



# COMMUNIQUE

A Publication of Mississippi Valley State University for Faculty, Staff, Alumni and Friends | November 2018 Vol.15 Edition 11

## MVSU DOMINATES DURING ANNUAL TMCF LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

Mississippi Valley State University swept all three places of the Wal-Mart coding competition hosted during the 18th Annual Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCF) Leadership Institute and Recruitment Fair Oct. 26-30 in Washington, DC.

Junior Mubarak Ibrahim won first-place, senior Kizito Nwaka earned a second-place finish, and senior Emmanuel Idehen came in third. All three students are Computer Science majors at MVSU.

“Coming in first place at the Walmart Coding Competition showcased the knowledge and technical skills I have acquired from the MCIS department at Valley,” said Ibrahim. “It was also an opportunity to showcase the high standards of Mississippi Valley State University.”

The award-winning Leadership Institute is a national program intended to develop students’ leadership skills, create a community of scholars, provide companies’ access to a talented and

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*Pictured, from left, are MVSU junior Computer Science major Mubarak Ibrahim of Nigeria; senior Computer Science major Emmanuel Idehen of Nigeria; Environmental Health graduate student Grace Adegoji of Nigeria; MVSU Director of Career Services Essie Bryant; junior Mass Communication and Business Administration major JaQuana Williams of College Park, Ga.; and senior Kizito Nwaka of Nigeria.*

## MVSU VETERANS HONORED DURING ANNUAL LUNCHEON

Mississippi Valley State University set aside time to honor student, faculty and staff, and alumni veterans who served in the United States Armed Forces during the Fourth Annual Veterans Day Celebration Friday, Nov. 9.

Organized by the Office of Student Records, the annual event is hosted in honor of Veterans Day and designed to highlight and thank veterans affiliated with MVSU for their service.

MVSU alumna Norma Jean Bradford served as the occasion’s keynote speaker. She used the opportunity to share her unique journey through the military as an African-American woman.

Bradford is the daughter of Frank Sr. and Ruthie Bradford of Cascilla, Miss. A recent retiree of the military (U.S. Army -Fort Leavenworth, KS), she served a total of 30 years, ending her service ranked as a colonel.

As a highly successful and decorated army officer, including receiving the Legion of Merit Award, Bradford has inspired many other young women to carry the torch.

However, the 1988 Valley graduate said her own journey began with the MVSU ROTC program.

“I first joined up because of the money, but when they started getting us up at 5 a.m. to work out that really made me rethink it,” she said with a chuckle.

Despite the early mornings, Bradford informed the audience that joining the military was the best decision she made for her career path.

“I was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the United States Army Reserve here at MVSU as part of the ROTC Early Commissioning

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# AFTER THE GAME: WALKER'S NEW BOOK HELPS STUDENT-ATHLETES TRANSITION

From the time she first picked up a basketball to her current position as Mississippi Valley State University's athletic academic counselor, Joi Walker has nurtured a deep connection with athletics. And while Walker loves sports, she has never been 100 percent defined by what occurs between the lines but by what happens outside of them as well.

Walker's desire to help athletes take the lessons they learned from sports and apply them to life inspired her to start "Sets for Life," a life-skills company dedicated to training, equipping and empowering student-athletes for life after sports.

In addition, Walker recently released a book entitled, "The Sweet Spot: Finding Purpose in Life after Sports."

"This book is really about my journey," said Walker. "As athletes, we spend the first 20-plus years of our lives dedicated to our sport. We all know that the ball will stop bouncing at one point, and we are well aware of the fact that less than two-percent of collegiate student-athletes will play professional sports. However, many athletes fail to properly prepare for the day that their playing career will come to an end," she explained.

Walker came to MVSU in 2017 as an assistant women's basketball coach, but the 30-year-old St. Louis native felt led to move into another



area that would allow her to help more athletes. She credits her time at The Valley with helping her to discover her purpose.

"MVSU is an exceptional place, and I truly enjoy working with the student-athletes here. My current position gives me the opportunity to help student-athletes think about their long-term goals outside of sports and put a plan in place to help them achieve those aspirations," she explained.

Walker obtained her bachelor's degree in accounting from South Carolina State

University where she was a member of the women's basketball team. She went on to receive her master's degree in accounting from Clark Atlanta University.

She has had the privilege to play and coach at the Division I level. She worked in corporate America for several years before returning to collegiate athletics.

Upon her return to sports, she was able to see the gaps that existed for student-athletes who

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## MVSU SEMINAR FEATURES UMMC PROFESSOR DR. LORI WARD



Mississippi Valley State University Environmental Health students enjoyed a lecture and words of inspiration from University of Mississippi Medical Center (UMMC) Assistant Professor Dr. Lori M. Ward Thursday, Nov. 15.

Ward, whose research focuses on health outcomes and health disparities, presented on the topic, "From Chemistry to Population Health Science" in the Mary E. Crump Auditorium of MVSU's Science and Technology Building.

At UMMC, Ward serves in the John D. Bower School of Population Health, Department of Population Health Sciences.

She earned a dual-title PhD in Pharmacy Administration (Health Outcomes Research) and Gerontology from Purdue University. She received a Bachelor of Science degree in Chemistry with a Biochemical Concentration from Tennessee State University and a Master of Science degree in Pharmaceutical Sciences with a specialization in Pharmacoeconomics/Health Outcomes Research from Florida A&M University.

Ward is a member of the International Society for Pharmacoeconomics and Outcomes Research. In her research, there is an emphasis on access to care, healthcare resource utilization, and medication adherence among underserved populations.

# MVSU STUDENT AMBASSADORS JUDGE LOCAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL READING FAIR



Mississippi Valley State University's motto is "Live for Service", and the university's student ambassadors recently had the chance to put those words into motion at a local elementary school.

For the second consecutive year, the group of MVSU student leaders journeyed to Davis Elementary School in Greenwood to serve as guest judges for the school's Annual Reading Fair Competition.

The purpose of the competition is to provide students the opportunity to share their favorite fictional book through a storyboard display.

The ambassadors were assigned a division ranging from kindergarten through sixth grade and judged each reading fair board using a rubric.

Principal Yolanda Greer said that students and school officials were excited to have the MVSU Ambassadors back to judge the competition.

"What a great delight it was to have these young and innovative students in our school displaying greatness in their mannerism and dedication to completing the long but rewarding task of scoring over 100 boards," said Greer.

Not only did the MVSU students judge the competition, but some also used the opportunity to ask questions while sharing their desire to pursue a future career in education.

"Many of the ambassadors stressed an interest in seeking future employment in the educational field. Dressed in their dark green blazers, they impressed both the students and faculty. The Ambassadors were invited back to assist with other school events, including reading to students, tutoring students, and judging other events," Greer shared.

JaQuana Williams, junior Mass Communication and Business Administration major expressed how attending the event is something she enjoys and looks forward to.

"This was a great event, and the students' projects were good. This is my second year participating as a judge, and I hope to continue. Coming from the Georgia school system, we never participated in this type of event, so observing the student's creativeness was most interesting," said Williams.

Chelsea Washington, a sophomore Government/Politics, and Speech Communications major, said that the experience was rewarding.

"This is my first year as a University Ambassador and being given the opportunity to help at a local elementary school was an awesome start," she said. "The experience was fun and brought back my memories of working on reading fair boards. The children and their parents worked very hard to produce great work. I hope to participate again next year."



## MVSU TARGETS CALI STUDENTS

MVSU Office of Admissions and Recruitment's Minority Admissions Counselor and Recruiter Joanne Taiheng recently participated in the Annual Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Caravan, as well as the Umoja Conference which took place in Riverside, California Nov. 9.

Umoja is a Kiswahili word which means "unity". The Umoja Community in California is an organization in which community and critical resources are dedicated to enhancing the cultural and educational experiences of African American and other students. MVSU Office of Admissions also participated in the Annual Umoja Conference Transfer Fair of 2018.

From Oct. 31 through Nov. 9, MVSU Office of Admissions represented and participated

as a vendor for community college students in California who are interested in transferring to continue their education at a four-year university.

This event was based around the California Community Colleges Transfer Guarantee Program, designed to help facilitate a smooth transition for students from all of the California Community Colleges to partnered HBCUs, including MVSU.

Within those two weeks, MVSU had the opportunity to recruit at a total of 10 schools and events. This is the second year the University has participated in the initiative.

# MVSU HOSTS COTTON SYMPOSIUM & EXHIBIT NOV. 1-2

Mississippi Valley State University, the Mississippi Humanities Council, Planters Bank and Khafre, Inc. partnered once again to host the Seventh Annual Sweat Equity Investment in the Cotton Kingdom Symposium Nov. 1-2.

Since its inception, the symposium has served as America's premier interdisciplinary conference on the Cotton Kingdom, exploring sharecropping, tenant farming and the significance of cotton to the successes of both American and European economies.

This year's event had a record-breaking audience of over 650 people—bringing together six institutions of higher learning; six school districts, four Delta municipalities, an undeterminable amount of local churches, and individuals from numerous cities throughout the country.

The annual symposium continued its expanded programs with two days of events that included a Brown Bag Lecture/Performance, the Inaugural Cotton-Pickin' Film Festival, and the opening reception of the Cotton in My Hands Exhibit.

Thursday's kick-off included a Brownbag "Art-Talk" featuring students from MVSU's Department of Mass Communications Theater Program, under the direction of Barbara Baymon. Their performance "Oh Freedom," was an original script written and directed by Latunya Evans.

The lunch lecture was presented by Dr. Delridge Hunter, professor of integrative studies in the Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences at Medgar Evers College in New York.

Hunter's lecture centered on his scholarly research on the paradigm Law of Position, a Position Theory, and The Ella Baker Story.

The day concluded with the opening reception of "Cotton in My Hands", a highly-praised art exhibit, curated by Drs. Leo and Gloria McGee, that offers an intimately authentic view of the heritage of cotton-picking and the legacy of Cotton Pickers known throughout the American South. The exhibit will remain on display at the library through April 30, 2019.

"The collection is mainly images of African Americans working in the cotton industry, since the days of slavery," said Dr. Sade' Turnipseed, organizer of the annual symposium and exhibit. "The images can help all of us celebrate rather than ignore a vital segment of African Americans' rich heritage."

The second day launched with a soul-stirring rendition of the African American National Anthem by Pastor Otha Campbell and continued with several special presentations and lectures.



Dr. Cynthia Honore Collins, associate professor & Master of Social Work program director, and Helen Sims, executive director of the Rev. George Lee Museum, served as the hosts.

During his keynote address, Hunter, along with his wife and partner Greer Smith of Transart, Inc., demonstrated their collective scholarship of American history by presenting their findings of African American images on US currency, documenting the historical truths of the sweat equity investment of cotton pickers.

This year's symposium also featured MVSU American and World History classes, who demonstrated their understanding of

"grandmama'nem's" contributions.

The event culminated with the Annual Cotton-Pickers Ball: An Ancestral Celebration at the Da House of Khafre in Indianola.

The 2019 symposium is set for Nov. 6-7, 2019, and will be themed "Gullah Geechee's: 400 Years of Making a Way Out of No Way."

For more information, visit [www.cottonpickers.us/symposium](http://www.cottonpickers.us/symposium).

For questions, call (662) 347-8198 or e-mail [info@khafreinc.org](mailto:info@khafreinc.org).

*See more pictures from this event on page 6.*

## Veterans *continued from cover*

Program in 1987, and my first major position was as a Second Lieutenant as the platoon leader, 173rd Quartermaster Company in Greenwood,” she shared.

Bradford also shared her most decorated accomplishment is rising to the rank of full bird colonel, which she explained was a feat that not many women obtain during their military career.

“I experienced another female soldier who saw me and asked if she could just touch me because she had never seen a female colonel before,” Bradford shared with the audience.

Bradford recently founded her own company, Been There-Done That (BtDt) Consulting Services, LLC (website: <https://btdtconsultingservices.org> ). She wants to continue to serve by assisting with grooming women and girls for leadership as they aspire to reach their fullest potential in the career field of their choice.

Following the full-coursed lunch, organizers Jeffery Loggins and Leticia Clay of MVSU’s Office of Student Records presented Valley’s veterans with awards in recognition of their service to the country.

“This is our small way to show each of you how thankful we are for your service,” Loggins said.





# MVSU FILM SCREENING HIGHLIGHTS HAMER, IMPORTANCE OF VOTING

Mississippi Valley State University students received a reminder of the sacrifices that were made to ensure everyone had the right to vote with a viewing of the documentary “Fannie Lou Hamer: Stand Up.”

Hosted Nov. 5 in the Cliff E. Williams Auditorium of the Business Education Building, the event included a free screening, followed by a discussion moderated by MVSU History Professor Dr. Sade Turnipseed.

The MPB original production chronicled the story of Fannie Lou Hamer, one of Mississippi’s most iconic civil rights leaders. Hamer would have turned 100 years old this year on Oct. 6.

To commemorate her legacy and the centennial celebration of her life, MPB produced the 30-minute documentary to highlight when Hamer attempted to register to vote in Indianola in 1962 while working as a sharecropper in Ruleville.

The plantation owner forced her to leave his property for trying to register. Then, her life propelled into civil rights activism to help African Americans register to vote. She worked with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and was a co-founder of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party in 1964.

Civil rights activists interviewed for the film included Charles McLaurin, Flonzie Brown Wright, Charles Cobb, the Rev. Edwin King and Leslie McLemore, founding director of The Fannie Lou Hamer Institute at Jackson State University.



Belinda Lane, educational outreach specialist with MPB, said, “We planned to share this documentary with college campuses because voting is important, and we wanted students to know how important it is that they go out and vote and give their voice to what is going to be occurring in our nation.”

“We hope after seeing the documentary that students will encourage their family and friends to exercise their right to vote. If the students

themselves are on the fence on whether or not they are going to vote, we want them to be encouraged to go out and vote as well,” she added.

The film recreates poignant moments of Hamer’s life including the time she was arrested and beaten in a Winona jail in 1963. The film also recounts the impact her testimony had on

See “Screening” next page



## MVSU CHRISTMAS TREE ON DISPLAY AT MUSEUM

Be sure to check out the Mississippi Valley State University Christmas Tree on display now at the Museum of the Mississippi Delta in Greenwood as part of the Annual Festival of 25 Trees. Now in its 9th year, the tree exhibit offers 25 different trees decorated by community organizations and businesses. Valley’s Christmas tree features MVSU-themed ornaments that were hand-made by MVSU’s University Development Coordinator Juanita Sims with assistance from Advancement staff members and was sponsored by MVSU’s Epsilon Pi Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.

The Museum is offering this exhibit free of charge but welcomes donations of any amount. The exhibit runs through the end of the year.

# MVSU'S TANNER TAKES HELM AS MADE PRESIDENT



A Mississippi Valley State University faculty member is now leading a state organization for developmental educators.

MVSU Director of Academic Success and Student Development Heather Tanner was recently sworn in as president of the Mississippi Association for Development Education (MADE) Nov. 9 in Jackson.

As president, Tanner will have the opportunity to influence MADE's mission to improve the theory and practice of Developmental Education.

Because of her position, MVSU will also serve as the site for the association's upcoming annual

conference, slated for Nov. 7-8, 2019.

"I am so excited to share all that the Mississippi Delta has to offer to every member of MADE," said Tanner.

MVSU Assistant Vice President Dr. Johnny Jones said he is ecstatic to have an MVSU staff member take on such an important role.

"Educational developers possess the leadership skills necessary to bring people together to engage in authentic conversations about enhancing student learning. As Mrs. Tanner takes the helm as president for the Mississippi Associate for Development Education, I know she will galvanize the higher education

stakeholders in the State to ensure each student has the academic support they need to be successful," he said.

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, Tanner 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.

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, ensuring 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](http://www.mymade.org)

## Book *continued from page 2*

are incredibly gifted but often lack the resources that would allow them to see themselves as more than just athletes and successfully transition out of collegiate athletics into the workforce.

"I struggled to figure out what I would do once I was no longer a basketball player. Once I got into coaching, I saw that I was not alone and that the cycle repeats itself. I saw that my players would need help as they transitioned from student-athletes to young professionals. I wrote this book because I believe it is the missing manual for all student-athletes," Walker said.

Ultimately, Walker hopes her book and what she strives to teach every day encourages student-athletes to see themselves as more



than just an individual who runs, jumps, tackles, hurdles or catches a ball.

"I want athletes to understand that they have more than just one gift," said Walker. "I want them to understand that all of the lessons they learned through basketball, football, volleyball, etc. will serve them well as they navigate life after sports. "I want athletes to understand what it takes to redefine them considering that for years they have only been viewed as athletes."

"My ultimate goal is to provide athletes with hope during what is often a challenging transition."

## Screening *continued from page 7*



HAMER

the nation as a Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party delegate to the Democratic Party National Convention in 1964. During her testimony, she gave intimate details of being beaten in jail.

Following the screening, Turnipseed posed questions to the audience regarding the documentary.

"We hope through this that the light is shined on the students to help them walk back into their community with purpose and a passion for justice," Turnipseed said.

The event was organized by MVSU's Office of Student Leadership and Engagement in partnership with MPB.

## Institute *continued from cover*

diverse student population, and help students make connections that lead to careers.

The power-packed four-day conference prepared carefully selected students from the 47 publicly-supported Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) to compete in today's very competitive global workforce.

MVSU's Grace Adegoy, a second-year Environmental Health graduate student, and JaQuana Williams, a junior Mass Communication and Business Administration major, also attended the event and were selected by the U.S. Navy to participate in a Lean Six Sigma White Belt certification during the leadership institute.

At the completion of the workshop, they both received certification as a Six Sigma Lean White Belt—an accomplishment that can be noted on their resume and marketed to potential employers.

All five MVSU students also had the honor of attending the 31st Anniversary Awards Gala. The TMCF announced that more than \$5.6 million was raised at the Gala. The audience consisted of over 400 students that participated in TMCF's Leadership Institute and over 1,000 civic, corporate, government and education leaders from around the country at the Washington Marriott Wardman Park Hotel.

The conference culminated with a recruitment fair that featured Fortune 500 companies, government agencies, and graduate program representatives offering jobs, internships, and continuing education opportunities.

"The TMCF conference was an amazing experience that granted me the opportunity to meet and network with my peers from other great HBCUs," said Ibrahim. "I was exposed to workshops that further enhanced my knowledge of financial literacy, building a personal brand and utilizing my strengths for greater achievements."

To learn more about TMCF, visit [www.tmc.org](http://www.tmc.org).



*MVSU's Department of Social Work wrapped up its MSW Student Organization's Annual Canned Food Drive today. The donations were presented to the Community Food Pantry in Greenwood on Tuesday, Nov. 20—just in time for Thanksgiving! Pictured, from left, are Dr. Lucille Durham-Lacy, Ms. Kathleen Greer, Ms. Diane Boston, Dr. Catherine Singleton-Walker (Social Work Department Chair), MSW student Tomeka James, Dr. Candace Carter, Mrs. Sowitza Johnson and Dr. Cynthia Honore'-Collins (MSW Program Director).*

# WELCOME ABOARD



**Gloria Conley**  
*Secretary*  
Warehouse



**Wesley French, Ph.D.**  
*University Archivist*  
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**Chaya Jones**  
*Fitness Specialist*  
Fitness Center



**Jessie McNabb**  
*Hall Monitor*  
Residential Life

Two  
Minutes  
with...

## Shakeila Robinson

*Administrative Assistant, Mass Communication*

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

I attended Mississippi Valley State University—obtaining a Bachelor of Science degree in Early Childhood Education and graduating cum laude. I am currently employed in the Department of Mass Communication, where I have been a dedicated employee for four years. I am from a small plantation called Bell-Chase (Minter City). I have two children, a daughter, Jocelyn Robinson, and a son, Quincy Robinson. Jocelyn also attended Mississippi Valley State University and obtained her Bachelor of Science degree in Early Childhood Education. She also graduated cum laude and is also a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. She is currently an active member in the graduate chapter, Kappa Alpha Omega. Quincy is a senior at North New Summit in Greenwood, and he plans to attend Mississippi Valley State University after he graduates.

*How do you approach providing service?*

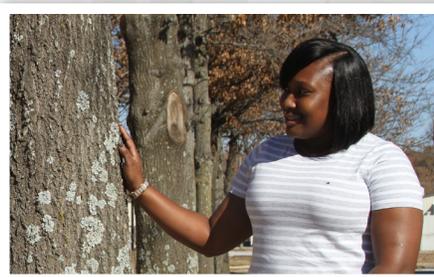
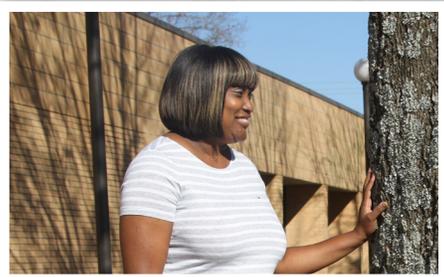
I provide service by helping students with applying for scholarships and internships, or even walking them to class if they need direction. I believe in doing whatever I can to help the Mass Communication department, as well as the students here at MVSU, be successful.

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

When I am not at work, I am most likely in the comfort of my home with family and friends, or at church.

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

My daughter and I obtained a Master of Science degree in Early Childhood Education from Jackson State University together. It wasn't easy, but with God on our side "We Mastered It!"



# COMMUNIQUE

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**New Hashtag: #GOMVSU**

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