

Volume 24/ Issue 1

Winter 2024

The LEGACY

A Publication of Watson-Brown Foundation, Inc.

On
A MISSION
ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Oh
THE BIRDS
GOODRUM HOUSE

History
AND
MEMORY

WATSON  BROWN
FOUNDATION



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A close-up of the couch fabric in the Goodrum House library (1931).



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OUR MISSION

The Watson-Brown Foundation, through creativity, diligence and financial support, labors to improve education in the American South by funding its schools and students, preserving its history, encouraging responsible scholarship and promoting the memory and values of our spiritual founders.

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BIRDS OF A FEATHER FLOCK TO GOODRUM



Goodrum House

BY BARBARA HYDE

A tour participant once commented that May Patterson Goodrum must have loved birds. To be honest, I had never thought about it; but after a careful contemplation of her personal objects and decorative arts collection, the observation was spot on!

Her love of nature and birds is reflected in her choice of textile patterns throughout the home. For her bedroom wall covering, she chose a large repeat pattern of pink, blue and apricot peonies laced with purple wisteria and interspersed with colorful songbirds feeding their young or flitting about the branches and leaves. The library couch and chair display a pattern of oversized camellias along with a Southern chickadee couple snuggled together on a branch.

The bird theme is carried out in her choice of fine China and collectable curios. Her Spode pattern is titled “Vase and Flowers” and dates to the early 19th century. The transfer printed earthenware consists of a central pattern of a parrot perched on the branch of a spindly tree with two swans

gliding on a green lake in the background all surrounded by flowers and vine forms. Two Asian-style cranes stood sentinel on either side of her living room fireplace whilst an agate sculpture of ducks rested on the mantel in the library. Even her furniture displayed her love of fowl. In the larger guest room, two twin beds displayed Chinoiserie scenes of tea houses with cranes flying overhead. The smaller guest room across the hallway had a now lost daybed; its arms consisting of sinuous carved swan necks curved into legs and topped with their heads.

The pièce de resistance is the breakfast room. Conceived as the interior of an aviary complete with ogee ceiling by Philip Trammell Shutze and painted by Athos Menaboni, the ceiling displays all manner of bird – exotic hummingbirds and a parrot from South America, a nest of blue jays, a pair of love birds all flying about through bamboo lattice, grapevines and morning glories chasing their own tasty meals of dragonflies and butterflies. Each day May, her mother Mollie, and Mollie’s caregiver, Clara Steele Cody started their day here



Spode plate, c. 1833



Living room fireplace, c. 1950s



Parrot and dragonfly from the breakfast room ceiling.



Blue jay family from the lunette in the breakfast room.

amongst the birds with a breakfast of their own, possibly on the earthenware Spode plates, once again reflecting the theme of floral and fowl.

Her living feathered friends certainly had a beautiful garden to visit. Ken Steele, Clara's son, recalls scores of hummingbirds fighting over the fig trees in the Serpentine Garden and Bob-white quail whistling through the pine woodlands behind the five-acre property. While the quail's habitat has been gobbled up by houses, we are still home to quite a few species of bird. Spring is heralded by flocks of blue birds and robins. Two Dark-eyed juncos always nest in the

upper peak of the garage overlooking the Serpentine Garden. Summer is marked by the first hummingbird sighting and brightly colored American goldfinches. In autumn, a few barn owls hoot their low calls at dusk behind Little House — and all is overseen by a pair of red-shouldered hawks who regularly fish the koi pond. Apparently, May was not too fond of fish!

CAMPUS NOTES



Watson-Brown Scholars in Action

RUND ABDELNABI

SENIOR, CLEMSON UNIVERSITY

This semester, I had the opportunity to study abroad in Córdoba, Argentina. I spent five months exploring different regions of Argentina, learning about different customs and traditions, enjoying the delicious food, improving my Spanish-speaking skills, and most importantly, making lifelong connections with the people of Córdoba. During my time in Argentina, I lived with a host family that I shared meals and memories with. This was my favorite part of the trip. I was able to immerse myself within this family and learn to love and care about the things and the people they loved and cared about. I was also able to pick up some of their hobbies. For example, my host mom loves to folklore dance, and she shared this passion of hers with me. Many times, I joined her in dance classes or folklore dance festivals. She also loved hiking and taking walks, which is something I love as well, so together, we joined a hiking group in Córdoba and went on hiking trips.

Living in Argentina was a unique experience because it is such a big country that offers different landscapes and views. My friends and I were able to travel all around Argentina and see a wide variety of landscapes and experience different Spanish dialects, foods, dances, and customs. We visited Buenos Aires, Mendoza, Jujuy, Bariloche, and a city nearby called Carlos Paz. In Buenos Aires, we experienced European influence and were blessed with the presence of Tango. In Mendoza, we visited the highest mountain in Latin America, Aconcagua, and enjoyed the tourist vibes. In Jujuy, we got to immerse ourselves in Northern



Rund Abdelnabi

Argentinian culture and listen to the differences in speaking in comparison to the people of Córdoba. In Bariloche, we experienced a winter wonderland, amazing chocolate, and the beautiful views of the seven lakes and the Andes. The traveling was amazing, but the warmth, love, and support that I felt from the people of Córdoba was unmatched.

Lastly, I completed an internship focused on the public healthcare system in Argentina. I learned about what universal health care truly is and how it can be put into practice, I learned about the different social determinants of health, and the differences in patient-physician interactions. I joined a women's knitting group within my internship and learned

how the public healthcare system incorporates social programs because of their positive impact on mental health. I fell in love with the group of women and enjoyed every minute I spent with them. Now, I am back in where I consider home, but I will always have Argentina and the people that I met there in my heart!



Timothy Ashe

TIMOTHY ASHE

SENIOR, ERSKINE COLLEGE

Fall 2022 and Spring 2023 was a transformational year for me in many ways, the biggest one being my newfound desire to pursue intellectual ideals, fully apply myself in every single class, and treat each class I took with a deep and profound appreciation for the material I was learning. In my first two years of college, my goal was to always keep my GPA above a 3.0, but last year I wanted to challenge myself even further. In the fall term I achieved a 3.5 GPA, and while this was a great feat for me I found myself wanting more. In my Spring 2023 term, I was able to get a perfect 4.0 GPA by applying my new appreciation for knowledge to all of my courses, and I hope and expect myself to get a 4.0 GPA from now on. While it was not an easy task, I proved to myself that I am more than capable of doing it. I also landed myself an internship with Enterprise Holdings for the summer of 2023, which is now where I will spend most of my time this summer. I am excited to learn the ins and outs of a multi-billion-dollar corporation while also gaining experience in sales and business management.

MASON COLLINS

JUNIOR, UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA COLUMBIA

My sophomore year of college taught me a lot both in the classroom and outside of it. Within the classroom this year, I began honing in on my education

classes rather than basic music courses. I spent a lot of time observing schools around Columbia and studying the practices of some great music teachers.



Mason Collins

I also spent a lot of time working on my skills not only as an educator, but as a performer. The USC saxophone ensemble went to Mississippi for the North American Saxophone Alliance, where we had a unique opportunity to perform for the conference as well as watch a large variety of different performances. Already since the semester ended, I've been to both Tennessee and Washington D.C. In Tennessee, my friends and I saw Taylor Swift perform. A few days after that, I went to Washington D.C. with the USC Teaching Fellows. While in D.C. I had some really cool opportunities including a tour of the Washington Commanders stadium, visiting the monuments, touring one of the D.C. public schools, seeing the National Zoo, going to a Nationals game, and so much more. It's been an extremely fun and engaging year, and I can't wait for next year!



Maria Gonzalez Taborda

MARIA GONZALEZ TABORDA

SOPHOMORE, CONVERSE UNIVERSITY

Having the opportunity to go to college has changed my life completely and my perspective about different topics.

I'm so grateful to the Watson-Brown Foundation and to Converse University because thanks to this awesome organization and thanks to Converse University I'm living my dream and accomplishing many of my career and personal goals. My first year at Converse has been amazing, I have had the opportunity to meet and connect with people who have made a positive impact on my life and I have learned so much as a student and as a person at the same time. I have been fortunate to be part of an organization called HOLA (Hispanic Organization for Latin Awareness), which offers different events throughout the school year at Converse with the purpose of providing education and awareness about the culture and traditions of Spanish-speaking countries around the world. Finding this organization in Converse has been one of the best things that has happened to me, because not only have I found an organization that I identify with, but it is also a place where I feel safe and free to embrace and represent my Latino culture.

My picture is from our last event on campus this year, our annual Carne Asada. At this event, we bring traditional Latino foods to share with other students and the staff, and we also close our academic year celebrating with music and different games.



Berlian Fu

BERLIAN FU

SOPHOMORE, GEORGIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

College has been quite different than what I am used to coming from a small high school and town. There is so much to do on campus with so many students who come from a wide range of backgrounds and places. Classes

were more difficult but also more engaging in most cases. I struggled at times, but the challenge of it made my accomplishments feel like I truly earned my grade. College so far feels like a place where I am growing not just academically but also as a person, and I am really looking forward to see what the rest has in store for me.



Mandy Jiang

MANDY JIANG

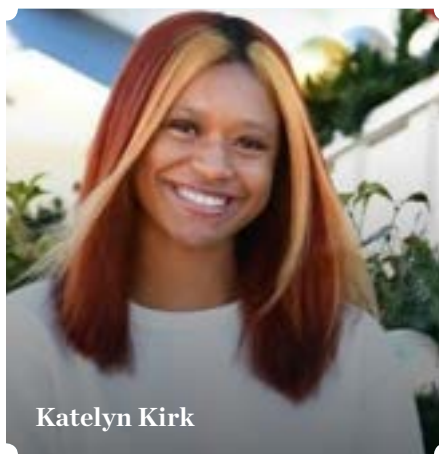
SOPHOMORE, NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

If I can use an example to describe my first year of college, it would be like ocean waves. Waves of moments, emotions, and events. There are the good times, bad times, and times when I felt lost, confused, stuck, and sad. I believe that communication, opening up, and being open-minded and curious helps ease everything. I'm a part of the D'Amore-Mckim Hajim Scholars program at Northeastern and during Spring Break, our cohort took a trip to NYC. While there we visited many firms, spoke with NU alumni who work in the finance industry, and also visited different tourist spots, which allowed me to network and connect with people in the career field I'm interested in. I made many memories and friends during my week there. Being a part of the programs allowed me to gain a sense of community. I see the people in my cohort not only as my best friends, but also family.

KATELYN KIRK

SOPHOMORE, WINTHROP UNIVERSITY

Being able to start my freshman year at THEE Winthrop University was a great experience. I had to get used to being an hour and 40 minutes away from my family for the most part, but academically I can say I had a great year.



Katelyn Kirk

I was able to be a part of the Honors Program at Winthrop University, join the organization National Society Collegiate Scholars, and become a College of Business Ambassador. In the fall semester, I was able to make the Dean's List, with a GPA of 3.5 while partaking in a part-time job. Spring semester I finished my freshman year with a 3.4 GPA, and I also found a few genuine people I can call friends. I am so blessed to have faculty and staff in the College of Business who are willing to help their students when it is needed, and I am blessed to have a support system that is so proud of my accomplishments I am proud of :).



Victor Mattison

VICTOR MATTISON

JUNIOR, CLEMSON UNIVERSITY

My first year at Clemson University was pretty good for the most part. I met some wonderful people that I know for a fact I will never forget, and made some wonderful experiences. My second semester was more enjoyable than my first semester even though it was busier. I became closer with friends and started to enjoy life more. I feel that I did not enjoy my first semester as much as I should have because I stressed myself out too much and would not have much fun. I made a promise to myself to not do that again going into the next semester.

In my second semester, most notably, I crossed over my fraternity, Kappa Alpha Psi, and joined a lifetime of brotherhood. I am a Spring '23 initiate and the "8ight Ball" or "Eight Klub" of my line. The first year flew by. I cannot believe I am already in my second year of college. I am looking forward to returning to school, but make no mistake, I am in no rush whatsoever. Overall, I had a good first year and I always want to give a huge thanks to the Watson-Brown organization for making my college experience less stressful for me and my family.



Enajah McCluney

ENAJAH MCCLUNEY

SENIOR, UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA COLUMBIA

This past school year, I was able to accomplish one of the biggest goals that I've had since wanting to go to the University of South Carolina. I earned the spot of becoming one of three drum majors for the University of South Carolina Marching Band. As a drum major, I share the responsibility of serving as the primary leader of the band through conducting the halftime shows, performing on the field during pregame, and most of all, exemplifying servant leadership by serving the band from the bottom to the top. This dream of mine has shaped who I am and I cannot wait for the season to begin so that I can live out the privilege of getting to serve and lead more than 365 members.

NIKOLAI SARLO

SOPHOMORE, COLLEGE OF CHARLESTON

When I got to College of Charleston, I had a difficult time finding a group of



people that I could really call my friend group. During my first semester, I only ever hung out with my roommate. I love having a group of truly close friends and it was upsetting that I never fully connected with anyone. When I returned for the Spring semester though, one of my classmates introduced me to her friend Emma.



Nikolai Sarlo

After talking to Emma and some of her friends for a little while, and going to a basketball game, I had decided that I would make my friend group around them. Over the course of two months, I grew close with all of them and made friendships that I entirely believe will last for a long, long time. I even brought them to my hometown to go see a concert during the middle of the semester. We would study together in the library, and even try and help each other understand difficult topics from our various classes. While college is an academic adventure to allow you to better yourself for your future, I believe that it is also the time where you meet some of the best people in your life.



Bailey Smith

BAILEY SMITH

JUNIOR, COASTAL CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

This past year was quite a difficult challenge because it transformed me into an adult. My classes progressively get difficult as my major proceeds. So, attempting to balance all of my classes,

long labs, maintaining an apartment, finding a new place to live, looking and applying for internships, and keeping up with my clubs has been a difficult yet molding challenge for myself and I believe has matured me further than I could imagine. One of the clubs I love being a part of most is Love Blue. Love Blue is a beach cleanup organization that donates the plastics and other debris we find to a company that can recycle and turn them into surfboards! This summer I am going to apply for more internships as I am trying to get some hands-on experience.



Chloe Smith

CHLOE SMITH

SENIOR, ANDERSON UNIVERSITY

This school year I had the opportunity to travel to the Southeast region of the American College Dance Association (ACDA) in March. Throughout the four-day event, there are many opportunities to take classes in a large variety of dance styles. These classes are taught by professors from colleges and universities from the schools that attend the event. Each evening there is a formal performance, where most schools will submit both a professor- and student-choreographed dance to perform. Each dance piece is judged and provided with verbal feedback following the formal concert. During the final evening of this event, there are dances called back by adjudicators to perform again for the audience. ACDA also has informal performances, which are not adjudicated and just for performance opportunities. These informal concerts take place during the day, along with the classes offered. This was a very special event for me because I was able to take convention-style dance classes that are not offered at the majority of colleges. I was also able to perform outside of my university, to an

audience of other universities, doing what I love. This was the first time since COVID that ACDA was able to offer in-person events again, which made it more special because I was finally able to experience ACDA in ways that I had heard about from older and previous dance majors. ACDA has been one of my favorite memories that occurred during this past school year.



Jane Yang

JANE YANG

JUNIOR, UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

This year was a year of personal growth and new understandings of myself. As I made the difficult decision to switch majors, I stepped out of my comfort zone and had to re-search for confidence. Through this year of new challenges and opportunities, I was able to explore my true passions in chemistry, which have earned me a summer research grant, all while being able to nurture my extracurricular pursuits in dance and Taekwondo. Leading the UPenn Taekwondo Team in our first collegiate league victory in 10 years, I am proud and grateful to share my passions alongside my academic achievements.



ON HISTORY AND MEMORY



T.R.R. COBB HOUSE

BY SAM THOMAS

Cicero, the great Roman statesman and scholar wrote, “To be ignorant of what occurred before you were born is to remain always a child. For what is the worth of a human life, unless it is woven into the life of our ancestors by the records of history?”

Research is the backbone of the T.R.R. Cobb House. We research the collections that come through our doors; we research the history of the objects, how people of their period interacted with them; and we research the people who interacted with those objects. All of this gives us another paragraph or chapter in a deepening story of the individuals who lived and worked within these walls as we attempt to impart more knowledge to our visitors.

The stories of the Cobb families, as well as the Lumpkins, Lamars, and many others during the complex era of the Civil War years are stories of joy and hardship, love and death. The stories weave and meander across the years of the nineteenth century. Their stories begin to come to life through the pages of their diaries, their personal correspondence, even their business receipts. But even with the copious amount of information we have in collected and archived form, we still do not have a complete picture of who they were as people. How did others see them? What were their relationships like with those around them?

Over the past 17+ years, we have attempted to gather as much information from other records and correspondence that might shed a bit more light on the T.R.R. Cobb family and their related families. It hasn't been all that difficult of a matter, since those individuals and families were literate and, for the most part, had financial means. The problem, however, was that this view was based on the relationships with only one part of society of the time – white society. What about the other half of Southern society? What would a deeper look into enslaved society of the region reveal about the Cobb, Lumpkin, and Lamar families? With the help of researchers, students, and teachers, we hope to open a window into the interactions between master and enslaved, and the process that turned an inhuman situation into a profitable enterprise that formed the bedrock of Southern society.

Frederick Douglass wrote in his book *Narrative of the Life*

of Frederick Douglass about the cruelties of slavery and the relationships between master and enslaved. To develop a fuller story of T.R.R. Cobb and other members of the Cobb family, as well as the Lumpkins and Lamars, we need to understand more about those around them on a daily basis. For the most part, they lived the same lives which makes their story just as important as any others. In their recent work, *Seen/Unseen*, Christopher Lawton, Laura Nelson and Randy Reid, three friends of the T.R.R. Cobb House, explore the enslaved's



Students, staff, and historians research the lives of enslaved individuals of the Cobb, Lumpkin, and Lamar families.

interior and exterior lives: “Like most human beings before or since, they built meaningful existences out of countless hours spent eating, working, feeling, communing with others, pondering the past, and dreaming about the future.”

It is a difficult topic for many to understand. It isn't just students who have trouble navigating their way through history. Teachers are increasingly finding it more and more frustrating to teach subject matter that so many find controversial. Memory plays a part in how we tell that history, but memory is NOT history. Always remembering that shared experience does not mean shared memory. We research to provide a clearer window into our shared history, but it is a window that looks upon only a small portion of that history. This recollection endeavor shows,

according to Lynn Hunt in her book *History: Why It Matters*. “how hard it can be to recover the past when forgetting seems desirable, especially the forgetting of events that run counter to a positive national narrative.”

Our memories of how things were in years past can be comforting, and attempts at altering a narrative that has been alive for so long often makes others uncomfortable. What is controversial to us today may not have been so within an earlier time. Whether controversial or not, however, we should be willing to tread down that treacherous path between the differing views. We must be willing to take on the ethics and responsibility of preserving the past, of telling all aspects of the story.

So, to gain a better understanding of the relationships swirling around the Cobb family et al, we need to dig deeper with our investigative techniques. The enslaved were responsible for many aspects of everyday life: they worked the fields, they were engineers, tailors, cooks, midwives, teachers, artisans. Because their lives were completely dependent on the people they owned, the enslaved appear constantly as actors, both minor and major, in the paper trail left behind. A few were literate, most, of course, were not. While in the past the focus of our research has been on the different families of Cobb, Lumpkin and Lamar, in recent years, our investigations have been shifting to the enslaved.

Researching the backgrounds and stories of the enslaved who were connected to the Cobb and related families offers the opportunity to explore wider contexts as well as new views on various topics, opening up new ways of addressing old questions. It also helps to explain actions and motivations inextricably linked to those who were enslaved and those who held them in bondage.

In this search we are not alone. Over the years we have utilized the services of professionals from different fields of history, archaeology, geography, genealogy, and even law. We also rely on other professional researchers, through contracting and internships with undergraduates and graduate students from numerous colleges and universities. The information we gather over time contributes to deeper understandings of the Cobb family and the mid-nineteenth century. This additional information contributes to an ever-changing interpretation of the period and of the people involved, as well as the ever increasing world around them.

We started this process several years ago, but with our recent purchase of the 1859 Plantation Record of John Basil Lamar, it has enabled us to expand our research enormously. The largest problem facing an investigation into the Cobb families' enslaved is the dearth of original source materials. With this one plantation record, we now have the names of an estimated 700 enslaved individuals existing on six different plantations in four different Georgia counties. Adding these individuals to our ever-growing database we can begin to bring them back to life, to show that they were more than a name on a list. And these approximately 1,000 names are just for the Cobb and

Lamar families. We still have the Lumpkin and Rutherford families to go.

Armed with the individual names of the enslaved, we moved to uncovering additional information by searching through various types of records such as medical and dental records, work receipts, rental agreements and the like, often found in archival collections, but seldom looked at by researchers. Census records give us bits and pieces of information at a single, fixed point in time, but additional records drawn from various original sources, can help us to create biographical sketches, giving the enslaved more life, and at the same time, furnishing a more personal perspective on our understanding of the experiences and relationships of those enslaved.

One of our first researched enslaved individuals was Jesse Harvey. Working primarily as the T.R.R. Cobb family's carriage driver, on occasion, Jesse attended to Marion's gardens and oversaw both the planting of crops and harvesting of foodstuffs for the coming months. Jesse found himself loaned out to Howell or Mary Ann Cobb whenever they needed extra assistance, such as plowing the family's vegetable or flower garden.

During the Civil War, T.R.R. Cobb took two enslaved young men with him to war — Jesse and Jack. Jack worked mostly as a courier, and we constantly found Jack moving back and forth between Athens and T.R.R. in Virginia. Jesse, on the other hand, stayed with T.R.R. throughout the latter's time in the military as his personal body servant and cook. This information, primarily gathered through the voluminous correspondence of T.R.R. Cobb, gives us a good start. If we stopped at this point, however, we would still know more than most researchers do about any one enslaved individual, but, as Lawton, Nelson and Reid write, Jesse would be simply another one of those “voiceless murmur[s] in the distance, waiting to be heard, just out of earshot but at a frequency that torments our collective sense of what it means to be American.”

Jesse, who refused T.R.R.'s offer of a pass to get him through the lines and to freedom in the North, returned to Athens with Cobb's body and walked in a place of honor within Cobb's funeral procession. Following emancipation, Jesse remained a part of the Cobb family household until 1873 when Marion sold the house and moved in with one of her daughters. Jesse married Hepsey (who may possibly have been an enslaved woman within the family) and owned a home in 1870 on Strong Street in Athens. The Bank of the University employed Jesse as a janitor, a job he augmented with serving as Sexton at Oconee Hill Cemetery. By 1880, he added another position as the Sexton of the First Presbyterian Church. Jesse became a member of the African American Presbyterian Church in Athens, dying at his home on December 3, 1896, and buried at Gospel Pilgrim Cemetery.

The story of the Cobb family and all the families connected to them, by blood or by station, is complex to say the least. It is a story that needs telling with all of its nuances and intricacies — and memories.





AN ENDURING MYSTERY



Sticks & Stones

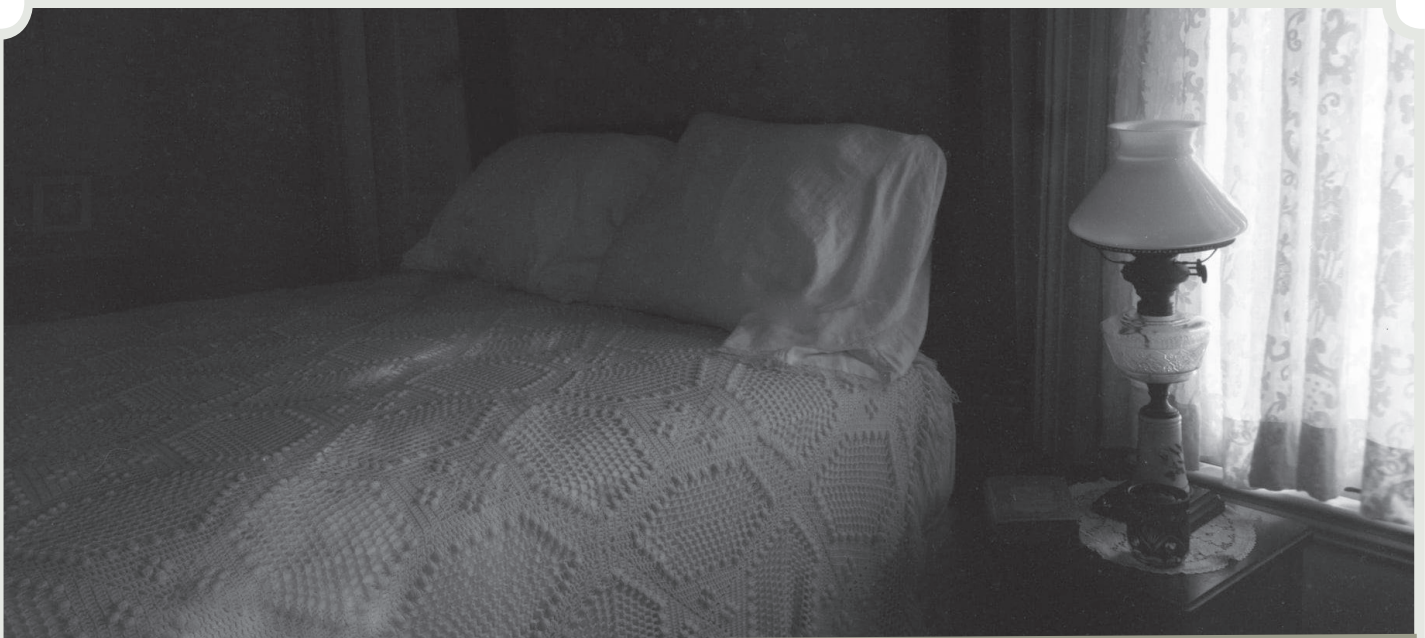
BY FRANKE L. SMITH

On most days, Hickory Hill is a quiet haven from the bustle of 21st-century life. Unless Mr. Rhodes, our beloved landscape manager, is mowing the grass or wrangling leaves into submission, the only sounds to be heard are those of the birds, the wind in the trees, and a squirrel or two chattering away. Without the occasional sirens and 18-wheelers that hurry up and down Main Street, the property is serene, and was even more so during the early 1900s when Thomas E. Watson lived in the home. In the wee hours of the morning on March 15, 1907, however, that tranquility was unexpectedly shattered by the sound of gunshots and return fire.

While News of the incident spread quickly and within days, reports were printed in cities as far as Los Angeles, Montreal, Burlington, Vermont, and Gainesville, Florida. Inflammatory headlines claimed: "Assassin Fires on Tom Watson's Son," "Plot on Foot to Slay Thomas E. Watson," and "Thought that Shooting was Due to Plot Against T. E. Watson or Family." While the reports of the episode vary, what follows is a rough

outline of John Durham Watson's account of the unusual events of that evening and early morning.

Around 10 p.m., on March 14, 1907, Oscar Lee (Agnes Watson's husband and Thomas E. Watson's son-in-law) heard shots in his backyard. He rose to investigate, and after checking the yard, believed his neighbors had been shooting and determined that his home and family were not in danger. A few blocks away John Durham, Watson's son, had stayed up late and was reading on a lounge in one of the front bedrooms at Hickory Hill, while his wife and daughter slept. Eventually J.D. turned in for the night, only to be awakened by a noise and then gunshots around 1:30 a.m. The first shot was fired through the blinds, but the second shot shattered a window. Both shots missed J.D., but he did note that the second shot was fired at the lounge he had been sitting on earlier in the evening. He sent his wife and child to an upstairs bedroom and retired once more, shotgun at hand. Around 2:30 a.m. another shot was fired into the bedroom and J.D. gave chase, shooting at his assailants as they fled. Miraculously, no one



Mrs. Watson's bed
Photo courtesy of Mark Albertin

was injured. Most of the newspaper accounts made sure to note that Thomas E. Watson, the famed lawyer and Populist, was in Florida at the time.

Even though this story was reported nationwide, there is little indication that the police or the Watsons ever figured out what was really going on that evening. Was someone mad at Watson the politician, and unaware that he was not at home that night? Was someone upset with John Durham because of

something he had printed in *The Jeffersonian*, the newspaper which he edited for his father? Did someone want to hurt Watson by harming his surviving children? Or did they simply want to scare and intimidate him out of running for office again? Could this have been the work of several reckless and potentially inebriated individuals? We will never know, but it is one of the more bizarre mysteries this quiet, lovely house has witnessed.



Area of where a second gunshot shattered the window at Hickory Hill in 1907.
Photo courtesy of Mark Albertin

HEATHER GRACE KROME



Alumni Spotlight

BY TIARA HODGES

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHN OSTERHOUDT



Heather Grace Krome, M.D. is on a mission — one that she’s been on since childhood.

Currently in her first year of residency in internal medicine/pediatrics at the University of Louisville in Kentucky, Heather has carved out a path paved with the support of her family and hometown. “I’ve magically known what I’ve wanted to do with my life. I always knew, and my family was very supportive of that. Coming from Thomson, everyone was supportive of my dreams,” Heather said, recalling how there was no question that she would be a doctor.

To help fulfill that dream, Heather knew she had to get scholarships to alleviate college costs. She would be the first person in her family to go to college, and it was a no-brainer that she would apply for a Watson-Brown scholarship while at Thomson High School. As a 2015 Watson Brown Scholar, she could relieve some financial burden when she attended the University of Georgia, where she majored in biology.

During her time at UGA, Heather had a few revelations. In high school, she was an academic star, but as so many students discover, college is a different world. She went from excelling academically to being, as she puts it, “painfully average.” But Heather is anything but average.

When it was time for Heather to pursue medical school her junior year of college, she had already received scholarships to pay for the MCAT and her medical school applications. She just had to meet with a pre-med advisor to, as implied by the title, advise Heather on next steps and help her improve her application. Heather recalled that the advisor did not look at her or inquire about what she did at school, the advisor simply “looked at her computer screen, looked at my GPA and said, ‘Don’t waste your money applying to medical school.’”

This dismissal lit a fire within Heather to passionately continue her mission. After she walked out of the advisor’s office crying, she called her dad for encouragement. He told Heather, “She doesn’t know you.”

And Heather’s father was right. That advisor didn’t know that Heather was on the board of various clubs, that she worked through college, that she volunteered in her community, that she was a CNA at just 15, and that her father was her first patient and entry into the medical field.

That advisor did not know that when Heather was too young to have a driver’s license, she drove her father down a dark country road to the hospital when he suffered from a severe asthma attack because she knew an ambulance would not come in time. That advisor did not know that even under the terror of seeing her father struggle with this ailment, Heather gained a deeper understanding of what patients and their families go through. That advisor did not know what Heather learned all those years ago: that compassion and empathy should be the cornerstones of great medical care.

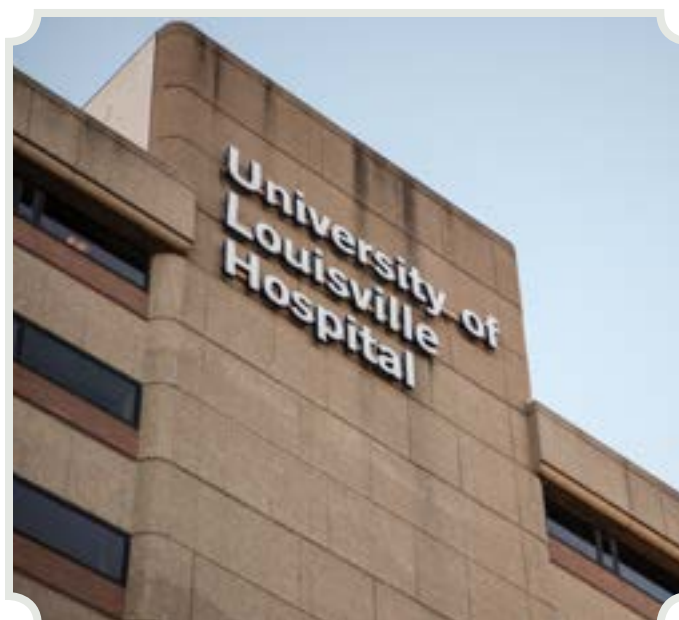
After a pep talk from her father, she decided that she would continue the pursuit of her dreams, because, in a humorously truthful realization, “It wasn’t my money that I was wasting anyway.” So she applied and got in on her first try.

Heather took her acceptance letter to that advisor’s boss and put it on their desk. “Unfortunately that happens to lots of people, not just at UGA. Lots of people get told that they can’t do what they’ve always dreamed of doing. And some people change their minds and some people pivot and change course. I am very glad I stuck to it because I’m very happy with how everything turned out,” Heather said.

That’s the thing about Heather, she knows how to stay the course, and she wants to encourage young people to do the same. Inspired by her less-than-ideal experience with her pre-med advisor, she would visit her old high school to share her experiences and show students that the path to a career in medicine is possible.

She continued to mentor at Mercer University School of Medicine in Macon as a student, and started a chapter of the Young Physicians Initiative with two friends. YPI offers mentorship, support, and guidance to students as young as middle school age who want to become doctors. In Heather’s time at Mercer and since graduation, the chapter has expanded to Mercer’s Columbus location, with about 200 volunteers who host events like “Doctor for a Day,” where high school students from across Georgia get an inside peek into the lives of medical students and practicing physicians.

“That is the thing that I created in med school that I am most proud of. I haven’t even been gone a year and it has continued to grow,” Heather said. For her work with YPI, Heather has spoken at the American College of Cardiology Conference, and was awarded Georgia’s Outstanding Medical Student



in Volunteerism and Advocacy from American College of Physicians in 2022. For more information on YPI, visit ypiprogram.com.

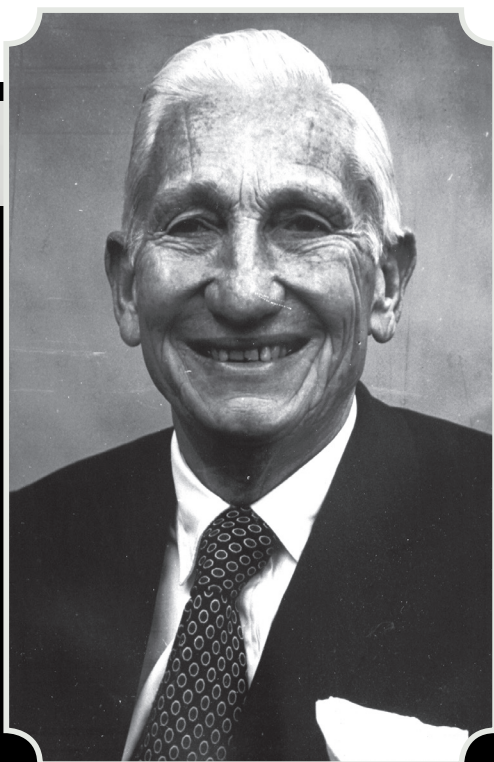
Now as an M.D. in her first year of residency, Heather is the doctor in the room. She understands with this comes great responsibility to maintain compassion. “Being present with the patient in front of me is my favorite part of my job,” Heather said, explaining that she was once a worried family member of a patient in need.

Her dad continues to help her see her mission clearly. Before every event or test, Heather asks her dad to wish her luck. He replies without fail, “You don’t need luck if you have good skill.” She’s carried that reminder in her heart and as a tattoo, knowing that she doesn’t need luck when she has “the good skill” to accomplish anything.

To all dreamers and future doctors, Heather wants them to know, “You can do whatever it is that you aspire to do. Truly, it’s a cliché quote, but it is true. And it’s okay to ask for help. Everybody needs help now and then.”

As she continues her way through residency, Dr. Heather Grace Krome wants to continue to grow as a person. “My biggest motivation is just being the best person that I can be, learning something from everybody I come into contact with, and making my parents and hometown proud.”

It’s safe to say: Mission accomplished.



OUR FOUNDER

Walter J. Brown was a journalist and a broadcast pioneer who built and chaired what would become Spartan Communications, Inc., one of the larger privately held TV companies in the country.

Early in his career, Brown had an office in the White House when he served on the staff of Secretary of State James F. Byrnes. Brown's enduring love for politics was eclipsed only by his respect for Jimmy Byrnes. Inspired in part by Byrnes's philanthropy — which in 1948 established the James F. Byrnes Foundation — Brown created his own private Foundation in 1970. Named for Thomas E. Watson and J.J. Brown, the men to whom Brown attributed his success, the Watson-Brown Foundation today continues to ensure that hundreds of deserving students are provided the opportunity to excel at the college of their choice.