TURNING THE PAGE TO A NEW CHAPTER

IT’S THE DAY THEY’VE ALL BEEN WAITING FOR - THE FIRST day of the rest of their lives. They’re off to new beginnings, and the possibilities are endless. Still – despite their eager anticipation of this new and exciting journey – it’s a bittersweet moment. After all, everyone says that the College years are the best years of our lives.

Over their years here, the 2009 retiring staff and faculty have dedicated their time and energy to the College – not to mention their wisdom and curiosity, their hearts and souls. Below, some of the retiring employees tell us how they feel about leaving and just what they’ll be up to next.

GARY ASLESON, 1975, professor of chemistry and biochemistry. Upon retirement, “I hope to be able to travel, work on my golf game and supervise some home renovations and grow some grass,” says Asleson. “I’m a loyal Cougar fan and plan to keep attending basketball, baseball and volleyball games.”

LARRY CARLSON, 1979, English professor. “To quote Thoreau when he left Walden Pond, ‘I have several more lives to lead,’” says Carlson. “I hope to devote more time to my interests in horticulture, perhaps even participating in Clemson’s Master Gardener Program. Too, I want to develop my skills in carpentry. And, as a lover of the natural world, I want to spend more time on the water and more time in the woods.”

LAURIE CHAMNESS, 1996, director of the Office of Research and Grants Administration. Even though she’s already booked a trip to Yellowstone and Mount Rushmore for later this month, Chamness says she’ll miss the College community: “Besides all the great people at the College, I’ll miss being right next door to Starbucks!”

ANNE FOX, 2003, senior instructor of communication. Fox plans to spend her extra time working to get her plays published. “I would also like to return to acting, if possible,” she says. “Acting was my first love.”

SYLVIA GAMBOA, 1976, English professor and dean of summer sessions. Gamboa will spend her retirement researching her Irish roots, cataloguing her father’s World War II photographs, volunteering and exercising. “I love water aerobics and have just taken up cycling,” she says.

SUSAN GURGANUS, 1991, professor of teacher education. With all the extra time she’ll have, Gurganus plans to travel, draw, paint and write. “I think I still have a couple of books in me,” she says. “I’m really looking forward to a new chapter.”

GEORGE HOPKINS, 1976, history professor. “I have thoroughly enjoyed my time at the College,” says Hopkins. “It is a great institution, and it will become even better in the future because of the efforts of faculty and staff to continue to improve it.”

PAT JOHNSON, 1988, administrative assistant for the history department. For Johnson, retirement is all about the simple luxuries. “The most important thing of all,” she says, is “no alarm!”

ELISE JORGENS, 2003, provost and executive vice president for academic affairs. In addition to visiting her grandchildren, Jorgens plans to go somewhere “that has no connection whatsoever with work or even family. We have not had the luxury of that kind of travel in a long time,” she says.

JOAN MACK, 1985, public information director in the Center for the Documentary. “It’s great to be at that point in your life where you have worked hard and have earned the pleasure of having ‘free’ time to choose what you want to do each day,” says Mack. “I intend to spend more time visiting the grandchildren.”

LANEY MILLS, 1971, physics professor. “I will miss the students,” says Mills. “They are willing to be impressed by ideas that are impressive. They are not cynical and they operate in good faith. They are appreciative and they don’t mind being challenged.”

DUNCAN R. MUNRO, 1992, senior instructor of biology. Munro will also miss being around the students. “Sometimes I think they taught me more than I taught them,” he says, adding that he has cherished every moment he’s had at the College. “My only regret is that I didn’t come here 20 years earlier.”

HERB SILVERMAN, 1976, distinguished professor of mathematics. “I plan to cause even more trouble than I did when I was here,” says Silverman, warning: “I’m still going to be hanging around Charleston, and I’ll have more trouble-causing time.”

Pictured above (l-r): Duncan R. Munro, Laurie Chamness and Herb Silverman. For more information about the retiring employees, visit cofc.edu/thenortico.
IT’S EASY TO GET WRAPPED UP in ourselves, to let the demands of our daily lives consume our thoughts and blind us from the things that are really worth our attention: the rolling chant of a Carolina wren, the intense fuchsia of an azalea bloom, the genuine compassion of a complete stranger. But – while it takes a concerted effort for some of us to put down our cell phones, look up from our Blackberries and take it all in – you don’t have to remind Marlene Williams to stop and smell the flowers. After all, it’s part of her job.

As a member of the Grounds Crew, Williams is responsible for the health and maintenance of the flower beds and the hanging baskets across campus. She spends her days watering and weeding the plant beds, pruning and trimming established shrubs and trees and planting and transplanting new flowers and bushes. In short, she keeps the campus looking its best.

“We’re just making sure it looks beautiful for the people,” says Williams, who gets to campus at 7 a.m. every day. “Our first agenda in the morning is policing the grounds, cleaning up trash from the night before, picking up cigarette butts, making the place presentable for people. From there, it’s just our daily journey of upkeep.”

It’s a journey that Williams has been taking for 10 years now – and she’s learned a few things along the way.

“First, you’ve got to take your time to do things right – not dally around, but make sure it gets done like it’s supposed to,” she says, adding that most of what she knows about gardening she learned on the job. “I didn’t know a thing about gardening when I started – I’m not a country girl. I’ve learned about the different variety of plants, how to prune everything, how to treat each plant. I like learning about new plants and the different concepts for landscaping. I’ve learned a lot.”

And she has the okra, cucumber, squash, tomatoes and peanuts in her home vegetable garden to prove it. But her green thumb isn’t the only thing that has improved over her years as a groundskeeper.

“I think I have more patience now. Watching things grow puts you at ease, makes you relax,” she says, noting that the other crew members make her job even more enjoyable. “I love just being out here with these guys. We’re just like family. We really get along.”

Of course, it can’t always be a bed of roses. There are commencements that require added exertion, banquets and receptions that undo previous efforts and – of course – weather conditions that slow down progress.

“Every day is a new challenge, but I like being outside, enjoying it all,” says Williams. “This is where I’m supposed to be – that’s for sure.”

Her certainty comes not only from the love she has for her job, but also from the validation she gets from the campus community.

“We get a lot of compliments,” says Williams. “It’s nice getting the comments – you know your work is being appreciated. We’re doing it for the people.”

In that sense, Williams understands her job as being less about gardening and keeping the grounds looking beautiful, and more about encouraging people to slow down, look around and get some joy out of their surroundings.

“People might have a frown on their face, but I’d like to see a happy face. So that’s what I do – brighten their day,” she says. “When I’m out there, it just seems like people draw near – they want to stop and talk, show their appreciation, ask questions. It brings a certain peace to me throughout the day. It’s all good.”

And so, for Williams, it seems everything’s coming up roses.
SOME PEOPLE HAVE A HECK OF A TIME

finding their groove, but Amie Smith started out on the right foot when she was only 2 years old – and she's been perfectly in step ever since.

“I’ve been dancing as far back as I can remember,” says the administrative specialist in the Office of Cougar Card Services, who has been enrolled at Trudy’s School of Dance on James Island essentially since the day she could walk. “It’s just always been a part of my life.”

With fuzzy memories of “wearing the pretty costumes and dancing on the big stage,” Smith can’t quite recall when she fell in love with dance, but, at this point, she can’t imagine life without it.

“For me, it’s a stress relief – a way to relieve some tension,” says Smith, who has studied ballet, tap, jazz, hip-hop, pointe, modern and lyrical dance over the years. “My favorite is tap. It’s fun, it’s high energy, you’re constantly moving. And I’m good at it – it just comes natural to me – and the confidence itself makes me better at it.”

That confidence, it seems, can work both ways.

“Dancing builds self-esteem,” says Smith, who not only continues to take two jazz classes, a tap class and a lyrical class, but also teaches three different classes at the school: tap for adults, tap and jazz for teens and ballet and tap for preschoolers. “I tell my students, the more you do it, the stronger you get and the easier it gets. You don’t know what you’re capable of until you try.”

And, once you do, you might just surprise yourself.

“I had a class of little kids who complained and complained and complained about everything. Every class, it was, ‘I can’t do that, I don’t know how,’ Smith recalls. “Of course, they thought I was mean for making them practice every day, but then, at the recital, they got it. They did it. Afterward, they came running out – they were so proud. That was really fun and rewarding for me. It’s great to watch them realize that they’ve done the thing they thought they couldn’t do.”

It’s a lesson that Smith repeats to herself every time she’s learning a new routine.

“I get frustrated when I can’t get the choreography right away. I know I can do it – I just have to take a step back for a minute and then try it again. And, when I do get it, it feels really good. There’s always a lot of yelling and cheering whenever we get it down for the first time,” she says. “So, just because you don’t get it the first time doesn’t mean you won’t get it. Never give up.”

It’s safe to say that Smith isn’t giving up any time soon – not on any daunting new choreography, and definitely not on dancing.

“I just want to keep dancing as long as I can and keep sharing my knowledge and my love for dance with my students so that one day they’ll love it as much as I do,” says Smith. “I want them to enjoy it, to build their self-esteem and to learn that, even if they’re not the best, they should always try their best.”

And, quite frankly, being “the best” sounds a lot more serious and a lot less pleasurable than the alternative.

“Even though we’re not going to be prima ballerinas, it’s still fun – probably more fun,” says Smith. “You’re learning to try new things, moving around, using up some energy. You’re having a good time.”

In other words, you’re really getting your groove on.

FOR THE LOVE OF THE DANCE: Amie Smith Is in the Groove

GARDENER’S PICK

Pomegranate

AKA: Punica granatum.
ON CAMPUS: Found in the northwest corner of 58 George Courtyard and behind the Sottile Theatre.
DESCRIPTION: Considered a Southern Heritage plant, this carefree, heat-tolerant shrub is extremely long lived, growing to 30’ high. It has narrow leaves that open bronze and then turn a glossy, bright green, showy flowers with orange-red ruffled petals in the summer and reddish, orange-sized fruit in the fall. The fruit’s tough skin encloses its white, spongy tissue that protects the tart, juicy, jewel-like (and edible) seeds inside.

TIPS: Plant in full sun. Water regularly for fruit production. Prune judiciously in the dormant season for the first three years to encourage maximum new growth and strengthen the frame. Thereafter, remove suckers and dead branches only. Suckers may be transplanted. Seeds will germinate readily, though propagation from 10-20’ cuttings is recommended.
short, she keeps the campus looking its best. In to campus at 7 a.m. every day. "Our first shrubs and trees and planting and hanging baskets across campus. She spends Williams is responsible for the health and a concerted effort for some of us to put azalea bloom, the genuine compassion of a Carolina wren, the intense fuchsia of an worth our attention: the rolling chant of making you relax," she says, noting that the green thumb isn't the only thing that has learned a lot." In that sense, Williams understands W e're doing it for the people." – you know your work is being appreciated. Williams. "It's nice getting the comments we get a lot of compliments," says Her certainty comes not only from the love she has for her job, but also from the community.

“Some are really groovy. Some are tacky. But they’re all fun," says Haga. “They’re all my favorites. They’re like children – you can’t pick a favorite.” Of course, Haga is somewhat partial to the piece that got the whole ball rolling more than 15 years ago: a model of a Mayan pyramid that a student brought him from Mexico.

“After that, another student brought me the Eiffel Tower, and then the dean [former Dean Edward McGuire] brought me my first Statue of Liberty,” he remembers. “And when you have three things, you have a collection.” And once you have a collection, everyone wants to contribute. Over the years, as colleagues, students and friends have continued to bring him souvenirs from their travels, the collection has expanded so much that Haga has had to pack some pieces up in boxes (labeled “Chachkas” and stacked in his office) until he has more space.

Still, he insists he can never have too many – and he’s always accepting new additions.

“If anyone is traveling and wants to bring me something, they are more than welcome to do so," he winks, adding that no one should ever spend more than $3–$5. “I could use the London Eye, and I’d like the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, though I don't even know if they make it. I need Monticello and I need another Washington Monument. I don’t care if I have duplicates – you can always use another Eiffel Tower or Statue of Liberty.” Besides, the individual pieces don’t matter as much as the collection as a whole.

“This is one of those things where the sum is greater than the parts,” he says. “They’re all tacky, but they develop a wonderful quality once they’re all together.”

It’s a quality that isn’t lost on Haga’s visitors. “They make people happy,” he says. “People come in and they see all the sights, and they feel better than they did when they walked in.” The best part: You don’t even need a passport.
SAVE THE DATE

**SPOLETO SNEAK PREVIEW**

Get the scoop on all the “must-see” performances of the 2009 Spoleto Festival USA and Piccolo Spoleto Festival from School of the Arts faculty. A reception will follow.

**When:** Tues., May 12, 6 p.m.
**Where:** Simons Center Recital Hall
**Fee:** None
**Contact:** Jenny Fowler, 3.6526, fowlerj@cofc.edu

**TOBACCO MANAGEMENT SEMINAR**

This seminar will provide key information and practical tips for tobacco users who want to become tobacco free.

**When:** Thurs., May 28, 11 a.m.
**Where:** Berkeley County Government Office, Moncks Corner
**Fee:** None
**Contact:** Register at eip.sc.gov/prevention/training.aspx and follow the link to the May 2009 events. For more information, contact Xavery Hopkins, 803.737.2779 or xhopkins@eip.sc.gov.

Ever been for a climb in your family tree? You may be surprised by what you find in your genealogical branches — maybe a historical figure, a celebrity or, perhaps, even a colleague. That’s where Larry Stoudenmire (right), director of web and electronic marketing, first ran into Jake Stoudenmire (left), research associate in the Joseph P. Riley, Jr. Center for Urban Affairs and Policy Studies. Both Stoudenmires had noticed each other’s names before, but it wasn’t until Larry did a little digging that they thought anything of it. “I’m always running into Stoudenmires all over the state, so it wasn’t a big surprise to me,” says Jake, a Columbia native. Then he received an e-mail from Larry indicating that they may very well be long-lost relatives.

“I’ve traced Jake back to Daniel Stoudenmire, born between 1775 and 1795,” says Larry, who suspects that he and Jake had the same second-generation ancestors since both their branches of Stoudenmires can be traced to Orangeburg. “I’m still trying to figure out if it goes back to the first generation. That’s what I’m really working on right now.”

For about 25 years, Larry has been tracing the Swiss-German Stoudenmires, who originally settled in the Orangeburg and Charleston areas. Gaps in the records have made it less than easy, but, with all the information he’s collected, logged and coded, he’s set on getting to the root of his family tree. “It’s almost like an algebraic expression,” he says. “You have to take what you don’t know and figure out what you do know through the process of elimination.”

And, who knows, you might just find your roots right here at the College.

NEWS BRIEFS: News You Can Use

- The following faculty members were named the 2009 Multicultural ExCEl Awards program’s Outstanding Faculty of the Year: John Creed, associate professor of political science, for the School of Humanities and Social Sciences; Jocelyn Evans, associate professor of economics and finance, for the School of Business and Economics; Enrique Graf, artist in residence in the Department of Music, for the School of the Arts; Rénard Harris, assistant professor of teacher education, for the School of Education; Health, and Human Performance; Linda Jones, associate professor of physics and astronomy, for the School of Sciences and Mathematics; Gladys Matthews, program director for the Department of Hispanic Studies, for the School of Languages, Cultures, and World Affairs; and Amanda Ruth-McSwain, assistant professor of communication, for the Graduate School.
- The following employees were also honored through the 2009 Multicultural ExCEl Awards program: Otto German, compliance coordinator in the Athletics Department, Eddie Ganaway Distinguished Alumni Award; Clara Hodges, administrative specialist for academic affairs, Outstanding Staff Member of the Year; Simon Lewis, associate professor of English, President Alex Sanders Outstanding Public Service Alumni Award; Michael Phillips, interlibrary loan coordinator and assistant head of the reference department in the Addlestone Library, Unsung Champion Award.
- The deadline for employee parking applications for next year is June 1. To apply, log onto CougarTrail as an employee, select “Parking Account,” follow the “Request Permits” link, select four unique locations and proceed accordingly. Employees without computer access may apply in person in the Office of Parking Services. For more information, visit cofc.edu/~parking/employees.html or contact parking services at parkingservices@cofc.edu or 3.7834.
- The Office of Cougar Card Services is now responsible for on-campus snack and beverage vending machines. For information about performance issues, product availability and refunds, contact cougar card services at 3.1100 or cougarcards@cofc.edu.
Thanks to everyone who participated in the last photo quiz, and congratulations to Moneke Watson, campus police officer, who was the first to guess that the object in question was the lion statue in front of the Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity house at 101 Wentworth Street. The golden statue actually represents the mascot of the Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity, which occupied the house until 2003. “The lion was never removed when they vacated,” says Kassie Kissinger, director of Greek life. “The Alphas have now adopted the lion as their own local symbol.”

Take a look at the picture above. The object can be found on campus. Do you know what it is? The first person to submit the correct answer will win a tasty lunch for two at Liberty Street Fresh Food Company, compliments of ARAMARK. Good luck!

Send your submission to lutza@cofc.edu by Friday, May 15, 2009. The contest is open to all College faculty and staff. One submission per person, please.