

STRONGER TOGETHER

Remembering Kaitlyn ‘McAuley’ Millen and Wyatt Banks



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University of Georgia Kappa Sigma member Charlie Mixson and Phi Mu member Amanda Finley pose in front of the Kappa Sigma house, holding portraits of Wyatt Banks and Kaitlyn “McAuley” Millen in Athens, Georgia, on Monday, Jan. 13, 2024. PHOTO/LANEY MARTIN

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Georgia grown

UGA community reflects on Jimmy Carter’s legacy

Sophia Eppley

Authentic. Peacemaker. Humanitarian. These are a few of the words students and professors at the University of Georgia used to describe former President Jimmy Carter, who died on Dec. 29, 2024, at 100 years old. Carter, the first and only president from Georgia, was an activist, politician, peanut farmer, friend and inspiration to many at UGA.

How UGA has immortalized Carter

Carter’s connection to UGA dates as far back as 1966, when he first ran for governor, according to Charles Bullock, a political science professor at UGA who met Carter numerous times over the years. In the four years following Carter’s 1966 gubernatorial loss, he invited students – a number of which were from UGA – to his home in Plains, Georgia. When he ran for governor again in 1970, he had grown a following of young voters who “thought he was a great person [and] that he sat down and listened to them,” according to Bullock.

In 1974, then-Governor Carter attended the dedication of the Russell Library for Political Research and Studies. In 1999, Carter, his wife Rosalynn and the Carter Center were honored for their contributions and dedication to world peace, as the first recipients of the Delta Prize for Global Understanding. The prize was created in 1997 by UGA and Delta Air Lines to recognize efforts to advance understanding and cooperation among nations and cultures.

Carter was also inducted into the Georgia Writers Hall of Fame, which honors authors whose work contributes to Georgia’s rich literary heritage, at UGA’s Hargrett Library in 2006. Carter is additionally memorialized in UGA’s Special Collections Libraries, where students can explore his political memorabilia and more than two dozen of his books, which range from memoirs to poetry and children’s books.

In 2007, Carter’s former White House Chief of Staff, UGA graduate Hamilton Jordan, worked with John Maltese, associate dean of UGA’s School of Public and International Affairs, to organize the Carter Conference, which celebrated the 30-year anniversary of Carter’s inauguration.

The three-day conference held a series of panels that were well attended, including by Carter himself, former Vice President Walter Mondale, former Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer and former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright.

“We basically brought Carter and his wife, Vice President Mondale and his wife and almost every living member of the Carter Administration back to campus,” Maltese said.

The conference was designed to reflect on Carter’s presidency and discuss lessons from his time in office that could be applied to the current political climate.

One of the panels was led by UGA undergraduates; they each spoke about aspects of Carter’s legacy that are rele-



GRAPHIC/RYLEE TOOLE

vant to the 21st century. Carter was “ahead of his time” in many ways, according to Maltese, including his ideas and policy on energy conservation and combating inflation.

“Carter sat in the front row of virtually every panel, and he’d be asking questions and participating,” Maltese said. “It sort of showed his accessibility.”

In 2018, Carter was inducted into the Agriculture Hall of Fame, administered by UGA’s College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences, for his career as a peanut farmer and his contributions to agricultural research and presidential legislation.

Inspiring future generations

Ian Roberts, a junior political science, history and religion major at UGA, grew up in Americus, Georgia, approximately 10 miles outside of Plains. Roberts and Carter shared a hometown, birthday and, in some ways, a family.

“When [Carter died] and the news got out, a lot of people in Americus were posting online like, ‘Goodbye Grandpa Jimmy,’” Roberts said. “He was really like our grandfather.”

Roberts’ family was deeply involved with the Carters

on several fronts; Roberts’ aunt was the Carters’ in-house nurse up until both of their deaths, and his father worked at the Jimmy Carter National Park service for 13 years. Roberts’ first memories are of walking through Carter’s childhood home and school with his family.

Sharing an Oct. 1 birthday with Carter meant that Roberts walked in the Plains Peanut Festival parade alongside the former president every year growing up.

“I used to think, ‘Oh my gosh, all these people are here for me and Jimmy Carter,’” Roberts said.

Roberts was heavily influenced by Carter’s involvement in politics and devotion to his faith, inspiring Roberts to pursue his own similar interests in political science and religion.

“He’s always been there,” Roberts said. “He’s kind of like our identity. I think for me and my family, it was really just thankfulness that we had Jimmy.”

Carter’s memory lives on in the hearts and minds of UGA’s colleges, students and professors.

“I think continuing to pursue some of those goals is the best way of honoring him – probably what he would be the happiest about,” Maltese said.

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University of Georgia Kappa Sigma member Charlie Mixson, Phi Mu member Amanda Finley and members of their respective pledge classes pose with portraits of Wyatt Banks and Kaitlyn “McAuley” Millen in Athens, Georgia on Jan. 13, 2024. PHOTO/LANEY MARTIN

A shared purpose

Phi Mu and Kappa Sigma team up to honor lives of former members

Rebecca Schillinger

Every death of a University of Georgia student produces a unique type of hurt. But, a pair of Greek life organizations are actively demonstrating how that love and loss can be channeled to not only help others, but keep the memory of beloved Bulldogs alive.

The UGA chapters of Phi Mu and Kappa Sigma will host a flag football tournament, Touchdowns 4 Tomorrow, to honor the lives of former members Kaitlyn “McAuley” Millen and Wyatt Banks.

Charlie Mixson, a sophomore management information systems and business major, alongside Amanda Finley, a sophomore intended finance major, are organizing the event as the philanthropy chairs of Kappa Sigma and Phi Mu, respectively.

Touchdowns 4 Tomorrow

Touchdowns 4 Tomorrow is focused on raising money for suicide prevention and awareness in honor of Millen and Banks, who were active members in Greek life at UGA. The tournament will be held on Wednesday, March 19, at the UGA Intramural Fields. Students can register on a Google Form linked on the Touchdowns 4 Tomorrow Instagram page. The registration fee is \$15 and includes a T-shirt. Following registration, a draft night will be at Paloma Park on Thursday, Feb. 20.

On the day of the tournament, a moment of silence will be held at the Intramural Fields pavilion in remembrance of Millen and Banks, followed by speakers who personally knew them.

Mixson and previous Phi Mu Philanthropy Chair Jessie DeSantis, a junior economics and international business major, had the idea to organize the event in honor of both students.

“That’s really our goal this year, to just make an event that’s fun for everyone so it creates momentum and has the lasting effect that creates legacy and continues to be a good event,” Mixson said.

They first started brainstorming ideas in April 2024 and held their first percentage night in September at Paloma Park and Clarke’s Collective to support the Wyatt Sean Banks Foundation and the McAuley Millen Spotfund. They are currently raising money through percentage nights, sponsorships, entry fees and a GoFundMe.

All the money raised by Touchdowns 4 Tomorrow will go to the Wyatt Sean Banks Foundation and the McAuley Millen Spotfund. Mixson worked alongside Sean Banks, Banks’ father, to create the GoFundMe and tournament. They have also discussed giving money to the Sunshine Fund, which gives Greek life members and UGA students access to therapy and mental health services through the UGA Student Care and Outreach program.

Touchdowns 4 Tomorrow is actively speaking with sponsors, alumni and local businesses in preparation for the main event.

Who were McAuley and Wyatt?

Millen was a junior psychology major from Charlotte, North Carolina, and an active member of Phi Mu and the sailing club. Millen was admitted into Morehead Honors College on scholarship. She enjoyed singing, dancing, soccer and field hockey. Her obituary described her as “always on the move, gold curls in disarray – arms-pumping, singing songs, swinging in her beloved tree swing, climbing trees and discovering the world around her.”

“So many college kids struggle, and to have something to remind people they’re not alone, and to honor their memory going forward, I think is really special.

MARY KAUPP | FRIEND OF KAITLYN “MCAULEY” MILLEN

“‘Genuine’ is the word I would use to describe her,” Mary Kaupp, a UGA alumna and friend of Millen, said. “She was always super open to her struggles, which made everyone around her feel comfortable sharing their own. I remember so many nights in the sorority house having the most genuine and deep conversations that I truly have never found another person to be able to speak at that level, very emotionally aware, but also just a fun-spirited person.”

Millen died in Athens on March 21, 2023. She is survived by her parents Don Millen Jr. and Salina Millen.

“McAuley’s smile, determination, sparkle and quick wit were coupled with a fierce devotion to her friends and family,” her obituary reads.

Banks was a sophomore economics and political science double major in the Morehead Honors College, with the intention to pursue law school. He enjoyed sports, travel, chess, church choir and piano. He was described in his obituary as having a “big heart, always selflessly willing to help someone hurting or in need.” Banks attended Marist School, making the Dean’s list every semester of high school and earning the Yale Book Award and the Physical Fitness Award.

The Wyatt Sean Banks Foundation was established in his honor by Banks’ family with support from his community, family and friends. The mission and details of the foundation are still being determined.

“I guess everyone would agree he was the life of the party ... the best guy to be in the room with,” Nick Nichols, Banks’ pledge brother and sophomore business, intended management information systems and international business major, said. “Always had a smile on his face and always put a smile on other people’s faces. Super smart. Definitely one of the smartest people I knew.”

Banks died on Feb. 21, 2024, in Athens. He is survived by his parents Sean and Emily Banks, sister Caroline Banks and brother Nolan Banks.

The UGA community has been hit with multiple unrelated student deaths by suicide in the last few years, including Millen and Banks, sparking conversations around mental health and accessibility of resources.

Resources

According to the American Psychological Association, more than 60% of college students met the criteria for at least one mental health problem in the 2020-2021 school year.

UGA offers multiple free mental health resources through Counseling and Psychiatric Services (CAPS), including: Headspace, a free mindfulness and meditation app; Togetherall, an anonymous peer support platform; virtual counseling sessions; a mental health support line; a sexual assault hotline; individual and couple counseling;

single and group session therapy; and psychiatric services.

Other students have taken action around mental health awareness and support. Phi Gamma Delta’s 2028 pledge class created a GoFundMe to support mothers and families who have lost their children to suicide.

Pledge brothers Quinn Lyons and Campbell Gosslee, both freshman finance majors, created the fund to raise money to support those grieving a death by suicide. After realizing many of their pledge brothers have lost someone or knew someone who lost their life to suicide, they decided this would be the best way to support others.

“There’s 38 of us, and we just wanted to choose a cause that was meaningful to all of us,” Lyons said. “As a freshman, I wanted to make our impact on the fraternity.”

They have raised most of their profits through the GoFundMe, as well as earning \$700 through a philanthropy event where they sold hot dogs and provided a dunk tank. Lyons also shared that UGA alumni and legacies have been helpful in raising money. All proceeds go to Alliance of Hope For Suicide Loss Survivors, which provides resources, counseling and assistance to mothers and families navigating losing a child.

Touchdowns 4 Tomorrow will raise money in honor of Banks and Millen, while also keeping their memories alive. Phi Mu and Kappa Sigma hope to keep the tradition going for years to come by passing the trophies from team to team in remembrance of their fellow bulldogs.

“I’m really happy that they’re doing something to honor their memory, especially since our pledge class has since graduated, but to see the younger girls still care about this,” Kaupp said. “So many college kids struggle, and to have something to remind people they’re not alone, and to honor their memory going forward, I think is really special.”



University of Georgia Kappa Sigma member Charlie Mixson and Phi Mu member Amanda Finley hold photos of Wyatt Banks and Kaitlyn “McAuley” Millen, former members of their respective pledge classes. PHOTO/LANEY MARTIN

60%

According to the American Psychological Association, more than 60% of college students met the criteria for at least one mental health problem in 2020-2021 school year.

According to Mixson, UGA Dean of Students Eric Atkinson has helped organize and fund the tournament. Atkinson was able to work with the students to reserve the fields and pavilion in support of the event, according to a UGA spokesperson.

While a few members of Phi Mu and Kappa Sigma will be coaching teams, any student can sign up and play, regardless of their involvement in Greek life. Each team will consist of eight players.

There will be female and male divisions, the winners of each will receive the McAuley Millen Trophy and the Wyatt Banks Trophy, respectively.

“Hopefully, it’s just something that people are proud to win and compete for,” Mixson said.

Protest protection

Why we need to defend student activism

Caroline Feagin

In recent semesters, student protests and activism have held a prominent place in mass media coverage. With the protests over the Israel-Hamas war and the various organizational efforts on campuses during the most recent election cycle, student activism has become a hot topic of conversation.

The American public has been particularly divided over protests on college campuses. According to YouGov, 47% of American adults oppose the recent Pro-Palestine protests, while only 28% strongly or somewhat supported them. Compared to only 19% of older adults, 40% of younger adults, ages 18-44, were far more supportive of the protests.

The political environment at the University of Georgia can feel divided, with things like voter organizations mobilizing on campus and anti-abortion speakers visiting. However, it feels to me like students' right to protest has come under fire.

In April 2024, UGA students organized an encampment on campus to express solidarity with Palestine. During the demonstration, 16 individuals were arrested. In August, six of those students were found to be in violation of code of conducts regulations for their participation in the encampment. Late in the fall 2024 semester, University Judiciary upheld and extended the suspension and probation of Students for Justice in Palestine group, who organized the encampment.

I find a lot of the buzz surrounding these protests to be perplexing. Student activism is nothing new. Students at Howard University Law School organized sit-ins at restaurants to protest racial segregation in the 1940s. Thousands of students protested the war in Vietnam in the 1960s, causing disruption around the country. National surveys showed that 70% of respondents engaged in the Black Lives Matter movement in 2020 through social media, television or attending in-person demonstrations.

UGA students also have a longstanding tradition of engaging in political protests, such as marching and holding sit-ins in academic buildings to advocate for gender equality. There have been various other demonstrations in recent years, such as in 2021, when protestors called on the university to recognize the victims of Linnestown, and in October 2024, when conservative political activist Charlie Kirk visited campus and was met with protest over his ideologies.

I see several parallels between reactions to recent and historical protests. In the April 18, 1968, edition of The Red & Black, a letter to the editor expressed anger with demonstrators for "seeking ways and means of violating [stan-



dards],” criticisms which ring similar to the comments aimed at protestors today. These sentiments were mirrored by comments on The Red & Black’s Instagram post from May 3, 2024, reporting on the more than 180 UGA faculty members who called for immediate un-suspension of arrested students. One commenter on the post stated that the protestors should remain suspended because “rules are rules.”

Protests have historically not been particularly well-received by the public. Many people find them disruptive and agitating, but that discomfort does not negate their purpose in society as tools for raising awareness and bringing change.

Civil disobedience has been recognized by philosophers and historians alike as a powerful tool for marginalized groups to express their grievances with inequity. No society is perfectly just, meaning that the right of citizens to express dissatisfaction with institutions is integral to fighting injustice.

Student activists who have participated in the recent protests about the Israel-Hamas war - and other forms of activism surrounding the election, abortion and immigration - should be recognized as engaging in civil disobedience. Expressing discontent with and criticism of the university without fear of punishment should be allowed.

In my opinion, the punishments that SJP received far outweigh their actions. Regardless of whether one disagrees with their stance, we should all be concerned over what the silencing of student activists represents for the UGA and Athens communities, both culturally and politically.

After all, what is the purpose of activism if its disruption conforms to the rules of the very institution being challenged? If UGA truly is a place where people are free “to teach, to serve and to inquire into the nature of things,” as its motto reads, then why are we silencing the voices of those attempting to emulate this?

Even if the university disagrees with the nature of a protest, disavowing these organizations sets a troubling precedent for the future of student activism and the protection of our First Amendment rights.

Caroline Feagin is a sophomore journalism major at the University of Georgia.

STUDENT VOICES

Have you heard?

UGA students weigh in on recent campus safety policies and initiatives

Stella Short

The University of Georgia strives to create a safe learning environment, whether it be in a lecture hall or on the streets of campus. Following the murder of Laken Riley on campus, UGA has invested \$7.3 million in several new safety initiatives, such as adding Campus Safety Ambassadors, emergency call stations, automatic license plate readers and additional lighting and fencing.

While these measures represent significant efforts, are students aware of their implementation? And if they are, do they believe these protective measures are truly effective? The Red & Black asked students about whether they have noticed the new safety measures around campus.



Tristan Bessie

SENIOR ENGINEERING MAJOR

“I haven’t heard about them very much. I think I’ve seen some newsletters talking about it, but I never really noticed the implementation,” said Bessie.



Rachel Bruno

SENIOR PSYCHOLOGY AND RELIGION MAJOR

“I don’t feel like much has changed on campus, in particular. I feel like my own personal understanding of my surroundings has changed though ... But, in regards to UGA and what the university has done, I don’t feel like much has changed,” said Bruno.



Aaishi Patel

FRESHMAN PUBLIC HEALTH MAJOR

“I didn’t know they existed until I went to the IM fields for a class. I don’t think they are talked about enough, and most people don’t know how to use them,” said Patel.



Evangeline Erickson

FRESHMAN ECONOMICS MAJOR

“I wasn’t fully aware of any new initiatives, except for a few new officers that were patrolling, and I hadn’t felt that there was much change until I learned more. I feel like it all should be talked about more,” said Erickson.

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Help nearby

Where to find resources in Athens if you are experiencing homelessness

Olivia McGahee

Several shelters in Athens provide safe and secure housing for families or individuals experiencing homelessness this winter season.

With the help of donations and volunteers, these shelters can remain open and offer emergency housing during harsh weather conditions. Additionally, many of these shelters offer vital services such as meals, access to clean clothing, blankets and hygiene supplies.

Athens Area Homeless Shelter

The Athens Area Homeless Shelter provides shelter and a housing program for families and dependent children. The Almost Home Family Shelter offers families with children under 18 year old up to 45 days of emergency shelter, full-time child care and after-school care. The shelter also provides comprehensive, trauma-informed case management given by an experienced, master's-level worker.

Other services include rental assistance and a transitional housing program designed to help participants find and maintain stable housing. For additional information, call 706-354-0423.

The Bigger Vision of Athens Community Shelter

The Bigger Vision of Athens offers overnight shelter for up to 36 adult guests in a communal living space for those 18 and older with proof of at least one COVID-19 vaccination. Guests must call 706-340-6062 by 4 p.m. to reserve a bed for a given night, begin the check-in process at 6 p.m. and arrive no later than 8 p.m. Guests must call to reserve a bed each night that they need to stay at the shelter.

After being checked in, guests are fed a hot dinner. After dinner, guests have the opportunity to socialize, shower and launder clothes. Guests receive a continental-style breakfast in the morning before departing the shelter by 7 a.m.

The Abundant Life Program is for people who are employed, in a short-term workforce development program or awaiting military enlistment and are interested in staying at the shelter continuously while working towards getting housing. The program provides a maximum of five guests with continuous shelter for up to six months. Accepted applicants will have a guaranteed bed every night without having to call in and will have a place to store their possessions during the day.

The Salvation Army of Athens Center of Hope

The Salvation Army shelter offers 80 beds. There are 32 men's beds, four of which are reserved for veterans. Additionally, there are 28 women's beds and two family units with eight beds each.

New intakes should arrive from 2-4 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday and on weekends from 6-8 p.m. Facility access to overnight sheltering closes at 10 p.m.

For additional information call 706-543-5350.

Project Safe

Project Safe's 24/7 emergency shelter serves any individual experiencing domestic violence. The shelter offers 22 beds, including four family spaces and six individual bedrooms.

To access the shelter, individuals can call the hotline at 706-543-3331 and speak with an advocate. Project Safe also offers bilingual services for Spanish speakers.

Homeless Day Service Center

This shelter is a day-time resource open to the public Monday through Friday, from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The center allows individuals to receive mail and messages, access laundry and shower facilities and use telephones. The staff provides case management and support around issues relating to homelessness, as well as direct assistance to available housing supports.

For additional information call 706-354-1154

Ayuda cerca

Dónde encontrar recursos en Athens si se encuentra sin hogar

Olivia McGahee, Traducido por Isa Sucre Pardo

Varios refugios en Athens ofrecen alojamiento seguro para familias o personas sin hogar esta temporada de invierno.

Con la ayuda de donaciones y voluntarios, estos refugios pueden permanecer abiertos y ofrecer alojamiento de emergencia durante las condiciones climáticas duras. Además, muchos de estos refugios ofrecen servicios vitales como comidas, acceso a ropa limpia, cobijas y productos de higiene.

Refugio para Personas sin Hogar del Área de Athens

El refugio para personas sin hogar del área de Athens ofrece refugio y un programa de vivienda para familias y niños dependientes. El refugio familiar "Almost Home" ofrece 45 días de refugio de emergencia para familias con niños menores de 18 años y son elegibles para cuidado infantil de tiempo completo y cuidado después de la escuela. El refugio también ofrece gestión de casos integral e informada sobre el trauma a cargo de un trabajador experto con nivel de maestría.

Otros servicios incluyen asistencia para el alquiler y un programa de vivienda de transición diseñado para ayudar a los participantes a encontrar y mantener una vivienda estable. Para obtener información adicional llame al 706-354-0423.

Refugio Comunitario "The Bigger Vision" de Athens

"The Bigger Vision" de Athens ofrece alojamiento por la noche para hasta 36 huéspedes adultos en un espacio de vida común para mayores de 18 años con prueba de al menos una vacuna COVID-19. Los huéspedes deben llamar al 706-340-6062 antes de las 4 p.m. para reservar una cama para una noche específica, comenzar el proceso de registro a las 6 p.m. y llegar a más tardar a las 8 p.m. Los huéspedes deben llamar para reservar una cama cada noche que necesiten permanecer en el refugio.

Después de registrarse, los huéspedes reciben una cena caliente. Después de la cena, los huéspedes tienen la oportunidad de socializar, ducharse y lavar ropa. Los huéspedes reciben un desayuno estilo continental por la mañana antes de salir del refugio a las 7 a.m.

El Programa "Abundant Life" es para personas que están empleadas, en un programa de desarrollo laboral a corto plazo o en espera de alistamiento militar y están interesadas en permanecer en el refugio continuamente mientras trabajan para conseguir una vivienda. El programa provee alojamiento continuo a un máximo de cinco huéspedes durante un máximo de seis meses. Los solicitantes aceptados tendrán una cama garantizada todas las noches sin necesidad de llamar y tendrán un lugar para guardar sus pertenencias durante el día.

El Centro de Esperanza del Ejército de Salvación de Athens

El refugio del Ejército de Salvación ofrece 80 camas. Hay 32 camas para hombres de las cuales cuatro están reservadas para veteranos. Además, existen 28 camas de mujeres con dos unidades familiares de ocho camas cada una.

Los nuevos huéspedes deben llegar entre las 2 y las 4 p.m. los lunes, martes y jueves y los fines de semana de 6 a 8 p.m. El acceso a las instalaciones del refugio por la noche cierra a las 10 p.m.

Para obtener información adicional llame al 706-543-5350.

Project Safe

El refugio de emergencia de "Project Safe" atiende a cualquier persona que experimente violencia doméstica. El refugio ofrece 22 camas, que incluyen cuatro espacios familiares y seis habitaciones individuales.

Para acceder al refugio, las personas pueden llamar a la línea directa al 706-543-3331 y hablar con un defensor. "Project Safe" también ofrece servicios bilingües para hispano-hablantes.

Centro de servicios de día para personas sin hogar

Este refugio es un recurso diurno abierto al público de lunes a viernes, de 10 a.m. a 4:30 p.m. El centro permite a las personas recibir correo y mensajes, acceder a instalaciones de lavandería y duchas y utilizar teléfonos. El personal brinda gestión de casos y apoyo en torno a cuestiones relacionadas con las personas sin hogar, además de brindar asistencia directa a los apoyos de vivienda disponibles.

Para obtener información adicional llame al 706-354-1154

Thursday Crossword - Answer Online FRIDAY Jan. 24

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52					53					54		
55					56					57		

ACROSS

- Subway alternative
- Klutzes
- Things that go ____ in the night
- Tumult
- Woodwind
- Calculus calculation
- N.Y.C. sports venue
- Fly, e.g.
- Approximate
- Wind surges
- Isn't quite perpendicular
- Cinderella's soiree
- Factions
- Athens attractions
- Don't keep up
- Bow wood
- Busy
- Mariachi band instrument
- Fido's greeting?
- Variety
- Scottish ponds
- 2004 Jude Law role

- Buy stuff
- Abalone production
- Unwelcome forecast
- Egg cell
- Rush job notation
- Diamonds
- Ran
- Honor, in a way
- Peck at
- Blown away
- Certain surgeon's "pa-tient"
- Mail place (abbr.)

DOWN

- Engine part
- Billboard messages
- Confusing
- Cry over spilled milk
- Looks out for, maybe
- Paleontologist's pursuit
- Get firm
- Deadly poisons
- Fertilizer ingredient

- Suggest
- Course guidelines?
- Skeleton component
- By-the-book
- Forehead
- Surrounding glow
- Aswan or Hoover
- Token taker
- America's Cup activity
- Audio effect
- Stinger
- Holiday help
- Kate in "Titanic"
- Mug
- Holding one's piece
- Make happy
- "____ chance!"
- Declare
- Fix
- Fencing category
- Fore's counterpart
- Mushroom topper
- "I" problem

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Dynamic duo

Cécile Canqueteau-Landi and Ryan Roberts look to season ahead for Georgia gymnastics

Caroline Batson

The start of the 2025 season for Georgia gymnastics has been like no other – a completely new team atmosphere, a sold-out home opener with Simone Biles in attendance and Cécile Canqueteau-Landi and Ryan Roberts in their first season as co-head coaches – an uncommon occurrence in college gymnastics.

“While it may seem a little bit unorthodox, this is the typical elite club kind of dynamic,” Roberts said. “But we feel it is the best model for this team.”

“We balance each other really well,” Canqueteau-Landi said. “We’re different people with the same goal.”

A Hall of Fame U.S.A. Gymnastics coach, Canqueteau-Landi led the U.S. to a team finals gold medal at the 2024 Paris Olympic Games. Alongside her husband, she has been a personal coach to Biles and Jordan Chiles, assisting Biles to six Olympic medals.

Although this is Roberts’ first season as a co-head coach, it is not his first with Georgia gymnastics. After four years of coaching at Alabama, Roberts arrived in Athens as an assistant coach and helped improve the bars group in ranking by 10 spots. Last year, Roberts coached Lily Smith to four All-American Honors and SEC Freshman of the Year.

Prior to her start at Georgia, Canqueteau-Landi worked alongside Roberts at World Olympic Gymnastics Academy in Frisco, Texas, for club gymnastics.

Now, working together at Georgia, they hope to restructure the program alongside assistant coaches Oleksii Koltakov and Marissa King.

While it can be common in college to have different staff members specializing in different events, Roberts explained that Georgia’s structure is an “athlete-centric mentality,” meaning every coach is involved in every event.

“We balance each other really well. We’re different people with the same goal.”

CÉCILE CANQUETEAU-LANDI | CO-HEAD GYMNASTICS COACH

“If you have a breakdown in technique in one area, most likely that’s going to apply everywhere,” Roberts said. “So it’s really important for all of our staff to know the athletes on every event.”

“It’s just a really good environment,” sophomore Ady Wahl said. “I’ve been able to grow so much as a gymnast just by how much support I feel by all of the coaches. They work very well together. Ryan and Cécile balance each other out, and then Oleksii and Marissa balance each other out.”

Going into a new season, the legacy of head coach Suzanne Yoculan remains in mind. With five straight national championship titles from 2005-2009 and 10 NCAA total titles in her time with the Bulldogs, Yoculan’s success is an inspiration to the current team, who debuted a new motto: “Together We Are.”

“We want to get back out there and have our own banner, for sure,” Canqueteau-Landi said.



Co-head coach Ryan Roberts coaches during the UGA vs. Boise State gymnastics meet at Stegman Coliseum in Athens, Georgia, on Friday, Jan. 17, 2025. Georgia won 196.825-193.600. PHOTO/LANEY MARTIN



Georgia junior Nicole King performs on the floor during the UGA vs. Boise State gymnastics meet at Stegman Coliseum in Athens, Georgia, on Friday, Jan. 17, 2025. Georgia won 196.825-193.600. PHOTO/LANEY MARTIN



The Georgia gymnastics team cheers during the UGA vs. Boise State gymnastics meet at Stegman Coliseum in Athens, Georgia, on Friday, Jan. 17, 2025. Georgia won 196.825-193.600. PHOTO/LANEY MARTIN



Olympian Simone Biles “calls the Dawgs” during the UGA vs. Boise State gymnastics meet at Stegman Coliseum in Athens, Georgia, on Friday, Jan. 17, 2025. Georgia won 196.825-193.600. PHOTO/LANEY MARTIN



Georgia sophomore Lily Smith performs on the beam during the UGA vs. Boise State gymnastics meet at Stegman Coliseum in Athens, Georgia, on Friday, Jan. 17, 2025. Georgia won 196.825-193.600. PHOTO/LANEY MARTIN

Historic on the hardwood

Georgia men’s basketball off to its best start since 1930

Bo Underwood

Herbert Hoover was president the last time the Georgia men’s basketball team got off to a start like this.

When the Bulldogs beat South Carolina State in their final non-conference game of this year’s regular season, they secured their first 12-1 start since 1930-31. They didn’t stop making program history there.

Third-year head coach Mike White’s Bulldogs rebounded from an SEC-opener loss to Ole Miss by beating consecutive top-20 teams for the first time since 2007. Georgia stunned No. 6 Kentucky in front of a raucous Stegeman Coliseum crowd, and followed it up with another home win over No. 17 Oklahoma.

“We couldn’t have done it without the crowd,” freshman forward Asa Newell said, after the Oklahoma game. “They’re always there for us. Creating a home court advantage is something that’s super important to us as a team, and just going out there and keeping the standard up is something that we need to do every time we take home court.”

Newell has been a revelation for the Bulldogs. He’s looked every bit like the potential NBA lottery pick he was advertised as when he joined his brother, red-shirt sophomore forward Jaden Newell in Athens. Asa Newell leads the Bulldogs in points and rebounds per game, and averages just over one steal and block apiece. He’s flashed scoring skills beyond his years and has a nonstop defensive motor to go with it.

Fellow freshman Somto Cyril has been a monumen-



tal addition to Georgia’s interior defense, currently averaging a team-high of two blocks per game. He’s already had five games this season with at least four rejections.

But it’s not just the youth taking over. Transfer swingman RJ Godfrey has been a steady presence all year, while Tyrin Lawrence and De’Shayne Montgomery brought some needed experience to the backcourt out of the portal. So has Dakota Leffew, who is second on the team in scoring. The Bulldogs have also gotten some solid defensive minutes from Appalachian State transfer Justin Abson.

And then there’s Silas Demary Jr. – he was arguably the most interesting player on Georgia’s roster last year as a freshman, with defensive instincts and playmaking standing out on a team that arguably wasn’t all that competitive in the SEC. Demary plays the game with a fire not seen in every college basketball player. This year, he’s been on a different level.

Demary is Georgia’s lead ball handler on offense and the most important perimeter player on defense. He’s become one of Georgia’s most vocal leaders on both ends of the floor and is, in many ways, the heart

and soul of the team.

“A lot of stuff that he brings to this team and this program right now — and I hope he continues to grow in his role — does not show up on the box score that we’re looking at right now,” White said. “His leadership in huddles, the impactful things he’s saying in timeouts, the way he carries himself ... He’s got an ability to affect the game in a big way without scoring, but he also can score.”

Georgia couldn’t pick up a road win at Tennessee on Wednesday, Jan. 15, falling to the Volunteers 70-68. That loss, combined with Georgia’s lopsided 75-28 combined free throw attempt margin in its two top-25 wins, has led some to doubt whether or not this team’s early success is to be taken seriously.

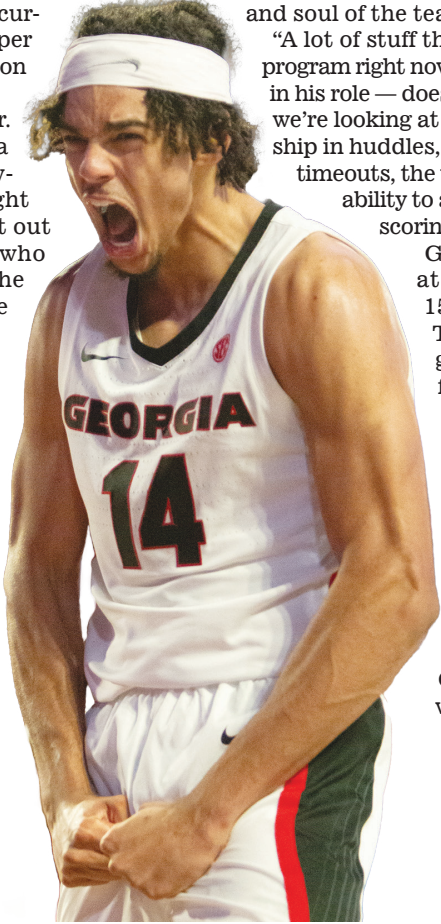
But for the Bulldogs, it’s just more motivation to prove people wrong.

“Since we’ve been here at Georgia, we’ve had outside noise like, ‘Why are you at Georgia? Georgia is not good at basketball, whatever,’” Cyril said. “We’ve been working for success since June. I know these guys like my brothers.”

The Bulldogs have a tough stretch of SEC games ahead, including No. 5 Florida – a true, deciding factor of this team’s legitimacy.



Georgia forward Justin Abson (25) and Georgia forward Asa Newell (14) walk off the court at halftime during a men’s NCAA basketball game against Notre Dame at Stegeman Coliseum in Athens, Georgia, on Tuesday, Dec. 3, 2024. Georgia won 69-48. PHOTO/MADY MERTENS





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CROWNING MISS UGA

‘The best title in the state of Georgia’

Ella Ryann Cottrell is crowned Miss University of Georgia during the 2025 Miss University of Georgia Pageant on Saturday, Jan. 18, 2025, at the Fine Arts Theatre on UGA's campus in Athens, Georgia. The Miss UGA Pageant is an official Miss America Preliminary that has been held at UGA for over 100 years. PHOTO/MERIELLE GATLIN



Members of Drexel Jhalak perform during the University of Georgia Indian Cultural Exchange's UGA India Night at the Classic Center in Athens, Georgia, on Saturday, Feb. 3, 2024. UGA India Night is an annual Bollywood-fusion dance competition. PHOTO/LANEY MARTIN



The Cottage presents "The Vagina Monologues" at the Marigold Auditorium for Arts and Culture in Winterville, Georgia, on Thursday, Feb. 15, 2024. All proceeds benefit The Cottage in providing free services to survivors of sexual violence and child abuse. PHOTO/NAVYA SHUKLA

Upcoming Events

1. Parker McCollum

WHAT: Country singer Parker McCollum will perform at the Akins Ford Arena at The Classic Center as a stop on his "What Kinda Man Tour 2025." One dollar of every ticket sold will be donated to The Ruger Fund.

WHEN: Thursday, Jan. 23 at 7:30 p.m.

WHERE: Akins Ford Arena

PRICE: \$26+

4. Ballet tour

WHAT: The American Ballet Theatre Studio Company will come to Athens as part of its seven-city spring tour. The diverse program will consist of two original ABT Studio Company commissions, as well as classical and neoclassical favorites, including "Human" by Yannick Lebrun, "Tarantella" by George Balanchine and more.

WHEN: Friday, Jan. 31 at 7:30 p.m. and Saturday, Feb. 1 at 2 p.m.

WHERE: University of Georgia Performing Arts Center

PRICE: \$42+

7. Athens Wine Weekend

WHAT: The Classic Center will present Athens Wine Weekend. The weekend will kick off with an Amuse-Bouche event on Friday, Feb. 7 with sampling from chefs around Athens, followed by a Gourmet Dinner, wine tasting classes and a Grand Tasting on Saturday and a Sparkling Wine Brunch on Sunday with mimosas and a buffet.

WHEN: Friday, Feb. 7 through Sunday, Feb. 9

WHERE: The Classic Center

PRICE: \$15+

2. Blues Fest

WHAT: The Classic City Entertainment Group will present the first annual Classic City Blues Fest, a Southern soul concert featuring artists including Tucka, Sir Charles, West Love and more. VIP tickets including after-party access are also available for purchase. A portion of proceeds will go towards CCEG community efforts and scholarship opportunities.

WHEN: Saturday, Jan. 25 at 7 p.m.

WHERE: The Classic Center Theatre

PRICE: \$60+

5. Live Wire 10th anniversary

WHAT: Live Wire Athens will host a 10th anniversary celebration, headlined by The Grateful Brothers and featuring a performance by F.O.R., a band consisting of Neal Fountain, Erik Olson and Jeff Reilly. Don Carne will also be serving tacos at the event.

WHEN: Saturday, Feb. 1, doors open at 7 p.m., event begins at 8 p.m.

WHERE: Live Wire Athens

PRICE: \$20+

8. Valentine's Day market

WHAT: The Athens Farmers Market will present "Handmade with Love," a Valentine's Day spin on its weekly Saturday market at Bishop Park. Patrons can shop from local artists for Valentine's Day gifts and one-of-a-kind creations.

WHEN: Saturday, Feb. 8 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

WHERE: Bishop Park

PRICE: Free

3. Tom Segura

WHAT: Comedian, actor and writer Tom Segura will make his Athens debut with a live performance of his show "Come Together" at Akins Ford Arena. A portion of the proceeds from Platinum ticket sales will be donated to the World Central Kitchen, a nonprofit dedicated to providing meals in the wake of natural disasters.

WHEN: Thursday, Jan. 30 at 7:30 p.m.

WHERE: Akins Ford Arena

PRICE: \$31+

6. The Vagina Monologues

WHAT: The Cottage Sexual Assault Center and Children's Advocacy Center will host its third production of "The Vagina Monologues." The play – originally by V, formerly Eve Ensler – explores themes of sexuality, reproduction and sexual violence. All proceeds will benefit The Cottage in providing free services to survivors of sexual violence and child abuse.

WHEN: Thursday, Feb. 6 through Saturday, Feb. 8 at 8 p.m.

WHERE: Marigold Auditorium for Arts and Culture

PRICE: \$16+

9. UGA India Night

WHAT: The UGA Indian Cultural Exchange will present its 31st UGA India Night, a Bollywood-fusion dance competition bringing together teams from across the country to put on performances that have been months in the making.

WHEN: Saturday, Feb. 8 at 6 p.m.

WHERE: The Classic Center

PRICE: \$22+

Navya Shukla



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Ella Ryann Cottrell is crowned Miss University of Georgia during the 2025 Miss University of Georgia Pageant on Saturday, Jan. 18, 2025, at the Fine Arts Theatre on UGA's campus in Athens, Georgia. The Miss UGA Pageant is an official Miss America Preliminary that has been held at UGA for over 100 years. PHOTO/MERRIELLE GATLIN

Spotlight on scholarship and service

A look at the 64th annual Miss University of Georgia Pageant

Caroline Newbern

Saturday night on the Fine Arts Theatre stage. 16 women in vibrant evening gowns. One title: Miss University of Georgia 2025.

The Miss University of Georgia Pageant, a franchise of Miss America and an annual over 100-year-old tradition, was held on Saturday, Jan. 18. 16 UGA women competed for the 64th Miss UGA title, with only one walking away with the glittering crown.

Contestants range from first-timers to experienced pageant competitors, and undergraduate to graduate students ages 18 to 27.

Why pageantry?

Ella Ryann Cottrell, a sophomore studying regenerative bioscience from Madison, Georgia, had never competed in a pageant before. Cottrell noticed an advertisement for the Miss UGA Pageant on one of the campus buses.

"I've always wanted to do a pageant when I was growing up, but just never did," Cottrell said. "I thought it'd be fun to be around other girls my age, and we kind of have the same goals."

SCORING

30% private interview, 20% health and fitness, 20% evening gown, 20% talent, 10% on-stage conversation

As the co-volunteer coordinator for the UGA American Medical Student Association, a shift leader for Campus Kitchen at UGA, a member of the UGA Pre-Dental Society and a volunteer with Extra Special People, Cottrell sought connections with like-minded, ambitious women.

Maliyah Howell, a master's student studying business analytics from Thomaston, Georgia, competed in the pageant for her fourth time. Howell was also drawn by the prospect of meeting like-minded women, as well as the scholarship aspect.

"I think the most incredible part about the pageant is getting to earn scholarship money," Howell said. "Also, again, to meet so many like-minded women across the state and across the UGA community as well, and just being able to advocate for something that we're really passionate about."

Jerry Anthony, the external affairs coordinator for UGA Engagement, Leadership and Service, has been the director of the Miss UGA Pageant since 1993.

"We try real hard to emphasize that it's not a beauty pageant, it's a scholarship competition," Anthony said.

Miss UGA receives a \$1,000 scholarship, while the first runner-up receives \$500. Before the competition and during intermission, the audience also plays a role in determining a scholarship award: the People's Choice Award. Each dollar with one vote, the total raised going to a scholarship

awarded to the contestant with the most votes.

Each year's Miss UGA also goes on to compete in the Miss Georgia pageant in June with the chance to win \$20,000 to \$25,000 in scholarship money. The Miss Georgia winner then competes at the Miss America level for a prize of at least \$50,000 in scholarship money.

Not just a beauty pageant

Ahead of the competition, contestants submit a fact sheet — similar to a resume — and choose a Community Service Initiative, allowing judges to familiarize themselves with the Miss UGA candidates. The winning contestant then continues on with their CSI over the course of the year, Anthony said.

Cottrell's CSI is called Nourish Athens. Inspired by her involvement with the Campus Kitchen at UGA, Cottrell aims to work with surrounding middle and high schools to conduct nutrition-based educational and cooking classes.

"I just think starting with the cornerstone of our future, the youth, and teaching them how to do these things and budget and meal plan like that, I think it could be really beneficial to combat some of the things that we're seeing so prevalently in healthcare today," Cottrell said.

Howell's CSI is Steamminded Georgia, promoting the importance of STEAM education, which focuses on science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics, in schools across the community. She aspires to be a role model to young girls.

"You can be both a woman that wears a crown and also a woman in STEAM," Howell said.

In addition to being asked about their CSI during on-stage conversation, contestants are asked about it in more detail during a private interview.

"The interview counts the most, and then the auditors tabulate the scores, and the person with the highest score is the winner," Anthony said.

To form a contestant's score, the private interview counts for 30%, on-stage conversation counts for 10%, and the talent, health and fitness, and evening gown categories each count for 20%. The judges score each contestant on a scale of one to 10 in these phases of the competition.

Following the private interview before the official pageant starts, contestants moved to the UGA Fine Arts Theatre, taking center stage at 7 p.m.

Carson Hand, a graduate of UGA, and Osjha Anderson Domenicone, who was Miss UGA 1999 and Miss Georgia 1999, emceed the evening.

As part of the program, Miss UGA 2024, Carson Bridges, also returned to campus to crown Miss UGA 2025. Bridges, now pursuing her master's in occupational therapy at Brenau University, considered winning Miss UGA 2024 her "victory."

"I would not be where I am without the Miss University of Georgia organization, or without the Miss Georgia organization," Bridges said.

Bridges credits both organizations with providing her the interview skills to attain her present ownership of Legacy Performing Arts dance studio in Commerce, Georgia.

Crowning the 64th Miss UGA

After an opening number performance, contestants divided into a red group and a black group to complete the various phases of the competition, each with a unique outfit to match.

All 16 women answered an on-stage question related to their CSI. The red group performed their talents while the black group engaged in the health and fitness competition, switching categories following intermission.

During the talent portion of the night, contestants presented no more than 90 seconds of a chosen skill, ranging from vocal and musical performance to dance and monologue.



Maliyah Howell at the 2025 Miss UGA Pageant on Saturday, Jan. 18, 2025, at the Fine Arts Theatre on UGA's campus in Athens, Georgia. The Miss UGA Pageant is an official Miss America Preliminary and has been held at UGA for over 100 years. PHOTO/MERRIELLE GATLIN

In honor of Miss America's partnership with the American Heart Association and Rebel Athletics, contestants wore red athletic attire for the health and fitness portion of the pageant. The American Heart Association and Rebel Athletics also provide funding toward scholarships.

The evening wear competition allowed the women to walk the stage in a gown of their choice.

"Once you get to college, there's not a lot of opportunities for you to dress up like prom and stuff anymore, so it is fun to get dolled up and go across the stage," Cottrell said.

Following Bridges' farewell remarks and final walk as Miss University of Georgia, the contestants had a final walk across the stage before forming a semicircle to begin the award ceremony.

Aiyana Ekins, a master's student studying music therapy, won the Floreida Harrell Miss Congeniality Award. Cottrell won the People's Choice award. Landon Knight, an undergraduate student studying journalism, won the Interview Award.

Isabella Fiorentino, a master's student studying geography, won fourth runner-up. Taryn Hooks, an undergraduate student studying international business and management, won third runner-up. Kira Doppel, an undergraduate student studying journalism and sports media, won second-runner up. Knight won first-runner up and the \$500 scholarship.

12 girls, including Cottrell, remained in the semicircle. The anticipation was palpable.

Cottrell's friends and family had been surprised by her decision to try her hand at Miss UGA, and Cottrell said she had agreed with them, considering herself to come off as more "stoic," and "not as bubbly" as a typical pageant girl. Yet, she thought of what winning would mean to her.

"I'm doing something out of my comfort zone and actually succeeded in that," Cottrell said. "I think it would be like a personal achievement for me too, just because it's not something I would have seen myself doing, especially winning."

Cottrell certainly succeeded: the pageant concluded with Bridges crowning her as Miss University of Georgia 2025.

"There is always a saying within the Miss Georgia organization that being Miss UGA is the best title in the state of Georgia," Bridges said.



Ella Ryann Cottrell, who would be crowned Miss UGA 2025, looks at her dress for the 2025 Miss UGA Pageant at her home on Thursday, Jan. 16, 2025, in Athens, Georgia. The Miss UGA Pageant took place on Saturday, Jan. 18, 2025, and is an official Miss America Preliminary that has been held at UGA for over 100 years. PHOTO/MERRIELLE GATLIN



On Saturday, Feb. 12, 2023, the UGA Asian American Student Association held their annual Lunar New Year event at Tate Grand Hall in Athens, Georgia. PHOTO/SIDNEY CHANSAMONE

The Year of the Snake

What is Chinese New Year?

Rachel Roberts

The Chinese New Year, also known as Lunar New Year, will begin on Wednesday, Jan. 29, welcoming in the Year of the Snake. This year is set to bring wisdom, transformation and intuitive energy, and will offer opportunities for growth and change to those who celebrate, according to ChineseNewYear.net.

The Chinese New Year, or the Spring Festival, is a 15-day celebration that begins with a new moon and lasts until the following full moon, according to Britannica. The celebration marks the start of a new zodiac cycle in accordance with the Chinese Lunar calendar.

In the days and weeks leading up to the Lunar New Year, it is tradition for Chinese households to undergo significant cleaning to symbolize a process of removing any bad luck from the previous year. It is also customary for celebrating communities to begin decorating with red, the color of joy and good fortune, according to National Geographic.

On the night before the start of the New Year, families gather together to eat a symbolic reunion dinner to bring good fortune for the year. Some common dishes include noodles, which symbolize a long and healthy life; whole fish, which represent abundance; and dumplings, which represent wealth and prosperity, according to History.com. During the beginning days of the New Year celebration, younger family members are often given money in red envelopes, known as “hong bao” in Mandarin or “lai see” in Cantonese, according to National Geographic.

Throughout the two-week celebration period, there are many festivities, including parties, parades, firecrackers and dinners with family members. While the celebration is generally lively, there are also somber moments throughout the weeks. On the

third day of the Chinese New Year, it is considered bad luck to see friends and family, according to National Geographic. Rather, this is a day meant for honoring deceased relatives by visiting temples, pausing for moments of reflection or making offerings, according to ChineseNewYear.net.

The final day of the Chinese New Year, which will fall on Wednesday, Feb. 12, will be celebrated with the Lantern Festival. Celebrants will hang glowing lanterns in temples or carry them in nighttime parades as they usher in a hopeful and prosperous year, according to ChineseNewYear.net. The dragon, a symbol of good fortune in Chinese culture, will often perform in festival celebrations across many Chinese communities, according to Britannica.

The Lunar New Year is celebrated in communities across the world, including Vietnam, Korea, Singapore and more according to National Geographic. However, it will also be observed locally. To celebrate in Athens, children are invited to attend the Lunar New Year Crafternoon on Wednesday, Jan. 29, from 3-5 p.m. at the Athens-Clarke County Library.

The Chinese American Student Association at the University of Georgia will also partner with the UGA Chinese Students and Scholars Association to host the annual Spring Festival Gala to celebrate the Chinese New Year. The event will be on Saturday, Feb. 1, from 6:30-8:30 p.m. in the Memorial Hall Ballroom, featuring a night of performances for the Year of the Snake.

The Asian American Student Association at UGA will celebrate their annual Lunar New Year Festival on Saturday, Feb. 8, at 7 p.m. in the Tate Grand Hall. The festival will include performances showcasing the beauty and talent of the Asian community and a skit illustrating the importance of love. The theme for this year’s festival is “Hearts in Harmony,” inspired by the Chinese story “Legend of the White Snake.”



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Culinary ‘stamp’ on the Classic City

Athens Cooks brings quality kitchenware and food to Athens

Katie Jarrard

Courtney Nelson and Grady Thrasher, co-owners of Athens Cooks, first crossed paths in their previous teaching careers.

During their time teaching, Thrasher asked Nelson, “If you could do anything, what would you do?”

Nelson’s response was “to own a kitchen store.”

With a passion for quality kitchenware and food, Nelson wanted to create a space that offered kitchen products, while helping people connect with cooking. In December 2022, she opened Athens Cooks to fill a gap in the Athens community.

Athens Cooks sells products from around the world and works to “educate people about food and everything to do with the kitchen and community,” according to Thrasher. The store offers cooking classes throughout the year to fulfill this mission.

“We like nothing more than when this place is busy and alive and full of people who are having a good time,” Thrasher said.

Megan Bearden, the executive chef for Athens Cooks, is new to the team and will instruct most of the classes, alongside occasional guest chefs.

“There is going to be a very dynamic set of classes, especially with Megan joining our team,” Nelson said. “She is really well-versed in pastry, but she also knows savory.”

Athens Cooks typically offers 10 to 12 classes per month, including one or two pasta classes, a sushi class, a pastry class and a wine education class. Its offerings also “span the globe,” with additional classes ranging from making empanadas to exploring Korean and Ethiopian cuisines.

“We really try to bring in things that people don’t know how to do, that they may want to learn about, but they just don’t have the family history to know how to make,” Thrasher said.

Hazel Altizer, a sophomore intended public relations student at the University of Georgia, attended an Athens Cooks class in October 2024.

“We made sushi, and I loved it,” Altizer said. “It was so fun and delicious.”

Altizer said she enjoyed learning how to roll the sushi, as it was a new and challenging experience.

Bearden said she loves experimenting with new cake creations and always looking for fresh, unique ideas. She said Athens Cooks is currently focused on discovering what kind of desserts the community wants and what the store’s



Megan Bearden poses for a portrait in the Athens Cooks kitchen on Saturday, Jan. 18, 2025, in Athens, Georgia. Bearden has been the executive chef of Athens Cooks since November 2024. PHOTO/ASHTIN BARKER

“stamp on the city” will be.

“We don’t want to try and be anyone else,” Bearden said. “We just want to be uniquely us.”

The Rolling Pin, a kitchen store formerly located on Alps Road that closed about 10 years ago, provided kitchenware and cooking classes for the community. Since Athens Cooks’ opening, Thrasher said they have had a lot of “old-time Athenians” come into the store, thankful that they offer a similar experience.

“I feel like we are filling a void where people who are passionate about cooking can kind of come back to a home base,” Thrasher said.

Nelson rigorously researches the quality and ingredients of all food and products that enter the store. She wants to make sure that she is “always on more of the cutting edge of everything.”

“I think we offer a service that [people] can come in here

and buy anything and know that it’s going to work well, that it’s going to have safe ingredients and that you know that I have researched it,” Nelson said.

At Athens Cooks, patrons can also meet others from the community with whom they might not usually cross paths. According to Nelson, the large central table intentionally encourages everyone to come together as one, both during classes and on a daily basis.

The store’s upcoming goals in the new year include expanding pastry offerings, adding wedding and graduation registries and having cooking classes for younger children.

Nelson said they feel “privileged” to be part of the community, and that they value the connections, memories and experiences that Athens Cooks’ food and services create.

“The community you create goes so much further than just sharing a meal,” Nelson said. “I think food is so much more intentional and sharing a meal together creates memories.”

REVIEWS

Want to try something new?

The Red & Black offers a few local recommendations



The Matcha Mojito from Puma Yu’s in Athens, Georgia. PHOTO/MAKENNA REAVIS



A sample tray with oxtail, curry chicken and macaroni and cheese from 316 Caribbean Cuisine in Athens, Georgia. PHOTO/PAOLA MAGALLANES



Mocktails from Osteria Olio in Athens, Georgia. From left to right: Liberoni, Flower Child, Pack Mule, Lucky Luciano, Booster Shot. PHOTO/PRIDE HAGGERTY



Anticuchos at Paltas Latin Kitchen in Athens, Georgia. PHOTO/KATIE JARRARD

‘Matcha Mojito’

A taste of Puma Yu’s mocktail menu

Puma Yu’s is known for its inventive cocktails and small plate Thai food. Within its rotating selection of cocktails, Puma Yu’s also offers a lineup of mocktails. Currently, the mocktail menu features six different options in a variety of flavor profiles, from the coffee and orange of “Faux Spro,” to the blood orange and hibiscus of “Super Sour.” During my visit, I sampled the “Matcha Mojito,” which is crafted with matcha, nori tea, mint, citrus cordial and lime.

Mint and lime are the highlights of the drink, mirroring the makeup of a typical mojito. The muddled mint grows in strength as you drink, making this an ideal mocktail for sipping. The matcha and nori, while subtle, cleanly balance the tangy bite of the citrus. An aromatic mint garnish is included in the glass, which enhances the overall look and flavor of the drink.

The ambience at the restaurant was cozier than I had expected, which added a warm, welcoming presence to my experience that I greatly enjoyed. Puma Yu’s atmosphere could match the mood of both a romantic date and a night out with friends.

A unique element to the “Matcha Mojito” is its zero-waste citrus cordial, which is created using the leftover citrus peels from fruits used for other drinks at Puma Yu’s.

The aromatic, refreshing sensation of the “Matcha Mojito” mocktail, combined with its eye-catching presentation and low-waste element, makes it a unique, light experience. With a stronger presence from the matcha to live up to its namesake, this drink would reach perfection.

- Makenna Reavis

Jamaican-made

Trying 316 Caribbean Cuisine

To me, 316 Caribbean Cuisine offers some of the best chicken in Athens. With chefs who hail from Jamaica, the restaurant offers a welcome variety of traditional Caribbean proteins, side dishes and drinks.

316 Caribbean Cuisine is located inside the Georgia Square Mall Food Court. The mall is empty and lies near Atlanta Highway; however, when I visited, this busy shop had a line of customers. I sampled a tray of the restaurant’s top picks, including oxtail, curry chicken and mac and cheese.

Before this, I hadn’t tried oxtail. Now, I understand why it is so beloved; the tender oxtail meat perfectly absorbed the seasoned glaze. I urge you to order a fruit juice if you try the spicy sauce. 316 Caribbean Cuisine offers a variety of fruit beverages, which I found soothing between each savory bite.

The chicken was very tender. The red beans and rice, which added a rich factor to the meal, were served with heaping portions of meats and plantains.

Lastly, I tried the mac and cheese, one of the restaurant’s numerous side dish offerings. The aromatic seasoning within the bake added a pleasant twist. Although I enjoyed the texture of the thick noodles, the amount of cheese made the dish a touch too greasy. Since the meal itself was dense and filling, I hoped that the side of cabbage would tone down the richness of the chicken, but the cabbage vegetable mix was greasy and not as refreshing as I hoped.

Overall, 316 Caribbean Cuisine’s powerful flavors and welcoming staff overcame the mall’s underwhelming appearance.

- Paola Magallanes

The ‘Pack Mule’

Osteria Olio’s take on Dry January

Osteria Olio has launched “Aperitivo Sobrio,” a mocktail-focused version of Aperitivo hour, an Italian tradition of enjoying a drink and light snacks before dinner. The menu is available Wednesday through Saturday from 3-6 p.m. throughout January and features alcohol-free beverages.

The drinks offered range from the spritz-style “Lucky Luciano” to the “Liberoni,” a spirit-free Negroni.

Complimentary small plates featuring roasted chickpeas, chunked parmesan, focaccia and warm olives are served alongside the mocktails, creating a complete dining experience.

Among the drinks created in-house, the “Pack Mule” stands out for its taste and one-of-a-kind approach to a classic mocktail, combining house-made ginger syrup, freshly squeezed lemon and lime juice, club soda and apple butter. The apple butter includes soft apple chunks that give it texture and deliver hints of spice and sweetness. If you appreciate a little texture in your drinks, this is a great choice.

Unlike traditional mule cocktails that typically use ginger beer, the “Pack Mule” uses ginger syrup and club soda instead, resulting in a smoother, less overpowering ginger flavor which I found particularly enjoyable.

For those exploring Dry January or looking for a unique mocktail experience, the “Pack Mule” and the range of Osteria Olio’s intricately crafted mocktails are definitely worth trying.

- Pride Haggerty

Paltas pop-up

Peruvian-owned Latin kitchen

On Friday, Jan. 17, I stopped by Authentic Brewing Company to visit Paltas Latin Kitchen, a Peruvian-family-owned pop-up restaurant that specializes in emblematic plates highlighting a variety of Latin American cuisines. The event-only pop-up can be found at a variety of breweries, festivals, markets and other local events.

On the night that I visited, Paltas offered anticuchos, Peruvian beef stew, papa rellena and more. I decided to try the anticuchos and pollada, finishing the meal with the “Paltas Key Lime Pie.”

The first dish I tried was the anticuchos, served with a fresh salad of Peruvian corn, cilantro and tomatoes. The grilled skewers of meat were tender, and the salad contrasted the savory flavors. Alongside the anticuchos was a side of grilled potatoes, lightly seasoned with a mild spice, making for a straightforward and satisfying plate.

Next up was the pollada, which featured grilled chicken with crisp lettuce, fresh tomatoes and a house dressing that added a tangy kick. The potatoes were seasoned with a distinctive blend of spices, offering a flavorful complement to the chicken.

“Paltas Key Lime Pie,” named in honor of a family recipe, was a standout dessert, with the perfect balance of tart and sweet. Each bite was smooth, creamy and indulgent, offering a delightful contrast of flavors that lingered just right.

I will definitely visit Paltas Latin Kitchen’s next pop-up. Its authentic dishes and vibrant atmosphere offer a true taste of Latin America, and I highly recommend it for anyone craving fresh, flavorful food.

- Katie Jarrard



Scenes from All Elite Wrestling's Collision event



All Elite Wrestling (AEW) brought its Collision wrestling event to Akins Ford Arena in Athens, Georgia, on Saturday, Jan. 11, 2025. Attendees cheered on their favorite wrestlers as they chopped, slammed, flipped, suplexed, choked and grappled around the ring. The event was nationally televised on TNT. PHOTO CREDIT: ETHAN GREENE (1,2,4,5,8), FOREST X. DYNES (3,6,7)

Highlights from a rare snow day on UGA's campus



University of Georgia students explored a snow-covered campus, enjoying sledding, snowball fights and making snowmen on Friday, Jan. 10, 2025. UGA closed campus and canceled in-person classes ahead of the winter storm in Athens, Georgia. PHOTO CREDIT: FOREST X. DYNES (1, 4, 7), ETHAN GREENE (2, 3), LILY KATE AKINS (5, 6, 8)



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