Erin Hanson’s (B.A. ’86) soft-shelled, protective football helmet cover is changing the game.

Former Atlanta Mayor Sam Massell (B.C.S. ’51) took a passion for progress and helped modernize the city.

Ann-Marie Campbell (MBA ’05, B.A. ’07) joined The Home Depot as a cashier. Today, she’s president of a division.

“KILLING ZOMBIES IS GOOD”

As executive producer of 'The Walking Dead,' cable television’s highest-rated drama ever, Tom Luse (B.A. ’74, M.S. ’81) is behind the scenes for the zombie zeitgeist.
FROM THE PRESIDENT

Georgia State is in a dynamic period of improvement and expansion, and it is extremely important that we provide first-class facilities to meet the needs of our community.

A CAMPUS WITHOUT BOUNDARIES

IN ENHANCING ITS FOOTPRINT, GEORGIA STATE IS CONTRIBUTING TO THE INCREASED VITALITY OF DOWNTOWN ATLANTA

OUR UNIVERSITY CONTINUES TO BE A MAJOR CONTRIBUTOR to the revitalization of downtown Atlanta as we develop our campus to serve the needs of our students, faculty and staff. Our footprint in the heart of the city continues to grow.

We will break ground this summer on the second tower of the Pett Science Center, located in the first tower at the corner of Decatur Street and Piedmont Avenue. Designed for highly focused research space for our faculty, the tower will be located adjacent to the first tower at the corner of Decatur Street and Piedmont Avenue. Decatur Street and Piedmont Avenue. Decatur Street and Piedmont Avenue.

We will open the third tower of the Petit Science Center, the privately owned and managed student housing complex, that was at the same time the first phase of expansion, and it is extremely important that we provide first-class facilities to meet the needs of our community. In enhancing our physical plant we’re contributing to the increased vitality of downtown Atlanta. We are a campus without boundaries, and we never lose sight of that.

Sincerely,

Mark P. Becker
President

GAU
gsumagazine design! I'd dig the new @gsu_news I’m really

LETTERS

SO LONG, KELL! Reading about Kell Hall brought many memories. I was involved at Georgia State as a student and an employee from 1954 through 1975. I served as Director of Purchasing from 1957 through 1975. My first memory goes back to the mid-1930s. The facility was known as the Bella Isle parking garage. My dad would periodically take our family downtown on Saturday afternoon for a movie and, on occasion, bowling at Bick’s bowling alley, just north of the parking garage on Ivy Street. When bowling was on the schedule, my dad would park at Bella Isle.

I clearly remember receiving a piece of stick candy from the attendant when my memory goes back to the mid-1930s. The garage skeleton, the “ramps” were unique in their efficiency to take us from floor to floor. If only those walls could have spoken I clearly remember receiving a piece of stick candy from the attendant when my memory goes back to the mid-1930s. The garage skeleton, the “ramps” were unique in their efficiency to take us from floor to floor. If only those walls could have spoken.

Sincerely,

Mark P. Becker
President

“Why not, as Kell Hall is being demolished, have some of the concrete be broken up into fist-sized chunks and make them available to the thousands who trek up and down the ramps to and from classes? I, for one, would gladly pay for receiving a chunk from the rubble. Such a ceremony would also be an opportunity for professors and students from the ‘Ramway’ days to have an opportunity to greet each other.”

Dr. Roger Stembridge (B.S. ’60)
A MODEL FOR STUDENT SUCCESS
University support program cited by Education Trust

Georgia State’s data-driven approach to dramatically increase student success has been held up as a national model by The Education Trust. The Education Trust’s new report, “Learning from High-Performing and Fast-Gaining Institutions,” identifies Georgia State as one of eight universities implementing programs to markedly improve graduation rates over time.

Georgia State President Mark Becker joined other invited college and university presidents for a Jan. 16 summit focused on making college more accessible to students held by President Barack Obama at the White House.

Georgia State is one of a handful of large institutions nationwide using new technology to track students from the moment they arrive on campus to ensure progress to graduation. With the university’s early warning tracking system, struggling students get the intervention they need to get back on track, improve or change their academic path.

BLUE IS THE NEW GREEN
Georgia State is proving a large urban university can take steps toward sustainability

Georgia State’s Office of Sustainability has brought campus recycling and energy conservation issues to the forefront. The office executed several initiatives this past year to engage students and faculty in building a greener campus. “Go Green Fall 2013” implemented a campus-wide recycling day where students received free items for participating in recycling.

The office also coordinated with University Housing for the “Compete to Reduce” Campus Conservation national competition for the second year in a row. One of the most interactive ideas was

MORTARBOARD MADNESS
GEORGIA STATE GRADS GET CREATIVE WITH THEIR CAPS

Character Studies: From Doctor Who to Cookie Monster to Dory (Just Keep Swimming) from “Finding Nemo,” the class of 2013 found plenty of inspiration from pop culture for their graduation cap decorations.

Message Board: For Almeera J. Pratt (B.A. ’13), her graduation cap was a way to let her family know that all her hard work paid off. Her cap read: “I got a job, mom!” Pratt now works at the public relations firm Jackson Spalding.

Cap and Gallery: Visit magazine.gsu.edu to check out a gallery of some of Georgia State’s newest alumni’s cap designs.
Concussions grew—the Guardian Cap

The Guardian Cap is a padded helmet cover that snaps onto the helmet to absorb impact and reduce concussions. It was developed to enhance the design of football helmets and could make a difference.

During a game, the Guardian Cap is almost exclusively worn during practice but is used in games as well. The cap is made of a soft, shell-foamed helmet cover aimed at reducing concussions.

Hanson says they took it to the National Football League’s concussion symposium. “They told us that it would change the game of football, if we did it,” she said, referring to the audible pops that come when a player hits another player. “And that would be bad for business.”

After that, Hanson says the company worked hard to find a product to market. A few years later, when her son, James, was ready to start playing football, Hanson was concerned for his safety. She knew a lineman who had been killed in high school between 1,200 and 1,500 years ago.

In 2012, as Hanson was tending to her grief, the company worked to enhance the design. They came to a agreement at the Georgia State University’s national conference in Chicago. The 2014 Sprite Campus Program Excellence Award was presented to the chapter members attending the conference in a presentation on Jan. 7.

“Lynn’s award not only recognizes the ongoing excellence of one of the university’s top programs in student engagement, it’s also an endorsement of the larger nonprofit community in Atlanta and its support of our student through internships and other mentoring activities,” said Mary Beth Walker, dean of the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies, which houses Georgia State’s chapter.

Students participating in the Georgia State chapter represent every academic level and all types of degrees, said NLA chapter advisor Maggie Tolan, director of career services and student life for the Andrew Young School.

“The award recognizes that our campus has strong career leadership,” Tolan said. “We are in a city with awesome internships, and our students do more than the minimum number. They often work up to four internships, when only one is required for certification.”

The Hansen Group, a technology and material sciences company that has developed a range of protective products, including transparent armor for U.S. military vehicles, for example, several years ago, the company worked with a football helmet manufacturer to create a soft foam-foamed helmet cover aimed at reducing concussions.

Hanson says they took the Guardian Cap to the National Football League concussion symposium. “They told us that it would change the game of football, if we did it,” she said, referring to the audible pops that come when a player hits another player. “And that would be bad for business.”

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According to the Georgia State chapter of the Nonprofit Leadership Alliance (NLA) has been recognized as the top chapter in the country at the organization’s national conference in Chicago.

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Urban Oasis

Indian Creek Lodge reopens as a new state-of-the-art facility

Georgia State has operated the Lodge at Indian Creek since 1998 as a location for off-campus events and retreats. The old lodge, once a family home, was razed in 2013 to make way for the new facility. Opened in January, the new lodge is the first Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design-certified building at Georgia State.

The Lodge at Indian Creek houses a large meeting room, two breakout rooms, an open lobby reception area with fireplaces, a catering kitchen and front and rear outside decks with seating. Georgia State students, alumni who are members of the Student Recreation Center are eligible to use the facility for a fee.

“Indian Creek has always been a jewel for the Georgia State community, and now it’s really something special we can call our own,” said Scott Levin, director of the Department of Recreational Services, which has maintained the property at 900 South Indian Creek Dr. since 1992.

In Memoriam

J. Mack Robinson and John Rhodes Haverty, M.D.

The Georgia State community mourned the loss of two of the university’s biggest supporters earlier this year. J. Mack Robinson, the legendary Atlanta business leader, philanthropist and namesake of the J. Mack Robinson College of Business, died Feb. 7. John Rhodes Haverty, M.D., founding dean of the School of Allied Health, a precursor to the Byrdine F. Lewis School of Nursing and Health Professions, passed away on Jan. 4.

Robinson’s $10 million endowment to Georgia State in 1998 enabled the business school to rise to new heights, becoming internationally recognized for its top programs and faculty.

In 1968, Haverty founded the School of Allied Health with degree programs in nursing and physical therapy, the first accredited physical therapy program in Georgia.

Researcher To Be Featured

Science Channel

Sarah Brosnan has been studying the behavior of monkeys and apes for years, and science lovers can now learn about her research right on their TV.

The associate professor of psychology, philosophy and neuroscience at Georgia State is being featured on “Through the Wormhole,” an American science documentary television series on the Science Channel hosted by actor Morgan Freeman.

Her footage was filmed on Dec. 1, and is tentatively slated to air this summer.

Kurt Sayenga, director, producer and writer for the episode, interviewed Brosnan about her research on inequity, which examines how individuals respond to inequity and fairness. How do we react when we get more or less than our partner for completing the same task.

Brosnan demonstrated the concept with two capuchin monkeys, who receive different food rewards, a piece of grape or bell pepper, for handing a rock back to Brosnan. Monkeys who receive the less preferred reward, the bell pepper, respond badly, often throwing out a bell pepper that, in other circumstances, they happily eat.

The research helps to determine how human response to inequity and fairness evolved, Brosnan said. Well, maybe not. Adia Wingfield, associate professor of sociology thinks there may be a link between socioeconomic class and cybersecurity, and is using a National Science Foundation grant to help her dig into the issue.

“Existing research has shown that poor individuals are more likely to both get and play the lottery,” said Wingfield. “I speculate that a large number of these people will also fail for phishing scams.”

Phishing is the attempt to get people to reveal personal information, such as passwords, Social Security numbers or account details, in emails or other electronic communication designed to look like they originate from a legitimate source.

The study will evaluate how people from different socio-economic classes respond to different Web page designs.

“We hope the work we are doing will help enable an intervention tailored to target specific groups,” she said.
THE SUPER SLEUTH

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF HISTORY NICK WILDING'S DISCOVERY OF A GALILEO FORGERY HELPS NAB A RARE BOOK CRIMINAL

A BOSTON BOOK DEALER paid half a million dollars in 2005 for an original printer’s proof of “The Sidereus Nuncius,” Galileo’s most important work. The buyer did his due diligence, having the book authenticated by professors at Harvard University, the University of Naples and the Institute for Advanced Studies in Berlin. But it was a fake. Nick Wilding, assistant professor of history at Georgia State, was sure. The book bore a stamp proclaiming it to be from the library of Federico Cesei, a 17th-century nobleman. But legitimate copies of the stamp were known to have the book authenticated by professors at Georgia State. Wilding, an expert in his own right, asked for an employee, has since confessed to forging five copies of the “Sidereus Nuncius” and five more of another Galileo book, the “Compasso.”

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The Center for Nano-Optics, a research center focusing on the science of developing tools and instruments, has been created at Georgia State. Physics Professor Mark Stockman and a group of physics faculty will expand the university’s nano-technology focus and continue the development of two university inventions — the spaser and the nanoplasmatic metal funnel.

11

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It’s an age-old tale: two popular bands have a fight, the media covers both sides, and both groups get plenty of publicity. It certainly worked for the clean-cut Beatles and the wild Rolling Stones, two of the biggest rock bands in history. The rift between the groups was legendary, and is still debated among music fans today. But according to History Professor John McMillian, that famous feud was a complete fraud.

“Even the most gnarled and intransigent veterans of the Beatles-Stones debates will emerge enlightened by this book. McMillian is a scholar of the ’60s unindustrious. You’ve got to seek out new material. McMillian will enjoy it just as much as I do.”

Although a native of Atlanta, McMillian is a fan of the Stones. “For me, the Stones are the greatest rock band that ever lived. I’ve got complete sets of the fan magazines for both the Beatles and the Stones, as well as lots of others.”

In ‘Beatles vs. Stones,’ Professor John McMillian examines the careers of the two greatest rock and roll bands of the 20th century.

Rather than rely on the usual books and recordings, he went to a different source: underground press and magazines.

In 'Beatles vs. Stones,' Professor John McMillian examines the careers of the two greatest rock and roll bands of the 20th century.

"Any good historian is always looking for new evidence," he said. "You’ve got to be industrious. You’ve got to seek out new material. I write the kind of books that I would enjoy reading myself. My hope is that readers will enjoy it just as much as I do.”

For McMillian, seeking out underground sources for the great debate was the next natural step.

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IN THE CITY

21,000 +
Archival items, including manuscripts, photographs, periodicals, newspapers, oral histories, maps and other materials, digitized by the Georgia State Library for its digital collections. Visit library.gsu.edu to browse and access the collections.

RAJEEV DHAWAN, EXPERT ECONOMIST

Alums rock Super Bowl halftime show with Bruno Mars

Dugger plays the saxophone and King the trumpet in Grammy-winning artist Bruno Mars’ band The Hooligans. The two took the stage with Mars during the halftime show of this year’s Super Bowl, which had the largest national television viewership in history when 115.5 million people tuned in. Even more watched the halftime show, which also set a record with 115.5 million viewers. Dugger, King and Mars were joined by the Red Hot Chili Peppers, and the performance received the prior record of 114 million set by Madonna two years ago.

For many years the Braves had been frustrated by the absence of more favorable economic development around Turner Field and were eager to obtain more control of both stadium operations and the investment strategy for developing the area around the stadium. It’s clear that the Braves had just lost patience with the city and had sought other options. The fact that a parcel of land managed to materialize almost by accident, as the Braves were at their most frustrated, seems to have been a coup de grace in compelling the move.

Why are the Braves leaving downtown?

Surprised that there was an equal number of leaks on the economic issues involved in the Braves, but a sudden and fast discovery was made. The Braves recognized that Cobb County would naturally be suspicious about the size of the investment, and it happened for the Braves to be made aware of the well-known strategy among sports franchises to use location alternatives as a way to negotiate better deals. It is actually hard to believe that there is any small group involved in this discussion, which was clearly necessary to avoid leaks. It is actually hard to believe that there is any such group involved in this discussion, which was clearly necessary to avoid leaks. It is actually hard to believe that there is any small group involved in this discussion, which was clearly necessary to avoid leaks. It is actually hard to believe that there is any small group involved in this discussion, which was clearly necessary to avoid leaks.

The announcement came out of nowhere. How did it happen?

This is indeed quite surprising, and it happened for the first time. It could not only be kept secret if it was fast and this, and it was obviously not a master plan of the Braves, but a sudden reaction when the crowd thought they were off and then suddenly perceived that there was a leaking of information.

1,930
Number of Georgia State student-athletes in the 2013-14 academic year

1,032%
5-year growth rate of the U.S. real GDP

THE BRAVES’ NEW WORLD
BRUCE SEAMAN, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ECONOMICS AND EXPERT PROFESSOR OF THE BUSINESS OF SPORTS, WHICH IS IN THE ATLANTA BRAVES CONTROVERSIAL MOVE OUT OF DOWNTOWN TO THE BURBS.

ATLANTIS

ALL-PURPOSE ALBERT

Albert Wilson is Panther football’s first FBS ALL-AMERICAN

Prolific receiver and kick return specialist Albert Wilson is Georgia State’s first All-American at the Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) level. Wilson earned an honorable mention selection as an all-purpose player on Sports Illustrated’s 2013 college football All-America team.

Wilson’s average of 190.2 all-purpose yards per game this season was the second-highest figure in the FBS.

Wilson led the Sun Belt in receiving yards (981) per game second in rushing yards (236.5) and third in kickoff return yards (236.5), breaking his own record in each category. He averaged 25.4 yards on kick-off returns and was the Panthers’ third-leading rusher.

PANTHERS GIVE BACK

Georgia State student-athletes have completed more than 5,500 hours of community service in each of the past three years.

More than 40 Georgia State student-athletes, administrators and staff spent much of an afternoon in early December at Hurt Park downtown Atlanta to join the community with their “Paws for a Cause” event. In this event, the student-athletes such as clothing, shoes, bags and toiletries to people in need, the project was coordinated by assistant athletic trainer Kasinda Hodges, who enlisted the Student-Athlete Advisory Council to help with the call for donations. It turned out to be much more.

“The event was awesome to see so many people—from student-athletes to coaches to the Georgia State community and departments on campus — really embrace the idea of giving back,” Hodges said. “The event went better than expected, and we received more donations than projected. We are thankful for all who donated items or their time.”

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2014 GRADUATE PROFESSIONAL CANDIDATES
Professor engineers an electronic playmate to help children with cerebral palsy.

For physical therapists, children with cerebral palsy present a unique challenge. The children can be difficult to understand, but because they lack control over their movements, they can’t easily repeat modeled movements. Making an assessment can be difficult.

The solution may look like a toy — a robot that can play with children with cerebral palsy and be programmed to their individual needs. The robot can also collect data to help the physical therapist design the most helpful care.

That’s the vision of Yu-Ping Chen, assistant professor of physical therapy at Georgia State. She has built a playmate robot for children with cerebral palsy. The project is funded by the National Science Foundation.

“Children with cerebral palsy don’t have very much control over their movements,” Chen said. “So, we decided to use a robot as a playmate and at the same time ask the robot to become an evaluation tool.”

The new, small robot fills a need for kids with the disease who have limited use of limbs. The robots are designed for adults, not children. They don’t fit children’s size or developmental stage. They’re not created as appealing, animated, lifelike toys, like the ones taking shape at Georgia State.

Cameras in the robot’s eyes record the range and speed of the child’s movements. These data will help create an assessment, and the robot can also be programmed to play with the child to improve motor skills and muscle control in children.

In his book “Improbable Women: Five Who Explored the Middle East,” William Cotterman tells the stories of five courageous women who journey through the Middle East to honor Zenobia, a third-century warrior queen.

Cotterman became the first full-time chairperson for Georgia State’s Computer Information Systems Department in 1975. The job led him to Kuwait. There, he discovered a new passion for Arabic culture, history and language. Over the next 30 years of his teaching career, Cotterman spent as much time as possible in the Middle East, and each journey was more than just a vacation.

“I realized that what I really wanted to do was dig into some aspect of history, master it as thoroughly as my intellect would allow and then write about it,” Cotterman said. “In my reading, I found a number of women who traveled to the Arab world, and the idea dawned that I should take a closer look at women travelers.”

Cotterman writes about five women who exemplify elements of courage, audaciousness, determination and decisiveness. He found each woman he chose, al differences and barriers created by their gender. In his book, Cotterman tells why these women traveled to the Middle East and how they escaped upper-class British traditions during the 18th, 19th and mid-20th century.
Sam Massell took a passion for progress and three pieces of paper from Georgia State and helped modernize Atlanta

By CHARLES MCNAIR

Photography by BEN ROLLINS
Massell catalyzed Atlanta’s nascent convention and tourism industry; oversaw the development of Woodruff Park, near Georgia Dome and a magnet for downtown; and created the Atlanta Convention and Visitors Bureau, its Hospitality Hall of Fame, the International Civil Rights King Center’s Walk of Fame, Georgia Trend Magazine’s Most Influential Georgians Hall of Fame, and honorary doctorates degrees from Georgia Tech University and John Marshall University.

He also treasures one more important Massell moment — his induction to J. Mack Robinson College of Business’ Hall of Fame.

As a realtor, Massell adorned himself with miniature cruise ships. Today, as head of the Buckhead Coalition, he wears a buck — a buck head. It’s a realtor thing.

He’s proud of all four seasons of his career.

Realty came first. After a 1949-’50 stint as chief of publications for a trade magazine for the National Association of Women’s and Children’s Apparel Salesmen, Inc. (his Georgia Cracker lit mag experience came in handy), Massell based on with Allan Grayson, Realty Company, old friends of the family.

“I was like you took a bird and threw it out to fly,” he says.

His first year in commercial realty, he paid more in taxes than he made in annual salary at the magazine. He quickly became a member of the Million Dollar Club, and rose to company vice president (1957-’65).

“I have a very agile mind and could have been a very successful real estate developer,” a former colleague, Charles Ad-

erman, told Points North Magazine. “In- stead, he gave that up into a better and energy improving the Atlanta community.”
Massell's contributions to diversity before Atlanta Is Too Young To Die

Some blamed a campaign slogan perceived him, he lost City Hall to Maynard Jackson. Even the hugely influential outgoing mayor, Ivan Allen Jr., campaigned against him. Still, Massell won. He served ably for four years. Then the same shifting tides of change that swept him into office swept him out. In a campaign that still haunts him, he lost City Hall in Maynard Jackson. Some blamed a campaign slogan perceived as racist — Atlanta Is Too Young To Die. The accusations bit, especially in light of Massell's contributions to diversity before and after office.

“Atlanta was ready for a black mayor,” Massell says simply. “The time had come.”

THE DREAM BUSINESS

Worse things could have happened. Ever resilient, Massell sat down with a spreadsheet of interests, passions, capabilities. He opened the Yellow Pages to find a career match. He warned a dream job now, so he decided to “sell dreams,” as he puts it. He and Doris started their travel business, bought a vanity license plate bearing a sign: VOYAGE. Then he fixed a smaller spreadsheet of interests, passions, capabilities. He broadened, soaking up experiences. He broadened, soaking up international experiences. He broadened, soaking up ideas from travelers and locations. He was ready when Buckhead called.

One of Atlanta’s big hitters, Charles Loudermilk, CEO of megabusiness Aaron Rents, got together with 12 business buddies to form the Buckhead Coalition. They needed a leader. Massell wanted the job. The founders wanted to give Massell the one-year contract at the fledgling organization; Massell wanted three. They settled on two.

Now he’s led the coalition for 25 years, still going strong. It’s perfect work for Massell. The coalition comprises 100 companies in Buckhead, Atlanta’s affluent northern suburb. Members pay $9,000 yearly in dues, and that funds his three-person staff in work that ranges from installing defibrillators in offices to resurrecting a multiblock heart-of-downtown Buckhead renovation stopped dead by the Great Recession.

Mobility seems part of Massell’s DNA. In the early 1990s, some 20 years after MARTA, Massell spearheaded coalition efforts in support of Georgia 400, the well-traveled artery connecting Buckhead and the rest of Atlanta with populous northern counties of the metro area.

Massell shows up everywhere. One hour, he’s working out an innovative way to care for youth sports injuries at the Shepherd Spinal Center. The next hour, he’s directing with great pride the distribution of a new booklet, “Buckhead Coalition: A Sampling History of Achievement.”

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The faces of six U.S. Presidents peer down from the walls (who ARE those guys with Sam Massell?), and crystal or polished-metal awards and plaques gleam in every corner. A half-dozen shrivels from ground-breaking ceremonies hang in another place. Commemorative baseball caps dangle like scarves.

Massell proudly displays among fine memorabilia and mementos from a quarter century of coalition work.

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KILLING ZOMBIES IS GOOD

TOM LUSE (B.A. ’74, M.S. ’81) IS EXECUTIVE PRODUCER OF TELEVISION’S WILDLY POPULAR POST-APOCALYPTIC HIT, THE WALKING DEAD.

BY WILLIAM INMAN  PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOSH HELSTER
So much so that when AMC’s post-apocalyptic megahit, “The Walking Dead,” is filming here, residents and business owners clear out for days at a time and deliberately let their lawns go fallow. This hands-on approach to an hour south of Atlanta is zombie ground zero. Its Main Street was the backdrop for the town of Woodbury — a now-destroyed refuge for survivors of the “zombie apocalypse” that serves as the main for the highest-rated cable drama in history. “The Walking Dead!” is big business here and the locals have gone all-in. The walls of Senoia Coffee and Café, for example, are covered in memorabilia from the show, and the restaurant even brews a “zombie” coffee blend. It was here where Tom Luse (BA ’74, M.S. ’95), executive producer of “The Walking Dead,” realized just how big of a phenomenon it has become. “I was sitting there, having coffee, and a guy from Finland comes over and strikes up a conversation,” Luse says. “This guy traveled halfway across the world to see where ‘The Walking Dead’ is filmed.”

The show, going into its fourth season, is also huge for the state’s growing film industry. Last year, 310 feature films, television shows, commercials and music videos were filmed here. Georgia’s film commission estimates the direct economic benefit of film production in 2013 came to nearly $1.2 billion. Film production in the state provides plenty of work and opportunity for talent on both sides of the camera. The industry has created an estimated 35,000 jobs, according to the commission. Of course, that wasn’t always the case. When Luse, 62, made his very first film as a student at Georgia State in 1981, Atlanta was a show business outpost. “I’ve always been a big film fan, and as a student I was becoming more and more interested in it,” Luse recalls, adding that he worked under Martha Coolidge, the director of cult classics “Valley Girl” and “Real Genius,” and the critically acclaimed “Rambling Rose.” From there, he never looked back. He was in show business, no matter how many hats he was forced to wear. “I worked as a technician in commercials, as a grip, a crew member, on props,” Luse remembers. “For a while, I was a video-ographer for the Atlanta Hawks.”

Luse’s debut caught the eye of the American Film Institute, which awarded him an internship at Paramount Pictures where he worked under Martha Coolidge, the director of cult classics “Valley Girl” and “Real Genius,” and the critically acclaimed “Rambling Rose.” From there, he never looked back. He was in show business, no matter how many hats he was forced to wear. “I worked as a technician in commercials, as a grip, a crew member, on props,” Luse remembers. “For a while, I was a videographer for the Atlanta Hawks.”

For Luse, whose successful film career spans more than three decades, the show’s massive popularity still seems unreal. “For the crew, we kind of are unaware that this is going on all around us,” he says, laughing. “Then I sit down and watch the show with my kids and they’re on their phones texting and all over social media about what’s happening. It’s really caught on.”

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Today, GEORGIA STATE’s popular film and video program prepares students for all angles of work in film. Back when Luse was on campus, students interested in studying communications, including journalism and film studies, were in what was then called the College of Public and Urban Affairs. They received a degree in urban studies with a concentration in communications. Luse, who earned a degree in psychology in 1979, had returned to academia in the late ’80s to continue his studies, but a conversation with communications professor and Atlanta Film Festival co-founder Kay Beck changed his direction. “I perceived an artistic interest, maybe even a passion,” says Beck, now the director of Georgia State’s Digital Arts and Entertainment Laboratory. “I suggested he try filmmaking, and quite honestly, he took it from there.”

So instead of pursuing a graduate degree in psychology, Luse entered the master’s of urban studies program and became one of Georgia State’s first film students. “I’ve always been a big film fan, and as a student I was becoming more and more interested in it,” Luse recalls, adding that he worked with the long-running Lyceum Film Series, a makeshift film club run by students that screened art house films in rooms across campus. He was also a projectionist at the Loew’s Grand Theatre before it was razed in 1980. As a graduate student, Luse produced a handful of short academic documentaries and commercials, he remembers. “I had a fantastic graduate school experience,” he says.

At the end of his master’s degree, he had to complete a master’s thesis, a hefty writing requirement. “I didn’t want to write a paper,” Luse says. “So I went to [Department Chair] Harvey [Newman] and said, ‘Why don’t you let me make a film instead?’”

Newman, it turns out, had just the project. He was campaigning against a sales tax referendum proposed by then-Mayor Andrew Young (who, a few years later, would become the namesake for Georgia State’s policy school where Newman is still on the faculty). “My perspective on the sales tax increase was the regressive impact on the city’s low-income residents, and we were beginning the process of fighting it.” Newman remembers. “Right around that time, I walked Tom, and I told him, ‘I have something for you.’”

Newman asked the young filmmaker to create a political advertisement and film a handful of economic and policy experts objecting to the referendum on camera. “But instead of filming these ‘talking heads’ like I had in mind, he wrote a script for a film noir detective movie,” Newman says. “It was very creative. It’s a well-made piece and it showed the promise of great things!”

The film, called “Who’s Killing the City?,” didn’t sway Atlanta voters, however, and Young’s referendum passed handily. “Mayor and Young understood the big picture better than I,” Newman says. “When we have policy discussions now, Ambassador Young seems so much wiser and I so much more naïve. We laugh about our disagreements from back then.”

For Luse, not only did the film help him earn a master’s degree, it became an integral part of his portfolio. “I got the full film experience from working to posting it, the whole nine yards,” he says.

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He was also the location manager on 1983’s forgettable “Murder in Coweta County,” starring Johnny Cash and Andy Griffith. The made-for-television movie was the first of several Georgia-filmed motion pictures Luse would work on. He was a young kid and they’re in the major motion pictures “Glory,” an Academy Award-win-
“Remember the Titans” and “Drumline.” When things dried up here, he split to Hollywood, where he was a producer for Canada for a spell. Then overseas, then to “Everwood,” when he got a call from his agent imploring him to meet with representatives from the AMC network. They were hiring a production crew for “some zombie series,” Luse remembers. It was, of course, “The Walking Dead,” based on Robert Kirkman’s graphic novel series.

“I went out the night before, bought the comic books and read them all,” he says. “The network, then known as one that just showed vintage movies, was taking a big chance with a production like “The Walking Dead,” and Luse was intrigued. “I really liked the project, but I thought the zombie apocalypse would be good for at least six or seven episodes,” he says.

Luse signed on and headed back to his old stomping ground, downtown Atlanta, to begin shooting.

“I remember sitting on set of the first episode, and Rick [Grimes, portrayed by actor Andrew Lincoln] is riding his horse through downtown and then he starts killing zombies, and you feel good!” he says. “I was a release. You can always feel good about killing a zombie!”

Luse says that, at that moment, he had a hunch the show would last. “We have a moral protagonist, Rick, and he has to deal with a world gone mad. How does he do it?” he says. Spoiler alert: Set in and around a post-apocalyptic Atlanta, Rick and a handful of survivors of a widespread epidemic battle mindless, flesh-eating zombies while navigating a dystopia where those who are still alive are often more dangerous than the undead.

In the show’s four seasons, Luse worked about six or seven episodes, “Tom Luse has really created the machine that allows this very large show to get made week to week,” says AMC’s Executive Vice President Joel Stillerman. For Luse to find his biggest career success where it all began for him is particular, he’s the five-star general in charge of the show’s production. It’s Luse’s job to see the overall creative vision is executed.

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Luse admits he didn’t think he was cut out for life on a television series such as “The Walking Dead.” “I thought it was pathologically unsuited for this,” he says. “But Luse says he learned early there is no single path in the film business. And one just needs to look at his career arc to understand that. "For the record, my favorite film is Alfred Hitchcock’s “North By Northwest."

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ANN-MARIE CAMPBELL’S AMERICAN DREAM

SHE JOINED THE HOME DEPOT IN 1985 AS A CASHIER. TODAY, SHE LEADS A DIVISION FOR THE FORTUNE 500 COMPANY.

By Doug Gillett  Photography By Adam Komich
When you’ve risen high enough in the corporate hierarchy to be presented with your own bobblehead doll, it can be hard to stay grounded.

But that hasn’t been an issue for Ann-Marie Campbell (MBA ’05, B.A. ’07), president of Home Depot’s Southern Division. One reason is the collection of orange aprons she has hanging just a few feet from her bobblehead. Four times a year, each day quarterly earnings are announced, every employee at Home Depot headquarters — from the mailroom assistant to the CEO — don the same orange aprons that store clerks wear. It’s a show of solidarity, a reminder that they’re all in it together.

Not that Campbell needs an apron to stay humble. She hasn’t forgotten that she once wore the apron as a store employee herself, a cashier at store No. 216 in North Miami Beach, Fla. And while her ascent to executive status happened as a result of hard work and dedication, she gives plenty of credit to colleagues and mentors — within Home Depot and at Georgia State — who helped her turn that hard work into success.

“I was able to move up in the company because people reached out and helped me,” she says. “It went from a job to a career because I had people who believed in me.”
I was able to move up in the company because people reached out and helped me.

In addition to what she was learning on the job, Campbell got a boost from Georgia State, first completing the Executive MBA (EMBA) program at Georgia State’s Robinson College of Business, then earning the bachelor’s degree in philosophy she was working toward at Florida International. The most important aspect of the EMBA, she says, was having professors and classmates who, like her, were out in the world of business even as they were getting additional education. “I had a strong business lineage, so I was really able to understand and associate the business practices I was learning in class with my environment,” she says. “School gives you the theoretical knowledge, but the practical knowledge is so important. So when you can apply that in real time and real life, it just makes sense.”

HOW TO BUILD A CAREER

Campbell says she learned fairly early that she couldn’t accomplish that on her own. She needed a mentor and a champion. And she found her most important one more or less by accident. “Lynn Martin was a vice president years ago,” she recalls. “It was a chance meeting in a store. He asked a question, and I was in the group accompanying him on the ‘store walk,’ and I answered the question. He took a particular interest in finding out who I was and he left a note and said to check in on me. That’s how I decided early on that it could go from a job to a career. And when you make that decision in your mind, you operate a little differently. You realize the sky is the limit, and what else you could do if you could accomplish that next step.”

TODAY, Campbell oversees more than 10,000 employees at 66 Home Depot stores. And now that she’s made it to the corner office, she’s working to help give other people the same chance to get that there that she got. That includes both Home Depot employees and the two sons she and her husband, Christopher, are raising. “The older of the two is finishing his third year in college — and, she freely admits, is already getting an earful of advice as he begins following in his mother’s footsteps. “He initially thought he wanted to be an architect, but now he really likes to pay attention to details. He wants to be the type of person that other people can depend on, so that’s really his thing.”

HUMBLE WISDOM FROM THE TOP

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“Just a few more years and I’ll be out the door,” she says. “But it’s really important to have someone to turn to when you need advice. That’s why I wanted to be a mentor myself.”

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