

ATHENS TECH  
FOUNDATION

2023

*IMPACT REPORT*



## LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Dear supporters:

It is with great humility and gratitude that I reflect on the journey that led me to serving as the chair of the Athens Tech Foundation Board. When I was first approached with the opportunity to take on this role, I was deeply honored and humbled by the trust placed in me by my fellow board members and the wider Athens Tech community. I am honored to serve as the board chair of the Athens Tech Foundation. As an alumna of Athens Technical College myself, I understand firsthand the transformative power of education and the pivotal role the Foundation plays in supporting our students.

It is with great pride that I reflect on the countless individuals within our community who have contributed to the success of Athens Tech and the Foundation over the years. From dedicated faculty and staff to generous donors and passionate advocates, each member of our community plays a vital role in empowering our students to achieve their academic and professional goals.

One of the most fulfilling aspects of serving as board chair is witnessing the impact of the Foundation's support on our students. Through scholarships and financial aid, we were able to remove barriers to education and provide students with the resources they need to succeed. These investments not only benefit individual students but also strengthen our community by ensuring that talent and potential are not limited by financial circumstances.

This year marks 36 years of supporting Athens Tech. With ambitious fundraising goals, we are confident in our ability to make a meaningful difference in the lives of our students and the future of our community. As we look ahead to the future, I am excited about the possibilities that lie ahead for Athens Tech and the Foundation. I am continually inspired by the stories of perseverance and determination that I encounter among Athens Tech students. By providing them with the support they need, we are not only investing in their futures but also in the future prosperity of our community.

By working together, supporting one another, and remaining committed to our mission, I am confident that we can build a brighter future for all. Together, we are truly making a difference.

Sincerely,



**Lori Lord**

Chair, Athens Tech Foundation Board of Directors

## ATHENS TECH FOUNDATION 2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### Officers

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Ms. Lori Lord

Owner/CEO, Promotional Marketing Service

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Attorney

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Lori Lord (left)  
and Dr. Daniel

### Voting Board Members

- Mr. Jeremiah Bame, Chief Nursing Officer, Piedmont Athens Regional Hospital
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- Mr. Whit Richardson, Owner, Taziki's Mediterranean Cafe
- Mr. John Skinner, Commercial/Industrial Engineer, Jackson EMC
- Mr. Sam Young, Retired Economic Development Director

### Members Ex-Officio

- Dr. Andrea D. Daniel, President, Athens Technical College
- Mr. Josh Paine, Executive Director of Public Relations and Institutional Advancement, Athens Technical College
- Ms. Jen Welborn, Director of Institutional Advancement, Athens Technical College

### ABOUT US

Established in 1988, the Foundation is a registered, charitable 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Our donors contribute to the success of our students and ultimately the quality of our regional workforce.

### **OUR MISSION**

To partner with Athens Technical College and with the community to build the workforce of today and for the future.



# **ATHENS TECH FOUNDATION**

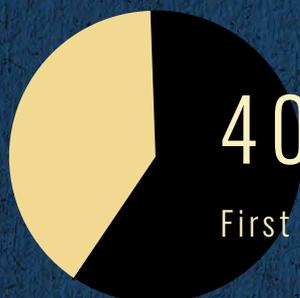


# FAST FACTS

AY 2023



23  
Average Age



40%  
First generation

5,226

Total credit enrollment

1,108

Adult Education Enrollment

1,668

Pell Grant recipients

1,660

HOPE Scholarship recipients



# TOP PROGRAMS



A.A.S. in Interdisciplinary Studies



Health Care Assistant



Cosmetology

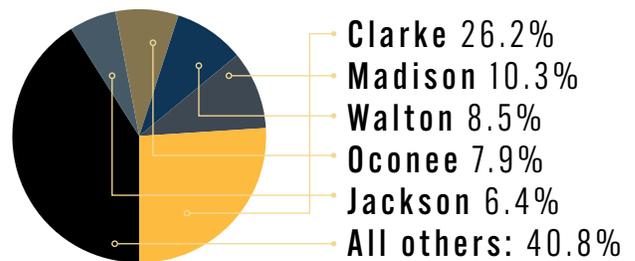
Commercial Truck Driving



Welding and Joining Technology



## TOP COUNTIES OF RESIDENCE



NEW BOARD MEMBERS

# Foundations of Success

The Athens Tech Foundation is pleased to announce the addition of two new board members for three-year terms that began January 2024.



BOARD SPOTLIGHT

## Why do you support the Athens Tech Foundation?

“When I began my role on the Board with the Athens Tech Foundation, my initial engagement with the role was centered on fulfilling its duties. However, as I immersed myself in the complexities of the position and fostered connections with the students, my perspective changed significantly. Delving into the narratives of students, particularly through my involvement on the Scholarship Committee, has been profoundly moving. I have found myself moved to tears while reading essays submitted by students. Each encounter presents tangible instances of the transformative impact Athens Tech has on its community.

I have witnessed graduates thriving in professional settings, from encountering dental hygienists trained at Athens Tech during routine dental visits, to having meals prepared by graduates of the culinary department. The influence of our students is palpable. Furthermore, I’ve found profound inspiration in the determination of individuals who have chosen to return to school mid-career to pursue their educational goals. These encounters reaffirm my commitment to facilitating and supporting the academic and professional pursuits of our students and contributing to the enduring legacy of Athens Tech within our community.”

Joy Pirkel, Lean Deployment Manger  
Caterpillar Inc.





**John Skinner** began his career while still a student in 2015 with a full-time technical sales co-op at Georgia Power Company. He received a bachelor's degree in Environmental Engineering from the University of Georgia in 2019 and an MBA from Georgia Southern in 2023. He accepted

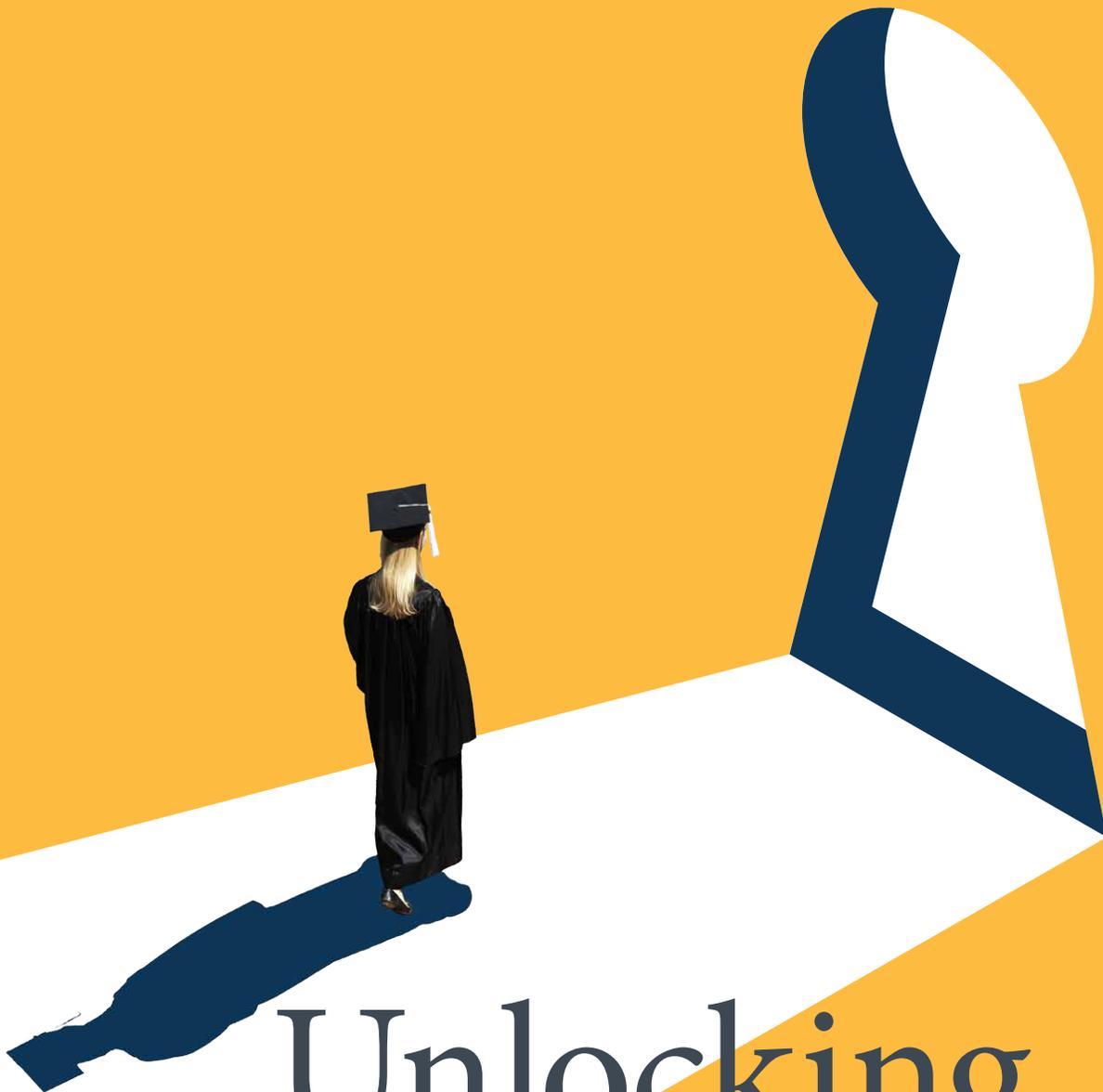
his current position with Jackson EMC in 2019 where he is responsible for providing technical support to the company's Business Development Team. Skinner often performs energy audits, infrared scans, and consultations related to renewables, electric vehicles, and carbon emissions, to ensure the best service to the cooperative and its members. He is a graduate of the Athens Chamber of Commerce LEAD Athens program class of 2022. In his free time, he enjoys rock climbing and exploring with his dog, Trixie.



**Jeremiah Bame** has worked in progressive leadership roles throughout the hospital-based care industry since 2006. In his current position, Bame is the Chief Nursing Officer at Piedmont Athens Regional. Prior to his current role, Jeremiah

served as the Chief Nursing Officer at Piedmont Newton Hospital in Covington, GA. Bame has earned a bachelor's degree in nursing from the University of Florida, and a master's degree in business administration from Georgia State University. Bame is currently participating in the Athens Chamber of Commerce LEAD Athens program.





# Unlocking Opportunity



**ATHENS TECH  
FOUNDATION**

**Athens Tech Foundation  
Scholarships are the key to  
success for many students**

## ATHENS TECH FOUNDATION STUDENT AID STATS

# 122

Scholarships Awarded  
totaling \$116,223

# 213

Retention and  
Emergency Grants  
Awarded totaling  
\$48,023

# 369

Total applications for  
scholarships received

## Julissa Lopez

Hometown: Monroe, Ga.

Program: Radiologic Technology

Recipient of the Life Sciences and Safety Public Safety  
and the Dr. Sherrie Ford Memorial Scholarships

“Not only has this scholarship allowed me to dedicate more time to my studies, but it has also encouraged me tremendously. With a little bit of financial stress being taken off my shoulders, I now feel that my success is completely dependent on me and my dedication to my goals. This scholarship has allowed me to pay off this semester completely and some remaining. I am so thankful for the opportunities that come along with these scholarships. I enrolled into Athens Technical College to get my associate’s degree in applied science. However, I plan to continue my studies and accomplish my dream of becoming a radiation therapist. The medical career can be very overwhelming and stressful at times but I am so fortunate to have a group of people supporting me along the way. I enjoy that my program really challenges me. So far, Shane Argo has been really helpful throughout these first semesters. As an ATC student, so far I have gained lots of knowledge and a different type of confidence in myself. Thank you for making such a huge difference throughout my college career along with many others.”



# Julio Fierro

**Hometown:** Athens, Ga.

**Program:** Paralegal & Interdisciplinary Studies

Recipient of the Rotary Club of Athens Scholarship

## What led you to enroll at Athens Technical College?

I originally enrolled because the price was fantastic, and I also wanted to try the college experience prior to going to a four-year university.

## What do you enjoy about your program at ATC?

Interdisciplinary studies-I enjoy the fact that the program lets me take introductory core classes and it allows me to take pre-reqs on a smaller setting with more help and receive credit for it!

## How did receiving this scholarship impact your educational journey?

It made a difference winning the scholarship, it was a huge motivational push. I believe it's a great thing to be acknowledged for your achievements.

## Can you share a specific example of how the scholarship funds were beneficial to you?

My parents worked at the Athens Country Club, and I would go there as a child, now as a student and scholarship recipient, I have been an honored guest speaker there on behalf of the Rotary Club.

## What are your career goals?

I plan to graduate from UGA with a real estate business degree and after that go into Law school. Athens Tech has confirmed my interest in law and upon furthering my degree I want to practice immigration, real estate, and litigation law.

## Were there any ATC mentors or advisors who have had a significant impact on you?

It's hard to choose because there are so many wonderful advisors and professors, but I would have to say Ms. Helms. She was my public speaking



professor my first semester and encouraged me to join an organization that she is the advisor of. With her guidance, I joined Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) and worked my way up to the President position. Her encouragement also inspired me to join multiple organizations on campus including the international club, success club, student government association, Skills USA and National Technical Honors Society.

## In what ways has the scholarship positively affected your personal development and growth?

The scholarship has impacted me by being able to show my family my accomplishments. Making my parents proud is everything and being able to show them my growth and my successes has been incredible.

## Are there any particular skills or knowledge you gained as an ATC student you'd like to share?

My public speaking has greatly improved leadership, patience, and most importantly the power of teamwork. I often try to shoulder all the weight of tasks but I've realized in my time working in a leadership position in student organizations that I have a team that I can trust and I can delegate some of those tasks to the team.

# Stephanie Ochoa

**Hometown:** Stephens, Ga.

**Program:** Accounting

Recipient of the Eve Carson Scholarship



## What led you to enroll at Athens Technical College?

I was working at Amazon when I got into a car accident and could not continue working there. With the chronic back pain caused by that accident, I soon realized that I would not be able to work these types of jobs anymore. This motivated me to apply to Athens Technical College to get a degree and get a job that I can do without any more pain.

## What do you enjoy about your program at ATC?

I enjoy that the teachers try their best to help us succeed. They give us plenty of opportunities to get extra credit and ask for help if we need it. I also enjoyed that my classes were small because it allowed me to be confident enough to ask the questions I needed to ask.

## How did receiving this scholarship impact your educational journey?

This scholarship has impacted my educational journey positively because it helped lower my stress about the textbook costs, school supplies cost, and even gas cost I need to get to school.

## Can you share a specific example of how the scholarship funds were beneficial to you?

I needed new notebooks and pens this semester and since I cannot work now, I did not have the funds. My parents are not able to help me either and so these funds were a lifesaver.

## What are your career goals?

My career goals include going to a four-year college while also working to gain experience. Once I graduate with a bachelor's, I hope to have my career defined and a steady job with great pay.

## Were there any ATC mentors or advisors who have had a significant impact on you?

My Phi Theta Kappa advisors, Ms. Kay Helms, and Mrs. Hayden Kelly had a significant impact on me this past year. They helped me break out of my shell and helped me achieve things I was not sure I could do. For example, my participation in the annual induction ceremony was a huge thing for me because I usually get nervous and afraid to do things like that.

## In what ways has the scholarship positively affected your personal development and growth?

I believe that when people do not have situations that add stress or anxiety to their lives, they can use all their energy to focus on the important things. For example, since I do not have to worry about how to pay for my textbooks, tuition, or even school supplies, I was able to put all my energy into succeeding in my courses.

## Are there any particular skills or knowledge you gained as an ATC student you'd like to share?

I learned about managing my time, and more about leadership as an officer in the Phi Theta Kappa chapter.

Ochoa (from left) was inducted as the 2023 vice president of finance, Fierro as president, and David Avant Jr. as vice president of scholarship in Athens Tech's Phi Theta Kappa chapter.



# Christina Smith

**Hometown:** Originally from California, but resides in Athens, Ga

**Program:** Health Information Management Technology

Recipient of the Lewis Williford Scholarship

## What led you to enroll at Athens Technical College?

I chose ATC because it had the program I was interested in and the location is great.

## What do you enjoy about your program at ATC?

I enjoy learning about the different aspects of the Healthcare industry.

## How did receiving this scholarship impact your educational journey?

This scholarship helped me acquire the necessary books and tools needed to enhance my education.

## Can you share a specific example of how the scholarship funds were beneficial to you?

I was able to buy all the books and additional supplies I needed without having to worry about the financial burden of what I required.

## What are your career goals?

I plan on getting my Registered Health

Information Technician certification. This will give me a few different opportunities to get into the healthcare industry.

## Were there any ATC mentors or advisors who have had a significant impact on you?

My advisor Andrea has been a great source of information and help in getting me situated with my class schedule for each semester.

## In what ways has the scholarship positively affected your personal development and growth?

I am proud to have been chosen for this scholarship. It has boosted my confidence and is helping to make my goals achievable.



## STUDENT SUCCESS BY THE NUMBERS

AY 2023

1,897

Technical Certificates  
of Credit

216

Diplomas

**Are there any particular skills or knowledge you gained as an ATC student you'd like to share?**

Time management skills and learning about my studying style in First Semester Seminar, have really helped me tackle each class.



412

Associate Degrees

100

Percent placement rate

5.3

Percent in-field placement

213

Companies trained



# Nicholas Williams

**Program:** Computer Science and Networking

**Hometown:** Loganville, Ga.

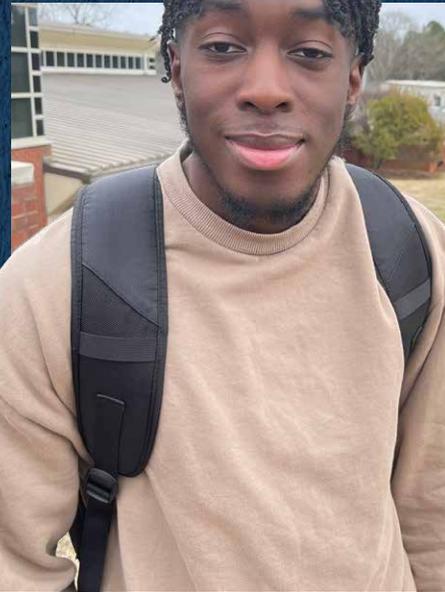
Recipient of the Phil Bettendorf Business and Education Scholarship

“In my academic journey so far, I have consistently demonstrated a passion for technology and a strong commitment to excellence. I have actively engaged in various extracurricular activities, including internships, workshops, and collaborative projects, to broaden my understanding of the dynamic field of networking.

My long-term educational and professional goals revolve around becoming a skilled and innovative networking specialist. I aspire to contribute to the advancement of network technologies and cybersecurity. Beyond the academic realm, I aim to leverage my knowledge and skills to make meaningful contributions to the business world. I envision a career where I can bridge the gap between technology and business, ensuring that organizations harness the full potential of cutting-edge networking solutions.

My dream as a networking specialist is to play a pivotal role in designing and implementing secure and efficient network infrastructures for organizations. I am particularly drawn to the idea of creating interconnected systems that facilitate seamless communication while prioritizing data integrity and user privacy. I believe that in an increasingly digital world, the role of a networking specialist is crucial not only for the functionality of businesses but also for safeguarding sensitive information.

Furthermore, networking is not just about connecting devices; it's about connecting people. I plan to develop strong communication and leadership skills to effectively convey complex technical concepts to non-technical stakeholders. This interdisciplinary approach is essential for translating technical solutions into tangible business benefits.”



# Lizett Nava Chavarria

Hometown: Elberton, Ga.

Program: Early Childhood Care and Education

Recipient of the Robert and Betty Williford Memorial Scholarship

“Not only does the scholarship help pay for classes, but it also provided me with my books, resources, and even my own personal laptop. My career goals at the beginning of my first year were to become a registered nurse but as I started taking classes for that I realized I did not like it. And as I viewed my options, I had amazing ATC mentors who helped me evaluate my choices and help me make the right decisions. I hope to become a teacher and continue my teaching studies here at Athens Technical College. And with the help of this scholarship, I can. This scholarship positively affected my personal development and growth because they made me appreciate what I have now. I am blessed to be given the help to pay for my studies and resources that I need to succeed in life and be someone. I know that by continuing to go to school and earning my degree I will be someone in the future. I know that my hard work and effort will pay off and I can make a difference. I hope in the future that I will help students grow and give them that push that this scholarship gave me.

A few skills and knowledge that I gained as an ATC student I want to share is that this campus provides so many opportunities and different programs of study for all types of students. They also have diverse types of clubs and groups for everyone. Staying on track is another important skill I have gotten used to while studying here. Being on time and staying on top of schoolwork is also especially important. I would like to close by saying that The Robert and Betty Williford Memorial Scholarship has done so much for my future and future life. I am so lucky to have had help from such an amazing team. Thank you!”



## STUDENT SUCCESS BY THE NUMBERS

AY 2023

1,694

2023

TOTAL GRADUATES

2022

(30% increase  
from 2022)



Learn more about ATC  
Foundation's Scholarship  
opportunities by scanning  
the QR code.



# SPECIAL EVENTS



Last year's Illuminate Gala, spotlighting workforce development, was a great success! Thanks to the incredible support from our donors and sponsors, the evening sparkled with the magic of generosity at The Georgia Club. With our shared commitment to education, we raised nearly \$80,000 dollars in one night. Thanks to everyone who made the inaugural Gala unforgettable – you're lighting the way for our students, the college, and the community!



## ILLUMINATE

SPOTLIGHTING WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

*Celebrating*  
**35**  
*years*

*Presented by:*



*\* Luminary Sponsors:*




*\* Star Sponsors:*















METAL + PETAL









*\* Spark Sponsors:*







*Thank you for your generous support!*



## WORTH A HOOT

Together, the Athens Technical College family raised over \$8,730 in our fall "Give a Hoot" employee campaign! We were thrilled to reach our goal of more than 65 gifts in total, representing the 65th anniversary of the College.

# Connecting with students: Leslie McKenzie

**How do you believe your support has contributed to the overall mission and goals of Athens Tech Foundation?**

Part of the mission of the college is to provide education and to foster lifelong learning. My support of the foundation helps to provide access to education. The education that we provide at Athens Tech promotes lifelong learning. As a faculty member, I believe that anything that I can do to help support students in accessing quality education as they learn, grow and develop the skills needed to contribute to the community impacts economic development through improving the workforce.

**Have you seen any changes or improvements in the community or college that you attribute to the foundation's efforts?**

The foundation offers scholarships to students. This effort, in itself, supports student success at the college by providing the opportunity to attend classes. This would have an extended impact in the community because the students take what they are learning into their workplaces. These scholarships create a snowball effect. This not only impacts the students, but also the college and community.

**In what ways has giving to Athens Tech Foundation been a rewarding experience for you?**

Giving to the Athens Tech Foundation is truly rewarding. I see students applying for scholarships who really need the assistance with funding their college education and experience. They are able to be here and learn. I enjoy hearing from students who have been awarded a scholarship and how much it has helped them. They may not know that I am contributing to their college experience, but it makes me feel more connected to them.

**What is your favorite part of your job?**

My favorite part of my job is connecting with students. I love helping them set goals for their life and striving for success. I enjoy hearing from graduates about what they are doing post graduation; where they are working; and how they are now contributing to their communities.



## FINANCIAL REPORT

FY 2023  
(as of Dec. 31, 2023)

\$89,744.97

In-kind contributions

\$297,635

Contributions

\$262,746

Investment gains

\$649,771

Total revenue

-\$65,837.06

Change in net assets

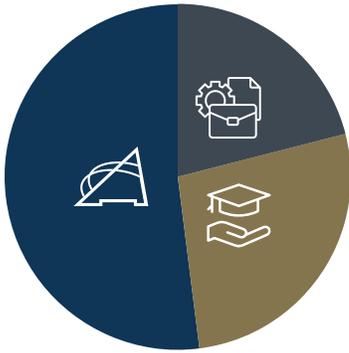
\$1,852,061

Total assets

\$1,737,519

Total investments

**EXPENDITURES**



\$127,186

Administrative Expenses



\$166,141

Student Support



\$318,153

College Support

**DONOR SPOTLIGHT**

# Nursing the future: Marilyn Brown

**Why do you support the foundation?**

For years, I've had the privilege of knowing Jen, whose enthusiasm and unwavering work ethic have always inspired me. She entrusted me with the opportunity to support students through scholarships, and her guidance and support were invaluable in getting everything off the ground. Jen's proactive approach and assistance were instrumental in setting the wheels in motion.

It is truly remarkable to have such a school and opportunities available at a local level. I had the privilege of teaching English as a second language at Athens Tech, and I've developed a deep affection for the institution. Their outstanding nursing program and their profound impact on the community are truly commendable.

**What made you start the Kramer-Brown Nursing Scholarship?**

Nurses and nursing students hold a special place in my heart as well. Their dedication, compassion, and tireless commitment to caring for others is truly admirable. I've been fortunate to have been cared for by wonderful nurses and their kindness and expertise have



Nursing students and scholarship recipients Jane Bennett, Carmen Tucker and James Fortner enjoyed visiting with Marilyn Brown on campus.

left a lasting impression on me. It's inspiring to see how their care can make such a difference during times of vulnerability and need.

**Tell us about your background.**

I began my academic journey as a Language Major at Middlebury College in Vermont where I studied French. Upon graduation, I began teaching French at a High School. After several years of teaching, I pursued further education, earning a master's degree. It was after earning my Master's that I was presented with an opportunity to teach English overseas. I taught in Africa, Taiwan, Saudi Arabia, and Iran. Each country presented me with a different perspective of our world, enriching my life in ways beyond measure.

# 2023

## CONTRIBUTING DONORS

Kari Abernathy  
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Alice F. Glenn, CPA

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Patricia Scharko



Even though owls are often seen alone, groups are known as a parliament. The Athens Tech Foundation's **Parliament Society** recognizes individuals, corporations, and foundations that make the most generous gifts to the Athena Fund each fiscal year (January-December.)

While targeted donations to specific funds are invaluable, unrestricted funds provide the flexibility to respond swiftly to emerging opportunities and unforeseen challenges. These funds help address immediate needs, drive innovation, support faculty and expand outreach in the community.

- **Individual membership:** gifts of \$1,000+
- **Corporate/Foundation membership:** gifts \$1,500+
- Matching gifts made by employers also count toward your eligibility.
- Young professionals (under 40) and ATC employees may join with a gift of \$500 or more.

#### **Membership includes:**

- Invitation to a special annual recognition event for two attendees
- Recognition in the annual report and website
- Exclusive communications about priorities, issues, and events

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## **2023 Parliament Society Members**

Athens Area Chamber of Commerce

Athens BMW

Athens Radiology Associates, P.C.

Carroll Daniel Construction Co

Caterpillar, Inc.

Dr. Andrea Daniel

Dr. Kristen Douglas

Dr. Mark Ellis

Leslie Friedman

Georgia Farm Bureau Federation Inc.

Georgia Power Company

Hal and Becky Dally Fund  
of the CFGA

Lois & Lucy Lampkin Foundation

Lori A. Lord

Michelle Morgan

Michael McCord

Phil Hughes Honda

Promotional Marketing Services

Piedmont Athens Regional  
Health System

Carl Swearingen

Synovus Bank

The Classic Center

The Middlebrooks Automotive  
Holdings, Inc.

The Todd Emily Community Fund  
at AACF

Trinity Health - St. Mary's Health Care

Westlake Pipe & Fittings

Fran and Terry Wingfield

Schimmel Family Foundation

Serial CFO

Nancy Seymour

Jennifer Shea

Alden Shmerling

Sunita Singh

Mildred "Pudge" Smith

James Sprouse

Stanfield Air Systems

Shawana L. Stanford

Nancy Stangle

Carol Stanley

Ryan Stanley

Lawton E. Stephens

Allen Stewart

Dan Stewart

LaReece Stewart

Mary Strother

James Summers

Superior Air Management, Inc.

TCSG Foundation, Inc.

Zachary Tellano

Ruth Tellano-Daniel

Temple United Methodist Church

The CandyVet Foundation at AACF

The Classic Center Cultural Foundation

The Dixen Foundation at AACF

The Georgia Club

The Gordon Law Firm

Kathryn Thomas

Cindy Thompson

Ella Thompson

Tonya Trapp

Lauren Turner

Union Christian Church

Josh Waddy

Walton Co Chamber of Commerce

Elizabeth Waters

Katie Waters

Heather Watson

Betty L. Watts

Lisa G. White-Rodgers

Janna Whitfield

Elizabeth and Franklin Whitworth

Carol S. Williams

Lauren Williams

Christina Wolfe

Reginald Woods

Ed Wysong

Sam Young



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