Join us for a night of fun—Friday, June 8!

Each year, thousands of Gainesville State College alumni, faculty, staff, students, community members, and their families come together for the annual Starlight Concert & Fireworks. This signature event will be held at the G. W. Bailey Amphitheater on the beautiful Gainesville Campus.

On Friday, June 8 (rain date June 9) the gates will be open from 4:30 to 8:00 PM. This year, we will “Rock through the Decades.” Our opening band, the “Brat Pak,” will play your favorite 80’s songs from 5:00 to 6:30, and “Back in Time” will play classic rock from 7:15 to 9:15, so you can dance the night away. Bay Fireworks will provide a great fireworks show at dusk. The entry fee for the event is $10 per car or $20 per large van or bus.

Presenting sponsors of this community favorite are dB Audio and Danley Sound Systems. There are many opportunities to support Starlight! Reserve your table for six, purchase an Alumni package, or be one of our corporate sponsors:

- ROMAN CANDLE—$5,000
- BOTTLE ROCKET—$2,500
- CHERRY BOMB—$1,000
- SPARKLER—$500

All sponsorships above include display table at event plus many more great benefits!

RESERVED TABLE OF SIX—$100: includes table with tablecloth, centerpiece, six chairs, and two parking passes and will be located on the side of the amphitheater.

ALUMNI PACKAGE—$50: includes one Starlight T-shirt, one glow item bag and one parking pass, $75 includes two Starlight T-shirts, two glow item bags, and one parking pass.

Further details and benefits can be found at www.gsc.edu/alumni. All proceeds benefit scholarships and student programming. For further information on sponsorships, email alumni@gsc.edu.

We are also looking for volunteers. If you are interested, please email events@gsc.edu with name, email address, cell phone number, T-shirt size, and availability.

A.C.E. Catering is providing the opportunity to purchase a pre-packaged gourmet meal for $13.95 per person! Menu selections include:

**Selection 1: Applewood Smoked Pulled Pork** served with Brunswick stew; redskin potato salad; creamy coleslaw; choice of fresh baked bread or buns; and choice of cookies or triple chocolate brownies.

**Selection 2: Grand Summer Salad**, including micro greens with fresh garden vegetables; dried cranberries and blueberries; grated cheeses; and topped with your choice of grilled chicken, grilled shrimp, or smoked pork tenderloin; and your choice of honey-lime vinaigrette and balsamic vinaigrette dressing. Served with fresh baked bread and gourmet cookies or triple chocolate brownies.

The meals will be available for purchase on-site. To guarantee your meal selections, please pre-order by Monday, June 4. Pre-orders can be made via email at dowengsc@yahoo.com or by calling 678-717-3626. Meals will be available for pickup from 5 to 7 PM.

Walk-ins, pets, political signage, advertisements (without sponsorship), sparklers, open flames, and grills are not allowed at this event. The campus is tobacco-free.

For more information, call (678) 717-3648.
Retiring president continues to support

It is with very mixed emotions that I write my last message for Anchors Away. The last almost fifteen years have been a wonderful time in my career. There have been challenges; however, the great successes of the College have overshadowed troublesome issues we have faced along the way.

Our faculty and staff have handled our tremendous growth, adding a campus, becoming a state college, and now planning for consolidation with a generous spirit, always focusing on what is best for our students. That so many of our faculty and staff are alumni speaks volumes about the fact that GSC is a wonderful and fulfilling place to work. Our “family” spirit is very evident in our collaboration and collegiality with each other.

GSC’s campuses are critical to the new regional university which will be comprehensive in nature and offer additional educational opportunities for the North Georgia region and beyond.

With our nationally recognized Institute of Environmental and Spatial Analysis and the Gainesville Theatre Alliance, we add special distinctiveness to the university as well as our reputation as a strong academic institution that produce students who succeed at universities or in our own baccalaureate programs.

Our alumni are very important in continuing to be great ambassadors in the region, spreading the reputation of the College as being student-focused and learning-centered. This special culture is critical to the success of the new university.

While I will be retiring after June, this College and the people I have worked with will always hold a special place in my heart, and I intend to continue my support for an institution which has made such a significant difference in the lives of so many.

—Dr. Martha T. Nesbitt

GSC, NGCSU will consolidate in Jan. ’13

The Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia elected in January 2012 to consolidate Gainesville State College (GSC) and North Georgia College & State University (NGCSU) to enhance higher education and degree completion opportunities for Georgians. The consolidation is expected to become effective in January 2013. Ours is one of four consolidations being implemented across the state.

A joint website has been created for the GSC/NGCSU consolidation that was created to be a user-friendly and information-rich site. Updates on the consolidation process will be provided at www.gscngcsu.org. For information about the University System and our institutions, please visit the University System of Georgia website at www.usg.edu.

Director of Alumni Affairs:
Exciting things are happening!

There are many exciting things happening at GSC! As our spring class graduates and rings in the summertime, we’ll be planning our Alumni & Friends community event, “Starlight Concert & Fireworks”! We look forward to this event each year and have some new things planned for you. With bringing in two new bands and a different fireworks company, this is sure to be one you don’t want to miss.

This summer, we will also be gearing up for fall semester planning and our Golf Open. I am pleased to say that we will return to the Chattahoochee Golf Club this year. Please mark your calendars and plan to join us on Friday, October 12.

I would like to extend my sincere congratulations to our graduates and look forward to hearing about success stories and having you back on campus for our various events! I lend a great quote and words of encouragement.

"Go confidently in the direction of your dreams. Live the life you have imagined." ~ Henry David Thoreau
Dr. Nesbitt retires after 15 years of service to GSC

Gainesville State College President Martha T. Nesbitt will retire June 30, 2012. Having served as the College’s third president, Nesbitt is also first in many categories. She is the College’s first female president; she is the first president to serve under the College’s “state college” status; through her leadership the College became one of the first tobacco-free colleges in the nation, and the list goes on.

Dr. Nesbitt took over leadership of then-Gainesville College in 1997, and over the past 14 years, she has continued to shape the institution to better serve as an educational and cultural resource in Northeast Georgia.

Under Dr. Nesbitt’s leadership, the College experienced a 174% enrollment increase during the ten year period from fall semester 2000 to fall semester 2010, when enrollment increased from 3,256 students to 8,900 students. This impressive growth was made possible by the addition of the Oconee Campus in Watkinsville and continuing growth on the Gainesville Campus. Nesbitt realized the need for a two-year college in the area east of Gainesville, and through her strong and effective vision, the Oconee Campus became a reality in the summer of 2003.

“A hallmark of Dr. Nesbitt’s career has been her dedicated focus on ensuring a strong college access mission for students,” said University System of Georgia Chancellor Hank Huckaby. “She has been singularly effective in this work within the University System, both at DeKalb College (now Georgia Perimeter College) and as president since 1997 of Gainesville State College. During her tenure as president, she created the College’s new Oconee Campus, which is just one example of her highly effective leadership.”

“When you think of Martha Nesbitt,” said Dr. Stephen Portch, former USG Chancellor, “you think of boundless enthusiasm, deep commitment, true loyalty, genuine compassion, and tireless work ethic. That’s why she became a transformative President for GSC.”

If you would like to honor Dr. Martha Nesbitt with a tribute gift to the GSC Foundation, those funds will be used to support students and enhance the President’s Leadership Program—started by Dr. Nesbitt. The acknowledgment will be sent to Dr. Nesbitt (without the amount), showing you have chosen to honor her in this way. Donations can be made online at www.gsc.edu/foundation or mailed to Gainesville State College, Institutional Advancement, P. O. Box 1358, Gainesville, GA 30503. Please indicate “Martha Nesbitt” in the memo field. For more information, call (678) 717-3948.

Workshops bring awareness to students

Two workshops were held on the Oconee Campus to foster awareness of the Alumni Association and to provide career advice and information to our students.

On March 14, Tana Suggs (’07) and Ben Wentworth (’09) talked about their personal experience, career paths, and reasons they had a successful and exciting time at GSC. Chris Stenander, GSC’s Alumni Association President, gave a presentation on his career path on March 28. He offered advice on what it takes to build your character and relationship base within your community and beyond, and what the corporate world is like.

The student leader luncheon was held April 25 at the Gainesville Campus. Ten students had the opportunity to participate with our Young Alumnus Achievement award winner and Alumni Council member, James Wright (’03). They discussed several different topics, including career paths, networking, and why it’s important to give back and stay connected with GSC.

Alumni Council President:

Graduation is my favorite time of year

Graduation is my favorite time of year at GSC. As I reflect back on my time at the college, I am reminded of the incredible faculty, small student to teacher ratio, and the attention the faculty gave to my needs as a student. The faculty really cared about student success, and I’m happy to say that it’s still like that today.

As President of the Alumni Association, I take my volunteer position very seriously. I want to encourage new grads, alumni and friends to take your passion seriously and take it to a new level. If you are passionate about GSC, let us know and let us see your continued support.

There are many ways to get involved with the Alumni Association. Send us your story for Anchors Away, make a commitment to be on the Alumni Council, update your information via our website (www.gsc.edu/alumni) or “like” us on Facebook. Your donations are always needed for scholarships and student programming as well. The last page of our newsletter gives you the opportunity to donate and give back to your alma mater.
Alumni renew friendships and reunite at reunion

Over 60 people attended the Gainesville State College Alumni reunion reception at the new Academic IV Building on April 13 to mix and mingle and renew and reunite.

During the program, Chris Stenander, president of the GSC Alumni Council, welcomed and thanked the group for their participation in the reception.

The evening was highlighted by a special video presentation to GSC President Dr. Martha T. Nesbitt that included past GSC presidents, faculty and staff members, and GSC Alumni expressing their gratitude and well wishes to Dr. Nesbitt on her upcoming retirement.

Rich White, chair of the Foundation Board of Trustees, introduced the video tribute and spoke of the many accomplishments and contributions Dr. Nesbitt has made during her time as president of GSC, including the new state-of-the-art building and the overall growth of the college. The video also included remarks by the college’s first and second presidents. Dr. Hugh Mills, Jr., the first president, said he was especially proud of the impact Dr. Nesbitt made on the college and in the community.

Several awards were also presented. The Alumni Association created a new award this year, the Martha T. Nesbitt Leadership Award. Dr. Nesbitt was recognized as the 2012 inaugural recipient.

Others recognized included Lesley Congdon, who received the Distinguished Alumnus Award; Vicki Davis, recipient of the Distinguished Service Award; James Wright, who received the Young Alumni Achievement Award; and Rita Mandell, who was honored with the Volunteer of the Year Award.

Congratulations to all who were nominated for these awards!

**Young Alumni Achievement**

Amy Bradford, Joshua E. Logan, Jamila Hunter-Leavell, Gina Sartain Neill and James Wright

**Martha T. Nesbitt Leadership of the Year Award**

Jeff Barkley, Susan Barkley, Patricia Choquette, Martha Nesbitt, H. Jeff Turk, Jackie Wallace and Lillian Welch

**Volunteer of the Year**

Rita Mandell and Michele Piucci

**Distinguished Service Award**

Vicki Davis, Doug Magnus, and Jackie Wallace

**Distinguished Alumnus Award**

Wendell Bagwell, Amy Bradford, John A. Brown, and Lesley Congdon

The Alumni Reunion weekend festivities concluded Saturday evening at the Georgia Force Football game at the Gwinnett Arena. Dr. Nesbitt kicked off the game with a successful coin toss, and the college’s brass ensemble, led by GSC’s trumpet instructor, Greg Holland, played the national anthem.

The Alumni Association thanks Liberty Mutual for their sponsorship of the pre-game reception and Matthews Printing for their assistance with our reunion brochure.

Look for another reunion in 2013!
Becky Wood Carlan ('97) has announced her intentions to run for tax commissioner of Banks County. Carlan has been employed at the Jon Massey State Farm Insurance Agency in Commerce for the past 13 years. She is a licensed insurance agent and also serves as office manager for the agency. She holds an Associate Degree from Gainesville State College and a Bachelor of Science Degree in Family and Consumer Sciences from the University of Georgia, with a double major in Consumer Economics and Housing.

Lauren Wehunt Blanton ('05) had a beautiful baby girl, Aubrie Lenox Blanton, on March 29, 2012. With proud father Lonni Blanton at her side, Aubrie was born at 7:32 p.m. and was 7 lbs., 10 oz. and 20.5 in. long. The proud grandmother, Lynda Gastley, retired from GSC in 2008 after 24 years of service.

Rich Elsarelli ('06) came back to campus to speak to the GSC Politically Incorrect Club. Rich is Ron Paul’s campaign coordinator for Georgia’s 10th Congressional District. He made the case for Rep. Paul’s presidential candidacy and answered questions from the audience. Elsarelli is a graduate of GSC and North Georgia College as well as a veteran of the 101st Airborne Division.

Jasun Pina ('06) has published I Love You..., his first children’s picture book. It is “a story of families—mothers and daughters, fathers and sons, brothers and sisters—and the bonds of affection they share.” Pina received a Bachelor Degree in art education from NGCSU in 2009 and is married to Erin Parrish ('07), GSC’s records coordinator in the financial aid office. Jasun’s book is available for purchase on Amazon.com.

Gina Sartain Neill ('08) was named the 2012-2013 Teacher of the Year for Hall County. Neill has been a Special Education teacher at White Sulphur Elementary School for the past four years. She has been a special education parapro for 16 years, and is a proud mom of her talented son, Adam Stewart. She is married to Robin Neill and has a golden doodle named Riley!

Stephanie Llanes ('10) was recently elected to a prestigious student leadership position, Vice President of the College Council (CC) at Emory University. Llanes’ experience affords her the rare opportunity to have both an outside and an inside vantage on CC. At GSC, Llanes spent two years serving on the Student Government Association, the second year as vice president. She gained valuable experience setting and following her initiatives until their implementation — experience which the Emory College Council values and knows will continue under her leadership.

Zach Abernathy ('10) has joined the WordPress community as a Core Contributor. In his volunteer role, Abernathy will be working on the team integrating design and useability features for iPad and Kindle Fire users in the next full software release of WordPress. WordPress founder Matt Mullenweg asked Abernathy to become a contributing developer at this year’s WordCamp Atlanta, a two-day conference covering key topics related to WordPress, free and open-source publishing software. Abernathy earned an Associate Degree in business administration from GSC.

Heather Geltz ('11) joined Sterling on the Lake, a residential community in Flowery Branch, as the marketing coordinator. In this position, Geltz supports all marketing for Sterling and coordinates events and programs for the greater community and local Realtors. Geltz earned an associate degree from Gainesville State College in 2011 and is currently completing her Bachelor Degree in business administration at North Georgia College & State University. As a former real estate agent, Geltz has real estate experience, also having worked for Hallmark Custom Homes in Savannah as a customer care associate.

Excerpts from a letter from Juan Llanes ('09) to Dr. Martha T. Nesbitt:

"I am writing to let you know that I finally graduate this Saturday, and yes, I finished both degrees and achieved a 4.0 . . . . I thought you would be proud of the fact that this student, who was accepted at Gainesville State College after being discouraged to enter as a freshman in other colleges, has made it through school thanks to the excellent start I was given at GSC . . . .

"Thank you for all your support helping me get to this point. It truly changed my life forever.

Regards,
Juan

"P.S. This summer I will be at Microsoft. I will then return to Tech and get a Masters in Machine Learning applied to Automated Trading, which basically combines my Computer Science degree with my Finance degree."

Juliana Gastley Dean ('03) gave birth to a healthy baby boy on May 1, 2012. Nolan Roger Dean is Juliana and Roger’s first child. Nolan was 7 lbs., 2 oz. and 20 in. long. The proud grandmother, Lynda Gastley, retired from GSC in 2008 after 24 years of service.

Juliana Gastley Dean ('03) gave birth to a healthy baby boy on May 1, 2012. Nolan Roger Dean is Juliana and Roger’s first child. Nolan was 7 lbs., 2 oz. and 20 in. long. The proud grandmother, Lynda Gastley, retired from GSC in 2008 after 24 years of service.

Stephanie Llanes ('10) was recently elected to a prestigious student leadership position, Vice President of the College Council (CC) at Emory University. Llanes’ experience affords her the rare opportunity to have both an outside and an inside vantage on CC. At GSC, Llanes spent two years serving on the Student Government Association, the second year as vice president. She gained valuable experience setting and following her initiatives until their implementation — experience which the Emory College Council values and knows will continue under her leadership.

Zach Abernathy ('10) has joined the WordPress community as a Core Contributor. In his volunteer role, Abernathy will be working on the team integrating design and useability features for iPad and Kindle Fire users in the next full software release of WordPress. WordPress founder Matt Mullenweg asked Abernathy to become a contributing developer at this year’s WordCamp Atlanta, a two-day conference covering key topics related to WordPress, free and open-source publishing software. Abernathy earned an Associate Degree in business administration from GSC.

Heather Geltz ('11) joined Sterling on the Lake, a residential community in Flowery Branch, as the marketing coordinator. In this position, Geltz supports all marketing for Sterling and coordinates events and programs for the greater community and local Realtors. Geltz earned an associate degree from Gainesville State College in 2011 and is currently completing her Bachelor Degree in business administration at North Georgia College & State University. As a former real estate agent, Geltz has real estate experience, also having worked for Hallmark Custom Homes in Savannah as a customer care associate.

Excerpts from a letter from Juan Llanes ('09) to Dr. Martha T. Nesbitt:

"I am writing to let you know that I finally graduate this Saturday, and yes, I finished both degrees and achieved a 4.0 . . . . I thought you would be proud of the fact that this student, who was accepted at Gainesville State College after being discouraged to enter as a freshman in other colleges, has made it through school thanks to the excellent start I was given at GSC . . . .

"Thank you for all your support helping me get to this point. It truly changed my life forever.

Regards,
Juan

"P.S. This summer I will be at Microsoft. I will then return to Tech and get a Masters in Machine Learning applied to Automated Trading, which basically combines my Computer Science degree with my Finance degree."
Congratulations, graduates!

The Alumni Association hosted two graduation receptions, one on the Gainesville Campus April 23 and another on the Oconee Campus April 25. Collectively, over 140 attended and had the opportunity to meet Alumni Council representatives, pick up their caps and gowns, and participate in an exciting raffle. It was a great chance to say “congratulations” to our graduates, show them our appreciation, and honor their accomplishments.

Foundation welcomes Perry Roberts, Director of Development

In December 2011, Perry Roberts joined Gainesville State College’s Institutional Advancement team as the Director of Development. He comes to us from Georgia Gwinnett College where he had served as Director of Annual Funding and Alumni Relations since 2007.

Mr. Roberts brings an incredible amount of experience to our institution. He has held senior fund raising and marketing posts with other large nonprofit organizations including Callaway Gardens Foundation and the American Heart Association. Prior to his work in the volunteer sector, Perry enjoyed a long and successful career with American Woodmark Corporation. His primary focus was market strategy and developing new markets through expansion of dealer and distributor networks.

Perry began his career in sales and brand management at General Electric Company, principally directing new market initiatives. He has also conducted a variety of training seminars, becoming certified as a facilitator through the Covey Leadership Center.

Perry and wife Kim have one child, a son, Matthew, age 17. Matthew will be one of our new students and attend GSC in the fall!

With Liberty Mutual, Gainesville State College alumni can get more from their auto and home insurance.

Get More. Save More. Find out just how much more today.

Vicki Davis
340 Jesse Jewell Parkway - Suite 500
Gainesville, GA 30501
770-354-2750 ext. 57241
Vicki.Davis@LibertyMutual.com

COME JOIN US!

Volunteer Picnic

Thursday, June 28
4:00 to 7:00 p.m.
Gainesville Campus
Academic IV Terrace

If you have volunteered for the Alumni & Friends Golf Open, Alumni Reunion, Graduation Receptions, or Starlight, you will be invited to attend this thank you event. We’ll provide food, music, and fun to our great volunteers who are champions of our many successful events!
Huckabee announces appointment of Dr. Randy Pierce

University System of Georgia Chancellor Hank Huckaby announced on April 18 the appointment of Dr. Randy Pierce as the interim president of Gainesville State College.

Pierce will assume the post on July 1 of this year, upon the planned retirement of current president Dr. Martha T. Nesbitt. “As we move forward with the consolidation of Gainesville State College and North Georgia College & State University, it is critical to have excellent leadership during this transition,” said Huckaby. “Dr. Pierce brings a high level of experience in the University System to this post, and we are pleased that he is willing to share this experience to lead the college.”

Pierce served as president of Georgia Highlands College for ten-and-a-half years before his retirement on December 31, 2011. Prior to his appointment as the president of Georgia Highlands College, Pierce served as provost of the Lawrenceville campus of Georgia Perimeter College from 1996 - 2001. From 1994 through 1999, he served as the director of the Gwinnett University Center. Pierce has held several positions at Georgia Perimeter College and Georgia State University.

Pierce earned his doctorate in educational leadership, master in education and bachelor of business administration degrees from Georgia State University.

He has served on a number of boards and committees, including as a member of the Rome/Floyd County Chamber of Commerce board of directors, chair of the Georgia Public Broadcasting – Northwest Georgia Advisory Board, and as a member of the Board of Directors, Southern Association of Community, Junior and Technical Colleges.
PARENTS: Help us keep GSC graduates well informed! Forward Anchors Away to your son or daughter, but first send the corrected mailing address label for your GSC graduate to the Alumni Office, Gainesville State College, P.O. Box 1358, Gainesville, GA 30503.

GSC Alumni & Friends Golf Open 2012
SAVE THE DATE
Friday, October 12
Chattahoochee Golf Club
Gainesville, GA
For more information, call (678) 717-3648

Continuing Education at GSC
Check out our Summer Camps and Adult Classes offered through GSC’s Continuing Education program. The summer edition of “On Course” is now available online at www.gsc.edu/ce. Camps include soccer, theatre improv, digital graphic arts, and much more! For further information or to register, call (678) 717-3605.

Announcing GTA’s 2012-13 Season!
WonderQuest: GTA for Young Audiences presents: The Frog Prince Sept 28-Oct 6
And on the GTA MainStage: The Producers Nov 6-17
A February Festival of Theatre - Feb 12-23:
She Loves Me A Raisin in the Sun
And in the spring: Twelfth Night April 9-20
GAINESVILLETHEATREALLIANCE.ORG
678.717.3624