



THE PILOT

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Weather

Thursday Sept. 18 83/58 Mostly sunny	Friday Sept. 19 79/56 Partly cloudy
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Marching band chief's death stuns GWU

By Lauren Taylor
Pilot editor in chief

Sid Haton, the director of athletic bands and instructor of music for the Department of Fine Arts, was found dead in his office Friday afternoon at about 3 p.m.

The cause of death is unknown at this time, pending release of the coroner's report.

Haton, 45, leaves behind his wife, Dr. Sydney Brown,

an English education professor whom he married April 2007.

Also mourning his loss are 150 student members of the marching band. Haton was brought here to begin an athletic band program, which is now in its second year.

In the quad outside Haton's office in McMurray Hall Friday, students and faculty were consoling each other and praying as the ambulance that responded to the emergency call sat in front

of the building.

At 5 p.m., there was a gathering in O. Max Gardner Hall where Dr. Patricia Sparti, head of the Department of Fine Arts, encouraged students to call her if they needed anything. She told them to seek consolation over the weekend.

Director of Student Ministries Neil Payne shared 2 Thessalonians 4:13, which is about not being sad when our brothers and sisters in Christ "fall

asleep."

Haton's body left campus at 7 p.m. with the Mecklenburg County coroner, who would perform the autopsy.

"We are deeply saddened to have lost a valuable member of the Gardner-Webb family," said GWU President Frank Bonner said in a press release.

"We grieve with his wife Sydney, the university faculty, staff and all students in this tragedy."



Photo by Jessica Jones

Students and faculty spontaneously gathered in the quad Friday afternoon as the news of marching band director Sid Haton's death spread across the campus.

Memorial service a loving farewell to Sid Haton

By Lauren Taylor
Pilot editor in chief

Family, faculty and students filled Boiling Springs Baptist Church Tuesday afternoon to say their good-byes to Sid Haton, director of the athletic band, who died Friday.

Tear-wiping punctuated by bursts of laughter was common in the congregation as the invited speakers told stories about Haton.

Marching band member Meredith Marlin spoke through the tears streaming down her face.

"He was a man of insurmountable joy of love and a passion for all that he pursued," she said.

He was also a brother, a professor, best friend and inspiration to Marlin, not only in music, but in life as well, she said.

"He had a way about him. If you were having a bad day, go to him — he'd cheer you up."

Laughter rang out, especially in the balcony where the marching band members were sitting, when she recounted catchphrases Haton was famous for.

"Alright guys, bring it to the 50!" "Stand tall, like a chee-



Photo Courtesy of Sydney Brown
Sydney Brown and Sid Haton on their wedding day, Easter Sunday 2007.

tah!" he would always say. We knew he'd give us an inspirational speech that would carry us through the week," said Marlin.

Haton would keep the band going during a long practice session by telling them to "Go to your happy place," said Marlin.

"My happy place is Oreo Ice Cream," Marlin recalled Haton saying.

Donald Sidney Haton Sr., pastor at Grace United Methodist Church, thanked people for

coming and spoke of how wonderful it was to be Sid's father. His wife, Eleanor, stood by his side.

"We knew he was a very special person from the first day until the last," Haton said.

Once they realized his potential, they put their son into music classes. He learned to play more instruments, and joined bands and orchestras. He provided music for Christian congregations of all denominations, as well as synagogues.

"All of this he did with a compassion for the music," said his father. "In all my life I have never known a more gifted and talented musician, a more intelligent and seeking mind..."

Throughout his talk, he gave comical descriptions of his son, but ended on a touching note.

"I'm proud of the 45 years he lived with us — I only wish it could have been much, much longer."

Afterwards, Sydney Brown recalled the moment she met her husband.

"It's only been two years since he bounced up to me and said, 'Hi, I'm Sid.' I said 'I am, too!'"

Two days after their first

date, he wrote her a letter talking about the impact she had already made on him. He made sure she knew how much he loved her.

"His goal as a husband was that I should never want for anything," Brown said. "I know that I'm a better person because of his influence."

In an e-mail to The Pilot, Dr. Patricia Sparti, chair of the Fine Arts Department, praised Haton's work at GWU.

"The job Sid Haton did here at GWU was nothing short of extraordinary. The loss to GWU is immeasurable," she said.

"Our kids are beyond devastated."

"He was also the perfect colleague and a cherished friend. Personally, he was also the nicest, most kind and perhaps most understanding person I have ever met, and we all loved him so very much."

In addition to his wife and parents, Haton is survived by his sister Donna Sears and her children Chelsea, Zoe and Lindsey; parents-in-law Fred and Linda Brown; his wife's brother Michael, his wife Whitney, and their children Bryce, Adam and Ethan.

Band members: We will march on

By Ali Cunningham
Pilot staff writer

Ali Cunningham is a member of the GWU Marching Band, and provided this insider's perspective on Sid Haton's life and how it touched band members.

Monday afternoon, drum majors Adam Velez and Chad Roseboro conducted the Bulldog Marching Band's rehearsal of Samuel Barber's "Adagio," a song that often moved band director Sid Haton — and now the band members — to tears.

We shared our memories of Sid during our first practice following his unexpected death Friday.

A member of the band or not, anyone walking near the practice field during Thursday or Friday rehearsals would likely hear Sid yelling something.

Meredith Marlin, a drum line member, recalled one moment in particular.

"One time we were learning drill and learning how we were supposed to be standing when at attention ... and somehow Sid managed to tell the band 'Stand tall, like a cheetah!' None of us have a clue what it

means, but it was hilarious!"

At rehearsals last week we were having difficulty with the opening song for Saturday's game. Sid yelled, and then I heard an echo. And I swear he continued to yell just because he wanted to hear himself echoing back.

Chad Roseboro, drum major, recalled one of this favorite moments from band.

"There was this one time when we were playing at camp last year and Sid knew that we were playing with a lack of confidence. Out of nowhere he used the analogy to pretend we were swimming in a big pool of Oreo ice cream."

"And that's the type of things he said all the time to make us have that easy-going feeling."

Sid always had a great knack for making you feel special and wanted. Nicole Werme, clarinetist, recalls when she arrived for band camp and first met Sid.

"The first time I saw Sid was when the band got to move in for band camp, and I walked into the music room with Sarah Bunker (flag line). I e-mailed him a month or so before telling him I was interested in

band, so when I walked in, he says 'So you must be Nicole.'

"He had a great big smile and was just so welcoming. He was like, 'I have been waiting to meet you all day.' But it was just so great being welcomed, because I felt someone was excited to meet me, and for me to be there."

We all have amazing stories of Sid and just how much he has touched our lives. We all know he was an incredible man and an amazing band director.

Marlin said Haton meant so much to so many people.

"Sid was everything you needed, at any given moment. He could be your clown for laughter, your counselor for the tragic moments and your angel in moments of distress. I loved him dearly, I miss him so much and he will never be forgotten by myself or anyone else that had the pleasure of knowing him."

There are some big shoes to fill. It is from people like Marlin, Velez, Roseboro, Humphries and band president DeMario Ragin that we have the courage and the strength to continue Sid's legacy.