing a college's athletics program. As men's basketball head coach and director of athletics at NGCSU, he oversaw the athletic department's transition to the Division II and the PBC along with the addition of five new sports.

While he knew what to anticipate on that front, Dunn noted a marked difference between his time at NGCSU and YHC—the passion and commitment of the College's alumni.

"I never saw the same dedication at North Georgia as I do here—and what's truly remarkable is I'm referring to alumni who were here when YHC was still a two-year institution," he said. "They went on to other schools, but their hearts will always be here. Now we have four years to impact a student's life, and the connection is going to be deeper than ever."

According to Dunn, YHC's student-athletes also set themselves apart because of the support and respect they have for each other, as well as a keen awareness that they represent the College.

"Our teams really appreciate their fans, and they try to give back in the local area however they can," said Dunn. "The people of this community are what make YHC truly special. The sincerity of the faculty, staff and the community is unmatched."

He strives to preserve this by building a strong, family environment on campus and setting an excellent example to outsiders and newcomers. "The idea is for people who are new to the College to look in and feel a longing to be part of this family," he said.

Dunn has ensured that more student-athletes can find a home at YHC with the addition of three new programs: men's and women's basketball, men's and women's lacrosse, and competitive cheerleading.

As an avid lover of all sports—"I honestly can't pick a favorite," he diplomatically noted—Dunn said his role allows him to be involved in all aspects of athletics as well as enjoy special and often historic moments.

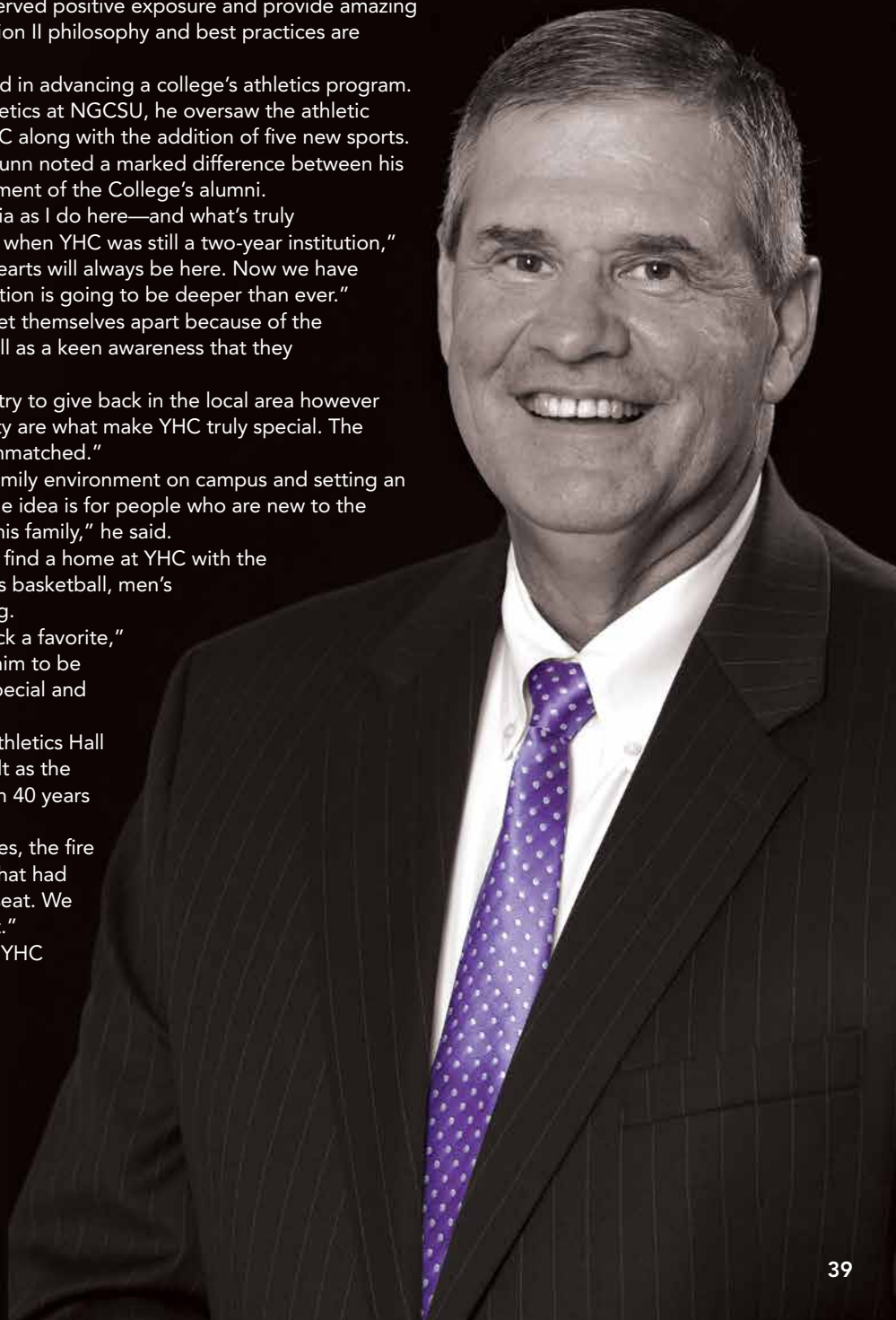
In addition to inducting the College's inaugural Athletics Hall of Fame class last fall, Dunn recalled the pride he felt as the Mountain Lions played their first basketball games in 40 years back in 2010.

"You could see the excitement on everyone's faces, the fire in their eyes, as they entered our impressive arena that had just opened," he recalled. "There wasn't an empty seat. We were definitely cemented as a community that night."

Dunn has high hopes for the future of athletics at YHC and the student-athletes who are pulling out all the stops to succeed on the field and in the classroom.

"We're encouraging students to practice their discipline, unleash passion, and develop strong character that will ensure they're leaving behind a positive legacy at YHC as they go out into the world and make something of themselves."

❖ Sports may be his primary passion, but Dunn is also an avid music lover. His required listening consists of Elvis, Johnny Cash, Garth Brooks, Ronnie Milsap, '64, and Trisha Yearwood, '84.











MOUNTAIN  
LION

# Pride

BY MASON MITCHAM, '14  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY SCOTT DEAN



For a small liberal arts institution, the Young Harris College community has a lot of spirit. From breaking out the body and face paint during home athletic events to repping the Mountain Lion logo whenever possible on and off campus, purple pride is constantly on display.

While every student, faculty and staff member, alumni, and friend of YHC plays a role in spreading this spirit that permeates the Enchanted Valley, there are two groups that undeniably create the core of the College's spirit: the competitive cheerleading teams and the Purple Reign pep band.

## PERFORMING WITH PEP

When the competitive cheerleading team made its debut as an intercollegiate athletic program at YHC in 2012, no one could have guessed how rapidly the program would grow.

From a roster of 23, the group has expanded into two competitive teams and one non-competitive "spirit team" featuring 60 student-athletes. As the squads add talented new members, they are also gaining some noteworthy achievements.

This summer, the large coed team earned a Silver Bid to the 2015 National Cheerleaders Association (NCA) Cheer and Dance Championship in Daytona Beach, Fla., while the small coed team earned a Bronze Bid. This marked the third consecutive year YHC has made the trip to nationals and the second with two teams in tow.

"It's easy to forget we are a young program because of the talent and maturity of our student-athletes," said Competitive Cheerleading Head Coach Chase Carter. "We have made significant improvements each year, and there's no denying we are headed in the right direction."

Carter brought a wealth of knowledge to YHC after coaching at Shorter University and cheering for the Wolfpack as a student at North Carolina State University. He coaches alongside his wife and former YHC cheerleader, Victoria Neisler Carter, '12, who serves as assistant coach as well as senior admissions counselor at the College.

Last season, the Carters led their squad to a strong second-place finish in the Peach Belt Conference (PBC) Cheerleading Championship. The team also trained hard for NCA nationals, where the coed team advanced to the finals and placed third.

Individual members have also racked up accolades. Revon Magee, a junior business and public policy major from Miramar, Fla., and Jessica Haas, a junior biology major from Lisle, Ill., were named NCA All-Americans last season. Haas received the honor for the second year in a row, after being the

first Mountain Lion in the program's history to earn the title.

"Becoming an All-American is a goal we have for all team members," Chase Carter said. "These two really put in the work to get there. They are great people who work very hard, and they truly deserve it."

The cheerleading squad has become a staple not only at basketball games but also during major campus events like Homecoming where they get a chance to interact with alumni and friends of the College during the bonfire, parade, and lunchtime festivities.

The squad works hard both on and off the mats. Cheerleaders participate in nearly every student organization on campus, as well as volunteer at local churches and community venues. They recently hosted stunt clinics for high school students interested in collegiate cheerleading, and annually host a showcase on campus that benefits the Make-A-Wish® Foundation.

"That's one of my favorite events, because it's so amazing seeing everyone come out and cheer for us," said Diane Mouangkham, a sophomore biology major from Young Harris. "A friend came up to me afterward and said he had no idea until watching us do some of our competition material that cheerleading is truly a sport—and a difficult one that takes a lot of talent."

Mouangkham also noted that her head coach measures the team's success by how well they perform not only on the court but also in the classroom. "He wants to make sure we stay on top of our homework and tests, and he encourages us to always do our best," she said.

Espen Myklebust, a sophomore business and public policy major from Asker, Norway, who also serves as Student Government Association president, added that this kind of support helps when balancing many commitments. "I have a lot going on outside of being a cheerleader and a student, so it's important that I plan everything properly and make my schedule work," he said.

According to Breann Lindsey, a junior outdoor leadership major from Lindale, the planning and perseverance pays off when wearing the purple and white.

"I love being a cheerleader because I'm one of the faces of the College," she said. "At a basketball game, alumni gathering or annual events like Homecoming, I'm able to represent the school I'm so passionate about."

Lindsey also pointed out the pride she feels exemplifying the YHC spirit on a national level during the NCA

❖❖ The music and lyrics for the "YHC Fight Song" were arranged by beloved former Dean of the Division of Fine Arts and Professor of Music Dr. Benny Ferguson, who retired from YHC in 2011.



cheerleading camp each August leading up to the championship tournament in April.

"This is the most driven team I've ever been a part of, coach or athlete, and there is no limit to what they can achieve," said Chase Carter. "We look forward to competition season this spring, and making our team goals a reality."

## REIGNING SUPREME

It's hard to imagine attending a sporting event without hearing chants and cheers from the sidelines—or the powerful sound of the "YHC Fight Song" coming from the stands. When basketball returned to YHC in 2010, the College's pep band, Purple Reign, was formed.

"As with all colleges and universities, the school songs become an integral association with the institution," explained the ensemble's leader, Senior Instructor of Music and Director of Bands Mary Land. "One of the main goals of Purple Reign is to support YHC and encourage school spirit."

The band consistently has more than 40 instrumentalists each year, and Land would like to see that number increase. While most members are music majors, that's not a requirement to join. Talent and a sense of Mountain Lion pride, however, are. "Our band students are among the most successful students on campus," said Land.

Senior music education major Rachel Bettis, of Dawsonville, is involved in many of YHC's music ensembles but always looks forward to performing with Purple Reign and getting instant reactions from the crowd.

"It's so rewarding because we often have spectators come and directly compliment members of the band on our performance," she said. "Not to mention we have won the PBC's Spirit Competition two years in a row."

During the annual matchup, each band is evaluated based on musicianship, musical impact and school spirit effectiveness. Land noted that the band makes a point to choose high-energy songs that represent the Mountain Lion spirit. "We always aim to channel our creativity into some awesome music and movement," she said.

"The competition was a blast—the most fun I've had during my time at YHC," added Brian Montgomery, a senior business and public policy major from Powder Springs. "It was rewarding to see the blood, sweat and tears the band members shared pay off. Winning made me extremely proud to be a Mountain Lion."

The band definitely made their presence known in the PBC after taking the title from three-time defending champions University of North Carolina at Pembroke their first time in the running. Even with these honors, Bettis isn't quite satisfied.

"I want to see our pep band amongst the top athletic bands in the country," she said. "I want people from other schools and students who are choosing colleges to have conversations like, 'Oh, Purple Reign? They dominate the competition every year.'"

The ensemble is well on its way to achieving this goal. Many seniors like Sally Petty, a music education major from Cumming, will graduate after this season with high hopes for the pep band they helped shape and succeed for the last few years.

"My bet is the band has an awesome future ahead," she said. "I would love to see the group continue to develop connections and respect all over campus and throughout the Peach Belt. If our successes keep adding up like I expect they will, I foresee limitless opportunities." ■



The sound of a drum can truly define a moment—especially in the realm of athletics. Thanks to a group of spirited students, the YHC community will be enriched for years to come with an exciting new addition: the Mountain Lion Drumline.

Senior Instructor of Music and Director of Bands Mary Land developed the Mountain Lion Drumline to garner interest in the College's band program and promote school spirit. YHC now has more than a dozen instrumental ensembles for students to choose from, and Land pointed out the level of commitment it takes to join them.

"Our students work tirelessly through grueling rehearsals and prepare a wide variety of music performances for all areas of our College," she said. "We are fortunate to have hard-working students in our band program who are dedicated to musical excellence."

Under the direction of Adjunct Instructor of Music Eric Brown, the Mountain Lion Drumline will perform at campus events throughout the year. "Being part of the drumline gives students the chance to perform at a high level in front of large crowds," he said.

The group, which made its official debut during Alumni Weekend in April, is open to any experienced students and hopes to expand in order to tackle more complex cadences and songs in the future.

"We have everyone from a member of the soccer team to a flute player," said Armando Granados, a junior music education major from Euaharlee. "Being part of this group has helped me learn not only how to teach, but also how much other people love music. I've gained new ways of thinking, teaching and playing."

In addition to growing as a musician, Granados loves spreading school spirit through the ensemble. "I mean, what better way to get a crowd pumped up and cheering than by having a group of students playing drums, rocking out and having fun, right?" Right.

# FANDEMONIUM



## CODY BECK

SENIOR BUSINESS AND  
PUBLIC POLICY MAJOR  
LEXINGTON, NC  
POSITION: LEFT-HANDED PITCHER

## JUSTIN COOPER

SENIOR BUSINESS AND  
PUBLIC POLICY MAJOR  
PISGAH FOREST, NC  
POSITION: LEFT-HANDED PITCHER

## SPENCER THOMAS

SENIOR BUSINESS AND  
PUBLIC POLICY MAJOR  
KEY BISCAVNE, FL  
POSITION: CATCHER



**Competitive. Determined. Full of heart. Driven. Loyal.** These are a few of the words some of Young Harris College's most devoted fans used to describe athletics in the Enchanted Valley. They are also words that define these steadfast supporters who show their spirit in far-reaching ways—from attending daily basketball practices, to driving 16 hours to catch a lacrosse match, to feeding hungry student-athletes. They are faithful. They are proud. They are Mountain Lions.

## FAN FACT

Game-day rituals for baseball team members vary from wearing a particular undershirt for a game, to using the same bat, to placing their glove and hat in a specific area of the dugout between innings. Right before the starting lineup is announced, the group always gathers for a team prayer.

### RESPECTING RITUALS

While many students show up in the "Valley of Doom" to cheer on the Mountain Lions, there is one especially spirited group who sit in the same small section of bleachers near the home bench. This dedicated group represents a sizable amount of the baseball team roster. "We sit right under the goal—prime position to cheer on our team, talk to the referees and maybe persuade some calls, and heckle the opponent," said Beck. Over the last few years, it's become known that this section is "reserved" for the team on game day. "We have to make sure we are closest to the court to support our team," said Cooper. "It's definitely become a tradition for us."

### THE SPIRIT SECTION

When basketball returned to YHC in 2010, the baseball team was thrilled. "Basketball is a sport that everybody loves to watch and many of us played in high school, so we just love coming to games," explained Beck. "It started out as an understanding that everyone wanted to go, and then it became a formality. If the Mountain Lions were at home, we were going to be there." The student-athletes also saw it as a way to unify their own team, and it has turned into true, diehard fandom. The men's basketball team reciprocates the encouragement. According to Cooper, Men's Basketball Head Coach Pete Herrmann plays a big role in that. "He comes to our practices before big games to give us pep talks, and his team supports us by coming out to our games as well."

### BATTLE OF BLOOD MOUNTAIN

Rivalries within sports are a given. For Beck, beating "big schools" like Lander University and the University of South Carolina Aiken provides a huge thrill. "It's always gratifying to win against top teams like them," he said. For all YHC student-athletes, losing is not an option when competing against the University of North Georgia. "It's more than just a game when any of our teams play North Georgia—it's a battle for Blood Mountain," said Thomas. The close proximity between the institutions only makes the rivalry stronger, and the baseball team looks forward to fellow student-athletes defeating the Nighthawks just as much as getting the "W" for themselves. "It's always nice beating them and knowing that YHC owns the mountain for another year," said Cooper.

### ONE DREAM

The support across the 15 intercollegiate sports programs at YHC is always evident—from lacrosse players cheering on the soccer team from the stands of their shared field, to the softball team stopping by to check out a tennis match after afternoon practice. "Encouraging everyone helps unify our teams and helps YHC develop a stronger athletics program," Thomas noted. Taking the field during a home game and seeing a crowd cheering in the stands provides a big boost, according to Cooper. "There's nothing like it. It lets us know we have support from the students and surrounding community. We're all one family chasing one dream, and that is to win a championship. I wouldn't want to miss seeing any YHC team experience that victory."

# BOB SHORT, '51

BLAIRSVILLE, GA

## FAN FACT

Short was recently inducted into YHC's Athletics Hall of Fame during the College's Homecoming festivities in November.

### UNFORGETTABLE ALL-STAR

A celebrated athlete on the court during his student days, Short made a name for himself among some of the College's biggest rivals. His playing days are still vivid—like the time he led the Mountain Lions to victory against Brewton-Parker College. "It was a double whammy," he said. "I got the best of one of the state's top defensive players, Bobby Wilder, who later became my neighbor and lifelong friend, and we beat the conference champions." Short also fondly remembers playing in the old gym—a far cry from today's "Valley of Doom." "It was heated by wood stoves on each end and had an uneven floor. We had to alter our shots to take care of the gravity."

### TRUE DEDICATION

Most afternoons, Short can be found in the empty arena stands at the Recreation and Fitness Center intently watching the Mountain Lions run drills and practice plays while conferring with Men's Basketball Head Coach Pete Herrmann and Assistant Coach Brian Benator. "Hardly a day passes that I don't talk with the coaches about the team and our aspirations for its future." It's a point of pride for him to personally know each and every student-athlete on the roster. "I truly enjoy watching the team mature and our players improve."

### LONGTIME SUPPORTER

An avid sports fan, Short's support for the Mountain Lions has never wavered since he hung up his jersey in the 1950s. He even helped recruit some of the College's most notable players including the late John Adcock, '57, who was inducted into YHC's Athletics Hall of Fame last year. As a sportswriter for the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, he got to know many high school basketball coaches who recommended players. Short moved back to the North Georgia mountains after stints in Atlanta and Washington, D.C., and loves living near his alma mater again. "I have grown to deeply appreciate the College's athletics because all of the sports give me an opportunity to keep the YHC spirit alive," he said.

### A BIG BOOSTER

For Short, being chosen as the inaugural president of the Mountain Lions Booster Club was an honor. "It's been a source of comfort to me to see the support the College and community have given our athletics teams," he said. The role allowed him to support the coaches and players he loves and encourage others with the "Young Harris spirit" to do the same. "I know from being a college athlete what it means to have the stands full of supportive fans—not only vocal support, but financial as well."



# LARRY AND LESLIE KERNOHAN

WHITBY, ONTARIO, CANADA

## FAN FACT

Women's Lacrosse Head Coach Katie Ilott hails from the same hometown as the Kernohan family. While their paths crossed from time to time, they never officially met until YHC brought them together.

Jaclyn, Larry, Leslie, and Nicole Kernohan gathered on the YHC Soccer and Lacrosse Field.



## TRAVELING FOR THE TEAM

Although Larry and Leslie live more than 14 hours from the Enchanted Valley, they regularly travel to the North Georgia mountains to see their daughters, freshman business and public policy major Nicole and junior biology major Jaclyn, compete on the women's lacrosse team. They wouldn't miss big moments like seeing the team's first-ever win—a 20-8 victory over Reinhardt University. "I loved being here for that," said Larry. "The fans' attitudes certainly changed as they witnessed the excitement of the players rising to the occasion. The

passing and shooting was just awesome." When they can't make it to their second home here, the couple live streams the games and constantly check the athletics website for stats and game-day updates. "Every team gives 100 percent for the College, making each game interesting. I'm grateful for the dedication of the talented players as well as the time and effort given by all the coaches, directors and supporting staff," said Larry.

## COMING TOGETHER

Student-athletes from across the United States and beyond find a home at YHC, and teammates quickly become second families. "It's amazing to watch 26 young women from all over the world come together to form a team of best friends," said Leslie. That support system is not just evident on athletics teams, though, according to Larry. "The friendly atmosphere at the College and on the field makes you feel like everyone is part of the team—it's truly one big family. Everyone makes you feel at home, even if you're 1,600 miles away in what we Canadians refer to as the 'Great White North.'"

## SHOWING SUPPORT

The Kernohans make every effort to encourage their daughters on and off the field, from an email about how well they played to a quick call to check in via Skype or FaceTime. "Support of any kind throughout our children's athletic careers is huge. All kids love the support, and it elevates their game," said Larry. The pair also pointed out that they try to ensure their daughters balance working hard with having fun. "As parents, we can foster their love of the game with our support," said Leslie. "When they hear cheers coming from family, friends, and fans, it gives them someone else to play for and to make proud."

# DR. CLAY DOTSON

YOUNG HARRIS, GA

## TEAM TRACKER

When serving in many capacities at YHC over the years as a history professor, academic dean and interim president, Dr. Dotson didn't have much time to truly enjoy YHC athletics until he retired for the second—and last—time in 2004. He used some of his newfound free time to frequent basketball and baseball games, and started recording stats for the latter about alumni who continued to play at other colleges and professionally. "I realized I could make a worthwhile contribution to the program by tracking our past players and presenting the coaching staff with a weekly report," he explained. During the Major League Baseball season, Dr. Dotson said he watches a game each night that features a former Mountain Lion. He especially likes to track the progress of standouts like Nick Markakis, '03, of the Baltimore Orioles, Charlie Blackmon, '06, of the Colorado Rockies, and Cory Gearrin, '06, of the Atlanta Braves. "Sometimes I even record two games at the same time so I don't miss any of the action involving those players," he said.

## DAVID VS. GOLIATH

A fan of YHC athletics for more than 50 years, Dr. Dotson has seen the Mountain Lions compete against some big opponents—and come out on top. He explained that back in the 1960s, freshmen were not eligible to play on varsity basketball teams at four-year colleges, so playing freshmen from schools like the University of Georgia and Georgia Tech was a big deal. "Even though we were a smaller college, we won most of those contests under the able leadership of legendary coach Luke Rushton, '42," he said. Rivalries are now shifting as YHC competes in the PBC, but one thing remains the same according to Dr. Dotson. "Now that we are going up against other four-year colleges and universities, we're still the small school that loves to win."

## SUPPORT FOR ALL SEASONS

Dr. Dotson's love for baseball and basketball dates back to his playing days in high school and college. When the Mountain Lions take the field or court, he soaks up the spirited excitement. "I love to see the display of passion from players, coaches and fans. The combined student and community support especially makes for a rousing atmosphere during basketball games," said Dr. Dotson, who can always be found wearing purple and white during matches. He also attends softball games, has made an effort to learn more about soccer, and cheers on his grandson, Sam, a sophomore business and public policy major who competes on YHC's tennis team. "I've always believed that competing in sports strengthens the physical and mental attributes of a person," he said. "I love to see the skills on display from our student-athletes and also our opponents."

## DEDICATION AND DRIVE

When he moved to Young Harris in 1961 from the coal mining area of Virginia, Dr. Dotson was introduced to the game of golf by his friend and colleague, Dennis Hale, and worked hard until he could beat him on the Butternut Creek course in Blairsville. Annual trips to see the pros at the Atlanta Classic golf tournament, he added, "provided a thrill and a dose of realism when it came to my abilities on the golf course." One of the "greatest surprises" in his life came in 2000 when the YHC family sent Dr. Dotson and his wife, Betty, on a golfing trip to Scotland as a retirement gift. He was even more moved when the College's annual golf tournament officially became the Clay Dotson Open in 2005. "Having the funds raised used for scholarships and having my name associated with that effort is an honor beyond my wildest dreams."





## FAN FACT

Dr. Dotson's proudest moment as a Mountain Lion came in 2007 when the baseball team won the district championship against Chattanooga State Community College. Down by four runs in the ninth inning, Jordan Price, '07, delivered a base hit with two outs and two strikes against him to win the game 5-4.



## FAN FACT

The Millers are season ticket holders in the “Valley of Doom” and have never missed a home basketball game since the sport returned to YHC in 2010.

### DESERVED SUPPORT

Baseball is a game that will always be special to the Millers. “I learned a lot about the sport when Zell coached. I kept score, counted pitches and made notes. It made the game much more enjoyable,” said Shirley. Dating back to the days of celebrated basketball coach Luke Rushton, ‘42, in the 1950s and 1960s, the couple has also enjoyed watching basketball games in the Enchanted Valley. “These kids spend a lot of time practicing. When they give that much of themselves to be on a team, they deserve our support,” said Gov. Miller, who still remembers how supportive the fans were when he played basketball at YHC. The courts were a bit different back then, though. “Our surroundings were not super comfortable,” Shirley recalled. “There was a potbelly stove at each end, and we would huddle around them to keep warm. Despite that, student support was very strong when we were at YHC.”

### THE BASEBALL HOUSE

Before embarking on a celebrated political career in Atlanta and Washington, D.C., Gov. Miller started YHC’s baseball program in 1960 and coached the team to three winning seasons. There were many late-night practices that sometimes ran past normal dining hall hours. Shirley was always waiting, ready and willing to open her door to a gang of hungry boys she loved as her own. “We lived in a little framed house near where the post office sits today. The baseball boys were always there. They would go fishing and come back to clean the fish in our basement, and I’d often cook for them.” The relationships developed in that home nestled on campus have stood the test of time. “All of the players were so dear to us,” Shirley added. “We’ve followed many of their lives since leaving YHC.”

### AN ENCYCLOPEDIA OF KNOWLEDGE

A sports enthusiast in his own right, Gov. Miller—who was an inaugural inductee into YHC’s Athletics Hall of Fame in 2013—could often be caught in the Governor’s Mansion with an encyclopedia of baseball history under his desk. Staffers, colleagues and friends would call to quiz him on various stats. “I would tell them to hang on while I thought of the answer. In reality, I was looking it up in my book!” It’s no surprise that the Millers became close friends with baseball giants Mickey Mantle and Hank Aaron over the years. Aaron even helped raise funds for YHC’s Zell B. Miller Baseball Field. “The team used to play on an old, rocky field, and I wanted them to have a first-class field,” said Gov. Miller, who takes great pride in seeing the team play today.



# BOBBY BURNS

YOUNG HARRIS, GA



Bobby showed off his Mountain Lion pride with his wife, Doria, and children, Pierce and Ava.

## FAN FACT

In addition to Brother's at Willow Ranch, many local restaurants and businesses lend their support to YHC athletics by providing game-day meals and catering VIP events including Asiano, Blimpie, The Blue Otter, Brasstown Valley Resort, Café Portofino, The Chop House, The Copper Door, Enrico's Italian Restaurant, Happy Hawg, Papa's Pizza of Hiawassee, Sodexo, The Ugly Mug, Walmart's Deli, and Zaxby's.

### BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

Whether he is catering an event for VIP sponsors prior to a basketball game or feeding a team after a big win, local restaurateur Bobby Burns enjoys being a part of the experience YHC athletics provides. "Feeding the fans and student-athletes helps expose our food and brand to a very diverse group of people," he said. "We want to build a relationship with this group that hopefully lasts for years to come."

### COMMUNITY CHEER

Burns sees the value in supporting sports at YHC—for the students and the community. "A strong athletics program helps create exposure for the College, generates revenue, promotes student health and instills a sense of community," said Burns, who also noted the Mountain Lion pride that has reached enthusiastic fans in the region. "These programs give a small town something to get excited about, and it's a joy to be a small part of that experience."

### COMPETITIVE NATURE

Burns has gotten to know many coaches and players through his interactions before and after games. "They are all such great people. I enjoy watching them grow, develop and compete on an increasingly higher level." The avid sports fan is also a former athlete who ran cross country and played football and baseball in high school. His competitive spirit often comes out when watching the Mountain Lions take on various opponents. "While celebrating a major victory is gratifying, one of my coaches always reminded us that you are only as good as your next game played," he said. "You soon begin treating every game like it's the championship." ■

# AN ULTIMATE COMPETITION

BY MASON MITCHAM, '14  
PHOTOGRAPH BY SCOTT DEAN

⚡ Often referred to only as “Ultimate” by those in the know, the sport is included in the World Games and recognized by the International Olympic Committee.

Generally, Frisbee doesn't conjure up thoughts of competitiveness. It's more often associated with friendly games of catch. That perception is rapidly changing at Young Harris College, where an intense new club sport is sweeping across the campus: ultimate Frisbee.

“We actually just play to have fun,” said Fernando Serrano, of Gainesville, Ga., who was inspired to form a team after watching collegiate ultimate Frisbee matches on ESPN. “I thought, ‘Hey, YHC can do that,’” he recalled.

Serrano co-founded the team with fellow senior biology major and ultimate Frisbee enthusiast Kaleb Swanda, of Blairsville, who has been playing the game since middle school. While spreading the word to interested classmates, the duo contacted the sport's governing body, USA Ultimate, to find out how to build a team from scratch.

“I've always wanted to have an ultimate Frisbee team on campus, and I'm so glad it's finally happened,” said Swanda. “Starting a new team was a challenging process, but it has paid off. All of us are excited to see how well we perform against other teams nationally.”

More than 80 students turned out for tryouts in 2013, and around 20 made the cut. The popular

Ultimate Frisbee team co-founder Kaleb Swanda made a daring dive during practice.





club sport has generated enough interest for the College to field multiple seven-member teams that compete in USA Ultimate's Southeast Regional Conference Division III.

"There is an unbelievable variety of students that make up YHC's team—cross country runners, band members, soccer players, resident assistants—and they have all come together to form one united group," said Director of Campus Activities Ashley Randall.

For those unfamiliar with the sport, it's like the offspring of Frisbee and football. Teams compete to score the most points by throwing the Frisbee to a teammate in the opposing team's end zone.

Many members of YHC's team, like new recruit Nathan Barnes, a freshman biology major from Marietta, had never played before college. He found out about the sport one fateful afternoon after joining a casual game of Frisbee on the lawn.

Barnes said he enjoys the game's "laid-back vibe" and the fact that it's very inexpensive to compete compared to other sports. "I've said it before and I'll say it again—you can really play at any time," he said. "All you need is a Frisbee and you've got a game going."

Ultimate Frisbee is unique in the world of sports in that it doesn't

**STARTING A NEW TEAM WAS A CHALLENGING PROCESS, BUT IT HAS PAID OFF. ALL OF US ARE EXCITED TO SEE HOW WELL WE PERFORM AGAINST OTHER TEAMS NATIONALLY.**

**KALEB SWANDA**

rely on referees to enforce rules.

"The awesome thing about ultimate Frisbee is that it's self officiated, meaning the sport is governed by the players," Serrano explained. "This means all players have to have a respect for the game," added Swanda.

Last spring, YHC's ultimate Frisbee team finished the season with a 4-11 record while learning a lot and savoring hard-won victories against well-known institutions like Princeton University.

"I think our team really encompasses the YHC spirit," said Fernando. "If you want to do something, do it. Be a leader. Never be hesitant to do something great."

## OUTDOOR ORGANIZATIONS ON THE RISE

The Enchanted Valley is full of ways to find fun and fresh air—and that's exactly what students are doing by starting new clubs that speak to the College's beautiful surroundings. Here are what three club founders had to say about some of YHC's unique new offerings.



### DISC GOLF CLUB

Also known as Frisbee golf, this game relies on precision and accuracy as players throw a flying disc at a target. The object of the game is to play a course from beginning to

end with the fewest number of throws.

"We want our club to be a place where people who want to learn about the sport can come to play and grow, while also offering more skilled disc golfers the opportunity to compete in tournaments locally, collegiately, and nationally. It truly is an honor to compete as an entity of this amazing College."

**Parker Sewell, Biology, Marietta**



### EQUESTRIAN CLUB

This club's goal is to create an environment where horse lovers can feed their passion. Students have joined for a variety of reasons, from a general

interest in the sport to a determination to continue the equestrian lifestyle in college.

"As a horse lover, I'm glad the club offers an opportunity for interested people to learn more about horses. The club also fulfills a more basic need for students at YHC—a way for people who have the common interest of riding to meet each other and socialize."

**Natasha Davidson, Biology, Blue Ridge**



### FLY FISHING CLUB

Many YHC students are hooked on angling, as evidenced by the already thriving bass fishing team. YHC's new fly fishing team has partnered with Southern

Highroads Outfitters in Blairsville with a goal of letting students learn and gain experience.

"I love being captain of YHC's bass fishing team, but I started this club to spread the passion I have for fly fishing with others and to connect with students who love to fly fish just as much as I do—or possibly even more."

**Matthew Davis, Outdoor Leadership, Waverly Hall**

# Friendly RIVALRIES

BY LEANN WALDROUP

A crisp, cool fall day. Cheers echoing across the lawn of the Young Harris College campus. Banners and signs covering Appleby Center in support of a favorite fraternity or sorority. Throughout history, friendly rivalries amongst student organizations have added to the spirit that is YHC. Intramural sports were—and still are—an easy way to get involved and have an outlet for staying fit.

“The College was pretty isolated during my student days,” said Alumni Association Board Vice President Candler Ginn, ’77, of Cartersville. “Intramurals gave us something to do on the weekends. It was all about getting involved, and it provided a whole lot of entertainment.”

Recreational sports on campus have included everything—ultimate Frisbee, bowling, pool, even square dancing. From the 1940s-1960s, basketball and football were the mainstays for the Phi Chi fraternity, Sigma Beta Sigma (Susan B) sorority, Phi Delta sorority, and even the Young Harris Debating Society. The groups also tried their hand at volleyball and table tennis.

The popularity of intramural sports soared in the 1970s and 1980s, when fraternal rivalries between the Phi Chis,

Kappa Tau Omegas (KTO) and Upsilon Delta Sigma (Sigs) brought the entire campus community to the lawn to watch the Greek flag football teams battle it out.

One of the proudest moments for Board of Trustees Chair Brantley Barrow, ’74, of Atlanta, came when Phi Chi claimed victory over the KTOs during the inter-fraternity sports championship. With only a minute remaining, they used a trick play called the “muddle huddle” to score the winning touchdown. “The alumni who returned to watch the game were especially excited since the KTOs had consistently won the championship for years,” he said.

There were also some serious sorority rivalries. The Phi Deltas and Susan Bs participated in flag football, basketball, pool, and table tennis. They also made a point to cheer on their brother fraternities—the Phi Deltas supported the Phi Chis while the Susan Bs rooted for the Sigs.

“We had a great time cheering on our classmates and trying to compete in events we may not have been good at or even knew how to play before joining our team,” said Class Coordinator and Susan B member Jane Harrell Roberts, ’70, of Atlanta.

Sororities often brought in coaches from their brother fraternities during big games. Although winning was paramount,

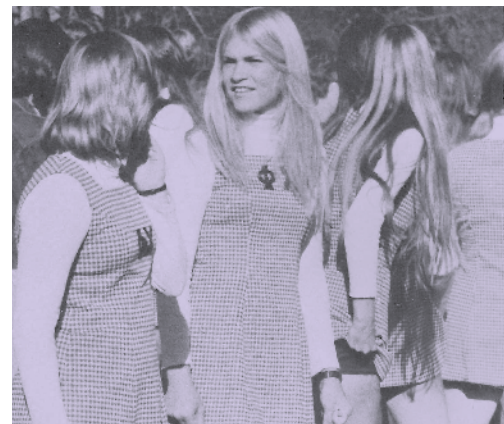
Roberts admitted she played intramurals for another reason. “I loved to make new friends and enjoyed the camaraderie,” she said.

Intramurals truly brought students together. “On a campus with 450 students and limited activities and access to cars, these sports were an important part of student life,” said Alumni Association Board President Rob Murray, ’75, of Young Harris, who played for Phi Chi’s flag football team. “No sports program would be complete without pep rallies and bonfires. We had parades and decorated the residence halls and dining hall.”

Greeks aren’t the only ones with fond memories of intramurals. Many other student organizations, referred to as “independents,” also proved to be worthy adversaries—especially when John Kniess, Ph.D., who served in a variety of academic, athletic and administrative positions before retiring in 2012, took over as director of intramurals in the late 1970s.

“When I arrived at the College, only Greeks played intramurals. I wanted to expand the program to include everyone,” he explained. “These events bring the campus together and promote spirit.”

Chris Dyer, ’83, of Blairsville, was part of a team called “Homegrown” made up of local students. “We considered pretty



Members of the 1947 Susan B basketball team posed for a photo. ■ The Phi Chis and Sigs battled it out in a game of flag football during Alumni Weekend in 1973. ■ Phi Deltas cheered on members of Phi Chi during a 1975 flag football game.



much every organization our rival, but the other independents were our biggest ones in every sport," he said.

Dr. Kniess also recruited faculty and staff members to play. Longstanding professors like Steve Harvey, Ph.D., Louisa Franklin, and Jim Thomas dominated the basketball court or spiked volleyballs alongside students—adding to the familial and friendly atmosphere. "Faculty formed a bond with students outside the classroom," Dr. Kniess said. "Plus, it was a lot of fun."

During the last two decades, Greeks and independents alike battled it out just as fiercely as their predecessors. Alumni Board member and Class Coordinator Ben Persons, '94, of Marietta, put together teams with his friends for basketball, softball, ultimate Frisbee, and flag football. His biggest highlight was scoring the game-winning touchdown for Phi Chi during the championship matchup.

"I was the resident assistant for a group of freshmen baseball players who would come cheer us on," he said. "They ran onto the field, picked me up on their shoulders and ran around cheering. Even though it was only intramurals, it felt like I had just won the Super Bowl."

A first-place finish meant bragging rights for a year in addition to snagging a sought-after prize. "Every sport was equally popular because they all led to that championship T-shirt," said Persons. "Mine was designed by a friend

who was an art major. I still have it somewhere."

"It was all about getting that T-shirt," added Class Coordinator Matthew Anderson, '03, of Marietta. "We wore them as a badge of honor. I ran into one of my old teammates recently and he had on our shirt—11 years later."

Like Persons, Anderson scored his shirt for a flag football victory. That big win on campus led his Alpha Omega fraternity team to travel to Milledgeville where they competed against other private colleges in the state and brought home the title to YHC.

"Intramurals were something to look forward to," said Anderson, who counted the Alpha Xi fraternity as his biggest competition. "They were great for those of us who played sports in high school and still wanted to compete."

While each decade is defined a little differently by the alumni who played intramurals, one sentiment about these sports has remained the same through the years. Rivalries existed, yes—but the YHC bond was always stronger than any specific group at the end of the day.

"The competitiveness was unbelievably fierce, but it made us all closer friends," said Dyer. "If not for the opportunity to play, I would have never realized how talented some of my fellow students were or gotten to know members of other student organizations. I still have a lot of respect for the teams we competed against to this day."

## The State of INTRAMURAL SPORTS

YHC students still enjoy a wide range of intramural sports through student-run leagues that allow for competitive play and promote staying active, making new friends, and having fun. Find out why these three team organizers enjoy the challenge.

### CHASE BLAIR

**Business and Public Policy  
Ranger**

**Favorite Intramurals:**  
Basketball, Flag Football,  
Volleyball

**Why He Plays:** "It's a great way to stay in shape. Sports also help me relax, and I enjoy being around others who love them. Intramurals are a fun way to meet new people while taking a study break to enjoy the college experience. Those who played sports in high school but are not on an athletics team can show off their skills and keep the competitive spirit."



### LOU ROLAND

**Outdoor Leadership  
Woodstock**

**Favorite Intramural:**  
Ultimate Frisbee

**Why He Plays:** "Intramural sports are a lot of fun but also very competitive. I've always had a love for sports, and I want to do whatever I can so that others can enjoy them too. I play to help keep me active, in shape and in the game. It's a great stress reliever."



### JOHN ROSS

**Business and Public Policy  
Gainesville, Ga.**

**Favorite Intramural:**  
Ultimate Frisbee

**Why He Plays:** "It's a great way to get out of your room and hang out with friends. It also helps get my mind off school for a few minutes. Plus, if your team wins, you get a championship T-shirt to show off at the end of the season."



Students hung signs in front of Appleby Center to support various intramural teams in 1981.

■ The "Homegrown" intramural team played baseball against the Zeta Pi fraternity in 1991.

## MOUNTAIN LIONS ROUNDUP

YHC saw 157 student-athletes named to the PBC Presidential Honor Roll, with 50 Gold Scholars—more than any other PBC institution for the second year in a row. + The competitive cheerleading team earned a Silver Bid to the National Cheerleading Association's (NCA) Collegiate Cheer and Dance Championship next April in Daytona Beach, Fla., while the small coed team earned a Bronze Bid. The Mountain Lions finished third in large coed and 10th in the all-female category during last year's competition. + **Revon Magee**, a junior from Miramar, Fla., and **Jessica Haas**, a sophomore from Lisle, Ill., were named NCA All-Americans. Haas also earned the accolade last year. + Baseball alumni **David Atwood**, '14, of Waynesville, N.C., and **Adam Moore**, '14, of Kennesaw, along with softball outfielder **Sydnee Weaver**, a senior from Sylvania, were named to the Capital One NCAA Division II Academic All-America® team. Moore was also named to the National Collegiate Baseball Writers Association's (NCBWA) Second Team. + Catcher/infielder **Jack Morrow**, a senior from Carneys Point, N.J., was named to the NCBWA's First Team and the American Baseball Coaches Association's NCAA Division II All-Southeast Region First Team. + Infielder **Chandler Stooksbury**, a sophomore from Kennesaw, was named to the National Fast-Pitch Coaches Association's NCAA Division II All-Southeast Region Second Team. + The men's tennis team finished the 2014 season ranked No. 35 in the NCAA's Division II by the Intercollegiate Tennis Association after winning a record 11 matches. + Midfielder **Jaclyn Kernohan**, a junior from Whitby, Ontario, Canada, midfielder **Kaylynn Roach**, a sophomore from Whitby, Ontario, Canada, and defender **Anna Lummus**, a sophomore from Cumming, were named to the Division II All-Independent Women's Lacrosse Second Team. Roach was also named to the Division II All-Independent Freshman Team.

Student-athletes participated in "Let's Move Day" and "Food for Families" this fall.



## STUDENT-ATHLETES STRIVE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Young Harris College's Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) set lofty goals for the 2014-2015 season. The group's main objective is to raise more funds than ever for the Make-A-Wish® Foundation, with each team aiming to raise \$1,000 by hosting a variety of fundraisers.

This fall, the women's soccer team presented a "Crossbar Challenge," while the men's soccer team raffled off a signed jersey. The competitive cheerleading team took donations and held a 50/50 raffle during their annual fall showcase. The baseball and softball squads presented a "Battle of the Sexes" game.

In December, the men's and women's cross country teams hosted the "Jingle Jog" 5K race and the women's basketball team assisted with the College's annual "Breakfast with Santa" event.

This spring, the men's and women's golf team will present an "Ice Bowl Par-3 Challenge," while the men's and women's tennis teams will host a pro-am doubles tournament.

The SAAC again focused on "Food for Families" this fall, raising more than \$3,000 for the Towns County Food Pantry, Union County Food Bank, and Ninth District Opportunity that support residents from Towns and Union counties. The student-athletes bagged groceries and collected tips at Ingles Markets in Blairsville and Hiawassee to raise the funds.

In September, several student-athletes and coaches participated in "Let's Move Day" at Meeks Park in Blairsville. Local youth were encouraged to stay active and have fun while playing sports with Mountain Lion mentors.

"Events like this provide a fun way for us to show the community what we can do, keep kids active and have fun playing the games we love," said SAAC Public Relations Chair Jaclyn Kernohan, a junior lacrosse player from Whitby, Ontario, Canada. "It also gives us a chance to show that we are not only athletes but also students who care about those around us. If we can do something to help, we should."

### SAAC PRESIDENT EARNS NEW TITLE

YHC's SAAC President Diana DiMarco, a junior tennis player from Alpharetta, was recently elected vice president of the Peach Belt Conference's SAAC. Through this role, she will preside over the group's spring meeting and update student-athletes on division legislation.

"I believe the student-athlete's voice is significant, and I truly want our needs to be met in order for us to better represent our schools," said DiMarco. "This opportunity will give me insight into the experiences of other student-athletes that I can apply at YHC to further promote the success of our athletic programs."





## BASEBALL TEAM LOOKS TO NEW LEADERSHIP



New Young Harris College baseball coach Travis Huffman is a familiar face after serving as assistant coach for the Mountain Lions for four seasons.

"I've had an advantage because I already knew all the returning players and had a hand in recruiting the incoming ones," said Huffman. "With most head coaching changes, it takes a little while to learn and get accustomed to each other, but that's not the case for me. From day one, everyone was on the same page."

Huffman also noted that he has a good grasp on changes that need to be made on the field after losing many starting seniors.

"There are going to be a lot of new faces, but I expect a smooth transition," he said.

The Mountain Lions won 114 games during Huffman's tenure as assistant coach while transitioning into a new division and conference. Since taking the reins this season, he has emphasized weight lifting and conditioning during the fall and focused on building a team dynamic.

"This year's team is by far in the best condition I've seen yet, which is allowing us to do more on the field," he noted. "The players are also holding themselves and their teammates accountable in the weight room and the classroom."

When the season kicks off on Feb. 1, Huffman's main goal is to compete for the Peach Belt Conference (PBC) title now that the team is eligible. "There's no doubt our players are willing to do whatever it takes to move their program in a new direction as we start competing for championships on a regular basis," he said.

## BASEBALL, SOFTBALL AND SOCCER TEAMS ADD ASSISTANT COACHES



### BASEBALL: CHRIS HOWELL

Fitzgerald native Chris Howell joins the Mountain Lions as assistant coach after spending two seasons at Middle Georgia State College. He looks forward to advancing Huffman's goals for the program.

"He has a vision of what direction he wants this team to go, and I wanted to be part of that," said Howell. "I was also drawn

to the fact that Young Harris has a comfortable, family-oriented atmosphere on a beautiful campus with so much to offer."

He began his coaching career at his alma mater Tiftarea Academy in Chula, helping his team win the 2009 Georgia Independent School Association Class AA State Championship. He earned state Coach of the Year accolades in 2009 and Region 3-AA Coach of the Year honors in 2009 and 2010.

Howell pitched for two years in the Panhandle Conference at Pensacola Junior College before helping the University of Tennessee advance to the 2005 College World Series as a senior. Howell also pitched two years professionally for the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim.

At YHC, he will primarily work with pitchers. "Expectations can be reached if there's trust and care for each player," he said. "We will set personal goals of competing and working hard every day."



### SOFTBALL: MARTI LITTLEFIELD

Marti Littlefield saw an opportunity to help the Mountain Lions softball program grow. "Having such an awesome support system within the Athletics Department also attracted me to YHC," she said.

The Nashville, Ga., native spent six years as a player and coach at Valdosta State University (VSU), contributing to an unprecedented run of six straight Gulf South Conference (GSC) softball championships since 2009. Her coaching staff earned National Collegiate Athletic

Association (NCAA) Division II South Region Coaching Staff of the Year honors in 2013 and 2014.

"Hard work pays off and the outcome of any game is not predetermined," said Littlefield. "Starting with the pregame all the way until the last pitch requires an extreme amount of focus and team effort."

Littlefield was one of the most successful offensive players in GSC history, setting records in a slew of categories including home runs, RBIs and doubles. She also led her team to the program's first-ever national title in 2012.

She was named GSC Freshman of the Year and was VSU's Female Athlete of the Year in 2011. She was selected to the All-GSC and all-region teams for four years and named an All-American by the National Fastpitch Coaches Association in 2009 and 2011.

She thrived academically and was named a VSU Community Service Leader in 2011 in recognition of her volunteer work.



### WOMEN'S SOCCER: NATHAN ARCHARD

Huntsville, Ala., native Nathan Archard is no stranger to the PBC. He was a defender for the University of Montevallo men's soccer team from 2007-2010. He helped the team win the GSC regular season title in 2008 and the PBC regular season and tournament championships in 2012.

"YHC being in the Peach Belt is really what made me want to come here," Archard explained. "I'm familiar with the schools and venues, and I really believe in the NCAA's 'Life in the Balance' motto."

Archard previously served as a men's soccer varsity assistant coach at Grissom High School and a staff coach/coordinator for the United Soccer Club in Huntsville, Ala. He looks forward to entering the arena of women's soccer at YHC.

"Coaching is all I ever wanted to do," he said. "I enjoy watching student-athletes develop into better players on the field but, more importantly, better people off the field. I'm excited to see these young women mature, and I hope to help build a strong competitive program for years to come."



# Spirited SUPPORT

BY JUDY LUNSFORD  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY SCOTT DEAN



**CHARLOTTE SPARKS  
MCCLOSKEY, '64**  
Big Canoe, GA



# THE Consummate CHEERLEADER

Charlotte Sparks McCloskey, '64, became a cheerleader for Young Harris College in 1962, and she has never quit. Even 50 years after graduating, her enthusiasm for her alma mater is as contagious as the chants she once led.

"All alumni can be cheerleaders for Young Harris," she said. "The campus is beautiful, and the College continues to be small enough for everyone to know each other. The reasons I loved Young Harris as a student are still there. It's a delight to stay connected."

Growing up, McCloskey was familiar with YHC because her grandmother, Annelle Segars Sparks, '32, had attended the former Young Harris Academy. McCloskey was convinced on her first visit that YHC was the place for her. "I saw the mountains, everyone was so friendly and I just knew I wanted to go there," she recalled.

The close-knit community was the perfect fit for the North Georgia native. She jumped into campus life with extra pep in her step. Her enthusiasm and high energy earned McCloskey the nickname "Sparkie" around campus. "Even my professors called me that," she said. "Zell Miller, '51, and Clay Dotson still know me as Sparkie."

A cheerleader for four years at Commerce High School, she tried out for YHC's eight-member varsity team. "We were pretty progressive back then because we had both girls and guys on the squad," she noted.

However, she added, everything "was very proper" when the squad traveled to away games under the leadership of men's basketball head coach Luke Rushton, '42. "All the girls rode with Coach Rushton's wife, June, to the games, and the guys traveled in a separate car."

McCloskey will never forget one of the group's trips to Florida. She and her fellow female teammates worried that their legs would look pale next to the opposing team's squad, so they came up with a solution for achieving a quick tan.

"We mixed brown ink with a bottle of Jergens lotion and spread it on our legs," she said. "We *always* had tan legs after that. Looking at the products available today, we probably should have pursued that later on."

Many moments cheering on home turf still stand out as well—hearing the pep band play, leading the crowd in singing the "Alma Mater" and getting the fans on their feet with the cheer "Two Bits, Four Bits."

Off the court, McCloskey was president of the Young Women's Auxiliary and a member of the Susan B. Harris Literary Society, Baptist Student Union, and Georgia Educational Association. Her academic achievements earned her membership in the Phi Theta Kappa national honor society.

During her second year at YHC, she was faced with a tough decision when the basketball team's away games made it difficult to attend rehearsals for the College's theatre productions that she also participated in. "My mom paid for me to attend college, and choosing to pursue drama over cheering saved some money," she explained.

McCloskey poured her energy into the College's fine arts program, serving as secretary for the Delta Gamma Drama Society. Her peers named her Most Valuable Member of the group, and she also received the Best Supporting Actress award.

Her time pursuing theatre at YHC also helped her hone her

public speaking skills. During a speech competition, she recalled freezing in the middle of it. "I suddenly didn't know what came next," she said. "Instead of running off the stage, I stood there and then the words came back and I finished." She took home the top prize the following year.

After graduating from YHC, McCloskey earned a sociology degree from the University of Georgia. Her career took her to North Carolina, where she worked with the state's Department of Social Services—first in youth services and then adoption placement supervision.

She later returned to Georgia, earning a master's degree in elementary and middle grades education from North Georgia College & State University, now the University of North Georgia. She taught in Hall County before serving as a student-teacher supervisor for five years. She later volunteered as a mentor for Dawson County schools.

McCloskey and her husband, Jim, a retired pilot for Delta Air Lines, live in the Big Canoe community in Jasper. Much like her college days, McCloskey has remained highly involved in her local community.



## "THE REASONS I LOVED YOUNG HARRIS AS A STUDENT ARE STILL THERE. IT'S A DELIGHT TO STAY CONNECTED."

She has served as chair of the Big Canoe Chapel's Women's Guild, a representative for Dawson County on the Chestatee Regional Library System Board, a founding board member of Leadership Big Canoe, and an emcee for several special events—and that only represents a handful of her volunteer activities. In 2008, she was named Big Canoe's Woman of the Year.

"I am cutting back on those commitments," she admitted. "We want to spend more time with our grandchildren and continue taking trips to Bar Harbor, Maine, and Charleston, S.C. I will, however, continue to remain involved at YHC."

McCloskey has supported the College generously with her time, leadership and gifts. A member of the College's Alumni Board, she chairs the Homecoming committee and has sponsored alumni gatherings near her home.

In addition to establishing an endowed scholarship, she participates in the annual Class Scholarship Challenge. She supports the College's theatre, music, and art programs through Friends of the Arts, and, of course, athletics through the Mountain Lions Booster Club.

"Every gift to the College is so appreciated, and every gift is used wisely," she said. "A college education is so important, even more so than when I earned my degrees."

McCloskey noted that YHC's move to the National Collegiate Athletic Association's (NCAA) Division II will likely attract even more students to the campus. "When they come, they will be so fortunate to be able to go to Young Harris for four wonderful years," she added. "I say that from my heart."

**WILLIAM "BILL"  
ROBERTS, '52**  
Fayetteville, GA



## Holding COURT

When Dr. Charles R. Clegg accepted the presidency of YHC in 1950, he asked one of his daughter's classmates to attend. Clarkesville High School senior Bill Roberts, '52, accepted the invitation. "It was one of the best decisions I ever made," he said. "I still enjoy coming to YHC to see the changes that have been made and visit my classmates."

YHC was a small school with around 250 students when Roberts arrived. "You knew everybody on campus, and they knew you," the alumnus recalled.

Having played basketball in high school, he wanted to continue at YHC. "I wasn't sure I would make the team, but I did," recalled Roberts, who played center. "We were all friends and had a good time traveling to games all over the state as well as Tennessee and North Carolina."

Roberts was presented with the Sportsmanship Award the year he graduated—a great ending to a season with an impressive 21-7 record. "I played hard but I didn't get into any trouble during the games," he said, adding with a chuckle that his teammates said he received the award because he was always nice to opponents.

The shiny arena basketball court the Mountain Lions play on

today isn't like the one Roberts remembers. "We played in an old wooden building with rusty metal clad on the outside," he said. "The floor wasn't level, and we had two potbelly stoves at alternate corners. That was all the heat we had." However, he does recall one advantage to the setup: "We knew where all the low spots were in the floor and the other teams didn't."

Roberts played under renowned head coach Luke Rushton, '42, who led the Mountain Lions to 462 wins during his 21-year career. "He led by example and I learned from his actions. He was a good teacher, coach and person," said Roberts, who noted that the players kept a busy schedule. "We practiced for two hours in the afternoon and two hours at night during the season. You had to sink 50 free throws daily—and if you didn't, you had to start all over again."

Roberts made time to get involved off the court as a member of the Phi Chi Debating Society, solicitor general of the Student Council and secretary of the prestigious SPAT Club.

While the College didn't have a baseball team during Roberts' student days, he played on a local team managed by fellow alumnus, trustee, and Georgia's future Governor and U.S. Senator Zell Miller, '51. "We would go through the stands taking up money to buy baseballs so we could play," laughed Roberts, who forged a friendship with Miller that's lasted more than half a century.

After YHC, Roberts continued his basketball career at Mercer University. He graduated on a Monday, and joined the Marine Corps that Friday. He served three years of active duty and 11 years of active reserve, attaining the rank of major.

Roberts later continued his education, earning a bachelor of business administration from Georgia State University and a juris doctor degree from Woodrow Wilson College of Law.

In 1958, Roberts met Judy Dobson when she first arrived in Atlanta. After a year of courtship, the couple married in 1959 and celebrated their 55th anniversary this year.

He worked for an Atlanta-based stock and bonds firm before providing 30 years of expertise and leadership in Georgia as an esteemed public administrator. His career revolved around helping to build things—literally—to benefit Georgia. Roberts worked for the State School Building Authority before becoming executive secretary and director of the construction division at the Georgia State Financing and Investment Commission.

Since retiring in 1994, Roberts has remained busy providing valuable leadership at YHC and other institutions. He currently serves on YHC's Board of Trustees as a member of the finance, development, and athletics committees and is a former treasurer of YHC's Alumni Foundation. In 2014, YHC recognized his achievements with the Distinguished Alumni Award for Lifetime Career Achievement.

He and Judy regularly support scholarships and athletics programs, in addition to the College's Class Scholarship Challenge, Capital Campaign, and Clay Dotson Open golf tournament. "Someone paid my way, and I feel I owe it to help others," said Roberts, who attended YHC on a work-study scholarship.

These days, the Roberts can be found frequenting campus to take part in Alumni Weekend and Homecoming festivities or cheer on the Mountain Lions.

"Many exciting things have happened at YHC in the last few years, and it's been a pleasure to witness it all firsthand," said Roberts. "I want to help Young Harris continue to be a great small College, and I hope other alumni and friends will do whatever they can to help YHC progress and flourish."



# Cheering **ON HOME TURF**

When Jane Peeples Stanfield, '75, attended YHC, intramurals reigned supreme. Today, NCAA Division II athletics play a major role on the campus in North Georgia. As a trustee and alumna, Stanfield is not only excited about her alma mater's athletics programming, but she's also committed to it becoming one of the best in the nation.

The Dalton resident credited the College's transformation into a Division II institution to YHC President Cathy Cox and her team. "Cathy is a visionary," said Stanfield. "I'm in awe of her and all that she's been able to accomplish. There's a great group of administrators who totally believe in YHC and have charisma that draws you into their vision."

Stanfield believes sports create synergy on a college campus. Rallying behind teams builds a greater sense of community and connectivity for today's students.

"In order to draw students, you have to have something for them to identify with, like team spirit," Stanfield explained. "You attract

more student-athletes with a program that's small because it also offers a sense of community. I realize schools without athletics might disagree with me, but I've watched what's happened since Young Harris brought back basketball and added new sports."

A sense of community is what attracted Stanfield to YHC more than 40 years ago. While visiting her brother, Alan Peeples, '74, on campus, she saw even then what continues to be at the heart of the College today—a true place of belonging.

"The campus didn't look anything like it does now. It was very, very small," she said. "You didn't get lost in a crowd; people knew each other. Everybody was friendly with a close-knit campus community. And just looking at the beauty around the campus was so peaceful and serene. It was easy to make that choice."

Though she has an abiding love for sports, Stanfield called herself a "non-athlete" and credited her love of sports to her two younger brothers who played many sports growing up. "I once went out for softball, and I sprained my knee the very first day," she laughed.

Yet, for all her naysaying about her athleticism, Stanfield is known in her hometown for her dancing skills. "The only reason I know I can dance is because I won Dancing Stars of Dalton two years ago," she said. In addition to taking home the signature sparkling mirror ball trophy, Stanfield helped raise more than \$50,000 for the Alzheimer's Association while participating in the annual fundraising event.

The commitment to hard work she demonstrates at her family's company, Textile Management Associates, where she serves as administration and cash management specialist, shines through to her volunteer activities.

"My dad has always worked hard," she said of her father, Shelby Peeples, who successfully built the family's business. "He taught us that hard work is what you have to do to be happy with yourself. You have to know that you've put forth the effort and have done your very best, and then you can be content with yourself."

It was with that steadfast commitment to hard work that Stanfield accepted an appointment to YHC's Board of Trustees in 2013. "Being a trustee is an honor, but it's a heavy responsibility," she said. "I take this role very seriously."

Appointed to the Board's athletics and properties committees, Stanfield has been able to see President Cox's vision for the campus become a reality. She's proud that her family's company was selected to help make part of that come to life by supporting YHC's athletics program.

When planning YHC's new soccer and lacrosse venue, the College opted for synthetic turf. YHC's Director of Athletics Randy Dunn learned that Textile Management Associates owned AstroTurf®. Having also grown up in Dalton "where everyone knows each other," Dunn contacted Stanfield.

In 2013, the YHC Soccer and Lacrosse Field became one of around 200 playing fields, stadiums, parks, and even cities around the world where Textile Management Associates installed AstroTurf® that year. YHC's field is outlined in "YHC purple" and features the Mountain Lion logo at center field. "Oh, my word, it looks good," said Stanfield.

With the College's recent move to the NCAA's Division II, Stanfield foresees YHC's future becoming even brighter. "To encourage that level of involvement of quality athletes, you have to have a great team, great administrators who support each other and a great program," she said. "And Young Harris has all of that."

With the enthusiasm of an avid fan, she mused about the future of the landscape of her alma mater. "I can foresee the whole town continuing to bloom," she said. "Truly, the sky is the limit." ■



**JANE PEEPLES  
STANFIELD, '75**  
Dalton, GA

## CLASSES WHO SURPASSED \$1,000:

1930	1961	1971
1947	1962	1975
1952	1963	1979
1955	1964	1982
1956	1965	1987
1957	1966	1988
1958	1967	1991
1959	1969	1994
1960	1970	2003

*Classes who have consecutively achieved their goal are denoted in green.*

- Class of **1952** won the challenge
- **\$89,615** received total
- **27** classes reached **\$1,000** goal
- **12** more classes achieved the goal than last year
- **13** classes have consistently achieved the goal

## AN UNFORGETTABLE IMPACT

Young Harris College's annual Class Scholarship Challenge is the perfect opportunity for alumni to band together and contribute to the success of YHC students like Alex Chance, a senior early childhood education major from Dacula.

"I know that the scholarships I benefit from are made possible because of the generosity of others," said Chance, who is a member of the Sigma Beta Sigma sorority and Student Professional Association of Georgia Educators (SPAGE). "I'm so thankful for what others have done to support me, and I will not forget the impact these contributions have had on my education."

The 2013-2014 challenge, which wrapped up in July, saw record numbers of participation and first-time donors with 56 classes raising more than \$89,000 for student scholarships. The Class of 1952 was the winner of the annual campaign for the third year in a row. The Class of 1947 and the Class of 1962 finished in second and third place, respectively.

"This is a great way for alumni to get involved with giving," said Class Coordinator Rudy Harrell, '71, of Atlanta, whose class earned bragging rights for having the most participation this year. "Most are not aware of the importance of contributing to the College regardless of the amount. Many foundations take into consideration the percentage of alumni support when deciding to give to an institution."

Twenty-seven classes surpassed the \$1,000 goal, and the total raised represented an increase of more than \$30,000 from 2012-2013—all of which directly impacts student scholarships and helps new generations have the same transformative educational experience so many alumni have shared.

"YHC contributed greatly to my development, and I want to help other students have the same opportunity I had," explained Harrell. "The Class Scholarship Challenge is just one of the ways I can give back."

The 2014-2015 Class Scholarship Challenge will kick off in January. Alumni interested in participating can make a gift now marked for the Class Scholarship Challenge online at [yhc.edu/giving](http://yhc.edu/giving), or call the Office of Advancement at (800) 241-3754 or (706) 379-5173.



**TOP** April Hobbs, a senior business and public policy major from Thomson, chatted with Shirley Miller, '54, of Young Harris, during the annual Scholarship Luncheon held on campus this fall. **BOTTOM** Rev. James Turpen, '57, and his wife, Catherine, of Tallulah Falls, posed with scholarship recipient Jade Smith, a senior mathematics major from Clayton.



## YHC ALUMNI HONOR BELOVED LIBRARIAN

### THE PAPA RICH PROJECT RAISES FUNDS THROUGH GRASSROOTS EFFORT

When Young Harris College alumni recall their time in the Enchanted Valley, the memory of former Head Librarian Robert "Papa Rich" Richardson is often one that stands out. That's why several members of the Young Alumni Council

banded together to honor the former SPAT Club and Quantrek Club advisor by organizing a grassroots giving initiative aptly named "The Papa Rich Project."

"To say Papa Rich was bigger than life is true both metaphorically and close enough to being true literally," said Jeff Doke, '92, of Brunswick. "He was a storyteller, a philosopher and a voice of reason."

The group decided to memorialize Papa Rich by raising funds to name the circulation desk in the new Zell and Shirley Miller Library in his honor. The alumni created a Facebook page dedicated to the

initiative to track their success and keep people engaged.

"A lot of people came together to make this happen," explained Skip Breeden, '99, of Sandy Springs. "In fact, so many people contributed to this project that it became more of an organic, grassroots movement than a centrally planned and organized effort."

The effort saw a substantial amount of first-time donors to the College, and Breeden attributed that to Papa Rich's deep connections throughout the YHC family. Now, a new generation of YHC students will get to learn about his legacy.

"This project was successful because it connected giving with people's personal relationships with Papa Rich. It's important that his contributions to the YHC community—which were substantial—be remembered," said Breeden.

"You always knew when Papa Rich was around and you were always glad when he was," added Doke. "To us, he will never be forgotten."



# ANNUAL CLAY DOTSON OPEN OFFERS REWARDING CHALLENGE FOR GOLFERS

The annual Clay Dotson Open golf tournament to benefit student scholarships at Young Harris College was held on May 19 at Brasstown Valley Resort. Around 160 players helped raise over \$81,000 while enjoying morning and afternoon flights followed by an awards ceremony.

More than 90 percent of YHC students receive some form of financial assistance, and all proceeds from the Clay Dotson Open are used toward scholarships for YHC students.

Prize categories included overall winners for each flight as well as second and third place for each flight, longest drive, and closest to the pin. The tournament also featured the annual Alumni Team Challenge.

This marked the 15th year Gene Clopton, an avid golfer and friend of the College from Young Harris, participated in the tournament. Clopton first met the tournament's namesake, Professor Emeritus of History, former Academic Dean and interim President Clay Dotson, Ph.D., in 1995. The two began golfing together and have been close friends ever since.

"The event began as a successful alumni golf tournament to raise money for scholarships," said Clopton. "Clay does his part to participate in organizations that promote the College and local area. His greatest attribute is his ability to contribute without a need for personal recognition."

Winning a trophy is quite a feat, as the tournament draws talented and dedicated golfers. Despite the challenge, the ultimate goal for all participants is contributing to the success of students like Kelsey Britt, '14, of Douglasville.

"My scholarships are allowing me to fulfill my goal of becoming a teacher," said Britt, who recently graduated in May and teaches second grade for Fulton County Schools. "I made wonderful friends and memories in those gorgeous mountains. My experiences and the knowledge I obtained at YHC will remain with me."

**The next Clay Dotson Open will be held on Monday, May 18. For player registration and sponsorship opportunities, visit [yhc.edu/claydotsonopen](http://yhc.edu/claydotsonopen) or contact Director of Development Mark Dotson, '88, at (706) 379-5355 or [mcdotson@yhc.edu](mailto:mcdotson@yhc.edu).**

Dr. Clay Dotson (second from right) presented the Alumni Team Challenge award to Scott Rich, '94, Andy Burks, '94, Rick Davenport, '71, and Matthew Mashburn, '95, during the 2014 Clay Dotson Open golf tournament.



## YOUNG HARRIS ANNUAL FUND IMPACTS STUDENT SUCCESS

Each year, thousands of gifts—ranging from \$5 to \$500,000 and beyond—to the Young Harris Annual Fund make a combined, immediate impact. This collective source of support helps Young Harris College fund student scholarships, support outstanding faculty, make classroom equipment upgrades and underwrite new innovative programming.

For YHC trustee and alumnus Jimmy Tallent, '70, of Blairsville, giving to the Annual Fund allows him to directly affect student success.

"Our young people are the most valuable resource we have, and by investing in their futures we let them know we're proud of them and believe in their success," said Tallent, who noted the significant impact YHC has had on his own life. "YHC prepares students academically as well as with life lessons that stay with them forever."

Only 50 percent of YHC's operating costs are covered by the cost of tuition. The College counts on Annual Fund gifts as the very foundation for all other giving. They provide a vital margin of excellence and give the College flexibility to spend where the need is greatest.

As the College continues to build on its long-standing legacy, it's crucial for alumni and friends to play an essential role in helping YHC take its place among the most competitive four-year colleges in the nation. Giving to the Annual Fund does just that.

"I'm very proud of the College's reputation of being one of the finest schools in the South with outstanding faculty in a nurturing, wholesome environment," said Tallent. "Supporting up-and-coming students through the Annual Fund is one of the most valuable investments I could ever make."

Gifts to the Annual Fund can be applied to a specific division, department, athletic team or program. All support—in any area, in any amount—counts toward YHC's success.

**The 2014-2015 Young Harris Annual Fund drive ends on June 30, so it's not too late to make your gift count. For more information, visit [yhc.edu/giving](http://yhc.edu/giving) or contact the Office of Advancement at (800) 241-3754 or (706) 379-5173.**



ALUMNI WEEKEND 2014:

# YOUR YHC ROOTS



PHOTOGRAPHY BY SCOTT DEAN  
AND PHILIP SAMPSON, '84

HUNDREDS OF YOUNG HARRIS COLLEGE ALUMNI, THEIR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS TRAVELED TO THE ENCHANTED VALLEY THIS SPRING TO GET IN TOUCH WITH THEIR YHC ROOTS DURING ALUMNI WEEKEND 2014, APRIL 25-27.

“What I like most about Alumni Weekend is that no matter how many years separate our alumni classes, we all love being together,” said Alumni Board Secretary Tommy Drake, '82, of Blairsville. “Our common bond is our love for YHC—and our love for each other.”





**OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP TO BOTTOM** Alumni enjoyed coffee and a talk by author and educator Ken Robbins, '64, Ph.D., on Friday afternoon. ■ The weekend's festivities included a memorable service in Susan B. Harris Chapel. ■ The Young Alumni Council sponsored the All-Class Social. ■ During GreenFest, students promoted various clubs and Greek organizations on the plaza. ■ The weekend kicked off with an ice cream social at the Byron Herbert Reece Farm and Heritage Center. **TOP TO BOTTOM** Alumni from across the generations gathered on the plaza. ■ Alumni chatted with retired and emeriti faculty and staff and President Cathy Cox over coffee in the Campus Gate Art Gallery. ■ Clara Erwin, Paula Mitchell McClung, '61, and Frank Erwin, '61, caught up during the Half Century Club Dinner and Alumni Awards Ceremony. ■ Students and alumni mingled at the Dorcas/SPAT breakfast. ■ A casual networking lunch allowed students to receive guidance from alumni for the college-to-work transition. ■ Alumni Association President Rob Murray, '75, of Young Harris, addressed alumni during the College Update.





# ALUMNI AWARDS



**Marc McAfee, '07**  
**Smyrna, GA**  
YOUNG ALUMNI  
ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Given to an alumnus or alumna who has graduated within the last 15 years and has excelled in his or her career



**Rev. Fred Whitley, '66**  
**Young Harris, GA**  
ARTEMAS LESTER AWARD

Given to an alumnus or alumna in recognition of a lifetime dedicated to ministry and a commitment to Christian service



**Dr. Margaret "Peggy"**  
**Pleasants Thrasher, '59**  
**Tiger, GA**  
IUVENTUS AWARD

Given to an alumnus or alumna who has made significant contributions to the education of our youth



**Henry "Hank" Aaron**  
**Atlanta, GA**  
NANCY LOUISE HAYNES STEPHENS  
SANDERSON ROBERTSON  
OUTSTANDING FRIEND AWARD

Given to a friend of YHC who has dedicated his or her time, resources and energy to ensure a successful future for the College



**The Duckworth Family**  
YHC FAMILY OF THE YEAR AWARD  
Given to a family associated with YHC in recognition of their special connection to the College



**Dorothy "Dot" Lowe O'Dillon Sayer, '45**  
**Rome, GA**  
SUSAN B. HARRIS AWARD  
Given to an outstanding alumna who has provided strong support for YHC



**William "Bill" Roberts, '52**  
**Fayetteville, GA**  
DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD  
FOR LIFETIME CAREER ACHIEVEMENT  
Given to an alumnus or alumna who has demonstrated great success in his or her career following a successful foundation laid by the College

The weekend kicked off with an ice cream social on Friday afternoon that took place at the Byron Herbert Reece Farm and Heritage Center. Designated part of the Southern Literary Trail, the farm serves as a virtual showcase of Appalachian farm life in the first half of the 20th century when the Reece family tilled the land as subsistence farmers.

The weekend also included several new events. On Friday, the Office of Alumni Services partnered with the Student Success Center to host a casual networking lunch that allowed students to receive guidance from alumni for the college-to-work transition.

"Both alumni and students were eager to participate in this event, which allowed them to bond through discussion of career interests," said Student Success Center Director Jaime Miller. "Many alumni took the opportunity to share advice and words of wisdom rooted in their personal career journey, while others encouraged students to consider their places of employment for internships and positions after college."

Also on Friday, alumni had the chance to chat over coffee with esteemed educator, author, and alumnus Ken Robbins, '64, Ph.D., and YHC Associate Professor Emeritus of English Janice Moore. Robbins most recently served as director of the School of the Performing Arts at Louisiana Tech University and has received several awards for his writing.

The highlight of Friday evening was the Half Century Club Dinner followed by the Alumni Awards Ceremony at the Recreation and Fitness Center. Alumni from across all generations gathered to reminisce and honor a group of outstanding alumni and friends. Members of the Class of 1964 were also recognized as special guests of the evening in commemoration of their 50th reunion.

Saturday's festivities kicked off with the annual Dorcas/SPAT breakfast, a morning coffee with President Cathy Cox and retired and emeriti faculty and staff at the Campus Gate Art Gallery, and a College Update presented by Alumni Association President Rob Murray, '75, and President Cox.

Alumni then enjoyed the beautiful weather outside on the plaza at the Alumni GreenFest that included children's activities and table displays from students promoting various clubs and Greek organizations. Many alumni also attended a memorable service in Susan B. Harris Chapel.

Alumni had the opportunity to enjoy cultural events on campus including shows at O. Wayne Rollins Planetarium, the Senior Thesis Exhibition at the Campus Gate Art Gallery and Theatre Young Harris's season finale of the revolutionary rock opera Rent.





**TOP TO BOTTOM** The Class of 1964 got together to celebrate their 50th reunion. ■ The Class of 1988 congregated at The Ridges Resort & Marina in Hiawassee during the weekend. ■ Old friends caught up during the Class of 1964's special reception held on campus. ■ The Class of 1964 mingled in the Glenn Auditorium lobby. ■ The Class of 1974 gathered near campus for a fun reunion party.



On Saturday, alumni got a sneak peek of the first floor of the new 121,000-square-foot Rollins Campus Center. There was also an acoustic jam session for alumni on the lawn as the All-Class Social sponsored by the Young Alumni Council kicked off.

The weekend's festivities wrapped up Sunday morning with a worship service at Sharp Memorial United Methodist Church led by YHC trustee and alumnus Rev. Dr. Don Harp, '61.

"My hope is that alumni and students felt a sense of YHC pride while attending Alumni Weekend," said Director of Alumni Services Dana Ensley, '97. "The schedule was packed with exciting events that truly reminded alumni of their roots here at the College." ■

Remember When...

**YOUNG HARRIS  
COLLEGE ALUMNI  
WEEKEND 2015**

**SAVE THE DATE**  
**Friday-Sunday,**  
**April 24-26**

- Make plans to attend the **Half Century Club Dinner and Alumni Awards Ceremony** on Friday evening, where special VIP tables will be available for Class of 1965 members.
- Nominate alumni and friends for the **2015 annual alumni awards** online @ [yhc.edu/alumniawards](http://yhc.edu/alumniawards) or contact the Office of Alumni Services at (706) 379-5334 or [alumni@yhc.edu](mailto:alumni@yhc.edu). Deadline for nominations is Friday, Jan. 9.
- Celebrate a reunion or just mingle with classmates on Saturday from 4-6 p.m. at the **All-Class Social**. Complementary hors d'oeuvres and beverages will be provided.
- Enjoy **campus events** like Mountain Lions baseball games, the Theatre Young Harris season finale Good Boys and True, and the Senior Thesis Art Exhibition.
- Start planning your **milestone class reunion** by contacting the Office of Alumni Services.

A detailed schedule and registration form will follow in early spring.

Find out more about Alumni Weekend @ [yhc.edu/alumniweekend](http://yhc.edu/alumniweekend).

Start the conversation using the hashtag #YHCAW15.

View more photos of Alumni Weekend 2014 @ [flickr.com/youngharriscollege](https://www.flickr.com/photos/youngharriscollege/).

Watch highlights from the event.





# CLASS NOTES

Share your news with other Young Harris College alumni and friends.

Send achievements, announcements and photos to: Young Harris College Class Notes  
P.O. Box 275 Young Harris, GA 30582 | alumni@yhc.edu | yhc.edu/alumni

## ACHIEVEMENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

### 1950s

**Homer Overstreet, Jr., '57**, recently published a book of poems, titled "Poems to Read to Your Cat," which is now available on Amazon.

### 1960s



**Charles W. Clowdis, '64**, of Monteagle, Tenn., addressed more than 400 metals industry executives during the Metals Service Center Institute's Economic Summit held in Schaumburg, Ill., Sept. 7-9. Clowdis is managing director of global transportation at IHS Economics and serves as IHS's Transport Industry leader.

**Larry Demby, '63**, and his family meet at Coosa Valley Church in Rome twice a month to knit for Quilts

of Valor, a program that produces quality hand-made quilts for veterans. "I never thought when my wife taught me to quilt, I could find a way to pay it forward," he said.

**John Parmele, '62**, recently published a 25-page booklet titled "Management in a Nutshell" that condenses hundreds of management terms and applications into a handy, easy-to-read and understand "desktop" guide for management students as well as new and seasoned managers.

**Ruth Woolley Sapp, '67**, is organizing an Alaskan cruise for the Class of 1967 in May 2015. Those interested should contact the Office of Alumni Services at (706) 379-5334.

### 1970s



**John Beverstein, '78**, and **Marianne Nail Beverstein, '79**, were recently recognized as one of five finalists for

the Small Business of the Year Award from the Columbia, Mo., Chamber of Commerce for 2014. The couple has owned and operated their franchise of Honey Baked Ham there for almost 15 years.

**Juli Sibley, '79**, recently published a book titled "Earth Friendly Fabric Design" that is available on Amazon and Kindle.

### 1980s



**Timothy Miller, '83**, spent the summer with his wife, Brandi, in Ghana working as a volunteer host at the Accra Baptist Guest House, a nonprofit bed and breakfast owned by the International Mission Board that's used to house missionaries traveling in West Africa.

**R. Todd Smith, '89**, director of campus store services at the Loch Shop at Clayton State University, was named a trustee on the board of the National Association of College Stores, the professional



**Dr. Jennifer Cash Scrivner, '84**, was named the 2014 Georgia PTA District 13 Elementary School Principal of the Year. The organization, which represents the PTA units and councils of Cherokee, Forsyth, Gordon and Whitfield counties, presents annual awards to recognize outstanding educators. Dr. Scrivner works at Clark Creek Elementary School STEM Academy and resides in Woodstock with her husband, Gary, and son, Jack.

trade association that represents the nation's collegiate retailing industry.

**Michael Thomas, '80**, recently relocated to Washington, D.C., to continue his civilian government work for the U.S. Department of Defense after living overseas for 16 years. He spent more than a decade in Stuttgart, Germany, as a soldier and then as a government civilian.

### 1990s

**Mark Hodges, '91**, received the Media Award from the Greater Augusta Arts Council that annually recognizes outstanding members of the Augusta community for their support and contributions to the arts. Hodges is creative services director for WRDW-TV in Augusta.

**Brian Johnson, '94**, was appointed director of statewide planning and environmental management for the Georgia Department of Community Affairs.

**Amanda Nolen Seals, '94**, and her husband, Paul, have been selected as program chairs for the 2014 class of Leadership Georgia. They graduated from the program in 2013. Amanda was also selected to serve as vice president for administration for the Junior League of Cobb-Marietta for the second year in a row.

### 2000s

**Brian Creasman, '01**, was appointed superintendent of Fleming County Schools in Kentucky.

**Presley Dyer, '07**, recently earned her master of library science degree from Valdosta State University.

**Ginia Magers, '02**, obtained her master of library and information science degree from the University of North Texas. She was also promoted to evening supervisor at the Zell and Shirley Miller Library on the YHC campus.



**Dr. Elizabeth Fincher Nevil, '57**, was named the 25th recipient of the J.W. Fanning Humanitarian of the Year Award by the Athens Regional Foundation. The award recognizes individuals who have high personal values in their own life while making significant contributions to Athens Regional through their time, interest, and commitment to the medical center and the community it serves. A valued member of the Athens Regional Auxiliary, Dr. Nevil has served in numerous leadership positions including president in 2004-2005.

Continued on page 70



## REMEMBERING **Elois Anderson, '45**



Young Harris College alumna Elois Anderson, '45, made an indelible impact on both her alma mater and the entire region surrounding the campus.

A Hiawassee native, she graduated as valedictorian from both Towns County High School and YHC. Anderson was highly involved at the College as editor of the *Enotah Echoes* newspaper, French

Club president, and a member of the Sigma Beta Sigma sorority, Schubert Music Club, choir, and Alpha Honor Society.

A true pioneer as one of the first female bank presidents in the state, she served as board chair of the Bank of Hiawassee before retiring in 2011 after 64 dedicated years. Anderson was also a board member for the Georgia Bankers Association.

After the loss of her beloved husband in 1983, Anderson succeeded him as a director of the Blue Ridge Mountain Electric Membership Corporation for more than 30 years.

She was selected as a Gracious Lady of Georgia, a group of highly achieved ladies dedicated to business involvement in their community and church services. She volunteered much of her time and resources with the Georgia Mountain Fair, following in the footsteps of her husband who served as the fair's president for over two decades.

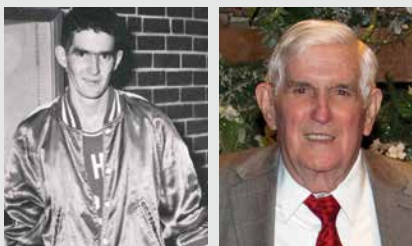
Anderson held many key roles in the community as president of the Towns County Chamber of Commerce, secretary of the Appalachian Education and Historical Society Board of Directors, and a board member for the Towns and Union counties branch of Habitat for Humanity.

She assisted in many capacities as a member of Hayesville First United Methodist Church in Hayesville, N.C., chairing various committees and teaching Sunday school.

Anderson supported her alma mater through the years, contributing to the Friends of the Arts program and other funds. In 1996, she was awarded the prestigious Young Harris College Medallion from YHC.

She passed away peacefully on Feb. 19 at her residence in Warne, N.C.

## **A Tribute to John Adcock, '57** | 1933-2014



Young Harris College alumnus John Adcock, '57, shone brightly throughout his life both on and off the court—a talented athlete in his youth who became a father figure to many as a celebrated coach in his later years.

As a high school junior and senior, Adcock played basketball with the Young Harris Junior College team while attending the Young Harris Academy. He led the team in rebounding and was an All-State performer during each of his four seasons at Young Harris.

Adcock received a basketball scholarship from the University of Alabama. He played

one season, spent three years in military service, and returned to Alabama for his senior season as a team captain and rebounding leader.

Adcock began his coaching career at Walter Wellborn High School in 1963 and never left. He served as the varsity basketball coach for 15 years and was named Calhoun County Coach of the Year three times. He retired as a teacher in 1996, but continued to work as a substitute teacher and volunteer.

In 2005, the gymnasium at Walter Wellborn High School, where he hit a career milestone of more than 400 wins, was renamed in his honor.

Last year, YHC honored Adcock as an inaugural member of the Athletics Hall of Fame. He was also a member of the inaugural class of the Coweta Georgia Sports Hall of Fame in 2003 and was inducted into the Calhoun County Sports Hall of Fame in

## IN MEMORIAM

**James H. Abercrombie, '57**  
May 14, 2014

**Grady S. Adams, '61**  
June 1, 2014

**John W. Adcock, '57**  
June 10, 2014

**Bera Banks, '68**  
Oct. 8, 2014

**Michael S. Barnes, '59**  
March 17, 2014

**Louise Bolton, '46**  
May 30, 2014

**Eunice Brown, '36**  
Oct. 8, 2014

**Martin O. Burrell, '48**  
March 13, 2014

**Kitty Caldwell, '54**  
July 9, 2014

**Bobbie J. Chancey, '58**  
Sept. 23, 2014

**Catherine L. Chapman, '90**  
June 11, 2014

**Martha J. Coffee, '45**  
July 12, 2014

**Mary A. Cole, '83**  
July 2, 2014

**Maine Compton, '42**  
March 16, 2014

**Wesley A. Edwards, '57**  
May 10, 2014

**Agnes C. Hale, '40**  
May 21, 2014

**Mary Lois Godsey, '45**  
June 10, 2014

**Hubert Handy, '51**  
July 25, 2014

**Elizabeth Harn, '39**  
July 13, 2014

**Jack Hogsed, '64**  
Aug. 31, 2014

**James H. Holcomb, '62**  
May 23, 2014

**James R. Huitt, '75**  
July 23, 2014

**Stephen A. Johnson, '78**  
June 1, 2014

**Robert L. Kennerly, '63**  
May 7, 2014

**Leslie A. Locke, '89**  
July 11, 2014

**Charlene Love, '42**  
Sept. 25, 2014

**Henry E. McLain, '65**  
June 6, 2014

**Edward F. McLeroy, '56**  
Oct. 13, 2014

**Susie R. Miles, '40**  
April 12, 2014

**Cynthia L. Nelson, '80**  
April 23, 2014

**Lonnie L. Pitts, '56**  
Sept. 4, 2014

**Robert E. Sherrer, '64**  
Oct. 15, 2014

**Peggy Veal, '51**  
July 9, 2014

**Jack W. Wilhite, '77**  
April 30, 2014

**Owen B. Williams, '61**  
July 22, 2014

Alabama in 2012.

Adcock was a longtime member of First Presbyterian Church of Anniston, where he directed a summer recreation program for more than 40 years. The recreation building there now bears his name. He was also passionate about collecting funds for muscular dystrophy research.

A devoted family man, Adcock was married to his wife, Sue, for 51 years. He had three daughters, eight grandchildren and one great-grandson.

He passed away on June 10 at the age of 81.

Continued from page 68

**Jason K. Norton, '02**, an independent financial advisor for Norton Financial, Inc., in Villa Rica, recently attended the LPL Financial SUMMIT 2014 conference in Monte Carlo, Monaco. The event is for the highest tier of advisors at LPL Financial LLC, the nation's largest independent broker-dealer. Norton, who resides in Douglasville, has served as a financial services professional for more than 10 years. "Attending events like this help me remain on the forefront of industry trends, and continue to develop the breadth and depth of my services," he said.



**Grier Fricks, '08**, of Kailua, Hawaii, earned national recognition in the *Journal of Paddlesports Education* as their Instructor of the Month. She works as an education coordinator and kayak guide for the Kama'aina Kids program at He'eia State Park.



**Jessica Keaton, '11**, was awarded San José State University's Ida Tay Sacs Scholarship that is presented to an outstanding creative writing graduate student by the English faculty.

**Eva Lou Groves Shuman, '60**, and her husband, Daniel, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary with a reception in their beautiful home in Reidsville on May 25. More than 125 friends and family dropped by the reception to celebrate the happy occasion.

based out of Wisconsin. She works in the Vinings office.



**Catherine Werner Hicks, '37**, celebrated her 96th birthday on Sept. 13 in LaGrange with a close-knit group of friends as well as her daughter and son-in-law. Fellow alumna Raye Yearwood Smith, '58, gifted Hicks with an orchid to celebrate the occasion.



**Casie Jones, '08**, and Brandon McDowell were married on Feb. 15 in her hometown of Locust Grove where the pair resides and Jones works as a middle school media specialist.

## 2010s

**Misty Barber, '11**, was nominated for the 2014 Metropolitan Atlanta Theater Award in the Major Supporting Actress in a Musical category for her performance as Inga in *Young Frankenstein* at OnStage Atlanta last year.

## ENGAGEMENTS, MARRIAGES & BIRTHS

## 1960s

**Rev. David, '60**, and **Harriette Haygood, '60**, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on June 14 by taking a cruise down the Danube River. They were married at Centenary United Methodist Church in Macon.

## 2000s



**Katy Conlon, '02**, married Bradley Roberts on Nov. 8 in Dahlonega. The couple resides in the Old Fourth Ward area of Atlanta. Conlon is the marketing manager for the Real Estate division of OnCourse Learning, an online education company,

**Amy Edwards, '05**, and **Eric McConnell, '01**, were wed on July 19 at Susan B. Harris Chapel on the YHC campus.



**Hank Haynes, '05**, and **Lindsey Watson, '01**, of Clermont, welcomed a daughter, Sarah Graycen, on June 13.



**Carrie Johnson Vanderver, '05**, and her husband, Jeff, of Eatonton, are pleased to announce the birth of their son, Wells Archie, on Sept. 11. He was 7 pounds, 10 ounces and 20 inches long.



**Kelsey Cunningham, '12**, and **Wezly Barnard, '13**, got engaged during YHC's Alumni Weekend festivities on April 26. Barnard set up a scavenger hunt that took Cunningham to some of their favorite spots on campus before proposing on the Soccer and Lacrosse Field where the pair made many memories as soccer goalies. They were congratulated by former teammates who will be in attendance at their wedding on May 16, 2015. Cunningham is a marketing specialist at the Georgia World Congress Center, while Barnard works as an admissions counselor at YHC.





# THE LAST WORD

## Overheard@YHC:

Athletics are a major part of the Young Harris College experience. We took to Facebook to ask fans and former athletes to share their favorite sports-related memory as well as what makes them proud to be a Mountain Lion.

## SPORTS STORIES

My whole time playing softball—but especially making it to nationals and placing top 10 in the nation. **Meagan Borum, '05**

Playing clarinet in the pep band for basketball games. **Judy Elder Wofford, '64**

Basketball games in the mid-1960s. We really had a good time, and a great majority of the students attended. Where else would we go? I think we were a lot like the Cameron Crazies at Duke. **Freddy Lockman, '66**

In 1994, I scored the winning goal to beat the No. 2-ranked team Andrew College in the biggest upset at the time in YHC history. **Ahrash Farhangi, '94**

Traveling with the tennis team on the bus together watching Top Gun or listening to Fleetwood Mac. **Kimberly Price Welling, '04**

## MOUNTAIN LION PRIDE

The teachers, Theatre Department, small size, location and local Greek life! **Jillianne McCarson, '17**

Our ethics, drive, determination, character, ambition and a never-ending search for wisdom. We will never forget what you have given us, YHC—and we will strive to share your gifts in all that we do. Go Mountain Lions! **Joshua Dyer, '00**

The caliber of students that attend YHC and the sense of community between students and staff. **Carla MacDonald, '95**

My Susan B sisters! **Ashley Eschbach, '15**



Join the conversation @ [facebook.com/youngharriscollege](https://facebook.com/youngharriscollege).

## Athletic Artifacts

History can be found in nearly every corner of campus. Some of it even lingers in the closets, attics and display cases of alumni who hold onto cherished memorabilia from their days at YHC. Many former student-athletes were kind enough to donate these treasures to the College so that they could be displayed in places like the Office of Alumni Services and Recreation and Fitness Center for all generations of Mountain Lions to enjoy. Here are some of the stories of these athletic artifacts.

1. Cheerleaders showed off their purple pride by wearing letter jackets like this one from 1958.
2. Lee Ramsey, '61, earned his varsity letter while helping the men's basketball team become state champions and Region 8 champions with an impressive 28-1 record.
3. This baseball was signed by the 1959 Phi Chi fraternity intramural team.
4. This basketball jersey belonged to Bill Green, '58, of the 1956-1957 state champion Mountain Lions basketball team.
5. This copy of the "Alma Mater" is signed by the alumnus who wrote the words and music, Allen C. Smith, '25.





Office of Alumni Services  
P.O. Box 275  
Young Harris, GA 30582

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# LUKE WANTS YOU

## TO JOIN THE MOUNTAIN LIONS BOOSTER CLUB

The steadfast support of this spirited group helps YHC athletics achieve its goals—from providing student-athlete scholarships to upgrading athletic facilities. Contribute to a specific athletic program or project—or give to the general fund to make a difference in the areas of greatest need.



Dare to make a difference and become a booster today. (706) 379-5355 | [yhcathletics.com/boosterclub](http://yhcathletics.com/boosterclub)