

*Olivia  
Goeke*

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*We Are*

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Olivia Goeke

2024

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# *Foreword*

Photography is not the ability to create an inconceivable and improbable product, but the ability to capture a conceivable situation in an improbable light. Photography is the art of noticing.

I was told once that though everyone has a story, some people's stories are 'just uninteresting'. I could not disagree more.

To claim the ordinary is boring is to ignore the seeds of beauty planted daily. It is to overlook the elegance of failure. It is to misconstrue life itself. The mundane defines us.

We strive to fill our life with beauty, romance, and passion. To live instead of survive. To outpace the monotony of routine, but the pace is set by the mundane, not the fantasy. We do not start at the top; we dream of climbing. Everyone's story serves to supplement humanity.

Like a quilt, our lives are patched together by those we encounter and the experiences we create. I would not be who I am today without the sacrifices, care, and inspiration of others. Thus, I cannot consider anyone's story boring. Without them, I would be Olivia Goeke only by name.

In this portfolio, I will share the stories of those who motivate me. The stories that may be novel but are far from boring. The stories that will lead our forthcoming society.

These are the voices of an upcoming generation.







**This is Blind Jive.** Blind Jive is a Classic Rock, Southern Rock, and Blues band based in Atlanta, GA. This is their story.

This is our passion.

We want to keep recording, keep building an audience, and hopefully go on tour. We have two singles out now, and we just want to keep growing. It would be incredible to turn this into something we can make a living off of. We will keep going 'til we make it.

Music has been something we've enjoyed our entire life. (Singer, left center) In pre-school my parents used to get calls home that I was singing in the bathroom and disturbing other students. I had not been in a band until Blind Jive and being in a band is so special.

(Guitarist, right center) We found our name when I saw a sign while driving that said, 'Blind Drive', and I thought that sounded like a really cool band name. (Keyboardist's, left) Dad mispronounced the name and said, "Blind Jive", and it sounded much more interesting and unique, so we stuck with it.

To anyone who wants to start a band, It is important to find people you click with and who can agree on music. It's one thing to be good at playing or singing, but the band must have a good stage presence too.

Be prepared to spend money if you want to be good, and know your value. Especially when you're starting, you have to take gigs even if they don't pay well. Just get your name out there. It's really hard, but it is so worth it.

There is no feeling like playing live.



**This is Abby Foster.** Abby Foster is on a pre-med track and wants to pursue OBGYN. This is her story.

For a long time, I have wanted to become an OBGYN.

I am in FLO Rise (Reimagine, Inspire, Serve, Empower), and I love the community so much. I feel like I can really get my voice heard and share discussions with my peers. There are so many outlets for women and just about every female peer I have met has been so supportive and helpful.

I am also very political, and in Atlanta I feel so inspired to become an advocate and activist. During this past election I participated in a rally and encouraged people to get out and vote.

My mom is my biggest inspiration. She is very democratic and feminist, and I am grateful I grew up learning about politics from a young age. I think she made me realize I wanted to be an OBGYN too.

It is so exciting that I can now act on my dreams. Both physically and mentally, it is so powerful to be a woman. I want to serve them and give them the care they deserve.

As I continue to study to become a doctor, I also want to become a mentor. The medical field is primarily based on ranking, but whether people are considered above or below someone else, they all want to reach a unanimous solution.

We all work towards the same goal.





**This is Erik Goeke.** Erik Goeke is a fourth-year Aerospace Engineer and works in a lab with Machine Learning Robots. This is his story.

The most interesting places to travel are those that no one else has been to before, and space is just that.

Space is largely unexplored, and I think it is exciting to explore this uncharted territory. Aerospace has three main pathways: aircraft, rotorcraft, and rockets. I want to pursue rocketry, though I find emerging fields like AI and machine learning to be very interesting as well.

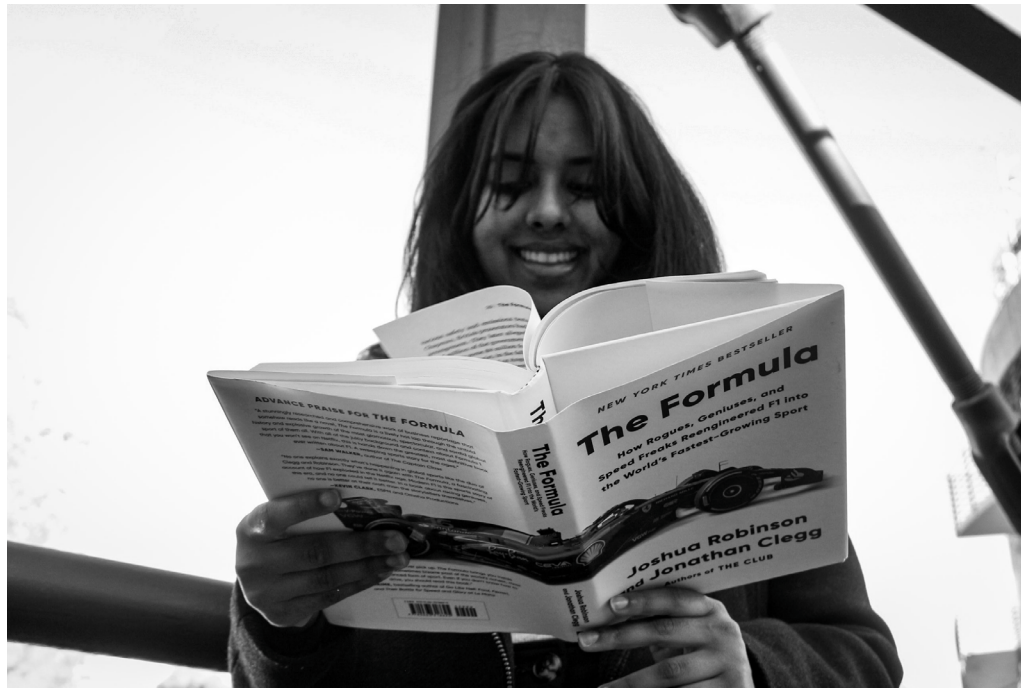
This past summer I worked with a former professor of mine, Dr. Griendling, to teach high school age students about drones and rovers. I joined Dr. Griendling's lab this semester in which we teach NASA machine learning robots to travel through un-mapped terrain and traverse obstacles.

When I visit high schools, I often encounter students who are uninterested and though this does not offend me, I urge those who do not yet have a passion to find one. Your passion does not have to be aerospace, but find a passion because once you do, it inspires you to work hard. There are so many brilliant engineers in my line of work, and they all inspire me to work harder.

My family inspires me a lot as well. Since I was a kid, I've wanted to be an engineer and go to Tech, and my family has always supported my dreams and pushed me to achieve them.

Whether you think plumbing, environmental science, cars, business, or aerospace are interesting does not matter. If the world is full of passionate, hardworking people who all have different interests then that makes the world a better place.

We need all kinds of people.





**This is Syona Gupta.** Syona Gupta works in a lab researching hydrogen energy and enjoys F1 racing. This is her story.

I love all aspects of F1.

Of course, I enjoy keeping up with the races, but I find the engineering behind the sport so interesting too. So much has changed within the sport, safety, for example, has improved dramatically. Enzo Ferrari was beloved, but when he raced, it was so dangerous that I believe the pope called it the devil's sport.

The sport isn't very environmentally friendly either. The cars themselves emit a lot of pollution, but I think an even larger issue is all the plane emissions. These racers take private jets to races around the world and they live very lavish lives.

The lab I work at researches Hydrogen Fuel Cells. Hydrogen energy produces energy where the only byproduct is water.

People aren't going to stop traveling, but I think hydrogen can be a great fuel alternative. I really want to make a hydrogen-fueled car as well! I know it wouldn't be very feasible, but I think it would be so interesting to see how one would work.

The biggest lesson I can share with others is don't be afraid of failure. Sarah Blakely, a self-made businesswoman, shares in a podcast the importance of failure and rejection. At the dinner table, her father used to ask her and her sister how they had failed that day, and it almost became a competition to see who could fail more.

I always try to remind myself that failure is a part of learning. It is so important to not be afraid of failure because that is when you learn the most.

Failure is the optimal time to learn.



**This is Olivia Severson.** Olivia Severson is part of the Georgia Tech competition Taekwondo team. This is her story.

I started taking Taekwondo lessons in 4th grade when my brother wanted to become a Jedi, and we thought the Taekwondo uniforms looked like Jedi uniforms.

I kept up with Taekwondo throughout middle school and high school, and I wanted it to be a part of my college experience too. Unlike when I did Taekwondo before, everyone on the college team is around the same age, and we all have similar goals. Everyone wants to succeed and wants to help others succeed.

When I first thought about studying biomedical engineering (BME), a parent at the Taekwondo studio I worked at told me she did BME, and I really liked the science and technology aspects of the major.

Before coming to Tech, I didn't have many role models and it nearly felt like the only reason women got into engineering was to up the ratio, but I now know that is untrue. Everyone really deserves to be here, and I have found peers in Taekwondo who study BME and who really want to achieve.

I used to teach Taekwondo, and I remember one girl in particular who really looked up to me. Her mom said she worked so much harder when I was there, and I loved being able to serve as a young female role model for her. I hope I can get an admin position on the Taekwondo team at Tech, so I can continue sharing Taekwondo with others.

I hope to serve as a role model to younger generations.





**This is Viktor Snapp.** Viktor Snapp is a 3D modeler and designer. This is his story.

I want to keep developing the field of 3D printing.

My Grandma bought my Dad a 3D printer, but he never built it, so over COVID, I decided to build it myself. I have my own company now called Snapp Labs, and I focus on rapid prototyping specifically for CAD (Computer-aided design), CNC (Computer numerical control), and laser engraving.

3D printing and Mechanical Engineering are relatively new interests of mine, but I've loved robotics and tinkering with machines my whole life. I really enjoy managing a business as well, and hopefully I can keep developing my company after college.

Georgia Tech offers a lot of great resources to help startup companies, but I know many other colleges don't have resources like that. I want to help my peers at other schools to start their own passion projects and businesses.

I had an internship in high school with a business manufacturing company called ZhumeisterLabs, and the owner, Michael Zhu inspires me. He really wants to help others and prove that you can still be successful and give back to the community. He would host workshops to help fix people's 3D printers completely for free, just because he really wanted to help others.

I have a lot of ideas to fill gaps within the field, and I always want to keep exploring, but it is important to take a step back sometimes and not get burned out.

Consistency is key.







**This is Saanvi Sundaram.** Saanvi Sundaram plays violin in the Georgia Tech Symphony Orchestra. This is her story.

My dad first got me into playing violin.

When we moved to India, my dad put me in violin classes, and I learned to play both Classical and Western music. This allows me to share my music with others no matter where I am. In India, I think I was the only one who played violin, and I didn't enjoy music very much, but when I moved to the States and joined my high school's orchestra, I started to enjoy music more.

It is so fun to play with a community. Everyone in the orchestra at Georgia Tech really want to be in the orchestra, and I can converse with my peers about our music and school.

For example, there is a large connection between neuroscience and music. I was speaking to someone developing a glove that would allow you to practice playing with one hand (the hand movements) while working on something else with the other hand.

I love the discourse I get to share with my peers as well. I am the only one in my family allowed to vote, and I didn't grow up discussing US politics much, but college has opened me up to so many other opinions. In orchestra, different majors all come together to play. Like in life, We are united.

We get to make really beautiful music.



**This is Emily White.** Emily White is a cheerleader for Georgia Tech. This is her story.

I love the competitive environment of the sport.

I started cheerleading in 4th grade when I went to a competition with a neighbor of mine. Ever since I've been cheering, and I am now in my third year of cheer in college.

College is by far the best. My confidence has improved so much, and I love cheering in front of people.

I am very used to the athletic and academic balance, and to any athletes who want to pursue their sport further, don't overload yourself. Time management skills are critical!

I study Industrial Engineering, and though it is not directly related to cheer, it has taught me a lot of important lessons. It's taught me to be efficient and flexible. Being an athlete at Tech, it is so important to go with the flow and to stay on top of your work.

For me, I don't have any problem being at a male-dominated school or in a male-dominated major. It allows me to be my own person, and I can be the unexpected. I don't feel like I have to compete against my peers.

I get to grow into who I want to be without expectations.





**I am Olivia Goeke.** I am a first-year environmental science student. I am a photographer and writer. This is my story.

Both science and the arts are imperative to develop our society.

I grew up in an academic-centered family of engineers and computer scientists, but unlike them, I disliked math. Throughout my schooling, I still took many STEM-focused classes, unsure what I wanted for my future. I knew, however, that I loved art and for a very long time wanted to be a journalist. I loved to write and often found ways to express myself creatively.

I grew up believing these were two separate worlds. Either I enjoyed science and math, or I enjoyed arts and languages, but these two fields are so deeply interconnected that they would not exist in our society without the other.

If humans were not creative and curious, we would not have bothered to learn science and math. If mathematics, chemistry, and biology did not exist, we would not be able to create art and would have no need to write languages.

I want to push the boundaries. I want to not only prove to others, but prove to myself that just about anything is possible. I want to keep hunting for connections others miss, because I believe our society is more interconnected than we give it credit for.

I read Robin Wall Kimmer's book, *Braiding Sweetgrass*, during my senior year of high school, and I try to channel her sentiments into my goals. She is a Potawatomi Botanist and weaves the indigenous teachings she grew up on with environmental academia. Her book teaches us to be more aware of our surroundings and to remember that above all else, we are human.

It is so important to view climate issues not only with a scientific lens but as a human as well.

# Afterword

It is said that the most unheard voice is that of the photographer.

I believe photography has given me a voice.

With each photo I take, I share my passion with others. In the angles I choose, in the composition of each image, in the way I edit each photo, and in the conversations that come from the craft, I feel more connected to those around me. It is easy for me to get overwhelmed, but in each picture, I can preserve a momentary detail.

It has empowered me.

Thank you to everyone who helped me achieve this portfolio, without you, this portfolio would be 23 blank pages.

We are:

Engineers, Musicians, Artists, Designers, Scientists, Athletes, Researchers, Mentors, Coaches, Doctors, Advocates, Activists, Humans.

*Find your soul  
as your  
organs find  
your bones  
-OG*