



COMMUNIQUÉ

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

MVSU CELEBRATES FIRST GRADUATES THROUGH COMPLETE TO COMPETE PROGRAM



Pictured, from left are Tommy Rush, Jr. of Indianola, MS; Gertrude Stewart of Greenville, MS; MVSU President Dr. Jerryl Briggs; Gloria Sturdevant of Metcalf, MS; and Mark Myles of Belzoni, MS.

Four individuals who had some college hours but hadn't earned a degree received an early Christmas present—a bachelor's degree from Mississippi Valley State University by way of the Complete to Compete (C2C) program.

MVSU celebrated its first group of C2C graduates during a special ceremony, hosted at 11 a.m. Dec. 14 in the William Sutton Administration Building.

A state-wide initiative, C2C encourages Mississippi adults who have some college coursework to finish what they've started.

During the ceremony, the graduates shared the unique circumstances that hindered their degree completion.

For Mark Myles of Belzoni and Tommie Rush Jr. of Indianola, it was the need to support their growing families.

Myles said he'd earned an associate's degree, but always wanted to complete a bachelor's degree for further advancement in the workforce to help support his wife and two kids.

"I took time and reached out to Mrs. (Shearra) Hardwick at MVSU about the C2C program, and it worked out for me," he said.

Rush said his journey began in 1978 when he attended an out-of-state university as a star football player. However, after just one year, the school faced dire financial problems and was forced to let their football team go.

"I had two choices—I could go to Mississippi Valley or Delaware State," Rush said. I chose to come to Mississippi Valley and it was the best thing I've done."

Soon after starting school at MVSU, Rush took on a full-time job. His grueling schedule

included working from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. before heading to classes at MVSU at 8 a.m.

He would eventually stop attending college.

"I've worked the same job for 37 and a half years. I've been married for 34 years, and I have four adult children, so I've had a great life," Rush said.

Yet, he always carried the desire to finish what he started at MVSU.

"I've always wanted to complete my degree so that I could become the first male in my generation to graduate from college. Now, I can represent," he said with a grin.

Gertrude Stewart of Greenville said she was attending MVSU, but stopped when her mom became ill.

MVSU'S TANNER SELECTED AS VP OF MADE

A Mississippi Valley State University faculty member has been selected to serve as an officer for a state organization dedicated to ensuring student success.

MVSU's Director of Academic Success and Student Development Heather Y. Tanner was recently chosen as the vice-president elect of the Mississippi Association for Developmental Education (MADE).

Tanner said she is thrilled to have the opportunity to help the organization strive towards its mission to improve the theory and practice of developmental education.

"I am honored and excited to be elected as the Vice President of MADE," Tanner said. "I am humbled that my peers in developmental education would nominate me."

A native of Culver City, Calif., Tanner is a graduate of Southern University and A & M College in Baton Rouge, LA, where she obtained a Bachelor of Arts in Spanish Linguistics.

The former Miss. Southern University (1996-97) has worked for the Los Angeles Unified School District as an English as a second language (ESL) and adult basic education instructor.

In 2005, Williams returned to Southern University to serve as the study abroad



coordinator and service learning instructor within the Center for International Education before joining MVSU in 2015.

However, Tanner said her passion has always been motivating and mentoring students.

"Throughout my entire career in higher education, I have always maintained a teaching position, in some capacity, so I can encourage and motivate students to strive for excellence and admirable achievement," Tanner said.

"It is one of my personal goals to always aspire to keep my finger on the pulse of my audience. This is what led me to present at last year's MADE conference at Coahoma Community College on Strategies for Increasing Retention for Summer Development Programs."

The MADE chapter is a member of the National Association for Developmental Education (NADE).

MADE was founded in January of 1981 when James Barber, from Copiah-Lincoln Community College in Natchez, called together a group of developmental educators from across the state to form an organization based on the National Association for Developmental Education.

Over the years, MADE has become a driving force in colleges and institutions across the state, insuring that students receive an education that is based on their beginning capabilities and one that will take them as far as they can go.

For more information about MADE, visit www.mymade.org

MVSU TO ROLL OUT NEW ONLINE CRIMINAL JUSTICE GRADUATE PROGRAM

Mississippi Valley State University is working towards its mission to provide educational opportunities that are affordable and accessible with the addition of a new online master's degree program.

MVSU's Department of Criminal Justice has announced plans to roll out a Master of Science in Criminal Justice online degree program following approval from the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning Nov. 16.

The new program, expected to become available next fall, will become the institution's second online graduate degree program.

MVSU Vice President of Academic Affairs

Dr. Constance Bland said the online program was designed to help the university better address the changing demographics and needs of its students.

"This degree will give a large group of our students an opportunity to enjoy the flexibility, convenience and self-pace attributes of an online program," said Bland. We believe the degree will help us to better serve our students and provide an additional opportunity for others to pursue a post-baccalaureate degree."

With plans for all courses to be offered 100 percent online, the program will allow students to complete their degree without stepping foot into a classroom, said MVSU Criminal Justice Chair Dr. Emmanuel Amadi.

"This will enable the Department of Criminal Justice at MVSU to expand student access by providing alternative program delivery

method to traditional classroom instruction."

Currently one of MVSU's largest graduate programs, the Criminal Justice graduate program prepares students for entry and supervisory level positions within the criminal justice field as well as doctoral studies.

The program is open to individuals who hold a bachelor's degree in criminal justice or in other academic disciplines from accredited universities.

For questions or more information regarding MVSU's Department of Criminal Justice, contact (662) 254-3364.



MVSU REMEMBERS DR. JOSEPH WAHOME

Mississippi Valley State University is saddened by the loss of Dr. Joseph Muriuki Wahome, a former associate professor of biology in the Department of Natural Sciences and Environmental Health.

Wahome passed away in Greenwood. He was 55.

A native of Kenya, Wahome will be remembered at MVSU for his love of science and research.

“He was brilliant,” said Dr. Kathie Golden, Wahome’s friend and former colleague. We would banter and argue, but we were never mad with one another. He always promised the take me to Kenya one day.”

Golden said Wahome was well-liked by students, particularly international students, and was always willing to help sponsor International Week activities.

“He was an international student, so he had an affinity for it and understood what it meant not to be able to go home for the holidays,” said Golden. He enjoyed helping students perform research, and did all he could to help student-athletes. I’ve never had a student to complain about him.”



Wahome joined MVSU’s faculty in 1995 as an Assistant Professor of Biology. Prior to that, he was a post-doctoral researcher at the National Park Service’s Golden Gate National Park, Calif.

During his graduate career at the University of California-Berkeley (1990-1995), he served as a graduate student instructor, coordinator of the UC Berkeley Education Abroad International Outreach program and as an assistant in the Education Abroad Office.

During his tenure at MVSU, Wahome held positions with other universities and research organizations. He was a member of the research faculty at the National Marine and Fisheries Science Center in Miami, Fla., a master trainer at the University of Miami and Miami Museum of Science Technology Project, GEMS Associate at the UC Berkeley Lawrence Hall of Science, visiting researcher at Baylor University and associate faculty in the University of Pittsburg Semester at Sea program.

At MVSU, Wahome was engaged in several research projects and held a variety of positions.

From 2000 to 2001 and 2014 to 2015 he was vice-president of the Faculty Senate, and from 2015 to 2017 senate president. Wahome served as chair of MVSU’s Natural Sciences and Environmental Health Department from 2002 to 2010, during which time he also served as chair of the IRB and Animal Care and Use committee, director of MBRS program, LSMAMP and MBRS Programs.

Wahome was an active researcher, conducting research with both students and faculty that was frequently presented at the Mississippi Academy of Science annual meetings.

Wahome published several articles that focus on animal behavior and environmental issues.

Wahome received a Bachelor of Science with honors in 1987 and a Master of Science in Biology of Conservation in 1989, both from the University of Nairobi Kenya.

He earned a PhD in Zoology from the University of California, Berkeley in 1995.

Services for Dr. Joseph Wahome were held in his homeland of Kenya.

MSW ORGANIZATION DONATES GOODIES



MVSU’s Master of Social Work student organization recently donated a bag of Christmas goodies to residents of Crystal Health and Rehab of Greenwood. Pictured, from left, are Diane Boston, co-advisor; Catherine McCall, MSW Student Organization president; Doris Moore, Crystal Health and Rehab activity director; and Dr. Cynthia Honore-Collins, director of MVSU’s MSW Program.



35 PROMISING LEADERS INDUCTED INTO MVSU'S NATIONAL SOCIETY OF LEADERSHIP AND SUCCESS



New inductees of Mississippi Valley State University's National Society of Leadership and Success (NSLS) as well as outstanding faculty and staff members were honored Monday, Nov. 27, during a special induction ceremony.

The ceremony, hosted in Room 103 of the William Sutton Administration Building, recognized 35 student inductees. Also recognized were faculty and staff members nominated for Excellence in Teaching and Excellence in Service awards and honorary membership in the organization.

MVSU's University College organized the event.

"Leadership is not about a position, it's about a process. We learned that throughout our time that we had together—you don't always have to be out front. You can be behind the scene supporting,"

said MVSU NSLS Chapter Advisor Dean Renardo Hall.

Hall said while the inductees are prepared to become leaders in the community, they are also encouraged to step up as leaders on MVSU's campus.

"We want each of these inductees to serve as catalyst for change at the institution...to honor the history and build on the great foundation that we have at Mississippi Valley by making a difference."

The event was highlighted by a keynote address from MVSU's Vice President of Academic Affairs Dr. Constance Bland.

Bland used the opportunity to discuss the importance of leadership.

"You cannot turn on the television without seeing examples of leadership—whether it's good or bad," said Bland.

She then reviewed several traits that are necessary to become a good leader including learning to communicate, learning to listen, learning to smile and thinking strategically.

MVSU faculty and staff members selected for honorary membership were: Larry Kinds, summer development program coordinator; Edominas Perry, student leadership and engagement coordinator; and Tammy Timbers, first-year experience coordinator.

See "Society" page 7

NICHOLAS SELECTED FOR FCS AND HBCU SPIRIT BOWLS

Mississippi Valley State University's standout DB/CB, Everett Nicholas V, has been named to the 2018 NFL Draft Diamonds Small Schools prospect list.

Nicholas represented MVSU on the American Team (White) in the FCS National Bowl Game on Dec. 10, 2017 in Daytona Beach at the Daytona Beach Municipal Stadium. He will also play in the HBCU Spirit of America Bowl Jan. 14, 2018 in Salem, VA.



The FCS Bowl and the HBCU Spirit of America Bowl are annual post-season college football all-star games consisting of the top players from college football FCS and HBCU schools. The rosters give NFL/CFL scouts a chance to view and get to know some of the best players from small schools.

Nicholas, a senior at MVSU and the child of a former MVSU football and track athletes Everett Nicholas, IV and Kyshea Williams Nicholas respectively, is a second-team All-SWAC selection. He had 30 targets, 12 break-ups, 118 cover snaps, 17 passes defended, 3 interceptions, 60 rec yards and 0 TD's allowed.

Nicholas has led his team in interceptions the last two years.

He finished this season in the top 3 in INTs and in the top 5 in the conference in passes defended.



MISSISSIPPI VALLEY STATE
UNIVERSITY
ANNUAL
Tree Lighting &
FACULTY & STAFF
Holiday Reception
HIGHLIGHTS





HONOR SOCIETY DONATES PROCEEDS FROM CANNED FOOD DRIVE

Members of MVSU's Iota Kappa Chapter of Delta Mu Delta International Honor Society recently donated the proceeds from their canned food drive, hosted Oct. 30 through Nov. 16, to the Salvation Army in Greenwood, Miss.

Delta Mu Delta is the International Honor Society for business programs accredited by ACBSP at the baccalaureate, graduate and doctoral levels.

Chapter officers at MVSU for the 2017-2018 school term are Morgan Houston, president; Jasmine Parker, vice president; Jangela Burden, secretary; and Virginia Bolden, treasurer. MVSU Assistant Professor of Management Dr. Mary L. Shepherd serves as faculty advisor.



President Morgan Houston of Belzoni, MS (pictured, right) presented donations collected as part of MVSU's Delta Mu Delta International Honor Society canned food drive to Carlos Barbosa (left) of the Salvation Army.

Program *continued from cover page*

"Because I'd gotten a little older, I didn't want to return to the classroom with young students who were fresh out of high school, so I'd really given up on getting my degree," she said.

Fortunately, she ran across an article in her local newspaper about the C2C program and decided to learn more. She said the process was very easy, and she had dedicated faculty and staff members at MVSU to help along the way.

Now with a bachelor's degree in tow, Stewart said she can work towards her goal of becoming a teacher and will receive a pay raise at her current job.

MVSU C2C graduate Gloria Sturdevant of Metcalfe expressed a similar sentiment.

She's been working for the Children's Defense Fund's Southern Rural Black Women's Initiative for Social Economic Justice for 14 years and learned about the C2C program from an MVSU Chief of Staff and Legislative Liaison La Shon Brooks.

"That was in early September, and here I am today," she said. "It just blows my mind."

Sturdevant said having a bachelor's degree will help her to complete more of her life goals.

"I just feel like I'm called to do work in the Mississippi Delta, and this degree will really

help me to accomplish a lot more," she said. I just want to say thank you to Valley and the C2C program."

MVSU Vice President of Academic Affairs Dr. Constance Bland said the C2C program was designed to help more Mississippians earn a college degree with little or no additional course work.

"Approximately two years ago, all of the public colleges and universities in the State of Mississippi were asked the question, 'Can we do more to increase the number of college graduates in the state?'" Bland said. Today, we see the fruits of our labor."

According to Dr. Elizabeth Evans, MVSU associate vice president of Academic Affairs, the circumstances of MVSU C2C graduates are reflective of the reality for many Americans.

"Research shows that approximately 31 million Americans have completed some college without earning a degree—whether that's an associate's degree or a baccalaureate degree," Evans said. "C2C is designed for all adult learners who have some coursework completed in Mississippi. That institution does not have to be Mississippi Valley State University, but you know we want it to be."

In addition to degree completion pathway, the C2C offers a "reverse degree" component that allows individuals who have taken some junior college courses before transferring to a university to receive an associate's degree and

the option to return to a four-year institution for a bachelor's degree.

The program also offers tuition-assistance grants to qualified individuals, Evans said.

MVSU President Dr. Jerryl Briggs invited the four graduates back to campus to participate in the Spring 2018 Commencement Exercise.

"This type of event, for me, is very special because it shows the dedication and hard work, as well as the support and love, that this university has for the community," he said.

"I know you're proud, I know your family's proud, and we are proud of you here at the University. I'm appreciative of you all for taking advantage of this opportunity and choosing Mississippi Valley State."

Degrees awarded included: Mark Myles of Belzoni, Miss., Bachelor of Arts in General Studies with concentrations in Advanced Learning and Engineering Technology; Tommie Rush, Jr. of Indianola, Miss., Bachelor of Arts in Advanced Learning with concentrations in Business Administrations and Accounting; Gertrude Stewart of Greenville, Miss., Bachelor of Arts in General Studies with an concentration in Advanced Learning; and Gloria Sturdevant of Metcalfe, Miss., Bachelor of Arts in General Studies with concentrations in Advanced Learning, Public Administration, and Physical Education.

To learn more about the C2C program, visit www.msc2c.org or call (662) 332-8389.

MVSU 2017-2018 ENERGY CONSERVATION PROGRAM & SCHEDULE

Mississippi Valley State University will officially close for the holiday on the evening of Wednesday, Dec. 20, at 5 p.m.

Beginning Thursday, Dec. 21, all persons entering the University campus must produce MVSU identification (employees and students; others must show official federal or state ID) at the front gate and sign-in. All other entrances, including construction entrances, will be closed.

If you reside on campus, you must contact the University Police if you are entering a building other than your residence or apartment.

If you must come to work during the holiday period, please do so during regular business hours, generally 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. For security and safety reasons, it is very important that you turn off all lights and make sure doors are locked behind you when leaving a building. **You must contact the University Police Department, (662) 254-3479, upon entering and leaving a building.**

Further, Mississippi Valley State University will implement an energy conservation program during the holiday breaks this year; most buildings' temperatures will be lowered to 50 degrees Fahrenheit.

Residence halls will remain open and will operate within the standard temperature ranges for occupied buildings. Other auxiliary buildings online will be the J.H. White Library and H.M. Ivy Cafeteria.

NOTE: All other buildings will be officially closed and temperatures in the buildings will be lowered to 50 degrees.

The program will begin the evening of Wednesday, Dec. 20, 2017, and will continue until the campus resumes full operation on Monday, Jan. 2, 2018. Exterior building lights, however, will remain turned on throughout the holiday.

All non-essential HVAC equipment in general use classroom, athletic and office facilities will be shut off and set to fixed temperatures by Facilities personnel. Selection of affected buildings is tailored to operating schedules of the facility and the time necessary to return the facility to normal operating temperatures for opening. Laboratories (with laboratory specimens), research areas, data centers, museum and archival space facilities are not included in the setback schedule.

Exceptions are made only through special request.

Due to the importance of maintaining stable temperatures and humidity levels, some buildings will not be included in the conservation program. Facilities Management will work with the Residence Halls and Athletics to ensure that comfortable temperatures are maintained in those respective facilities as needed during the break.

Most of the main campus facilities are attached to the Chill Water Loop. All buildings will be set back by Facilities Management Personnel. For those buildings which are centrally controlled, Facilities Management will implement temperature setbacks appropriate for the holiday, night, and evening settings. Exterior building lights, street lighting, and parking lot lighting will remain on for security reasons.

Faculty & Staff:

Building managers (or their appointed representative) are required to disseminate the message to shut-off all unused office equipment any time of the day. Turn off devices/ equipment and unplug these devices and equipment in those out of the way places and places where no one has assigned responsibilities. Check out classrooms, restrooms, storage closets, etc., to ensure that someone turns off the energy-using devices.

Heating/ cooling should be addressed by the appropriate building representative.

All personal and office energy-consuming equipment and devices (**lights, computers, monitors, printers, copiers, fax machines, lamps, radios, etc.**) should be turned off and unplugged by occupants before leaving for the holiday break and/ or business day. All computers should have files saved, hard drives shut down, monitors turned off and all equipment, including surge protectors unplugged from outlets.

Building managers should ensure that all interior lights are turned off.

Individuals having items in the lounge refrigerators should remove those items as these appliances will be unplugged.

If you are using a portable space heater in your office during the break, it must meet the following specifications: 1) 1500 watts or 12.5 amps or less and; 2) has a safety thermal protector and tip over switch. Please do not use an extension cord when running a space heater, and do not place heaters underneath a thermostat. **All other heating devices are prohibited.**

Thank you for your ongoing efforts to help us with our energy saving program at The Valley.

Your support of these conservation measures is much appreciated. Conserving energy is not only the right thing to do but it frees up resources; **SAVING ENERGY SAVES JOBS.**



BUSINESS AND FINANCE DONATE TO SALVATION ARMY



The Office of Business and Finance donated toys and clothes to the Salvation Army during the holiday season. (From-left) Joyce Dixon, Gloria Turner, Deborah Swinney, Carolyn McGee, Marshall Boyd, and Claudette Kahn.

Society *continued from page 4*

Faculty members receiving Excellence in Teaching awards were: Dr. Rachel Venn Beecham, natural sciences professor; Shannon Bowden, mass communication instructor; Lucille Durham-Lacy, assistant professor of social work; and Dr. Elizabeth Evans, associate vice president of academic affairs.

Staff members presented with Excellence in Service awards were: Contessa Burns, maintenance operations work control center/transportation; Carrie Dean Ollie Hicks, office manager for Student Affairs and Diversity; and

Kotrese Saulsberry, assistant director of Student Leadership and Engagement.

Local chapter awards were presented to Vanderbilt Dixon and Howard Hill, both from MVSU's Department of Facilities Management. The new inductees included: Kadajah Babbitt; Jasmine Baker; Raymond Banks; Jada Brinson; Michael Clark; Carolyn Davis; Jordan Ellerby; Demarcus Frazier; Ashley Hemphill; Tiffany Hollins; Alexandria Jackson; Bobby Jackson; LaTonya Jones; Catherine McCall; Jamessa Morris; Lyric Nolden; Trainnisha Pates; Sara Pinkston; Samuel Pulley; Sherrod Reed Jr., Lurena Robinson; Marcus Romain; Janeisha

Sanders; Cameron Shaw; LaGwenia Simon; Shatasa Smith; Mawanda Stephens; Dustin Stewart; Sheletha Stokes; Rashaan Surlis; Marissa Tellis; Kajarius White; Idella Williams; Jalissa Williams; and Tekoa Williams.

The nation's largest leadership honor society, NSLS selects members for membership based on academic standing or leadership potential.

Since July 2014, MVSU's NSLS chapter has inducted over 185 members into the society.

The organization currently has 804,643 members nationwide.

Two Minutes with...

Dr. John Zheng

Chair, Department of English and Foreign Languages

Tell us a little about yourself and your background.

My junior and senior high years were spent in a boarding school with a major in English. Then, I was rusticated for two years as a farmhand growing cotton with a stint as a teacher of Chinese in a rural elementary school. I attended college and graduate study in Wuhan, a metropolitan city and my home base, where I dated my dear wife of over forty years ago and served as a professor of English for a decade. Later, I came to the States to further my graduate study in Hattiesburg, Miss., and earned my PhD and two masters from the University of Southern Mississippi. I started teaching at MVSU in 1996. My zodiac card, collected 40 years ago, said my career would be a teacher, writer and editor, and that's all I am doing now.

How do you approach providing service?

Always student-oriented with hopes to discover talented students who show a desire for writing, publishing, and scholarship. It's been a joy to help students and colleagues become published and receive grant awards.

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

At home writing, mowing the lawn or driving on a back-road, snapping pictures of whatever piques my curiosity.

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

Time waits for no one. Since we all hold a one-way ticket, each day should be a surprise of a kind. Two more books are forthcoming.



WELCOME ABOARD



Delfonzo Jones
Security Officer
University Police



Calvin Miller
Security Officer
University Police



Rodrigize Shaffer
Security Officer
University Police



Jacqueline Simpson
Security Officer
University Police

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 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
or email news@mvsu.edu

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

Brittany Davis-Green
*Director of Communications
and Marketing*

John McCall
Senior Graphic Designer

Joseph Cotton
Associate Graphic Designer

Donell Maxie
Communications Specialist

Shanae Curry
Project Coordinator

Latrice Carothers
Intern



Dr. Jerryl Briggs
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.