

Veteran, 88, graduates from University of North Georgia

Allen Fleming served in World War II, Korean War

(Aug. 4, 2014) The University of North Georgia (UNG) held a summer graduation ceremony for more than 200 graduates on Aug. 2, including an 88-year-old World War II veteran who earned his Bachelor of Arts in English.

Allen Fleming, a native of Elberton, Georgia, who retired to Dahlonega in 1990, was joined at the ceremony by three dozen family members and friends from across the country who wore "Allen Fleming" buttons and held up congratulatory signs. Fleming was recognized with a standing ovation from a crowd of 1,800 graduates, faculty and guests when he was recognized during the ceremony by Dr. Patricia Donat, UNG's provost and senior vice president for academic affairs. He received a second thunderous round of applause – punctuated by a shout of "That's my Dad!" from daughter Julie Angert – when he took the stage to get his degree from UNG President Bonita Jacobs.

Still beaming and surrounded by family after the ceremony, Fleming credited the support of family and UNG faculty members and students with achieving his goal. He hopes his accomplishment inspires other adults to return to college, and encouraged people of any age thinking about returning to school to seek out those who have had similar experiences.

"It takes a lot of time and it really does take some study, research and library time. There has to be a commitment," he said. "I had a sense of satisfaction and a little egoism from having done this, but for people younger than me, it could be a real career enhancement."

Fleming served during World War II and the Korean War and launched his own advertising and public relations firms. He also has had careers as an insurance salesman and a mail carrier. Fleming attended several colleges and universities throughout his years of military training, but never completed a degree. After putting his children through college and watching as their children attended college, in 2012, he decided to return to college and has attended UNG for two years. Fleming admitted that computers and mathematics were two trouble spots for him, but learning about new technology was an asset.

"We're getting to be so technologically directed and influenced that if you don't have some knowledge in that area, you're going to feel like a second-class citizen," he said. "I'm also reading now about how job opportunities are becoming more and more technologically oriented so that day laborers and such are not as much in demand anymore."

Fleming said he plans to enlarge his degree and put it up on his wall for all to see. Now that he's finished his classes, Fleming plans to travel with wife Janet and help run their Dahlonega antique shop. He's also excited to brag about his accomplishment to former high school classmates when he attends his 71st class reunion later this year in Elberton, Georgia.

In addition to Saturday's commencement ceremony, graduating members of the Corps of Cadets took oaths as second lieutenants in the National Guard or U.S. Army in individual commissioning ceremonies held with their families earlier in the day.

For summer semester, UNG will award some 400 degrees, including more than 130 associate degrees, more than 240 bachelor's degrees and two dozen graduate degrees. Details still are being finalized for fall commencement, but ceremonies will be held Saturday, Dec. 13 for the Dahlonega and Cumming campuses and Sunday, Dec. 14 for the Gainesville and Oconee campuses.

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University of North Georgia

Positioned in the fastest-growing region of the state, the [University of North Georgia](http://www.ung.edu) comprises four campuses united by a single mission focused on academic excellence and academic and co-curricular programs that develop students into leaders for a diverse and global society.

The University of North Georgia is a University System of Georgia leadership institution and is The Military College of Georgia. With more than 15,000 students, the University of North Georgia is the state's sixth-largest public university. The university offers more than 100 programs of study ranging from certificate and associates degrees to professional doctoral programs.