Forty-Year Teaching Legacy

The Department of Biology and Geology will experience a major change this fall. For the first time in over 40 years, Dr. Harry E. Shealy, Jr. will no longer be in the classroom! After a long and successful career at USCA, he is retiring from teaching, but as will soon become evident, he will in no way be retiring from the profession he loves.

A native South Carolinian, Dr. Shealy was born and raised in Columbia. He credits his father, an engineer at Southern Bell, with instilling in him an interest in all things natural. He always liked science, and his dad, “taught him the wonderment of it all”! He grew up in the Forest Acres neighborhood, which, at that time, had lots of open space. “We never played inside—we didn’t own a TV or a computer—we were always outside in the woods,” Dr. Shealy remembers.

Dr. Shealy earned all three of his degrees at the University of South Carolina, a B.S. in 1965, an M.S. in 1971, and a Ph.D. in 1972, all in biology. During his junior year as an undergraduate he met Dr. John Herr in a class called Comparative Morphology of Vascular Plants, and his future as a botanist was sealed. He studied early seed development under Dr. Herr during his graduate career, using electron and light microscopy to discover the patterns formed during development. He began teaching at USC Aiken as a graduate student in 1970 when the campus was housed at Banksia. Offered a full-time position upon the completion of his Ph.D., he asked to defer the appointment for a year while he traveled to the University of Manitoba in Canada to complete a one year post-doctoral fellowship in the Plant Science Department working on seed shriveling in the wheat-rye

Shealy continued p. 6
From The Chair:

by Dr. William Jackson

Have you ever thought to ask yourself who you are? It is often a difficult question to answer, and if you ask others for their opinion, you may get a number of very different answers. If you are one of our current biology majors, here are my thoughts on who I think you are.

• You have chosen to become a biologist at a small comprehensive university that is focused on your success.
• You have determined that you do not want to be another face in the crowd and that you want to be a part of an exciting department that expects your participation.
• You are not intimidated by the idea that the USC Aiken Biology faculty will know who you are and expect great things from you.

Take a look at the accomplishments of our most recent graduates and I think you will agree that these individuals came to USC Aiken, and the Department of Biology and Geology, to succeed. USC Aiken’s 2012/2013 class included 40 new biologists, 17 who graduated with honors, four who graduated from the Honors Program, and five who were awarded the prestigious Magellan Scholarship for undergraduate research. This group of seniors founded the USC Aiken chapter of the national biology honor society – Tri Beta, and provided its first 13 members. At last count, ten members of the Biology class of 2012/2013 accepted positions into an array of graduate and medical programs. We wish them, along with all other members of the class of 2012/2013, the best of luck, and a thank you for accepting the challenge that we extend to all of our majors, which is to become the best biology major that you can be.

As we begin another academic year, I can tell you that I am not only excited about our new students and the new possibilities that come with them, but our continuing students as well. You have big footprints to fill, and it has been my experience that you will! In this regard, I often tell incoming freshmen that if you are not excited about taking your first REAL biology course and becoming a biologist, you are probably in the wrong major – go look for something else that excites you.

We invite you to join us, but to go all out and take advantage of all the great opportunities you have as a Biology major at USC Aiken. It is not just about taking classes and making grades, it is about becoming a member of the department, interacting with faculty, getting involved in undergraduate research, and learning to become a biologist. It is a challenge that we have all faced, and it is how you meet that challenge that determines how satisfied you will be.

Finally, I cannot help but note the retirement of Dr. Harry Shealy, who began his career at USC Aiken in 1973. During this time he touched many lives and helped mold an awful lot of biologists – including me. Thank you Dr. Shealy for all you have done for USC Aiken and the Department of Biology and Geology.

Center for Research Excellence

Last Fall, Dr. Jordan announced the creation of an Innovation Fund, the purpose of which was "to provide funding for 'pilot' projects that will help us retain students by actively engaging them in the learning process." (Chancellor's newsletter) One of the funded projects, a new Center for Research Excellence, was the brainchild of Drs. Bill Jackson and Michele Harmon. Their goal is to promote undergraduate and faculty research, showcase the on-going research at our school, encourage collaborations, and provide funding for research projects. They have been developing a website for the center with the help of communications major Cody Keisler and USCA's webmaster, Lauren Coules. A call for proposals will go out to the campus this Fall with the first awards being made in Spring 2014. Informational workshops will be held to discuss the application process. Students whose projects are funded will present their results at Research Day in April beginning in 2015.
“Jam tan”
Peace only, the habitual response to greetings both light and serious any time of day. Even as I hide in my hut to write this, my host nieces chant this over pretend phones.

It has been two years since I graduated from USCA with a B.S. in biology and just under that since I received my official invitation to serve as a Peace Corps Volunteer (PCV). I pursued the lengthy application my senior year after looking at a range of study abroad options. I qualified under the Agriculture program in Sub-Saharan Africa with my science and French studies at USCA, field internship at SRS, and tree-loving nature.

When the much anticipated invitation packet arrived, I nervously read it over twice in the privacy of my room before finally sharing the news. I was nominated to serve the following fall as an Agroforestry Extension volunteer in Senegal. I received continued support and a matching curiosity from family and friends. At the time, I only wish I could better explain the approaching position, but there was no way of knowing details. There are too many external (not to mention internal) factors that contribute to this ultimately unique experience like local language and site placement, prior NGO presence and relations, perception of foreigners, and motivation for change.

Over the summer, I did everything I could to prepare for the vague job description and terrifying PCV blogs that squeezed into my nightly reading. PCVs were mugged by knife point and by tropical birds, they fell into old latrines, and fell in love with new cultures. The stories were rich, unexpected, and promising of wonderful (mis)adventures. It was then that I first received the best and most annoying advice that would carry through my service: “You’ll...figure it out.” I had a plan, a prayer, and not much more, but was ready to put it to work with real-world experience in an international environment.

The first two months of training consisted of “figuring it out” through culture shock, intense emotions, and homesickness out the wazoo. I was the exotic fish, the toubab, brought in from across the Atlantic, and everyone tapped on my glass to ensure that I wouldn’t forget it.

Biology alumna Jessica Cochran in Senegal

That misinterpreted thing that made me crumble early on was the same thing that encouraged perseverance—Senegalese hospitality, or Taranga. They shared with me their family name, their tongue-in-cheek jokes, snotty-kiddy colds, bowls of white rice, and seemingly redundant customs. In return, I have humbling discretions and shared stories that change stereotypes on both sides. It seems silly to entertain everyone I bump into with the automatic response “Peace only!” It wasn’t until I was dropped in my rural village of 400 with my shabby Pulaar language skills and time that I would understand.

I spent my days in the gossipy gardens and cotton fields with the women, the afternoons making tea in the shade of mango trees with the men, and any transition in a paparazzi swarm of kids, the most forgiving of my Pulaar mishaps. Although the last two years of classroom French would be next to useless at the village level, good ol’ biology never let me down.

(Senegal con’t on p. 10)
My department is proud to announce that seven more of our students have been named Magellan scholars in the 2012-13 academic year. Each of them describes what his or her project entails:

In 2012, the CDC cited 36% of Americans as overweight. Furthermore according to statistics in 2008, about 30% of adolescents under the age of 18 years in the United States were overweight and about 15% of these adolescents were obese. Thus, experiments determining the effects of the western diet or high sugar diets on human health are becoming more prominent. As a result, the focus of our Magellan project is to determine whether long term exposure to a sucrose-rich diet affects the physiology, cognition, stress/anxiety, and activity levels/depression of rats. We are currently gathering data comparing rats on a high sugar diet to those with normal diets. Rats fed a high sugar diet were given a 10% sugar solution, which is the same concentration as that found in soda, upon weaning in order to serve as a model of what might happen when a child is raised on sugary drinks. After the rats have been on the separate diets for about five to six months, we will then compare the four health aspects of the rats using several different tests and analyze the results for statistical significance.

My Magellan project focuses on halting HIV replication by inducing apoptosis, or programmed cell death, before the virus has a chance to proliferate. Within HIV’s genome is the transactivator of transcription, Tat, which acts to exponentially increase the rate of viral transactivation. The role of Tat may be one that can be harnessed to halt the virus, as opposed to aiding in its production of viral progeny. This will be achieved through the use of pro-apoptotic proteins tBid (the truncated BH3 interacting-domain death agonist) and Bax (Bel-2-associated X protein) delivered in plasmids under the control of the HIV promoter/enhancer that will selectively express these genes only in infected cells. The primary purpose will be to exploit HIV’s normal function to induce apoptosis in cells that express the viral Tat protein.

When examining the structure of food webs, parasites are often not included despite the fact that they are among the most abundant organisms on the planet and can have more biomass in an ecosystem than the top predators. Because parasites infect the majority of the organisms that make up these food webs at all trophic levels, there is no doubt that they have an influence on food web dynamics and have the capacity to regulate energy flow. There is much known about the effects that parasites have on prey hosts, altering their anatomy and behavior to make them more susceptible to predation from a predator. However, what has not been thoroughly investigated are the effects of parasites on predators. This effect could be manifested in the form of an altered functional response, which is the intake rate of prey by a predator in relation to prey density. Such information would prove critical to our understanding of food web dynamics, and the role that parasites play in altering those dynamics. I am investigating the effects of parasites on predators by determining if infection by Haematoloechus breviplexus has an effect on the predator-prey relationship between libellulid odonates and their cladoceran prey. By determining the functional response of the odonates tested both prior to and after induced parasitic infection, we can determine if there is a difference in the amount of prey needed to sustain proper metabolic function.
Geology Student Of The Year

Mark Schultz, graduating summa cum laude in August 2013, was chosen by the faculty as this year’s Outstanding Geology Student. Originally from upstate New York, Mark moved to Anderson, South Carolina in his middle school years and has made South Carolina his home since then. He worked for ten years in the Clemson area for a company manufacturing building materials and then moved on to work in Columbia. He cites 2003 as a pivotal year in his life--he married his wife Molly, his first child, Vicktoria, was born, and he bought his first house here in Aiken! He began working for an automotive parts company and started his college career by taking classes at Aiken Technical College.

And now, several years later, Mark has realized his goal of earning a Bachelor’s degree in biology with a concentration in Environmental Restoration and Remediation, distinguishing himself in the process as an excellent student, a hard worker, and a friend to all those around him. Karin Willoughby, Mark’s professor in Geomorphology writes: "Mark has worked for seven years to achieve his college degree, but he has done it in extraordinary style. In both geology and biology classes, he has demonstrated excellence and, in particular, his efforts in his geology classes set a new standard of achievement. Not only does he succeed, he takes time to help other students... Mark’s enthusiasm, dedication and leadership have made him a true asset to the department."

Mark’s wife Mollie and daughters Vicktoria and Isabella (Izzie) were his biggest supporters at home, and he was mentored in the lab by Dr. Michele Harmon, with whom he did his senior research on the phytoremediation of divalent cationic metals from constructed wetlands. He hopes to continue his studies in the future, with an eye to the MEERM (Master of Earth and Environmental Resource Management) program at USC. In the meantime, he will continue self-employment in the construction field and is making plans to through-hike the Appalachian Trail next Spring!
hybrid triticale. He returned to USCA in the Fall of 1973 to take up a tenure-track Assistant Professor position.

In his 42 total years at USCA, he has taught a wide variety of classes, with the field botany courses being his favorites, especially the Seasonal Flora class he has been teaching since 1975. He has seen the campus and the faculty and staff grow exponentially, and while he says everyone knew each other better when the numbers were smaller, he feels the school is qualitatively so much better. “It’s a good university to work at. I’m going to really miss my colleagues. I’m so proud of all they do! The exceptional faculty and staff have always been the hallmark of this place,” he reflected.

He has served the university in many capacities, including a ten-year stint as Associate Chancellor of Development and Alumni Affairs from 1983-93. He served on and chaired a plethora of committees, most notably chair of the Faculty Assembly for two different two-year terms which happened to be exactly 30 years apart! He has also been a member of the University of South Caroliniana Society Executive Committee, the USC Libraries Ex Libris Society, and the Thomas Cooper Society. He was tenured and promoted to Associate Professor in 1978 and promoted to Professor in 1983. When asked what the best things were about being a university professor, he listed: love of teaching and contact with the students, along with freedom to teach courses in which he was interested, getting outside to teach his botany and conservation courses, and the personal freedom to develop his skills as a botanist, which gave him an entrée into many other professional areas.

His publication record includes many articles on the flora and wetlands of the Southeastern United States, with particular emphasis on South Carolina, and a biographical article on the 19th century botanist Henry W. Ravenel for The South Carolina Encyclopedia edited by Walter Edgar.

Dr. Shealy’s extensive service to his profession and the community share the common theme of conservation and land preservation. He has served on the board of the Hitchcock Foundation since 1980, preserving and expanding our city’s treasured Hitchcock Woods, and has just been elected chairman of the board for the second time. He was the co-founder of the Aiken County Open Land Trust, now known as the Aiken Land Conservancy, and serves on the boards of the South Carolina Chapter of the Nature Conservancy, The Conservation Voters of South Carolina, where he served as president for three years, and the South Carolina Conservation Bank. He has worked with the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources on the Edisto River Basin Project and the Natural Areas Committee of the Heritage Trust Program and is chair of the scientific advisory committee for Craig’s Pond. He has taught courses for USC Aiken’s Academy of Lifelong Learning and has spoken to and led field trips for countless groups ranging from kindergartners to senior citizens. One can only imagine that he will continue to be in great demand during his “retirement”!

Dr. Shealy leading a field trip at the Savannah River Bluffs in 1984
Dr. Shealy met his wife of 48 years, Margaret, in an invertebrate zoology class at USC. He jokingly says, “We met over the protozoa, by the flatworms we were dating, and when we reached the echinoderms we were a thing!” Margaret is retired from teaching for 38 years in private middle schools in Aiken. Their daughter, Beth, grandsons Jack (a rising senior biology major at USC) and James (a rising senior in high school), and son, John all reside in Columbia.

Anyone who knows Dr. Shealy, whether it be former student, colleague, friend, or acquaintance, knows him for his stories and his bow ties—“Books and bow ties are two of my favorite things in life,” he proudly admits. We in the department will miss our daily contact with Dr. Shealy, and sincerely hope he will continue to grace our halls with his presence (and yes, his stories, too)!

Dr. Shealy with former students Brad Reinhart, Michele Harmon and Bill Jackson, all members of the faculty in the department!

With wife, Margaret, daughter Beth Garrick and Bruce Prior

With longtime colleagues Bill Pirkle and Irene Rudnick
**Student Awards**

**South Carolina Academy of Science Annual Meeting awards for outstanding undergraduate research:**

Alyssa Smith, Biology & Environmental Sciences Oral Session, *Exploring the mechanisms of allelopathic interactions in the invasive annual plant 'Phyllanthus Urinaria'*, mentor Dr. Andy Dyer

Stephan Albrecht and Helen Morris, Medicine, Pharmacy, and Public Health Session, *Dose dependent effects of caffeine on cognitive performance and neuronal activation*, mentor Dr. Michelle Vieyra

Priscilla Simon and Claudia Fulmer, Molecular Biology Poster Session, *Comparative study of HIV-1 induced apoptosis by expression of pro-apoptotic BAX and TBID*, mentor, Dr. Bill Jackson

Priscilla Simon, Outstanding Female Undergraduate Scientist

**USCA Research Day:**

Keifer Richardson, Silver Medal, Oral Presentations-Sciences, *The effects of various promoters on mPing transposition in 'Arabidopsis'*, mentor Dr. Nathan Hancock

Courtney Burchhalter, Silver Medal, Posters, *Phaseolus acutifolius' transformation*, mentor Dr. Nathan Hancock

Shana Woodward, Bronze Medal, Oral Presentations-Sciences, *Evidence of genetic variation and adaptive phenotypic plasticity in two California annual invasive grasses*, mentor Dr. Andy Dyer

**USC Discovery Day:**

Shana Woodward, Oral/Creative Presentations: STEM I, First place (see previous title)

Alex Jureka, Posters: Biology & Biomedical Sciences I, First place, *Measuring the comparative effectiveness of anti-HIV-1 Tat siRNAs*, mentor Dr. Bill Jackson and Priscilla Simon, Second Place, (see previous title)

Ashley Strother, Posters: Biology & Biomedical Sciences II, First place, *Targeted insertion of the mPing transposable element*, mentor Dr. Nathan Hancock

Kristian Pickrel, Oral/Creative Presentations: STEM I, Second place, *Determining transposition promoting regions based on recombinant mPing and mPong constructs*, mentor Dr. Nathan Hancock
Biology Student of the Year

Brandy Bossle, graduating magna cum laude in May, was chosen by the faculty as the Outstanding Biology Student of the Year. Brandy is from Maryland, and was recruited for the softball team here at USCA, where she played softball all four years as an outfielder. And while being a student athlete is demanding in and of itself, Brandy proved herself a great student as well. She chose to do her degree in our concentration for Environmental Remediation and Restoration and did her research in the lab of Dr. Virginia Shervette. She also worked as a lab assistant for the department during her junior and senior years, taking care of the animals in the museum and helping to prep labs. She was a Magellan Scholar (see Spring 2012 newsletter) for her project "Mercury Concentrations in Three Commonly Consumed Fishes of Impaired Watersheds in South Carolina," which she presented at Discovery Day in Columbia this past Spring and will also present at a national meeting of the American Fisheries Society later this year.

Brandy knew she wanted to study biology when she came to USCA. She grew up on the Chesapeake Bay where she experienced first-hand her community’s concern for the environmental health of the Bay system. Her most valuable experiences came from working with Brad Reinhart as a lab assistant and with Dr. Shervette in her Fisheries Lab. "I learned an immense amount about fishes' anatomy as well as how to manage fresh- and salt-water tanks," Brandy said. "I am mostly interested in diverse types of fishes but the basics of biology are essential to understand the more complex ideas."

Brandy will begin the MEERM (Master of Earth and Environmental Resource Management) program at USC this Fall. Her goal is to someday work in sustaining populations of fishes or to become a teacher to get children excited about biology. "I want them to become passionate about biology, just like I am!"
My research is about the influence parasites have on food web dynamics. Basically, I am examining how they influence the flow of energy between predator and prey interactions. In recent literature, it states that parasites can compose up to 1-3% of host biomass, and can have a total biomass that exceeds that of the top predators, (Kuris et al.2008).

What is known throughout the literature is how parasites influence prey behavior, however what is not known is the influence in how they affect predator behavior. In my research, I am using the parasite Posthodiplostomum minimum to infect either Lepomis macrochirus (Bluegill Sunfish) or Gambusia affinis (mosquitofish), depending on which fish is the easiest to infect with the parasite, and I’m going to use the prey animal, Daphnia magna (water flea). The P. minimum infection could have an energy cost that influences the consumption rate of infected fish and thus changes the functional response of the predator (the relationship between prey consumed and prey abundance). I’m going to create Type II functional response models of both controlled and infected fish. These graphs would provide the data to determine whether or not P. minimum infection of fish causes them to increase their intake of prey. This research project is a step towards understanding the impact parasites have on links of the food web.
Research continues to be an integral part of our department’s program. Students pursue independent study projects under the tutelage of faculty members. Those pursuing a B.S. degree are required to complete a senior research project. Listed below are projects for Fall 2011 and Spring 2012.

**Fall 2012 Senior Research Projects**

Ebony Adiotomre: *Effectiveness of ‘Pontederia cordata’ in phytoremediation: Dissolved versus particulate natural organic matter (NOM).* Dr. Michele Harmon.

Matthew Baker: *The Kings Mountain Terrane and chronostratigraphy of the Carolinian Rheic Margin.* Dr. Allen Dennis.

William Blackwell: *Parasites of largemouth bass (Micropterus salmoides) from Par Pond.* Drs. Hugh Hanlin and Derek Zelmer.

Chris Boyer: *Patterns of infectious disease in South Carolina and the US in the 20th century.* Dr. Andy Dyer.

Kaitlyn Edgington: *Microbial Source Identification using Genetic Markers.* Dr. Michele Harmon.

Rashida Felder: *The effect of transposase expression level on ‘mPing’ transposition.* Dr. Nathan Hancock.

Rechard Harris: *Using ‘Ceriodaphnia dubia’ to model remediation of metals by ‘Carex stricta’ in a model aquatic mesocosm.* Dr. Michele Harmon.

Savannah Harris: *Residuum soils thought to host characteristic plant communities at Heggie’s Rock and Burk’s Mountain.* Dr. Allen Dennis.

Sara Hopkins: *Cloning siRNA tat 5834 into the retroviral vector, sSRNG.* Dr. William Jackson.

Victoria Meyer: *Adaptive germination traits in ‘Aegilops triuncialis’.* Dr. Andy Dyer.

Brittany Sullivan: *Testing phenotypic plasticity in ‘Cyperus esculentus’: preferential tuber placement related to nutrient patches.* Dr. Andy Dyer.

Ashley Williams: *Characterization of bacterial isolates from hypersaline environments.* Dr. Garriet Smith.

**Spring 2013 Senior Research Projects**

Stephan Albrecht: *Cognitive functioning and neuronal activation in response to caffeine.* Dr. Michelle Vieyra.

Asheeba Baksh: *Microbial Source Identification using antibiotic resistance analysis.* Dr. Michele Harmon.

Brandy Bossle: *Advanced topics in fish biology.* Dr. Virginia Shervette.

Emily Bush: *Beta-galactosidase as a marker for HIV-1 tat-dependent expression.* Dr. William Jackson.

Nichole Clark: *Influence of host age and size on the parasite infracomunity structure of bluegill sunfish.* Dr. Derek Zelmer.

Casey Garvin: *Bioavailability of Mercury to non-target organisms.* Mr. Brad Reinhart.

Ricardo Garza: *The germination ecology of barbed goatgrass (Aegilops triuncialis).* Dr. Andy Dyer.

Sandra Hunsberger: *Determinants of guild structure in monogeneans infecting largemouth bass from Par Pond, SC.* Dr. Derek Zelmer.

Kamaria Johnson: *Age and growth validation in gray triggerfish (Balistes capriscus).* Dr. Virginia Shervette.

Alex Jureka: *Comparative study of anti-tat siRNAs.* Dr. William Jackson.

Katherine Layne: *Testing for the presence of glyphosate-resistant weeds in commercial potting soils.* Dr. Andy Dyer.

Giselle Outten: *Development and functional screening of a domain swapped protein library.* Dr. Nathan Hancock.

April Patterson: *Spatial heterogeneity in the parasite community of Appalachian seal salamanders, Desmognathus monticola.* Drs. Hugh Hanlin and Derek Zelmer.

DeAnndra Pickens: *Analysis of Sleeping Beauty insertion sites in HeLa cells.* Dr. William Jackson.

Kristian Pickrel: *Determining transposition promoting regions based on recombinant mPing and mPong constructs.* Dr. Nathan Hancock.

Michael Poole: *Corals and coral diseases.* Dr. Garriet Smith.

Keifer Richardson: *The effects of various promoters on mPing transposition in Arabidopsis thaliana.* Dr. Nathan Hancock.

Mark Schultz: *Phytoremediation of heavy metals.* Dr. Michele Harmon.

Priscilla Simon: *Comparative study of HIV-1 tat induced apoptosis by pro-apoptotic Bax and tBid.* Dr. William Jackson.


Kellen Stone: *Investigating local ecotoxicological issues.* Dr. Michele Harmon.

Zachary Williams: *Use of anti-Vif ribozymes to inhibit HIV function.* Dr. William Jackson.

Shana Woodward: *Adaptive and plastic variation across rainfall gradient in two species of invasive annual grasses.* Dr. Andy Dyer.
Where are you from and how did you choose USCA for your college career? What did you like best about USCA?

I am originally from Hephzibah, GA and I chose USCA as my choice of college when I moved to North Augusta in 1997. I joined the US Navy upon graduation from high school in 1990, got out of the navy in 1994, and moved to Augusta and worked at Augusta Newsprint from 1994-1997. I decided to attend college in 1996. It was convenient and upon reading about USCA, I was surprised to learn about the excellent rankings that the institution held. While at USCA I made some good friends, especially my study group for organic chemistry! Norm, April and Mike! Hope they’re all doing well!

Favorite classes would be comparative anatomy, zoology and anatomy and physiology. One of the things that sticks with me is Dr. Hugh Hanlin and his explanation of kidney physiology using a kangaroo rat as an example! Favorite teachers would have to be Dr. Hanlin, Dr. Jackson, Dr. Yates, and the entire biology staff! Also American art history still continues to be one of my favorite classes ever.

I also have to thank Glenn Schumpert, Director of Financial Aid for his advice and guidance. I worked in financial aid for all three years while I was at USCA as a work study. That was also a great experience.

How did you choose dentistry for your career? Did you know you wanted to be a dentist when you came to college?

I chose dentistry as my vocation after reading about dentistry. The more I read about it, the more interested I became. I chose dentistry as my vocation after reading about dentistry. The more I read about it, the more interested I became. I chose that my second year at USCA. I knew I wanted to be in the medical field, which is why I chose a biology major upon entering USCA.

How prepared did you feel for dentistry school? What was your experience at MUSC like?

I felt that I received a good base knowledge for my post graduate training. It was a fantastic experience at MUSC. Charleston is a great place and I couldn’t have asked for a better place to attend school. It was classes all day for the first year, second year is mostly still classes and I saw my first patient. My third and fourth years I treated patients and attended classes. I graduated from USCA in May of 2000 and started dental school in June 2000. Gross anatomy is the first class you attend in dental school and that is the class that makes or breaks you.

What have you been doing since graduating?

Since graduating MUSC in 2004, I entered private practice at different practices as an associate doctor and am now working at an office in Greenwood SC. I would have to say there are a lot of things I enjoy about my profession. Interacting with different people everyday, I don’t feel like I’m going to work and I get to help people feel and look better!

Any other information you’d like to share about family, pets, hobbies, etc.

I enjoy hunting and attending USC football games with my family. I have a dog named Lucky who is 12 years old.