

**Award winners at Pickens schools**



**Bus Safety Contest Winner – Jasper Middle School student Madison Whitley, winner of the school system's Bus Safety Poster Contest, is shown with JMS art teacher Allison Naples.**



**Dr. Lula Mae Perry presents a plaque to Jasper Middle School Principal Neil Howell for the highest yearly attendance for the Pickens County schools.**

# Hunter education course options

Do you need the hunter education course before deer season arrives? The Georgia Department of Natural Resources' Wildlife Resources Division offers three ways to make that happen: an 8-hour online course followed by a 2-hour review or the 10-hour traditional classroom course. "Because of the importance of the information learned in a hunter education course, our agency has made efforts to meet the needs of many users," says Walter Lane, hunter development program manager with the Wildlife Resources Division. "The online courses offer more scheduling flexibility as they can be done at any time of day. And for those who prefer a traditional method, the classroom courses provide a face-to-face opportunity with instructors."

The classroom course is free of charge. The three available online courses each require a fee (from \$9.95 - \$24.95) but all are "pass or don't pay" courses. Fees for these courses are charged by and collected by the independent course developer. If the online course vendor fees are an obstacle, students can obtain a CD-ROM by contacting their local DNR law enforcement of-

Complete. Completion of a hunter education course is required for any person born on or after Jan. 1, 1961, who:

- purchases a season hunting license in Georgia;
- is at least 12 years old and hunts without adult supervision;
- hunts big game (deer, turkey, bear) on a wildlife management area.

The only exceptions include any person who:

- purchases a short-term hunting license, such as the Apprentice License or the 3-day Hunting and Fishing Combo License (as opposed to a season license);
- is hunting on his or her own land, or that of his or her parents or legal guardians.

For more information, go to [www.gohuntgeorgia.com/hunting/education](http://www.gohuntgeorgia.com/hunting/education) or call 770-761-3010.

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**Another Rodney Dangerfield?**

# Back to School: One Last Time

By David R. Altman  
Progress Contributor

A grandfather in the classroom? Are you kidding me?

It's no joke. After 39 years (almost to the day) that I graduated from Georgia State, I'm back in the classroom this fall. Apprehensive? Yes. Excited? Yes! Another Rodney Dangerfield? I hope not!

When I got my college degree, Hank Aaron had just broken Babe Ruth's home run record and Richard Nixon had just resigned as president. It was the year of the worst tornado outbreak in north Georgia history when an April storm killed 6 and injured 30 late in the late afternoon across Pickens, Cherokee and Dawson counties. It was the year "The Sting" won the Oscar for best picture, the Steelers won their first of four Super Bowls and the first Georgia Marble Festival was still six years away.

Now, at 61, a lifetime lived away from college (though incredibly influenced by it), I return to the "scene of the crime."

Georgia State has changed more than just a little, from an enrollment of 13,000 in 1974 to more than 32,000 this year (second only to UGA).

The GSU Alumni building was the old Atlanta City Auditorium where, as a freshman, I watched Muhammad Ali regain his title by knocking out Jerry Quarry in 1970. And, more than a few nights I stayed after class to watch groups like The Allman Brothers and The Who perform. Forgive the reminiscing, as I am trying to avoid a trip down memory lane. As the brilliant young Georgia poet Clifford Brooks reminds us, "Nostalgia is ruinous, the slow death of better days."

But we have to look back occasionally, as it provides perspective - and blessings we can actually count.

My degree allowed me to pursue a career in broadcast journalism and later in corporate communication. Now, I'm writing again, this time around for this wonderful newspaper. I am working on a collection of poetry, so my writing and journalistic life has come full circle.

Do you know that nearly 400,000 Americans over the age of 55 are enrolled in college? According to the NEA, "Some retirees go back to school to prepare for a second career or an advanced degree...yet another group simply relishes the pleasures of learning for its own sake - especially when exams and term papers are optional!" I fall into that last category.

I wanted to allow plenty of time to travel with my beautiful wife of 39 years, to be around our daughters and their families, to keep fishing bass tournaments and doing volunteer work with the homeless. And, of course, to enjoy those cool mountain mornings on Sassafras Mountain. If there is time left over, my wife and I will sit in our recliners to watch Downton Abbey, The Walking Dead and, more recently, the final episodes of Breaking Bad (not to mention football).

Going back to school is not cheap. If memories serves (a dicey assumption), I think it ran about \$400 a semester back in 1974 for a full schedule. This time around I'm taking just one course, and it set me back about \$1,300. Of course, the cost of gasoline was 53 cents a gallon back then, and I used a lot of it to commute to Georgia State.

College keeps the mind engaged - and in touch with our changing world. It is so easy to get isolated as we grow older, often falling victim to cynicism and negativity. Grumpy old men (and women) contribute little to their families and even less to the world. We must keep our minds (and hearts) open to experiencing new things - and college is just one way to do that.

As I sit in my creative writing class, nine floors above the sounds of sirens on Decatur Street, I try to remember what it was like in 1974. Just like me back then, these bright kids around the classroom have no idea what they are in for.

I had no way of knowing that I would live a life after college that would include an extraordinary marriage, three beautiful daughters and two incredibly cute grandkids. I got to travel, seeing cities far away from my small-town Ohio roots: places like London and Capetown and Hong Kong. I got to go backstage with Tom Petty and Chuck Leavell. I've walked three daughters down the aisle and known their unconditional love. I have been richly blessed. Like Tennyson's Ulysses, I have become "...a part of all that I have

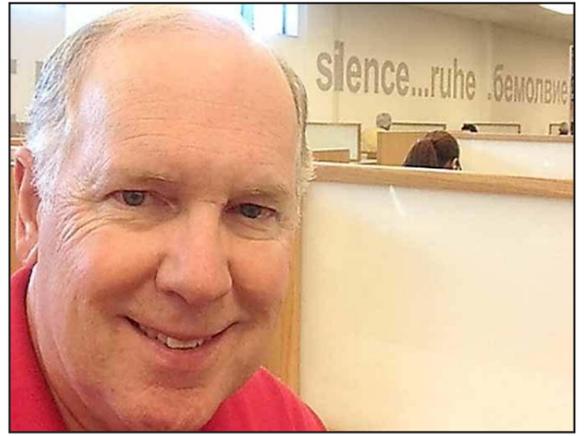
met."

I remember my father, who graduated from Ohio State on my 13th birthday, and how much he loved the classroom. But his decision to put his family first created a 'late start' on both his education and his career. I have lived long enough to understand the sacrifices that he and my mother made.

So my dad, were he still with us, might ask (like Dylan) "Where will you go now, my blue-eyed son?"

And I would answer, "I'm going back to school where the buildings are different but the heart is the same."

Older now, I carry a backpack over my shoulder, trying foolishly to jam a Yukon into a Yugo-sized parking space, back aching, cursing Atlanta's traffic, still balding and highly uncertain of what lies ahead.



The author in the GSU Library: Quiet please.

But there is one certainty I know: nothing is more exciting than learning. And I am living proof of that.

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