

## A PASSPORT TO SUCCESS:

One man's  
journey  
from a  
foreign  
battlefield  
to Athens  
....and a  
return visit  
50 years  
later.

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**ATHENS STATE**  
UNIVERSITY

*the* **column**

A publication for alumni, students and  
friends of Athens State University.

spring 2014



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*the* **column**  
**spring 2014**  
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"Graduates, you have answered a call, and I am so privileged to be sending you out into the world where you will be lighting the path. You will have moments of joy, and you will have abiding satisfaction. You must answer calls, and if you get a little confused sometimes about what you should be doing, look backwards and ask yourself where you have shown your light the brightest. Walk through doors that allow you the opportunity to shine. Finally, remember that integrity and excellence are never broken apart. They only exist in the presence of the other."

Remarks by trustee  
Mary Scott Hunter  
to graduates at the  
fall Commencement,  
December 2013



# ACCOUNTING GROUP RECOGNIZED

The Institute of Management Accountants (IMA) recently bestowed a positive endorsement upon Athens State University's Bachelor of Science in Accounting program. The national organization's Committee on Academic Relations announced its endorsement just before the end of 2013.

In an email to Athens State IMA Campus Advocate Professor Stacie Hughes, the IMA announced that it was favorably impressed with the quality of the program, the thoroughness of Athens States' application, and the school's high level of engagement with IMA.

"I am pleased to let you know that your institution has received IMA endorsement of its program," stated Dr. Raef Lawson, Professor-in-Residence and Vice President of Research at IMA. "This major accomplishment recognizes that your school's program meets the educational standards enabling students to pursue the Certified Management Accountant credential and provides your students with essential skills sought after by successful organizations and their financial team leaders."

To receive an endorsement, Athens State had to prove that they substantially cover all of the material on the CMA exam (at Level C), have adequate faculty re-

sources, are accredited by a recognized accreditation organization, and have a faculty member designated as an IMA Campus Advocate.

Hughes and Professor Emily Corzine serve as IMA Faculty Advocates. As a result of their application, the IMA found that Athens States' program in Accounting aligns itself with the needs of business and is crucial in addressing the competency crisis in the accounting profession.

"This is a significant award and I think it speaks very highly of the Accounting program, the College of Business, and the University," remarked Hughes. "There are a number of individuals who graciously, and without hesitation agreed to help gather the information needed and without whom this application and eventual endorsement wouldn't have been possible."

Dr. Bob Glenn, President of Athens State University added, "This is a great accomplishment and one about which we can all be proud. I am not the least bit surprised that this faculty has demonstrated this level of excellence. They are an exceptional group and I am proud to be associated with them."



## NEW LEADERSHIP

Athens State University has named Dr. Kimberly LaFavor as Dean of the College of Business. LaFavor, who previously served as Associate Professor of Management and Department Chair at Athens State University, began her role as Dean with the spring semester. LaFavor will replace the retiring Dr. Linda Shonesy who has been Dean since 2005.

"It is a good day when we can celebrate an internal achievement such as this," states Athens State President Bob Glenn. "After an intensive national search, Dr. LaFavor's commitment to the College of Business and her private sector experience made her the clear choice for this important position."

Dr. LaFavor has been employed as a full-time professor at Athens State University since 2005, where she also served as Department Chair for both the Management and Human Resources Management programs. She has taught collegiately for 22 years at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.



# ALL THE WORLD'S A

# STAGE

Athens State Junior Patrick Kutsor performs as Orlando in William Shakespeare's *As You Like It*. The Athenian Players staged the production November 14 - 17 of last year to full audiences. The Elizabethan comedy was the acting troupe's third production since being established last year. The Athenian Players are overseen by Assistant Professor of Drama Hugh Long.



Photo courtesy of Brennen Smith, *The Decatur Daily*



## NEW TAG DESIGN

The Athens State University Alumni Association's Car Tag Program offers a new look this year using a woodcut design by Art Professor Pamela Sue Keller.

You can support the Alumni Association by purchasing these when you renew your license plates in the state of Alabama. Of the \$50 fee, \$41.25 comes back to the University for scholarships and is tax-deductible. The Vanity Tag proceeds currently bring in over \$9,000 annually for scholarships.

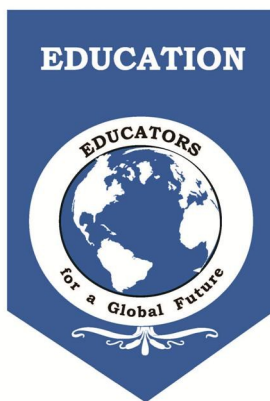


# ATHENIAN AMBASSADORS

The Athenian Ambassadors are the hosts and hostesses of Athens State. The 2013-2014 Athenians received scholarships from the Alumni Association with \$300 for each Athenian and \$600 for the Head. This is the first time that Athenians have received scholarships. They are required to complete a minimum number of service hours to the university in order to receive funding.



*Pictured are, back row (l to r): Ben Womack, Nathan Rodriguez, Chandler Malone, Stephanie Montgomery, and Charles Smith. Middle row (l to r): Ana Brito, Nickie Fanning, Paige Reutter, and Brooke Alexander. Front row (l to r): Kelci Carter, Halli Smith, Hannah Esch, Sarah Beth Henderson, and Lindsay Adams*



## NEW LEADERSHIP

Dr. Patricia Sims now serves as the University's Dean of the College of Education. She started her new position in February of 2014.

Dr. Sims received a bachelor's degree in biology from the University of West Alabama, a master's degree in Secondary Education from Alabama A&M University, and a doctorate in human and organizational development from Vanderbilt University. Sims performed post-doctoral study at the Thomas L. Lakin Institution for Mentored Leadership and the Harvard Institutes for Higher Education Management Development Program.

Prior to holding the Deanship at Athens State, Sims served as Dean of Instruction and Student Services since 2009, and as Student Services Management Director since 2002, at Drake State Technical College. Before her positions at Drake State, she served as Principal at Westlawn Middle School in Huntsville, Alabama and held adjunct and teaching positions at various institutions.





# NEW MINOR OPTIONS

*The Alabama Commission on Higher Education has approved two new degree options for Athens State University's curriculum. These options are Juvenile Justice Option for Criminal Justice majors and Information Security Option for Computer Science majors. Both are housed within the University's College of Arts and Sciences.*

THESE TWO NEW  
DEGREE OPTIONS  
STARTED WITH  
THE SPRING 2014  
SEMESTER.

## ARTS & SCIENCES



### THE JUVENILE JUSTICE OPTION

Athens State University offers a Bachelor of Science degree for students seeking to enter or advance in the field of Criminal Justice. The minor option of Juvenile Justice will allow students to specialize in juvenile delinquency and justice as it relates to the criminal justice system. Students wanting to work with children in the criminal justice system and other community agencies will have the opportunity to complete this option. This academic option was created with an interdisciplinary approach that includes courses currently offered in criminal justice, psychology, public safety, child advocacy, and sociology.

"Our institution is excited that we are among the first to provide our students and the community with such a unique academic program," states Dr. Quanda Stevenson, Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice. "This academic option is available to all students interested in working with children in the community regardless of their major."

Stevenson continues, "We want to continue to provide our students with educational skills and training they need whether it is for professional development or employment; we want our students knowledgeable and prepared."

The Juvenile Justice Studies Option will serve as a strong academic link for Athens State as the University continues to collaborate with the Alabama Department of Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention and the Child Defend programs. It includes the three required courses for the Child Advocacy Studies Training program. As a result, this option will provide students with research and information pertaining to delinquency, justice, advocacy, prevention, and intervention.

### THE INFORMATION SECURITY OPTION

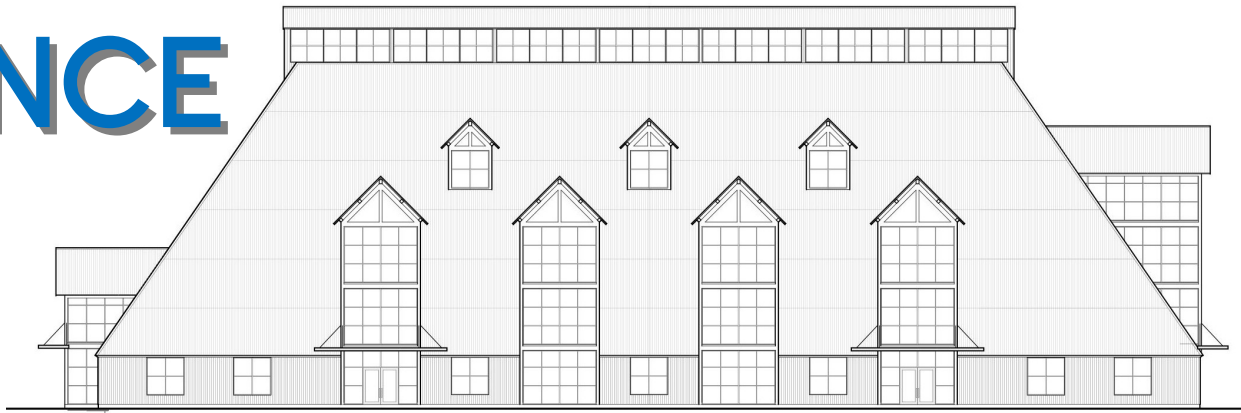
Computer Science at Athens State University is a program that provides a strong foundation for programming, problem analysis and solution, and software engineering combined with practical experience. The newly created Information Security option is a plan of study where students will enhance their knowledge of the technologies and methods to protect the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of information and the computing devices that store that information. It focuses on the understanding of the relevant theoretical and practical knowledge and skills to solve problems of computer programming, computer networking, and information security. Graduates with this minor will have a broad-based understanding of the principles of information assurance issues related to policy, procedures, laws, and strategy in business and government.

"A few moments listening to the evening news or surfing news websites tells us just how important it has become for us to understand how to secure and protect the computers that have become so pervasive in our society," states Dr. Adam Lewis, Assistant Professor of Computer Science. "This new option in our Computer Science degree will help to produce the next generation of computer scientists and information technology professionals with a solid understanding of cyber security issues"

This Information Security plan of study requires 118 to 124 semester hours of study with coursework divided into general education, pre-professional prerequisite, and professional components. The core coursework for the minor includes Network Security, Operating Systems, The Digital Enterprise, Foundations of Network Security, and Applied Cryptography and Systems Security.



# A NEW SHAPE FOR SCIENCE



The mission of the Alabama Center for Science and Technology located in Decatur, Alabama will be to create a University Center that prepares students to work in the most advanced science and technological careers. A major focus will be placed on meeting current and future needs of today's businesses. Our programs in science will emphasize chemistry and biology with applications specific to regional employer needs. The technology school will train students in the areas of planning, designing, implementing and securing information technology and networking solutions. Students will be trained in state of the art cyber labs with accommodations for both classified and unclassified projects.

This program will utilize a board of advisors from regional businesses and industry to recommend program changes that will reflect the current needs in the market place. The advisory board will allow real time input from employers to influence the direction of curriculum. Working within the constraints of accreditation approvals and financial restraints, changes will be made as expeditiously as possible to keep all programs current. Consideration will be given for special projects from business partners to allow students opportunities for application experience in preparation for program completion.

The Alabama Center for Science and Technology will have many benefits for the region. First, and most importantly, the center will provide this region with the most qualified work force in the areas of science and technology. This will be accomplished partially by partnering with business to identify current needs and by partnering with other institutions to provide for opportunities on every skill level. This Center will represent a new concept in higher education with partnerships in all available avenues to assure the most prepared student upon graduation.

The Center will influence economic growth by attracting and retaining a skilled labor force and businesses. The Center will contribute to the region's economy through the contribution of "intellectual capital." By emphasizing critical thinking and analytical skills the center will foster leadership, risk-taking, and innovation which contributes to entrepreneurship and business development. The Center will prepare students to enter today's labor force and upgrade the skills of experienced workers with the knowledge to be competitive in the current economy.

## HONORING GEORGE WASHINGTON



The Athens State University Foundation has donated framed portraits of George Washington to each of the Athens City Elementary Schools. The portraits were acquired by the Foundation through the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association, a group established in 1853 that is wholly responsible for the stewardship and upkeep of Washington's Virginia home near Washington, D.C.

*Pictured at left are Julian Newman Elementary School Principal Darin Aderholt and Athens State University Foundation board member Mary Pat Martin. In the background is the Washington panel exhibit that accompanied the portraits located at the Center for Lifelong Learning.*



# HANDS ON HISTORY



Photo courtesy of Gary Cosby, Jr., *The Decatur Daily*

"IT IS FUN -  
LIKE PLAYING  
HOUSE IN  
THE 19TH  
CENTURY."

Elizabeth Morrison graduated from Athens State University in December of 2013 with a degree in History and Political Science and will step into what she feels is the perfect job. After doing her internship at Pond Springs, the General Joe Wheeler Home in Hillsboro, she was offered a permanent position at the historic site.

Morrison's position assists Wheeler Home Site Director Kara Long to document, catalogue and archive the more than 10,000 artifacts collected and housed at the museum. Her position is being funded by a grant provided by the Friends of the Joe Wheeler Home, a group dedicated to preserving the house and grounds. Dr. Mildred Caudle serves as the President of the Friends organization.

Caudle states, "The board of our friends group association saw the need for another employee at the site, and graciously raised the funds to hire that person. During her internship, Elizabeth demonstrated her strong work ethic, love of history, and ability to work well with others. She was the first person I thought of when we began to look at candidates for the position."

Morrison was assigned to the Wheeler Home by Athens State's Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences Ron Fritze. She was an active student who served as the President of Phi Alpha Theta, the history

honor society. Morrison dabbled in various concentrations before deciding that a history degree would be her preferred route. This decision was reached during her internship at the Wheeler Home.

"I enjoyed my internship so much that I'm thrilled to continue my work there as a permanent employee," Morrison added. "It is fun – like playing house in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. I have learned so much and now I'm eager to apply what I know in this amazing historic setting."

Pond Springs is the post-Civil War home of Gen. Joseph Wheeler, a Confederate major general, a U.S. congressman, and a Spanish-American War general. Following the Civil War, Wheeler became a national symbol for reunification and reconciliation. Wheeler's daughter, Miss Annie Wheeler, served in three wars as a Red Cross nurse. The 50-acre site includes a dogtrot log house built around 1818, a circa 1830 Federal-style house, the 1870s Wheeler house, eight farm-related outbuildings, two family cemeteries, an African-American cemetery, a small Indian mound, a pond, a boxwood garden, and other garden areas.



# A PASSPORT TO SUCCESS

**NORMAN TCHUN: FROM A LIFE ON THE BATTLEFIELD TO ATHENS, A TOWN HE COULDN'T FORGET.**



December of 2013 marked the first time in 50 years that Narm Seek Tchun stepped foot on Athens State's campus. Although much had changed, he still remembered the pathways that led him from his dormitory, the student center, and Founders Hall.

"This place still feels like home," remarked Tchun, who adopted the American name of Norman upon his arrival. "When I came here to Athens College, it was an all-white school. I didn't know how I would be treated as a recent immigrant and a person of color, but I was accepted here and that made me feel very special."

His acceptance into a then-segregated school was a small obstacle compared to the struggles he endured to actually make it to America. Born in 1943 in Japan, his family was all but wiped out by the end of World War II leaving him an orphaned adolescent. Sent to Korea as a result of the war, he worked his way up to the ranks of Commanding Officer in the Korean military. At the end of the Korean War, Tchun was taken under the wing of General William Westmoreland and, as an avoidance of becoming a prisoner of war, was exiled to America to study and become a U.S. citizen. His fellow soldiers pooled their monies and gifted Tchun with \$800 to help him on his new journey.

"At that time, \$800 was a lot of money, and that was all I had coming into this new world," remembered Tchun. "General Westmoreland had a friend in Huntsville and I became his ward. It was this friend who introduced me to Athens and Athens College."

When Tchun arrived at the then Athens College, he was immediately shown his new home – Sanders Hall. In order to compensate his tuition, he worked long hours at two jobs. He served as a janitor at Market Street Church of Christ, and as a night desk person at the now-defunct Ross Hotel in downtown Athens.

"The people at Market Street Church and the Ross Hotel were very nice to me," Tchun said. "I believe they had never seen an Asian person before and I must've seemed very exotic."

Tchun began his college career by studying Sociology, which was a department at that time chaired by Dr. David Rosenau. Tchun remembers his classes and professors well and graduated in 1966 before leaving to become a candidate for an MA in Sociology and MS in Statistics at the University of Northern Illinois.

Tchun worked as a Research Scientist for Amoco, and then as a Senior Research Director for CNA Insurance before retiring in 2002. He was married for 36 years to his wife Carla before her death in 2010.

"It had always been Carla's wish that I write my story – to tell of the marvelous adventure of my life," remarked Tchun. "I was so devastated with her passing that I became a hermit and concentrated on doing just that."

This was one of the reasons his trip to Athens after 50 years was so important to Tchun. He had for the past 10 years totally withdrawn from society, seeing and visiting no one, just writing.

"I was travelling to Chicago and had heard we had a graduate in the area who was a writer so I called and asked to stop by and say hello," said Vice President for University Advancement Rick Mould. "When I met Mr. Tchun, I realized that his circumstances in getting an education were like no other. I asked him to campus and we were thrilled when he accepted the invitation."

When Tchun came to campus just prior to the Christmas break, he was given tours and met many of the faculty members, students and administrators. He was invited to attend a holiday reception at Athens State President Bob Glenn's home.

"His remarkable story is not only one of survival against all odds, but also one of compassion and furthering oneself through educational opportunities," stated Glenn. "We were happy to play host to Mr. Tchun, to learn his story, and to reacquaint him with his alma mater."

Tchun has completed one of what will be a series of novels centered around his experiences. The first book, *Ma-hayak and the Barber of Lyle*, is in print and is a deeply personal story of a young Japanese boy affected by war and exiled to America – weaving fiction and reality into an unforgettable book.

"Currently, this book is being converted to a screen play," added Tchun. "When the movie is released, I am inviting all my new friends at Athens State to the premier."

It was a tearful goodbye to Athens State when Tchun left campus to return to his home in Chicago. However he vows to return soon, and often,

now that he has reconnected to the school and established so many good relationships here.

"This was my home, and 50 years was too long to stay away," said Tchun to Mould as he entered his assigned gate at the Huntsville Airport – and with a salute, he turned and boarded his plane.

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# DIALING FOR DOLLARS



Fundraising is integral to the Office of University Advancement. With the Capital Campaign at its halfway mark, the annual phonathon is one way to help reach the Campaign goal of \$2.5 million. The University has conducted an annual phonathon since fall 2009; however, it wasn't until the most recent fall 2013 phonathon that we saw a marked increase in donations.

Five (5) trained students and recent graduates phoned just under 14,000 alums over a 10 week period under the supervision of phonathon manager, Chelsea Love. Their efforts yielded \$17,866.60 in donations to date- an increase of 38% over the fall 2012 phonathon. Reducing expenses also contributed to the success of the phonathon with a decrease of 53%. The largest percentage of donors to the fall 2013 phonathon came from graduates that had never donated to the Annual Fund.

Lastly, an anonymous \$15,000 matching gift brought the total proceeds to \$32,866.60 as of February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2014. "We are very

grateful to all of our donors- whether they're able to give \$1.00 or \$1,000. With the number of graduates tipping 33,000, imagine the power of every graduate donating \$1.00 during the span of one year," states Trish Di Lullo, Director of Annual Giving. "The phonathon doesn't just raise funding; it allows us to reconnect with our alums. If they were looking for employment, we were able to refer them to the Career Development Office or give them information on networking events."

Proceeds from the phonathon are used in the areas with the most need, unless designated by the donor, and mirror the priorities of the Capital Campaign- Technology Enhancements, Endowed Scholarships, New and Revitalized Facilities, Programmatic Opportunities/Graduate Programs, Faculty/Academic Support, Development/Alumni Infrastructure and Cultural and Community Enrichment. Some Fall 2013 phonathon donations were used for a scholarship endowment, SGA projects and technology enhancements.

"WITH THE COST OF COLLEGE A CONCERN FOR MANY FAMILIES. IT'S IMPORTANT FOR STUDENTS TO FIND A SCHOOL THAT PRODUCES SUCCESSFUL, WELL-PAID GRADUATES."

-MATT DAVIS  
THE COLLEGE DATABASE

## ATHENS NOTED FOR COST EFFECTIVENESS

Athens State University has been recognized for providing high quality education at an affordable price. The College Database has released its list of the top Alabama colleges with the highest financial return on investment.

This distinction stems from a new metric created by The College Database. Schools on the list have annual tuition rates below \$20,000. Athens State University students enter the workforce earning an estimated \$39,000 per year after graduation, ranking it among the most financially effective of all Alabama post-secondary schools.



# A LEAGUE OF THEIR OWN



## THE 2ND ANNUAL EVENT HONORED WOMEN OF ATHENS STATE SPORTS

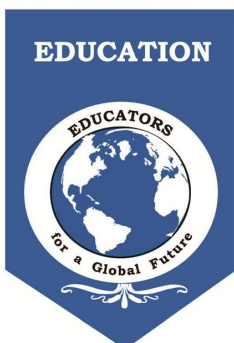
Athens State University hosted the 2nd Athletic Homecoming Reception honoring former sports programs at Athens College, Athens State College, and Athens State University. Coaches Larry Keenum (softball), Dr. Betty Jo Fuller (tennis, volleyball, golf), Dr. Al Long (tennis, gymnastics) and Tena Bullington (cheerleading) were on hand to highlight the women's sports programs. All former athletes, boosters, volunteers and family members were invited to attend. The reception was held July 27 in Carter Gymnasium.

"The 2012 Athletic Homecoming exceeded our expect-

tations with over 150 attendees," states Director of Alumni Affairs Trish Di Lullo. "Coaches Oba Belcher and Harold Murrell were posthumously honored for their years of service to the University last year and the focus was on the men's sports programs. This year we focused on the women's sports programs and the impact they made on the college."

The Sports Museum was open during the reception. It houses items from every era and sports program.

## ATHENS STATE AND UNA PARTNERSHIP



"We are pleased to once again partner with UNA on a graduate program initiative," states Athens State Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs Jackie Smith. "The requests by our students to continue their studies without relocating are issues we have been monitoring for years."

The seven 3-hour core courses and one orientation course in UNA's MAED Program will be taught on the Athens State campus in a hybrid format to offer flexible scheduling. An additional 12 hours of elective coursework is required. Students must qualify for admission through the University of North Alabama Graduate School.

Beginning in August of 2013, The University of North Alabama has partnered with Athens State University to offer a Masters of Arts in Education (MAED) degree on the Athens campus. Athens State will provide classroom space for graduate students in UNA's MAED program with UNA teaching staff controlling the curriculum.





## CO-OP STUDENT OF THE YEAR

### **MARKA DUKE HANCEVILLE, ALABAMA**

Marka Duke, a Business Management major from Hanceville, was named the Alabama Cooperative Education Student of the Year. In June, she was named Athens State's Cooperative Education Student of the Year and was awarded the state-wide title at the Alabama Association of Colleges and Employer conference in Auburn this month. Duke was assigned an internship at the Decatur Downtown Redevelopment Authority beginning in May 2012.

"We are thrilled that Marka was recognized on the state level for her good work," stated Saralyn Mitchell, Athens State Director of Career Counseling Services and Cooperative Education. "More than 15 universities located throughout the state of Alabama submitted nominations and were represented at the conference along with numerous prospective employers.

The Alabama Association of Colleges and Employers serves as a consortium for cooperative education, career services and employers. Membership in this organization provides networking opportunities to benefit the state's university students, their future employees as well as providing professional development. The mission of the organization provides a resource for industry and education to partner to promote a competent and productive workforce.

At Athens State, students entering the Cooperative Education Program must be recommended by a member of the faculty and be degree-seeking with at least at 2.5 GPA. They must have completed at least one semester at Athens State and should not be in their final semester before graduating.

## LEADERSHIP ALABAMA AND PRESIDENT GLENN

ways I have always sought to learn about leadership is through observation of great leaders.

I am excited about the opportunity to observe and learn from so many of Alabama's accomplished leadership. The Leadership Alabama program has always been extremely effective in creating this type of leadership learning environment."



Athens State University President Bob Glenn was chosen as a member of Leadership Alabama's Class XXIV for the 2013-2014 year. Fifty-seven members from across the state were tapped for this class.

Leadership Alabama gives established leaders across Alabama exposure to the broader fabric of the state. It develops a network of relationships and provides a structure for this network to seek mutual understanding of problems and priorities for Alabama's future. Leadership Alabama encourages its members to act, individually and in concert, to move Alabama forward to help our state reach its full potential.

"I am humbled and honored to be a part of a class with so many accomplished people," states Glenn. "I have always felt that leadership is an ability that has to be consciously sought and honed. One of the

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*-BOB GLENN*



# FACULTY PROMOTIONS

*With the convening of Athens State University's 2013/2014 academic year – the 192<sup>nd</sup> for the institution – two faculty members were promoted within their ranks.*

*"Athens State has an excellent faculty and I applaud their commitment to teaching, service and professional development," states Athens State Provost Dr. Ronald R. Cromwell. "We are always pleased to promote faculty demonstrating quality in teaching, service to students and the University, and professional development and growth over time. These faculty represent the very high level of all the faculty at Athens and their commitment to our students in helping them to develop and reach their personal and professional goals."*

**"WE ARE ALWAYS PLEASED TO PROMOTE FACULTY DEMONSTRATING QUALITY IN TEACHING. SERVICE TO STUDENTS AND THE UNIVERSITY, AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH OVER TIME."**

*-DR. RONALD CROMWELL*



**Dr. Mary Harris** - Promoted to Associate Professor.

Harris received her undergraduate degree in Elementary Education from Athens State College, her Master in Elementary Education from the University of Alabama in Birmingham, and her Ph.D. in Elementary Education at the University of Alabama. Her research interests include first year teaching, encouraging science careers for elementary aged children, and curricular mandates and their impact on teaching. Harris joined the Athens State University faculty in 2005.

Harris documented quality teaching and integration of projected based learning activities. She has served on various committees including accreditation committees and state wide committees related to science education. She has worked with AMSTI Science education program, the Limestone Ground Water Festival which hosts programs for fourth graders, and has been the director of a growing Athens State summer science camp for students in grades 3-5. She received a Dekko Foundation grant to assist with these camps. In 2012, she presented at the International Organization of Social Sciences & Behavior Research meeting on the effect of the science camps on future teachers ability to teach quality science in elementary classrooms. In early 2013, Harris developed a program with the Decatur Youth Symphony which integrates leadership and mentoring skills for symphony members and elementary music students.



**Dr. Ronald Merritt** - Promoted to Associate Professor of Mathematics.

Merritt currently serves as the Chair of the Department of Mathematics and is the Mathematics and Computer Programming Lab Director. He received his undergraduate degree in Mathematics and Secondary

Education from Greensboro College, his Master in Mathematics and Mathematics Education from North Carolina Central University, and his Ph.D. in Mathematics Education and Mathematics from North Carolina State University. Merritt joined the Athens State University faculty in 2008.

Merritt is the department chair for Mathematics, Computer Science and Science. He documented quality teaching and integration of projects and various technology tools into his upper division mathematical courses. He has supported and developed tutoring systems and support in his classes for students to successfully learn math. Prior to joining Athens State, he received the Excellence in Teaching Award at three educational institutions where he served on the faculty – Lee University, Durham Technical Community College and North Carolina State Community College. He is a member of the national Mathematical Association of America and is actively involved in the Alabama Association of College Teachers of Mathematics. He has presented at national meetings and co-chaired and hosted last year's Alabama meeting at Athens State.

## MY ATHENS STATE STORY



Dr. Diane Willard Hudson is a 1979 graduate of Athens State College. Her admission to the school came at a time when most would have given up.

"In 1977 I was a single parent with children, ages 1, 2, and 3," states Hudson, "I had completed 2 years of college but quit to get married. Now here I was, single again, and needed direction. I applied to Athens State College, and was accepted."

Hudson received some limited music scholarships, but with the help of many she excelled and graduated. She was also named to "Who's Who in American Colleges and Universities" her senior year. Within two weeks of graduation she began teaching in Lawrence County, Alabama. While teaching, Hudson continued her studies and received a Master's Degree and an Education Specialist Degree. Later, she taught in Athens City schools as a Learning Disabilities Specialist in the 1980s and early 90s.

In 1995, Hudson worked as an assistant professor in Secondary Education at Athens State after receiving a Doctorate in Educational Leadership. She retired as an Associate Professor Emeritus in 2005 but still teaches as an adjunct professor in the College of Education.

"All three of my children have graduated from Athens State, and we all have strong ties to this institution," remarks Hudson. "I love Athens State because it was there when I needed it most. The professors were wonderful, and I learned so much about life and the pursuit of education and goals. Hudson thanks Athens State for the long journey they have had together. She hopes to pay it forward as an active alumnus and in her work as an instructor.



# LOVE ON A LEASH



Love on a Leash's Therapy Dogs make regular visits to Athens State University in an effort to relieve student stress associated with the week of finals. The visiting dogs bring smiles to the faces of numerous students, faculty, and staff. These warm and fuzzy breaks are sponsored by the Student Government Association.

All dogs affiliated with Love on a Leash Therapy K-9's are registered with the national organization Therapy Dogs Inc. based in Cheyenne, WY. Their goal is to bring smiles and happiness to everyone they meet and at Athens State University. They consistently achieve their goal.

## MY ATHENS STATE STORY



Joe White retired in 2002 as Vice President of Production for Murray, Inc. - a manufacturer of bicycles, lawn mowers and outdoor equipment. He is a 1985 graduate of Athens State College.

During his time as a student, White took advantage of the fact that Athens State had flexible class offerings as he was only able to enroll in evening classes.

"First, I would like to express my appreciation to Athens State for offering night classes to working individuals who could not have gotten an education otherwise," states White. "Second, I am grateful for Murray for being an employer willing to sponsor, pay tuition and accommodate a schedule for an employee to continue to work while attending classes." Because of Athens State and Murray, White says he was given the opportunity to achieve his Bachelor's Degree in Business.

These two entities provided the means for him to move from assembling kick stands on bicycles in the plant in 1958 up through the organization to the position of Vice-President of Production before retiring in 2002.

White continues, "I shall always be grateful to Athens State for their cooperation and accommodation in making possible my ability to enjoy a more secure future and a better lifestyle for myself and my family."

Tell us your Athens State Story: visit [www.athens.edu/story](http://www.athens.edu/story).



# DISTINGUISHED ALUMNUS OF THE YEAR

## SANDRA SIMS DEGRAFFENRIED

At a reception prior to their annual meeting on February 28, the Athens State University Alumni Association recognized Dr. Sandra Sims-deGraffenried by awarding her the 2014 Distinguished Alumnus Award.

Sims-deGraffenried is a strong advocate for the University and has boldly shared her love for the institution with alumni, state officials and the community. She earned not only her bachelor's degree but also her master's degree from the University in 1970.

Sims-deGraffenried led a very public career as Executive Director of the Alabama Association of School Boards. She was known for her hard work and dedication to the issues most important to school boards and the communities they represented.

In 2012, Dr. Sims-deGraffenried was nominated to serve on the newly created Athens State University Board of Trustees. Her fellow trustees recognized her work and understanding of educational issues and elected her the first chair pro tempore under the new governance.

Vice President for University Advancement Rick Mould has long worked with Sims-deGraffenried on legislative issues for Athens State. In his introduction of her he remarked, "Sandra is passionate about Athens State University. She loves this institution and is dedicated to it. We are all proud of her and her accomplishments in serving education. Tonight we recognize her and in this small way say thank you for representing our University so well."

Athens State President Bob Glenn presented Sims-deGraffenried with a framed print of Founders Hall and a proclamation from Alabama Governor Robert Bentley commending her for her career in education and her advocacy for the state institution. Glenn read the proclamation to the reception attendees.

Sims-deGraffenried is a native of Hartselle, Alabama and currently resides in Orange Beach and Huntsville.



"SHE LOVES THIS INSTITUTION AND IS DEDICATED TO IT. WE ARE ALL PROUD OF HER AND HER ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN SERVING EDUCATION. "

- RICK MOULD





# PUTTING TALENT TO THE TEST

Before he graduated in December, Athens State University Art Major Jay Keller was enlisted to use his talents for a good cause. The Athens/Limestone Foundation on Aging contacted Professor Gail Bergeron to find students willing to take on the task of painting the backdrops for the group's upcoming Poke Sallet Follies. Bergeron asked Keller and the match was made.

"Admitting that we were limited in talents and abilities, we reached out to the faculty of the Athens State University Art Department," states Follies Director Stacey Landtroop Givens. "Gail Bergeron, who was incredibly easy to work with, approached then-student Jay Keller with a mutually beneficial plan."

It was arranged that Keller would handle the artwork for the event and earn class credit for his time and work as part of his independent study.

Givens added, "Jay embraced the idea, and we are so fortunate that he did! We received the completed artwork before Christmas putting us far ahead of schedule, and his work is incredible."

Keller painted many local scenes to use as backdrop for the Follies following its theme of "Home Sweet Home." One of the most popular and most familiar to him is his recreation of the historic Founders Hall on the Athens State campus.

In a letter to Athens State President Bob Glenn, Givens wrote, "We thank the administration of Athens State University which encourages collaborative efforts with the community. We commend the faculty, particularly Gail Bergeron, who truly desires to help their students grow and learn through real-world experiences. Most of all, we appreciate the willingness of your student, Jay Keller, for sharing his wonderful talent with this community. Nearly 1000 people are expected to attend this event and I am certain that his artwork will be a crowd favorite."



# ALUMNI GOLF CLASSIC

## MAY 15

The Athens State University Alumni Golf Classic is scheduled for Thursday, May 15 at Canebrake Club in Athens with lunch at 11:30 a.m. and a shotgun start at 1:00 p.m. This annual event supports student scholarship funding. All 2013-2014 Golf Scholarship recipients will be volunteering at the tournament.

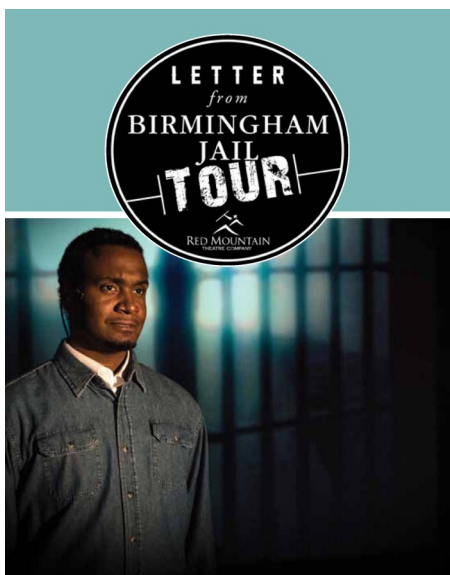
The paid golfer registration deadline is May 8th and can be made by calling the Office of Alumni Affairs at 256-233-8185, dropping by the office on the corners of Pryor and Hargrove Streets or emailing [alumni@athens.edu](mailto:alumni@athens.edu). Sponsorships are available for \$100, \$250, \$500 or \$1,000.

McClary Ford is sponsoring a 2014 Ford Fusion Hole in One prize.

The Golf Classic is open to any interested golfers - not just those who are alumni of Athens State.



## ATHENS STATE SPONSORS LETTER FROM BIRMINGHAM JAIL



Athens State University's Livingston Concert Lecture Series partnered with the award-winning Red Mountain Theatre Company to perform their dramatic interpretation of the *Letter From Birmingham Jail*. The play was performed at the Princess Theater in Decatur on Thursday, September 26 and was offered free to the public on a first-come, first-served seating basis. The performance was unique because of the inclusion of local civic and business leaders who read portions of the play.

In 1963, eight white clergymen from a variety of denominations in the Birmingham area wrote a letter to Dr. Martin Luther King admonishing him to allow local laws to deliver justice to Blacks suffering a variety of injustices at the time. On April 16, 1963, Dr. King responded to the clergy letter with a powerful, eloquent response which has become required reading in high schools and universities ever since.

"We sponsored this performance because we believe our children and our community should see Mr. Washington's riveting performance and should also be reminded that correcting injustice is always important and urgent," said Athens State President Bob Glenn.

The central character in the play, Dr. King, was portrayed by Red Mountain Theatre Company principal actor, Mr. Cecil Washington. The local community participants, reading the parts of clergymen were Bill Briscoe, John Bush, Ellis Chenault, Joel Denbo, Ronnie Knox, Bob Glenn, Hugh Long, and Robby White.

SPONSORED BY





# A CAMPAIGN UPDATE:

In June of 2012, Athens State University announced the undertaking of a \$2.5 million capital campaign. We are pleased to announce that as of February we have exceeded our goal due to the generosity and support of our loyal donors. By surpassing our goal a year in advance of its end, we have reexamined our possibilities and are pleased to announce that we have raised the campaign goal to \$4 million.

"We surpassed our goal mainly because of two of the nine identified areas of need were extremely popular," states Rick Mould, Vice President for University Advancement. "Scholarships and Community Enrichment both well exceeded their individual goals to date. We still have needs in areas of Technology Enhancements, Facilities, Programs, Academic Support, and Alumni Infrastructure. The areas of Annual Fund and Unrestricted Gifts have also been well-funded despite having them as a portion of the countable goal."

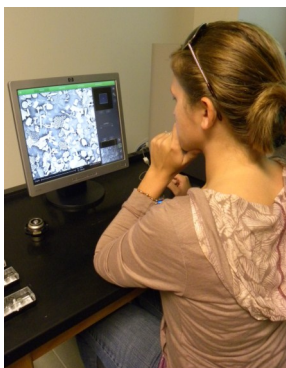
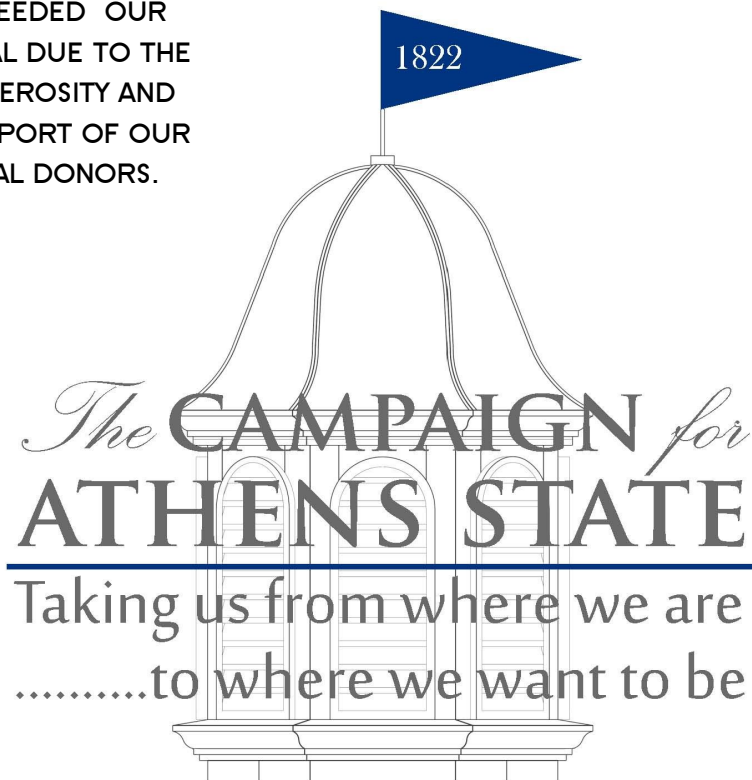
The campaign categories were determined after an extensive study of the structural and infrastructural needs of the University through our Vision 2020 Master Plan, and through individual interviews of those who recognize and support the mission of Athens State, we have made the determination of the critical areas for funding.

The stretch goal of \$4 million will follow the original campaign end-date of May 2015. Mould continued, "We are optimistic that this updated figure offers even further support to the University and its mission."

Visit [www.athens.edu/campaign](http://www.athens.edu/campaign) for details and information about the campaign and how you can be a part of our success.

## ABOVE AND BEYOND

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**To RSVP or for more information contact Pamela Rigsby – SooHoo & Associates with CruiseOne at 1-800-894-2210 or the Athens State University Office of Alumni Affairs at 256-233-8185.**

Travel provided by



\*Rate is per person and includes roundtrip air from Huntsville Intl Airport, air taxes and fees/sur-charges, hotel transfers, and includes early booking savings. Airfare: For your convenience, we offer airfare for purchase with all vacation packages. If you purchase an air-inclusive program, your airfare will be quoted inclusive of all fuel, taxes and fees. Your rates are subject to change until paid in full. Seats are limited and may not be available on every flight or departure date. Checked Baggage Charges: Some airlines may impose additional charges if you choose to check any baggage. Please contact your airline or refer to its website for detailed information regarding your airline's checked baggage policies. \*\*Book by savings valid on air-inclusive bookings only.

