

# The Patriot

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Francis Marion University's award-winning student newspaper

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## Out with the old; in with the new Students burn 2020 paraphernalia

Finn Millions  
Copy Editor

The Student Government Association (SGA) sponsored an event called “Light the Way,” in which the FMU community could gather around a bonfire and throw physical mementos of 2020 into the bonfire to release the negative energy.

Tymoshio “Ty” Robinson, president of SGA, helped create and advertise the event.

“The premise of the event was to be inspirational, to kind of give people hope,” Robinson said. “2020 was rough, I’m going to be honest, for all of us. We wanted something that would give students, faculty and staff the medium to forget all of the trials or tough points of 2020.”

The purpose of the event was to promote a symbolic transition from the year of 2020 into the new year of 2021—a year everyone desperately wants to be better.

The Young, Gifted and Blessed (YGB) Gospel Choir, the FMU Choir and Bishop Donald Jackson brought songs and words of inspiration and wisdom.

Jackson, from the Fellowship of Christians Movement (FCM), presented a sermon to emphasize the symbolism of the bonfire and the meaning behind the



PHOTO BY ELODI BREG

Students burn journals, calendars and other mementos from 2020 in a bonfire outside the UC.

practice. “This is what I want to encourage you today—to create optimism,” Jackson said. “Because with the help of God Almighty and your perseverance, you will make it.”

Jackson believes that faith and community will allow people to create a smooth transition between 2020 and 2021. He said not to focus on the past, but instead look toward the future and the opportunities it holds.

“We do not want to bring the negativity of 2020 into 2021,” Jackson said. “As we go into 2021, I know that it is different because of the pandemic; nevertheless, we can make it. Let us continue to pull together as we stay apart.”

Robinson also said the addition of the sermon and the choir enhanced the experience of bringing in a new year.

“Sure, the bonfire was great—giving people an

opportunity to burn those symbolic, physical manifestations of 2020 was great,” Robinson said. “But bringing in the choirs and Bishop Jackson was kind of the cherry on top in giving those amazing words of inspiration which gave us more of an ‘oomph,’ and helped commemorate the new year and help light the way for 2021.”

For some students, such as sophomore nursing major Amy McKenzie, the bonfire was a perfect, symbolic way

to move on from the past.

“It was pretty cool,” McKenzie said. “Even burning something as simple as a planner. It was a way to get rid of some of that energy.”

For others, it was simply a way to go and socialize safely with friends. Ashaunti Rucker, a junior nursing major, already has limited free time, and COVID-19 makes it difficult to go and socialize during the time she does have.

“This was my first social

bonfire, so I kind of wanted to see how it was,” Rucker said. “I think it was cool.”

COVID-19 is one of the biggest tethers to the negative energy of 2020. Unfortunately, people were unable to throw the pandemic into the fire; however, while the bonfire was symbolic of an energetic transition, it also was a symbol of how working together while following COVID-19 protocol was feasible and could still be fun.

“Even though it wasn’t a huge event, everyone who was there was able to be there because we made it through 2020—and we did so by working collectively to follow the guidelines,” Robinson said.

SGA wants students to be able to enjoy the community and events, but they also prioritize safety. It is more than possible to have a better, fun and active semester—it will simply take proper planning and cooperation.

“In order to light the way for 2021, it is important to follow those same guidelines so that we don’t repeat and don’t fall into the same dark abyss of 2020,” Robinson said. “It’s important for us to all work together to make sure we’re still successful this semester.”

## FMU adds pause days Athletics in 2021

Lesley Willard  
Staff Writer

FMU will replace spring break with a series of “Patriot Pause Days” for the Spring 2021 semester.

“We did away with spring break because of the pandemic,” Peter King, professor of biology and university provost, said. “We didn’t think it was a good idea for students to travel to distant places and then come back.”

There will be a total of four Patriot Pause Days, each taking place during different weeks throughout the semester. The first will be on Wednesday, Feb. 3, 2021, followed by a second on Tuesday, Feb. 23, 2021, and a third and fourth on Wednesday, March 17, 2021 and Thursday, April 8, 2021, respectively.

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the best way to protect yourself and others from COVID-19 is to postpone travel and stay home. This recommendation was taken into consideration when deciding whether or not the Patriot Pause Days would be a good fit for FMU.

King said that the idea to implement Patriot Pause

Days originally came from several faculty members who thought they would be a good substitution for spring break. Along with FMU, several other institutions throughout the state and country have adopted this new schedule as well.

The goal for the Patriot Pause Days is to give both students and professors the chance to slow down and reflect on what is happening in their community while also taking the necessary precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

The four-scheduled Patriot Pause Days will be treated much like Reading Day, during which the university is open, but no classes, meetings, or student events are held.

“We want people to have a personal day where they can relax, get their thoughts together, and collect themselves,” King said.

While King said that he has received no negative feedback from faculty, many students have voiced their concerns.

“I am appreciative of all of the breaks I can get this semester, but I would have rather just had one whole week off instead of a few days here and there,” Katelyn

Coker, a junior psychology major, said. “It’s really hard having to keep up with when I am supposed to be in class and when I’m not with the combination of Patriot Pause Days and hybrid classes.”

Other students commented on the change as well, calling it frustrating, among other things.

“I’m a nursing student and my clinicals fall on some of these pause days,” said Hannah Cumbie, a junior nursing major. “We still have clinicals, so we don’t really get all Pause Days.”

While King acknowledges that this change will be an adjustment for students and faculty alike, he noted that it is only temporary. As soon as COVID-19 is more controlled, the university plans to return to a normal schedule for all classes, events and breaks.

Ultimately, the decision to replace spring break with Patriot Pause Days was made in an attempt to protect the health of the students and faculty. While it may not be ideal, the purpose of the change was to avoid giving students the opportunity to travel while still allowing them personal time, and it seems as if it will do just that.

Finn Millions  
Copy Editor

Though the pandemic and all the precautions stemming from it have severely limited life on campus, it has not shut down sports for Spring 2021.

Murray Hartzler, the director of athletics, is passionate about the sports programs at FMU and wants them to be as authentic as possible.

“We want to have students attend and do it safely, and we want to have as many as possible,” Hartzler said. “The number one thing is being adaptable.”

With athletic events, the most important aspects are proper planning and adherence to regulations. The athletic department set up the gym at the Smith University Center (UC) to allow attendance to basketball games, which will carry over into other athletic events and facilities.

“What we are doing with basketball right now is preselling tickets; with baseball, softball, soccer it would be kind of the same thing,” Hartzler said. “We would put it out on social media. If you want to attend the game, you will have to come sign up to get a ticket.

There will be a limited number of tickets based on what we are allowed in each facility and based on how many season tickets we sold and how many parents will be there.”

Capacity of stadiums and gyms are a crucial detail here. The athletic department, FMU President Carter and other departments and organizations have to agree on the seating limitations and different policies. Season ticket holders and families of athletes will get first choice of tickets and what’s left over will be available to students. Students will have to go to the athletics office at UC 234.

“For baseball, softball and soccer, we will figure out the number of tickets available next week,” Hartzler said.

Though some of the athletic events will occur at the Griffin Athletic Complex at the same time, there will be no walking between events unless they are severely under capacity. Walking back and forth will be regulated in some way.

Also, the stadiums at the Griffin Athletic Complex will be filled with regulating signs and sanitizing equipment to prepare for the upcoming seasons.

“We are going to have

signs about masking and social distancing,” Hartzler said. “We have purchased ‘don’t sit here’ signs that we will put in. Along with hand sanitizers, wipes - basically, it will not look the same, but the same type of criteria will be in place.”

The events will be available through cooperation with regulations, signs and sanitation. If everyone can follow the rules and work together, the athletics dept. may grant more access to the public.

“We need them also to observe the spacing and sit in the right seats and wear the masks and do all the right things,” Hartzler said. “The more that happens, the better it is for everybody. The more smoothly everything runs, maybe—if COVID gets better—we’ll increase attendance. I want them to come, I want them to enjoy it, I want as many to attend as possible, but I want to do it safely.”

Check out the FMU athletics department on social media, the athletic website or your university email for more information on upcoming athletic events.

### News

Read about the changes made to FMU athletic events this semester.

PAGE 1

### Opinion

Read one student's opinion about representation in public schools.

PAGE 3

### Spotlight

Read about Langston Gaither, a recent transfer to FMU.

PAGE 4

### INDEX

NEWS	1-4
SPOTLIGHT	2
OPINION	3



# PROFESSOR SPOTLIGHT | George Schnibben

**Julia Fulmer**  
Staff Writer

George Schnibben, an FMU mathematics professor of 37 years, said his interest in math arose in his early 20s after a rough patch in his academic career.

Born and raised in Florence, S.C., Schnibben received his bachelor's degree in mathematics from FMU (at the time known as Francis Marion College), later acquiring his master's and a doctorate in mathematical sciences from Clemson University.

Though Schnibben is highly recognized for his proficiency in mathematics and teaching, the road he traveled to become a professor was anything but a straight path.

"I failed algebra 2 in high school, and my teacher told my mother I would never do well at math," Schnibben said. "I wish I had learned the importance of being able to study more then."

Schnibben pointed to the wall of his office where a framed letter of dismissal from Francis Marion College hung. He said he originally attended FMU as a business administration student, hoping that what



PHOTO BY JULIA FULMER

George Schnibben restored his legacy at FMU after facing adversity as a student.

he learned would help him manage his family's movie theaters when he graduated. However, as he became disinterested, his grades suffered, resulting in a dismissal letter on his doorstep one morning.

After leaving FMU, Schnibben began reading about mathematics in his free time, and he became increasingly interested in the subject.

"After I had been kicked out, I just started reading, and it came up to stuff that was math-oriented," Schnibben said. "I thought,

"This is rather interesting. I kind of like this." I wanted to know more, and I knew the only way to do that would be to go to an institution. So I thought, "Why not go to Francis Marion?"

Sure enough, above the letter of dismissal on the wall hangs his diploma from FMU, as well as the mathematics department award for 1979.

Since he began teaching at FMU, Schnibben adopted a more relaxed teaching style and classroom setting. He said that keeping the mood light by making jokes helps

students feel more at ease and encourages class discussion. Schnibben attributes much of his teaching style to Roger "Bucky" Allen, a professor of mathematics at FMU.

"I always enjoyed taking his classes," Schnibben said. "If there was anybody I tried to emulate, it was him. He would come into class, and he would say whatever he wanted to. He was funny, and class was always fun. I always looked forward to it."

Schnibben said Jack Smith, the chair of the mathematics department, also played a role in securing

him a place on the FMU faculty. While pursuing his Ph.D., Schnibben said he received a call from Smith offering him a place in the math department.

"[Smith] said, 'I've got a friend; I'm going to let him work here for a semester,'" Schnibben said. "We'll hold a spot for you if you get your Ph.D. I defended it and got it on Friday, then started working on Monday."

Schnibben said Smith, along with Joel Brawley, his faculty advisor from Clemson University, both played impactful roles in his life as a student. Though it was not always an easy road, Schnibben said he is thankful for his opportunity to work at FMU.

"I guess you could say I wished I hadn't failed out," Schnibben said. "But, as a matter of fact, it taught me a lesson. Know that you're going to have to work. That's true of every major here on campus. You have to work. Open the book and look at it yourself. Rely on yourself. Don't rely on somebody, your friend or your teacher, to do something for you."

# FMU recognizes Holocaust online

**Ansley Lesley**  
Staff Writer

The Student Life Office hosted an International Holocaust Remembrance Day Program from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Jan. 27 on an online platform.

The day promotes awareness of the Holocaust. During World War II, Jewish men, women and children, along with Roma and other minorities living in Germany and other occupied areas, were forced into concentration camps and slaughtered. The Holocaust began in 1941 and ended on May 9, 1945 with the liberation of the Stutthof concentration camp and Theresienstadt Ghetto.

"The whole point of today is awareness," said

Alex McGill, student life coordinator for student engagement. "There's still people today who don't know what the Holocaust is or understand genocide."

Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the event was held over Facebook, where students and the general public could access different media pertaining to the Holocaust. Among the media was a virtual tour of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., videos of Holocaust survivors discussing their experiences and links to movies. Media was posted every hour until 5 p.m. and discussion boards were opened every half-hour until 5 p.m.

"I'm really happy that,

even if it's only in this capacity, we were still able to mark this day and do something and show our students that this is something that we care about," McGill said.

There was some debate as to whether the program would take place this year, as COVID-19 is still proving a problem. However, McGill decided to move the event to another platform.

"No way is this not going happen," McGill said. "So we decided, 'OK, I'll make it virtual.'"

One aspect that was lacking compared to past programs was the discussion and interaction between the people in attendance that occurred in previous years.

"One of the things that

I really wanted to do was incorporate that experience of that discussion, and that's really hard," McGill said. "I know it sucks because students really miss [meeting] in person and just connecting with people."

In past years, Holocaust survivors were able to give talks at the program. Recently, the children of survivors and the Columbia Holocaust Education Commission have taken up the role as speakers.

"[The students] get to see somebody and talk to somebody and really get hit home," McGill said. "As the survivors are getting older, it's harder and harder for people to come speak."

Typically, the turnout was somewhere between 30 and 50 students at previous

programs. However, the Facebook event was interacted with by 210 people, though not all of them necessarily attended.

"I guess I just think, 'Of course, people know about the Holocaust; it's such a big event,'" McGill said. "But so many students, maybe they know the word, but they don't really know what happened."

A few other events, including a Black History Program, a Native American Cultural Program and an International Roma Day Program, are in the works at FMU this semester.

*The Patriot* is published four times per semester by and for the students of Francis Marion University. Opinions expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official opinions or policies of FMU. We encourage letters to the editor but do not guarantee publication. *The Patriot* reserves the right to edit or reject any material submitted.

## NOTICE TO FMU OFFICES AND STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS:

*The Patriot* is interested in what you are doing on campus. To increase the likelihood that your events are covered, please submit news releases and schedules to us. We look forward to hearing from you.

## The Patriot

Francis Marion University's student newspaper

P.O. Box 100547  
University Center Room 201  
Florence, SC 29502

(843) 661-1350

e-mail:  
fmupatriotnews@gmail.com

advertising:  
fmupatriotads@gmail.com

www.patriotnewsonline.com

**Finn Millians**  
Copy Editor

From a fateful state game his freshman year of high school, Gary Edwards, head men's basketball coach at FMU, knew he wanted to be a coach. With a legacy of 14 previous seasons at FMU, 37 years as a head coach in college and 42 years of coaching in total, he truly embodied the coach he always wanted to be.

"From that moment on, I said, 'This is what I want to do,'" Edwards said. "I think I get a feeling, 27 or 28 nights a year, that not many people get, and I'm not ashamed to say that I am addicted to winning."

Since his FMU debut in 2006, Edwards has worked to guide his players and lead them to victory.

"I try to coach as I try to be a father; I think sometimes you have to be tough and sometimes you have to be whatever, you know?" Edwards said. "I have a lot of interests and try to teach my players different things other than basketball. I never wanted to be a coach with just a whistle in the gym and wearing sweatpants."

He has certainly worked for it, with a legacy of winning at FMU and several tournament appearances in



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Gary Edwards is committed to returning to his roots leading the FMU men's basketball team to victory.

his lengthy career. Even after a disappointing finish last year, Edwards is staying positive and optimistic about the current year and the future of the program.

"After last year, we had, record-wise, the worst season of my career and one I never thought we would have," Edwards said. "I decided, 'I'm going back to my roots.' We are doing exactly what we were doing way back when – my first season as a head coach, back in 1984. And it's a lot of fun; we are having a lot of success with it. I think the guys are really starting to embrace it."

Through the years, Edwards adapted to the

evolution of basketball and to his countless teams. COVID-19 and the previous season reminded him of the basics, the fundamentals he worked on tirelessly. He changed his coaching style to fit the style of current players, but he has reverted back to old-school tactics to find more success.

"I really enjoy the team that we have this year—it is kind of odd to say that since this has been such an unusual year, and it has been such a challenging year, for everyone," Edwards said. "But I'm really enjoying working with the guys this year—they respond really well to coaching. I think they

want to learn about the game of basketball. I am doing more teaching than I have in the past few years, I think, and I am really enjoying it."

The fundamentals are a passion for Edwards: he genuinely cares about the foundational skills that make or break a team. This season and the upcoming seasons will focus on basketball basics and the "universal truths" of the game.

Edwards and the players are learning to love the process and embrace the learning experience found in practice and the games.

"I think we have a good attitude about it," Edwards said. "Every game is like

icing on the cake and we feel so fortunate [about] the games we are able to play."

The basketball team is not the only activity Edwards participates in, however. During the basketball season, Edwards runs a column every Saturday in a Florence newspaper, "The Morning News."

"Writing and literature have always been a love of mine," Edwards said. "If I had not gone into coaching, I would have tried to go into journalism."

His weekly article talks about anything, even though it is located in the sports section. He occasionally talks about the program or his family. Sometimes, he will incorporate humor and discuss life lessons. Edwards uses his column as a literary outlet, as writing is one of his passions.

"It has been good to let people know me and let people know our programs," Edwards said. "It has been a blessing, as well."

The men's basketball team will continue their season over the next couple of months as they fight for a tournament bid. Catch Edwards and his team at a home game or on a live stream to see them—and the re-established old-school playing—in action.



# VOICES of the PATRIOT

## COVID-19: MY EXPERIENCE

Melanie Dozier  
Staff Writer

After testing positive for COVID-19, along with 5,762 other South Carolinians on Jan. 17, my symptoms weren't what I expected.

On Jan. 14, I woke up with a fever that was completely random. Immediately, I wondered if it was COVID-19. In 2020, everyone was told that you had to be cautious with every symptom, even if it was similar to that of a common cold.

The next day, I had a very sore throat, so I went and got tested due to the fact that I live with other people and didn't want to infect anyone else. I was sure I didn't have COVID-19, because I hadn't been around anyone. I stayed at home and only took my girlfriend to and from work.

Being certain I didn't have it, I decided to go to urgent care after I got tested, not thinking that I should quarantine. The doctor took my vitals, and looked at my throat.

"I believe you have the beginning stage of strep throat," she said.

She ordered some antibiotics and I picked them up later in the day.

After taking the antibiotics for a few days, I felt fine. But I wouldn't know my COVID results until Jan. 17. I got a call early in the morning from McLeod hospital. They told me I had tested positive and needed to quarantine for 10 days. So I did.

Along with myself, thousands of other people in South Carolina tested positive. A week prior to this, I had a friend who had lost her aunt to COVID-19. Just yesterday, my step-father lost his uncle to coronavirus as well.

CNN's Alta Spells and Maggie Fox said that all across the nation, "on Saturday [Jan. 17], Johns Hopkins reported 198,218 new cases and 3,286 new deaths."

In the U.S. alone there have been 25.6 million cases, since the start of the pandemic, with 156,000 new cases just today. The total number of deaths has reached 429,000, excepting 4,101 from Jan. 28.

My first inclination was to be afraid and my anxiety raised through the roof. I was worried that I would be hospitalized. All over the news we hear doctors and nurses, along with other medical professionals telling us that the virus is deadly, and people can experience breathing issues.

I thought the worst. Little did I know, it wouldn't be any worse than the flu.

From Jan. 14-18, I had a fever, sore throat, loss of taste and smell, congestion, clogged ears and weakness throughout my body. These symptoms happened separate from each other, and none lasted more than a day.

The strangest thing was the symptoms went away so fast. I expected to be in bad shape weeks after being cleared for the virus.

All in all, COVID-19 was just a big anxiety attack for me. I am in good shape health-wise, and I am now back in school. This doesn't mean I won't think of the virus as any less life-threatening than I did before. COVID-19 is nothing to play around with.

## BE YOUR OWN BEAUTIFUL

Chanelle Hanberry  
Staff Writer

In the past, some men and women grew up with the belief that their bodies were not perfect because their bodies did not match a model in a magazine or an actor on a television show. They were pressured into believing that if their bodies didn't look the same, they wouldn't have a happy ending like in fairytale books. Young men and women believed that their bodies weren't perfect because of how society viewed them. Society favored the "hourglass figure" over the "pear figure," the "pear figure" over the "apple figure."

To me, body positivity is whenever you accept your body for how it is. You look at all your flaws then you smile and say, "Thank you." You wouldn't be you without your flaws. No one has the "perfect body." Even if you want to be skinnier or bigger, it's still your body. You are given only one body in your life. The least you can do is treat it well.

Body positivity also means encouraging other people to accept their bodies. According to sociologist Charles Cooley, "I am not what I think I am, and I am not what you think I am. I am what I think you think I am." In the past, we were the ones tearing ourselves down based on what we thought people thought about us. Not only do we tear down our own self-esteem but others add fuel to the fire that you've already started. If you pass someone and they look really nice, a small compliment could really brighten someone's day.

Recently, I was on TikTok, and I found multiple pages that promote body positivity. They are all different

sizes focusing on the same purpose. People, such as TikToker @peachnspice, normalize flaws and show them off as perfect.

Our flaws are not what define us. We define ourselves – our personality, attitude, posture, even how we speak. We are one with our bodies; our bodies are not one with us.

When I was younger, a friend of mine struggled with self-confidence. In her mind, she believed that she was "ugly," and that was her reason why no guy wanted to date her. On the outside, people believed that she liked how things were going while on the inside she was hurting. She wanted to look as good as the cheerleaders, but she believed she could never look that way.

In the early 2010s, the body positivity movement emerged. My friend started seeing people with different bodies showing off their flaws. She saw how confident they were. That's when she started to internalize body positivity and believe that her body wasn't as bad as she had been made to feel.

In high school, she broke out of her shell and started accepting her body. She started showing off what she had rather than hiding it as she did in middle school. People approached her and wanted to become friends with her. She realized that accepting herself was all she needed to do to be happy. Nowadays, she's complimenting others, showing off her flaws and telling people, "You're beautiful, no matter what you look like."

## GIVE US MORE CREDIT

Julia Fulmer  
Staff Writer

We've all been there. Whether it's because of your major, or merely general education requirements, you've found yourself in a lab. Not only are you responsible for keeping up with the rest of your courses, but you also need to block out an extra three hours from one of your weekdays to account for your lab.

There's no question that lab courses are helpful. They provide a hands-on experience for students to truly connect what they've learned in class to a real-world setting. In some cases, when the student does well in their lab, it might even help boost their final grade in their lecture class. However, there is an ever-present issue involving the lack of credit students receive for their lab classes.

According to the 2020-2021 FMU course catalog, a credit hour (also known as a semester hour) is "one class hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction per week and an expectation of at least two hours of out-of-class student work each week." Essentially, for every hour spent in class, you should spend two hours doing homework or studying.

Currently, lectures in the sciences are assigned four credit hours, a step up from the usual three credits of the average course, with labs tacked onto them at zero credit hours, as it is understood that they will be taken together.

From a surface-level standpoint, it would make sense that a lab requiring three extra hours per week would count toward three credit hours. However, not everything is so cut and dry. It's worth investigating to see if lab classes also fill the second condition of the definition concerning how much time students spend outside of class.

As it turns out, aside from the time spent studying for labs and lectures, students are almost always required to write reports and complete homework

for their labs assigned independently from their lecture course. Though both classes cover the same topics, they have completely different assignments, which creates much more than the two hours of work that would justify just one credit.

It's worth mentioning that the course catalog does have a section that defines a lab class as "a minimum of two-three class hours of work each week and an expectation of at least one hour of additional out-of-class student work each week." As we can see, the catalog seems to have underestimated the time required outside of labs. While this doesn't necessarily change the issue, it was worth acknowledging before moving forward.

Also, for students entering the sciences, such as biology, chemistry and physics, their majors are heavily based around these lab classes. While it's not ideal to receive one credit for an entry-level lab course, once you move toward the upper-level courses, the work becomes significantly more time-consuming, and yet the same single credit hour is assigned.

At the heart of it all, students want to feel like their time was well spent. While I don't expect the FMU administration to assign three credit hours to lab classes immediately, I think it would be helpful to move toward making them worth two credits instead of one.

Of course, there are always variables to consider. Sometimes labs let students out early, and homework volume varies from time to time. But at their most uneventful, they are still worth more than one credit.

## I DON'T SEE MYSELF

Ke'iyona Jordan  
Copy Editor

School, for most children, regardless of their parents' socioeconomic status, race, culture or religion, is their second home. School is the place they spend most of their childhood, and teachers are at the forefront of the ideas, beliefs and talents they come to possess. Teachers inspire students and bring them opportunity. Most importantly, they teach children about life after school.

In America, with the lack of diversity among teachers, certain groups of students are left behind and feel a sense of imprisonment from having teachers they can't connect with. After going through more than 15 years of school, I can count on my fingers the number of Black teachers I've had, and that, to me, is something that needs to change. From kindergarten to my senior year of college, I've had only six African-American teachers out of the fifty or more who taught me in my educational journey. In my four years of college, I haven't been granted the privilege of Black representation. While I had some amazing professors and teachers, I was robbed of the connection, inspiration and empowerment that I wished to experience as an African-American.

Many articles and statistics show that African-American students are more likely to excel in school if they have at least two African-American teachers. African-American teachers have a long history of advocating for their students. These teachers were behind many of the opportunities that African-American students receive. The lack of Black teachers in schools, ranging from elementary to universities and colleges, is a subtle way of discriminating against minority students. History, psychology and statistics point toward the positivity of Black students having Black leaders, teachers and mentors they can learn

from. So, depriving Black students of that is a means to control and hold them back.

An argument I've heard is that students have to learn to welcome diversity; however, that argument is flawed in that, in America, only minority students are forced to accept and navigate around diversity in the education system because more than 50 percent of teachers are white, which means white students can thrive in environments around people who look just like them. This is due to the role model effect, which states that people need and/or create relatable people to help them advance in their own career.

In my personal experiences, I felt a sense of confidence in myself when my teachers were Black that I didn't feel in other classrooms. Some of those teachers did absolutely nothing objectionable, but the subconscious thought that they may believe I didn't have a fighting chance caused me to doubt my own capabilities. Many Black students can attest to the exhaustion of having to put on a facade in an effort to prove to our teachers and professors that we are the exception to Black stereotypes. I am in no way saying that only Black teachers should teach Black students. I am saying that more Black teachers should be in a position to teach Black students.

This is not a problem that can afford to be left unsolved. To be left unsolved is simply deciding to purposefully hold back generations of Black children. I suggest that laws be put in place that require every school to hire Black teachers based off the student population. I think that closing the gap will help equalize opportunity across all communities.



# ATHLETE SPOTLIGHT | Langston Gaither

**Finn Millions**  
Copy Editor

A junior sports management major and a recent transfer from Grayson College in Texas, Langston Gaither is no stranger to the grit and hard work required for success.

“I always wanted somewhere I could go where I’d have opportunity, and Coach Edwards told me I would have an opportunity to play and make good decisions with teammates and really do something special,” Gaither said.

Originally starting his collegiate basketball career at Howard University in Washington, D.C., Gaither transferred to Grayson College, a junior college (JUCO) in Denison, Texas, for his sophomore year looking for a new opportunity.

“Basketball was always the sport that could lead me to the next level,” Gaither said. “The biggest thing for me was having an opportunity to play.”

Starting from a young age, Gaither saw basketball as the only sport, the only activity. It was everything.

“I started playing when I was seven or eight, taking it seriously, working out before school and stuff,” Gaither said. “Now I really just continued that, I never really played any other sports.”



PHOTO BY JAMES MCCARLEY

A new addition to the men’s basketball team, Langston Gaither is already making his mark at FMU.

Disciplined and driven, Gaither is always looking to get those extra reps; the first in the gym and the last to leave. That dedication has paid off.

Since his debut at FMU early this year, Gaither has certainly made a splash. One half of the infamous “dynamic duo” along with teammate Holden Redparth, Gaither performs in the top of most statistical categories in his games. Scoring an average of 23.8 points per

game, Gaither ranks high in the PBC and in the entirety of the NCAA DII.

Since the Patriots lost many of their previous starters from last year, they are a rather young team. Gaither, transferring in as a junior with Division I experience, wants to be a leader and help the team succeed.

“I am just trying to be a leader,” Gaither said. “We are a young team, a new team. I am really looking

forward to the second half of the season.”

Life for Gaither, while primarily influenced by basketball, is not only about the sport.

A sports management major, Gaither is trying to expand his knowledge to grow his business, 2 Assist Fitness.

“I already am a certified personal trainer,” Gaither said. “I got certified while I was in JUCO and started doing classes outside

of school and taking certification classes.”

His time in Texas, surrounded by big, beautiful gyms, inspired him to start pursuing his dream a bit earlier than he expected. He earned his certifications and started teaching classes outside of school. After transferring to FMU, he used his business and Instagram page to give online training programs to new clients.

“It’s been fun—that experience and building that

profile,” Gaither said. “Being a personal trainer and also a basketball player, that’s what they want to see—your doing well as a basketball player.”

Gaither hopes that his performance as an athlete will give him some leverage as a personal trainer.

“What we’re doing this season, I want to show that we can win, so I can take that to my business and say, ‘Hey, if you want to win, come train with me,’” Gaither said.

As he continues to pursue his degree and finish his basketball career, he has plans to expand his business and broaden his work experience. He even uses team weightlifting to focus on his craft.

Besides personal training and basketball, only one other thing ranks high in his priorities: family.

“I talk to my parents every day,” Gaither said. “My family means everything to me; that’s why I do what I do and why I work so hard. It’s definitely good being back on this side.”

From half a country to a couple of states away, Gaither is glad to be close enough to see his parents sometimes. It may not be D.C., but it is certainly closer than Texas.

Find Gaither on the court as the Patriots continue their 2021 season and fight for a coveted bid to the NCAA tournament.

## Patriots suffer loss in close game to Braves

**Finn Millions**  
Copy Editor

Despite an early lead and multiple players tallying up more than 15 points apiece, the Patriots suffered a close loss to the UNC Pembroke Braves 80-82 on Jan. 27 at 7:30 p.m.

Holden Redparth, a senior transfer and guard, led the team with a double-double—24 points and 10 rebounds in total—while also providing a handful of assists and steals. He was also 7 for 7 at the free throw line.

“My rebounding and the energy I bring to the table contributed to the game,” Redparth said. “I’m a leader, and I want to help get everyone on the same page; bring the energy up.”

Redparth has been performing at the top of his team, or close to it, since the beginning of the season. He and his teammate, Langston Gaither, put up most of the points each game and have even been nicknamed the “dynamic duo.”

Junior transfer and forward Langston Gaither put up 22 points and 7 rebounds,



PHOTO BY KEI'YONA JORDON

Darius Dawson #21 tries to block an attempted shot from Braves #14 in a hotly contested game.

also contributing six assists and three steals. Gaither went 3 for 4 at the free-throw line.

Even with the dynamic duo and a contribution of 16

points—12 of them from the 3-point line—from junior guard Alex Cox, the Patriots were unable to edge past the Braves in the final half.

“We really played hard

the whole game,” Gaither said. “We just got to stay with our stuff. We had a couple possessions where we fell off mentally. When we get tired, we just have to

stick with it. We have to talk a little bit more.”

The Patriots tallied up a total of 20 fouls on the Braves, and the Braves only gave them 12. Of the

20, 14 were in the second half. From the free-throws garnered from the fouls, the Braves accumulated 16 points in total.

“We also fouled a lot pretty early in the first part of the second half,” Gaither said. “That’s a lot of easy points.”

Though there was some inevitable disappointment from the loss, the Patriots are focused only on the wins in the future.

“We got better from this loss,” Redparth said. “The next nine games are super important; we are trying to make the tournament.”

They certainly ended on a good note with a steal and dunk from junior forward Uhana Ochan.

“There are a lot of games left,” Gaither said. “We just have to win out for the rest of the way.”

The Patriots next home game will be on Feb. 6 at 5 p.m. in the Smith University Center against Clayton State. Live stats and the livestream will be available through the athletics website.

## FMU discusses new study abroad opportunities

**Ansley Lesley**  
Staff Writer

The International Programs held a Spring Liaison Meeting on Jan. 26. FMU currently offers study abroad opportunities at 11 universities in five different countries, including Ireland, France, Germany, Canada and England.

“We want our students to be able to go abroad,” said J. Mark Blackwell, professor of philosophy and religious studies and director of international programs. “[President] Carter makes it happen.”

Each university is carefully chosen to ensure

that students will be safe and receive a quality education while abroad. Study abroad partners tend to be smaller sized universities. FMU faculty extensively research the potential partner and meet with their faculty repeatedly.

“We take about 12 to 18 months anytime we select a partner,” Blackwell said. “We take a lot of time to research and do the work on the partner to know that the partner is a good fit for us and our kids.”

All study abroad classes, except language classes, are taught in English. FMU also helps students find housing and covers a portion of the plane fare.

“We don’t use tuition money, nor do we create tuition money for this program to work,” Blackwell said. “So it’s not a tuition-driven thing.”

The opportunity to study at the University of Burgos (UOB) in Burgos, Spain, is soon to be available to students. In addition to Spanish majors, other majors are welcome to apply, depending on the course offerings.

Before sending students abroad, the presidents of both universities must visit each other’s campuses. This requirement has not been met yet due to the COVID-19 pandemic and is the last step

before UOB becomes open to FMU students.

“Our policy is a very wise policy,” Blackwell said. “We have to visit their campus. They have to visit our campus. So, we’re just waiting to clear the way to get there and do it. At this point, until we visit, we won’t be able to go ahead and complete a contract.”

The Rennes School of Business (RSB) in Rennes, France is also on the verge of partnering with FMU. FMU needs to make a visit to RSB before sending students there. RSB will accept only business majors, but the majority of FMU’s partner universities accept students

from all disciplines.

Due to COVID-19, all study abroad programs have been shut down due to the pandemic. However, the international program is currently accepting applications to tentatively send students abroad in the Fall 2021 semester. Blackwell encourages students interested in studying abroad to visit the International Programs webpage on FMU’s website at [fmarion.edu/internationalprograms/](http://fmarion.edu/internationalprograms/).

Blackwell said the international program is a great experience for students, despite their concerns or apprehension.

“It broadens your

horizons; your maturity changes; your socialization increases,” Blackwell said. “Students go away often a little concerned or scared, then they come back and they’re upset because they want to go back or they don’t want to come back [to the U.S.]”

For the first time in the history of the international program, the study abroad application can be filled out online. The deadline for applicants is March 1, 2021. Interested students can also contact Blackwell directly at [jblackwell@fmarion.edu](mailto:jblackwell@fmarion.edu).