



ALUMNI NEWS

JUNE 2021

at the
Governor's School

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About the Cover

This semester, our Visual Arts seniors completed "Composite 2021," a collaborative project featuring 3x3" drawings that were combined and pinned to three separate 3x4' panels. Imagery ranged from realistic and derived, to direct observation of one's own portrait, to selections of either man-made or organic objects to represent oneself in a purely symbolic manner. The finished work will hang in the downtown offices of investment company Pacolet Milliken.



1

Your Art Area

Show your love for your department by giving directly to their discretionary fund. Your gift will support entry fees, field trips, and other opportunities vital to the Govie curriculum.

2

Scholarships

Give future Govies the opportunity to follow their art, pursue their dreams, and achieve their goals by donating to the Virginia Uldrick Scholarship Fund.



3

Guest Artists

The guest artist fund brings master artists to campus to work directly with our students.

This is one of the most unique opportunities given to Govies, and you can help make it happen!



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AT [SCGSAH.ORG/GIVING/WAYS-GIVE](https://scgsah.org/giving/ways-give)**



FROM the PRESIDENT

Dear Alumni,

As we mark the end of a very difficult academic year, we also mark a time of intense reflection on all that we accomplished and what we've overcome as a community. No doubt, this was one of the most difficult years in the history of the Governor's School, but I'm so pleased to say that we did not simply make it through to the end. We listened, we planned, and we collaborated in our work to a level that allowed us to excel and achieve far beyond expectations during a very challenging time. Throughout the period of constantly changing health guidance and countless shifts in our attendance plan, the entire Govie community came together in support of each other with a collective spirit that allowed for artistic and academic growth for the entire school year. In spite of the difficulty that was imposed on us as well as on schools throughout the state and nation, we have redefined success and what is possible under extreme circumstances.

We were pleased to return to an in-person commencement ceremony in May with 112 seniors in the Class of 2021 crossing the stage at the Peace Center. Maintaining the tradition of true scholars and artists, their awards and achievements are representative of their focus on excellence of the highest caliber. The graduating class included two YoungArts Finalists, two US Presidential Scholars in the Arts, six medalists in the Scholastic National Art & Writing Competition, and forty-seven inductees into the National Honor Society.

Also returning to the campus are the younger Govies, as we resume in-person programming for all of our summer programs this year. As with all things during this year, adjustments have been made to provide for a safe and healthy experience, but we will deliver

the same robust face-to-face programs that we have done in the past and can't wait to welcome them to the campus. Throughout the summer, our halls will be filled with the next classes of Arts Odyssey, Academy, and Summer Dance, followed by a much-anticipated return to "normal" in preparation for the fall semester.

We are grateful for the number of alumni who have reconnected with us this year and given of your time both in-person and virtually by engaging with our students and community as guest artists, consultants, supporters, and donors. With a focus on this in the future, we hope that more of you are able to join us as we plan additional alumni activities in the upcoming months.

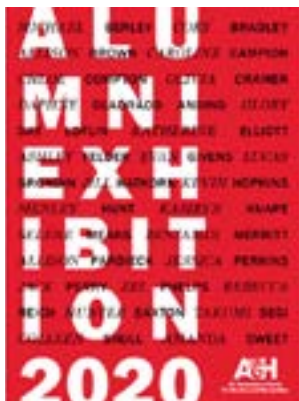
As always, I thank you for your continued support and involvement with the Governor's School and I look forward to seeing you throughout the state and on the campus. We would love to see you at a performance or presentation as we fully reopen in the fall and certainly at any of our alumni events.

Sincerely,

Cedric L. Adderley, D.M.A.
President

CAMPUS NEWS

We had the distinct honor of hosting Governor Henry McMaster on campus on April 15th! He received a student-led tour from Miriam Miriithi and Tyler Wesley, watched a drama monologue, saw student artwork and spoke with our community members. It was such a pleasure to share our Govie experience with the Governor and his staff.



Visual Arts alumni spanning 20 years participated in the juried 20th Anniversary Alumni Exhibition that never made it to the Lipscomb Gallery due to COVID-19. However, you can now view their works in the exhibition catalogue currently featured [here on our blog](#). Check out this incredible collection!

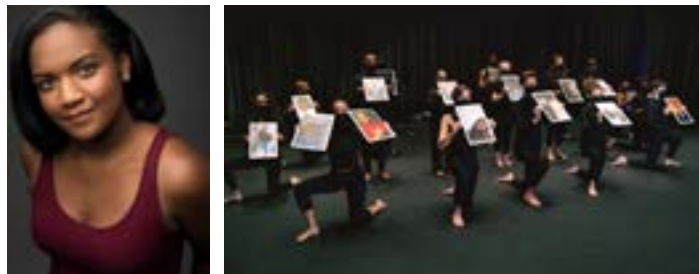


We're always thrilled when an alum rejoins our campus community as an employee! We recently welcomed 2010 Dance alumna, Mahalia Mays back to the Governor's School as an Administrative Assistant supporting the Student Services Department.

After graduating from SCGSAH, Mahalia moved to New York City to join the professional division at the Alvin Ailey School and to pursue higher education. She is a proud graduate of Fordham University with degrees in economics and marketing. She has worked as a Finance Assistant for the Alvin Ailey Dance Foundation and Administrative Assistant for The Harlem School of the Arts. Mahalia shared her talent and passion for dance as a Teaching Artist in New York City, teaching in public and private schools.

She believes in the transformative powers of the arts and is excited to support the next generation of young artists at Governor's School.

The Drama Department presented its FIRST EVER livestream presentation, "2020 Unmasked: A Character Transformation Project," featuring our Studio 4 actors on January 27th and it was the first production on the Sakas Theatre stage in over a year. This original 45-minute piece, directed by Drama Guest Faculty and 2012 graduate Jasmin Johnson, springs from interviews seniors conducted with members of their communities on the topic of 2020 and its impact on their lives. [Watch here.](#)



In 2018, David Gerhard and his advanced graphic design students were asked by the City of Greenville's Environmental Engineering team to design kiosk signs focused on educating the public on Greenville's watershed. These signs were installed in Cleveland Park in March! For this project, students identified the audience, created an appealing mascot related to the watershed, and designed and crafted all components of the sign designs while working with an actual client. (Images)

Art Direction: David Gerhard, MFA. Designers: Adam Conversano, Layton Davis, Nat Fanello, Nohemi Medina Gomez, and Andy Small.



SOUTH CAROLINA

TEACHER RESOURCES

While last year was incredibly challenging, it also brought to light creative ideas that allowed us to connect with teachers across the state in new ways. Thanks to Outreach efforts, the school continues to serve as a resource to the state and is currently on track to reach record numbers of students and teachers this year.



Historical dances are part of a strong dance tradition, and they help us understand the cultural dynamics of the world around us. Join senior Governor's School Dance students and faculty members Thomas Shoemaker and Irina Ushakova to learn three historical dances that can help widen perspectives and deepen appreciation for dance.

For more information on this pre-recorded activity for the 4th-12th-grade classroom, [check out this video.](#)



To the actor, language is a physical pursuit—not just letters on a page. Words and language are primary tools with which the actor does their job. In the same way that the body must be prepared for acting work, so must the vocal instrument be prepared and honed for effective use on the stage. This pre-recorded teacher resource with Governor's School Drama faculty member Jayce Tromsness introduces vital aural and physical language practice and warmup techniques for the developing acting student.

[Reserve this activity for your classroom today!](#)



Young actors must prime themselves with good, solid warm-ups. In this instructional video, Governor's School dance instructor for Drama Rhonda Murray guides students through a series of movement exercises intended to prepare and focus the body for the demands of a strong acting practice.

For more information and to request your copy of the video, [visit this link.](#)



Check out our latest Visual Arts Teacher Resource! This activity, created by our animation instructor, Jeffrey Martell, teaches students some quick animation basics as they create their own flipbooks using index cards and binder clips.

[Learn more here.](#)



Our Creative Writing faculty has gathered some of their favorite prompts into a curated collection for easy classroom use! These index-sized cards can be used in a variety of settings, from bell work to special projects needing deep creative thinking, and they are appropriate for any content area. Request a set for your classroom that includes multiple prompts for Poetry, Nonfiction and Short Essay.

[Check out this link below for details!](#)

GUEST ARTISTS

Our Govies continue to gain knowledge and different artistic perspectives from guest artists who join us virtually from near and far. Here are a few who joined us this semester.



Sonia D'Orleans Juste

Sonia D'Orleans Juste is a teacher of modern dance. Based in Israel, she has taught for multiple dance programs in Tel-Aviv and is currently teaching for the B.A. dance program of Seminar Ha Kibutzim College. During her guest artist talk, she shared her dance journey which began in Quebec and eventually led her to Israel. Ms. Juste and Ms. Garant attended the Teacher's Program at the National Ballet School of Canada together.



Liz Sweibel

Liz Sweibel is a visual artist based in Brooklyn, NY, and serves as associate chair and senior lecturer for Arts & Sciences at LIM College.

"My work is an exploration of liminal spaces, points of contact, and unseen forces: wind, history, values, math, gravity, emotion,

memory. I make drawings, sculpture, and installations that are spare and abstract, using specific yet ordinary materials and gestures. I salvage materials and forms from my older work and use it to establish value and identity in the present. My studio process is low-tech, immediate, and improvisational."



Nick Gerald

Music alum ('09) Nick Gerald is an instrument restorer at Rare Violins of New York City. He spoke with the string students about his training and career as a luthier/instrument restorer for one of the top violin shops in the country.



Jasminn Johnson

Drama alum ('12) Jasminn Johnson joined us as artist-in-residence for the second time this school year and directed the Studio 4 presentation "2020 Unmasked: A Character Transformation Project." Ms. Johnson graduated from Juilliard and is an actor, teacher,

and writer in New York. She made her Off-Broadway debut with the Keen Company in "Blues for an Alabama Sky." Other recent credits include "Viola in Twelfth Night" (Shakespeare on the Sound), "The Politician" (Netflix), and "Ruby in Seven Guitars" (The Juilliard School). As a teacher, Ms. Johnson has worked with students all over New York City.



Jarell Howard Rochelle

Mr. Rochelle led a Hip Hop class with our junior dancers. He is a visual movement artist, actor, and inspirational speaker. Artistic credits include being a featured performer on FOX's hit TV show, So You Think You Can Dance as a two-time Vegas finalist for seasons 9 and 10.



Christopher Martin

Mr. Martin is the Principal Trumpet of the New York Philharmonic. He spoke from the practice room in his New York apartment where he maintains his skills and prepares for rehearsals and performances. Mr. Martin offered insights into the demands—both physical and

mental—on a professional musician in a principal position of a major orchestra.



Rosa Mercedes

Ms. Mercedes is recognized for her expertise in all the styles of Spanish dance, including flamenco, bolera school, folklore and classical Spanish dance. Hailed by Dance Magazine as "a virtuoso", she has performed throughout the United States, Europe, South America and Canada as soloist and principal

dancer with companies including Maria Benitez Teatro Flamenco, Compañía Flamenca de Carmen Cortes, Ballet Español de Lucia Real y El Camborio, Ballet Español de Madrid, Zorongo Flamenco Dance Theatre and Segovia Ballet Español.

Our guest artist programming is supported by the generous donors of the SC Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities Foundation. If you feel inspired to make an impact on our young artists' education, consider making a gift online at SCGSAH.org/giving or contact the foundation at 864-282-4104.

KEEP YOUR EYE on THESE GOVIES!



Brandon Brooks (Percussion, '11) was recently interviewed by Post and Courier for his role as a percussionist in a new virtual off-Broadway production of "The Last Five Years." The production, which features an all-Black cast and mostly Black crew, tells the story about two New Yorkers who fall in and

out of love over the course of five years. Brooks' part in the musical ensemble is the show's only newly created role: a drummer. Read more about this exciting project [here](#).



2008 Music alumna **Kristine Kruta**, along with her Broadway team, were nominated for a 2020 GRAMMY Award for Best Musical Theatre Album for their work on Alanis Morissette's show Jagged Little Pill. (image)

The arrangements of these classic songs are available on all streaming services or can be found [here](#).



2012 Music alumna **Julia Murray** was named one of Charlotte's 2020 "Top Thirty Under Thirty" Future Leaders by Elevate Lifestyle. Julia, who now owns and operates a custom photography business, describes her "underlying magic as bringing positivity to others and making them feel welcomed and comfortable [which] our community needs now more than ever."

SENIOR SEND-OFF



CLASS NOTES: Life Events

BIRTHS:

- Andrew Pastides (Drama, 2002) welcomed a son, Harris
- Cassidy Jarrett Reynolds (Music, 2011) welcomed a son, Devereaux
- Mary Elise Wallace (Music 2013) welcomed a son, Elijah
- Bryson Allen Schultz (Music, 2001) welcomed a son, Alex

ENGAGEMENTS:

- Shawn Scott (Visual Arts, 2007)
- Kori Hayes (Drama, 2018)

CONGRATULATIONS

to our alumni who shared their college graduation or advanced degrees news with the Alumni Office.

Leah Misano Abbott (Dance 2017)

Bachelor of Fine Arts in Contemporary Dance
Performance from the Boston Conservatory at Berklee.

Madison Allen (Music, 2015)

Master of Arts in Ethics, Peace, and Human Rights and
a concentration in Environmental Peacebuilding from
American University, School of International Service.

Samuel Anderson (Music, 2013)

Graduating from Yale.

Trenton Bridge (Music, 2015)

Doctorate of Pharmacy from the University of
South Carolina.

Gabriel Carnick (Creative Writing, 2008)

Master of Fine Arts in Film Directing from
Chapman University.

Cassidy Cheyenne Carter (Music, 2016)

Bachelor of Science in Information Science and a
minor in History from the University of South Carolina.

Killian Conahan (Creative Writing, 2014)

Master of Fine Arts in Poetry from Virginia
Commonwealth University.

Sierra Alexandria Cribb (Dance, 2014)

Masters of Public Health from the University of
Pennsylvania.

Katie Crockford (Music, 2017)

Bachelor of Arts in Religion at Furman University
and will attend Union Theological Seminary in NYC
in the fall.

Joshua Dantzler (Drama, 2017)

Bachelor of Arts in political science from American
University with a minor in communication studies
and certificate in advanced leadership studies.

Lainey Davidson (Visual Arts, 2017)

Bachelor of Fine Arts of Computer Animation from
Ringling College of Art and Design and starting
a position at Hasbro as a Digital Sculptor after
graduation.

Eric Dempsey (Music, 2007)

Associates Degree of Nursing from Trident
Technical College in Charleston, South Carolina and
set to take boards in June to be a Registered Nurse.

Jessica Dugan-Hamer (Music, 2010)

PhD in Psychology from Emory University.

Suzanna Margaret Edwards (Visual Arts, 2012)

Master of Arts in Humanitarian and Disaster
Leadership from Wheaton College.

Ashley Felder (Visual Arts, 2011)

Master of Fine Arts in Visual Art from Clemson
University.

Olivia Feltus (Visual Arts, 2017)

Bachelor of Arts in Art History and Japanese
Graduating from Vassar College.

KC Forbes (Music, 2002)

Master of Business Administration in Management
and Marketing from Florida Institute of Technology.

Nina Lewis Ford (Visual Arts, 2007)

Master of Education in Curriculum & Instruction with
focus on Trauma & Resilience in Educational Settings.

Corneilus Franklin (Music, 2009)

Master of Fine Arts in Acting from UC San Diego.

Sarah Gregory (Visual Arts, 2009)

Masters in Art Education with a certificate in
community art practices from Tyler School of Art.

Peyton Johnson (Music, 2014)

Master of Music In Trumpet Performance from The Hartt School.

Jessica Key (Music, 2017)

Bachelor of Music in instrumental performance from Mannes School of Music then attending Teachers College at Columbia University for a Masters of Arts degree in Music Education (K-12 certification).

Samantha Kriney (Creative Writing, 2017)

Bachelor of Science in Economics and minors in Finance, Management Information Systems and Spanish Studies from Clemson University.

Gracie Lookadoo (Music, 2017)

Bachelor of Music Technology and minor in Digital Arts from Stetson University.

Justin McMahan (Music 2017)

Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Clemson University.

Amanda Burth Meares (Music, 2013)

Master of Education in Higher Education from Penn State.

D'Angelo Milford (Music, 2015)

Master of Social Work (MSW) from Rutgers University.

Tristan Perryman (Drama, 2016)

Bachelor of Science in Biology/Chemistry minor from Warren Wilson College. Attending University of Georgia this fall for his DVM (Doctor of Veterinary Medicine).

Rachel Reed (Music, 2016)

Master of Science in Community Engaged Medicine from Furman University and attending the University of SC School of Medicine Greenville this summer for MD.

Macy Ruple (Visual Arts, 2012)

Masters of Divinity and a Masters of Practical Theology from Columbia Theological Seminary.

Autumn Smith (Music, 2017)

Bachelors of Music Education and a minor in Psychology from Florida State University.

Margaret Stacy (Music, 2017)

Bachelor of Science in Health Sciences from Clemson University. Starting a Doctorate in Occupational Therapy at Belmont University in the Fall.

Jennifer Staples (Dance, 2009)

Master of Arts in Arts Leadership from the University of Houston.

Caroline Harpring (Visual Arts, 2017)

Bachelor's of Fine Arts, Majoring in Communication Arts and Minor in Creative Writing from Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts.

Eliza McClure O'Connell (Creative Writing, 2010)

Master of Education in Literacy from Clemson University.

Amber Oglesby-Thompson (Music, 2014)

Bachelor of Science in psychology from University of New Orleans and Commissioning as a 2LT in the Army.

Shimon Ohi (Music, 2015)

Master of Music in Orchestral Conducting from University of Cincinnati, College-Conservatory of Music.

Elisabeth Peterson Sharpe (Dance, 2006)

Masters in Cybersecurity from New York University (NYU) in December.

Hooper Stevens (Music, 2017)

Bachelors of Music in vocal Performance from Florida State University and then attending the University of Tennessee, Knoxville for Masters of Music in Vocal Performance.

Alex Speer (Visual Arts, 2003)

Masters in Occupational Therapy.

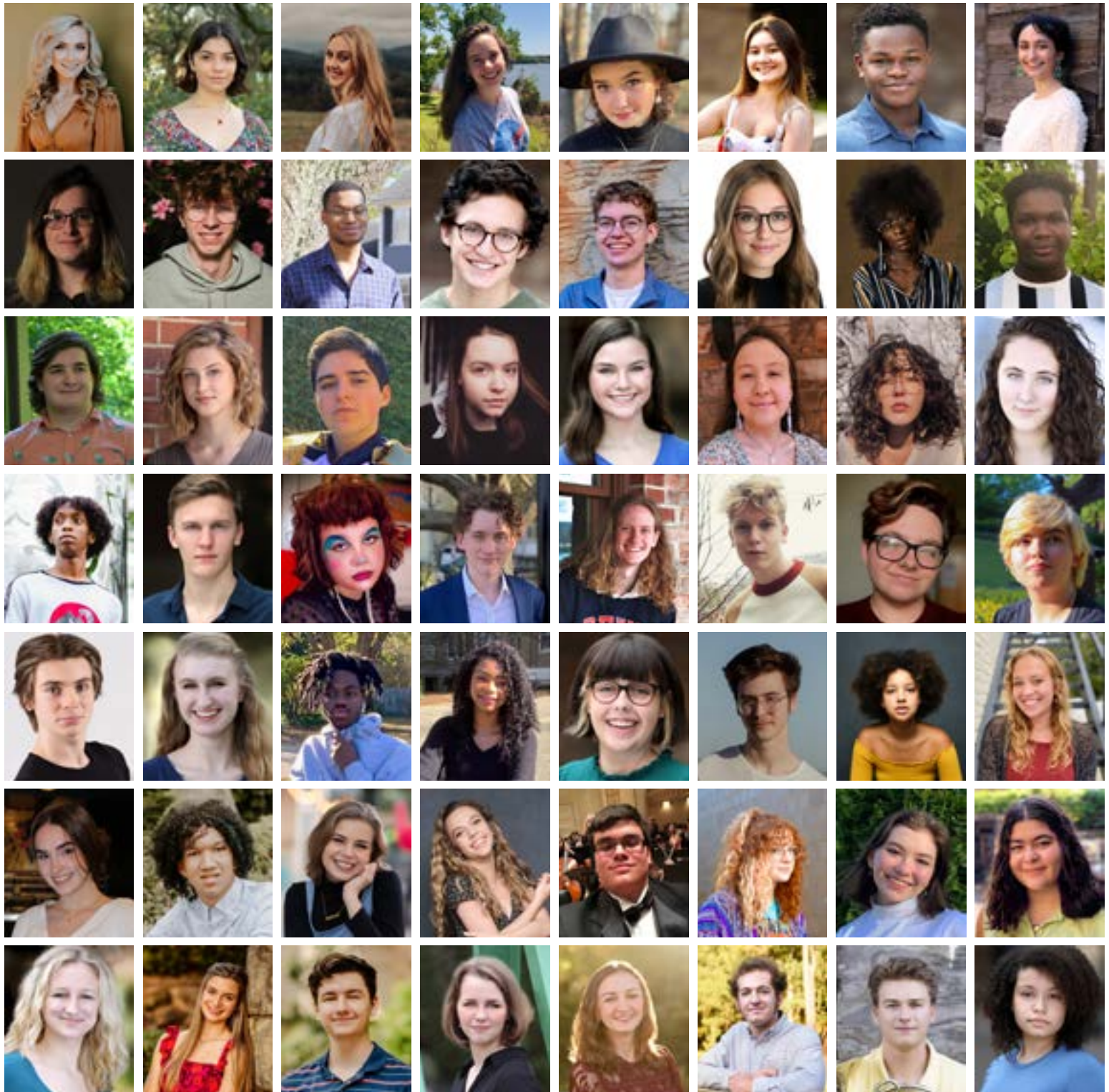
Danielle Williams (Music, 2012)

Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing from George Mason University.

Mary Helen Kennerly (Creative Writing, 2001)

Master of Arts in Marriage and Family Therapy from Mount Mercy University.

CONGRATULATIONS,



CLASS OF 2021!



CLASS OF 2021

DESTINATIONS

Emma Brooke Alley | *Converse College*

Mersina Alexandra Argyropais | *Gap year*

Annaliese Grace Arvay | *Clemson University*

Faith Lea Bachman | *University of South Carolina,
Honors College*

Emily Anne Barwick | *Gap year*

Lauren Elizabeth Bleuel | *Appalachian State University*

Isaiah Zavion Boozer | *DePaul University*

Katelyn Nisha Boyd | *Kansas City Art Institute*

Aislinn Rea Bramlett | *New Approach School for Jewelers*

Daniel Cesar Villanueva Carey | *Carnegie Mellon University*

Madison Kathryn Carlton | *Savannah College of Art
and Design*

Aubrey Bell Chapman | *Wofford College*

Dezmond Ahmaad Chavous | *Pace University*

Anier Isabel Colón-Flores | *Converse College*

Isabella Kay Conlin | *Warren Wilson College*

Lydia Lauren Cross | *University of South Carolina*

Jason Franklin Culbertson | *Kansas City Art Institute*

Ethaniel Lawrence Curcio | *Pace University*

Bryce Cunningham Daniels | *Embry, Riddle Aeronautical
University*

Thomas Alexander Denney | *Marymount Manhattan
College*

Noah Danie DeYoung | *Tufts University*

Audrey Elizabeth Dickson | *Florida State University*

Jasmine Imani Doctor | *University of North Carolina at
Greensboro*

Christian Dante Dukes | *Furman University*

Virginia Beverley Dunlap | *University of Miami*

Ashlyn Britt DuPree | *Indiana University, Bloomington*

Willow Marie Edmonds | *Employment*

Taylor Henry Esbenshade | *Peabody Conservatory of The
Johns Hopkins University*

Camila Isabel Escobar | *Southern Methodist University*

Charles Freeman Everett | *Gap year*

Brigham Logan Freyburger | *University of South Carolina,
Columbia*

Dylan Sandford Fritz | *Middlebury College*

Hayden Coughlin Gavin | *Gap year*

Tatum Virginia Gee | *Clemson University*

Alexander Barrett Gentemann | *Savannah College of Art and
Design*

Naomi Corinne Goodson | *University of South Carolina,
Columbia*

Anna Katherine Gossett | *Boston Conservatory at Berklee*

Emma Rose Gowans | *Savannah College of Art and Design*

Madysen Alyene Grant | *Emerson College*

Bailey Reese Greemon | *Boston Conservatory at Berklee*

Kathryn Elizabeth Green | *Florida State University*

Claryn Ivy Greenway | *Converse College*

Camryn Whitley Hambrick | *Clemson University*

RaNajah Jon'Quelle | *Employment*

Luke Andrew Herman | *DePaul University*

Kaitlyn Maria Hernandez | *Point Park University*

Dylan Anthony Hudson | *Southern Methodist University*

Diana Maria Ilie | *Furman University*

David-Johnathan Rufus Johnson | *Francis Marion
University*

Drew Scott Johnson | *Shenandoah University*

Leia Mai Johnson | *Converse College*

Richard Douglas Keefauver | *Wilkes Honors College of
Florida Atlantic University*

Tyler Michael Kellogg | *University of Pennsylvania*

Ed Beaufort Kelso | *Emerson College*

Felix Miller Killingsworth | *Gap year*

Olivia Marie Klein | *Kansas City Art Institute*

Sofia Magdalena Klimkowski Arango | *Maryland Institute College of Art*

Abigail Victoria Lambert | *Kansas City Art Institute*

Isabella Ricci Land | *Vanderbilt University*

Aimee Grace LaRue | *University of South Carolina, Columbia*

Olivia Erin Lee | *University of South Carolina, Columbia*

Sophia Ellen Lefew | *Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design*

Sophie Jinying MacRae | *University of Massachusetts, Amherst*

Gavin MacGregor Mahoney | *University of South Carolina, Columbia*

Jeffrey Hayden McCann | *Fordham University*

Natalie Hope McElhinny | *Muhlenberg College*

Jaden Caleb McGuire | *Clemson University*

Cameron Dawn Mitchell | *Furman University*

Ally Marie Montgomery | *DePaul University*

Woodward Howard Morgan | *Maryland Institute College of Art*

Miriam Wangeci Muriithi | *Pace University*

Cari Ann Nazario | *Clemson University*

Elizabeth Noel Nicholson | *Undecided*

Arthur Bade Nyanfor | *Eastman School of Music of the University of Rochester*

Amaud Vashon Odom | *Columbus State University*

Hannah Sloane Pancoast | *University of South Florida*

Emma Angelina Perez | *Kansas City Art Institute*

Sampson William Piermattei | *Berklee College of Music*

Stevii Brooks Randall | *Warren Wilson College*

Ashliegh Elizabeth Ratgen | *Savannah College of Art and Design*

Kaela Mairi Redman | *University of Toronto*

Garrick Langston Reeder | *Reed College*

Constante Gayle Rhodes | *Furman University*

Ashton Layne Rivera | *University of Hartford*

Arturo Emilio Romero | *Boston Conservatory at Berklee*

Riley Joan Russell | *College of Charleston*

Erin Kathleen Rutherford | *Mercyhurst University*

Cristina Teresa Sanchez | *Eugene Lang College of Liberal Arts, New School*

Lois Isabelle Sarmiento | *Maryland Institute College of Art*

Lukas Schober | *College of Charleston*

Henry Dennison Schrecker | *George Washington University*

Grace Anne Secor | *Clemson University*

Alina Maria Shaner | *Florida State University*

Hector Miguel Silva | *Undecided*

Joanne Maree Tagabi Sison | *Undecided*

Alexa Kennedy Smith | *Fordham University*

Sarah Margaret Smith | *Coastal Carolina University*

Olivia Faith Spadavecchia | *University of South Carolina, Columbia*

Jacob Riley Spell | *Furman University*

Ashley Taylor Spikings | *Kansas City Art Institute*

Abigail Lorraine Stewart | *Peabody Conservatory of the Johns Hopkins University*

Hampton Roy Ströble | *University of South Carolina, Columbia*

Jaden Thomas Taylor | *U.S. Army*

Jayde Taylor Torres | *Texas Christian University*

Aja Noelle Trice | *Pomona College*

Danett Clarisa Vargas Sanchez | *Clemson University*

Tyler Jordan Wesley | *Texas State University*

Ashley Elizabeth White | *University of Denver*

Alyssa Lula-Jane Wilson | *Bennington College*

Christa Faye Young | *Winthrop University*

Sophia Rose Young | *University of Pennsylvania*

Sofia Eden Zwerdling | *Ohio State University*

FINDING NEW LIFE DURING A PANDEMIC

RICHARD WILLIAMS



July is usually when the first day of school begins for the Academy of Hope Public Charter School in my hometown of Conway where I had been employed for nearly 5 years. In July of 2017, I was excited about the prospects of new music and a dynamic winter concert to showcase our students' talents. The first day of school came, and I greeted my students for the first and last time. A week prior to the start of school,

I had been experiencing fatigue and major swelling in my hands and feet. I tried all kinds of remedies that I thought my grandmother would recommend in cases like this, but nothing got better. I started the first day of school hoping that this was just temporary and that I would recover in time. I would find out later that night, after taking a visit to the ER, that this was much more serious than I had anticipated. I learned that night that my kidneys were failing and that I was in Stage IV renal failure. I spent 17 days in the hospital, and I was added to the long list of family members to be placed on dialysis; I would be number 6 to be exact. The journey ahead would take 3 years, but those years would provide for me a greater outlook on life, establish hope for my future and ground me as a family man.

Dialysis was a blessing and curse for my family and me. Although, my quality of life had changed drastically overnight, through a dim glass I could see the blessings of family, love and community that I had taken for granted and so desperately needed at this crucial time in my life. My oldest son, Caleb, was going into kindergarten in 2017, and I had always dreamed of being able to be hands-on in my children's education, like volunteering with the PTO and helping with the book fair. Having dialysis every Monday, Wednesday and Friday for 4 hours each round, I was able to gather enough strength to show up every Tuesday to serve nachos to the students after recess. Many people wondered how I did it, and some never knew the struggle was going on. Through it all, I was gaining a greater appreciation for what I had.

After a year on Hemodialysis, I began to look at the option of kidney donation. I was told to find a live donor because live organs are always better and last longer than organs from people who have died. The search for viable kidneys in my family would prove to be challenging because, as I mentioned I'm number 6 in the family, and by this time most of us had already been tested for other members of our family, and the other half were holding on to theirs because of our family history. During this time, I set out to educate my friends and family on social media and from any platform that would allow me. It was important for me to dispel any myths surrounding

organ donation so that more people would step up and not only help me but help so many in the U.S. who are waiting on organs to survive. Kidney donation is one of those organs you can give while you're still alive because a healthy person only needs one kidney to live. Unfortunately, many well meaning people stepped up to offer me one of their kidneys but none were eligible or matched. I refused to be or feel defeated; I chose to be patient. If I was going to get a life-saving organ I wanted to get the right one, the first time.

The greatest blessing of this journey was that we discovered our family of 4 would become a family of 5. Who would have thought, the hope that the birth of a child brings would rise from these ashes? In my heart, I knew that this was a sign that my purpose in life, no matter how bleak things seemed, had not yet been fulfilled, there was much more work for me to do. On a normal Friday night in April of 2020, while eating fish with my family, I get an unexpected phone call from the University of South Carolina. This. "Mr. Williams, we think we have found a match for your kidney." These are the words I had waited to hear for 3 years. The only problem was, my call came at the height of a global pandemic. Everything we had planned about this day would look different. My wife drove to the doors of MUSC and kissed me goodbye. We had always planned that she would be by my side as we walked through this together. The hospital's safety precautions did not allow this to happen. I waited and was prepped for surgery, prayed quietly to myself and hoped that when I awoke from my surgery, I would have a fully functioning kidney. After a 4-hour surgery, I awoke from a deep sleep to my prayers being answered. After a year of being transplanted, I still have to pinch myself to see if all of this is real. When I go to the market people are still shocked to have seen me go through 3 years of dialysis and uncertainty to now seeing me thriving as a husband, father and Pastor. Although I would not wish this on anyone, I am grateful for this journey. I am kinder to myself. I take a moment every now and then and just breath, and I hold my 3 children a little tighter. I have been on a mission this last year along with Sharing Hope SC to bring awareness to all about the importance of organ donation. More than 108,000 people in the U.S. are waiting for a life-saving organ transplant, with more than 1,200 of those in the state of South Carolina. When asked this year by Sharing Hope SC, a Organ Procurement Organization (OPO), what I thought about organ donation, my response to them is my message to all; I am a firm believer that the greatest gift you can give to humanity is life after your life.



ALUMNI ARE JUMPING IN! WANT TO PARTNER WITH THE FOUNDATION?

The foundation raises money to increase access for students who need financial support, provide arts education in under-resourced counties, and hire guest artists to work with each department. CONTACT AMANDA.HERLIHY@GSAFOUNDATION.NET TO FIND OUT HOW YOU CAN HELP FUTURE GOVIES FOLLOW THEIR ART.



Jonathan Jacobs (Music 2011) and Glory Day Loflin (VA 2010) both participated in fundraising events



Jasmin Johnson (Drama 2012) was hired as a guest artist and Maggie Morton (Music 2007) is serving on the foundation board.



Nicholas Gerald (Music 2009) and Nichole Mango Maple (VA 2002) allowed us to share their stories.





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