



# COMMUNIQUÉ

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## DR. JERRYL BRIGGS NAMED VALLEY'S EIGHTH PRESIDENT

**ITTA BENA**— An impromptu meeting by the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning on the campus of Mississippi Valley State University ended in a standing ovation Oct. 19 as the crowd celebrated the naming of Dr. Jerryl Briggs as MVSU's eighth president.

Members of the IHL Board met earlier that morning, unanimously selecting Briggs as the man for the job before heading to Itta Bena to formally announce the news—just in time for the Homecoming 2017 weekend.

Briggs had served as Acting President of the University since June 15. He previously served as the Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer.

"It is indeed an honor and blessing to be named the eighth President of Mississippi Valley State University," Briggs said during his remarks. "I would like to thank search committee chair, Trustee Shane Hooper and the entire IHL Board for having the confidence in me to lead Valley. I would also like to thank our Valley family for their support and encouragement, and we will surely continue to keep 'Valley in Motion.'"

After listening to the concerns of MVSU students, employees, alumni and stakeholders during a half-day of listening session the week prior, Trustee Shane Hooper, chair of the Mississippi Valley State University Board Search Committee, said it was clear that Briggs was a good fit.

"Throughout the listening sessions held last week, we heard the Valley community say that the university's next president should be someone with vision who will bring stability to the office and build on the current success," said Hooper. "Dr. Briggs clearly has a commitment to the history, legacy, culture and mission of the university, as well as a vision for the future."

Hooper pointed out that the campus is on a good trajectory with solid enrollment and in



good financial shape.

From fall 2013 to fall 2016, the university has seen an increase in enrollment each year for a total change of 11.4 percent.

In the past four years, the university's cash position has improved by 47 percent. The days of cash on-hand have improved by 65 percent, from 63 days of cash on hand to 105 days.

"Mississippi Valley State University is on an upward trajectory," Hooper said. "Dr. Briggs has played an integral role in creating this momentum on campus, and we have full confidence that, under his leadership, this will continue."

As Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Dr. Briggs served as the ranking vice president with direct oversight

for the operational well-being of the university, assessing the university needs through formal structures and constant contact and involvement with all constituents of the university.

While at Mississippi Valley, Dr. Briggs has helped to reestablish the University College model which led to successfully improving the University's retention rate by 10 percent for fall 2014 and 12 percent for fall 2015. He worked collectively with MVSU staff to increase overall university enrollment, resulting in more than a 200 percent increase in dual enrollment students for fall 2016 and an overall 11.4% within the last three years. He also managed a \$17 million capital improvement project for the university's athletic complex, with additional planning underway for renovations to residence

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# DAVIS-GREEN TAPPED AS MVSU'S NEW COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

ITTA BENA— Mississippi Valley State University recently named Brittany Davis-Green as its new director of Communication and Marketing.

An experienced journalist turned public relations professional, Green began in her new role at MVSU Oct. 2.

A native of Indianola, Miss., she previously served as the Chief Communications Officer and Branding Identity for Coahoma Community College in Clarksdale, Miss., where she played an integral role in growing the institution's social media following and enhancing its media exposure.

Prior to that, she was an award-winning journalist with the Mississippi Press Association for The Enterprise-Tocsin newspaper.

At MVSU, Green serves as the University's official spokesperson and leads the Office of Communications and Marketing in its efforts to develop integrated marketing strategies and to promote a positive image of the University.

"Receiving the opportunity to work for a university that plays such a pivotal role in the livelihood of my home, the Mississippi Delta, is indeed an honor," said Green. I'm excited about the opportunity to accentuate the myriad of positive things happening here at MVSU and to highlight the impact Valley is making in this



region and across the world."

Interim Vice President of University Advancement Dameon Shaw is excited to welcome Green aboard.

"We have a talented Communications and Marketing team here at MVSU, and Brittany's

first-hand knowledge of the assets and unique challenges we have facing the Mississippi Delta, as well as her diverse skill set and experience in the communications and marketing sphere, makes her the ideal fit," Shaw said. We are expecting great things from Brittany as we continue to expand MVSU's prominence in the world of higher education."

Green said she is looking forward to collaborating with members of MVSU community in her new role.

"Valley is a special place that offers unique opportunities for individuals to develop educationally as well as personally. I look forward to working with the leadership team and the entire MVSU community as we push forward in solidarity to continue living up to our slogan, 'One Team. One Goal. One Valley. ...In Motion.'"

Green obtained a bachelor's degree in Journalism and a master's degree in Liberal Studies from Delta State University.

She is a member of the College Public Relations Association of Mississippi and the Kappa Alpha Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated.

Green currently resides in Cleveland, Miss. with her husband, LeMarrick, and their two children—LeMarrick Jr. and Bailei.

## MVSU MALE ATHLETES AWARDED FOR HIGHEST GRADUATION RATE IN STATE



STARKVILLE—Mississippi Valley State University (MVSU) male athletes have been making big wins inside of the classroom, and they have the trophy to prove it.

MVSU was the recipient of the "David Halbrook Award for Academic Achievement Among Athletes" in the Men's Public University Division Oct. 3 during the 84th annual Halbrook Awards Luncheon.

Hosted at Mississippi State University as part of the Mississippi Association of Colleges and Universities Annual Conference, the annual event is organized to recognize colleges and universities that achieve and maintain high academic

standard for student athletes, which in turn encourages high graduation rates.

MVSU Acting President Jerryl Briggs said that earning the coveted award is indicative of the institution's theme—"One Team. One Goal. One Valley. ...In Motion."

"We're really doing some great, positive things at MVSU and receiving this award shows that our male athletes are not only performing in the classroom, but that they are also graduating and that's really what we are all about as a university," Briggs said.

Briggs said outperforming the other seven public Mississippi universities is not only a testament to the hard work and dedication of the students, but to the faculty and staff as well.

"Being recognized as the highest achiever amongst the (Mississippi Institute of Higher

See "Atheletes" page 7

# WEISS NAMED MVSU 2017 HUMANITIES TEACHER OF THE YEAR

ITTA BENA– Associate Professor Dr. John Weiss has been selected by the Mississippi Valley State University Office of Academic Affairs as the Humanities Teacher of the Year.

Each year the Mississippi Humanities Council recognizes October's designation as Arts and Humanities Month by bestowing Humanities Teacher Awards to outstanding faculty in traditional humanities fields at colleges and universities across the state.

Weiss is the associate professor of music and choir director at MVSU, where he conducts the University Choir and Valley Singers. He also teaches Applied Voice, Choral Conducting, and Secondary Choral Methods and Materials.

"I am pleased, honored and humbled to accept the Humanities Teacher of the Year Award and to join past recipients whom I admire and respect," Weiss said.

As part of the nomination, Weiss will give a presentation at 11 a.m. Tuesday, Nov. 14, in the Little Theater in the Walter Sillers Fine Arts Building.

The topic of Weiss' presentation will be: "The Gospel of Musical Diversity."

"MVSU is an institution of higher learning and students should experience different ideas, opinions and interpretations. This is as true



in choral music as it is in any other academic discipline," Weiss said.

"Learning and performing only one style of music because it is what students already know and, therefore, already like is not educational," Weiss explained. However,

studying and presenting a wide variety of choral music creates a broader perspective that can lead to more informed decision-making about what is good, what is not and why. Also, students can learn that there may be more than one way to express the same thought or emotion."

Weiss feels the presentation will showcase why learning different types of music is an essential component in growing a university community.

"This presentation will briefly consider some of the reasons why learning and performing diverse choral repertoire are important objectives in a university choral program. In addition, MVSU's Valley Singers will perform musical excerpts demonstrating a variety of choral techniques and choral styles," he added.

Dr. Weiss holds a Bachelor of Music degree in Music Education from Boston University's School for the Arts, a Master of Fine Arts degree in Choral Conducting from the University of California at Irvine and a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Choral Conducting from the University of Arizona.

He has presented interest sessions at the Northwest Division Conference of the American Choral Directors Association, the Washington Music Educators Association State Conference, the Oregon Music Educators Association, All-State Conference and adjudicated prestigious voice competitions such as the Singer of the Year contest in Los Angeles and the National Association of Teachers of Singing Artist Award Regional Competition in Seattle.

As a bass, Dr. Weiss was a Metropolitan Opera Regional Finalist and won first prize in the Associazione Lirica Italo-Americana Mario Del Monaco Voice Competition. He has performed leading and supporting roles with Boston Lyric Opera, Indianapolis Opera, Ash Lawn-Highland Summer Festival (VA) and other regional companies.

For more information about MVSU's Humanities Teacher of the Year Award, contact the Office of Academic Affairs at 662-254-3875.

## STUDENTS ENGAGE WITH EMPLOYERS DURING ANNUAL CAREER FAIR



Nearly thirty companies shared information with students about their organization, job/internship opportunities and benefits.

Alexis Stewart, a graduating health, physical and recreation major from Brooksville, Miss., said the career fair hosted fields that can catch your attention.

"There were representatives from a lot of different fields here today," said Stewart. The fair gave me the opportunity to meet with several companies and get information that will help me after I graduate."

Sophomore Tavion Bowman was impressed with the knowledge he gained from the career fair.

"I came here today expecting to learn a lot and get information on career paths that I could enter into," said Bowman.

ITTA BENA– The Department of Career Services held their annual career fair Tuesday, Oct. 10, on the campus of Mississippi Valley State University.

Hundreds of students filed into the R.W.Harrison Complex to obtain information about possible job opportunities.

See "Career Fair" page 8

# MVSU CONTINUES SUPPORT OF UNITED WAY DURING KICK-OFF EVENT

ITTA BENA– Mississippi Valley State University pledged to continue its support of a local non-profit Oct. 10 during the “United Way Kick-Off” event.

Hosted at 11 a.m. in the Sutton Administration Building, the annual event was a chance for campus members to receive information as well as begin or renew their commitment to the United Way of Leflore County (UWLC), which supports 11 local charities.

“When we say your money stays here, it really does,” said to UWLC Executive Director Courtney Kimmel during the event. “Each and every one of the agencies we support are great. They are really making a huge impact in this community.”

According to MVSU United Way Chairperson Margaret Clark, the university is well on its way, already receiving 65 percent of its \$5,000 goal prior to the kick-off event.

“We really appreciate the support of our MVSU family,” said Clark. “This is definitely a worthy event that we’ve been participating in the past few years, and we’ve been able to consistently exceed our \$5,000 benchmark.”

MVSU Acting President Jerryl Briggs said the university is committed to supporting the local community through agencies like the United Way.



“We are a part of this broader community, so we want to do all that we can to support their efforts,” said Briggs. “We’re going to make sure that we continue to meet our goal–We won’t let them down this year.”

The Leflore County United Way is designed to identify the needs of the community and bring together the resources necessary to have a positive impact on the people of Leflore County.

Agencies currently supported by the organization include: Beacon Harbor; Boy

Scouts of America; Boys & Girls Club; Community Food Pantry; Delta Grace; Fuller Center for Housing; Gim Community Kitchen; Girls Scouts Heart of the South; Leflore County 4H Clubs; Leflore County Human Society; and the Salvation Army.

To learn more about the Leflore County United Way, visit [www.uwoflc.org](http://www.uwoflc.org)

For more information about MVSU’s partnership with United Way, contact Clark at (662) 254 3618.

## VALLEY OPENS THE DOOR TO THE “FACES OF AFRICA” ART EXHIBIT



ITTA BENA– The Mississippi Valley State University community received a glimpse of Africa during the opening reception of the “Faces of Africa” art exhibit at the James H. White Library.

Nearly 50 people showed up for the opening reception. The celebration kicked off with the MVSU Choir, under the direction of Dr. John Weiss, rendering a musical selection with solist Morgan Johnson.

Co-curator and MVSU Assistant Professor of History Dr. C. Sade Turnipseed expressed how thrilled she was to have an exhibit of this magnitude on Valley’s campus.

“We are so honored to have this exhibit here for the Mississippi Valley State campus,” said Turnipseed in her comments during the reception. I am so thankful to all the departments

who had a hand in making this happen,” she added.

The phenomenal six-month presentation of traditional African images gives students, faculty and the community an opportunity to learn more about Africa’s 54 sovereign countries, nine territories and two de facto independent states.

Dr. Jerryl Briggs, president of MVSU, welcomed the audience to the exhibit and shared why housing such an important feature was beneficial to the Valley family.

“We are moving in the right direction and with this art exhibit, which shows the rich history and culture of Africa we are definitely ‘in motion,’” Briggs said.

See “Exhibit” page 8

# MVSU'S IT DEPT. OBSERVES CYBER AWARENESS MONTH

ITTA BENA— As Halloween approaches, many individuals are preparing to be spooked by friends and neighbors with frighteningly realistic haunted houses and other ghostly tricks, but nothing can be scarier than having your personal data compromised in real life.

In honor of October's designation as Cyber Security Awareness Month, Mississippi Valley State University (MVSU) Director of Information Technology Torrey Moore schooled members of the University's Extended Cabinet on the dangers of phishing and email/network security during their Oct. 10 meeting.

Phishing is the attempt to obtain sensitive information, such as usernames, passwords and credit card details, often for malicious reason, by sending an e-mail that appears to be from a trustworthy individual or entity.

According to Moore, there are several steps individuals can take to check the validity of an e-mail and to prevent them from becoming a victim of phishing.



Moore told cabinet members to be suspicious of e-mails with an urgent request for personal details.

He also warned them to be leery of clicking on random URLs and taught them the "mouse over technique" to check the legitimacy of a link before visiting the website.

If you still find yourself a victim of phishing, Moore said have your computer tested to ensure that it isn't comprised, reset your password and

check to ensure that your e-mail isn't forwarding.

"There is no foolproof system that can protect us from everything," said Moore. "However, the No. 1 way to prevent these incidents is through education, and that's what we aim to do."

Moore said his office has plans to share the presentation with other areas of the university as well as provide additional educational material in the near future.

# VALLEY AMBASSADORS VISIT DAVIS ELEMENTARY



*Davis Elementary School students, seated, were excited to have MVSU student leaders on campus. They are pictured along with University Ambassadors and Student Union Board members (back row, from left) Deveon Treadway; Terrell Stanley; Carenda Dukes; Mardarius Mann; Angel Lett; LaTunya Evans; Lyric Nolden; Angel Jackson; Lania Cooper; Maya Murry; Pamela Hilton, director of MVSU's Office of Student Leadership and Engagement; and Gladys Flaggs, coordinator of Community Service Learning.*

Members of Mississippi Valley State University's Student Ambassadors and Student Union Board traveled to Davis Elementary School in Greenwood, Miss. Friday, Oct. 20, to serve as judges for the school's Reading Fair Competition. The trip was organized by Office of Student Leadership and Engagement.

# DEVILETTES CROSS-COUNTRY RACES INTO HISTORY



The Mississippi Valley State University Women's Cross Country team made history recently when they won the school's first ever Southwestern Athletic Conference Championship.

Valley posted 58 points en route to the victory over six-time defending champion Alabama State who finished in second place with 64 points. Grambling State finished third with 69 points.

"It's a great feeling," said MVSU Cross Country/Track and Field Coach Fermon Tate.

The team did an outstanding job. It took a lot of sacrifice, but the commitment that they've shown over the past two years is really paying off."

In addition, Valley also earned the awards for runner and coach of the year. Scholasticah Kemei was named the 2017 SWAC Women's Runner of the Year while Tate won the 2017 SWAC Coach of the Year.

"It definitely wasn't expected, but it is a great honor—especially with the accomplishments of the team," said Tate. The ladies have worked



**TATE**

so hard, and I'm very proud of them."

Kemei won the women's individual title with a time of 18:30.83 and was named First Team All-Conference. Joining Kemei on the first team was

Alice Kimutai. The Devilettes who cracked the second team all-conference squad included Derica Pitters and Autezia Sellers.

## MCIS MAJOR REPRESENTS VALLEY IN SUMMIT

Senior Mathematics and Computer Science major Victor Oporum represented MVSU during the United Negro College Fund's (UNCF's) 5th annual HBCU Innovation Summit. The summit was held Oct. 24-28 in Silicon Valley. Founded by UNCF in 2014, HBCU Innovation is fueled by the fundamental belief that any young person empowered with resources and access is capable of achieving amazing things in changing landscapes.





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**HOMECOMING**  
*It's a Family Affair*  
HIGHLIGHTS





## From the Director's Desk

# THE PATH THAT LED ME HERE

By: Brittany Davis-Green

My first job was as a reporter for a small, weekly Mississippi newspaper. I remember reassuring myself on my first day that I would work diligently for a few months before relocating for a more attractive opportunity. Instead, I found myself intrigued by the culture and legacy of what has been hailed "the most southern place on earth."

As a reporter, I interviewed everyone—from congressmen and mayors to cancer patients and drug addicts. I watched a convict in the notorious Parchman Penitentiary take his last breath during an execution. I toured the grounds where pivotal Civil Rights leaders had stood decades earlier. I even interviewed B.B., "King of the Blues."

Yet, the most poignant experience of that time occurred as I reclined on a threadbare sofa in a faded delta living room. I'd written a feature story about an elderly African American man, and he'd asked me to bring a copy of the newspaper to his home. When I arrived, he stared at his photo in awe, then he placed it aside. My journalistic instincts were aroused. After careful prying, I discovered that he had forgone a formal education in his youth. Instead, he and his siblings had



chopped cotton. I began to read aloud, transforming the foreign words on the page into his life's experiences. His eyes shone with pride. In his gaze I found my purpose.

As a newly minted advocate for education, a subsequent opportunity to serve as the Assistant Communications Officer, and later as the Chief Communication Officer for Coahoma Community College was ideal. I adapted my communications and media skills to promote what Nelson Mandela has so eloquently referred to as "the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world"—education.

I am excited about the opportunity to continue walking in my purpose at Mississippi Valley State University, and I plan to use my skills to highlight the enormous impact the University has made by providing its students a quality education that is affordable and accessible.

I believe that growing enrollment as well as community and alumni engagement requires consistent interaction, targeted marketing, and attention to the human story that weaves throughout all of our endeavors. I look forward to collaborating with my new MVSU family as we forge ahead to increase the visibility of MVSU across local, national, and international markets.

## Atheletes

*continued from page 2*

Learning) schools was tremendous, and I give all the thanks to the Athletic Department for really making sure that our students are in the classroom."

MVSU Director of Athletics Dianthia Ford-Kee attributes the achievement to the academic enhancements that have occurred over the past three years through a NCAA AASP Grant which has been instrumental in creating MVSU's Student-Athlete Academic Success Center.



**FORD-KEE**

"This award represents the commitment of our student-athletes to buy into the academic goals of the Department," said Ford-Kee. "Kudos to my staff for their commitment to the academic success of our student-athletes."

While serving in the Mississippi Legislature, Representative David M. Halbrook Sr., along with his brothers John, James and J.A. Halbrook, endowed the Halbrook Awards.

Today, the awards are administered cooperatively by the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning, the Mississippi Community College Board and the Mississippi Association of Independent Colleges and Universities.

MVSU last received the award during the 1997 and 1998 school term in the Men's Division and in 2001 for the Women's Division.

# AME CHURCH RENAMED IN HONOR OF VALLEY ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

On Sept. 22, 2017, the 143rd Session of the North Mississippi Annual Conference voted to rename Kosciusko AME Church to Baldwin Chapel AME Church, after Dr. Jo Baldwin, an associate professor of English at Mississippi Valley State University.

Baldwin is an ordained Itinerant Elder in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. The newly named Baldwin Chapel AME Church is the oldest standing church building in Kosciusko and Attala Counties.

The church, located at 312 Tipton Street in Kosciusko, was originally a Presbyterian Church for African Americans because of segregated worship. Baldwin's mother, the late Mrs. Katharine Carr Esters, was a Ruling Elder at the church for over 30 years. When she became ill she asked Baldwin, as an AME, to keep the church doors open every Sunday with Church School and Worship Service.

Keeping her promise to her mother, Baldwin and the congregation bought the building from

the Presbytery of Mississippi, to be held in trust for the AME Church, in May 2017.

Kosciusko artist Mrs. Jewette Battle, who was her mother's dear friend, painted three scenes of the church representing spring, summer and winter.

The Right Reverend Julius H. McAllister, Sr. of the Eighth Episcopal District serves as the Bishop.

"I love that sweet little church just like my mother did," Baldwin said.

# STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN MISSION MISSISSIPPI CONFERENCE



*MVSU participants in the 2017 Mission Mississippi Race Reconciliation Conference were (pictured, from left) Marderius Mann; Larry Shaw; Maya Murry; Pamela Hinton, director of Student Leadership/Engagement; Laderka Coats, Miss MVSU 2017-2018; Netanyah Kegler; Raven Lomax; Lyric Nolden; Cornelius Washington; Trenlon Harris; and Jerome Petty, professional tutorial coach/academic advisor.*

The Mississippi Valley State University's Office of Student Leadership and Engagement recently traveled to Jackson, Miss. with nine students and two staff members to participate in the 2017 Mission Mississippi Race Reconciliation Conference.

Mission Mississippi has been promoting racial reconciliation throughout the state over the past 23 years by bringing people together to build diverse relationships so they can in turn work together to better their communities.

The vision of Mission Mississippi is to engage, equip and empower the next generation to build relationships across racial lines, to work together with better understanding, to build greater respect for one another and to trust each other while making a better Mississippi together.

## Exhibit *continued from page 4*

Mantra Henderson, director of library services, expressed, "This exhibit marks the beginning of the kind of major displays we are very interested in presenting on-going in the James H. White Library."

The highly praised collection reflects 3,500 years of African art and cultural traditions rendered by critically acclaimed artist Richard W. Jones (1934-2008). The collection features: ancient Nok head busts, Yoruba statues, Benin bronzes, as well as the spectacular masks of Dogon dancers and contemporary South African murals. The exhibit also showcases a Diaspora collection that includes Caribbean and African America expressions.

"Faces of Africa" will be on display until March 30, 2018.



For more information and instructions on how to arrange a guided lecture/tour or field trip for your students, please contact Dr. C. Sade Turnipseed at (662) 254-3025; (662) 347-8198 or [cassie.turnipseed@mvsu.edu](mailto:cassie.turnipseed@mvsu.edu).

## Career Fair *continued from page 3*

with me the educational opportunities with teaching. They opened my eyes to the potential of helping people through teaching to set a foundation for myself," Bowman shared.

Engineering major Taurus Jones from Houston, Miss., said he was shocked to see so many booths with engineering related fields.

"I didn't know there were so many jobs here for engineers that I was literally shocked. Everyone I spoke with either had something for me or I was able to get information about possible internships and volunteer work to get community service hours to graduate," said Jones.

"This event is a great one that the Career Services Center holds for the students. I really enjoyed myself today, and I am thankful for the opportunity," Jones added.

# MVSU RECEIVES \$750K GRANT TO PROMOTE STEM DISCIPLINES



*Caption Information* Pictured, from left, are Dr. Candace Carter-Stevens, Dr. Manju Pande, Dr. Latonya Garner (Chair), Dr. Hattie Spencer, Dr. Rachel Beecham and Dr. Earlean Moore-Anderson (MSEIP Project Director).

The Department of Mathematics, Computer and Information Sciences (MCIS) is excited to announce that it is the recipient of a \$750,000 grant from the United States Department of Education.

The grant is titled, “STEM CHANGERS: Customized High-Quality Approaches Necessary to Graduate, Excite, and Retain STEM Students” and will support a Minority Science and Engineering Improvement Program (MSEIP) at Mississippi Valley State University. The overarching goal of the project is to increase the awareness of STEM Education among minorities, especially women while creating pathways for students to earn bachelor’s degrees in a STEM field.

The program will include three initiatives: Faculty and Student Research, Science Academy/Bridge Program and Retention.

The projected grant award is over a three-year grant cycle, which will allow MVSU to fortify its partnership with the Greenwood Public Schools and the Leflore County Public Schools districts to promote STEM disciplines among middle school students targeting females and high school seniors.

This initiative was led by Dr. Earlean M. Anderson, director of academic support for STEM Departments and STEM faculty members; Dr. Candace Carter Stevens, Dr. Rachel Beecham, Dr. Hattie Spencer, Dr. Manju Pande and Dr. Latonya Garner.

“I am absolutely honored and proud of the hard work this team has done and will continue to do to make a difference in our local school districts and in the scientific community,” Garner said.

## President *continued from cover page*

halls and other campus buildings.

“Dr. Briggs has demonstrated exceptional leadership skills as Acting President and Executive Vice President at Mississippi Valley State University,” said Dr. Glenn Boyce, commissioner of higher education. “Having honed these skills over many years in higher education, he has developed a student-centered approach that puts a laser focus on enabling student success. His experience and skill set, coupled with an understanding of the university and the Delta gained since coming to the university, make him ideally suited to lead the university into its next chapter.”

Briggs has more than 25 years of professional experience in higher education administration. Before joining Mississippi Valley State University, he served as vice president for student affairs and enrollment management at Central State University in Ohio. Prior to Central State University, he has held various positions within higher education administration, including serving for ten years at Lincoln University (Penn.) as vice president for student affairs and enrollment management, and dean of students. He has also held positions at Clark Atlanta University, the College of William and Mary, Georgia Institute of Technology, and the University of Illinois-Urbana/Champaign.

“Dr. Briggs has been an important part of the progress made at Mississippi Valley State University in recent years,” said John Johnson, president of the MVSU National Alumni Association. This announcement came at a good time with so many alumni on campus as we celebrated the 35th Annual National Alumni Summit. Dr. Briggs is an exceptional leader who will be able to build on the progress made without missing a beat. He understands the campus, the students and the Delta. I look forward to working with him in this new role.”

Briggs earned his Bachelor of Science degree in chemistry education from Xavier University of Louisiana, his Master of Arts degree in human relations and supervision from Louisiana Tech University, and both an Educational Specialist degree in higher education administration and doctorate in educational policy, planning and leadership from the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Va. He also completed Harvard University’s Institute for Educational Management program.

# MVSU'S NAACP CHAPTER IS BACK



*From Left to Right: Dr. Jones (Advisor), Monifa Amadi (2nd Vice President), Jermarlius Rushing (1st Vice President), Tanessa House (Assistant Treasurer), Bria Daniels (3rd Vice President), Talaria Stiffin (Assistant Secretary), Jordan Anderson (Treasurer), Jaishone Cornelius (President), Lasharda Leasy (Secretary), Ms. Bell (Advisor)*

ITTA BENA— Mississippi Valley State University has reinstituted its National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Youth and College Chapter.

For 10 years, the chapter has been gone from the Valley community, but now it's back with a renewed purpose.

The students will be under the leadership of advisors: Dr. Yolanda Jones, dean of student development and Shakia Bell, office manager, faculty development.

Dr. Jones said helping students understand the importance of working in the community and understanding social issues is what drives her to help with the chapter.

"I believe the importance of civic responsibility is paramount to student success," said Jones. This will help our students become aware of the social issues around them, but more importantly, how to deal with these issues. In order to develop holistic students, it is pivotal to expose them to political, social, and economic issues during these years to help them become productive citizens."

The MVSU chapter hosted its first informational and general body meeting Oct. 11 in the Business Administration Building (Cliff E. Williams Auditorium).

The chapter's president, Jaishone Cornelius, a senior Criminal Justice and Pre-Law/Legal Studies major expressed why it was important

to revive the NAACP on campus.

"It was of utmost importance for us to reinstate the NAACP Youth & College Division here at Mississippi Valley State University; considering, we were the only HBCU in the state of Mississippi that did not have an active chapter," said Cornelius.



**JACKSON**

"My goal as president of MVSU's NAACP Chapter is to carry the torch and keep the flames ignited in our combat to invoke change for the voiceless; whether that is educationally, economically or socially," Cornelius

added.

The NAACP Youth & College chapter is a division of the association devoted specifically to youth and their activities. The division was established in March 1936 under the direction of Juanita Jackson, a youth delegate in the association.

The mission of the NAACP is to ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights for all persons and to eliminate race-based discrimination. The division gives a political voice to the young and creates a platform for youth leaders to be change agents for the voiceless.

Members of the chapter include: Senior Criminal Justice & Pre-Law/Legal Studies

major Jaishone Cornelius, president; senior History major Jermarlius Rushing, 1st vice president; senior Criminal Justice & Biology major Monifa Amadi, 2nd vice president; senior Biology major Bria Daniels, 3rd vice president; junior Speech Communications major Jordan Anderson, treasurer; senior Criminal Justice major Tanessa House, assistant treasurer; senior Government & Politics major LaSharda Leasy, secretary; senior Broadcasting major Talaria Stiffin, assistant secretary; junior Pre-Law/Legal Studies and Government & Politics major Angel Jackson; Criminal Justice graduate student Augustus Johnson; junior Social Work major Shannequia Jones; senior Criminal Justice major Khadijah Kidd; senior Biology & Chemistry major Mardarius Mann; senior Broadcasting major Neena Matthews; junior Pre-Law/Legal Studies & Government and Politics major Kambreca Mitchell; junior Biology and Environmental Health major Maya Murry; senior Social Work major Trainnisha Pates; sophomore Broadcasting and Journalism major Justin Read; HPER graduate student Kateris Scott; senior Criminal Justice major Marissa Ware; and junior HPER major Kierra Waters.

For more information regarding the MVSU NAACP Chapter, please contact [mvsu.naACP@gmail.com](mailto:mvsu.naACP@gmail.com), Dr. Yolanda Jones at (662) 254-3830 or Bell at (662) 254-3081.

# WELCOME ABOARD



**Debra Boyd**  
*Secretary*  
Information Technology



**Patrece Clay**  
*Lab Tech/Inventory Officer*  
NSEH\*



**Brittany Davis-Green**  
*Director*  
Communication & Mktg.



**Rachel Granderson**  
*Administrative Assistant*  
Social Sciences



**Quaneisha Gwin**  
*Program Asst. I*  
Mass Transit



**Jamar Harp**  
*Hall Monitor*  
Residential Life



**Keyundra Haymer**  
*Admissions Counselor*  
Admissions & Recruitment



**Mildred Michael**  
*Office Manager*  
Mass Transit



**Janehsia O'Neal**  
*Clerk-Student Accounts*  
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**Richard Williams**  
*Driver*  
Mass Transit

## Two Minutes with...

# Stella-Marie Akindayomi

*Instructor, Health, Physical Education & Recreation*

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

Greetings! I am Stella-Marie Akindayomi, an instructor in the Health, Physical Education & Recreation (HPER) Department. I also serve as the advisor to the HPER Club. I am a proud "army brat," originally from Grambling, La, where my parents and I are alumni of Grambling State University. My father is from Nigeria, and my mother is from a small town located outside of Port Gibson, Miss. I grew up all over the world, so I love to travel, experience new cultures and meet new people. My most recent trips were to Hawaii and India. I am the proud mother of a very charismatic and funny 10-year-old girl, Amaya. I am pursuing my Ph.D. in Sport Administration from the University of New Mexico, located in Albuquerque, which is where I lived prior to moving to Itta Bena.

*How do you approach providing service?*

I aspire to be a transformative and a compassionate leader. In every position that I hold—whether as a HPER instructor,

HPER Club advisor, P.E.A.R.L.S. mentor, sister, friend, or mother—I want to empower everyone to have an active part in the leadership process. I want my students to leave my classroom and office feeling that I care about them and their success at The Valley and beyond.

*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 running around the ponds on the fitness trail, in the MVSU Fitness & Wellness Center, on the tennis court, participating with P.E.A.R.L.S. Mentoring for Girls, Inc., hanging out with my daughter or driving on U.S. 82 towards Louisiana.

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

I will provide three surprises. I am the oldest child; I have six sisters and one brother. I stopped biting my nails at the age of 25. While I will go zip lining, I refuse to ride on a roller-coaster.

# COMMUNIQUÉ

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