

The Stater

A Magazine for the Alumni and Friends of Southern Arkansas University

Muleriders® making a
Difference

Pages 6-9

A Time for HEROES

Over the past one-hundred years, we know that the U.S. has faced many periods of struggle and crisis. From the Spanish flu pandemic of 1918-20, the Great Depression, World War II, and the Civil Rights struggle, just to name a few. Through all of these times, we have persevered.

We also recognize that we are once again living through another one of those turbulent times. A time that tests our resolve, wisdom, and courage. We have always found inspiration as a country in the midst of our struggles. That inspiration these days can be found throughout our SAU alumni and community!

Within the pages of this *Stater* issue, we will be chronicling the courageous and meaningful acts of Muleriders working on the front lines and aiding our fellow citizens and neighbors throughout the country. You will read about Muleriders ranging in age from 22 to 100 who are truly making such a difference influencing lives, changing lives, and saving lives in every corner of this land.

They are all heroes among us! They are showing extraordinary courage and care as we live through the COVID-19 crisis.

Another group of heroes we must also recognize is our dedicated SAU faculty and staff. We have watched them all change their lives to keep our campus and students safe. We have seen our staff drive laptop computers to students throughout Arkansas and to students in neighboring states who had no access to technology. We have also observed our staff members conduct long hours of health screenings for our students and parents over multiple days. Equally amazing has been the work of our SAU faculty as they radically changed the way they teach and the way they have worked even more closely with students in order to continue the education process off campus and to assure our students' success. And finally, we have watched our Engineering professors create hundreds of medical face shields on their 3-D printers for our regional hospital, nursing home workers, local dentists, and other healthcare providers.

You don't have to look beyond the SAU campus to find heroes at work.


Indeed, we know our work has just begun as we adjust to a possible new reality and as we work to continue to keep SAU safe and healthy. We are truly anchored by the courage and care of the Mulerider community as we journey through these uncharted waters. What is for certain, is that 100 years from now, people will look back on this period as another time for heroes.

We are so thankful for our Mulerider heroes – everywhere!

Sincerely,



Trey Berry, Ph.D.
President



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From left, Dr. Trey Berry, president of SAU, Joey Baker '77 and Brenda Baker. Mr. Baker has created an endowment for Emerson students as a means of giving back to both his home town and SAU.

Why I Give - Joey Baker

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The Stater

Summer 2020

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Grant Smith '05

Photos by Matthew Wilkins



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GET. THINGS. DONE.

SOUTHERN ARKANSAS UNIVERSITY + AMERICORPS VISTA

By Jessica Williamson

With the priority goal of breaking cycles of poverty for students, the SAU+VISTA program continues to make a difference in the lives of current and future Muleriders on our campus. In 2019, an AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) program was established at SAU toward the goal of poverty alleviation through college degree completion and early college access, courtesy of \$250,000 in grant support from the Corporation for National & Community Service (CNCS). The program is under the direction of SAU's First Lady and Senior Advisor for Institutional Advancement, Dr. Katherine Berry.



Over three years, the SAU+VISTA project seeks to meet the following goals: identify poverty-related barriers among current and future students and then reduce barriers that prevent degree completion and advise, coach, mentor and shepherd students in landing their first job post-college. The team also works to create more efficient processes to encourage service among students and inspires and actively encourages the next generation to pursue a college degree. Alysia Hurt also serves as the SAU+VISTA representative to LeaderCorps, a statewide group sponsored by EngageAR, Arkansas' state commission on national service.

In just one year, the SAU + VISTA AmeriCorps have volunteered their time through several different projects. SAU + VISTA fellow Hurt has worked with the Mulerider Teen College team to revamp the curriculum for 6th-8th graders at the weeklong summer camp. She has worked to create different career tracks that will be incorporated to spark interest in college education for our future Muleriders in the community.

The mental health of college students remains one of the biggest obstacles for students when faced with the stress that can come along with continuing their education. SAU+VISTA Fellow, Kyle Plunk, saw the need for a facility where our students could go during the day to take their minds off of their studies and have a healthy escape from their busy schedules. With the help of the Counseling Center, they established the Rest and Relaxation Room. This room is a place where students can lounge on the couches or bean bag chairs, enjoy a massage in the Real Relax massage chair, or participate in their preferred means of meditation.

The Mulerider Market- a project led by Fellow, Macye Plunk, is one that will make a difference in the lives of our students in a big way. It is a resource available to all current students who need food or personal hygiene items. To use the Mulerider Market, students must present a valid student ID and can pick



Photos by Matthew Wilkins

(Above) For MLK Day of Service, the VISTA+SAU Fellows volunteered at Southern Christian Mission homeless shelter in Magnolia. They assisted with the food pantry, clothing closet and served dinner to the residents. (Right) Macye Plunk, an SAU+VISTA Fellow, and Emma Wooldridge check out the items available at the new Mulerider Market, which celebrated its opening in June.




Photos by Matthew Wilkins

out what items they want in their package. All students are able to receive one package per week full of essential items they might not have access to otherwise. When SAU+VISTA Director, Dr. Katherine Berry learned about the troubling statistics related to food insecurity among college students, she knew action was needed. "Having this program staffed with talented young adults allows SAU to tackle real problems that run parallel to the college experience. As an educator, we know that hunger is direct barrier to learning. SAU students should not, and I hope will not, ever need to go hungry. Mulerider Market is a solution to this very real concern."

One project the VISTA's look forward to kicking off next year is Career AIM (Alumni Inspiring Muleriders). This Alumni Mentor Program enables alumni to share their professional and personal experience and expertise with a current SAU student and foster a meaningful relationship between the two.

Alumni do not have to be on campus to make an impact. Whether you are right down the street or across the globe, we invite alumni from around the world to be part of Career AIM. The connections made in this program will give Muleriders a unique experience and provide insight into life beyond SAU.


(Left) 2019-2020 VISTA+SAU Fellows: Front row: Karaline McCracken, Allysia Hurt, Leanna Allen, Macye Plunk Back row: Johanna Baker Wade, Jeremy Hunter, Dr. Katherine Berry, Cole Williams, Kyle Plunk



ALUMNI INSPIRING MULERIDERS™

CAREER

AIM



Be a mentor! Provide Muleriders with the opportunity to explore career fields by visiting you in your workplace.

Sign up to be a mentor at www.SAUmag.edu/AIM

MULERIDERS

MAKING A **SUPER** DIFFERENCE!



SHIELDING THE COMMUNITY

BY JESSICA WILLIAMSON



In response to the shortage of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), the SAU Engineering and Physics Department adapted its 3D-printing resources to produce face shields for Magnolia Regional Medical Center (MRMC) and many other local medical professionals that are on the front lines of the worldwide pandemic. The Engineering Department has six 3D printers working around the clock to accommodate the demand. Even though the cost of each shield is minimal, time is of the essence as each frame can take up to six hours to print.

According to Dr. Abdel Bachri, dean of the College of Science and Engineering, there's mounting evidence that coronavirus's primary mode of transmission is from respiratory droplets, which makes guarding the face a priority for health workers on the front lines. "Face shields are not fool-proof against the transmission, but they offer an added protection when used in combination with other PPE," said Dr. Bachri.

Dr. Mahbub Ahmed, associate professor of Engineering, and Mr. Jeff Sumner, the engineering shop machinist, led the effort to produce a large batch of face shields and developed the capability to fabricate more as needed. "This is the least we can do to support, in a modest way, our healthcare workers against the coronavirus struggle," said Dr. Ahmed.

Layer by layer, the 3D printer builds the frame for the shield taking nearly 6 hours from start to finish of each frame. The finished product has three notches with the typical spacing from a three-hole punch. Standard page protectors or transparencies are attached to the frame serving as the shield and also allowing for easy disposal and replacement if needed. They can also be disinfected and used repeatedly, thus eliminating the need to continue to replenish the stock.

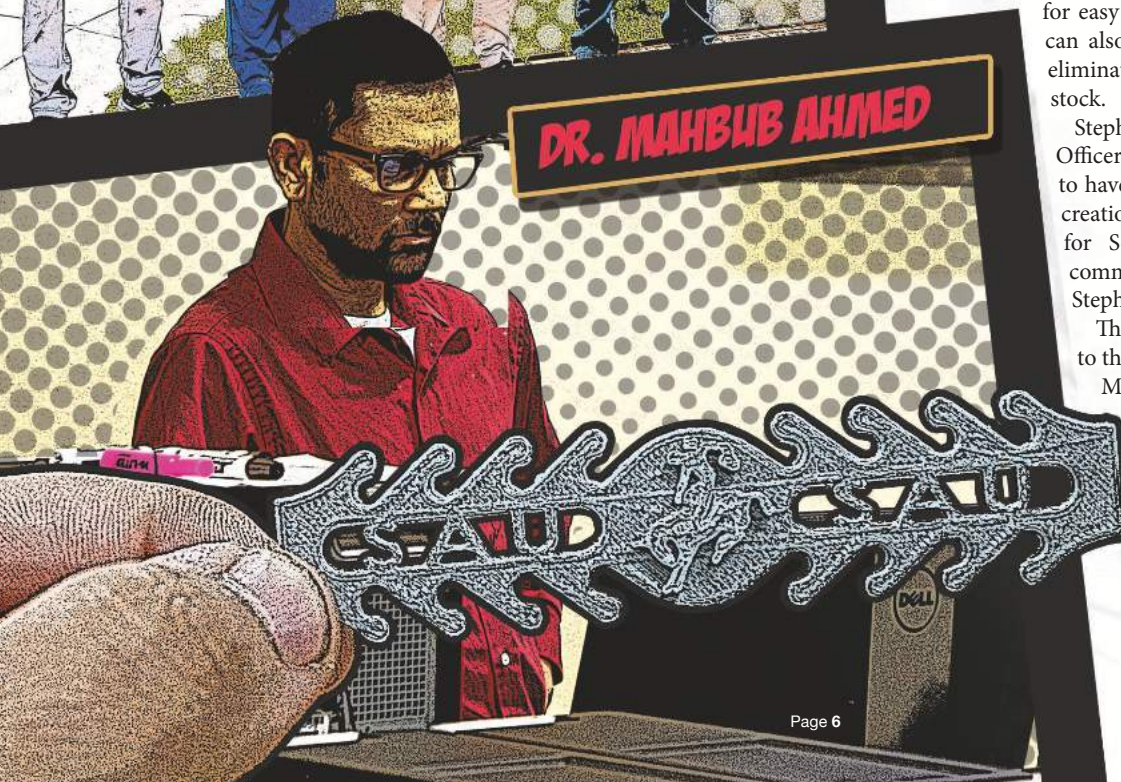
Stephanie Schmittou '00, MRMC Chief Nursing Officer, welcomed the PPE. "MRMC is very proud to have these face shields for our protection. This creation was fortunate, and we are so grateful for Southern Arkansas University and their commitment to our community hospital," said Stephanie.

The department donated over 300 face shields to the community. Places of distribution include MRMC, local nursing homes, dentist offices, and our own SAU Health Services. SAU strives to make a difference not only on campus, but throughout the community as well. SAU is grateful to have played a small part in helping with the unexpected change of life that came along with the COVID-19 pandemic.



DR. MAHBUB AHMED AND JEFFERY SUMNER, PROJECT LEADERS, PRESENT THE FACE SHIELDS THEY MANUFACTURED TO STEPHANIE SCHMITTOU '00, MRMC CHIEF NURSING OFFICER AND REX JONES, MRMC CEO.

DR. MAHBUB AHMED



SHARING OUR SOUND

BY DAN MARSH

In order to keep young musicians sharp with schools out of session due to COVID-19, Southern Arkansas University music majors offered free 25-minute lessons to 9th-12th graders via Skype, Facetime or Zoom.

Student-teachers in the Music Education program reached out to high school students and provided online instruction aimed at maintaining instrumentation as well as sharpening the music education majors teaching skills.

Acknowledging the difficulty presented by school closures resulting from the worldwide pandemic, J.P. Wilson, director of Mulerider bands, said the program offered high school students the opportunity to keep up their musicianship by participating in online instruction.

He said that since the inception of the program in March, as many as 60 students across three states – Arkansas, Texas and Louisiana – participated weekly. Many of these students as well as their SAU student instructors agreed to continue the lessons through the summer.

Students were allowed to sign up via a Google Docs link available on the SAU Band's Facebook page. Lesson instructors reached out to interested students via email to assign lesson times.

"Any student anywhere can access our Facebook page and the Google sign-up document and take advantage of these lessons," Wilson said.

Free Zoom clinics in April gave students the opportunity to hear firsthand from innovative, creative and world-renowned artists. These clinics allowed the students to learn new techniques and continue to advance their own musicianship, even without face-to-face instruction.

Nina Martinez, a sophomore from Greenbrier, Arkansas, and Derik Camp, from Elkins, Arkansas, were among the student-teachers organizing and preparing the service. They put together a GroupMe with the music majors they selected. "Once we started to share the opportunity with schools and really put the word out there, we were getting kids signing up daily," Martinez said. "Every day, I checked email and assigned the students to lesson instructors."

Via email they asked students what they wanted to achieve and the best times for lessons. "I can't thank the lesson instructors enough for giving up their time to help these students," Martinez said.

"Sharing my passion

for music with younger students, whether it be in person or over a Zoom call, was incredible. I loved seeing how students still want to push themselves as musicians and I was happy to help them," she said.

Wilson explained that the online instruction inspired hopeful Muleriders and helped keep their spirits up.

Classes were recorded and made available via Mulerider Band social media and YouTube, so that instruction was only a click away. "We want these kids to keep firing on all cylinders," Wilson said.



ZACHARY SHEALY

BY DAN MARSH

ON THE FRONT LINES IN HEALTHCARE



Zachary Shealy, a 2018 graduate of SAU's nursing program, applied his skills on the front lines of the pandemic at a hospital in Mineola, New York.

The Texarkana, Texas, native began working at NYU Winthrop Hospital on April 12, gaining valuable experience as a traveling nurse and doing what he loves: helping patients.

"I enjoy taking care of people," Shealy said from Mineola, about 30 miles from New York City. "It's what I've always loved to do."

He was working as an Intensive Care Unit nurse at UT Health in Tyler, Texas, when the country went into lockdown. He saw an opportunity to help patients, relieve overwhelmed nurses, and obtain the experience necessary to eventually fulfill his goal of becoming a full-time traveling nurse.

After receiving offers to come to work in hospitals in the New York City area, he signed an eight-week contract with NYU Winthrop, a 591-bed facility.

Responding to a worldwide pandemic was not how Shealy envisioned starting his career. "I never imagined I would see a pandemic in my lifetime," he said. "I'm happy to be blessed with the knowledge and skills to be able to do this. Though, it is difficult for me to see everything I see here."

Shealy enjoyed his educational experience at SAU, having chosen its nursing program due to its affordability and close proximity to his home town. He had his sights set on nursing since high school.

At NYU Winthrop, Shealy works five 12-hour shifts per week, self-isolating as much as possible in his hotel. Though he misses social interactions, he still tries to make patients and their families feel better. "I am a hugger, and anyone having a bad day or not feeling well gets one. I miss giving and getting hugs, so that's been rough," he said.

He has seen patients who have died of coronavirus and those who have recovered. "You never know how the virus will affect someone," he said. "People who had it thought that

they had something else; some healthy people did not survive. A lot depends on how much fight the patient is able to give."

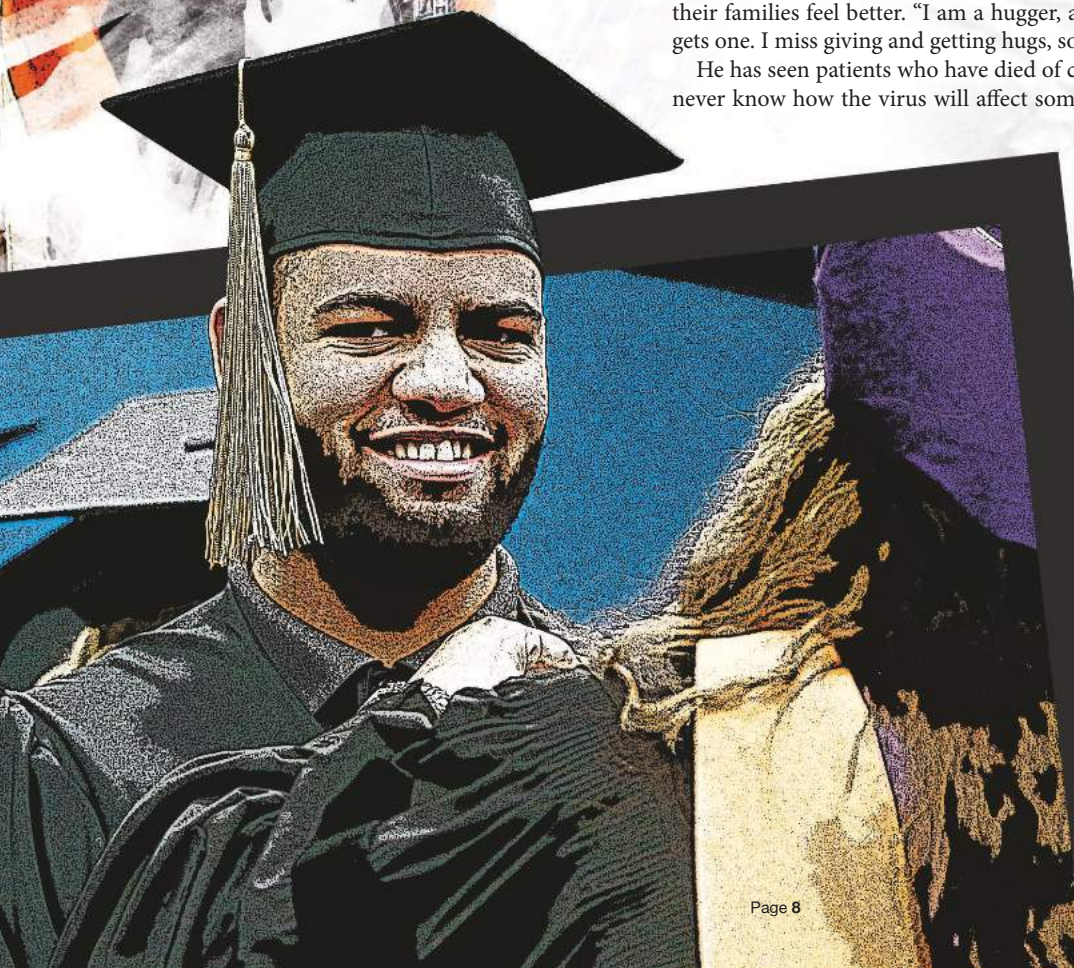
Healthcare workers doing the best they can in an unprecedented situation have a lot to endure. "It's taxing to see so much death," Shealy said. "For nurses it can be especially hard because they don't want to bring the virus home to their families, so they spend a lot of time alone. That makes it harder."

Social distancing guidelines seemed to have a positive effect on the number of new cases Shealy saw coming into his hospital.

"I think it's made a difference, but I think people will pay less attention as things reopen," he said.

"I take as much time for myself as I can," Shealy said. "Today I went for a run. I stay away from people as much as I can, but sometimes that isn't completely possible."

After completing his work in New York, Shealy plans to pursue a career as a traveling nurse. "I want to continue helping my fellow healthcare workers as well as patients as much as I can," he said.



HELPING YOU TO STAY **SAFE** AT HOME



A 2005 graduate of Southern Arkansas University is putting his education to the test for the State of Arkansas during the worldwide pandemic.

Grant Smith, Software Lead Engineer for the Department of Information Systems, is helping meet the Governor's goal of moving essential services online due to the coronavirus.

He and his Windows Support Team are working around the clock to help dozens of state agencies operate remotely.

Smith earned his business degree from SAU, an education that helped prepare him for the task of giving state workers the capabilities necessary to work from home. "It's a challenge and a change," he said. "We are used to rolling things out physically in an emergency, but this is an emergency you can't see."

The El Dorado native continued in his older brother's footsteps by choosing SAU as his college home. "Most people think of SAU as an agricultural school, but it is so much more than that. The amount of knowledge and talent coming out of SAU is phenomenal."

Smith has worked for the State of Arkansas for 15 years and responded to emergencies in the past. "This is different," he said of the pandemic.

His first responsibility, after the Governor announced the need to move services online, was deploying laptops to workers who needed them. "Most employees have desktops, and you can't just pick those up and move them," he said. "We had to get the laptops to the employees."

He and his 17-member team not only physically delivered hundreds of laptops but manage servers and answer IT questions from the Governor as well as dozens of agencies. His work impacts hundreds of employees and ensures the smooth functioning of a wide range of vital services.

"We are a 24/7 shop," he said. "I'm always on call." Smith still works mostly out of his office, which is near the Governor's. "Sometimes, it's easier for me to walk over and solve a problem," he said.

Stephen Bright, a 1992 alum of SAU, met Smith through transitioning services online. Bright, an analyst for the state Department of Transformation and Shared Services, praised Smith's work.

"Without him, this process would not be happening," Bright said. "There has never been a large scale need for employees to work remotely before. It is not an easy process. As soon as Grant and I met, we began talking and realized we were SAU graduates."

Both were greatly influenced by John and Curtice Rankin, who owned a Magnolia restaurant while Smith was a student at SAU.

"I needed a job one summer, and they helped me by hiring me and giving me as many hours as I could handle," Smith said. "Curt let me work on his PC in my free time. That computer was my learning and testing device. The Rankins were instrumental in my education, and I want to thank them."

SAU provided the "ground floor" of instruction necessary for Smith to perform his job today. "Technology is now faster and more automated," he said. "It's wireless, and has

changed a lot since I was in college, but there is always a command line for understanding how (technology) is built and how it functions. SAU teaches you from the ground up. You'll always take that with you. If there's a problem, you can go under the hood and solve it."

Smith thinks remote work will continue indefinitely and that more services will transition online. "We have to increase our ability to deploy on a mass scale. We were able to roll out within a week, but we may need to expedite that in the future. How do we do that? We can support a thousand people today, but will we need to support 2,000 tomorrow? These are questions we're already asking. What is the new normal?"

For the foreseeable future, this Mulerider's knowledge and skills will be tested as he continues the vital work of supporting essential state functions.



Ed.D. in Rural & Diverse Educational Leadership

Southern Arkansas University™

Southern Arkansas University is now approved to begin offering its first doctoral-level degree according to a recent decision by its regional accreditor, the Higher Learning Commission. SAU's first cohort of doctoral students will be admitted in Fall 2021 to pursue the title of Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) in Rural and Diverse Educational Leadership. The program will be offered fully online and requirements can be completed in as little as three and a half years.

Establishing SAU's first doctoral program was a key vision set forth during Dr. Trey Berry's first year as SAU President. Reacting to final approval of the degree program, Dr. Berry remarked:

"This news marks such an important point in SAU history! To be the first university south of Little Rock to offer a doctorate through a College of Education is a responsibility we take very seriously. Over the past few years, our students have benefitted from the University establishing academic programs that are unique to south Arkansas. The creation of the Ed.D. is yet another example and natural progression of the expanding academic mission of SAU. We are excited to be providing the opportunity for an advanced, terminal degree to equip our educational and community leaders for the future."

The launch of the Ed.D. in Rural and Diverse Educational Leadership comes at a critical time for Arkansas and for rural America. Educators and community leaders who serve rural and diverse communities face sharply changing demographics, reduced populations, and economic upheaval as industries relocate and rural manufacturing continues to decline.

These challenges affect schools and students at every educational level from preschool to graduate school, as well as the community organizations that serve them. The newly approved SAU Ed.D. program provides advanced training in research and practice for professionals holding or seeking leadership positions in rural schools, colleges and universities, and community and government agencies.

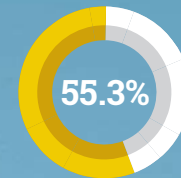
A survey of local and statewide educational leaders, conducted in 2017, affirmed strong regional demand for this program. Stakeholders, including building- and district-level K-12 administrators, college and university faculty and staff, and area non-profit and public agency personnel indicated strong support for a program that would develop regional educational leaders. The survey results gave SAU a sense of urgency to formally develop the Ed.D. program and to deliver it entirely online.

After receiving approval from the Arkansas Division (then-Department) of Higher Education, SAU applied for regional approval of the change in the University's role and scope to the Higher Learning Commission, the Chicago-based agency that accredits degree-granting post-secondary educational institutions in a number of states, including Arkansas. The process, which began in Fall 2016, concluded with the May 8, 2020, affirmative decision by the Commission.

Dr. David Lanoue, SAU's Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, said that the University "is eager to begin the process of developing the next generation of educational leaders in south Arkansas. Under the

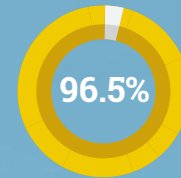
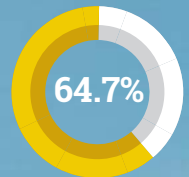
leadership of Dean Kim Bloss of the College of Education and her outstanding faculty and staff colleagues, this program will have a transformative effect on our students, our region, and rural educators across the nation."

Additional program information will be available beginning September 1, 2020.



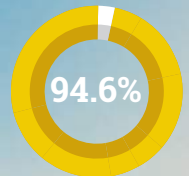
More than half (55.3%) of the open positions immediately available within their district, school, or agency required applicants to have skills acquired through doctoral training.

Over two-thirds (64.7%) of such positions will be open for hire in the coming years.



Strong (96.5%) preference in hiring for leadership positions in their organization would be given to applicants holding the doctoral degree.

Overwhelmingly wanted (94.6%) the program to be offered entirely online.



For the latest information, visit www.SAUmag.edu/EdD



The Alexander-Warnock and Ozmer Historic Farmstead and Learning Center *Dedication*



Photos by **Matthew Wilkins**

Members of the Alexander, Warnock and Ozmer families, Arkansas Natural and Cultural Resources Council representatives, and guests gather for the ribbon cutting of the Alexander-Warnock and Ozmer Historic Farmstead and Learning Center.

“This is our history brought to life and made accessible to us today.”

- Ms. Stacy Hurst

Cabinet Secretary, Arkansas Department of Parks, Heritage and Tourism

By Dan Marsh

“Welcome home.” This was Dr. Trey Berry’s message at the dedication of the Alexander-Warnock and Ozmer Historic Farmstead and Learning Center on March 6, 2020. Hailing the completion of the four-year project as a great state and community effort, Berry proclaimed the day as a historic one for SAU.

“Today is about family,” Berry said. “Today is about home and preserving our heritage.”

Under sunny skies, he welcomed members of the Alexander, Warnock and Ozmer families, as well as state officials, members of the SAU campus, alumni and friends to the ceremony on the Farmstead grounds.

Warmly noting that hundreds of people were to thank for their participation in and support of the project, Berry began by acknowledging W. Derrell Rogers of Magnolia, who donated the Ozmer House to SAU in 1986 for its

preservation. “In some ways, this project has been going on for 34 years,” Berry said. He also thanked David and Diana Hall, direct descendants of the Ozmer family, who invested in their ancestral home by funding moving expenses to place the home in its new location at the heart of the campus.

Magnolia resident Molly Harsh Burns spoke on behalf of the Alexander and Warnock families. Mrs. Burns expressed shared appreciation from the families toward the University for their efforts to save and preserve their ancestral home. She regaled the large audience with stories about the homes, noting to laughter that “the two houses are kin by marriage.”

The Arkansas Department of Parks, Heritage and Tourism cabinet secretary, Ms. Stacy Hurst, and the Arkansas Natural and Cultural Resources Council (ANCRC) program manager, Ms. Debra Fithen, attended the Farmstead dedication. Through grants the ANCRC has

provided significant resources to transform the SAU campus over the past nine years, including the Farmstead. Ms. Hurst spoke on behalf of ANCRC, acknowledging the importance of protecting historic resources in the state. “These historic structures are not only beautiful but instruct on life in rural Arkansas,” Hurst said. “This is our history brought to life and made accessible to us today.”

The Farmstead consists of the Alexander-Warnock House, c. 1853-55, and the Ozmer House, c. 1883, bathrooms disguised as a detached kitchen, and a barn for Molly Ann, the University’s mule. As part of the dedication, guests toured both newly-renovated historic homes and visited with Abbie Guin, the SAU Mulerider mascot.

The event concluded with family members, University leaders, and state officials gathering at the corner of the Farmstead lawn to plant a ceremonial holly tree.



Alexander family members take part in the planting of a ceremonial holly tree as a part of the dedication.



Ms. Stacy Hurst, Arkansas Department of Parks, Heritage and Tourism Cabinet Secretary enjoys the dedication program.



Laura Heath Brashear '84 and Carolyn Heath Steely '80, members of the Ozmer family, stand in front of their family's home.



Photo by **Matthew Wilkins**

University Housing staff and Health Services staff stood on the front lines as they greeted and screened all SAU students returning to University Housing facilities on campus after their return from spring break.



Photo by **Kelvin Tee**

Students celebrated Chinese New Year at the Global Center on SAU's Campus.



Photo by **Matthew Wilkins**

With COVID-19, the Student Activities Board had to get creative to keep students engaged and connected to campus while they were at home. Activities included a week long TikTok Challenge, Scavenger Hunt and Virtual Trivia
Above: Lydia Lindsey '03, Assistant Director of Student Activities, hosted the Virtual Trivia Night where students connected via Zoom.

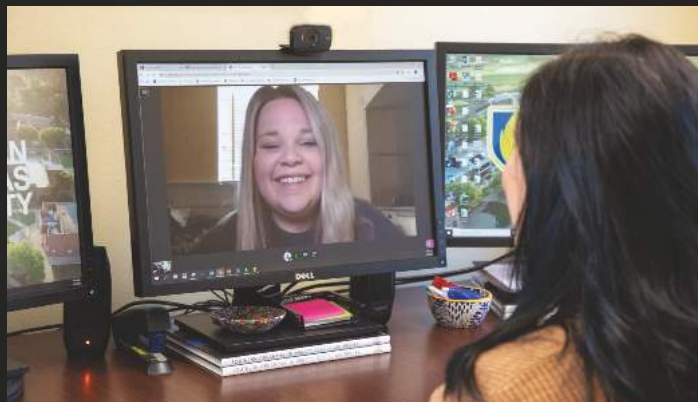


Photo by **Matthew Wilkins**

Academic Advisors are always meeting the needs of our students, but this semester looked a little different. For the first time in history, students registered for their classes via video conferencing. Pictured above: SAU Academic Advisor, Margarita Norment, helps current Mulerider, Lindsey O'Neal make her class schedule for the fall semester.

Photo by **Katie Graham**

(Left) Carson Beeching of Sherwood, Arkansas, was crowned Miss Southern Arkansas University on February 29, 2020.

around campus





Photo by **Matthew Wilkins**

Kimberlee Smith from Sheridan, Arkansas, and other musicians, showcase their talents during the SAU Concert Band and Wind Ensemble Performances.



Photo by **Matthew Wilkins**

Landen Frinrup accounting major from St. Louis, Missouri, volunteered as a BlackJack Dealer at the Student Activities Board annual Casino Night. This student favorite is a night where students come together to play casino games and win prizes.

Photo by **Matthew Wilkins**

(Below) The SAU theatre department performs "Wiley and the Hairy Man," featuring life-sized puppets specially built for SAU's production by the Arkansas Center for the Arts in Little Rock.



Photo by **Matthew Wilkins**

Students participate in the Greek Games on the campus mall in early March.



Photo by **Matthew Wilkins**

Agriculture students, Amelia Orvis from Beebe, Arkansas, and Katelyn Crowder from Cabot, Arkansas, take a break from their studies and enjoy a loop around the SAU Farm Road on the MuleRide Bicycles.



Photo by **Matthew Wilkins**

Mulerider Volleyball players, Fabi Rivera from Dorado, Puerto Rico and Morgan Gross from Bandera, Texas, gather in the Reynolds Center on the first day of class for the Spring 2020 Semester.





College of Education



Olivia Faught

- Olivia Faught, a senior Sport Management: Sports Information emphasis major from Alma, Arkansas, will experience the HKR Department's first virtual internship this summer. Olivia was named a member of the national Student Athlete Advisory Committee with the NCAA. In late fall, The Great American Conference accepted an internship proposal from Olivia and HKR Chair Steven D. Dingman, and Olivia began making plans to move to Russellville for the summer portion of the internship. Due to concerns with COVID-19, summer internships were put on hold. Instead of cancelling the internship, Olivia will be assisting the Great American Conference Office with items such as attending and taking notes for weekly GAC Compliance Administrators' virtual calls.



Christy Canfield

- The SPED K-12 M.Ed program at SAU has candidates from all over the United States. These teachers are striving to increase student success at the schools they work in. Christy Canfield, Spring 2020 graduate, who teaches at Emerson High School is a perfect example. Christy is working to not only assist students with disabilities but those who are deemed at-risk and need interventions. She has created a reading

intervention program at Emerson High School to help those students who are two or more grade levels behind in their reading. Christy has spent much of this year planning and preparing, with implementation of the intervention program set for the fall. Mrs. Canfield is just one example of how candidates from the SPED K-12 M.Ed program are making a difference in their schools and the lives of their students.

College of Liberal and Performing Arts



Spencer Stanton, Studio Art Major

- In lieu of an in-person exhibit displaying their work, 18 outstanding students majoring in Studio Art; Game, Animation and Simulation; and Communication Design chose to present their senior capstone exhibit online. Each student's page features their biography, as well as highlights from their visual work and their final presentations to the faculty that were conducted via Zoom. The work of these talented artists, designers, and game creators can be viewed by visiting: <https://2020vision.mulerider.net>.
- Two Muleriders recently achieved distinctions in Sigma Tau Delta, the international English Honor Society. From these two, Kayla Ashbrooks, a senior from Murfreesboro who is double majoring in English Education and Musical Theatre, was appointed Junior Student Advisor, one of two voting student positions on the organization's board. Kayla was invited to present her scholarship at the 2020 Convention in Las Vegas and has been a member of the local Epsilon Theta chapter since 2017. Dr. Shannin Schroeder, a professor in the Department of Modern Languages and advisor of the chapter, was elected Vice-President/President-Elect. Up to this election, Dr. Schroeder served as

Secretary/Treasurer of the organization for fourteen years; she also chaired three national conventions.



Kyle West

- Students interned in four states during the Spring 2020 semester in the Field Practicum course taught by Whitney Gass, assistant professor of criminal justice. They interned in Florida, Texas and Louisiana. Ten other student interns were dispersed throughout various agencies in Arkansas. All are senior Criminal Justice majors at SAU. This was the first time that students in the program interned in four different states.

College of Science and Engineering



Dr. Abdel Bachri, Dr. Md Islam, and Dr. Lionel Hewavitharana, recipients of the ARDOT grant. Dr. Islam serves as the principal investigator.

- The Engineering program was awarded a \$291,000 research grant from the Arkansas Department of Transportation (ARDOT) to study improved methods for manufacturing the asphalt used on the state's roads and highways. Faculty members will analyze the use of a wood ash-based polymer as an alternative filler for producing hot mix asphalt. ARDOT's Transportation Research Grant Program

supports the study of materials to establish facts and reach new conclusions in logistics, processes and methods to ensure cost-effectiveness. It also furthers economic development in all forms of transportation.



First Financial Bank Poultry Education Facility

- Phase 1 of the First Financial Bank Poultry Education Facility is complete. The curriculum will improve instruction in poultry in south Arkansas and create more job candidates for the field. The new complex, which consists of three phases, will allow students to observe and interact with different aspects of poultry production – from breeder to hatchery, from broiler to processing. It will contain a feed storage room and a classroom/laboratory.



From left, Brad Kelton, Christa Marsh and Rachel Holt represented the SAU Biology Department at KATV in Little Rock.

- The SAU Biology Department was featured in a segment on the KATV Ch. 7 program "Good Afternoon, Arkansas." Assistant Professor of Biology Christa Marsh, biology major Brad Kelton, and public health major Rachel Holt appeared in a segment promoting the biology

program. Also highlighted in the episode, which aired in February, was the Mulerider pep band, directed by J.P. Wilson, and members of the SAU Theatre Department, who brought along life-sized puppets built for "Wiley and the Hairy Man."

Rankin College of Business



- Following an outstanding peer review, the Rankin College of Business received a five-year extension of its AACSB accreditation, the top business accreditation in the world. The visiting team commended the Rankin College of Business for the many opportunities provided to students, highlighting specifically the low-cost local, regional, and international travel opportunities described as "amazing and horizon-opening opportunities and certainly a best practice."
- Through a gift from Don McDonald '89 and The Don McDonald Group at Merrill, the college joined a collaboration with the Barron's in Education Program from Dow Jones. Students and faculty receive 24/7 access to Barron's digital content and experiential learning elements. Faculty use it to integrate additional current events and enhance financial proficiency into the existing curriculum.
- The Rankin College of Business 71st Award Ceremony was combined with the Spring Induction Ceremony and held in a virtual setting using Zoom videoconferencing. Recognized at the event were Outstanding Undergraduate Student Micah Larey and Outstanding Graduate Student Emily Gill. Additional student awards included Outstanding Students from each major, Amanda Easley – Accounting, Petra Sonnen – Management, Oliva McClure – Marketing, and Morgan Jolly – Supply Chain Management.

Faculty excellence awards were presented to Ms. Sheila Pearson – Teaching, Dr. Shane Warrick – Research, and Dr. Gerald Plumlee – Service.

PBL students were recognized for placing in their state virtual conference and moving on to the national virtual competition to be held this summer.



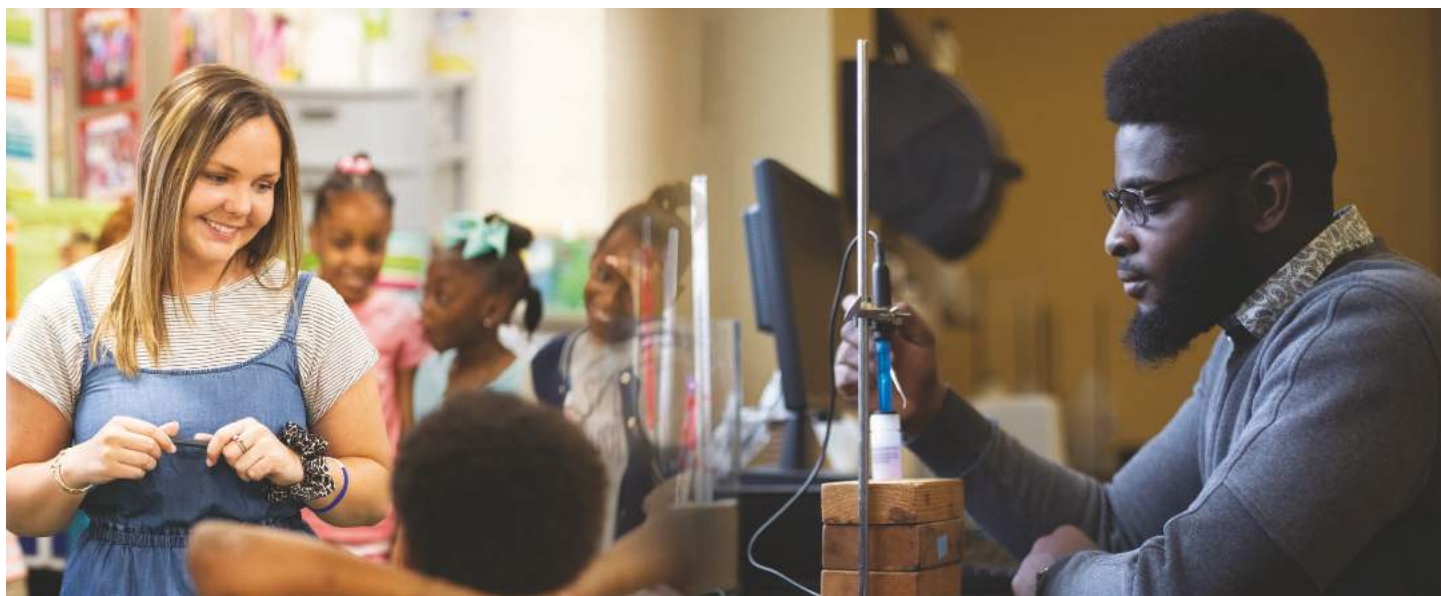
State Sen. Bruce Maloch addresses a class during the annual Executive Network Conference.

- Alumni from a variety of professions participated in the annual Executive Network Conference. Executive-level professionals shared about their path to success in talks that inspired and encouraged students. The event held over two days included speakers from Magnolia to Malaysia with a record attendance of 841 students over the 20 sessions.



Dr. Jennifer Logan

- Dr. Jennifer Logan, Puterbaugh Professor, was featured on the Farmers Bank & Trust Right at the Heart podcast discussing the economic impacts of COVID-19 on Arkansas and Columbia County.



Forbes'

JOURNEY

By Jacob Pumphrey

SAU Director of Athletic Communications

In a 2009 article for GoDuke.com, longtime Durham, North Carolina, sportswriter Al Featherston remarked that "Tobacco Road is not so much a geographical location as it is a basketball oasis – the one place in the South where the hardwood sport reigns supreme."

For former Mulerider Baseball pitcher and SAU Sports Information Director Steve Forbes '88, the latest stop in a 30-year basketball coaching journey has sent the 1988 Southern Arkansas University graduate to that aforementioned basketball oasis. On April 30, Forbes was named the 23rd head coach of the Wake Forest Men's Basketball program.

Before being appointed to lead the Demon Deacons, Forbes spent five seasons as head coach at East Tennessee State where he led the Buccaneers to 130 wins and two Southern Conference championships. In his final season, ETSU was a program-best 30-4 before the cancellation of the NCAA Tournament due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Forbes earned the 2019-20 Hugh Durham Award which recognizes the most outstanding mid-major coach in the country.

Prior to his time at ETSU, Forbes served as an assistant coach at Wichita State (2013-15), Tennessee (2006-11), Texas A&M (2004-06), Illinois State (2003-04), Louisiana Tech (2000-03) and Idaho (1998-2000) in addition to two years as the head coach at Northwest Florida State (2011-13). He led the Raiders to a combined 62-6 record and back-to-back NJCAA Division I National Runner-Up finishes.

As a Division I assistant coach, Forbes was an instrumental factor in the successes of each program that he spent time with. Most recently with Wichita State, the Shockers combined to win 65 games over his two seasons with a pair of NCAA Tournament appearances. In 2014-15, Wichita State advanced to the Sweet 16 after knocking off college basketball blue bloods Indiana and Kansas in the first two rounds.

Forbes' coaching career began with two stints at the junior college level; first with a four year stay at Southwestern CC (1989-90 to 1992-93) and then at Barton County CC (1993-94 to 1995-98). He served as both an assistant coach and head coach at each school before jumping to his first Division I job as an Idaho assistant coach in 1998.

Before a coaching career that has spanned nearly a third of a century, resulting in 260 wins as a head coach and many more as a key assistant, while including stops at 11 different schools in nine states, Forbes and his 1987 Mulerider Baseball teammates made history. That year, the Muleriders finished 46-7 overall (25-1 AIC) and won an AIC Championship, an NAIA District 17 Championship and placed third at the NAIA World Series. In 2017, the 1987 Mulerider Baseball team became the first team ever to be inducted into the SAU Sports Hall of Fame.

Right: Wake Forest named Steven Forbes '88, the 23rd head basketball coach in Wake Forest history.



GAC All-Decade Teams

Jacob Pumphrey

Director of Athletic Communications

In January, the Great American Conference looked back at the league's first nine years, which began in 2011-12 with nine charter universities, and announced the all-decade teams for 13 sponsored sports. With a voting electorate consisting of league coaches, sports information directors, athletics directors, senior woman administrators and media members, seventeen former SAU student-athletes and two current Muleriders in seven sports were honored as the GAC's best since the league's inception nearly a decade ago.

Mulerider Football placed a department-high six players on the GAC's All-Decade Football Team as former offensive standouts in quarterback Barrett Renner (2014-18), tight end Tanner Hudson (2014-17) and running back Mark Johnson (2011-13) were all honored in addition to former defensive stalwarts in defensive end Davondrick Lison (2015-18) and defensive back Elgin Moore (2014-17) and current SAU player Antonio Washington (2017-current). In all, the six selections combined for 19 All-GAC nods, with 11 first-team plaudits, 13 GAC Player of the week honors, 20 all-region selections and 11 All-America honors. Renner (2015 GAC Freshman of the Year) and Lison (2017 GAC Defensive Player of the Year) each earned GAC superlative honors in their careers.

Southern Arkansas Cross Country was represented by two male runners and two female runners. Mickey Hammer (2011-12), Lane Alexander (2015-18), Carli Langley (2011-14) and Virginia Ney (2012-15) were named to the league's Cross Country All-Decade Teams. The foursome collectively garnered 13 All-GAC honors, including eight first-team plaudits, and 14 runner of the week awards. Hammer (2012 GAC Men's Runner of the Year) and Langley (2014 GAC Women's Runner of the Year) received the league's top honor for their respective sports.

The lone hardwood honoree for Southern Arkansas was former Mulerider hooper CJ Elkins (2014-19) who finished an outstanding career in Magnolia as the only basketball player in league history to receive All-GAC accolades four times. He finished seventh on the program's all-time scoring list with 1,499 points to cap a career that began with him earning GAC Freshman of the Year honors in 2015-16.

On the links, former Mulerider golfer Helle Leed, one of the program's most decorated, was named to the GAC Women's Golf All-Decade Team. Leed was a three-time All-GAC performer with a first-team honor in her final collegiate season of 2018. That year, Leed

became the first individual golfer in program history to qualify for the NCAA Division II Women's National Championship.

Representing SAU Softball on the GAC All-Decade Team were a trio of All-Americans in designated player Maddie Dow (2014-17), outfielder Brooke Goad (2014-18) and current starting pitcher Victoria Taylor (2017-current). Dow (2017 GAC Player of the Year/2016-17 GAC Female Athlete of the Year), Goad (2018 GAC Player of the Year/2017-18 GAC Female Athlete of the Year), and Taylor (2018 GAC Pitcher of the Year) all earned superlative honors from the league during their notable careers and each owns a laundry list of career accolades.

There was no questioning the overall dominance of the program over the past decade as the GAC named Southern Arkansas the league's Program of the Decade. A pair of head coaches in Corey Lyon (2012-2014) and Jason Anderson (2015-current) combined for 321 wins and since 2014, the Muleriders have claimed two GAC Regular Season Titles, a pair of GAC Tournament Titles, two NCAA Central Regional Championships in five regional appearances and have made a pair of trips to the NCAA Division II World Series. As a league member, the Mulerider Softball program owns a .659 winning percentage overall and a .674 winning percentage against GAC opponents.

For Mulerider Baseball, four former student-athletes were recognized on the GAC Baseball All-Decade Team and after a dominating first nine-years as a member of the league, Southern Arkansas was tabbed as the GAC Program of the Decade as a result of an overall winning percentage of .670 and multiple league titles since 2012.

Infielders David Harris (2013) and Jacob Richardson (2017-18), outfielder Trevor Rucker (2014-17) and starting pitcher Kenneth Tabor (2015-18) combined for ten All-GAC honors, 11 all-region accolades and six All-America selections. Harris (2013 GAC Player of the Year), Richardson (2018 GAC Player of the Year), and Rucker (2014 GAC Freshman of the Year/2017 GAC Player of the Year/2016-17 GAC Male Athlete of the Year) all received the league's top athletic baseball honor following their senior seasons.

Since 2012, the Mulerider Baseball program, under the direction of head coaches Steve Browning (2011-2016) and Justin Pettigrew (2017-current), has recorded 297 wins which includes four GAC Regular Season Titles, five GAC Tournament Titles, and six NCAA Regional Tournament appearances. In GAC play, the Muleriders have won 168 games and own a winning percentage of .683.

For more in-depth facts and figures on each of the nineteen Muleriders and two programs honored, visit www.MuleriderAthletics.com.



GAC All-Decade Mulerider Student-Athletes

- **Mickey Hammer '13** was recently named to the GAC's All-Decade Cross Country Team.
- **David Harris '13** was recently named to the GAC's All-Decade Baseball Team.
- **Mark Johnson '14** was recently named to GAC's All-Decade Football Team.
- **Carli Langley '15** was recently named to the GAC's All-Decade Cross Country Team.
- **Virginia Ney Wallace '16** was recently named to the GAC's All-Decade Cross Country Team.
- **Maddie Dow '17** was recently named to the GAC's All-Decade Softball Team.
- **Tanner Hudson '17** was recently named to GAC's All-Decade Football Team.
- **Elgin Moore '17 '19** was recently named to GAC's All-Decade Football Team.
- **Trevor Rucker '17** was recently named to the GAC's All-Decade Baseball Team.
- **Brooke Goad '18** was recently named to the GAC's All-Decade Softball Team.
- **Helle Leed '18** was recently named to the GAC's All-Decade Golf Team.
- **Davondrick Lison '18** was recently named to GAC's All-Decade Football Team.
- **Barrett Renner '18** was recently named to GAC's All-Decade Football Team.
- **Jacob Richardson '18** was recently named to the GAC's All-Decade Baseball Team.
- **Kenneth Tabor '18** was recently named to the GAC's All-Decade Baseball Team.
- **Victoria Taylor '18** was recently named to the GAC's All-Decade Softball Team.
- **Lane Alexander '19** was recently named to the GAC's All-Decade Cross Country Team.
- **CJ Elkins '19** was recently named to the GAC's All-Decade Basketball Team.

Why I Give - Joey Baker

A desire to generously give back to his community in a significant way inspired Joey Baker '77 to endow the Emerson, Arkansas Scholarship for students from his home town who choose to make Southern Arkansas University their college home.

"Emerson School and SAU helped shape who I am today," Baker said. "I want to give back to them both in a meaningful way."

Baker, who graduated from Emerson High School in 1973, still identifies with those students today. "I see them in the same way that I was in 1973. Money was such a big issue. I want to be able to help out."

Scholarships will be awarded to Emerson graduates based on academic achievement and financial need, as determined by SAU's Scholarship Committee. There is no essay requirement.

Baker chose Southern State College for its proximity to his home as well as affordability. (The college changed its name to SAU in his senior year.) He majored in marketing and obtained his BBA in 1977 – a memorable year in his life.

That year, Baker served as president of the student body at SAU. It was also the year the bell tower was constructed on campus and that Dr. Harold Brinson was welcomed as president. A family tragedy, however, showed Baker firsthand the commitment to caring for students that SAU has always demonstrated.

"The students, faculty and administration were unbelievable in their support for me and my family," Baker said. "It is examples like this that set SAU apart from other institutions."

He can attest to the true "family feel" of SAU and observes that this "culture of caring" continues today. "They really do care," Baker said of faculty and administration.

Richard Samuel, a marketing professor at SAU, mentored Baker. "He was instrumental in me getting my foot in the door for the education field," Baker said. "One day, Mr. Samuel asked me if I would be interested in teaching marketing at El Dorado High School. At the time, I was a college graduate working in the oil field construction business. It was

during the recession of the late 1970s, and I took whatever work I could find. I jumped at the chance to teach."

However, Baker lacked the education credit hours to go with his business degree. "Mr. Samuel said, 'no problem, I will work with our Education Department to get you the hours you need while you are teaching.'" For the next couple of years, Samuel helped Baker obtain the necessary credits to become a certified teacher. "I applaud SAU for thinking outside the educational box," Baker said.

Teaching at El Dorado introduced Baker to the education field, but he soon moved on to politics. "I left teaching to work for Arkansas Secretary of State Paul Riviere when he ran for Congress in the 2nd Congressional District," Baker said. "Another person that I happened to meet on that campaign was Dr. Trey Berry."

After politics, Baker went to work for the Pharmacists Mutual Company providing insurance and financial services for Arkansas pharmacists for 28 years. He has been teaching as an adjunct professor at UAMS College of Pharmacy for 21 years. "I teach a personal finance course for third-year pharmacy students."

He also teaches personal finance at Harding University's College of Pharmacy. Utilizing his teaching and life experiences, Baker has written a book to be published later this year, *Baker's Dirty Dozen Principles for Financial Independence*. He believes that giving back will make one healthy in heart, body and soul.

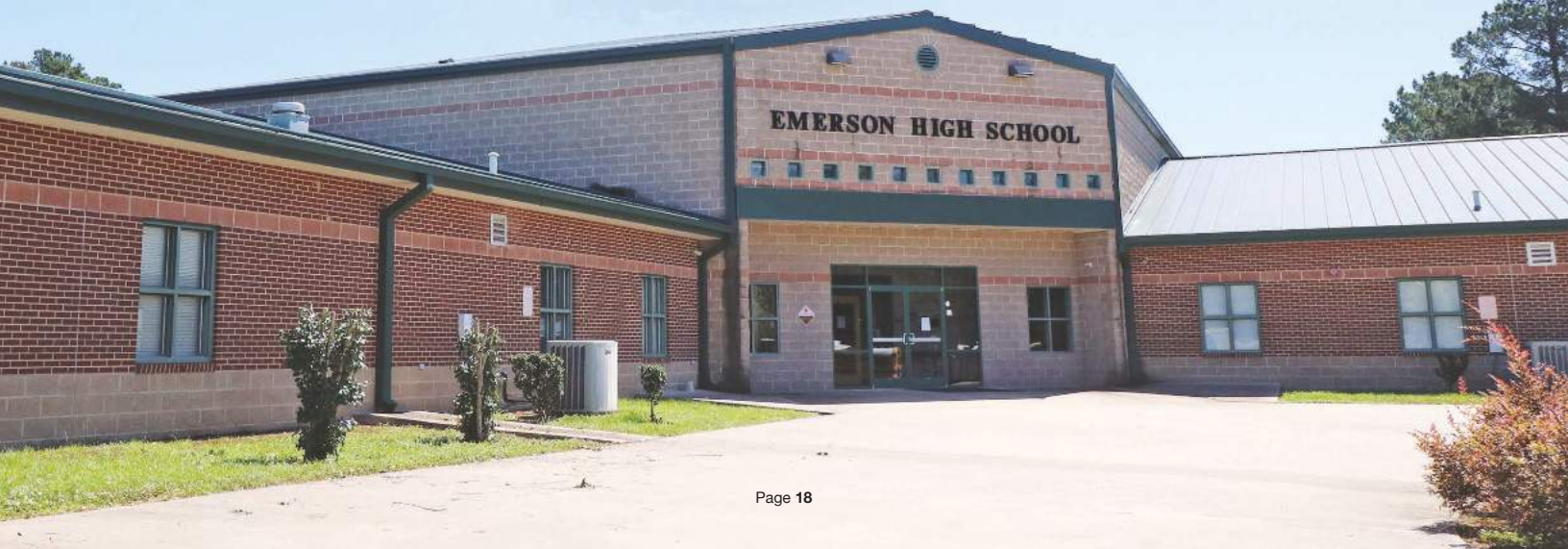
He and his wife, Brenda, who retired as a math teacher from Benton Public Schools, have two daughters, Lindsey and Brooke. Lindsey holds an undergraduate degree from Ouachita Baptist University and a MAT from SAU. She teaches middle school social studies at Pulaski Academy in Little Rock. Brooke also has an undergraduate degree from OBU and a master's degree from Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee. She is a social studies teacher at Kent Place School in Madison, NJ, and has been accepted into the doctoral program at UCLA to study Near Eastern Languages and Cultures.

Baker received his MBA from the University of Central Arkansas.



Joey Baker '77

For information on establishing a scholarship endowment please visit saufoundation.org or call (870) 235-4078.



Dr. Neelie Dobbins selected as first College of Education Endowed Professor

Through the generosity of many alumni and friends the College of Education now has its first endowed professorship. Dr. Trey Berry, President of SAU, announced that Dr. Neelie Dobbins, Associate Professor of Teacher Education, was selected to hold the title.

"The effort to secure this endowed professorship was unlike any other in SAU history," said Dr. Berry. "It was truly a grassroots effort involving the hard work of a committee of College of Education alumni and the gifts of dozens of people who made this possible."

"Dr. Dobbins' dedication to the profession of teaching, her commitment to students, and her service to the College make her the perfect candidate for this honor," said Dr. Kim Bloss, Dean of the College.

Dobbins has been teaching at SAU since 2010 and has an exemplary record of teaching, service, and research. She has chaired the Department of Teacher Education since 2015 and served as the department's Accreditation Coordinator since 2017. She is a dedicated teacher and advisor to more than 100 students. Her research record includes numerous journal publications and presentations at local, state, regional, and national conferences. Dr. Dobbins is passionate about teacher education and continues SAU's legacy of preparing the best educators in the state.

"I am beyond honored and grateful for the opportunities I have been provided by SAU to learn and grow," she said. "This is another way for the Teacher Education Department and me to develop as educators to ensure we have the best pedagogical practices and technology available."

Special thanks to Steve and Deborah Nipper as well as the Professorship Steering Committee who led the effort in funding this endowment.



You give.
You receive.

There's a way for you to support Southern Arkansas University and feel confident that you have dependable income in your retirement years. You can do this through a charitable gift annuity. A charitable gift annuity is a contract with the SAU Foundation in which you agree to make an irrevocable donation with cash or appreciated securities. In return, we agree to make fixed payments to you for life. Resources that remain after your lifetime can be directed to benefit any area of the University.

To learn about the advantages of a charitable gift annuity, visit
www.saufoundation.planmygift.org
or call (870) 235-4078.



Stronger Together

Alumni, students, faculty, and staff sport their SAU gear in celebration of Southern Arkansas University.

By Caleigh Moyer

In times of social distancing, members of the Mulerider Family that are scattered across the country found a way to come together as one. SAU alumni and friends, students, faculty, and staff, wherever they were, traded their casual quarantine apparel for SAU Blue and Gold for #MuleriderStrong Day on Tuesday, April 14. The event encouraged members of our campus community to post photos of themselves across their social media channels using the hashtag #MuleriderStrong, along with messages of support and connection for the SAU community.

The University hosted the sixth annual Giving Day on Tuesday, June 30, and received a generous contribution of 215 gifts totaling over \$220,000. On this annual day members of the SAU community came together to support various areas of SAU. In 2019, 150 donors contributed and raised over \$65,000.

“Story after story and photo after photo, something that we already knew became even more apparent: the reason we are #MuleriderStrong is because of our people. Seeing the SAU family rally on that day was truly inspiring,” said Wilson Impson, Assistant Director for Development.

This daylong online pep rally celebrating all things Southern Arkansas University brought light to many memories, connected long lost classmates and provided a time to reflect on many life-changing moments experienced as Muleriders. The posts helped spread gratitude, pride and happiness—all amid a time when people were experiencing loss, stress, and longing.

The success of #MuleriderStrong Day and Giving Day is a great reminder that our community is Stronger Together! To members of the Mulerider family that continue to display their love and support for SAU, from a safe social distance, we want to say thank you!



Search



#MuleriderStrong

Allysia Marie posted a photo



Today, tomorrow, and forever, I will support you like you have supported me.

Haining Wang posted a photo



#MuleriderStrong

Kendall Grace Hays posted a photo



Definitely #MuleriderStrong w/ Ol Molly Mule at home. Missing Magnolia but I can't wait to go back in the fall.

Juanita Harris '10 posted a photo



Home is where the ❤️💛 is.
#MuleriderStrong

Tommy Jackson '77 posted a photo



SAU proud. We are ready to get those sports back on. Go Riders!!
#MuleriderStrong

Mickey Moss '86 posted a photo



Adversity provides great opportunities to shine the light that's within us. Now is the time to be that light. Let it pierce the dark shadow which has been cast upon us. Remember, light shines brighter and farther in the darkness! #MuleriderStrong

Will Vance '88 posted a photo



It's the People that Make the Memories of the Lessons they Teach You at a Place You will Never Forget. Ever.
#MuleriderStrong

Madison Jones posted a photo



I have no doubts that SAU is where God led me! Here is to being #MuleriderStrong in the midst of our changing world! Thank you SAU for everything you do! ❤️

Krystal Hinton '10 posted a photo



SAU and the people I met there have had some of the most influence on who I am today. I could not be more grateful for the years I spent there. The experiences I had helped to solidify my purpose when I was desperately trying to find it. I found so much more than my purpose. I found a family. I found a home. I found the love of my life. #MuleriderStrong

Chelsa Carr posted a photo



Quarantined & working from home but I'm still #MuleriderStrong
Hang in there Rider family!
❤️💛 #ProudAlumni




Reporting for **DUTY**



Story by:
Dan Marsh
SAU Communications Assistant

Photos courtesy of:
Molly Garg Photography
www.mollygargphotography.com



Ray Burns sets out on another **MISSION**

Love of country and a desire to help his fellow Americans battle a new enemy, coronavirus, led Ray Burns, a World War II veteran, Columbia County native and former student at Magnolia A&M, to walk to raise money for virus relief. Born on Aug. 5, 1920, Burns walked 100km – or about 62 miles – in celebration of his upcoming 100th birthday to raise money for healthcare workers battling the COVID-19 pandemic. He finished his challenge six weeks ahead of schedule joined with family and friends by his side for his last mile. His fundraiser is still active. Anyone wishing to help Burns may visit his website PapaRayWalks100 that links to his GoFundMe campaigns.

“Every morning at 9:00 a.m., there is at least one or more of my neighbors waiting at my steps,” Burns said. “I never realized how valuable it would be for me to really get to know all of my neighbors and friends. I tried to cover about 2 kilometers a day. I had a mission in the morning and in the afternoon. My son is a walker/runner, and he measured out several routes that cover 1 to 1.5 kilometers, so I could pick the one I wanted.”

He was inspired by British WWII veteran Tom Moore, who raised millions by starting a program of walking in his garden. Burns set a goal of raising \$15,000; to date, he has raised more than \$14,800 towards his goal. “We have to work together to save our country,” Burns said. “I would like to complete this mission.”

Born and raised in Walkerville, a small farming community between Taylor and Emerson, Burns still feels affection for Columbia County. He attended SAU in 1940 when it was known as Magnolia A&M. In 2009, he established a nursing endowment in memory of his late wife, Emogene Winn Burns, also from Walkerville, and late daughter, Suzanne Harvey, who was a

nurse. That year, he attended the Great Southern Arkansas Mule Ride, which allowed mule or wagon rides to celebrate SAU’s Centennial. “I graduated high school in 1940 and enrolled in Magnolia A&M,” he said. “My plans were to become a Soil Conservation Engineer as my oldest brother had done. I joined the Arkansas National Guard, Company B, 153rd Infantry Regiment, not with the intention of making a career, but to serve my country and help finance my college education.”

By mid-1940, the German Army was preparing to invade Britain. “It was very obvious the U.S. would be compelled to defend Britain, though most Americans were opposed to entering the war,” Burns explained. “President Roosevelt called National Guard units to active duty for one year, and the 153rd Infantry Regiment was selected. We were mobilized in December 1940.” The regiment completed combat training in Tennessee, then boarded a troop train for Seattle, Washington. “About August or September, the U.S.S. Grant pulled in, and we headed west on the troop ship. Rumor was we were going to the Philippines, but after six days, we wound up in a fishing village in Alaska. We performed Guard duty there for the construction of an air base.”

Burns was in Alaska when Pearl Harbor was attacked by the Japanese on Dec. 7, 1941. “Our mission changed significantly from construction to defending what we had,” he said. “We were trying to defend the place with Company B from Magnolia. The biggest weapon we had was a .30-caliber machine-gun.” The mission was completed in 1944. “We headed back home. After arriving at Camp Shelby, Mississippi, we were given a 15-day leave and informed we would receive six weeks of refresher training before being sent to Europe as replacements –

this was the time of the D-Day invasion.”

Three weeks into training, orders changed, and the regiment was deactivated, its personnel sent to training centers in Florida, Texas and Arkansas. “I was sent to Fort Hood and remained there until the war ended in Europe. I volunteered for paratroop training but was denied due to the critical mission we were performing. The U.S. had about 15 million men and women in service and began releasing some on a point system.” Burns was released in July 1945. He intended to return to A&M but took an interim job with Halliburton Oil Well Servicing Company. After the war with Japan, job situations changed, and Burns was required to move. Meanwhile, he and Jean had married and started a family. “I decided to go back into the service, in the Army Air Corps,” Burns said.

He served in the Air Force until 1969, a period that saw the U.S. enter the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the Cold War. He worked on various radar, electronics, ballistic missile, and space launch projects during his career. After retiring from the Air Force, he accepted a position with Lockheed-Martin, retiring from the company in 1986. “I had a great life,” he said. “I don’t get back to Mulerider Land as often as I would like, but Dr. Trey Berry keeps me informed. I am so proud of what the University has accomplished. It’s a great school; a lot of people like myself would not have been able to go to school without SAU or Magnolia A&M.”

He said the money he is raising is “for the ones putting their lives on the line every day. That’s what motivates us.” Funds benefit the Mile High United Way COVID Relief, Operation USA, and Feeding America, all of which support medical, emergency response and delivery efforts affected by COVID-19.

ORVAL'S BOYS

BY: DAN MARSH

SAU Board of Trustee, Gary Golden '70 and Jim Baker '68 reminisce on the lasting impact Mr. Orval Childs had on their lives and many others while Childs served as the head of the Agriculture Department at Magnolia A&M and Southern State College.

For generations of students, Orval Childs, an agriculture professor for 34 years at Southern State College, served as a popular and profound mentor whose influence is still felt among alumni who consider themselves "Orval's Boys."

"My dad was my best mentor," said Jim Baker, Faulkner County judge and a 1968 graduate of Southern State's business program, "but Mr. Childs was the second-best. He was as good a mentor as you could ever hope to have."

Being known as one of Orval's Boys is not only meaningful to Mr. Baker but also to Gary Golden (1968-1970), vice chair and CEO of First State Bank of De Queen. "Mr. Childs was instrumental in many lives. He offered a path to college for boys who otherwise could not have considered it."

Orval's Boys, which Golden described as the composite name for the students who worked on the college farm and lived in Childs Hall during the professor's tenure, formed relationships that have endured across the decades.

Childs served at Magnolia A&M from 1942-1950 and Southern State College from 1951-1975. He operated the farm, putting students to work whenever and wherever he could. He recruited students at county fairs, where Baker's grandfather first met him.

"When I was introduced to Orval, I called him Mr. Fair Child, because that's what my grandfather called him," Baker said. "He corrected me on that."

Though remembered as a stern taskmaster, Childs inspired his students to work hard and succeed. Golden recalled working on the farm for Childs.

"We worked the hogs, the chickens, the cattle. We'd milk about 90 cows

a day, twice a day," Golden said. "It was basic farm work. We would get up at 3:30 a.m., get the barn ready, milk the cows, then have breakfast. At 8:00, we'd go to class. I remember Monty Harrington's dad teaching a 90-minute lecture. There we were, having been up since 3:30, listening to a lecture on bugs! We had to sit together to keep each other awake."

Golden said the college sold the milk. "It was an income-producing farm," he explained. "We'd sell slaughter hogs to a packing plant in the Magnolia area. We bought grain, stored it in the bins and mixed our own feed for dairy cows. We were self-sufficient; students did all the labor."

Childs was there to provide jobs and advice across an array of subjects, not just agriculture.

"He basically found a way for a collection of guys from the country to go to college," Golden remembered. "There was always work on the farm. If you needed a job, Mr. Childs would create one."

Baker arrived at Southern State College from Glenwood, Arkansas, in 1964 on a football scholarship. "Mr. Childs was tough on athletes," he recalled, "but I formed a strong bond with him."

He remembered visiting other colleges before choosing Southern State. "They all asked me about my transcript and financial condition," he said, "but at Southern State, the first thing they asked was if I'd had supper yet. That made the difference."

Baker recalled Childs never bringing a textbook to class. "He taught from experience. He always said that most books were obsolete by the time they were published. He believed that most people who were successful in agriculture were good at adjusting to change."

Childs took his students on field trips to Texarkana, Bradley and



Orval A. Childs

Lewisville, showing them the latest advancements in agriculture. “He said all those places were 10 years ahead of us, and he wanted us to see those innovations.”

Baker said the poultry industry in western Arkansas was developed with the help of Orval’s Boys, including Leland Tollett, former president of Tyson Foods, who received a two-year degree from SSC before earning B.S. and M.S. degrees in poultry science and nutrition from the University of Arkansas.

“You could not major in agriculture at SSC in those days,” Baker said. “After two years, you had to transfer out to get your degree in agriculture.”

Childs knew that families could live on the income produced by cattle and poultry. “He saw a lot of his students come from some pretty tough places, but he tried to accommodate them and help them move forward,” Baker said.

Childs was inaugurated into the first class of the Arkansas Agricultural Hall of Fame. “Many of his former students nominated him for the distinction,” Baker said, “and many have followed him into the Hall of Fame since then.”

Childs was also recognized by the Arkansas Poultry Federation for his dedication to youth and received a State of Arkansas Certificate of Merit for Distinguished Service. He received SAU’s Distinguished Alumni Award and was recognized as an “Outstanding Arkansan” by the Arkansas Electric Cooperation for 33 years of Leadership. In 1973, he was named the Progressive Farmer magazine’s Man of the Year in Service to Agriculture in Arkansas.

Baker, now in his third term as Faulkner County judge, and other



Contributed Photo

Orval A. Childs, head of the Agriculture Department, was an integral part of many student's experiences as he inspired, mentored, and taught students throughout his time at Magnolia A&M and Southern State College from 1942-1975.

of Orval’s Boys will always remember their professor for his tutelage. “He wanted you to be self-motivated. His advice was sought out by many individuals and state agencies. He had the sort of institutional knowledge that you carry with you forever.”

The lives of Orval’s Boys have long been intertwined. “We’ve all maintained relationships over the years,” Golden said. “The common denominator was that we came from modest backgrounds, and Mr. Childs gave us the opportunity to better our lives.”



1950 – 1959

• **Geneva Scoggin '55** recently moved to Farmersville, Texas. She is proud of her children and grandchildren, and enjoys being active in their lives. After graduating from SSC, she continued her education at the University of Houston, and received an MPA from Angelo State University.



Administrative Committee.



Arkansas. Since 2009, Verna has been a member of a group of musicians who entertain at nursing homes, churches, and for various community groups.

• **J.W. Evers '57** was recently selected to serve on the Executive Board of the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention (SBTC) headquartered in Grapevine, Texas. J.W. will also serve on the

• **Verna Dean Johnson Clark '59** recently retired after serving for 45 years as a Legal Secretary, Paralegal, and Trial Court Administrative Assistant for Attorneys and Circuit Judges in Kansas and



• **Judy (Davis) Butler '69** is set to retire on June 1 after a 50-year teaching career that began at Southern State College.



• **John "Laddie" Lawrence '69** is currently wrapping up his 52nd year of coaching. In 2018, Laddie, a nationally recognized coach, was inducted into the SAU Athletic Hall of Fame. The

new Track and Field Facility at Staples High School in Westport, Connecticut, has officially been named the Laddie Lawrence Track and Field Facility. Laddie gives much of his credit to his success to Rip Powell, who gave him the opportunity to start coaching while still an undergraduate at SAU, then SSC.

1970- 1979

• **Diane Merritt Renschen '70** recently retired in the Houston, Texas, area after careers in engineering, auditing and taxes, teaching, and parenting.



• **Gary Golden '72** was recently appointed to the SAU Board of Trustees by Gov. Asa Hutchinson.



• **Boyd Rosser '72** nearing 71 years of age, shot a 71 (even par) at Champions Circle Golf Course in Fort Worth, Texas, in March 2020.

• **Dr. Pamela Howell '73** recently celebrated seven years as Chair of the Department of English at Midland College in Midland, Texas. She has also received several awards for outstanding teaching at MC and two nominations from MC for a state teaching award. She has published several academic articles and presented an academic paper at Oxford University, Oxford, England. Her daughter, Elizabeth, is finishing Utah State University in May 21 in IT after which Pamela hopes to retire in North Arkansas. She is currently working on three novels in addition to her active educational and community involvement.



• **Mary Fowler '76**, CEO of Peoples Bank, just celebrated her 56th work anniversary.

• **Jane Berry Scott '76** recently celebrated five years as the Assistant to the Vice President and Leasing of Kimco Realty, Texas Region in Houston, Texas. Before that, she served as the Assistant to the CFO of Weingarten Realty for 26 years.



• **Tommy Jackson '77** recently retired as Pharmacist with Walmart after 38 years of service.



• **Gary Don Smith '77** was recently selected as an honoree for the 2020 Hall of Fame for the Arkansas High School Coaches Association as a new member of the AHSCA. Gary was also selected as an honoree for the 2020 Union County Hall of Fame.



• **Greg Cheshier '78** was recently appointed by Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson to the Arkansas Appraisal Licensing and Certification Board. He owns Team AG Real Estate and

Appraisals in Lincoln and El Dorado, Arkansas. He formerly worked for Country Pride Foods in 1978, Farm Credit Services in 1981, and First Financial Bank in 1993.

• **Karlene Coleman Hooker '78** is excited to announce that her daughter, Deedra Hooker, has enrolled in the Master of Arts in Teaching program at SAU. This makes this branch of the Hooker family four for four on attending SSC/SAU. Karlene (Korny) and Wayne Hooker (FS 80) met on campus. Brent (FS 08) attended SAU, and now Deedra completes the set.



• **Janet Wood '78 '79** was recently selected as an honoree for the 2020 Hall of Fame for the Arkansas High School Coaches Association as a new member of the AHSAAA.

1980-1989



• **State Sen. Bruce Maloch '80** recently received an Arkansas State Chamber/Associated Industries of Arkansas 2019 Business Matters Leadership Award at a State Chamber/AIA

Door-To-Door meeting in Texarkana. Maloch was recognized with the award for supporting positive business initiatives during the 92nd General Assembly.

• **Joni Neinst Lee '81 '88** recently retired from teaching after 38 years in public education. She plans on traveling, yard work, and spending time with family.

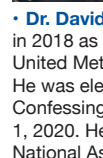


• **Chris Nadaskay '81** is currently completing his 27th year as University Professor of Art at Union University in Jackson, Tennessee. Chris has taught on the college level for 36 years. Chris and his

wife, **Suzanne (Cross) Nadaskay '80**, have been married for the last 38 years.



• **Deedra Stofer '81** was recently nominated for the Teacher Impact Award by the Arkansas School of Mathematics and Sciences.



• **Dr. David W. Bush '83** was appointed in 2018 as the Senior Pastor of First United Methodist Church of El Dorado. He was elected to serve on the National Confessing Movement Board on January 1, 2020. He is an active member of the National Association of United Methodist Evangelists and President of Swamp Angel Ministries. His congregations have received the Church of the Year Award of the Arkansas Annual Conference 10 times.



• **Allen Blackwell '84** recently accepted a new position as Superintendent at Rose Bud School District.



• **Beth Galway '84** is currently serving on the launch team for #OneWomanCan-ChangetheWorld by Ronne Rock. It releases June 16. To learn more, visit www.OneWomanCanChangetheWorld.com.



• **Rickey Jasper '84** recently released a new book "Walking in the Gray." It will soon be available to purchase on the iUniverse online bookstore.

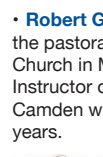


• **Michele Hamilton Rhodes '84** was recently named the Executive Director of Hamilton Haven in Prescott, a non-profit organization serving as a temporary home for displaced

families and individuals which opened in April. She led 45 volunteers in the two-year complete renovation of a house, support of the board of directors, fundraising, program development and public relations. Professionally, Michele is a Nurse Practitioner for the Arkansas Department of Health.



• **Roger '85 and Darla Dunlap '84** recently celebrated 20 years in ministry with First Baptist Church in Magnolia.



• **Robert Gunnels '86** recently accepted the pastorate position at Trinity Baptist Church in Magnolia. He also is an Instructor of History for SAU Tech in Camden where he has been for 24 years.



• **Dr. Rita Hamilton '86** was recently named Chief Medical Officer of Baylor Scott and White Institute for Rehabilitation in Dallas, Texas.



• **Alice Nesbitt Horton '85** retired as the Coordinator of Early Childhood Special Education services with the Arkansas River Education Service Cooperative in Pine

Bluff, Arkansas. She has published two children's books, "The Real Meaning of Christmas" and "Grandma Got Stuck in the Bathtub". Alice is married to **James Horton '96**, a retired educator, and she is the mother of two young adults, Damon Horton and Dana Horton-Jones who are also educators.



• **Griffin Park '86**, AGFC Supervisor, has helped manage Millwood Lake to attract more waterfowl to the southwest Arkansas waterbody.



• **Doug McCrary '87** was presented with the 2020 Business Leader of the Year Award at the 81st Annual Magnolia-Columbia County Chamber of Commerce Awards Banquet.

• **Kristi C. (Heaton) Barger '89** recently achieved the designation of Certified Wealth Strategist, administered by Cannon Financial Institute. This prestigious designation is awarded

to those individuals completing a comprehensive program of study surrounding key wealth management issues facing clients today. Kristi also holds the designations of Certified Trust and Financial Advisor and Accredited Fiduciary Investment Manager and has 33 years of experience in fiduciary services, trust administration and investment management. She serves as Vice President and Senior Trust Officer for Relyance Bank in Hot Springs. She was voted *Hot Springs Village Voice* Peoples Choice Financial Advisor of the Year in 2019 and a finalist for the Greater Hot Springs Chamber of Commerce Woman of the Year. Mrs. Barger was recently elected to the SAU Foundation Board of Governors and serves on the Investment Committee. She and her husband Gary live in Hot Springs, have one daughter and two grandchildren.



• **Don McDonald '89** was recently named to the 2019 Financial Times "401 Top Retirement Advisers" list. Don has been a part of Merrill's Fort Smith, AR office for 30 years.

1990-1999



• **Sharon Gathright '90** was recently named the new Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer at Peoples Bank in Magnolia, Arkansas.



• **Lisa Toms '90** was recently named as the new Vice Provost for Academic Programs and Services at the University of Central Missouri.



• **David Buchanan '91** has taken a position in Supply Chain and Quality at the Albemarle Magnolia plant. The past two and a half years he has been on assignment for Albemarle on a special project

that has taken him to their plants in numerous states in the U.S. and to Chile, China, Germany and The Netherlands.



• **Boomer Brown '92** recently returned to his position as an Assistant Football and Softball Coach for the Nashville School District. Boomer was a part of four state championships and a 65-game winning streak in junior high football during his previous tenure.



• **Darrell Howell '93** recently received the NAACP Making a Difference Award.



• **Erica Jackson Woods '93** was recently appointed to the SAU Board of Trustees. Erica recently co-authored a published book with 17 others on an anthology project, "The Success

Recipe: Dream, Believe, Work, Achieve, Repeat."



• **Cecily Riley-Butler '94** is finishing up year 26 in Education. After coaching 3 sports for 24 years, Cecily is now teaching K-4 P.E. at Genoa Central.



• **Maridelle Dickerson '94** recently retired after serving for nearly 16 years as the Librarian at the Dorothy J. Lowe Library in Nettleton, Mississippi.



• **Bobby Mullins '94 '15** Boys Basketball Coach for the Nevada School District led the Bluejays' Senior High Boys Basketball Team to become the 2020 Class 1A State Champions. Bobby

was also named the ArBCA (Arkansas Basketball Coaches Association) Class 1A Boys Coach of the Year.



• **Ulysses Brewer '95** was recently appointed by the city of Texarkana Board of Directors to fill the vacated Ward 4 seat.



• **Johnny Gibbs '95** was recently named the new President of Diamond Bank in Murfreesboro, Arkansas.



• **Chris Pennington '95** recently celebrated his 500th career basketball win. Chris has been coaching for 24 years as a head coach in both Arkansas and Texas. Currently, Chris is the

Head Boys Basketball Coach at Barbers Hill High School in Mont Belvieu, Texas.



• **Brannon '98** and **Erin Broom Collier '99** recently opened The Tiger Den in Taylor, Arkansas.



• **Cathey McAllister Griffin '98** will serve as the Ambassador to Congressman Westerman for the Alzheimer's Association.



• **Sarah Huddleston '98 '18** was recently selected to receive the Elizabeth Buck/Lois W. Thomas Arkansas State Organization Scholarship. Sarah is currently a seventh grade literacy

teacher in El Dorado, Arkansas.



• **Amy Ingram '98** recently accepted a new job as the Head Girls Basketball Coach at Kaufman High School in Kaufman, Texas. Amy has been in teaching and coaching for 21 years. Next year will be 10 years as a head coach. Amy was voted Coach of the Year in 2019 in district 7-5A. Career record 177-111, 8 Playoff Appearances, 5 Bi-District Championships, 2 Area Championships, 2 Regional Quarterfinalists, 1 District Championship.



• **Keith Martin '98** was recently named the new Superintendent for the Pea Ridge School District.



• **Chris Beavert '99 '18** recently became the President of the Arkansas Track Coaches Association. Chris has been working in the Arkansas public education system for 20 years and is currently employed by

Cabot Schools where he has been for eight years. In 2018, Chris became the boys and girls Head XC/Track & Field Coach. He teaches geography. His wife Haley is a two-time graduate school graduate of SAU ('07) and is the Cabot Northside Elementary Principal. He has two daughters, Cortlyn (15) and Mary Keaton (13).



• **William Hogg '99**, North Little Rock, has been appointed to the Advisory Council of the Arkansas Arts Council. Appointment expires June 30, 2023.



• **Jeff Overton '99** recently started a new position as Strategic Services Director with Cromwell Architects Engineers Firm in Little Rock.

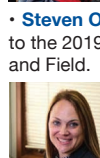
2000-2009



• **Jay Click '00** recently earned his Professional Community and Economic Developer (PCED) certification, a national designation, from the Community Development Council (CDC).



• **Traci Hughes '00** recently started a new position as Human Resources Manager at COMPACT Family Services in Hot Springs.



• **Steven Oden '00** was recently named to the 2019 SAU Hall of Fame for Track and Field.



• **Whitney Peterson '00** has accepted a position as an Investment Advisor with Mustard Seed Wealth Management.



• **Stephen Zorsch '00** was recently recognized for being the number one producer of Blue Cross/Blue Shield for Farm Bureau Insurance in the Southwest District for 2019.



• **Melanie Yarberry Davis '01** CPA was recently named the new Managing Director of KPMG's Shreveport office. Melanie has been with KPMG for 17 years and has worked in

audit and tax. KPMG is one of the world's leading professional services firms, providing innovative business solutions and audit, tax, and advisory services to many of the world's largest and most prestigious organizations.



• **Thad Mason '01** was named 2019 Nophlet Citizen of the Year.

• **Kevin Bingham '02** was recently announced as the new Hot Springs Regional President of Malvern National Bank.



• **LaTonya Hall '02** was recently promoted to Assistant Principal at Hastings Elementary with the Duncanville Independent School District in Texas. LaTonya has been an educator since 2007 in Texas.



• **Cindy Lewis '03** is celebrating 11 years with Area Agency on Aging of Southwest Arkansas where she currently serves as the CFO.



• **Angela Rich '03** was recently appointed to the State Board of Examiners of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Counselors.



• **Tim Thornton '03** recently started a new position as Chief of Police at Village of Hatch Police Department in New Mexico.



• **Jamie Waller '03** was recently named the Quicken Loans Top Mortgage Loan Officer in Arkansas. Jamie is currently President/CLO of Peoples Bank in Magnolia.



• **David Downs '04 '12** was recently voted as the 1A Region 8 Athletic Director of the Year.



• **Staci Miller '04** was recently named Creative Services Director at the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* in Little Rock. Miller has been with the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* since 2005 and recently served as the company's Niche Publications Director.



• **Anthony Socia '04**, Head Strength and Conditioning Coach and Assistant Football Coach at Fordyce School District led his weight lifting team to win the 2019 State Title for 2A with 5,010 lbs. lifted and ranking 2nd in the state for overall weight lifted. He also went on to coach the Redbugs in winning the 2A Football State Championship game against Junction City this past December.



• **Jessica Yarbrough '04**, Public Defender for Columbia County, was recently the keynote speaker at the Columbia County NAACP Freedom Fund Banquet.



• **Victor Duke '05 '08** recently started a new position as Director of International Student Services at Southern Arkansas University.



• **Derek Helms '05** was recently appointed to the Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board.



• **Tina Hofstetter Moore '05** was recently awarded Teacher of the Year at College Hill Middle School in Texarkana. Tina currently teaches sixth grade math.



• **Tony Falconio '07** was recently named the Director of the Madison County, Illinois, Emergency Management Agency. Tony is the manager of the county emergency operations center and manages the COVID-19 response in Madison County.



• **Doug "Bo" Smith '07 '19** was recently announced the new Parkers Chapel High School Principal for the 2020-2021 school year.



• **Jennifer Sharp '07**, an Intensive Care Unit Nurse at the Medical Center of South Arkansas, received the DAISY award. The award is part of the DAISY Foundation's national program to recognize the extraordinary efforts nurses perform every day.



• **Alan Garrett '08** was recently promoted to Loan Operations Officer at Peoples Bank in Magnolia.



• **Greg Harrison '08 '10** recently started his own business, Harrison Financial, a franchise of Ameriprise Financial. Greg also purchased a building on the square in downtown El Dorado where he co-owns another business with his wife (**Kelli '10**), The Olde Towne Store. Since receiving his master's degree at SAU, Greg was named Financial Advisor of the Year for the past four years and served as the Past Chair of the United Way of Union County. He is a current Quorum Court member, current El Dorado Boys & Girls Club member, and serves on the Union County Complex Board.



• **Nicolas Williams '07 '08 '11** was recently recognized as an Amazing Educator for 2020 by *Little Rock Family Magazine*.



• **Jamie Collier '08 '13** recently accepted a new position as a Columbia County Extension Agent with the U of A Division of Agriculture.



• **Krista Hamlin '09** recently accepted a position at The Call as County Coordinator for Columbia and Lafayette counties.



• **Cedric Thornton '09** was recently named to the D2Football.com's 2010 All-Decade Team.

2010-2019



• **Brittany Barnett '10** was recently promoted to Director of TRIO Student Support Services at Texas A&M University-Texarkana. Brittany has worked at Texas A&M University-Texarkana for 10 years. She was also selected as the Mrs. Arkansas Plus America 2020-2021 and will be competing in the national Mrs. Plus America Pageant in Louisville, Kentucky in March 2021. Brittany was also selected as a Texas TRIO Emerging Leaders Institute participant for 2020-2021 in preparation for a leadership role in Texas TRIO.



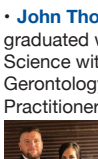
• **Cordara Newson '10 '17** recently started a new job as ACE Academic Advisor at John Jay College in New York.



• **Dr. Michael Davis '11** recently joined the Hospital Group at Unity in Searcy, Arkansas. Michael also serves as the Chief Medical Officer of the Long Term Care Facility.



• **Zach Stout '11 '14** was recently named Mr. Arkansas United States Esquire 2020. Zach will be competing in the Mr. United States Pageant.



• **John Thompson '11 '16** recently graduated with his Masters of Nursing Science with a concentration in Adult Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner from Maryville University.



• **Justin Arsenault '12** was recently named the new Principal of New Boston Middle School. Mr. Arsenault served as the Assistant Principal for two and one half years, before becoming the interim in January of 2020.



• **Larry Graham '12** recently accepted a new position as the Learning and Development Manager at Buzzfeed. Caylie Lambert '12 recently started a new position as a Realtor with Southern Realty Group in El Dorado, Arkansas.



• **Caylie Lambert '12** recently started a new position as a Realtor with Southern Realty Group in El Dorado, AR.



• **Dr. Brennan Pitard '12** recently accepted a new position at Ward Veterinary Clinic in El Dorado, Arkansas. Dr. Pitard will be taking over the daily operations of the clinic.



• **Micah McCartney '13** recently started a new job as the Sports Editor/Breaking News and general photographer for the *Wise County Messenger* newspaper in Decatur, Texas.



• **Shelbi Sloan '13** recently started a new position as Nurse Practitioner at Pinnacle Dermatology in Little Rock.



• **Colton Capps '14** recently started a new position as a Loan Officer at Diamond Bank in Hope, Arkansas. He also owns his own meat processing business, C&A Processing, and is in the process of building a full-blown packaging house in Hope, Arkansas.



• **Cheri Walker-Davis '14 '18** recently opened her own business, Concrete Rose Dance Company, a performing arts dance studio in Magnolia.



• **Anthony Hammonds '14** is wrapping up his first year as the Head Coach for the Junior High Girls Basketball/Track teams in Magnolia.



• **Sarah Madelyn Jones '14 '16** recently started a new position as the Assistant Director for the University Career Development Center at the University of Arkansas.



• **Mallory Kornegay '14 '18** recently accepted a new position as an Associate Accountant at Murphy USA in El Dorado.



• **Haley Quintana '14** recently graduated from the DNP/FNP program.



• **Lucas Talley '14** was recently named the 2019 Columbia County Officer of the Year.



• **Haleigh Alexander '15** accepted a new position in Marketing and Carrier Relations at Daines Insurance & Financial Services, LLP.



• **Janson Carr '15** is now a Partner at Conner & Duffer Insurance in New Boston, Texas.



• **Monika Kelley '15** was recently promoted as Botanist for the Southern Plains Region of the National Ecological Observatory Network.



• **Kelly Burrus '16** was one of only 169 Arkansas educators to achieve certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards in 2019. Kelly was also one of only 53 Arkansas educators to achieve certification in the area of Early and Middle Childhood Reading-Language Arts in 2019. Less than 10% of Arkansas teachers are certified by National Board.



• **Britney Davis '16** was recently nominated to the Volleyball All-Star Coaching Staff for the 2020 All-Star Volleyball High School game in Arkansas. She will be coaching in the game on June 26. Britney is currently the Head Volleyball Coach at Gravette High School.



• **Kelsea Lee '16** recently graduated from Harding University College of Pharmacy with her Doctor of Pharmacy Degree.



• **Casey O'Hara '16** recently started a new position as the Laboratory Safety Supervisor at Brown University in Providence, RI.



• **Megan Bodiford Phillips '16** recently started her Doctoral Capstone Project for Occupational Therapy School and will be graduating with her OTD Degree in August.



• **Angela Roberson '16** was appointed to the Mosaic Templars of American Center for African American Culture and Business Enterprise Advisory Board.



• **Miranda Bryan '17** was recently hired as the new Greek Life Coordinator at Southern Arkansas University.



• **Trey Frachiseur '17** was recently promoted to Human Resources Coordinator at Howard Memorial Hospital.



• **Brooke Goad '17** was recently named a Justin's World of Softball Player of the Decade. Brooke is currently an Assistant Softball Coach at SAU. Brooke was also named to the GAC's All-Decade Softball Team.



• **Chet Green '17** recently accepted the position of Recruiter at SAU Tech in Camden. He plans to start the Mental Health Counseling master's program here at SAU so he can help college students and young adults with challenges they may be facing.



• **Chevy Brock '17** recently received a "Beating the Odds" award for the 2018-2019 school year, specifically for helping his school achieve the best math grown scores in the Central Arkansas region. Chevy is currently a teacher at East Village Junior High, part of the eSTEM Public Charter School System in Arkansas.



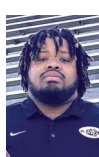
• **Dalton Johnson '17** recently started a new job as Sales Executive with The Allen Americans, ECHL affiliate of the Minnesota Wild.



• **Lavana Jones Kindler '17** recently retired after serving SAU as the SI Coordinator, Tutor Coordinator, and adjunct faculty over the past 12 years. Mrs. Lavana has accepted a part-time position with the Office of Violence against Women in the Criminal Justice Department at SAU. She will be responsible for coordinating the federal grant on campus, and she will continue teaching adjunct classes at SAU, which she thoroughly enjoys.



• **Mattie Klippert Keaster '17** recently started a new position as a Registered Nurse in the NICU at Arkansas Children's Hospital in Little Rock.



• **Ronald Lewis '17** recently accepted a new job as a Varsity Football Coach at Little Rock Central. Ronald will also continue to be a Math Teacher for Dunbar Magnet Middle School.



• **Mitchell Rowland '17** recently started the Master of Science Program in Poultry Science at the University of Arkansas, then plans to obtain his Ph.D. in Poultry Science. Mitchell works in Biological Sciences with

Novozymes, which consist of research and development of probiotic products for the poultry industry.



• **Brendon Scott '17** was selected as the Arkansas Christian Academy Elementary Teacher of the Month.



• **Connor Williams '17** recently celebrated his fifth anniversary with Peoples Bank in Magnolia. Connor is currently a Financial Analyst at the bank.



• **Lindsey Wood '17** is the first SAU graduate to pursue Public Health and Epidemiology. She successfully defended her master's thesis in epidemiology in July 2019 from the University of

Louisville and subsequently began her Ph.D. work in Epidemiology. Lindsey recently returned home to SAU in October to speak to and advise the Public Health Club. During the current pandemic, Lindsey is putting her education to practice by working as an investigator for the CDC on top of her regular work on an environmental health study. Additionally, Lindsey has worked as a research consultant for NASA, has over 13 peer-reviewed publications and presentations, has been accepted for an internship with the EPA, and has volunteered as a disaster response researcher for FEMA and CDC.



• **Dan Capp '18** was recently hired as the new Head Wrestling Coach of the Trojans at Hannibal-LaGrange University.



• **Kayla English '18** was recently named as a finalist for the 2020 Geri Ann Glasco Rising Star Award presented by Swivel Vision Sports. The winner will be announced in December.



• **Bryce Fincher '18** is currently studying Genetic Counseling at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences in Little Rock.



• **Reagan Grubbs '18** recently presented a professional development session to the pre-service agricultural educators at SAU who will be heading out to student teach next semester. Reagan educated them on the use of simulated laboratories within the classroom and how they can use kits (provided through her research projects) within their student teaching.



• **Stormi Harvey '18** was recently accepted into Law School at the UNT Dallas College of Law and will start this fall.



• **Colby Leggett '18** recently accepted a new job as the Agriculture Teacher and FFA Advisor at Gurdon High School.



• **Kyler Means '18** was recently accepted into the Disney College Program at Disney World in Florida.



• **Sterling Penix '18** recently worked with others through the DFA to put on a Jail Standards Resource Day where multiple public and community partners came in to discuss different resources that may be

useful for working with incarcerated people.



• **Victor Pulido-Rojas '18** a teacher at Westlawn Elementary in Texarkana, was recently granted admission to the University of Arkansas School of Law for the 2020 fall semester.



• **Sabrina Yeasky '18** recently accepted a new position as the Human Resources Generalist with the SHARE Foundation. Sabrina is also currently in the MPA program at SAU.



• **Laura Bolt '19** recently completed the didactic portion of Pharmacy School. Laura currently attends the University of Arkansas Medical Sciences.



• **Jada Fricks '19** recently started a new position as Cement Development Chemist with Ash Grove Cement Company.



• **Lily Hesen '19** recently started a new position as Sales Admin. at Aloft Hotels in Little Rock.



• **Madison Hopkins '19** recently represented Arkansas in the American Farm Bureau Federation Virtual Collegiate Discussion Meet.



• **Marissa Johnston '19** was recently featured in the latest issue of *Arkansas Pharmacist*.



• **Donna Osborn '19** was recently hired as the new Principal of Oaklawn Elementary School in Derby, Kansas. Her experience at Southern Arkansas University prepared her for this next

step in her educational journey. She would like to thank Dr. Connie Wilson, Denise Mosely, and Roger Guevara for all of their support and assistance in helping make her dream of becoming an administrator a reality. Serving others and promoting success for staff and students on a daily basis will be her platform for effectively leading incredible educators and learners.



• **Randy Rhoden '19** recently started the nine-month Police Academy Program and is expected to graduate in August.

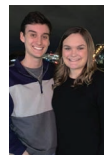


• **Taylor Stricklin '19** was recently accepted into the Texas Woman's University Doctorate of Occupational Therapy program in Denton, Texas.

• **Mallory Stringer '19** recently started a new position as a Production Scheduler at Aerojet Rocketdyne in Camden, Arkansas

2020

• **Meg Grose '20** recently started a new position as a Special Education Teacher at Arizona State University Preparatory in Tempe. Additionally, Meg was named Assistant Volleyball Coach at Park University in Gilbert, Arizona.



• **Cody Lucy '20** recently accepted a position with Beacon Baptist Church in Bussey as Associate Youth Pastor.



• **Katy Medford '20** recently accepted a new position at East Alabama Sports Outreach through Auburn University. While working, Katy will be pursuing her Master's Degree in Exercise

Science with a focus in Exercise Physiology.



• **Haley Mullin '20** was recently accepted into the University of Tennessee Dental School in Memphis.



• **Sydney Parham '20** was recently accepted into law school at the University of Arkansas School of Law in Fayetteville, Arkansas, and will begin this upcoming fall semester. Sydney will be graduating in May with a BA in Political Science with a minor in Finance.



• **Kara Richardson '20** was recently accepted into the Doctor of Physical Therapy Program at the University of Arkansas Medical Sciences at the Northwest Campus in Fayetteville, Arkansas.



• **Michaela Roden '20** was recently accepted into Harding's Pharmacy Program.



• **Keely Stofer '20** was recently accepted into the Dental Program at the University of Missouri in Kansas City.

Little Muleriders®



Colton '14 and **Presley Pennington Capps '14** announce the birth of their daughter, Conley Rae Capps, born on February 16, 2020. She weighed 7 lbs. 3 oz. and was 19.25 inches long.



Ryan and Jonni Carter '15 announce the birth of their son, Rhett Duane Carter, born on January 23, 2020. He weighed 7 lbs. 3 oz. and was 19 inches long.



Lovie Downs '18 announces the birth of her son, Khalin Collins Jr., born on December 18, 2019. He weighed 6 lbs. 14 oz. and was 19 inches long.

Gary Don '05 and **Ahna Farrar '11** announce the birth of their daughter, Quin Parker Farrar, born on May 10, 2020. She weighed 8 lbs. .05 oz. and was 20 inches long.



Tyler '17 and **Lauren Rivas Gentry '15** announce the birth of their daughter, Adalyn Rose Gentry, born on March 22, 2020. She weighed 7 lbs. 13 inches and was 20 inches long.



David '05 '15 and **Mandy Gray '09 '18** announce the birth of their daughter, Anna Courtney Gray, born on January 22, 2020. She weighed 9 lbs. 5 oz. and was 19.2 inches long.



Zane '17 and **Chelsea Harger '17** announce the birth of their daughter, Hannah Harger, born on July 18, 2019. She weighed 6 lbs. 1 oz. and was 19 inches long.



Zephrey '19 and **Abbie Harvey** announce the birth of their son, Odus Wayne Harvey, born on October 16, 2019.

Austin and **Erin Hayes '11** announce the birth of their daughter, Emma Claire Hayes, born on October 7, 2019.



Devante and Ehvan Johnson '16 announce the birth of their daughter, Channing Renae Johnson, born on April 12, 2020. She weighed 6 lbs. and was 18.5 inches long.



Jackson '15 '17 and **Megan McCurdy '14 '17** announce the birth of their son, Cannon Keith McCurdy, born on September 5, 2019. He weighed 8 lbs. and was 21.25 inches long.



Damon '15 and **Leigha Newman '14** announce the birth of their daughter, Poppy Caroline Newman, born on May 14, 2019. She weighed 6 lbs. 12 oz. and was 20 inches long.



Wes '13 and **Megan Wyrick '16** announce the birth of their daughter, Addison Wyrick, born on August 8, 2018.

Weddings



Andrew '17 and **Gabriela Coburn '17** were married on July 27, 2019.



Warren '18 and **Sarah (Moore) Gerrald '18** were married on June 22, 2019.



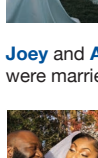
Calum '20 and **Olivia (Faught) Graham '20** were married on August 6, 2020.



John and **Robbie (Greer) Hall '12** were married on April 4, 2020.



Josh and **Kaylee (Mantooth) Hogue '19** were married on June 8, 2019.



Joey and **Anne (Mooney) Lewis '11** were married on May 4, 2020.



Alvin and **LaToya Phillips McBride Jr. '07 '19** were married on November 16, 2019.

Hunter and **Michelle Page '18** were married on March 27, 2020.



Jared '16 and **Morgan (Kelley) Wyrick '17** were married on February 2, 2019.

In Memory of

1930-1939

Maureen Harris '37
December 4, 2019
Annie Dean McGuire Rodgers '39
April 28, 2020

1940-1949

Ellen Minor '42
January 8, 2020
Billie Locke Culver '43
March 21, 2020
Richard Hampton Jones '45
February 13, 2020

William Frank '48
November 21, 2019
Silas Fernon Smith '48
March 4, 2020

Charles Edward Downs '49
February 27, 2020
John William Evans, Sr. '49
March 16, 2020

1950-1959

Lavoin Payne Carroll '50
February 21, 2020
Thomas McGill '51
March 27, 2020
Winzel Matthew Lowdermilk '52
January 26, 2020

Dorothy "Dot" Russell '53
April 14, 2020
Billy Joe Fisher '54
December 5, 2019
Albert Benny Aycocock '55
April 7, 2020
William Craig '56
March 26, 2020
William "W.B." Benjamin Dumas '58
May 13, 2020

Charlotte Colvin Mayden '58
November 13, 2019
Phyllis (Ruth) Luchsinger '59
January 15, 2020
Neta Virginia Souter '59
December 22, 2019

1960-1969

James Ray Cox '60
March 5, 2020
Robert Dodson '60
November 29, 2019
Patsy Lou Fennell '60
April 14, 2020
Billy Seay '60
December 4, 2019
Edith LaVerne McAllister '62
December 25, 2019
Robert Toms Hardy '63
December 8, 2019
Kelly Michael Lewis '64
April 11, 2020
Mary Reed '64
November 26, 2019
Henry Hilliard Ferguson '65
March 2, 2020
Edgar Long '66
December 5, 2019
Marilyn A. Warren '66
November 30, 2019
Urban Wayne Wilson '67
January 12, 2020
Joe Samuel Mullins '68
January 31, 2020
Ethel Bruce '69
November 6, 2019

Robert Edward Harris '69
November 20, 2019

Leonard (Lynn) Hayes Horton, III '69
April 4, 2020
1970-1979

Gwendolyn J. Dawson '70
January 23, 2020

Mary Ridgell '70
April 12, 2020

Ronald William Drysdale, Jr. '70
May 9, 2019

Robert Leroy Dunn '70
March 4, 2020

Kathryn Elaine Cowling '71
March 16, 2020

Robert Head '73
April 9, 2020

Curt Leroy Howell '71
March 17, 2020

Joe Barry Brister '72
March 8, 2020

David McCarty '72
December 7, 2019

Dale McDonald '73
November 30, 2019

Bobbie Sue Stevens '73
February 3, 2020

Julia Jennings '74
December 3, 2019

John Douglas Black '75
January 6, 2020

Bonnie Sue Claybaker '75
April 2, 2020

Vicky Lynnn Herring '77
February 10, 2020

Jo Ann Bolding '79
March 19, 2020
1980-1989

Elizabeth Sheridan '80
January 19, 2020

Elizabeth Fowler '81
November 17, 2019

Marshall Meeks, Jr. '84
April 27, 2020

James Michael "Mike" Barksdale '87
February 25, 2020

John Douglas Slaton '87
April 5, 2020
1990-1999

Connie Johnson '95
February 7, 2020

Margaret Jane Kelley Pirniquie '95
March 19, 2020

Melinda Wood Shapiro '96
January 23, 2020
2000-2009

Gwendolyn Thompson '00
November 24, 2019

Richard Alan Wolfe '02
January 10, 2020

Janice Loreen Daniels '06
February 3, 2020

Connie Scott '06
April 26, 2020
2010 - 2019

Renda Henry '18
January 16, 2020

Staff, Faculty, & Friends

Debra Banks
March 5, 2020

Kenneth Wayne Cowling
March 2, 2020

Martha Forgey
April 6, 2020

Joe Winstead
November 20, 2019

Deane Woodward
May 6, 2020

Cecele Eads
May 10, 2020



Alumni Day at the Races

February 8, 2020
Oaklawn Park
Hot Springs, Arkansas



(Above) Anita Cameron '75 '77, Stephanie Manning Thompson '97, Cathy Cameron '72 (Right)
Left to Right, Top to Bottom - Jacob Wright, Stormi Harvey '18, Gabriela Clemence Coburn '17, Andrew Coburn '17, Chase Vandeest '17, Audrey Smith



Contributed Photos



Contributed Photo

SAU President Dr. Trey Berry greets Muleriders before the races begin during a private Winner's Circle Buffet luncheon in the Arkansas Room.



Contributed Photo

Left to Right: Karlene Coleman Hooker '78, Bekah Burton Kee '05, Josh Kee '03



Contributed Photo

Left to Right: Amy Morris, Justin Morris '07, Nikki Kitchens Moore '06

virtual
TRIVIA
night

August 13, 2020

6-7 p.m.

Zoom + Kahoot!

Register to play at

www.sau alumni.com/trivia



Let's STAY Connected
on social media!

Class News • Alumni Spotlights • Event Updates • Campus News

@MuleriderAlumni



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Magnolia, AR 71753

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Do you know any future
Muleriders?

Help Southern Arkansas University continue to shape lives and open doors for the next generation by referring a future Mulerider.

We encourage you to refer a high school student that would make a great addition to the Mulerider family. Please consider "Referring a Mulerider" by visiting: www.saulumni.com/refer