

Alumni Memories Allyson Manning



Sheridan Falkenberry — Class of 2013 “It’s incredible that you’ve been there for 20 years, and it’s a little weird that I first met you when I was in 7th grade, 19 years ago. Thanks so much for the great memories from drama class and all that you do!”

Victoria Wilson — Class of 2015 “She has touched my life in many ways! I have many memories and moments I could share, but one big thing that has stuck with me was when she pulled me aside after class because she noticed I was struggling with something personally and felt very alone and discouraged.

She chose to share a few details about her own personal life and about her sister that will always stick with me. I wasn’t the only one in my battle. It helped me not to feel so alone, and she was able to understand what I was dealing with.

She is one special mentor to me, and I am so glad that our paths crossed because although she started off as just my teacher, I now have a lifelong friend!”

Emily Dini — Class of 2016 “Mrs. Manning was always one of my favorite teachers at Cornerstone. Her kindness and her encouragement have always stuck with me, and she helped me grow tremendously as a writer. I remember writing my first essay in her class on *Pride and Prejudice* and having absolutely no idea what she meant by ‘analyze the text.’ She graciously broke it down for me and showed me examples, and it’s quite funny to me now because writing and analytical thinking are two of the primary skills I use in my career.

I’m not sure where I’d be today if I’d never set foot in Mrs. Manning’s classroom. I think that’s the beauty of being a teacher: your impact extends far beyond the short time you have your students in the classroom. Mrs. Manning is no exception to that, and I’m truly grateful for the privilege of being her student.”

Laura-Margaret White — Class of 2016 “Mrs. Manning was so understanding and kind during my time in her classes. I remember that in high school, I was beginning to suffer from severe anxiety. I was terrified of speaking in front of the class, and the idea of a speech made me want to cry. I eventually opened up to Mrs. Manning, basically begging her to let me sit out of a speech assignment. Instead, Mrs. Manning worked to make me more comfortable and found a solution so that I could still present my assignment without being in front of the entire class.

That alone made me appreciate her so greatly; she helped build my confidence but also protected my emotions. Cornerstone is such a lucky school to have had her expertise for 20 years!”

Carson Borders — Class of 2017 “Mrs. Manning and Mrs. White were two of my family’s favorite people in the world. They are reliable, loyal, intelligent, and driven. Nan would be so happy that they are still at the school doing what they love.”

Katrina (Heitz) Williams — Class of 2017 “No other teacher knew the Class of 2017 as well as Mrs. Manning! I still don’t know if it was by choice or just pure coincidence that she got to move up with us each year of high school for our English classes! As someone who writes a lot now for my job, I’m so thankful for the foundations of writing and grammar that Mrs. Manning instilled in me.

Back in, I think, 2015, I remember Mrs. Manning taking extra time outside of normal teaching hours to read chapters of a book Morgan Poole and I were dreaming up together. We weren’t sure if she would scold or report us for using profanity in the drafts, but we valued her opinion enough that we were willing to risk it. We never ended up finishing that project, but I do remember her thoughtful feedback and a small note next to a curse word that said, ‘Is this necessary?’

Crazy to think you’ve been with Cornerstone almost since its formation. Congratulations on 20 amazing years!”

Jake Wall — Class of 2020 “I think something I can say about both Mrs. White and Mrs. Manning is that they could both teach their classes in a way that every student could connect with. They interacted with students in a way that got everybody engaged in class, and it was a fun time to be there! Despite whatever could be going on in their personal lives, they would always be a blessing to every student they taught. And definitely, having patience as teachers paid off. I look back and remember how some buddies and I from back in school would be cutting up, and it amazes me sometimes how they both put up with us. Two sweet, wonderful teachers who I miss.”

Jana Wrenn - Class of 2020 "Mrs. White and Mrs. Manning were both instrumental in fostering my love for reading and writing and encouraging me to go on to study English in college, and ultimately become a high school English teacher myself.

Mrs. Manning challenged me as a reader, writer, and learner both in class and outside of it, directly contributing to who I have become today. She encouraged me to join the Writer's Guild and practice creative writing, a passion I still hold. She also recruited me as a Peer Editor for the Writing Center. While tutoring others in writing, I discovered a love for editing and helping others, which has ultimately led me to become an English teacher myself. I chose Mrs. Manning as my STAR teacher when I got STAR student. She gave me a personalized journal (which I filled long ago) and a piece of desk decor that now lives on my desk in my own English classroom. Often, teachers don't get to see the fruits of their labor—keeping in contact with flighty college students is difficult, and we as students often don't realize the impact teachers have on us until we are older. Especially now as I teach, I see how my teachers shaped and grew me to be curious and creative, and how they fostered a love for learning that I will treasure for the rest of my life. I am incredibly grateful for the work of these women, and hope they know that their labor bears fruit a hundredfold, even if they do not get to see it."

David Archer – Class of 2024 "Mrs. Manning personifies Christ in a beautiful way. She was a friend I could share anything with and could trust, not to mention the grace that she exudes both as a teacher and friend."

Lily Buck – Class of 2024 "Thank you so much for being an amazing teacher in my 9th and 12th grade years. I remember looking forward each year until senior year to have you again! You always taught with such joy and encouragement!"

Sara Provost – Class of 2025 "My favorite thing about Mrs. Manning was how she would not only listen to your dreams, but she would take action to help you achieve them. When I expressed to her that I had an interest in editing, she provided me with opportunities to gain practical experience, including a novel that's now published. Her deep dedication to her students is evident, and she truly makes a difference in their lives."

Simeon Greene – Class of 2026 "Mrs. Manning stood out to most as a kind and encouraging follower of the Lord. I always appreciated the time she took to pray or encourage us to pray each morning. There were moments when she had to take calls or answer messages in class about her foster children, which highlighted her commitment and care for her loved ones."