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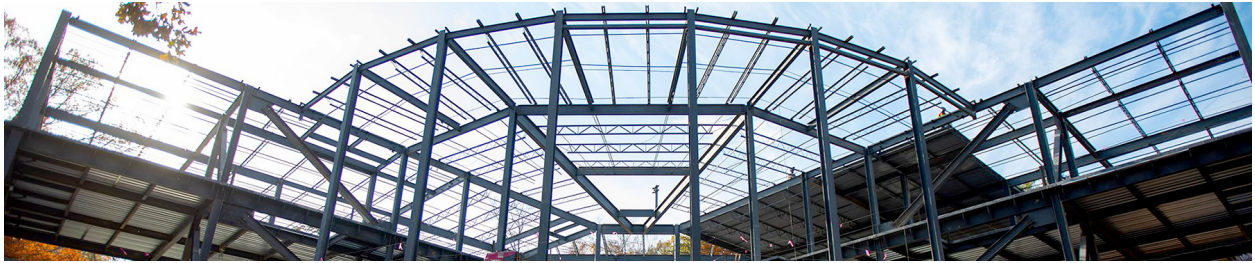
11-2019

## **November 2019 QuickNotes**

Southern Adventist University

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## November 2019 QuickNotes

# Campus Life

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### **SOUTHERN WELCOMES NEW VICE PRESIDENT FOR SPIRITUAL LIFE**

Southern Adventist University is pleased to welcome Joseph Khabbaz as the vice president for spiritual life. Along with serving as campus chaplain, Khabbaz will help prioritize Southern's spiritual goals through this newly restructured position.



“For some time, I hoped for an administrative position focused on spiritual life that would provide direct input into top decision-making processes,” said President David Smith, PhD. “I believe that spiritual life is at the heart of everything that is important to us at Southern and that we are best served by waving the flag of spiritual life as high as we can. I know that the focus on spiritual life will be greatly enhanced through Joseph’s ministry and that our employees and

students will be effectively ministered to through the work he and his team in the Chaplain's Office will provide.”

Khabbaz was born and raised in Sydney, Australia, where he worked as an accountant before attending seminary at Andrews University. He has years of experience working with young people, including his most recent position as the youth and young adult pastor at Sligo Seventh-day Adventist Church in Takoma Park, Maryland. His hobbies include international mission trips, basketball, and spending time with friends and family, including his uncle, retired Southern religion professor Philip Samaan, DMin.

“I'm excited to serve young adults as they matriculate through Southern,” Khabbaz said. “This is a time of life where they will be making critical decisions that will set their future direction in areas such as career, finances, friendships, and spirituality. As faculty and staff go through life alongside students, I pray that both we and the students will be transformed through a vibrant relationship with God.”

Khabbaz assumed his responsibilities in the dual role of chaplain and administrator in mid-October.

—by Rachel Beaver, senior public relations major

### **CONSTRUCTION UPDATE: BIETZ CENTER FOR STUDENT LIFE**

The Bietz Center for Student Life \_\_\_\_\_ every week. Despite losing 43 working days to weather in the past 12 months—Chattanooga received 20 more inches of rain last year than its average—construction remains a point of excitement on campus.

During Homecoming Weekend, alumni, employees, and student leaders gathered under McKee Library's covered entrance to celebrate the new building's progress. The event was scheduled to take place on the promenade directly in front of the Bietz Center for Student Life, but it rained all day.



Moving beyond the irony and inconvenience, university leaders directed an uplifting time together. President David Smith, PhD, emceed a short program that included a dedicatory prayer from Jack Blanco and construction trivia questions, with a limited number of the new Gordon Bietz bobbleheads as prizes. The bobbleheads are featured in a series of videos about construction progress, \_\_\_\_\_.

Programming for the Homecoming Weekend construction celebration concluded as attendees signed a large Southern-branded metal plate that workers later adhered to one of the steel beams supporting the new student center. It was a symbolic gesture of commitment, enthusiasm, and gratitude as employees and students move closer toward the building's completion in late 2020.

To stay up to date on the Bietz Center, part of Southern's \_\_\_\_\_, visit the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

—Staff Report

### **STUDENTS INITIATE MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS CLUB**

Empowering Minds has become Southern's first mental health awareness club. The organization, sponsored by nursing professor Maria Valenca, MD, hosts bi-monthly meetings that aim to provide a community where people can develop the "courage to speak up," according to club president Nathan Martin, a junior nursing major.

"We want to start conversations and get people interested or aware of their own mental health," Martin said. "We're not a counseling service, we're like the PSA commercials you see on TV—a

method to spread awareness and get people thinking. We strongly encourage anyone facing hard times to go get the help they need by making an appointment with one of Southern's trained counselors in the Student Success Center."



Club officer Brayden Viehmann, senior construction management major, shared his vision for the organization.

"I want people to know that there's a club here that genuinely cares about each and every student and what they're going through," Viehmann said.

According to Viehmann, the club has received a positive reaction from students. Faculty and staff support the club's mission as well.

"It's exciting to see students prioritizing their own mental health and encouraging others to do the same," said Tiffany Bartell, a counselor in Southern's Student Success Center. "Student leadership is key to not only reducing the stigma surrounding mental health but also in normalizing help-seeking. I'm looking forward to seeing the impact Empowering Minds will have on campus!"

—by Sarah Klingbeil, freshman English major

## Community Connections

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## **ROUNDTABLE EVENT CONNECTS STUDENTS WITH ALUMNI MENTORS**

Southern's School of Visual Art and Design, in partnership with the School of Journalism and Communication, recently concluded its fourth annual Roundtable event. Alumni from both departments returned to Brock Hall as volunteers, presenting to students about their professional work.

The program began in 2016 under the leadership of Tom Wentworth, '06, alongside Southern professors Nicholas Livanos, '07, and David George, '98. There has been significant growth since that first year, which focused only on the film department and scheduled 12 alumni presenters. This year's Roundtable had more than 60 alumni in attendance with real-world wisdom to share. The scheduled sessions represented a wide range of topics such as animation, photography, journalism, television and movie production, public relations, and more. Presenters also brought a wide area of experience with them, ranging from advertising work at IBM to animating "Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse."



In order to extend the opportunities, organizers added a new component to Roundtable programming this year. The Senior Cohort pairs Southern seniors with professional alumni from their corresponding fields. The alumni act as mentors whom students can reach out to for advice and networking, not only during their last months on campus but also as they transition into the working world.

One of the program's mentors is Omar Bourne, '07, who graduated with a degree in print journalism and now works as the deputy press secretary at the NYC Emergency Management Department.

“I am happy to be able to come back and share my knowledge and experience,” Bourne said. “I wish I had something like this when I was a student here.”

Michaela Lewin, senior public relations major, has participated in all four years of Roundtable and joined the Senior Cohort this year with Kettering College’s marketing director, Lauren Brooks, ’12, as her mentor.

“Mentoring is valuable because it brings people who have gone through the same things that we’re currently going through to just give us that extra reminder that we’re not alone,” Lewin said.

Looking into the future, Wentworth said that he and the leadership team plan on continuing to grow the program and expand it further than just the three-day event. He mentioned having Roundtable Nights once a month throughout the year where an alum joins students virtually in a classroom to speak on a specific topic.

“The core purpose of the Roundtable is to create those connections, to make sure that students have as much access as possible to alumni who care about them and who are invested in them,” Wentworth said.

—by Joel Guerra, junior business administration and public relations major

**MEDIA PARTNERSHIP WITH CAROLINA CONFERENCE SERVES YOUNG PEOPLE**  
Recently Southern partnered with the Carolina Conference to support the initiative [\\_\\_\\_\\_\\_](#). This multimedia project aims to create spiritual and engaging content for young adults across various media platforms, including blogs, videos, and podcasting.

“The goal of Project ReFresh is to create discussions and answer questions about biblical and social issues, which is something that young adults have been searching for within the Adventist church,” said Rebecca (Mills) Carpenter, ’97, director of communications at the Carolina Conference.



Since Carolina Conference launched Project ReFresh in 2018, several Southern students and employees have been involved the initiative’s various media channels. This summer, the university officially joined in supporting the project.

“We believed in the content that Project ReFresh is producing and their willingness to not shy away from tough topics,” said Isaac James, ’08, director of Marketing and University Relations at Southern. “We saw this as an opportunity to promote that idea and show that Southern is also supportive of young people and their thoughts about church issues.”

Southern sponsors three of Project ReFresh’s channels: The Loop video series; “What If,” a vlog series soon to be launched; and the Echo podcast. Echo is hosted by Ryan Becker, ’15, ministry coordinator and admissions counselor at Southern. The second season of the podcast was recorded on Southern’s campus and featured students and pastors in the local area.

–by Rachel Beaver, senior public relations major

## Alumni Highlights

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**SCUBA DIVER PROVIDES CLOSURE FOR FAMILY FOLLOWING TRAGEDY**  
Rich Abernathy, ’18, made national and international [\\_\\_\\_\\_\\_](#) over the summer when he



discovered a long-lost GoPro camera belonging to a young man who had passed away two years prior.

Abernathy—or Rich Aloha as he goes by on his [YouTube channel](#)—has been documenting his adventures for several years. He particularly enjoys searching bodies of water and finding lost items, which he tries to return to their owners. In July, Abernathy was scuba diving in Foster Falls State Park in Southeast Tennessee when he found a GoPro barely peeking out from under the mud. The camera was cracked but still in working order. He checked the footage and discovered that it had belonged to a young man named Rich Ragland who had drowned at the falls in 2017. Abernathy whole-heartedly believes that God led him to the GoPro.

“I had already searched Foster Falls for three days with some friends and hadn’t found that particular GoPro,” Abernathy said. “Everyone else was ready to leave, but I had a little more air left in my tank, so I decided to dive a little more, and that was when I found it.”



Abernathy was eventually able to connect with Ragland’s family and give them the GoPro in person.

“I was able to return something that you can’t put a monetary value on,” Abernathy said. “His mother and father were also in shock at the similarities between me and their son: we both had the same name, we were both entrepreneurs, and we both loved adventure. What are the odds? The family is so sweet. We still talk on a weekly basis.”

Abernathy considers his freediving to be a form of ministry; being able to return lost items to their owners provides unique witnessing opportunities. In this case, Ragland’s parents had been

praying to find the GoPro for two years, and Abernathy was able to play a part in answering that prayer.

Another way he has used his videography work for God was on a trip to Guam earlier in the year. Abernathy was able to create videos for the Guam-Micronesia Mission of Seventh-day Adventists, traveling to different islands and showing what's happening in the churches and schools in Guam. Although he initially planned to stay for a year, that didn't work out. Abernathy sees God's hand in the change of plans: "If I were still in Guam, I don't think I would have found the GoPro."

—by Rachel Beaver, senior public relations major

### **AWARDS BESTOWED DURING HOMECOMING BANQUET**

During the Homecoming Weekend kick-off banquet in Wright Hall on October 24, several special awards were presented to alumni and friends of the university. A limited amount of time that evening—as well as a limited amount of space here—prevents honorees from receiving the individual attention they deserve.

This QuickNotes article provides selected highlights from two of the young alumni recognized at the banquet. The Homecoming Weekend program includes a \_\_\_\_\_, as well as those of these fellow honorees: Doug Jacobs, '73, and Lanell Jacobs, '77 (Distinguished Service); Tereshkova Bonnicks, '08 (Graduate Studies Alumna of the Year); Bill and Beverly Wilson (Honorary Alumni); Philip Samaan (Honorary Alumnus); and Jeanette Meyer, '78 and '03 (Southern Lady of the Year).

### **Alumna of the Year: Danae (Bland) Netteburg, '02**

Before Netteburg graduated from Southern with a bachelor's degree in biology, she took a year off to serve as a student missionary in Zambia. This solidified her desire to become a missionary physician and serve abroad, as her parents has done in Nigeria. She attended medical school at Loma Linda University, where she kept active in missions, traveling to Adventist hospitals in Ethiopia and Malawi.



Netteburg (pictured below) began her specialty training in obstetrics and gynecology at Baystate Medical Center in Massachusetts. During residency, she won awards for teaching excellence and for surgical excellence in the field of laparoscopy. She was also published for her research on respiratory distress in pregnant women during an avian flu outbreak.

For the last eight years, Netteburg has followed God's calling to work in Chad, a country with the infamous distinction as "Worst Country in the World to Be a Woman." It also has the most dire maternal and neonatal mortality rates. Since Netteburg's arrival at Chad's Bere Adventist Hospital, patient visits and surgical volume have doubled or tripled on all services, square footage of the hospital has expanded threefold, income has as much as quadrupled, and patients have visited from all six bordering countries. In 2016, the hospital was named the Best Hospital in Chad by the International Healthcare Commission.

Netteburg has delivered thousands of babies and performed hundreds of Cesarean sections, hysterectomies, and fistula repairs. She also is training the next generation of healthcare providers, empowering women whenever and wherever possible.

### **Young Alumnus of the Year: Luther Whiting, '12**

For Whiting, the supportive, mission-minded community at Southern was the perfect environment for coupling big dreams with the hard skills needed to realize them. During the 2008-2009 school year, Luther consulted with his mentors at Southern, recruited a board of directors, and founded an organization called Noshaq. Over the following three years, his organization increased access to services for more than 6,000 villagers in Afghanistan's

mountainous northeast. Combining these field experiences with his academic work at Southern gave Luther an unforgettable and practical education.

Following graduation, Whiting moved to the Washington, D.C., area, where he was hired by U.S. Senator Susan Collins to staff her on a broad legislative portfolio ranging from immigration reform, labor law, U.S. Postal Service policy, and firearms trafficking legislation. He also served on the staff of the Special Committee on Aging, where he supported investigations into an international fraud scheme targeting senior citizens. Whiting later leveraged his experience in international investigations to start a project called Citizen Catalyst. Working to improve crime reporting rates in regions with high levels of gang and cartel activity, Luther and his team created a web- and phone-based app to help community members safely and securely report crime with minimal risk of retribution.

Whiting transitioned into conflict resolution work by accepting a role at Search for Common Ground, the largest dedicated international peacebuilding organization. Today, he serves as a development manager at Center for Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC), also in Washington, D.C. CIVIC works to protect civilians living in conflict zones by engaging governments, militaries, and the affected communities themselves to prevent, mitigate, and amend harm inflicted on innocent civilians.

Southern alumni, faculty, and staff honor Netteburg and Whiting for their outstanding professional accomplishments and humanitarian service.

–Staff Report

## Upcoming Events

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Unless otherwise noted, all events are free and open to the public.

**Isaac Duncan III Sculpture Exhibit.** Through December 2 in the John C. Williams Art Gallery (Brock Hall). Duncan has been nominated for the prestigious Joan Mitchell Foundation Sculpture Fellowship, and he received the State of Tennessee Individual Artist Fellowship in 2017. His sculptures can be found in a variety of museums and college campuses across the United States and Canada.

**Evensong: I Cantori.** November 16 at 5:30 p.m. in the Collegedale Church of Seventh-day Adventists. The performance's theme, "God is My Refuge," centers on psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs that inspire comfort, assurance and hope.

**Archaeology Lecture.** November 18 at 7 p.m. in Lynn Wood Chapel. Felix Hofmayer, PhD, and Katharina Streit, PhD, will present: "The Austrian-Israeli Expedition to Tel Lachish: First Results After Three Seasons of Excavation."

**Rachel Williams-Smith Convocation.** November 21 at 11 a.m. in the Collegedale Church of Seventh-day Adventists (or \_\_\_\_\_). Williams-Smith, PhD, is dean for Southern's School of

Journalism and Communication. She is also author of *Born Yesterday: The True Story of a Girl Born in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century but Raised in the 19<sup>th</sup>*.

**An Emerald Isle Christmas Concert.** December 3 at 7 p.m. in Iles P.E. Center. Danú is an acclaimed Irish ensemble that has won major awards from the BBC and Irish Music Magazine for its virtuoso performances that utilize fiddles, flutes, button accordions, percussion, and pipes. Pre-concert music provided by Southern's Jazz Ensemble, along with refreshments.

**Kristen Wolcott Memorial 5K Run.** December 6 at 3 p.m. near the Duck Pond.

**Wind Symphony Christmas Concert.** December 7 at 8 p.m. in Iles P.E. Center. Repertoire \_\_\_\_\_.

**Star Watch.** December 13 at 6:30 p.m. in Hickman Science Center parking lot. Students and guests will explore the heavens through a telescope (weather permitting).

**School of Music Christmas Concert.** December 14 at 4 p.m. in the Collegedale Church of Seventh-day Adventists (or \_\_\_\_\_).

**Winter Commencement.** December 19 at 7 p.m. in Iles P.E. Center (or \_\_\_\_\_).

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