

# VALLEY CONNECTION

MISSISSIPPI VALLEY STATE ALUMNI MAGAZINE

**SPRING 2017**

Committed to  
**SERVICE**



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On the cover: Dr. Cherae Farmer – Dixon, Dean of the School of Denistry - Meharry Medical College





# FourthFloor

## From the president

Greetings MVSU Alumni and Friends,

As I end my 3rd calendar year and begin my 4th academic year at MVSU, I look back and am pleased with the progress WE have made together. Although there are many more things to do, I celebrate daily our accomplishments to date. Here are a few noteworthy things WE all should take pride in:

- The campus physical appearance, according to young and young at heart alums, has never looked so good and inviting. Visitors and prospective students consistently comment on how beautiful the campus is looking.
- Two years and counting of over \$1 million raised from alumni, faculty, students, corporations, foundations and friends of "The Valley." This, along with the amount of Valley paraphernalia that is being sold & worn, is a clear sign of school pride and internal & external support for OUR University.
- Student Success (increased enrollment, graduation & retention rates, holistic student development & career enhancement) is being actively achieved and demonstrated. One brief, yet clear example of career enhancement/return on investment is the fact that this year our students earned internships and/or jobs with Microsoft, Merrill Lynch, Ingalls, Sanderson Farms and Corporate Walmart. And this year 122 of our student-athletes were named to the SWAC All-Academic Teams, ranking us 4th overall.
- New academic offerings and degree programs - The past 2 years, we have started masters programs in Sport Administration & Convergent Media, and undergraduate degree offerings & concentrations in Pre-Law/Legal Studies, General Studies and Sound Recording Technology.

Mississippi Valley State University is needed more today than ever. With the rising cost of tuition across the nation, political atmosphere and social climate, we need to maintain a safe haven for our students. It is critical to the livelihood of Valley and our students to become productive, contributing citizens to combat the many issues they will face once they leave our beloved institution.

How can you help?

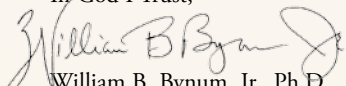
It is important that our alumni and friends rally behind us to assist in our recruitment, lobbying efforts with the legislature and fundraising.

More importantly, alumni, I want you to continue to boast proudly of your Valley experiences. Valley is an institution like none other. The family environment and nurturing that students receive from individual professors and staff members is incomparable to any other institution I've worked. Let people know about the love, care and support that they can expect once they choose MVSU.

Lastly, our overall State appropriation has been severely cut this past year, and more cuts are anticipated this academic year. With over \$1 million in budget cuts, it is going to be near impossible to sustain programs and other necessities of the University without increased giving. We need greater support. Our development officers are often asked for statistics on alumni giving from potential corporate & foundation donors. They don't ask about the overall amount, rather they ask the percentage of alumni that invest in the institution, for that will determine how much they are willing to give, if any. The bottom line for corporations and foundations is, if your alumni are not willing to give back, then why should we?

Mississippi Valley State University is indeed a "Jewel of the MS Delta." Please join me and many others in helping to maintain this "Jewel" so that Valley can thrive for many years to come, and not just simply survive.

In-God I Trust,

  
William B. Bynum, Jr., Ph.D.  
7th President

# UNIVERSITY NOTES



## STUDENT SUCCESS ON THE RISE AT THE VALLEY

“Close your eyes and picture the Delta without Mississippi Valley State University (MVSU) in it,” said MVSU President William B. Bynum, Jr. during his State of the University address.

“Homes would be in foreclosure, cars would be repossessed, and the financial livelihood of many individuals and their families would be in serious jeopardy.”

“It would also mean the cycle of poverty in the Delta would become worse, because the opportunity for individuals to educate themselves at this ‘Jewel of the MS Delta’ would not exist,” he added.

Bynum’s use of imagery settled into the hearts and minds of MVSU’s faculty and staff as he gave an update of the University’s triumphs and small ‘bumps in the road.’

He said one of the University’s accomplishments that he is most proud of is its ability to produce outstanding, care ready scholars and productive citizens.

“Our students have received some outstanding offers in terms of jobs and internships,” continued Bynum. “We have had students placed with Microsoft, Merrill Lynch, Ingalls and Corporate Wal-Mart to name a few.”

He also announced student athletes at MVSU graduate at a higher rate than the regular student body, and 122 of the University’s student athletes made the Southwestern Athletic Conference (SWAC) All-Academic Team.

The group maintained over a 3.0 grade point average while competing in their respective sports. This accomplishment placed MVSU fourth in the SWAC.

After the audience applauded the efforts and accomplishments of the University’s students, another round of applause was granted due to the University’s current student enrollment status.

“As of now, we are tracking ahead of last year’s 2,509 head count, and out of state enrollment is increasing,” continued Bynum.

Bynum also announced the return of the Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (ROTC) program and the University’s new master’s programs in convergent media and sports administration.

The continued renovation of College Hall I, which will add 140 additional beds, will continue during the Fall semester, and phase one renovations for the original president’s house, Friendship Manor, have been completed. Phase two is scheduled to begin during the upcoming year. The space will be available for meetings and receptions.

Bynum also said the Departments of English and Foreign Languages, Mass Communications, University College and Athletics are working with architects to design the interior of the Academic Skills building in which they will be housed in the future.

“We will continue with our low cost, high impact projects,” he said.

The University received \$7.5 million for the renovations of Edna Horton Hall, which will add 275 additional beds, and plans to lobby the legislature for funds to improve the Jacob Aron Student Union is set for this year.

In addition to student success and face-lifts, the Office of Residential Life will launch a module that will allow students to manage their housing options and requests 24/7 online.

Bynum is extremely pleased with the two-year success of the Office of University Advancement.

“With the help of faculty, staff, students, corporations, foundations and the community, the Office of Advancement has exceeded its goal of \$1 million for the second time,” he continued.

He is also grateful for the \$2.5 million increase in sponsored research, from \$6.6 million to \$9.1 million during the 2015-16 academic year.

As previously mentioned, the University did face a few ‘bumps in the road’ during the academic year.

“We had a slight tuition increase of 3 percent and fee increase of 2 percent,” said Bynum. “We hate to have any increase for our student body, but this was by far the lowest increase of all the IHL institutions.”

MVSU also faced budget cuts amounting to approximately \$500,000 last year and anticipate \$500,000 additional in 2016-17.

Despite these challenges, if we commit to recommitting to our One Goal (Student Success), One Team (University and Community Stakeholders working together), and One Valley (School Pride and Spirituality), we will continue to see “The Valley” thrive and not simply survive.

## VALLEY RECEIVES FUNDS FROM NSF

Mississippi Valley State University (MVSU) Department of Mathematics, Computer and Information Sciences was awarded over \$2 million in funds to enhance surrounding communities through its HBCU-UP III initiative.

The funds were awarded to the University by the National Science Foundation (NSF). Each year, NSF supports an average of about 200,000 scientists, engineers, educators and students at universities, laboratories and field sites all over the United States and throughout the world, from Alaska to Alabama to Africa to Antarctica.

MVSU has been receiving funds from the NSF for a number of years, and according to Timothy Holston, project director and graduate school readiness coordinator, the primary purpose of the grant is to encourage undergraduate and high school students to pursue studies in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) disciplines.

"In order to pursue a degree in STEM, students must be proficient in mathematics," said Holston. "We try to enrich the skills of students by improving or enhancing the skills of their teachers."

This summer, the STEM department will host a Teachers Teaching Teachers Clinic. It is a five-week clinical experience that is used to enhance the pedagogical skills of teachers and improve the math and science skills of high school students. It is also designed to strengthen the content knowledge of its participants as well as acquaint them with new and innovative methods of instructional delivery.

"Our goal is to train teachers so that when they return to their respective schools, they are able to train other teachers," said Holston.

NSF funds are also being used to provide graduate school readiness services. "We work with our students to ensure that they are prepared for graduate school," said Dr. Earlean Anderson, veteran initiatives co-coordinator.

"We offer tutorial services for students who plan to take the graduate record examination, review their applications for graduate school, and inform them about various career readiness programs at MVSU."

The veteran initiative, co-coordinated by Dr. Raymond Williams, is another component of HBCU-UP III.

"One of the goals of MVSU is to make sure various offices such as financial aid and student records are veteran friendly," said Holston. "We want to make sure that we are prepared for our first cohort of veteran students during Fall 2016."

MVSU recently hosted a veteran recruitment workshop. The purpose of the workshop was to inform veterans about the educational opportunities that have been made available for them.

Holston said MVSU also plans to implement various services to attract and accommodate veterans.

## VALLEY STATE PARTNERS WITH VIRGINIA TECH TO HOST FIRST ROBOTICS COMPETITION KICK OFF

The University's Department of Engineering Technology has entered into collaboration with Virginia Tech and the Sunflower County Consolidated School District (SCCSD) in a partially funded National Science Foundation (1511792) robotics collaborative titled "Actualizing STEM Potential in the Mississippi Delta."

The program is an adapted version of a robotics collaborative program co-developed by the lead investigator, Dr. Brenda R. Brand, associate professor in science education at Virginia Tech. Dr. Brand, a native of Shaw, Miss. has fought hard for several years to secure funding to expand this program to her Mississippi home. The Virginia model program has been highly successful and is now entering its 16th year.

She is excited to see the yearlong, after school robotics program off to a great start at Gentry High School in Indianola, Miss. At the high school, the facilitative team consists of John Cochran, math instructor; James Jimison, metal trades instructor; Ralph Smith, computer and technology consultant; and Kenya Horn, administrative supervisor.

High school students from Gentry and Ruleville High Schools will design, construct, and operate a complex robot that must perform specific tasks. These students will be assisted by ten college mentors from the Departments of Engineering Technology and Mathematics, Computer and Information Sciences at MVSU. Students are under the supervision of Dr. Qiang He, Lemorris Strong, and Dr. Dan Trent. Strong and Dr. Trent, as well as Cochran, Jimison and Horn spent time on the campus of Virginia Tech last summer in preparation for the program building and programming robots and getting an overview of the Virginia program.

The centerpiece of the program is participation in a national robotics competition called FIRST - For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology. FIRST teams from across the United States and abroad compete at various sites across the world to solve a common problem utilizing only materials specified by FIRST.

Robots must weigh no more than 120 pounds, must meet certain size restrictions, and perform various tasks outlined within each year's challenge. Students are free to design the robot in any manner that solves the problem. Students will design, strategize, plan, troubleshoot, re-design, build, and operate the robot. All of the design and construction takes place in a six week time frame.

A FIRST robotics team consists of high school students, college mentors, high school and university faculty, parents, grandparents, family members, local businesses, and the community.

"A great team embraces involvement by many individuals," said Brand. "More people bring more ideas and will help to build a more robust robot. The community is invited to attend this kickoff event and to become involved. This is our first year of competition and we expect it to be a blast!"



## MVSU INTRODUCES SOUND RECORDING TECHNOLOGY CONCENTRATION

The Department of Fine Arts at Mississippi Valley State University (MVSU) offers a new concentration.

Students will have the opportunity to earn a bachelor's degree in music with a concentration in sound recording technology.

"It will be a music degree with an emphasis on the fundamental principles of audio and audio mixing," said Dr. Alphonso Sanders, chair of Fine Arts.

According to Sanders, the purpose of the concentration is to add a needed technology component to the existing degree program.

"This is an effort to meet the modern student's interest in music recording," he added.

Graduates will have the opportunity to seek employment in a variety of careers, most of which are entrepreneurship categories.

The program's goals are to prepare students for careers as recording technicians, mixing engineers, live sound recorders, recording studio owners, and entertainment industry employees. "Music and many other things in our modern society are being driven by technology," said Sanders.

"This program will allow MVSU to give students the opportunity to choose between a traditional route of music and a more technological route."

The educational focus of the new degree program will ensure that students will have the skill-sets, theoretical context and background needed to be successful practitioners in the field of music.

Sound Recording Technology courses will be offered in the B.B. King Recording Studio which is the only studio at a university in the nation bearing the name of the late Blues musician.

The instructional delivery methods will be predominately hands on training by qualified instructors in the field of music and recording technology. Lectures, workshops, clinics, and visiting artists will also aid in the instructional methods.

The admission process will remain the same as required by the University and the Department of Fine Arts for existing degree programs.

"This program will allow MVSU to be just as competitive as other institutions that offer recording technology programs," said Sanders

## PHI BETA SIGMA WINS BIG DURING STATE CONFERENCE

The Delta Phi Chapter of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc., received awards in multiple disciplines during the 2016 Phi Beta Sigma State Leadership Conference in Jackson, Miss.

Theodore Johnson received an award for having the highest grade point average (GPA) in the state; Jatarius Harris won athlete of the year; Randy Nicholas won the oratorical contest; Lloyd Dixon, director of financial aid at Mississippi Valley State University (MVSU) and Phi Beta Sigma advisor, received the advisor of the year award and the entire chapter received an award for having the highest GPA, collectively, and an award for being the most improved chapter in the State.

Johnson's cumulative GPA is 3.62. He said when his name was announced during the conference, he was astonished. "I have a higher standard for myself," he said. "I had been aspiring to earn a higher GPA, and that is why this award came as a total shock to me," added Johnson.

"After receiving the award, I felt so accomplished," he continued.

To be nominated for awards, each institution was required to submit current statistics on each member of their particular chapter and a letter which explained why the chapter's advisor should receive the advisor of the year award.

According to Dixon, the competition was intense. He said, "You really do not know who will win until you get to the conference." "This just proves the level of talent and persistence that the collegial chapter at MVSU has and the guys are actually listening to my advice. It was definitely a wonderful experience."

Dixon has been a member of Phi Beta Sigma since 1987. "Their accomplishments remind me of the agility and competitive drive I had during our competitions," added Dixon. "I am so proud of them!"

As advisor, Dixon said he does not receive monetary compensation, but he tries to remain visible in the lives of the collegiate members. "I try to render as much help as I can to them and it has definitely paid off."



## DRA PARTNERSHIP WITH MVSU SEEKS TO BOOST MINORITY ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE DELTA

*Pictured from left are Bill Allen, President and Founder, Allen Entrepreneurial Institute; Chris Masingill, Federal Co-Chairman, Delta Regional Authority; Dr. Curressia Brown, Acting Chair, Department of Business Education, Mississippi Valley State University (MVSU); and Dr. William B. Bynum Jr., President, MVSU.*

Five Historically Black Colleges and Universities in the Delta region will empower aspiring student entrepreneurs to develop their ideas for business success through the inaugural HBCU Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Initiative.

The Initiative will help HBCUs and their student populations expand their local entrepreneurial ecosystem by engaging HBCU leaders, community leaders, and student entrepreneurs in a series of activities that support the growth of minority-owned businesses on college campuses in the Delta region.

“Entrepreneurship presents an important opportunity for youth to channel their creativity into business success and economic activity for their local community,” DRA federal co-chairman Chris Masingill said. “HBCU campuses present a great space to cultivate student entrepreneurs and build a more inclusive and supportive ecosystem for

minority entrepreneurship to grow and help transform the Delta.”

Campuses participating in the inaugural round of the Initiative were selected through a competitive application process. The selected schools will receive funding and support to host a two-day technical assistance and rapid acceleration workshop to teach aspiring and advanced student entrepreneurs about the skills and resources needed to launch and scale their businesses.

“AEI is committed to expanding the entrepreneurial mindset of HBCUs and their students within the Delta region,” said Bill Allen, founder and president of the AEI. “Through our joint efforts, we will work to expand the number and size of minority and women owned businesses in the U.S. by partnering with and preparing our HBCU students to become tomorrow’s business owners.

“MVSU is excited to be apart of such a profound initiative that will help continue to spur economic growth opportunities for the Mississippi Delta region,” said MVSU President William Bynum. “This is a great opportunity for students to gain valuable tools and resources as they venture into entrepreneurship.”

The HBCU Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Initiative is part of the DRA’s Delta Entrepreneurship Network that is identifying, connecting, and growing entrepreneurs into talented, innovative drivers of the Delta’s local and regional economies. DEN recently hosted a HBCU roundtable conversation with presidents and business college deans of the region’s HBCUs to discuss opportunities to increase entrepreneurship among minority populations and the role that HBCUs can and should play in supporting youth entrepreneurship.





MILTON

## MVSU ANNOUNCES NEW BAND LEADERSHIP

Mississippi Valley State University selects seasoned music professional Kenneth Milton to lead the Mean Green Marching Machine (MGMM) as director of bands and instructor of music along with other auxiliary bands.

Tomisha Brock has joined the University as associate director of bands and assistant professor of music.

"I would like to thank the band search committee led by Dr. Briggs and Dr. Gibson as well as the MGMM drum major, section leaders and co-captains of the Satin Dolls who took the challenge and process very seriously," said Dr. William B. Bynum Jr., MVSU president.

Milton has been with MVSU since 1991, serving in various capacities with the band and music department with his most recent position of associate director of bands/instructor of music. Milton holds bachelor and master's degrees in music education from Jackson State University.

"His experience and familiarity with the band made him the ideal candidate for the director's position," said Bynum. "We look forward to his leadership in continuing to move the Mean Green Marching Machine to greater heights."

Most recently, Brock served as director of university bands at Elizabeth City State University for 5 years. Brock holds a bachelor's degree in music education from Virginia State University and a master's in music education from Norfolk State University. She is in the process of completing a doctorate degree at the University of North Carolina - Greensboro.

"Brock brings a host of music directing experience and accomplishments to MVSU and was highly recommended by the music faculty," said Bynum. "She also has significant teaching experience which will be extremely beneficial to our music department."

## MVSU FORMS PARTNERSHIP WITH HOLMES COMMUNITY COLLEGE



*Pictured front row, from left are Dr. Walter Roberts, HCC board of trustees vice-president, Dr. William Bynum, MVSU president; and Dr. Jim Haffey, HCC president; second row, Luke Jones, HCC director of career technical education, Goodman Campus; Dr. Constance Bland, vice president of academic affairs, MVSU; Michelle Burney, HCC vice-president, Grenada Campus; Dr. Sharon Freeman, assistant vice president of Institutional Research, MVSU; Dr. Don Burnham, HCC vice-president, Ridgeland Campus; Dr. Kenneth Done, assistant vice president/distance & online education, MVSU; Jenny Jones, HCC academic dean, Goodman Campus.*

Mississippi Valley State University (MVSU) and Holmes Community College have established an educational partnership.

The partnership will allow MVSU to provide Holmes graduates access to a 4-year degree on the Goodman campus.

According to Dr. Kenneth Done, assistant vice president of distance and online education, this is an opportunity to broaden MVSU's brand and make the University more visible in the Holmes County area.

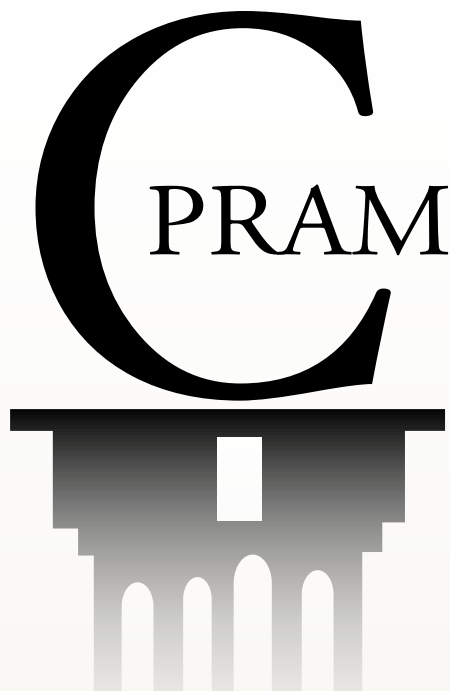
"The partnership allows MVSU an opportunity to increase enrollment, while meeting the needs of students who cannot come to the main campus," he added. "It affords us the opportunity to appeal to more students where they are located."

The goal of the partnership is to also improve the coordination of degree programs between the two institutions in order to maximize movement of students from the community college to the University.

"Holmes offers the first two years of the college academic program, and MVSU provides the third and fourth years, along with graduate study," added Done.

The educational partnership will also allow faculty and staff members of Holmes who meet the necessary prerequisites to register for up to 6 credit hours per semester at MVSU at a reduced rate of 50 percent tuition.

"We are excited about this partnership and look forward to growing our ever expanding reach of the Valley," said Done.



## COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING STAFF WINS CPRAM HONORS

The Office of Communications and Marketing staff at Mississippi Valley State University recently won four awards at the College Public Relations Association of Mississippi (CPRAM) Conference held in Ocean Springs, Miss.

The University's Communiqué won a second place award in the newsletter category. On the winning team were Maxine Greenleaf, director; and Joseph Cotton, associate graphic designer.

Senior Graphic Designer John McCall won third place in the digital art/photo illustration category for his 'Serving with a Purpose' stadium banner design.

Greenleaf and McCall won first place honors for the University's Donor Thank You video in the creative partners category. The video was a partnership with Broadcast Media Group based in Starkville, Miss. Also, the pair won first place for a Fine Arts brochure.

Other competitors in the senior division included Alcorn State University, Jackson State University, Mississippi State University, Mississippi University for Women, University of Southern Mississippi, University of Mississippi and William Carey University.

CPRAM promotes excellence in public relations at public and private four- and two-year educational institutions in the state. Mississippi's four-year institutions compete in the senior division and community colleges in the junior division. This year, the organization received over 300 entries in both divisions.

## WASHINGTON NAMED MVSU HUMANITIES TEACHER OF THE YEAR



WASHINGTON

Assistant Professor Barbara J.P. Washington has been selected by the Office of Academic Affairs at Mississippi Valley State University as the Humanities Teacher of the Year. The award is given by the Mississippi Humanities Council.

Washington delivered a lecture titled, "Teaching as a Profession/Passion."

Washington holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Mississippi Valley State University (MVSU) and Master of Education degree from The University of Mississippi - both in English Education.

She joined the Department of English and Foreign Languages at MVSU in 1974 as an instructor. While at the University, she has held numerous roles such as Honors College director, Writing Center professional tutor, and student teacher supervisor.

Her professional memberships include the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Mississippi Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Phi Delta Kappa, National Council of Teachers of English, Mississippi Congress of Parents and Teachers, and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated.

Washington has served as an Education Advisory Committee member for the Leflore County School District, advisor for Alpha Chi Honor Society, Region IV Director of Alpha Kappa Mu Honor Society, and head coach and co-coach of the Honda All-Star Academic Team.

Over her career, she has earned numerous honors including Teacher of the Year, NAFEO Distinguished Alumni, and William Winter Faculty Scholar of the Year, SACS Outstanding Services Rendered, just to name a few.

She has actively served her community through local, state, regional and national organizations. Washington served as secretary, northern regional coordinator, publicity coordinator and director for the state Parent Teacher Association; numerous roles for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools; PTSA president - Leflore County Elementary and High Schools; Sunday School teacher; among a host of other volunteer efforts.

## NCAA RENEWS VALLEY'S AASP GRANT FOR THIRD YEAR

The Athletics Department recently renewed a grant giving \$300,000 to support student-athlete academic success.

The grant is the second installment of a \$900,000 award the department received from the NCAA Accelerating Academic Success Program (AASP) meant to encourage student-athlete academic achievement.

"I was extremely pleased when I learned the NCAA AASP Grant Committee approved our Year 1 Report without any hesitation," said Dianthia Ford-Kee, athletics director at Mississippi Valley State University (MVSU). "I felt our team was prepared and our presentation would affirm that the resources granted to Mississippi Valley State University are making a major impact on the academic success of our student-athletes."

Grant recipients are required to complete a report on how funds have been allocated to help students prior to receiving subsequent installments of the grant. Ford-Kee noted that in previous years, several schools were not approved right away for year 2 of the AASP grant, so





the athletics department was pleased that the grant was renewed without any complications.

"The selection committee appreciates all of the commitment and work completed by your staff over the first year," said Bernard Franklin, executive vice president of education and community engagement at the NCAA. "It is clear that your institution has embraced the purpose and goals of this program."

In order to demonstrate the effectiveness of the award in its first year, the athletics department put together a video explaining both the challenges unique to MVSU and the successes it has had over the past year. The video was shown to the NCAA AASP Grant Committee when they visited campus. The video highlighted several achievements, including the grand opening of the Academic Skills Parlor, the installation of a new computer lab for athletes, hiring new staff to tutor and advise students under Student-Athlete Academic Services, and installing WiFi on buses.

During the presentations to the grant committee, other academic successes were highlighted. Every team on campus maintained an average GPA above a 2.6, and five teams had averages above a 3.0. The average for all teams is 2.996.

## JESSICA KERN NAMED AS HEAD WOMEN'S BASKETBALL COACH

by LaMonica Scott '08

Mississippi Valley State University's Director of Athletics Dianthia Ford-Kee announced Jessica Kern as the fourth head women's basketball coach on April 4, 2016.

"It is our pleasure to welcome Coach Jessica Kern to the Mississippi Valley family, said Ford-Kee, "She brings to us a wealth of knowledge and experience that will move our program in the right direction. She has proven she has the ability to motivate players to excel on and off the playing surface and to build a championship caliber program."

Kern comes to the Devilettes after serving as an assistant coach for Furman University. Furman ended their regular season in fifth place with a 15-16 record and advanced to the semi-final game of the Southern Conference Women's Basketball Tournament.

"I would like to thank President Bynum, Mrs. Ford-Kee and the selection committee for selecting me. I am honored that I was selected to lead this program, stated Kern, "I ask the administration, faculty, staff and surrounding communities, that you open your arms to the young ladies that



KERN

will be playing underneath me. They will walk with discipline; they will carry themselves with respect and will respect this institution."

Prior to Furman, Kern was the head women's basketball coach at Lincoln University (PA), taking over a program in 2011 that had won just three games the previous season. In her first season at the helm, she coached the Lady Lions to seven victories, 10 triumphs the following year, and to a 12-16 season in 2013-14 before posting a 22-9 mark her final season.

During her second season at Lincoln, she made school history, as the first basketball coach to advance in post season play, defeating powerhouse, Johnson C. Smith 50-46, in the CIAA Basketball Tournament after the school moved from NCAA Division III to Division II in 2010.

In her third season at the helm of the Lincoln Lions, she helped guide the program's first win over a NCAA Division I opponent, a 94-86 triumph over Morgan State, and later directed her team from a 16-point second half deficit to beat Winston-Salem State, 64-62, in the 2014 CIAA Basketball Tournament.

The 2014-15 season saw Kern capture the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA) Coach of the Year honors after leading her squad to a 22-9 record and a share of the CIAA Northern Division title. The 22 wins marked a school record and carried Lincoln to a CIAA Tournament championship game appearance, where the Lady Lions fell to Virginia State.

Before accepting the head coaching position at Lincoln, she served as an assistant coach and media specialist at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee of the Horizon League for the 2010-11 campaign, immediately following a two-year stint (2008-10) as an assistant coach/recruiting coordinator at Arkansas-Pine Bluff.

Kern attended Penn State University, where she served as a basketball team captain for two years and twice earned All-Big 10 and Academic All-Big 10 honors while also competing in track & field. After graduating in 2002 with a degree in journalism, she began a successful seven-year professional basketball career that would take her to Australia, Germany, Switzerland, Romania, and Poland.

In the off-seasons from 2002-2007 she returned home to Milwaukee, Wisc., to teach at various Milwaukee High Schools and assisted girls basketball and track & field teams. In addition, she established several basketball camps for under-served neighborhoods.

In the summer of 2007 she was appointed head coach of the Arkansas Lady Ballers in the Women's Blue Chip Basketball League, a 20-team national semi-pro league. Her up-tempo style helped propel the Ballers to a victory over the Canadian national team, regional championship, and national title.

Kern enjoyed one of the most successful prep careers in Milwaukee City Conference history, earning a combined 11 letters in basketball, volleyball, and track & field while serving as team captain in each sport for multiple seasons. In basketball she played in four state Final Fours and won a pair of state championships. She claimed 11 individual conference championships in track & field and was a three-time all-conference performer in volleyball.

She has a son, Bobby Lee Collins, Jr.

## GREENWOOD LEFLORE CHAMBER NAMES MVSU BIG BUSINESS OF THE YEAR



*Pictured from left are Kortney Haymore, Student Government Association president; Dr. William Bynum Jr., MVSU president; and Lance Gregory, Cannon Motor Company.*

Mississippi Valley State University (MVSU) was honored last night by the Greenwood Leflore Chamber of Commerce as Big Business of the Year during its 99th Annual Meeting. Each year, the Chamber recognizes outstanding businesses, volunteers and citizens for their success, dedication to excellence and leadership in the community.

“It is an outstanding honor for MVSU to be selected for this award,” said Dr. William B. Bynum Jr., president. “We are truly living out the tenets of One Goal. One Team. One Valley. Without the awesome work of our students, alumni, faculty, and staff, this community award would not

have been possible. Our community presence has improved tremendously since my arrival. I want The Valley to continue these great works as we strive to improve the lives of those around us and continue to be community partners.”

MVSU has been an active participant in the local community and beyond. Valley’s students have completed over 52,000 community service hours since October 2014. MVSU has sponsored and/or volunteered at Bikes, Blues, and Bayous, 300 Oaks, Greenville’s Dragon Boat Race and Viking Half Marathon along with tutoring students, volunteering with Habitat for Humanity, providing water during the Flint, Mich. Water Crisis, volunteering and hosting Hope America’s Christmas for Children Giveaway for Mississippi residents, assisting during the United Way’s Day of Caring, among many other efforts.

Most recently, MVSU has been named to U.S. News & World Report Best Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Regional Universities South rankings; College Choices’ Most Affordable Business Schools, and ToBecomeaTeacher.org’s Best Teaching Colleges in Mississippi Listing. Valley’s students have won several honors throughout the nation and state.

MVSU has an internationally renowned choir and band. The choir has performed in Chicago, Cincinnati, Jackson, Memphis, New Orleans, Omaha, Seattle, St. Louis, and Vancouver. Overseas destinations have included Brazil and Italy. In March 2014, Valley Singers toured Boston and performed at Boston University, Old South Church, the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, and Acton-Boxborough Regional High School. The Mean Green Marching Machine Band has performed at the Presidential Inauguration of Richard Nixon, Indianapolis 500, Rose Bowl Parades, National Olympic Sports Festival, Official Honor Band for President George H.W. Bush’s Visit to Mississippi, to name a few of its noteworthy performances.

Qualifications for the honor include a proven track record of success and positive contributions to the community in philanthropy or community support for activities and projects; along with being a Chamber member in good standing. Nominations were received from the local community for the award.

## COLLEGE HALL I SET FOR COMPLETION BY 2018



According to Terrence Hurssey, director of capital projects and interim director of facilities management, College Hall I renovations are taking a little longer than expected due to unanticipated environmental concerns.

“Asbestos was found on the brick veneers,” said Hurssey. “This caused us to extend the project because we had to abate the building of all asbestos containing material.” The renovation process began in 2015.

the environmental concerns, subsequently we had to increase the budget,” continued Hurssey.

He also said the building has to undergo two phases before construction begins. “The first phase was abatement and demolition,” he continued. “We have completed the design development phase and starting the construction documents phase.”

“The construction documents should be ready by Sept. 1,” added Hurssey.

Although the renovation process is a bit lengthy, College Hall I is expected to feature laundry rooms, hard wood floors, computer labs and improved exterior and interior lighting.

“It is going to be completely redesigned,” said Hurssey. “It will look very similar to Magnolia Hall.”

Because of College Hall I’s historical significance, the structure of the building will remain similar to the old structure.

“The building is going to be practically new with the exception of the roof and the foundation,” continued Hurssey.

The building is expected to be completed by 2018.

The budget had already been set for construction according to previous construction jobs until asbestos was found. A large sum was taken away from the original budget for the abatement process.

“Funding sources that were allocated for construction had to be used to correct



# ALUMNI NOTES

## PARNELL 'PAYDIRT' DICKINSON SELECTED FOR BLACK COLLEGE FOOTBALL HALL OF FAME



Brighton, Ala. native Parnell "Paydirt" Dickinson has been selected for the Black College Football Hall of Fame.

Dickinson went from the Brighton High School Bears to play for Mississippi Valley State, where he was the quarterback for the Delta Devils from 1972 through 1975.

Dickinson was an All-SWAC pick four times, left the league as its all-time leader in total offense with 7,442 yards and was a member of the inaugural class of the SWAC Hall of Fame in 1992.

In his 37-game collegiate career, Dickinson completed 599-of-894 passes for 6,326 yards with 83 touchdowns and 33 interceptions

### DICKINSON

Dickinson is on the Divisional Player ballot for the College Football Hall of Fame's Class of 2017.

Dickson was the first quarterback drafted by the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, selected in the seventh round of the 1976 NFL Draft by the expansion team.

After serving as Steve Spurrier's backup, Dickinson started Game 7 of his rookie season and had completed all four of his passes, including an 18-yard touchdown toss, against the Miami Dolphins when he sustained an ankle injury and had to leave the game. He returned to play in three more games as a reserve in 1976, but torn knee ligaments suffered in a game against the Cleveland Browns on Nov. 21, 1976, essentially ended his football career after eight NFL games.

The other members of the Black College Football Hall of Fame's Class of 2017 are Harold Jackson of Jackson State, Gary "Big Hands" Johnson of Grambling State, Robert Porcher of South Carolina State, Isiah Robertson of Southern and coach Billy Joe of Cheyney, Central State, Florida A&M and Miles.

The Class of 2017 were honored at the Eighth Annual Black College Football Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony, presented by the Atlanta Falcons.

## TOWNSEND SHOWS PASSION FOR MVSU THROUGH RECRUITMENT EFFORTS

Earl Townsend Jr., C'70, said he is not good at fundraising but he gives back to Mississippi Valley State University (MVSU) through his recruiting efforts.

In the past 3 years, he has traveled over 1,000 miles, serviced eight counties in Georgia and visited approximately 100 high schools to recruit students for the University.

Although he does not receive monetary compensation for his efforts, Townsend said he simply wants to give back to the place that made him realize his 'self-worth.' "Without Valley, I would not be where I am now," said Townsend. "They taught me how to survive in this world."

Townsend began his recruiting efforts by contacting various high schools and attending college fairs in Atlanta. "Atlanta has a large number of high schools that are primarily composed of African Americans," he said. "Before I began recruiting, none of the schools knew about MVSU."

He recently collected over 1,000 applications from students who have been admitted to Valley, and 47 of his past recruits are currently attending the University. "When the students moved in on campus, I came from Georgia to welcome them to the University and I provided them with school supplies," he added.

Townsend said when he attends college fairs, he talks to students about his experiences during his time at MVSU. "Valley saved me from going to the Vietnam War," he continued. "During my first semester at the University, I was not serious about school and my grades reflected it. I had to meet with Academic Affairs, and while there, I was told that I would receive a second chance. They did not have to give me a second chance."

## SIMELTON SERVES AS ALABAMA STATE CONFERENCE PRESIDENT



SIMELTON SR.

A native of Tiplersville, Miss., Benard H. Simelton Sr. enters his 5th year as president of the Alabama State Conference of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

A career soldier, he served 23 years in the Air Force and retired in 2000 as a Lieutenant Colonel. His most rewarding assignment was serving on the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) negotiation team in Geneva Switzerland which led to the signing of the START Treaty between the United States and countries of the Former Soviet Union.

Some of his military awards include the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Joint Meritorious Service Medal, and Air Force Meritorious Service Medal.

He is a life member of the NAACP and served as president of Limestone County Chapter for six years. Since joining the NAACP in Alabama, he has received the Regional Medgar Evers, Regional Kelly M. Alexander, and Regional Director Award and numerous branch awards.

Benard was a founding member of the Athens Limestone Library Foundation Board. Also, he served over ten years on the Community Action Partnership for Huntsville, Madison and Limestone Counties.

He is also Scoutmaster for Troop 947 and received the District Whitney M. Young Award. Benard is an active member of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. and has held several chapter leadership positions in the graduate and undergraduate chapters throughout the nation.

He is married to the former Elaine Erves of Vicksburg. They are the proud parents of Bernard Jr., an emergency medicine doctor in Brooklyn, N.Y. and Eric, a medical device district sales manager in Miami, Fla.

He graduated with a B.S. degree in sociology from MVSU in 1976 and received a Master's in Public Administration from the University of North Dakota in 1981.

Benard is a member of Indian Creek PB Church where he serves as a deacon.

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## EVANS RECEIVES PARENT OF THE YEAR

*Pictured from left are Dr. John R. Kelly, Board Chair of the Mississippi Board of Education; Lora Evans, Parent of the Year for the State of Mississippi; and Dr. Carey Wright, State Superintendent, Mississippi Department of Education.*



Lora Evans is the 2016 Mississippi Parent of the Year.

She said this selection came as a surprise to her, and she is honored to serve as the Parent of the Year for the State of Mississippi. “When I was notified about it, I was in total disbelief,” said Evans. “I was not aware that I had been chosen until I received a call from The Greenwood Commonwealth.”

“It is truly a privilege to be recognized for my community efforts and achievements,” she added.

Evans is the executive director of Delta Hills Health Corporation, a physician-hospital organization formed in 1995 by Greenwood Leflore Hospital and its medical staff. She is also a founding member of the Parents for Public Schools of Greenwood and the owner of Evans Executive Services and Rance Recruiting.

In addition to her professional affiliations, Evans is a member of the Leflore County Healthcare Center Advisory Board, Greenwood Public School Board, Girl Scout Troop Committee, American Red Cross Advisory Board and a plethora of other community organizations.

Above all of her professional and philanthropic associations, Evans is a mother of twins, Aaliyah and Ahmad Evans. “During the time that I was selected, the twins

were attending Greenwood Middle School,” she said. “Each school nominates their Parent of the Year, and from there, the school district selects a Parent of the Year.”

A committee of educators reviews numerous applications submitted by the school districts. As a result, the committee selects a Parent of the Year from each congressional district, and from those four names, the 2016 State Parent of the Year is selected. Evans said she was also required to complete a short application.

“I came out on top with Congressional District 2,” she added.

Evans said the work that she does in the community is not for personal gain; she simply has a passion for education and seeing individuals become their best self.

“I think that a person who is selected as Parent of the Year should be supportive and well-informed throughout their child’s educational process,” she continued.

“This person should also be a parent that teaches his or her own children and one who knows their rights and responsibilities as a parent.”

Evans said she plans to continue her efforts in the community and promote parental involvement.

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## NORWOOD NAMED TO MDCC BOARD OF TRUSTEES



NORWOOD

Desiree Norwood has been appointed to serve on the Mississippi Delta Community College (MDCC) Board of Trustees.

As a member of the board, she will oversee various processes that occur at the college such as policymaking and the hiring process.

"This is an amazing accomplishment," said Norwood. "My goal is to create and enhance a culture of success and excellence at MDCC."

Norwood received a bachelor's degree from Mississippi Valley State University (MVSU) and M.B.A from Delta State University. She is employed with the Mississippi Tobacco Free Coalition.

Norwood is a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Greenwood – Leflore Young Professionals, MVSU's National Alumni Association - Sunflower County Chapter and the Living Legacy Organization.

Norwood is also the president of the Parent Teacher Association for the East Sunflower Elementary School District.

Although she has a number of accomplishments and proud moments she could expound upon, Norwood said the experiences she had at MVSU made her into the woman she is today.

"I am so happy I chose the Valley," she added. "I reference Valley in everything that I do and everywhere I go, because the University taught me so many life lessons."

"Great people come from the Valley," continued Norwood. "I am Mississippi Valley State University!"

## TUCKER RECEIVES FUNDRAISING PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR HONOR

In commemoration of National Philanthropy Day (November 15), the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP) North Alabama Chapter awarded Archie Tucker, AAMU interim vice president for marketing, communications and advancement, with the 2016 Fundraising Professional of the Year Award during its annual Philanthropy Day Program.

The award is presented annually to a fundraising professional demonstrating commitment to the profession, knowledge of the industry, and leadership capabilities. The individual also exemplifies the ethics and standards set forth by AFP. Nominees should have a track record of service, and advancing philanthropy in their workplace and in the greater community.

AFP is an international organization with more than 30,000 members whom raise more than \$100 billion annually. Mr. Tucker is past treasurer of the board for the local chapter and has also served on AFP's International Chapter Support Committee.

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# EDUCATION IS MINISTRY FOR VALLEY ALUM

by Donell Maxie



McGAHA

Dr. Gary McGaha is a lifelong educator who has worked tirelessly to educate minds, uplift spirits and push young people to their very best potential.

The Rienzi native has walked a long journey on the road of education and his work ethic landed the 1972 Mississippi Valley State University graduate in the Office of the President of Atlanta Metropolitan State College in Atlanta, Ga. Dr. McGaha has served as president since November 13, 2007.

Dr. McGaha is married to Juliette Wilkinson McGaha and he has two daughters and two sons. He is an active church and community member. He is a member, deacon and Sunday school teacher at Greenforest Community Baptist Church. He is a member of the Board of Directors for the Metropolitan Regional Service Agency and vice chairman of the Board of Directors of the Southern Association of Colleges with Associate Degrees.

His journey into the world of education began when he graduated from Valley with a B.S. in political science. Dr. McGaha completed his post-graduate studies at Bowling Green State University and received a Doctor of Philosophy degree from the University of Mississippi. Dr. McGaha became the first African-American to receive a Ph.D. in political science from the UM.

Despite all of his educational accomplishments, in which he carries great pride, he is most proud of his time as a student at Mississippi Valley State University.

"This is where my journey to excellence began," said McGaha. "The fire for educational excellence that burns in my belly was ignited at the Valley. I grew up as an educator and my world view of education was reshaped by what was taught in the classes."

Dr. McGaha entered the Valley in 1968 after graduating high school from Easom High in Corinth. He came to the school on a music (band) scholarship and graduated magna cum laude in 1972.

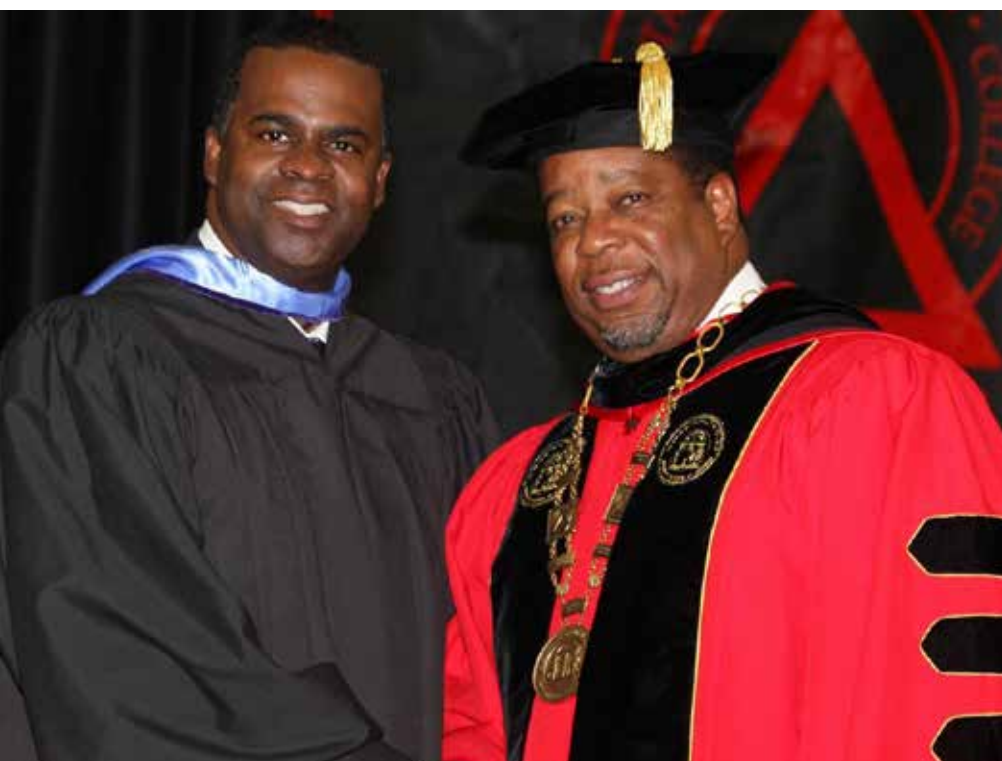
His professional career began as a senior level administrator at Kentucky State University. During this period, he served as the administrative assistant to the president, as chair of the Department of Political Science and History and he also served as the associate vice president for academic affairs.

In 1983, Dr. McGaha accepted the invitation from Louis W. Sullivan, M.D., (founding President of Morehouse School of Medicine), to serve as his executive assistant, and assist with the development of the medical school. He served in this capacity for 10 years.

"I had never met Dr. Sullivan, but I was asked to fly to Atlanta and aid him in his efforts," McGaha said. "It turned out to be an excellent fit for me."

*Continued on page 39*

*Atlanta Mayor Kasim Reed and Dr. McGaha shake hands during commencement exercises at Atlanta Metropolitan State College.*





# LAUREN DUBOIS RETURNS A KICKING FAVOR



by Paisley Boston '12



For some, the game of soccer is a hobby, but for Lauren Dubois '13 it was a vessel that transported her to places that once seemed intangible.

Dubois grew up in Keystone Apartments, in Jonesboro, Ga. She was the only girl of three children, and was reared in a single-parent home.

As a child, Dubois said she and her brothers often desired to participate in extracurricular activities, but most of them required money; money which Dubois's mother did not have.

"My mom provided everything we needed as far as clothes, food and shelter, but her funds were limited, which meant we could not participate in any activities outside of school," she added.

Dubois and her brothers spent their summer vacations slumbering around their apartment until one day, while playing outside, they were introduced to the 'Soccer in the Streets' program by one of the coaches.

"When we were approached about the program, we were kind of reluctant, but my brothers and I ran inside to tell our mother about 'Soccer in the Streets', and beg her to allow us to join," said Dubois.



'Soccer in the Streets' is a nonprofit organization that allows individuals with economic hardship the opportunity to play soccer at no cost. The team at 'Soccer in the Streets' uses soccer as a medium to teach children vital life lessons while also setting them up for a brighter future. The program strives to empower kids who come from low-income homes, attend low-performing schools and face adversities such as high crime rates in their neighborhoods or not enough food to eat.

Dubois has been involved with the program since the age of five. "Once I reached 13, 'Soccer in the Streets' helped me to become certified as a referee," Dubois said. "The program gave us something else to do with our free time; other than getting in trouble."

*"Although I signed with MVSU, I remained in disbelief until I stepped onto the soil. It was an amazing experience."*

Now, she is a certified coach for the program. She coaches children six years of age and younger. "It is essential for me to work with children from my neighborhood because my presence allows them to see a tangible role model and stay out of trouble."

For years, Dubois participated in the program after-school and during summer months. Once she graduated high school, she would have never imagined what the next chapter in her life entailed.

"I was offered the opportunity to sign and play soccer for Mississippi Valley State University (MVSU)," said Dubois. "Although I signed with MVSU, I remained in disbelief until I stepped onto the soil. It was an amazing experience."

Dubois played soccer throughout her collegiate career, while earning a bachelor's degree in sociology.

"From the academic life to the extracurricular activities, you couldn't ask for much more," said Dubois. "I had some of the most amazing professors."

"They worked hard to ensure that the students were well prepared for whatever hardships that came along with life," she continued. "My professors helped me to develop amazing study and research techniques that I now use in graduate school."

Dubois currently teaches special education in the same neighborhood that she grew up in. Dubois remains instrumental in the 'Soccer in the Streets' program because of its significance to her upbringing.

"The program helped to shape my personality, and made me realize the true meaning of self-worth and determination," she said. "The program was my family away from home, and now I am working to pass the torch to other generations by remaining involved."

"I work earnestly to help my students understand their worth," she added. "Their backgrounds do not determine their future."

Dubois said she was not aware of the importance of giving back to her community until attending MVSU.

"Some of the best years of my life were experienced at the Valley," she continued. "I was given the opportunity to play soccer with the most loving group of individuals and gain an understanding of how significant it was to invest in one's community."





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# Committed to SERVICE

by Maxine Greenleaf '07



G

rowing up in Indianola, Miss. provided the backdrop and support needed to mold an outstanding woman. Dr. Cherae Farmer – Dixon '86 has dedicated her life to influencing the lives of those around her while wearing many hats.

Her childhood in a small rural town gave her the confidence to spread her wings across many ventures. Farmer-Dixon is the only African American female dean of a dental school in the United States. She is a lieutenant colonel in the United States Army Reserve and works part time at a juvenile detention center.



"Wherever I was it was that encouragement and support and building you up," said Farmer - Dixon. "It allowed me to believe in myself and that I could do anything. That type of encouragement was not only in my house but in the community. At the time, I didn't see it. It took me becoming an adult and looking back at how communities are now. I really was blessed and fortunate to be in a small town where everyone did know everybody. "



A high school summer program gave her an early insight into the profession of dentistry.

"Coming into Valley, I knew I wanted to go to dental school so I knew I needed to major in the sciences," she said. "One of the bonuses for me that most people don't have going into college was I knew going in what I wanted to do because of the exposure I had in high school."

This is the same determination and spark she took with her to Meharry. Dixon met her mentor, Dr. Rueben Warren, who served as the first African American Mississippi State Department of Health Director. This meeting came with it another calling; she developed an interest in public health. Shortly after completing her doctorate in dentistry, Farmer - Dixon enrolled in Meharry's master of public health program to pursue a career in assisting the underserved.

"He took me under his wing," said Farmer - Dixon. That's really how I became interested in public health because he set up school based programs in Port Gibson, Miss."

She began in her career as a general dentist along with working in what she determined to be a temporary role in teaching at Meharry. A temporary role has spanned over two decades and numerous lives changed.

"When I began teaching, I thought it was only temporary. I was still practicing. When I started working with the students, I really connected with them. As a recent grad, being able to work with students and seeing them transform over a four year period was the best of both worlds. I could provide quality care and improve the oral status of my patients. I also had the opportunity to train the next generation and teach them."

Farmer - Dixon joined the ranks of the military by happenstance. While serving in her role, as Dean of Students of the Dental School, she was privy to many presenters coming in to educate students. During one of the presentations by a military recruiter, her interest was piqued a little more. She decided to join the United States Army Reserve to give back to her country by providing



***“Wherever I was it was that encouragement and support and building you up,” said Farmer - Dixon. “It allowed me to believe in myself and that I could do anything. That type of encouragement was not only in my house but in the community.***

dental services. A role she has been in for over a decade, serving now as a Lieutenant Colonel.

Giving back to the community runs deeply in Farmer – Dixon’s veins. Since she can remember, she’s been involved in community service initiatives.

“All my life, I have been involved in community organizations,” Farmer – Dixon said. “It really started for me there. The interesting thing about coming to Meharry; it’s all a part of its overall training and mission - to train leaders who care – it’s not just that we want you to be competent in your skills, but we also want you to be involved in community outreach. I’m passionate about giving back; being of service, goes back to me growing up and getting involved.

Managing a busy schedule of juggling three jobs and volunteering is a heavy task. Somehow, she manages to weave it all in to her lifestyle.

“Being in dental education and the community, I can balance. I’m combining what I am as a health professional with my efforts to help the community.”



Dr. Farmer – Dixon treats a patient.



Dr. Farmer – Dixon is with her mother Bettye Farmer, adjunct professor and coordinator of the English Writing Project, during last year's First Lady's Scholarship Luncheon.



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A portrait of Tim Lampkin, a Black man with a mustache, smiling and wearing a dark blue blazer over a red and white checkered shirt. The background is a blurred indoor setting.

# LAMPKIN Puts Passion to Work through Revitalization

by Paisley Boston '12

**A** native son of the Mississippi Delta, Tim Lampkin'08 has put his passion to work to revitalize an area he holds near and dear to his heart.

Although his list of expertise is extensive, community revitalization is his top priority. Serving in capacities such as entrepreneur, philanthropist, and consultant, he has been instrumental in raising awareness about the poverty level in the Mississippi Delta along with generating solutions and funds for community improvements.

Pouring his talents into gaining capital for community programming, brick & mortar community spaces, and dynamic educational experiences for youth, Lampkin has been a force to be reckoned with. "I think it is so important for people to really think about their legacy," added Lampkin. "I help develop programs and

projects based on the need of the community. The work that I do is directly aligned with my purpose."

Because of his ongoing desire to improve the Delta, he has helped to secure \$350,000 from ArtPlace America to establish the Crossroads Cultural Arts Center and \$172,000 to renovate the only public pool in Clarksdale.

He also assisted the Mississippi Valley State University (MVSU) Foundation Board with identifying resources for awarding student scholarships.

“Community development can be a bit stressful, but I am really passionate about my efforts to revitalize the Delta,” said Lampkin. “I truly feel that my purpose is to help, empower, and connect people.”

The most important aspect of his story is that he came back to the Delta. “A lot of people graduate from college and move away from the Mississippi Delta, but I came back because I felt compelled to use my knowledge and resources to make this area a better place.”

Lampkin is the founder of Lampkin Consulting Group, LLC. The group provides grant writing, project design/management, small business coaching, and event support to various entities.

He also CEO/co-founder of Higher Purpose Co., a social enterprise designed to connect, educate, and inspire minority millennials in rural communities. Higher Purpose Academy is the philanthropic initiative of the company, which trains participants in the areas of entrepreneurship, financial literacy, community development, and leadership. This initiative is supported through revenue generated from Higher Purpose Co. merchandise.

Recently, Lampkin took on the role as outreach coordinator for the Mississippi Humanities Council. In this capacity, he manages a racial equity fund which is supported by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

His efforts have yielded him a number of awards and recognition including an appointment to the National Advisory Board for the Next Generation Project, which is led by Art of the Rural and the Rural Policy Research Institute. Lampkin was invited to the White House for the Rural Placemaking Convening to share his insight and knowledge with national stakeholders. Also, he has been featured in the Advocate-New Orleans, Clarksdale Press Register, New Orleans City Business, and Huffington Post.

Sure, Lampkin wears many hats, but he said MVSU molded him into the man he is today. He earned a bachelor's degree from MVSU and MBA from Delta State University before completing the MSOP program at Bellevue University. He is currently pursuing a doctorate of education in adult and lifelong learning from the University of Arkansas.

“I would not trade my experience at MVSU for anything,” he continued. “I had mentors that were hard on me, but they gave me a lot of guidance. Valley solidified my ability to be a leader; I learned a lot from a ton of people. I represent Valley every day.”







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# ALUMNI *ON* THE MOVE



## *Andy Lo '11*

Andy Lo graduated in 2011 with a degree in mass communications and business. He received his Master of Business Administration from Valley in 2014. Andy is a man of many talents and he uses each one to the best of his abilities. Lo runs and works in several business. He operates his family's store, Goodwill Groceries, in Greenwood, he is the owner of Lo's Fish and Steaks Restaurant, owns Andy Lo Photography, has a cell phone repair business called Handy Andy Screen Repair and even owns rental properties.

He credits Mississippi Valley State for giving him the structure and education to perform and operate in each of his professional ventures. Since he was 14, he has worked. Andy truly believes that if you cannot find work then it is left up to the individual to create work. Lo came to America when he was 12 from Hong Kong. He and his family moved to Chicago. At the age of 17, they moved to Mississippi. Lo's first business was his cell phone repair business. He started the business from simply fixing his own phone and then watching YouTube videos. To his estimation he has repaired over 2,000 phones.

Lo learned his work ethic from his parents. He learned the theory of business from Mississippi Valley State. At The Valley, Lo improved his business skills and has been able to manage his businesses better.

Lo loves the Mississippi Delta and remains here because he believes it's like being a big fish in a small pond. His work here stands out. His photography business has grown to where he has clients all over the country. Ultimately, Lo succeeds in all his business because of the quality of his products and how hard he works to constantly improve on whatever service he offers.



## *LaShunna McInnis '93*

LaShunna McInnis was named Jackson Public Schools' Teacher of the Year for the 2015-2016 school year. She is a 10th-grade English teacher at Provine High School, graduate of Provine High School, and has a degree in political science and pre-law with a minor in English from Mississippi Valley State University. She has also been an active member of the Rho Lambda Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. since 1995.

McInnis is a doctoral student in administrative leadership at Walden University, and attends Anderson United Methodist Church, where she teaches Bible Study and serves as youth choir director.



## *John Bell '13*

John Bell is on the move for the corporate giant Wal-Mart using his computer savvy to make waves for the company. Bell is a 2009 graduate of Gentry High School in Indianola. The 25-year old graduated from Mississippi Valley State in 2013 with a degree in computer science.

He is the son of Diane Bell. While at MVSU, he was a mathematics tutor, and a member of the Computer and Information Sciences Club.

Bell is currently a senior programmer analyst for Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. in Bentonville, Ark. Bell began his journey with Walmart's technology division in June of 2013. He started off as an IT rotational analyst, where he ventured into the various technology units of the company.

Rotating among the different positions allowed Bell to gain a better understanding of different functions of Walmart Technology and how they played a role in meeting the company's business goals. Upon graduation from the ITRP program, he continued his tenure with the company as a programmer analyst, and was promoted to senior programmer analyst in May of 2016. As a senior programmer analyst, Bell worked with business partners to oversee the design, development, and implementation of a software suite intended to replace several existing eCommerce applications.

Bell has worked hard and in his time as senior analyst he has contributed to the installation of a global fulfillment system into all of the U.S. and some international markets that is used by store associates to satisfy customer orders generated from the eCommerce websites. He also helped the company to adopt a new technology as the standard for front-end software development, while also implementing the integration with external customer access points such as self-service lockers, home delivery, customer check-in, and other product offerings for a seamless shopping experience.



# CLASS NOTES

## 1970's

EARL TOWNSEND JR. '70

Chair of the Atlanta-Metro Alumni chapter's student recruitment committee. He taught high school for 37 years, and he now serves as a volunteer recruiter for MVSU. In the past 3 years, he has traveled over 1,000 miles, serviced eight counties in Georgia and visited approximately 100 high schools to recruit students for the University.

## 1980's



GAYLE (BASKIN) LOWERY '81

Has held leadership roles in various healthcare organizations including Chief Information Officer for the Mississippi Division of Medicaid, IT Director for Xerox Corporation and currently as vice president, IT Management with Cognizant Technology Solutions. As the Vice President of IT Management, she is responsible for the oversight and management of large-scale projects across the country and business development efforts for the healthcare line of business.

MARTHA BROCK '80

Professional photographer who was named one of Chicago's most published African American photographers. She established Martha Brock Photography in 1992, where she specializes in celebrity, commercial, fashion, special events, and public relations photography. Some of her clients include J Records, R. Kelly Jive Records, Chicago Housing Authority, The Boys and Girls Clubs, and T.D. Jakes Ministries.

RILEY MURRY '85

Was induct'ed into the Mississippi Valley State University (MVSU) Athletic Hall of Fame. As a football player at MVSU he was a three-time All-Southwestern Athletic Conference performer at the center position. He was the first offensive lineman at MVSU to play in the Freedom Bowl Classic in Atlanta, Georgia and graduated from MVSU with a Bachelor of Science degree. Currently an instructor in the Health and Physical Education Department and the men and women Head Golf Coach at Mississippi Valley State University.

## 1990's

DOROTHY THOMAS '93

Was named 2014-2015 state finalists for the prestigious Presidential Awards for Excellence in Math and Science Teaching Program. Thomas teaches Algebra I and foundations of algebra at Pontotoc High School. Thomas is a National Board Certified Teacher of early adolescent mathematics. She also serves on the Standards Review Committee that will make recommendations to the Board on the state's academic standards. Thomas is a member of the Mississippi Professional Educators, the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics and the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.



KHARY ORR '99

Won 100 games as head coach of the Terry High School (Terry, MS) boys' soccer team, with a career record of 111-54-17. Orr led his team to six Division 6-6A championships and nine straight state tournament appearances. In addition, he coached the 2014 Wendy's High School Heisman winner for the State of Mississippi and the 2015 Gatorade Mississippi boys' soccer player of the year.

## 2000's

IDA HAMPTON CANNON '00,'02,'11

Won "Officer of the Year" for the Central District of the MS Department of Education Office of Compulsory School Attendance Enforcement in September 2015.





KELLY MOORE '00

Chief operating officer in Scranton, an affiliate of Commonwealth Health, was named Master of Health Services Administration Distinguished Alumna of the Year by Mississippi College. She earned a Bachelor of Science from Mississippi Valley State University in 2000 and a Master of Science with a major in health services administration from Mississippi College in 2004.



SAMUEL MELTON JR. '05

Director of sponsored programs and Title III, at Mississippi Valley State University was recently elected to serve as member-at-large for the National Association of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Title III Administrators. He has been a member of the association since 2007; and he now serves in a position that he says helps to advocate and maintain funding for HBCUs. As a member-at-large,

Melton is present during monthly meetings and provides input on matters concerning the Title III community. He is also the co-chair of the membership committee and a member of the workshop planning committee.



HOSEA L. MINNIEWEATHER JR. '01

Named to the Mississippi Business Journal's 2015 Top 50 under 40 class. Minniweather is currently employed with Noven Pharmaceuticals as a specialty sales representative. His primary responsibility is to offer FDA-approved options for treating menopausal symptoms. Hosea is a former MVSU All-SWAC football player. He earned his Bachelor of Science Degree from Mississippi Valley State University in 2001 and a MHA from Belhaven University in 2014. He is also a member of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc.

MARITZA JOHNSON '14

Recently released an album titled "Amazing" with 'Brandon Mitchell and S.W.A.P. (Singers With a Purpose). The album quickly climbed the charts of iTunes Christian and broke into the Top 100 category.

EXODUS BROWNLOW '14

Has published a nonfiction essay, "Love & Nappiness: On Hair, Race & Self Worth," in Luna Luna Magazine, a hybrid lifestyle, dreamer's diary and arts journal. She is now studying in the MFA program at Mississippi University for Women, where she serves as a graduate teacher assistant. The Department of English and Foreign Languages fees proud of this graduate and wishes her the best in creative writing and publication.



DEMARCUS MCKINLEY '04

Drummer, Manager and one of the producers of the gospel recording group "Redeemed." The group's album "Favor Ain't Fair" won Album of the Year for an Upcoming Artist. The award was given by the Jackson Music Awards Association.

SHLANDA BYRD '15

Published author of a novel titled, "Building Marriages That Will Last" and recent Mississippi Valley State University graduate. The novel is composed of ten short, fictional stories that teach valuable, real life lessons.

DERRICK T. JONES '15

2016 recipient of National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowships. Jones each will receive three years of financial support, including a \$34,000 annual stipend and \$12,000 annual cost-of-education allowance.

MAIYA BEAVERS '16

Recently released an album titled "Amazing" with 'Brandon Mitchell and S.W.A.P. (Singers With a Purpose). The album quickly climbed the charts of iTunes Christian and broke into the Top 100 category.

CEDRIC FOSTER '07

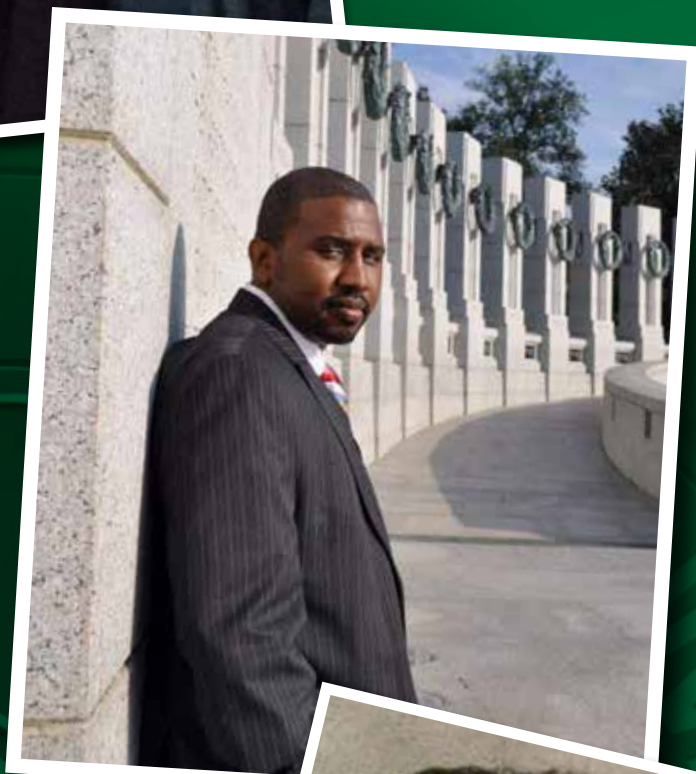
Assistant Vice President of Mortgage Web Services and Applications, Regions Bank and the owner of UxRenovations.com and kanuefooster.com. He published two books "Building a Strong Foundation: A Guide for being a Successful College Student No Matter Who You Are or Where You Come From" and "The Makings of a Fatherless Child" under pen name Chandler Alexander. Foster earned his Bachelor of Science degree from MVSU in 2007 and is currently residing in Birmingham, Ala. with his wife and three children



Pictured from left are Powell Rucker '82, Krystal Rucker '13, Avery Rucker '15, and Ennis Rucker '78.

# A RUCKER FAMILY LEGACY

IN THE WORDS OF  
ENNIS BROWNLOW-RUCKER



Anthony Rucker



LIVE

FOR

SERV



**M**ississippi Valley State University has been and continues to be a staple in the lives of the Rucker Family for two generations. This university nestled in the heart of the Mississippi Delta has changed the trajectory of our clan; hence, our unrelenting support and advocacy of Mississippi Valley State University also known by the alumnae and friends as The Valley.

Our legacy began when a young lady, Ennis Brownlow of Panther Burn, Miss. registered and began to attend Mississippi Valley State University. The decision to attend this university would become a life-changing experience. With business education as a major, the challenge of studying shorthand, typing, accounting, business law, finance, and banking kept her focused and helped her to overcome the many trials and tribulations of life's journey. The environment at The Valley was exceptional in helping to quiet life's struggles. The Valley provided instructors and a family that pushed one to preserve and to accomplish life

goals which would help improve our family's educational, personal, and financial status.

Ennis Brownlow-Rucker understood at an early age that she wanted to make a difference in the lives of children with

disabilities. The difference began with her graduating from MVSU with a degree in business education leading to her later receiving a master's in special education from another university. She was employed at Mississippi Christian Family Services (MCFS), a day care center for special needs children in Rolling Fork, Miss. With no direct contact with the students, Rucker worked in the Finance Department doing clerical and accounting duties. She would often find herself interacting with students while visiting with staff members in the School Age Program.

Another graduate from Mississippi Valley State University would enter the doors of MCFS as a teacher of students with disabilities. As life would have its connections, this graduate, Powell Rucker and Ennis would become immediate friends. As great minds link together through friendship and love, the two graduates united and created a long lasting legacy through the union of Ennis Brownlow and Powell Rucker.

The legacy continues with one son, Anthony, who graduated from Mississippi Valley State University with a degree in biology. Later, he would receive dual master's degrees in divinity and business administration from Howard University, Washington D.C. With Mississippi Valley State University being a strong force in the Rucker

household, the parents and brother encouraged the younger members of the clan to follow in our footsteps by attending The Valley. Our daughter, Krystal, received a degree in business administration in May 2014 and our son, Avery completed his degree in business administration in May 2015.

The results of their matriculation at The Valley have led to the professional and personal successes experienced in the family. Powell Rucker retired with 31 years in education with the later eight years as superintendent of the Holmes County School District in Lexington. Ennis Brownlow-Rucker is completing her 29th year in education in the Leflore County School District in Greenwood and an active alumnus with the Holmes County Alumni Chapter - Mississippi Valley State University. Anthony is an associate minister at Alfred Street Baptist Church in Alexandria, Va. where he also serves as a ministry budget coordinator managing approximately eighty ministry budgets in a full time capacity. Following in her mother's footsteps, Krystal is a special education teacher in the Holmes

County School District and presently enrolled in the Masters of Arts Program at Mississippi Valley State University. Avery is working with his father as the business manager of PEAK's Quick Food in Tchula.

A long history of loyalty and love for The Valley has made Ennis Rucker a

welcomed presence on the campus. She is often asked, "Where do you work on campus?" She laughs, smiles and replies, "I am here working to gain support for Valley's continued progress and legacy. I want others to experience the educational institution that allowed our family to have access to the American Dream of personal, professional, and financial security." She is often on the campus working on fundraisers as well as coordinating post-game feasts for the football team with the Friends of Mississippi Valley State University Football.

Five degrees of excellence have been obtained from The Valley where education led to great professional opportunities for our family. This institution of higher learning has become an enormous part of our life; to be more specific, everyone in their household has commuted across the hallowed grounds of The Valley. Therefore, the love and loyalty our family has for The Valley is infinite.

Mississippi Valley State University has become the fabric of our existence and an intricate part of our family history interwoven with memorable moments of life never to be forgotten and experienced anywhere but at The Valley.

**"I AM HERE WORKING TO GAIN SUPPORT FOR VALLEY'S CONTINUED PROGRESS AND LEGACY."**



Dear Alumni and Friends:

We are delighted to greet you again as fellow alumni and a Valley Supporters. As we make provision for the future of our children and grandchildren, include Mississippi Valley State University in your estate planning process.

Mississippi Valley State University needs your time, talent and treasure. The future of this great institution depends on *You*, its' Alumni and Supporters.

Join us today in making MVSU better for tomorrow.

One Goal, One Team, One Valley.

Mrs. Margaret W. Clark,

Attorney Fredrick B. Clark



# Advocacy 101: Tips for Effective Advocacy

According to experts, effective advocacy relies on three things: where you live, how effectively you communicate, and whether people in other legislative districts are asking the same thing.

On Capital Day (and afterward), here are things you should focus on:

1. Stick to the message. Effective advocates stay “on message” and ask for exactly the same things within a legislative district and across districts.
2. Tell your personal story – it makes an issue come alive for an elected official. Also, try to make your issues their issues. Help your legislators understand how state support impacts you, your family, and the community you and the legislators live in.
3. Meet with the legislators who represent you, or with whom you have another kind of strong connection.
4. Communicate clearly and concisely. Your meeting may last only 15 minutes.
5. Always be polite and respectful. Don’t get into debates. If legislators disagree with you, listen to their views, briefly acknowledge what they’re saying, and politely restate your position.
6. If you are asked a question you can’t answer, it’s OK to say “I don’t know.” But tell them you’ll find the answer and get back to them.
7. Keep in touch with your legislators after Capital Day. It’s important to develop personal, ongoing relationships with elected officials.
8. Say thank you! Legislators are busy people. Make sure to let them know you appreciate their time, attention, and consideration.



## ALUMNI Q &amp; A



## Jerry Redmond '95

**How important is it to give back to your alma mater?**

I am a proud philanthropist. I love the Valley, and I try to remain instrumental in the University's happenings and knowledgeable of its necessities. If there is anything I can do to help MVSU move forward to the next tier, then I am so committed and willing to make it happen. Some alums and pioneers that once were instrumental in their philanthropic efforts at MVSU are now deceased or elderly, and now is the time for my generation to pick up where the other alums left off.

**How did your education at MVSU assist you in your career?**

The experiences and academic rearing that I had at MVSU helped me to develop into a successful entrepreneur. I started as a visual communications major because I wanted to be a graphic designer. However, being a graphic designer during this time was a bit challenging because we did not have adequate equipment and software. I decided to major in computer science as well. I was privileged enough to take part in an internship with the John C. Stennis Space Center. This experience helped me to learn how to be a graphics professional.

**What advice would you give current students?**

Current students must understand the career path at which they are on. I encourage current MVSU students to remain goal oriented and culturally sound. While you are in college, you should try to figure out what you are good at and enhance upon that skill. You should understand your craft and try to master it. We get busy trying to be a 'jack of all trades' and a master of none. I also want students to gain an understanding of the importance of making contributions to their community. Culturally, we as African Americans have not been able to embrace the notion of philanthropy. This notion stems from the essence of giving and sewing money back into the community.



## Education is Ministry

*Continued from page 17*

At the time Morehouse School of Medicine was a two-year institution, but Dr. McGaha worked alongside his colleagues to implement programs that would grow the school into a doctor of philosophy and doctor of medicine granting institution.

“Although I was very pleased, I still had a yearning to teach. I applied for a position as department chair of the social science division at what was then called Atlanta Metropolitan College. I served in the position for about nine years and I also taught political science. I had no idea I would ever become president,” he explained.

Dr. McGaha left the Atlanta Metropolitan College in 2002 to become the Dean of Academic Services for the Dunwoody Campus and the Alpharetta Site of Georgia Perimeter College. He returned to the school in August of 2006 to become the vice president for Academic Affairs and was named interim president in November of 2006.

Under his leadership, the enrollment at AMSC has increased 86-percent since fall 2006. The college was granted baccalaureate degree status by the University System of Georgia Board of Regents in May 2011 and the name of the institution was changed to Atlanta Metropolitan State College on May 9, 2012.

All in all, Dr. McGaha has a deep passion for education and to him it's more than a job it's a ministry.

I enjoy going places and seeing people whose lives I have impacted,” said Dr. McGaha. “One day, I was at home, cleaning my gutters and I fell off of a ladder. My wife rushed me to the emergency room and to my surprise, one of my former students was the physician. God has blessed me with the ministry of education and I simply want to spread it to everyone that I possibly can,” he added.

On May 7, 2016 Dr. McGaha received another honor from Mississippi Valley State when he was chosen as the 64th commencement speaker.

# VALLEY ALUM WRITES SONG OF 'PEACE'



“While in route downtown, I really had forgotten about my initial responsibility, I just wanted to help in any way that I could,” said Officer Charles Vaughn ‘08 of the Dallas Police Department as he described the tragic police shooting.

Vaughn said the event was heart-wrenching and devastating.

When he arrived home after the tragedy, he had a burning desire to do something that would ease the hearts and minds of those who lost their loved ones, so he wrote a song and made a video titled “Let’s be that change.”

“My ultimate goal for the song and video is to turn on the television and not see as much crime; especially against one another, but I know that this is almost surreal,” he said. “This is a message based song; we are all people and we should all be treated that way.”

The song was written and composed in approximately two hours, but it was one of the most difficult pieces that Vaughn had ever written.

“Losing a brother in the field of law enforcement affects all officers,” he added. “I want people who hear this, to feel the tragedy we’ve experienced and be motivated to stand up to the challenge of making a change.”

Vaughn aspires to use the song as a vessel for unity. “I want to see a constant change of peace,” he continued. “I just want things to be better.”

Although the song and video have gone viral and have been shared on multiple media platforms, Vaughn said it was a selfless composition.

“I am extremely appreciative for all of the support that I have received for the song, and I am happy that it has touched so many people,” he added.

VAUGHN

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# Bestseller

A photograph of the interior of the Greenwood bookstore. The space is a two-story atrium with high ceilings, ornate chandeliers, and light blue walls. Bookshelves line the walls, and a large wooden table in the center is covered with stacks of books. A display of colorful children's books is visible in the foreground.

Greenwood is the perfect slice of everything Delta from blues and business alike. Greenwood boasts hospitality that is both down-home and world-class. From work to play, pickups to pinstripes, authentic to up-scale, Greenwood boasts all these things in abundance. Greenwood is like no other place on earth: a place of culture, passion, resilience and diversity; a place of commonalities and contradictions; a place so unique, so authentic, it will make total sense when you hear us say, *"That's so Delta."*

A photograph of a vast, flat field with rows of crops stretching towards the horizon under a clear sky.

*That's so Delta.*  
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# **The Leflore County Board of Supervisors is proud to work with Mississippi Valley State University.**

While it's not always been easy, Valley has been a beacon of educational hope for many who might otherwise have been left behind. Today thousands of men and women throughout our nation enjoy the benefits of a higher education thanks to Valley. The Leflore County Board of Supervisors would like to extend our gratitude for your service to Leflore County and the Delta.



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Vice President



**Wayne Self**  
District 4  
President



**Robert Collins**  
District 5



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# I N M E M O R I A M

Yesmenn Auther	Clara Lipsey
Neddia A. Bailey	Melvyner Mason Garret
Ira C. Bell	Neville N. Morgan
James G. Bellard	Willie L. Nunaley
Geneva Briggs-Young	Patricia A. Pepper
Dorothy M. Blockett	Brenda F. Taylor-Peterson
Willie Breauxsus	Lemmie Pinkney
Annie M. Brown	Zannie Rainey
Matthew Burks	Jessie L. Raymond
Lawrence E. Carmicle	Vivian M. Raymond-Stansberry
Antonio Clay	Louise S. Robenson
Elton W. Cockrell	James J. Roberson
Maude W. Coleman (Age 103)	Earl L. Robinson
Melba P. Copeland	Shelia D. Robinson
Anthony Davis	John L. Ross
David E. Dennis	Jessie M. Rushing
John Dickerson	James A. Scarborough
Victor R. Dixon	Theodoric S. Scott
Matlean B. Edwards	Corrie Smith, Jr
Paul Expose	Lazeric D. Smith
Minola Fields	Kenneth (Chumbley) Smith
Willie Fontaine	Alyce Steward
Fannie M. Gardner	Maxine Perryman Stewart
Charles Griffis	Kevin Peyton
Frances Hall	Dorothy Vortice
Clarence J. Higdon	Tonya Moore Wallace
Gregory Hodo	Angela Ward
Harold E. Hopkins	Lottie Ware
Callie L. Humphreys	Willie J. Washington
Lennette Ivy	Pearl Anderson Webb
John James	Donald Wells
Doris J. Johnson	Bobbie L. Wicks
Lee Audrey Johnson	Felix Wicks
Mayrene W. Jones	Willie L. Wilson
Breuna Kimbrough	Roosevelt Williamson, Sr
Homer G. Lakes	Claudia Wright
Charles H. Lewis	Geneva B. Young
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RAINEY

## Rainey's Passion for Education Led Her to MVSU

103 year old Mississippi Valley State University (MVSU) alumna Zannie Rainey taught for over 35 years, but MVSU enabled her to become a professional educator.

Before attending the University, Rainey taught for 20 years. "At this time, a degree was not required to teach," said Rainey. Although she taught for a number of years without a degree, Rainey was an avid educator. She strongly desired to become certified in her profession.

"During the regular school year, I would teach," said Rainey. "In the summer, I went to school."

While attending MVSU, she rented a room in Itta Bena. "I wanted to attend MVSU because it was close to home. I really enjoyed the time I spent at the Valley."

Her daughter Viola Rainey said she recalls her mother's journey to professionalism. "We would stay with a relative while my mother attended school," said Viola. "Ms. Rainey reared 12 children and had five of her own."

In 1968, Rainey received a degree in elementary education. She continued to teach in the Shaw and Boyle School Districts for roughly 15 years.

According to Viola, Rainey is completely blind but her faith in God keeps her uplifted.

The City of Shaw recently renamed a road in honor of Rainey's work in the community.

*Before the publication of this magazine, Mrs. Zannie Rainey passed away.*



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Itta Bena, a **FUTURE** vibrant college town, is on the path of revitalization to meet the needs of its residents and the university family, to empower the residents to practice healthy lifestyles, and to stimulate the local economy.

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*Thelma Collins, Servant Mayor  
Itta Bena Board of Alderpersons*



Cherae M. Farmer, DDS, MSPH, FACD  
Dean and Professor  
Meharry Medical College  
School of Dentistry



## FOUR GENERATIONS STRONG

### 1<sup>st</sup> GENERATION

Willie Mary Marshall '56

### 2<sup>nd</sup> GENERATION

Willie Montague Farmer '57

Bettye Lloyd Farmer '59

### 3<sup>rd</sup> GENERATION

Cherae Montalisa Farmer '86

### 4<sup>th</sup> GENERATION

Tiffany Farmer Yarbrough '09

“Education is the most  
powerful weapon  
which you can use to  
change the world.”

– Nelson Mandela

Alma Ross Turner, 67





# ANNUAL DONORS REPORT

# SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS



## **JOVANNA WALKER**

Hometown: Saint Francisville, La

Major: Business with a concentration in Accounting

Classification: Sophomore

"Immense gratitude", is the phrase that comes to mind when describing the joy I feel towards the department of advancement. Thanks to their generous contributions I am able to further pursue my academic career at Mississippi Valley State University.

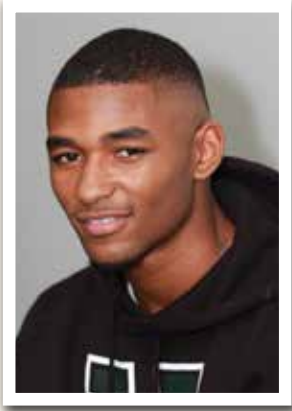
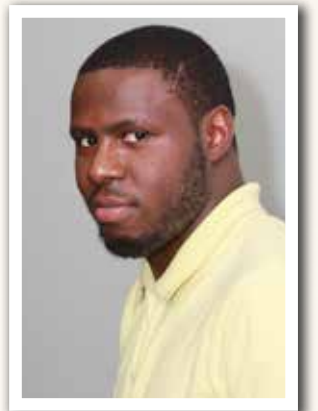
## **EMMANUEL IDEHEN**

Hometown: Nigeria

Major: Computer Science

Classification: Junior

The Private Scholarship was a blessing to my life. It helped me pay part of my tuition. I want to say a very big thank you for giving me an opportunity to go through school without resulting to loans. I pray that God continues to bless each and every one of you.



## **KATERIS SCOTT**

Hometown: Rolling Folk, Miss

Major: General Studies

Classification: Senior

The Private Funds Scholarship is very beneficial. It helped me to get specific items I needed like books, supplies, and other tools to pursue my education. With this scholarship, I am able to enjoy my time here at The Valley without worrying about financial problems.

## **XAVIER FANT**

Hometown: Albany, Ga

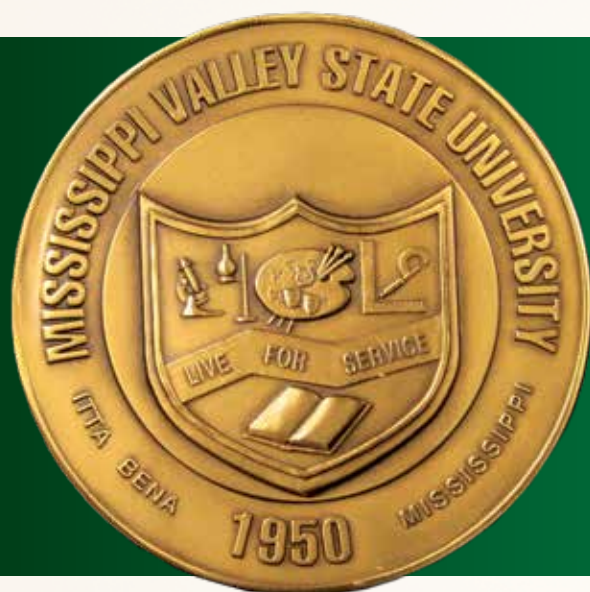
Major: Elementary Education

Classification: Freshman

Being chosen as a recipient of the Private Funds Scholarship has been a huge honor. Having a part of the financial burden removed has allowed me to become a better leader, scholar, and make the most of my time at MVSU. Paying for college was a big concern for my family and I. The scholarship which I received has made it possible for me to attend one of the best schools in the country. Being nominated for this scholarship has lifted my balance, which I am not paying any money out of my pocket. Thank you!!

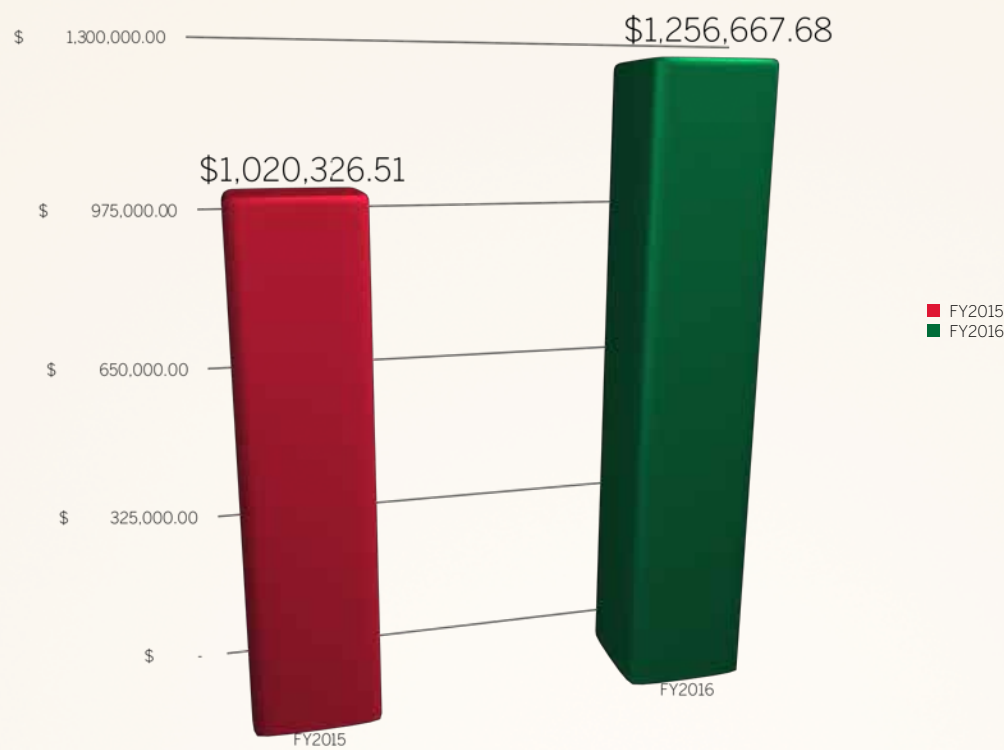




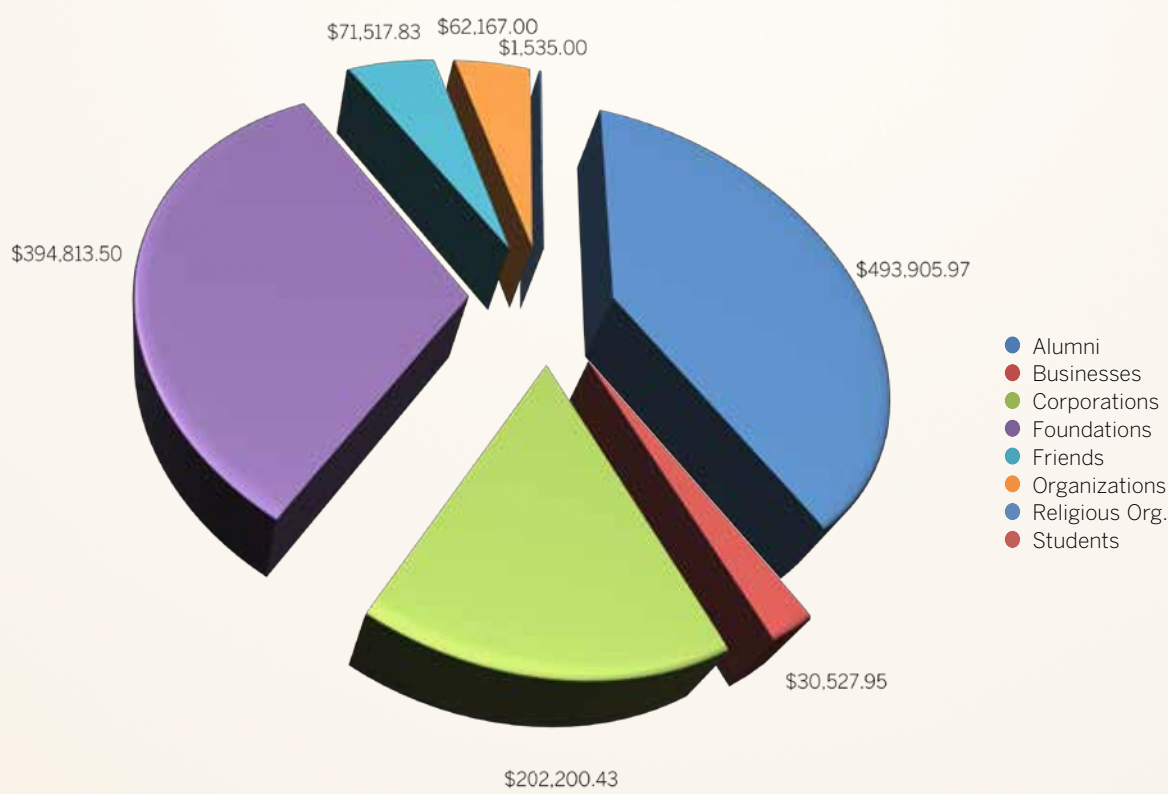


# FISCAL YEAR 2016 DATA AND GRAPHS

# ANNUAL GIFT COMPARISON FY 2015 AND FY 2016



# TOTAL GIFT AMOUNTS BY CATEGORY JULY 1, 2015 THRU JUNE 30, 2016

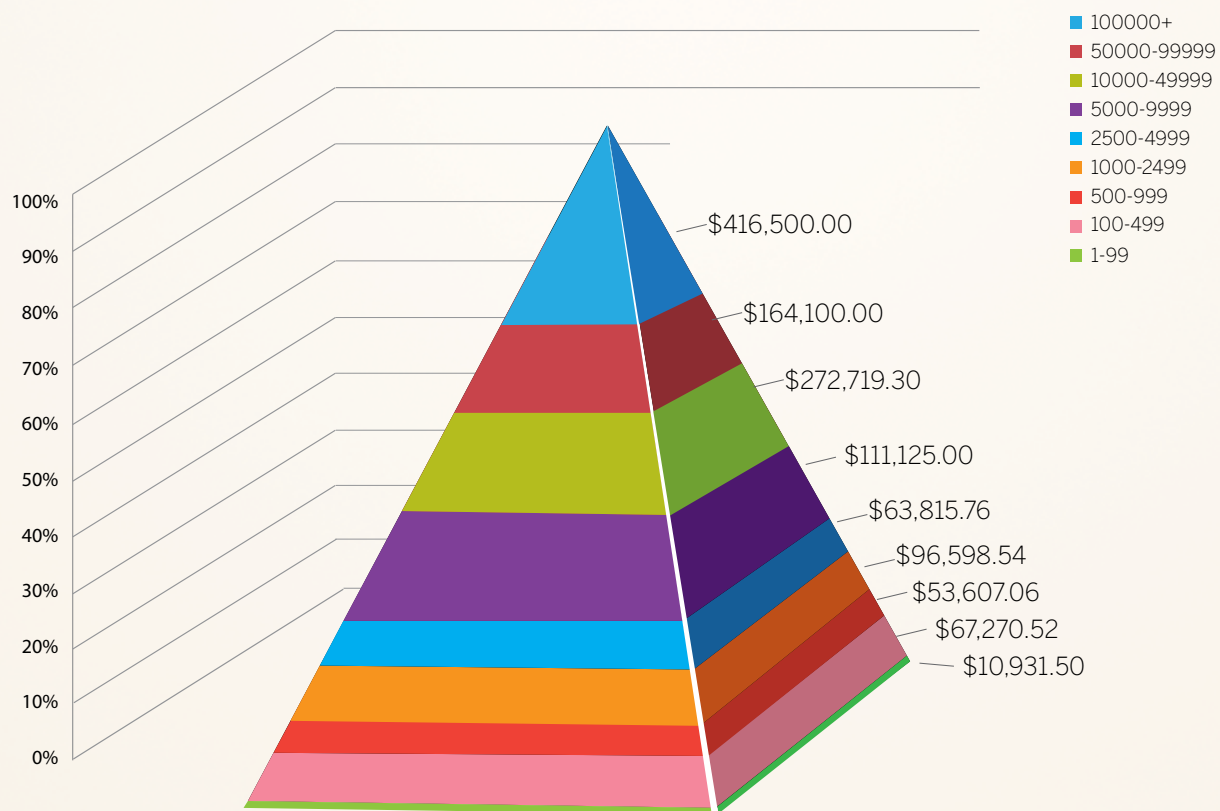




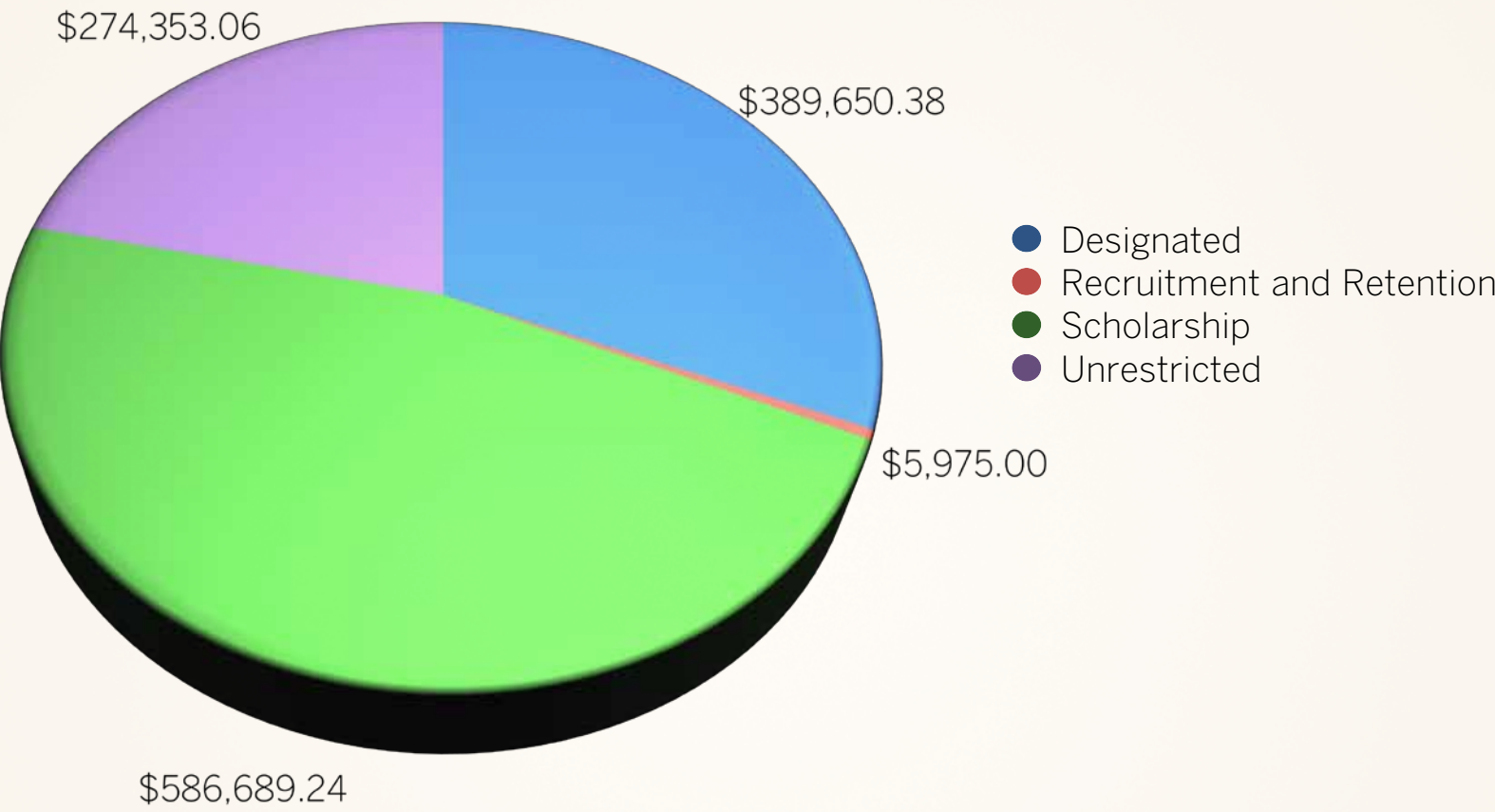
## TOTAL GIFT AMOUNTS BY QUARTER JULY 1, 2015 THRU JUNE 30, 2016



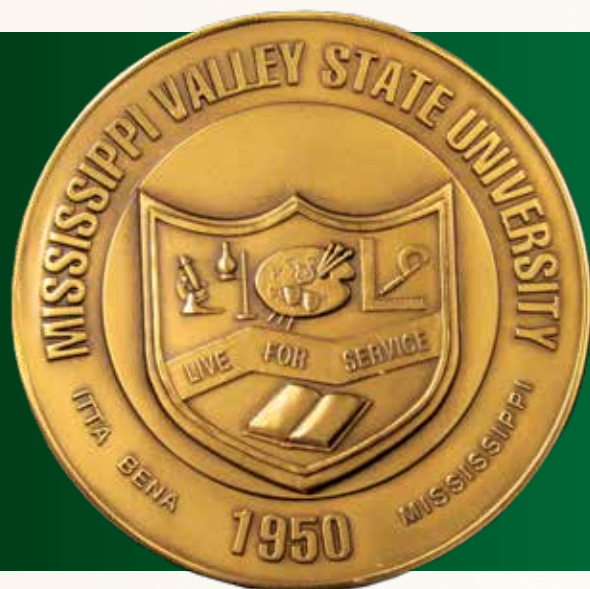
## TOTAL GIFT AMOUNTS BY DONOR LEVELS JULY 1, 2015 THRU JUNE 30, 2016



2016 CONTRIBUTION  
DESIGNATIONS  
BY AMOUNTS







# FISCAL YEAR 2016 DONORS LIST

# 2016 DONORS LIST

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Robert M. Hearin Support Foundation

## \$50,000 - \$99,999

MVSU Foundation  
MVSU National Alumni Association, Inc

## \$10,000 - \$49,999

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ATMOS Energy  
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Coca-Cola  
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