



COMMUNIQUE

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MVSU UNVEILS “KIRKLIN HALL” DURING DEDICATION CEREMONY HONORING ALUM

Mississippi Valley State University has named the hall that houses its Military Science Department “Kirklin Hall” in honor of alumnus and supporter Major General Ronald Kirklin ('87) during a special dedication ceremony Saturday, Sept. 22.

The MVSU community joined close friends and family of Kirklin for the event, which was highlighted by the unveiling of the hall's exterior signage and a mockup of the plaque that features a photo of Kirklin and his biography.

Located in MVSU's O.P. Lowe Teacher Education Building, Kirklin Hall is where Kirklin began his extensive military career as a cadet more than 30 years ago, working his way up to Major General—one of the military's highest posts.

“Kirklin was an outstanding student and cadet. It was easy for us to train him because he had some training at home,” recalled Kirklin's former instructor and mentor First Sergeant Al Hines during the ceremony. “He was obedient, dedicated and disciplined, so our job was that much easier with him. I consider it an esteemed and distinct pleasure to have had Kirklin as a



student.”

MVSU President Dr. Jerryl Briggs said that Kirklin is the epitome of the greatness that a Valley graduate can achieve.

“The greatness of our University is our students—both current and former. I'm overjoyed by this opportunity to honor one

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MVSU STUDENT NAMED 2018 WHITE HOUSE HBCU SCHOLAR

The White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities recently announced the names of 63 students from 54 HBCUs who have been selected as 2018 HBCU Competitiveness Scholars, and among them was Mississippi Valley State University's Jamireia Hampton.

Hampton was one of three Mississippi students selected for the recognition program designed to honor current HBCU students for their competitiveness. Hezekiah Williams from Hinds Community College-Utica and Reagon Johnson of Tougaloo College were also recognized.



Hampton, a junior English major from Kemper, expressed how excited she was to be named a Competitiveness Scholar.

“I was astonished and in disbelief that I had been selected to be an HBCU Competitiveness Scholar,” said Hampton.

“I am truly honored, and I hope this will help set my resume apart from other competitors when applying to graduate programs,” she added.

An active and engaged student, Hampton is a member of the Alpha Lambda National Honors Society, National Council of Negro

Women Collegiate Section, Gateway Leadership Ambassadors Program, Career Services Center Ambassadors, University Ambassadors and the Ronald E. McNair Post-Bachelorette Achievement Program.

She is also a member of the Epsilon Pi Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.

Although she currently majors in English, Hampton said she plans to pursue a doctoral degree in Sociology.

Comprised of undergraduate, graduate, and professional students, Competitiveness Scholars are recognized for successfully preparing to

See “Scholar” page 7

MVSU'S HAWKINS TO CHAIR RURAL POVERTY RESEARCH INTEREST GROUP

Dr. Cassandra Hawkins may be new Mississippi Valley State University (MVSU) faculty, but she is already making an impact on campus.

Hawkins, who is an assistant professor of public administration /rural public policy and planning, has been nominated to serve as the chair-elect of the Rural Sociological Society's Rural Poverty Research Interest Group (RIG) for 2018-2019. She will serve as chair of the Rural Poverty RIG in 2019-2020.

The Rural Sociological Society (RSS) is a professional social science association that promotes the generation, application, and dissemination of sociological knowledge to enhance the quality of rural life, communities, and the environment. The association's Research and Interest Groups (RIGs) reflect the substantive interests of RSS members and serve as an important avenue for connecting members with similar interests.

The Rural Poverty RIG welcomes, fosters, and promotes research from diverse theoretical perspectives and methodological approaches that contribute to a broad understanding of



HAWKINS

the dynamic intersecting factors that produce and perpetuate conditions of poverty for rural individuals, families, communities, and regions in both the United States and in other nations.

"This opportunity will allow me to expose my students in the MA Rural Public Policy and Planning program to research, networking, and career opportunities," Hawkins said.

"I look forward to preparing for the 2019 RSS National Conference and having students present their work," she added.

Hawkins teaches in the Rural Public Policy and Planning graduate program as well as the Government and Politics program in the Department of Social Sciences at MVSU.

Her research interests include student pedagogy, American literature, agriculture policy, rural policy, socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers, and food insecurity in Mississippi.

"Dr. Hawkins is an addition to our capacity building for research in agricultural policy and rural policy," said Dr. Richard Mushi, chair of MVSU's Social Sciences Department and coordinator of the Rural Public Policy and Planning program.

"We are so excited about research and grantsmanship possibilities she brings to Rural Public Policy and Planning graduate program, Social Sciences department and our Mississippi Valley State University."

For information about the Rural Poverty RIG, visit www.ruralsociology.org

To learn more about MVSU's Rural Public Policy and Planning program, call (662) 254-3352 or visit www.mvsu.edu



MVSU STUDENT INTERNS AT GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK

Mississippi Valley State University Junior Keshona Young of Greenville, Miss., recently had the opportunity to put her skills to the test during an internship at the Great Smoky Mountains National Park in Gatlinburg, Tenn.

Young, an Engineering Technology major, was one of five candidates selected out of more than 40 applicants for an internship with the Greening Youth Foundation through the Historically Black Colleges and Universities Internship (HBCUI) program.

The Greening Youth Foundation's mission is to work with diverse, underserved and underrepresented children, youth and young adults in an effort to develop and nurture enthusiastic and responsible environmental stewards.

During the 11-week program, Young resided in the national park and had the opportunity to initiate and assist with various projects.



She worked closely with the parks' facilities management department and served as a project coordinator, designed floor plans for new office spaces and updated evacuation maps for the park's headquarters.

Young said she's grateful for the experience.

"I thought it was the best thing in the world... it was great. I felt that the internship helped

See "Park" page 9

INTERNSHIP LEADS TO FULL-TIME JOB FOR MVSU ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH GRAD

Life can change in an instant and for Mississippi Valley State University (MVSU) graduate Oriana Bledsoe that change has manifested into a dream come true.

In November 2017, Bledsoe became the first MVSU student to be selected to participate in the City of Jackson's Wastewater Treatment Facility (CJTWF) internship program through its environmental partnership with Veolia Water North America – South, LLC.

This program is offered in collaboration with Multi-Energy Group (MEG), LLC. A woman and minority-owned business, MEG is an engineering and program management company that provides professional consulting services to both the private and public sectors.

"My experience coming into the program was considerably different from the typical intern in that I began my career as a public-school teacher in the classroom for five years before deciding to make a career transition," Bledsoe said. "Veolia has proven to be a great learning experience for me as I have been enlightened both regarding



technical knowledge in running a laboratory and about the economic outlook of the water/wastewater utilities industry in general."

Bledsoe finished her degree at MVSU in 2009 earning her Bachelor of Science degrees in both chemistry and biology. Following her stint as a teacher, she decided to alter her career path and pursue a master's degree in Environmental Science from MVSU.

At the completion of her internship in May 2018, Bledsoe accepted a full-time position with the Veolia.

Kelvin Peters, Veolia's senior project manager, said the company affords college students career opportunities that many may not have been aware of prior to gaining an internship.

"There is an abundance of career opportunities in the areas of operations, laboratory analysis, and maintenance. Veolia is afforded the ability to expose college students and other interested citizens in the community to these opportunities," Peters said.

See "Internship" page 7

MVSU OPENS NEWLY RENOVATED CAMPUS LAUNDRY BUILDING



Mississippi Valley State University students now have access to two modernized laundry facilities following a ribbon cutting for the newly renovated Campus Laundry building Wednesday, Sept. 19.

The two-month renovation project included the installation of new floors, smart TVs,

upgraded restrooms, a new HVAC system and an upgraded lighting and security system. The freshly painted building also features 18 washers and 20 dryers.

The renovated facility now joins a second new Campus Laundry building, located adjacent to the R.W. Harrison Complex, that opened this

past summer. Both facilities are free for current MVSU students.

"We're very excited that Valley has remodeled the laundry facility," said MVSU student Lacey Williams of Columbus, Miss.

See "Laundry" next page

MVSU CAREER SERVICES CENTER HOSTS ANNUAL GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL SCHOOLS DAY



The Career Services Center at Mississippi Valley State University hosted its Annual Graduate and Professional Schools Day Fair from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 18, on the Concourse Level of the R.W. Harrison Sports Complex.

The event offered participants the opportunity to interact and gain information in their pursuit to further their education with graduate studies. Representatives from more than 45 programs attended the fair.

For more information about services offered by the Career Services Center, call (662) 254-3441 or email careerservices@mvsu.edu.



Laundry *continued from previous page*



“With the upgraded security system, I will feel much more comfortable using the facility,” she added.

“I’m just flabbergasted at the upgraded facility,” remarked MVSU senior Alexis Stewart of Brooksville, MS after the reveal. “It’s a big plus that we have access to a free washers and dryers on campus.”

MVSU Director of Laundry Services Suzanne Williams said the opening of the renovated building has been highly anticipated by students.

“The students are so excited to have these renovated facilities that feature updated amenities,” Williams said. “The addition of the new laundry facility this summer allows us to accommodate more students.”

According to MVSU Vice President of Student Affairs Dr. Jacqueline Gibson, the upgraded laundry facilities are part of the University’s broader vision to keep students first.

“As students are our top priority, it is the University’s goal to provide the services they need at all times, including as many on-campus amenities as possible. Our newly renovated laundry facility is one such amenity, in addition to another brand-new facility, which is also located on campus.” Gibson said.

“Ultimately, it is our aim to ensure that the services our students need are readily available at their home away from home.”

MVSU HOSTS “I GOT YOU” EVENT FOR LOCAL TEENS

In today’s fast-paced, social media-influenced world, teenagers face many issues. However, local teens received a dose of the information and support needed to help them make healthy life choices during a special event hosted at Mississippi Valley State University.

I Got You (IGU) Healthy Life Choices for Teens, an outreach program working to improve the mental health of students in Mississippi, visited MVSU’s campus Sept. 7 to educate, motivate, and inspire seventh and eighth-grade students from the Leflore County School District and the Carroll County School District.

Organizer Dr. Yolanda Jones, MVSU dean of student development, expressed excitement about MVSU’s partnership with the IGU program.

“When I initially agreed to coordinate this event at MVSU, I knew that it would be a great opportunity to bring students to our campus that live nearby who may have never visited our campus,” said Jones. “To have an opportunity to bring 200 to 300 potential students on our campus is one of the greatest recruitment opportunities to kick-start the fall 2018 academic year.”

The event, hosted in the Walter Roberts Auditorium, began with high energy and fun with IGU project coordinator Frankie Johnson who captured the students’ attention using music, dance and a couple of outfit changes—from a country singer to Michael Jackson.

“We get on the kids’ level with fun to catch their attention, and then we talk about the serious things before we get back to having fun because that’s what it’s all about,” Johnson said.

The students in attendance received information concerning understanding mental illness, alcohol and drug prevention, healthy coping skills, bullying and cyberbullying, suicide prevention, self-injury and healthy relationships.

In addition, students also had the opportunity to drive go-carts outside using drunk driving simulators to learn first-hand about the effects of alcohol.

“The IGU program was designed to decrease behavior-related office discipline referrals in schools, in addition to reducing suicide, substance abuse, and dating violence. This program also increases the knowledge and the perception of mental illness, which many of our juveniles are facing on a daily basis,” Jones explained.

Johnson, who is also the Director of Public Relations for Central Mississippi Residential Center, said interest in the program has increased tremendously over the last decade.



“We began the program ten years ago with about 300 youth as just a community project,” he said. “The first year was great, and we talked about one or two topics. It was a success the first time, and we felt we should add more topics the next year.”

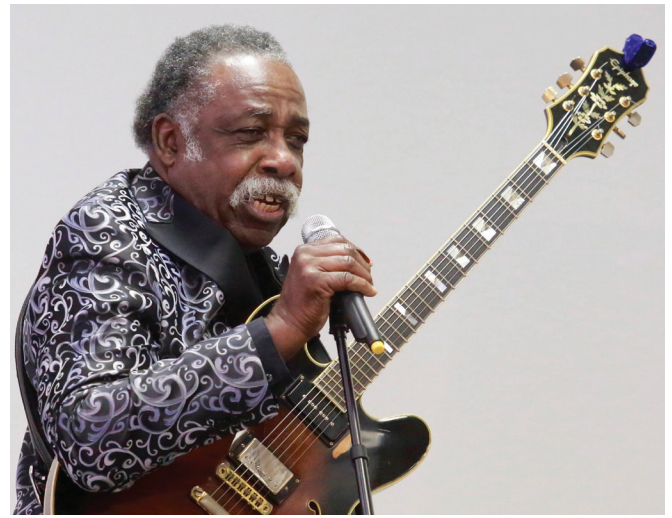
Johnson said the program continued to grow and by the third year roughly 1,000 kids were participating.

“It grew to the point where now we travel throughout the state, and we have about 6,000 kids that we see,” Johnson said.

Johnson said his vision is for IGU to continue to grow and have a positive impact on students.

“Nowadays, youth are fragile with so many devices that we didn’t have in our earlier stages of life, and many kids have not developed the coping skills to know that it’s okay to get help,” he said. “We get them to open up, and we talk to them about these issues and raise awareness for them. IGU is a prevention program, so it is designed to help youth take preventative measures so they won’t make choices they may regret later.”

B.B. KING RECORDING STUDIO PRESENTS
4TH ANNUAL
BB KING
DAY AT MVSU
SYMPOSIUM
Suffering Songs:
The Blues Identity of Native and
African American People and Their Struggles
SEPTEMBER 6, 2018





Jamireia Hampton

compete for top opportunities that improve long-term outcomes.

Each candidate was nominated and endorsed by their institution's president and was selected from among several highly distinguished HBCU students chosen based on their academic achievement, campus, and civic

Internship *continued from page 3*

"A bonus is the fact that interns can earn a reasonable wage through their participation and gain invaluable work experience while continuing their education. Through this program, they are then able to relate their experiences to their peers who may not have been previously aware of the possibilities of such a career and thus indirectly increase interest in the environmental occupations," he added.

During her time with Veolia, Bledsoe said she has grown professionally and has gained a better understanding of the field.

"My laboratory skills have strengthened 100 percent. I have become thoroughly familiar with the importance of state and government compliance regulations and how to use data for accurate compliance reporting," she explained. "The preparation I have received here has prepared me for future assignments in leadership and management as demonstrated



involvement and entrepreneurial ethos or "go-getter" spirit.

In the course of their one-year term, Competitiveness Scholars will learn and share proven and promising practices that support individual and HBCU competitiveness, with the goal of strengthening prospects for career and life success.

Competitiveness Scholars will assemble September 16-18 at the 2018 National HBCU Week Conference held at the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel, in Washington, D.C.

During this national convening – themed, "HBCU Competitiveness: Aligning Institutional Missions with America's

Priorities" – the scholars will participate in workshops designed to improve leadership, encourage ongoing personal and professional development and discover areas of innovation and entrepreneurship.

As the embodiment of unique competitive advantages HBCUs provide students, Competitiveness Scholars are afforded opportunities to highlight their exceptional contributions to institutions, ignite new passions and explore ideas critical to lifelong growth and development.

To learn more about the White House Initiative on HBCUs, visit <https://sites.ed.gov/whhbcu/whihbcu-competitiveness-scholars>.

by the opportunities I have been afforded to mentor several new interns who have been admitted into the program after me."

Patrice Greenwood, V.P. Project Management at MEG, said that the primary objective of the year-round internship program is to provide long-term exposure to complex assignments, which enables the interns to apply theoretical and practical knowledge learned in the classroom to the work environment.

Greenwood said she's been impressed with Bledsoe.

"It has been especially rewarding to see our program come full circle as we have had two former interns complete their internships and receive permanent full-time positions with Veolia," she said. "Oriana Bledsoe is a splendid example of this accomplishment. She was hired as an intern, demonstrated stellar performance,

received her master's degree from MVSU, landed a permanent full-time position as a Laboratory Analyst with Veolia and is now mentoring all laboratory interns who we bring in to join our ranks. This is truly the picture of success!"

Dr. Hattie Spencer, an associate professor in MVSU's Department of Natural Sciences and Environmental Health, said she was thankful for the program and its impact on MVSU students.

"We are grateful to the Multi-Energy Group, LLC who helps to manage and implement the Internship program for Veolia and the role they continue to play in seeking high caliber students from our programs," Spencer said. "We strongly believe that this partnership will help students build an early professional experience that can lead to their choice of the career path in environmental health."

MVSU HOSTS INAUGURAL MILITARY APPRECIATION DAY



More than 100 servicemen and women visited the campus of Mississippi Valley State University Friday, Sept. 14, for the inaugural Military Appreciation Day.

The event, hosted from 8 a.m. to noon in MVSU's Business Education Building, was designed to show gratitude to military personnel for their service.

The celebration was also the opportunity for MVSU to share more about its undergraduate and graduate academic programs as well as provide information about the University's Army ROTC Program.

During the event, attendees were treated to a continental breakfast and lunch.



Ceremony *continued from cover*

of Valley's own," said Briggs. "When our students see the name of this hall, hopefully they'll want to know why, and we'll be able to share and show them all the great things that Major General Kirklin has accomplished in his life."

Briggs noted his ties to Kirklin go beyond their love for MVSU.

"For me, referring to him as Major General is phenomenal, but also referring to him as Brother Kirklin is even more special since we're both members of the illustrious Omega Psi Phi, Fraternity, Inc.," he said.

"This is assurance that this University is doing the right thing in providing the opportunities for our students to be successful. It is important that when they think about where they want to go, they see a representative as a graduate that's second to none because this University is second to none," Briggs added.

A native of Lexington, Miss., Kirklin said that it was MVSU that chose him as a student more than 30 years ago.

"I walked through this building many times really not knowing what the future held," he

said. "No words can express my gratitude for what's happening here today and what this dedication means to me, but I think what matters most is what it means to the people who invested in me."

For the young students and future leaders to see someone with a background similar to theirs have a moment like this and to know that MVSU can lay the foundation for them to follow at some point.

Kirklin also used the opportunity to encourage MVSU ROTC students in attendance.

"Performance is important—no matter what you're doing, the end results are what really matter," he said. "You have to be prepared, dedicated and persistent in what you do, and the last thing I've learned as a leader is that you really have to care for people."

Kirklin said he never imagined that he would become a major general, a ranking that less than one percent of military officers achieve.

"I'm living proof that anything is possible for those of you following me. Don't give up and

remain dedicated to what you're doing," he said.

He also used the opportunity to thank those who have supported him over the years.

Many people who have been successful in life have had a really good cheer team behind them. They're the people who are important in the end when all of this is said and done," he said.

One of the things I've learned lately is that when the bright lights are no longer shining on you and the spot light is off, they will come be your light. So, I want to thank the hundreds of people who have helped me on this journey."

Kirklin said he's humbled by the legacy that Kirklin Hall will have for generations to come.

"I want to thank Mississippi Valley State University for choosing me and giving me a chance. I know that this University will continue to change lives for young men and women years after I'm gone," he said.



me to become stronger in both of my concentrations, Computer Aided Drafting and Design and Architectural Construction Management, because I had the chance to draft two projects as well as serve in the role of project supervisor,” she said.

Young said her most memorable experience was the opportunity to redesign Smokemont Ranger Station and provide ideas on how the space could be utilized in the future. She said that the project taught her to believe in her skills

“Initially, I had some self-doubt, but afterwards everyone told me how good I did and it made me feel confident. I’m so glad Mr. (Antonio) Brownlow (Acting Chair of Engineering Technology) encouraged me to apply,” she said.

An aspiring civil engineer, Young encourages her cohorts to also take advantage of internship opportunities.

“It’s important to make sure you pay attention in class because what we’re learning will be utilized in our career,” she said. “Learn all that you can and take advantage of every opportunity.”

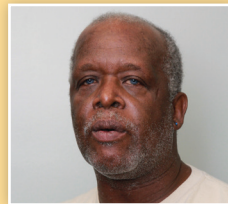
To learn more about the Greening Youth Foundation, visit www.gyfoundation.org.

For more information about MVSU’s Engineering Technology program, call (662) 254-3411 or visit www.mvsu.edu.



Members of the Epsilon Pi Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., recently presented MVSU President Dr. Jerryl Briggs with a \$1,000 check in honor of the sorority’s HBCU Impact Day Monday, Sept. 17. Pictured, from left, are Claudette Curry, advisor; Jamireia Hampton, parliamentarian; Niasia Harrington, secretary; Briggs; Undrea Porter, treasurer; JaQuana Williams, president; Joyce Dixon, advisor; and Cassandra Hansbrough, advisor.

WELCOME ABOARD



Fred Bell
Hall Monitor
Residential Life



Portia Boyd
Work Control / Transportation
Facilities Management



Jeremy Dixon
General Labor
Facilities Management



Philanteus Jarrett
Security Officer
University Police



Kenneth King
Buildings & Grounds
Facilities Management



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University Police



Eddie Smith
Buildings & Grounds
Facilities Management



Alan Wiederhold-Son
Director of Media
& Public Relations
Athletics

*Natural Science and Environmental Health

Two
Minutes
with...

Timothy Holston, Ph.D

Assistant Professor Computer Science



Tell us a little about yourself and your background.

I am originally from Itta Bena, Miss. I graduated from Leflore County High School in 1996. I received bachelor's degrees in Computer Science and Mathematics from MVSU in 2000. I finished my master's in Computer Science in 2002 from The University of Mississippi and a PhD in Computer Science from The University of Mississippi in the summer of 2018.

How do you approach providing service?

To provide service to students at MVSU, I first figure out their needs and after assessing those needs, I help them

figure out what they need to successfully navigate through computer science and/or mathematics curriculums. Every student may have different needs and interactions with them must be unique for them.

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

When I'm not working, you'll likely find me on the highway traveling or in the union playing spades.

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

I write poetry to relax my mind. When different things happen in my life, poetry provides solace and gives me some closure.

COMMUNIQUÉ

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New Hashtag: #GOMVSU

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