

"I didn't want to be known as a quitter"

Nearly 40 years after she first started her college degree, Jackie Smith can finally call herself a college graduate. Smith, who is also the oldest member of South Piedmont Community College's Class of 2024, will receive her associate degree in early childhood education during commencement ceremony May 11.

"It feels great," said Smith, 60. "It's proof that if you don't give up, you can do it - even if it takes a while."

Smith, a native of Marshville, started her college career while still attending Forest Hills High School. In 1985, three years after she graduated from high school, she returned to South Piedmont. It would be the first of a half-dozen or so stops and starts in her college career. She paused her studies to raise her son. Then she stopped again to help raise her oldest granddaughter (she has 15 "grands" in total). Then came two great-grandchildren. She had to work to help support her family, and sometimes her schedule didn't leave room for school. She faced a couple health challenges, including a fractured leg last year.

Each time she started again, she earned a few credit hours, inching closer to her goal of a college degree.

This year, 2024, was the year she decided she had to finally cross the finish line. "I've been going through this for a while. I'm getting older, and I didn't want to be known as a quitter," she said.

In earning her degree this May, Smith will become the first of her nuclear family - she has two brothers and one sister, now deceased - to graduate from college. She hopes her example will inspire her extended family, and even members of her broader community.

"I see a lot of people saying they can't go to college, even though they're young and don't have a lot of responsibility. I hope they see from me that, yes, they can do it, and they should do it now," she said.

As it turns out, this won't be Smith's last trip across the commencement stage. She works at a childcare center in Waxhaw, and while she's excited to put her associate degree in Early Childhood Education to use, when she first started her college career, she was also interested in earning a degree in Criminal Justice. She's on track to finish her associate degree in Criminal Justice Technology at South Piedmont later this year. She's not sure if she'll want a career change, but she's not ruling it out.

"I'm excited about any and all doors that may open for me now that I am a college graduate," she said.



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Economic Impact of N.C. Agriculture and Agribusiness Jumps to \$111.1 Billion

Second straight year of strong growth

The economic impact of North Carolina's agriculture and agribusiness industry jumped to \$111.1 billion, posting a second straight year of strong growth at nearly \$8 billion Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler announced on May 18.

"With last year's increase of \$10 billion, that represents over \$18 billion in growth since 2022 when we were coming out of a pandemic and some challenging economic times," Troxler said at the opening of the 2024 Got to Be NC Festival. "It's exciting to see numbers like these because it shows the strength and resiliency of agriculture and agribusiness in this state."

N.C. State University Economist Dr. Mike Walden calculates the economic impact numbers annually using data from USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service and other multipliers.

"If you remember one thing I say today, I hope you will remember that Agriculture IS our food supply," Troxler said. "It is an important industry because it feeds us. We don't ever want to have to rely on another country to feed us. We want to be self-reliant when it comes to our food supply and that's why it is important that we support our farmers."

Troxler noted that the economic figures were supported by the state's top production rankings nationally, including being No. 1 in the production of sweet potatoes, tobacco, poultry and eggs, second in Christmas trees, turkeys and trout, third in hogs and cucumbers, fourth in peanuts and broilers, and fifth in cotton.

"This growth is also a result of our continued investment in agricultural research, our continued efforts to expand and attract new food manufacturing and to create more value-added opportunities, and the continued support of our legislators," Troxler said.

Military Appreciation Weekends at Discovery Place Science and Discovery Place Kids - Rockingham

Free Museum admission will be offered for those with active military ID or USAA membership during Memorial Day, July Fourth and Labor Day weekends

Discovery Place announces three upcoming Military Appreciation Weekends, sponsored by USAA—Memorial Day, July Fourth and Labor Day weekends. Thanks to the incredible support from USAA, Discovery Place Science and Discovery Place Kids - Rockingham will offer free admission to those with active military ID or USAA membership and their families.

"USAA is honored to sponsor Military Appreciation Weekends at Discovery Place Science and Discovery Place Kids - Rockingham," said USAA CFO Jeff Wallace, who also serves as the Charlotte Site Leader for USAA. "This sponsorship reflects our mission of serving the military community and their families, and we're excited to expand our reach this year to include three celebratory weekends and also bring the city of Rockingham into the fold."

"We are grateful to USAA for giving us additional opportunities this year to welcome military families to Discovery Place Science and Discovery Place Kids - Rockingham, free-of-charge," said Catherine Wilson Horne, president and CEO of Discovery Place. "We thank our military for their service, and by providing free admission, USAA is supporting our organization's vision to offer accessible options for the community."

Free admission tickets require proof of eligibility by showing an active military ID* or USAA membership, with card or through the USAA mobile app, upon arrival at the Museum. See below for offer details at each Museum. *A photo of military ID will not be accepted as proof of eligibility.

Discovery Place Science Free admission includes up to four (4) tickets per active military ID or USAA membership and can be reserved in advance here. In addition to Museum Admission, Military Appreciation Weekends include up to four (4) tickets to one (1) documentary film or one (1) planetarium show in the Accenture IMAX Dome Theatre. Military appreciation will be celebrated the following weekends:

- Memorial Day Weekend, May 25 - 27
- D Day Weekend, June 6 and 8-9
- July Fourth Weekend, July 6 - 7
- Labor Day Weekend, August 31 - September 2

Discovery Place Kids - Rockingham Free admission includes up to four (4) tickets per active military ID or USAA membership and can be reserved in advance here. Military Appreciation will be celebrated the following weekends:

- Memorial Day Weekend, May 25 - 27
- July Fourth Weekend, July 6 - 7
- Labor Day Weekend, August 31 - September 2

Anson County Juneteenth Celebration is June 15

The Anson County Branch of the NAACP is proud to present this year's Juneteenth Celebration Festival on Saturday, June 15, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Anson County Courthouse. Beginning at Greene Street and moving along Wade, Martin, and Morgan Streets.

Vendors are welcome. To learn more and register on becoming a vendor visit www.ansoncountynaacp.org or email NAACP President Sinic Marsh at: admin@ansoncountynaacp.org.



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TOWN OF MORVEN PUBLIC HEARING

Annexation of a contiguous territory

In accordance with the Town of Morven Development Ordinance (MDO), North Carolina General Statute (NCGS) 160A-31 inclusive, the Town of Morven Town Council has scheduled a special PUBLIC HEARING for the purpose of acting on a voluntary petition for annexation of a contiguous territory further described as follows:

Annexation Case ANX24-001: An 8-acre parcel of property owned by Unity Development Group LLC located off Robinson Bridge Road, further identified utilizing Anson County Parcel Identification Number 649011761757, and more particularly described as follows:

Beginning at a stake in the Camden Road near the Col. Methodist Church (Harris Chapel) one black-jack pointer and runs N. 10 1/2 W. 7.62 chains to a stake on South edge of Morrison Road. Then West 11.90 chains. To a stake in said Morrison Road; then So 12 E. 8.75 chains. To a stake in J.H. Gardners line one black-jack pointer; then No. 71 1/4 E. 8.75 chains. To a stake said J.H. Gardners corner; then with said Gardners line So 62 1/2 E. 3.65 chains. To the beginning, containing Eight and two-fifths Acres (8 2/5).

The same parcel of land situate on the boundary line of Town of Morven, known as the D.A. Liles land, and being the parcel of land conveyed by David A. Liles and his wife, Mary M. Liles to T.V. Hardison by deed dated February 14, 1902, recorded in Deed Book 35, Page 511, Registry of Anson County.

A portion of the property, approximately 1.75 acres, is already located within the corporate limits of the Town and zoned Single-family Residential (SFR-2). Approval of the annexation petition means the entire parcel will be located within the Town's corporate limits.

The hearing will occur on Monday, June 3, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. at the Morven Town Hall located at 301 East Main Street, Morven, NC 28119.

The public are invited to attend and offer comment on the annexation request consistent with the Town's applicable rules of procedure. Questions can be directed to Town of Morven staff at (704) 851-9321. Copies of the annexation petition are available at Town Hall.

Individuals with a disability who wish to attend/participate are asked to contact the Office of the Clerk to the Town Board at (704) 851-9321 no later than 12:00 noon on May 31, 2024 so that adequate plans for accommodation can be arranged.

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