

# UT Martin's Campus Scene

Volume XLVIV, Winter/Spring 2011



## **Our Backyard Town** A tribute to Mike Barnett

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University Celebrate  
30-year Partnership**

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**New President of The  
University of Tennessee  
visits UT Martin**



**Dr. Thomas Rakes**  
UT Martin Chancellor

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**UT Martin continues to enjoy recognitions from national sources such as a ranking of number 17 among public, southern master's institutions from U.S. News & World Report as well as one of the "Best Buys" in the Southeast.**

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The 2010-11 academic year is well under way at UT Martin, and I am pleased to report on a number of activities and achievements that are cause for celebration. The UT Board of Trustees recently named Dr. Joe DiPietro as the 24th president of the UT System. A familiar face around UT, Dr. DiPietro previously served as Chancellor of the UT Institute of Agriculture and boasts a proven track record as a team-oriented leader not only at UT but also at two previous land grant institutions. Thanks to the leadership of Interim President Jan Simek, UT has been well-positioned for the future.

UT Martin celebrated another record enrollment in fall 2010 with 8,469 students enrolled on campus, online or at one of our extended-campus centers and sites. This enrollment growth represents a 4.5 percent increase in headcount and is not our only indicator of success. UT Martin continues to enjoy recognitions from national sources, such as a ranking of number 17 among public, southern master's institutions from U.S. News & World Report, as well as one of the "Best Buys" in the Southeast.

During homecoming activities in October, we celebrated with several events including a naming ceremony for the Nick and Cathy Dunagan Alumni Center in honor of UT Martin Chancellor Emeritus Dunagan and his wife, Cathy, and a special dedication ceremony of a lamp post and bench near Centennial Court in the Quad in memory of former Chancellor Larry T. McGehee. We also recognized the accomplishments of several distinguished alumni with awards – look for more information about our award recipients in this issue of Campus Scene.

This year commemorates the 30th anniversary of the official partnership between Hirosaki University and UT Martin. Our international relationship is among the oldest and most successful institutional partnerships in Tennessee. In recognition of this significant milestone, I was honored to be hosted in Hirosaki by President Masahiko Endo in August, and in October, to be able to return the favor when President

and Mrs. Endo traveled to Martin to participate in our homecoming events.

I am pleased to report that our All-Steinway Campaign is unfolding as we strive to become one of only 120 All-Steinway institutions worldwide. We anticipate that this goal will be reached within the next year, thanks to the support of all those who have contributed to this project.

During the most recent special session of the Tennessee General Assembly, the Complete College Tennessee Act of 2010 was passed. This trend-setting legislation will provide incentives to move higher education in our state to an outcome-based model and thereby encourage institutions to focus more directly upon student success than the current enrollment-linked funding formula. Although this new model will challenge us to refocus resources and priorities to meet funding formula requirements, I believe that students enrolled at UT Martin will, over time, be well served by the implementation of an outcome-based funding model.

The budget outlook isn't as promising to report. We are planning for a possible 1 to 3 percent budget reduction in state assistance effective July 2011. This action may be avoided if state revenues continue to improve, but we must prepare for this possibility. To date, we have experienced budget cuts approaching 30 percent in state appropriations during the past three years. In real terms, that figure reflects an actual reduction in state support that amounts to \$272,000 per month.

Although we have much to celebrate, we also face continuing challenges primarily related to budget issues that have a direct impact on academic programs, services and employee compensation. However, as a result of operating efficiencies, careful budget planning, private support, increased enrollment and the ongoing hard work of faculty and staff, our campus successfully moves forward. Working together, UT Martin faculty and staff continue to improve programs and services for our students, as well as provide important research and outreach within this region and beyond.

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# UT Martin's Campus Scene

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## WELCOME TO OUR BACKYARD TOWN BED AND BREAKFAST IN MARTIN

By Rita Mitchell

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**In Memoriam:  
This Campus Scene  
feature about Our Back-  
yard Town was written  
before the death of Mike  
Barnett on Nov. 27, 2010.  
The bed and breakfast in  
Martin showcases his love  
of history and a lifetime  
of collecting.**

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If you had mentioned the term “bed and breakfast” to Mike (‘74) and Cathy Barnett 15 years ago, the Martin, Tenn., couple admit that they wouldn’t have had any idea what you were talking about. That’s hard to imagine about a couple who have operated Our Backyard Town Bed and Breakfast since 1998.

“We have been to some bed and breakfasts since we’ve opened ours, and we definitely know we are doing this right,” Cathy said. She added that many B&Bs, obviously, are only in it for the money, “but we enjoy our guests. We’ve met some of the nicest people from all over the world.”

The four-acre bed and breakfast suspended in time – the 1930s – gives new meaning to the business term value-added. The couple remodeled the home place of Mike’s grandparents, the late L.E. and Clara Puckett, who located their family and a sawmill in Martin during the Great Depression. Then Mike and Cathy began transforming other existing structures on the property and filling them with Mike’s lifetime collections. Over the years, they’ve added period pieces from estate sales, auctions and individuals in the region.

Visitors who stay in The Davy Crockett, The Lincoln Log Cabin or the Train Station, all private cabins, “live” in Our Backyard Town. Clint Riley (‘01), Cathy’s son, who works at the B&B and also operates a pottery shop in Martin, helped Mike disassemble six log cabins for enough wood to build two of the cabins and part of the third.

But don’t let the cabin names fool you. During their stay guests not only have the amenities that are bed and breakfast hallmarks – great food, relaxed, comfortable rooms and specialty linens and bath products – they get a private tour of the town that can take as long as they want to linger over a childhood toy or a good memory.

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“On the tour, people say, ‘Oh, my grandmother had one of those,’ or ‘I saw that on the *Waltons* (TV show that depicted life during the Depression),” said Mike. “They can relate to something we have in the collection.”

Complete with hardware, grocery and toy stores, drugstore with antique soda fountain, a café, hotel, barbershop, feed mill, service station and wedding chapel, the structures, furnishings and fixtures are authentic. Each building is packed with period products from canned goods and notions to antique tools and toys. Mannequins, dressed in outfits and uniforms from the era, stand waiting for customers.

Some of the most interesting features are the 27 mint-condition antique cars maintained in a series of buildings on the perimeter of the property. Cowboy movie star “Hoot” Gibson’s 1931 Cadillac LaSalle is displayed along with the oldest model, a 1911 Maxwell Roadster. A 1930 Ford Deluxe and 1939 Packard Super 8 Victoria Convertible also are part of the collection that Mike and his father, the late Charles “Shorty” Barnett, shared.

After practicing on a host of friends and family, Mike and Cathy opened Our Backyard Town to the public. Mike has continued to own and operate Puckett

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The antique car collection is housed in buildings on the perimeter of the property while the interior of the “town” boasts a grocery store, café and drugstore, among other businesses.



The “Martin Feed Mill” has the display cases, signage and products of a 1930s establishment that easily transport a visitor back in time.



Accommodations at Our Backyard Town Bed and Breakfast range from The Davy Crockett, The Lincoln Log Cabin to the Train Station, all private cabins. They are complete with all the amenities that guests expect in any bed and breakfast – cozy rooms, fine linens, specialty bath products – but also are appealing for the charm of yesteryear. One of the many treasures displayed is a gift from a Japanese guest. The four tiny perfume bottles were hand-painted – from the inside.

*Continued from page 5*

Lumber Co., remodeling and redecorating Our Backyard Town on days off and weekends.

Our Backyard Town was featured on public television's Tennessee Crossroads in 2003. "After that, we had so many guests stay here we couldn't accommodate them," Cathy said. That's when plans were made for additional cabins.

"All I knew to do was cook like my mother and grandmother and try to please the guests," Cathy said. "My grandmother could make a meal out of just nothing."

Mike, she added, takes guests on tours of the backyard and tells them how it all got started – how they began unpacking his numerous collections and realized they had an amazing opportunity.

In fact, it was a fire in the barn that really led to the display. "A lot of stuff burned up, and Mike saw how, just like that, ... his material things could vanish," Cathy said. "I told him there was no use in having this stuff in boxes if you can't enjoy it."

When the couple finished repairing the barn, "he said he'd always wanted a place outside that was covered to work on cars, so we made the front of

*Continued on next page*



Cowboy movie star "Hoot" Gibson's 1931 Cadillac LaSalle is displayed at Our Backyard Town, along with 26 other antique cars collected by Mike Barnett and his father, the late Charles "Shorty" Barnett.

the barn look like a service station.” When Mike was pleased with the outcome of that project, Cathy said he asked her, “What can we do next?” ‘Next’ was the drugstore because Cathy had purchased an old-fashioned soda fountain, a popular fixture in drugstores of that era. Then came the barbershop, tobacco store and post office, grocery store and so on. “We had three children in college . . . , so we stayed at home and played in the backyard,” she said.

“The majority of our collection is from the surrounding territory (Western Kentucky and West Tennessee), and the majority of it is original,” Mike said.

“It was much easier to collect 40 years ago. There were not as many people hunting it,” he said of the antique fixtures, furniture and accessories. He added that the stores are set up as if the shopkeepers “just got up and left. These buildings are set up with all the minute details that would have been in the buildings. . . . These stores are reminiscent of the good old days.”

“He’ll never get through remodeling,” she said, ticking off a list of his current projects. And that’s good news for some of the guests who return to stay at Our Backyard Town year after year.

The fact that their B&B is located in a college town makes for additional challenges such as the time they hosted a Japanese justice and his wife on two occasions while their son attended the University of Tennessee at Martin. Since they did not speak English, their son served as interpreter of not only the language, but also the culture, food and history his parents experienced at Our Backyard Town.

During the second visit, the father presented the Barnetts with four tiny perfume bottles. “They are hand painted from the inside and display the four seasons,” she said. “I was just very impressed that he would bring such a gift for just sharing our backyard with him.”

More recently 21 visitors from France, who did not speak English, came to Martin to visit relatives and stayed at the B&B. Once again, a family member translated phrases, “country” cooking and Southern hospitality.

The challenge of operating a bed and breakfast with the potential of being “on” for guests all the time in a very personal atmosphere is daunting in itself. The Barnetts also challenge themselves by continuing to reflect and replay history in Our Backyard Town. **UTM**





## CHUCK LATHAM ASSOCIATES REACHES FOR THE TOP IN PET SUPPLY INDUSTRY

By Bud Grimes

Chuck Latham ('78) had no sooner proposed to his wife, Kathy, than he told her that he had quit his job to start a new venture. If she didn't know it by then, Kathy was about to marry a risk taker and visionary who later turned the worst of financial circumstances into a successful national business. Today, Colorado-based Chuck Latham Associates is reaching new markets as the company celebrates 25 years of serving the pet supply industry.

Owning a business that bears his name wasn't an early goal for Latham, who was raised on a hog farm in Hardeman County and graduated from Middleton High School. He remembers that he attended UT Martin largely because his dad wanted him to, and he had several friends from Future Farmers of America also attending. His older sister, Carla ('76), earned an education degree and now teaches in Bolivar. As an animal science major, Latham dreamed of becoming a veterinarian, and UT Martin was a good place to begin.

"I remember getting this great education in my core animal science classes due to the great relation-

ships with my professors, whether it was Dr. Robbie (Niels "Doc" Robinson) or Dr. Gresham (Dr. Jerry Gresham). I was close to both of them," he said. "And then there was Mr. (Lang) Unger over in history, and I have this love of history today because of him, the way he taught." Latham was active in Greek life as a member of the Phi Sigma Kappa Fraternity, and he stays in contact with several fraternity brothers today.

He headed to Knoxville after graduation to work while he sought admission to the UT College of Veterinary Medicine. However, in the midst of that process, he received a call from the U.S. Department of Agriculture about a position that gave him several relocation choices, one of which was Colorado. He'd been on a ski trip with Phi Sig brothers to Colorado, was impressed with what he saw, and reasoned, "Stay here (in Colorado), young, single, have lots of fun, or move back to Middleton and feed hogs and drive a tractor," he said. "There was a little bit of a motivation factor."

Latham moved to Colorado and, some time later after working for the USDA and a veterinary

*Continued on next page*

supplies distributor, he was asked to represent a company selling a new medical syringe for cattle. This is when he asked Kathy to marry him, and right after giving her the engagement ring, he told her, "Oh by the way, I'm quitting my job today." He added, "We sold some wedding presents to pay for our honeymoon, borrowed money from my father-in-law – everybody needs to do that. My father-in-law was a great banker, but I also gotta tell you, he was a very tough banker."

Chuck Latham Associates began as a manufacturer's rep business, primarily selling animal health and pet supplies. Today, CLA is a retail sales, service and marketing company with major customers that include PetSmart and PETCO. His relationship with PetSmart goes back to when he remembers writing early PetSmart purchase orders on a card table in the back of the first store. Today, CLA has approximately 1,100 employees across the U.S. and Canada and will likely expand into Puerto Rico in 2011.

CLA also works with large consumer-package goods companies such as Hill's Science Diet, Del Monte Foods and Nestle. The company has Tennessee ties in Knoxville-based Radio Systems Corp., which operates under the brand name PetSafe. This company produces "invisible fences," bark collars, dog doors and related pet products. Company chairman and CEO, Randy Boyd (UTK '79), and his father, Tom, are longtime friends and business associates. "It's been a fun ride. His dad owned a company called Fi-Shock, which (is) an electric fencing company, and he was one of my very first product lines," Latham said.

In 25 years of business, Chuck and his company have experienced far more good days than bad, but no business is immune from disaster. Four years ago, in a matter of months, CLA lost a major client and also had an employee make a costly error. "We made a mistake, and we have a belief – we say, 'Look if we screw up, it's our mistake,' and we wrote the customer a check, and I'll tell you what, it put us into a real financial hurt," he said. "We had to ask employees to take pay cuts, and we're worried whether we're going to be in business the next day."

Chuck credits his employees with bringing the company back stronger than ever from those dark times. "We tell everybody it's about the people, as our product is people, and we focus on having the very best," he said. "And if you have the best people out there, you can get through anything."

CLA prides itself on giving clients "peace of mind" as the company's reputation is built on strong customer assurances. "We have a guarantee that we're

going to execute at 99.7 percent and always have a quality score of four on a scale of one to five," he said. "That just separates us." The company also guarantees to resolve a customer problem within 24 hours. Latham remembered his dad saying, "I expect you to make a mistake, but I expect you to fix it ... and learn from that mistake," and that's the number one thing that we tell everybody."

These business practices have earned the company national recognition. Latham read a book several years ago called "The Great Game of Business" by Jack Stack. The author says that the path to business success is to place the emphasis on the employee, share all financials and create open-book management. "And I bought into that," he said. CLA applied for the first time last year for an award that recognizes companies that are leaders in following this philosophy. CLA was among the top six finalists, placing the company in a good position to win next year.

With years of 90-hour workweeks and recent financial challenges behind him, Chuck is focused more on his family (Kathy and Chuck have three daughters) and helping others, including a recently completed term as president of PetSmart Charities. "I think if you're successful, you really need to give back to the community and what made you successful," he said. CLA is also very involved in the charity, Wine to Water, whose focus is building wells to bring fresh water to Third World countries.

He might have refocused, but after 25 years, employees and customers need not worry about Latham's interest in CLA. The goal five years ago was to triple the business, he said, and today the company is close to realizing this goal. "I believe I have one more triple in me. I'm 54 ... and I believe I can triple it one more time."

Latham never takes for granted where he's been and what he's accomplished. "It's a great life I have," he said. "God has blessed me greatly." He probably won't recommend starting a business without a job and no money in the bank, but when you have vision, courage and a plan, great things can happen, as they have for Chuck Latham. **UTM**

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Chuck Latham Associates began as a manufacturer's rep business, primarily selling animal health and pet supplies. Today, CLA is a retail sales, service and marketing company with major customers that include PetSmart and PETCO.

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# UT MARTIN, HIROSAKI UNIVERSITY CELEBRATE 30-YEAR PARTNERSHIP

By Rita Mitchell

**“Our university has and continues to benefit from this partnership and others that serve to link UT Martin with people and cultures around the globe.”**

Agreements are signed to facilitate experiences and opportunities for each partner, but the work of educational and cultural exchanges is carried out “people to people.”

Chancellor Tom Rakes traveled during summer to Japan for the first of several events marking a 30-year exchange partnership with Hirosaki University. The celebration culminated with Dr. Masahiko Endo, Hirosaki University president, visiting UT Martin during homecoming in October. Thirty-five UT Martin students and 21 faculty members have participated in the exchanges.

Making the Hirosaki trip with Dr. Rakes were Sandra Baker, retired UT Martin International Programs/International Admissions director, and Kyoko Hammond, UT Martin lecturer of Japanese.

“Our university has and continues to benefit from this partnership and others that serve to link UT Martin with people and cultures around the globe,” said Rakes. In August, at a formal ceremony held at Hirosaki University, Rakes received an honorary doctorate presented by President Endo.

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Dr. Jan Simek, left, University of Tennessee interim president, and Dr. Tom Rakes, right, are pictured with Dr. Masahiko Endo, Hirosaki University president, who visited UT Martin during homecoming and marked a 30-year exchange partnership between the two universities. President Endo was presented with the Chancellor's Medallion during the annual Alumni Awards Banquet.

UT Martin and Hirosaki University entered into a formal university relationship in 1980 to foster educational exchanges, improve understanding between the United States and Japan, promote and support the exchange of faculty, administrators and students and subsequently develop cultural exchange programs.

As a result of the success of the relationship, UT Martin went on to use this original agreement as a model for other partnerships in Europe, Brazil, China and Korea. Today, UT Martin has agreements with 17 university education groups in eight countries.

“Along with Sandra Baker and Kyoko Hammond, I was able to experience first-hand the benefits and global importance made possible through our interaction with the faculty, staff and students at Hirosaki University,” said Rakes.

President Endo and a delegation from Hirosaki University were guests at the Alumni Awards Banquet, as UT Martin celebrated homecoming. He was presented with a Chancellor’s Medallion for his professional manner, support and dedication

to international engagement through multiple partnerships and involvement of faculty and student exchanges as reflected in the 30-year partnership between UT Martin and Hirosaki University. **UTM**



Chancellor Tom Rakes, center, and President Masahiko Endo, of Hirosaki University, hold a “Statement of Affiliation” signed in 1980 establishing a partnership between the universities. Others are, from left, Nobuyoshi Miura, Hirosaki International Students Exchange Department chief; Dr. Shuichi Kuramata, Hirosaki International Exchange Center director; and Dr. Jerald Ogg, UT Martin vice chancellor for academic affairs.



Chancellor Tom Rakes, fourth from left, received an honorary doctorate during a ceremony last summer at Hirosaki University. It was presented by Hirosaki University President Dr. Masahiko Endo, fourth from right. Rakes visited Hirosaki as part of the celebration of the 30-year exchange partnership between the two universities. With him were Kyoko Hammond, third from left, UT Martin lecturer of Japanese; and Sandra Baker, third from right, retired UT Martin International Programs/International Admissions director.



## ON THE FRONT LINES OF A DISASTER

By Bud Grimes

Drew Wirwa casts off the line to launch the twin-v 24-foot boat to motor to North Breton, part of Breton National Wildlife Refuge.

**D**rew Wirwa (UTM '06, UTK '09) and other U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service staff members were at sea May 7 some 50 miles off the Louisiana coast. It was more than two weeks after the Deepwater Horizon explosion that occurred April 20 in the Gulf of Mexico. As they surveyed the waters, their worst fears were realized – they saw oil from the gushing well rolling in on the waves, headed toward the Chandeleur Islands.

This discovery opened a new chapter in Wirwa's young career as assistant manager for the Breton, Delta and Bayou Sauvage National Wildlife Refuges in Lacombe. The subsequent weeks saw Wirwa and countless others working to minimize wildlife and land damage along the Louisiana coast from the largest oil spill in U.S. history.

Wirwa's preparation began early in life for the tragedy unfolding before him. He comes by his appreciation for wildlife management and the environment honestly as his father, Carl (UTK '75), who attended UT Martin, is a 32-year veteran of the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency and is responsible for wildlife management areas in Dyer, Gibson and Crockett counties in West Tennessee.

His brother, Nick (UTM '03), is a biologist at St. Catherine's Creek National Wildlife Refuge Complex in Natchez, Miss. Drew and Nick's mother, Carol (UTM '74, UTK '75), a Crockett County Middle School librarian, isn't involved in the wildlife management profession, but she rounds out the family's UT Martin connection.

Wirwa earned his bachelor's degree in natural resources management at UT Martin and his master's degree in wildlife and fisheries at UT Knoxville. His graduate work focused on shorebird and waterfowl use of the Kentucky Reservoir during drawdown. While in Martin and Knoxville, he worked on wildlife refuges in the Student Career Experience Program (SCEP), a USFWS co-op program. After earning his graduate degree, he went to work in spring 2009 at Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge in southeast Georgia as a wildlife refuge specialist. Four months later, he accepted his current position at the Southeast Louisiana Refuges Complex in Lacombe, located on the north shore of Lake Pontchartrain.

As assistant manager for three of eight refuges in the sprawling complex, Wirwa has administrative

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responsibilities for real property and equipment and tools; performs data collection in the field; and assists with the special-use permits that are issued on the refuge. He also works on marsh restoration projects. Each complex has its own distinct features. At 25,000 acres, Bayou Sauvage, located in the New Orleans city limits, is the largest urban national wildlife refuge in the nation. Programming includes environmental education and interpretive programs with area schools and public use of the refuge.

Delta is a 49,000-acre Mississippi Delta marsh east of Venice and involves significant oil and gas management. He said that more than 60 special-use permits for oil and gas operations were issued on Delta in the recent year. The USFWS owns the surface rights, but it doesn't own the mineral or subsurface rights. Some subsurface rights are owned federally by the Bureau of Land Management, while others are privately owned. "Oil companies can come in and mine those minerals, but we have to administer the surface resources and protect the refuge as much as possible," he said. "So we do that through the special-use permit process."

Breton, established in 1904 and the second oldest refuge in the National Wildlife Refuge System,

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*photo by Tom Mackenzie, USFWS*

A brown pelican flying, with containment boom in background. Booms were placed to help deflect oil from 1,300 nesting brown pelicans.



*photo by Tom Mackenzie, USFWS*

Wirwa counting brown pelican nests before the potential impact of incoming oil from the Deepwater Horizon spill.



Wirwa making his way across a lagoon to inspect the status of 1,300 nesting brown pelicans at North Island, Breton NWR, May 3, 2010.

*Continued from page 13*

is 1,100 acres post-Katrina and includes all of the Chandeleur Islands, a barrier island chain that runs north and south to the east of New Orleans. This is designated as a wilderness area, and much of USFWS's work involves maintaining the wilderness characteristics of the islands. A pelican banding program is also in place at the refuge, which in 2010 banded 1,100 pelicans to monitor survival rates and dispersal. Wirwa said that 70 percent of Breton's land base was lost during Hurricane Katrina.

In a strange coincidence, Wirwa's regular duties were already interrupted before the Deepwater Horizon explosion with the cleanup of a 400-barrel oil spill that occurred in early April at the Delta Refuge. This overlapped with response to the Deepwater Horizon spill when it happened, so the USFWS was already in a lower-level response mode. When they learned of the Horizon spill, nobody understood the extent of the disaster, so the first response teams were small. "It wasn't a concern initially, because we were told that there was no sign of oil released at all," he recalled.

The situation changed quickly as more about the oil spill became known. They knew that the oil was coming, so Wirwa's first assignment "was to fly the Chandeleur chain and do (an) aerial survey of the seabird breeding colonies" as these birds begin nesting in April. "We were identifying the priority areas such as pelican nesting colony islands and getting those areas protected as much as we could, and that involved putting boom around them," he said. Obtaining boom (floating barriers) and establishing protection around priority areas was accomplished in cooperation with British Petroleum (BP) contractors. The boom did play an important role in preventing oil from reaching the nesting colonies on Breton, Wirwa said.

The refuge staff's role evolved in April and May as the scope of the disaster was better understood. Four to six staff members worked an average of 12 to 14 hours daily, seven days a week, beginning in April. Then came their first encounter with the oil May 7 at the Chandeleurs, and everything changed. "We were the only ones out there," he recalled. "This is ... 50 miles offshore, and we saw the oil actually rolling in. And there was boom out around this island, but ... the waves were to the point where a lot of it was washing over. And we could just see streams of it coming in, and we watched it." All he could describe was "a really

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helpless feeling” as he and his colleagues knew that much more oil was coming.

Impact from the oil began in mid-May when it started hitting the shoreline. Work from that point involved cleanup and maintaining the booms for the likely arrival of more oil as it was unknown when the well would be capped. This continued through August, when they started picking up booms “and really refining the cleanup process of the oil on the shoreline, in the marsh and on the beaches.”

Nothing in his background prepared Wirwa for what was happening. “I mean ‘helpless’ is the best way to describe it,” he said. “All we did that day (May 7) is just take pictures ... and document everything as best we could. ...” He added, “Trying to predict the next few months was just what we focused on, trying to predict what would happen and how to better mitigate these impacts.”

Although the oil well was finally capped in mid-July, life for Wirwa and other USFWS staff members isn’t completely back to normal. Some have returned to their regular duties, but he is among those still involved in cleanup operations for the Chandeleurs (as of early November). “The Chandeleurs were hit relatively hard by the oil patties that washed in, and so we’ve got a big crew of contractors ... going out there every day that the weather permits,” he said, “and we’re going out

there with them to identify areas that need cleaning and just working from north to south down the 22-mile island chain and getting the significant areas cleaned up as best we can. And that will continue more than likely for the next few months.”

Wirwa said that he learned much “from the day-to-day operations of the incident command system and how that works in a national disaster.” He added, “I guess in general, to step back, I really learned about the resiliency of the people down there in the gulf, as well as the ecosystem. It was interesting, but pretty spectacular to watch and be part of.” Nobody had seen anything like this spill before, “But now we’ve got this experience. Yeah, I definitely feel like we’re much more capable of handling something like this if it happens again.”

As for the region’s wildlife, Wirwa said that much work is needed to determine the extent of the damage. “Researchers are currently determining ... proportions or percentages of wildlife populations that were impacted,” he said. “Of course, we’ll be studying the ... indirect effects or impacts for decades.”

Drew Wirwa uses adjectives such as “new,” “exciting” and “rewarding” to describe his work. He can now add “historic” to this list of descriptors, as he has been on the frontlines of helping America recover from one of her greatest environmental tragedies. **UTM**

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**The refuge staff’s role evolved in April and May as the scope of the disaster was better understood.**

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## **Update: Nov. 30, 2010**

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife employees responding in the Gulf region: 59**

**Total responders: 3,294**

**Oiled coastline:** Louisiana: 335.1 miles oiled, heavy to moderate oil on 69.4 miles; Mississippi: 83.6 miles oiled, heavy to moderate oil on 3.4 miles; Alabama: 64.8 miles oiled, heavy to moderate oil on 0.3 miles; Florida: 64.8 miles oiled, heavy to moderate oil on 0.4 miles.

**The following estimated amounts of oiled debris have been removed from sensitive lands since Aug. 16:** Florida: 855,022 lbs., Alabama: 550,080 lbs., Mississippi: 1,916,517 lbs.

Clean-up activities have been running continuously, weather permitting, on Department of Interior lands in Mississippi, Alabama and Florida. Many of the DOI lands are approaching a “No Further Treatment” designation, and will transition into a Maintenance & Monitoring Program for the foreseeable future.

**Bon Secour National Wildlife Refuge:** Four hand crews at Perdue and Ft. Morgan Units continue to remove submerged oil and remove tarballs from beaches, averaging 6,000 lbs. of oil/day. Refuge staff continue to respond to multiple sea turtle strandings.

# POSITIVE STEPS: BALLET MEMPHIS DANCE OUTREACH TAKES TROUBLED TEEN GIRLS AS PARTNERS

By Barbara Bradley

Reprinted with permission from *The Commercial Appeal*, August 3, 2010

Nikki Lewis, featured in this story, is a 2008 UT Martin graduate with a BFA: Dance Education.

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**They are allowed to choose to participate in dance, because “we want to help them make their own decisions.”**

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The students, all girls, most in their teens, walked single-file to dance class, where they were asked how they were feeling and if they wanted to dance. They all did, except one, who sat by the door, put her head down and kept it there.

The rest, attentive, sat in a circle around dance teacher Nikki Lewis, who led them in stretching exercises and then asked them to flex their feet. They all flexed, except one who sat immobile.

Dance class was starting off well.

Lewis, 24, is a teacher with Dance Avenue, the outreach and education arm of Ballet Memphis that is conducting the 10-week program that began in June, at the Girls Center for Intensive Residential Treatment at the Bartlett campus of Youth Villages.

Dance Avenue has not worked with troubled girls before, said Karl Condon, associate artistic director, and Girls Center staff say they've never had a sustained dance class. The girls learn a little ballet, along with African dances, modern, step and hip-hop. The partnership seems to be working.

The girls, dressed in whatever was comfortable, imitated Lewis' simple steps well enough, but when Lewis put on African drum music, the effect was electric. Smiles spread and chatter rose. Hip-hop especially energized them. Before Lewis could demonstrate a backward move, one girl shot back, hips swiveling, feet balletic, causing the others to erupt in laughter.

Becca Benton, a recreational therapist, said people from the community have taught yoga and exercise classes, “but this is by far the one they've been most receptive to. Maybe it's the music. They're so encouraging to each other in this setting. It surprises me.”

The girls will don simple costumes and perform for mentors and family at the center August 20.

The Girls Center serves 64 girls, many seriously troubled, said Traci Carr, a residential counselor. They come from Tennessee and other states, some referred through other treatment programs that didn't work. “Most have had some type of trauma, sexual or physical abuse, or traumatic grief,” she said. “Some have self-harming behavior or they're physically aggressive.” They live in housing organized in quadrants and go to school on campus.

They are allowed to choose to participate in dance, because “we want to help them make their own decisions,” said Carr. Participation in various activities earns points, which gets them privileges.

*Continued on next page*

Any of 16 girls may choose to attend the classes held twice a week for an hour. Lewis never knows who will attend. It doesn't seem to matter. Her manner is cheerful and patient.

Lewis is a former Ballet Memphis School scholarship student who earned a degree in dance education from the University of Tennessee, Martin.

"I tell them to take the frustration out in movement. It makes the movement more expressive," she said.

"She's really nice," said Felicia Limon, 16, one of the residents. "I think I'm doing good."

"The hardest part is leaving," said Brittany Mackey, 14.

Rebecca Hancock, director of the Girls Center, said the class was funded by Youth Villages. She hopes they can repeat it with other girls, but they need a sponsor.

Issues have been rare during the course, except once when two girls got into an altercation. They were separated.

On this day the girl who declined to flex her foot gamely struggled to follow the class for about half an hour, and then walked off the floor. She laid down and curled up in a small enclave and kicked angrily several times at a door. The class continued, barely missing a beat.

A staff member quietly walked over to "process" with her. That meant to help her identify the source of her feelings and find better ways to deal with it. She calmed down, but did not rejoin the group.

A number of girls tired during class and dropped out to sit on benches and watch the others. Some rejoined later.

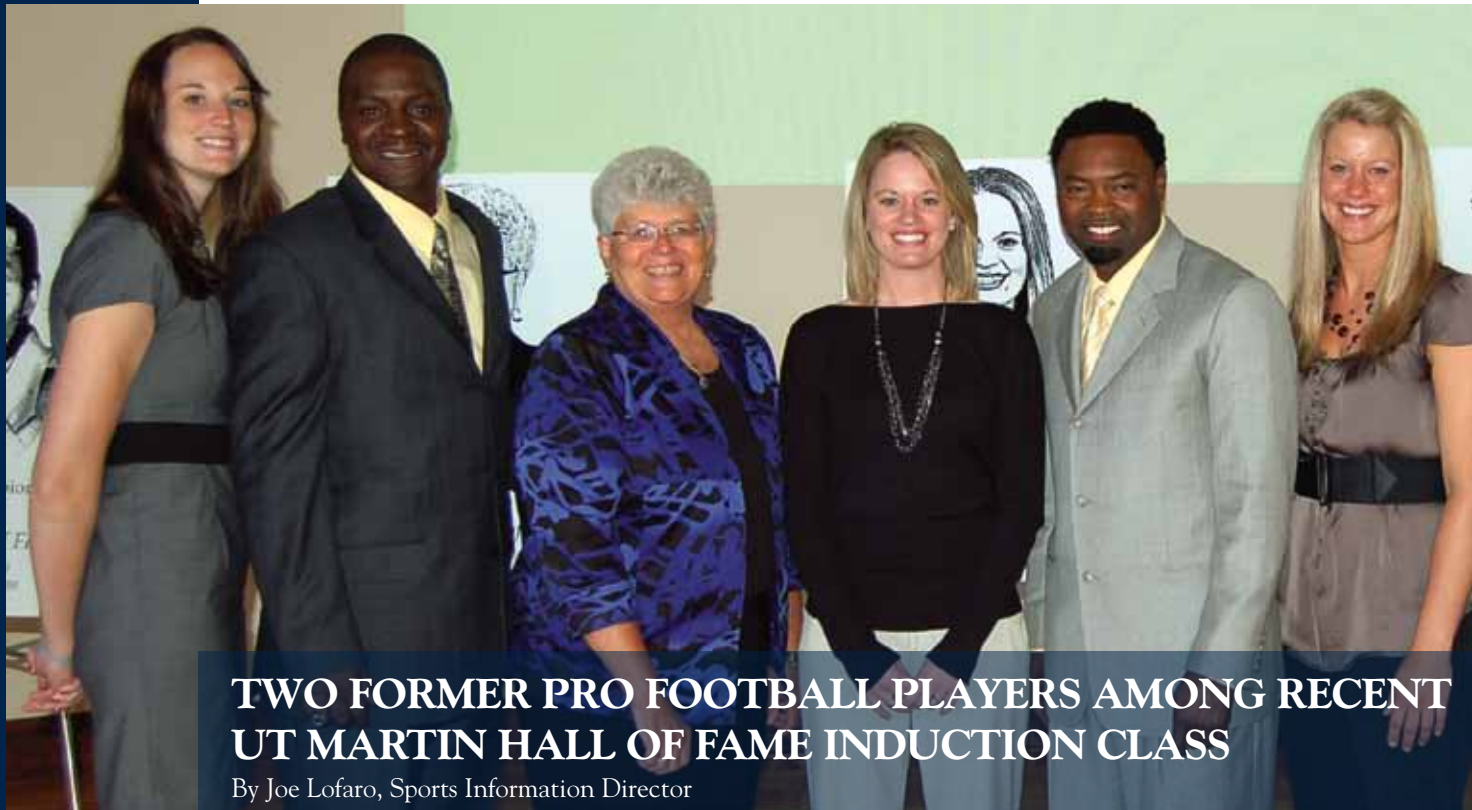
At the end of class, well after the line formed to leave, three girls, who had never sat down, were still dancing.

When Benton walked the line, asking girls how they felt, thumbs went up. **UTM**



*Photograph by Alan Spierman, courtesy of The Commercial Appeal.*

Nikki Lewis (right) of Ballet Memphis Dance Avenue outreach program leads residents of Youth Villages in Bartlett in a class that is a first-time experience for the Girls Center there and the ballet company.



## TWO FORMER PRO FOOTBALL PLAYERS AMONG RECENT UT MARTIN HALL OF FAME INDUCTION CLASS

By Joe Lofaro, Sports Information Director

Members of the recent UT Martin Athletics Hall of Fame Class included (from left to right) Rachel Ahlers (volleyball 1999-02); Tony Champion (football 1981-84); Lin Dunn (Pioneer 1965-69); Kelly Pendleton DeVilder (women's basketball 1998-02); Fred Thomas (football 1995); Lindsey Vicknair (volleyball 1999-02); Carl Summers (wrestling 1969-71); and Cliff Sturdivant (baseball 1969-71).

The University of Tennessee at Martin inducted eight people into the athletics Hall of Fame, including two professional football players, during the 27th annual Letter Winners Club and Hall of Fame Breakfast in the Student Life Center on campus. The induction ceremony was held in conjunction with the university's homecoming activities.

The induction class included Rachel Ahlers (volleyball 1999-02); Tony Champion (football 1981-84); Kelly Pendleton DeVilder (women's basketball 1998-02); Lin Dunn (Pioneer 1965-69); Cliff Sturdivant (baseball 1969-71); Carl Summers (wrestling 1969-71); Fred Thomas (football 1995); and Lindsey Vicknair (volleyball 1999-02).

**Ahlers** helped the UT Martin volleyball team to win back-to-back Ohio Valley Conference regular-season championships in 2001 and 2002, along with an OVC tournament title and a berth in the NCAA tournament in 2002. She was a three-time All-OVC first-team selection. Ahlers graduated ranked No. 2 all-time on the program's career-kills list with 1,196, and she still holds the single-season record for kills in a season with 429 in 2001.

**Champion** was one of the most prolific and productive players in UT Martin football history. He played for head coaches Lynn Amadee and Fred Pickard and was a four-year letterman. He caught 72 passes for 1,531 yards and 14 touchdowns in 25 career games. After UT Martin, he signed a free agent contract with the NFL's Dallas Cowboys. He also played for the San Diego Chargers and Green

Bay Packers. However, Champion is well known for his career in the Canadian Football League, where he played for the Hamilton Tiger-Cats from 1985-88 and 1990-92. The two-time Eastern Division all-star caught 74 passes for 1,216 yards in 1986 and helped the Tiger-Cats win the Grey Cup.

Champion was inducted into the Hall by his daughter and current UT Martin coed Kiara Champion. The former UT Martin wide receiver suffered a heart attack in November 2009, but said he is recovering.

"The most important thing for me was to have Kiara to do this," Champion said.

**DeVilder** was a four-year letterwinner at UT Martin, and she helped the Skyhawks gain a berth in the Ohio Valley Conference Tournament four consecutive seasons. As a freshman, she was a member of the first-ever OVC regular-season championship team that also earned a berth in the Women's National Invitational Tournament (WNIT). She was the recipient of the OVC's 2001 Steve Hamilton Sportsmanship Award.

**Dunn** never played basketball at UT Martin because there were no formal competitive teams for women while she was a student. She played intramural sports and went on to coach in the college ranks for decades at Austin Peay, Ole Miss, Miami and Purdue. She sported a 447-257 win-loss record and a .635 winning percentage. She took teams to the NCAA Tournament seven times and the Final Four once. She began her professional coaching



career with the Portland Power in the American Basketball League in 1996. She served as the head coach and general manager of the Seattle Storm of the WNBA. She was named the head coach of the Indiana Fever in 2007, and she guided the 2009 team to the Eastern Conference Championship.

Dunn thanked former UT Martin women's athletic director Bettye Giles for the courage "she gave me to be so outspoken about women's athletics."

**Sturdivant**, who now lives in Bruceton, played outfield and catcher. He sported a .316 career batting average. He was named UT Martin's most valuable player in 1970 with a .374 batting average, 10 doubles and five home runs. He was also named to the All-Volunteer Scholastic Athletic Conference (VSAC) team in 1970. In 1971, Sturdivant helped UT Martin win the VSAC baseball championship and advance to the NCAA Mideast Regional Tournament.

Former UT Martin baseball coach Roger Shore inducted Sturdivant into the Hall of Fame. "I remember Cliff coming to me and asking for a chance to play baseball," Shore said. "Giving Cliff a chance to play baseball was not the problem. I had a very good catcher already, and I always wanted the best players on the field. So what I did was let Cliff catch one game and play right field the next game." Sturdivant was actually platooning behind the plate with fellow UT Martin Hall of Fame member Mike Fortune.

"What I remember the most about our team was we were a bunch of misfits that fit together," Sturdivant said. "I also remember being a member of the UT Martin baseball team that won a triple-header and being part of the team that played in the NCAA tournament in Marietta, Ohio."

**Summers** wrestled on UT Martin's first wrestling team in 1969-70 and also in 1970-71. He served as the team captain both seasons for head coach Bud Reiselt. He compiled an impressive 14-3 dual-meet record in both the 190-pound class and the heavyweight class. Before Summers wrestled at UT Martin, he served in the United States Marine Corps, where he served in the Vietnam war and was awarded the Navy Cross, two Silver Stars, three Purple Hearts and the Navy and Marine Corps Medal for Bravery.

Summers received two standing ovations during his induction, one for his military service and the other when he explained to the crowd he was battling throat cancer.

"I made lifelong friends here, and I love them all," Summers said. "College was a spectacular moment in my life, and this is the crowning moment."

**Thomas** played one season for the Skyhawks (1995). He earned All-Ohio Valley Conference first-team honors and recorded 69 tackles and four interceptions. He was the 47th pick in the 1996 NFL draft, the highest pick ever in UT Martin history. He was picked by the Seattle Seahawks in the second round. Thomas signed with the New Orleans Saints in the winter of 2000. He received the New Orleans Saints Ed Block Courage Award in 2002. He played in 156 NFL games and started in 80 during 12 seasons. He recorded 424 career solo tackles and 360 total tackles, 13 interceptions and 73 pass deflections. Thomas announced his retirement from the NFL in 2009.

Before Thomas shared a story about his first game in the NFL with the Seattle Seahawks he said, "The people at UT Martin have truly blessed me."

In his first regular season game, Thomas was assigned the task of covering San Francisco receiver Jerry Rice. "My only job was to cover him wherever he went," Thomas said. "I was so nervous, and before the first play, I remember my helmet touching (Rice's) jersey. I was two yards offside."

**Vicknair** helped the UT Martin volleyball team to back-to-back Ohio Valley Conference regular-season championships in 2001 and 2002, along with an OVC tournament title and a berth in the NCAA tournament in 2002. She is the only volleyball player to ever be a four-year All-OVC selection. She graduated as the career-record holder in assists (5,050) and still holds that record by more than 1,700 assists. Vicknair graduated as the OVC all-time assists leader and still ranks No. 4 all-time.

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The University  
of Tennessee  
at Martin  
inducted eight  
people into the  
athletics Hall of  
Fame, including  
two professional  
football players.

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## PRESIDENT DIPIETRO VISITS UT MARTIN CAMPUS



University of Tennessee President Joe DiPietro, center, was in Martin, Oct. 28, as part of a two-day system tour following his election by the UT Board of Trustees as the 24th president. With him are Dr. Jan Simek, left, interim president, and UT Martin Chancellor Tom Rakes.

University of Tennessee President Joe DiPietro made his first official visit to the University of Tennessee at Martin, Oct. 28, and talked about his vision and first steps as the university's 24th president. Previously serving as the UT Institute of Agriculture chancellor, he was elected by the UT Board of Trustees during the fall meeting. He began his new role on Jan. 1, 2011.

"When I look at this university, and I've gotten to know it very well, ... our mission is to educate, to discover and to connect," said DiPietro. "So, you do that very well here in Martin in many ways. You educate your students. Your enrollment is growing. It's a vibrant campus," he said.

He also talked about UT Martin's "connected nature" with initiatives such as the extended-campus centers that joined the Oct. 28 event by webcast from the Martin campus and the WestStar Leadership Program that has been developing leaders across West Tennessee for 22 years. These connections, he said, "are key to our success and the bright future that we have together."

As he establishes his new administration, DiPietro said he will continue what he has always done – build teams. "... I can't tell you how humble I am about that opportu-

nity, but excited." He also will continue to foster relationships with the new governor and other elected officials in Nashville and Washington. Finally, DiPietro said he will push the Complete College Tennessee Act to increase the number of young adults in Tennessee who receive a baccalaureate degree and also support and promote the new UT Foundation, "because fund raising has become more critical for us."

DiPietro said he wants to be aware of what's happening and will spend time on the campuses. "I think that's the best way I'll be equipped to realize what challenges you have, what things you need and how I can best help you as the 24th president of this university."

"People are what make this work and make us great. It's no one individual in a university that makes that happen. It's all of us collectively together. And the university needs to be the centerpiece, not the president."

DiPietro said the university owes a debt of gratitude to Dr. Jan Simek, interim president, and to the board of trustees members, such as Betty Ann Tanner and Crawford Gallimore, "for what they've done in developing a structure that I think will send us to the next level."

Simek also spoke and discussed the presidential search that culminated when the trustees elected DiPietro during the fall meeting. "We really needed somebody who understands who we are – and that's exactly what the board of trustees did," said Simek. "He is perfect, I believe, for the future of the University of Tennessee."

Reflecting on his time as interim president, Simek thanked the UT Martin campus community for its support. He added that getting to know and work with the UT Martin campus community "has been really one of the very greatest parts of the experience that I've had. This is a terrific place. You do a wonderful job."

UT Martin Chancellor Tom Rakes welcomed DiPietro and his wife, Deb, and those attending the event, including UT Trustee Betty Ann Tanner, of Union City, who was accompanied by her husband, Congressman John Tanner, and UT Trustee Crawford Gallimore, of Martin, and his wife, Nancy.

A reception was hosted for the new president following the program. DiPietro departed Martin for a stop at the UT Health Science Center in Memphis to end the first day of his two-day tour of campuses.

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## ALUMNI CENTER NAMED FOR NICK AND CATHY PORTER DUNAGAN



University of Tennessee at Martin Chancellor Emeritus Nick Dunagan and his wife, Cathy, were honored during the homecoming weekend with the naming of the Nick and Cathy Dunagan Alumni Center.

Chancellor Emeritus Nick Dunagan served the University of Tennessee at Martin in a number of leadership roles through the years, capping his career as chancellor from 2001-07. During homecoming, Dunagan and his wife, Cathy, were honored with the naming of the Nick and Cathy Dunagan Alumni Center.

Constructed in 1969 as the Chancellor's Residence, the structure was repurposed in 2008 to accommodate the Chancellors' Suite and the Office of Alumni Relations.

"The Dunagan family has a connection with UT Martin that spans more than 50 years," said Dr. Tom Rakes, UT Martin chancellor, at the dedication ceremony. "The family legacy began with Horace and Sara Dunagan, who first came to UT Junior College after WWII." Rakes went on to say that through the years, the Dunagan family has supported business, honors, agriculture, education and student travel, among other programs. Their support included the Horace and Sara Dunagan Chair of Excellence in Banking. Rakes also recognized all the Dunagan family members in attendance, many of whom are UT Martin alums.

"It's hard to welcome them back because they never really left," said Rakes about Nick and Cathy Dunagan and their service to the university, community and county. He noted that Cathy is serving on the UT Development Council, and Nick currently chairs the Weakley County Economic Development Board and served on the Ned Ray McWherter Monument Commission. "We talk about servant leadership; it's right in front of us."

"It's also fitting that the alumni center be named in honor of Nick and Cathy for their service, not only to the university, but their commitment to the students and alumni for several decades," Rakes said.

Dunagan thanked Chancellor Rakes and the UT Board of Trustees for making the dedication possible. "It's been a wonderful day, and we are very appreciative of this honor." Dunagan added that this year marks the 42nd UT Martin homecoming he and Cathy have attended. "Homecoming 2010 will be very, very special in our hearts for a long, long time.

"None of us get to where we are on our own merits," said Dunagan, who thanked his wife and family for their support of the university. "A day like today makes you appreciate the people who helped you along the way." Reflecting on his UT Martin career, he said, "I really never felt like I had a job." He said he got up each morning, and the "No. 1 purpose was to go out and make a better world for the students."

Dunagan began his work at UT Martin in 1973 as director of development. Some of his job assignments while at the university included executive vice chancellor,

vice chancellor for development and administration and vice chancellor for student affairs.

Before being named the eighth chancellor in April 2001, he also served as interim chancellor three times (1985-86, 1997-98, 2000-01) and as executive director of WestStar, the university's regional leadership program for West Tennessee. Dunagan retired from his position as chancellor in June 2007 and was named chancellor emeritus of UT Martin in September 2007.

Dunagan is also chair of the Volunteer Community Hospital Board of Trustees and was selected as the 2006 Weakley Countian of the Year by the Weakley County Chamber of Commerce. He also received the 2006 Otis L. Floyd Award for Excellence in Administration, presented by the Tennessee College Public Relations Association.

A native of Caruthersville, Mo., Dunagan is a 1968 UT Martin graduate, a 1971 graduate of the University of Missouri School of Law and received a doctorate in higher education administration in 1990 from Vanderbilt University. He is a retired colonel in the Tennessee Army National Guard and is an active member in the Martin First United Methodist Church. Cathy Porter Dunagan, a Humboldt native, also is a UT Martin graduate. They have four grown children and six grandchildren. Three children and their spouses all graduated from UT Martin. Drs. Stan (UT Martin associate professor of geology) and Stephanie Dunagan live in Paris and work in Martin and Paris, respectively; Cody and Glenna Dunagan live and work in Florence, Ala.; and Brett and Tracy VanderMeeden live and work in Madison, Miss. The fourth, Casey, and his wife, Elizabeth, live and work in Washington, D.C. **UTM**

## UT MARTIN FALL ENROLLMENT CONTINUES TO SET RECORDS

UT Martin has more than 8,400 students and continues to set all-time enrollment records in six categories, based on fall 2010 enrollment figures.

A total of 8,469 students were enrolled for the fall semester, an increase from 8,101 recorded for fall 2009.

The fall 2010 total included all-time record fall enrollments for total headcount, undergraduates, dual-enrollment students, transfer students, total credit hours and total full-time equivalent. Public higher education funding is based on fall semester full-time equivalency.

“We continue to experience increasing levels of enrollment interest. I am proud of the high quality of our faculty and staff, who serve to draw increasing numbers of great students,” said Chancellor Tom Rakes.

Based on final figures, this fall’s enrollment was a 4.5 percent increase over fall 2009. Final figures were compiled by the university’s Office of Institutional Research and Planning.

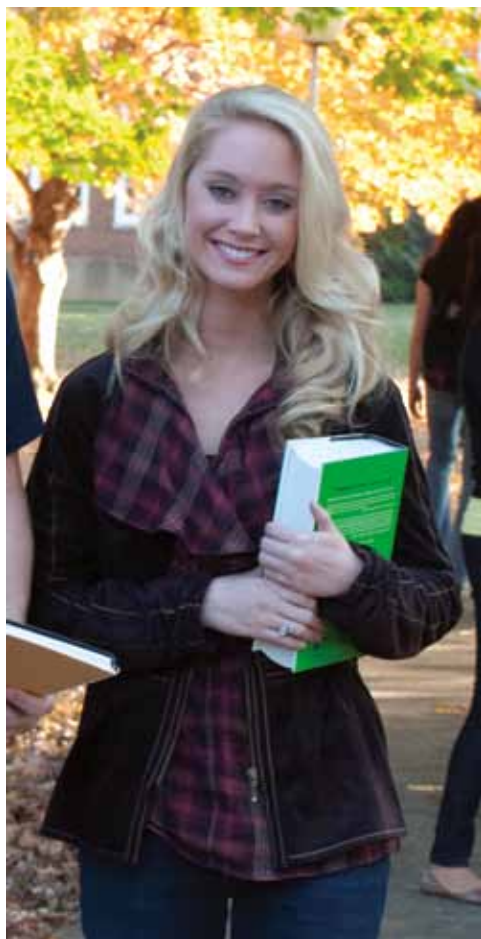
The fall enrollment also reflected 1,255 freshmen on the UT Martin campus. Fall enrollment indicated that first-time freshmen had an average 3.4 high school grade-point average, up from 3.39 in 2009. There were 360 more undergraduate students returning, which represents an 8.3 percent increase. The university also experienced growth in on-campus undergraduate students and online at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

“Our increasing numbers are encouraging, but we continue to focus on academic rigor and the importance of the overall academic and learning atmosphere our students deserve,” said Rakes.

Compared to last year’s totals, UT Martin had 368 more undergraduate and graduate students. There are 112 additional dual-enrollment students, a 12.1 percent increase; and 44 more transfer students, a 7.9 percent increase.

UT Martin began the 2010-11 school year with the announcement that the university advanced in the top-tier ranking for master’s level public universities in the South in the 2011 edition of America’s Best Colleges compiled by U.S. News & World Report. Also, it was announced in August that UT Martin again earned the designation as one of the best colleges and universities in the Southeast, according to The Princeton Review, 2011 Edition. Also, UT Martin is listed for the fifth consecutive year among America’s 100 Best College Buys, a listing compiled by Institutional Research & Evaluation, Inc.

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MARTIN

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– Abbey Stoker  
Biology  
Dresden

[www.utm.edu](http://www.utm.edu)

Dr. Joe DiPietro, the newly elected 24th president of the University of Tennessee, addressed a crowd on the Martin campus on Oct. 28 and talked individually with members of the campus community and area residents. With DiPietro, left, are Dr. S.K. Airee, right, UT Martin professor of chemistry, and Dr. James Hodge (UTM '88, UTK '90, '93), senior scientist and director of the Recombinant Vaccine Group in the Laboratory of Tumor Immunology and Biology, National Cancer Institute, NIH, Bethesda, Md. Hodge was on campus to present a seminar, "Vaccine for Cancer Treatment."



Terry Oliver ('68), of Gleason, Tennessee commissioner of agriculture, receives a plaque from Dr. Jerry Gresham, interim dean, UT Martin College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences, and chair, Department of Agriculture, Geosciences, and Natural Resources. The plaque recognized Oliver for his service to Tennessee agriculture and the university. The commissioner was the keynote speaker for the UT Martin Fellows Research Program and 4-H Centennial Celebration Recognition Dinner held Nov. 18 in the Boling University Center. Also pictured is Whitney Crow, of Atoka, a Fellows Research Program participant.



Faculty members in the UT Martin Department of Agriculture, Geosciences, and Natural Resources, along with Alpha Gamma Rho Fraternity alumni and actives, joined Terry Oliver (center, top row), Tennessee commissioner of agriculture, Nov. 18, to discuss and plan support for the UT Martin Fellows Research Program. The program fosters and enhances undergraduate research through a mentored relationship with a department faculty member. The group met before the UT Martin Fellows Research Program and 4-H Centennial Celebration Recognition Dinner in the Boling University Center. Pictured are (top row left to right) Dr. Tim Burcham, faculty member; George Evans, Tennessee Farmers Cooperative; Joe Brasher (UTM '71, UTK '73), First State Bank, AGR alumnus; Ben Moore ('99), farmer, AGR alumnus; Terry Oliver ('68); John Chester ('00), farmer, AGR alumnus; Mitch Hobby (UTM '92, UTK '95), Tennessee Tractor, LLC, AGR alumnus; Marvin Flatt ('76, '83) Weakley County Schools, AGR alumnus; and Dr. Joey Mehlhorn, faculty member; (bottom row left to right) Justin Hargrove, UT Martin agriculture major and AGR active; Harold J. Smith, UT Martin professor emeritus of animal science; Dr. Jimmy Butler and Richard Shadden, faculty members; and Dr. Jerry Gresham, interim dean, UT Martin College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences, and chair, Department of Agriculture, Geosciences, and Natural Resources.



## NEW UT MARTIN WEB SITE ROLLS OUT IN JANUARY



After four years, it was time for a change. The current UT Martin Web site was implemented in 2006 and, at the time, was a much-needed update to the university's Web presence at [www.utm.edu](http://www.utm.edu). But, much has changed, and a new Web site design will be unveiled in January 2011.

Several things happened at the same time to push the Web site redesign as a university priority. Chief among them were recommendations by STAMATS, a nationally known higher education marketing firm. STAMATS conducted research on university outreach efforts in several areas, including the Web site. The company's research showed that current and prospective students want more interaction when they visit a Web site, more social media integration and more current designs. So, Web site design trends in higher education, along with the need to reach out to current and prospective students and provide them with the experience that they expect and want were the main impetus for the redesign.

New features of the Web site include richer multimedia elements on the homepage, the ability to customize certain homepage elements and a revamped, unified search that includes searching the Web site and the UT Martin phone directory at the same time. Plans for the near future also include incorporating more audio and video on all levels of the Web site and a total revamp of the admissions area to provide students and their parents easier access to the information they need to know about UT Martin.

# UT MARTIN LAUNCHES ALL-STEINWAY CAMPAIGN, WELCOMES NEW PIANOS

*Len Solomons and Brent Duke contributed to this article.*

*Please contact the UT Martin Development Office at 731-881-7620 for additional information or visit [www.utm.edu/steinway](http://www.utm.edu/steinway) to give online.*

UT Martin's more than 35,000 alumni, friends and donors already know that this university is a world-class institution. However, how many times in our history has UT Martin had the opportunity to become one of only 120 in the world? The All-Steinway Campaign will allow this campus to achieve just such a distinction. Currently, only two other public universities in the state of Tennessee have become All-Steinway Schools: ETSU and MTSU. An All-Steinway School is an educational institution in which students perform and are taught mostly on Steinway pianos.

Because of the thoughtful planning and foresight of the Department of Music and the UT Martin administration, only about \$600,000 more is needed in order to reach the goal. This campaign would not be feasible without private support, as well as the commitment of the university. The administration has invested in rebuilding nine pianos over the last seven years, guided by recommendations from the Rev. Elwood Doss, UT Martin's piano technician. Doss is an 18-year veteran who will be traveling to the Steinway factory to become an officially certified tuner with Steinway & Sons. Already major commitments have been made by Bill and Roberta Blankenship, of Sandestin, Fla., who have become avid champions of the cause.

*Continued on next page*



Bill and Roberta Blankenship



A crowd celebrates the delivery of two grand pianos and six vertical faculty studio and student practice room pianos as part of the campaign to become an All-Steinway institution.

As chairpersons of the campaign to become an All-Steinway School, they have purchased a seven-foot grand piano, as well as a number of uprights. When asked to comment on the importance of the campaign, Bill said, "Becoming an All-Steinway school elevates the image of the university. This powerful asset aids in recruitment of stellar music and music education students placing the emphasis on student development."

An additional grand piano was also purchased recently by Robert and Virginia Gibson from Union City in honor of the pianist at their church, Michael Yandell, who is also a UT Martin senior music major. Only 15 additional uprights are now needed in order for UT Martin to reach All-Steinway status. Two additional faculty and practice uprights have been purchased by Betty and Newell Graham, of Union City, and additional uprights by Drs. David Loebbaka and Allison Nelson of Jackson; Charles and Betty Moore, of Baton Rouge, La.; Maurice and Carla Field of Martin; Betty Smith of Union City and her brother Hunter Mountjoy of Halls; Ed Williamson of Pensacola, Fla.; as well as Drs. Ernest and Elaine Harriss.

Dr. Harriss, Department of Music interim chair, has been a key 'player' in this effort. Dr. Harriss

had the opportunity to travel to the Steinway factory in New York to select our Steinway "Model B" grand pianos. After her trip and seeing the first shipment of pianos arrive on campus, Dr. Harriss said, "Becoming an All-Steinway School is one of the most exciting initiatives I've seen during my 40-year association with the university. What a difference it will make in teaching and learning! This campaign shows the value UT Martin places on the arts and affirms that student learning and achievement rank first on this campus."

Gifts of all levels are now being solicited and an 88 Keys Campaign has been launched to invite membership in the giving societies noted. Names can be placed on individual keys or entire pianos in memory or honor of friends or loved ones. Already gifts have been received from UT Martin professor emeritus Dr. Dwight Gatwood and his wife Dianne, Kitty Cannon of Memphis, who established the Cannon Center for the Performing Arts, as well as Ray and Wilma Smith and Dr. Lew and Mary Jo Dougherty of Camden. As co-chairs of the Campaign for Tennessee on the Martin campus, Smith and Dougherty are encouraging all alumni and friends to participate and help to end the campaign in 2011 on a "high note!" **UTM**

## 88 Keys Campaign Giving Societies

Tennessee Society  
(\$25,000)  
Upright Steinway Piano

President's Club  
(\$5,000)  
Octave

University Circle  
(\$500-\$999)  
2-4 Keys

Century Club  
(\$100-\$499)  
1-2 Keys



Donors recognized during the All-Steinway Campaign kickoff in October included, top row left to right, Dr. Robert and Virginia Gibson, Newell and Bettie Graham, Dr. Elaine Harriss, Ed Williamson (donor) accompanied by his friend Ella Johnson; bottom row left to right, Drs. David Loebbaka and Allison Nelson, Charles and Betty Moore, Hunter Mountjoy and Richard and Betty Smith and Carla Field.

# THE REAL DEAL



**Charley Deal**  
Assistant Vice Chancellor  
for Alumni Relations

It's funny sometimes to find out how small this world really is. During homecoming, people are visiting with friends only to discover they have kids the same age or live in the same area. Yes, many of us may have changed in appearance over the years, but we still love and value a good education and the UT Martin spirit even more today than we did while in school. For those who have not attended Quad City before, let me try to explain in very simple terms what it is about. Quad City is a "circus, farm, family reunion, music festival and food tasting road race on steroids." The largest crowd ever enjoyed sounds from UT Martin alum David Jones ('10) and cheered for the Skyhawks during the Skyhawk Walk! If you have not returned for homecoming, I ask you "why not?" Consider this your personal invitation to attend the 2011 homecoming, Oct. 8. Homecoming is not just for a few groups to enjoy; it is for everyone. Come back, and if you do not enjoy it, I will let someone else write my article for the Campus Scene in the future!

## Alumni Relations Calendar of Events

APRIL 2011		
10	11 Monday	12 Tuesday
	☞ Golden Grad Reunion ☜	
14 Thursday	15 Friday	16 Saturday
☞ UT Martin College Rodeo ☜		
MAY 2011		
4 Wednesday		
Grand Finale Celebration and Senior Walk		
OCTOBER 2011		
7 Friday	8 Saturday	9 Sunday
☞ Homecoming ☜		

## LEGACIES, LIFE LESSONS PART OF ALUMS' CONNECTIONS WITH UT MARTIN



Betsy Brasher, top, William Hoy Jr. and Bob and Nancy Hurt were honored at the Homecoming Alumni Awards Banquet with Outstanding Young Alumni, Outstanding Alumni and Chancellor's Award for University Service awards, respectively. With them are UT Interim President Jan Simek and Chancellor Tom Rakes.

The four UT Martin alumni and friends who were honored as part of homecoming activities had memories of campus life that were as vivid as yesterday's. The award recipients were recognized during the Alumni Awards Banquet and again at the homecoming football game at Hardy M. Graham Stadium.

Honorees were Betsy Brasher ('98, '03), of Memphis, who received the Outstanding Young Alumni Award; William C. Hoy Jr. ('77), of Clarksville, who received the Outstanding Alumni Award; and Bob ('63) and Nancy Hurt ('62), of Trimble, who received the Chancellor's Award for University Service.

Brasher said the word that kept coming to her mind as she prepared her remarks was "legacy." The legacy of her family attending UT Martin, the legacy of knowing people, such as former and current chancellors, other administrators and faculty members, and the legacy of UT Martin traditions, such as homecoming, Greek competitions, rodeo and friendships. Brasher also spoke about the legacy of the UT Alumni Association and Women's Council.

"I truly believe that the legacies of my experiences on this campus, the relationships I have built with faculty, staff and other students, the

traditions that are passed from generation to generation and the love I have for UT Martin have truly brought fulfillment to my life," said Brasher, when she accepted her award.

Hoy cited several memories of his life on campus and noted that he appreciated the opportunities he was given as a student. "I owe so much to this university," said Hoy, as he accepted his award. "I am honored and very humble."

The Hurts also recounted memories of campus life when they were UT Martin students. "Thanks to UT Martin for providing such quality education and amazing life experiences for so many thousands of youngsters each year and for allowing us to be a part of that service," he said. He added that their children, Rob and Rachel and son-in-law, Chris Payne, have degrees from UT Martin. He said he is "pushing for the third generation of UTM grads" with their five grandchildren.

"UTM helped open doors in my life," Nancy Hurt said. "I received a B.S. degree in business education ... and found a career teaching for 30 years." She added that she met her husband at UT Martin and reiterated that both children were graduates. "You can see why UTM means so much to me." **UTM**



## UT Martin / UT Knoxville Football Game and Alumni Event



Bob and Nancy Hurt and Family

More than 1,000 loyal UT alumni from Knoxville and Martin celebrated the historic meeting of the two universities Sept. 4 at Neyland Stadium. The crowd was treated to comments from UT Martin alumnae and Lady Vols basketball coach Pat Head Summitt (UTM '73), UT Martin Chancellor Tom Rakes, UT Interim President Jan Simek, UT men's basketball coach Bruce Pearl and others. A "Family Feud" contest was the highlight of the event, pitting Martin alumni against Knoxville alumni. The contest ended in a tie, but the crowd was clearly pulling for the orange and blue! **UTM**

## Teachers of the Year

Several alumni of the University of Tennessee at Martin Teacher Education Program were honored on campus. Pictured with the honorees are UT Martin Chancellor Tom Rakes; Cliff Sturdivant, Tennessee Department of Education field service director, right; and Dr. Mary Lee Hall, College of Education and Behavioral Sciences dean, left.



Emily Cross ('03, '08) was named a Obion County Teacher of the Year (Building and District Level). Cross, second from left, is a Lake Road Elementary School fifth grade math teacher.



Lisa Bell ('91) was named a finalist for 2011 Teacher of the Year. Bell, second from left, is a Camden Elementary School teacher.



Mary Marvin ('73) was named a Tennessee Principal of the Year Nominee. Marvin, second from left, is Friendship Elementary School principal.



Tim Rogers ('85, '88) was named a State Finalist for Supervisor of the Year. Rogers, second from left, is Henderson County schools supervisor.



## Bench and Lamp Dedication

Homecoming 2010 was indeed a "home"coming for the Larry T. McGehee family. Having lived in Martin for nine years while Dr. McGehee served as chancellor, the family returned to campus to participate in the formal dedication of a lamp post and bench in memory of Chancellor McGehee, who passed away in the fall of 2008. Attending the ceremony were wife and daughters, left to right, Elizabeth H. McGehee of

Baltimore Md.; Betsy McGehee of Spartanburg, S.C.; and Dr. Molly McGehee, who resides in Clinton, S.C. The project was chaired by Emmitt Edwards ('76) and was completely funded by private gifts.

The lamp and bench are located on the east side of the Centennial Court area, adjacent to the sassafras tree, an area Chancellor McGehee enjoyed during his tenure on campus. **UTM**

## Candle Lighting Ceremony and Legacy Luncheon

This fall, the Office of Alumni Relations invited a member of every class from 1953 through 2010 to participate in the opening ceremony of the First-Year Initiative for Freshmen. The honorary marshals for the ceremony were Bettye Giles and Paul Kelley. Chancellor Emeritus Nick Dunagan lit the Torch of Preparation, along with Sammie Litton, SGA President, and Lemoyne Robinson, UT Martin Alumni Council president.

The ceremony was part of UT Martin's overall welcome to campus for all freshmen and followed the annual Legacy Luncheon for second generation UT Martin students held in the Paul Meek Library. **UTM**





**Buddy Mitchell** ('66), vice chancellor for the Institute of Agriculture, recently was named the interim chancellor for the institute. The chancellor of the Institute of Agriculture oversees the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources, the College of Veterinary Medicine, UT AgResearch and UT Extension. Mitchell replaces Chancellor Joe DiPietro, who was elected president of the University of Tennessee in October by the Board of Trustees. Mitchell began his interim assignment Jan. 1. A search for a new chancellor is expected to be complete by July 1. Mitchell, who has worked at UT since 1984, also served as interim vice president of agriculture prior to DiPietro's appointment in 2006 and beginning in 1998 during a search that resulted in Jack Britt's appointment as vice president of agriculture. The leadership title was changed from vice president to chancellor in June. As vice chancellor, he oversees development and government relations for the Institute of Agriculture. Mitchell has served in other administrative roles at UT, including associate vice president for federal relations. A native of McMoresville, Mitchell earned his bachelor's degree in general agriculture at UT Martin and his master's degree in agricultural economics at UT Knoxville.

## 1947

**Edward L. Williamson** ('47) majored in engineering. He lives in Pensacola, Fla., and has a daughter: Rebecca Ann Williamson Ballesteros. Email: williamsonll@cox.net.

## 1964

**Glenda (Ginger) Lawson Brodie** ('64) majored in English. She lives in Tifton, Ga. Her late husband, **Malcolm (Gene) Eugene Brodie** ('64), played football, baseball and ran track. He won two state championships. Glenda is a retired teacher. She has three children: Gena, 42; Stacey, 39; and Malcolm, 35. Email: gingerbrodie@att.net

## 1970

**Charles A. Vowell** ('70) majored in education. He lives in Martin, and he has three children: Brandy Lea Vowell Seifert, Benjamin Jason Vowell and Julie Ann Tansil. Email: cvowell2@gmail.com

## 1971

**Jimmy Alston** ('71) lived in Memphis until age 50 after graduating from UT Martin. He is now living in Hattiesburg, Miss., at 62 years of age. He married in 1971 and is the father of four sons whose mother passed away in 1986. He remarried in 1998. He has been self-employed most of his adult life with his own business, Alston Stairs.

## 1975

**Betty Murphree Allen** ('75), majored in counseling and lives in Humboldt. **Sidney L. Allen** ('75), her husband, passed away on Nov. 21, 2009. He was self-employed in heavy equipment sales. She has two sons: Justin, 32, and Blake, 29.

## 1976

**Phillip Gibson** ('76) majored in criminal justice. He lives in Union City, and he is employed as the lieutenant investigator in the Union City Police Department. Email: pagib619@yahoo.com

**Rachel Cashion Young** ('76) majored in biology. She is employed as a registered nurse at Methodist North in Memphis. She was named Methodist LeBonheur Healthcare 2010 Nursing Star and recognized by Celebrate Nursing as one of the top 100 nurses in Shelby and Fayette counties. She and her husband, Robert Young Jr., live in Brighton. They have two children: Ashley, 29, and Robert, 24. Email: rcy54@aol.com

## 1980



**Susan Capps Mitchell** ('80) majored in elementary education. She is employed at Adamsville Elementary School as a math interventionist. Susan and her husband, Phil Mitchell, live in Adamsville. They have two children: Thad, 27, and Tyler, 23. Email: smitchell623@gmail.com

## 1984

**Michael K. Burton** ('84), is supervisor of the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation Oil and

Gas Board. He has been in this position since 1996. As supervisor, he is responsible for permitting and environmental issues for all oil and gas sites within the state. Also as supervisor, he conducts six scheduled board meetings per year, and he and the field personnel present a required training course for all new operators in the state annually. Prior to taking the oil and gas supervisor position, Burton worked for the Tennessee Wellhead Protection Program. He worked with water systems within the state to ensure that wellhead areas are protected from contamination. He was in this position from 1993 to 1996, when he first came to Tennessee. His professional career outside of Tennessee included working as a geologist with Geologic Associates from 1987 to 1990 and with ERM Southeast from 1990 to 1993. He was involved in soil sampling and placement of monitor wells during this period of time. Burton received his master's degree in geology from the University of Memphis in 1987. He was also in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1977 to 1980. He is a pastor in his local church and is active in the community. Also, he has served as chairman of the Cheatham County Solid Waste Board.

**Richard Taylor** ('84) lives in Memphis and is employed at FedEx Customer Information Systems as the senior business system analyst. Email: rhtaylor1540@comcast.net

**Deborah L. Coble Wise** ('84) majored in communications. She now lives in Waverly, Iowa, and is the pastor at Trinity United Methodist Church. Email: debwise@mchsi.com

# Let us know what you're doing!

Please also use this form to update your address if it has changed.

## 1985

**Tim C. Hicks** ('85) lives in Covington and is employed as a 4-H Youth Specialist for the University of Mississippi Extension. Email: hickstc@missouri.edu

## 1988

**Jeff Dahlstrom** ('88) majored in marketing. He and his wife, **Stephanie Dahlstrom** ('88), live in Franklin. Jeff is employed at Southeast Financial as a banker, and Stephanie is employed at Williamson Medical as a registered nurse. They have two children: Collin, 20, and Raven, 18. Email: jdahlstrom@southeastfinancial.org

## 1989

**Jill B. Richardson** ('89, '93) is employed as disability claims supervisor at the State of Tennessee Disability Determination Services. She currently lives in Ashland City. Email: jbeth1967@aol.com



**Cary Martin** ('89) majored in communications. He left a successful broadcasting career to start a new company with his wife, Gina, called Little Rock Tours and Travel. They own two motor coaches, plus vans and minibuses and a Murder Mystery Dinner Theatre. Cary and Gina live in Little Rock, Ark. They have two children: Presley, 8, and Brooke, 6. Email: cary@littlerocktours.com

Full Name (include maiden name, if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Years Attended: \_\_\_\_\_ through \_\_\_\_\_ School/College of: \_\_\_\_\_

Degree(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Major: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Business Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_ Business Name or Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

Business Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Your E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like your E-mail address published in *Campus Scene*? Yes  No

Full Name of Spouse: \_\_\_\_\_

Did your spouse attend UT Martin? Yes  No

Years Attended: \_\_\_\_\_ Through \_\_\_\_\_ School/College of: \_\_\_\_\_

Degree(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Major: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_ Business Name of Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

Business Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse's E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Names and Ages of Children: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Additional News (honors, promotions, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

List your current hobbies: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Would you consider taking an active leadership role in UT Martin alumni activities? Yes  No

Would you like this information published in *Campus Scene*? Yes  No

If you know anyone who may be interested in UT Martin and is a high school junior or senior, please give us his or her name and address.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### Enclose a recent color headshot photo, if possible.

*No low-resolution digital photos, please! Photographs cannot be returned to you. Every effort will be made to use all color headshots submitted. However, space considerations and/or photo quality may prevent us from using submitted photos in some instances.*

Online alumni update form available at: [www.utmforever.com](http://www.utmforever.com)

Fill out, clip and return this form to:

### Office of Alumni Relations

University of Tennessee at Martin

1900 Alumni Way

Martin, TN 38238

alumni@utm.edu

THE UNIVERSITY of  
**TENNESSEE** **UT**  
MARTIN



**Jeffrey Holt** ('77) was sworn in Oct. 20, as the United States Marshal for the Western District of Tennessee. A criminal justice graduate, he previously served as the Dyer County sheriff, a position he held since 1994. His previous employment includes time spent as a criminal investigator for the District Attorney's Office of the 29th Judicial District of Tennessee, a trooper with the Tennessee Highway Patrol, a chief investigator for the Fayette County Sheriff's Office and as the Bolivar chief of police.



**Julie Allen Burke** ('93) graduated with a bachelor's degree in business administration. She was appointed earlier this year as the director/executive vice president of the Milan Chamber of Commerce in her native Milan. Since graduating from UT Martin, she has lived in all three geographical regions of Tennessee, with

**Lynn Willis** ('89) majored in communications. Lynn works as a rural carrier at the U.S. Post Office and lives in Dyersburg with wife, Mitzi Willis. They have one child: Carlton Willis. Email: Willis709@bellsouth.net

## 1997

**Tameka Deshone Lewis** ('97) is currently employed as an educational consultant with Evans Newton Incorporated (based in Scottsdale, Ariz.) providing nationwide instructional modeling, professional development, teacher/administrator coaching, specialized delivery and custom assessments as a means of fostering student achievement and educational leadership. Email: tdeshone@bellsouth.net

**Jennifer L. Jeffrey** ('97) majored in human learning K-8. She is employed at Shadowlawn Middle School in Shelby County. She and her husband, Michael, live in Cordova. They have one child: Ava. Email: mikeandjennie@bellsouth.net

the last 11 years being in Knoxville. Her sales and administrative experience has prepared her for this executive position of leading the chamber in its mission. This includes maintaining and creating business and community development through a unified community providing educational, cultural and recreational opportunities in a safe and attractive environment. She is committed to enhancing the economic development of the greater Milan area and the heritage of her hometown. Along with her full-time chamber career, she is also an independent consultant for a private designer clothing label (since 2006) and resides in Milan with her two sons, ages 9 and 5.

## 1999

**Kevin R. Killebrew** ('99) majored in marketing. He is employed as a logistics engineer at Ozburn-Hessey Logistics in Brentwood. His wife, **Amanda Killebrew** ('00), earned a degree in education. She works as a sales coordinator for Crown Castle International. They live in Nashville and have two children: Maggie and Caroline. Email: killebrewkevin@hotmail.com

## 2000

**Whitney D. Durham** ('00) majored in geoscience. He recently earned a doctorate in geography from Oklahoma State University, and currently lives and works in the Washington, D.C., area.

## 2003

**Michelle R. Jordan** ('03) majored in human learning. She lives in Martin and is employed as a teacher at Head Start. Email: michelley54@frontiernet.net.

**Katherine A. Bruetting Mitchell** ('03) majored in communications. She is employed as the product manager at Luscombe Engineering in California. She lives with her husband, Eric, in San Diego. Email: k\_bruetting@yahoo.com.

## 2005

**Michele L. Priddy** ('05) majored in communications. She lives in Nashville and is employed as the assistant director of admissions at Aquinas College. Email: michele.priddy@gmail.com

**Joseph Pierce** ('05) earned a degree in marketing. He attended Sigma Chi Fraternity's International Balfour Leadership Training Workshop, July 19-31, in Raleigh, N.C. During the workshop, the UT Martin chapter received the Daniel William

Cooper Scholarship Award. Of the more than 230 Sigma Chi chapters, UT Martin has the best scholarship program and proven success in its execution.

**Holt Pritchett** ('05) majored in agricultural business. He is employed as a loan officer at First South Bank. He and his wife, **Jenny Pritchett** ('05), live in Jackson. Email: holtp@1stsouth.com.

## 2006

**Shannon Marie Cagle** ('06) majored in psychology. She has since earned a Master of Arts in forensic psychology from The Chicago School of Professional Psychology. In 2009, she graduated with honors from a federal law enforcement-training academy. In August 2010, she started classes as a clinical forensic psychology doctoral student at The Chicago School. Shannon is currently living in Chicago, Ill. Email: scagle@thechicagoschool.edu



*Continued on page 32*



**More alumni news available at:**

**[www.utmforever.com](http://www.utmforever.com)**

**A**t a special award ceremony earlier this year, the Public Education Foundation of Marion County (Fla.) named **John LeTellier Jr.** ('95) its Golden Apple Teacher of the Year for his outstanding efforts in the classroom.

Shortly after winning, the Stanton-Weirsdale Elementary music teacher spoke to *Ocala Style* about his love for music and for teaching.

**Were you surprised when they called your name?**

I was humbled by the fact that there are so many great teachers in this county and they chose to put their faith and trust in me. I was overwhelmed and overjoyed.

**How have your colleagues responded?**

Everybody's so excited. I was the first person to ever win a Golden Apple at my school. It's fairly small, 500 or so kids, in a rural countryside. East of the school, there are rolling hills and cattle all around. One thing that I have just been in awe of about the school—and almost everybody who visits there says this—is how nice everybody is, how well-behaved the kids are, and how warm the faculty is. The people care a lot about education and the kids, and I want to come to work each and every day. It's a family.

**You went to the University of Tennessee, but you're originally from up north, right?**

New Jersey. I have a bachelor's degree from the University of Tennessee at Martin, a master's degree from the University of Miami in music, and then additional graduate studies at

The Juilliard School in piano accompanying. Then I did some graduate education studies at Florida State.

**Why the University of Tennessee?**

I was supposed to be going into the Marine Corps, but I broke my leg. My piano teacher called up and said, "There's this assistantship open at the University of Tennessee and they need somebody's that's a good accompanist." I called the person up and said I could be there tomorrow for an audition. I drove 14 hours with my father-in-law, played for them, and got the position. Then Juilliard—I went there right after that.

**That's the ultimate school for many musicians.**

It was a dream of mine. As a kid, I'd always heard of The Juilliard School, of course, and here I was auditioning. You walked down the hallways and there were people preparing for auditions, and the caliber was stunning.

**Do you only play the piano?**

I play the piano, the saxophone, and recently the drums at church. I was in the marching band in high school. In fact, my band teacher actually said once, "Maybe one day you could be a band director." I said, "No, no, no." I was bent on being a concert pianist.

**When did you first discover, though, that you had musical talent?**

My dad played accordion and piano, so I was always around music. At three, I started plucking some things out on the piano. I'd sit in the dark at night and turn on the florescent piano lamp and just grab

books to the left of me and read. They were tremendously hard, but I didn't care. I played them slow, pecked through them, whatever I had to do. That propelled my love of sight-reading. I realized that I wanted to do music for a living, in some capacity, when I was sixteen.

**So growing up, you were pretty disciplined about your music?**

I was one of the unusual ones. If you said I had to practice for 20 minutes, I'd practice for two hours. I just loved it.

**Are you still diligent about practicing?**

I do a little bit every day. In the summers, I practice more.

**Have you felt the effects of the budget cuts?**

Last year, I had a letter saying that I didn't have a job next year—so I went from that to being Marion County's Teacher of the Year. But when the school board had to make a decision to cut teachers, I could see that it was a pained decision. [Superintendent] Mr. [Jim] Yancey was very upset about it. They did everything they could to bring everybody back. I've worked for several school districts, and I think this is a tremendous one.

**In that same vein, why is music class important for kids?**

Music, art, P.E., any of these special areas can give kids self-esteem that they may not garner from another area. Music can really help to reinforce other subjects. Interdisciplinary work helps a child to grasp a concept more fully. There are multiple intelligences and music is one of them. It's important for us to touch upon

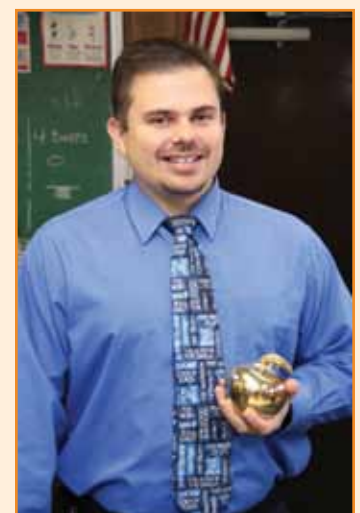
all of these to make sure that a child has a chance to show what he can do. Then there's simply the aesthetic beauty of music and the fact that music is important and something to be treasured and cherished on its own.

**You must see first-hand the positive effects music has on kids' learning.**

Just last week, the kids were playing a piece, and one kid couldn't get the rhythm. A child who could asked, "Mr. LeTellier, can I please help him?" And I said, "Absolutely." So he began to teach him how to do it from a kid's perspective, and the student started to get it. I absolutely believe that music touches kids, helps them to learn, and is integral to our education system.

**What's the most rewarding aspect of your job?**

Just seeing those kids' eyes light up when they get it. I have so many kids who come up to me in the halls and say, "Mr. LeTellier, on Thursday I'm coming to music!" If my kids have a memorable experience in my class, then I've had a great day. **UTM**





**Beth Parnell** ('04) who earned a bachelor's degree in communications, was named in July 2010 as the events manager for the Jackson Area Chamber of Commerce. She was formerly co-host of the EPlusTV6 show "6 in the City" and a new accounts representative with Jackson Energy Authority. In 2009, the local Cystic Fibrosis Foundation selected Parnell as one of Jackson's Top 20 Finest Young Professionals. In 2010, the Jackson chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution honored Parnell with an Award of Excellence for Outstanding Broadcast Media.



**Army Capt. Kyle J. Maki** ('06) has been decorated with the Distinguished Flying Cross Medal for his actions while serving as a pilot on an AH-64D Apache attack helicopter in combat in Afghanistan. The medal is awarded to a member of the Armed Forces who distinguishes himself or herself by heroism or extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight.

**Kevin Creech** ('06), pictured below, is a new assistant coach for the University of Mississippi softball team. He previously served on the UT Martin softball staff, first as a volunteer coach and for the past three seasons as assistant coach. He also was an assistant for UT Martin athletics marketing. While at UT Martin, he helped lead the Skyhawks to an NCAA tournament appearance in 2009, an Ohio Valley Conference tournament championship and 143 wins in four seasons. Last season, he helped coach the Skyhawks to a 47-11 record and the OVC regular-season championship. His wife, **Jennifer** ('06), earned a degree in elementary education.



**Tatoni Jackson Dunlap** ('06) majored in dance. She and her husband, Nicholas Dunlap, live in Rutherford. They have two children: Nicholas and Michael. Email: tonia.dunlap@gmail.com

**Townes "Tucker" R. Leigh** ('06) majored in chemistry. He has recently graduated from the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine with a doctor of osteopathic medicine degree. He plans to enter the family medicine program at the University of Alabama Medical Center in Tuscaloosa, Ala.

**Jared Newson** ('06) is currently playing with the Kataja club in Finland. After playing in the NBA Developmental

League last season, he has returned overseas – where he previously had cemented a reputation as one of the most athletic players around. A native of Belleville, Ill., he graduated as UT Martin's third all-time leading scorer (1,347 points) and still ranks in eight UT Martin all-time top-10 career statistical categories despite playing just three seasons.

**Kamela Prewitt** ('06) majored in Spanish. She lives in Collierville and is employed as a bilingual proofreader at a printing company. Email: kamelaprewitt@yahoo.com.

## 2007

**Kristen A. Cross Riley** ('07) majored in psychology. She lives in Lakeland and is employed as an occupational therapist at Baptist Hospital. Email: kcross715@gmail.com

**Kimberly Michelle Baker Rinks** ('07) majored in broadcast communications. She and her husband, **Timothy Rinks** ('09), live in Charlotte, N.C. They were married in January of 2010 and bought their first house in the summer. Kimberly is employed at the Hilton Garden Inn as the front desk concierge, and Timothy is employed at Reinhausen Manufacturing as the area sales manager. Email: k.baker@live.com

**Cleve Woodfork** ('07) plays for the TV Werne club in Germany, continuing a successful overseas professional career since graduating from UT Martin. Since then, the 6-9, 235-pound swingman added a consistent outside jumper to his inside game. A St. Louis native, he left as UT Martin's ninth-leading scorer (1,094 points) after earning four letters in the Skyhawk basketball program.

## 2009

**Allica Austin** ('09) is a health and fitness specialist at the M.D. Anderson Fitness Center in Houston. Among her duties are teaching fitness classes, managing the fitness center's TV channel and developing personalized exercise programs for center clientele. M.D. Anderson Cancer Center is again the leading hospital in the nation for cancer care in the annual "America's Best Hospitals" survey published by U.S. News & World Report. She earned her bachelor's degree in health and human performance from UT Martin. E-mail: adaustin@mdanderson.org

**Lester Hudson** ('09) began the NBA season as a member of the Washington Wizards. After being drafted with the 58th pick of the 2009 NBA draft by the Boston Celtics, he split time with the Celtics and the Memphis Grizzlies last season before joining the Wizards this summer. A two-time All-American at UT Martin, he was just two points shy of the all-time UT Martin scoring record (1,727 points) despite playing only two years. The Memphis native led the Skyhawks to the program's first-ever Ohio Valley Conference championship in 2009 and was a two-time OVC Male Athlete of the Year.

## 2010

**Whitney L. Alexander** ('10) majored in nursing. She lives in Knoxville and is employed as a registered nurse at the University of Tennessee Medical Center. Email: nursewhitney@hotmail.com

*Continued on page 35*

### Did you know...

UT Martin is home to the WestStar Leadership Program, Tennessee's first and largest regional leadership program. WestStar boasts 587 graduates and is in its 22nd year of developing the region's leaders.



by Bud Grimes

## MARCHING BAND FIELD COMMANDER FOLLOWS MOTHER'S FOOTSTEPS

**S**haron Lee ('90) must experience déjà vu when she enters Hardy M. Graham Stadium on a football game day. The fact is, she's really been here many times before as a field commander for UT Martin's marching band from 1982-86. This fall, the Lee family returned often to Graham Stadium to watch daughter, Savannah, continue the family tradition. A sophomore integrated studies major, Savannah was one of two field commanders for the 2010 edition of the 140-member band.

Field commanders (sometimes called drum majors) function as the band director's assistants. "We're also there to kind of keep the morale of the band up," said Savannah, who plays French horn and mellophone and participates in concert band. She's also a member of Sigma Alpha Iota, the UT Martin chapter of a professional women's music fraternity that advances interest in music.

Sharon and Savannah's enthusiasm for music and marching bands began early on and hit full stride at Gibson County High School, where Sharon is full-time field commander instructor and an administrative assistant for the band director. She is also assistant principal at Dyer Elementary and an English as a Second Language teacher at the school. Savannah was GCHS field commander for three years under the watchful eye of her mom, also a Gibson County alum (the Lees live in Dyer). "My mom's been teaching drum majors ... since I was little, so I've just always been around,"

Savannah said. "I've always known how to conduct the patterns and stuff, and so I just decided after my freshman year of high school to try out, and I made it, and I ended up loving it."

Although performing at a high level for your mother isn't the easiest task to accomplish, the Lees managed to make it work. "It wasn't awful," Savannah remembered. "I kind of enjoyed it because I was close to her, but if anything went wrong and she got mad or anything, you know, sometimes it could carry over to the house."

Sharon has a "mother's view" of those years working together. "It was rewarding for me because it gave me a chance to expose her to something that I loved so much, not only band but being a field commander," she said, adding, "Anytime we had a rough day at practice, it sometimes meant a long night at home, but each time, it only strengthened our relationship as mother and daughter and teacher and student."

Savannah's high school experience prepared her well for field commander duties at the college level, which offers some different challenges. For one, there are "more responsibilities in college, even though in high school it's a little more serious" as high school bands attend band competitions most every weekend in the fall. And then there's the work preparing for college-level shows.

"We actually start about a week before the rest of the band," Savannah said of the Skyhawk Marching Band's fall camp. "We just get together and come up with ways to keep the band positive, ways to take care of problems, whatever comes up. We talk about ideas for the show." The band starts

practice on a Sunday and goes through Friday, including three nights this summer when the band stayed until 10 p.m. Different sections of the band also practice separately at different campus locations. Then, when the fall semester begins, the full band rehearses weekly, 6 to 8 p.m., Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

Besides hard work by the band members, Savannah credits Dr. Nola Jones, marching band director, and Dr. Andrew Bliss, who works largely with percussion, for the band's high performance level. "They help try to keep us positive," she said. "They give us everything we need to know how to do the show – the music, the drill. They have everything there that we need to make it as good as we can."

Sharon can recall her marching band days in Graham Stadium and make some informed observations of what she sees during performances. "Well, as far as marching, the routines are very similar," she said. "The styles of music, of course uniforms, and the style of marching has changed, but yet the high level of commitment, hard work, responsibility, I don't think those will ever change because of the high level of directors that UTM has been able to place in their marching band program."

As for Savannah's performance with the band, Sharon couldn't be more pleased. "I feel like she has grown into a mature young lady and a very mature conductor," she said, adding, "I feel like she's made a tremendous amount of progress this year as far as her conducting responsibility and just in general."

Tori Abbott, an integrated studies major from Rutherford,

is a fellow Skyhawk Marching Band member and friend who has watched Savannah assume the responsibilities of a field commander. Although possibly a little more objective than Savannah's mom, she approves of what her friend has accomplished. "She does a very great job on the field and on the podium with it being her first year as a college leader," Abbott said. "She's surpassed expectations with flying colors. She's stepped up, and you couldn't tell that this is her first year she's been at the college level, at all."

During football game days, count the entire Lee family present as Savannah takes the field. Sharon is joined by her husband, **Jeffery** ('86), who has a geosciences degree, and daughter, **Becca**, a rising softball player who's getting an early taste of college game day excitement (see photo upper left). Years later, Sharon can still say, "... I will never forget that feeling the very first time I marched on that field as a drum major."

Today, Sharon Lee can only smile as Savannah takes the field at Graham Stadium. After all, Sharon has been there before. **UTM**



Savannah conducts the 2010 field show, "Woodstock: Peace and Love Through Music."

## Longtime Prosecutor Weirich Embraces New Role as Deputy DA

Article & Photo Courtesy *The Memphis Daily News*, Thursday, October 14. Written by Aisling Maki. Photo by Bob Bayne.

In August, veteran prosecutor **Amy Weirich** ('87) made history when she was appointed Shelby County's first female deputy district attorney.

But Weirich, who has worked as an assistant district attorney for nearly two decades, said she's never felt she was treated any differently from her male colleagues during her career.

"I don't dwell, and never really have, on being a woman," she said. "The female prosecutors I've worked with here, we just don't generally think about it. It's more about being the best prosecutor you can be."

As for her new role as second in command, Weirich said she's "honored and humbled that (District Attorney) General (Bill) Gibbons felt that confident in my ability to do the job. I guess I don't really think of it in terms of being the first female; I just think in terms of doing the best job for the office and for the people of the state of Tennessee."

Weirich replaces James J. Challen III, who retired after



32 years in the D.A.'s office, 12 of which he served as deputy district attorney.

"As long as I've worked in this office, the person who held this job has always been an individual who was looked up to not only by those within the office, but by the community, by the defense, by the judges, and by law enforcement," Weirich said. "I hope to continue that tradition."

Born in Minnesota, Weirich spent time in Fargo and Kansas City before moving with her family to Memphis in 1977 – "The week Elvis died," she said.

As a girl, her interests varied, but she was always captivated by the idea of the courtroom.

"For a while I dreamt of being a veterinarian, until I realized all the organic chemistry that I'd have to take to make that happen," she said. "But my other dream job was a prosecutor. Growing up, it just always seemed like an interesting, exciting career choice."

After graduating from Germantown High School and earning her bachelor's degree from the University of Tennessee at Martin, Weirich enrolled in the Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law at the University of Memphis.

"Law school is grueling and horrific and all the things that you hear about that are all true," she said. "But at the same time, that's where I met my husband, and we still have great friends from our law school years. So, in between the misery, there was much fun and friend-

ship forming and relationship building."

After receiving her law degree, Weirich knew exactly how she wanted to use it.

"I enjoyed courtroom experience and I knew that being in the D.A.'s office would be a good way to make that happen," she said, adding that she worked in civil practice "for just a minute, while waiting for my job in the D.A.'s office to open."

And shortly thereafter, it did. In 1991, Weirich joined the office as an assistant district attorney. Over the last 19 years, she has served as a division leader for the Special Prosecution Unit in criminal court and most recently as chief prosecutor the D.A.'s Gang and Narcotics Prosecution Unit.

She's a frequent lecturer at training seminars for the National District Attorneys Association and the Tennessee District Attorneys General Conference.

Her honors have included the Board of Directors' Trial Award for Outstanding Advocacy in Capital Cases from the Association of Government Attorneys in Capital Litigation.

In hindsight, Weirich said her most memorable cases have generally been those that never made the front page of the paper or the 5 o'clock news.

"Really, the ones that mean the most to you individually are usually the ones that don't get any media attention; the voice in the community

that maybe nobody had ever listened to until you stood up and tried their case for them," she said.

And while prosecuting criminal offenses can be an emotionally daunting task, Weirich remains just as passionate about her work as when she first joined the D.A.'s office.

"I think it would be impossible not to get emotionally attached," she said. "You think about victims and you think about how their children are today and how their spouses are today. It is difficult, but at the end of the day it's about making this community a better place for myself, for my family, for the families whose names I don't know, and for the families who've yet to come."

Weirich describes her own family, which includes her husband, an attorney in private practice, and their four children ages 4 to 17 as "pretty amazing."

Outside the courtroom, Weirich can be found watching school plays and cheering from the sidelines at sporting events.

"We are constantly in motion," she said. "From the minute their feet hit the ground in the morning until they get into bed at night, it's going and going and going."

"I don't know how we do it. If someone had told me years ago 'you're going to have four kids and be the deputy D.A.," I would've said they were crazy. It's my life and I just make it work." **UTM**



**Dr. Kay Durden**, of Greenfield, professor emeritus of information systems, died Dec. 2, 2010. Durden, a professor of computer science and information systems, joined UT Martin in 1960 and retired May 2005. She returned from August 2005 to July 2008 on a post-retirement contract. A Greenfield native, she received a bachelor's degree in business administration from UT Martin, and a master's degree in business education and doctorate from the University of Mississippi. In 2002, she was named the recipient of a University of Tennessee National Alumni Association Alumni Distinguished Service Professorship. The prestigious faculty award continues until retirement. She also has a national scholarship named in her honor by a professional fraternity for women in business and economics. She was a member of the Association of Information Systems Professionals, Administrative Management Society, Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society, Delta Pi Epsilon Graduate Honor Society, Phi Chi Theta professional fraternity and the National, Southern and Tennessee business education associations. She conducted numerous workshops and seminars, served as a consultant to area industries and governmental agencies in word processing and office management and was published in professional journals. Donations in her memory can be made to the university's Kay Durden Scholarship Fund.

**Lorraine "Lauri" Aden**, 36, of Fulton, died Oct. 18, 2010, at Parkway Regional Hospital. Mrs. Aden was a member of Fulton First United Methodist Church. She was a teacher for the Fulton Independent School System and had served as the vice president of the Fulton City Booster Club. (Courtesy of *The Fulton Leader*)

**Col. Jerry Bussell** (Retired), 67, Nevada's First Homeland Security Advisor and 2010 Distinguished Nevadan recognized by the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, died Oct. 18, 2010. Born in Parsons, he received his bachelor's degree and regular Army commission in 1967 from UT Martin, where he played varsity football and distinguished himself as chief justice of the student body, Commander of Cadets ROTC, Distinguished Military Student and Distinguished Military Graduate. In 2000, he received UT Martin's Outstanding Alumni Award. (Courtesy Reno Gazette-Journal)

**Mitchell Lynn Darnall**, ('86) of Franklin, died Aug. 7, 2010. He is survived by his wife, Debra Dooling Darnall, of Franklin; two sons, Michael Darnall, of Franklin, and Tyler Darnall, of Lawrence, Kan.; his mother, Susan Darnall, of Bruceton; father, James Darnall; and stepmother, Wilma, of Huntingdon, and two brothers, Jimmy Darnall, of Bruceton; and Joey Darnall of Huntingdon.

**E.J. Eaton**, 73, died Aug. 19, 2010, at his home in Martin. He was a trombonist and taught low brass and music education, and supervised student teachers for 35 years at UT Martin. He directed the UT Martin Jazz Band and was a member of the Jackson Symphony for many years. He was also director of the Instant Replay Band and a member of the Memory Makers Band. He earned the UT Martin Excellence in Advising Award in 1987 and the Tennessee Governor's School for the Arts Outstanding Teacher Award in 1993.

**Richard Andrew "Drew" Maloan Jr.**, 62, of Jackson, died Aug. 18, 2010, at Jackson Madison County General Hospital. He was a 30-year employee of the U.S. Postal Service in Jackson, a UT Martin graduate and a U.S. Army veteran. (Courtesy Murphy Funeral Home, Martin)

**J. Robert (Bob) Swain**, 81, died July 7, 2010, in Austin, Texas. A veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps, his career included teaching theatre at Trinity University in San Antonio, founding of the 1st Repertory of San Antonio, serving as the artistic director of Zach Scott Theatre in Austin and serving as professor of drama and theatre arts at Austin Community College. As director of UT Martin's Vanguard Theatre, he was honored as the theatre's founder at a 2009 Vanguard Theatre Reunion. (Courtesy Austin American-Statesman)

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