



# COMMUNIQUE

A Publication of Mississippi Valley State University for Faculty, Staff, Alumni and Friends | February 10, 2017 Vol. 14 Edition 2

## AKAEZE LANDS APPLE INTERNSHIP

To say Henry Akaeze is an impressive young man is an understatement. When the Nigerian born 22-year old landed in the Washington airport two-years ago he thought he would return the same as he landed, he was mistaken.

The computer science and mathematics major at Mississippi Valley State University (MVSU) has accomplished much in his short time in America and now he has added one more thing as he was recently awarded an internship with Apple.

Akaeze will serve on the ISO Productivity OCOGS Team and reporting to Charles Kalko. The effective start date will be May 22-August 11, 2017.

Akaeze came on the Apple radar while attending the 28th Annual Thurgood Marshall College Fund Awards Gala in November of 2016.

While there he delivered a five-minute speech about his life and his struggles as well as his accomplishments. The reaction from the audience was a standing ovation and afterwards he heard Apple was looking for him.

See "Internship" page 4



## GREENVILLE MAYOR SERVED AS SPEAKER FOR MVSU'S MLK/BLACK HISTORY CONVOCATION

Mississippi Valley State University hosted its annual Martin Luther King/Black History Convocation at 11 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 9, in the H.G. Carpenter Auditorium. The theme for this year's event was, "Being the Catalyst for Change: The Next Generation."

The program featured the Mississippi Valley State Choir and Symphonic Band. In addition to the musical selections there was Martin Luther King Jr. reenactment.

The speaker for this year's convocation was Greenville Mayor and Attorney, Errick D. Simmons. Simmons is the second African-



SIMMONS

American Mayor and the first African-American male.

Simmons was first elected as a city councilman in 2008 and served on the Greenville City Council for eight years. In his last year as a city council member, he served as vice mayor.

During his tenure on the board, Simmons served on the charter and ordinance committee, finance, public safety committee, education, and

airport committees. During his tenure as city councilman, Simmons has balanced eight city budgets totaling over 500 million dollars and managed over \$100 million dollars in grant awards.

Simmons matriculated through the Greenville Public School system, where he graduated second in his class at T. L. Weston High School in 1995, second to his twin brother and law partner, Mississippi State Senator Derrick T. Simmons. Simmons later studied at Jackson State University, where he received a Bachelor

See "Convocation" page 4

# MISS. PHILOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION TO HOLD ANNUAL CONFERENCE AT VALLEY

The 2017 Mississippi Philological Association (MPA) Conference will be held at Mississippi Valley State University, February 10-11, 2017. This will be the third time this conference is to be hosted at Mississippi Valley State University.

MPA holds an annual conference at a sister university in Mississippi. The 2017 conference offers a great opportunity for scholars, professors, graduate students, and writers from 30 institutions in seven states (Mississippi, Louisiana, Alabama, Tennessee, Arkansas, Wisconsin, and Missouri) to meet and exchange ideas.

The 2017 MPA Conference will have twenty-one panels with seventy-five presentations covering the topics on American literature, English literature, world literature, Mississippi literature, Delta writers, African American culture and foodways, pedagogy, law, race, music, language, writing, education, poetry, fiction, nonfiction, translation, etc.

The past two MPA conferences chaired by Dr. John Zheng at Mississippi Valley State University in 2005 and 2007 were a great success. We are looking forward to the third successful one this year. The conference will start on the second floor of the Sutton Administration Building February 10 from 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. It will resume February 11 from 9:00 a.m. to noon.



*Ben Wiley Payton, courtesy of [www.benpayton.com/](http://www.benpayton.com/)*

The special event to be held Friday, February 10, at 5:30 p.m. in Auditorium 108 of the Sutton Building will be the musical performance by Ben Wiley Payton, sponsored by the B.B. King Recording Studio. Mr. Payton is a blues artist with roots in the Delta. He was recently honored to represent his home state of Mississippi in Washington DC for the American Folklife Center's Homegrown Concert Series presented by the Library of Congress. He has performed

in numerous places including the prestigious Kennedy Center. Mr. Payton was born in Coila in the hill country just east of the Delta and lived in Greenwood before moving as a teen with his family in the early 1960s to Chicago. He now lives in Jackson, Mississippi.

The conference admission for non-presenters is free, and the university and local communities are welcome to attend the conference.

# SANDERS PERFORMS AT GRAMMY MUSEUM IN L.A.



Dr. Alphonso Sanders will be performing in Los Angeles at the Grammy Museum. GRAMMY Museum Mississippi and MDA/Visit Mississippi are working in conjunction to host the 8th annual Mississippi Night at the GRAMMYS, Thursday, February 9 at The Grammy Museum at L.A. Live in downtown Los Angeles. This is a banner year for Mississippi at the GRAMMYS, with six Mississippians being honored in 2017. Bobby Rush, Vasti Jackson and Luther Dickinson are nominated for Best Traditional Blues Album. Jimmie Rodgers and Charley Pride are receiving Lifetime Achievement Awards, and Tig Nataro is up for Best Comedy Album. Dr. Sanders will be performing with recording artist Steve Azar and former members of BB King's band.

# Stribling Harris Court Naming

## MVSU TO DEDICATE COURT IN HONOR OF COACHES STRIBLING AND HARRIS

Two long-time and legendary coaches at Mississippi Valley State University will see their names forever etched in hardwood on Saturday, February 11, 2017.

Coach Lafayette Stribling and Coach Jessie Harris will receive the honor of having the court located in the R.W. Harrison Complex named after them.

The celebration will take place prior to the Devilettes and Devils home game against Alcorn State University. The Stribling-Harris Court will formerly be unveiled prior to the women's game with a brief ceremony at courtside beginning at 1 p.m.

Harris will offer remarks during halftime of the women's contest and Stribling will likewise offer comments during halftime of the men's game.

"Having your name embossed on a gym floor or an athletic field where you built championship programs is one of the greatest honors for a coach. Coach Stribling and Coach Harris are deserving of this honor for their work and service here at Mississippi Valley State University," said Dianthia Ford-Kee, Director of Athletics at MVSU.

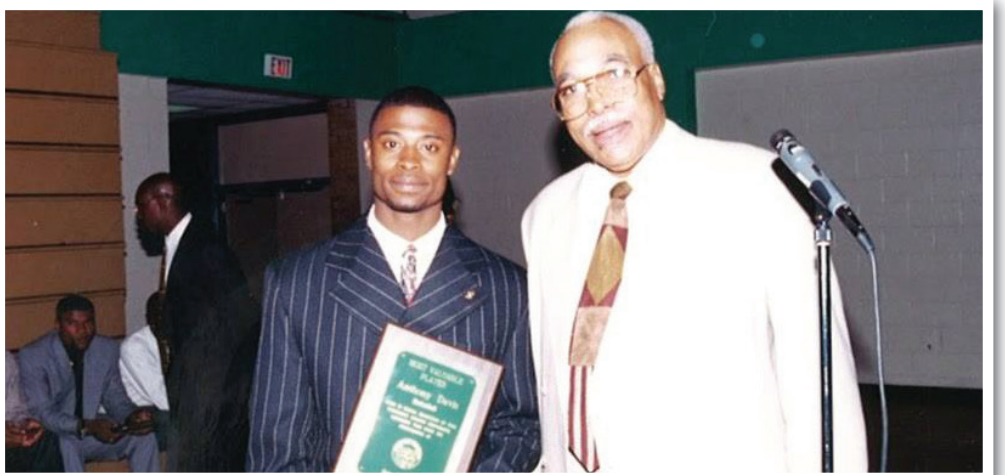
Stribling is the winningest men's basketball coach in the school's history, with a 315-307 record and three NCAA tournament appearances. One of the most memorable NCAA tournament appearances under Stribling came against the Duke Blue Devils in 1986 when the team led the top-ranked perennial basketball power house by three points at halftime. MVSU ultimately fell to the Blue Devils 85-78 in the first round. The Delta Devils also lost to Ohio State in 1992 and Georgetown in 1996 in their other tournament appearances under Stribling.

Stribling was an inductee of the Mississippi Coaches' Hall of Fame in 1989, 2006 SWAC Hall of Fame inductee, and a 2010 inductee into the MVSU Athletic Hall of Fame. He was named SWAC Coach of the Year in 1992.

Harris began his coaching career at the Valley in 1975 when he was hired by Andrew Jackson as an assistant men's basketball coach. During his tenure as an assistant for the men's program, the women's basketball program was reinstated and



*Jessie Harris talks things over with his ladies hoops squad during a home game. Harris coached the MVSU Devilettes for 27 years and won three SWAC Championships. Harris holds the record for most wins in MVSU women's basketball history.*



*Coach Lafayette Stribling poses for a picture with Anthony Davis during the 1997 MVSU Athletic Banquet. Stribling is the winningest men's basketball coach in the school's history.*

a head coach was needed.

Harris was named the head coach of the women's team in 1975. In his 27 years on the sideline, the Devilettes won 380 games. Coach Harris holds the record for most wins in women's basketball at MVSU.

It was under Harris' leadership that the Devilettes won three Southwestern Athletic Conference Championships (1988, 1989 and 1993). During his tenure as the head women's basketball program, Harris won 28 games in a

single season, a record that still stands today for all Mississippi Valley sports. Harris also served as the head women's volleyball coach from 1989-2002.

Harris is a member of the MVSU Alumni Hall of Fame, MVSU Athletic Hall of Fame, and SWAC Hall of Fame. He was selected Black College Coach of the Year in 1989 (Basketball) and SWAC Coach of the Year (basketball) 1982, 1987 and 1988.

# GOLDEN SELECTED TO PRESENT AT NAFSA CONFERENCE



Dr. Kathie Stromile Golden's NAFSA Bi-Regional Conference Workshop (October 2016) titled *Identity and Culture in the African Diaspora: Intercultural Dynamics at Historically Black Colleges and Universities*, conducted in collaboration with Dr. Monica Hayes, ESL (English as a Second Language) Coordinator at Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University, has been selected as National Association of

Foreign Student Advisers (NAFSA) Regional Conference Highlight Selection for Region VII.

As a NAFSA Regional Conference Highlight Selection, Drs. Stromile Golden and Hayes have been invited to present an abbreviated version of the workshop at NAFSA's 69th Annual International Conference in Los Angeles, California from May 28 – June 2, 2017. Their

presentation is scheduled for June 2, 2017 at 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm.

According to Dr. Stromile Golden, some long-time NAFSAs believe the presentation to be a historical moment as a first ever session focusing solely on HBCUs being selected for regional highlight; or at least, the first such selection in more than 20 years.

"Our session examines issues surrounding cross-cultural conflict at HBCUs, and provides an overview of cultural and linguistic competency – skills that promote 21st century strategies needed to expand global engagement at HBCUs," said Dr. Stromile Golden. "This overview will set the stage and frame the beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors necessary to achieve cultural and linguistic proficiency with others as well as within ourselves. Many practitioners and others in the field believe they are already culturally and linguistically competent because they are people of color, or because they love people, don't see themselves as racist...etc. The road to the skill sets involved in cultural and linguistic competency begins with a look within. The presentation seeks to assist participants with taking the first step on that journey."

## Internship *continued from page 1*

Due to the attention he received from his successful speech, Akaeze was unable to connect with Apple on that evening, but before the Christmas break he was contacted by Apple and informed he was accepted, but would have to interview for the internship.

"Three teams from Apple contacted me, but due to my international student status only two could interview me because the other was for U.S. students only. Both teams offered me the internship so I choose the ISO team. This team is the creative part of Apple working on products for the future," he said.

Akaeze's life journey has been one of struggle and grief. At six years old, he lost his mother to cancer, and at the age of 13 his father passed away due to complications from diabetes. He's the youngest of eight children.

"Losing my mom was hard, but we kept going with our dad, but then around 2007 things happened with my dad and he passed away. I was offered admission from Valley, but when I replied it was too late. They informed me they had given my scholarship away, but I decided to come anyway on faith and believing that God would do something," explained Akaeze.

"With the help of Executive Vice President Jerryl Briggs I was able to get my scholarship back. Seeing what I have seen in life, I have gained a lot of motivation. I have always been an ambitious person so I knew there was more to life than I could get from the universities in Nigeria was offering. I was raised in a Christian home so I have always believed in God. A lot of big schools told me no, but Valley told me yes. I have gone to a lot of places thanks to Mississippi Valley," Akaeze said.

Although MVSU is a small school, Akaeze believes what you can experience here is all about what you set your mind to.

"It's a small school, but it's all about what you set your mind to. From Valley I have been able to work with Walmart Technologies. Now, I am about to do an internship with Apple. Having your eyes set on the goal is the main thing that helped me go through all the adversities in my life. If you come here knowing what you want, Valley will help you attain it. My department, the MCIS Department helped me to know what I wanted and then help me go for it," he added.

## Convocation *continued from page 1*

in Business Administration in Economics in 2000. In 2002, Simmons received a Master of Arts degree in Economics from Howard University Graduate School of Arts and Sciences and received his Juris Doctorate from Howard University School of Law (HUSL) in 2005.

Simmons is an active member of several local, state, and national boards, recipient of numerous community service awards by local, state, and national organizations, and has been featured in several local, state, and national publications. Simmons is a proud life member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. and a mason. He is a team sponsor for Washington County and City of Greenville youth sport leagues and sponsors an annual Christmas Toy Give-a-way, providing toys to nearly 600 needy kids in his area. Mayor Simmons financially contributes to both Jackson State University, Howard University School of Law, and charitable, civic, and social organizations. He is a member of the Greater Springfield Missionary Baptist Church in Greenville, Mississippi where Mark Buckner is pastor. He is married to Dr. Temika M. Simmons and they have two (2) children – Errick and Eriel.

# OMEGA PSI PHI TO HOLD ANNUAL CHARLES R. DREW BLOOD DRIVE

Mississippi Valley State University's Omega Psi Phi Fraternity will be holding its Annual "Charles R. Drew" Blood Drive with Mississippi Blood Services (MBS) on Thursday, February 16, from 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. The MBS Donor Coach will be parked in the Student Union parking lot. All donors will receive a T-shirt. Donors can now check their total cholesterol on their MBSCoach Account.

February is American Heart Month and studies have shown donating blood is good for your heart.<sup>1,2</sup> February is also the month we associate with love and nothing says "I love you!" like a gift from the heart. Please, have a heart and give the gift of love that lasts a lifetime, donate blood. It's good for your heart in more ways than one.

Donating blood is safe, simple and it saves lives. Donors must be at least 17 years old (16 years old with signed parental consent, visit their Web site for a copy of the form), weigh at least 110 pounds and have a valid ID. Visit us at [msblood.com](http://msblood.com) or call us at (888) 90-BLOOD (902-5663) for information. You can also visit our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/give2live](http://www.facebook.com/give2live) and follow [MSbloodservices](https://twitter.com/MSbloodservices) on Twitter. *When you give, people live.*

<sup>1</sup> "4 Unexpected Benefits of Donating Blood." News&Views. <http://news.health.com/2014/06/13/4-unexpected-benefits-of-donating-blood/>

<sup>2</sup> "Why Donating Blood is Good for Your Health." Medical Daily. <http://www.medicaldaily.com/why-donating-blood-good-your-health-246379>.

# KNUTSON PRESENTS PAPER AT MLA CONFERENCE



KNUTSON

Dr. Lin Knutson, in the Department of English and Foreign Languages, received the honor of presenting a paper at the Modern Language Association Conference in Philadelphia, Pa. on January 5-8, 2017. Her conference paper, "Adrienne Rich's Revolution" focused on the Jewish American poet's revolutionary poetry, and her Marxist criticism of U.S. capitalism that it prevents many races from achieving upward mobility. Dr. Knutson is planning to publish this paper. This literary conference is the most competitive in the field of literary studies, and this is Dr. Knutson's fourth presentation at MLA. Dr. Knutson used this opportunity to attend many other MLA panels in the fields of literature and composition.

# WELCOME ABOARD



Portia Collins  
Manager of Special Events  
Office of University Advancement

# EVENT CALENDAR

## February

10 – Men and Women's Track @ Samford Invitational, 9 a.m.

MVSU Softball @ Nicholls State, 5 p.m.  
Mississippi Philological Association Conference, 8-5:30 p.m., William Sutton Building (Rm. 108, 202, 203, 231, 232)

11 – Women's Basketball v. Alcorn, 2 p.m. Harrison Complex; Men's Basketball v. Alcorn, 4 p.m., Harrison Complex

MVSU Softball v. Southern Illinois @ Nicholls State, 5 p.m.

Mississippi Philological Association Conference, 9-noon, William Sutton Building (Rm. 108, 202, 203, 231, 232)

13 – Women's Basketball v. Southern, 5:30 p.m., Harrison Complex

Men's Basketball host Southern, 7:30 p.m., Harrison Complex

SAVE THE DATE



MARCH 24, 2017  
SPRING  
HIGH SCHOOL DAY

Snapping @ the Valley



Special Guest:  
Emmanuel Hudson  
from Nick Cannon's  
Wild N' Out

8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.  
Harrison Complex



Two  
Minutes  
with...

# Theresa Rash

*Assistant Professor, Social Science*

*Tell us a little about yourself and your background.*

I am a native of Shaw, Miss. Currently, my family and I reside in Cleveland. I am a 1990 graduate of Shaw High School. After high school, I attended Delta State University in Cleveland. I am a three-time graduate of Delta State University. I received my Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology/sociology; master's degrees in social science education/sociology and community development. During my matriculation at DSU, I was a member of the women's basketball team, in which we were 1992 Division II National Champions. I am a member of the Bolivar County Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. in Cleveland. I am also one of the founders and the 1st vice president of the Dorothy I. Height Quad County Section of the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW), which serves

Sunflower, Bolivar, Washington and Leflore Counties. The Dorothy I. Height Quad County Section of NCNW was founded on

June 3, 2015 in Indianola, Miss. I've been married to Terrence L. Rash for 21 years and we have three beautiful and lovely daughters, Tyla, who is a freshman at The University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg; Terin and Taylor who are students at D.M. Smith Middle School in Cleveland and Taylor. My motto is Philippians 4:13: "I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me."

*How do you approach providing service?*

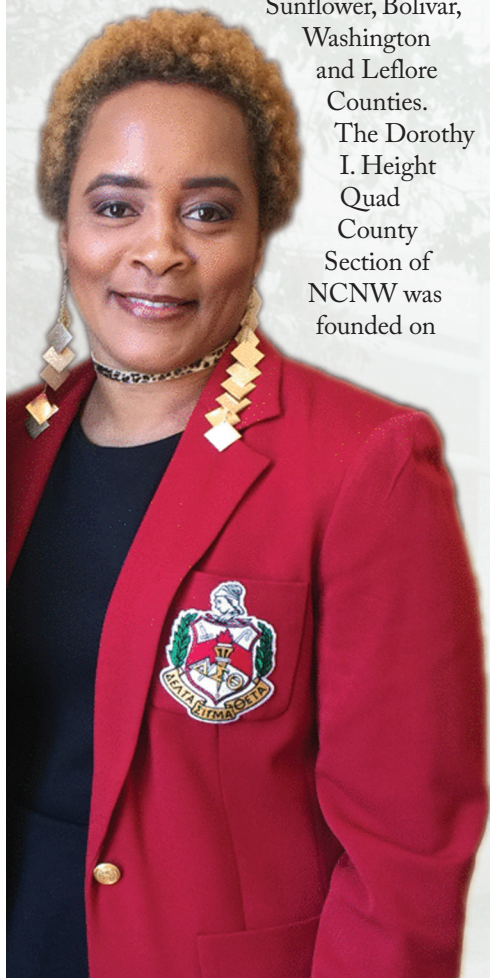
All of us have a calling on our lives to serve all humanity. I am reminded of the greatest example of love and service the world will ever know, and that is in the person of my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. What did Jesus do to leave such a mark in this life? What did Jesus do to eradicate many of the issues and crisis of His community? What did Jesus do to empower His community? Jesus SERVED? He loved and He served! Jesus's entire life was about giving and service. This is how I approach providing service, with the same attitude that Jesus had, loving and giving back to my community to those who are less fortunate.

*Where are we most likely to find you when you are not at work?*

When I am not at work you most likely will find me at the CrossFit gym, spending time with my family, shopping with my girls, or at church. Some of my hobbies include jogging, playing basketball, and coaching and teaching my girls the fundamentals of basketball, track and softball.

*What is something we would be surprised to learn about you?*

You would be surprised to learn about me that I am from a family of 17.



# COMMUNIQUÉ

The Communiqué is published for faculty, staff, alumni and supporters of Mississippi Valley State University by the Office of Communications and Marketing

Editorial material should be sent to [news@mvsu.edu](mailto:news@mvsu.edu) or mailed to:

## OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING

Mississippi Valley State University  
MVSU 7233 • 14000 Hwy. 82 W.  
Itta Bena, MS 38941-1400

For more information, call 662.254.3578  
[news@mvsu.edu](mailto:news@mvsu.edu)

Dameon A. Shaw  
*Interim Vice President for  
University Advancement*

Maxine Greenleaf  
*Director of Communications  
and Marketing*

John McCall  
*Senior Graphic Designer*

Joseph Cotton  
*Associate Graphic Designer*

Donell Maxie  
*Communications Specialist*

Shanae Curry  
*Project Coordinator*



Dr. William B. Bynum Jr.  
*President*



@MississippiValley



@MVSUDEVILS

**New Hashtag: #GOMVSU**

Mississippi Valley State University complies with all applicable laws regarding affirmative action and equal opportunity in all its activities and programs and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation or group affiliation, age, disability, handicap, or status as a veteran or disabled veteran.