

VALLEY CONNECTION

MISSISSIPPI VALLEY STATE
ALUMNI MAGAZINE | 2019



THE MAN BEHIND THE *MOTION*

DR. JERRY L. BRIGGS, SR.
8TH PRESIDENT OF MVSU

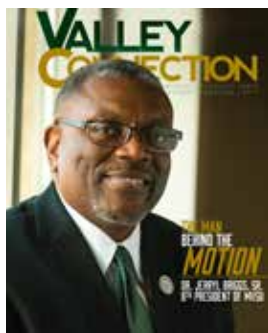


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VALLEY CONNECTION

MISSISSIPPI VALLEY STATE ALUMNI MAGAZINE

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Fourth Floor

From the president

Greetings MVSU Alumni & Friends,

I've spent the last three decades navigating a career in higher education that has led me to progressively challenging roles at diverse universities across the country. While my career has been a rewarding one, becoming the 8th President of Mississippi Valley State University has certainly been the highlight of my journey thus far.

Since joining the MVSU family, I can truly attest that the students, alumni and community supporters here at MVSU are second to none to the many institutions I've experienced in my life. Your high energy, unwavering support and dedication, and deep love for The Valley is what has helped this institution to continue to grow and thrive since 1950.

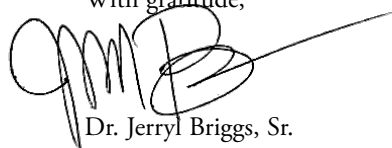
Today, I'm proud to say that we are on the right track to ensure continued success. This edition of the Valley Connection magazine is a testament to remarkable achievements we have been able to accomplish over the past several months. As you peruse this magazine, you will see that our tagline "One Goal. One Team. One Valley. ...In Motion" is more than just a catchy phrase—it's a way of life that is actively being achieved each and every day.

However, as we celebrate our successes, we cannot rest on our laurels. We must remain cognizant of the fact that MVSU needs us now more than ever before. With a significant budget cut on the horizon, projections of decreased state appropriations, and an aging infrastructure, we must position ourselves to make some tough decisions. The good news is that there are small things that each of us can do that will, together, make a big impact and continue our positive strides.

As an alumnus or friend of the Valley, we hope that you "talk up" the University in your respective communities as well as take advantage of every opportunity to advocate for the institution by speaking to your local legislatures about the impact Valley has had on your life. With multiple fundraising efforts underway, you can show your support through life-changing monetary donations and gifts of all sizes. To that end, we also hope that you take advantage of opportunities to assist us in our recruiting efforts by encouraging your friends, family, and others looking to pursue a college degree to seriously consider MVSU.

The need for MVSU in the Mississippi Delta and beyond is evident in the hundreds of graduates we celebrate each spring and in the accomplishments of our alumni each and every day. While the challenges that lie ahead are inevitable, we must remember that we here at Valley have always risen to the top, and we will continue to do so. I look forward to continuing my work with each of you as we push to keep our beloved Valley "In Motion."

With gratitude,



Dr. Jerryl Briggs, Sr.





NAA President's Message

It's a great time to be an alumnus of MVSU and a member of the National Alumni Association!

I am humbled to serve as president of our National Alumni Association. When I initially became involved in the association, this position was not something that I sought. However, I am a testament to the opportunities that are available for an involved alumnus who wishes to serve their fellow alumni and the University. It's an honor and privilege to serve as your national president, and I pledge to work tirelessly to ensure that our focus is on our mission.

I am blessed to have inherited a financially sound National Alumni Association. However, I want to remind you that our mission continues. I will work hard to keep us focused by setting goals that are in line with our strategic plan. I am looking forward to working with you all over the next two years.

Our chapters are, and always will be, the lifeblood of our association, and we all work best when they are connected, engaged and giving. Our association is filled with opportunities for us to give our time, talent and treasure. With your support, we can achieve our goals and ensure the success of our shared mission, making certain Mississippi Valley State University reaches its fullest potential.

My fellow alumnus, we are challenged to raise Valley's profile in the community, not just here in Itta Bena, but in the thousands of communities that you call home. To quote the often repeated phrase, "Valley is everywhere you are." Every day, you each have the opportunity to represent Valley through participation in chapter events, community volunteerism, and current and future student outreach.

The National Alumni Association has made giant strides—not only in giving to the University but also in developing and implementing ways to involve more alumni in its operations. Realizing that we live in a social networking world, the National Alumni Association continues to implement and upgrade social networking to reach and involve more alumni.

Please join me as we challenge ourselves to be the best Valley ambassadors and supporters that we can be.

Charlie J. Tolliver ('68)

One Goal. One Team. One Valley. ...in Motion!



COMMISSIONER OF HIGHER ED SAYS MVSU'S FUTURE IS "BRIGHT"



IHL Commissioner Dr. Alfred Rankins (left) visited MVSU as part of his listening tour. He is pictured along with MVSU President Dr. Jerryl Briggs Sr.

"I think the future is bright here at Mississippi Valley State University. The university is financially sound and has the capacity to do some great things."

That was the message of optimism echoed by new Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) Commissioner Dr. Alfred Rankins during his visit to Mississippi Valley State University Friday, Aug. 24, 2018, as part of his listening tour.

During the visit, Rankins met with various constituency groups, including President Dr. Jerryl Briggs, cabinet members and department chairs, faculty, staff, students and alumni to get their input on how they view MVSU and what the IHL can do to help.

The one-day visit included an open forum and community reception as well as intimate roundtable discussions.

"I can't provide effective leadership if I don't know what the issues are," said Rankins. "That's why I'm here—to listen and have dialogue with those out there in the trenches with our students every day."

A concern expressed by many was the major loss of support the University is anticipating with the ending of funding from the AYERS settlement in 2022.

Rankins said that he believes MVSU is well-positioned to absorb the deficit but shouldn't depend on state appropriations. His suggestions included moving AYERS-supported salaries to other funding sources and growing revenue through tuition and fees.

"The University needs to be very strategic on trying to grow and grow in the right way," Rankins said. "You can't plan budgets based on hope... Valley needs to take its fate into its own hands and be ready."

Rankins was appointed to his position as the top administrator of higher education in the state in March 2018 and began serving in the role July 1, making him the first African American commissioner.

Before his current role, Rankins served as the 19th president of Alcorn State University, the nation's oldest public land-grant HBCU.

Prior to that, he was the IHL's deputy commissioner, which included a one-year stint as the acting president of MVSU.

In his new position, Rankins sees his toughest challenge as being able to get funding and support from the state to address the needs that MVSU and other state universities face.

"I need to show the legislature that they're not just giving money to Mississippi Valley State—they're investing in it, and they're going to get a return on that investment."

Rankins' other goals include increasing educational attainment in the state.

During his MVSU visit, Rankins also dispelled the rumor of merging some state institutions, specifically HBCUs.

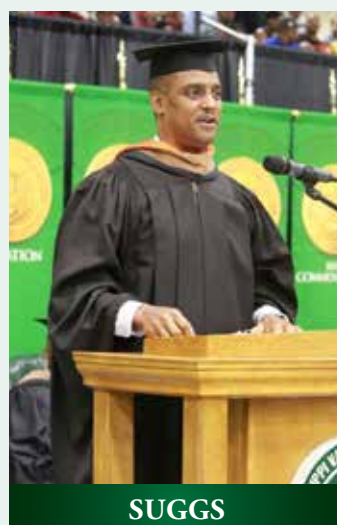
"Nobody is talking about mergers except people on campuses," he commented.

Rankins believes that MVSU's focus needs to be on recruiting new students and retaining them.

"I think the outlook for Valley looks good. With three dorms scheduled to eventually come back online, the university has the capacity to grow and do some things that other institutions can't do," he said.

"There are a lot of good things that are going on here at the Valley despite the challenges. It's my goal to help Valley get to where it wants to be."

MVSU CELEBRATES MORE THAN 500 "GIANT SLAYERS" DURING 66TH COMMENCEMENT



President of Toyota Mississippi Sean Suggs equipped the "giant slayers" of Mississippi Valley State University's Class of 2018 with five stones to help them conquer success during Saturday's 66th Commencement Exercise.

"You're graduating from one of the best Universities in the country. Did you know that only 35 percent of the 325 million folks in the United States have a 4-year degree? That means you're an elite class. I would say that you are giant slayers" said Suggs to the more than 500 MVSU graduates seated in the R.W. Harrison Sports Complex during the 8 a.m. and 11 a.m. ceremonies.

Alluding to the biblical story of David and Goliath, Suggs said that while David defeated Goliath with just one stone, he initially picked up five smooth stones from the stream.

"I imagine he picked up five because he wanted to have a backup plan," Suggs said. "You have proven that you are a giant slayer with the first stone by sitting here today as graduates. But what will you do next?"

Suggs continued his commencement address by sharing words of wisdom on

how the graduates can keep “slaying” with the other four stones of success.

His advice for stones 2 and 3 were to dream big and trust your intuition. “Dreams with no goals are just dreams,” he said. Set daily goals and objectives to live out your dreams.”

Asking those in attendance to repeat the Japanese phrase “Ikigai,” which translates as “your reason for being,” Suggs challenged the graduates to find and live out their purpose.

The fourth and final stones were to be risk takers and to have a great attitude about life.

“At Toyota, we challenge our team members to take risks every single day—to be creative, challenging and to be courageous,” said Suggs, who is responsible for the manufacturing and administration functions of Toyota’s Blue Springs-based plant. “Every great leader I’ve ever been around have been leaders who have tackled challenges and taken great risks.”

Suggs said that, ultimately, attitude is what will set MVSU graduates apart. “I believe your attitude is the engine; it’s the asset that you have to separate you from everyone else,” he said. “Your attitude can shift the tide and make you and the company you’re working with great.”

During the ceremony, graduates Henry Akaeze of Lago, Nigeria (B.S. in Computer Science and B.S. in Mathematics) and Laadi Issaka of Accra, Ghana (B.S. in Health, Physical Education and Recreation) received special recognition for earning a 4.0 cumulative grade point average.

Also featured during the ceremony were the “Golden Graduates”, who commemorated 50 years since their graduation as the 16th graduating class of the then Mississippi Valley State College.

“You all came here for a degree, and you’ve achieved that,” said MVSU President Dr. Jerryl Briggs during closing remarks. “But the education that you all received is priceless. We know that education changes lives; education changes communities. Education can change the world. So make sure you use it as a tool for growth.”

Briggs’ final bid to the Class of 2018 was to share their knowledge and love for MVSU with the world.

“As graduates, my charge to you is to give—give back to others and help someone else,” he said. “Congratulations, I’m so proud of you all, and I know you’re just getting started.”

MVSU CELEBRATES THE INAUGURATION OF ITS EIGHTH PRESIDENT



Mississippi Valley State University (MVSU) capped off its 2018 Founder’s Week by marking another important milestone in the legacy and advancement of the University—the installation of its eighth president, Dr. Jerryl Briggs, Sr.

Faculty, students, alumni, community members and higher education officials from across the state and nation gathered in MVSU’s Walter Roberts Auditorium the morning of April 20, 2018, for the historic occasion.

During the investiture ceremony, Briggs was formally invested with the responsibility and authority as president of MVSU by Commissioner of Higher Education Glenn F. Boyce and President of the Board of Trustees of the State Institutions of Higher Learning C.D. Smith Jr.

“This is a special moment in the history of this outstanding institution,” said Boyce. “Briggs is a man with a wealth of experience in higher education and truly understands students and the services and support they need to be successful both on campus and in life.”

Reflecting on the institution’s transformation from a cotton field into a flourishing institution of higher learning, Boyce said Briggs has the skill set needed to continue moving the University forward.

“His experiences throughout his career have prepared him perfectly for this moment,” he said. “We’re fortunate to have a leader of his caliber to guide us and take us to a new point in history.”

During his inaugural address, Briggs accepted the charge and said he considers it a privilege to serve the University.

“It is indeed a blessing for me and my family to be here standing before you as the eighth president of Mississippi Valley State University,” he said. “I’d like to thank Commissioner Boyce, Board President C.D. Smith and other board members here today for entrusting in me this opportunity and having the confidence in me to serve. I also want to thank the Valley family for sharing that confidence as well ... You all have embraced me from day one, and it has truly been a blessing.”

Noting the University’s humble beginnings in 1950, Briggs said he plans to continue building upon the University’s commitment and dedication to academic excellence.

“This is our Founder’s Week, and to have this ceremony now just shows, for me, that I’m standing on some very tall shoulders,” he said. “There are some individuals who toiled and really worked to make sure that this institution was successful, and I owe a lot to them. They paved the way so that I can stand here today, and I’m just really blessed to be a part of this great institution.”

Briggs then shared his vision for the University, explaining the meaning behind his addition of “...IN MOTION” to the University’s mantra, “ONE GOAL. ONE TEAM. ONE VALLEY.”

Using an acronym, Briggs said “motion” stands for: Motivation, Optimistic, Time, Inspiration, Outspoken, and “No” is not the answer.

“I have a love for higher education, and I really have a true love for HBCUs,” he said. “We’re doing some great things. We’re going to continue to support each other, and we’re going to continue to give...someone gave back to me, and it’s my responsibility to assure that others have those same chances.”

MVSU, GPSD CELEBRATE NEW EARLY COLLEGE WITH OPENING CEREMONY

Mississippi Valley State University joined representatives from the Greenville Public School District (GPSD) in celebrating the inaugural class of the GPSD Early College during a special opening ceremony Aug. 22, 2018.

Stationed on MVSU's campus, the early college offers select GPSD students the opportunity to gain college credit while earning their high school diploma.

The ceremony, hosted in Cliff E. Williams Auditorium of MVSU's Business Education Building, was designed to formally welcome the 10th graders to MVSU's campus and give community members and stakeholders the opportunity to see the early college in action.

The event was highlighted by the mock signing of the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) by MVSU President Dr. Jerryl Briggs, Sr. and GPSD Superintendent Janice Page.

"This is just the beginning of a long-standing partnership with the Greenville Public School District. Here, at the university, we believe in our vision of 'One Goal. One Team. One Valley...In Motion' and 'In Motion' means partnerships like the one we're celebrating right now," said Briggs during his opening remarks.

"The university is moving, and we're moving in the right direction. Creating opportunities for all to have access and availability to higher education is one of our premier goals. This is just one example of how we're moving the university forward," he added.

Then in their third day of classes, the students were referred to as "trailblazers" by Page.

"You've stepped up to the challenge. You've already set the bar high, and you're on your way to meeting the high expectation that we've set and you've set for yourselves," said Page to the roughly 30 early college students present. "We know that you're up to the challenge, and we want to make sure that we're doing everything to ensure your success. Continue to do well and we're looking forward to hearing great things."

MVSU is the first four-year Mississippi Institution of Higher Learning to participate in an early college program.

As part of the partnership, MVSU has provided classroom space to house GPSD Early College students who will spend their days on Valley's campus completing high school and college courses. Professors from MVSU are teaching the college courses while GPSD teachers are providing high school instruction. GPSD, in conjunction with a MVSU agreement, is providing the students' transportation to Itta Bena.



Seated, from left, are the late Dr. Constance G. Bland, MVSU vice president of Academic Affairs, MVSU President Dr. Jerryl Briggs Sr., Hinds President Dr. Clyde Muse and Dr. Theresa Hamilton, vice president for the Raymond Campus and the Jackson Campus Nursing/Allied Health Center and director of College Parallel Programs. They are joined by faculty members from both institutions who were on-site to witness the historic occasion.

MVSU, HINDS CC SIGN AGREEMENT ENSURING SEAMLESS TRANSFER

Hinds Community College (Hinds CC) recently signed a 2 Plus 2 agreement with Mississippi Valley State University to offer junior and senior level courses for students pursuing a bachelor's degree in Environmental Health, Biology or Chemistry.

Representatives from both institutions gathered April 27, 2018, at Hinds CC-Raymond Campus for a signing ceremony to formalize the new partnership, designed to better serve students and to promote successful undergraduate educational experiences for students who wish to attend both institutions.

Before signing the agreements, Hinds CC President Dr. Clyde Muse and MVSU President Dr. Jerryl Briggs, Sr. discussed the benefits of the partnership for both institutions.

"This is a good opportunity that we have to come together as institutions to confirm our relationship and to have the opportunity to further it with this agreement," said Muse. "With this agreement, we have made the process of transfer much simpler, and that's an advantage for the student."

According to Briggs, the agreement serves as an example of both institutions moving forward.

"One thing that we've established at Valley is that vision of 'ONE GOAL. ONE TEAM. ONE VALLEY.' and now that's '...In Motion'. It means that we're moving in the right direction, and this is the right direction, I think, for both institutions," he said.

As part of the agreement, MVSU will accept all Hinds CC courses outlined in the articulation agreement, providing students pursuing bachelor's degrees in Natural Science and Environmental Health with a seamless transfer.

In addition, MVSU has agreed to provide junior/senior and graduate level courses on Hinds' campus. It will also offer two transfer scholarships to Hinds CC graduates with a 3.5-grade point average or higher.

Hinds CC has agreed to provide MVSU access to its campus for classes, registration, recruiting and support services.

HUNDREDS VISIT MVSU FOR YANKY 72 DEDICATION CEREMONY



The YANKY 72 Memorial, constructed in honor of the 16 servicemen who passed away when their military aircraft crashed into an Itta Bena soybean field, was unveiled July 14 as servicemen, dignitaries, community members, friends and family of the victims looked on. A special ceremony was also hosted earlier that morning in the Walter Roberts Auditorium of MVSU's H.G. Carpenter Building.

Hundreds of visitors filled the campus of Mississippi Valley State University Saturday, July 14, 2018, to honor the legacies of the 15 Marines and one Navy Corpsman who passed away last year when their military aircraft crashed into a nearby soybean field in Itta Bena.

The Walter Roberts Auditorium of MVSU's H.G. Carpenter Building was nearly filled to capacity for the dedication ceremony that included a greeting from MVSU President Dr. Jerryl Briggs, Sr. as well as special tributes from MS Gov. Phil Bryant; U.S. Sen. Cindy Hyde-Smith; Lt. Gen. Rex McMillian, Commanding General of the U.S. Marine Corps Forces Reserve and the U.S. Marine Corps Forces North; and Lt. Gen. Carl E. Mundy, III, Commanding General of the U.S. Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command and U.S. Marine Corps Forces Central Command.

"As we gather today for the YANKY 72 memorial service, 'The Valley' extends its heartfelt condolences to the families and friends," said Briggs. As a University, our motto is 'Live for Service', meaning we truly understand and embrace a passion for giving. The Valley family can assure you all that this university community will stand with you and give support, always."

Briggs then joined Commissioner Mike Tagert of the MS Northern Transportation District in unveiling the highway marker renaming 7.2 miles of U.S. Highway 82 (from the site of the YANKY 72 Memorial to the Leflore/Sunflower county line) as the YANKY 72 Memorial Highway.

In addition to the naming of the memorial highway, Mississippi's Marine Corps League led an effort that raised more than \$100,000 for a memorial placed outside of the Leflore County Incubator where the recovery effort was based, several miles east of the crash site.

Bryant said that the highway marker and the newly constructed memorial site are just small gestures to honor the legacies of the servicemen.

"The memorial that was built will last for generations and generations, and we hope that generations hence will come to that memorial and remember those 16 that were lost, and never forget that freedom is not free—whether it is on foreign battlefields or here in Leflore County," Bryant said.

Hyde-Smith called the 16 servicemen "giants among men." "We will recognize them as such forever," she added. "It is our responsibility to carry on the legacy of honor and courage these men represent."

Mundy applauded MVSU for its support in hosting the YANKY 72 dedication ceremony.

"I told Dr. Briggs that I didn't realize that he was a former Marine, and that he epitomizes what it means to be 'semper fidelis'. I won't forget that, and I will always remember Mississippi Valley State University for more than just Jerry Rice," he remarked.

After the ceremony, shuttles transported those in attendance across the highway from MVSU for the unveiling of the memorial. During the unveiling ceremony, plans were announced to host a ceremony at the memorial site each July.

The YANKY 72 Memorial and Dedication Ceremony were made possible by the Marine Corps Aviation Association, the Marine Corps League, the United States Marine Corps Reserve Association, the Wingman Foundation, the Marine Raider Foundation, the Marine Battleherks, the Marine Corps Air Transport Association, Leflore County and the City of Greenwood, Hamilton and Associates, Larry's Fish House, and MVSU.



MVSU AMONG 79 ORGANIZATIONS NATIONWIDE TO RECEIVE NEA BIG READ GRANT

Mississippi Valley State University recently received a \$10,150 grant to host the NEA Big Read in the Mississippi Delta community.

A national initiative of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) in partnership with Arts Midwest, the NEA Big Read is designed to broaden the understanding of our world, our communities, and ourselves through the joy of sharing a good book.

MVSU is one of 79 non-profit organizations nationwide and the only organization in the state to receive an NEA Big Read grant to host a community reading program between September 2018 and June 2019.

The NEA Big Read at MVSU will focus on Tayari Jones' "Silver Sparrow," a touching and moving read threaded with the themes of love, family as well as the difficulties of coming of age.

The novel was chosen as a Best Book of 2011 by O, The Oprah Magazine, Library Journal, Slate, and Salon.

Since 2006, the National Endowment for the Arts has funded more than 1,400 NEA Big Read programs, providing more than \$19 million to organizations nationwide. In addition, Big Read activities have reached every Congressional district in the country. Over the past eleven years, grantees have leveraged more than \$44 million in local funding to support their NEA Big Read programs. More than 4.9 million Americans have attended an NEA Big Read event, approximately 82,000 volunteers have participated at the local level, and 39,000 community organizations have partnered to make NEA Big Read activities possible.



Pictured, from left, are Dan Trent, MVSU; Ralph Smith, independent technology specialist; LaMorris Strong, MVSU; Paula Wilder, retreat facilitator; Anza Mitchell, VA Tech doctoral student; James Jimison, SCCSD; Dr. Brenda Brand, principal investigator/ VA Tech; Lezly Taylor, VA Tech doctoral student; John Cochran, SCCSD; Takumi Sato, VA Tech; and Marcus Golden, MVSU.

MVSU, VIRGINIA TECH AND SCCSD STILL BRINGING STEM TO THE DELTA

Mississippi Valley State University has been continuing its work with Virginia Tech and the Sunflower County Consolidated School District (SCCSD) to increase and strengthen the impact of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) in the Mississippi Delta.

Since 2015, the trio has been advancing STEM education through the program "Actualizing STEM Potential in the Mississippi Delta," made possible through a \$1.6 million grant from the National Science Foundation.

As part of the program, faculty from MVSU and SCCSD have been teaming up to teach high school students in Sunflower County leadership and teamwork skills while encouraging them to explore STEM careers.

Recently, representatives from each organization met for their annual workshop to discuss ideas and activities centered on ways to continue advancing STEM in the Delta. The group also discussed sustainability plans, which includes

launching a STEM excellence center at MVSU.

Organized by Dr. Brenda Brand, a native of Shaw, Miss., "Actualizing STEM Potential in the Mississippi Delta" is based on a STEM initiative implemented at Virginia Tech nearly two decades ago.

The program provides high school students with the opportunity to plan, design, build, and program robots. In March 2018, the students had the opportunity to put their skills to work as team "Delta Overload" during the FIRST Robotics Competition Bayou Regional, hosted in Kenner, La.

"The students at Gentry have really improved their robotics skills each year of the build season as well as the competition," said MVSU Computer Science Instructor Marcus Golden. I am looking forward to this upcoming season, where I believe we will finally break through and be among the top in the competition."

NISSAN CONTINUES ITS SUPPORT OF MVSU STEM PROGRAMS

Nissan has continued its support of Mississippi historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs), including Mississippi Valley State University (MVSU), with a \$250,000 donation to help boost science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) programs and departments.

Representatives from MVSU joined members from Alcorn State University, Jackson State University, Rust College, Tougaloo College, Coahoma Community College and Hinds Community College-Utica Campus April 26, 2018, at Nissan's Canton-based facility for the donation presentation.

With its latest contribution, Nissan has invested nearly \$2 million in local HBCUs since its Canton facility opened in 2003—with more than half directed toward STEM-specific curriculums.

"Our continued commitment to HBCUs, specifically in the areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics, is vital to fostering the minds of the next George Washington Carver or Mae Jemison," said Jeffrey Webster, director of Diversity and Inclusion for Nissan North America, Inc. These institutions have implemented proven practices to assist students in STEM fields, and we are proud to help make their students' career dreams a reality."

Past donations have helped MVSU's Engineering Technology Department to purchase material for three concentrations: Electronics Technology, Architectural Construction Management and Computer Aided Drafting and Design (CADD).



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FACULTY & STAFF NOTES

EVANS NAMED MVSU'S INTERIM VICE PRESIDENT OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS



EVANS

Mississippi Valley State University President Dr. Jerryl Briggs has announced Dr. Elizabeth Evans as the Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs.

In this role, Evans will serve as the institution's chief academic officer, overseeing the Office of Academic Affairs. As a member of the institution's Executive and Extended Cabinets, she will also play an integral role in the overall management of the institution.

"Dr. Evans has had a remarkable career, both in the United States Air Force and here at Mississippi Valley State

University," said Briggs. "She is extremely committed to our students and university's success, and I look forward to her continuing to move our academic mission forward."

Evans, who most recently served as the associate vice president of academic affairs, said she is humbled by the opportunity to serve.

"My experience in the military and the field of education have converged to prepare me for this executive administrative position. I embrace the opportunity and welcome supportive ideas," she said.

A 1975 graduate of Gentry High School in Indianola, Miss., Evans earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Mathematics from Mississippi Valley State University, where she was commissioned as a Distinguished Graduate of the Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps (AFROTC) program (1979).

She also earned a Master of Arts Degree in Public Management from the University of Houston-Clear Lake, Texas in 1986, and a Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Public Policy and Administration from Mississippi State University in 2012.

She is a 24-year veteran of the United States Air Force, where she spent the first 20 years of that time in the "Space Operations" career field working with satellites and their role in the defense of the United States of America. The remaining four years were spent recruiting, educating, training, motivating, and selecting college students for military service.

MVSU PROFESSOR JOINS "PRISON TO COLLEGE PIPELINE" PROGRAM

MVSU History Professor Kathryn Green co-taught a college course in the summer of 2018 to women inmates at Central Mississippi Correctional Facility.

Green received the opportunity as part of the Prison to College Pipeline program, which offers inmates the opportunity to receive college credit for courses they take.

Green worked with Dr. Robby Luckett, a professor at Jackson State University, to teach the course Modern U.S. History.

"The students were so proud of their accomplishments, and they were really good students for the course," said Green. "I have used the opportunity to talk up MVSU and took examples of curriculum MAPs to show the students, talking about transfer of credit opportunities and programs available at Valley."

Green said the opportunity was a "wonderful experience" and that she hopes to be able to continue next summer as well as pursue additional educational opportunities for prisoner populations in the state.

The program was sponsored by the Mississippi Humanities Council.

MVSU'S BROOKS JOINS DELTA COUNCIL BOARD



BROOKS

Mississippi Valley State University Chief of Staff and Legislative Liaison La Shon Brooks was recently appointed to serve on the board of directors for Delta Council, an organization devoted to promoting the development of the economy in the Mississippi Delta.

Brooks' appointment was made by Delta Council President Woods Eastland. As a director, Brooks has joined the organization's community and county directors, who are elected by the membership election process. Her appointment will last for one year.

"We're proud to have a high-level staff member from the Valley represented on our board of directors," said Eastland. "La Shon is an outstanding person, and she will contribute a lot. We're thrilled that she has agreed to the position."

Brooks said she is honored to be extended the opportunity.

"The work of Delta Council includes agriculture, workforce development, and infrastructure—all of which are very important to the Delta and the state," she said. "I am very excited to be a part of such an important and progressive organization."

Based in Stoneville, Delta Council represents 18 Delta and part-Delta counties of Northwest Mississippi.

Founded after the Great Flood of 1927 and in the midst of a depression, the Delta Council remains one of Mississippi's most influential organizations.

The scope of the organization's influence has included agriculture, ag-research, economic development, industry, flood control, transportation, health, education and forestry.

TWO MVSU OFFICERS COMPLETE POLICE ACADEMY

Two Mississippi Valley State University officers are now ready to protect and serve after successfully completing the Law Enforcement Training Academy at Mississippi Delta Community College.

Officers Svante' Brown of Greenwood and Henry Manuel, Jr. of Moorhead were among 24 cadets to graduate from the Academy Aug. 2, 2018, in Moorhead.

The cadets lived on campus five-days per week for 12-weeks to complete the academy, which included intense physical training and learning of the law.

During the graduation ceremony, Manuel was recognized for earning 3rd place

and Brown for earning the 5th place Top PT (Physical Training) award. Both officers were also recognized for successfully completing the Warrior Challenge and for running five miles in under 50 minutes.

As part of the training, the officers also earned certification in shooting, shuffle steering, OC pepper spray and defense tactics.

Brown has been employed with MVSU for 3.5 years, and Manuel has been employed at The Valley for 2.5 years.

MVSU PROFESSOR APPOINTED TO FLHCF BOARD



A Mississippi Valley State University professor was recently appointed to the board of a local organization devoted to eradicating cancer, particularly in the Mississippi Delta.

MVSU Assistant Professor of Environmental Health Dr. Mark Dugo has joined the board of directors for the Fannie Lou Hamer Cancer Foundation (FLHCF).

The Ruleville-based non-profit was founded and is led by MVSU alumna Freddie White-Johnson ('82). Its mission includes preventing cancer in the Mississippi Delta by increasing awareness and establishing a public agenda for the prevention of cancer.

Dugo brings to the organization a wealth of knowledge in the areas of health disparities and the underlying causes of cancer.

His term will last two years, and he will be eligible to be re-appointed by the Foundation's executive board.

To learn more about the Fannie Lou Hamer Cancer Foundation, visit www.flhcf.com.

VAUGHN WINS "BEST IN SHOW"



MVSU Assistant Professor of Art Dr. Dorothy Vaughn recently earned an award during the annual Mississippi Homemaker Volunteers (MHV) Conference, hosted May 21-24, 2018, at Mississippi State University in Starkville.

Vaughn's mixed media drawing of B. B. King won "Best in Show" in the Cultural Arts Exhibit under the category of Painting and Drawing.

Vaughn, who retired June 30, 2018, after several decades in MVSU's Department of Fine Arts, stated that she had fun playing around with magic and fiber markers, felt tip pens, and ink pens to produce the piece.

"Art can be created from almost anything if you have the vision and inspiration to explore creativity," she said.

According to Vaughn, she found most of the liquid media at her mother's house and was inspired to begin on the drawing while visiting her.

Vaughn has been a member of the Mississippi Homemaker Volunteers, Inc. since 1993.

The mission of the MHV is to strengthen families through education and community involvement.

This year's Mississippi Homemaker Volunteers Conference was special as it marked the centennial anniversary of the organization.

COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING TEAM BRINGS HOME FIVE CPRAM AWARDS



Pictured (front row, from left) are Brittany Davis-Green, director of Communications & Marketing; Shanae Curry, project coordinator; (back row) John McCall, senior graphic designer; Donell Maxie, communications specialist; and Joseph Cotton, associate graphic designer.

Mississippi Valley State University's Office of Communications and Marketing staff recently won five awards during the College Public Relations Association of Mississippi's (CPRAM) annual conference, hosted May 22, 2018, in Ridgeland.

MVSU's "Valley in Motion" commercial won first place in the Senior Division-Television Spots category. The winning team included Brittany Davis-Green, director; John McCall, senior graphic designer; Joseph Cotton, associate graphic designer; Shanae Curry, project coordinator; and Donell Maxie, communications specialist.

The University's Communiqué won second place in the Senior Division-Newsletter category. On the winning team were Davis-Green, Cotton and Maxie.

McCall and Cotton won first place in the Single Piece Artwork (Sports) category for their "ONE GOAL. ONE TEAM. ONE VALLEY." athletic stadium banners.

Cotton also won first place in the Single Piece Artwork (Non-Sports) category for his piece "Past, Present, Future."

Maxie won second place in the Feature Story-Senior Division for his 2017 Graduation series.

Davis-Green received the first place and second place awards in the Junior Division-Feature Story category for pieces she wrote while previously serving as the Chief Communications Officer for Coahoma Community College in Clarksdale.

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.

More than 100 entries from 12 senior public and private institutions in the state of Mississippi participated in this year's awards competition.

MVSU'S MUSHI AND HOLSTON-OKAE PUBLISH ARTICLE

Dr. Richard Mushi, associate professor and department chair of MVSU's Social Sciences department, and MVSU alumna Dr. Bettye L. Holston-Okae ('99) authored a research article featured in the International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences.

The study, entitled "Employee Turnover in the Hospitality Industry using Herzberg's Two-Factor Motivation-Hygiene Theory", is grounded in the motivation-hygiene theory and assesses the relationship between employee turnover intention and job satisfaction, employee compensation, employee engagement, employee motivation, and work environment for hospitality employees from Western Georgia, Central Mississippi and North Central Texas.

LIU RECOGNIZED AS MVSU'S 2018 DIVERSITY EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR



Pictured, from left, are Trustee Shane Hooper, MVSU 2018 Diversity Educator of the Year honoree Dr. Jaibo Liu, and MVSU President Dr. Jerryl Briggs

Dr. Jaibo Liu has made a unique contribution to the diversity of Mississippi Valley State University through his involvement in diverse teaching, recruitment, and retention activities.

For his efforts, Liu was recently recognized by the Mississippi Board of Trustees of the State Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) as MVSU's 2018 Diversity Educator of the Year.

Created in observance of Black History Month, the IHL Diversity Awards are presented to campus and community leaders in recognition of their efforts in advancing diversity and encouraging understanding and respect.

Liu, an associate professor in MVSU's Department of Criminal Justice, received a plaque presented by Trustee Shane Hooper and MVSU President Dr. Jerryl Briggs for his contributions to the diversity of MVSU through his diverse and advanced research activities.

Liu joined MVSU's faculty in January 2003. He specializes in research methods and quantitative analysis and their applications in legal analysis and criminal justice research. Liu has written numerous articles and contributed to several books with his findings.

Liu earned a B.A. in Information Management from Beijing University; an LL.M. from Beijing University School of Law; an M.S. in criminal justice from the University of Cincinnati; and a doctorate in law from the London School of Economics.

CARTER-STEVENS, AKAEZE SELECTED AS MVSU'S 2018 HEADWAE HONOREES



AKAEZE

Assistant Professor of Mathematics Dr. Candace Carter-Stevens and senior Math and Computer Science major Henry Akaeze ('18) represented Mississippi Valley State University during the 31st Annual Higher Education Appreciation Day-Working for Academic Excellence (HEADWAE) program.

Each year, HEADWAE honors an outstanding faculty member and outstanding student from each participating member institution of the Mississippi Association of Colleges and Universities.

HEADWAE was established by a Mississippi Legislative Resolution to annually honor the academically talented students and faculty members of Mississippi's higher education institutions who have made outstanding contributions in promoting academic excellence.

The Appreciation Day, hosted by the Legislature each February in Jackson, is the Legislature's way of saying "thank you" to students and faculty for their commitment to the future of Mississippi.



CARTER-STEVENS

MVSU'S HAWKINS TO CHAIR RURAL POVERTY RESEARCH INTEREST GROUP



HAWKINS

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

The Rural Sociological Society (RSS) is a professional social science association that promotes the generation, application, and dissemination of sociological knowledge to enhance the quality of rural life, communities, and the environment. The association's

Research and Interest Groups (RIGs) reflect the substantive interests of RSS members and serve as an important avenue for connecting members with similar interests.

KNUTSON PUBLISHES ACADEMIC PAPER

Dr. Lin Knutson recently published an academic paper in the University of Toronto Quarterly, a respected literary Journal. Her paper, "Monster Studies: Liminality, Home Spaces and Ina Vampires in Octavia E. Butler's Fledgling" examines the protagonist in an African American vampire text through the lens of Victor Turner's anthropological concept of liminality, a creative space of empowerment. Octavia E. Butler is one of a very few female African American authors writing science fiction. The academic paper is printed in volume 87, number 1, winter 2018, University of Toronto Press.

MVSU STUDENT NAMED 2018 WHITE HOUSE HBCU SCHOLAR



HAMPTON

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

Hampton was one of three Mississippi students selected for the recognition program designed to honor current HBCU students for their competitiveness.

An active and engaged student, Hampton is a member of the Alpha Lambda National Honors Society, National Council of Negro Women Collegiate Section, Gateway Leadership Ambassadors Program, Career Services Center Ambassadors, University Ambassadors and the Ronald E. McNair Post-Bachelorette Achievement Program.

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

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

MVSU STUDENT INTERNS AT GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK



MVSU Junior keshona Young poses for a photo during her internship at the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

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

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

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

During the 11-week program, Young resided in the national park and had the opportunity to initiate and assist with various projects. She worked closely with the parks' facilities management department and served as a project coordinator, designed floor plans for new office spaces and updated evacuation maps for the park's headquarters.

MR. & MISS MVSU ATTENDS LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE



GREEN & HOLLAND

Mr. and Miss Mississippi Valley State University 2018-19 Tony Holland and Stormy Green recently attended the 17th Annual HBCU Leadership Conference in New Orleans.

The MVSU student leaders traveled to the Crescent City for the leadership conference, designed to provide helpful information, support and resources for newly elected kings and queens as they prepare for their upcoming reigns.

In addition to networking with kings and queens from other Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU), Holland and Green had the opportunity to listen to presentations from trained professionals on a variety of topics, including articulation, stage presence, etiquette, confidence, and professionalism.

MVSU STUDENTS ATTEND IOBSE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The continued partnership with Mississippi Valley State University's (MVSU) Career Services Center and the International Organization of Black Security Executives (IOBSE) recently provided MVSU students with a unique opportunity to gain real-world leadership and career experience.

MVSU junior Business Administration major Jamya Edwards, senior Business Administration major Theron Chatman, Jr. and junior Computer Science major Shaniqwa Barber were extended the opportunity to attend IOBSE's Annual Spring Conference after participating in a Career Leadership Seminar and interview hosted by the non-profit security organization on MVSU's campus earlier during the Spring 2018 semester.

The conference, hosted April 24-26, 2018, by the JC Penney Corporation in Plano, Texas, was an exciting and informative program designed to assist in developing future industry leaders for tomorrow's domestic and global security challenges.

"We truly appreciate the partnership and exposure provided to our students for professional development and networking at this capacity in preparing our students for post-graduation careers," said Essie Bryant, MVSU's director of career services.

Valley students participated along with 30 other students from universities across the nation, including Arkansas-Pine Bluff, Bethune-Cookman, California State-Dominguez, Clark Atlanta, Delgado College, Florida Memorial, Grambling, Florida A & M, Southern IL-Edwardsville, Southern-New Orleans, Stony Brook, Texas Southern, University of Central Florida and Western IL.

Founded in 1982, IOBSE is a non-profit security organization that has grown to be the "Leading Organization for Minority Security Professionals". Over the past several years, the organization has expanded its focus and commitment to include minority college students and has introduced comprehensive programming support to help those students jump-start their careers.

MVSU STUDENT EARNS TOP SPOT FOR STATE RESEARCH PAPER COMPETITION



LANE

Mississippi Valley State University student Derrick Lane II ('18) was selected as the undergraduate winner for the 2018 "Advancing Mississippi" student paper competition.

As a result, Lane was invited to present his work, entitled "Investigating Health Disparities of Prostate Cancer in Mississippi Compared to National Trends," during the "Advancing Mississippi" conference, hosted June 8, 2018, in Jackson.

Lane's paper was an epidemiological analysis of prostate cancer at the national and state levels, with emphasis on racial disparities. As part of the award, he also earned a \$300 book scholarship and the opportunity to have his paper published in The Mississippi Economic Review.

"It was a great experience to present my research information about health disparities in Mississippi. I gave insight on what is affecting men's health in Mississippi especially the Mississippi Delta," he said.

Lane, an aspiring doctor, said that ultimately his desire is to promote prevention education.

"I want to promote cancer awareness and prevention across the state, and I plan to do further research and partner with people and organizations to bring about the change I would like to see," he said.

The annual "Advancing Mississippi" conference is organized by the University Research Center (URC), a division of Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) and is a unique opportunity for researchers from across the state to present papers addressing long-term economic challenges facing the state.

MVSU STUDENT LEADERS CITCHENS, WASHINGTON ATTEND NEW LEADERSHIP MS

Two budding Mississippi Valley State University leaders recently had the opportunity to learn more about leadership and politics during a nationally recognized program designed to address the underrepresentation of women in American politics.

MVSU's Office of Student Leadership and Engagement recently sent rising sophomore Chelsea Washington of Yazoo City, Miss., and rising junior Janice Citchens of Tutwiler, Miss. to represent the University during the NEW Leadership™ Mississippi program.

Hosted May 20-24, 2018, on the campus of Mississippi University for Women (MUW), the national bi-partisan program was developed by Rutgers University and designed to expose participants to new ideas and opportunities as they consider their future careers.

The program consisted of a very strategic and rigorous selection process to which both Citchens and Washington were selected.

MVSU SHINES DURING NATIONAL MINORITY COMPUTER SCIENCE/ ENGINEERING SYMPOSIUM



Mississippi Valley State University students outshined STEM students from across the nation during the 2018 Association of Computer and Information Science/Engineering Departments at Minority Institutions (ADMI) symposium hosted recently in New Orleans.

Themed "CompUtainment: Gaming, Graphics, Music, Visualization and Animation," the symposium highlighted undergraduate and graduate research with particular interest on innovations in the computing field.

During the event, MVSU students won first place in the Cybersecurity Bowl Competition and second place in the Hardening Challenge using Raspberry Pi.

The winning team included MVSU Computer science majors Henry Akaeze of Nigeria; Shaniqwa Barber of Greenville, Miss.; Kyanie Waters of Heidelberg, Miss; and LaAndrea Gates of Greenville, Miss. They were led by Christopher Lanclos, MVSU assistant professor of Computer Science. The team competed in the highly competitive event against students from several schools, including: Hampton University, North Carolina A & T, University of Alabama, Morehouse College, and Winston-Salem State University.

In addition, MVSU placed second in the Computer Science Quiz Bowl competition. Team members included Kizito Nwaka of Nigeria; Mubarak Ibrahim of Nigeria; Arian Williams of Mound Bayou, Miss.; and Koran Wright of Clarksdale, Miss.

The late Dr. Constance G. Bland, MVSU's former vice president for academic affairs, was invited to serve as the keynote speaker for the symposium.

MVSU STUDENT AWARDED TEACHING SCHOLARSHIP

Mississippi Valley State University Education major Kalik May was recently awarded the Linda Anglin Teacher Presentation Scholarship by the Mississippi Professional Educators organization.

As part of the honor, May received a \$500 scholarship as well as a complimentary membership to the MPE for his first year of teaching.

The Greenwood native is a former professional baseball player and currently volunteers as an assistant coach for the MVSU baseball team.

Founded in 1979, the Mississippi Professional Educators is Mississippi's largest and premier organization for professional educators, serving approximately 14,000 teachers, administrators and support personnel.

MISS. MVSU NAMED AMONG EBONY MAGAZINE'S TOP TEN HBCU CAMPUS QUEENS



COATS

When Laderka Coats ('18) decided to vie for the title of Miss. Mississippi Valley State University 2017-18, she did so out of a desire to serve.

Little did she know, the opportunity would also land her photo in the pages of Ebony Magazine as one of the featured Top 10 HBCU Campus Queens.

The Belzoni native said she is humbled to be featured in such a prominent national publication and grateful to those who helped make it possible.

"I would like to thank the Mississippi Valley State community for all their support," she said. The faculty and staff and student body

helped out tremendously. I would especially like to thank my family, friends and the Belzoni community for their love and support throughout the journey to become Miss. MVSU as well as an Ebony Campus Queen."

The announcement from Ebony marks the second consecutive year that an MVSU queen won a spot in Ebony's top ten. Miss MVSU 2016-17 Symone Daniels, who is also a Belzoni native and attended the same high school—Humphreys County—as Coats, earned the prestigious honor last year.

The EBONY HBCU Campus Queens program provides a platform to recognize young Black women who are poised to affect significant change globally. The coveted title identifies collegiate women who have demonstrated the ability to inspire, lead and give back to their communities.

MVSU STUDENT RESEARCHERS PRESENT DURING MS ACADEMY OF SCIENCES MEETING

Two Mississippi Valley State University students presented research that explores the relationship between cybersecurity and homeland security during the Mississippi Academy of Sciences (MAS) Meeting.

MVSU Criminal Justice major Bianca Watkins of Plainfield, Ill., and Mathematics, Computer, and Information Systems (MCIS) major Mubarak Ibrahim of Nigeria presented on the topic, "Why Cybersecurity is Essential to Homeland Security".

Hosted at the University of Southern Mississippi's Thad Cochran Center, the annual meeting offered participants the opportunity to present addresses, symposia, workshops, scientific papers, and exhibits of interest to members of the state-wide organization dedicated to reshaping and expanding the role of science and technology in the state.

The students conducted the research with assistance from MVSU Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice Dr. Alaba Oludare and Instructor Christopher Lanclos of MVSU's MCIS Department and Cybersecurity Center.

The research was supported by funds awarded by the Charles Koch Foundation, under the direction of Dr. Emmanuel Amadi, chair of MVSU's Criminal Justice Department.

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STUDENT NOTES

MVSU STUDENT RECEIVES COMPETITIVE AWARD TO CONDUCT BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH



MVSU student Stephon Simpson (pictured right) interned with Mississippi INBRE, which aims to promote biomedical research in the state of Mississippi.

In the summer of 2018, Mississippi Valley State University student, Stephon Simpson was selected as part of a group of only 34 students in Mississippi to participate in a biomedical research internship through Mississippi IDeA Network of Biomedical Research Excellence (INBRE) Research Scholars program.

Students in the Mississippi INBRE Research Scholars program work with researchers throughout the state to conduct biomedical research. This practical experience provides students with a skill set and knowledge base which will help them as they further their educational career and their research.

Simpson spent his first week of the internship at The University of Southern Mississippi learning laboratory basics and safety techniques.

During this time, he was also able to hear from professionals about graduate programs, resume and interviewing tips, and presenting at professional conferences.

After completing this week of training, Simpson began working with Dr. Mohamed Elasri at The University of Southern Mississippi to complete the remaining 10 weeks of his internship.

Simpson has aspirations to further his career in research and medicine to be of service to his home state of Mississippi. Following the internship, he will have several opportunities to present his research, further expanding his professional network and marketable experience.

MVSU MALE ATHLETES AWARDED FOR HIGHEST GRADUATION RATE IN STATE



MVSU President Dr. Jerryl Briggs accepts the David M. Halbrook Award for Academic Achievement Among Athletes 2016-17 during the 2017 Mississippi Association of Colleges and Universities (MAC) conference in Starkville, MS.

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

MVSU was the recipient of the 2017 "David Halbrook Award for Academic Achievement Among Athletes" in the Men's Public University Division during the 84th annual Halbrook Awards Luncheon.

Hosted at Mississippi State University as part of the Mississippi Association of Colleges and Universities Annual Conference, the annual event is organized to recognize colleges and universities that achieve and maintain high academic standard for student athletes, which in turn encourages high graduation rates.

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



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JOHN DEERE

ALUMNI NOTES

2018 MVSU GRADUATE LANDS JOB WITH IBM



OPURUM

Victor Opurum ('18) graduated from Mississippi Valley State University May 5, 2018, with bachelor's degrees in Mathematics and Computer Science.

But not only did the Nigeria native cross the stage to a degree but also a job; he was offered and accepted a position with IBM in Littleton, Mass., as a software developer.

Opurum began his new career journey on July 10, 2018.

"The journey from my freshman year doing research to performing internships at Dell and a company called SWAYS and now finally being able to put those experiences and technical skills to use to land a job with IBM is a dream come true," said Opurum.

From his humble beginnings as a youth in Imo State, Nigeria to his life at MVSU, Opurum said it has been all about the journey and the experiences he has shared with classmates, including many of whom are also international students.

"The job is great, but the journey to get here is what has been most exciting to me," said Opurum. "Coming from Nigeria, I was always enthusiastic about opportunities. I came to Mississippi Valley in the fall of 2014, and I came with the mindset to work hard and achieve my goals."

Mission accomplished, Opurum.

JOHNSON KEYNOTES MVSU'S 68TH FOUNDER'S CONVOCATION



JOHNSON

The year was 1976 when Gloria Johnson received a bachelor's degree in business administration from Mississippi Valley State University.

42 years later, Johnson returned to her alma mater Thursday, April 19, 2018, to serve as the keynote speaker for the institution's 68th Annual Founder's Convocation.

Hosted in the Walter Roberts Auditorium of the H.G. Carpenter Building, the event embraced the week's theme, "Keeping Valley in Motion: Connecting our Founding to our Future."

A native of Delta City, Miss., Johnson said she enrolled in MVSU with her best friend on a full academic scholarship, becoming the first in her family to receive a college degree.

Johnson is retired and was employed by Entergy Mississippi from 1987 until May 2016. She began her career with Baxter Travenol Laboratories in Cleveland, Miss., and later joined Uncle Ben's Foods of Greenville where she served as Cost Services Coordinator for nine years.

"The Valley instilled in me confidence, character, a lifelong quest to learn and the wherewithal to support myself after graduation," Johnson said.

MVSU ALUM NAMED DIRECTOR OF USDA'S SOUTHEAST AREA

A Mississippi Valley State University alum now heads up a national research agency dedicated to finding solutions to agricultural problems that affect Americans every day.

Archie Tucker Sr. ('79) of Greenville was recently named director of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Southeast Area.

Tucker has spent a 42-year career with the Stoneville-based USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS), where he started in 1974 as a 16-year-old student under the president's "Stay-in-School" program. He worked part-time while completing high school and during his four years at MVSU, where he earned a bachelor's degree in Business Administration.

Tucker was named to his current position after becoming the agency's acting director in Dec. 2017. Prior to that, he served as associate area director since 2015.



TUCKER

"I am extremely pleased to be named area director. I am grateful to Dr. Chavonda Jacobs-Young, ARS administrator, for giving me the opportunity to lead the Southeast Area," Tucker said.

"The research and administrative experience I have gained during my 42-year career with ARS has prepared me for this position. I am looking forward to providing effective leadership to the Southeast Area," he added.

Tucker has served in many capacities for the agency, including as acting area director for the Mid-South area; acting research leader for the Biological Control of Pests Research Unit; and acting deputy area director for the Beltsville Area.

With his extensive experience, Tucker is well-respected not only within ARS and USDA, but also among commodity groups, stakeholders, and university cooperators.

"There has been nobody who has played a more pivotal role in the success of agricultural research in the Mid-South over such an extensive period as Archie Tucker," said George King, president of Delta Council, in a recent interview. Delta Council is pleased that we will be continuing our close working relationship with him and the entire USDA-ARS team to impact the challenges and opportunities of our largest industry."

The ARS is the USDA's chief scientific in-house research agency. With over 90 research locations and overseas laboratories, its vision is to lead America towards a better future through agricultural research and information.

MVSU ALUM SELECTED FOR NATIONAL FELLOWSHIP TO HELP CULTIVATE LOCAL ECONOMIES



LAMPKIN

Mississippi Valley State University alum Tim Lampkin ('08) has been named to the 2018 cohort of the Business Alliance for Local Living Economies (BALLE) Local Economy Fellowship.

The Clarksdale, Miss. native joins 25 leaders recognized as representing some of the most innovative local economic and community development solutions in the U.S. and Canada.

The fellows have been noted for pushing the boundaries of economic change and championing

locally-based, regenerative rural enterprise. They have been identified as visionaries, innovators, and strategic connectors who are supporting and strengthening thousands of rural communities and businesses across 16 states and three Canadian provinces.

Lampkin joins the group as a nationally recognized social entrepreneur who utilizes his expertise to improve low-income communities through his Clarksdale-based non-profit, Higher Purpose Co., a non-profit social impact agency dedicated to building community wealth in the Northwest Region of the Mississippi Delta by focusing on small business development, strategic real estate investing, and social enterprise initiatives.

Lampkin earned a B. S. degree in Business Administration from MVSU, an MBA from Delta State University, and an M.S. in Organizational Performance from Bellevue University. He completed executive education at Harvard Kennedy School of Government and is currently finishing his Doctorate of Education at the University of Arkansas.



MVSU NATIONAL ALUMNI ASSOCIATION INSTALLS NEW OFFICERS

Mississippi Valley State University's National Alumni Association (MVSUNAA) now has new leadership "in motion" following the recent installation of its newly elected officers.

The special ceremony was hosted Saturday, Jan. 27, 2018, in the Cliff E. Williams Business Auditorium.

The new officers received the oath of office by Rev. Johnnie Collins of Itta Bena.

The officers include: Charlie Tolliver ('68), president; Jerry Redmond Jr. ('95), 1st vice president; Margaret Clark ('13), 2nd vice president; Karolyn Bridges-Jordan ('79), secretary; and Norma Quinn ('81), treasurer.

The administration plans to focus on numerous goals, including creating stronger partnerships with external and internal entities, cultivating students as future engaged alumni, building engagement among current alumni, increasing alumni marketing and communications efforts and maintaining and communicating the University's unique traditions and legacies to the MVSU family.

MVSU ALUM RECEIVES ANNA JULIA COOPER TEACHER OF THE YEAR AWARD



RILEY

Mississippi Valley State University alumnus Dr. Emmitt Y. Riley III ('08) has a passion for teaching. His apparent love for mentorship and education are two of the reasons why the Assistant Professor of Africana Studies at DePauw University (Ind.), was recently awarded the 2018 Anna Julia Cooper Teacher of the Year Award.

The honor was bestowed on the Itta Bena native by the National Conference of Black Political Scientists during its 49th Annual Meeting in Chicago, Ill., March 16, for demonstrating excellence in teaching, advising and mentoring.

With earning the accomplishment, Riley attributes a great deal of his success to Mississippi Valley State University.

"One of the things that has shaped my teaching career has certainly been my experience at Mississippi Valley," said Riley.

(At MVSU) I discovered my passion for wanting to go into academics as a professor."

Riley, who graduated Magna Cum Laude from MVSU in 2008 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English as well as Political Science, shared how impactful MVSU professors were to his journey.

"My whole life, I have been surrounded by excellent teachers and the education I received here at Valley has been instrumental in setting me on the trajectory that I am on now in my career...For that, I am eternally grateful," he said.

A member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., Riley earned a master's degree in Political Science from Jackson State University in 2010 and a Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Mississippi with a specialization in American Politics and International Relations in 2014.

WINDFIELD TABBED AS MVSU'S NEW DIRECTOR OF ALUMNI RELATIONS



WINDFIELD

Mississippi Valley State University's Office of University Advancement has brought on a new director of alumni relations who is familiar with the institution and all things Valley.

Jackson native Kylon T. Alford-Windfield, a 2013 graduate of MVSU, has been tabbed as the director of alumni relations. His primary duties include serving as a liaison between University administration, the National Alumni Association, area chapters and alumni of the institution.

He officially began in his new role Nov. 1, 2018.

Windfield said he's humbled and excited to serve in this capacity at his alma mater.

"I am honored to have been chosen to be the new director. To have the opportunity to work in this capacity with a university that means the world to me is truly a blessing," he said.

Dameon Shaw, MVSU's interim vice-president of advancement, said bringing Windfield aboard should provide a boost of energy to the department.

"We are excited to add Kylon to our team. With his experience in admissions and having to deal with both students and parents, he brings a fresh perspective which should allow us to move the Office of Alumni Relations in a strong direction," said Shaw.

Windfield said he hopes to help improve efficiency in key areas of the office while maintaining the same welcoming culture that was established by the previous director, Willie Young, who retired in June 2018.

"My objective for the Office of Alumni Relations is to develop a comprehensive, strategic plan that increases alumni engagement and participation," he said.

"I plan to work collaboratively with the Office of Communications and Marketing to rebrand alumni publications, fundraising, and soliciting tactics that will keep 'Valley in motion,'" Windfield added.

Windfield said he also plans to increase contributions from alumni and university stakeholders.

"Currently, I am working to design innovative approaches to encourage millennials to become active alumni," he said.

Before joining the Office of University Advancement, Windfield served in MVSU's Office of Admissions and Recruitment for three years. Prior to that, he worked briefly at Rust College in Holly Springs.

He believes the skill set he gained while working in Admissions will transfer well in his new role.

"Being that I have experience in Admissions, I completely understand the importance of maintaining a relationship with alumni and creating new relationships with prospective students," he said.



MISSISSIPPI VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY

Mississippi Valley State University continues to serve the Mississippi Delta region in educating future leaders. The close knit community at MVSU prepares graduates for careers in a diverse social, political and global environment.

Most MVSU students are first generation, leading the way to brighter futures for generations. To learn more about The Valley, contact the Office of Admissions at 662.254.3347 or **800.GO2.MVSU**

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4 Generations
STRONG!



ALUMNI



FELECIA LAMPKIN '02 \ '09

Mississippi Valley State University alumna Felecia Lampkin ('02 & '09) is the epitome of "Valley in Motion." Receiving a bachelor's degree in Speech Communication and a master's degree in Criminal Justice, Lampkin has made a name for herself in the Delta and beyond as a philanthropist, entrepreneur, humanitarian, real estate investor and personal trainer. She is the founder and executive director of Lampkin International (USA), a non-profit dedicated to providing lifesaving interventions for underserved and vulnerable populations in Ghana. Lampkin is also the CEO of Bodyworks & Tan Fitness Center, located in Indianola, Miss., the president of McCarty Enterprises, Inc. and a realtor with Keller Williams Realty. Lampkin is affiliated with the Madison County Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., the National Association of REALTORS, Mississippi Association of REALTORS and Central Mississippi REALTORS. She is a member of First United Baptist Church and has received numerous awards and recognition for outstanding leadership and service. Lampkin believes her mission is to educate and empower the less privileged and the vulnerable in hard-to-reach rural communities in Ghana to increase control over the preventable causes of diseases and deaths by sharing information, education, research and the word of God. She believes that with God, all things are possible!

VC: How did your education at MVSU prepare you for your career and formulate your vision?

FL: MVSU has an enviable hallmark of preparing its students to take up challenges in real life situations and has always provided its students with the requisite skills to explore and delve into career opportunities in their respective fields. The dream and vision I had before gaining admission into MVSU was to acquire good communication skills in the field of Speech Communication and to leverage such skills to speak up for the voiceless and to extend a helping hand to the less privileged. The course contents I learned during my undergraduate studies helped to shape my vision of wanting to help those in need in underserved societies. My passion has taken me on various missions in different countries over the past fifteen years.

I am happy to note that my first mission trip was through Dr. Kathie Golden, MVSU director of International Programs, to Ghana, West Africa 15 years ago. That experience has shaped me to become the philanthropist that I am today and provided lifesaving interventions for underserved and vulnerable populations in Ghana.

Since then, I have provided safe drinking water for thousands of rural folks in Ghana, who otherwise would have to depend on polluted surface water sources, by drilling wells and boreholes for communities. I have also established over twenty hand washing centers and donated hand washing materials, school supplies and personal hygiene items to rural schools in Ghana. More wells, boreholes, washrooms and classrooms are currently being built.

Communication studies at MVSU has also helped to shape me with interacting with many different people from different backgrounds and cultures effectively, especially on my mission trips to Africa.

VC: What advice would you give current MVSU students?

FL: First and foremost, I would like to seize this opportunity to advise all current students to take their studies seriously in order to obtain good grades. It is also incumbent for every student to clearly state his or her vision and career path in relation to their respective fields of study and pursue them with all their might. The surest way to becoming useful to yourselves and the wider society with your skills and knowledge acquired in school is to have a clear-cut vision and purpose.

I would also like to encourage current students to challenge themselves by taking a step out of their comfort zones and explore new frontiers with the expertise and knowledge gained while pursuing their careers. Remaining in our comfort zones places enormous limitations on us as humans, but growth actually lies in taking that first step out of our comfort zones.

I would also like to advise current students to appreciate and thank God for whatever educational facilities and privileges they have been afforded at MVSU. I share this advice because my mission trips to third world countries have been eye-openers. I've encountered many students in different schools in rural communities who attend classes under trees or dilapidated classrooms with no bathrooms. They don't have the luxury of running water or electricity, share drinking water with animals from ditches, wear worn-out clothes, and have to sit and write on the floor because there are no desks. Ironically, these students are not discouraged—they still go to school every day with high hopes for their future, with bright smiles and humble hearts.

VC: What does "Live for Service" mean to you?

FL: For me, life is only meaningful if it is lived for service to others or to the benefit of the greater good. The lives of Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King Jr. are classical examples of "Live for service." I have always taken my motivation from the lives lived by these legends and many others. This is why I found myself doing what I am currently doing in Africa – serving the less privileged through my mission trips and lifesaving interventions.

I have always believed that this world will be a beautiful place if each and every one of us give some kind of voluntary service back to society.



THE MAN BEHIND THE *MOTION*

DR. JERRYL BRIGGS, SR. 8TH PRESIDENT OF MVSU

▼By: Brittany Davis-Green

Standing tall in the center of the Walter Roberts Auditorium stage, Dr. Jerryl Briggs looked surprisingly composed despite the enormity of the moment before him.

His close friends, longtime mentors and only sister seated behind him, the remainder of his family and campus community looked eagerly before him as the board president of the Mississippi State Institutions of Higher Learning declared those long-awaited words at last, "Dr. Jerryl Briggs Sr., president of Mississippi Valley State University."

The audience erupted in applause as a smile crept slowly across Briggs' face.

His whole life had prepared him for this moment.





Born in Chicago, Briggs' earliest memories are of living in New Orleans.

His mother, Varna Briggs, a native of the Crescent City, reared Briggs and his older sister, Gizele, alone in a housing project; the modest apartment would remain Briggs' home until his early 20s.

Although they were poor, the siblings grew up insulated from that reality as their single-mother often worked multiple jobs to ensure her children never went without. And whatever they lacked financially, Ms. Briggs compensated for with quality time and support.

Despite the turbulent inner-city environment, Ms. Briggs instilled the importance of an education in her children early on. While she never attended college, for her kids, it wasn't an option but a mandate — one that wasn't out of reach for Briggs or his sister, who both naturally excelled in school.

As a result, they both had the chance to attend McDonogh No. 35, NOLA's first public magnet school for African Americans. Unlike the neighborhood high school just one block over, at McDonogh, getting good grades and going to college was the standard and expectation.

"That was different — to see people who looked like me but were different from me ... to be exposed to kids as smart or smarter than you," Briggs said.

"I had to catch two buses to get to my school, so coming home with a different shirt and jacket on from the other neighborhood kids was sometimes a little challenging," he recalled. "Where I lived, being smart or liking school wasn't cool."

But that didn't seem to faze Briggs, who had perfect attendance throughout high school. McDonogh No. 35 illustrated for him a life of endless possibilities. There, his passion for learning was solidified through engaging classes and enriching extra-curricular activities.

"We both were members of the honors band. I was the trumpet player, and Jerryl played the French horn," recalled Norman Barnum, who befriended Briggs during their freshmen year at McDonogh No. 35.

In the honors band, members had to show their ability to sight read and lead in competition.

"That was the first indication that I had of not just his talent, but of his desire to be excellent," Barnum said. "I can tell you, without hesitation, that Briggs shined."

Briggs credits his experience at McDonogh No. 35 for reinforcing the values instilled by his mother.

"It was a rigorous curriculum at the high school, and I always said that I wish that they had dual enrollment at that time because all of us would've gone to college as sophomores," Briggs said chuckling.

But since he didn't have that advantage, the 16-year-old decided to

join the United States Marine Corps, attending drill one weekend per month as he finished up high school to help alleviate the financial burden attending college would bring.

After graduating from high school in 1979, Briggs spent the summer at basic training in San Diego and would remain in the reserve for six years.

He began college that fall with his mind, at the influence of his mother, set on becoming a pharmacist.

From the very start, Briggs knew that he wanted to attend a Historically Black College and University (HBCU).



Jerryl Briggs' senior portrait at McDonogh No. 35 High School in New Orleans.

Although he applied and was accepted into several colleges, he only seriously considered Xavier University, a private HBCU in his hometown that offered a top-ranked pharmacy school, and Florida A&M, where he'd been offered a band scholarship.

Learning that the band scholarship would require him to major in music, coupled with his desire to remain close to home, Briggs became a student at Xavier.

There, he received a nurturing environment that helped him come of age and discover his passion.

"A lot of people in high school thought I was shy," he said. "Sometimes people equate quietness with shyness. I'm quiet, but I'm not really shy. ... If I don't have something I really need to say then I don't."

After a couple of semesters at Xavier, Briggs noted his lack of enthusiasm for the pre-pharmacy courses.

"That's when I began to consider what I really wanted to do, and I had to build up the courage to tell my mom that I didn't want to be a pharmacist," he said, laughing.

Ms. Briggs took it well.

Noting his love for math and science, Briggs decided to switch to a major that wouldn't require him to lose too many credit hours. He settled on Chemistry Education, which landed him in Dr. Antoine Garibaldi's class in 1984.

"When he took my adolescent psychology course I wasn't quite sure how much potential he had," recalled Garibaldi. "He usually sat in the back of my class, and there were days when I was not sure if he was tired or bored, or if I was the one who was boring. But I gradually learned from my Xavier University faculty and student affairs colleagues that this vigorous young man really loved his fraternity, Omega Psi Phi."

A commuter his first two years at Xavier, for Briggs, joining a fraternity propelled him deeper into campus life and helped him to create lifelong friends. Still, Briggs never lost his focus.

"They were all good students, but they loved to have fun, too,"



(Pictured, top left) Briggs was reared in New Orleans by his mother, Varna Briggs, whom he credits for his success today (bottom left). As President, Briggs (center) makes a conscious effort to keep himself accessible to MVSU students.

recalled Garibaldi. “In my class, Briggs performed well on tests and wrote good research papers. But I had the strong feeling that he had more ability than I was observing.”

It was a series of conversations with Garibaldi, who’d taken up the role as his mentor, that sparked Briggs’ interest in higher education.

“Initially, he thought that I was going to be a chemistry teacher, and I thought about that, but I said I really wanted to work at a university,” said Briggs. “I didn’t know what that meant at the time, or how it was going to happen.”

After earning his bachelor’s degree, the 22-year-old decided to pursue a postgraduate degree at Louisiana Tech in Ruston, La., where he earned a master’s degree in Human Relations and Supervision in just one year. But like most newly minted college graduates, Briggs had trouble landing his first entry-level position.

Returning home to work odd jobs, Briggs continued to send off his resume to prospective employers until he finally received an offer to become the residence hall and multi-cultural affairs coordinator at North Central College in Naperville, Ill.

This would ignite his professional career in higher education at institutions, both small and large, in six states over the next three decades.

A private liberal arts college, located in an affluent suburb outside of Chicago, Naperville proved to be a very different environment than what Briggs was accustomed to.

“That was an interesting experience,” he said. “It was culture shock for sure, but not in a negative sense. It helped me to learn to adapt in an environment outside of my comfort zone.”

Next, Briggs worked a one-year stint at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. However, the intense winters and ice storms quickly waned his enthusiasm.

During a visit to a fraternity brother in Atlanta, Briggs’ desire to return to the South intensified.

“I went down for that weekend, and I told him ‘In six months I’m going to be here,’” Briggs said affirmatively.

Sure enough, Briggs was courted by Georgia Institute of Technology during a conference and was extended the opportunity to serve as the area coordinator for housing, overseeing the university’s housing staff and 2,500 rooms.

While at Georgia Tech, he began to take his career more serious, joining national professional organizations and presenting at conferences.

Two years later, he attracted the attention of the College of William & Mary in Williamsburg, Va., where he became the assistant director of housing.

Now in his late 20s, Briggs worked full-time and decided to pursue an educational specialist degree.

But, after two years at the nation’s second-oldest school, Atlanta was still calling. On top of that, Briggs desired to transition to working at a HBCU.

The solution — a director of residence life position at Clark-Atlanta University.

Briggs joined a team of promising young professionals, which included William Bynum Jr., at Clark-Atlanta in 1995 and would remain there for six years.

“What Briggs brought to the mix of talent and enthusiasm was a vision for the nescience between a student’s academic and intellectual development, and the enhancement of their personal and social wherewithal and a commitment and appreciation for the whole student,” recalled Dr. Doris Walker Weathers, Briggs’ mentor and former supervisor at Clark-Atlanta.

“Dr. Weathers was a strong mentor,” Briggs said. ‘I think she helped myself, as well as Dr. Bynum, understand the professionalism behind student affairs.’”



Briggs embraces his older sister, Gizele Briggs Leon, during his investiture ceremony.



When Bynum was given the opportunity to become Vice President of Student Affairs at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania, Briggs was his first call. He joined the staff of Lincoln (known for being the first HBCU to grant a degree) as the dean of students and campus life for the next 8.5 years.

He was then promoted to the VP of Student Affairs, holding that position as he completed a doctorate at William and Mary.

“I commuted from Lincoln to William and Mary — it was a six-hour drive, or sometimes I caught the train — every week for nearly two years to finish up my doctorate,” he said.

After a total of 10 years at Lincoln, Briggs accepted the vice president of student affairs position at Central State, a public university in Ohio.

He was hardly there a month when the president asked him to take on enrollment management as well.

“I didn’t want enrollment management because I knew my responsibilities would completely switch,” he said. “But I said ‘Ok, fine,’ and what I expected happened — the emphasis became enrollment management. I think we were able to do some really good things at Central State, and they still are.”

Then, Bynum left Morehouse University to become president of Mississippi Valley State University. Again, Briggs was his first call.

“He knew I wanted to get closer to home,” Briggs said. “Being in the Midwest and Northeast, I never got used to those winters. My comforts and way of life have always been more attached to living in the South.”

Briggs joined MVSU as the executive vice president in 2014. Three years later he was named MVSU’s acting president when Bynum became president at Jackson State, and Briggs was appointed president Oct. 19, 2017. He was formally installed in the position April 20, 2018.

“Now, looking back, it’s been almost five years since I first joined MVSU. It’s just been really a blessing for me to be at this university and to be in a community that I really have grown attached to. The whole experience has just been really positive for me,” he said.

Briggs has often stated that during his career in higher education, he aspired to become a university president, but not just at any institution—the right institution.

For him, Valley is the prototype.

“I think it’s really the mission of the university, recognizing the importance of giving back and that the significance of us being here is more than just us being in college,” he explained. “We’re talking about life-changing experiences that can change the whole direction of an entire family. When you still have a large number of students who are first-generation college students, the impact of getting a degree and getting a job changes the whole dynamic of the family.”

As a first-generation college student himself, Briggs knows personally the impact a college degree can have.

And while HBCUs, like Valley, tend to cater to first-generation minority students, Briggs said that doesn’t deter from the university’s academic prowess.

“All eight of Mississippi’s public institutions have the same exact admissions criteria. So every kid who gets admitted to Valley could get admitted into the seven other schools,”

he said. “We have exceptional alums who are doing great things in all professions who can really speak to the value of getting a degree from this university.”

“Do we get more students who are first generation than other schools? Yes. Do we get more students that may be closer to the end of that test score than the top? Yes. But that doesn’t mean that kid isn’t able to perform and be successful,” he added.

Almost wrapping up the first year of his presidency, Briggs has experienced many special moments, most notably, his first graduation.

“It’s always exciting at graduation and then to see the next wave of students come in,” he said.

He’s also learned of the demanding schedule taking on the role requires.

“I used to always tease Dr. Bynum and say, ‘Man, you’re never on campus.’ But now that I live it, I see what he was trying to tell me,” he said.

Despite the hectic schedule, for Briggs, it’s important to keep everything in perspective and to stay grounded.

His self-care routine includes early morning walks around campus and playing a couple rounds of golf whenever he can. He also enjoys spending time with family; his two sons — Isaiah and Jerryrl Jr. — are also a big part of his life.

“That’s really been my saving-grace, being near family and having the chance to visit home,” he said.

“I know that it’s very demanding personally, but when you have a passion for what you do that’s OK. I have some friends who are doing very well from a financial standpoint, but they’re miserable because they’re working to make money instead of working to be satisfied in life. I’m happy that I’m in a field where I’m satisfied in life. For me, that’s more rewarding than anything else professionally.”

When he became president, Briggs added the phrase “In Motion” to the university’s tagline “One Goal. One Team. One Valley.”

“Initially it came from the campus’ wellness initiative, and I thought, ‘That’s really what we are,’” he said. “We didn’t necessarily need to change our vision, but I considered how we could build on it and expand it.”

Briggs said the word “motion” means movement, but it’s important to be strategic about the direction you’re going.

His No. 1 goal during his tenure at the Valley is to successfully implement an enrollment success model — which encompasses recruitment, retention and graduation.

"NOW, LOOKING BACK, IT'S BEEN ALMOST FIVE YEARS SINCE I FIRST JOINED MVSU. IT'S JUST BEEN REALLY A BLESSING FOR ME TO BE AT THIS UNIVERSITY AND TO BE IN A COMMUNITY THAT I REALLY HAVE GROWN ATTACHED TO."

“I’m really hoping that we will be that university that will become the model for what enrollment success is. It’s not just about growing — it’s about retaining and graduating your students and really focusing on their academic success,” he explained.

He also hopes to improve town and gown relationships with surrounding communities.

“We want to ensure that this campus doesn’t sit isolated — we’re a part of the community. We need to figure out how we can partner more and do more with our surrounding communities and really expose people to who we are and what we have to offer,” he said.

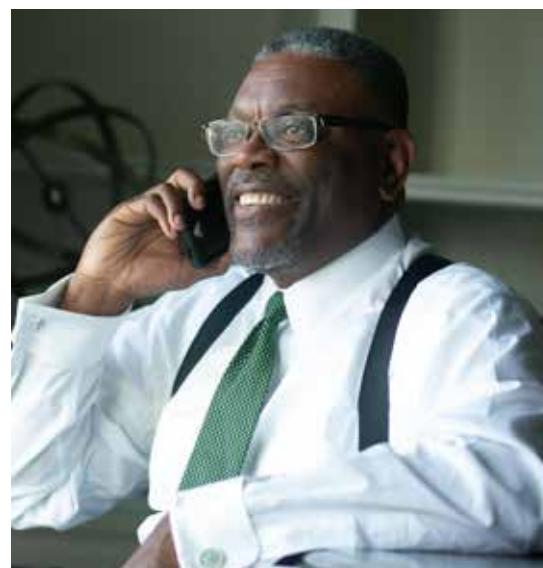
“It’s surprising when I hear people who live less than 30 miles away say they’ve never been on the campus. We’re an economic engine in this community. We want the community to embrace us, and we’ll do the same.”

And while there are some challenges, Briggs prefers to see the glass as “half full.”

“We need to speak about our successes to really highlight that we’re not going to be stagnant — We are ‘In Motion,’” he said.



Briggs enjoys spending time with his family (pictured), especially his sons Isaiah (pictured to Briggs’ left) and Jerryrl Jr. (right).



Briggs said he’s content with his career and finds it rewarding.



WINNING ON THE FIELD AND IN THE CLASSROOM: MVSU CROSS COUNTRY

▼By: Donell Maxie

ON AN EARLY HOT AND MUGGY MISSISSIPPI MORNING, YOUNG LADIES FROM THE MISSISSIPPI VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY'S CROSS-COUNTRY TEAM GEAR UP TO HIT THE ROAD RUNNING.

While the Mississippi summer weather can be harsh, they have been conditioned to understand that if they can survive it, then they can survive the season.

Not only did MVSU Women Cross-Country survive the 2017 season, they thrived, becoming the first cross-country team in school history to win the Southwestern Athletic Conference (SWAC) Championship.

When the women of the Valley cross-country team started to prepare for the 2017 season they did so with a purpose in mind—winning.

This idea was fueled by the fact that just a year prior, the team fell just a few points short from unseating Alabama State, a team that had won four consecutive SWAC Championships and 2016 made their fifth.

The drive, vision and hard work manifested itself into something special in 2017 as the women of the Valley took the throne.

“We were runner-ups last year, and the girls figured that with a little more sacrifice and discipline we could win it all. We were one person away from winning it all in 2016. We added a few more people to the mix and what happened was a championship,” said Fermon Tate, former MVSU cross-country coach.

Not only did the team win the championship, but they also were celebrated for having the SWAC Athlete of The Year on their squad—Scolasticah Kemei of Eldoret, Kenya. Affectionately called “Scola” by her teammates, Kemei was selected as the cross-country, indoor track, and outdoor-track Athlete of The Year.

Another fascinating truth about the cross-country team is that all of the athletes are honor students. Being an honor student requires the same characteristic needed to be a strong runner—discipline, commitment, focus and hard work.

“The runners on the team are honor students, and it takes a certain type of focus and intelligence because you’re out there and running for 30 to 40 minutes alone, so you have to have the mental focus to accomplish that,” Tate noted.

Winning on the field and winning in the classroom is the foundation for becoming a successful student-athlete.

When the semester started last season, the athletes would run at 5:30 a.m. and then attend classes at 8 a.m. and return to train following courses in the evenings. The team proves to be mentally tough as individuals and ultimately as a team.

Now that Valley has won the SWAC championship, there’s no limits to what the ladies are capable of, and now that they have had a taste of winning and will be returning the entire team, the plan is to out-perform everyone once again.



RUNNING **STRONG**

▼By: Donell Maxie

Major Anthony Strong ('05) is a man of many responsibilities.

He is a member of the Army Reserves and he recently took command of the Regional Training Site Maintenance at Fort McCoy, Wis. on July 6, 2018. The Regional Training Site Maintenance-McCoy provides job and skills training to junior and senior enlisted Soldiers in various maintenance Military Occupational Specialties.

He is also a husband to Elizabeth and the father to two children — Sydney and Jackson. Elizabeth, who also graduated from MVSU in 2008 recently took over as Quality Assurance Manager at Land O'Lakes Animal Milk Products in Black River Falls, Wisc.

In addition to his role in the military, in which he has served for 18 years, and with all he has to do, there is one thing Strong is sure to make time for each day. Every morning, before he does anything else, Strong laces up his shoes and runs.

He doesn't do it for any reason in particular other than he enjoys the peace and the freedom he feels each time his foot hits the pavement.

"I have been running religiously for the past six years," he shared. "I run from four to seven miles per day and typically on a Saturday or Sunday, which is my long run day, I go from 10 to 18 miles."

Strong's passion for running began when he was in Afghanistan in 2011.

He served on a very small base, with a very small gym, but there was a one-mile loop around the base that was quiet from around 6 a.m. each morning.

"To start my day while in Afghanistan, I would get up and run seven loops around the base which is equivalent to seven miles," he said.

"I ran that loop for the entire year I was there, and when I returned home to Mississippi, I had that same passion. In my civilian life, I was working at the Wal-Mart distribution center, and when I got off work at 2:30-3 a.m. in the morning, I would lace up my shoes and go on my 10 to 12 mile hike. Then, I would go home, go to bed and repeat."

Outside of the obvious health benefits of running, Strong said being outside in the elements moving through the environment brings a certain level of clarity for his day.

"Running allows me to free my mind. Everything I have to face that day I can mentally walk through it while running," he said. "Running is a de-stressor, and I feel that if I don't run my day does not go right."

The proud Valley graduate said he was once not a big advocate of organized running.

"For me, it's all about getting up and saying I want to run and determine how far I want to go," he explained.

However, he eventually pushed aside his feelings to participate in a 10K at Poseyville High School in Indiana last

spring. He finished in second place with a time 44:02. He enjoyed it so much that he ran in another 10K in Henderson, Ky., and finished second there as well.

Last May, Strong entered the Evansville River Run half-marathon and finished fourth in the male 30-34 age group out of 42 runners. He also came in 13th out of 350 men and finished 15th overall out of 945 runners.

Strong's passion for running is also helpful as it relates to his military service.

"Twice a year we have to take a physical fitness test, but I don't really have to train for it," he said. "I find a young 17 or 18-year-old who's taking the test and I may not pass him or her, but I'm going to stay with them. I may not finish first, but I will be second or third."

A native of Greenville, Miss. Strong is a 2001 graduate of Greenville High School. He attended and graduated from Mississippi Valley State University with a bachelor's of science degree in Business Administration.

He obtained his master's degree in Business Administration from Columbia Southern University in 2010. While at Valley, Strong was a member of the ROTC and Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.

Strong's road to military service began during his junior year of high school when he joined the National Guard.

"I joined the National Guard as a

junior in high school. I went to basic training the end of my junior year, came back home and finished my final year of high school and went on to complete advanced training after my senior year of high school," he said.

With advanced training running longer than he anticipated, Strong returned home to college as registration was drawing to a close.

"When I made it to the gym to go through the registration process, I was faced with an issue. As a freshman gym was a requirement, but all the classes were filled. But, there was this little lady in the corner that said put him in ROTC, and that lady was Barbara Robinson, secretary of ROTC."

That was the beginning of a lifetime of service.

"Ms. Robinson is the reason that I found what ROTC was all about and the reason that I am still here today," he said.

Strong also credits his commitment to service to his grandparents, Tommy and Isabell Nelson, who reared him as a small child.

"My earliest inkling of service came from my grandfather. He was in Vietnam. When I decided to join my grandmother was very against it, but my grandfather was the person who convinced her and once she bought in I joined from there," he said.

"There is a passion in me to want to serve."



Leonard “Chief” Tramiel: *The Living Legend*

▼By: Portia Weeks Collins (‘10)

Known for his fiery spirit and no-nonsense approach to all things, Leonard “Chief” Tramiel is one of the most loved and admired band directors who has ever graced the campus of Mississippi Valley State University.

A native of Shreveport, La., Tramiel began his journey at MVSU as a student in 1961. After graduating in 1965, he accepted his first job as a band director in Fayette, Ala., and subsequently went on to teach at Druid High School in Tuscaloosa, Ala. while simultaneously attending graduate school at the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa.

In 1969, during his tenure at Druid, the band became the first black ensemble to integrate the Alabama Bandmasters Association concert band festival.

Tramiel returned to The Valley in 1973, this time as the Director of Bands. For more than 30 years, Tramiel faithfully served in this position, becoming the longest serving MVSU band director to date.

“When you talk about SWAC Bands, Tramiel’s name definitely makes the list. The man is a legend,” said current MVSU Band Director Kenneth Milton.

Milton joined the MVSU faculty in 1991 and had the pleasure of working with Tramiel for many years.

“I’ve always had a lot of respect for him, even before I became employed with the University. My goal was always to help him in any kind of way.”

Undoubtedly, Tramiel has always been committed to the success of students and endeavored to make them more than just mere bandmates.

“We had a fearless leader in Chief, who not only pushed the music agenda but also made the environment where we cultivated and displayed our gifts a safe place to call home,” said former band member Chevez Robinson.

“He taught us some of the same life skills we received at home along with encouraging us to value education. He indirectly constructed a family that we had no choice in adapting to. All of the essentials were in place and we naturally conformed.”

Former band member Reese Walker shared, “He taught his students the true meaning of burning the midnight oil. He believed that you must work hard for everything you want in life. He shared with us that if you can make it at the Valley, you can make it anywhere!”

While at MVSU, Tramiel’s active ensembles included Symphonic, Marching, and Varsity Pep bands, the “New Jack Swing” floor show band as well as Trombone, Euphonium & Tuba ensembles.

He also served as the chapter sponsors for Kappa Kappa Psi/Tau Beta Sigma Honorary Band Fraternity and Sorority. He has served as a band clinician, judge, consultant, guest conductor, & speaker on many occasions.

Known for his unabashed talkativeness and keen sense of humor, Tramiel has always captured the hearts of those he has encountered by simply being himself.

Tramiel retired from the University in 2013 and currently resides in Greenwood. He is a member of Jennings Temple C.M.E. Church where he has served as a Steward.

He has two sons, Marvin and Nelrich, and three granddaughters.



STILL BALL ING: MICHAEL ARCHIE



▼By: Evonna Lucas ('13)

From an early age, Michael Archie believed that “ball is life”. Growing up in Greenwood, Miss., he spent his free time playing at the local recreation center and attending basketball games at Mississippi Valley State University.

With hours of practice and training, Archie grew up to become a standout basketball star throughout his career at Greenwood High School. After graduating in 2001, he attended MVSU on a full basketball scholarship.

“I had offers from bigger schools, but I knew deep in my heart that I wanted to come to Valley, so that’s what I did,” he said.

Archie began his collegiate career under the leadership of Coach Lafayette Stribling. While at Valley, he quickly became known for his showmanship on the court.

Sadly, his basketball career was cut short during his sophomore year.

In January 2003, while celebrating a victory against Prairie View University at a local club in Itta Bena, Michael was shot in his side while trying to escape the club after hearing gunfire. The bullet shattered his spine. While he survived the ordeal, he was unfortunately left paralyzed from the waist down.



Overcoming Adversity

Archie acknowledges that the road ahead was extremely hard, but through hard work and support from his family he was determined to make it work.

"I was 20 years old, in the prime of my life, thriving in college. It was hard to digest," he said.

His turning point came after visiting the Shephard Center in Atlanta, GA. While watching other individuals with spinal injuries productively doing what needed to be done to gain a sense of normalcy, Archie resolved mind that he wasn't going to let this beat him.

He also credits Ashley Ambrose, Valley alum and NFL Draft Pick, for encouraging him to push forward.

"He stopped by to see me in therapy. The conversation that we had was really the starting point for me getting on the road to recovery," he recalled.

Archie continued his education at MVSU and graduated in 2006. He went on to marry his college sweetheart, Viveca Moore Archie, who was by his side throughout the difficult period in his life.

Still Balling

Archie and his wife currently reside in Olive Branch, Miss. He works for the Social Security Administration as the Claims Specialist.

"There have been instances where I've been helping clients at work and pushed back to get something off the printer and they were shocked when they realized I was in a wheelchair. That's like the ultimate compliment to me" he chuckled.

**"I WAS
20 YEARS OLD
IN THE PRIME OF
MY LIFE
THRIVING IN
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IT WAS HARD
TO DIGEST
"**

Archie is also a shooting guard for the Memphis Rolling Grizzlies, a nationally ranked, non-profit competitive wheelchair basketball team that's affiliated with the NBA's Memphis Grizzlies. An award-winning team, the Rolling Grizzlies have won the South East Championship for the past five years.

For Archie, the Grizzlies have given him an outlet to continue playing the sport that he fell in love with many years ago.

It's been fifteen years since the accident, but Archie still has faith that his current situation is only temporary.

"In my mind, I wouldn't say I'm comfortable in the situation, but I don't think I will always be in this wheelchair. I don't allow this chair to set limits on me," he said.

The strength and courage that Michael shows is admirable at best. Despite the challenges, for him, life remains a ball.



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FROM PLAYING TO COACHING: A MONARCH OF SUCCESS

▼By: Donell Maxie

As a kid growing up in Owensboro, Ky., Scott Monarch loved the game of basketball.

His love for the game and his standout performances captured the attention of former Mississippi Valley State University head basketball coach Lafayette Stribling.

Stribling saw something he liked about Monarch, and Monarch saw something in the charismatic coach that led him to choose MVSU.

"I wanted to play Division I college basketball," said Monarch. "Coach Stribling was very persistent and convincing throughout the recruiting process. I also knew I wanted to coach basketball after my playing career was finished, and MVSU had an excellent Health and Physical Education Department."

Monarch graduated from Valley in 1990 with a bachelor's degree in Health and Physical Education and Recreation (HPER).

Following graduation, he attended Baylor University in Waco, Texas, where he earned a master's degree in HPER and simultaneously began his college coaching career at McLennan Community College.

Monarch, 51, went on to successfully recruit and coach across the nation at almost every level of college basketball. His college basketball coaching experience now spans across 28 years.

Monarch is currently the head men's basketball coach at Grayson College in Denison, Texas. He is married to the former Lacey Logan of Meridian,



**"I ALSO KNEW I WANTED TO
COACH BASKETBALL AFTER MY
PLAYING CAREER WAS FINISHED,
AND MVSU HAD AN EXCELLENT
HEALTH AND PHYSICAL
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT."**

Miss. and is the father of three children—Samantha, Kacey and Scott Jr.

During his 15 years in Junior College, he won the Texas Eastern Conference Championship

(2003, 2007), the Region XIV Coach of the Year award, and departed Panola College as the winningest coach in Panola College history. In addition, Monarch guided more than 40 players to NCAA Division I programs, two of which (Perry Hill and Larry Cox) played at MVSU and went on to be SWAC All-Conference players.

Monarch also has experience at the NCAA Division I and II levels. At Kentucky Wesleyan, Monarch was a part of a program that reached the 1998 NCAA Division II national championship game. He also recruited four players who were first-team All Americans, three of which became National Players of the Year.

During his ten-year stint at the Division I level, Monarch coached and recruited 10 All-Conference athletes, including U.S. Olympian Jimmy Butler, Big East Player of the Year Jae Crowder and nine other NBA players. Monarch helped lead Marquette University to four consecutive NCAA Tournament appearances (2009, 2010, 2011, 2012) including back-to-back Sweet 16 appearances (2011, 2012).

With all of his on-court accomplishments, Monarch credits the influence Stribling had on him at MVSU.

"Coach Stribling's impact still resonates in my life today," he said. "Coach Stribling taught me to always focus on the positive. I can still hear his voice today saying, 'The moment you worry about what you DON'T have, you'll forget how to use what you DO have.' To this day, Coach Stribling continues to mentor me in my college coaching career."

Monarch will always cherish the valuable lessons learned and the life-long friends he gained while at The Valley.

"Mississippi Valley was the greatest experience of my life. Not only did Valley train me in my profession, which has enabled me to provide for my family for 28 years, Valley also gave me the greatest education of them all; Valley taught me how to depend on myself," he said.

MVSU ALUM NAMED “AIRMAN OF THE YEAR”

▼By: Donell Maxie

Michael Clark is a man of service. His desire to work in a capacity that allows him to help people is evident in his everyday life as a residence hall director at Mississippi Valley State University, but perhaps even more so in his service to the United States of America in the Air Force Reserves.

On Jan. 7, 2018, Clark, a Staff Sergeant of the 307 Security Forces Squadron stationed in Bossier City, La (Barksdale Air Force Base), received exciting news when U.S. Air Force Col. Robert VanHoy, 307th Bomb Wing commander, presented him with the Wing's "Airman of the Year" award during a commander's call.

The 32-year-old Tchula native represented the wing during the "Airman of the Year" competition at 10th Air Force in St. Augustine, Fla.

Clark received the distinction from a pool of nine other Airman. From the final three contenders, he was selected as the winner.

"Winning this award means a lot to me. It's a great accolade. I am very happy, and my unit is pleased. A lot of people have offered me congratulations," said Clark.

Clark, who is a 2010 and 2012 MVSU graduate with a bachelor's degree in accounting and a

master's degree in criminal justice respectively, said his decision to join the Air Force was rooted in his desire for change.

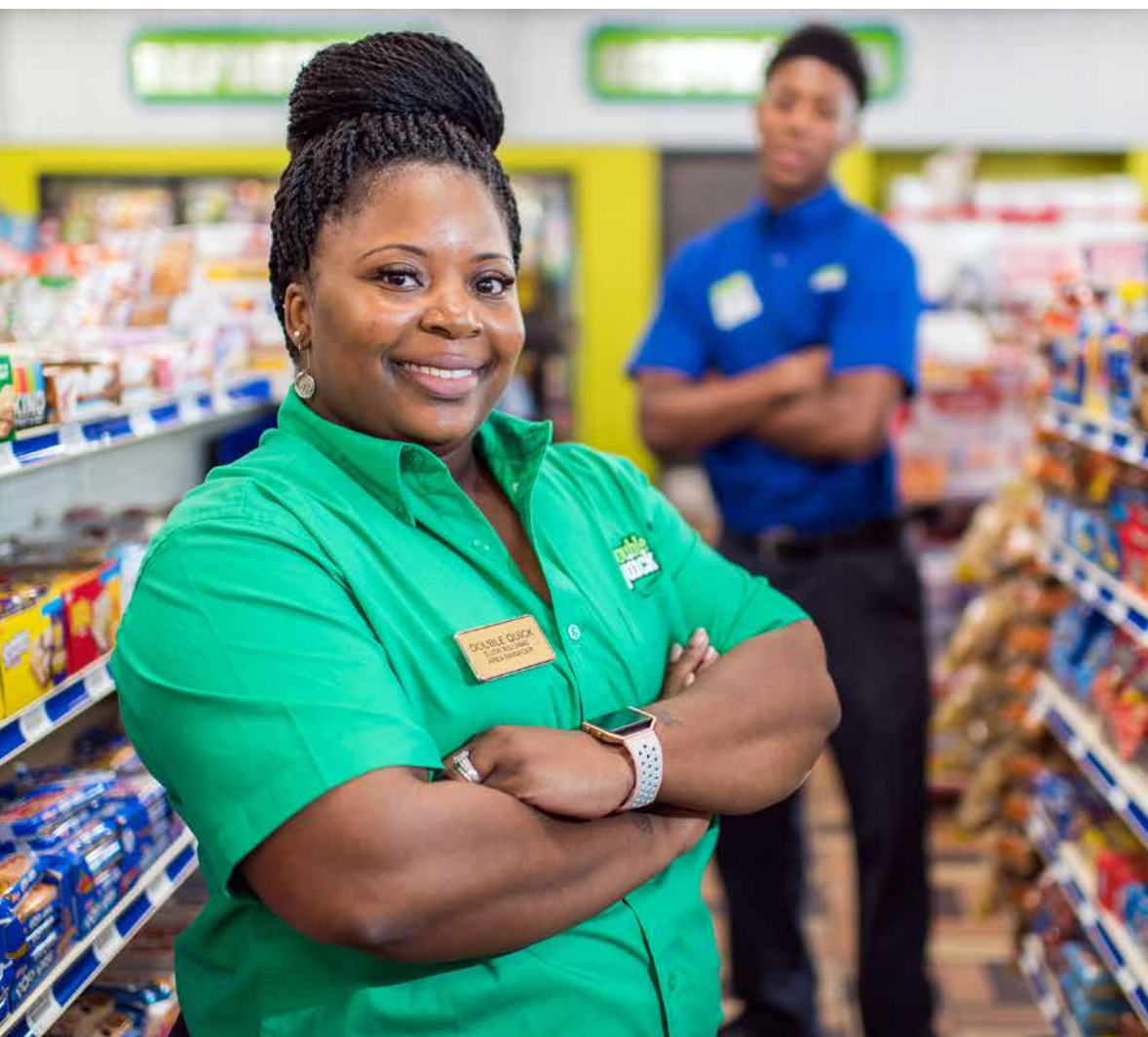
"Coming from a small town the only thing I knew was basketball. Sometimes you have to make a turn in life and, after getting a master's degree, I decided to join the military," he said. Once I joined the military it was something I knew I would enjoy and something that gave me the opportunity to see the world. It also offered me a way to take care of my daughter, Jordan."

During his time at Valley, Clark was a member of the Delta Devils basketball team. Being a part of the team and being a part of the military drew a lot of similarities.

"Playing basketball, you work together to accomplish a goal. If you are an athlete, the transition to military life is not that much different. Although I didn't know what I was getting into, I had enough courage to face the challenge that was ahead of me," he said.

With six years in the Air Force already, Clark's goal is to remain until he reaches 20 years of service and to retire.

Clark graduated from Valley with his second masters in Sports Administration in May 2018.



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SERVICE OVER SELF: DESIREE NORWOOD

Desiree Norwood ('08) has many hats, and she wears them all well.

The 32-year-old is the mayor of the Town of Sunflower and serves as the project director for the Mississippi Tobacco Free Coalition of Leflore, Humphreys and Carroll Counties.

A board member for Mississippi Delta Community College and the Mississippi Municipal League, Norwood is an up and rising leader in the Delta and surrounding areas. She's also active in the community with the Sunflower County Consolidated School District P-16 Council, Greenwood Leflore Young Professionals, Persimmon Grove Missionary Baptist Church, East Sunflower Parent Teacher Organization and the Eta Theta Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.

But despite her numerous responsibilities, Norwood always finds a way to exhibit her love for The Valley.

An active member of the MVSU Sunflower County Alumni Chapter, Norwood says MVSU will forever be "near and dear" to her heart. But it didn't start out that way.

"I always said I wouldn't attend MVSU. This statement was not made because I actually knew anything about MVSU. It was because of other's perception," she shared.

But fate had it that she would remain in the Delta and attend The Valley, where she earned a bachelor's degree in Business Administration. The rest, as they say, is history.

"MVSU taught me so many life lessons that I utilize each day of my life," she said. "My purpose started with MVSU. It was by design that

I would stay in the area and attend an institution that I didn't want to attend initially only to be successful and have the ability to share with others how MVSU poured into me so that I can now pour into others."

In fact, Norwood lives by the mantra, "Service over Self," instilled in her during her time at MVSU.



"Often times, we think that we can only give back through monetary gifts. However, giving back can be through your time, experiences, resources and more," she said.

"Doing amazing things for your university or community shows a sense of appreciation. I'm forever indebted to my surroundings because if it wasn't for the resources that were invested in me, I wouldn't experience the extraordinary blessings that I'm fortunate to receive."

For that, she's forever grateful.

"Thank you, MVSU! Because of you, I am!"

“Often times, we think that we can only give back through monetary gifts. However, giving back can be through your time, experiences, resources and more.”

MCCLELLAN AIMS TO “ELEVATE” V-STATE

Hakim McClellan ('10) likes to refer to himself as a “solution-oriented” guy. That’s the approach he took when he decided to partner with Mississippi Valley State University to launch Elevate V-State, a grassroots fundraising campaign that is taking an unconventional approach to support the institution.

Designed to target young alums, Elevate V-State is patterned behind the concept of popular subscription-based platforms like Netflix, Hulu, Apple Music and Spotify; alums are encouraged to give a minimum of \$10 per month to help “elevate” Valley to its fullest potential.

“Everyone has ideas and opinions about what improvements Valley could make but people rarely talk about solutions,” McClellan said.

McClellan pointed out that Apple now has 36 million paying subscribers. Earlier this year, Spotify announced that it had 70 million paying subscribers.

“If we can encourage 1,000 alumni and friends to pay \$10 a month, that’s \$10,000. Eventually that number will grow and get larger every day. The strength is in numbers and that is what I believe can be done with Elevate V-State,” he added.

Kendall Tanner, MVSU director of development, said he fully supports McClellan’s vision and his efforts to organize Elevate V-State.

“We at MVSU value the generous contributions of alumni and friends. This is what Elevate V-State embodies. The University, alumni, community, and friends coming together harmoniously to reinforce MVSU’s mantra of ‘One Goal. One Team. One Valley... In Motion.’”

Tanner said that energized young alums like McClellan are needed to help sustain the University.

“I am excited for the future of MVSU in regards of philanthropy as we work to instill the fundamentals of giving back to current students, enhance connection with our millennial alumnus, sustain and expand relationships with our current donors and

seek new philanthropic opportunities. The support from these bodies will help us to thrive now and in the future,” Tanner said.

McClellan received a bachelor's degree in Business Administration in 2010 and a Master of Business Administration with a concentration in Management in 2014.

While at Valley, he was a four-year letterman in track & field and three-time All-SWAC honoree. McClellan also won the 2010 Indoor SWAC 200-meter dash, making him the first from MVSU to accomplish that goal.



In May of 2014, McClellan joined the staff at Prairie View A&M University as the athletic academic advisor for men’s baseball, women’s basketball, soccer, and track & field.

Prior to accepting the position at Prairie View A&M University, McClellan returned to Mississippi Valley to begin a career in athletic administration as an athletic intern. After serving as an intern for one year, he was officially added to MVSU’s athletic staff as the Eligibility Specialist/ Compliance Coordinator.

In July of 2016, McClellan was given the opportunity to become Prairie View A&M’s first Certification Officer in the Office of the Registrar.

McClellan is currently the Assistant Athletic Director at Jackson State University.

He is married to Elenor Simpson McClellan, also a graduate of MVSU. They have one son, Mikah.

To learn more or support Elevate V-State, contact the MVSU Office of Advancement at (662) 254-3790.

“We at MVSU value the generous contributions of alumni and friends. This is what Elevate V-State embodies.”

CLASS NOTES

1970's



ARCHIE TUCKER (1979)

Greenville native Archie Tucker was recently named the director of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Southeast Area. Tucker has spent a 42-year career with the Stoneville-based USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS), where he started in 1974 as a 16-year-old student under the president's "Stay-in-School" program. He worked part-time while completing high school and during his four years at MVSU, where he earned a

bachelor's degree in Business Administration. Tucker was named to his current position after becoming the agency's acting director in Dec. 2017. Prior to that, he served as associate area director since 2015.

1980's



DR. ARNETHA HARGROVE-EDWARDS (1984)

Dr. Arnetha Hargrove-Edwards has made remarkable accomplishments in the counseling arena, representing the helping profession on the state and national level. She recently completed a term on the Mississippi Board of Examiners for Licensed Professional Counselors, where she was appointed by Governor Phil Bryant. She is a former advisory team member for several state and national counseling organizations.

Hargrove-Edwards retired following 30 years of service in the education system. She currently provides behavioral health services through her private practice, Premier Counseling Services, LLC in Greenville, Mississippi.

1990's



DEXTER SWIMS (1990)

A native of Greenwood, Dexter Swims has been named Deputy Superintendent of the St. Louis County Department of Justice Services in Clayton, MO. Swims is a 1990 graduate of Mississippi Valley State University and holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Criminal Justice. As superintendent, he oversees 30 employees at the 1400 bed facility where inmates are

offered many programs and services. Unlike traditional jails, this facility has no bars. Swims started his career 25 years ago as a corrections officer and moved up the ranks as lieutenant, captain, then major before being named deputy superintendent. He is married to the former Audrea Howard of Greenwood. They are the proud parents of Dexter, Kameron and Torri. He is a member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. and the MVSU National Alumni Association.



DR. TALISA DIXON (1991)

The Columbus City Schools Board of Education recently named Dr. Talisa Dixon as the superintendent of Columbus (Ohio) City Schools. Dixon is a former Columbus principal and the current superintendent at the Cleveland Heights/University Heights School District. She began her professional career as an instructor at the University of Akron, before becoming an assistant principal with the Akron City Schools. Dixon grew up in Oxford, Mississippi, and she graduated

from Oxford High School, after which she attended Mississippi Valley State University where she received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology. She has three master's degrees and a doctorate from the University of Akron.



LASHUNNA MCINNIS (1994)

McInnis has worked in the field of education for a total of 24 years—20 with the Jackson Public School District and four with the Greenwood Public School District. McInnis taught English at her high school alma mater, Provine High, for 15 years and was named the Jackson Public School Teacher of the Year in 2016. She is currently the Assistant Principal at Peoples Middle School. McInnis is the inaugural director of the Metro-Jackson Panhellenic Chorus and has served as the director for nearly five

years. She currently resides in Clinton, Miss. and is a proud member of the Jackson Hinds Alumni Chapter of MVSU.



CLINTON GATEWOOD (1996)

For the past 12 years, Clinton Gatewood has served as the Athletic Director for the Greenwood Public School District. However, for the past 9 years, he has also been the award-winning head football coach for Greenwood High School. Under Gatewood's leadership, the Greenwood High School Bulldogs have won six Region 3-4A titles, five district titles, and most importantly, he has groomed numerous

young players who continued on to play at the collegiate level. Gatewood is a former member of the MVSU Delta Devils Football Team where he played for four years. He is married to Kimberly Jones-Gatewood and they have one son, Jorden.



DR. KRISTI K. HARRIS (1999)

Dr. Harris is the principal at Hazelhurst Middle School in Hazelhurst, Miss. Harris has worked in education for 18 years and has enjoyed many successes in her capacity as teacher and administrator. A native of Shelby, Miss., Harris received a bachelor's degree in Business Administration from MVSU and a master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Central Michigan (2001). She obtained a Master's in Administration and Supervision

from the University of Phoenix (2007) and culminated her educational pursuits with an Ed.D from North Central University in Educational Leadership (2017). During her time at MVSU, Harris was a proud member of the Mean Green Marching Machine under the leadership of Leonard "Chief" Tramiel.



DR. HALEIGH B. EUBANKS (2010)

Cleveland, Miss. native Haleigh B. Eubanks is making her mark in the science world. The former Pre-Med/Biology major graduated from MVSU with aspirations of becoming a physician-scientist. To date, she has obtained a master's degree in Cancer Biology from Jackson State University and a Ph.D. in Interdisciplinary Biomedical Sciences with a focus in Cell Biology from the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences. Currently, she is a second-year osteopathic medical student at the Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine- Auburn

University. Eubanks aspires to provide healthcare to underserved populations and be an advocate for diversity and inclusion in medicine and evidence-based public policy.

2000's



REV. GREG MERRIWEATHER (2006)

MVSU alumnus Rev. Greg Merriweather was recently appointed as the new pastor of the historic Calvary Baptist Church, located in Haverstow, New York. The 106-year-old church is one of rich tradition and heritage. Prior to his recent appointment, Merriweather served in the ministry in Harlem at Mount Zion Baptist Church. He and his wife, Christina, have two daughters, Lauren and Layna. They currently live in New York City.



TYRIESA HOWARD HOWELL (2011)

Tyriesa Howard Howell completed her Ph.D. in social work with a concentration in mental health from Howard University in 2017. She joined the faculty of Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey-New Brunswick in September 2017 as a postdoctoral associate in the Center for Prevention Science within the School of Social Work and is also an affiliated researcher with the Milken Institute School of Public Health at The George Washington University. Her research interests broadly focus on examining and understanding social and cultural determinants of health among marginalized populations, women's health, substance use, and social work education.



JUNE Z. JONES (2009)

J.M. Kelly Creative Arts School was founded in Nov. 2017 by MVSU alum June Jones of Greenville, Miss. Jones opened the school with hopes that youth and young adults could explore their creativity and develop a deeper appreciation for the arts. JMK Creative Arts School offers dance classes to students ages 3-18, in areas of jazz, liturgical, & hip-hop. One of June's most prized classes is the "Incredibles" class. This is a class for students with special needs such as autism.

JMK also offers master classes to students to teach them about sewing, acting, crafting, & other areas of creative arts. While at MVSU, Jones was a member of the Mean Green Marching Machine for two years and served as one of the "Sensational Twirlers."



ERICA SANDIFER (2012)

Mississippi Delta native Erica Marisa Sandifer recently debuted her writing career with her first novel, "Sunshine in The Delta." The novel, set in Money, Miss., took five years to complete and appeared on the Mississippi bestsellers list produced by The Clarion Ledger. "Sunshine in the Delta" also received the Black Caucus of The American Library Association's Ebook Fiction award and is available on Amazon, Turn Row Book Company in Greenwood and Lorelei Books in Vicksburg.



FALANDO JONES (2013)

Greenwood, Miss. native Falando Jones is an international professional basketball player, currently playing in Palestine. While at Mississippi Valley State University, Jones was a stand-out player for the Delta Devil Basketball Team, participating in the 2012 SWAC Championship game. That year, the team had the best conference record in SWAC history. He has also played basketball in Finland, Indonesia and Nigeria.



▲ Following in her father's footsteps (left), daughter Jasmine (right) is pictured in her Meharry Dental School regalia

A young Vincent Copeland, pictured with his mother, Melba Copeland.

A Legacy of Smiles

▼By: Evonna Lucas ('13)

For Itta Bena native and Mississippi Valley State University alumnus Vincent Copeland, MVSU is more than just a university—it's home.

The son of two devoted University employees, Copeland is grateful for the impact Valley had on his life.

The Copeland family played an integral part at the University during its formative years. Copeland's father, William Copeland, was hand-selected by founding president, Dr. J.H. White, as the Food Services Director. His mother, Melba Copeland, served as a hostess in the school's cafeteria.

As an only child, Copeland spent many days as a child on Valley's campus.

"Back then, Valley was very family-oriented. There were baseball teams during the summer and Dr. Musgrove, who was over the theatre department at the time, put on plays that we could participate in. All the staff's children were very close so we all played together around campus. It was a lot of fun," Copeland recalled.

Growing up on a college campus, Copeland was exposed to an array of positive role models to emulate.

So naturally, when it was time for him to attend college, it was only fitting that he enrolled at MVSU, where he would earn a degree in Biology.

Copeland fondly remembers his time as a student at Mississippi Valley. Not only did he excel academically, he also pledged Phi Beta Sigma and enjoyed campus Greek life.

Copeland credits Valley as sparking his interest in wanting to pursue a career in dentistry. He recalls noticing an advertisement for the Summer Science

Program at Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tenn. in the University's science department. Vincent applied and was accepted to participate in the program, where he had the opportunity to spend eight weeks during the summer taking classes with students from all over the United States.

Copeland acknowledges that the curriculum at Meharry was rigorous, yet enlightening because it prepared him for what was to come in professional school.

"It was because of Valley that I was able to find out about that program and decide my career path. The exposure was really great."

Copeland's parents loved Valley and were huge advocates for education. Vincent's father, who was originally from Georgia, was a first-generation graduate of Tuskegee University. With the signing of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, known as the G.I. Bill, the elder Copeland used the armed forces as an avenue to pay for a college education.

Enlisting in the 1940s, he was one of the first African Americans to enroll in the Marine Corp.

Because his parents were so passionate about education, Vincent, along with his wife, Helen, launched the William and Melba Copeland Endowed Scholarship Fund. Currently, it has almost reached its \$25,000 full endowment status.

Today, the Copeland family continues to create a lasting legacy. With practices in both Tunica, Miss., and Memphis, Tenn., The Copeland Dentistry practice is a "family affair".

Vincent and his wife are the parents of four daughters; Jasmine, Alexis, Kayla and Valeah.

Helen, a 1985 graduate of MVSU, went back to school to become a Dental Hygienist and assists with the practice. Before that, she had an extensive career in Social Work and owned childcare centers.

Their children are also pursuing dentistry as a career. His oldest daughter, Jasmine, recently graduated from Meharry Dental School, and their two other daughters are currently applying to dental schools and awaiting their acceptance.

When asked what advice he could offer college students, Copeland's words were simple, yet firm, "Be passionate and, be patient. I think everyone should strive to be a difference maker."



Vincent Copeland (third, from left) is pictured with his daughters (from left) Jasmine, Valeah, Kayla, Alexis and his wife, Helen.



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In Memoriam DR. CONSTANCE BLAND

"The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires."

—William Ward

Dr. Constance Bland was an inspiration for students and those fortunate enough to know and work with her at Mississippi Valley State University and beyond.

In 1991, Bland joined the faculty at Mississippi Valley State University as an energetic instructor, eager to nurture her students into competent and capable professionals.

Her passion and love for teaching were evident as she worked her way up to become an assistant professor in 1995 and department chair soon after in 1999.

In 2014, when she was promoted again as the Vice President of Academic Affairs, Bland never lost focus on what was important—her students.

She served as the University's chief academic officer with diligence and candor until the very end.

Bland passed away Tuesday, Oct. 9, 2018.

She was 60-years-old.

MVSU President Dr. Jerryl Briggs, Sr. expressed profound sympathy to Bland's family and friends in a letter to the university community following her untimely death.

"As the chief academic officer, Dr. Bland has played a critical role in creating a culture of academic excellence at the university. Her

unwavering dedication has truly helped to keep Valley in Motion. She will be missed dearly by her MVSU family," Briggs said.

An avid researcher and writer, Bland was the author of several scholarly publications and helped to secure more than \$2 million in external funding for the University. She was the mastermind behind the University's annual Women in Science and Technology (WIST) conference, which has, since 1991, inspired hundreds of young girls to pursue STEM careers and majors.

Dr. Latonya Garner, chair of MVSU's MCIS department, credits Bland for her career and educational success.

"Dr. Constance Bland was an exemplary leader. After receiving my Ph.D., Dr. Bland took a chance on me," said Garner.

"From day one, she has been my role model. When I first began working at Mississippi Valley State University, Dr. Bland did her best to mold me into a better educator. I can truly say that the impact that Dr. Bland has made on my life will forever be remembered, and I'm eternally grateful that I had the opportunity to know her in addition to working under her tutelage," Garner added.

Currently a computer technician for the Desoto County School District, MVSU alumnus Bradford Fair of Clarksdale said it was Bland who influenced him to receive a bachelor's degree in Computer Science.

"It was the best decision I ever made in regard to my career path. Dr. Bland was one of a kind. She was, in my opinion, brilliant, professional,

and, most of all, compassionate and caring for her students,” said Fair.

One of Fair’s fondest memories of Dr. Bland was how she pushed him to do something that he did not understand the importance of at the time.

“There was a J.C. Watts Foundation competition going on, and it required individuals to design a webpage. No one in the department participated, and Dr. Bland came in the room furious and expressed her level of disappointment that we hadn’t submitted anything into the competition,” Fair recalled.

“I remember she said, ‘We are not doing anything today, and it’s mandatory that you go and submit a web page by the deadline today at 5 p.m.’ So, I did just what was asked of me. During our final exams, students had to do a one-on-one in Dr. Bland’s office. While I was taking my exam, her phone rang, and it was one of the deans. Dr. Bland hung up the phone and said, ‘I can’t believe it! You won the J.C. Watts web page design contest. You will receive the maximum award which is \$10,000.’ She was so excited that until this day I’m not sure if I even finished my final exam,” Fair said with a chuckle.

Dr. Elizabeth Evans, interim vice president for Academic Affairs, recalled how Bland’s love for teaching went far beyond the classroom.

“She touched so many people with her graceful way of sharing the things she knew and had experience with,” said Evans. “She had a heart

for teaching and taught those around her—whether in the classroom, meetings, conversations, writing, research or even in times of her quiet resolve. She modeled the expectations bestowed on others.”

Evans, who worked side-by-side with Bland for many years, said Bland was an exemplary leader.

“As a leader, she was strategic in devising policies, processes, and plans for future organizational growth and sustainment. She encouraged others to push themselves and soar to accomplish their dreams. Her magnetic personality made others comfortable and secure in their abilities. Let us not forget her smile which was her persuasion; it melted away contention and anxiety,” she said.

Despite the enormity of her responsibilities, Bland served with humility and grace.

“Her walk with God was evident as she gave true humble service in her many roles throughout the University; culminating with huge and demanding responsibilities as the chief academic officer,” Evans said. “To say she will be missed doesn’t begin to describe the loss felt at Mississippi Valley State University, the surrounding communities (especially Dog Bog, Mississippi), the state and many places across the nation.”

YOUR REACTIONS



Bradford W. Fair Sr.
October 9, 2018 ·

I got word today that my mentor, role model, and advisor Dr. Constance G. Bland has made her transition. She was very instrumental in my life and one of the reasons I decided to obtain my degree in Computer Science from MVSU. I'm at a loss of words and MVSU has suffered a major loss. Prayers go out to the German/Bland families. #jobwelldone



Thaddeus Tyrone Fairley Sr.
October 9, 2018 ·

Today my heart truly bleeds with sorrow as I received word that a beloved jewel of MVSU passed on from this life. Dr. Constance Bland you have been the wind beneath my wings from the first day I met you in 2005. You pushed my mom to loosen her grip and promised her that you would always take care of me. You did just that. You encouraged me to come out of my shell. So much of who I am today, you played a vital part in that. I couldn't imagine standing before people, flying on a plane or leaving home for months if it had not been for your tender nudge. Even when I had to leave Valley due to sickness, you encouraged me to come back and finish my degree. I was so glad I got the opportunity to hug you as I crossed the stage to receive my degree last May and to hear you say “You did it, Thad!” It's amazing how someone from Dogbog, MS (hope I spelled it right) changed so many lives, especially mine. I am so grateful to have had you as a mentor! Your legacy will live on forever, through each of the lives you've touched. #DrBland#MVSU #MCIS



Travis Gee
October 9, 2018 ·

One of the few times I'm speechless....I've thought this post over a million times I remember when Amanda Bland and I became friends in high school; Dr. Bland welcomed me with opened arms. She treated me as her own and was equally on me about academics and social decisions as she were her girls. When I entered college at MVSU it was because of her influence I began my educational journey as a Computer Science major. Later down the road I ended up taking some Mass Comm electives and found my love for media and arts. I can recall the day so vividly I was about to take my change of major form to her; I was sweating bullets because she was like a mother figure. When I gave her the form the only thing she did was smile like only she could and made me promise to finish school and do something with my Mass Communications degree. Fast forward to the present well the photo below means the world to me now because she was able to see me in action at her daughter's wedding and her exact words to me were “I'm so proud of you Travis; when Hillary informed me that you would be her photographer I was elated to hear you stuck to it.” Constance Bland thanks for making me keep that promise of chasing my dreams and serving me the equal accountability as you did your daughters for who knows; Travis Gee Media may have never been in existence. #RestInLove #PartOfMyVillage#AValleyLegacy #ThisOneHurts



Emmitt Y. Riley III
October 9, 2018 ·

Join me in uplifting the Bland family in prayer. Today the Mississippi Valley State University family suffered a major loss with the passing of Dr. Constance Bland, Vice-President for Academic Affairs and Professor of Computer Science. Dr. Bland was one of those professors that demanded excellence and pushed her students to achieve greatness. She showcased her students, helped them land internships, publications, and so much more. In 2016 I returned to my alma mater to give a lecture on “Voter Suppression” for the Social Sciences Department and to my surprise she was in the audience. She would always tell me how proud of me she was. If I can be half the Professor she was then I know I will have had a major impact on my students. RIP Dr. Bland.



Latonya Garner
October 10, 2018 ·

After receiving my PhD, Dr. Constance Bland took a chance on me. From day one, she has been my role model. She's the epitome of a great academician, who loved her students and faculty members. She then trusted me enough to become the Chair of the Mathematics, Computer and Information Sciences (MCIS) Department, where she was Chair for over 19 years. She will definitely be remembered for her great work at Mississippi Valley State University and in the Delta. I'm grateful for all Dr. Bland has done for me and my son. I love her dearly. Rest well Doc....



Cassandra Pete
October 10, 2018 ·

My heart is feeling blue at the loss of my VP, Dr. Constance G. Bland; but God knows best. RIH Dr. Bland, you will be truly missed. Your kindness, generosity, smile and your strong love/dedication for MVSU will never be forgotten. Thank you God for her impact in my life. "God saw a beautiful rose that was missing from his garden and he called her by name to join him in the land of holiness and beauty." I'm gonna miss you my friend...



Chartese Darnel Jones
October 9, 2018 ·

As I sit and read all the wonderful words about Dr. Constance Bland I recall her saying to me, “When the tough get going, the going have to get tough”. You gave many students and educators hope. When no one else believed in us you never gave up on us. Many may be able to do the job you do, but NO ONE will be able to do it like you. You have created many trailblazers—trust and believe your legacy will live on! Amanda Bland we love your mom and we wish you all nothing but understanding and blessings.

I N M E M O R I A M

Bennie L. Abson
Tiffany U. Austin
Ruby B. Avery
Cleon Baker
Frances Louise Moore Barnes
Helen M. Benson
Leslie Benson, Sr.
Edward D. Blackshire
Bonnie F. Blackwell
William Bright, Jr.
Arthur Brisco
Joplin D. Brock
Mattie L. Brown
Selestine Brown-Skipper
Effie Butts
W A. Butts
Willie E. Carthan
Barbara J. Clayton
Sam Clayton
Willie L. Coleman, Jr.
LaDorotha Cooks-Keesee
Elaine G. Craft
Cynita L. Cross
Harold P. Dean
Martha L. Dennis
Billie C. Dickson
Lorine Dillard
Tommy Dillard, Jr.
Clinton Dixon
Mark A. Dorsey
Elford S. Dudley, Jr.
Gladys M. Edwards
Franklin Ervin
Louvenia P. Evans-Marshall
Carol A. Flowers
Audrea L. Ford
Geneva T. Fox
Billy L. Franklin
Willie E. Gatewood

Mary F. Gibbs
Daniel Gipson
Clarence C. Givens
Jeffery S. Graves
Elmus S. Gray
Tony Haggie
Kay M. Harper
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Marcus A. Johnson
Mary Jean Johnson
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Katie M. Jones
Willie C. Jones
Martha L. Justice
Venitra Kye
James Ledbetter
Kevin C. Lee
James W. Lowe, Sr.
Horace B. Lyons
Curtis G. Maddox
Bertha L. Marion
Sidney M. Matlock, Jr.
Otis S. McCain
Elzina R. Meeks
Willorean Melton
Larry L. Miller
Hazel L. Moffett
Eric D. Montgomery
Robert E. Moore
Wallace Moore
V.J. Moore
Earless P. Morris
Tyshawna S. Nellum
Melvin Newsome

Sarah A. Patton
Gerard M. Poole, Sr.
Osie Pope
Carver Randle, Sr.
Mae L. Raymond
Dorthy Reaves-Beasley
Jerlene M. Riley
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Theodore Washington, Sr.
Darryl D. Watson
Delois L. Watson
Ila M. Wells
Janet C. Westerfield
Exzelmon White, Jr.
Henry O. White, Sr.
Carolyn C. Williams
James H. Williams
James R. Williams
Dorothy M. Yates
James Young, Jr.
Bernice C. Zachary

A photograph of two Black men standing side-by-side in front of a dark wood-paneled wall. The man on the left is wearing a dark pinstriped suit, a light blue shirt, and a red and blue striped tie. The man on the right is wearing a dark blue suit, a white shirt, and a red and blue striped bow tie. Both are smiling. Above them is a circular seal featuring an eagle with spread wings, perched on a branch, with the words "OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL" around it.

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*"The Commitment You Need.
The Justice You Deserve."*



GOAL!

Issaka SCORES ON AND OFF THE FIELD

▼By: Donell Maxie

Laadi Issaka grew up in Ghana, but her love for soccer, helping others and education brought her across the Atlantic Ocean to join the Mississippi Valley State University family.

As a student-athlete at MVSU, Issaka has accomplished a great deal of success on the soccer field and in the classroom.

On the field, Issaka was the 2016-17 NCAA Division I Statistical Champion for most points per game and goals per game. During the 2015-16 season, she was the NCAA Division I Women's Soccer Statistical Champion for assists per game.

For two consecutive years, she finished first in multiple categories in the nation. It marked for the first time in Devillettes soccer history that an athlete has recorded back-to-back number one finishes nationally.

In May 2018, she graduated from MVSU with a B.S. in Health, Physical Education and Recreation. During the ceremony, she joined Henry Akaeze of Lago, Nigeria in receiving special recognition for earning a 4.0 cumulative grade point average.

Currently, Issaka is enrolled in the Sport Administration graduate program at MVSU while also still playing soccer. Her work in the community, on the field and the classroom, is also the reason she received the NCAA Accelerating Academic Success Program Award.

"When I got the message on my phone that I won the award, I was so surprised, overwhelmed and delighted because out of hundreds of students that applied I was the chosen one," said Issaka.

"I could not hide my joy, so I quickly went to see my AD (Dianthia Ford-Kee), and she was even more excited than I was. At that moment, I realized it was not just an award but a great achievement."

Even though her family is thousands of miles away, Issaka said MVSU feels like home.

"Looking at how proud I made (Ford-Kee) and most people around me gave me chills, and I felt a little emotional especially when she hugged me and congratulated me. She did not only act as my AD but as my mom," Issaka said.

Issaka received the grant, designed for students who attend Accelerating Academic Success Program (AASP) eligible schools and plan to pursue careers in athletics. Perks included having her travel costs paid to attend two NCAA developmental events — the Career in Sports Forum on May 31-June 3, 2018, in Indianapolis and the AASP Conference on July 24-25, 2018, in Orlando, Florida.

AASP assists select Division I schools in developing programs and systems designed to increase graduation rates and ensure academic success. Issaka was chosen by an AASP committee composed of NCAA staff and membership.

While aspiring to become a coach or a teacher, Issaka serves as a role model for young kids in the community. Throughout her community service involvement, revolving around a back-to-school theme, she encouraged youth to continue their education.

Today, she is motivated to pursue a career in sports, which she sees as a way of giving back to her community, influence and inspire others, especially young girls.



A member of her campus Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, Issaka used the platform to discuss ways of improving the lives of student-athletes on and off the field and to connect with student-athletes from different universities. On the soccer field, this Ghana's national team midfielder led Division I in goals per game in 2016 and assists per game in 2015.

"This award means a lot to me because looking at the smiles I put on people for making them proud makes me want to continue to work hard both on and off the field, and I am so glad and blessed to have people like them around me," she said. "When I decided to come to Valley for school my goal was to work hard in everything I do and now getting all these awards means I am living up to my goal."

While Issaka received a great deal of support from her campus family, she was also able to contact her family in Africa, and she exclaimed how equally excited they were for her accomplishment.

"When my family and friends back home, especially my mom, called to congratulate me, I couldn't hold my tears back because she said, 'my dear, upon all the struggles you have been through you are making us proud back home' and that I should keep it up."

The support of family, coaches, teachers, teammates, and friends is a vital one for Issaka. According to her, the most significant contributor to her success is her MVSU family.

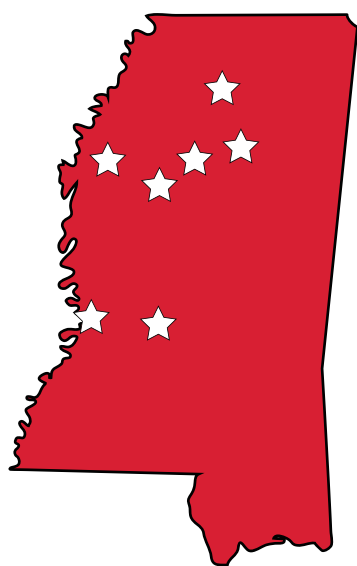
"Valley has impacted my life in so many important ways. When I first got to Valley, I thought I would be lost and would not fit into the environment, but that was a delusion," Issaka said. "Valley may seem like a small school, but they have a variety of opportunities for its students. Valley has prepared me to fit in my field of study and to embrace what I love to do. Valley has impacted my life in a lot of ways, and I now consider it my home."

With every accomplishment, Issaka understands the role soccer plays in it. Soccer means a great deal to her and ultimately is the reason she was afforded the chance to earn a quality education here in America.

"Playing soccer is my passion, and it has had a major impact into my life, especially getting a scholarship to come here to the States to study and play," said Issaka. "I would never have imagined where I would be today if I did not play soccer," she added.

She views all of her recent accomplishments as only the beginning.

"I know I have come a long way, but I still have a lot of work to do," she said. "Playing soccer has earned me lifelong friends which I cherish so much and most of all I got the opportunity to travel around the world. I learned how to network with people through soccer and got a lot of opportunities because of soccer."



CANNON

MOTORS OF MISSISSIPPI



NOBODY Beats A Cannon Deal... NOBODY!



Friends-turned-business partners fortunate for Valley

▼By: Donell Maxie

From sororities and fraternities to athletic teams and academic clubs—college offers numerous opportunities to create bonds that can last a lifetime.

That's exactly what happened for Theodore Crystian, Jacques Jackson, Mervin Bell and Princeton Clayborne. The four young men met, pledged and graduated from Mississippi Valley State University.

Today, they're business partners and the masterminds behind Fortunate Clothing Company, an urban wear line that offers a dose of inspiration along with style.

Collectively, they are representatives of what can happen when like-minded people collaborate and desire the same things out of life.

In November 2013, the young entrepreneurs joined forces to start Fortunate Clothing. They eventually added Levon Murphy of French Camp, Miss., to the team.

All five young men are graduates from Valley and members of the Zeta Phi chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.

The young men were not only connected through a fraternal

order or Valley, they are also linked in that they are all sons of the Mississippi Delta. Jackson is from Louise, Clayborne and Crystian are from Belzoni and Bell hails from Indianola.

"The idea started with one of my frat brothers saying he wanted to get started selling Greek (organization) clothes. We started out, but quickly started selling our own clothes," said Jackson.

Because it was four people in the group they decided on the name Fortunate to represent everyone.

"Our goal is to inspire others through fashion," said Jackson.

"I always use the slogan, 'conquer the world' and that's how we want people to feel when they put the clothes on. There's not enough positivity going around, which is why we place motivational sayings on our clothes," said Jackson.

The group believes fashion is a medium in which every person can be touched. No matter what obstacle one may face every person has the opportunity to strive and create their own fortune.

Check out some of their latest at fortunateclothingco.com

My Valley Story

SHAKIR MILLER

▼By: Brittany Davis-Green

It's no secret that many students at Mississippi Valley State University are the first in their family to attend college. But some, like Shakir Miller, are also the first to graduate from high school, which makes obtaining a college degree an even more notable feat.

Growing up in Baptist Town, one of the Delta's oldest Black neighborhoods located just east of downtown Greenwood, Miller was surrounded by stark poverty.

Despite the fact, he said that he was often motivated by community members to stay in school.

"My family did the best that they could," Miller said. "I didn't really feel the poverty, but I understood early on that education was a way to make a better life for myself and my family."

During middle school, when he was extended the chance to be a part of MVSU's VAST program—a residential 3-week program that which exposed students to STEM curriculum—Miller received a first look at the endless educational opportunities available to him.

"That program really exposed to me college life and sparked my interest in science," he said.

A subsequent opportunity to participate in MVSU's HBCU UP program during high school affirmed his desire to attend college.

"The love and support I received during those programs really helped to prepare me for the college life," he said.

Miller also received encouragement from folks like Larry and Freddie White-Johnson ('82), who pushed him to pursue a higher education.

Despite the positive experiences, the 2012 graduate of Greenwood High School said that The Valley wasn't his first-choice.

"I was adamant about wanting to leave the area," he admitted.

But life didn't go as planned and Miller found himself registering for classes at MVSU that fall.

"It wasn't my first choice, but it turned out to be the best choice," he said. "I had such a strong support system, so it was only natural that I made Valley my home. Everyone was and continue to be very helpful."

Once a student at Valley, Miller matriculated through the Biology program. He aced most of his classes, but then in 2016, during his senior year, he received an unexpected blow when his best friend, Tyree Jernigan, passed away unexpectedly.

"That was a dark time for me. I was the best man in his wedding and everything, so it became really hard to focus on my studies."

Although it was tough, Miller managed to stay focused on his No. 1 objective—finishing school—with the help of his caring professors.

"I would be remised if I didn't give a special shout-out to Dr. Mark Dugo—he became a special father figure to me."

Recalling the time when he had difficulty completing his senior project, Miller said Dugo pushed him to produce quality work that he was able to present during a national conference.

"(Dr. Dugo) always took the time to understand where I was coming from. He believed in me even when I didn't believe in myself," Miller said.

"I learned something from all of my professors," he added. "...Professors like Dr. Ikenga, Dr. Pande, Dr. Wahome and Dr. Beechman pushed me so hard. I'll never forget them."

In retrospect, Miller said he can certainly attest to the saying, "It takes a village to raise a child."

"At the end of the day, it's all about support—that's what makes Valley the perfect choice. There's nothing stronger than the support system you receive there," he said. "That's what I love most about the university—the family aspect. I needed that because where I came from I didn't get that."

Today, Miller serves as a chemistry teacher at Amanda Elzy High School.

He said that his background and experiences have helped him in relating to his students.

"I try to teach them routes around adversity and living positive despite the circumstances," he said. "I also encourage each of them to attend college and, of course, to make Valley their first choice."



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.



Christine Lymon
Chancery Clerk



Sam Abraham
District 1



Robert Moore
District 2



Anjuan Brown
District 3
President



Wayne Self
District 4



Robert Collins
District 5
Vice President



LEFLORE COUNTY
MISSISSIPPI



ANNUAL

DONORS

REPORT

SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS



CRIMSON DRIVER

Hometown: Yazoo City, MS
Major: Engineering Technology
Classification: Junior

"I would like to say that I am thankful to the donors that give to the University, which, in turn, makes our college experience more pleasurable. I value the importance of education, and I understand how hard it is paying for school. These scholarship opportunities mitigate those hardships. Your generous contribution is appreciated as it assists in making college more affordable. Thanks again."



MARQUISHA ENGLISH

Hometown: Lexington, MS
Major: Social Work
Classification: Sophomore

"I am sincerely honored to be selected as a scholarship recipient for this academic school year. I am grateful for the generosity of others, which has allowed me to continue my education at Mississippi Valley State University. Your generosity has inspired me to help others and give back to the community. I hope to one day be able to help students achieve their goals just as you have helped me."



KAILYN DUNN

Hometown: Tuscaloosa, AL
Major: Criminal Justice
Classification: Senior

"Thank you! The investment that you have made towards my education is greatly valued, and I will indeed look to pay it forward. The financial assistance you have provided has been a great help to me in paying my educational expenses and has allowed me to concentrate more of my time on studying and playing softball. Thank you, again, for your act of kindness, and I will continue efforts to make my parents and The Valley family proud."



SOLOMON GEBRHANA

Hometown: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Major: Computer Science
Classification: Junior

"I am super grateful for this opportunity, and I want to thank the donors and my school from the bottom of my heart for providing me with the opportunity to be a scholarship recipient. My first priority is to get my bachelor's degree, work for a few years, then go for my master's and doctorate degrees. My future plan is to better myself in any way possible and to be able to help my family back home. I know this is not going to be easy, but I am willing to try my best and give it my all. Thanks to you, I am now one step closer to my goals."



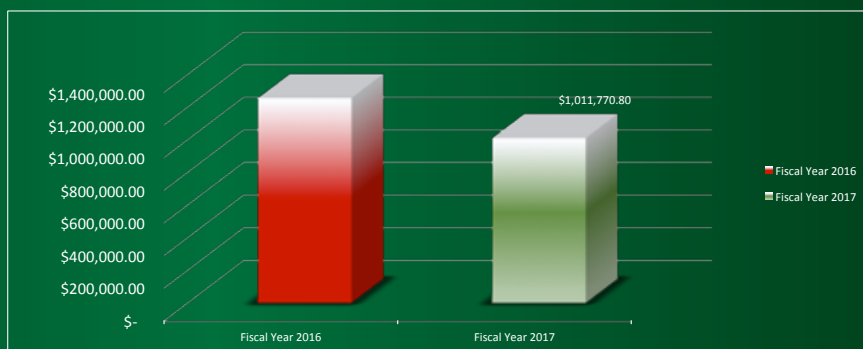
FISCAL YEAR
2016-18
DATA AND GRAPHS

FISCAL YEAR 2016-17

DATA AND GRAPHS

ANNUAL GIFT COMPARISON FY2016 and FY 2017

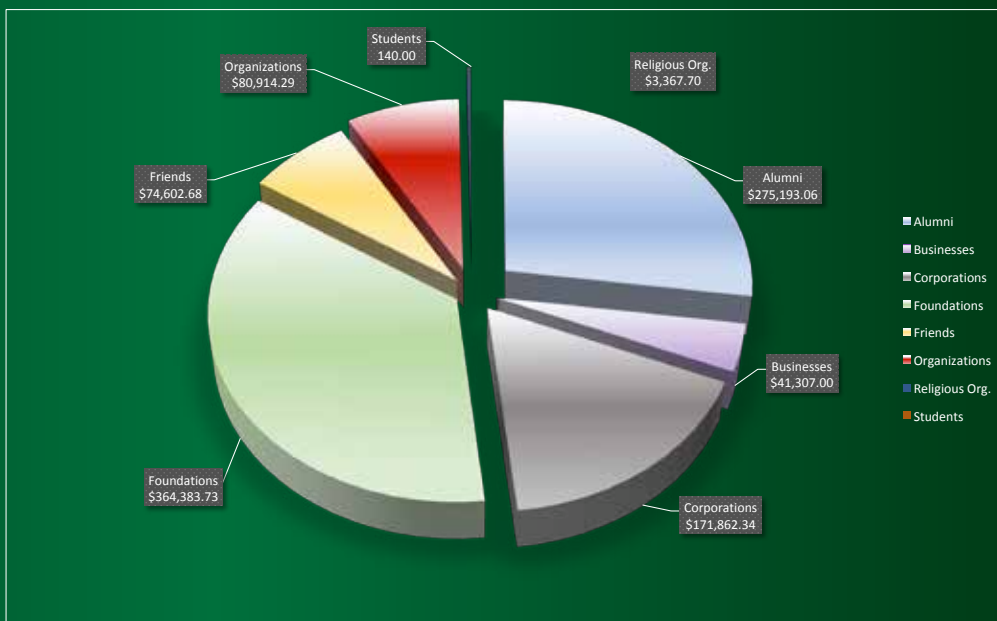
Fiscal Year 2016	\$1,256,667.68
Fiscal Year 2017	\$1,011,770.80



TOTAL GIFT AMOUNTS BY CATEGORY July 1, 2016 Thru June 30, 2017

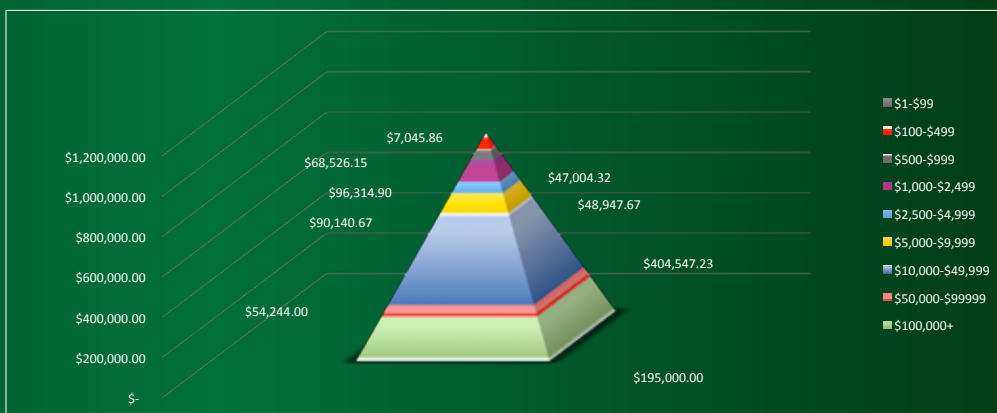
FISCAL YEAR 17

Alumni	\$275,193.06
Businesses	\$41,307.00
Corporations	\$171,862.34
Foundations	\$364,383.73
Friends	\$74,602.68
Organizations	\$80,914.29
Religious Org.	\$3,367.70
Students	\$140.00
Total	\$1,011,770.80



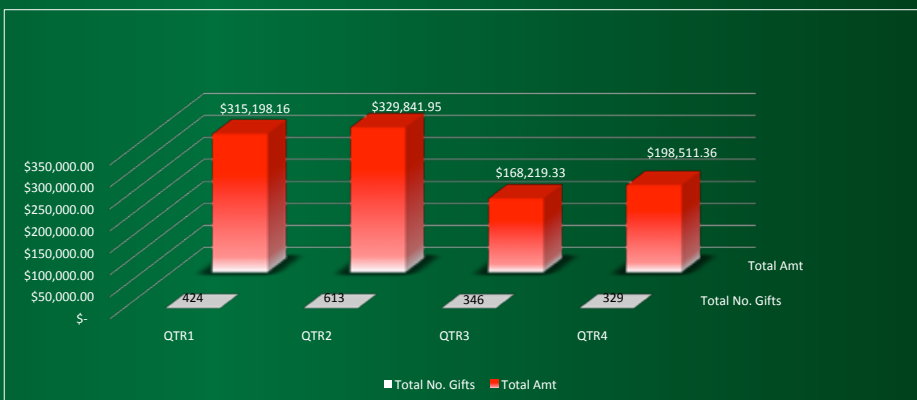
TOTAL GIFT AMOUNTS BY DONOR LEVELS July 1, 2016 Thru June 30, 2017

Donor Levels	Gifts Per Level
\$100,000+	\$195,000.00
\$50,000-\$99,999	\$54,244.00
\$10,000-\$49,999	\$404,547.23
\$5,000-\$9,999	\$90,140.67
\$2,500-\$4,999	\$48,947.67
\$1,000-\$2,499	\$96,314.90
\$500-\$999	\$47,004.32
\$100-\$499	\$68,526.15
\$1-\$99	\$7,045.86
Total	\$1,011,770.80



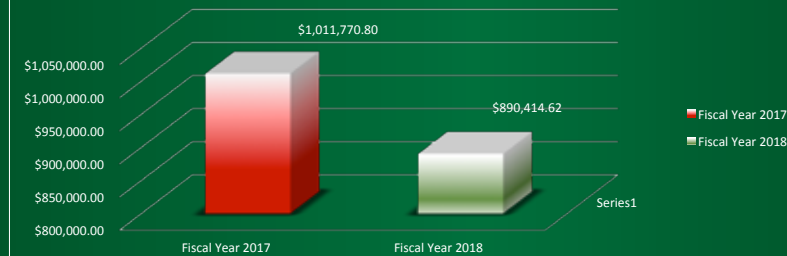
TOTAL GIFT AMOUNTS BY QUARTER July 1, 2016 Thru June 30, 2017

QT	Total No. Gifts	Total Amt
QTR1	424	\$315,198.16
QTR2	613	\$329,841.95
QTR3	346	\$168,219.33
QTR4	329	\$198,511.36
Total		\$1,011,770.80



ANNUAL GIFT COMPARISON FY2017 and FY 2018

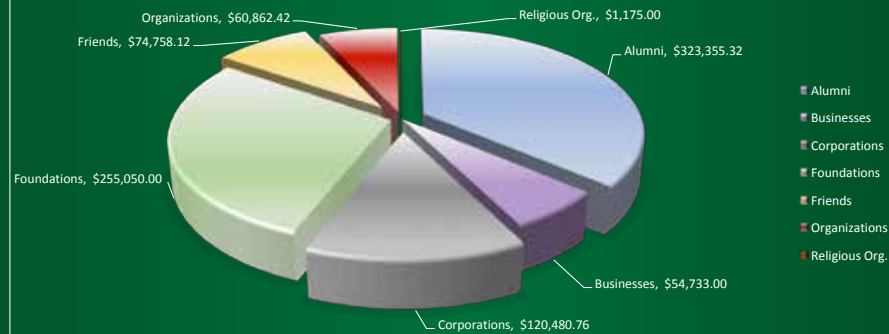
Fiscal Year 2017 \$ 1,011,770.80
Fiscal Year 2018 \$ 890,414.62



TOTAL GIFT AMOUNTS BY CATEGORY July 1, 2017 Thru June 30, 2018

FISCAL YEAR 17

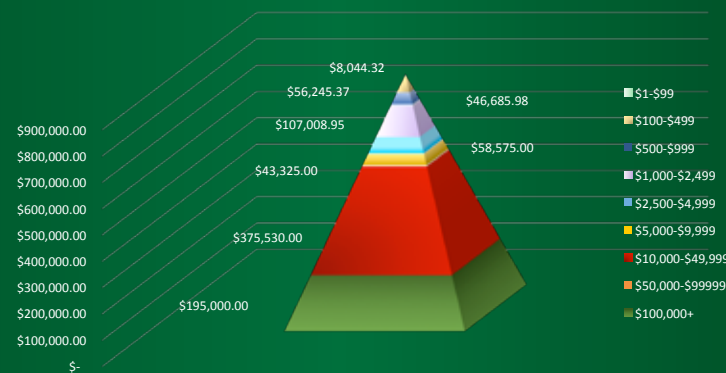
Alumni	\$323,355.32
Businesses	\$54,733.00
Corporations	\$120,480.76
Foundations	\$255,050.00
Friends	\$74,758.12
Organizations	\$60,862.42
Religious Org.	\$1,175.00
Students	\$-
Total	\$ 890,414.62



TOTAL GIFT AMOUNTS BY DONOR LEVELS July 1, 2017 Thru June 30, 2018

Donor Levels	Gifts Per Level
\$100,000+	\$195,000.00
\$50,000-\$99,999	\$-
\$10,000-\$49,999	\$375,530.00
\$5,000-\$9,999	\$43,325.00
\$2,500-\$4,999	\$58,575.00
\$1,000-\$2,499	\$107,008.95
\$500-\$999	\$46,685.98
\$100-\$499	\$56,245.37
\$1-\$99	\$8,044.32

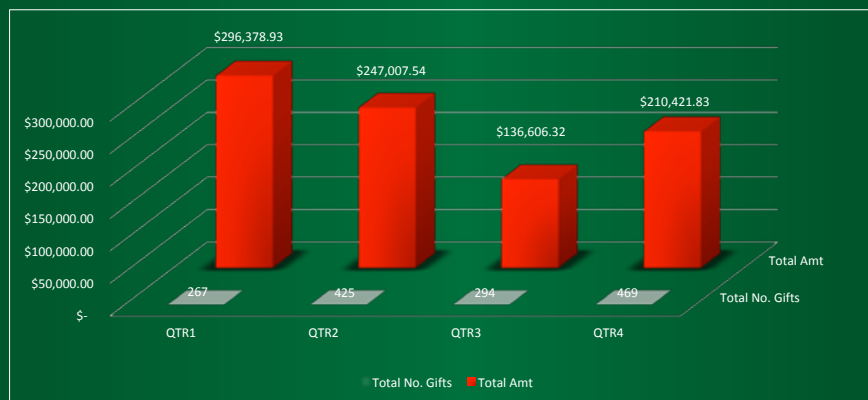
\$890,414.62



TOTAL GIFT AMOUNTS BY QUARTER July 1, 2017 Thru June 30, 2018

QT	Total No. Gifts	Total Amt
QTR1	267	\$296,378.93
QTR2	425	\$247,007.54
QTR3	294	\$136,606.32
QTR4	469	\$210,421.83

\$890,414.62



An aerial photograph of the Mississippi Valley State University campus, showing a large central building with a portico, surrounded by green lawns, trees, and other campus buildings. The image is partially obscured by a large green diagonal overlay that contains portraits of three students.

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