From empty field to diverse campus

Computer science graduate Pradeep Raman ’91 is GM for Microsoft in Trinidad

Savannah Winds: Behind the scenes of a world premiere

A magazine of Armstrong Atlantic State University
About this issue

Thousands of motorists and Savannah residents rumble past the two main entrances to the Armstrong campus along Abercorn Street every day without seeing what lies beyond the Armstrong marquee and the few buildings visible from the road. Many residents, including alumni, have perhaps not stepped foot on the Southside campus for years and are unaware that yes, we educate, house and feed some 1,500 resident students—in addition to more than 6,100 non-resident students—who enjoy modern facilities built in recent years. Bill Dawers, local newspaper columnist and Armstrong faculty member, writes about the physical changes to the campus and how far we’ve come since introducing the first housing facilities in 2002.

We spotlight Pradeep Raman ’91 and his wife Caroline McCracken Raman ’93 who met as students. Pradeep, a proud Armstrong alumnus who earned a degree in computer science, now serves as general manager for Microsoft in Trinidad and Tobago.

In fall 2010, as part of Armstrong’s 75th anniversary celebration, Savannah Winds, a community symphony in residence at Armstrong, performed the world premiere of A Savannah Symphony by composer Philip Sparke. We take a glimpse at what went on behind the premiere and how members of Savannah Winds stepped up to bring this special treat to our campus and the city.

Please send your comments and ideas for future stories to Francisco.Duque@armstrong.edu.

—Francisco Duque

PRESIDENT’S LETTER

Dear Friends,

As we complete another academic year, the second since my start at Armstrong, I would like to share with you some thoughts about where we are as an institution and what we may expect over the coming months, especially in regards to Armstrong’s new strategic plan and the fiscal outlook for 2011-2012.

In recent months we have developed a strategic plan, “Charting Excellence Together,” to help us provide a purposeful and clear path for the university in years to come. The plan, which was built with broad participation from faculty, staff, students and external constituents, identifies the vision, mission, values and five strategic goals for the university. I invite you to read more about the plan on page 12.

The next step, to be completed in the coming academic year, will be to identify campus initiatives and action plans that will help us achieve those five strategic goals. This process will involve departmental plans, discussions across the campus and a committee of faculty and staff to monitor and report our progress.

Looking forward to the 2011-2012 fiscal year, we will continue to be as fiscally prudent as we can, while working with the Governor and the Georgia Legislature in support of higher education across our state. As many of you may be aware, recent reductions to Georgia’s HOPE scholarship will bring additional financial challenges to our students. We are, however, moving forward with optimism, maintaining strong fiscal management and continuing to seek alternative resources of funding, while continuing to provide excellent educational opportunities for our students.

Last year we ushered in Armstrong’s 75th anniversary and today, as we look forward to the future, we are proud of our history, strong foundation and our record of service to our students, the city and the state. Our new strategic plan will serve as the lens through which we envision Armstrong’s next 75 years and reaffirm our commitment to being a teaching-first university with deep and strong ties to the City of Savannah.

With warm regards,

Linda M. Bleicken
President
Campus News

Treasuring Savannah

On March 5, some 224 students, faculty, staff and alumni fanned out across the city in support of Treasure Savannah Day of Service, providing volunteer service at the Union Mission, West Broad Street YMCA and Keep Savannah Beautiful. The second Treasure Savannah Day of Service built upon a new tradition born with support from Armstrong President Linda M. Bleicken in fall 2010. Volunteers, including President Bleicken, helped prepare gardens for spring planting at the West Broad YMCA, cleaned out an old Union Mission house in midtown and cleaned the grounds near the Kingdom Life Christian Fellowship Church. “We rely heavily on volunteers, especially for the big projects,” said Peter Doliber, executive director/CEO of West Broad Street YMCA. “To have 40 people come through for four hours makes a huge difference in our ability to serve the community. It means the world to us.”

World perspectives

As one of several events providing world perspectives during the year, the Office of International Education invited Alina Fernandez, Fidel Castro’s daughter, to speak on campus during International Week last fall. Fernandez spoke to a crowd of students, faculty and local residents about her experiences growing up in Cuba and the island’s political environment during the 1960s and 1970s. She is the author of Castro’s Daughter: An Exile’s Memoir of Cuba. Similarly, Joseph Sebarenzi, former head of the Rwandan Parliament, made a presentation to students and faculty during International Day of Peace, September 21.

Sailing away on St. Patrick’s Day

Doctors of Letters

Two recent recipients of Honorary Doctor of Letters awarded by Armstrong include Frank Barragan Jr. and Alva B. Lines in May and December 2010, respectively. Barragan, a Savannah native, graduated from Armstrong Junior College in 1938. He served in World War II with the U.S. Eighth Air Force and later became president of the North Carolina Natural Gas Corporation and chairman emeritus.

Lines was among a small group of students who enrolled in 1935, the first year of Armstrong Junior College, and graduated with the inaugural class in 1937. He went on to attend Emory University and also served in World War II before returning to Atlanta to start his own company, Southeast Microfilming.

Both Barragan and Lines are members of Armstrong’s Heritage Society.

“The Armstrong Atlantic,” a student-designed and built pirate ship float, sailed away during the Savannah St. Patrick’s Day Parade in March for the second consecutive year. The 2011 Homecoming king and queen Austin Jackson and Whitney Maxwell captained the ship and greeted thousands of tourists and residents along the parade route.
$37,204 go to science scholarships

Twenty-two science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) scholars were selected from a large pool of applicants majoring in biology, chemistry, computer science, information technology, mathematics and physics to receive scholarships for fall semester 2010. A total of $37,204 in scholarships was awarded as part of a National Science Foundation $483,760 grant awarded to Armstrong in 2007. The scholarships average just under $1,700 each and cover tuition, books and fees. Recipients also get additional support services such as tutoring, internship programs and career counseling. “An important aspect of the scholarships is that they allow students to decrease the amount of hours they have to work to make ends meet,” said Suzy Carpenter, associate professor of chemistry. She added that the scholarships are critical in addressing Georgia’s shortage of science and technology workers.

A Hollywood producer’s take

Hollywood producer and Savannah ice cream parlor owner Stratton Leopold visited the campus last fall to provide an insider’s view of Hollywood and the movie industry to students. Leopold, a Savannah native and former Armstrong student, has produced hits such as Mission Impossible III, The Wolfman and The General’s Daughter during his 30-year career in film. He has worked with the likes of Tom Cruise, Laurence Fishburne, Anthony Hopkins and John Travolta. Jessica Armstrong, a sophomore majoring in theatre, enjoyed hearing from him. “I love theatre but I’m looking at getting into film,” said Armstrong. “It really helped getting inside information from Mr. Leopold.”

Third World encounter

Armstrong and Savannah hosted the 28th annual conference of the Association of Third World Studies in October. Michael Hall, professor of history, served as site coordinator, organizing the logistics of the three-day event that attracted more than 125 scholars, representatives of government agencies, and other professionals in the area of Third World development. José de Arimatéia da Cruz and Daniel Skidmore-Hess in political science presented papers. Also presenting papers were three history graduate students: Corrie Hand, Duncan Pindar and Matt Moyer. The organization serves as a forum to discuss and analyze Third World studies and advance understanding of the forces shaping its future. Savannah’s historic sites provided a rich backdrop for the event, which opened with the sound of cannon fire and an outdoor, country-style dinner at Old Fort Jackson, following opening remarks from Anne Thompson, Armstrong interim vice president of academic affairs. Armstrong President Linda M. Bleicken addressed organization members during the awards ceremony.

Armstrong virtual tour

A virtual tour of the Armstrong campus is available to prospective students, their parents and anyone with an Internet connection. The university partnered with YourCampus360 last fall to begin offering the virtual walking tour. “We are making available a new online tool for prospective students and their families to give them the opportunity to learn about Armstrong before they set foot on campus,” said Brenda Forbis, Armstrong director of marketing and communications. “We are confident that once students see our campus and learn about our academic programs and student life, they will be compelled to visit us in Savannah or apply online.” Visit armstrong.edu/virtualtour.
Gifts establish scholarship, golf endowment

Two recent gifts to the Armstrong Atlantic State University Foundation have established an endowed scholarship to benefit political science students and created the first endowed scholarship for athletics, benefiting the Armstrong men’s and women’s golf teams.

The José de Arimateía da Cruz endowed scholarship will provide an annual scholarship to a full-time student in political science who maintains a 3.0 GPA. The scholarship also honors da Cruz, current associate professor of international relations and comparative politics.

A second gift established the Armstrong Golf Fund, which will support the purchase of golf bags and equipment for the men’s and women’s golf teams. The scholarship was established through supporters of Michael Butler, head coach for both teams. Butler is in his eighth season as coach of the men’s team and enters his third season coaching the women’s team. He has led the Armstrong men to six straight NCAA regional appearances and an NCAA Division II National Championship Runner-Up finish in 2005.

To learn more about the Armstrong Foundation or to establish a scholarship, contact Gail Rountree, Office of Advancement, at 912.344.2710.

Community partners for indicators

A partnership between Armstrong, the City of Savannah, the United Way of the Coastal Empire and Chatham County has led to the establishment of the Savannah Chatham Community Indicators database (www.savannah-chatham-indicators.org), a tool to help local government and community leaders measure progress and assess needs in four key areas—education and youth development, health and wellness, economic independence and regionalism. Michael Toma, professor of economics and director of the Armstrong Center for Regional Analysis, is the lead researcher. Research assistance and technical support were provided by several Armstrong faculty and staff and 20 students, who conducted telephone surveys of thousands of community residents.

The database will be continually updated as research data becomes available. “These indicators may be used to establish a baseline for identifying priorities, developing solutions and monitoring progress toward an improved quality of life in our community,” said Toma.

Moot Court team wins national award

The Armstrong team of senior William Grimm (left) and junior LaRon Dunham (right) won first place in the written competition, beating out 19 other collegiate teams from across the country, during the American Collegiate Moot Court Association’s National Tournament hosted by Tulane University Law School in January. Dunham and Grimm placed among the top sixteen teams in regional competition at the University of Tampa in November, leading up to the national tournament. Becky da Cruz (center), Armstrong assistant professor of criminal justice, serves as Moot Court coach. HunterMaclean sponsors the Armstrong Moot Court program. For information on program sponsorships, please contact the Office of Advancement at 912.344.2541.

NCATE accreditation

The College of Education has earned continued accreditation through spring 2017 under performance-oriented standards of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), the organization responsible for professional accreditation of teacher education. Professional accreditation by NCATE is a way to ensure that schools of education are graduating well-qualified teachers ready for today’s classrooms. “It is extremely satisfying that Armstrong’s professional education unit has met very high national standards,” said Patricia Wachholz, dean of the College of Education.
A Savannah Symphony

The world premiere of *A Savannah Symphony*, composed and conducted by Philip Sparke and performed by the Savannah Winds last November, presented a rare opportunity for local musicians and Armstrong students to be involved in the premiere of a symphony honoring Savannah’s history.

A community-based ensemble in residence at Armstrong, Savannah Winds consists of more than 100 local accomplished musicians, including high-level music students at Armstrong, members of the military, band directors, talented high school students and other residents of the region. In 2009, the Savannah Winds Board of Directors, recognizing the talent of its symphony, decided to commission an original composition that became part of Armstrong’s 75th anniversary celebration last year.

“We had been ruminating on the idea for a while, but we had never taken the project head on,” said Robert Paredi, at the time chair of the board. “We had no idea about how to raise money and no idea about how much money we would need.”

But Paredi and two other board members, Bob Slagel and John Sobke, a retired U.S. Army general, formed a core group that led a fundraising effort to make it happen.

“We worked closely with the Armstrong Foundation, Gail (Rountree) and her staff,” said Paredi. The Courtney Knight Gaines Foundation provided major support.

It fell on Mark B. Johnson, Armstrong assistant professor of music and music director and conductor of Savannah Winds, to identify a composer who would be able to compose a symphony and be in town to conduct the premiere performance in late November 2010. He turned to British composer and musician Philip Sparke.

“Over the years, Savannah Winds has had the opportunity to perform works by Mr. Sparke,” Johnson said. “We were familiar with his work, how he writes and the level of difficulty of his pieces.”

It also helped that Sparke, an associate of the Royal College of Music in London, had been in Savannah before and had a working relationship with Johnson. By late August, Sparke had delivered a complete music score that honors Savannah’s history. Johnson worked with Savannah Winds on the piece from September through November. Sparke and the musicians rehearsed together only once prior to the premiere on November 30.

The symphony’s three movements interpret some of the city’s most notable events in its history, including the landing of General James Oglethorpe, the invention of the cotton gin in Savannah and the city’s architecture.

“The second movement begins with a sonic replication of the cotton gin that is simply brilliant,” said Paredi, who has been a member of the symphony since 1995 and plays the principal trumpet.

“We had never had the opportunity to premiere a serious piece of work and to have done so under the direction of the composer was pretty noteworthy,” said Paredi.

Savannah Winds performs a series of seven concerts throughout the year that generate funds in support of music scholarships for deserving Armstrong students. For information about giving opportunities in support of the Savannah Winds or about supporting or establishing scholarships, please contact Gail Rountree at 912.344.2710.
Best-selling novelist Danielle Steel has purchased two paintings by artist Pang-Chie Hsu, associate professor of painting and drawing at Armstrong. Steel obtained the paintings in 2010 from the Andrea Schwartz Gallery in San Francisco, where she also curates art shows. The two works are part of a series of 20 paintings by Hsu exploring themes related to Chinese paper money.

In August, Hsu will collaborate with Steel in a group exhibition, “One Night Stand,” at the Andrea Schwartz Gallery. The exhibit will feature another collection of paintings by Hsu. The collection is a reflection of his personal interpretation of online dating services and the photos posted by members.

“Our generation has its own way of showing its physicality and I’m trying to use a non-art form to create something artistic and be able to have my own perspective,” he said.

During the 2009-10 academic year, Hsu took a leave of absence from his teaching duties at Armstrong to promote his work, all oil on canvas paintings, through a series of exhibitions at art galleries worldwide. Galleries which have shown his paintings, in addition to the Andrea Schwartz, include Taipei Fine Art Museum, Taiwan; Anderson Museum of Contemporary Art, Roswell, N.M.; the Hooks-Epstein Gallery, Houston, Texas; Thomasville Cultural Center, Thomasville, Ga.; and the Herter Gallery at the University of Massachusetts. Savannah’s Jepson Center commissioned a solo installation of his work in 2007.

A native of Taiwan, Hsu is a Fellow at the Camargo Foundation in Cassis, France and was selected to participate in the Roswell Artist-in-Residency Program in Roswell, N.M. In 2008, the Pollock-Krasner Foundation awarded him a grant. He is also the recipient of a Joan Mitchell Foundation grant. Harper’s Magazine featured Hsu’s work in September 2010.

Seeking notables

The Office of Alumni Relations is seeking nominations for notable alumni to be honored for professional and personal accomplishments. The Notable Alumni program was started in 2010 as part of the university’s 75th anniversary celebration and will continue to recognize alumni during on-campus events in the future. Members of the Armstrong Alumni Association, students, faculty and staff are invited to submit nominations. A form is available on the Armstrong alumni Web page at www.armstrong.edu/alumni. For more information, please contact Scott Joyner at Scott.Joyner@armstrong.edu. Deadline for nominations is July 1.

Order your piece of history

Order a copy of Janet Stone’s From the Mansion to the University: A History of Armstrong Atlantic State University 1935-2010 for $29.95 by calling 912.344.2603, or visiting the Armstrong Bookstore or E. Shaver Bookseller in Savannah. The book can be ordered online at www.bookstore.armstrong.edu.
A visitor to the Armstrong campus in 2000 would likely have been impressed by many things, including the diversity of the student body, the spacious campus with its towering pines, and the bustle of activity at gathering points like Lane Library and Shearouse Plaza.

But with just over 100 students living on campus in 2000, Armstrong’s identity was clearly as a commuter school. The vast majority of the students were from the Savannah area. Campus life was obviously limited.

A visitor today finds a radically changed institution.

The new century has brought impressive buildings like the Science Center and the Student Recreation Center. The 268-acre campus is now literally an arboretum.

Perhaps most importantly, residence halls like the new Windward Commons are home to 1,500 students from around the world. The new Student Union offers a gorgeous food-court style cafeteria, ample meeting space for the proliferating student organizations, and a gracious lobby—humming with activity throughout the day—that looks across an open plaza to the residence halls.

The changes have brought a new energy to the student body and to the faculty. Those who have witnessed Armstrong’s growth over the last decade see a university that is both more grounded and more expansive. There’s a stronger sense of place, as well as more connections to the region, state, and world.

Of course, Armstrong’s evolution didn’t just happen over the last decade. John Duncan, a Savannah icon and longtime history professor, began teaching at Armstrong in 1965—just before the move to the current campus and just after the institution’s elevation from Junior College to State College. He retired in 1997 from Armstrong Atlantic State University. He noted the dramatic changes over his 32 years: “I feel a little like Caesar Augustus who found Rome a city of brick and left it a city of marble.” But Duncan quickly added that the relatively recent addition of residence halls has been crucial for Armstrong’s identity and mission.

Joe Buck, who came to Armstrong in 1968 and retired as vice president for student affairs emeritus at the end of 2006, began working at Armstrong just three months after the first four-year class graduated. He remembers when the spacious campus had just 1,500 students, and he was also here to see the greater sense of place established over the last decade.

“The move of residential students on campus created a much more diverse population—ethnically, economically and educationally,” Buck said. “When I came to Armstrong, everyone was local; sorority and fraternity membership was pretty much determined by what local high school one graduated from. Students still ‘putting their feet under daddy’s table’ each night were not nearly so likely to ‘protest’—remember the late 60s and early 70s—and were very conservative in their political views about race and gender. One real purpose of education is to broaden the horizons of students, and a residential population of over 1,500 now allows for students to interface with a truly national and international classroom.”

The growing diversity of the student body was mirrored by the changing faculty, according to Buck, who is now board president of the Savannah-Chatham County Public School System. After Armstrong was designated a university in 1996, the campus began attracting more faculty from outside the...
Our diverse undergraduate population and the residence halls are opening up the world for students. Expanding its borders has made Armstrong a more welcoming place. — Teresa Winterhalter

purpose among the students,” music professor Randall Reese noted over lunch in the bustling dining hall of the new Student Union.

Reese, who first came to Armstrong in 1976, added that this new energy on campus has been facilitated by the growth of the commercial and residential offerings of Savannah’s Southside.

Tom Kohler, who attended Armstrong beginning in the fall of 1970, recalled the college’s former reputation: “We called it Abercorn High, and in a lot of ways it was—and in a lot ways it was not. Socially, it felt very much like a continuation of high school. There was not much to do on campus really, and there was not anything really to do around campus.”

But Kohler has far different memories of the curricular demands: “Academically, Armstrong was definitely not high school. There was a great feeling of connection between professor and student. Lots of Armstrong grads went on to law and med school each year.”

Since his book Waddie Welcome and the Beloved Community was chosen as the Common Read, Kohler and his co-author Susan Earl have been on campus about a dozen times this year. In his job as director of Chatham-Savannah Citizen Advocacy, Kohler is especially attuned to how imagery affects our perceptions of people and institutions, so it’s not surprising that he emphasizes the dramatic physical changes at Armstrong.

“A huge change on campus,” Kohler noted, “has been the brilliant work of Philip Schretter who runs the campus landscaping. I have often used him as an example of how one person can literally change the metaphorical and literal landscape of an organization.”

As the campus evolution continues, Kohler hopes that Armstrong will complement the landscaping by creating other “cool” visuals for students and visitors.

Despite the increasingly international nature of the campus, Kohler noted at the Common Read kickoff in fall 2008. “I have met students from all over Georgia, from other parts of the United States and some from other parts of the world. The students who have made the biggest impression on me have been a few who are from Savannah, who don’t have much money, and who are there to get everything they can from the experience. There are some great bootstrap stories on campus.”

In a recent open house for prospective students, President Linda M. Bleicken emphasized the transformative nature of the university experience. “Just as individual students will find their lives transformed by Armstrong,” she said later, “the campus will continue to be transformed by the needs—both intellectual and social—of students who choose to come here.”
BEN WOLFE '09 | Major: Theater | Hometown: Sandersville, Georgia

Ben Wolfe has never been the shy type. On campus, this theatre major got involved from day one. "Literally, the first day of classes, I went to an audition and started meeting people," he said.

At Armstrong, this Sandersville, Ga., native found an excellent fit for his talents and artistic goals and graduated with a bachelor's in theatre in 2009. Soon after, he started a teaching career and a year later was named the “2010 Teacher of the Year” by the Hilton Head Rotary Club in South Carolina.

“The best thing about the theatre program at Armstrong is that it’s so performance-based. There are a lot of classroom-based theatre programs in the United States, but Armstrong’s philosophy is that you learn on stage.”

In addition to gaining stage experience, including directing a production of The Full Monty, Wolfe also helped launch the Savannah Summer Theater Institute for high school students during his time at Armstrong. All this made the transition into teaching theatre easier.

“Today, I’m proud to be the director of performing arts at Hilton Head Preparatory School on Hilton Head Island. I teach acting classes and am responsible for everything from directing plays to building sets.”

Wolfe continues to have a strong relationship with his Armstrong theatre faculty members, turning to them on occasion for professional advice. And there’s one more thing to note: He was recently named “Bachelor of the Year” by Celebrate Hilton Head (CH2) magazine.

CARRIE YALE '05
Major: Health Science | Hometown: Atlanta, Georgia

Carrie Yale credits her education at Armstrong—a bachelor's in health sciences—with helping her land her dream job. Yale's mother also played a role in her education. “She was born and raised in Savannah and told me all about Armstrong,” said Yale.

As an exercise specialist at Atlanta’s Shepherd Center—one of the top rehabilitation hospitals in the nation specializing in medical treatment, research and rehabilitation for people with spinal cord or brain injuries—Yale helps individuals make a more complete and sustainable recovery.

“The quality of the education I got at Armstrong was excellent,” she said. “I learned in-depth information about the body and how the body is affected by exercise. That really laid the foundation for what I’m doing now.”

During her time on campus, she also worked with people who survived traumatic injuries through Abilities Unlimited in Savannah. After graduating magna cum laude in 2005, Yale earned a master’s in exercise sciences from the University of West Florida.

She is currently working on a six-month trial examining the impact of intensive exercise therapy on 50 spinal cord injury patients.

“I really enjoy seeing how exercise helps people on a physical, psychological and social level,” she says. “It’s rewarding and gratifying.”
JONATHAN NORMAN '06, '10
Major: Computer Science  |  Hometown: Moultrie, Georgia

For Jonathan Norman, who received a bachelor’s and master’s degree in computer science, the highlight of his Armstrong experience involved taking everything he learned inside the classroom and applying it to a real-world challenge.

After taking a class on machine learning, he had the opportunity to work with Dana Savige, an accomplished ocean current researcher at the Skidaway Institute of Oceanography in Savannah, as part of a yearlong internship. Savige had accumulated massive amounts of data about ocean currents, but needed a way to identify patterns within the data.

“I used some of the ideas we learned in class and created a neural network that would identify patterns including eddies, upwellings and errors,” says Jonathan. “I liked taking something I learned at Armstrong and using it for real-world purposes. It was a significant achievement for me.”

His computerized data analysis ultimately pointed to several key patterns that led to various insights about the behavior of ocean currents, including the discovery of a series of previously unidentified eddies which may have a significant influence on the way energy and material are transported between the Gulf Stream and the shelf waters. The findings were published in a recent issue of Geophysical Research Letters.

Now 28, he serves as a computer network administrator at Armstrong, reviewing and analyzing existing networks. “The most important thing is to stick with your education,” he said. “The results will amaze you.”

JESSE COUTURIER-HERNDON '11
Major: Art Education  |  Hometown: Starkville, Mississippi

Jesse Couturier-Herndon has given wine lovers a beautiful piece of art to enjoy as they sip their vino. One of his paintings was selected for the label gracing the bottles of Hyatt Hotels & Resorts’ house Cabernet Sauvignon, now available at all participating Hyatt properties throughout the United States.

Couturier-Herndon was one of three winners in a national contest sponsored by Hyatt to create wine labels for its exclusive house brand, Canvas. A native of Starkville, Mississippi, Couturier-Herndon came to Armstrong to pursue his long-held desire to teach at the high school level.

That seed was planted when, as a high school student, he encountered a teacher who made a strong impact on him and pointed him toward a career in art and teaching.

“High school is such a pivotal point in the life of a young person,” Jesse said. “Students make decisions at that time that will affect them the rest of their lives. My reason to want to teach is to provide guidance and help students make the best possible decisions.”

That teacher back in Starkville also convinced Jesse of the many possibilities awaiting him in a career in art—particularly painting, which he loves.

He decided to enter the Hyatt contest after his wife spurred him on. In preparation, he learned about the wine’s history, characteristics and winemaking. The award, he said, “helped me build my confidence by knowing that if you step out on a limb and try, you can achieve.”

A graduate of the Savannah College of Art and Design, he is on track to earn his teacher certification from Armstrong in fall 2011.

To share your story with Armstrong’s Office of Marketing & Communications, call 912.344.2971.
MICROSOFT EXEC MAKES GLOBAL IMPACT

BY ALLISON HERSH

Armstrong alumnus Pradeep Raman ’91 has taken his talent for computer science to international heights, meeting with three prime ministers and arranging for Microsoft to donate 120,000 laptops to school-age children in Trinidad and Tobago.

“That initiative is really transforming the educational system of the country,” explains Raman, who earned his bachelor’s in computer science from Armstrong. “It’s extremely important to understand the role that technology can play in transforming lives. Many of these kids will grow up with the same tools as children in the United States and will have the potential to come back and change the country’s economy and make a lasting impact.”

Raman started working for Microsoft 13 years ago as a consultant and currently serves as the general manager for the company’s office in Trinidad and Tobago, where he is responsible for overall operations in 19 countries across the Caribbean. A member of Microsoft’s elite Worldwide Senior Leader Bench Program, he meets with heads of nations and cabinet-level ministers to establish innovative partnerships that benefit citizens throughout the region.

An accomplished technology executive, Raman was recently featured in Forbes magazine for his international business savvy and has been honored with the Microsoft Achievement Award and the Microsoft Gold Star Award. “Microsoft is a very fast-paced and dynamic environment,” he says. “In the emerging market economies, that’s even more true. My position is extremely challenging and rewarding. I have overall accountability for Microsoft’s profit and loss in that whole region. Managing the company’s image in that area is a big part of my job.”

Originally from India, Raman decided to study computer science at Armstrong, attending the university on a four-year tennis scholarship. A tennis ace, he played on the squad that clinched the 1991 NCAA Division II Men’s Singles Tennis Championship. Armstrong awarded him the prestigious President’s Cup in 1991 in honor of his outstanding contribution to the university.

Armstrong's new strategic plan, “Charting Excellence Together,” was recently completed and will serve as the lens through which faculty, staff, students and administrators can view their roles and responsibilities in charting Armstrong’s course beyond its first 75 years. The plan, built on the foundation of Armstrong's unwavering commitment to student success, includes at its core a mission, vision, values and five strategic goals.

**Vision**
Armstrong strives to be an academically selective institution of first choice, recognized nationally for undergraduate, graduate and professional education.

**Values**
Armstrong embraces these core values:
- We value education that is student-focused, transformative, experiential, rigorous and leading to student success.
- We value balance among teaching, mentoring and scholarship.
- We value an environment of mutual trust and collegiality that builds an inclusive community.
- We value transparency that fosters shared governance.
- We value and respect diversity.
- We value ethical behavior and accountability that support high standards of performance.
- We value civic engagement through outreach and service.
- We value our relationship with Savannah, its unique geographic location, rich history and abundant opportunities.
"It's extremely important to understand the role technology can play in transforming lives."

— Pradeep Raman

"Armstrong has been pivotal and central in my life in many ways," he said. “It was a very positive experience that gave me a great foundation. I honed my work ethic and my problem solving skills. I have a great debt of gratitude to Armstrong for the lessons I learned along the way.”

Pradeep met his wife, Caroline McCracken Raman ’93, on campus. “Pradeep was a great tennis player,” said Caroline, who earned a bachelor’s in general studies. “I loved his confidence and how grounded and well-rounded he was.”

Today, the couple lives in Boynton Beach, Fla. with their three children ranging in age from 9 to 15. Raman commutes back and forth regularly to Trinidad and Tobago. Caroline is an accomplished sales associate with Premiere Realty in South Florida and the co-owner of Raman Homes, Inc., a company specializing in distressed homes.

Raman consistently encourages young people with an aptitude for math and science to pursue degrees in the computer science field.

“The demand for these skills in the workplace is extremely high,” he explains. “It’s an exciting career path because technology plays a central role in today’s global economy.”

**Goals**

1. Armstrong will impart the skills and habits of mind to motivated students that help them realize their potential as productive citizens of the world.
2. Armstrong will build upon and strengthen its foundational commitment to teaching, ensuring that transformative student learning occurs inside and outside the classroom.
3. Armstrong will enhance existing campus technologies, expanding both its technological capabilities and reach to meet current and emerging needs.
4. Armstrong will strengthen its financial base, diversify university resources, and wisely invest in initiatives in order to ensure long-term sustainability.
5. Armstrong will increase its visibility across the state and region by transforming its most compelling strengths, values, and offerings into resonant messaging that inspires loyalty among internal stakeholders and alumni and builds lasting relationships with the local community.

For more information, visit [www.sparc.armstrong.edu](http://www.sparc.armstrong.edu).
1940s

Bob R. Paddison ’48 received the 2010 Outstanding Philanthropic Award (individual) presented by Savannah’s Association of Fundraising Professionals.

1950s

Arthur M. Gignilliat Jr. ’53 was honored as Armstrong’s outstanding alumnus at the Board of Regents’ Gala in Atlanta in March.

1960s

Dennis A. Pruitt Sr. ’72 received the Scott Goodnight Award for Outstanding Service as a Dean from the University of South Carolina. He serves as vice president of student affairs, vice provost and dean of students at USC. He was honored as a notable alumnus during Armstrong’s 75th anniversary celebration in 2010.

Robert D. Johnston Jr. ’75 has been married to Sandra for more than 39 years. They have three grown children and four grandchildren. Robert has been in the banking business since he graduated and has spent the last 10 years as a self-employed consultant to community banks. He recently visited Savannah and the campus with his children.

1970s

Stephanie L. Duttenhaver ’80 is president of the Board of Directors of the Savannah Book Festival.

Howard Eugene Spiva ’80 salutes his son Gene Spiva on achieving his military paratrooper career.

Stanley M. Walthour ’80 was named director of the Chatham County Department of Family and Children Services in January 2010. He has been employed with DFACS since 1980.

Terry Adsit Trehern ’86 is the 2012 School Level Teacher of the Year for Juliette Low Elementary School.

Calvin E. Culberson Jr. ’89 was inducted into the 2010-2011 Armstrong Atlantic State University Athletic Hall of Fame. He played four seasons for the Armstrong baseball team from 1985-88 and holds seven school records, including a 32-game hitting streak during the 1988 season and 128 career stolen bases. Culberson was a two-time All-Big South Conference selection in 1986 and 1987 with the Division I Pirates, as well as a Division II All-American in his senior season in 1988.

1980s

Stephanie M. Frame ’84 was named the 2012 Savannah-Chatham County School Level Teacher of the Year for Hess Elementary School.

M.H. Clark ’85 received her Ph.D. in experimental psychology with a specialization in research design and statistics from the University of Memphis in 2004. She currently teaches statistics and research methodology to graduate students at the University of Central Florida. Her research interests include applied statistics in behavioral research and improving validity of experiments. Some of her studies have been published in the Journal of the American Statistical Association, Evaluation Review, and Learning and Individual Differences.

Tony L. Foy ’80 was named the 2012 Savannah-Chatham County School Level Teacher of the Year for Spencer Elementary School.

Robert L. Campbell Jr. ’81, ’88 was inducted into the 2010-2011 Armstrong Atlantic State University Athletic Hall of Fame. He played guard from 1997-2001 and was a 2-time Peach Belt Conference Player of the Year for the Pirates basketball team. He finished his four-year career ranked second all-time in NCAA Division II history with 357 steals. He also earned NCAA Division II All-America honors as a junior and senior.

Merilee J. Cox ’01, ’04 and husband, Steven, celebrated their 12th wedding anniversary in November. They have 3 children, Susanna, 8, Aiden, 6, and Connor, 2. Cox recently joined The New Teacher Project as a training and instructor manager. She will be working with the Georgia Teaching Fellows program to recruit, train, and prepare teachers for certification in high-need schools in the Savannah-Chatham County Public School System.

Roman Czerwinski ’01 was named the 2012 Savannah-Chatham County School Level Teacher of the Year for Windsor Forest High School.

Heather A. Williams Ruland ’01 was named the 2012 Savannah-Chatham County School Level Teacher of the Year for Southwest Elementary School.

Catherine J. Compton’s ’02 career has brought her back to Savannah from Nashville, Tenn. She is a nutritional coach for West Rehab Services, wellness division. She plans to be very involved with Armstrong students and alumni and is especially excited to bring her passion for health back to Savannah.

Erin L. Melius ’02 was inducted into the 2010-2011 Armstrong Atlantic State University Athletic Hall of Fame. She was the setter for the Pirates volleyball team from 1999-2002 that compiled a 124-35 record and earned the first-ever national ranking, NCAA championship appearances and Peach Belt Conference titles for Armstrong volleyball. In her four years, Melius tallied 5,582 assists, which ranks third in conference history and ranked among the top 20 in NCAA Division II when she completed play.

1990s

Elizabeth R. Clarke ’90 was named the 2012 Savannah-Chatham County School Level Teacher of the Year for Island High School.

Julia (Judi) Dawson Griffin ’90, ’95 is a WTOC-TV Top Teacher.

Kimberly S. Gabbard ’91, ’92 has served in social work in the State of Washington for over 15 years in the areas of child protective services, child welfare services and program management for adolescents in group care. She has 3 children and 2 grandchildren. Her youngest child is 16 years old.

David J. Ha ’91 graduated from the Medical College of Georgia in 1995, completing his internship and residency training in 1998. He practices internal medicine at Lexington Medical Center. He is married to Anhthao N. Ha and they have two children, Jonathan, 14 and Madison, 7.

Joey Ferraro ’93 was promoted to senior manager, quality services at GAF Materials Corporation, a building materials manufacturer. He has been with GAF for 17 years, starting his career at the Savannah plant in 1994.

Stephanie M. Frame ’94 was named the 2012 Savannah-Chatham County School Level Teacher of the Year for Hess Elementary School.

M.H. Clark ’95 received her Ph.D. in experimental psychology with a specialization in research design and statistics from the University of Memphis in 2004. She currently teaches statistics and research methodology to graduate students at the University of Central Florida. Her research interests include applied statistics in behavioral research and improving validity of experiments. Some of her studies have been published in the Journal of the American Statistical Association, Evaluation Review, and Learning and Individual Differences.

Kimberly A. Harris ’98 was named the 2012 Savannah-Chatham County School Level Teacher of the Year for Jacob G. Smith Elementary School.

Angela M. Bohne ’99 was named the 2012 Savannah-Chatham County School Level Teacher of the Year for Johnson High School.

Janet S. Lee ’99 was named the 2012 Savannah-Chatham County School Level Teacher of the Year for Esther F. Garrison School.

Lakita C. Reese ’99 was named the 2012 Savannah-Chatham County School Level Teacher of the Year for the School of Liberal Arts at Savannah High School.

2000s

Tony L. Foy ’00 was named the 2012 Savannah-Chatham County School Level Teacher of the Year for Spencer Elementary School.

Chris McCarthy ’00, ’03 is a member of the Leadership Savannah class.

Robert L. Campbell Jr. ’01, ’08 was inducted into the 2010-2011 Armstrong Atlantic State University Athletic Hall of Fame. He played guard from 1997-2001 and was a 2-time Peach Belt Conference Player of the Year for the Pirates basketball team. He finished his four-year career ranked second all-time in NCAA Division II history with 357 steals. He also earned NCAA Division II All-America honors as a junior and senior.

Savannah-Chatham County School Level Teacher of the Year for Island High School.

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Montesha “Tesha” Wiewel ‘02, ‘09 was inducted into the 2010-2011 Armstrong Atlantic State University Athletic Hall of Fame. She played second base on the inaugural Armstrong women’s fast pitch team in 1998 and played four years for the Pirates through 2002. She remains the Armstrong all-time hits leader (229), as well as the all-time runs scored leader (139).

Ryan Michelle Dadds ‘03 graduated in January 2011 with a physician assistant degree and a master’s in medical science from Stanford University School of Medicine. She holds a bachelor’s in biology from Francis Marion University.

DaVena N. Jordan ‘03 is a current member of the Leadership Savannah class.

Michaela Kratochvilova ‘03 was inducted into the 2010-2011 Armstrong Atlantic State University Athletic Hall of Fame. She played tennis for the Pirates from 2000-2002 and compiled a 95-20 overall singles and 95-15 overall doubles record. She was the doubles partner of Zsofia Golopencza for two of her three years at Armstrong. She was an ITA All-American in singles and doubles for all three seasons, as well as a three-time All-PBC honoree.

Mary G. Thaxton ‘03, ‘04 is the 2012 School Level Teacher of the Year for Bloomingdale Elementary School.

Zsofia O. Golopencza ‘04, ‘06 was inducted into the 2010-2011 Armstrong Atlantic State University Athletic Hall of Fame. She played No. 1 singles for the women’s tennis program from 2001-2004 and compiled a 151-9 overall singles record, as well as a 130-19 overall doubles record. She was a four-time ITA All-American in both singles and doubles, as well as the Peach Belt Conference’s Player of the Year all four years as a Lady Pirate.

Toi L. Haggray ‘04 was named the 2012 Savannah-Chatham County School Level Teacher of the Year for DeRenne Middle School.

Patrick L. Jarrett ‘05 is licensed and permitted to practice law in Texas, Alabama, and Georgia. Patrick has formed a full-service law firm, The Jarrett Firm, LLC, in Savannah. His firm primarily focuses on immigration and national law, criminal defense, and family law. He is eligible to represent clients in any immigration court in the United States and all state courts in Georgia, Alabama, and Texas.

Christopher R. Lancia ‘05 graduated from the U.S. Army Officer Candidate School in November 2010 and serves as a transportation officer at Fort Eustis, Va. His wife, Sarah, who attended Armstrong from 2004-07, graduated with a bachelor’s in fine arts from Old Dominion University in December 2010.

Thomas D. Whittaker ‘05 was inducted into the 2010-2011 Armstrong Atlantic State University Athletic Hall of Fame. He was on the Armstrong men’s golf team when it was reinstated as an intercollegiate sport in 2000. Whittaker played four years from 2000-2004 and captured the 2001 Peach Belt Conference Tournament championship as a freshman and earned PBC Player of the Year honors as a senior in 2004.

Joyce Angenette Lane ‘06 was awarded the title of Miss Plus America 2011-Jacksonville delegation and competed for the title of Miss Plus America 2011-Florida delegation in April. She organized a fundraiser dinner for her very own EJDS Child Abuse Prevention Project in March.

Kimbra S. Moore ‘06 was named the 2012 Savannah-Chatham County School Level Teacher of the Year for Haven Elementary School.

Timothy Bradley ‘07 was named the 2012 Savannah-Chatham County School Level Teacher of the Year for Pooler Elementary School.

Jessica A. Neese Clemons ‘07 was named the 2012 Savannah-Chatham County School Level Teacher of the Year for Garden City Elementary School.

Theresa A. Davis ‘07, ‘09 was recently promoted to the Armstrong Police Department as law enforcement special projects coordinator.

Traci A. Knuth ’07 was inducted into the 2010-2011 Armstrong Atlantic State University Athletic Hall of Fame. She is the all-time leader in kills and blocks in Armstrong volleyball history. The American Volleyball Coaches Association’s South Region Freshman of the Year in 2003, Knuth earned Peach Belt Conference Player of the Year honors as a junior in 2005 and as a senior in 2006.

Stephen H. Salley ’07 was named the 2012 Savannah-Chatham County School Level Teacher of the Year for Pulaski Elementary School.

Craig Daughtry ’08 was named the 2012 Savannah-Chatham County School Level Teacher of the Year for Beach High School.

Rae E. Williams ’08 is pursuing a graduate degree at Vanderbilt University in secondary education English with ELL certification.

Gina M. Freels ’09 was named the 2012 Savannah-Chatham County School Level Teacher of the Year for Savannah Early College.

in memoriam

Decatur Bostick Campbell Jr. ’39*, October 16, 2010
Myrtle Draughon Haskell ’39*, September 28, 2010
Elizabeth Myers Walker ’39*, October 21, 2010

Ruth Elizabeth Klingon Barragan ’40*, March 2, 2011
In 2010, Ruth and her husband Frank established the Frank and Ruth Barragan Leadership Fund to benefit students of Armstrong Atlantic State University.

Anita Fennell Marvin ’40*, August 21, 2010
Caroline Marshall Cone ’43*, October 2010
Norton M. Melaver ’44*, January 27, 2011
Thomas E. Cone ’45*, April 2010
Louise Adams Kaufmann ’45*, January 15, 2011
John Dominick Porzio III *’52, March 2, 2011
Ernest “Jennie” Laurence Clark ’61, December 10, 2010
Charles Joseph Singleton Sr. ’61, December 2, 2010
Margaret Maree Elliott Zeigler ’67, October 26, 2010
Elia Nugent Clancy ’69, December 31, 2010
Jackie M. Sommers ’69, November 14, 2010
Nancy Morrissey Shea ’70, December 20, 2010
Cheryl Marie Alkazin ’72, October 25, 2010
Leila Roberta Hill Butler ’73, February 6, 2011
Clarence Edgar “Butch” Chan ’75, August 30, 2010
Stephen Michael Hendricks ’76, September 7, 2010
John Stuart Lambertson ’76, September 14, 2010
Martha Sue E. Painter McCranie ’77, July 4, 2010
Gaines “Gregory” Sewell ’77, ’87, January 5, 2011
Sharon W. Kemper ’82, ’87, February 3, 2011
Joseph Patrick Coffey ’83, January 24, 2011
William Welcome ’86, November 2010
Edward M. Buttiner Jr. ’91, September 27, 2010
Teresa (Terri) Amerson Lank ’92, February 12, 2011
Khuong D. Nguyen ’00, February 2011
Gregory W. Oliver ’04, April 16, 2011
Robert Penn Mobley, student, March 5, 2010
Bryan M. Roman, student, October 19, 2010

Herman Wilmer Sartor, professor of education emeritus, December 18, 2010
Sabrina M. Simmons, former instructor of photography, August 21, 2010
Clifford V. Burgess, professor for more than 25 years, November 26, 2010

*Golden Graduate (1937-1959)
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Let us hear from you
If you would like to comment on anything you read in Armstrong magazine, or if you have ideas for future stories, please email Francisco.Duque@armstrong.edu.

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