

the delta devils GAZETTE

An award-winning college newspaper, by students for students

MAY 2024

MISSISSIPPI VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY • ITTA BENA, MISSISSIPPI

Volume 49/ Number 8

‘It’s Your Time’ urges 72nd Commencement speaker USDA area director Archie Tucker

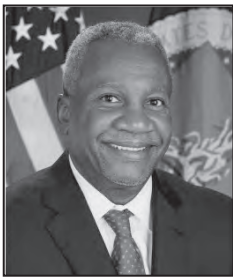
By Myiesha Smith, Staff Writer

Graduation represents the climax of a journey and the achievement of a goal. It is an exciting period in a person’s life, and an array of feelings will surface for the graduate.

Mississippi Valley State University (MVSU) celebrated its 72nd Commencement on Saturday, May 4, in the Harrison Complex. Approximately 200 graduates received encouragement from Archie Tucker, Sr., a 1979 graduate of MVSU. Tucker is Area Director of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Station, Southeast Area

During the commencement, Tucker expressed to the graduates, “It’s your time!” He urged them to go out and make their mark in the world and to take pride in being from Mississippi Valley State University.

Tucker not only directed the graduates



Tucker

in personal growth but also shared valuable information on financial literacy. “Make good decisions regarding your finances,” said Tucker. “Pay your bills on time and earn good credit ratings. Remember, you may never have enough money to pay cash for everything you want, but if you have good credit, you can get everything you need,” he added.

The ceremony concluded with a special surprise video message for the graduates from Vice President Kamala Harris. “As a proud HBCU graduate, I know firsthand the value of attending an institution like yours,” she said. The crowd gave the video a rousing applause.



PHOTO BY LATUYNA EVANS

A golden friendship forged at ‘The Valley’ over five decades ago



From left, Friends and Golden Graduates Sharon Johnson Watson and Dr. Emily DuBOSE Walker display one of the certificate frames for their Golden Diploma. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE DDG



Golden Graduates from left, Deneen Banks, Betty Oliver Roberson, Georgia Seals Winbush, and Marie Cooper presented a check to Alumni Affairs Manager Latavia Williams. According to Alumni Affairs, final donations totaled \$10,150. PHOTO BY LATUYNA EVANS, COMMUNICATION AND MARKETING

By Gail M. Brown, Ph.D., Gazette Faculty Advisor

The first three lines of the theme song to the TV sitcom “Golden Girls” may describe the friendship of two alumni who met at Mississippi Valley State University over 50 years ago.

Written by Andrew Gold, the lines read: “Thank you for being a friend. Travel down the road and back again. Your heart is true, you’re a pal and a confidant.”

Dr. Emily DuBOSE Walker and Sharon Johnson Watson recently returned to Valley to celebrate their 50th year as graduates of the Class of 1974. They were encountered at the campus bookstore by the Delta Devils’ Gazette, reminiscing about their Valley experiences.

Their story reflects the significant impact MVSU has had on their lives, careers, and enduring bond. Watson, a Texarkana, Ark. native, majored in health and physical education, while Walker of Moss Point, Miss. majored in social science.

“Sharon was a Delta [Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.], and I wanted to pledge Delta,” Dr. Walker said. “She became my Dean of Pledges. After making membership into Delta, she became my closest friend.

We were roommates, we were in each other’s wedding. We traveled together, shared our achievements, and have remained friends for over 50 years.”

Why Valley? Watson said she followed her sister, who was already at Valley and in the band. She also followed her sister in becoming a Delta. Walker chose to stay in-state and attend a small, family-oriented university. Both became successful teachers in different states: Watson in Tennessee and Walker in Alabama.

“We were influenced by teachers we had at Valley that had patience, understanding and kindness, and we wanted to exemplify those same characteristics in our careers,” Walker said. “We advise current students to prepare for the future. Stay the course, have a plan to achieve their goals, work hard and trust God!”

Approaching graduation each year, the MVSU Office of Alumni Affairs invites members of the class who graduated from the university 50 years prior to a celebratory reunion, which includes a Golden Gala and participation in the commencement to receive their Golden Diploma.

During the May 3, 2024, Golden Gala, the Class of 1974 Golden Graduates presented a generous donation to MVSU.

Cheers, congratulations to MVSU Class of 2024



PHOTO BY ALIYAH HILL



PHOTO BY ALIYAH HILL



PHOTO BY AMBER BURROUGH

By Zapouria Wadley, Student Columnist

Hello, MVSU Family!
First, CONGRATULATIONS on completing another semester at the Valley! I am proud to announce that I am officially a Mississippi Valley State Alumna as of Saturday, May 4, 2024. It seems like my four-year college experience flew by! My advice to current students at MVSU is to make the most of your college experience because it will be over before you know it. I am celebrating my recent accomplishment, but I am looking

forward to what the future holds. I have been accepted into the Haslam College of Business at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville (UTK) and will be pursuing my Masters Degree in Management and Human Resources this upcoming fall. Although I am furthering my education at a predominately white institution, I will forever hold my HBCU experience near and dear to my heart. I am a PROUD Valley Alum, and as I always say, "Mississippi Valley State University MADE me, but UTK will enhance me."



PHOTO BY LATUYNNA EVANS

By Amber E. Stewart, Editor-in-Chief

Hats off to you!
During this spring season, I want to take time out to congratulate all graduates of the MVSU Class of 2024. You all have accomplished what you set out to do.
As you begin your new journey in life, I hope you cherish the memories, keep the words of wisdom near, and remember those who have helped guide you to your success.
I would also like to acknowledge all of the wonderful educators here at MVSU in celebration of National Teacher Appreciation Week (May 6-10) for providing the proper knowledge to us,



Stewart

and ensuring that we are prepared for the next level in life. Hats off to you all.
It is truly a good day at the Valley when students achieve their degrees because it is also a pat on the back to the educators for their outstanding jobs as well. May you all enjoy the fruits of your labor for you are very deserving of it!

Love & light,
Amber E



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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.

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MVSU choir ends semester with ‘crowd-pleasing’ concert

By Cortney Dyer, Graduate Student

On Thursday, April 25, Mississippi Valley State University Choir held its Spring 2024 Concert at First Presbyterian Church in Greenwood, Miss.



Cash

The audience heard multiple selections from the choir and special guest, Clarksdale High School Choir, under the direction of Andre Nawls.

This year’s concert was titled, “Songs of Life’s Journey: Psalms of Lament, Faith, Hope, and Praise.” Welcome and greetings were given by Choir Director Dr. Brandon Cash, as the ensemble made its way in the aisle to open up the concert by singing “Hear My Prayer” by Moses Hogan.

The listeners’ ears were highly attentive as the choir’s voices rang throughout the sanctuary. “It is always an opportune moment along with myself and other peers to sing with the MVSU choirs,”



A picture from the spring concert “Valley Singers” Performing “Striving After God” by Undine Smith Moore. PHOTO BY ARVIN JOHNSON.

said Trayvon Jack, a current sophomore and tenor in the choir.

Later during the concert, Cash revealed the new choir leaders voted in by their peers for the upcoming year. Cheers of excitement and congratulations eroded as each name was called.

Pink cords were also handed out to honor the musical accomplishments the graduating seniors achieved. “Throughout my years at Valley, the choir has been instrumental in helping me tackle academic stress by not only providing a

scholarship but also serving as an outlet,” said Jasmin Redmond, a graduating senior.

Following Clarksdale’s performance, the MVSU choir closed by singing “Close To Thee” arranged by R.E Wooten. Special thanks and final remarks were given by Dr. Cash as the choir made its way back to the aisle singing, “Lord Bless You and Keep You” to the audience.

“The choir delivered a stellar performance, flawlessly presenting a diverse selection of songs,” said Cash. “It was especially heartwarming to see

former student Andre Nawls and the Clarksdale High School Concert Choir join us onstage, and Mr. Ray Smithee’s piano and organ accompaniment added an extra layer of depth to the evening’s melodies.”

“I’ve never seen so many talented students in both University Choir and Valley Singers, said Kierre Swims a graduating senior. “I can’t wait to hear how well they do next year when they compete in Italy!”

Mass Communications Department celebrates students during annual luncheon

MVSU Communication honors scholars; features Delta TV news anchor

By Jaheim Wilder, Staff Writer

ITTA BENA, Miss.- On Thursday, May 2, 2024, the Department of Mass Communication at Mississippi Valley State University (MVSU) held its Annual Honors Luncheon at 11:30 a.m. in the Devera Ball Alumni House.

The event celebrated the achievements of graduating scholars in both Mass Communication and Speech Communication, along with the other upper-class students.

The luncheon began with inspiring remarks from Acting Department Chair Dr. Carolyn L. Gordon, who shared memories of her time with the students and reflected on their growth. The enthusiasm continued as keynote speaker Earl Phelps, from WABG-TV, discussed his career drive and academic perseverance. He recounted a pivotal moment when a professor doubted his potential to graduate, which he used as motivation to not only succeed but to also build a successful career spanning more than four decades.

A highlight of the luncheon was the



sharing of personal stories by parents, students, and faculty about life lessons gained at MVSU. Central themes of the event included viewing rejection as a form of redirection and the values of trust and patience.

One of the senior honorees, Zapouria Wadley, expressed heartfelt gratitude. “This year’s Mass Communication Honors Luncheon was beautiful,” she



Wadley



Bradley

said. “I’m grateful to have received the 2023-2024 Chair’s Award from Dr. Gordon, an honor I didn’t expect. The MVSU Mass Communication department will always hold a special place in my heart.”

Wadley was a co-recipient with senior Tahj “Ace” Bradley of the Chair’s Award. Other senior honorees were as follows: James Snipes for Broadcasting and the Turk-Cannon Trailblazer

Awards; Jar’Kevious Edwards, Special Achievement – Speech; and Timothy Fisher and Amber Stewart, Special Achievement – Theater.

In journalism, the DDG recognized Editor-In-Chief Amber Stewart with a special recognition trophy for her dedication to going above and beyond the call of duty. Gazette Certificates of Award and Appreciation were awarded to Stewart, Myiesha Smith (Social Media Editor), Ekaterina Minakova (MVSU Global Editor), Joshua Mahoney (Sports Editor), Zapouria Wadley (Columnist), Jaylia Reed (Staff Writer), Shomari Hunt (Staff Writer), Hillary Victor (Staff Writer), Jaheim Wilder (Staff Writer); and senior Averii Sanders (Advertising Member/Staff Writer).

The seniors were recognized for their resilience and excellence, not only in communication but also in leadership and business. The department extended its best wishes to the seniors for their future successes. In the words of B.B. King, “The beautiful thing about learning is that no one can take it away from you.”

MVSU faculty receives hands-on training in Artificial Intelligence

DDG Staff Report

The Mississippi Valley State University Office of Faculty Development held an Artificial Intelligence (AI) workshop in April to provide faculty members with insight into the use of AI in education and research.

Al Smith of Purpix Education presented the workshop titled, “Advancing Higher Education with AI.” Smith designed his presentation as an easy-to-learn, hands-on activity that equipped faculty with the “knowledge, skills and practical strategies necessary to seamlessly integrate AI into the curriculum.”

Participants became excited when Smith engaged them in an exercise

that showed them how AI can write or compose their student learning outcomes (SLOs). He said, all the educators will have to do is tweak the SLOs according to what they will teach.

Several faculty members expressed that the workshop helped them to have a more open mind about AI use in the classroom. They each received certificates after participating in the two-hour professional development session.

According to Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs Dr. Abigail Newsome’s updates during a later full faculty senate meeting, there will be more AI workshops, seminars, and technology training.



Participating faculty members display their certificates as presenter Al Smith kneels. PHOTO BY DR. ABIGAIL NEWSOME



MVSU 2024 Hooding Ceremony

PHOTOS BY LATUNYA EVANS, MVSU COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING

MVSU 2024 Student-Athlete Stole Ceremony

PHOTOS BY ALIYAH HILL, DEPARTMENT OF ATHLETICS



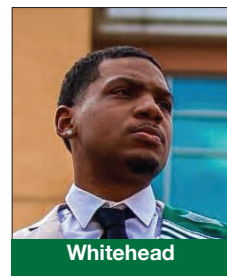
APPLAUDING
“Ms. Kate!”



The Gazette Team would like to acknowledge Exchange Student **Ekaterina Minakova**, affectionately known as “Ms. Kate,” for her diligent work as the editor for the “**MVSU Global**” international page of the Delta Devils’ Gazette (DDG) newspaper. Thanks, Ms. Kate for keeping our readers informed and updated with the news involving MVSU’s international students and activities. She has been punctual, enthusiastic and dedicated to her tasks and responsibilities to the DDG and to the field of journalism. We honor her for that. Although Ms. Kate is returning to her home university in Russia, we extend our love and gratitude, and we will remember her devotion to her craft.

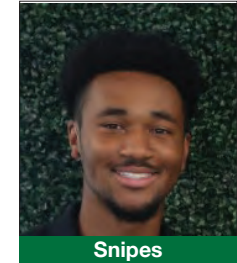
Best Wishes,
Amber E. Stewart, Editor-in-Chief
and the DDG Team

Students’ Voices Question:
How was your undergraduate experience at MVSU?



“My experience as an undergraduate was awesome. I met a bunch of wonderful people. Valley taught me numerous of things such as construction work and the ins and outs of construction. I plan on using my skills to help fulfill a career in my major.”
— **LaPatrick Whitehead**
Engineering Technology

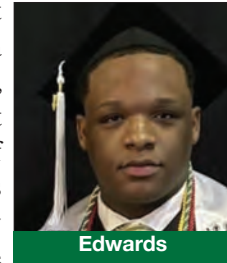
without me. I am proud to say that I am apart of keeping Dr. J.H. White’s legacy alive.”
— **JaQuae Edwards**
Speech Comm. and Mr. MVSU 2023-2024



“I am a proud mass communications graduate from MVSU, and I’m proud to be part of the baseball team. Almost everyone in college has a different path or trajectory of how their scholastic career goes. For some of us, this journey took four years, for some it took longer than that, and for some such as myself, it took less time than that. I was blessed to be able to achieve this degree in two years. But for all of us in our journey here at Valley, we have come to realize that Valley is a family. People like Dreylin Holmes, Maury Weaver, Ty Washington (shoutout to my fellow Mass Comm scholars) and my entire team for both of my years here have truly made this experience one to remember for life. ... Valley will always hold a special place in my heart.”

— **James Snipes**
Mass Communication

“I knew that I was not just a student ID number, but a product and reflection of this prestigious institution. I knew that I had a place here at the University and a home away from home. The experience I’ve had as an undergraduate was provided and shared through strong bonds and professional relationships with students, faculty, and staff. I often wonder where I would be without MVSU but fail to find the answer each time. The truth of the matter is, it was never me without MVSU, but MVSU



22nd Annual
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2-Day Weekend “Jus’ Da’ Blues”



Friday, JULY 12 6PM-10 PM Saturday, JULY 13 5 PM-10 PM

Featuring the following artists: **Barry Blakely ✧ Little Joe Ayers ✧ Little Willie Farmer ✧ Ra’Shad the Blues Kid ✧ Jerry Fair ✧ Bre Wooten ✧ Lewis Johnson ✧ and many others**

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DIRECTIONS:

I-55 Exit 195 (Duck Hill); Approximately 4.1 miles to Elliott Field

Greenwood's Battle of the Bands



Leflore Co. High School 1st Place, Division A. PHOTO BY AMBER BURROUGH

By Amber Burrough, Staff Writer

GREENWOOD, Miss.— The Greenwood High School Band Booster presented the Battle of the Bands on Sunday, May 6, 2024.

Greenwood High School's (GHS) band director, Olander Emmons, an emerging Southern soul artist from the Mississippi Delta and an alumnus of GHS Class of 1995, played a pivotal role in the event.

Emmons, viewed as a highly talented individual, is dedicated to nurturing creativity among his students. Reflecting on his journey, he said, "I am a product of the Greenwood Band Department." He emphasized his enthusiasm for joining GHS as an assistant, citing his memorable experiences working under his high school director both as a student and later as a colleague.

Emmons assumed the role of assistant band director for the Greenwood Band Department in 2006-2007,

contributing significantly to its growth. He underscored his commitment to excellence, ensuring his students were well-prepared for performances, regardless of competition, as they were a representation of him and his mentorship.

The Battle of the Bands featured two divisions, A and AA. In Division A, Leflore County High School from Itta Bena, Miss., directed by Tremeris Sanderson, won first place, and Ruleville Central High School, under the direction of Lavert Pickens, secured second place.

Meanwhile, in Division AA, Clarksdale High School, led by Jakevius Richardson, clinched the top spot, followed by Amanda Elzy High School, directed by Neiamiah Payton, in second place.

Fans were thrilled as all participating bands delivered fantastic performances, showcasing their musical prowess and dedication to the art.

G.L.A.S.S. holds its Autism Awareness Celebration



Patrice Beamon, Camden Beamon, Miranda Hodge and Benjamin Hodge.

By Miranda Hodge, G.L.A.S.S. Advisory Board Member

The Greenwood-Leflore Autism Spectrum Society (G.L.A.S.S.) held its annual Autism Awareness Celebration on Saturday, April 27, 2024, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Leflore County Agri-Center in Greenwood, Miss.

The event was held to promote Autism Awareness Month by highlighting community activities designed to support, educate, advocate and empower individuals diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorders and other disabilities.

Family members, supporters, and friends organized walking teams. The

participants enjoyed free food, games for children and adults, information booths, a health fair, entertainment, a T-shirt sale, door prizes, and a silent auction.

All proceeds from the Autism Awareness Celebration are used to fund G.L.A.S.S. projects such as professional development, meetings, autism awareness/community events, and scholarships for local high school graduates with autism and other disabilities who plan to further their education beyond high school.

Individuals who are interested in learning more about G.L.A.S.S. may contact Kassie Carter at 662-455-4393.

Call Us at 662-453-4211

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WWW.NOBODYBEATSACANNONDEAL.COM



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MOTORS OF MISSISSIPPI



Spring Stole Ceremony 2024: Athletes reflect on their time at ‘The Valley’

Hillary Victor, Staff Writer

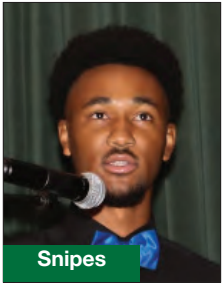
On May 3, 2024, the Spring athletic graduate stole ceremony was held at Mississippi Valley State University’s Walter Roberts Auditorium in the H.G. Carpenter Building.

The ceremony began with a welcome from Athletic Academic Counselor Gloria Newell, Then the graduates made their formal entrance wearing all-black attire.

Athletic Trainer Antanecia Kinds greeted and thanked her fellow student-athletes for all their hard work and passion throughout the last four years. Opening remarks were given by the University’s eighth President, Dr. Jerryl Briggs.

Next, four graduating seniors gave their “My Time at Valley” speeches. The first was baseball player James Snipes, graduating mass, comm major. He discussed how it is important to treat others with kindness, because you never know what they could be going through at that time. “All of us are [now] set up to succeed with the qualities needed to flourish in the world. Time management, discipline, teamwork, responsibility, accountability, resilience, and adaptability are just some of the key elements that we acquired during our time as a student-athlete and those very things will be why we successful in life.” He congratulated his classmates and teammates and thanked Valley for everything.

Secondly, softball player and Miss

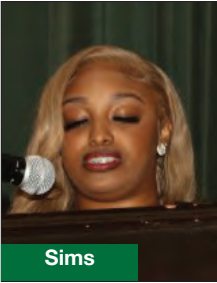


Snipes

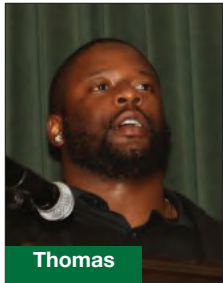


PHOTO BY ALIYAH HILL

MVSU Kathleen Sims, graduating with a bachelors in sociology spoke. She went over how we must not mourn this end but share the legacy. MVSU is where I forged lifelong friendships and found mentors who believed in my dreams even when I doubted myself. It’s where I was challenged to think critically, to question the status quo, and to strive for excellence in everything I do. But perhaps most



Sims



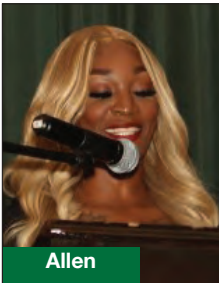
Thomas

importantly, MVSU is where I learned the true value of resilience and perseverance.” She thanked Valley for the memories and lessons learned.

Thirdly, football

player Remiello Thomas, graduating with a bachelors in HYPER, conversed about how when he first came to Valley, he was not going to class and slacking, but with time and being around the environment, he found his motivation and ended up graduating with a 3.0 GPA and joined an organization on top of athletics. “I came to play football, but I always enjoyed HBCU bands. My auntie and my coach were Alumni of Valley. It was hard, but it was fair. I crossed Omega Psi Phi and became the chapter president. I am grateful for the leadership opportunity and bond that will come from it,” Thomas exhorted.

Lastly, Luttwanda Allen, who is graduating with her master’s in business. Allen gave a shoutout to her fellow athletes, “Graduating is a



Allen

major accomplishment, and I know firsthand the dedication and hard work that it takes to balance both schoolwork and athletics.” She continued to pay tribute to her Alma Mater: “As I’ve grown from an eager undergraduate to a focused graduate student, my HBCU has been the fertile ground where my dreams and ambitions have taken root, guided by the wisdom of past generations and the vibrant spirit of my peers. Here, I’ve not only gained knowledge but also a sense of purpose and a commitment to excellence that I’ll carry with me long after I leave these hallowed halls.”

The student athletes were then presented with their athletic stoles by Senior Assoc. AD Jarred Ratliff and Athletic Academic Counselor Gloria Newell.

“There is no one like you, there should not be another person like you,” said Ratliff. “Authenticity is everything, protects your energy at all costs. My uncle once said ‘I adjust my own thermostat.’” He then congratulated and thanked the hard-working athletes one last time.

Other graduating athletes share their reflections with the Delta Devils’ Gazette.

“I finally did it after six years, I am proud of myself and my teammates who graduated,” said graduate Quin Bennett. “Being a student is hard enough but also being a full-time athlete at the same time is challenging. College baseball is the best experience I have had. Thank you, Valley.”

“I am so glad I got to experience this celebration with my fellow athletes,” said graduate Morgan Gutierrez. “Being a college student is hard, but being a college student athlete is a responsibility.”

PHOTO OF THE MONTH

Baseball Seniors Honored on Senior Day



These baseball seniors were honored on Senior Day. Seniors pictured from left to right: Quin Bennett, Isaiah Valenzuela, Ty Washington, Maury Weaver , Armando Sierra, Will Menendez, Dreylin Holmes, Hunter Stallings, Jack Early, Dylan Whitfield, Kyndell Dolphin and Davon Mims. PHOTO BY ALIYAH HILL