

READ ALL
ABOUT IT:



Bold new leadership in Itta Bena
Dr. Mary Tyes-Williams shares her vision for a “college city”. *Full story on Page 6*

the delta devils GAZETTE

An award-winning college newspaper, by students for students

AUGUST 2025 MISSISSIPPI VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY • ITTA BENA, MISSISSIPPI Volume 50 / Number 9

MVSU, Till Center launch 70th anniversary commemoration of Emmett Till’s murder

The collaborative to draw state, national and global visitors

DDG Staff Report

ITTA BENA, Miss. -- The Emmett Till Interpretive Center in partnership with Mississippi Valley State University and its Department of Mass Communication will commemorate the 70th anniversary of Emmett Till’s kidnapping and murder with activities aimed at preserving his memory and celebrating his life.

The three-day free event, themed “Remembering Emmett,” will take place at MVSU on Aug. 28 and 29, and conclude with a memorial service and wreath-laying ceremony at The Barn in Drew, Miss., on Aug. 30.

“On this milestone, we gather not only to remember the tragedy of Emmett Till’s murder but to honor the courage of his mother, Mamie Till-Mobley, whose decision to ‘let the world see’ ignited a spark that fuels the fight for justice today,” said Patrick Weems, executive director of the Emmett Till Interpretive Center. “These commemorations are essential to our work as agents of truth, helping people understand how history, truth, and justice can empower us to build fair and equitable communities.”

Prominent civil rights veterans and community leaders will participate in panel discussions, including scholar and SNCC activist Dr. Joyce Ladner and

author David J. Dennis, Sr., co-director of the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO).

During the wreath-laying ceremony on the final day, attendees will gather to honor Mamie Till-Mobley’s legacy and her dedication to seeking justice for her son after his 1955 murder, ensuring their story remains alive in our collective memory and inspires a commitment to truth and justice.

This marks the fourth year the Emmett Till Interpretive Center has hosted this celebration, encouraging people to keep Till’s story and legacy alive.

In June, MVSU’s James Herbert Whites Library became the host site for the Emmett Till & Mamie Till Mobley Let the World See traveling exhibit, which will remain through Sept. 21. “This exhibition provides an invaluable educational opportunity for our students, faculty, and the broader community,” said Dr. Kathie Stromile Golden, Provost and Senior Vice-President for Academic Affairs at MVSU. “Having this powerful story told at our university, close to where these tragic events unfolded, creates a unique opportunity for reflection, learning, and healing.”

The Till exhibit hours are Mondays - Thursdays: 9 a.m.-8 p.m.; Fridays: 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.; Saturdays: By Appointment



As registration numbers for the “Remembering Emmett” commemoration grow, MVSU and ETIC representatives evaluate the stage and sound setup in Walter Roberts Auditorium for Thursday evening’s opening performance. Pictured from left to right are Manager of Custodial and Support Services Vanderbilt Dixon, ETIC Event Coordinator Cynthia Goodloe Palmer, ETIC Chief Program Officer Dr. Daphne R. Chamberlain, Speech Coordinator/Instructor/Director of Theater Barbara Baymon, and MVSU TV Studio Director/Mass Comm Instructor Alfonzo White. PHOTO BY DDG/DR. GAIL H.M. BROWN

Only; and Sundays: 3 p.m. – 7 p.m.

Although admission to all activities are free, attendees are encouraged to register at www.emmett-till.org. For more

information about the 70th anniversary events, contact Cynthia Goodloe Palmer at till70th@emmett-till.org or (601) 918-7809.

MVSU’s Dr. Newsome earns prestigious Harvard fellowship

Gazette Staff Report

Congratulations to Dr. Abigail Newsome, associate vice president for academic affairs at Mississippi Valley State University, for being selected as a fellow in the inaugural cohort of the Strategic Data Project (SDP) Fellowship. This prestigious national initiative, supported by the Harvard University Center for Education Policy Research and the Gates Foundation, aims to enhance data practices at Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs).

Dr. Newsome is one of 18 fellows chosen for the 18-month program, which includes in-person and virtual training,

collaborative projects, and the development of resources focused on improving student success. “I am honored to represent Mississippi Valley State University in this groundbreaking fellowship,” Newsome said.

“This opportunity will help us better leverage data to improve student outcomes and institutional effectiveness. It’s about using evidence to create equity and excellence in education.”

Upon hearing the news, MVSU’s Provost and Senior VP of Academic



Newsome

Affairs Dr. Kathie Stromile Golden, said, “I was not the least bit surprised but was extremely delighted about Dr. Newsome selection as a SDP Fellow.” Dr. Stromile Golden explained that the program requires that fellows’ supervisor participate in the interview process, commit to attending one in-person workshop, provide continuous support as relates to the fellow’s capstone project, and is able to spend 5% of their time on fellowship-related activities as well as time on the agreed upon project.

“After our joint and individual interviews, I was confident that Dr. Newsome was a competitive applicant,” she said. “Dr. Newsome’s work in bioinformatics and experience with mining gigantic data sets, coupled with vast knowledge of the University’s data challenges and needs are impressive, which became evident during the interview process. At the conclusion of the Fellowship, I am certain that Dr. Newsome’s project will serve the university well and contribute to the

See “FELLOWSHIP” Page 4

Through My Eyes: *Reflections on the Emmett Till Mamie Till-Mobley: Let the world see exhibit*

By Ruchawn M. Williams *Editor-in-Chief*

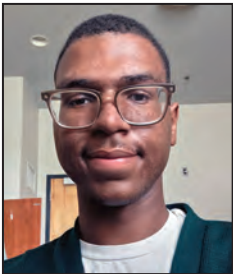
The first thing that caught my eye when I first walked into the exhibit was a black rotary phone resting on a podium. That phone contained an eyewitness recording from Rev. Wheeler Parker, the day Emmett Till was taken.

As I listened to this recording, I really felt the weight of history. I listened how these cruel white men, armed and insistent, came and bombarded Rev. Parker's house looking for poor Emmett.

Listening to his account, I understood that in this time and age, we all need justice. Not just for today, but justice for the past, present, and future.

The exhibit also displayed pages from old magazines that documented Emmett's story. I appreciated how the exhibit had interactive sections with different elements spread throughout the library that brought me in deeper.

However, I had seen the infamous picture of the aftermath of what they did to Emmett and how they brutalized his face until it was barely recognizable. That truly hurt my heart and almost



Williams

made me cry. That photo is not easy to look at, but it speaks louder than words about the scary times Black people endured.

I also spent time on the interactive computers and watched the short documentary the exhibit had. Both were powerful, giving out detailed insights into Emmett's life and the circumstances that led to his tragic death.

All in all, what they did to Emmett Till was downright horrendous. Even after his death, he will be remembered by me and millions of other people throughout the world.

This exhibit also shows that we need justice. Because without it, injustices are buried, voices are silenced, and wounds ignored. This world also needs courage and strength to speak about things that go unnoticed.

Remember Emmett Till. Never forget him.



Welcome back, Delta Devils - step into history



By Ruchawn M. Williams *Editor-in-Chief*

First, I am very ecstatic to serve as your new Editor-in-Chief for the amazing Delta Devils Gazette! Additionally, it is my pleasure to welcome you all back to the Valley. I hope every single student summer went well.

I want to wish a warm welcome to the new students, as well as the transfer students. The Delta Devils are excited to have you join our vibrant family here at Mississippi Valley State University. Whether you are beginning your college adventure or trying a new place, just know that MVSU is here to usher out their genuine support.

This August is especially meaningful



Remembering those who came before us

By Jaheim Wilder, *Columnist*

Hello again, dearest readers,
As we settle into August, it is important to remember the struggles, triumphs, and contributions of those who came before us. August is a month of celebration and remembrance. Every day is a reminder of the foundation that has been laid out for us.

Known and celebrated as “Black August” by many, it is a time of commitment to our community, ourselves, and our people. In the spirit of remembrance, we must reflect on the good and the bad. Black August began in 1979 in California’s prisons.

It was started by incarcerated members of the Black Guerilla Family at San Quentin State Prison. It was created to honor the lives and sacrifices of Black freedom fighters, particularly those who had been killed or imprisoned during struggles for liberation. Black August was and still is observed as a time of study, reflection, and resistance.

The month of August holds deep significance in Black history. Many key events took place in this month, such as the March on Washington in 1963, the signing into law of the Voting Rights Act in 1965, and former president Barack Obama becoming the first African American to become a major party’s nominee for United States president in 2008.

While we remember and celebrate those great achievements, we must also reflect on the sacrifices and struggles that made them possible. We must remember events such as lynchings, beatings, and jailings. One lynching in particular still haunts the Mississippi Delta: the murder of Emmett Louis Till.

Till was a 14-year-old boy visiting family in the Mississippi Delta during

the summer of 1955. Till was kidnapped, tortured, and murdered in Money, Mississippi after being accused of behaving inappropriately towards a white woman. As we near the 70th anniversary of Emmett Till’s murder, we must honor

his legacy and humanity. While Till is most known for his horrific death, we must take the time and explore his life beyond this tragedy. It is also necessary that we familiarize ourselves with the legacy of Emmett’s mother, Mrs. Mamie Till-Mobley, who dedicated her life to educating the public about her son, fighting for justice, and to a career as a teacher.

I encourage all of you to go see the Emmett Till & Mamie Till-Mobley: Let the World See exhibit located in the James Herbert White Library on the beautiful campus of Mississippi Valley State University. The exhibit is on display until September 21, 2025. There will also be events held around campus and in various Mississippi Delta areas from August 28, 2025, to August 30, 2025. To learn more, visit <https://www.emmett-till.org> and <https://emmetttillxhibit.org>.



for the university. The DDG is honored to publish this special edition showcasing the historical significance of our MVSU’s library hosting the Emmett Till & Mamie Till-Mobley: Let the World See exhibition.

This is just more than an event- it’s an opportunity to reflect, learn, and honor a pivotal moment in American history.

This university is not just a place of academic pursuit- it is a living witness to stories that continue to shape our understanding of justice, courage, and the power of remembrance. In this issue, we invite you to engage in remembrance of Emmett Till.

I highly urge every student, faculty, staff, and the whole community to take

time to visit and experience the exhibit. It isn’t just a display, but a chance to step into history, confront the harsh realities of the past, and continue the lesson it teaches. By viewing the exhibit, you honor the courage of Mamie Till-Mobley, preserve the memory of Emmett Till, and strengthen your knowledge of the ongoing fight for justice.

Your presence matters. Your voice matters. Let us come together to make sure these stories never fade, especially during today’s times when many in society are trying to erase them.

Welcome back Delta Devils. Let’s make this a great year for growth and community.



Fellowship

continued from page 1

development of a culture that embraces data-driven decision-making that ultimately contributes to STUDENT SUCCESS.”

The fellowship aims to strengthen data analytics skills and promote evidence-based solutions. Miriam Greenberg, senior director of the SDP, noted the potential for these fellows to drive impactful change.

For more on the Strategic Data Project, visit,

<https://sdp.cepr.harvard.edu/>

MVSU News also contributed to this report.

MVSU to host 2025 Fall Convocation



By MVSU News

Mississippi Valley State University invites you to the 2025 Fall Convocation on Thursday, August 28, 2025, at 11 a.m. in the Walter Roberts Auditorium, H.G. Carpenter Building.

This year’s keynote speaker is Dr. Miskia L. Davis, Director of Districts and School Performance and Accountability for The Kirkland Group. A proud daughter of the Mississippi Delta, Dr. Davis is a transformative leader in education whose inspiring story continues to impact students, educators, and communities across Mississippi.

Read the full story here:
<https://bit.ly/3UFBsOz>

MVSU Wesley Foundation seeks student leadership

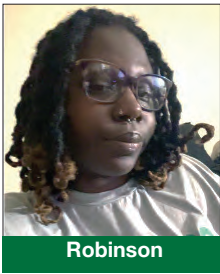
The MVSU Wesley Foundation is calling on students to step into leadership roles for this academic year. The organization is currently seeking dedicated and passionate individuals to serve as **Vice President, Chaplain, Secretary, Treasurer, and Mr. Wesley.**

These positions are vital to the mission of the Wesley Foundation, which serves as a spiritual and community hub for students on campus. Leaders will have the opportunity to help plan events, guide worship, and strengthen the foundation’s outreach across MVSU.

Students interested in serving in a position, please contact Ruchawn Williams at ruchawn.williams@mvsu.edu.

Students' Voices Question:

After seeing the “Emmett Till & Mamie Till-Mobley: Let the World See” traveling exhibit, what were your thoughts and emotions?

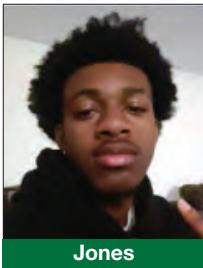


Robinson

After seeing the “Emmett Till & Mamie Till-Mobley: Let the World See” traveling exhibit, I felt a mix of sadness, anger, and deep respect. Sadness came from learning the details of what happened to Emmett Till and realizing how young he was when his life was taken. Anger came from the injustice of the situation and how the people responsible were never truly held accountable. At the same time, I felt respect for Mamie Till-Mobley and her courage to share her son’s story with the world, even though it was painful for her. Educationally, I learned how Emmett Till’s murder became a turning point in the Civil Rights movement. His mother’s decision to have an open casket funeral and to let the world see the truth made a powerful impact on people across the world.

Jasmine Robinson
Early Childhood

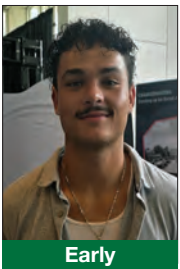
Before walking through, I thought I knew everything, so I was calm. Then, I realized I knew too little, and the story was deeper. I felt like I was insensitive. So, I



learned the rest of the story, and his story was very important for the development of Civil Rights, and I was proud to be a part of black history.

Joshua Jones
Accounting

My name is Tom Early, and I major in Mass Communications. I am very upset after seeing the exhibit. I feel disappointed that the murderers could get away with that in the U.S. So, that makes me very sad. However, what I learned educationally is how truly horrifying the murder of Emmett Till was, and the wave of backlash in the Civil Rights movement that came shortly after his murder. Although Emmett Till’s murder was a tragedy, it sparked a nationwide need for change.

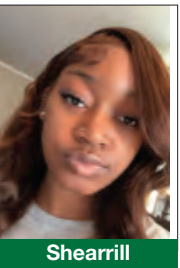


Thomas Early
Mass Communication (Broadcasting)

It shouldn’t have had to come to creating a civil rights movement. That only happened because he was black. Now, if he were a white man, the story would have been completely different, and that’s sad.

Ti'Mya Shearrill
Elementary Education

I feel saddened that a



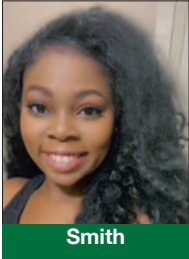
young boy was murdered due to his race, and inspired by his mother’s influence and bravery to stand up even more against racism.



Mikaila Jones
Legal Studies/Pre-Law

Yesterday was a great day, but it sparked all kinds of mixed emotions when walking through the Emmett Till Interpretive Center exhibit. My grandmother, who was once the director of the Emmitt Till Academy in Drew, Miss., told me all about his life and the history of death. She even took me to the locations where he was killed. And to know that we share the same birthday was even more alarming. So, the tour yesterday sparked more intense emotions as I walked around and read about the experience he encountered. I thought to myself, “it could have been me” at that age, considering I grew up on a street where my mom and I were the only black people residing. His death was senseless! Why do white people feel so privileged to hurt us, and is it okay?

Dezmond Johnson
Electronic Engineering

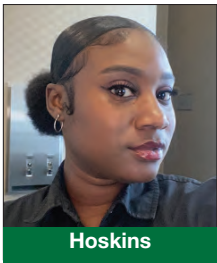


As I walked through the Emmett Till’s Interpretive Center [exhibit], my heart was filled with so many emotions. It made me angry that anyone could be so cruel as to do that to anyone, let alone a child. I also felt sympathy and gratitude towards his mom, Mamie, for allowing her son’s story to be told the way she wanted it to, and for standing her ground with the truth, even though it was hard. Her strength was admirable.

Veronica Smith
Business Administration

After walking through the Emmett Till Interpretive Center [exhibit], I feel that it was a powerful and emotional experience. Learning how he suffered the most brutal and painful death is truly heartbreaking. Especially having brothers the same age he was today. Reading how Ms. Mamie was able to start this movement was amazing to see everyone join her on a commitment to change.

Alisha Hoskins
Accounting



DDG’s photo editor excels in summer Gray Media Training

By Gail Brown, Ph.D., DDG Faculty Advisor

The Delta Devils’ Gazette is pleased to announce that Kobe Hilliard, its photo editor, successfully completed the WLBT Gray Media Training Center’s 2025 Summer Cohort in Jackson, Miss., earning a certificate of achievement.

“The Gray Media Internship was a great opportunity for me,” Hilliard said. “I got the chance to see different departments in the news and got hands-on experience. I came into the internship wanting to get better in areas that I wasn’t the best at, and this internship helped.”

He encourages juniors or seniors majoring in mass communication/journalism to apply, adding, “I am surely glad that I did.”

According to its website, “The Gray Media Training Center at WLBT-TV in Jackson, Miss. is an immersive experience that trains, prepares, and equips participants to become future industry leaders in local broadcasting and digital media.”

“Mr. Hilliard is a strong representation of Mississippi Valley State University,” said Director of the Gray Media Training Center Michael White. He added, “The Gray Media Training Center is excited to continue helping college students from



Courtesy Photo: Gray Media Training Center

underserved communities to reach their goals of becoming award-winning media professionals.” Hilliard is the seventh MVSU Mass Communication major to complete this acclaimed program.

“We are so proud of Kobe,” said Acting Department Chair Dr. Carolyn L. Gordon. “He spent his summer applying what he’s learned here at MVSU to learn even more as he prepares to be a change agent in the field of broadcast journalism. His service this summer continues the legacy of MVSU Mass Communication students interning with such a prestigious news organization.”

White expressed gratitude to MVSU for its continued partnership with the Gray Media Training Center’s Internship Program.

Mass Comm faculty reflect on Emmett Till exhibit

DDG Staff Report

Several members of the MVSU Department of Mass Communication faculty share their reactions to visiting the Till exhibit



Abedin

The gruesome lynching of Emmett Till was a horrible example of the Jim Crow Era in the US. It jolted the American acrimonious race relations -- hatred of the White extremists toward African Americans, especially. I am really shocked of seeing the exhibition of many images but encouraged by the remembrance of the Till’s lynching by the society. MLK considered the 1955 killing of Till a pivotal moment in the Civil Rights Movement. Muhammad Ali who was of the Till-age in 1955 was influenced to enhance his activism against racial injustices. It was a bold decision of Till’s mother to show the world the images of her son’s mutilated body.



White

The exhibit was a sad moment for me as I strolled through the exhibition to hear testimonies and demonstrations of how the movement unfolded and the reactions to the event. It still hurts that, on the surface, some individuals go unpunished for their crimes. However, behind spiritual walls, they shall receive their just due. We all have a higher power we must answer to, the just as well as the unjust; the wicked and righteous, the sinners as well as the saints.



Dr. Zainul Abedin
Associate Professor

Ms. Barbara Baymon
*Coordinator of Speech Communication
Instructor of Speech Communication
Director of Theater*

The Emmett Till display captures a significant time in our history that ignited the Civil Rights movement. It represents another era of the black experience in America.

Mr. Alfonzo White
*Director of Television
Studio/Instructor*

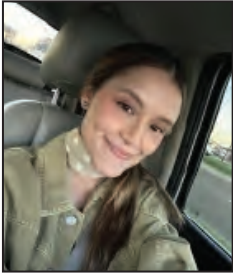
The voice behind this year’s MVSU Global page

Ana Ortiz, Global Editor

Hi everyone! My name is Ana Maria Ortiz and I’m beyond excited to be the new Global MVSU editor. I am currently in the graphic design program, and this is a little bit about me.

I come from a beautiful and full of happiness country, where music and dance take over the streets; where the landscapes are so beautiful that it would leave you breathless, a country full of magic and stunning people who will always welcome you with open arms and open hearts. Where diversity in species, ecosystems and cultures make my country one of a kind. I come from Colombia, I was born and raised in Bogota, the capital city and I grew up in an urban environment. When I was 21, I moved to a fishing village in Kenya, Africa where I learned the importance of community and the power of helping others.

I moved to the United States in 2023 and since then I have been finding my path in this world. I am a professional contemporary dancer, and I love animals



Ortiz

more than I love people! I am truly passionate about traveling and make a strong effort to do it frequently. I believe it enriches you as a person because it exposes you to different realities.

Just like me, there are many international students who bring rich cultures and personal stories to our school community and that’s why I want to invite the community to learn from international students, our cultures, and our life stories. In the same way we can also get to know the local culture deeply. We can create a more united community and make MVSU a place where diversity helps us reach beyond the Delta.

I also encourage international students to reach out to me whenever they want to talk or share things about their culture, so we can continue to become more internationalized together.

Valley, Tougaloo Upward Bound visit Till exhibit



DDG Staff Report

ITTA BENA, Miss. -- Students from the Mississippi Valley State University and Tougaloo College Upward Bound programs toured the Emmett Till & Mamie Till-Mobley: Let the World See exhibit, gaining an emotional understanding of one of Mississippi’s most pivotal civil rights stories.

On June 30, 143 Tougaloo College students and staff visited the display, while Valley’s Upward Bound I students toured it before their summer session ended. The traveling exhibit explores the 1955 murder of Till and the activism of his mother, Mamie Till-Mobley.

Dr. Valvia M. Wilson, Tougaloo’s summer program director, said the tour connected students with their state’s history. “It was an eye-opening experience to visit the exhibit and then go to the courthouse where Emmett Till’s murderers were acquitted. It gave me chills just to be there,” she said.

Students also engaged with the interactive displays. “I loved how I learned new things about Emmett Till... especially the River Site sign with bullet holes and the short film,” said Kayomi Summerville, a ninth grader at



Greenwood High School.

For Alice Hilliard, counselor for MVSU Upward Bound I, the visit was personal. “As a child of the Emmett Till era, it brought back memories of how segregated the South was. Overall, the exhibit was touching and highly educational.”

The exhibit remains on display at MVSU’s James Herbert White Library through Sept. 21. Hours are Monday–Thursday 9 a.m.–8 p.m., Friday 9 a.m.–4 p.m., Sunday 3–7 p.m., and by appointment on Saturday. For more information, call (662) 254-3495.

Arroz con leche

Colombian Rice Pudding

A traditional family-style recipe



- Ingredients:**
- 1 cup of rice
 - 2 cups of water
 - 1–2 cinnamon sticks (optional, to taste)
 - 1 can of sweetened condensed milk (use only half if you prefer it less sweet)
 - 4 cups of milk (or as needed)
 - ½ cup of raisins (optional, to taste)

- INSTRUCTIONS:**
- 1. Cook the Rice:**
In a pot, add the cup of rice, 2 cups of water, and the cinnamon sticks. Bring it to a boil over high heat. Once it starts boiling, cover the pot and lower the heat to a minimum. Let it cook until the rice is fully done, and the water is absorbed.
- 2. Warm the Milk and Soak the Raisins:**
Meanwhile, in another pot, heat the milk—but do not let it boil. While the milk is warming up, add the raisins so they can hydrate and soften.
- 3. Combine Rice and Milk:**
When the rice is ready and the milk is warm (with the raisins in it), gradually add the milk to the rice, stirring very gently to avoid breaking the grains.
- 4. Sweeten the Mixture:**
Add the can of sweetened condensed milk to the rice and milk mixture. If you find it too sweet, you can use only half a can.
- 5. Serve and Enjoy:**
You can enjoy this rice pudding either warm or cold—both ways are delicious. The amount of raisins and cinnamon is entirely up to personal taste, but this is how my family traditionally makes it.

the delta devils

GAZETTE

American Scholastic Press Association
1989,1990, 1991, 1997, 2002 and 2024 FIRST PLACE winner.
2015 THIRD PLACE winner. 2016 SECOND PLACE winner.

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The Delta Devils’ Gazette welcomes news and editorials from all students. The Delta Devils Gazette is a student publication of Mississippi Valley State University, under the supervision of the Department of Mass Communication. Editorial offices are located in: O.P. Lowe Education Building, Room 141.

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14000 HWY 82 West #7234 | Itta Bena, Mississippi 38941
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New mayor, bold vision: Dr. Mary Tyes-Williams seeks to revitalize Itta Bena

By Ruchawn M. Williams *Editor-in-Chief*

ITTA BENA, Miss. -- In the heart of the Mississippi Delta, Itta Bena welcomes its new mayor, Dr. Mary Tyes-Williams, a long-time resident with deep community roots and a vision for growth.

With a vision to help unite the surrounding Mississippi Valley State University (MVSU) and neighboring areas, she has hit the ground running.

Dr. Tyes-Williams was born and raised in Baldwyn, Miss. and initially enrolled at MVSU, where she met her husband, Cedric Williams. She later transferred to Tennessee State University, earning a degree in Healthcare Administration and Planning. She has a healthcare certificate from Meharry Medical College. Her career spans ministry, education, and public service, and she holds the position of Acting Assistant Chaplaincy Administrator and Chaplaincy Program Manager for the Federal Bureau of Prisons, making her the second-highest ranking female chaplain in the agency’s history.

She is a published author, life coach, community event planner, and ordained minister in the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church. She currently serves



Mayor Dr. Mary Tyes-Williams is happy to serve the town she calls home. PHOTO BY ALFONZO WHITE

as the Director of Evangelism and Spiritual Life for the MS South Region and the Director of Clergy Development for the Greenwood-Jackson District. She is a former board member and adjunct faculty member at Wesley Theological Seminary in Ridgeland, Miss.

For Dr. Tyes-Williams, her faith profoundly influences her leadership. “I don’t have the option to be one person

in one setting and someone else in another,” she stated. “My relationship with the Lord leads me in every decision I make.” This approach helps her connect authentically with residents.

One of her top priorities is to be instrumental in closing the gap between Itta Bena and MVSU. She has appointed community member Charles Blewitt to lead youth engagement efforts and

is planning events that appeal to both students and residents. “We want it to feel like when you come to Valley, you’re coming to Itta Bena,” she explained, envisioning a college town rich in entertainment, businesses, and job opportunities that keep students engaged locally.

Dr. Tyes-Williams is also focused on providing internship and shadowing programs at City Hall for MVSU students, stating, “Sometimes students don’t know they have an interest in something until they’re introduced to it.” She plans to meet with MVSU President Dr. Jerryl Briggs soon to share her vision.

Acknowledging the need for economic diversity, Mayor Tyes-Williams sees potential in Itta Bena’s small businesses and aims to talk with property owners about refurbishing or selling vacant downtown buildings to attract more shops and services.

When asked why she believes the community voted for her, she highlighted her long-standing relationships: “They’ve been a part of my life, and I’ve been a part of theirs. They trust me because they’ve seen my life over the years. I want for them the same things I want for my own family.”

Emmett Till’s Traveling Exhibit: An ‘eye-opening’ 2025 MVSUNAA Summit highlight

By Gail Brown, Ph.D., *DDG Faculty Advisor*

“The 2025 MVSUNAA Alumni Convention was a powerful weekend of fellowship, reflection, and impact,” Dr. Olivia Raine recently shared with the Delta Devils’ Gazette (DDG) campus newspaper.

Dr. Raine chairs the communication committee for the Mississippi Valley State University National Alumni Association (MVSUNAA).

“One of the most moving experiences was the Emmett Till exhibit,” she stressed. [It] “reminded us of the importance of preserving history and carrying forward the lessons of resilience, justice, and unity.”



Raine

“A l u m n i expressed how meaningful it was to connect our shared legacy with such a significant moment in history, reinforcing our commitment to educating, empowering, and uplifting future generations of Delta Devils.”

Current and long-serving MVSUNAA President Jerry Redmond described his view of the exhibit as “very impactful.”

“It was very easy to follow, self-guided. The story of the exhibit is impactful as



McInnis

Unopposed MVSUNAA Presidential Candidate LaShunna McInnis had this to say about her experience viewing the exhibit: “The exhibit is definitely an eye-opener, and it will fill your mind with knowledge that you may not have had before. It’s encouraging in how it urges us of the need to continue to share the

well, with how it goes from the beginning in learning about Emmett, what his mom went through, and how society was affected as a result.”



stories, tell the narrative, so the next generation will know, one: how beautiful we are and two: the cost of our beauty.”

Holmes County Alumni Chapter of MVSU honors students, welcomes new freshman

By Jontavia Bailey-Randle, *Staff Writer*

LEXINGTON, Miss. -- The Holmes County Alumni Chapter of the Mississippi Valley State University National Alumni Association celebrated local students’ academic achievements and welcomed a new freshman to the Valley family with acts of recognition and support.

Recently, students were treated to a special dinner at Primos Café (Madison, Miss.) in recognition of their strong grades and commitment to education during the 2025 Spring Semester.

Among the honored students pictured are Tkahya Myles, Darianna Brown, and Jontavia Bailey-Randle, who enjoyed the evening alongside community members and alumni. The event highlighted the alumni’s mission to support and encourage students to keep striving for excellence. The organization plans

to continue rewarding students from Holmes County throughout their years at Mississippi Valley State University.

In addition to celebrating academic success, the alumni chapter also welcomed first-year freshman Kayla Forest by providing her with essential supplies to begin her college journey. Kayla received everyday items such as tissue, paper towels, and an iron to help her settle into campus life. The gesture underscored the alumni chapter’s commitment to making sure new students feel supported as they transition into university life.

Through recognition dinners and practical support, the Holmes County Alumni Chapter continues to invest in the success of Valley students, encouraging them to pursue their education with confidence and community behind them.



(L-R) Students Tkahya Myles, Darianna Brown, Chapter President LeRoy Rile, student Jontavia Bailey-Randle, Scholarship Chairperson Margaret Brownlow-Tate, and Chapter Vice President Verlinda Alexander. COURTESY PHOTO



The Holmes County Chapter and Mr. and Miss MVSU pause for a photo opt with freshman Kayla Forrest (center) COURTESY PHOTO

COMMENTARY: Valley banking on new leadership for 2025 season

By Shomari Hunt, Sports Editor

Mississippi Valley State enters the 2025 football season with fresh optimism under new head coach Terrell Buckley, whose decorated playing career and broad coaching background have energized the program.

Buckley, a 14-year NFL veteran, Jim Thorpe Award winner, and former defensive back with 50 career interceptions, brings instant credibility to Itta Bena. He was a key contributor on the New England Patriots’ Super Bowl XXXVI championship team in 2002, further cementing his reputation as a proven winner. Many around the game consider it a “crime” that he has not yet been enshrined in the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

He began as an assistant at Florida State from 2007 to 2011 before moving to Akron for two seasons. He then coached cornerbacks at Louisville (2014–15), Mississippi State (2016–19), and Ole Miss (2020–21). In 2023, Buckley served as head coach of the XFL’s Orlando Guardians before being



What will the jumbatron display this season? PHOTO BY SHOMARI HUNT

hired at Mississippi Valley State in 2025.

One of Buckley’s first priorities at Valley was assembling experience around him. He hired Sam Parker as offensive coordinator from Division II powerhouse Ferris State, where Parker helped the Bulldogs win multiple

national championships. On defense, Buckley added Mario Edwards, a former NFL veteran, to work with the secondary and bring a tougher edge to coverage.

Predictions for Valley’s season center on balance and discipline. Offensively, Parker is expected to install a run-first

structure that sets up play-action and defined reads for the quarterbacks. A sturdier offensive line and returning skill talent could raise efficiency and limit negative plays.

Defensively, the emphasis is on communication on the back end and a front seven that can affect the pocket without sacrificing gap integrity. With Edwards mentoring the secondary, MVSU is projected to cut down on coverage busts and improve third-down defense.

Special teams may provide hidden yards, particularly in the return game, where Valley’s speed could flip field position in tight contests.

The early schedule will test cohesion, but the expectation is that MVSU secures multiple SWAC wins and shows marked improvement in situational football. While immediate title contention may be a longer play, Buckley’s leadership, Parker’s championship background and an upgraded secondary give Valley a path to one of the league’s most improved campaigns.

New AD, Dr. Shields-Gadson, encourages alums to ‘trust the process’

By Ruchawn Williams, Editor-in-Chief

ITTA BENA, Miss. — Mississippi Valley State University’s new Director of Athletics, Dr. Alecia Shields-Gadson, addressed alumni at the MVSUNAA 2025 Summit recently with a message of patience, unity, and alignment.

Shields-Gadson reminded supporters that athletics must reflect the university’s overall mission. “At all times, everything that we want, we have to first ask that first question— is it in alignment? And if it’s not, then advocate for it, but always show how it fits the bigger picture,” she said.

She also spoke on the importance of supporting fellow HBCU conferences. “As much as they are our competition, they are still our sister conference... our growth and their growth, it’s enough to



Shields-Gadsen

go around into what is the HBCU experience,” she noted.

Encouraging the Valley family to “trust the process,” she added, “Sometimes things are outside of our control, but it’s about trusting that you have a leader that’s committed.”

Shields-Gadson, who began her role July 15, brings more than 25 years of experience, including leadership posts at Alcorn State and Delaware State. She becomes only the second woman to lead MVSU Athletics, with a vision centered on growth, excellence, and student success.

MVSU’s cheering squad revs up fans for new era in MVSU sports

Squad urges an increase in excitement!



DDG Staff Report

As we approach the start of the new era in MVSU sports, the MVSU Cheerleaders have already sparked excitement among students during Welcome Week and during the MVSUAA 2025 Summit this summer.



MISSISSIPPI VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY
DELTA DEVILS

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MISSISSIPPI VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY

TODAY IS A NEW DAY.
A new day presents *promise* and *possibilities*. Every sunrise brings *new beginnings*. Don't let your *past* define who you *are*. **Every day** is a moment to grow, to heal, to rise above. Every day **is a chance to fix your mistakes**. Every day is new to be a better YOU.

Ruchawn's Inspirational



A mother's bravery. Her son's lasting legacy. Hear their story.

Let the World See tells the heartbreaking yet inspiring story of how a mother's courage transformed unimaginable grief into a catalyst for the American Civil Rights Movement.

***At the James Herbert White Library
at Mississippi Valley State University
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This project was made possible in part by The National Endowment for the Humanities: Democracy demands wisdom, the Maddox Foundation in Hernando, MS, The Institute for Museum and Library Services [MH-249226-OMS-21], and The Historic Preservation Fund administered by the National Park Service, Department of the Interior [15.904].

7TH
**ANNIVERSARY
COMMEMORATION**
of Emmett Louis Till

August 28–30, 2025

On the campus of
Mississippi Valley State University

1955 marked a tragic chapter in American history—and sparked a movement that has changed the world.

On this 70th anniversary, the Emmett Till Interpretive Center and Mississippi Valley State University will host a series of activities to honor his legacy and inspire the ongoing fight for justice and equality.

For more information about anniversary activities and events, contact **Cynthia Goodloe Palmer**, event coordinator, at till70th@emmett-till.org or (601) 918-7809.

Visit www.emmett-till.org/70th
for updates on anniversary activities.

