

*The*  
**COLUMN**  
ATHENS STATE UNIVERSITY



**THE RESILIENCE  
OF THE ATHENS STATE SPIRIT**

SUMMER 2020

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FRIDAY, JULY 31 & SATURDAY, AUGUST 1

# A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT WAY



## Dear alumni and friends of Athens State University:

Charles Dickens' A Tale of Two Cities begins: "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair..." Although Dickens was writing of the late 18th century in London and Paris, his famous quote very much applies today to the world in general and Athens State in particular.

In the first half of the spring semester, the University was humming right along. On February 29, we held a hugely successful gala at which we launched the public phase of our comprehensive "Athens Forever" bicentennial campaign to raise \$20 million. Times were good, the future was bright, and we were full of hope. We believed we had the experience and skills to handle any challenge.

However, as Spring Break approached, and coronavirus cases outside Athens State grew, we were ordered by the Governor to teach in-person courses online. Faculty had to scramble to convert courses over the break. We then reduced staff on campus to essential employees only. Others worked remotely. Some employees and students experienced stress and anxiety; others lost income due to family members losing jobs; and finishing coursework was difficult under the stay-at-home order. For many, it became a bad, dark period of despair. It was incredible that our 21st century knowledge and resources could not eradicate the COVID-19 problem.

If you know the history of Athens State, you will recall that in 1909 there was a typhoid epidemic, and 15 of our students died. The University rebounded from that. In the same way, we will bounce back from this pandemic. Fortunately, no employee or student has become ill. Our chatbot, Hebrew the Bear, has been relaying student concerns to staff for their attention. We have been giving emergency relief funding to students in need. We have been offering counseling services. We have been attempting to reach every student to ask how they are faring and how we can help. We are paying our employees. No-one has been laid off. Our faculty have been wonderfully versatile in adjusting their teaching modalities, while being flexible with students. Our staff have been willing to fulfill tasks outside their normal job descriptions. We are optimistic about summer enrollments due to our history of offering high-quality programs online.

The leadership team is keeping its eyes on the horizon. We are making strategic investments to ensure we are even stronger in the future. That includes funding new programs and faculty, engaging in a rebranding exercise, redesigning the website, and putting more quality courses online should we experience another crisis requiring remote working.

One recurring theme in Dickens' Tale of Two Cities is one of release from darkness. In fact, he toyed with titling the book "Recalled to Life." Rest assured that Athens State will be released from the darkness of COVID-19, and we will be "Recalled to (Normal) Life."

Sincerely,

Dr. Philip K. Way  
President

## OUR VISION

Athens State University will be the premier destination for transfer students seeking the highest quality education and cutting-edge delivery at the most affordable cost. As the upper division university in Alabama, building on a tradition that began in 1822, Athens State University will be the catalyst for positive change in the lives of its students.

## OUR MISSION

The University advances the best interests of its students and the State of Alabama through teaching, service, research, and other creative activities to empower students to make valuable contributions in their professional, civic, educational, and economic endeavors. Through innovative communication and course delivery for high-quality undergraduate and select graduate programs, Athens State University provides a supporting environment for each student, demonstrating the importance of the diverse and interdependent nature of our state and society. Athens State University changes the face of Alabama by changing the lives of its students.

## CONTACT US

Online: [athens.edu](https://athens.edu)

Phone: (256) 233-8185  
(800) 522-0272

Email: [advancement@athens.edu](mailto:advancement@athens.edu)

Mail: 300 N. Beaty Street  
Athens, Alabama 35611

## CONNECT WITH US





**We are all**

# IN THIS T

Athens State University is no stranger to adversity, facing many challenges and weathering many storms in its 198-year history. With each challenge overcome, the resilience of the Athens State spirit has always prevailed, growing stronger and more resolute over time.

Today's challenge is the coronavirus, also known as COVID-19; a worldwide pandemic that has affected the lives of people across the globe, including right here in Athens.

It didn't take long for the government to act; it issued travel bans to and from certain countries to avoid the spread. States began closing schools, followed by businesses deemed "non-essential," such as spas, salons, and small retail stores, in general. Restaurants were only able to provide carryout and to-go options, and large gatherings were canceled, which included concerts and sporting events. Meanwhile, stay-at-home orders were being issued across the country as the number of cases began to rise.

It was early March. Alabama had not yet had any reported cases; however, Dr. Philip Way, President of Athens State, had met with his Cabinet on several occasions to discuss how to move forward when the time came. "We wanted to be prepared," said Way, "so we began putting measures into place, readying ourselves for when the governor issued a stay-at-home order."

The University began sending COVID-19 update emails to students, faculty, and staff as the situation continued to evolve. In the meantime, the task had begun to move all classes to an online/remote learning format, beginning March 23, the Monday after Spring Break. Some staff began working remotely, while safety precautions were put into place for "essential" personnel who continued to work on campus.

By the time March was over, the campus was closed to students and the general public, until further notice; all campus activities and events had been canceled, until further notice; and spring commencement had been moved to August.

IT Services went into overdrive to accommodate students, faculty, and staff with the transition. Belinda Krigel, Chief Information Officer, said they were challenged beginning March 13, when the governor declared a state public health emergency. "We had to anticipate and prepare for

the demands and challenges working remotely would create," said Krigel.

Those demands and challenges, included, but were not limited to, assisting faculty with converting face-to-face classes to an online format; converting paper-based assignments to digital ones; making Zoom technology available to faculty so they could continue meeting with their students; assisting students with the challenges of finding computers and internet access to be able to continue their courses; and providing remote access to the university system and data files to the 65 percent of staff working from home.

While there have been no reported cases of the virus on campus or within the campus community as of this writing, those familiar with the history of Athens State will recollect the Typhoid Fever epidemic of 1909 that took the lives of 15 students and one teacher, Florence Brown, who stayed behind to help the sick. Brown Hall, named in her honor, stands as a testament to her selflessness and dedication to her students.

That tradition of putting students first continues today as Athens State faces the challenges presented by COVID-19.

Athens State has a unique student body, and that presents unique challenges, some of which one might not encounter at a traditional institution. Because Athens State is an upper-division university, the majority of its student body is "non-traditional" – students who are 25 years and older; have some college experience but were forced to put their education on hold for a variety of reasons; have been in the workforce or served in the military and are returning to school to complete their degrees; and they most likely have families. Over 85 percent have full- or part-time jobs, and more than half are classified as low income.

Aware of the unique challenges many of its students face, Athens State works continuously to ensure that students are able to finish their education without delay or disruption due to financial issues.

"We began working on this a few years ago, due to the increased need of students who were struggling with basic necessities, such as food, books, tuition assistance due to unforeseen circumstances, and transportation," said Dr. Keith Ferguson, Vice President for University Advancement.

# TOGETHER

Ferguson, along with Sarah McAbee, Vice President for Enrollment and Student Support Services, and Mike McCoy, Vice President for Financial Affairs, collaborated to find a way to help students without penalizing those who are unable to repay the funds. With the goal of avoiding any disruption in the student's education while helping students in their time of need, the team created the Emergency Student Assistance Fund in November 2016.

With funds provided by generous donors, the Emergency Student Assistance Fund can help students pay for courses when there are small gaps between their financial aid award and the cost of attendance, purchase textbooks or course materials, or provide funds for basic needs related to "life," such as rent, utilities, childcare, groceries, or gasoline to get to and from school and work. Students are not expected to repay those funds but are asked to "pay it forward" when they are able.

To date, more than \$105,000 has been raised through private donations and ongoing fundraising efforts, helping well over 100 students weather their financial crises and allowing many of them the opportunity to continue their education without dropping out to seek additional employment.

According to the Office of Enrollment and Student Support Services, which manages the fund, the majority of assistance provided is in the form of Walmart gift cards to help students with groceries and other necessities, in addition to checks issued to students for help with rent, utilities, and other essential bills.

The circumstances surrounding students who need assistance vary greatly, but they all have one thing in common – the need is personal and potentially life-changing. One student who recently received assistance from the Fund was forced to shut down her small business because it was deemed "non-essential." Scheduled to graduate this year, the funds have helped her focus on finishing.

"Considering all the changes and adjustments that have taken place, it was reassuring to be able to pay my rent and utilities. My focus now is completing my coursework to satisfy my degree. Thank you for your help at this unprecedented time."

Another student recipient wrote:

"Thank you from the bottom of my heart for the help with groceries. I cried when I checked the balance (of the gift card). As someone who in spring 2019 was working 70 hours a week and going to school full-time, this adjustment and subsequent termination has been tough to accept. My boys and I appreciate the help more than you can imagine."

Ferguson said the need for assistance has increased during the pandemic, which prompted him to reach out to the Tennessee Valley Old Time Fiddlers Convention Committee, a strong supporter of Athens State, to see if the organization might be interested in helping out.

The response was swift, said Ferguson. The Committee's decision was unanimous, with a vote to provide up to \$50,000 in matching gifts to the emergency fund.

"It is yet another indication of their strong support for Athens State University and our students," Ferguson said.

As the pandemic continues, the future remains unknown; however, Athens State remains committed to its students.

"Our collective hearts break for those who have been adversely affected," said Way, "and please rest assured that we will do everything within our power to assist you through these difficult times."

If you are able and wish to donate, please visit [athens.edu/give](https://athens.edu/give) and select "Emergency Student Assistance Fund." You may also contact the Office of University Advancement at (256) 233-8185 or [advancement@athens.edu](mailto:advancement@athens.edu).



# ATHENS FOREVER

# Gala



Thank you to everyone who joined us for the **ATHENS FOREVER GALA**, which celebrated the public launch of the **Bicentennial Capital Campaign**.



Scan the QR code above to view pictures from the event!

Follow **ATHENS FOREVER** on Facebook (@AthensForeverBicentennial) or visit **ATHENSFOREVER.ORG** for more stories from students, alumni, donors, and others from the Athens State family.



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# A BEACON OF HOPE:

BROWN HALL SERVES AS SYMBOL OF RESILIENCY

On February 29, 2020, the public phase of the "Athens Forever" bicentennial campaign was celebrated at the Athens Forever Gala.

That evening, a video tribute to Brown Hall was debuted. To watch the video, please visit

<https://vimeo.com/420690792>

or scan the QR code with your smartphone.



**Brown Hall** – the iconic, columned, three-story building that stands directly behind Founders Hall – has been a staple of Athens State since its construction in 1912. Placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1986, it is the second oldest building on campus after Founders Hall. Brown Hall's legacy represents a story of sacrifice, determination, and selfless service – a symbol of resiliency for the Athens State campus.

## THE HEROINE

In October 1909, an outbreak of typhoid fever left over 65 people on campus ill and confined to Founders Hall. Several faculty members became ill, but most of the infected were students. The campus was quarantined, and all students and staff who were well enough were sent home. However, 17 students were too sick to leave campus.

One brave soul, Miss Florence Brown, selflessly volunteered to stay with the students who were too ill to travel or had nowhere to go and to ensure the school remained operational.

Florence Brown served as registrar, assistant to the president, and a faculty member in literature during her tenure. She first came to the college as a student at 16 years old and quickly impressed everyone with her skills, positive attitude, and determination. By the fall of 1909, she was practically in control of the financial affairs of the college. A beloved member of the college, Brown stayed with the girls and ran the school during the typhoid outbreak, as Miss Mary Norman Moore was recovering from a buggy accident and was unable to be on campus.

On November 5, 1909, Florence Brown succumbed to the disease and passed away. Many of her charges began to recuperate and the quarantine was lifted, but in the end 15 students were lost to the epidemic. Brown's decision to stay and help nurse the infected and quarantined individuals helped save many lives and prevented the further spread of the disease. This was characteristic of her loyalty and dedication to the institution.

The next year, at the start of the 1910-1911 semester, the College saw full enrollment, and the administration at once set about securing funds to build a dormitory to accommodate the new students. Mr. and Mrs. T.J. Brown, the parents of Florence Brown, were the first donors to the fund. Other friends at the College responded, and money was raised for Brown Hall.

The dormitory was completed for approximately \$7,000 and contained eighteen bedrooms; a reception hall; a large, spacious basement; and three well-equipped bathrooms.

Just as Miss Florence Brown watched over the girls in Founders Hall, she could now and forevermore watch over her scholars and protect their well-being.



## THE GOAL

Over the years, Brown Hall has served as a dormitory, classrooms, office space, the president's home, and again as administrative office space as recently as 2013. Currently, the building is due for major restoration and is uninhabitable due to functional and accessibility issues.

On August 5, 2017, the Athens State University Foundation launched the silent phase of the "Athens Forever" bicentennial capital campaign, with the goal of raising \$20,000,000 to be used mostly to endow scholarships and infrastructure. Campaign priorities include endowments and gifts, centers of excellence, and campus facilities – of which Brown Hall is a primary component.

Brown Hall's restoration will require an estimated \$4,000,000, which includes the following renovations:

- Refurbished exterior
- New portico and columns
- Asbestos and lead abatement
- Water and sewer upgrades
- Fire suppression
- Complete interior restoration
- New plumbing and electrical
- Elevator and lift

## THE FUTURE

As the University continues to meet the workforce demands in numerous areas, Athens State's growing Health Care Management, Health and Wellness Management, Health Science, and Public Safety and Health Administration programs are in need of space that would allow for enhanced learning opportunities for students. These majors, along with minors such as Gerontology and Human Development, underscore the need for practitioners in these disciplines along with other programs currently being reviewed.

Brown Hall, a memorial to not only Florence Brown but to the 15 Athens College students who lost their lives as a result of the typhoid epidemic of 1909, would become a home for health and healthcare-related areas of study, with an emphasis on issues such as health disparities, mental health, and other pressing needs that affect the North Alabama region.

Help us continue Florence Brown's legacy and ensure Brown Hall can remain a beacon of hope, courage, and resiliency for decades to come.



Above: A rendering of the proposed Brown Hall exterior after restoration

Below: Brown Hall in its current condition



**To donate to Brown Hall's restoration fund, please visit [ATHENS.EDU/GIVE](https://ATHENS.EDU/GIVE), choose "Other" and enter "Brown Hall" in the text box.**

# DR. LEE VARTANIAN NAMED DEAN OF COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

After an extensive, nationwide search that produced a number of highly-qualified candidates, Athens State University has appointed Dr. Lee Vartanian as Dean of the College of Education effective July 2020.

Dr. Vartanian received his bachelor's degree in social work from Auburn University and then went on to earn his master's degree in early childhood education and Ph.D. in urban services at Old Dominion University. He has an accomplished career in the field of education, spending 14 years as a professor at Lander University and another three years of teaching second and third graders at elementary schools in Virginia and South Carolina.

As Chair of the Department of Teacher Education at Lander University, Dr. Vartanian facilitated new programs in secondary chemistry education and a master's in teaching and learning with a concentration in the Montessori Method. He also served as the Campus Director of Lander University Teaching Fellows. Throughout his career, he has had several academic works published in the fields of English Language Learners and Teaching Math to Children, and he has presented at a number of conferences throughout the Southeast.

Dr. Vartanian brings to the role a deep knowledge of current changes in the Higher Education landscape, an openness to new ideas, experience in strategic planning and accreditation, collaboration around new program development, multiple years of supervisory experience, including evaluation of faculty, and noteworthy service on a local Board of Education.

During his interview, Dr. Vartanian articulated a strong commitment to excellence in course content, informed by collaboration in decision making and the need for stakeholder engagement. "These are extremely important values needed as we chart new directions in the College of Education at Athens State," said Dr. Joe Delap, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. Dr. Vartanian recently authored a Quality Assurance System that included systematic, clearly-defined practices for setting improvement goals and using purposeful data to assess progress. This system has already evidenced improvement in efficacy and intentionality within programs.

In his initial letter of application, Dr. Vartanian expressed he "found that the biggest capital within the university is the relationships that are built within a department, across colleges, and amongst faculty and staff. Building rapport and trust amongst diverse faculty and community members is crucial for seizing important opportunities to develop innovative programs." Dr. Delap noted, "In one-on-one conversations with Dr. Vartanian, his commitment to pedagogy that is informed by scholarship and research nationally and internationally came out as a particular strength."



"The College of Education at Athens State has a long history of training diverse, dynamic teachers who make a difference in the lives of whom they teach. I look forward to working with the faculty and staff to advance our mission of preparing knowledgeable, reflective, and collaborative teachers." --Dr. Lee Vartanian

An artistic rendering of McCain Hall, which houses the Athens State University College of Education





# Classroom Learning Goes Behind Bars

Athens State University has recently become a part of the “Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program,” an international program with more than 150 higher education institutions participating in the United States and abroad in more than 200 prisons and jails. With a mission of creating opportunities for people inside and outside of prison through transformative learning experiences that emphasize collaboration and dialogue through a focus on “differences,” the program invites students to become leaders in addressing crime, justice, and other issues of social concern.

“Inside-Out” originated in 1995 when Lori Pompa, a professor in the Criminal Justice Department at Temple University, took a group of 15 undergraduate students to the State Correctional Institution at Dallas, Pennsylvania for a tour of the facility. As part of the tour, Lori and her students met with a panel of men who were incarcerated there, most of whom were serving life sentences. During the panel discussion, they touched on a variety of issues – social, economic, political, racial, psychological, philosophical – as they related to crime and justice. After this engaging, hour-long conversation, it was time to leave, but no one wanted to. This eventually led to the creation of the “Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program” in 1997, providing a means of bringing together campus-based college students with incarcerated students for a semester-long course held in a prison, jail, or other correctional setting. Since then, more than 50,000 students (from both sides of prison walls) have taken Inside-Out courses worldwide.

The idea for Athens State University to become a part of the program was initiated by Dr. Vanessa Miller, Assistant Professor of Psychology in Athens State’s Behavioral Sciences Department, who learned of the program from a colleague. Dr. Miller had already been working with inmates at the Limestone County Correctional Facility, as it is one of the many sites where Athens State students intern to satisfy requirements for various degree programs.

Dr. Miller said she thought it would be a good experience for students, as they “would benefit by gaining first-hand, real-world experience applying the topics and working with a population of individuals that many in society deem unfit, deviant, and unworthy of attention.” She brought the

idea to Dr. Stephen Spencer, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and Dr. Joe Delap, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. With their support, Dr. Miller, along with Dr. Susan Owen, Professor of Psychology and Chair of the Behavioral Sciences Department, attended training for the program in spring 2019 on how to present and teach the course.

The Inside-Out course is a three-credit-hour “Special Topics” course that is offered through the College of Arts and Sciences each fall semester. The first class was offered in fall 2019 and taught by Dr. Owen. She and Dr. Miller will alternate every fall, each teaching a different topic. There is no specific list of required topics, and the class is open to all majors.

There are strict guidelines for participants both inside (incarcerated students) and outside (Athens State students). It starts with an application process, followed by an interview. “It is important,” said Dr. Owen, “that the students know what to expect and that they are a good fit for the course.” Students meet once per week at Limestone Correctional Facility. The class is closely supervised, with a correctional officer stationed in the room at all times, along with video surveillance.

Dr. Owen said it is like any other class, with weekly readings, assignments, and interactive discussions, and all students are required to complete a term paper at the end of the semester. The program provides a unique learning experience in that students are challenged to think critically about social injustice and find creative ways to respond in a collaborative manner, all while bridging the gap between individual perspectives, backgrounds, and preconceived notions.

Once the course concludes at the end of the semester, the inside students receive a certificate of completion for the course, which is placed in their file for the parole board. Outside students receive a grade in addition to the certificate of completion.

According to Dr. Owen, feedback has been very good. “Students have called it a life-changing experience,” she said.

For more information about the program, visit [www.insideoutcenter.org](http://www.insideoutcenter.org).

# SHUTTERED BUT SOAR

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, Athens City Schools may have been shuttered with their students and teachers at home, but the servant spirit of the teachers and staff remains active throughout the school system. "Staff are admirably putting their motto, One Athens, into action," said Dr. Trey Holladay, a 1987 graduate of Athens State and current superintendent of Athens City Schools. He said One Athens is the guiding principle of the school system. It focuses on partnerships and working in harmony toward mutually-beneficial goals for students, teachers, and the community.

"Put simply, it says that we join together as one spirit to serve the needs of our students, families, and this community," Holladay said. "Teachers and staff across the district are working to do just this."

In the midst of school closings, the administration of Athens City School System prioritized their response. First, came the care and well-being of the 4,000 families and more than 500 employees of the school system. "Teachers are eager to teach and are concerned about the social-emotional well-being of their students," said Dr. Holladay. "For a lot of our teachers, it was a traumatic and abrupt end when they had to send their students out the door, not knowing if and how this virus would affect them, their students, or their families."

**"Goodbyes are in May," he said.  
"Goodbyes are not in March."**

To comply with the Governor's order, employees were sent home. Essential services such as payroll, maintenance, and accounts payable were continued as needed. Broad communications with staff, parents, and students began quickly both at the school and district level, providing parents with resources and guidance on the spread of the virus and on the district's plans. The system's website ([www.acs-k12.org](http://www.acs-k12.org)) was updated with a section devoted to the new pandemic.

The second-most-critical issue to be addressed was how to provide food to the hundreds of students who rely on school breakfasts and lunches each day. Swift action was taken by Child Nutrition Coordinator Tandy Norris and members of the CNP staff. Beginning as early as March 17, both breakfast and lunch "grab and go" meals were prepared and distributed at no cost to any student 18 years of age or younger. Menus and distribution schedules were published each week on the system's website. On some days, more than 3,000 meals were distributed by school personnel.

Phillip Jarmon, Assistant Principal at Athens Renaissance School and a 2004 Athens State alumnus, tweeted "It's

more than just passing out meals. It's smiling and waving as the kids pull up. It's asking how the family is doing. It's the ACS way – love!"



Following the Governor's announcement on March 26 that schools would remain closed through the remainder of the school year, Athens City announced "eLearning" for all students would begin Monday, April 6, immediately following the system's spring break.

The primary goal of eLearning was to keep students healthy both physically and emotionally and connected to the school community in order to prevent academic regression. To communicate with parents about what eLearning entails, the district developed a comprehensive website, ACS eLearning for Parents, outlining the essential agreements for teachers and students at each grade level. The agreement included that the quality of the instruction is more important than quantity and that general education teachers would not exceed three lessons/subjects per day for students.

To transition to the school system's new way of instruction, the first week of eLearning included a Spirit Week. "Our hopes for Spirit Week were to reconnect with our students in a way that would remind them that we are all part of a wonderful 'One Athens' school community," said Alyson Carpenter, Professional Learning & Instructional Technology Coordinator and 1996 graduate of Athens State. "Keeping our students physically and emotionally healthy during this time is a top priority for ACS, and Spirit Week helped us kick this off by providing fun opportunities for reconnection while also encouraging students to stay healthy and unplug regularly."

"The instructional team has been working diligently behind the scenes to provide our teachers and students with a manageable plan to implement the eLearning experience," said Melanie Barkley, a 1996 graduate of Athens State's College of Education and Athens City Schools Coordinator of Secondary Curriculum.



She further reported that a survey sent to parents and students following the first week of eLearning indicated overwhelmingly positive feedback regarding the manageability of the work and the comfort level when it comes to using the technology. When teachers asked their students what they wanted more of, the students overwhelmingly said more time together. “Because teenagers are such social creatures, our teachers are not only focusing on the lessons for students but also their social and emotional health by providing these opportunities for coming together,” Barkley said.

Angela Pettus said her “new normal” looks nothing like her old normal, but every single day is movement forward. Pettus said her students and parents have been amazing, with students electronically sending her math questions on a regular basis. She answers their individual questions via email and provides timely feedback for the work they submit. Pettus gives a lot of credit to the school administrations, reporting that they have even dropped in on a few of her Zoom classes to say hello to the students. “Is this the way I wanted to end the school year? Of course not.” said Pettus, who is vocalizing the way many teachers feel. “But as we journey through this, I am seeing students and teachers grow in ways that might not have happened had we not been forced into this situation. Athens High is definitely taking the lemons we were given and turning them into lemonade! And I just bet that down the road when we look back on this period of time, we will have some good – not just bad – memories.”

Daylee Downs, 2003 Athens State alumna and a teacher at Athens Middle School, believes connectivity and communication are key. “I think staying connected and communicating clearly and frequently during this unique time is what is most important,” she said. Her eighth graders were tasked with writing an active voice sentence and changing it to passive. Then, they had to record an instructional video in which they explained their thinking. Downs later sent recorded videos back to them providing her input.

“This experience has shown me how important personalizing learning really is and that students need

interactions with their teacher and with each other to truly thrive,” she said. “I think this has also shown my students that they truly do value personal interaction over technology more than they thought!”

Elementary students as young as kindergarten participated in eLearning as well. Angela McKenzie, a kindergarten teacher at Athens Elementary School, indicates that, although they required the help of their parents, her students participated by watching videos and submitting lessons to her using an application called SeeSaw. Teachers and students can “text” through this app as well as post lessons and videos. McKenzie can review the work students post on SeeSaw and leave written or audio comments. “I think they enjoyed hearing the comments the most,” she said, adding her weekly lesson plan included posting a “morning message” video each morning explaining the assignment for the day and simply allowing the students to see her. She filmed herself reading three or four times each week and posted the story on SeeSaw so students could listen at their convenience. She also hosted morning and afternoon Zoom sessions twice a week, providing choices so parents could work it around their schedules. “The students love seeing each other on Zoom,” McKenzie said. “We chat for a few minutes with each other and then we will do a lesson and I can see them respond.”

“There’s a vision that all you have to do is flip a switch and everything can be on the computer in a student’s living room,” said Barkley. “That is simply not the case. A lot of preparation is being done on the part of our classroom teachers to develop lessons that focus on the most important skills students need to be prepared for the next grade level or course.”

Holladay echoed those thoughts and complimented the work that is being done by teachers and the support being shown from parents. “This is another example of what makes Athens City School System special,” he said. “Everyone is working together to support each other and our students. We remain ‘One Athens’ during this unusual time.”



# SHOW YOUR PRIDE

Visit **ATHENSFOREVER.ORG** to learn more about our Bicentennial Celebration and the capital campaign that is building the next chapter of Athens State University. Read stories from alumni, students, donors, faculty, and staff who all have one thing in common - a great love for this historic institution we call home!



Follow us on Facebook (@**AthensForeverBicentennial**) to learn about Bicentennial news and events and see even more stories from the Athens State family. You can also reconnect with classmates, faculty, and staff from years gone by!



Help fund student scholarships by purchasing an **Athens State University collegiate license plate!**

This special edition is a commemorative tag for the "Athens Forever" Bicentennial. For just \$50 added to your annual registration fee, you will receive an Athens State license plate with free personalization.

Out of the \$50 fee, \$48.75 is returned to the University, so your support is directly impacting students!



Help us celebrate our history by sharing YOUR Athens State story. Tell us about your experience, about your friends who enriched your time here, about the staff or faculty member you will never forget.

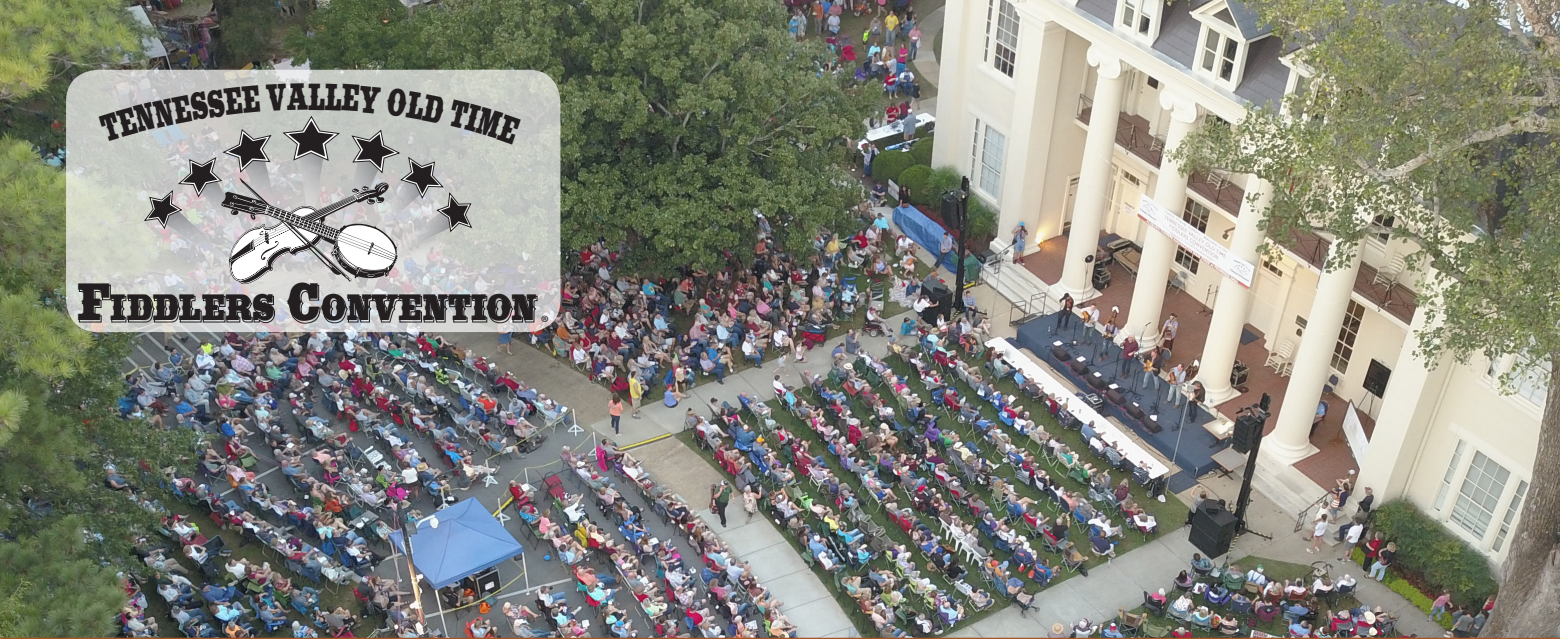
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SCAN ME



# Family, Friends, Fiddlers.

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**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1 - SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3**

**INFO & TICKETS:**  
**TVOTFC.ORG**

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**THURSDAY,  
 SEPTEMBER 24**  
 7 PM | McCANDLESS HALL

**KENNY & AMANDA  
 SMITH**

**CONCERT**  
 TENNESSEE VALLEY OLD TIME  
 FIDDLERS CONVENTION  
**SERIES**  
 2020  
 Enjoy Old Time Music  
 Year-Round

Tickets for each show are  
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**TUESDAY,  
 SEPTEMBER 29**  
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**DARIN & BROOKE  
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**FRIDAY, JULY 31 & SATURDAY, AUGUST 1**