FEBRUARY 17, 2016

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Witt to Hall of Fame

University of Alabama
System Chancellor Robert
Witt will be inducted into the
National
Collegiate
Wheelchair
Basketball
Intercolle-
giate Division
Hall of Fame
on Feb. 26
for his support of adaptive
athletic programs.
Witt will be inducted
during halftime at the UA
women’s wheelchair team’s
game against Illinois on Feb.
26 at Foster Auditorium. The
women’s game will start at
6 p.m., followed by a men’s
game at 8 p.m.
The UA adapted athletics
program will host a Night of
Champions event from 5-7
p.m. Feb. 25 at the Bryant
Conference Center. The event
is open to the public and will
offer free food, guest speak-
ers, prizes and autographs.
The first 250 to arrive will
receive a pair of tickets to
Friday’s games.
As president of UA, Witt
was supportive of the expan-
sion of the program, which
started with wheelchair
basketball teams. It has since
added golf and para-rowing
to its sponsored sports. UA
has also launched non-com-
petitive sports programs. Witt
was also supportive of adap-
tive athletic programs while
at the University of Texas at
Arlington.
Juliet Given St. John Calvin
August 3, 1933 - February 14, 2016

Juliet Given St. John Calvin, age 82 years, died on February 14, 2016.

The daughter of William Morris Given and Susan Perry Given, Juliet was born on August 3, 1933. She graduated from Ramsey High School at age 18, Program of the National Society of the Colonial Dames in America, and was the State Chair of Patriotic Services in her undergraduate degree at Vanderbilt University, graduating magna cum laude in French and English literature. She was named Decatur Volunteer of the Year. She was a member of the Theta Beta Kappa Society, and was a member of the Delta Delta Delta Sorority, bridge Study Club and was the President of the Birmingham Debutante Club of 1954, and was presented at the Redstone Club Annual Ball.

Juliet married to Finis Ewing St. John, III in 1956 with whom she lived in Cullman until his untimely death in 1984. The mother of two sons, Fess and Bill, she was active in numerous civic, charitable, church organizations and causes, including Grace Episcopal Church, where she taught Sunday School and served on the vestry, and Head Start, for which she was one of Cullman's first volunteers, the Red Cross and Cub Scouts.

In 1973 (at the age of 40), she enrolled at Cumberland School of Law. Commuting daily from Cullman, she finished seventh in her class of 200, served on the Cumberland Law Review and was inducted into the honorary society Curta Honoris.

She practiced law for over 20 years in the firm of St. John & St. John with her husband, her father-in-law, Finis Ewing St. John, Jr., her son, Fess and her daughter-in-law, Gaynor. She was one of the first female attorneys in Cullman County and later became the first female president of a county bar association in Alabama. Her mentoring and example were meaningful to many women lawyers who followed her into practice in Cullman. She served as a member of the University of Alabama Board of Trustees from 1982 to 1985.

In 1987, she married Joseph Hiram Calvin, III, numerous nieces, nephews and great nieces and nephews. She is also survived by her beloved caretaker and friend Margaret Dunn. The family wishes to thank Margaret as well as Dr. Gorman Jones for their years of patient attention and care. In lieu of flowers the family requests any memorial gifts be made to the Emily St. John and Juliet St. John Calvin Memorial at the Birmingham Museum of Art, 2000 Rev. Abraham Woods, Jr. Blvd., Birmingham, AL 35203.

A memorial service will be held at St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Birmingham on Thursday, February 18, 2016 at 2:00 p.m. Visitation will be from 12:00 noon to 2:00 p.m. with whom she lived until his death in 2012. They traveled extensively around the world and spent parts of each year in Birmingham and Cashiers, North Carolina.

In retirement, Juliet served as the National Chairman of the Indian Nurse Reading to underprivileged children for many years and was named Decatur Volunteer of the Year. She was a member of the Phi Beta Kappa Society, and was a member of the Delta Delta Delta Sorority, bridge Study Club and was the first (and only woman) President of the Colony Club of High Hampton in Cashiers, North Carolina. She organized and helped administer numerous bridge clubs and was a loving member of St. Luke's Episcopal Church. She was an accomplished watercolorist. Even in light of her remarkable and diverse life and career, Juliet will be most remembered for the sheer joy she took in life, her family, and her legions of devoted and life-long friends.

She was preceded in death by her parents, her husbands, her brothers William Morris Given, Jr. and Samuel Perry Given, and her granddaughter Emily Parker St. John. She is survived by her sons, Finis Ewing St. John IV (Gaynor), and William Given St. John (Elizabeth), her grandsons Finis Ewing St. John V (Virginia), and John Jefferson St. John (Maryann), her great-granddaughter Mary Juliet St. John, stepson Joseph Hiram Calvin, III, and nephews and great nieces and nephews. She is also survived by her beloved caretaker and friend Margaret Dunn. The family wishes to thank Margaret as well as Dr. Gorman Jones for their years of patient attention and care. In lieu of flowers the family requests any memorial gifts be made to the Emily St. John and Juliet St. John Calvin Memorial at the Birmingham Museum of Art, 2000 Rev. Abraham Woods, Jr. Blvd., Birmingham, AL 35203.
Court blocks use of BP restoration funds for Gulf State Park conference center

By: Dennis Pillion

A federal judge has blocked the use of certain BP restoration funds stemming from the Deepwater Horizon oil spill from being used to rebuild a beachfront lodge and conference center on the Alabama coast.

U.S. District Judge Charles Butler wrote in his decision that the Trustees who were in charge of allocating the funds "acted arbitrarily and capriciously by failing to conduct a proper alternatives analysis," as required by the Oil Pollution Act.

"The Court can, and will, enjoin the use of those funds pending further review by the Trustees," Butler wrote. "However, based on the administrative record before it, and the narrow issue presented by the pleadings, the Court cannot enjoin the Commissioner or the State from building the lodge/conference center with funds other than early restoration funds."

The decision came in a law suit filed by New Orleans-based environmental group Gulf Restoration Network, which challenged the process by which the project was approved.

"If you're going to fix natural resources, the law says you have to look at different ways of doing it," said Robert Wiygul, a lawyer who represented GRN in the case. "They didn't do that here."

"The law doesn't prevent the state of Alabama from making a bad decision, but it does prevent them from making an uninformed decision, and that's what they did."

The $85.5 million Gulf State Park Enhancement Project was among the first restoration projects approved under Alabama's portion of early restoration funds made available by BP as part of the Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA) process.

The project was proposed by the state, and approved by the NRDA trustees, which are the five states impacted by the spill, as well the U.S. Departments of the Interior, Commerce and Agriculture and the Environmental Protection Agency.

NRDA is intended to compensate states affected by oil spills for the loss of natural resources caused by the spill, both ecologically and economically. Critics argued that the state was ignoring the former in favor of the latter by using nearly all of the state's early-round NRDA money for the Gulf State Park project.

"The bottom line here is we didn't lose any convention centers to the oil spill," Wiygul said. "What we lost was marsh and fish and pelicans and habitat. Not convention centers and not hotels."

The project included improvements throughout the park, but was set to use $58.5 million toward the rebuilding of the Gulf State Park Lodge, which was destroyed by Hurricane Ivan in 2004.

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Lawmakers last year declined to approve a proposed $50 million bond issue to cover the remaining costs of building the lodge.

Cooper Shattuck, executive director of the project and a former legal adviser to Alabama Gov. Robert Bentley, said through a spokesman that the project will go forward in spite of the ruling.

"While we are disappointed with Judge Butler's decision, it will not impede our progress at the park," Shattuck said. "There are other funds available for the continued work on the lodge that do not include tax payer dollars.

"The court's ruling does not affect the other aspects of the project (trails, dune restoration, interpretive center, and research and education campus), which will continue unaffected."

In addition to the restoration funds that were at issue in this case, BP agreed to pay the state of Alabama $1 billion over 18 years for economic damages stemming from the 2010 oil spill. That money, which Bentley has said will go to the state's general fund, is not affected by Butler's ruling and could still potentially be used for the lodge project.
Alabama exports total $19.37 Billion in 2015

The Associated Press

MONTGOMERY — The state’s exports surpassed $19 billion in 2015, but shrunk from the previous year, Alabama Department of Commerce officials said Monday.

The $19.37 billion figure provided by the U.S. Department of Commerce is below the state’s 2014 total of $19.44 billion and a record $19.58 billion set in 2012, officials said in a news release.

Products were exported from Alabama to 188 countries in 2015, with transportation equipment being the largest category of exported goods. Other top categories were chemicals, iron and steel, machinery and paper.

“Exports of Alabama-made vehicle and parts continue to expand, underscoring the state’s status as a major player in this international industry, while there were also meaningful gains in exports of aerospace parts, machinery and paper.”

Shipments of vehicles manufactured in Alabama increased by 5.8 percent and shipments of machinery increased by 25 percent, commerce officials said.

“Alabama companies operating in the global economy through exports continue to be one of the state’s most powerful growth engines,” Governor Robert Bentley said in a news release.

“Alabama’s exports remained vital last year in spite of turbulence in the global economy, which included a collapse in oil prices and a slowdown in China,”

—Alabama Department of Commerce Secretary Greg Canfield said in a statement.
No. 1 priority

PARCA survey shows Alabama values education, will legislature do the same?

Sally Smith for AL.com

The people of Alabama have spoken. They say loudly that education in this state is underfunded, shouldn’t be cut and is in fact Alabama’s No. 1 priority.

Will state policymakers listen? An independent, nonprofit organization known for its objective research, the Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama, released survey results that indicate most Alabamians believe the people have no say in what government does. Most of them, 60 plus percent, even oppose earmarking revenue, and they are more likely to trust local government with decisions about spending than the state or even federal government. They don’t feel heard.

Perhaps it is time to listen to them more closely. Nearly 7 out of 10 Alabamians say they don’t believe education is adequately funded in Alabama — a majority of Republicans and Democrats agree. Most of those surveyed, transcending certain affiliations or demographics, say education is this state’s top priority. For over a decade the results have been the same.

Over many years, the PARCA survey has consistently shown Alabamians are willing to put some skin in the game and pay more in taxes to avoid education cuts. Most respondents to this year’s survey want to protect existing school funding by keeping education dollars in a separate budget.

It stands to reason we should safeguard and properly fund the state’s No. 1 priority.

Alabamians want lawmakers to provide the fundamentals for our schools — to keep talented teachers in classrooms, the school doors open, the lights on and our students on the path to graduation.

Doing so makes good sense.

The state’s promise to provide operational school needs has never been fully funded. If it were, instead of diverting local dollars to fulfill the state’s obligation, local school systems could invest their communities’ money in locally identified student needs and priorities.

Couple the right funding with maximum flexibility, and school systems would have the ability to address local, strategic goals. Already, under Plan 2020, the state’s graduation rate has climbed to 89 percent, outpacing its plan to reach 90 percent by the year 2020. Imagine what triumphs we could achieve if Alabama fully funded its basic needs.

In the PARCA survey, Alabamians recognized a need to spend more on teacher salaries. Our teachers deserve a competitive salary and to know our state values their profession. A budget-conscious raise is only a start.

Alabamians recognize school funding makes a difference: eight out of 10 said so in the PARCA survey. And 86 percent of them want the state to step in and fill the gap for poor communities unable to properly fund their schools.

Perhaps they know the right funding could mean the very quality of life where they live, work and raise their families would improve with true investment in education as an opportunity for every child to thrive.

The Alabama Association of School Boards encourages our legislators to follow constituents’ united voices and prioritize K-12 funding and flexibility. Local education leaders urge continued fiscal discipline in the state education budget with targeted funding for critical, foundational school needs.

Alabamians have spoken. Our boards of education, the local decision-makers in education, have spoken, and they say:

> Fund the basic needs for our school systems;
> Increase our teacher salaries;
> Protect the Education Trust Fund, and
> Oppose attempts to divert revenue to the General Fund.

Alabama is on its way to regaining ground after the painful loss of more than $800 million in public school funding since 2008. We can now begin to move education forward in this state, but we must be willing to listen.

Smith is executive director of the Alabama Association of School Boards.
Lee Roop lroop@al.com

NASA took the "acting" off Todd May's title this week and named him the new director of the Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville.

His first act was to announce exciting new science plans for the first flight of Marshall's main project, the Space Launch System rocket.

May had been serving as acting director since the Nov. 13 retirement of Patrick Scheuermann and deputy director before that.

May now leads one of NASA's largest centers, with almost 6,000 civil service and contractor employees and an annual budget of about $2.5 billion. The center is involved in NASA's human spaceflight, science and technology development missions.

"Todd's experience and leadership have been invaluable to the agency, especially as we have embarked on designing, building and testing the Space Launch System, a critical part of NASA's journey to Mars," NASA Administrator Charles Bolden said late Monday in a news release announcing the promotion. "He brings his expert program management and leadership skills and sense of mission to this new role, and I look forward to having him at the helm of Marshall."

May led the development of the Space Launch System, NASA's new human spaceship, since the program started in 2011. SLS recently completed its critical design review and is now in development.

SEE DIRECTOR, A4

ABOVE: This CubeSat will orbit the moon looking for water ice and other resources on the surface. Being able to find those resources from space inexpensively could help NASA astronauts in the future as they look for the ingredients needed to make fuel and other survival requirements. The project is a joint experiment of Morehead State University and Goddard Space Flight Center. Morehead State University
DIRECTOR
FROM A1

BIG PLANS FOR SLS

May appeared on a NASA television broadcast from the center Tuesday announcing science and technology missions for the first flight of SLS.

These missions will be secondary to the first SLS flight's main mission — sending an unmanned Orion spaceship around the moon and bringing it back.

NASA plans to fly 13 small satellites, each about the size of a shoebox, on that first flight in 2018. They will perform experiments and demonstrate new, low-cost technologies for space exploration. Among their missions is reconnaissance of the moon, approaching an asteroid and measuring space radiation.

This is the first time these small satellites will fly beyond low-Earth orbit, NASA technology integration leader Jitendra Joshi said. What makes it possible now are new technologies in communications and propulsion.

The first 13 CubeSats include Near Earth Asteroid Scout (NEA Scout) developed and managed by Marshall. It will travel deep into space — "where no cubesat has gone before," in the words of lead systems engineer Jared Dervan — to approach, observe and measure a small asteroid.

It's a two-and-a-half year mission in space that NASA has been working on since 2013, project manager Leslie McNutt said. She called NEA Scout and the other CubeSats "the next big step in getting big science in small packages."

How will NEA Scout propel itself to the asteroid? It will use a large solar sail of very thin, very reflective material. Sail project lead scientist Les Johnson said the sail works by reflecting sunlight. It can be turned to catch the sun just as a boat's sail on Earth catches the air.

The CubeSats are getting a chance to fly on the first SLS mission because an adaptor ring joining the Orion spacecraft to the SLS core has room to carry them. That configuration might not exist in future missions, but NASA leaders said they will look for more ways to get good CubeSat ideas into orbit.

"We're calling all young folks, the makers and the dreamers," NASA Associate Administrator Dava Newman said. "Give us your good ideas and we'll try to maximize all of those we can."
Impact fees eyed for new projects

Tuscaloosa eyes fees for water, sewer lines

By Jason Morton
Staff Writer

A move toward the implementation of impact fees on future developments took a step forward Tuesday when the Tuscaloosa City Council heard the first recommendations on how the fees should be assessed.

Impact fees are meant to offset the strain on city infrastructure and services that are created by new residential and commercial developments. Currently, the city has no such mechanism. If adopted, the money generated by impact fees would go toward expanding, improving and maintaining the city’s water and sewer system.

A consultant told council members that it could charge $2,090 for every new ¾-inch

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water meter and ¾-inch sewer meter – the smallest sizes used by the Water and Sewer Department – and recoup the costs associated with expanding, maintaining and upgrading the city’s water and sewer network to accommodate new development.

“It’s very common to use it based on meter size,” said Tony Hairston, project manager for Raftelis Financial Consultants Inc.

Raftelis Financial is a water and wastewater consulting firm based in Charlotte, N.C., that has helped utilities and municipalities across the nation develop similar impact fee structures for new developments.

The company received a $49,500 contract from the City Council last year to develop a plan on imposing impact fees to offset not only the effect on the city’s water and sewer systems, but also its storm water drainage and street and road network and public safety services.

But the city council indicated it first wants to tackle the water and sewer fees, which Hairston said was easier and used by many cities across the country.

The fees come with rules.

The money collected cannot be used to cover any municipal budgetary shortfalls because the state and federal laws that allow impact fees require that the fees be used only for the services for which they were collected.

Water and sewer impact fees can go only toward funding future water and sewer projects.

But when it comes to a development’s effect on roads, streets and the fire and police departments, it becomes more difficult to show the estimated effects a new business or apartment complex will bring.

“You can’t set it up in a way that’s a windfall to existing developers or existing rate payers,” Hairston said during the council’s public projects meeting on Tuesday.

While the $2,090 was a recommended charge for the city’s smallest water meter, Hairston presented a list of fees that correspond.
with each larger meter offered by the city.

The costs increased as the size went up because larger meters serve developments that cater to more people.

Hairston's fee list, however, was only a recommendation.

The committee took no action and will consider the water and sewer fee structure for two weeks before bringing it up for possible action.

"This is so much information, we're going to need time to digest this," said Councilman Kip Tyner, who chairs the public projects committee. "I just don't think it's possible to do anything today."

Council members plan to speak with the business and development community as well as the Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama before making a decision.

But it is likely that fees of some kind will be implemented.

Doing so was one of several recommendations by the mayor's Student Rental Housing Task Force, which urged the City Council in 2013 to adopt such fees as a way to pay for the infrastructure repairs and improvements that large, multifamily developments demand.

"It's very common to have water and sewer impact fees," Hairston said. "In fact, it's uncommon to not have water and sewer impact fees."

--Reach Jason Morton
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Roll Veterans Roll: Bama ranked one of America’s most military-friendly colleges

By: Cliff Sims

The University of Alabama is ranked the second most military-friendly college in the country, according to BestColleges.com, a site that “seeks to empower students by providing the information needed to make informed higher education decisions.”

“Since September 11, 2001, enrollment and subsequent retirement of U.S. military has surged, producing millions of new veterans,” explains Best Colleges. “Our nation is now home to a larger population of veterans than those on active duty, yet American military veterans and current service members alike face a number of challenges as they make plans to attend college and advance their career.

“Our goal is to provide a resource for veterans, active service members, reservists and military dependents to find comprehensive support in the form of military-specific financial aid and student services on campus.”

With that goal in mind, Best Colleges recently released its list of the most military-friendly schools around the country.

The University of Alabama ranked number two, just behind the University of La Verne in California, on the list of “Best Colleges for Veterans.”

Nationally recognized as a “military- and veteran-friendly university,” University of Alabama is home to a variety of comprehensive programs and services to ease veterans into college life and assist them in completing their degree. In addition to unique on-campus programs, including the Campus Veterans Association and Veteran Work Study Program, the University of Alabama offers support to veterans in the form of a VA Certification Program, Outreach Mission, special housing options and Transition Assistance, which comprises career transitioning and family support services. The university offers financial aid options for veterans, service members, dependents and survivors.

QUICK FACTS

— UA offers unlimited slots for the Yellow Ribbon Program and does not cap financial contributions to the program.
— In addition to the Yellow Ribbon Program, UA offers the Fry Scholarship to children of active duty members of the Armed Forces who have died in the line of duty on or after September 11, 2001.
— The university also supports the Leadership Scholar Program through a partnership between UA and the U.S. Marine Corps.

UA also ranked number two on Best Colleges’ list of the best online colleges for veterans.

The University of Alabama developed its own extensive distance learning system with the needs of military personnel and other non-traditional students in-mind. Active-duty service members may complete a range of degrees in an online format designed to accommodate unpredictable

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deployment schedules. Through a partnership with GoArmyEd, the university offers special tuition assistance for both undergraduate and graduate military students enrolled in distance learning programs. In addition to federal benefits, the Leadership Scholar Program and the Fry Scholarship are also available, among other forms of financial aid specific to military students.

No other Alabama colleges made this year’s lists.
1 Alabama University on list of best fraternity spots in the U.S.

By: Leada Gore

If your only exposure to college fraternities is the 1978 classic "Animal House" you will be glad to know that the men-only clubs have changed. Modern fraternities are often involved in philanthropic causes, though they are probably not against an occasional toga party inspired by the fictional brothers of Delta Tau Chi.

Fraternal organizations play a major role in the life of many college students and, as a recent analysis found, there are some schools with particular concentrations of the male-only social clubs.

StartClass recently ranked universities based on Greek participation and number of fraternities. The website put one Alabama college on its top 25 list of what the it called the "frattiest colleges in America."

The University of Alabama landed at number 23 on the list. The school is home to 38 fraternities and 29 chapter houses. About 26 percent of the male students at the university are in a fraternity.

You can compare that to Dartmouth College, which landed at number one on the list. Dartmouth has only 15 fraternities, each with a chapter house. It's their participation rate that pushes them to the top spot: 61 percent of male students at the New Hampshire school are members of a fraternity.

And, just because we're in Alabama and I know you're going to ask...Auburn is home to 27 fraternities and, according to the university's Office of Greek Life, about 23 percent of male students are members of a fraternal organization.
University of Alabama fraternity drug-testing program details revealed via internal documents

By: Connor Sheets

Detailed information about the University of Alabama's fraternity drug-testing program has been revealed via internal university documents AL.com obtained in response to a public records request.

UA quietly began testing members of several fraternities for drugs in September in a controversial arrangement one expert has described as one of the boldest anti-drug initiatives currently in place at any university in the nation.

The documents outline aspects of the drug-testing program ranging from how exactly it works to specific tests, screenings and rules members of participating fraternities must consent to in order to avoid being kicked out of their frats.

The UA MPACT (Maximizing Potential through Academics Community & Treatment) substance abuse program's student group drug-testing regime – dubbed the "Student Organization Program" or SOP – establishes a framework under which the university tests participating student organization's members for drugs and alcohol, the documents show.

The documents never specifically mention the terms "fraternity," "sorority," "Pan-Hellenic" or "Greek," instead describing it as a program for "student organizations."

But a four-page "Student Organization Partnership Agreement" that participating groups must fill out repeatedly stipulates requirements for "pledges," "new members," "initiated members" and "Housing Corporation[s]" and includes terms like "active roster," "whole house" "initiation" and "new member program."

The choice of terminology strongly suggests that the program is largely tailored to the Greek system, confirming statements several fraternity members made to AL.com late last year.

Some highlights of the Student Organization Partnership Agreement are listed below, or scroll past the highlights to view the documents in full:

- "The particulars of testing (location, date and times) will be prearranged by the MPACT program. Testing may be by hair and/or urine samples following MPACT procedures and chain of custody protocols."

- "Among others, MPACT may test for the following substances: Marijuana (THC), Cocaine, Heroin, Benzos (Xanax, etc.), Opiates (Hydrocodone, etc.), Amphetamines (Adderall, etc.), Buprenorphine (Suboxone), MDMA, PCP, alcohol, and others."

- Participating organizations must establish a five-member "health and safety board" that receives information about failed drug tests and other infractions from the MPACT program and determines how the group will discipline its members. The university also

See next page
has the ability to discipline group members who do not live up to the requirements of the drug screening program.

- A "baseline test" is carried out at the beginning of the school year, during which all members of participating organizations must pass an initial drug test.

- Following the baseline test, five percent of every participating organization's members must submit to an MPACT program-administered drug test each week throughout the school year.

- The specific members to be tested each week are selected at random by the program. Failing or missing a test initiates a set of protocols that determines the penalties for the infraction.

- "Failure to show up for a test when called will result in the absent Group member's indefinite suspension from the Group. The make-up test will be a hair test and must be passed in order to be considered for reinstatement into the group."

- Missed or failed drug tests are reported to the organization's health and safety board, which also has the power to order a group to member submit to a non-random drug screening "if a significant health and/or safety concern arises related to that member's substance use or abuse."

- "Student and parental notification will occur with each positive test result generated, whether that result is generated by an actual test or the failure to take a test."

- Students who fail a random drug screening must submit to weekly drug tests, and MPACT will "make recommendations for educational or treatment programming to the individual member."

- "If 75% or greater of any weekly random sample fail the drug test, a whole house test will be triggered immediately."

Student participants in the drug screening program are required to sign another document, titled "Student Organization Member – Notice & Consent Form," which outlines other details about the program.

Among other things, the form states that "the confidentiality of alcohol and drug abuse records maintained by the University's MPACT program is protected by federal law and regulations. Generally, MPACT may not say to a person outside the program that a student participates in MPACT, or disclose any information identifying a student as an alcohol or drug abuser" without student consent unless "the disclosure is allowed by a court order," or "the disclosure is made to medical personnel in a medical emergency or to a qualified personnel for research, audit or program evaluation."
The language in that document may ease concerns among critics of the drug-testing program who have questioned whether the information obtained by MPACT will be used by other government agencies or to further incriminate participants.

As of December, only a handful of UA fraternities appeared to be participating in MPACT's Student Organization Program, including the university's chapters of the prominent Sigma Nu and Sigma Alpha Epsilon (SAE) fraternities. MPACT is part of a collaborative effort between the university's Student Health Center and the Dean of Students' Office of Student Conduct.

UA spokesman Chris Bryant confirmed to AL.com late last year that it is drug-testing members of some Greek organizations, though he declined to say how many or which ones.

"Chapters have had the option of implementing substance abuse testing for their members for several years – since approximately 2009. The chapters make the decision to test in these instances," Bryant said via email in November. "UA supports their decision. Sometimes testing is a result of sanctions placed on the chapter as a disciplinary action."

David Westol, principal and owner of Limberlost Consulting Inc., works with fraternity chapters across the nation on issues including risk and crisis management, membership reviews and hazing. In December he described UA's drug-testing program as one of the boldest anti-drug initiatives in effect at any American university.

"I've heard about Alabama doing drug screening or drug testing of fraternities, but I'm not aware of any other university that's gone to that point and using it to any great extent," he told AL.com.

On Jan. 19, AL.com requested a range of public documents from the University of Alabama. UA spokeswoman Deborah M. Lane provided the above-referenced documents via email on Friday, but wrote that "UA has no documents that are responsive" to two other portions of the Jan. 19 request:

"[A]ny correspondence dated Jan. 18, 2015 to Jan. 18, 2016 (emails, letters, text messages, phone call transcripts or other relevant documents) that was exchanged between Dr. Steven Hood of UA Student Affairs and representatives of University of Alabama fraternity chapters, fraternity associations and/or fraternity executive boards about the drug-testing of fraternity members."

"[A]ny correspondence dated Jan. 18, 2015 to Jan. 18, 2016 (emails, letters, text messages, phone call transcripts or other relevant documents) that was exchanged between officials and/or leaders of the university's MPACT (Maximizing Potential through Academics Community & Treatment) substance abuse program and representatives of University of Alabama fraternity chapters, fraternity associations and/or fraternity executive boards about the drug-testing of fraternity members."
The evolution of Bryce

By: Emilee Benos

The iconic white dome of Bryce is almost as recognizable to some as the top of Denny Chimes, even in 2016.

The domes belonged to Alabama Insane Hospital, the first of its kind to be completed in the state of Alabama in 1863. When patients first arrived in 1865, it was surrounded by acres of green farmland and people praised it for its then architecture. Patients were greeted by the same huge white dome that they are today.

Dr. Thomas Kirkbride, an activist since the 1830s, created the idea of the building becoming a part of the treatment, providing amenities and a good living situation for its patients. The hospital, eventually renamed Bryce Hospital, promised its patients running water, gas lighting and 70-degree air conditioning which was revolutionary for that time, as explained by Brad Cook, the current University of Alabama project manager in construction administration.

The Alabama Insane Hospital was founded on the belief that treating patients with dignity and respect, rather than like prisoners, was the ideal way to treat mental illness. Dr. Peter Bryce, the first superintendent of the hospital when it first opened, popularized the previously unheard of moral treatment theory.

“He revolutionized the industry,” Cook said. “He treated the mentally handicapped like people. He was kind of cutting edge for that movement.”

It wasn’t always that way though.

While the state of Alabama served as the pinnacle of mental health treatment for years, it eventually fell into disarray by the mid-20th century. With conditions the Montgomery Advertiser compared to Nazi concentration camps in the 1970s, Bryce Hospital fell from its glory, and abysmal conditions remained for some time. Over the following years, Bryce worked and was able to regain the top conditions it once boasted by reevaluating their original treatment plan.

The 326 acres of the original Alabama Insane Hospital were adjacent to the University, and both were two miles from the city of Tuscaloosa at the time built. Naturally, The University of Alabama and Bryce Hospital have been intertwined since the hospital’s opening, even with various patients of Bryce acknowledging the relationship, too. In the patient-run newspaper, The Meteor, similarities and differences between the institutions and their practices were pointed out and recorded.

“From the very first time the foundation of Bryce Hospital main building was laid, there has been a connection between The University of Alabama and what was then called Alabama Insane Hospital,” said Steve Davis, current Department of Mental Health Historian. Steve Davis.

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Davis said that the hospital superintendents and the University presidents shared a long history, and that when the Civil War ended, Bryce offered to let the University use parts of the vacant east wing of the hospital as classrooms. Then-University President Josiah Gorgas, along with his wife Amelia, actually lived with Peter Bryce and his wife Ellen at the hospital. Amelia Gayle Gorgas and Ellen Bryce became best friends, and so did their husbands, Davis said. J.T. Searcy, the second superintendent of the hospital, acted as the personal physician of Gorgas, in addition to the next president of the University. In fact, the University president's home would typically get its food from produce grown at Bryce, which owned many acres of farmland.

With all of these connections, it's no surprise that the University's psychology department was associated with the hospital, and Davis said that most students completed their internships there. Dr. Ray Fowler, a psychology professor at the University, claimed the Wyatt v. Stickney case started in his living room. This case, filed in 1970, led to a great deal of progress after a 1999 settlement agreement was made to ensure that mental health standards were established.

"Enormously significant historical events may have very modest beginnings," Paul Siegel wrote in his book "A Personal History of the Department of Psychology of the University of Alabama," written in 1995. "Sometimes they are 'accidentally' determined. Something like that happened in the psychology department in the summer of 1970."

Even today, the relationship with the two institutions continues, and the University officially bought the Old Bryce campus in 2010, something it's talked about doing since 1969, Davis said.

"I've got a letter from 1977," Davis said. "A newspaper article from 1977 that they used to bring out in management council and read and they'd say 'yeah, that was in the Tuscaloosa News last week,' and this was in 2007, and I'd say, 'no, this was in the Tuscaloosa News in 1977.'"

Since then, the relationship has evolved over time.

"When they first started, it was a very close relationship, but they were obviously completely separate," Davis said. "At this point in time, they're totally integrated."

The new Bryce campus was built with University funds under University leadership and is currently on the University's campus. Davis said that the University pays for the maintenance and the hospital relies on the University for all of its auxiliary services.

The treatment of mental illness at Bryce Hospital has come full circle over the past 150 years. The white dome outlasted all the changes, but the same can't be said for other parts of the facility. Patients have recently been relocated. There used to be six wings of the facility, but now only two remain. A veil of dust covers every surface. Walls have been torn down, paint is chipping and dirt piles are in every corner. Vandalism dominates what walls are left, and the building is a shadow of what it once was.

Still, the heartbeat of the old facility can be felt. Murals and motifs that were hand-painted so many years ago can be seen under the peeling paint. Within the piles of dirt are old Christmas decorations, torn and forgotten. In the amusement hall, where patients used to have proms and performances, there remains a single, framed painting of birds flying over the ocean.

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"In a perfect world, I wish that the original Kirkbride building could have been kept, but never in my wildest imagination did I believe that the University would've been able to renovate as much as they have," Davis said. "So that has been a pleasant surprise."

The University has made sure the legacy of Bryce stays alive. They've restored the grounds to how they were in the 19th and 20th centuries. They've put new fences around the cemeteries, and some say that the evolution of the relationship between Bryce Hospital and the University reflects the evolution of mental health treatment as a whole.

"I know it's trite to say win-win," Davis said. "I know everybody uses that, but it really is."
UA student volunteers replace stairway at Moundville Park

By Ed Enoch
Staff Writer

Equipped with hard hats and hand tools, University of Alabama engineering students are replacing by hand the cross tie stairway that ascends Mound B at Moundville Archaeological Park as part of a service project at the Native American cultural site south of Tuscaloosa.

"The student involvement is perfect for something like this because it requires so much labor that can’t be done with heavy machinery," said Matt Gage, director of the UA Office of Archaeological Research. "It gives them a perfect opportunity to experience working on a site that has sensitive cultural resources."

Saturday was the third weekend volunteers with UA’s Student Engineers in Action

SEE MOUNDVILLE, A8
gathered to work on the project, which has been a priority for the park.

The students expect to take another weekend to complete the work, which will see them install about 120 new ties. The students expect to have completed about three quarters of the work by the end of this weekend, said Elizabeth Douglas, a sophomore in chemical engineering and project manager for Student Engineers in Action.

The ties of the original stairway, installed in 1967, were rotten, she said. "They were pretty bad shape," said Alex Benitez, director of Moundville Archaeological Park.

The service project offers real-world experience for some of the engineering students, but it was also a creative way for the museum to address an infrastructure need for which it had limited manpower, time and funding.

The idea of the service project came following talks involving the museum, UA's Facilities Division and the student organization.

The old ties came up quickly, but installing the new railroad ties requires more care, Douglas said. Because of the nature of the work, the students, working with hand tools, can only dig down about 2 inches to avoid disturbing the mound. The students must carefully level and pack the earth and sand to serve as the foundation of the new steps.

"We have to scrape the dirt away - we can't dig in," she said. "We are going slow and steady."

The service project is practical experience in problem solving, according to Kenric Minges, Americorps/VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America).

"You can't actually know how to do it unless you actually go out and do it," Douglas said.

The renovation presents an engineering problem with different limiting variables. The students had to figure out how to replace the steps by hand while minimizing the disturbance to the cultural site.

"They are coming up with some interesting solutions," Gage said, noting the students crafted a device to carry the heavy ties.

While the work likely won't provide practical professional experience for Douglas as a chemical engineering major, it is an opportunity get outdoors, out of the lab and build something.

"I do it mostly for the community service," Douglas said. "I like to be active... I think the big part of it for most people is getting a chance to get out and take a break from studies."
UA FOOTBALL

Author on Crimson Tide to speak Tuesday

By Nick Privitera
Special to The Tuscaloosa News

Tommy Ford, assistant athletic director at the University of Alabama and author of eight books about Crimson Tide football, will visit Morning Pointe of Tuscaloosa from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Tuesday to share stories about his experiences with Alabama athletics.

The event is free and open to the public.

Ford is a 1978 alumnus of the university. He has worked for UA since 1982, serving in a variety of roles associated with athletics and fundraising.

He currently is assistant athletics director of donor programs with the Crimson Tide Foundation, which helps fund athletic programs at UA.

Ford began his career as a sports writer with The Crimson White, UA's student newspaper, and was its sports editor during his senior year. As a student journalist, he traveled with the Alabama football team, spending time with players and legendary football coach Paul W. "Bear" Bryant.

Ford's work for the university and experience with The Crimson White provided him with insight for his eight books about the Crimson Tide.

He wrote his first book in 1982 about the tradition of families in Alabama football. He went on to cover topics such as UA's national championships and the Auburn rivalry in his other works.

"Writing is a hobby. I don't do it for the money. I do it for the love of writing," Ford said.

Ford said he plans to share some of his favorite moments in Alabama sports history on Tuesday. He is willing to sign books if audiences members bring their copies. Morning Pointe is at 1801 Rice Mine Road.
Rural districts already have a problem recruiting teachers, and the problem could spread soon

By: Tim Lockette

On Saturday, when many people were sleeping in at the start of a three-day weekend, Bryant Ginn showed up at Ohatchee High School to work. At 8 a.m., there was baseball practice, followed by basketball practice; Ginn coaches both. And when classes resume next week, he’ll be in the classroom teaching math.

Ginn, who worked at a civil engineering firm while in college, knows that with a math degree he could be putting in fewer hours for more money.

“I felt that the Lord called me to do this,” said Ginn, who has taught at Ohatchee since 2012. “I have a passion for teaching kids, and for coaching.”

Teachers like Ginn are increasingly on the minds of state policymakers as Alabama continues to crawl back from the depths of the Great Recession. Lawmakers and education policy officials are expressing growing concern about the potential of a teacher shortage in the near future — a shortage that, in some places, is already here.

“I would say our enrollment is down 10 to 15 percent in the past three years,” said Peter Hlebowitsh, dean of education at the University of Alabama. Education colleges across the country are reporting the same problem, Hlebowitsh said. With fewer teachers in the pipeline, educators say, there could be a widespread shortage in the next few years.

Hlebowitsh and other educators cite a host of reasons for the drop in would-be teachers. The money isn’t good, compared to what college graduates could make in other fields. The relative security of teaching doesn’t hold as much appeal in an improving job market. And with years of budget tightness — with few raises and teachers paying more for benefits — the job doesn’t seem as secure as it used to.

Lawmakers cite that potential shortage as a driver behind some of the 2016 legislative session’s most talked-about bills. There’s a bill to raise teacher pay by 3 percent, and another proposal for 4 percent. The leader of the Senate, President Pro Tempore Del Marsh, R-Anniston, is working on a bill that could offer some teachers a higher rate of pay if they elect not to enter the teacher tenure system.

It’s hard to find a teacher who will reject the idea of higher pay, but it may take more than a raise to attract more people to the profession, Hlebowitsh says.

“Certainly salary increases would help, but better conditions would as well,” Hlebowitsh said. “Some of these schools are really tough places to work.”

Perennial shortfall

Asked whether there’s a teacher shortage already, state schools Superintendent Tommy Bice said that largely depends on where you live.

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“The teacher shortage is contextual,” he said. “If you look at just numbers, we probably have enough teachers. The problem is, how do you get a teacher of mathematics, who was raised and lives in, say, Huntsville, to agree to go to Washington County to teach?”

Alabama is having trouble attracting teachers to rural schools, Bice said, and the problem is particularly acute with math and science teachers.

According to 2015 data reported to the state school board by local school districts, the state is short 86 high school math teachers, with a shortage of 93 teachers expected next year.

Most colleges of education produce handful of math teachers in any given year. Ginn said there were 12 math teachers in his graduating class at Jacksonville State University, a group he described as “the biggest class they’d seen in a while.”

Math is the only place Calhoun County Schools see a shortage, Superintendent Joe Dyar said, but that shortage is almost always there.

Dyar said he managed to get Ginn’s hiring approved just before a change to the state’s pension system went into effect. Like most long-time teachers, Ginn will be able to retire after 25 years. That 25-year rule allowed many teachers to retire in their late 40s or early 50s and find second careers. Teachers who started later in life could retire at 60, if they’d worked for at least 10 years.

An employee hired today can’t collect retirement until age 62.

“In the future, it’s going to be tough,” he said. “When those young teachers realize they’re going to have to work 40 years for their retirement, they’re going to think twice.”

The churn

Marsh has said that his pay raise and tenure bill, also known as the RAISE Act, will likely include incentives specifically for teachers in understaffed fields and rural areas. Just what those incentives will be is unclear; more than one draft of the bill has floated around Montgomery, but Marsh has yet to file a draft with the Senate.

“Since the last version, we’ve had more discussion with some of the stakeholders,” Marsh said last week. “We’ll be working on it through the weekend, and hopefully we’ll be in a position to have something introduced next week.”

The state school board cited teacher shortages last month when they approved an “adjunct instructor” policy that allows schools to hire teachers who don’t have state teaching certification.

State Education Department officials last week said the new policy has been used mostly to hire people who can teach work skills such as welding, as well as arts instructors.

Bice said he’s also hoping lawmakers will fund a new program, based on the UTEACH program in Texas, that will recruit promising math and science students in college and offer scholarships if they switch to teaching and commit to a few years in the classroom.

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Keeping teachers beyond the first few years could be a key to solving the problem long-term, said Thomas Spencer, an analyst for the Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama, a Birmingham think tank that studied teacher shortages last year.

"Teachers in their early years go where they can get a job," Spencer said. "The most ambitious of them tend to move on to some place with better conditions. There tends to be a churn in the underperforming systems."

PARCA’s study recommended bringing back a mentoring system that paid experienced teachers bonuses for mentoring new teachers. That program was lost to recession-era cuts. Bice said he’s asking for money to revive the program this year.

Ginn, the Ohatchee math teacher, said raises really would help recruit teachers if they were substantial, in the range of $5,000 to $10,000 per year. That’s well beyond anything lawmakers have proposed. Ginn said better working conditions for teachers would make an even bigger difference.

"If I think I’m going to have 40 kids in one class, that can be really intimidating," he said.
TED2016

Parcak: $1M to help global exploration
UAB's space archaeologist unveils big plans to open archeology to everyone

Kelsey Stein  kstein@al.com

With Sarah Parcak’s $1 million TED prize, the space archaeologist plans to build an online, crowd-sourced citizen science platform to allow anyone across the globe to help discover new historical sites.

“One hundred years ago, archaeology was for the rich,” Parcak said. “Fifty years ago it was for men. Now it’s primarily for academics. Our goal is to democratize the process of archaeological discovery and allow anyone to participate.”

Parcak and her team will provide data to anyone who signs up and undergoes online training. They will treat location information in a similar manner to how hospitals treat human patient data in order to protect the sites from looting.

They will use Periscope, Google+ and other social media to create a “21st century army of global explorers,” Parcak said.

UAB Arts & Sciences Dean Robert Palazzzo said that the school is privileged to provide a home for Parcak in its Department of Archaeology.

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PARCAK
FROM AL

Anthropology, "Sarah is an example of what happens when intelligent, passionate people with big ideas are rooted in an environment that catalyzes them," he said.

ParcaK is a professor, researcher and innovator who has devoted her life to preserving history. Often called the modern-day Indiana Jones, she says she's "more sites, less stubble."

She uses infrared satellite imagery to uncover ancient archaeological sites, then uses computer software to process that imagery, scouring landscapes for features that are invisible to the naked eye. She has discovered 17 lost pyramids, more than 1,000 tombs and more than 3,100 ancient settlements in Egypt.

UAB President Ray Watts said that ParcaK's work exemplifies the pioneering discoveries made at UAB.

Tuesday's announcement was streamed live at a TEDxUABLive event at the Hill Student Center.

"This is an exciting time for UAB, Birmingham and the local TEDx community," said Wes Lybrand with TEDxUAB, who called Tuesday's reveal a "transformational" event.

ParcaK won the 2016 Ted Prize after developing techniques to use satellite imagery to protect archaeological sites from looting.

In 2009, ParcaK wrote the first textbook on satellite archaeology, opening the door for future scientists to advance the field even more. In 2011, her work was spotlighted in a BBC documentary called "Egypt's Lost Cities." In 2012, she was named a National Geographic Emerging Explorer and a TED fellow, and she is a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries.

International awards like the TED prize bring attention to the entire field's challenges, like the dangers terrorists and looters pose to archaeologists working in Iraq and Syria.

"I am but one of many doing this work, and the people who are in the field doing this every day, I call them the real culture heroes," ParcaK said. "I'm just representing them, and if I can — through this prize and through my work — celebrate the great efforts that they're making, that's something that I want to do."
Eighteen years ago, UAB brought Mike Bennefield back from the verge of death. In helping resuscitate the school’s once defunct football program, he’s returning the favor.

Drew Champlin dchamplin@al.com

It’s only fitting that Mike Bennefield will be on the field Monday when the UAB football team returns to practice for the first time since 2014, resurrecting a once-dead program. Eighteen years ago to the day — Feb. 15, 1998 — Bennefield was near death himself. Then UAB saved his life.

On that day, a Sunday, Bennefield — then the 27-year-old defensive coordinator and head baseball coach at Oneonta High School — was throwing batting practice to his team in preparation for the season opener.

He emerged from behind the protective screen, and his life changed instantly.

“I wish I hadn’t done that, but it wasn’t the first time,” Bennefield said.

A sharp line drive struck him on the left side of the head. He fell and hit his head again on the bucket of baseballs.

Shaken, Bennefield sat in the dugout for a minute before ending practice early. He drove home quickly — thankfully a short distance from the school — and that’s about all he remembers.

“He came home, he was white as a sheet,” said his wife, Amy, who was home with 8-month-old son Mitchell. “I started asking questions because he was home early. He couldn’t answer any of my questions. All he would say is that he didn’t know what was wrong and didn’t feel good.”

Mike showed no visible signs of injury, so Amy called a nurse and listed the symptoms. The nurse thought it sounded like a stroke.

Alarmed, Amy called 911 and Mike was transported to an Oneonta hospital. A CAT scan revealed a skull fracture, shoved and splintered into his brain.

He was airlifted to UAB hospital. By Tuesday, emergency surgery was needed.

“When they met with me, they said he’s really sick and we’re going to try this, and this is all we can do,” Amy said. “If this doesn’t work, we’re going to have to start making decisions.”

Throughout, Mike — who served in Operation Desert Storm from 1990-91 — was resilient. He even tried to fight through a medically induced coma.

“We had two nurses that stood out in my mind,” Amy said. “One asked, ‘Is this guy a stubborn man?’ I laughed and said, ‘How do you know that?’

“He’s fighting. He’s breathed over the vent. He’s twitching and shouldn’t be doing that,” she said.

“He’s fighting to wake up, that’s him,” Amy replied.

With Amy at his side and the support of an entire community, Bennefield survived.

Among those in his corner was Bill Clark, who had hired Bennefield as a defensive assistant at Tuscaloosa High School in 1992.

As much as Mike hoped for a quick recovery, it took more than a year for him to return to the classroom. The process — from rehab to speech therapy — took patience. Not unlike the patience its taken to resurrect the UAB football program.

“The way this thing goes, you’ve got to have patience, you’ve got to take a little time, you’ve got to have a little trust,” said Bennefield, whose brain is still protected by a plastic plate. “With the foundation, everybody has a different part and a different role.”

Bennefield returned to Oneonta in the fall of 1999 as a teacher and junior high football coach. While there, he completed his master’s degree in social sciences from the University of Alabama.

In 2000, Clark asked Bennefield to join his staff at Prattville High School.

SEE COACH, B6

Offensive line coach Mike Bennefield has remained loyal to UAB as the program has recovered from a brief disbandment.

File

The operation was performed by neurosurgeon Dr. Winfield S. Fisher III, who remains at UAB today.

“He has a lot of respect for Dr. Fisher,” Amy said. “The level of care we got, you couldn’t match that anywhere. They didn’t fill us with any false hope, that’s for sure. They were very honest and very open. The night he had surgery, he told us, ‘You need to pray.’"
COACH
FROM B1

It proved a beneficial arrangement on and off the field that culminated in Bennefield being named Teacher of the Year in 2009.

Bennefield spent two years as the head coach at Slocumb High School in southeast Alabama — taking the Red Tops to the playoffs both seasons — before Clark lured him away once again in 2013, this time to Jacksonville State. A year later, Bennefield followed Clark to UAB and coached an offensive line that paved the way for Jordan Howard to run for 1,587 yards. The Blazers improved to 6-6 in 2014 from 2-10 the season before.

“He does a great job with our offensive line,” Clark said. “Our kids love him. That’s been a hallmark of him, he can get so much out of those kids. It’s a thankless job, but he’s got such a great temperament with those guys.”

Bennefield stuck with Clark when the UAB administration said that it would end the football program, and during the months football opponent waited for a reprieve. He was honest with high schools interviewing him for positions, saying he’d return if Clark asked him to.

He’s loyal to Clark, and to the university and Dr. Fisher, who gave him a second chance at life.

Monday will be an emotional day as the Blazers take the first concrete steps toward a return to competition in 2017. Bennefield won’t be alone. His son, Mitchell — just eight months old on that fateful day 18 years ago — will be there as a walk-on long snapper for the Blazers.

“It was very, very emotional when he got the job,” Amy Bennefield said. “Being able to come back and contribute in some way to the place that saved his life, it was very humbling.”
UAB lost a fighter and a true Blazer on Friday.
Norm Reilly, the school's longtime associate athletic director for media relations, passed away after a courageous battle with cancer. He was 56. The Reilly family and UAB Athletics are planning services and special recognitions.

Reilly was diagnosed with stage 4 colon cancer in 2007 and battled recurrences for nearly a decade. Despite the pain, Reilly worked as much as he could and remained a mainstay at UAB athletics events. He worked through early January.

His fighting spirit is what will live on with those who knew him.

"He was a fighter, man," said Aaron Jordan, who worked two stints at UAB under Reilly and is now an associate director for athletics communications and men's basketball contact at the University of Alabama.

"He was stubborn and he was a fighter. He fought that thing all the way to the end. He never lost hope. I would talk to him from time to time. Even when he would tell me some bad news and after getting a little shaken up, he would say, 'I'm going to keep fighting,' and he did."

The last time Jordan saw Reilly was on Feb. 3.

"The last thing I said to him was to keep fighting," Jordan said. "He said, 'uh-huh.' He defied the odds."

Former UAB athletics director Brian Mackin worked with Reilly for 12 years from 2002-14 in various capacities. Mackin was named UAB's athletics director in 2007 and saw Reilly battle the disease but never openly complain. He visited Reilly earlier this week.

"Norm was very respected among his peers and was very much liked by everyone," Mackin said. "He had a great work ethic and he had a tremendous passion for what he did and you could see it. He truly enjoyed what his profession was."

Reilly dealt with several coaching changes across all sports, including when Bill Clark was hired to replace Garrick McGee. "He did every single one of my press conferences," Mackin said. "Every single coach that was hired or fired, Norm put it together. I always trusted him to handle it with class and that's what he did."

Reilly had been at UAB since 2002 and was named associate athletic director for media relations in 2005. He also spent 15 years at the University of Georgia and had stints at East Carolina and at the National Senior Games Association.
We were blessed to know UAB's Norm Reilly, a gentleman in a less-than-gentle world

By: Kevin Scarbinsky

People who work in sports information departments at colleges and universities have a thankless job. They get yelled at by coaches and administrators for things reporters do. They get yelled at by reporters for decisions coaches and administrators make.

Often, they're the most selfless people in the college sports universe.

No one fit that description better than Norm Reilly, UAB's long-time associate athletics director for media relations. He was a gentleman in a less-than-gentle world, a loyal man in a world where victory is too often valued above all else, a UAB man in an Alabama and Auburn state.

If you don't think that was a challenge all its own in his position, you must not be from around here.

Norm did his job well and quietly, and since 2007, he did it while battling cancer. Not once in all our conversations over all those years did I hear him complain or ask for sympathy. When we visited, he always put his family and his school first.

Norm lost his fight Friday, but we can console ourselves in two ways as we pray for his wife Leslie and their sons, Trey and Graham. We know he's in a better place. We also know the rest of us who were blessed to know him are better because he walked this way.
Norman A. Reilly Jr. (1959 - 2016)

Obituary

December 25, 1959 - February 12, 2016

Norman A. Reilly Jr., 56, associate athletics director at the University of Alabama Birmingham (UAB) since 2005, passed away at home Friday, February 12, 2016 following a long battle with cancer. Norm's family and friends will gather for a memorial celebration of his life at 1 p.m. on Saturday, February 20, 2016 at Ridout's Southern Heritage Funeral Home in Pelham, Alabama. Pastor Michael Miller of Lakeview United Methodist Church will officiate. A private family service and entombment will be later in New Orleans, LA. In lieu of flowers, gifts may be made to The Coach Gene Bartow Fund for Cancer Research (ccc.uab.edu) or The Gene Bartow Fund for Excellence through UAB Athletics. Norm was predeceased by his father, Norman Albert Reilly Sr. of New York City, NY; mother, Doris Rolfs Reilly Womack of New Orleans; and step-father, Kenneth Womack of Portal, GA. Survivors include Norm's wife, Leslie Williams Reilly; two sons, Norman Albert "Trey" Reilly III and Graham Robert Reilly; and three siblings, including sister Dale Reilly Brown of Arlington, TX. Norm joined the UAB staff in 2002 as assistant athletics director for media relations. For 14 years, he led the sports information team with admirable dedication, Director of Athletics Mark Ingram said. Norm's commitment to his job, and more importantly to the people around him, was inspiring. Prior to UAB, Reilly spent a year as director of communications and public relations at the National Senior Games Association and five years as assistant athletics director for media relations at East Carolina University. Reilly spent 15 years in the Sports Information office at the University of Georgia before ECU. Reilly graduated from the University of Georgia in 1980 and attended graduate school at Georgia in public relations. Outside of college athletics, Reilly was involved with six Olympic Games, working for the host television broadcaster. In 2002, he served as director of communication and PR for the National Senior Games. Reilly was a member of the College Sports Information Directors of America, the Football Writers Association of America, and the United States Basketball Writers Assoc. He was named a 2006 recipient of the Scoop Hudgins Outstanding SID Award by the All-America Football Foundation. In July 2007, he was honored at the annual CoSIDA Workshop with the organization's 25-Year Award.
UAH Scientists Use Lidar to Measure Ozone Caused by Lightning

By: AZoOptics

Scientists at The University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH) have used UAH’s Rocket-city Ozone (O3) Quality Evaluation in the Troposphere (RO3QET) Lidar to measure ozone that was chemically produced by summertime lightning over the United States, research that could be important to air quality prediction and assessment once it is developed further.

“This is the first time in the United States that we have used high-resolution Lidar data to determine lightning’s impact on tropospheric ozone,” says Dr. Lihua “Lucy” Wang, a UAH Earth Systems Science Center (ESSC) research associate who was the lead author of a research paper on the team’s findings.

The ESSC team used data from a Lidar facility on the top floor of The National Space Science Technology Center (NSSTC) in Cramer Research Hall, one of just five such atmospheric Lidar facilities in the U.S. and about 15 worldwide.

Lidar uses a laser beam to collect data, so it is effective only during clear conditions. Vaisala’s U.S. National Lightning Detection Network (NLDN) monitors total lightning activity across the continental United States, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The UAH team estimated lightning nitric oxide (NO) emissions based on NLDN observations, measured the resulting ozone created by the lightning downwind of the storms, where clear conditions allowed Lidar to function and quantified the ozone enhancements due to lightning.

The troposphere is the lowest layer of atmosphere on Earth and produces the planet’s weather. Above it is the stratosphere, a layer of thinner atmosphere. The denser troposphere is separated from the stratosphere by a large temperature inversion called the tropopause.

Tropospheric ozone – a greenhouse gas and the kind that affects the air we breathe – can increase in concentration because of atmospheric conditions, or can result from human activities. In the winter, intermixing of stratospheric ozone with the troposphere in a process called Stratospheric Tropospheric Exchange (STE) is the chief means of ozone transport into our air, but Dr. Wang says in summertime that process subsides and lightning bolts create significant ozone enhancements in the middle to upper troposphere, particularly in the Southeastern US.

“During the summertime, the lightning produced very important ozone enhancements in the upper troposphere. When lightning introduces ozone into the upper troposphere, there is some downward transport mechanism that will affect lower tropospheric ozone” Dr. Wang says.

“In the troposphere, ozone is considered a bad gas,” says Dr. Wang. “It can worsen bronchitis, emphysema and asthma.” If ground-level ozone exceeds 70 parts per billion, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency issues an air quality advisory.
"We are investigating the processes that influence the ozone production," Dr. Wang says. The first Lidar measurements of lightning-generated ozone have opened a door to further research. "There are still many uncertainties in this research that we are trying to improve upon."

Co-authors of the research paper are Melanie B. Follette-Cook of Morgan State University in Baltimore; Mike Newchurch of UAH; Kenneth E. Pickering of NASA Goddard Spaceflight Center in Greenbelt, Md.; Arastoo Pour-Biazar of UAH; Shi Kuang of UAH; William Koshack of NASA Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville; and Harold Peterson of the Universities Space Research Association in Huntsville.

About The University of Alabama in Huntsville

The University of Alabama in Huntsville is a Tier 1 research university that prepares students for demanding positions in Engineering, the Sciences, Business, Nursing, Education, and the Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences. Located within one of the largest research parks in the United States, UAH is considered one of the nation's premier research universities.
Southeast tornado research project set to begin March 1

By: Leigh Morgan

A huge tornado research project targeting the Southeast is set to begin in the next few weeks.

Vortex-Southeast is coordinated by NOAA's National Severe Storms Laboratory but will involve meteorologists and researchers from the Southeast, including Alabama.

In fact, Huntsville will be the site of one of the first public events for the program. A media day is scheduled for Monday, Feb. 29, at 10 a.m. at the Severe Weather Institute and Radar & Lightning Laboratories (SWIRLL) building on the campus of the University of Alabama in Huntsville, according to information from NSSL.

Some of the project's participating scientists will be on hand as well as the research vehicles and equipment that will be used to track and study tornadoes later this spring.

The goal of Vortex-SE is to understand more about Southern-style tornadoes -- and how to prevent them from becoming killers. Vortex stands for Verification of the Origins of Rotation in Tornadoes Experiment.

The project, which has been in the planning stages for more than a year, will include 40 physical and social science researchers from 20 institutions, a fleet of cutting-edge equipment and a $5.45 million budget.

It's the latest in a series of Vortex projects that began with Vortex1 in 1994. Vortex2 followed in 2009. Both projects were focused on the Great Plains and sent teams of researchers and fleets of chase vehicles and equipment across thousands of miles to study tornadoes from beginning to end.

In this Vortex project, scientists aim to study nocturnal tornadoes, how terrain affects them and also the social science aspect of the warning process — specifically how the public receives warnings and reacts to them.

The project is timed to coincide with Alabama's prime severe weather season, which typically peaks in April. The project will run through April 30, according to the NSSL.
Gravitational waves will unlock these 'revolutionary' secrets of the universe

By: Norman Tucker

The researchers said they detected gravitational waves coming from two distant black holes - extraordinarily dense objects whose existence also was foreseen by Einstein - that orbited one another, spiraled inward and smashed together. "Gravitational waves provide a completely new way of looking at the universe".

An Alabama researcher and graduate student at the University of Alabama at Huntsville were vital to this discovery.

"This is definitive proof that they exist because there's no other objects that would be able to create gravitational waves like this", Kremer stated. To make detectable waves, massive objects must be moving quickly. But nobody knew how often that might happen. If the half beam's paths are not disturbed, the waves will come to the detector; however, a passing gravitational wave will stretch and compress the half-beam paths. "That will actually cause ripples in spacetime".

Each detector looks like a big L, made up of two tunnels 2.5 miles long.

The trouble is, it isn't just gravitational waves that can cause a length change in one of the arms.

Hawking said the findings confirm his theoretical work from decades ago, including the claim that the area of the merged black hole should be greater than the sum of the areas of black holes that were merged. But they were so touchy, they were set off by everything from minute shifts in the earth's core, to traffic entering the parking lot.

Sixty Indian scientists from nine Indian institutes were part of the LIGO Scientific Collaboration that is involved in research and analysis of data generated from the detector. The LIGO instrument had just been upgraded to boost its sensitivity making it by far the most sensitive equipment we have deployed so far.

His team has plenty of discoveries ahead on black holes and dying stars. On February 11th 2016 a scientific announcement revealed the detection of the first gravitational wave by humans.

The black hole collision was recorded by two widely separated Ligo facilities in the US.

Around a billion light years ago, in a part of space that's nowhere near Earth, two giant black holes collided with one another. The signal was brief but definitive.

What Are Gravitational Waves?

"And then right at the end of this waveform, we see the wobbling of the final black hole as if it were made of jelly as it settled into a static state".

Dr. Gebhardt is an expert on black holes. "You can sort of imagine gravity like that", Kremer said. We may even see relics of the very early universe during the Big Bang at the most extreme energies possible.

See next page
On Thursday, Hebrew University of Jerusalem also held a news conference to unveil documents related to Einstein's gravitational waves theory. The only direct application that can be foreseen is in the field of astronomy, where scientists will be able to tune in to space-time distortions from various periods in the history of the universe. He says the next run will represent "a significant boost in sensitivity, where we expect we might be seeing events like this several times a month".
‘THIS IS WHERE I LOVE’

Shaq Jones’ decision to stay at UAB came down to more than just football

Drew Champlin  dchamplin@al.com

Shaq Jones could be training for a professional career right now.
At 6-foot-3, 230 pounds, Jones certainly has the size, ability and production: He had 50 tackles — 12.5 for loss — as a junior JACK linebacker for UAB in 2014.

And the Lanett native had plenty of schools vying for his services when the UAB’s program shut down in 2014. He narrowed it down to Western Michigan, Western Kentucky and Marshall.

He bonded with the youthful energy of WMU’s P.J. Fleck, had a close relationship with former UAB assistant and current WKU head coach Jeff Brohm, and thought highly of Marshall head coach Doc Holliday.

But none could offer what UAB did.

So instead, he’ll be a senior when UAB resumes playing games in 2017.

“This is where I love,” Jones said at the Blazers’ first spring practice Tuesday at Legion Field. “I love UAB. UAB is who I am. I bleed green and gold. Once I made a commitment here, it’s a part of me.”

The opportunity to continue his football career elsewhere appealed to Jones, but being closer to his family was much more important. His son, 5-year-old Jamari, is in Lanett, just two hours from Birmingham.

“I didn’t want to feel like I was packing my stuff up and leaving my son,” Jones said. “I had responsibilities at home that I had to take care of. That’s all the things that played a role in me staying here at UAB.

“I wanted to make sure I could go see him and he could see me. It’s a family thing and being able to have access to my son was a big thing with me.”

Jones is close to his father, and his girlfriend is a senior at the University of Alabama.

There are no sure things in 2017, but Jones thrived under defensive coordinator Duwan Walker in 2014 and will be asked to play a major role in the Blazers’ return.

“I think he did what a lot of other guys maybe thought about doing,” UAB coach Bill Clark said “Just to see him here and give us that leadership, and obviously he’s got a chance to keep playing, he’s going to be a guy we look to for a lot of leadership.”

Jones wanted to surround himself with coaches like Fleck, Brohm and Holliday. But for him, nothing compared to what Clark and his staff did for Jones during his break-out 2014 season.

“The only things I cared about was being close to my family and seeing my son,” Jones said. “UAB is where I started. I made a commitment here in 2012. This is where I started and this is where I was going to finish.”

Shaq Jones cited his son, who lives in Lanett, as one reason he decided to stay at UAB. Joe Songer / jsonger@al.com
'YOU MADE HISTORY TODAY'

Once-shuttered program takes another big step with first spring practice

Drew Champlin  dchamplin@al.com

At the end of a two-hour practice, UAB coach Bill Clark gathered his team together at Legion Field and told them this: "You ain't like everyone else. This is special. You made history today."

That they did.

More than 60 players — a mixture of former players who never left, mid-year junior college signees and walk-ons — took the field a little more than a year after president Ray Watts shut down the program in Dec. 2014. It was another big step for Clark, his staff and players, who had worked toward this day since the program was reinstated last June.

"We trusted in him and now we're just going to live it out," said receiver Wally Adams, who began UAB career for Neil Callaway in 2011. "I feel reunited and rejuvenated, getting all the anxious energy out and excited to be here flying around with UAB football."

Though the team won't take a competitive snap until 2017, several UAB players looked the part, including the mid-year signees. Former Copiah-Lincoln (Miss.) standout Zac Williams made a leaping interception from his linebacker position during the media viewing period. Quincy Pernette — who originally signed with UAB in 2014 and returned after a year at Kansas — physically looked like the best receiver.

Several players who began their careers at Power 5 schools, including defensive lineman Noah Jones (Michigan State), running back Greg Bryant Jr. (Notre Dame), offensive lineman Brandon Hill (Alabama) and defensive back De'Eric Culver (Louisville), also took the field.

They're in competition with players like Adams, Shaq Jones, another returning senior, and returning linemen Lee See UAB, 85

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Dufour and Bryant Novick.

"That is the key for our coaches, for our players," Clark said. "Creating the competition, creating a sense of urgency. We are playing for something every day. We're getting better. We're creating depth charts, we're working special teams, all those things we're going to have to do."

Clark admitted he had butterflies, but was able forgot about the significance of the day for a little while, until he was approached by a large media contingent after practice. After all, the 28-year coaching veteran has done this before, but not like this.

"For our guys, it just became football," Clark said. "That's what we want. You look up and it'll be practice six and practice eight and it'll be about getting better. We don't want to forget this.

"We wouldn't want to go through it again, but it's going to make this program probably be what it could have and should have been. Hopefully it's going to to make this community proud. Hopefully it's a national story. That is 100 percent our goal, to be a national team."

UAB has the green light to build a football operations building, but the start of spring practice was also a harsh reminder of what the program still faces. Torrential rain on Monday pushed the start of practice back a day and moved the team from its campus facility to Legion Field, with transportation taking away precious practice minutes.

But this was a day to celebrate. Clark had his offensive and defensive players each shake hands — fostering the family environment he and his staff preach — and the players took a team photo in the end zone before heading back to campus.

"It's been a long time since we've been able to do this," said Jones, who had 50 tackles in UAB's 6-6 season in 2014. "The adrenaline was flowing. It's just an exciting time to be a player."
UAB SPRING PRACTICE

BACK TO WORK

Despite roster limitations, Bill Clark just happy to return to the practice field

Drew Champlin  dchamplin@al.com

On Monday morning, Bill Clark will step onto UAB’s practice field and coach players for the first time since late in 2014. Bit by bit, pieces of the puzzle have come together since the program was reinstated June 1, 2015. Clark signed a new five-year deal and hired a full-time staff. The UA System Board of Trustees accelerated the process for a new football operations building. The Blazers signed a top Conference USA class and the 2017 schedule was finalized.

UAB supervised workouts during the fall, but this will be the first full practice in the return. The Blazers’ mid-year signing class, some scholarship players from the fall and several walk-ons will take the field for the first spring practice in helmets and shorts.

“It’s going to be fun to get out there,” Clark said. “I know our guys are chomping at the bit. Obviously we don’t have a full contingent of guys, but two years ago we had eight offensive linemen (because of injuries).”

This spring, Clark feels UAB has good numbers across the offensive and defensive lines, quarterback, running back and in the secondary.

Other positions, such as linebacker and receiver, will be down this spring but have been addressed in signing classes.

“Really the position we’re most worried about right now, knowing it’s going to change, is receiver,” Clark said. “That limits your tempo. All the things you want to do, you’ll run those guys to death so you have to be real smart with them.”

UAB brought back one receiver from Clark’s first signing class in 2014: Quincy Perdue. The 6-foot-3 Perdue spent last season at Kansas after catching two passes for 82 yards and a touchdown as a freshman for UAB in 2014.

“I think the big thing for Quincy is growing up and deciding what he wanted to do,” Clark said. “He’s got a lot of god-given talent. He’s doing well so far.”

Clark said the linebacker unit “has enough to survive” this spring. The Blazers will add Clifton Garrett and Craig Kanyangara in May.

Spring practice will also give walk-ons who joined the program last August a chance to shine.

“This is a chance to see who we signed and see those guys that have come in and busted their butt and done everything right, that’s their chance,” Clark said.
Iceland native readies for SEC Championships

By Evan Dudley
Special to The Tuscaloosa News

It's beautiful. It doesn't have a name. It's just a small body of water, surrounded by miles of forest, somewhere in Reykjanesfólkvangur in the south of Iceland. It's the kind of place you'd never find, unless you'd been there before.

At the end of a season with the University of Alabama swimming and diving team, it's where junior Anton McKee escapes. His father, Robert, prepares a meal a few yards from the shore while Anton ties a lure, his mind free from a year of early-morning workouts, unrelenting competition and exhilarating successes. There's nothing in this water to take his mind away from braiding threads of line: one over the other, one over the other.

Beginning Tuesday, McKee, the former Olympian from Hafnarfjörður, Iceland, will be far from the crystal blue lake he and his father visited as he begins competing in the 2016 Southeastern Conference Swimming and Diving Championships. Anton and his teammates realize the opportunity they have been given with a top-10 national ranking, and they are focused heading into the meet being held on the campus of the University of Missouri.

"The team is very confident and we have a lot of belief in ourselves," said McKee. "Everyone is been training well this year and it's been fun down the stretch."

Anton is like other college athletes across the country. His day begins long before the sun creeps over the campus horizon. Pre-dawn workouts lead into a routine class schedule followed by afternoon practices and study halls. But unlike a majority of his peers, Anton faces the challenges of living in a culture not of his own.

Although faced with the daunting task of transitioning to a city and state over 3,500 miles from his home, Anton has acclimated well to his new surroundings. The people are friendly, welcoming and never miss a chance to engage in conversation or to just give a hearty "Roll Tide," according to McKee. The personality of the people as well as the advancements in communication have aided Anton in feeling comfortable in his new home.

"It was a fun transition, different but good different," McKee said. "I thought it would be hard leaving home, but with technology today you're only one click away."

Anton is not alone, however.

The swimming and diving team includes 15 international student-athletes, a fifth of the roster. Head Coach Dennis Pursley, currently in the third year at his alma mater, says recruiting internationally is crucial to putting yourself in position to compete and be successful, not only in the SEC but in NCAA championship competition.

"The international swimmers have a lot to offer," Pursley said. "I think they compliment one another, the domestic swimmers and the international swimmers."
ALABAMA WOMEN'S SWIMMING

Saunders' competitiveness can help Tide

By Evan Dudley
Special to The Tuscaloosa News

It's a time for family. For bonding. And racing. Nestled in the green fields and forest of Newhamptonshire, England, lies the Silverstone Racing Circuit. It's a stark contrast to the surrounding countryside. The smell of oil and gasoline distract from the sound of running engines, if only for a moment.

Silverstone is hosting track days this weekend, an event that allows the public to drive their own vehicles on the track, and Emma Saunders' family is participating. It's a chance for the family to spend some much-needed time with one another. Saunders will have to return to school in the United States, and this may be her last chance to race her father and brother one more time on the track. She claims victory more often than not.

It may have been a pleasant weekend for the Saunders family, but starting Tuesday, the senior at the University of Alabama will take her killer instinct from the track to the pool. Saunders will be competing at the 2016 Southeastern Conference Swimming and Diving Championships, held on the campus of the University of Missouri in Columbia.

"It's pretty much the same," said Saunders. "You're hitting marks on the track in order to take those tenths of a second, the same can be said for swimming."

A native of Bolton, England, Saunders has racing is in her blood. Her father, John, competes professionally in the GT Cup Championship, driving
a Ginetta G50. Alex, her brother, competes in various race circuits across England with a Caterham. Emma has been able to translate this upbringing on the track into the pool.

It's a racer's mentality coupled with her experience that has made Emma a versatile and valuable member of the swimming and diving team, according to coach Dennis Pursley. In crucial moments navigating a demanding SEC schedule, Pursley knows Saunders is the go-to swimmer because of her ability to overcome pressure situations.

"She is a competitor and racer when you put her in competition," said Pursley. "We can always count on the best effort from her."

Following the SEC Championships, Emma has no plans to stop racing, though her swimming career will be drawing to an end. Saunders will return to England after graduation and blaze her own path in the professional racing circuits. It's starting to become a family tradition.

"As soon as I get back, in the summer hopefully, I'll take my official racing license," said Saunders. "I can race in the bigger meets and go international as well."
ALABAMA SOFTBALL

Crimson Tide ends opening weekend with win

No. 5. Alabama won 10-2 against Liberty

Staff report

The Crimson Tide softball team finished up opening weekend at the UCF Knights Invitational, winning 10-2 against the Liberty Flames. Alabama played just six innings against Liberty, attributing its success to a solid offense.

The Tide (4-1) scored in five of the six innings, including a five-run third inning that helped Alabama gain some cushion room.

Sydney Littlejohn, junior, won her first game of the season. Littlejohn threw for four innings, allowing four hits and two runs. Alexis Osorio closed out the game, pitching for two innings. Osorio had five strikeouts and allowed two hits.

Liberty’s Chase Cassady (1-1) took the loss.

In the bottom of the second, Alabama’s Andrea Hawkins knocked in the first hit of the day. The Flames third baseman held her briefly on a ground-out in the next at-bat but Hawkins used her speed to break for home on the throw to first, scoring on the RBI groundout to make it 1-0.

Marisa Runyon scored the next run in the bottom of the third after battling through a long at-bat. Later in the inning, with two players on first and third, Hawkins hit her second ball of the day, lining an RBI single into center field to score Rachel Bobo.

Chandler Dare hit a single to bring home Sydney Booker, extending the lead to 4-0. Demi Turner hit a double after Dare to up the lead to 6-0.

Eager to not be shut-out, the Flames scored a run early in the fourth inning. Towards the end of the inning, Liberty got its second run of the game. Alabama got one run in the fourth innings and one in the fifth before it got a pair of runs in the sixth to finish out the game.

Hawkins was 3-for-4 with three hits and one RBI. Dare was 1-for-4 with two hits and four RBIs.

The Crimson Tide will travel to UAB on Tuesday to face off against the Blazers.
ALABAMA SOFTBALL

No. 5 Crimson Tide sweep in Orlando

Staff report

ORLANDO – The fifth-ranked Alabama softball team scored a pair of wins Saturday, shutting out Rutgers, 6-0, in the opener before scoring a comeback walk-off 2-1 victory in the finale against No. 19 James Madison at the UCF Classic.

For Alabama (3-1), Demi Turner and Leona Lafaele led the offense with three hits while Andrea Hawkins and Carrigan Fain each tallied two. Six different Tide players drove in runs, with two of the seven coming off the bat of Marisa Runyon. Alabama’s pitching staff combined to allow just one run over 14.0 innings pitched with 14 strikeouts.

Alabama excelled in all phases against Rutgers. Lafaele led the offense with a 3-for-3 performance, including a pair of doubles, while Turner, Fain and Hawkins each finished with two hits. Alabama’s speed was on display as well, going 5-for-5 in stolen bases with Turner and Hawkins swiping a pair and Kallie Case adding the fifth. Freshman Madi Moore (2-0) threw a complete-game shutout for her second win, allowing just five hits with four strikeouts.

Alabama persevered in a pitcher’s duel against James Madison, going hitless through the first five innings before taking advantage with clutch hits in the sixth and seventh innings to win in walk-off fashion.

Sydney Littlejohn and Alexis Osorio (1-0) combined for a strong pitching performance, with Osorio ultimately earning the win with one hit and five strikeouts over three innings in relief. Turner broke up Jailyn Ford’s (2-1) no-hit bid in the sixth before Marisa Runyon and Peyton Grantham gave the Tide the win with a pair of hits in the seventh. The hits for Runyon and Grantham were their first of the season.

Alabama concludes its weekend in Orlando facing Liberty today at 9 a.m.
A PASSIONATE VICTORY

Kiana Winston soars as she performs her floor routine during Alabama's win over West Virginia on Sunday. STAFF PHOTOS/GARY COSBY JR.
After falling to Auburn on Friday, Tide bounces back with 197.375-195.25 win

By Sean Landry
Special to The Tuscaloosa News

By the time senior Lauren Beers stepped onto the floor exercise mat in Coleman Coliseum on Sunday, the University of Alabama gymnast had already thrown a low vault, stumbled on the uneven bars and fallen off the balance beam for the third time in her last four routines. For the third time this season, she was on track to score below a 30 competing in all-around performance.

"Lauren is still figuring things out this season," coach Dana Duckworth said. "It is up and down, inside out. We're working on it. She has a great deal of ability. She didn't do a stellar vault, then she took a big step on her bar dismount, and then she fell. The true sign of a champion is being able to put that behind you and move on."

She stepped onto the mat with a smile and left with a career-high equaling 9.95—scored a perfect 10 by one judge—the exclamation point on a rebound performance for Beers and the Crimson Tide, powering the team to a 197.375-195.25 win over West Virginia.

"I have a little bit of passion, and I grabbed her (afterwards)," Duckworth said. "I just grabbed her and said 'That's how you do it.' That's all you want from her: just go and do this, and she did."

Duckworth's passion had been on display all night, with the second-year head coach imploring the 12,476-person strong crowd for applause and chants of "ten" after the team's beam performances.

"I kind of acted a little crazy as a fan today," Duckworth said. "We've been all over. We've been to some different venues, and something that's happening is, in certain venues, the crowd, whether they don't know any better or they're new, there's an energy. We have amazing fans, but I'd like our fans, when we land, to literally stand up and get excited because it affects what happens."

Beers finished with a 38.875 score in the all-around, a win by virtue of being the only competitor.

After Beers' fall on beam, Aja Sims and Katie Bailey posted a pair of 9.05s, pacing Alabama to a 49.55 score on the apparatus for the second time this season, still the highest by any team this year. Despite those marks, the team entered the meet ranked seventh on the apparatus, plagued by faltered scores from earlier weeks.

"I think that's where," Bailey said of the team's beam score.

"We've always had it there this entire season. For this and every other event, it's about putting it all together."

"This meet, we did a really good job, especially after a fall, of pulling it back together and doing what we do in the gym every day."

Sunday's win provided a much-needed bounce back for a team that suffered what Duckworth called a "gut shock feeling" after losing to rival Auburn for the first time in 118 meets on Friday.

"These ladies performed beautifully on Friday," Duckworth said. "Today, it could have been easy to sit back, not make this important. We made it as important as if we were competing against the No. 1 team in the country. That's what the mentality had to be after whatever happened on Friday, and really it was a blessing that we got to compete on Sunday."

Coach Dana Duckworth coaches up the crowd shouting "10" after a great performance on the balance beam by gymnast Keely McNeer during Alabama's win over West Virginia on Sunday.
ALABAMA BASKETBALL

Bama breakthrough

Jimmie Taylor comes up big as Tide breaks losing streak to Gators

By Kevin Brockway
Special to The Tuscaloosa News

GAINESVILLE, Fla. — Alabama coach Avery Johnson is ebullient by nature. But the first-year coach had even more reasons to smile following the Crimson Tide’s 61-55 win over the Florida Gators at the O’Connell Center. Alabama snapped an 11-game losing streak to the Gators dating back to 2008, and won at the O’Dome for the first time since 1995.

The Tide did it with defense, holding Florida to a season-low 28.6 percent from the field and just 3 of 21 from 3-point range. Alabama junior center Jimmie Taylor protected the rim throughout the game, finishing with 11 points and five blocks.

“It was a pretty good, complete game for our team,” Johnson said. “We came into the game trying to accomplish certain strategic and specific things defensively. Fortunately, we were able to accomplish a lot of our goals, one of which was (defending) the 3-point line.”

As for Taylor’s performance, Johnson said: “He’s been a new man over the last 10 days. I don’t know

SEE BAMA, C3

Alabama Crimson Tide forward Jimmie Taylor (10) takes a shot over Florida Gators center John Egbunu (15) during the first half at the O’Connell Center on Saturday, Jan. 13, 2016 in Gainesville, Fla. Alabama defeated Florida 61-55.

MATT STAMEY/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

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BAMA
From Page C1

if he's been eating something different. Maybe he's gone from barbecue ribs to grilled chicken, boneless chicken. But he's been a different person.”

Somehow, Alabama overcame its starting guards, Retin Obasohan and Arthur Edwards, both fouling out with more than five minutes remaining. Johnson credited sophomore point guard Justin Coleman's poise in running the team down the stretch and beating UF's press.

“He did a nice job of controlling our team, getting us in our sets,” Johnson said.

Also, Florida grabbed 23 offensive rebounds and outrebounded the Tide 54-35. But Alabama's second-shot defense was stout at its first, holding Florida to just 11 second-chance points. Florida coach Mike White thought the 6-foot-10 Taylor's length inside was the difference, which forced UF to miss a number of shots close to the basket.

“He was the most dominant player on the floor tonight,” White said.

Alabama trailed 27-23 at halftime, but the Tide took some momentum into the locker room when Coleman banked-in a 30-foot, 3-point attempt at the first half buzzer. It carried over into the second half. Alabama shot 60 percent from the floor in the final 20 minutes and took control of the game with a 7-0 second half run, taking a 47-41 lead with an Obasohan jumper with 6:34 left. Obasohan led Alabama with 15 points, but fouled out with 5:35 left. Red-shirt senior guard Arthur Edwards then fouled out with 5:22 left for Alabama and the Tide up 48-45. But Alabama allowed just one field goal the remainder of the game, a dunk from Florida freshman guard KeVaughn Allen.

“Breaking (Florida's) 11-game winning streak, it's incredible,” Coleman said. “It's tremendous for the program and tremendous for our fans.”

Alabama (15-9, 6-6 SEC) has won five of its last six games and continues to make a strong case for an NCAA Tournament at large berth. But Johnson said he's just focused on Alabama's next game Wednesday at LSU.

“The only bubble we're talking about is my bubble gum in practice,” Johnson said.
Alabama secured its first win in Gainesville in more than two decades Saturday night against the Gators. Despite losing two starters late in the game, Alabama held off Florida, 61-55, to end the Gators’ 11-game winning streak against the Crimson Tide. Alabama had last won in Gainesville all the way back in Feb. 1995.

Retin Obasohan had 15 points and Jimmie Taylor added 11 points and five blocks to extend Alabama’s current winning streak to four games.

The win against Florida gives Alabama a road win against a team currently ranked in the top 25 of the RPI. With Alabama moving its way into NCAA Tournament talk, the win in Gainesville gives first-year coach Avery Johnson another big notch on his belt.

It was Alabama’s first win against Florida since Mark Gottfried residied in Tuscaloosa back in the 2008 SEC Tournament.

**Tide survive foul trouble**
In a 10-second span, Alabama lost leading scorer Retin Obasohan and starter Arthur Edwards. Obasohan, who had an Alabama-high 15 points, picked up his fourth and fifth fouls within 30 seconds of each other with 5:30 left in the game. His fifth and final foul came on an ill-advised charge as he drove to the basket. It didn’t get any easier when Edwards picked up his fifth only a few seconds later, putting Alabama’s lead at serious peril without two of its best scoring options. The good news for Alabama was Taylor and Riley Norris were up to the task to finish off the Gators. Taylor had a huge dunk and block on the other end and Norris had four points in the final minute and a half to secure the victory.

**Good and bad statistics**
Alabama entered Saturday as the third-worst rebounding team in the SEC, tasked to slow down the SEC’s second-best rebounding squad. The results were predictable: Florida easily out-rebounded Alabama, 34-35. However, Alabama showed toughness late in the game grabbing a few crucial rebounds and enabling a loose ball foul with good boxing out technique. One statistic Avery Johnson will be happy about: 10. That’s the number of turnovers Alabama had against the Gators; four less than the Tide’s average. The even better number: 12. That’s how many turnovers Florida had, at home, against Alabama. Johnson should also be happy with the way his team performed defensively. Alabama held Florida to an anemic 28.6 percent (18 of 63) from the field, with the Gators making only 3 of 21 three-point attempts. Florida made only 4 of 20 attempts inside the paint in the second half.
Tide makes some changes to its coaching staff

University of Alabama special teams coach Bobby Williams is moving to an off-the-field position and staying at UA as part of a shift in the offensive staff's coaching duties, The Tuscaloosa News has learned.

Williams will move into a position of "special assistant to the head coach."

Alabama also confirmed the hiring of Brent Key, who was introduced to the team earlier this week, to coach guards and center on the offensive line. Mario Cristobal, who has coached the offensive line since 2013, will transition to coach offensive tackles and tight ends. Cristobal will also serve as the program's recruiting coordinator.

"What a tremendous opportunity to work at The University of Alabama with Coach Saban," Key said in a statement released by UA. "Coach Saban has built a tremendous program in Tuscaloosa, continuing a long tradition of success. I'm really excited to be part of this team and can't wait to get on the field and start teaching."

Key comes to Alabama from Central Florida, where he coached the offensive line from 2009-14. He held the title of assistant coach from 2012-14 and spent six seasons at the Knights' recruiting coordinator.

"We are excited to announce the addition of Brent Key to our staff," UA head coach Nick Saban said. "He is an outstanding football coach who is well-respected across the country in terms of his knowledge of the game, his reputation as a teacher and his ability to recruit. We are pleased to welcome Brent and his wife Danielle to Tuscaloosa."

It is currently unclear which coach will oversee special teams, which Williams coached eight seasons.

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Media Days announced

The 2016 SEC Football Media Days will take place July 11-14 at the Hyatt Regency Birmingham-Wynfrey Hotel in Hoover, the conference announced Tuesday. Auburn coach Gus Malzahn will lead off once again on Monday, July 11. Alabama's Nick Saban will visit on Wednesday, July 13. Here's the full team-by-team schedule: Monday, July 11: Gus Malzahn, Auburn; Jim McElwain, Florida; Derek Mason, Vanderbilt; SEC commissioner Greg Sankey. Tuesday, July 12: Kirby Smart, Georgia; Dan Mullen, Mississippi State; Butch Jones, Tennessee; Kevin Sumlin, Texas A&M. Wednesday, July 13: Nick Saban, Alabama; Bret Bielema, Arkansas; Mark Stoops, Kentucky; Barry Odom, Missouri Thursday, July 14: Les Miles, LSU; Hugh Freeze, Ole Miss; Will Muschamp, South Carolina. Players attendees for 2016 SEC Media Days will be announced at a later date.
An Alabama Love Story

By: Joseph Goodman

He had to ask her four times before she finally said yes. He was too poor. She was too nervous.

When the day came to elope, he borrowed a friend's car because his was a jalopy. She changed into her wedding dress inside a muddy service station in rural Mississippi.

Cherry and Bart Starr were both 20 years old in May of 1954. Their love has spanned more than six decades.

Cherry, 81, and Bart, 82, who will celebrate their 62nd wedding anniversary this May, have doted upon each other on Valentine's Day ever since they were upperclassmen at Montgomery's Sidney Lanier High School. If Sunday is the Hallmark holiday, then Bart has done his job through the years. Cherry has saved dozens of cards from her husband.

"We should have interest in the company I have so many," she said.

Today is a day for lovers, but for the Starrs it could also be a day of reflection. Together for so long, their marriage now seems just as legendary as Bart's playing days for the Green Bay Packers. Celebrated sweethearts, their longstanding romance is truly inspiring.

"One of the great things they do is they make it a habit of expressing to each other how they feel toward each other," Bart Starr Jr. said. "They don't let that go unspoken. Whether it was verbally, or a series of notes ... we shouldn't miss an opportunity to tell those who mean something to us, that they mean something to us.

"Never miss that chance."

The Starrs relationship has carried them together through every stage of their adult lives. There has been breathtaking joy and incomprehensible pain. Adored throughout the country, the Starrs have used Bart's platform and their union to help the lives of others. Now, a new stage of life has arrived. After multiple strokes and most recently a broken hip, Bart needs special care. Cherry, caregivers and some dedicated friends have been there to provide it.

He has responded well following each setback, and his therapist says Cherry is a big reason why. Strokes have disrupted his brain's language center, and dementia complicates daily rehabilitation sessions. Still, he responds to Cherry.

Always has.

What's the secret to a long and happy marriage? Cherry Starr hears that question all the time. There is no secret. Just make every day special.

And be ready to compromise.

UNSURE FUTURE

A student at Auburn in 1954, Cherry dropped out of school after her elopement and didn't see Bart for several months. She then moved to Tuscaloosa not to enroll in Auburn's rival, but to be
with her new husband, a struggling quarterback for the Crimson Tide. Cherry worked as a photographer's assistant to help pay the bills, and the couple lived in an old Army barracks that served as family-student housing.

So poorly constructed, the slipshod barracks had grass growing through the floorboards.

What's the one thing stronger than this state's suffocating football rivalry? As many couples know, that crazy thing called love.

Before Cherry ever moved to Tuscaloosa, Bart turned down a scholarship offer from Paul "Bear" Bryant at Kentucky to stay in Alabama and remain close to Cherry. Alabama was awful at the time, and wouldn't be good again until Bryant took over in 1958.

Starr once called his decision to attend Alabama "the greatest audible of my life."

He knew Kentucky wouldn't work. Cherry would have been too far away.

"He didn't want to lose me," Cherry said.

In those early days of their courtship, Bart would drive to Auburn once a month to visit. He knew he could lose his scholarship over it, but he asked Cherry to marry him anyway. She said no over and over and over.

Bart came from a relatively poor family, and Cherry just didn't know if it would work.

"But he kept badgering me," she said.

Bart found a justice of the peace who would marry them on the sly in Columbus, Miss. After their secret ceremony, Cherry lived with her parents for several months. She kept their elopement a secret as long as she could, but Bart mailed a letter to the Morton's Mississippi home addressed to Mrs. Bart Starr.

Her mother questioned Cherry about the letter, and she erupted into tears. Yes, she was married to a football player who received $87.50 a month for living expenses.

Things didn't get much better when Bart was drafted in the 17th round by the Packers.

His starting salary was $6,500.

TIRE SALESMAN

Here's some perspective on how much the NFL has changed since those early days. The Packers' current quarterback, Aaron Rodgers, makes more in one game than Bart Starr made in his entire 16-year career.

Before Vince Lombardi revolutionized a game, and his brilliant quarterback helped make football America's most popular sport, Bart was selling tires in the offseason just to pay the bills.

"Bart never had an agent, not in 16 years, and he never had any money either," Cherry said.
Similar to his days at Alabama, Bart was mostly an anonymous and obscure football player for his first few years in Green Bay. The Starrs weren't struggling anymore — Green Bay has always taken care of its Packers — but fame and notoriety didn't come until Lombardi left New York for Wisconsin in 1959. Even then, Bart's long-term prospects as a professional football player were questionable.

These days, there's enough money in the game to justify the strain a career in pro football puts on a marriage. In the 50s and 60s, it was different.

"We have wonderful memories, but people think it's so glamorous being married to a football player," Cherry said. "It's a hard life, and a very different life. There are a lot of temptations in the game because people are attracted to athletes because they're athletes ... and there's a lot of stress because most of the players are fighting to maintain their positions."

Bart wasn't an entrenched starter — college or pro — until 1960, or his fifth season in Green Bay.

Starr won his first of five NFL championships in 1961, but it wasn't until after Super Bowl II, or his final NFL title, when Bart and Cherry found themselves in a position to give back on a grand scale. That's when Bart got a random call from a man named John Gillespie.

RAWHIDE RANCH

Cherry and Bart knew they wanted to help troubled teens in Wisconsin, they just didn't know how to begin.

The Gillespies showed them the way.

Along with Cherry and Bart, John and Jan Gillespie are the co-founders of Rawhide Boys Ranch, a facility for troubled boys located near New London, Wis. Started in the 1960s with the help of the Starrs, Rawhide is now a gold standard nationally for alternative education.

After being approached to put their names behind the project, Bart relied on Cherry's judgement to get involved. She nodded her head in approval on that fateful evening when the Gillespies visited the Starrs for supper.

The Starrs now consider helping co-found the Rawhide Boys Ranch one of the best decisions of their lives, and one of the greatest achievements of their marriage.

"The Gillespies actually gave us the best gift of our marriage," Cherry said. "We're so thankful they asked us to help."

A property developer by trade, John Gillespie had no connection to the Starrs before he dialed directory assistance in the hopes of connecting with the most popular man in Wisconsin.

Gillespie says he'll never forget his first conversation with Bart:

"A man answered and said, 'Hello,'" Gillespie said. "And I said, 'Is this the Starr residence?'"

"It is," Starr replied.
"Is Mr. Starr there?" Gillespie asked.

"No, no Mr. Starr here," Starr said. "Bart is here, though."

"Oh, that's who I want to talk to," Gillespie said.

"Well, you're talking to him," Starr said.

Without knowing Starr, the recent MVP of the first Super Bowl, Gillespie laid out his vision for the boys ranch over the phone.

"We have this dream to work with teenage boys who are in tough situations, and we found a piece of property, and people have said that maybe you and Cherry would have a similar interest," Gillespie said. "Would it ever be possible to meet with you and show you some pictures of the property and tell you what our goals are?"

"Certainly,"

"Well, how do I make an appointment?" Gillespie said.

"Do you want to come to Green Bay right now?" Starr said.

Since its founding, Rawhide Boys Ranch has changed the lives of thousands.

And, for a few years there, Cherry Starr tried to hug every single resident of the ranch.

A notorious hugger, Cherry used to embrace every boy at the ranch when she would visit. To help the Gillespies buy the 700-acre property on the Wolf River, the Stasters raffled off the Corvette convertible Bart received as a gift for winning the MVP award for Super Bowl II.

"There was a lottery law in the state of Wisconsin, and you couldn't raffle anything off, but we knew the governor, Warren Knowles," Cherry said. "I called him and told him what we were going to do, and what we wanted to do, and he said if you can do it between Friday and Monday, we'll overlook the lottery law.

"We had tickets printed up, and the little city of Green Bay had 47,000 people at the time, and Saturday and Sunday we sold 40,000 tickets for a dollar each. I took the money to the bank in suitcases."

During their trip to Green Bay last Thanksgiving for Brett Farve's jersey retirement, the Stasters also made time to help raise $150,000 for Rawhide Boys Ranch.

"As a couple, those two were wonderful role models for hundreds and hundreds of boys that have never really experienced a loving mother and father," Gillespie said.

And maybe in a small way, the Stasters' work at Rawhide helped them heal after the tragic death of their own son.

UN SPEAKABLE LOSS
Bret Starr, Cherry and Bart's youngest son, died at the age of 24 after a struggle with drug addiction. It was Bart who found Bret's body.

The Stars are a family of highly intelligent people, and Bret was no different. His IQ was measured at 144 when he was a child, according to Cherry.

"They wanted him to skip two grades, but I wouldn't do it," Cherry said. "I thought he was too immature."

Bret's drug addiction devastated the family, and the Stars eventually moved him to Clearwater, Fla., to receive treatment. Bart was friends with a therapist who worked for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

They hadn't heard from Bret in several days, so Bart flew to Florida to check on his son.

"It was very, very difficult for Bart because he was the one who found our son after we hadn't heard from him," Cherry said. "He had been there for three days."

It's hurts to even read about a parent losing a child. There are many stages of pain, but the most pronounced might be the unshakable feeling of guilt. The Stars turned to each other for support, but then, like they had done so many times before, tried to use their experience to help others.

They traveled across the country speaking about drug addiction.

"We decided we would tell our story because it's embarrassing to admit you have a child who is addicted to drugs because we thought it was a reflection of us as parents," Cherry said. "But I found out that wasn't true."

Bart Starr Jr., now 58 years old and living in Birmingham, admires his parents for many things, but especially how they cared for each other after the loss of his brother.

"That is the sort of thing you could see lead to a relationship becoming frayed as opposed to strengthened," Bart Starr Jr. said. "They have stayed true to themselves. It is in their nature, and always has been in their nature, to reach out to others who are in need.

"That's the most traumatic situation anyone could go through, the loss of a child, but rather than become isolated from their friends and society, they took it upon themselves to continue to reach out in a moment of great anguish, and specifically reach out to those who had been through similar situations."

In honor of their son, the Stars created the Bret Starr Memorial Fund to help boys at the Rawhide Boys Ranch transition into adulthood.

"Making the difference in someone's life, you can see how that could strengthen your marriage," Bart Starr Jr. said.

THOUGHTFUL, GENUINE, RESPECTED

How the Stars have used their love for each other to affect positive change is their true legacy, says those closest to the couple.
The NFL has long revered the Starrs, and the Athletes in Action/Bart Starr Award given every year at the Super Bowl breakfast — one of the most respected awards inside the fraternity of the NFL — is just as much a tribute to Cherry as it is Bart.

According to the NFL, the award "was created to honor the NFL player who best exemplifies outstanding character and leadership in the home, on the field and in the community." Bart Starr represents those qualities: "an individual of impeccable character who has served his family and community faithfully through the years and is a role model for athletes and business people alike."

No two people are more respected in the NFL than Cherry and Bart Starr.

A friend of the family for 25 years, NFL commissioner Roger Goodell calls the Starrs regularly to check in with Cherry and receive updates on Bart's condition. Archie Manning called the Starrs after his son Peyton won the Super Bowl in what was most likely the final game of his career.

Universal admiration for the Starrs comes not through their fame, but how they have treated others through the years. That compassion for others is an extension of how they treat each other.

"We just really love each other, and respect each other and treat each other with dignity," Cherry said.

For Bart Starr Jr., watching his parents interact with one another through the years has left a lasting impression. He hopes others will also be inspired by his parents' love for one another.

"That's one of the great mysteries on Valentine's Day," Bart Starr Jr. said. "Why is it sometimes we're willing to treat people we see just every now and then with a long lost hug, but then someone you're nearly married to or actually married to, all of sudden familiarity becomes something negative? That's inexplicable.

"Why shouldn't the familiarity of someone you love and cherish, why shouldn't that become even more of an elevating and energizing quality rather than something less? And I think my mom and dad have definitely done that."