

The

LEGACY

SUMMER 2025 / VOLUME 25 / ISSUE 3

A World
OF
POSSIBILITY

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

ALL IN THE
Family

GOODRUM HOUSE

YOUNG WATSON
The Reader

STICKS & STONES

A PUBLICATION OF

WATSON  BROWN
FOUNDATION



WALTER J. BROWN

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.

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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GOODRUM HOUSE

ALL IN THE FAMILY

BY BARBARA HYDE

Research on the people who have walked the halls of Goodrum House has revealed the most interesting women. Consuelo Martha Abreu Mallory, the daughter of May's second husband, Francis Abreu, maintained a close relationship with May, spending summers and holidays at 320 West Paces Ferry. Her resemblance to Ingrid Bergman captured my attention and after reading her obituary, I was hooked.

Consuelo, or "Consi" as she was known to family and friends, was born to Martha Adrian Argo (1906-1992) and Francis Luis Abreu (1896-1969) in Brunswick, Glynn County, Georgia. Francis hailed from a long line of Spanish descendants. His father, Diego Wencelaus Abreu, was born and raised in Cuba on a sugar plantation; his family originally emigrating from Spain. His mother, Marie de las Mercedes Vatable Jova of New York, also had family sugar plantation holdings in Santa Clara, Cuba. Marie and Diego married in



Martha and Francis Abreu, Newburgh, New York, 1929

1892 and settled in Roseton, New York, close to the Jova Brickyard and Manhattan where the families'

merchant activities were centered. Francis was one of three sons and two daughters. The children led a privileged life – sailing off the coast of Key West, traveling to Cuba in the winters, and educated at the finest schools in New England. Francis attended architecture school at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York and eventually settled in Miami, Florida. With his family's support he opened his own architecture firm and would eventually expand up the east coast to The Cloisters on Sea Island, Georgia, as a design partner with Addison Mizner of the famed Mediterranean and Spanish Revival architecture, whose influence still casts a spell over South Florida.



The Miami Herald, 1937

Consi's mother, Martha Adrian Argo, came from Steel Magnolia stock. Born in Talladega, Alabama, to Adrian Wilbur Argo and Flora Ellen Adair, she was the only daughter in a brood of five sons. Her father had various retail establishments, including a saloon and retail dry goods store. Her mother, Flora, excelled in school

in her youth and upon her untimely death in 1922, she left Martha a substantial bequest to continue her own studies. In 1923, she entered Converse College in Spartanburg, South Carolina, fulfilling her mother's wishes for her continued education. Martha moved with her father to Miami, Florida, where she met and married Francis in October 1925. Four years later, they made their home in Brunswick, Georgia, where Francis was hired to design the annex of The Cloisters on Sea Island as well as playwright Eugene O'Neill's 10-room house of Spanish peasant style. Their lives were filled with social engagements, shooting parties and golf tournaments. Francis's architecture firm flourished and in November of 1930, they welcomed their daughter, Consuelo Martha, named for Francis's sister. But all was not well in the Abreu marriage and by 1934 they filed for divorce.



Pancoast Hotel

It would appear to be a civilized parting of the ways in deference to Consuelo. Martha returned to Fort Lauderdale and the following year, married Norman Pancoast whose family was one of Miami's pioneer real estate developers. It was the



Golden Age of the resort hotel and Norman thrived as the director of several famous ones including The Cloisters, the Pancoast Hotel of Miami Beach and Forest Hills Hotel of Franconia, New Hampshire. They welcomed a baby boy, Norman, Jr., in 1938. Consi's childhood was a whirlwind of parties with the Miami Beach Abreu branch of the family tree, beach vacations at South Wind, the Sea Island home of her father and his new wife, May, and boarding school at the Ethel Walker school not far from the Pancoast home in Connecticut. She and May had a close relationship, hunting antique porcelain cornucopias together, hosting parties at Goodrum House, and becoming part of the sub debutante set in Atlanta, Georgia. She also spent time with her other younger brother Peter, who was adopted by May and Francis in 1947.



Consi and Pete Abreu, 1950s

Upon Consi's graduation from the Walker school in 1949, Francis and May sent her on a six-week tour of Europe. It must have sparked her love of travel. That fall she began her studies at Bryn Mawr College. She and a school friend spent a year living in Manhattan, testing their secretarial skills and enjoying life in the city. By the early 1950s, she returned home to Atlanta and an investment banker, Waldo Weaver Mallory, Jr., caught her eye. They married in a quiet ceremony on the first of December 1954. As the only daughter in the family, Consi was

thrown a huge wedding reception at the Piedmont Driving Club by May and Francis. Peter could not contain his enchantment for his older sister. It was a relationship that would last a lifetime.

Immediately following their wedding,



Consuelo, Peter, and Waldo, Dec. 1, 1954

Waldo and Consi moved into Little House, the cottage on the property at Goodrum House. Their family rapidly expanded by three: Eloise, Peter, and Francis. When May and Francis decided to sell Goodrum House, Consi received a substantial portion of May's collection of furniture, presumably to furnish her new home. Waldo and Consi spent vacations in Maine, finally purchasing their own summer home to enjoy with their children. It became the hub of family activities. Consi reveled in caring for her young family – cooking, collecting quilts and eventually opening a small antique quilts business in Sargentville, Maine.

Waldo passed away in 1986. Consi decided to travel the world. She loved remote areas, trekking to South Africa to see wild animals living in their natural habitats, haunting local markets and buying handmade crafts. Like May, she brought back small souvenirs, trinkets and ephemera from the places she visited to decorate her



Consi and Pete Abreu, 1950s

homes. When her daughter Eloise came to visit Goodrum House, she exclaimed, "Now I understand where my mother got her love of color from!" Consi's homes were a riot of colors all living in harmony with her beloved memories. She passed away from complications of a stroke at the age of 68.



Consuelo and May Abreu, 1943

I like to think Consuelo and May were prodding me to contact Eloise that fateful day in to inquire about the color of the cornucopias in the 1945 newspaper photograph of her mother. Not only did it lead to Eloise parting with some of her mother's prized possessions, but also to the return of collections inherited by both her brothers. Furniture, porcelains, flatware, and china all flooded back into the rooms at Goodrum House, once again making the house whisper, "Welcome home!" ■

CAMPUS NOTES

Watson-Brown Scholars in Action



NORAH ABDELNUR

**SOPHOMORE, FRANKLIN
PIERCE UNIVERSITY**

My college let us smash a car for stress relief. It's pretty cool up here. Literally. New Hampshire is so beautiful, too. Thank you for this opportunity.

SAMANTHA BARNHART

**SENIOR, COLLEGE OF
CHARLESTON**

As I head into my senior year of college (I can't believe it's here already!), I feel grateful to reflect on my experiences from the past year, and I am sincerely thankful for the opportunities afforded to me and

the support of the Watson-Brown Foundation over the course of my undergraduate career.

This past fall, I began an internship in the Bindery and Conservation Lab at the Charleston Library Society, founded in 1748 as one of the country's oldest membership libraries. Working under the Director of Conservation, I've learned technical skills relating to bookbinding, book repair, and book arts while conducting independent research to teach skill workshops and work on the library's circulating collection and commission repair work.

In addition to my internship, I served on the English Department Student Advisory Board and began work on an interdisciplinary humanities research paper in an English course. I was thrilled to present my research at my first conference at Johns Hopkins University this past March in Baltimore, Maryland. This spring, I continued my internship and began working part-time as a peer academic advisor for the College of Charleston Academic Advising and Planning Center.

After wrapping up a busy academic year, I completed an apprenticeship with the Spoleto Festival USA during May and June – a non-profit arts organization that produces an annual multi-disciplinary arts festival, running for 17 days and nights in Charleston, SC. For the rest of the summer, I am working for the college and training for my first 5k race!



Next year, I am excited to serve as Managing Editor for *Miscellany*, the undergraduate-produced Literary and Art Journal of the College of Charleston while I consider my plans for post-graduation.

WILLIAM EATON

**SOPHOMORE, WOFFORD
COLLEGE**

This year was truly something that I will always cherish in my life. While I was nervous and anxious for what college held for me, I was more than excited for what the year ended up looking like. To start, I was surprised at just how many friends I was able to make. I was worried about reaching out to others, as that can sometimes be an issue for me. But, when it came down to it I met a lot of fantastic people that helped me grow in school and in my social skills. At my college,



I got to participate in many different activities, including French tables and movie nights, labs with my science classes, and even little things like attending football and basketball games. The French days were some of my favorites because they allowed and enabled me to take on new challenges, and eventually pick up French as a minor. I am very excited for my upcoming year and beyond, mainly because I cannot wait to take advantage of all the opportunities that come my way, and I will forever be thankful for the Watson-Brown Scholarship for enabling these opportunities for me.

constantly worrying about how my college experience would be since I tend to be a shy person. However, I impressed myself when I made some friends and made connections at network events. One of the network events I went to was Highpoint Market. It allowed me to grasp a view of the career of interior design and see so many different forms of creativity in art. It also allowed me to hear the life stories of people in the event, which I enjoyed. Overall, I feel truly blessed to be able to have the college experience I dreamed of.



JOSHUA HALE

SENIOR, AUGUSTA UNIVERSITY

This semester, I had the privilege of presenting my physics research at a university event and two competitive conferences. One of which was the international March Meeting hosted by the American Physical Society. In both conferences, I had the opportunity to network with other physics students on the undergraduate, graduate, and professional level. I also won for best undergraduate presentation at both conference sessions. Shortly after, I received an honorary award from my university for “Best Undergraduate

Research in Theoretical Physics.” Currently, I am continuing my research under the instruction of Dr. Theja DeSilva at Augusta University through the CURS Summer Scholars research program. Outside of school, I am managing a film production company, OpenMic Perform Pro LLC, alongside my twin brother in collaboration with EmageMax Studios. Later this summer, our team will be getting full coverage of the HollyShorts international film festival in Hollywood, California.



BRANTLEY JONES

JUNIOR, UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

This year was very different than my past years in college. I began the first semester at home taking some classes at a school that was 40 minutes away. It was very nice living at home, and I got to work a lot and get more experience in my future job field. I also had to learn to balance school and work; this was not the easiest thing to do but I succeeded in both work and school. During the spring semester, I transferred to UGA. Going to UGA was much different than any other school I had attended. I had to get used to living in a big city



CLAIR GONZALEZ-MENDOZA

SOPHOMORE, CONVERSE UNIVERSITY

My first year in college was very successful for me. When I was in my senior year of high school, I remember

CAMPUS NOTES

with many new people. I enjoyed my semester at Athens. I made new friends and enjoyed getting into my major classes and learning about the things I've been interested in my whole life.



SUMMER LAPRESS

SOPHOMORE, WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY

As a student at Wake Forest University, I am currently interested in pursuing a degree in engineering because I love to solve problems and figure out ways to help solve problems that affect other people. I would describe myself as a student who is eager to learn and loves to dive deeper into different subjects. Learning new things is always super fun because then I can see what I learned connects with previous knowledge I already had. I also would describe myself as proactive, because I always like to get my assignments done before they are due, and as a perfectionist because I like to look over my work after I have done it multiple times.

Personally, I have joined many clubs and activities that I would not have done without the influence of many friends I have become close to in my time at Wake Forest University. Branching out into new interests has really helped me to grow as a person and learn more about what I enjoy

in my free time. I think that learning new things has helped me to become flexible in different situations and helped me to develop my social skills.

I also joined the lacrosse club, which I have been playing for more than 10 years. I have always loved the game, and it has taught me so many strengths and skills that I am able to apply to my personal life. Many of the projects that we did were in groups, and my time in lacrosse has taught me the importance of teamwork as well as communication. It also taught me to pull my own weight, pick up the slack by thinking on my feet, plan for the next steps when things go as planned (or not), and how to recover. Lacrosse also taught me how to analyze and incorporate new skills or ideas into my own plans. However, my time with engineering has also helped me understand how to break things down into simpler parts.

Some engineering tools and character virtues that I have picked up from this semester are some things that I wouldn't have thought about without talking to professors. When asking professors what tools they used the most during their everyday life, one response was communication skills. Over this past semester, I have found that if I force myself to engage in social interactions with people that I'm not familiar with, it will get easier over time, especially since I will get to know them more. I also have learned how to start from the basics again and having no knowledge of a subject previously. Usually when I take a class, I know some things and can build upon them such as math or English. However, I have not had much engineering experience, so this was a great way to get out of my comfort zone and start from scratch, which will be helpful in the future.

I attended the Wake Forest "Alumni

Panel Career Education - Careers in DEI" as my networking event because of its relevance to me as a woman who is a minority in STEM. I find Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to be a goal close to my heart, and I thought this networking event would be beneficial to go to learn more about the subject and how I can implement it in the future when I am employed. It was a Zoom call that consisted of many people who had attended or worked at Wake Forest University where they shared their experiences in both working towards DEI as well as DEI in general and why it is so important. It was a very small event with most likely only 10 people attending, which meant that they were able to dive in deeper into their experiences and we were able to ask them personal questions.

During my interactions with the speakers, I learned about the difficulties in finding a voice and how DEI can help with that. I also learned about many of the various facilities Wake Forest has to offer in terms of DEI because many of the speakers worked at Wake Forest, which was very helpful. I am sure to check out those resources later, especially with finals coming up. I also learned about the many tracks DEI can take including clubs, organizations, events, etc. I enjoyed learning more about DEI and exploring what it means to work for DEI from the panel very much and will be implementing this information later.

ETHAN LECLERC

SENIOR, UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

I had my hardest classes this semester which were Dynamics 2 and Synoptic Meteorology. They were tough, but I'm proud to say I passed both with good grades. I also got selected

to participate in an REU (research experience for undergrads) in climate science at Penn State! I'm very excited to be going to Pennsylvania this summer to work on the topic of



“How repeated exposure to climate news shapes beliefs, emotions, and intentions over time.” I also started a serious gym journey this semester, and I've been successfully sticking to it. At the beginning of the year, I also rescued a cat. I named her Luna and she is the sweetest, most loving cat ever. Overall, this year was a great year and I loved being able to work on my personal health.

NADIRA MUHAMMAD

SENIOR, TUSKEGEE UNIVERSITY

This past year has been the toughest of my collegiate career. But I have been battling personal issues with newfound strength and a desire for success in mind. I'm grateful for the opportunities I was granted this year such as serving as the Minority Association of PreHealth Students' Vice President, a returning NSO leader, and beginning to charter a new chapter of MedLife on my campus.



I am ecstatic to say that, although my time at Tuskegee is coming to an end, I have learned and am learning enough to have these years stick with me for a lifetime. I would like to thank the Watson-Brown Foundation for giving me the chance to fill my head with knowledge and the surety that comes with knowing someone is in your corner.



WITOU PRAK

JUNIOR, CLEMSON UNIVERSITY

I've had a chance to engage with the community surrounding Clemson at Clemson Engineers for Developing Communities where I

interned on a community resilience project researching ways to connect community institutions to residents



HELI SHAH

SOPHOMORE, UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA COLUMBIA

A large reason that my first-year experience was amazing is due to my involvement in multiple organizations. They included the pre-medical fraternity (PhiDE) and Freshman Council, and I truly enjoyed being a part of them. Although the process of rushing for PhiDE was an arduous process, I was thankful for the number of answers it provided me with. It allowed me to find my answer to “Why medicine?” and “What specialty?” which really strengthened my passion for medicine.

Once I was initiated, PhiDE greatly contributed towards my freshman year because the community and family aspect that I received from that

CAMPUS NOTES

organization in the new surroundings at college helped me stay grounded in my medical journey. It also provided me with opportunities such as developing connections with speakers and volunteering.

Moving on, Freshman Council, as a branch of Student Government, has allowed me to expand and make connections within the university. I have been able to plan and organize events with my committee within Freshman Council such as the Carolina Cast Off, which is where we invited students and faculty to come out and light candles to float onto the Thomas Cooper Fountain. This fostered unity among the community and allowed them to write down their wishes for the new year or worries of the past year and float them away. I really enjoyed working as a team and seeing our hard work come to fruition. Both organizations played large roles in my college experience so far and have given me support systems that consist of some of my best friends and mentors.

I applied to continue working in Student Government and got a position under the vice president's branch. I hope to thrive in my new position as VP of Outreach. As for PhiDE, I have a mentee, and I hope I can pass down the advice and support that I received as I entered the fraternity. Overall, my freshman experience was rewarding and I am glad to have found so much support in a new environment!

REIKA SHIRAKI

SENIOR, UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA UPSTATE

I finished my most challenging semester of nursing school! It was quite difficult but very rewarding. I got to learn and experience clinicals in

Pediatric, OB, and Med Surg 2 nursing courses. During these classes, I made new connections with my peers and got to know them better through our long study sessions. I am glad to have made such great friends through this semester that have pushed me to excel and become a better student, mentor, and future nurse. I cannot wait to see what next semester holds. I am set to graduate with my Bachelor of Science in Nursing this December.



I am currently working as a Student Nurse Associate (SNA) at Spartanburg Regional where I get to work alongside nurses and perform quality patient care. I held this position for one year in May, and I am grateful to have this opportunity to work in the hospital to further my experience and develop my clinical skills. I am also president of our university's Student Nurses Association this coming semester where I will be serving alongside my peers to actively involve fellow nursing students in service opportunities and provide guest speaker events where students can learn more from experienced nurses and practitioners from various departments.

I am planning a trip to Cambodia and Thailand in the summer where I will be spending three weeks visiting family and exploring more about my heritage and culture. I am very excited about this opportunity and hope to strengthen my Khmer to better serve and communicate with

the population that I may interact with in my future career. I am very honored and thankful to Watson Brown for making all my ventures and accomplishments possible.



KEVIN WRIGHT

SOPHOMORE, GEORGIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

My biggest takeaway from this first year was the strengthening of my confidence as a student. I went into my first year nervous and worried about the difficulty of a school like Georgia Tech, but I proved myself by earning good grades and understanding challenging material. I am worthy and most importantly, capable of succeeding in this environment. My most memorable academic moment was going from being in my Calc 2 lecture thinking the teacher was doing magic on the board, to getting an A on that exam. I stayed up until about 3 a.m. studying, but in return, I performed better than my friends and most of my peers. Now that my first year has come to an end, I am leaving with a better attitude

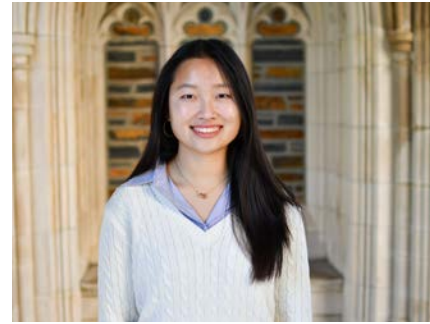
and a more focused purpose going into my second year now that I have found a career path that I'm excited to pursue. My plans for the summer are to continue to take classes, focus on my physical health, finish a book, and save up money for the coming year.

LILY ZHENG

**SOPHOMORE, DUKE
UNIVERSITY**

My first year in college was something that I have never experienced before. I'm sure many of us came from a high school where we were top of the class

and always had good grades. Since I got to college, this was no longer the case. I saw this coming, but the moment it actually hit me was when I saw the physical grades in my hand. At first, I couldn't really get used to it. It was a huge shocker to not only be no longer making straight As, but also having a difficult time even trying to maintain an A for the class. However, towards the end of the semester, after numerous talks with professors and fellow classmates, I finally came to the conclusion that grades are not the most important thing in the world and they should not dictate how the rest of my college experience goes. I'm not



saying one should not care about their grades, for they are still important. I am just trying to reiterate that as long as you've tried your hardest, that's all that matters.



T.R.R. Cobb House Museum's Barketing Manager, Henry, trying to look over the Cobb research to find juicy gossip.

THROUGH THE GRAPEVINE

ASHLEIGH OATS

Exploring the role of gossip in 19th-century life through the candid letters of the Cobb family.

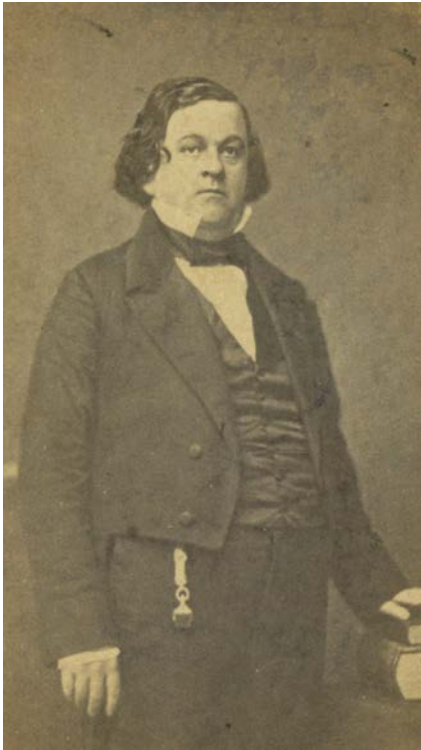
Spring has sprung at the T.R.R. Cobb House, and summer is right around the corner; that means the gardens are returning to life. Our gardens are often seen from afar while driving by or cutting through the property on the way to class. But just as the T.R.R. Cobb House is a house museum, so too, are the gardens their own living museum.

Before text messages and social media, gossip traveled out of town

slowly through carefully penned correspondence and whispers. While the whispers are lost to history, 19th-century letters reveal a vivid world of quiet scandal, sharp judgments, and intimate confidences nestled between updates on war, health, and local events. These writings unveil some rumors and truths that did not always make it into more official record. As evidenced by the extended Cobb family's letters, gossip was not just for

the women, but a practice enjoyed by the men as well. By reading between the lines of these personal exchanges, we gain rare insight into daily life and the human instinct to share a juicy story.

Marion Cobb and her sister, Callendar (Callie) Lumpkin King, enjoyed passing along whatever information they could in their correspondence. In this undated letter, assumed to be around



T.R.R. Cobb's older brother, Howell

1855, Marion shared,

Do you remember the Miss Ware we laughed at so much at church. She ran away with a drunken dissipated fellow named Willis from Greensboro - that morning - met him at our gate, got into the carriage with him & Sid Hughes & went over to Watkinsville & was married He courted [her] at the Greensboro College & her father Dr Ware of Columbus would not let her marry him.

(Note: It is likely that Marion is talking about Dr. Robert Alexander Ware's daughter Mary Ware who married George Moore Willis. He became an assistant surgeon for the Confederate Army.)

In a letter likely from 1856, Marion dropped more bits of information for Callie to enjoy:

Batavia [Thomas] is to marry soon I

hear a N. [New] Yorker -- She had that enlargement on her throat taken out in Philadelphia & looks badly from the effects of it. Laura Rutherford looks better than you ever saw her dresses well -- & seems so cheerful... Habersham [Adams'] wife is very much like her sister Mary Wilkinson do you remember her? rather pert & not very genteel -- Mary Willis Jackson has a son which weighed eleven $\frac{3}{4}$ of a pound!!

(Notes: Batavia Thomas was the daughter of Stevens and Peninah Thomas, and she married Charles Clinch in May 1857. Laura Rutherford was T.R.R.'s sister. Habersham Adams's second wife was Florida "Florrie" Virginia Wilkinson Adams and they were married in 1856. Mary Willis Jackson was a sister of Habersham Adams, and both were cousins of T.R.R.'s.)

T.R.R. Cobb was equally guilty of spreading gossip and suspicions. While writing to his mother, Sarah, in November 1849, he noted,

The Factory was set on fire & burned up on Tuesday night, no other damage done. They had turned off about forty of the hands & the suspicion is that it was the work of revenge. Mr. Newton's present house was fired again on Monday but fortunately discovered & put out before it burned anything but some beds.

(Note: Our attempts to find any further information about either fire was sadly unsuccessful.)

T.R.R. also shared information with his brother, Howell, in July 1852:

We met Mr & Mrs Hull & Mr & Mrs Harris on the cars from Richmond & enjoyed our ride with them. They went on to the White Sulphur. Mrs Hull is improving having walked for three hours in Richmond on yesterday....

They left Col Lamar in Richmond.

(Note: We are not sure which Hulls and HARRISES are being discussed here, but Mrs. Hull was recuperating from some illness. Colonel Lamar is likely Mary Ann's brother John Basil Lamar.)

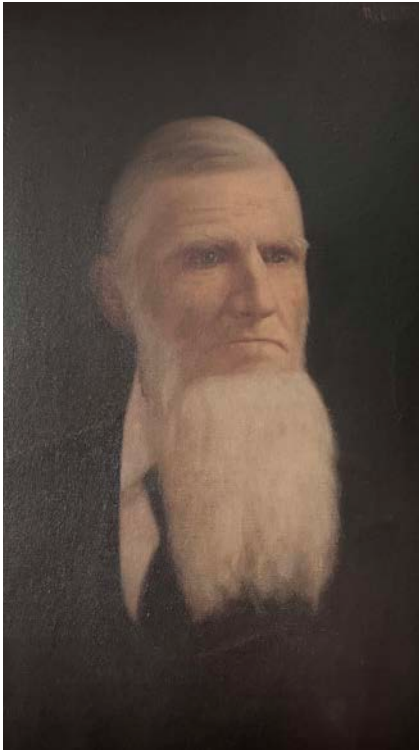
T.R.R. also passed along University news with his mother, Sarah, in December 1856. The news was especially exciting to share because it benefitted his brother-in-law, Williams



T.R.R. Cobb's sister, Laura Cobb Rutherford

Rutherford:

The Trustees of the College made their selection today & I rejoice to be able to write to you that Rutherford was elected Professor of Mathematics by the handsome vote of 19 to 7. Is this not good? He richly deserves it & what is better it is a situation he can retain for life if he desires it. A better man could not have gotten it.



Williams Rutherford was T.R.R. Cobb's brother-in-law and a math professor at UGA.

They turned out every old Professor except Dr Brantley & re-elected Dr Church who has consented to remain. I do not know that I have ever rejoiced more than at Rutherford's Election. Gov. Lumpkin, Judge Lumpkin, Mitchell, Hillyer, Phillips all went for him. Judge L was very active for him. Uncle William made a fine speech for him. Old Gilmer Jenkins & c & c against

him. I have written to Rutherford to come home immediately.

(Note: "Governor Lumpkin" refers to Wilson Lumpkin, Marion Cobb's uncle, while "Judge Lumpkin" and "Judge L" refers to Joseph Henry Lumpkin, Marion Cobb's father.)

Marion could not be left out of the gossip as well. Tom shared the following passages with her (see notes for dates):

I have no doubt [illegible name] will give us a vast amount of trouble. He is worst than ever as I am told he is drinking again. If you knew what a conceited ass he was sober you might imagine what a troublesome fool he would be drunk, but my duty is plain, I should discharge it and leave the result to God.

(Notes: This section is from a letter written on Oct. 11, 1860. Sadly, the name was illegible, so we are not sure who T.R.R. was upset with here.)

At West Point Charley Whitner came to the depot to meet me and told me of the safe delivery of Sister Mary Ann of another son, to whom she had given my name. Howell confirms the statement and says that sister M. says she will give him one or both R's as I may say. I rather prefer both, but will leave it to you to say. (Notes: This passage comes from a letter written

on Feb 3, 1861. T.R.R. refers to Howell and Mary Ann's twelfth child, named Thomas Reade Rootes Cobb in his honor. Marion must have agreed that both R's were preferred.)

Howell seized the Bible on which he swore the members and says he intends to keep it. One man refused to kiss the Bible. It was Judge Withers of So. Ca. He is an avowed infidel, one of the last of the disciples of old Dr. Cooper. I had taken a fancy to him before but after I saw and heard his reason, I feel a positive loathing to the man.

(Note: This was from a letter written on February 9, 1861, after the provisional constitution of the Confederacy was adopted. He refers to Judge Thomas Jefferson Withers of York County, South Carolina.)

Old Bluitt is here courting Mrs. Cowler, the sister of Mr. Ware who is worth \$300,000 and lives in a house worth cost \$75,000.

(Notes: This was from a letter written on February 10, 1861, confirming that spreading gossip about someone's worth and house value has been around for a long time.)

As these passages confirm, gossiping is a time-honored tradition, and one that the Cobb family enjoyed taking part. Until next time, XOXO, Gossip Girl. ■

Alumni Spotlight

JAHLEEL JOHNSON

BY TIARA HODGES

How one student's persistence, curiosity, and global vision are shaping a promising future in international diplomacy.

When Jahleel originally applied for the Watson-Brown Foundation Scholarship, he didn't get it. Yet, he persisted. On his third try, after revising his application, seeking feedback from his mentor, and building a portfolio of international experiences, he received the scholarship that would help springboard him to a life-altering journey.

"If it wasn't for the scholarship, I wouldn't have had these opportunities," he said. "I'm just so grateful."

Born and raised in Aiken, South Carolina, this aspiring diplomat's story is one of vision, ambition, and a deep commitment to bridging cultures.

He studied at the University of South Carolina and majored in political science with a minor in German, graduating in 2023. During his time in college, he was able to complete an internship on Capitol Hill with Congressman James Clyburn.

Today, Jahleel is interning in Berlin, Germany, where he's taking part in the International Parliamentary

Scholarship program, sponsored by the German government. The highly competitive initiative brings together 91 participants from 38 countries to study German democracy, politics, and governance – and to work directly with members of the German Bundestag.

His interest in global studies was planted by his father's stories of traveling the world during military service and business trips that took him to Canada, and it grew in classrooms where he watched bilingual peers switch between



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English and Spanish with ease.

“I just found it so cool that they were able to speak two languages,” he recalled. “That made me want to learn another language myself.”

While taking up German as a second language was his second choice (French was his first pick, but the teacher retired), the choice did prove serendipitous.

A high school exchange program first introduced him to Germany, when an exchange student stayed with Jahleel and his family for three weeks. The following year, he went to stay with a family in Germany for three weeks as well. After that, he decided to continue learning German and looked for ways to return to the country.

Years later, a Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange for Young Professionals brought him back during college. This is a program between both the German government and US government. Jahleel was one of the 75 American participants to be selected.

His journey gained focus during the pandemic, when, while stuck at home doing online classes, he picked up a memoir by former U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. Inspired by her work in diplomacy, he began seeking opportunities to turn his own love for languages and cultures into a career.

That led him to the State Department’s Charles B. Rangel Summer Enrichment Program, which introduces undergraduates to careers in foreign service. From there, things accelerated: a summer in Turkey to learn Turkish through a U.S. Department of State program, another summer back in Turkey through the same initiative, and now his current work in Germany.

His long-term goal? To work for the

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U.S. Department of State as a diplomat or ambassador. And while he may be a world traveler who has lived internationally multiple times, he is firm in his commitment to give back to his hometown.

“South Carolina is home,” he said. “And I do plan to invest back in my community.”

That sense of service is already playing out through mentorship. Though hesitant to call himself a mentor, “I think we try to hold ourselves to higher standards and don’t realize we’re already doing it,” he said. Jahleel frequently offers guidance to younger students seeking scholarships or international opportunities. He models the same thoughtful, pragmatic advice his own mentor gave him over tea at Panera Bread years ago: dream big, but plan even bigger.

“It’s good to talk about something,” he said. “But what are the steps you’re

taking to get to that goal?”

In his own life, those steps have been consistent and intentional. Even when rejected from programs like the International Parliamentary Scholarship program on his first try, he didn’t give up. He reapplied and succeeded, just as he did for the Watson-Brown Scholarship. Even when overwhelmed, he reminded himself that persistence is often the deciding factor.

“You might not get it the first time. You might not get it the second time. But if you have a goal, then you’ll find a way to achieve it,” he said.

He’s also learned to quiet self-doubt and move past fear.

“Let go of fear and stop overthinking,” he advised. “I’ve missed things because I sat and pondered too long. But the truth is, education opens doors – whether you like it or not.”

For him, college wasn’t just about classes. It was about relationships with professors, access to resources like the study abroad office, and mentors who helped him navigate complex applications. It’s why he encourages students to take full advantage of their time on campus.

As he juggles his responsibilities in the IPS program, from choir rehearsals for a multicultural talent show to policy work with members of Germany’s Christian Democratic Union, he remains grounded in the values he learned back home: community, perseverance, and vision.

His story isn’t just one of personal achievement. It’s a roadmap for young people who dream of something bigger but aren’t sure where to start.

“Whatever you do, take the time to learn something new,” he said. “Learn a skill. Seek out opportunities. And don’t be afraid to try again.” ■

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