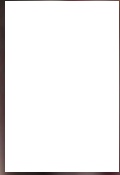


Playback

THE AGS MAGAZINE



ALABAMA
GOVERNOR'S
SCHOOL

at Samford University





Introduction

GOING PLATINUM: “PLAYBACK” AGS 2025

By Mae Li Blankenship

OVER A THIRTEEN DAY EXPERIENCE, AGS members orchestrate a melody of intellectual exploration and creative discovery. Students choose one morning and one afternoon seminar that interests them, allowing them to create an individual concerto experience. The familiar rhythm of early morning seminars, meals, service projects, mandatory fun activities, and, at day's end, crashing into bed composes a medley of work and play. One of the most engaging elements is the AGS talent show. Students confident enough to show off their talents, perform various skills for their fellow AGS audience



members and staff. The students and staff will see everything from beautiful dances, to groovy guitar playing, Grammy worthy singing, and even amusing parodies. This night has everyone wishing for an encore. Just as a bridge gives a song some variety, the weekend gives everyone a nice change of pace and scenery while AGS members enjoy two days of sleeping-in, movies, trips to Target and much needed

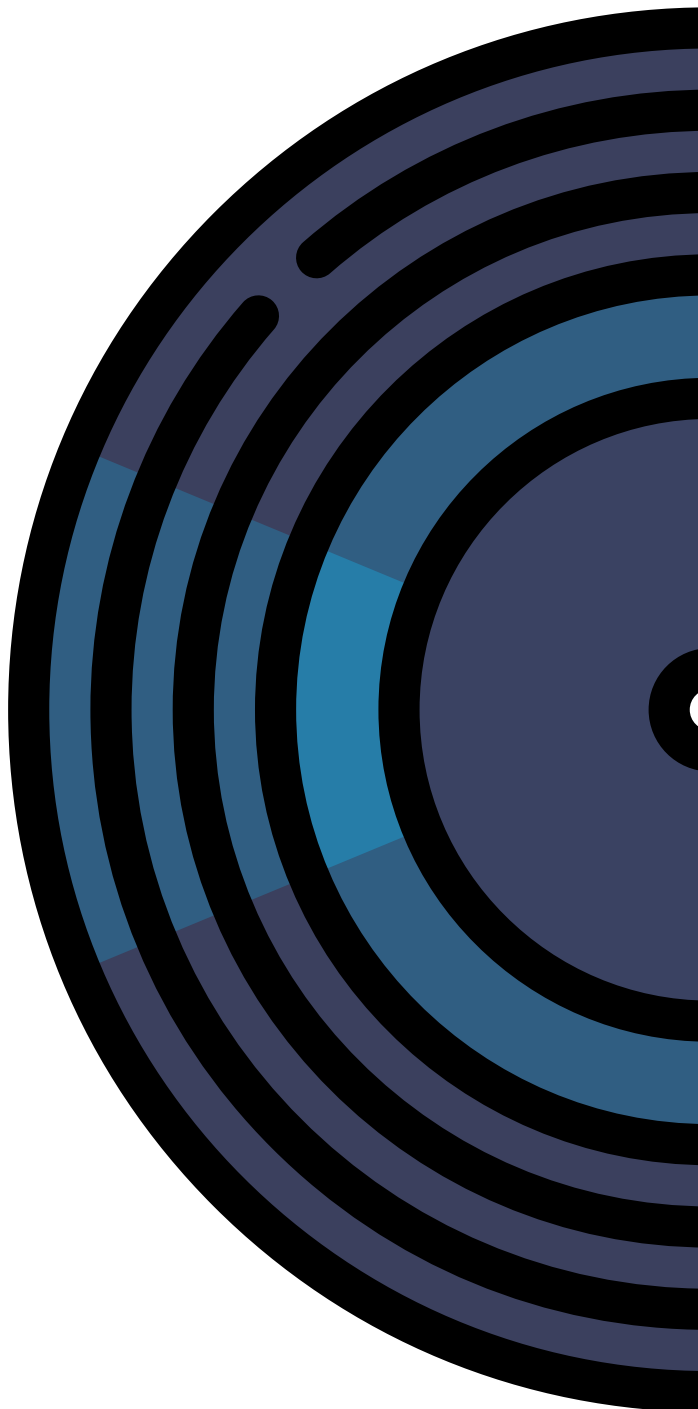
freetime to do laundry and just hangout with friends outside of scheduled events.

The finale of the whole Alabama Governor's experience is the tacky tourist dance where students gather and dance to all their favorite songs. Overall, these two weeks are number one on everyone's hot 100 fun list.

In keeping with our theme this year, you will find many students'

favorite lyrics and musical artists choices sprinkled throughout the magazine. Their selection of these lyrics and musicians fully illustrate the diversity and uniqueness found within this year's group of students. The comradeship instilled during these two weeks of academic and recreation activities resulted in a harmony of relationships which will last for a lifetime.

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Outstanding AGS Students and Leaders



PHOTO BY BRIGGS BROWN

Outstanding Male Leader: Daniel Benton, The Donoho School, Anniston; **Outstanding Male Student:** Jude Williams, Alabama School of Cyber Technology and Engineering, Huntsville; **Outstanding Female Student:** Mary Kate Dimler, Hewitt-Trussville High School, Trussville; **Outstanding Female Leader:** Marie Crane, Cherokee County High School, Centre

The **Outstanding Student** award goes to students who have demonstrated engagement and participation in class and seminars; have shown curiosity and interest; and who have asked thought-provoking questions.

The **Outstanding leaders** are students who have seen a need and met it by demonstrating initiative; they have organized their peers in order to make things run smoothly; they have encouraged and supported their peers; they have represented their schools, their families and the AGS program with highest level of character.

Samford is honored to partner with Alabama Governor's School to award a \$5,000 Alabama Governor's School annual scholarship (renewable up to four years for a total of \$20,000) to each of the students who receive the Outstanding Student and Outstanding Leader awards during Alabama Governor's School 2025.



Our 2025 AGS Photographer

Each year we enlist a Samford student from the Journalism department to serve as our "official" AGS photographer. This person is a crucial member of our magazine team since this publication is very "photography" driven. This year we were very lucky to recruit Nick Batson, a Samford senior, to serve in this capacity for our 2025 AGS session. Nick did an extremely efficient job of photographing all the aspects of this year's two week session. It seemed he was everywhere, capturing many special moments, in both classes, and extracurricular activities. Without Nick's help this magazine would not be possible. Also, this year we had photographic assistance from the members of our magazine class. Briggs Brown, Abigail Roark and Alex Dobbins made their own contributions to the photographic efforts to give this year's edition a very special look.

Donovan Harris— Magazine class instructor

OPENING CEREMONY



Dr. Jeanna Westmoreland, AGS Executive Director, welcomes the 2025 Alabama Governor's School incoming class during the opening ceremony. PHOTOS BY NICK BATSON



AGS Keynote speaker was The Honorable James L. Mitchell, Associate Justice of the Alabama Supreme Court.



This year's AGS class is the largest ever at a total of 101 students.



Former AGS students Aria Foster (top), 2024 Outstanding Female Student, and Tim Miller, 2024 Outstanding Male Leader, give important advice, and also share some of their experiences from the time they spent at last year's Alabama governor's School.

Make a donation To AGS:

Via: AGS Executive Director
Jeanna Westmoreland
Samford University,
800 Lakeshore Drive
Birmingham, AL 35229
jkwestmo@samford.edu
205-726-4850



Members of the Alabama Governor's Leadership Council include Hollins Rush, Senior Vice President of Wealth Advisor Regions Private Wealth Management, and Carolyn Plummer Drennen, a Birmingham philanthropist, and supporter of AGS for many years.



At the conclusion of the AGS opening ceremony, students were invited to a reception to meet each other and say goodbye to their parents, before returning to their dorms to prepare for the first night's session of orientation and recreation.

SPECIAL THANKS TO THESE AGS SUPPORTERS

The following people and organizations have contributed to the William R. and Fay Ireland Governor's School Endowment and Alabama Governor's School General Fund.

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Alabama Power Foundation	Dr. and Mrs. Robert Conner
Altec/Styslinger Foundation	Mrs. Kate H. Cotton
BB&T, North Alabama	Dr. Kim Crockard
BBVA Compass	Mr. and Mrs. Charles
BCBSAL	William Daniel
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Mr. Aaron Benway	Revolution, Gen. Sumter
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Mr. Ellis D. Bingham III	Mr. Paul DeMarco
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 Mr. William Randall Pittman
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 Vulcan Materials Company
 Wachovia Foundation
 State Senator James T.
 Waggoner, Jr.
 Drs. Andrew and Jeanna
 Westmoreland
 Mr. and Mrs. Harold Williams
 Women's Committee of
 100 for Birmingham



WHEN THE PARTY'S OVER

STORY BY LANA FORCHILLI / PHOTOS BY NICK BATSON

CORPRATE DINNER!!! THIS DINNER WAS A BIG networking opportunity for us. We met so many people from a variety of different career paths, from banking to The First Lady of Samford, Julie Taylor.

We prepared for this special event by engaging in etiquette classes. These sessions involved learning where items go on the table, how to eat properly, how to get up and sit down in your chair, the meanings of *spoon/fork* and correct napkin placement on plates. We got to have spirited conversations, interesting talks with 3 different table visitors. Eight students were placed at each table.

Overall, it was a fun event and each student had opportunities to both share their stories and learn new ones!!!



Tommy Angelillo, Protective Life



Sheila Herrington, Blue Cross, Blue Shield



Jennifer Wilson, Regions



Glen Adams, Homewood City Manager



Dr. Beck Taylor, President of Samford University



AGS Staff get a group photo.



Dr. Beck Taylor, Samford University



Dr. Beck Taylor, Samford University



Dr. Betsy Holloway, Samford University



Dr. Jeanna Westmoreland and AGS staff



Doug Wilson, Samford University



Jason Black, Samford University



Jasmine Sledge, Alabama Power



Julie Taylor, Samford University



Some AGS students pose for an after-dinner photo.



These AGS guys are hamming it up for the camera.

A TRIBUTE TO DR. GEORGE KELLER

We honor the long-time AGS leader.

By Dr. Carolyn Satterfield, Dr. Jeanna Westmoreland, and Jamie Cole

SHORTLY AFTER OUR AGS SESSION THIS YEAR, THE AGS community learned the sad news that our long-time leader, director of AGS from 2001 to 2023, had left us.

George Ernest Keller III passed away at his home in Birmingham, Alabama on the morning of Saturday, August 23rd after a four-year battle with cancer.

He was born on May 24th, 1960, in Bellefonte, Pennsylvania. Soon after, his family moved to Charleston, West Virginia, where he spent the majority of his childhood. He graduated from South Charleston High School in the spring of 1978. He attended Centre College in Danville, Kentucky, where he graduated in 1982 with a B.S. in Biology. He then went on to receive his Ph.D. in Biology from West Virginia University. Bud moved to Birmingham as a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Alabama at Birmingham in 1991.

Dr. Keller spent the rest of his life in Birmingham after meeting his spouse, Cindy, at Independent Presbyterian Church (IPC). There he began his career at Samford University, where he served as a professor of biology for more than 30 years. Throughout his career at Samford, he served as Assistant Dean of Arts and Sciences, as well as the Director for the Alabama Governor's School for close to two decades. He was an active member of his church, where he served as elder and deacon, participated in multiple committees, and also sang bass in his beloved choir.

Dr. Keller's impact touched every aspect of the program, as he recruited faculty, secured speakers for evening seminars, and planned Mandatory Fun and other activities for each year's school. He administered the nomination, application and selection processes that resulted in a unique mix of outstanding students from across the state each year.

Dr. Keller introduced new courses and revised favorites as student interest and technology changed. During the two weeks of the program, Dr. Keller was known for his extensive wardrobe of Governor's School t-shirts. Over the years, he saved the t-shirt from each Alabama Governor's School program, while also collecting t-shirts from Governor's School programs from other states. Prior to his service as director of the program, Dr. Keller taught the Research Science Class.

We asked two colleagues and esteemed members of the AGS family, Dr. Carolyn Satterfield and Dr. Jeanna Westmoreland, to pen their thoughts and tributes to Dr. Keller. We present them here as a remembrance to what he meant to the program.

From the AGS family to George's: Please know that he leaves a legacy of unmatched passion and excellence that impacted the lives of hundreds of AGS students. As the entire AGS family of leaders, alumni and supporters know, AGS wouldn't be here today without him.

YOU COULD ALWAYS COUNT ON DR. KELLER. SAMFORD University Biology Professor and Director of the Alabama Governor's School. For some two plus decades George and I worked closely together each year to create an exceptional two week learning and growing experience for the AGS students at Samford University.

We had Deans of schools teaching classes along with outstanding faculty from SU, UAB, and the private sector. George saw to the details of the corporate dinner at Vulcan Museum, the etiquette challenge, service project day, team competitions, and daily buses were ready so that events ran smoothly. Even when he was hit by that awful cancer, he was there to serve. We are pleased that the AGS continues to be a one-of-a-kind program for Alabama academically excellent high school students.

It is with sincere gratitude that I recall the man whom I, nor the Governor's School, could have done without, Dr. George Keller!

—Carolyn Green Satterfield, Ph.D., former
AGS Executive Director

DR. KELLER'S KIND AND THOUGHTFUL NATURE

conveyed to students that everything was under control. Even after a semester on-leave after his cancer diagnosis, Dr. Keller's calming presence reassured students attending AGS 2022—the first program after COVID disrupted plans for the 2020 and 2021 AGS programs.

In addition to his service to the Alabama Governor's School, Dr. Keller was an active member of the National Conference of Governor's Schools, "the leading voice in supporting the development and growth of summer residential governor's school programs." During his tenure as AGS director, he hosted the annual meeting of the organization in Birmingham.

Dr. Keller's influence lives on in the structure of the program, many of the courses offered and in the core principles and values that are the foundation of the program. That influence is affirmed as we continue to have many second generation AGS students attend each year.

—Jeanna Westmoreland, Ed.D
Current Executive Director
Alabama Governor's School
Executive Director Emerita
Samford University Legacy League



MEET THE MANAGERS

AGS Staff 2025



THE COUNSLERS AT AGS KNOW HOW TO HAVE FUN, ESPECIALLY AT RECREATION! THEY ARE ALL IN AND FULLY INVESTED IN EVERYTHING THEY DO!!

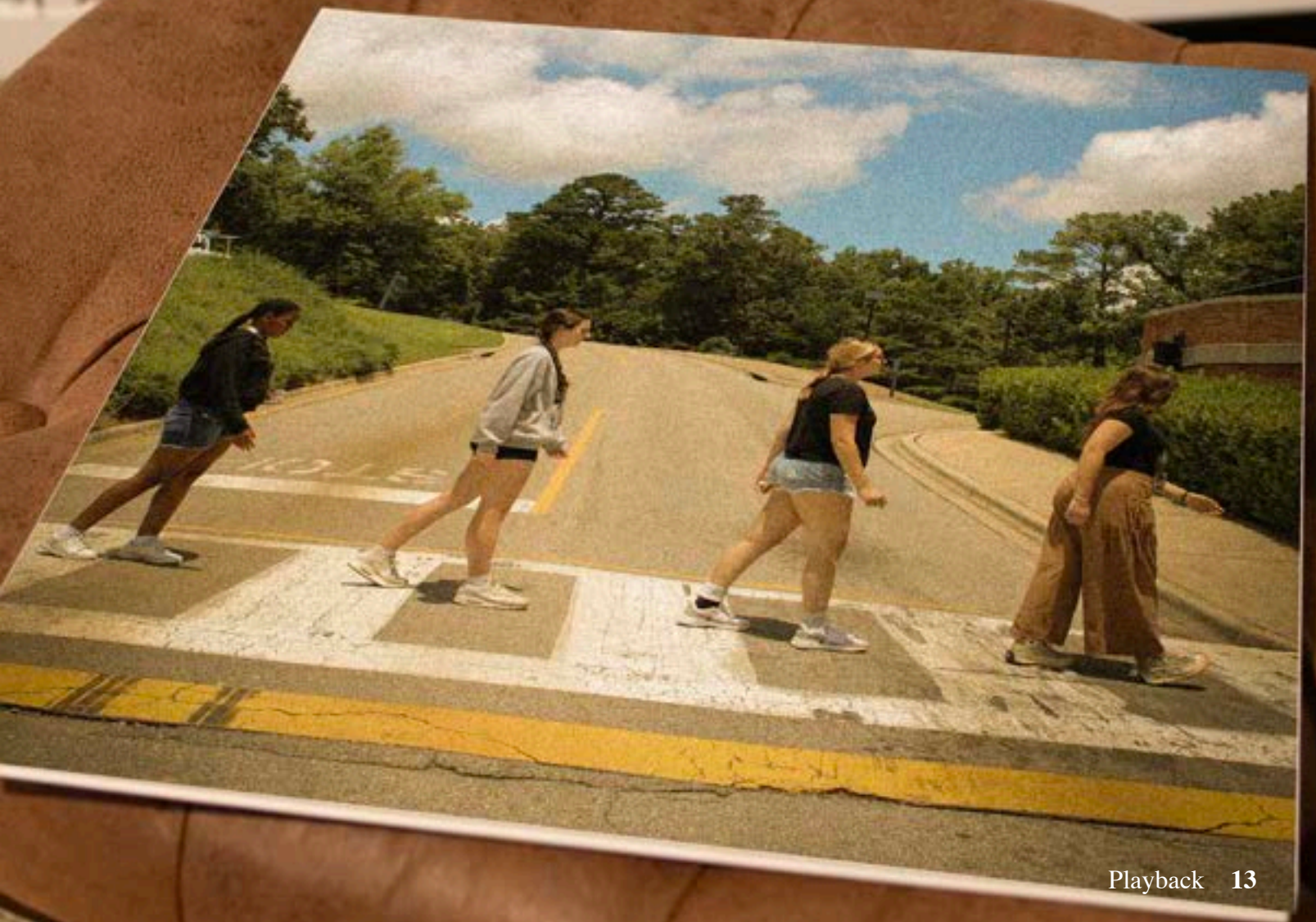
Upper Right Photo of AGS Staff: Top row: Evan Olson, Grant Dickson, Colin Boudreaux and Sawyer Waddell.

Middle row: Praise Kelly-Williams, Victoria Pereira, Anna Moore, and Lauren Campbell. Bottom row: Jordan Davis, Dr. Jeanna Westmoreland, Keely Owens, Aaliyah Harrell, Stevens Elise Key and Bailey Baldwin.

Upper Left Photo: Counselor Sawyer Waddell (in Samford shirt) and Student Gavin Swint. **Middle left photo:** Counselors Grant Dickson and Anna More with student Gavin Swint. **Bottom left photo:** Robby Robertson - Recreation staff.

Bottom right photo: Counselors Evan Olson (blue shirt) Keely Owens and student Forrest Smith (brown shirt)

AM Classes





DOCTOR, MY EYES

STORY BY KRISTAN SEALIE / PHOTOS BY NICK BATSON AND LANA FORCHILLI

INSTRUCTOR:

KIMBERLY FRENCH

GABI ALVIREZ

ROWAN BAGGETT

BROOKE BAKER

CIEL COMA

AVA DORMINEY

LILLIAN GREENWALT

CARLY HENDERSON

CLAIRE JEONG

CONNOR
MOORHOUSE

MOHAMMAD QASIM

ABBY RENZELMAN

GIOVANNI RUIZ-VEGA

ISHAN SHAH

EMALYN
SMITHERMAN

GAVIN SWINT

SARAH TIDWELL

KATE TOMPKINS

SILAS WITHROW

THE FUTURE DOCTORS AND NURSES OF AGS 2025

experienced many different things over the course of two weeks. From tours to UAB and the Christ Health Center to listening to a panel of professionals in the healthcare field, students in American Healthcare had many different experiences.

The instructor, Dr. Kimberly French, taught them many of the basics of healthcare, such as how to perform simple medical vital checks manually.

Students also learned about many different professions in the healthcare field and which one might best suit them. The students in this class had very unique experiences when they visited UAB. American Healthcare student, Emalyn Smitherman, shared that during the field trip to UAB she was able to visit the emergency cardiology unit and talk to different patients. She also shared that she was able to do a few check-ups and got to help do a CT scan. Emalyn stated "Overall, it was just an eye opening experience."





AGS Favorite Lyrics

**"Every thing you lose is a step you take."- Taylor Swift
(Riley Fuzzell)**

**"Me, myself, I got nothing to prove" -Tracy Chapman
(Olivia Hazelrig)**

**"The dreams you dare to dream really do come true."
-Judy Garland (Kit Heard)**

**"Never be so kind you forget to be clever, never be
so clever you forget to be kind." -Taylor Swift (Carly
Henderson)**

**"I'm trying to right my wrongs/But it's funny them same
wrongs helped me write" -Kayne West (Jacob Wilkinson)**



HERE COMES THE JUDGE

By MAE LI BLANKENSHIP / PHOTOS BY NICK BATSON AND BRIGGS BROWN

INSTRUCTOR: JUDGE
KARON BOWDRE

.....
COLLIN BENDOLPH

.....
ZARRY BINFORD

.....
POTTER BOUTWELL

.....
GRAYSON BOU

.....
KRISTEN BRANSCOMB

.....
ALLIE CAMPBELL

.....
ARABELLA GLASGOW

.....
SHEA GOBER

.....
AVERY GROS

.....
PAYTON HANEY

.....
SAM HECKER

.....
MICHAEL HOWELL

.....
ADDISON NORWOOD

.....
RISHI REDDY

.....
SOPHIA SOMTRY

.....
SARAH FRANCIS

.....
WARREN

.....
JACOB WILKINSON

.....
JUDE WILLIAMS

.....
CAROLINE YORK

.....

LEGAL WORK, MUCH LIKE

music, requires a deep understanding of processes, structure, and principles of the law. At the beginning of the seminar, the AGS students of the Legal class review the fundamental documents that helped establish our country, such as the Constitution, the Bill of Rights and other key amendments.

The seminar is taught by Judge Karon Bowdre. She hopes these students will learn to think for themselves on difficult legal issues, and how to conduct civil discourse. Lively discussions allow students to debate and ask questions.

Topics of conversation vary from anything from past history to the newest and latest news topics.

Some topics included "The

Right of the President to Send the National Guard to Los Angeles" and "Transgender Care for Minors". AGS students also delve deeply into how the legal system works.

The class learned the elements of a trial, what incarcerated life is like, and programs the government does, and does not, provide for people who are rejoining society.

Guest speakers visit the group and share experiences in their chosen fields of law. This year the class heard from Birch Bowdre, who talked to them about corporate law and estate planning and MaryLou Bowdre, who is an assistant United States Attorney in Montgomery.

During the second week of the program, students took a field trip to the United States Courthouse here



The defense side of the mock trial from left to right: Rishi, Sarah Frances, Potter, Addison, Payton, Collin, Jacob, Grayson, Arabella, and Omega Adams (the defense's side's coach for the trial).



The prosecuting side of the mock trial prepare their evidence.

in Birmingham. They got to view actual cases in progress, and hear the court's sentencing. Their time in the courtroom allowed the students to see, in reality, many of the procedures they have discussed in their seminar.

Students this year remarked that they "Didn't know that is was going to be so interesting, and that the seminar was "informative", and how the seminar piqued their interest

persuing a legal career.

At the start of the seminar students are presented with a fictional case and then split into a prosecuting side and a defense side. Throughout the seminar they must set aside time to collaborate with their peers inside and out of class and prepare a strong arguments for their side of this designated case. The teams were coached by John West and Omega

Adams who were former stars in the Cumberland National mock trial teams.

The mock trial happens during last class session. Through experiencing the mock trial and throughout the whole two week seminar students get an idea of what it looks like to work in the legal sytem.

These experiences allow students to take many new ideas back to their own high school.



The Legal class on their field trip to the Hugo L. Black Courthouse.



The defense side for the mock trial learn tips from recent Samford Cumberland Law student, Omega Adams.



Collin and Kristen listen to Judge Bowdre's many experiences while engaging in their daily discussions.



Judge Bowdre with class guest MaryLou Bowdre, who is an assistant United States Attorney in Montgomery.



Birch Bowdre, talked to the legal class about corporate law and estate planning during the first week of the seminar.

AGS Favorite Lyrics

**"Ooh, baby, it's raining, raining" -Rihanna
(Emalyn Smitherman)**

**"And I wonder, still I wonder, who'll stop the rain?"
-Creedence Clearwater (Marie Crane)**

**"What doesn't kill you makes you stronger"
-Kelly Clarkson (Allie Campbell)**

"I would do it again" - Hozier (Mary Kate Dimler)



THE SCIENTISTS

STORY BY RYANN SEALIE AND DR. SHANNON GILSTRAP / PHOTOS BY NICK BATSON AND BRIGGS BROWN

INSTRUCTOR:
DR. SHANNON
GILSTRAP

JATIN BANNA

TUCKER BROWN

COLLINS COBB

MARY KATE DIMLER

CLAUDE DUMAS

NORA FARRIS

JORDAN

FORRESTER

CAROLINE

ELIZABETH HOOPER

MASON MACKIEWICZ

TRIPP RALEIGH III

MASON RAY

AIDAN SALDANHA

MADDIE SOMERS

CATE WOODALL



DURING THE TWO-WEEK RESEARCH SCIENCE COURSE, students dove into the world of psychology and neuroscience through fun, hands-on activities. They ran their own experiments, learned how the brain works, and visited amazing places like the Civitan Neuroimaging Lab.

Each day included games, challenges, and experiments that helped them understand how we learn, think, feel, and behave. They also worked with real research tools, asked big questions, and discovered how scientists study the brain and behavior in everyday life.

Learning the methods of research and how researchers choose methods and tools, they could develop research experiments of their own.





AGS Favorite Lyrics

"You have gotta trust the signs. everything will turn out fine" -Jhene Ako (Zarry Binford)

"Nothing ever lasts forever" -Tears for Fears (Chloe Lambert)

"We are all made by these moments"-Red Clay Strays (Addison Norwood)

"She is all of this, mixed up and baked in a beautiful pie..." -Sara Bareilles (Sophia M Smotrys)



BACK TO BUSINESS

Working on the 9 to 5

By ABIGAIL ROARK

PHOTOS BY NICK BATSON AND ABIGAIL ROARK

THESE STUDENTS ARE GETTING “BACK TO BUSINESS”

learning the core values that it takes to run a business. Isiah Alexander stated that this class is the “ethical way of learning business”. Students lead by instructors Dr. Kirkpatrick and Dean Carson who teach the students the importance of building your business by following your morals.

They study the teachings of the bible, and how these messages correlate to building a vibrant business. The class is very interactive. Students collaborate with their peers, and create presentations on making morally sound business decisions.

“Be in the world but not of the world,” says Daniel Benton after learning about how to use the Gospel and biblical humility to strengthen your business. This deep philosophical way of looking at business intrigues students, and shows them the importance of sticking to one’s moral values in any venture you pursue.

Instructor Dr. Kirkpatrick says that the three most important values are wisdom, council, and relationships. Students say that some of their favorite parts of the class are the biblical aspects, answering deep personal questions, and the interaction within group projects.



Lastly, throughout the two week session “Getting Down to Business” went on three field trips. They visited Shannon Waltcheck, Accounting Services of Birmingham and Founders Advisors.

Trips to these accomplished businesses showed the students how to run a business successfully while utilizing their Biblical principles. These visits instilled key business skills which these students can use when going out into the real working world. In conclusion, whether these students pursue a field in business, or another field entirely; they are now prepared to take this knowledge they have learned and get down to business.

INSTRUCTORS:
DEAN CHAD CARSON
AND DR. NATHAN
KIRKPATRICK
.....
ISIAH ALEXANDER
.....
DALEYGRACE
ALFORD
.....
ROB ASHWORTH
.....
DANIEL BENTON
.....
LUKE DORION, JR
.....
KIT HEARD
.....

CHLOE LAMBERT
.....
LILY MEDELLIN
.....
VIHAAN PATEL
.....
AKASH PAREKH
.....
JOSELYN RENTERIA
CHAVEZ
.....
ZACH SLOAN
.....
JOSEPH SPENCER
.....
LAYLA TOWNSEND
.....



AGS Favorite Lyrics

“Jack makes good whiskey but God makes the good stuff” -Tyler Hubbard (Lily Medellin)

“I just ate a pizza off the ground. Now my stomach makin’ a funny sound. OWULULUU. “ -Yuno Miles (Jude Williams)

“I may not know it, but these are the moments, that, I’m gonna remember most.” -Miley Cyrus (DaleyGrace Alford)

“How many years can some people exist before they’re allowed to be free?” -Bob Dylan (Ainsley Wade)

“These are the days, these are the days we’ve been dreamin’ of” -Lauren Daigle (Sarah Tidwell)



MR. BLUE SKY

Fly high.

By ALEX DOBBINS

PHOTOS BY NICK BATSON AND ALEX DOBBINS

INSTRUCTOR:
SCOTT SETTLE

ADEN BRINKMAN

ABIGAIL DONATELLI

RILEY FUZZELL

TAYLOR GUILD

COLT HANCOCK

OLIVIA HAZELRIG

SHELBY HEUGEL

WALKER MARTIN

STACY ROSE

FORREST SMITH

AINSLEY WADE

COLE WALDROP

CAMILLE WOOD

AS REMOTE CONTROLLED PLANES FLY THROUGH THE air, the students of AGS's Sky's the Limit class watch from the ground below. This is one of the many activities in which the students of this class participated. Scott Settle, who has taught with AGS for 4 years, brought his students to various places across the Birmingham area, including flight history museums, and airfields, while showing them the beauty of flight.

One of the first places the students visited was the RC airfield, where they flew model RC planes. After this first experience, students were very excited for the last day, when they would be able to fly these planes without any safety measures, and be able to demonstrate the skills they learned. Students also visited the Shelby County Airport and its flight school. While there, they watched planes take off and land. They also talked to mechanics and instructors who answered their questions as they examined both experimental and trainer aircraft.

While there, students also visited the National Weather Service station. Talking to a meteorologist, the students learned how the NWS is able to forecast weather events, what they do in the event of bad weather, and how their mission is assisted with the use of aircraft.

The students also visited the Southern Museum of Flight, and saw historical and military planes. As a final stop, the group visited a special hanger where the students got to learn about repairing and maintaining planes.

Sky's the Limit class has shown these students the inner workings of flight, not so much the engineering side, but more of the repair and flight side. Aden Brinkman concisely put it, "[In general], the class has shown a lot about the opportunities from one end to the other end of aviation."

A group of students talk with an instructor at the flight school while Shelby pets one of the two dogs.





Walker gives a thumbs up while looking out the window of a C-130.



**"...I NEVER KNEW HOW
INTERESTING AVIATION COULD BE!"
-RILEY FUZZELL**



AGS Favorite Lyrics

**"Been wondering if your heart's
still open, and if so I wanna know
what time it shuts."**

-Arctic Monkeys (Avery Gros)

**"There's an anaconda in your
circle and you dont even know."**

**-Young Grizzley WRLD
(Lana Forchilli)**



VOGUE

The Writers of the Story

STORY BY BRIGGS BROWN / PHOTOS BY NICK BATSON AND BRIGGS BROWN

DURING THE MAGAZINE PUBLISHING CLASS, A TEAM OF WRITERS, photographers, and creative thinkers came together to produce a memory book for Alabama Governors School 2025. These talented students collaborated to brainstorm and refine ideas for the future magazine they would create. As part of the course, they visited a local bookstore to explore a variety of publications and identify standout magazines that inspired them for its “Playback” theme. The class also toured Dotdash Meredith, gaining an inside look at major publications such as *Southern Living* and *People*. This experience offered valuable insight into both print and digital media, as students engaged with professional photographers, stylists, and writers who brought these publications to life. This experience expanded their creative horizons and gave them the tools to turn ideas into impactful stories. Overall, the class offered a unique and inspiring look into the world of magazine publishing.



INSTRUCTORS:
JAMIE COLE AND
DONOVAN HARRIS
.....

PHOTOGRAPHER:
NICK BATSON
.....

MAE LI
BLANKENSHIP
.....

BRIGGS BROWN
.....

ALEX DOBBINS
.....

LANA FORCHILLI
.....

SETH HITCHCOCK
.....

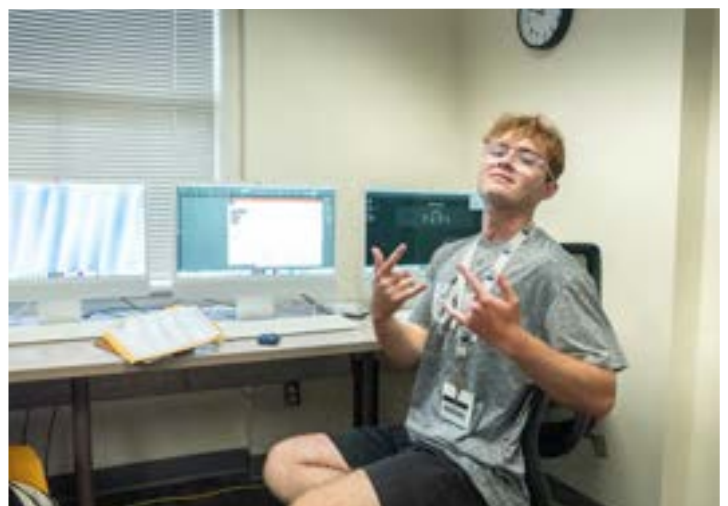
KRISTAN SEALIE
.....

RYANN SEALIE
.....

ABIGAIL ROARK
.....

ISABELLA RUSSEL
.....





AGS Favorite Lyrics

"Why is it so hard to accept that the party is over?"
-SZA (Kristan Sealie)

"But everyday above ground is a great day, remember that"
-Pitbull (Potter Boutwell)

"Life is good, the worst is over now"-PND (Ryann Sealie)

"Keep on going with your silly dream, life is prettier than it may seem."
-Laufey (Abigail Roark)



GO YOUR OWN WAY

STORY BY SETH HITCHCOCK / PHOTOS BY NICK BATSON

WALK ON THE WILD SIDE IMMERSSES STUDENTS IN the outdoors and all it has to offer.

Students got to discover various types of creatures including lizards, snakes, and frogs. The class also got to explore the environment of various locations throughout the Birmingham area. Exploring the outdoors was not only educational, but also fun as students got to discover how we are all connected to our environment.

Hiking was an integral part of the journey as students explored the outdoors. Hiking up and down the trails was at times difficult, but the reward was well worth the effort. The stunning beauty of waterfalls, woods, and mountains was incredible and made every trip feel unique.

The many creatures students got to see were just as amazing as the landscapes. Students got to discover a wide range of birds from small owls to gigantic eagles. Various reptiles were also very common as many students found frogs, lizards, and even snakes. Our environment is filled with many incredible creatures.

Students had tons of fun getting to work with instructor Leslie Hendon. Her fun and exciting personality helped create the atmosphere of stepping into the wild. Students truly had a fun time exploring this wild side of Alabama.



INSTRUCTOR:	SARA SAHLIE
LESLIE HENDON	MARCATO
.....
MARIE CRANE	SOFIA NUNEZ
.....
EMME DRESSLER	MILLER ROGERS
.....
CATI EPPERSON	JOSH VALTOS II
.....
MADDY FROST	MARI WENDORF
.....
KATHERINE HEARD	LEXI WRIGHT
.....
BEN KLECKER	MARY WALKER
.....
MCCARLEY MOORER	
.....	





AGS Favorite Lyrics

**"If you can't show up and pour
your heart out on my floor, then
what are friends for?"**

-Jenna Raine (Nora Farris)

"God is good all the time"

-Forrest Frank (Shelby Heugel)

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The 2025 Alabama Governor's School class made their group portrait in front of the Samford Fine Arts Wright Center. Photo: Nick Batson

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SERVING THE SERVANTS

AGS Service Project

By ISABELLA RUSSELL

THE STUDENTS AT AGS ARE ALL ABOUT GIVING BACK, AND THAT IS EXACTLY WHAT they did. The Christian Service Mission is a nonprofit organization dedicated to connecting resources with many needs in an effort to help build a stronger community.

At the Christian Service Mission, students sorted household items donated by Amazon. Others packed the sorted items into boxes, stacking them sky high. The students packed, taped, and sorted relentlessly until everything was ready to go. These boxes are then sent to churches which is a simple, but effective, way to offer help to those in need.

They had to be careful though, as some of the items were quite unusual. From oddly named street signs, to weird smelling candles, there were many surprises waiting for them. The students packed over 200 boxes and were then treated to a VIP tour of the CSM's freezer section which included sampling some delicious popsicles.

AGS students are proud to be a part of a better community, working to help provide needs for all in the local area.





MANDATORY FUN

Photos by Nick Batson



AGS TEAMS • RECREATION

PAGES 33-37



TALENT SHOW

PAGES 38-39



TACKY TOURIST DANCE

PAGE 40

MANDATORY FUN = RECREATION

Alabama Governor's School is one place where the fun is mandatory! These types of activities are also known as "recreation" and they give the participants an opportunity to unwind after their morning seminars. Students are assigned to teams which compete to climb up to the top of the AGS leader board. Some of the favorite activities during recreation include the spoons tournament, the AGS olympics, family feud, and capture the flag. These events also add a competitive and bonding experience that AGS students will always remember!



MANDATORY FUN / COMPETITONS



SUNDAY WORSHIP



MANDATORY FUN / AGS TEAMS



TEAM WON: *(Back left to right)* Aidan Saldanha, Grayson Bou, Rob Ashworth, Grant Dickson, Vihaan Patel
(Front Left to Right) Daley Grace Alford, Katherine Heard, Carly Henderson, Mae Li Blankenship



2ND DEGREE KNOWLEDGE: *(Back left to right)* Aden Brinkman, Mohammad Qaism, Daniel Benton, Layla Townsend, Shelby Heugel, Kristen Branscomb, Zach Sloan, Caroline Hooper, Praise Williams



TRI-HARDS: *(left to right)* Keely Owens, Brooke Baker, Briggs Brown, Ally Campbell, Claire Jeong, Ainsley Wade, Chloe Lambert, Forest Smith, Tripp Raleigh, Tucker Brown



4 DA WIN: *(Left to right)* Potter Boutwell, Sara Sahlie, Lily Medellin, Ciel Coma, Mary Walker, Alex Dobbins, Gavin Swint, Collins Cobb



5TH ELEMENT: *(Back left to right)* Luke Doiron, Claude Dumas, Cole Waldrep, Rishi Reddy *(Front left to right)* Joselyn Renteria Chavez, Sarah Frances Warren, McCarley Mooror, Mary Kate Dimler, Stevens Elise Key, Marie Crane



EVAN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: *(Back left to right)* Avery Gros, Silas Withrow, Jordan Forrester, Ishan Shah
(Front left to right) Mari Wendorf, Emme Dressler, Abigail Donatelli, Addison Norwood, Isabella Russel, Evan Olsen

MANDATORY FUN / AGS TEAMS



LUCKY #7: (*Back left to right*) Shea Gober, Colin Boudreaux, Colt Hancock, Joseph Spencer (*Front left to right*) Sofia Nunez, Kristan Sealie, Cati Epperson, Camille Wood, Ava Dorminey



ELITE 8: (*Back left to right*) Seth Hitchcock, Joshua Valtos, Sam Hecker (*Front left to right*) Lauren Campbell, Emalyn Smitherman, Nora Faris, Madeline Somers, Lana Forchilli, Kate Tompkins



BEESON'S BABES: (*Back left to right*) Michael Howell, Ben Klecker, Jordyn Davis, Madelyn Frost, Sophia Smotrys, Riley Fuzzell, Abby Renzelman, Lexi Wright (*Front*) Jacob Wilkinson



BEN TENISIONS: (*Back left to right*) Isiah Alexander, Jude Williams, Walker Martin, Mason Mackiewicz (*Front left to right*) Arabella Glasgow, Sara Tidwell, Aaliyah Harrell, Abigail Roark, Hayden Guild



OCEAN'S 11: (*left to right*) Payton Haney, Rowan Bagget, Connor Moorehouse, Miller Rogers, Anna Moore, Jatin Banna, Lillian Greenwalt, Kate Tompkins, Stacey Rose



DISTRICT 12: (*Back left to right*) Kit Heard, Caroline York, Olivia Hazelrig, Victoria Pereira, Ryann Sealie, Zarry Binford (*Front left to right*) Collin Bendolph, Akash Parekh, Giovanni Ruiz-Vega

TALENT SHOW

Mic Drop Moments

STORY BY BRIGGS BROWN AND PHOTOS BY NICK BATSON



HOSTS:
GRAYSON BOU
AND MADELYN
FROST





Isiah Alexander drew this beautiful piece during the talent show and presented it to the audience. The piece was titled, "AGS' Has Talent."



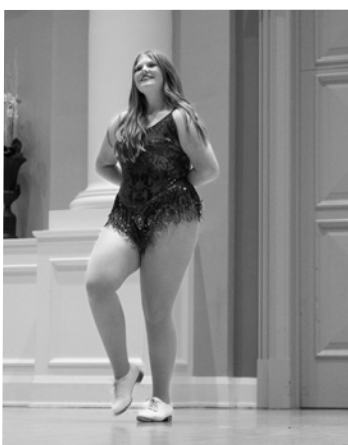
Daniel Benton played the guitar while singing "By Your Side" by Tenth Avenue North.



This group sang "Friends in Low Places" by Garth Brooks and the other students in the audience showed their support by waving their flashlights. (From left to right) Tripp Raleigh, Sam Hecker, Miller Rogers, Rob Ashworth, and Ishan Shah (Not Pictured) Forrest Smith, Gavin Swint, and Connor Moorhouse.



Abigail Roark sang her very own rendition of "From The Start" by Laufey.



Payton Haney performed a southern style clogging routine to "Roundtable Rival" by Lindsey Stirling.

THE PODIUM



1ST: FORREST SMITH

PLAYED GUITAR AND SANG AN ORIGINAL SONG TITLED, "HOLDING ON"



2ND: CLAUDE DUMAS

PLAYED "CLAIR DE LUNE" ON PIANO WHILST ENTERTAINING THE CROWD



3RD: JUDE WILLIAMS

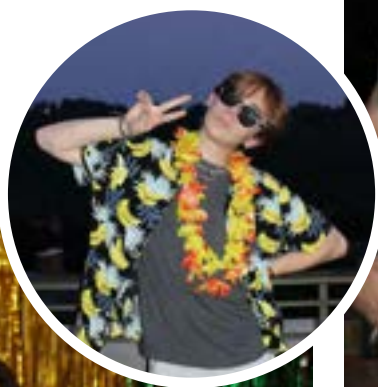
DANCED TO FIRST CLASS X GROVE ST. PARTY MASHUP



JUST DANCE

Suitcases Packed, Tacky Tourist Shirts On,
and Dance Moves Ready

PHOTOS BY BRIGGS BROWN



PM Classes



AGS 2025

"You are what you are, and you ain't what you ain't" -John Prine (Forrest Smith)

"Take a picture of all the people close to us."
-Lizzy McAlpine (McCarley Moorer)

"Riding in on the wind and rain"
-Luke Combs (Lexi Wright)

"Pirates on a boat, pirates on a boat"
-Yuno Miles (Collin Bendolph)



UNSTOPPABLE

STORY BY SETH HITCHCOCK / PHOTOS BY NICK BATSON

LEADERSHIP IS AN IMPORTANT QUALITY, AND STUDENTS IN THE LEADERSHIP development class got to empower themselves through their leadership abilities. Students learned about what it takes to be a leader along with the qualities that make a leader great. Student discussion and involvement played a huge role as class members got to reflect on what they believe defined a leader. One activity had students building towers with marshmallows and spaghetti noodles. The goal was to see who could make the tallest tower. This exercise required students to communicate and work with each other to achieve this goal. Another activity had students discussing with each other their strengths and weaknesses. Now these students can work better as a team when taking on challenges. Strong leaders are always needed. Sometimes leaders disagree. The students in leadership development had opportunities to learn how to communicate and learn from each other despite their unique personalities. Now these students have the skills to become leaders in their local communities. These future leaders can move forward in life to accomplish anything they desire.



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DAVID PRESLEY AND
DR. RILEY	SAM HECKER
WESTMORELAND
.....	CLAIRE JEONG
ROB ASHWORTH
.....	VIHAAN PATEL
DANIEL BENTON
.....	MOHAMMAD QASIM
ZARRY BINFORD
.....	ISHAN SHAH
GRAYSON BOU
.....	GAVIN SWINT
KRISTEN
BRANSCOMB	KATE TOMPKINS
.....
ALLIE CAMPBELL	SARAH FRANCES
.....	WARREN
JOSELYN RENTERIA
CHAVEZ	JACOB WILKINSON
.....
AVA DORMINEY	JUDE WILLIAMS
.....





AGS Favorite Lyrics

**"There's a guy who lifts you up
when you're down, always got
a smile, always lends a hand"**
-Daniel B (Gavin Swint)

**"It's you, it's you, it's all for you
/ Everything I do."**-Lana Del Rey
(Lillian Greenwalt)

"Have you ever tried this one?"
-Sabrina Carpenter
(Sarah Frances Warren)



MY MEDEA

STORY BY KRISTAN SEALIE / PHOTOS BY NICK BATSON

THE MEDEA SEMINAR, LED BY DR. RANDY TODD, WAS an exciting and enriching experience for AGS students. In this afternoon seminar, students read and analyzed the story of Medea, exploring such themes as justice, morality, ethics and more.

Dr. Todd emphasized how he just wanted the class to try to understand the characters and then form their own opinions about the story, rather than fully analyze the plot and the writings of Euripides. Themes like good vs. evil and innocence vs. guilty prompted students to really consider what makes a person labeled a certain way.

One highlight about this seminar was holding a mock trial to determine whether Medea was guilty for the crimes committed in the story. Students really enjoyed their time in this class as they got to dress up in togas (ancient Greek attire) and socialize among their peers.

Through this classic, the students were able to broaden their perspectives on life and human morality, changing the way they approach life.

AGS Favorite Lyrics

"I am unwritten" -Natasha Bedingfield (Gabi Alvidrez)

"Long live all the magic we made" -Taylor Swift (Ava Dorminey)

"Oo-de-lally, Oo-de-lally, golly, what a day..." -Roger Miller (Mason Ray)





INSTRUCTOR:
 DR. RANDY TODD

 BROOKE BAKER

 COLLINS COBB

 LUKE DOIRON, JR.

 LILLIAN
 GREENWALT

 AVERY GROS

 MICHAEL HOWELL

 RISHI REDDY

 ZACH SLOAN

 MARI WENDORF

 CAROLINE YORK



FIX YOU

STORY BY LANA FORCHILLI / PHOTOS BY NICK BATSON AND DR. TYLER WILLIAMS

INSTRUCTORS:

DR. TYLER WILLIAMS

DR. BETH AHO

DR. WES JOHNSON

DR. MAEGEN
POWELL

DR. KELLY ADKINS

STUDENTS:

JATIN BANNA

MARY KATE DIMLER

LANA FORCHILLI

ARABELLA
GLASGOW

SHEA GOBER

TAYLOR GUILD

PAYTON HANEY

CAROLINE
ELIZABETH HOPPER

SARA SAHILE
MARCATO

AKASH PAREKH

ISABELLA RUSSELL

MILLER ROGERS

SOPHIA SMOTRYS

JOSH VALTOS II

LEXI WRIGHT

TALKING ABOUT

nursing and medicine is something you typically would think of when you see the words “health professions”, and in this class a nursing career is something you definitely might consider when deciding which route to go with getting your college degree. In this class we walked through the ins and outs of many different health professions and their various aspects. Even when you’re not actively learning something, the instructors were always up and moving around. They would talk to students and share their experiences, and how to be successful with these career choices.

From talking about kinematics, anatomy, physical therapy, physicians assistant, speech/language pathology, and interprofessional

simulations. On Monday the class was introduced to physical therapy/anatomy. They learned parts of the legs and how the muscles shorten and extend when moving. Then students were asked to practice these skills by determining and replicating the exercises shown. Proceeding to next class they were taught about physical training and how being in shape will indicate how well you perform different physical activities. From bench pressing to pushing light-up buttons for reaction time, every skill that is potentially beneficial could improve your playing time.

In the next class session we got the opportunity to learn what physicians’ assistants do. We reviewed Dr. Johnson’s career and how important surgeons are in the medical field.



Dr. Johnson showed us how to stitch incisions, tie knots with a string, which is helpful in surgery, because if you are able to stitch or staple properly, then being able to tie a knot around the artery/liver, etc. can be life saving. We also got to utilize simple doctor office tools like blood pressure cuffs, examining each others’ ears/mouth, and even looking at real surgical tools.



We also got to experiment with robotic cameras and other medical tools used in surgery.

Another day we got to meet several different speech therapists. The class took, a memory test,

learned how to spell our names in vowel language, and was able to see various tools used for communication. These activities were fun to learn, especially testing everyone’s hearing in our class.



AGS Favorite Lyrics

"Cause I, I love you,
I want you to know,
that I, I love you, I'll
never let you go"
-Tenth Avenue North
(Daniel Benton)



UNWRITTEN

STORY BY KRISTAN SEALIE

PHOTOS BY NICK BATSON AND BRIGGS BROWN

INSTRUCTOR:

DR. JEANNA
WESTMORELAND

.....
ISIAH ALEXANDER

.....
DALEYGRACE

ALFORD

.....
BRIGGS BROWN

.....
TUCKER BROWN

.....
ABIGAIL DONATELLI

.....
EMME DRESSLER

.....
CLAUDE DUMAS

.....
OLIVIA HAZELRIG

.....
MASON MACKIEWICZ

.....
ADDISON NORWOOD

.....
GIOVANNI RUIZ-VEGA

.....
AIDAN SALDANHA

.....
KRISTAN SEALIE

.....
RYANN SEALIE

.....
FORREST SMITH

.....
MADDIE SOMERS

.....
LAYLA TOWNSEND

.....
AINSLEY WADE

.....
SILAS WITHROW

GETTING YOUR CREATIVE JUICES FLOWING CAN BE A challenge, no matter the task. Dr. Jeanna Westmoreland led the AGS “Creativity” seminar to help students overcome creative blocks through a series of engaging exercises.

One memorable activity involved members of the class attempting to untie knots using only one hand, without ever letting go. This exercise pushed them to think outside the box and come up with inventive and innovative solutions.

Several field trips were taken. They included a trip to the Birmingham Art Museum, where exhibits of different cultures and periods of time were on display.

By the end of the seminar, students were left with sharpened problem-solving skills and a more creative mindset.

Layla, Maddie, and Isiah having fun in a tree.





Briggs, Forrest, Silas, and Mason after completing the rope activity.



AGS Favorite Lyrics

“Love isn’t big, kid, it’s little and quiet. Let’s do today, I think you’ll turn out to like it.” -AJR
 (Brooke Baker)

“This can’t be the end” -Good kid
 (Alex Dobbin)



TAKE IT EASY

By MAE LI BLANKENSHIP

PHOTOS BY MAE LI BLANKENSHIP AND BRIGGS BROWN AND NICK BATSON

DR. TIMOTHY SUTTON

MAE LI BLANKENSHIP

CATI EPPERSON

COLT HANCOCK

CARLY HENDERSON

SHELBY HEUGEL

BEN KLECKER

CHLOE LAMBERT

WALKER MARTIN

ABBY RENZELMAN

COLE WALDREP

LEISURE INVITES US TO slow down and discover harmony between the things we enjoy and doing hard work. This year the AGS students in the Exploring Leisure class learned about the way philosophers like Aristotle defined and explored leisure known as Aristotelian Leisure.

Cole, Walker, and Colt, enjoy fro-yo after their long hike.



The Art of Leisure class from left to right: Walker, Cole, Ben, Colt, Abigail, Chloe, Shelby, Mae LI, Cat, and Carly with Dr. Sutton.

They learned the premise that you must work to have leisure. AGS students read excerpts from books like Josef Pieper's "Leisure: The Basis of Culture" and "Nicomachean Ethics". To continue their exploration the class watched Terrance Malick's "Tree of Life", a

Sci-fi movie that reinforced the idea of having to find the balance between having grace and pleasure versus having to make a living in a harsh world. The movie allowed students to explore the deeper meaning of a leisurely life. One class period, students were able to find a solitary,

quiet place on campus and pick a verse or scripture passage that was important to them and for one hour they meditated and thought about how they could apply this to their lives and also include a few minutes for prayer. And like any good AGS seminar, the class took a couple of fun field trips. The first field trip the class went on a hike at Moss Rock Preserve and enjoyed an afternoon in nature. The other field trip was to the Birmingham Museum of Art where students had time to walk around the various art galleries and explore different eras and styles of art. While they walked around

they had to find one piece of art that they felt a connection with and evaluate the piece based on the elements of Aristotelian leisure principles. Though the Exploring Leisure class only met on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, they were able to have meaningful discussions about life, and learn about what it means to relax. They talked about what makes them happy and how it affects our brains. Even though this class was more relaxed than some afternoon seminars, students enjoyed slowing down in the afternoon and having the opportunity to do some deep thinking.



The class gathers in front of the Birmingham Museum of Art.



Cati and Abigail contemplate art at the Birmingham Museum of Art.



Shelby, Mae Li, and Cati having a blast on the hike at Moss Rock.

AGS Favorite Lyrics

“Just Know the Kingdom of God is within you, even though the battle is bound to continue” -The Avett Brothers (Camille Wood)

“So I’ll push myself through tears, fly my flag through all my fears, “Not one less” is what I scream, I will never be a part of your regime.” - Ken Ashcorp (Ruiz-Vega)

“You drew stars around my scars, but now I’m bleeding” -Taylor Swift (Arabella Glasgow)



MAN IN THE MIRROR

Serving with a servant's heart.

By ALEX DOBBINS

PHOTOS BY NICK BATSON AND ALEX DOBBINS

INSTRUCTOR:
DEBBY HARALSON

GABI ALVIDREZ

ROWAN BAGGETT

CIEL COMA

MARIE CRANE

ALEX DOBBINS

MADDY FROST

SETH HITCHCOCK

MCCARLEY MOORER

SOFIA NUNEZ

MASON RAY

ABIGAIL ROARK

SARAH TIDWELL

MARY WALKER

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO be a servant leader? That's what students in the Servant Leadership seminar were tasked with finding out for themselves. The class began with talking about the ten qualities of servant leadership: listening, empathy, healing, conceptualization, self-awareness, stewardship, foresight, building community, commitment to growth, and persuasion. The students learned that good leaders have all of these, but that they are not perfect in all of them. Taught by Dr. Debby Haralson, this class explores what it means to be a

servant leader by talking to leaders in the surrounding areas.

The class first went to talk to a servant leader in the community, Pastor Crews, who is serving at Pillar of Hope. This organization serves the impoverished in the outskirts of Birmingham. The non-profit does this with a community garden, holding mass, as well as building up the community through opportunities to serve in it. The students asked Pastor Crews many questions and were very excited to tour the building.

The students were also given the opportunity



to volunteer in the Birmingham area, with places such as The Exceptional Foundation and The Grace Klein Community. At the Exceptional Foundation, students interacted with those who have intellectual disabilities, children and older people alike, talking and playing games with them. The students finally served at Grace

Klein, a food shelter for the insecure. That day, Grace Klein was holding a drive-thru food line, and the students stood in the sweltering heat, handing out boxes of food.

This class exposed students to servant leaders in the community and allowed them to find the value in these ministries. As a result, students were able to make their own definition

of what being a servant leader is and what it looks like. As Mason Ray puts it, "Servant leadership is anti-leadership. In regular leadership, you put yourself above others, whereas with servant leadership, you put others before yourself. It requires mental and physical fortitude, a strong foundation, and above all, a heart to serve others."



**"SERVANT LEADERSHIP...IT'S CHOOSING EVERYONE TO THRIVE, NOT JUST YOURSELF."
-GABI ALVIDREZ**



Pastor Crews listens to questions.



The group works to hand out food to the food insecure at Grace Klein.

AGS Favorite Lyrics

"Get up when you feel it, it's your chance to shine! You gotta strut like you mean it, freeeee your mind"

-Cheetah Girls (Sofia Nunez)

"Anyway don't be a stranger" -Phoebe Bridgers (Briggs Brown)

"When we're old and have to leave the Earth, I'll still remember all I've learned from you." -Faye Webster (Stacy Rose)

"I don't want the children of another man, to have the eyes of the girl I won't forget" -Sombr (Emme Dressler)



COOKING UP SOMETHING GOOD

BY RYANN SEALIE / PHOTOS BY NICK BATSON

INSTRUCTOR:
JOANNA BRADELY
.....
COLLIN BENDOLPH
.....
POTTER BOUTWELL
.....
ADEN BRINKMAN
.....
JORDAN FORRESTER
.....
RIELY FUZZELL
.....
KATHERINE HEARD
.....
KIT HEARD
.....
CONNOR
MOORHOUSE
.....
TRIPP RALEIGH III
.....
STACY ROSE
.....
EMALYN
SMITHERMAN
.....
JOSEPH SPENCER
.....
CATE WOODALL
.....
CAMILLE WOOD
.....

THE GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP STUDENTS HAVE BEEN learning what it means to be a world citizen. This ranges from learning about different cultures and languages, to sampling international foods. They took a field trip to multiple ethnic grocery stores where they searched for unfamiliar foods. In another class they met a guest from Central America who taught them how to make her favorite dishes. The second week, they went on an additional field trip to the Art Museum. During this outing they saw art from various countries. This experience expanded their knowledge of how life was portrayed in many cultures. The class also visited the Holocaust education center one afternoon.





AGS Favorite Lyrics

"You find out who your friends are, somebody's gonna drop everything" -Tracy Lawrence (Colt Hancock)

"Shaking the industry quaking reality making it iconic" -Stray Kids (Isabella Russell)

"Life is precious every minute, and more precious with you in it" -Matt Maltese (Cati Epperson)

PLAYBACK



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Playback is inside look at the Alabama Governer's School and all the adventures and memories shared by all the students.