



Healthy Expansions

Necessary Step

Annual Report of Donors

DANGER AT THE DOOR

Compared with what we hear these days from political commentators and cable TV comedians, the following may not seem like a rant, but it definitely is the “Schrader version.”

Brenau’s institutional life, opportunities and trajectories give every indication of substantial progress. This fall our total enrollment passed 2,800 students and graduate student enrollment surpassed 1,000. Our institutional financial condition is strong. International collaborations are sending more Brenau students overseas and are bringing more international students here. Campuses at Augusta, Norcross (North Atlanta), Fairburn (South Atlanta) and Kings Bay continue to grow along with skyrocketing online enrollments. Brenau recently reached an agreement with the City of Gainesville to evaluate long-term use of the Georgia Mountains Center for possible expansion of health careers programs (see story on page 19), which could add as many as 700 students to our rolls. The list goes on through many areas of academic programs, athletic achievement, financial stability and student life.

The Grateful Dead (and later Jimmy Buffet) sang “when life looks like easy street, danger’s at the door.” That’s not so much pessimism as it is a simple expression of the foundational truth in many spiritual traditions and ancient philosophies: Yin and Yang, Good and Evil, Death and Rebirth, opposing forces of nature and life. Intellectually I understand that happiness and grief as well as satisfaction and frustration permeate our lives.

So, what is bothering me? We should expect life to throw at us – and at our students – unexpected joy balanced by sorrow, or much-deserved achievement and personal reward thwarted by economic recessions or natural disasters. In fact, it is our job at Brenau – a personal and collective commitment – to prepare ourselves, our university and our students for all of these life changes. That’s hard enough. What is not necessary, however, is the unusually uncivil, unproductive, mean-spirited hype that bombards the world from a multitude of media outlets and political organizations. As a result, I see the United States dividing into hateful, mutually fearful and hostile groups.

Where are the accountability, personal conscience and feeling of responsibility in politicians, media personalities and other folks who profit from manipulation of fear and insecurity? Have we not learned from history that a vile and loathsome group permeates politics and media? These fear-mongering mafias advance their own agendas (often for profit or power) by making the “silent majority” afraid of circumstances that people cannot



Billy Howard

control? That technique is how Hitler, Trotsky-Lenin-Stalin, Jim Jones, Joe McCarthy and bin Laden gained their initial support and consolidated power.

Don’t get me wrong. I cling to my distinctly America-shaped and south Mississippi-nurtured tradition of patriotism, social conscience and fiscal conservatism. That tradition does not pre-judge individuals because of ethnicity, cultural nuance, social class, political affiliation or religion. Born of hard-working farmers and fishermen, immigrants from many countries, and those seeking safe haven from oppressive governments, that tradition asks men and women to prove themselves through actions in lives lived with integrity. That tradition dictates that we support those in need. It requires those who are able to contribute MUST DO JUST THAT.

We work. We give. We respect others’ rights to develop personal beliefs. We sometimes disagree, and we do so passionately. However, we neither denigrate nor villify fellow citizens who disagree with us.

Most important, we band together in times of national crisis. We collectively decide what is right for the nation. Especially in times such as these, we expect our elected representatives to govern with the country and its individuals in mind, not for political advantage. We expect media talent to report facts honestly and fairly and to transparently express objective opinions.

In my opinion, we are not following the American tradition politically or economically. Citizens need to demand better of their leadership, their representatives and the industry that reports to the public the events of our lives.

Brenau’s graduates are equipped to advance the quality of life and love in our world. Our legacy is that a better world will exist because Brenau has been a part of it. Politicians and performers need to subscribe to that same philosophy – to be enablers of progress rather than roadblocks.

To paraphrase what Bob Dylan said of our nation’s efforts for progress and better times: Get out of the road if you can’t lend a hand!

Ed L. Schrader

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COVER PHOTO BY CHARLIE MCCULLERS, COURTESY OF ATLANTA BALLET

For change of address, feedback or other communication with the staff, call 800 252-5119 or 770 534-6167. Fax 770 538-4300, or e-mail dmorrison@brenau.edu. Brenau University is accredited by the Commission on Colleges and the Commission of Secondary Schools of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award secondary, bachelor’s, master’s and education specialist degrees. Brenau believes in equal opportunity for all.

Please keep, share or recycle.





Billy Howard

2010-11

Annual Report of Donors

Putting Your Passion into Action

Passion is not something that can be forced on another person. While one can certainly help develop and feed it in others, it is something that must be found inside of each of us. I think in many ways the list that follows shows that we, meaning the university and those benefiting from the university, are lucky to have so many that are truly passionate about Brenau.

The names that you find in this list of donors, from gifts provided during the past fiscal year (July 1, 2010, through June 30, 2011), may or may not be familiar to you. However, if you are a fellow member of this list, they certainly have something very important in common with you – passion for Brenau University.

While we are beneficiaries of various forms of passionate support, the specific type illustrated in this list is from those who have stepped forward to give financially to Brenau. How their passion was first stoked certainly runs the gamut – from being a graduate of Brenau and remembering the transformative experiences that molded the remainder of their life; to being an audience member touched during a musical performance and knowing that a donation could make a difference in the lives of the students performing on the stage; to being a member of the community and knowing that the area was a better place with Brenau acting as a strong institution in the region.

While I could provide many examples of why people give, that is not the purpose of this undertaking. The reason for my comments is simply to say a heartfelt “thank you” to all of those who are passionate about Brenau and, because of this passion, decided to support its mission through a charitable donation. Your generosity will continue to propel Brenau forward and allow it to continue educating all that eventually will call Brenau their alma mater.

If you are reading this but do not have your name included on the following list, I am bold enough to venture the guess that you, too, have a passion for Brenau. I look forward to thanking you next year for your willingness to put that passion into action and support Brenau financially!

Sincerely yours,

Matt Thomas
Vice President for External Relations

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*Denotes deceased within the last fiscal year.

Brenau Scholars 2011 Class Represents Outstanding Academics, Leadership Qualities

One of the most significant results of Brenau University’s decision to dedicate all annual fund contributions to the pool of some \$8 million a year it spends on scholarships is the recently reconstituted Brenau Scholars program. Created three years ago by combining the previous Brenau Scholars award with another scholarship for leadership, the new program sought to provide a smaller number of larger grants to deserving first-year students. The idea was to use the program to entice some well-rounded, top high school academic performers – students with proven records for showing leadership qualities in and out of the classroom – to enroll in the Brenau Women’s College and stick around until they completed their undergraduate studies. The scholarship, funded in part by contributions, is a full ride for tuition, a value of more than \$20,000 each. But it’s not a free ride: students who accept the first-year grant sign a contract to keep grades up; live on campus and participate in campus organizations, leadership development and directed community service programs; and serve as mentors and contact points for younger students and older adults. If a recipient meets conditions of the contract, her scholarship can be renewed for subsequent years.

The university selects Brenau Scholars for their past and potential academic success, leadership achievement and personal qualities as exemplified in the Brenau Ideal. Brenau Scholars must have an SAT score of 1200 or better or ACT composite score of 27 or better and a 3.2 or better grade point average in a college preparatory curriculum. Students selected for this prestigious scholarship must reside on campus, participate in the Brenau Honor’s Program and the Women’s Leadership Development Program, complete a long-term community service project and maintain grade point averages above 3.3 on a 4.0 scale.

So far Brenau is batting 1.000 in

retaining Brenau Scholars under the new program. The 2009 scholars – Brianne Russ, Ashley Campbell, Amanda Corll, Chloe Golden and Christina Jundt – are completing their junior year now, all of them fully engaged in a wide variety of campus activities. The same is true for sophomores Rachel Siegfried, Megan Pinter, Jessica Anderson, Ashley Long and Lauren Cain, the 2010 Brenau Scholars group.

“We could not be more pleased with the success of the Brenau Scholars program,” said Scott Briell, senior vice president for enrollment and student services. “The young women that it has attracted have stepped into leadership roles on campus in and out of the classroom. They fully embraced both the spirit and responsibility associated with the Brenau Scholars program, and we expect this year’s group to do the same.”

Profiles of 2011 recipients continue in this section.

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Brittany Arthur

Brenau Scholar Brittany Arthur of Cumming, Ga., an honors graduate of North Forsyth High School, plans to major in pre-occupational therapy. She is the daughter of Tracy Arthur. Brittany played lacrosse for all four years in high school. The aspiring health care professional also was a member of the National Honor Society, Beta Club, Student Council, Future Business Leaders of America and Mu Alpha Theta mathematics honor society. At Brenau she has been elected freshman class treasurer.



Morgan Davis

Brenau Scholar Morgan Davis of Butler, Ga., a graduate of Marion County High School, plans to major in English literature. She is the daughter of Nicole Montgomery and Eddie Davis. Her career goal is to teach English and literature at the college level. “Books and writing have been such an amazing outlet for me that it seems almost criminal to not share it with someone else,” Davis says. “I’m so thankful for this amazing experience at Brenau.”

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Abigail Paul

Brenau Scholar Abigail Paul of Sugar Hill, Ga., a graduate of North Gwinnett High School, plans to major in theater. She wants to pursue a graduate degree in this discipline and teach. “I enjoy working with children and reading for fun when I get the chance,” Paul says.

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Sarah Rooker

Brenau Scholar Sarah Rooker of Jasper, Ga., a graduate of Pickens County High School, plans to major in history and political science. She is the daughter of Debbie J. Rooker and the late Mike Rooker. In high school, Rooker was president of the Mock Trial Honor Society, vice president of Future Business Leaders of America, yearbook editor and business manager, and a member of Beta Club. Her long-term goal is to go to law school and become a hospital administrator.



Amy Walls

Brenau Scholar Amy Walls of Braselton, Ga., an honors graduate of Johnson High School, is the daughter of Tommy and Cheryl Walls. (Mother Cheryl also graduated from Brenau). Walls plans to major in education with a minor in psychology. In high school Walls was a varsity football cheerleader, an Honor Thespian, and an oboe and percussion player in the marching and symphonic bands. She plans to work with children as an educator in English and drama.



necessary Step

When Kristine Necessary Loveless was 5 years old, she answered a question in one of those fill-in-the-blanks “All About Me” books in a particularly prescient way. For the what-do-you-want-to-be-when-you-grow-up question, she dictated the answer to her mother: “Ballerina and teacher.”

Loveless, who is now 29, followed that course. After graduating from Chattahoochee High School in Johns Creek, she enrolled at Georgia State University in 2000, even while knowing that her dance career was about to take flight. Keeping her *en point*, Atlanta Ballet – after her year as an apprentice – elevated her to the professional company. She quickly became one of its top dancers. Recent roles included her performances as Kitri in John McFall’s *Don Quixote*; summer *pas de deux* in James Kudelka’s *Four Seasons*; Aurora in McFall’s *Sleeping Beauty*; Sugar Plum Fairy, Dew Drop Fairy and Arabian in McFall’s *The Nutcracker*; and the principal woman in Val Caniparoli’s *Lambarena*.

However, seemingly at the top of her game after a stellar, decade-long professional career, Loveless did the unthinkable: She announced her retirement.

So if we consider dancing merely as Act 1 of an already-accomplished life, the graceful, long-legged, dark-haired, blue-eyed Loveless prepares now to leap into Act 2. That is, as soon as she completes the student-teaching requirement of her Brenau University Master of Arts in Teaching early childhood education program. “I had to do the dancing first,” Loveless explains. “I couldn’t exactly start dancing now.”

The focus Kristine Nicole Necessary placed on her dance career after high school compelled her to perform something of a *retirè* from her studies. She proceeded slowly, enrolling one or two classes a semester. It took her eight years to complete her GSU degree in history, the subject she chose since she couldn’t major in education, lacking the open time to student teach while adhering to the schedule demands of her dancing. She laughs when she recalls the relief of finishing at GSU in 2008. “Oh, my God,” she thought, “finally!”

ACT II

Her break from academic rigors was a short one. Although she was newly married to Matt Loveless, which would have been a convenient excuse to take five, she enrolled that fall as a candidate for Brenau’s College of Education graduate degree, the M.A.T. is designed for people – many of them career changers – whose undergraduate studies occurred in non-education disciplines and who, as a result, do not have the requisite credentials for teaching in elementary or high schools.

As she worked her way through the master’s curriculum, Loveless knew she also was drawing the curtain on dance, even as she continued to add substantial roles to her impressive list of credits. Even though dancing had been a huge part of her life since age 3, she was at peace with the prospect. Still, she had no exact time frame in mind for the end of Act 1 and beginning of Act 2.

Her younger sister, Courtney, who is now 27, led the way.

Right: Kristine Necessary with J. Hooper at the Cobb Energy Center.

Some gotta dance. Some gotta teach.
Some – one Brenau grad student in particular – gotta do both.

by Howard Pousner





Kristine Necessary and Christian Clark in Atlanta Ballet's Cinderella.



Pirouetting in the classroom, Kristine now stars in a new role.

Previously Courtney had followed Kristine's footsteps – from the Atlanta Ballet's Centre for Dance Education into the professional company. But she retired in 2010 to pursue an M.B.A. at Vanderbilt University in Nashville. When Courtney hung up her *pointe* shoes, Kristine began a somewhat public introspection.

A BIG SURPRISE

"I really began to think about the next step I wanted to take too," she wrote on the ballet's blog after announcing her imminent retirement. "I reflected on my dance career and also thought about the other things that are important to me. I now know I have reached a point where I feel completely satisfied with my life as a dancer. I love dancing, and I will always be passionate about it, but there are so many other things life has to offer that I'm passionate about, too."

The announcement took the Atlanta dance community by surprise. In her prime, Loveless had suffered no serious career-

altering injury. Plenty of good roles had come her way and more would come. This was a rising star. After 25 years of hard work and accomplishment, who walks away from a secure spot in and a bright future with the country's oldest continuously operating dance company?

Chinese dancer Wei Dongsheng, however, was not surprised at all. He had been her partner in her first non-Nutcracker principal role, 2002's *Esmeralda Pas de Deux*. Having danced with the Atlanta Ballet troupe until he was 38 years old, Dongsheng now runs the Atlanta Professional Dance Academy in Johns Creek, where Loveless has taught during several summers.

"She's such a smart girl," says Dongsheng, sounding like a proud papa. "She scheduled her career very well. She knew how many years she was going to study in college and when she would graduate. It's very, very impressive to me that at such a young age she knew exactly what she wanted to do."

Loveless, indeed, knew that she wanted to be an elemen-

tary school teacher, just like her mom had been before Kristine and her two younger sisters came along.

"I always enjoyed being in the classroom," she says. "I liked all my teachers."

That comment simplifies the story too much. It sounds like she smoothly choreographed this business of preparing for one career while starring in another all by herself. But her parents, Debbie and Steve Necessary, played a big part in the decision-making all along. They were especially key in keeping Kristine on track, focused on life as opposed to what for many is a fleeting, short-lived career.

The parents encouraged development of the dance talents of Kristine and the younger siblings, Courtney and Abbie. They ferried the three girls between school and dance classes, bursting with pride over their skills and accomplishments. But they were hardly the stereotypical

driving, consumed stage parents.

"When we would get upset about something that would happen at dance, they would say, 'If it's bothering you that much, then quit,'" Loveless recalls.

When Kristine and Courtney were in high school and already starting to get meaty roles, Debbie and Steve, vice president of video strategy and product management for Cox Communications, insisted that they couldn't rehearse on Fridays.

"You need to enjoy what regular high school students do," Loveless remembers her parents telling her. "This can't be your whole life. We hated it at the time. Now, looking back, I'm so glad I did that because I got to homecoming and the prom, the games. We did normal stuff."

In 2002 as all three of the girls performed in the Atlanta Ballet's annual performance of *The Nutcracker* (Abbie portrayed the young Marya and Kristine danced

as the adult character), Debbie Necessary explained the parenting philosophy. “You can love dance, and that’s great because God has given you this talent,” she said in an interview with *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* that year. “But it can’t be your total focus. It’s not going to last forever.”

Kristine received a slightly different, albeit a somewhat more forceful, elaboration when she announced to her parents that she planned to take a year off after high school to give undivided attention to her blossoming dance career.

ever, in the face of apparent talent, the company made what could be called “a Necessary exception.”

DOABLE JUGGLING

Undergraduate studies at GSU turned out to be a doable juggle, “not that much work, comparatively,” Loveless recalls, but she made concessions during her eight-year educational odyssey, which was more a means to an end than an idyllic college experience. She engaged few acquaintances and embraced no extracurricular activities.

Likewise, the subsequent graduate study at Brenau that first fall jibed quite well with her dance schedule. Her one four-hour class met on Monday evenings. The Midtown Atlanta resident could take most of her classes at the Norcross campus a half-hour away. There were also online courses that could fold around her work. Only a handful required her presence on the main campus in Gainesville.

Since the early childhood education program is small, Loveless shared classes with familiar, friendly faces. She calls so little attention to herself that most classmates had not a clue they had a *prima ballerina* in their midst. “Brenau is more work than Georgia State, for sure,” she says. “But I enjoyed it more because [education is] also what I’m most interested in.”

Being able to study long and hard on Mondays, when she was off from the ballet and her husband was at work project managing for a construction company, helped make her master’s manageable.

“The only times it got difficult were when we were actually performing,” she says. “That Monday after doing two shows on Sunday, I was just completely drained. I probably fell asleep multiple times while trying to study.”

Loveless laughs about that now, but it gets at a hidden truth about ballet dancers, particularly Atlanta Ballet company members: They are perfectionists and push themselves hard, beyond any prodding from supportive Artistic Director McFall.

“I’m never happy with what I do, ever, even when people say, ‘Great job, great show.’” Loveless admitted in

February as she prepared for her final starring role, as Princess Aurora in *The Sleeping Beauty*. “As I’ve gotten older, I’ve learned to not get upset about it. Still, the expectations rise and rise.”

The interview before a rehearsal at Atlanta Ballet’s new Westside studios, a fashionable makeover of a former appliance manufacturing plant, also included the more “seasoned” fellow ballerina Christine Winkler, with whom Loveless shared a dozen roles and some sweet common experiences during the past decade. “Every dancer is just so self-critical,” Winkler added in this conversational *pas de deux*. “But that’s part of a good work ethic. It’s part of the process of pushing yourself.”

A FIRST LEAP

As a 15-year-old dance school student with a noggin full of ballerina dreams, Loveless occasionally penned gushing, adulatory notes, illustrated with the teen’s flowery drawings, to her favorite Atlanta Ballet dancer, who just so happened to be Christine Winkler. The notes contained such sentiments as “You’re so beautiful. I hope one day I can be like you.” The flattered Winkler encouraged her young disciple. “I kept telling her, ‘You wait. One day you’ll be better than me.’” Winkler recalled.

That proved to be somewhat prophetic. In 2001 Loveless became one of the first – and one of the few – Atlanta Ballet Centre for Dance Education grads to make the leap to the professional company, essentially evolving into her idol’s peer.

“Kristine has had two loves all of her life, and she’s kind of fulfilled this one,” said Winkler, who in her late 30s is still dancing. “I don’t want her to go, but I know that she’s ready, and she is making the right decision for herself.”

During that February conversation, Loveless affirmed not only that she was completely comfortable with her decision, but also that she felt something rare in a career: utter contentment, even a sense of completion.

“Every classical role that I’ve wanted to do as a ballet dancer, I’ve done,” she said. “I feel completely satisfied with that.”

Still one wondered whether she really was trying to persuade herself.

Flash forward eight months. Much has changed. Loveless has completed her Brenau classroom work. With the Atlanta Ballet 2011-12 season in high gear and its signature performance of *The Nutcracker* imminent, the former ballerina paces through practice teaching steps at Morris Brandon Elementary in Buckhead. And in a bigger development, she’s pregnant with her and Matt’s first child. She found out she was expecting a son right after her final season ended. Indeed, such major, life-altering, happy

developments offer much to look forward to. However, no one could blame her if she missed her first love, dance.

“Of course, I’ve missed it,” Loveless admits now.

“I’ve missed the people a lot. It’s worse when you watch something and think, ‘Oh, I can still do that.’ Now, being pregnant, there’s no way I could be doing that right now.”

A DIFFERENT ‘STAGE FRIGHT’

Although Loveless is accustomed to performing in auditoriums and theaters full of people, some of them very knowledgeable about the art and her practice of it, her real “stage fright” occurred on the first day that she stood in front of a class, not knowing what to expect or how the students would react. But they’ve responded well as she’s continued to add subjects and build time in front of them.

Her new anxiety differs significantly from that she felt as a dancer.

“Kristi will teach them to listen, to enjoy learning, and to apply themselves in a manner that will illustrate to them they can become whatever they desire to be.”

“I know there’s the real teacher there and, if I mess up, I can always correct it,” she says. “Onstage you don’t have that. You’re alone, and you can’t make up for it.”

Loveless expects her child in late January. She plans to begin teaching full-time in fall 2012. She’s excited at both prospects, together making a life very different than the one she lived for her first 28 years.

Perhaps surprisingly Atlanta Ballet Artistic Director McFall fully supported her decision to give up one of the ballet’s 20 coveted company positions. He predicts that she will be as big a success in front of demanding students as she was in front of discerning Fox Theatre and Cobb Energy Performing Arts Center audiences.

“Kristi will teach them to listen, to enjoy learning,” McFall says, “and to apply themselves in a manner that will illustrate to them they can become whatever they desire to be.”

Or, if they’re anything like Kristine Necessary Loveless, whatever *two things* they desire to be.



Kristine with second grade teacher Tangie Byrd.

“My parents said, ‘Uh-uh. You’re going to apply to school, and go to school.’ So I remember Dad and me sitting down on Sundays, filling out applications.” Kristine wasn’t thrilled, but deep down, she “kind of knew” her folks were right. “I know I’m going to want to [go to college and become a teacher] eventually,” she thought, “so just do it.”

At the time the “career” side of her life fell under purview of her Atlanta Ballet Artistic Director John McFall and Centre for Dance Education Dean Sharon Story. Naturally, as other young dancers appeared to be throwing all hearts, souls and waking moments into their careers, the teenaged Kristine worried some about how her professional mentors would react to the dictates of her-so-out-of-it parents. How-



Rudi Kiefer

As an undergraduate, OT graduate scholarship recipient Brittany Fox always was a stand-out student on campus – in every respect.

Growth gives OT, Nursing 'school' naming rights

With careers in health care professions roundly diagnosed as both rewarding and veritably recession-proof, Brenau sees more students opting for majors and graduate degrees in those fields. With the growth in both headcount and prestige for producing well-trained professionals, Brenau this year officially upgraded two of its academic departments to the School of Nursing and the School of Occupational Therapy.

"When I came to Brenau in 2002, there were only 125 students in these fields," said Dr. Gale Starich, dean of the Sidney O. Smith Jr. Graduate School and College of Health & Science. "Now we have 720 in two of the fastest-growing programs at the university." With both ensconced at new, state-of-the-art digs at the Brenau East campus in Gainesville and facilities upgraded and prepped for growth at campuses in Norcross and Fairburn, the numbers will only grow higher. Brenau added a Doctor of Nursing Practice degree this fall and, barring unforeseen circumstances, will seat the first class in an OT doctorate in 2012. With the change Dr. Keeta Wilborn, nursing chair, and Dr. Barbara Schell, chair of OT, advance to become associate deans in the College of Health & Science.

Starich says the change means more than just reprinting departmental stationery. School status dovetails better academically with Brenau's plan to grow dramatically in graduate-level programs. The 2,819 official fall enrollment high-water mark for Brenau includes, for the first time, more than 1,000 graduate students, about 40 percent of whom are in health professions preparation. The long-term plan for 5,000 students includes about 50 percent in graduate school programs.

Leading legacies

Domeca Taylor Fillingame and Amanda Miller Taylor became fast friends when they met as Brenau freshman roommates, both intent on careers in occupational therapy. In 1999, as Women's College seniors facing graduate school expenses, they decided on a meaningful way to stay in touch. They each pledged \$500 a year toward establishing the endowed Taylor-Miller Award, a \$1,000 scholarship for Women's College students who elect to pursue occupational therapy in graduate school. Friends, family, and OT faculty members since have contributed to the fund. Brittany Fox, a women's college student from North Canton, Ohio, was awarded the scholarship for the 2011 academic year.

Sara Brayman, long-time chair of Brenau's OT program, one of the first in the nation to require a year of graduate study for the degree, also knew well one of the realities of higher education at Brenau: Although a number of scholarships exist for undergraduates, financial aid for graduate study has been limited. Brayman, on her 2010 retirement, established the Dr. Sara J. Brayman Occupational Therapy Scholarship. Its first recipient, honored this academic year, is Sandi Cierra Brown of Stockbridge, Ga.

Barbara Schell, associate dean for the School of Occupational Therapy, says graduate programs like the imminent occupational therapy doctorate will require additional funding for scholarship and research "if we're going to compete successfully with other programs around the country."



Scott Rogers

Brenau builds a 'healthy footprint' in Gainesville

For more than three decades the Georgia Mountains Center in Gainesville has hosted every kind of event you can imagine, ranging from concerts to family parties to home shows to kickboxing to gun and knife shows to jumping Austrian stallions to Brenau University commencement exercises. However, with operations running in the red for the public-owned facility featuring a 2,500-seat arena, theater, meeting rooms and other assets, Gainesville city leaders sought proposals from a wide array of sources about how to put the convention, trade show and entertainment venue back in the black.

The only idea that caught anybody's attention came from an unlikely source: Brenau University. Long frustrated by unsuitable locales to expand the Gainesville campus toward the heart of the city around the town square, Brenau proposed converting the Mountains Center into a home base for graduate studies programs, particularly those involved in professional preparation for fast-growing health care services careers like occupational therapy and nursing.

For many civic and political leaders, the idea made perfect "why-didn't-we-think-of-this-earlier" sense. In early September the city council and the university signed a memorandum of understanding that gave Brenau the opportunity to evaluate a long-term arrangement for the university to lease the Georgia Mountains Center as part of its expansion plans. "This idea truly is in the best interests of both the university and the city of Gainesville," said Brenau President Ed L. Schrader. "Brenau has some ambitious growth plans over the next two decades with no place in the Gainesville area to accommodate the growth. The city has the place, but it has become a financial drain."

Although the idea has received very little negative reaction, it is still just an idea. The agreement effectively took discussions about other uses for the Mountains Center off the table in Gainesville's city government until Brenau had time to do a detailed feasibility study about whether it could make the idea

work. A key issue is whether the university can expand its existing offerings in health care by adding degrees in programs like physical therapy, pharmacy or other health sciences it does not currently offer.

But Schrader says the numbers work in the university's favor. Brenau currently enrolls more than 2,800 students, more than 1,000 of whom are in graduate programs. About 40.4 percent of the graduate students are enrolled in health-related master's degree programs: nursing, occupational therapy, clinical psychology, physician assistant, applied gerontology and health services administration, and combined they represent the fastest-growing segment of all Brenau academic programs. Likewise, critical shortages of health care professionals in many disciplines exist now in north Georgia and elsewhere, many of the health care professions have been highly rated as ideal, virtually recession-proof career choices. Among the CNN-Money listings of the 100 best career choices for salary and employability, health care professions represented more than one fourth of the total. Of the top five, Brenau already prepares students for the No. 2 profession, physician assistant, and is considering preparation for the No. 4 profession, physical therapy.

Although the Mountain Center is not contiguous to Brenau's Gainesville campus, the university already has established that its programs can work in that sort of setting. Four years ago Brenau opened what's known as "Brenau East," leased space in Featherbone Communiversity. That location, about a mile from the main campus, now operates successfully as the home for the schools of nursing and occupational therapy, dance studios and other Brenau programs.

Schrader says he anticipates making a recommendation about the use of the Mountains Center at the spring meeting of the university's board of trustees.



Tom Askew

Emily Dunlap Lawson, better known as “Sissy,” has recited the “Brenau Ideal” from memory and quoted it in speeches during her long career in politics, starting with her role as the first woman on the Gainesville City Council and her election as the city’s first female mayor in 1992.

An ‘Ideal’ Trustee

“THE BRENAU IDEAL IS CLOSE TO MY HEART for so many reasons,” she says. “It’s a timeless guide for living, to be ‘vigorous in mind’ and ‘serenely confident of the limitless reaches of human endeavor.’”

Plus, it was written by her grandfather, Dr. H.J. Pearce, the 50-year president of the women’s college who coined the name “Brenau.”

Lawson, who joined the Board of Trustees this year and attended her first meeting in November, claims many ties to the university. Her mother, aunt and grandmother all graduated from the Women’s College. Lawson, feeling the need to “do something on her own,” attended Stephens College, a private women’s institution in Missouri, and the University of Georgia before returning to Gainesville and embarking on a career in public service.

Lawson is married to Bobby Lawson, who served in the Georgia House of Representatives from 1978 to 1994. She was one of the first three women in Hall County to earn a real estate license and among the first to join the Kiwanis Club. The Girl Scouts of North Georgia have named her a “Gainesville Woman of Distinction.”

Over time, Lawson says, she has realized Brenau’s ever-growing importance in the civic life of north Georgia. “My grandfather loved bringing international students here, and I’m especially excited to see such diversity in the international community of students,” she says. “Brenau enriches this community in so many ways, including bringing high-caliber students from all over the world, who often end up making this area their home.”

Since retiring from public life, Lawson has been witnessing, firsthand, campus evolution as an enthusiastic participant in BULLI (Brenau University Learning and Leisure Institute). She currently is taking a class on social media.

“Many institutions tend to remain stuck in the past, but Brenau keeps adapting and stepping boldly into the future, offering a wonderful base of arts and culture, a growing program for the sciences and health care, and an expanding athletic program on top of all that,” she says. “Brenau makes Gainesville a desirable destination, not just for students but for everyone.”

This ‘Greenhouse Effect’ helps the planet

BRENAU’S GREEN THUMBS soon will have a fertile, year-round laboratory for their intensive biological research, thanks to the generosity of supporters Arthur Bilyeu and his wife, Pamela Bilyeu. The couple donated \$10,000 toward The Dr. Arthur and Pamela Bilyeu Bioscience Greenhouse in loving memory of their daughter, Shannon McCoy, who died of cancer at age 34. Dr. Bilyeu is a retired investment representative for Edward Jones and Company, and his wife serves on Brenau’s Board of Advisers. Both have been active in the arts and community affairs of northeast Georgia.

The greenhouse fittingly plants its roots near Smithgall Lane on the Gainesville campus at the edge of the campus’ historic bamboo forest, which dates to the 1920s. The new facility will strengthen the university’s acclaimed Endangered Plant Program (see “Brenau’s Butterfly Effect,” *Brenau Window*, Summer 2011 at www.brenau.edu/brenaumagazine), which is working to protect and sustain several species of threatened botanicals on Georgia’s list of 30 critically endangered plants.

Brenau gains academic workplace ‘Top 10’ national status

NOT ONLY DO STUDENTS GENERALLY enjoy life at Brenau, but apparently faculty and staff do, too, according to the university’s “Honor Roll” status in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*’s 2011 “Great Colleges to Work For” rankings. Among Georgia colleges and universities, only Brenau and Georgia Tech made the honor roll – the Top 30 universities and four-year colleges, (10 in each category for small, medium and large institutions), among 310 surveyed. Brenau earned “highest distinction” marks in six of the 12 categories surveyed – collaborative governance; professional and career development programs; teaching environment; confidence in senior leadership; relationships with supervisors and faculty chairs; and respect and appreciation for employees. Brenau President Ed Schrader attributes the showing to one factor: “The university values and appreciates the commitment and collegial input from all of its employees because all of us throughout the Brenau community of professionals believe that we are, individually and collectively, vitally important to carrying out the university’s mission.”

Broader educational platform choices push enrollment to a new high

By the time Brenau’s institutional research director Robert Cuttino crunched the final numbers for the annual report he has to file with the U.S. Department of Education, Brenau University had set a new record for overall enrollment at 2,819 students as well as new high-water marks for enrollment in graduate studies and online programs. The record includes for the first time more than a thousand graduate students in various university programs, including the 15 students in its first doctoral program – candidates for the Doctor of Nursing Practice degree. It also includes 507 students in both undergraduate and graduate school programs who take all their courses from the university through its fast-growing online academic programs. That group is among the 1,379 students at Brenau who are taking at least one course online during the fall semester.

Enrollments for the residential Women’s College are at 864 this year – a slight decline from last year’s 895, which university officials attribute in part to lingering uncertainties about the U.S. and global economy. However, total enrollment of nonresidential undergraduate students on the Gainesville campus partially offsets that decline. The total “official” university enrollment last year was 2,769 students. Brenau Women’s College hit its peak of 926 students enrolled in 2007-08.

Although enrollments fluctuate throughout the academic year, historically increasing slightly during spring term, the university uses month-end October enrollments as the “official” number that it reports to the U.S. Department of Education’s statistical branch.

“These numbers are absolutely indicative of where the university is going,” Brenau President Ed Schrader reported to the Brenau

University Board of Trustees during its meeting on the Brenau campus in early November. The numbers, Schrader said, track projections in the Brenau 2025 strategic plan, which aims to double enrollment at the university to about 5,000 students primarily through growth in online programs and graduate studies. Brenau’s fully accredited online program, which has six undergraduate and 10 graduate degree tracks, has grown by 265 percent in the past seven years.

Brenau also maintains coeducational programs at Georgia campuses in Augusta, Kings Bay, North Atlanta/Norcross, and South Atlanta/Fairburn – all of which posted enrollment increases. Brenau’s strategic plan envisions that Women’s College enrollments by 2025 will have leveled at between 900 and 1,000 students, about 20 percent of the total.

Schrader attributed the online enrollment surge to economic trends that affect people in their 30s and 40s and older who return to academia to burnish their credentials for an increasingly competitive job market. Since many of those students are already working, trying to fit improving their educations into busy careers and personal lives, studying online is an extremely attractive option. However, for those who enroll for programs on campuses, online course availability provides additional course scheduling flexibility. Many students enrolled in the Women’s College, for example, take some of their courses online.

The Brenau 2025 plan envisions a wide array of choices for prospective students, including the single-gender residential college experience. “What we have done in the past few years,” Schrader says, “is to remove the hurdles between educational platforms.”



Jason Jones

Roger West, from Buford, Ga., typifies the trend in Brenau enrollments. West completed bachelor’s, master’s and education specialist degrees at Brenau. Now the 26-year veteran educator, whose wife, June, is also an alum, teaches in elementary school and coaches high school swimming and tennis. Jasmine Dickerson, however, is taking a more traditional route. The Women’s College junior from Birmingham, Ala., a member of Alpha Chi Omega, majors in music and legal studies.



Jason Jones

1950s

Mignon Franklin Ballard, WC '56, in Fort Mill, S.C., looks forward to the publication of her 18th novel, scheduled for November from St. Martin's Press. *Miss Dimple Rallies to The Cause* is the second book in her new mystery series. She invites you to visit her website at www.mignonballard.com.

Shirley Atkins Mize, WC '57, lives in Houston, Texas, where she has retired after a 20-year stint as a research assistant at the University of Texas and, for a short time, for the Human Genome Sequencing Center at Baylor University School of Medicine in Houston. Mize majored in home economics at Brenau but says now, given her career arc, that she wishes she had done a little more in science and music in student days although she did put her degree to good work in her first career as a homemaker. Mize has attended some Brenau reunions in Texas and Gainesville over the years and plans to return to Gainesville for the 2013 gathering.

1980s



Gale Buckner, EWC '87, of Chatsworth, Ga., has been appointed to the Murray County Hospital Authority Board of Directors. She has been a member of the Georgia Board of Pardons and Paroles since 2005.

1990s

Dennis J. Hancock, EWC '90, has been elected to his sixth term as mayor of Fenton, Mo. He is married with three adult children and two grandchildren, and he is a site director for Jones Lang LaSalle Americas. He has undergraduate degrees from the University of Missouri, St. Louis, and an M.B.A from Brenau. Hancock also serves as chair of the St. Clare Health Center Community Advisory Board.

Laura G. Sarsfield, WC '90, of Buford, Ga., has been appointed

by Gov. Nathan Deal to the Georgia Commission on Hearing Impaired and Deaf Persons. Sarsfield is a homemaker, former nurse and mentor for the Bionic Ear Association at Advanced Bionics. She is a member of the Universal Newborn Hearing Screening and Intervention Stakeholders Committee. Sarsfield is also a member of the core team for the National Initiative for Children's Healthcare Quality for Universal Newborn Hearing Screening and Intervention for Georgia. She serves as the parent



Cheryl Gray, WC '92, and John Ferguson married March 31 in Antigua. Gray's Zeta Tau Alpha sorority sisters **Kim McCoy, WC '92**, and **Melissa Shepherd Browher, WC '93**, attended a reception for her on April 30. Gray and her new husband reside in Gainesville, Ga.



Cecilie Lilletvedt Goodman, WC '98, Jonas, and big sister Nora Caroline welcomed Annika Lovie on March 31. Cecilie and her family live in Atlanta.



Ann Wisniewski, EWC '98, is president of the American Society of Interior Designers Georgia Chapter. Ann became active with the student chapter of ASID while at Brenau. She served as the student representative to the board in her senior year.

representative for the Georgia Commission on Hearing Impaired and Deaf Persons. Sarsfield earned a bachelor's degree in genetics from the University of Georgia and a bachelor's degree in nursing from Brenau. She and her husband, Michael, have three children, two of whom have hearing loss and use bilateral cochlear implants.

Beth Hall, WC '95, has been named Builder Representative for Coldwell Banker Advantage New Homes at the Avondale development in Wake Forest, N.C. The Raleigh, N.C., native has worked in property management and new home sales since she graduated from Brenau.

John L. Geib, EWC '96, of Watkinsville, Ga., has been named North America team materials manager for the door manufacturer Albany Door Systems, based in Lawrenceville, Ga. In his new role he is responsible for all industrial door procurement activities including supplier selection and qualification, competitive pricing, material quality, and inventory control and reduction.



Rachel Ewing Chambers, WC '00, of Flowery Branch, Ga., and her husband Joseph, welcomed their first child, David Joseph, on Aug. 3.



Melissa Corral, WC '03, has joined the Board of Directors of the American Academy of Professional Coders after serving several years as an officer at her local chapter in Gainesville, Ga. You can contact her at melissa.corral@aapcca.org.

Christie Samojedny, EWC '96, of Palatine, Ill., is serving this year as principal at Stuart R. Paddock School in the Chicago area's Community Consolidated School District 15. She has been principal of Lincoln School in the district for four years after serving as a third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade teacher at Virginia Lake School for eight years.

Rebecca Barnett Yoder, WC '97, graduated from Furman University this year with a Master of Arts in education with a concentration in administration and supervision. She works with the Library of Congress as a teacher mentor. She was selected to be on the South Carolina Junior Book Award



Sharon Cook, O '02, from Suwanee, Ga., has been promoted to vice president and director of corporate communications at the Federal Home Loan Bank of Atlanta. Cook, who has been with FHL since 2008, oversees marketing, public and media relations, shareholder relations and stakeholder communications. She also serves on the marketing committee for the Partnership Against Domestic Violence in Atlanta, and on the communications committee for the National Housing Conference in Washington, D.C.

Committee. Rebecca lives in Anderson, S.C., with her husband and 2-year-old son.

2000s

Rachel Roe, WC '03, of Raleigh, N.C., recently accepted a position with Ford Motor Company. She worked for General Motors since 2007, most recently in its Cadillac division. Ford will relocate her to Charlotte, N.C., in April 2012.

Kelly Foss, WC '06, accepted an occupational therapy position at Gwinnet Sports Rehab, an affiliate of Gwinnett Medical Center. Kelly will be focusing on upper extremity and hand trauma rehabilitation, which has been a career goal for her.



Rebecca Cantrell, WC '04, married Tim Hanik on April 2 in Lilburn, Ga. The couple lives in Snellville, Ga.



Rhonda Patjens, WC '04, married Luke Francis on May 14 in Charleston, S.C. Bridesmaids included Alpha Delta Pi sisters **Stefanie Diaz Sheehan, WC '05**, **Alicia Pendleton Harris, WC'04**, and **Paula Ogletree, WC '03**. The couple lives in Roswell, Ga.

Nancy L. Fowler, WC '09, works as an admissions adviser and instructor for Brenau School of Occupational Therapy. She also provides OT services to patients in a skilled nursing facility and to domestic violence survivors.



Alicia Jones, WC '05, and Terrence Hicks announce the birth of their first child Charley Olivia Hicks on March 29. She weighed 6 pounds, 13 ounces and was 19.5 inches long. In what proved to be a busy spring, Alicia also received an M.B.A. in marketing from American Intercontinental University in Dunwoody in May. She plans to enroll in a doctoral program through Walden University this fall.



April Johnson, WC '09, married Nathan Karn on June 11, in Dalton, Ga. The couple lives in Duluth, Ga.



Lindsey Austin Brown, WC '09, received a Master of Science degree in physician assistant studies from Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine on July 29.



Tammy A. Thompson, WC '06 is the program director for the new occupational therapy assistant program at Crowder College in Missouri. The program will enroll its first class in June.



Christi Dodson, WC '11, married Jarred Opstad in February in Charleston, S.C. The couple lives in Loganville, Ga., with their three dogs and two cats. Christi is currently the office manager and head veterinary technician for Animal Medical Center of Monroe.

News about you!

Please send us high resolution photos and news about your career, family or other events for publication in the Class Notes section of *Brenau Window*. Email your news to: Jenny Dell, Director of Alumni Relations at jdell@brenau.edu, call 770-534-6164 or go to <http://alum.brenau.edu/classnotes>.

Complementary skills: new alumni and development directors

Although she unabashedly admits to being one of those through-and-through Georgia Bulldogs, Jenny Dell's canine of choice is the basset. In fact Brenau's new alumni affairs director and her husband, Clay, have a pair of them – Mari-gold and Leonard, shown with Jenny in the photo. Dell moves to Brenau from Knoxville, Tenn., where she was director of communications and alumni relations for Christian Academy of Knoxville, marketing director and Webmaster for Legend Fitness, a commercial strength equipment manufacturer, and communications director for West Park Presbyterian Church. But she was also founder and president of the University of Georgia alumni club in the area, which she helped to grow to more than 500 members. The suburban Atlanta native is a 2002 graduate of UGA's Grady School of Journalism who has spent the past seven years in marketing, graphic design, advertising and public relations roles – all of which will serve her well in the new Brenau job, says Matt Thomas, vice president for external relations.



Dell replaces Natalie Walker, who moved to a new vacancy as development director for the university, responsible for myriad fundraising activities. Walker's background includes extensive experience in both alumni affairs and development. So with Brenau involved in major development initiatives, says Thomas, who oversees both alumni affairs and development, she was a natural for the open position. "Actually Jenny was a finalist for the alumni post when we hired Natalie six months ago," Thomas says. "We thought then that we would love to combine their very complementary skill sets, and fortunately, when the alumni post opened again, and Jenny agreed to take it, we're now able to do just that."

"I have found my passion in working with alumni," Dell says. "I really feel drawn to the post-graduation experience – to be part of who alumni are as well as a part of what made them who they are."

Upcoming Events

Monday, Nov. 28, 7:30 p.m.
Holiday Concert
John S. Burd Center for the Performing Arts, Hosch Theatre. Brenau University's Spectrum Singers and Vocal Chamber Ensemble will perform a program of holiday choral music for all ages. Free and open to the public. For information call 770.538.4764 or visit www.brenau.edu/music.

Thursday, Dec. 1, 4 p.m.
BULLI Winter Registration for Jan. 9 - Feb. 25 term
Brenau University Learning and Leisure Institute. Extended registration weekdays through Dec. 7, 9 a.m-4 p.m. at 406 Academy St.

Friday, Dec. 2 to Sunday, Dec. 4
The Nutcracker
Brenau University's Pearce Auditorium. Enter a world of magic as a little girl takes you through an enchanted forest of snowflakes into a land of sweets and dreams. Don't miss this holiday tradition! Call 770.532.4241, or visit www.gainesvilleballet.org for more information and tickets.

Tuesday, Dec. 6, 7:30 p.m.
The John Berry Christmas Concert to benefit Challenged Child
Brenau University's Pearce Auditorium. Challenged Child presents a holiday favorite. For more info call 770.535.8372 or visit www.challengedchild.org.

Sunday, Dec. 11, 1 - 4 p.m.
Family Day
Northeast Georgia History Center. Christmas Traditions. Free photos with Santa Claus; family activities and Christmas crafts. Performance by Enota Show Choir. Free and open to the public. Call 770.297.5900 or visit www.negahc.org.

IN MEMORY

- Margaret Hill Gaus, WC '40, of Chevy Chase, Md., died April 21.
- Norma Anderson Barnett, WC '47, Atlanta, died July 5.
- Margaret Fearington Baumann, WC '46, Newport Beach, Calif., died Aug. 1.
- Maxine Bullock, WC '45, Cleveland, Ga., died Aug. 16.
- Pamela Roberts Churchill, WC '80, Gainesville, Fla., died Feb. 18, 2008.
- Florence Novinger Davis, WC '26, Jacksonville, Fla., died Sept. 20.
- Jane Butt Franks, WC '79, Gainesville, Ga., died Aug. 13, 2010.
- Harry Glass, EWC '84, Martinez, Ga., died May 3, 2009.
- Paula Nivens Hardy, WC '61, Commerce, Ga., died Aug. 7.
- Ozzie Pope Herrod, WC '39, Tuscaloosa, Ala., died June 16.
- Evelyn Hardman Hill, WC '42, Griffin, Ga., died March 22, 2007.
- Lois Jean Miller, WC '71, Tampa, Fla., died July 24, 2010.
- Ida Fay Corban Phillips, WC '48, Foley, Ala., died Oct. 10, 2008.
- Ann Sharp Pilgrim, WC '72, Gainesville, Ga., died April 23.
- Frances Benjamin Pittman, WC '45, Mayfield, Ky., died Nov. 30, 2007.
- Patricia Eddy Ruark, A '63, Wilmington, N.C., died June 23.
- Robert Lee Ruble, EWC '83, Wylie, Texas, died April 26.
- Gloria H. Smith, EWC '90, Royston, Ga., died Oct. 16, 2008.

GWEN BROWN MUNDY

Dr. Gwen Brown Mundy, WC '49, a long-time Brenau trustee and respected educator, died Sept. 8 in Gainesville, Ga., after a long illness. She was 82. Ed Schrader, president of Brenau University, said in a statement that “Gwen Mundy was a dedicated professional educator with a passion for teaching well. She leaves an enduring legacy for future generations.” Judge Sidney O. Smith Jr., who served on the Board of Trustees with Mundy since her appointment in 1992, said Mundy was “an asset to Brenau and an asset to the community. She knew a lot about education and that’s what we were about on the board at Brenau.” Mundy retired as an administrator with the Hall County public schools system. The Gainesville Business and Professional Women’s Club named her “Woman of the Year” in 1980. In 1983, she received the Johnny V. Cox Award for Distinguished Service in Instructional Supervision and earned the Brenau Alumni Association Professional Achievement Award in 1985. Mundy had been in declining health after she suffered a stroke six years ago while speaking to a group of educators. She was elevated to emeritus status on the Brenau Board in 2007.



Mundy with Brenau president Schrader in 2008 ceremony elevating her to trustee emeritus.

ONE FOR THE BOOKS



WALTERS' RAZOR

Once a month Brenau University trustee Jim Walters meets Ed Schrader, the university’s president, for a lunch of salmon, wild rice, broccoli, roll and strawberry short cake. The menu never varies.

“It’s what we had the first time, and it was good, so we had it again the second time,” Walters explains. “He likes it; I like it. Why change?” After about the fourth or fifth lunch, the pattern evolved into tradition. Although the non-varying menu smacks a bit of ballplayers’ wearing the same socks during a hitting streak, it also illustrates Walters’ belief in “if-it-ain’t-broke-don’t-fix-it” simplicity. Likewise, if you’ve scheduled an hour-long meeting with Walters, but said what you had to say in the first five minutes, it’s time to adjourn. One suspects that the 14th-century Franciscan friar William d’Ockham presciently had Walters in mind when he created his famous “razor” that, absent a wealth of evidence to prove a theory, the simplest solution probably is best.

The monthly lunch meetings tend to have one thing on the agenda: brainstorming sessions that Walters calls “our scheming,” discussions of ideas for benefitting Brenau. A recent lunch “scheme” germinated following news that the City of Gainesville needed a way to stop losing money on the city-owned facility, the Georgia Mountains Center. Brenau had been shopping unsuccessfully for suitable expansion locations close to the town square. It did not take long for the two to connect realistic dots into a clear picture that would benefit both the city and the university.

“It was such a great idea that I did not think anyone would be opposed,” says Walters, who after the lunch with Schrader went immediately to work to help bring the idea to fruition. Just a few weeks later, the city council voted unanimously to grant Brenau exclusive rights and time to develop the grand Walters-Schrader scheme. If all goes well in the ongoing studies and redevelopment design, trustees in March will vote on whether the Mountains Center will be the home for Brenau’s health care careers graduate programs.

James A. “Jim” Walters, president of Walters Management

Co. in Gainesville, Ga., grew up in Matthews, N.C., a Charlotte suburb. He dropped out of North Carolina State University after a couple of years to take a job as a methods engineer. A maverick even then, he never subscribed to the procedures for lengthy studies and mathematical calculations followed by the degreed, white-shirt-and-tie engineers in the firm. Instead he asked the blue-collar guys who would do the work how to solve the problem. “It took me about five minutes to do a job it took the others a week to do,” he says.

But Walters eyed another industry. Consumer loan companies were giving banks, well, a run for their money and Walters jumped in. He moved to Gainesville in the early 1970s. In 1979 he launched his own business with one store-front loan office in Statesboro, Ga. Now his company has 110 branches in three states, off-shore industry insurance operations and substantial real estate interests.

Walters has repaid for his success through a wide range of community philanthropies and public service, including a long term on the board of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, which he also chaired for a number of years.

Since he has been one of the university’s leading benefactors (the offices for this magazine are located in Walters House), Brenau has awarded him an honorary doctorate as well as its Distinguished Service to Brenau award. The Walters’ largesse has significantly affected other institutions in the community, including the hospital, the Boys & Girls Club and the Hall County YMCA.

However, it was not so much for his financial support that Brenau honors Walters as for other contributions. “He has always been selfless with his time and personal energy,” says Schrader. “He will kick around ideas with you, but he’s a straight shooter. He will quickly tell you whether he thinks something is realistic. Institutions love having him on their boards because he works at it. Simply put, it’s great to have Jim Walters on your side.”

Pass the salmon, please. — David Morrison



INTRODUCING THE BRENAU UNIVERSITY ALL-STEINWAY SCHOOL INITIATIVE

More than 135 colleges, universities, conservatories and other schools of distinction already have embraced the “All-Steinway School” moniker. Brenau strives to add to its powerful academic arsenal the piano that inspires students to realize their artistic talents and that best prepares them to compete at the highest levels.

Higher education today inhabits a highly competitive world. Three other institutions within a 50-mile radius of Brenau already are among the all-Steinway schools.

Brenau’s mission is to prepare students for extraordinary lives. To accomplish that, you need nothing less than extraordinary tools.

To learn more about how you can help Brenau reach this goal, please contact Matt Thomas at 770-534-5309.



Scan the QR code to watch and listen as Brenau music professor Ben Leaptrott introduces the Brenau All-Steinway School program. Or go to www.brenau.edu/steinway to watch the video and get more information.