

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE AT MARTIN

CAMPUS SCENE

A L U M N I M A G A Z I N E

VOLUME LIV SUMMER/FALL 2014

THE ULTIMATE STUDENT ATHLETE

meaningful
++ degree

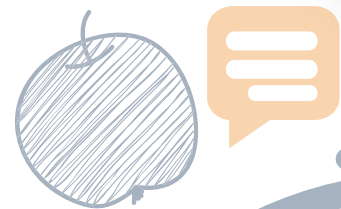


teacher



▶ 3.86 GPA

education



HEATHER
BUTLER

player



4 OVC
TITLES



#11



basketball



CHANCELLOR'S

CORNER

Dr. Tom Rakes, *UT Martin Chancellor*

>>> This issue of the Campus Scene is filled with snapshots and remarkable accomplishments involving noteworthy faculty, staff, students, and alumni from around the Quad and across the state. I am pleased to also be able to share several items of interest that further extend the sphere of the UT Martin spirit. Exemplifying this spirit is the 2014 national championship title earned by the UT Martin Men's Rodeo team. My compliments to coaches John Luthi and Nelson Davis along with our talented rodeo team for achieving this national honor.

We continue to be recognized by several top college rating groups, including our inclusion in the top tier of southern master's institutions as reported by U.S. News & World Report for 2015. In August, for the 12th consecutive year, the Princeton Review named UTM among the "Best in the Southeast."

Enrollment for this fall stands at the 7,042 mark, and our official reporting shows our incoming freshman class to hold the highest average ACT score in the history of the institution (22.8). Overall headcount enrollment is down 5.1 percent with 47 percent of the drop accountable to a loss in dual enrollment students. Off-campus undergraduate enrollment is up 10.1 percent; online enrollment reflects a full-time undergraduate enrollment increase of 16.5 percent. Our challenges needing attention are first-time freshmen, transfer students and graduate students.

We were delighted to have President Joe DiPietro join us for the celebration of the new West Tennessee Healthcare Nursing Wing at the Parsons Center and for a tour following the celebrations of the relocated Barnes & Noble College Bookstore on the first floor of the Boling University Center. Along with the new bookstore, we celebrated the completion of a \$3.2 million Sodexo Skyhawk Dining Hall renovation. Additionally, fundraising efforts continue toward construction of a new Science Complex, an upgrade of the press box in Graham Stadium, Phase II of the Fine Arts Building, and construction of four new sorority houses on Peach Street. Phase I of a capital maintenance project is funded for 2014-15 for a \$7 million renovation to Clement Hall.

We have reached two milestones involving our loyal alumni, the first with alumni participation giving exceeding 7 percent, which is 2 percent above the national average. Second, in a recent report through the UT Alumni Association, UT Martin received an alumni approval rating of 80 percent, which leads the UT System. We appreciate so many of you who responded so positively about your experiences at UTM. Such confirmation by our alumni serves to reaffirm the commitment of our faculty, staff and community to our students.

The 2014-15 academic year will bring new challenges and opportunities for us all, but the Skyhawk faithful can continue to be proud of The University of Tennessee at Martin. I extend to you my sincerest appreciation for your continuing input and support.

CONTENTS

FEATURES

- 24 HEATHER BUTLER** the Ultimate Student Athlete
By RYNE RICKMAN
- 28 UNLIKELY COLLEGE ROOMMATES** Build Decades-Long Friendship
By BUD GRIMES
- 32 WORKING FOR DAVE RAMSEY** Inspires UT Martin Alum
By CARMEN WAGSTER
- 36 UT MARTIN ALUMS** use Great Chemistry to Help Solve Crimes
By BUD GRIMES

DEPARTMENTS

SCENE & HEARD

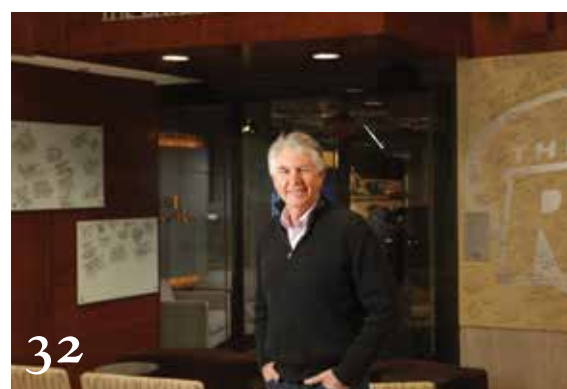
- 8 NOTEWORTHY** News and views from on- and off-campus.
- 16 ATHLETICS** Rodeo team captures national title, Hall of Fame and OVC honors, new coaches for baseball and men's basketball
- 22 UNIVERSITY ADVANCEMENT** Alumnus sets up largest single endowment for UT Martin communications department.

ALUMNI NEWS

- 43 THE REAL DEAL** I Heart UTM ... highlighting our university's positive impact.
By CHARLEY DEAL
- 44 ALUMNI NOTES** Alum Will White honored with Emergency Room Nurse of the Year Award.
- 46 SPOTLIGHT ON ALUMS**
- 50 CLASS NOTES** The who, what, when and where.
- 50 IN MEMORY**

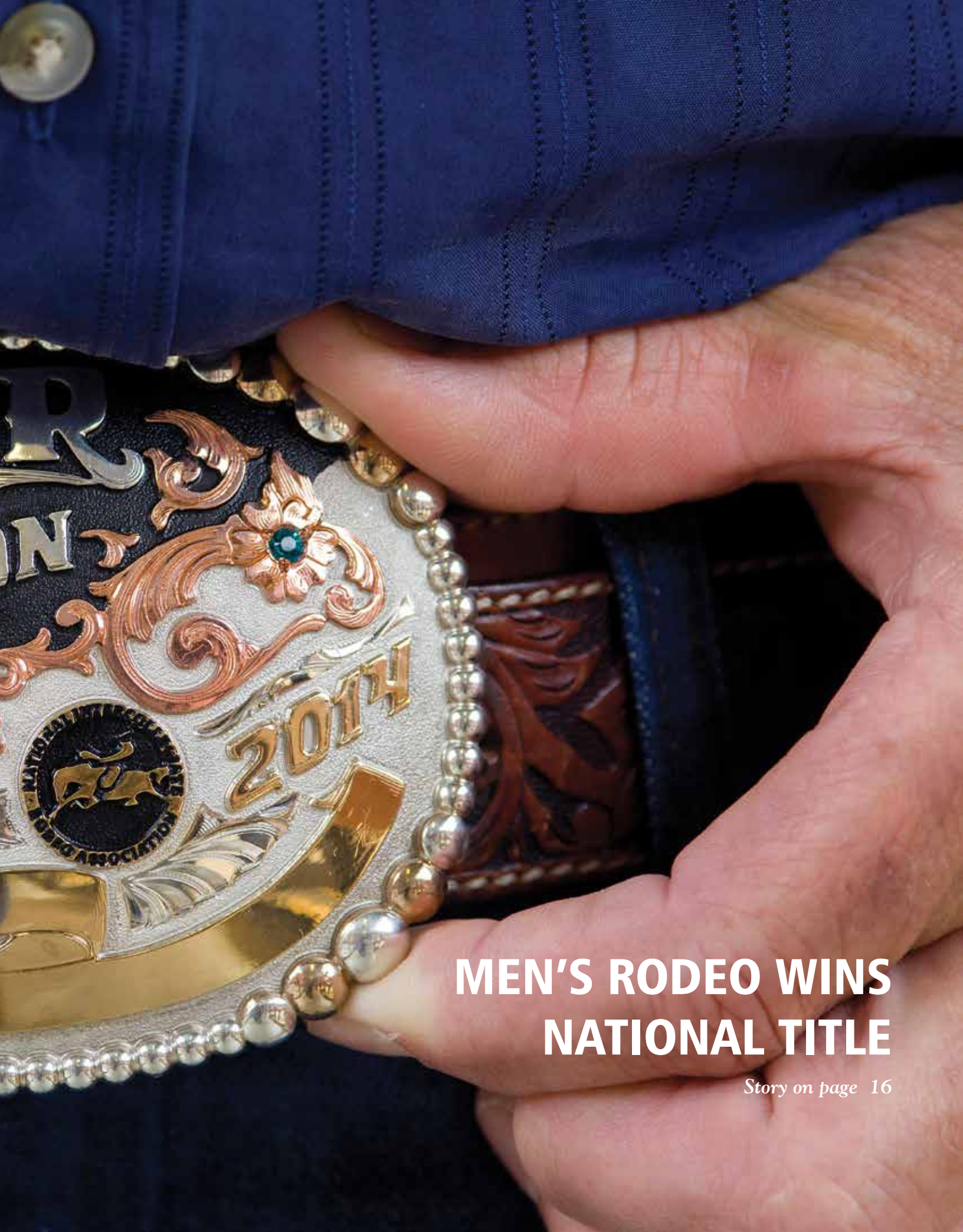
On the cover: Heather Butler, UTM alum and professional basketball player.

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the **big** picture





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2014

MEN'S RODEO WINS NATIONAL TITLE

Story on page 16



FACULTY SPOTLIGHT>>> **Dr. Robbie Montgomery** *Associate Professor of Chemistry*

"We are very lucky in this department for the instrumentation that we have available to the students," **Robbie Montgomery** said of the technology. She continued, "The great thing here is that the instrumentation is for the students and not just for research purposes. So, they get to use it, and we get the bonus of using it for research as well."

Montgomery's focus during her graduate research was centered on the separation of proteins. Since she began teaching at UT Martin, she has been able to continue with her studies, while her students are able to learn about the processes of protein separation.

Montgomery also has an interest in forensics, which is why she is looking forward to teaching a few new classes. "Just recently, [the Department of Chemistry and the College of Engineering and Natural Sciences] have been working with the Criminal Justice Program. We have developed a forensics science concentration for students. So now, students can major in criminal justice with a concentration in forensics science. Most of the forensics science classes that they have to take will come through the chemistry department. I actually get to develop two new classes to teach for the forensics program. We also have a forensics class here for students wanting to go into the crime lab or work at TBI."

Chemistry is not an easy major, but for ambitious students who are willing to put time and energy into their work, their preparedness will be evident. "Our graduates are extremely successful in going to professional schools, med schools, pharmacy schools; we have some in dental school, optometry school, nursing programs." Montgomery said, "We've heard from many other universities in the health sciences that say that the students that come from UTM, we know they are prepared for the course work there."

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE AT MARTIN

CAMPUS SCENE

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THE UNIVERSITY of
TENNESSEE **UT**
MARTIN

SCENE & HEARD

NOTEWORTHY 8
ATHLETICS 14
UNIVERSITY ADVANCEMENT 22

NEW NURSING WING OFFICIALLY OPENS AT UT MARTIN PARSONS CENTER

Story on page 15





(noteworthy)>>>

40 YEARS OF SERVICE>>> By Carmen Wagster

Charlie and Judy Rayburn served UT Martin for more than 40 years. Between these two familiar faces, they have covered several facets of the UT Martin campus. From residence life to athletics to the Office of Admissions, UT Martin has been lucky to call the Rayburns a part of our family.

Charlie and Judy met while attending Murray State University, and after they graduated and were married, Charlie was informed about a job opportunity in the Department of Health and Human Performance, and in 1973, he accepted a position to teach for UTM.

Charlie and Judy went from being Murray State Racers to UT Martin Pacers (and later the Skyhawks) in a short matter of time, but it did not take them long to feel at home.

Charlie said, "It was just kind of a home atmosphere, and when we got to know students and other faculty and staff on campus, it was a point where we had something in common."

Judy was along for the ride when she arrived at UT Martin in 1973. She said, "When we came here, the first year I did not work. Billie Ann Pace was the dean of women; that was back in the day when we had a dean of women, and I met her when he [Charlie] came for his interview.

"We became good friends. She dabbled in a little bit of everything. She was PanHellenic advisor. So, I just helped her do things, projects."

Judy recalled, "I became the head resident in Ellington in '74, the first year that it was coed and did that for four years. After that, I taught in the College of Business for five years."

When the opportunity to work in the Office of Admissions arose in 1984, Judy accepted the role. Working in admissions gave Judy an opportunity to connect with students and support them throughout their UTM experience.

She finds it encouraging and exciting to see the students she recruited succeeding in their careers. Judy said, "They're professionals, they're doctors, they're PTs, they're lawyers, they're pharmacists, they run companies, and you think 'My goodness! I knew you then!'"

In addition to the connections Charlie and Judy made with their students, they also became very close to the faculty and staff at UTM. Charlie has been a part of the Department of Health and Human Performance for more than 40 years. He said, "I was teaching with a group in HHP. I guess for the most part, we taught together for 25 to 30 years."

The Rayburns continue to keep the UT Martin tradition going. Their children, **JAIME ('98)** and **JAKE ('01)**, grew up and completed their degrees at UTM. Now, Judy says, it's time to get the grandchildren on track to attend UT Martin when they reach college age.

"Now we have to start working on the grandkids. We've kind of brainwashed them," she said. When we were watching the selection show, our son sends me a text and they're watching the [NCAA Women's Tournament] selection show, and Hailey (7) has her pompom out and she's saying, 'Go, Skyhawks.'"

In May 2013, Charlie retired as associate professor of health and human performance after 40 years, though he still teaches a few physical activity classes. Charlie is also known for coaching cheer and pom for 27 years and for creating the design for Pacer Pete and Pacer Polly, the UTM mascots that preceded Captain Skyhawk. One year later, this May, Judy retired after 30 years in the Office of Admissions.

Whenever there's an athletics event, Charlie and Judy are likely to be in attendance. They may have retired from working for the university, but their active dedication to UT Martin will remain the same. <<<

Pictured above: Judy and Charlie Rayburn have each retired with 40 years of service to UT Martin.



RETURNING HOME – Van Jones (second from right) is joined by Dr. Robert Nanney, Dr. Jerald Ogg and Alex Jacobi ('14), of Dyersburg at the 2014 Communications Awards Banquet. Alex is a former executive editor of The Pacer.

CROSSFIRE'S VAN JONES URGES STUDENTS TO USE UT MARTIN AS A SPRINGBOARD >>>

by Bud Grimes

Jackson native and CNN Crossfire co-host **VAN JONES** didn't play on a sports team coached by UT Martin Provost Jerald Ogg. But, "coach" is Jones' reference to his former communications professor and Pacer student newspaper adviser in recognition for a lifetime of support and encouragement.

Jones referenced his mentor often as he told UT Martin students to use the same opportunities given to them as a springboard for success. Jones was the keynote speaker for UT Martin's 2014 Communications Awards Banquet held April 14 in the Boling University Center's Duncan Ballroom. That evening, he received the university's Department of Communications Distinguished Alumni Award as the university's first journalism student to receive the honor.

"Well, it's good to be home," Jones said, who was a double major in communications and political science. "Good to be home. The emotions I felt

coming up here today after 24 years is just hard to put into words." Referencing his relationship with Ogg, he said that people need two kinds of friends in life, those for good times and those for bad. "And he's been both of those friends for me for 24 years and more."

Besides his association with CNN, the Los Angeles resident is president and co-founder of Rebuild the Dream, which VanJones.net says is "a platform for bottom-up, people-powered innovations to help fix the U.S. economy." He has written two New York Times Best Sellers: *The Green Collar Economy* and *Rebuild the Dream*. In 2009, Jones was the green jobs adviser to the Obama administration.

Jones also co-founded two social justice organizations: the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights and Color of Change. He has received many honors and recognitions, including the NAACP's Image Award.

"You can get anywhere you want to in this world from UT Martin," Jones told the students. "Anywhere you want to literally in the world from UT Martin." He then recalled how he was tempted to

transfer from UT Martin his sophomore year and was set to do so when someone recommended that he talk first with Jerald Ogg. "I sat down and talked with him, and it was the most important conversation of my life," he said.

Ogg didn't try to stop Jones from leaving but assured him that, if he applied himself, his UT Martin degree would prepare him for whatever he wanted to do. That short conversation convinced Jones to stay. "What I've learned in my life is it does not matter how low down you start," he said, noting that he's worked at the White House, for CNN and has traveled the world, adding, "Only two things matter: how strong is your springboard, and how hard do you hit it? ... This communications department is a springboard."

He told about leaving UT Martin following graduation and driving his 1980 Chevrolet Monza Spyder to Yale Law School. He interacted and competed with students from very different backgrounds, most from private schools, who used words that he had never heard. But, he told of what he learned at UT Martin that pulled him through the experience.

He said that he spent every day as a UT Martin student "trying to break down what was happening in simple terms." Then, during his time at Yale University, "I would go in the (Yale) library and read, but I would go around and interview the students that seemed like they knew more than I did, and I didn't mind looking stupid. Because you're a communications major, you'd rather look stupid and then be able to write a smart story than be sitting up here trying to be so impressive and have your editor tell you, you don't know what you're talking about."

>>>

(noteworthy)>>>

<<<

Using this approach at Yale, he was able, within a semester, to outperform those students who prepared for many years to be there, and he eventually graduated at the top of his law school class. Master this skill of making the complicated understandable, he told the audience, and “you are better than 95 percent of the people in your profession.”

Further stressing the importance of reading, Jones credited Ogg with encouraging his students to “read everything.” He reads across a broad range of topics, many of which he knows little about, because Ogg told them, “You never know when that one fact is going to make a difference.”

Lastly, he learned a work ethic at UT Martin. “The world’s more competitive now than it was when I was here,” he said, adding, “Nobody’s going to give you anything. You have to work circles around the people around you who are not here.” He recalled his time as editor for *The Pacer* when Ogg wouldn’t let the staff print the paper until everything was correct, even if it meant everyone’s working in the early morning hours to meet a 7 a.m. printing deadline. “We had pride in what we were doing. They don’t teach that everywhere,” he said, adding, “This is a serious job to be a communicator in a democracy.”

Jones moved to Oakland, Calif., after earning his law degree to work with less fortunate children. This allowed him to use his communications and law skills to explain complex legal concepts to poor parents and help them make good decisions for their children. His work there resulted in cutting the youth prison population in California by 80 percent, he

said, and he pushed his message to public officials, the media and opinion leaders, thanks to what he learned at UT Martin. “The truth will stand up by itself, if you tell it,” Jones said.

He then turned his attention to creating jobs for young people, and in cooperation with the Oakland City Council he helped to create the Oakland Green Jobs Corps to install solar panels. “You’re in front of my house today being a nuisance. I want you on top of my house doing something positive,” he said of the program that came from an idea he had while reading.

Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi heard of the program, he took the idea to Washington, D.C., and it grew into the Green Jobs Act of 2007 signed by President George W. Bush. “The only thing he (President Bush) and Pelosi ever agreed on was my bill,” he said, laughing. That same year, he went to New York with President Bill Clinton and introduced a program called Green for All as part of the Clinton Global Initiative. His best-selling book in 2008 that followed was read by then-Senator Barack Obama.

He paused and asked the audience, “Didn’t I tell you you can get anywhere from here?”

President Obama liked the book and made Jones part of his transition team that used his original idea for Oakland to create a national training program and separate stimulus package for the solar industry. He spent six months in the White House working with the program. Again, he credited his UT Martin experiences for these achievements.

“The best people in this country are at places like UT Martin. Honest folk. Hard-

working folk. People who understand what real people are going through,” he said, adding, “And you owe it to yourself. You owe it to your family. You owe it to your country to hit this springboard hard.”

He remembered one day in class when Ogg threw a stack of assignment papers against the wall because he was disappointed in the quality of work. “I mean you can talk to every person that was in that class that day. It changed our lives that we’d let him down.”

In a 2002 Campus Scene story about Jones, Ogg said of this former student, “Van was certainly one of the most gifted students I have had the pleasure of teaching. What stood out even more than his intelligence, however, was his passion.

“I was a student here (at UT Martin) in the mid-’70s, and Van had the same zeal to make a difference you associate with that era.”

Dr. Robert Nanney, communications department chair, has known Jones since his days as a UT Martin student.

“Our students were inspired by his passion, his journey and his heart,” Nanney said. “Van has countless awards from groups across the country and beyond, but it was especially gratifying that he was truly touched to receive our department’s Distinguished Alumni Award. It meant the world to him.”

Microsoft co-founder and philanthropist Bill Gates is quoted as saying, “Everyone needs a coach. It doesn’t matter whether you’re a basketball player, a tennis player, a gymnast or a bridge player.” Jerald Ogg stepped up as a life coach for Van Jones, who turned his UT Martin experience into a springboard for success. <<<



Caroline Cannon (center), a sophomore nursing major from Covington, received the 2014-15 Nick Dunagan WestStar Leadership Scholarship during the WestStar graduation program, June 19, in Jackson. **Charley Deal ('92, '96)**, executive director, WestStar Leadership Program, and her mother, **Harriet Cannon ('82)**, area director for USDA Rural Development, join Caroline following the scholarship announcement. Harriet is both a UT Martin and a WestStar alum.

COVINGTON STUDENT RECEIVES NICK DUNAGAN WESTSTAR LEADERSHIP SCHOLARSHIP >>>

Caroline Cannon, a sophomore nursing major from Covington, was awarded the 2014-15 Nick Dunagan WestStar Leadership Scholarship during the WestStar graduation program, June 19, in Jackson. She is the daughter of **Harriet ('82)** and Lenard Cannon. Harriet is area director for USDA Rural Development and a 2000 WestStar graduate.

The scholarship goes to a student who has proven leadership skills or displays leadership potential. Preference is given to students who display a high level of academic achievement and who have a proven record of community or university involvement. The WestStar Board of Trustees selects the scholarship recipient.

Dr. Nick Dunagan ('68) is a WestStar Leadership Program founder, former executive director of the program and UT Martin chancellor emeritus. He established the scholarship to be awarded to a dependent of a WestStar alumnus whose student is enrolled at the university.

The WestStar Leadership Program is in its 25th year and graduated 29 members in the 2014 class. The program now has 710 alumni who have successfully completed the program. <<<



RECENT ALUMS RECEIVE MEEK LEADERSHIP AWARDS >>> Bosede

Afolami, left, of Memphis, **Jamie Arnett** (second from left), of Bartlett, and **Taner Swinea** (second from right), of Waynesboro, received Paul and Martha Meek Awards presented at May 3 commencement exercises. Dr. Margaret Toston, vice chancellor for student affairs, presented the awards, the only awards announced during commencement. The Meek Award is a cash award given to graduating seniors who have demonstrated outstanding qualities of leadership while at UT Martin and is made possible by the children of Paul and Martha Meek. Paul Meek served as UT Martin chancellor from 1934-1967. All three recipients distinguished themselves as leaders in the ways they have served their student colleagues, the university and the community. <<<

(noteworthy)>>>



Bettye Giles, retired UT Martin women's athletics director, and Lady Vols Coach Emeritus Pat Head Summitt are pictured at the Oct. 6, 2012, unveiling of "Coaches," a statue display at the entrance to the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center. The new Chi Omega House will be named in Summitt's honor.

UT BOARD OF TRUSTEES APPROVES NAME FOR NEW CHI OMEGA HOUSE>>>

by Joe Lofaro

The University of Tennessee Board of Trustees approved the naming of one of four new sorority structures at UT Martin at its June meeting in Knoxville. The full board unanimously approved the name of the Pat Head Summitt Chi Omega House in honor of **Pat Head Summitt (UTM '74)**, benefactor and an athletic, academic and volunteer leader of the university.

Alpha Delta Pi, Alpha Omicron Pi and Zeta Tau Alpha, all founded on the UT Martin campus in the early 1960s, will also build new two-story structures on the southern edge of campus near University Courts.

Summitt was born Patricia Sue Head in Clarksville. She attended UT Martin where she was a member of Chi Omega and earned All-American honors playing for the women's basketball team. Just before the 1974–75 season, with women's college basketball still in its infancy and not yet an NCAA-sanctioned sport, the 22-year-old Summitt became a graduate assistant at the University of Tennessee and was named head coach of the Lady Vols after the previous coach resigned suddenly.

Summitt co-captained the first United States women's national basketball team as a player in the inaugural women's tournament at the 1976 Summer Olympics, winning the silver medal. Eight years later, in 1984, she coached the U.S. women's team to an Olympic gold medal, becoming the first U.S. Olympian to win a basketball medal and coach a medal-winning team.

Summitt holds the record for most all-time wins for a coach in NCAA basketball history of either a men's or women's team in any division. She coached from 1974 to 2012, all with the Lady Vols, winning eight NCAA national championships.

The date of an official naming ceremony will be determined upon completion of the new house. <<<



FACULTY HONORED>>> Several faculty members were recognized April 13 at Honors Day 2014. They included (back row, from left) **Dr. Paula Moore ('90, '02)**, 2014 UTAA Outstanding Teacher; Dr. Margaret Toston, vice chancellor for student affairs; Dr. Tom Rakes, UTM chancellor; **Dr. Jerald Ogg ('76)**, provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs, and **Jenna Wright ('70, '73)**, Department of English and Modern Foreign Languages chair; (front row, from left) **Dr. Stan Dunagan ('93)**, 2014 Cunningham Outstanding Teacher/Scholar; Dr. Teresa Collard, 2013 UTAA Outstanding Teacher; Dr. Somsak Sukittanon, 2014 Cunningham Outstanding Teacher/Scholar; **Dr. Tracy Rutledge ('97)**, 2013 Coffey Outstanding Teaching Award; Dr. James Butler, 2014 UTAA Outstanding Teacher; and Dr. David Carithers, 2014 Coffey Outstanding Teaching Award. <<<



FRESH SPACES – The Barnes and Noble College Bookstore and Sodexo Skyhawk Dining Hall welcomed students this fall with redesigned space and more choices.

NEWLY UPGRADED UT MARTIN BOOKSTORE AND DINING HALL GIVE STUDENTS OPTIONS>>>

by Bud Grimes.

New surroundings, expanded choices and cool places to spend time. All were officially unveiled Sept. 11 as the university celebrated the grand re-opening of two widely used areas on the main campus. A ceremony in the Boling University Center showcased the newly upgraded Barnes & Noble College Bookstore and Sodexo Skyhawk Dining Hall.

Barnes & Noble committed \$350,000 to the bookstore's relocation to the university center's first floor, while Sodexo made a \$3.25 million investment in the dining services area.

John Abel ('99, '02), Boling University Center interim director, emceed the program leading up to a ribbon cutting that was held on the first-floor hallway entrance leading to both the bookstore and dining services. "Both (projects) have been a long time coming," Abel said, who welcomed the crowd that included Barnes & Noble and Sodexo representatives.

Abel said that both projects involved student input throughout and were completed almost simultaneously in eight months. SGA President John Domanski, of Dickson, described the changes as "something that we have needed." He added, "I think it's safe to say that everyone I've talked to likes the new areas."

The Barnes & Noble College Bookstore began moving spring semester from its longtime second-floor location in the Boling University Center. With the move, the bookstore increased the amount of merchandise and textbooks, but appearances are deceiving as the new space is similar in size to the former location. "The floor space is actually not a huge difference in square footage," said bookstore manager **Steven Sanchez ('12)**

in an earlier interview. "The difference comes from the layout. Upstairs the store was long and straight.

"Now we have a better layout with a better experience for everyone. We also can handle crowds for our back-to-school times a lot better now, too."

Sanchez is especially pleased with the bookstore's new combination study and leisure area called The POD, which is located in the store's book sales area.

Across the hall from the bookstore is the renovated dining hall and new coffee shop, The Hanger, which serves Starbucks Coffee. The Sodexo Skyhawk Dining Hall has a larger seating capacity and new dining options, including the 360 Degrees grill, Magellan international food option and an Italian food choice called Bella Trattoria.

Staple dining options include the salad bar, now called Fresh From the Fields, the hot plate option called Daily Dish, the Basic Kneads sandwich station, and the Ignite Grill. Desserts can be found near each food station, and soda fountains are in three different locations.

Jesse Koweleski, UT Martin Sodexo Dining Services promotions coordinator, has seen the area's transformation firsthand. Work on the dining hall began the day after May graduation, and meals were served starting in mid-August when athletes returned to campus, he said.

"Pretty much if you look at it, every single thing from the spoon, the fork, the knife, the plate, is brand new. All of the equipment, brand new. Everything is new," Koweleski said in an earlier interview.

As for reaction to the changes, "It's almost been a complete shock. ... All the reactions of the students, some of the faculty as well, and then even some community members, they absolutely love it." The dining hall is open to the public, and brunch is served on the first Sunday of each month. <<<

(noteworthy)>>>



KELLY MURRAY EXCELLENCE IN PORTFOLIO MANAGEMENT AWARD>>>

Each semester the Kelly Murray Excellence in Portfolio Management Award is given to students in the UT Martin TVA Investment Challenge program

who exemplify the dedication and skill of Kelly Murray, late son of Dr. Sandra and William Murray, to the TVA Investment Challenge portfolio management program in the finance major. For the spring semester 2014, **Adam Tolley** (second from left), of South Fulton, and **Ryan Wallace** (second from right), of Lexington, received the award for their outstanding efforts in managing the UT Martin TVA stock portfolio and the dedication they showed in continuing the outstanding performance of the portfolio. The TVA Investment Challenge began in 1998 and includes 25 universities in the TVA service area. Each university manages a portfolio of stocks under the guidelines set by the TVA. The UT Martin program gives undergraduate students in finance the opportunity to manage a stock portfolio by making all of the investment decisions under the guidance of the program's co-directors, Drs. Mahmoud Haddad and Arnold Redman, both professors of finance. Redman retired following spring semester after 22 years of UT Martin service. <<<

UT MARTIN ACADEMICS EARN ACCREDITATIONS, ACCOLADES>>>

UT Martin academic programs earned accreditations and earned accolades in recent times. More information about these and other academic programs is available at www.utm.edu.

Department of Communications – The national Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication recommended full reaccreditation for the UT Martin Department of Communications following a site visit Feb. 2-5. The 32-member accrediting council made its final vote May 2 in Arlington, Va. The ACEJMC review cycle is every six years.

Department of Family and Consumer Sciences – A site team representing the Council for Accreditation of the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences met April 6-9 with various groups across the main campus. The resulting report commended the FCS department for the excellence of its programs. The council for accreditation will make the final determination of continued accreditation in November 2014.

Department of Nursing – The Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing recommended full accreditation for the UT Martin Department of Nursing. The next ACEN is scheduled for eight years, the longest that a department can receive, according to Dr. Mary Radford, Department of Nursing chair.

The university offered a two-year nursing program from 1970 to 1991 and began the transition to the Bachelor of Science in Nursing program in 1988. UT Martin offers the traditional BSN at the main campus and the Parsons Center. An RN to BSN program option is offered at the university's Ripley Center and also online.

Veterinary Health Technology - May was a month of firsts for UT Martin's veterinary health technology option. The program received initial accreditation from the American Veterinary Medical Association Committee on Veterinary Technician Education and Activities. Then the first 20 students graduated from the program May 3 during spring commencement.

Courses were first taught in fall 2011 at UT Martin, and 120 students are now pursuing the option. It's one of 24 accredited bachelor's degree programs in the country, the only four-year program in West Tennessee and the only accredited veterinary technology program in West Tennessee.

Online Master of Science in Education - Best Online Colleges has named UT Martin's Online Master of Science in Education with a major in counseling at the University of Tennessee at Martin among the best in the nation for 2014. The listing can be found at BestOnlineColleges.org and includes 34 schools sorted by affordability, flexibility and efficiency. UT Martin is the only Tennessee college or university included in the online counseling program list. <<<



MORE OPPORTUNITY – Jessica Brownyard, who was accepted into the UT Martin BSN Program this fall speaks at the official opening of the new West Tennessee Healthcare Foundation Nursing Wing on Aug. 28.

NEW NURSING WING OFFICIALLY OPENS AT UT MARTIN PARSONS CENTER >>>

Jessica Brownyard has a lot to say about the UT Martin Parsons Center.

Brownyard spoke at the July 2013 announcement of the center's new West Tennessee Healthcare Foundation Nursing Wing. On Thursday, Aug. 28, she spoke again at a ribbon-cutting ceremony that officially opened the expansion. Sometime in the future, she can say that she's among the first to graduate from the center's Bachelor of Science in Nursing program housed in the facility.

Brownyard joined UT President Joe DiPietro, UT Martin Chancellor Tom Rakes, Jim and Janet Ayers of the Ayers Foundation, local and state elected officials and others to celebrate the expansion's completion.

Dr. Kelli Deere, center director, welcomed the overflow crowd and recognized the partnership among the

UT Martin Parsons Center, the West Tennessee Healthcare Foundation and the state of Tennessee for making the expansion possible. She specifically thanked Tennessee Gov. Bill Haslam and the Tennessee General Assembly for supporting the project, which was completed by TLM Associates, of Jackson, and Quinn Construction, of Parsons.

Initial funding for the expansion was included in the 2013-14 state budget, and a \$1 million appropriation was made to build a 10,000-square-foot addition to the center. The project received added support when the West Tennessee Healthcare Foundation also made a \$1 million commitment to the project. The addition includes classrooms, a skills laboratory and a high-fidelity computerized simulation laboratory.

Chancellor Tom Rakes also expressed appreciation to all who made the project possible. He reminded the audience that the university offers a high-quality BSN program to the center as he told of 2014

nursing graduates achieving a 100 percent pass rate on the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses.

"We feel fortunate to partner with this community, this region of the state, certainly with West Tennessee Healthcare," Rakes said of the project. "We appreciate the relationships with our legislators, and we don't take it for granted because it doesn't happen automatically."

President Joe DiPietro compared the new nursing wing to the time when he and other University of Illinois veterinary science faculty members moved to a new large animal hospital. He recalled that the move "changed how we felt about ourselves. It changed how we were able to train our students. It changed the spirit of the organization to focus on getting even better." He sees the expansion having the same potential impact for the Parsons Center.

DiPietro kept the focus on students and introduced Brownyard, who was accepted to begin the nursing program this fall.

"I never thought that in my wildest dreams that I would get to graduate from the UT Martin Parsons Center," Brownyard said. "And now I will get to be one of the first ever to graduate from the new BSN program." She thanked Jim and Janet Ayers and the Ayers Foundation for helping her "through every single semester of college" and added, "This new addition gives so many students the hope that one day that they can graduate while still staying close to home and saving a little bit of money."

A surprise ending to the program came when Jo Ann Ayers Lynn, sister of Jim Ayers, and Rakes unveiled a bust of the businessman and philanthropist. <<<

College National Finals Rodeo



2014



(athletics)>>>

>>> UT MARTIN MEN'S RODEO TEAM CAPTURES FIRST-EVER NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP.

The UT Martin men's rodeo squad put together a dominant week which culminated in the program's first national championship at the 2014 College National Finals Rodeo held in Casper, Wyo., June 15-21.

UT Martin compiled 755 team points in the event, holding off a late charge by Tarleton State University (730 points) on the seventh and final day of competition. All in all, UT Martin emerged victorious in a 56-team field that boasted the best cowboys in the country.

A total of six cowboys combined for the men's team title, as Will Lummus (steer wrestling, tie down roping), Tyler Waltz (bareback riding), Clark Adcock (tie down roping, team roping), Tanner Phipps (bareback riding), John Alley (team roping) and Colt Kitaif (bareback riding) represented UT Martin. Nealey Dalton also earned a spot in the CNFR as a representative of the UT Martin women's team.

"What a blessing," said UT Martin head coach John Luthi, who was named the 2013 National Intercollegiate Rodeo Association Coach of the Year. "The championship still hasn't sunk in yet. I am so thankful for this great group of guys. Everybody contributed points and it was a total team effort. It's a pretty amazing feeling."

UT Martin sat atop the men's team standings for the final five days of the CNFR, considered the "Rose Bowl" of college rodeo.

The previous best CNFR finish for the UT Martin men's team was third place in both 1985 and 2008.

A total of nine individual events were held at the CNFR, with three rounds in each event spread out throughout the week. The top-12 average finishers then qualified for Saturday night's championship round.

A trio of UT Martin cowboys advanced to the final round. Adcock placed second nationally with a 37.5 average score in tie down roping, while Waltz came in third place with a 31.5 average in bareback riding. Lummus finished fourth in the nation in tie down roping (40.1 average) and 10th in steer wrestling (18.0 average on three runs). Adcock (270 points) and Lummus (120 points) also placed third and sixth, respectively, in the men's all-around cowboy category.

>>> UT MARTIN ATHLETICS ANNOUNCES 2014 HALL OF FAME CLASS.

A total of four members have been selected to join the exclusive UT Martin Athletics Hall of Fame. Current administrator Col. Bill Kaler (1980-present), retired head rifle coach Bob Beard (1982-2014), former rifle shooter Jaymi Collar Ray (2003-07) and former men's basketball player Jared Newson (2003-06) employ the Hall of Fame's Class of 2014. The select four will be officially enshrined in the UT Martin Athletics Hall of Fame during the Letter Winner's Breakfast ceremony Saturday, Oct. 25, during Homecoming weekend.

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By Ryne Rickman

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Kaler was a retired military officer and former professor of military science at UT Martin when he joined the athletic department as an academic coordinator for former director of athletics Ray Mears in 1980. A native of Bardwell, Ky., he is currently the assistant athletics director for compliance, providing the education for NCAA and Ohio Valley Conference rules in order to ensure the compliance of the coaching staff as well as selected university units. He also monitors overall academic performance so coaches and student-athletes have a continuous status of their athletic eligibility.

Under Beard's tutelage, the UT Martin rifle team has been a model of excellence and consistency – ranking in the national top-20 polls in 31 of the past 32 years. He was named Ohio Valley Conference Coach of the Year four times (2000, 2007, 2011, 2014) and produced four All-Americans, one national champion and an Olympian. While UT Martin competed in the Gulf South Conference, the Bardwell, Ky., native led UT Martin to 87 straight match victories and nine conference championships, including eight in a row.

Ray is one of just two shooters in UT Martin rifle history to earn All-Ohio Valley Conference accolades for four consecutive years (air rifle honors in 2004-06, smallbore accolades in 2006-07). She qualified for the 2006 NCAA Championships held in Colorado Springs, Colo., and left the program with the all-time record in individual smallbore (578, set at Kentucky on Nov. 4, 2006). The Blairsville, Ga., native wrapped up her remarkable career by being named the 2007 Bettye Giles Female Student-Athlete of the Year.

A Belleville, Ill., native, Newson was a two-time All-Ohio Valley Conference performer – including a spot on the OVC's first team in 2005-06 when his 18.8 points per game ranked second in the league. Despite the fact that he only played three years at UT Martin, he left the program as the third all-time leading scorer with 1,347 points. He still ranks in eight UT Martin all-time top-10 career statistical categories, including field goals made (452), free throws made (378), rebounds (535) and steals (128).

>>> UT MARTIN BOASTS FIVE OVC FRESHMEN OF THE YEAR. An exciting new wave of freshmen invaded Skyhawk athletics in 2013-14, five of which earned top honors as Ohio Valley Conference Freshmen of the Year in their respective sports.

Ashia Jones (women's basketball), Dacotah Faught (rifle), Austin Swafford (golf), Hitomi Naito (tennis) and Carly Gonzales (softball) were all recognized as the top rookies in the conference. In addition, fellow Skyhawks Ben Upton (baseball, Louisville Slugger Freshman All-American, OVC All-Newcomer), Aiofe Lennon (soccer,

OVC All-Newcomer, only freshman on the All-OVC first team), Ellie Myrick (soccer, OVC All-Newcomer), Madison Wessling (volleyball, OVC All-Newcomer) and Burcu Tari (tennis, All-OVC second team) also ranked amongst the OVC's elite.

Jones finished her season with averages of 13.1 points, 6.3 rebounds, 1.5 steals and 1.0 blocks per game. Jones scored in double figures 20 times on the season, including finishing the year with 17 consecutive games with 10 points or more. She scored 20 points or more on six occasions and took home a program record six Freshman of the Week honors in 2013-14.

Faught advanced to the NCAA Championships, which marked the first time since 2006 that UT Martin had an individual qualify for that event. Facing the nation's best, she advanced to the finals with a 595 score (out of 600) before finishing eighth in the air rifle competition. She averaged a 585.2 score in air rifle and set a new school record with a 597-point showing at the NCAA Qualifier in February.

Swafford was named only the second OVC Freshmen of the Year in UT Martin golf history. He splashed onto the scene in 2013-14, ranking 23rd in the OVC in scoring average (74.72). His best finish was a seventh place performance at the Murray State Invitational on Sept. 30-Oct. 1, with his best round of the year (68) coming in the third and final round of that same event.

Naito posted a 16-4 record in singles and 11-8 mark in doubles. Against league competition, she went 10-0 in singles play and 5-4 in doubles action. She continued her dominating play when competition increased, finishing 10-3 in the second slot. Naito was one of the hottest tennis players in the OVC all season, as she won 14 straight singles matches from March 2 through April 17.

Gonzales played in 47 games in 2014, leading the Skyhawks with a .328 batting average. Along with her potent average, she tallied four doubles, a triple, one home run and 17 runs batted in. She recorded 11 stolen bases on the season, joining a squad that swiped 90 bags as a whole. She also tallied a .405 slugging percentage while reaching base at a .391 clip.

>>> RICK ROBINSON HIRED AS NEW UT MARTIN HEAD BASEBALL COACH. UT Martin Chancellor Tom Rakes and athletics director Julio Freire announced the hiring of Rick Robinson as the 10th head baseball coach in Skyhawk program history on June 3.

Robinson brings 17 years of head coaching experience to UT Martin, including the last 16 years transforming Young Harris College into a junior college and NCAA Division-II powerhouse.

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(athletics)>>>

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Robinson sports a 699-281 career head coaching record (.713 winning percentage) and boasts four 50-win seasons, eight conference championships, five Region XVII championships and one NJCAA World Series appearance.

Robinson, who has never had a losing record as a head coach, averaged 49.3 wins per season from 2002-08 in the junior college ranks before Young Harris transitioned into a four-year baccalaureate school competing in Division-II in 2011.

In his coaching career, Robinson has guided 43 players to the professional ranks, including 25 Major League Baseball draft selections. Current major leaguers who have played under Robinson include Baltimore Orioles outfielder Nick Markakis (seventh overall pick in the first round of the 2003 MLB Draft), Colorado Rockies outfielder Charlie Blackmon (72nd overall pick in the second round of the 2008 MLB Draft), Atlanta Braves right-handed pitcher Cory Gearrin (138th overall pick in the fourth round of the 2007 MLB Draft) and Bill Buckner (55th overall pick in the second round of the 2004 MLB Draft).

Robinson has coached a pair of National Players of the Year in Markakis (2003) and Bryson Smith (2009) and also worked with some of the game's brightest college stars when he served as head coach of the Hiyamis Mets in the Cape Cod Baseball League in 2008.

A Brevard, N.C., native, Robinson played collegiate baseball at Appalachian State University in Boone, NC., He earned his degree from Appalachian State and later earned a master's degree from Furman University.

Robinson is married to the former Luann DeGroat of Hawley, Pa. The couple has been married for more 20 years and has three children: Faithe (17), Rhett (14) and Ryan (11).

>>> TRIO OF FORMER SKYHAWK FOOTBALL PLAYERS SIGN NFL CONTRACTS.

Former UT Martin football players Jeremy Butler, Ben Johnson and DJ Roberts all earned a chance to showcase their talents for a spot on an NFL roster, as Butler and Roberts agreed to terms with the Baltimore Ravens while Johnson inked a deal with the Kansas City Chiefs.

Butler and Johnson signed undrafted rookie free agent contracts in mid-May while Roberts was invited to minicamp on a tryout basis. Roberts then impressed Baltimore's coaching staff and inked a similar undrafted rookie free agent deal in early June.

Butler rewrote the Skyhawk record books in only two seasons (2012-13), ranking first in UT Martin history in 100-plus yard

receiving games (eight), second in touchdown receptions (20), third in receptions (141) and fifth in receiving yards (1,953). The Bradenton, Fla., native was named a 2013 All-American by five different media outlets after ranking sixth in the nation in receiving yards (1,203) and seventh in receptions per game (7.5).

Roberts successfully made the transition from defensive line to outside linebacker in the professional ranks. The Knoxville, native earned first team All-Ohio Valley Conference accolades after putting together a career-high 53 tackles, including 11 tackles for loss and four sacks. He concluded his Skyhawk career with 12.5 sacks (ninth all-time) and three straight seasons of at least 11 tackles for loss and 3.5 sacks.

Johnson led the OVC in tackles (102) for the second straight season in 2013, after accumulating 131 stops in 2012. The Primm Springs, Tenn., native tallied 12.5 tackles for loss (exactly half of his career total) in 2013 alone, garnering first team All-OVC honors in addition to an All-American honor by Phil Steele Publications. He accounted for 330 tackles in his career, which puts him in seventh place in the UT Martin record book.

>>> UT MARTIN RIFLE DUO COMPETES IN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS.

Dacotah Faught and Jessica Cobb, both members of the UT Martin rifle team, stood toe-to-toe against the nation's best and held their own at the 2014 NCAA Rifle Championships, held on the campus of Murray State University.

Faught, a freshman out of Amenia, N.D., fired the second-highest score out of all 46 shooters in the first relay, compiling 595 out of a possible 600 points. That score trailed only West Virginia's Maren Prediger (the eventual national runner-up) for the best air rifle score. Faught advanced to the finals, where each shooter takes their turn and the lowest score is eliminated until an individual champion is crowned. Faught fired a score of 80 to come in eighth place.

A senior hailing from Cedar Hill, Tenn., Cobb compiled a score of 573 in her first relay of the day. Both participants shot in front of more than 200 spectators on the main arena floor of the CFSB Center. The Skyhawk duo were the first participants to represent UT Martin at the NCAA Rifle Championships since Jaymi Collar and Heather Tillson earned a spot in the 2006 field.

>>> HEATH SCHROYER TAKES OVER AS UT MARTIN MEN'S BASKETBALL COACH.

UT Martin introduced Heath Schroyer as its ninth men's basketball coach in program history at a press conference held March 20 at the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center.

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(clockwise from top): UT Martin athletics director Julio Freire welcomes new head baseball coach Rick Robinson; UT Martin alum and Indiana Fever head coach Lin Dunn (story on page 21); UT Martin alums Heather Butler (left) and Jasmine Newsome (stories on pages 20 and 21).

(athletics)>>>



Heath Schroyer was announced the ninth men's basketball coach in program history at a press conference held at the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center.

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Schroyer, 42, brings 18 years of collegiate coaching experience to the Skyhawk program, including seven years as a head coach at the Division-I level. All six of Schroyer's stops at a Division-I institution have culminated in either a conference championship or postseason play.

A native of Walkersville, Md., Schroyer has spent the past three seasons at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas working as the associate head coach under Dave Rice. The Runnin' Rebels sported three 20-plus win seasons, a 71-32 overall record (29-19 against Mountain West Conference opposition) and appearances in the 2012 and 2013 NCAA Tournaments in Schroyer's tenure. He was named a top-15 assistant coach in the nation by Bleacher Report in 2012-13 and followed that with a top-20 assistant coach in the nation honor by College Sports Madness for the 2013-14 campaign.

Schroyer coordinated UNLV's recruiting efforts since he joined the staff in 2011. The Runnin' Rebels' 2012 recruiting class was ranked No. 7 in the nation by ESPN and one year later, UNLV produced Anthony Bennett - the No. 1 overall selection by the Cleveland Cavaliers in the 2013 NBA Draft.

>>> SKYHAWK WOMEN'S HOOPS ADVANCES TO FOURTH STRAIGHT NCAA TOURNAMENT IN 2013-14.

The Skyhawk women's basketball team wrapped up another remarkable season in 2013-14, advancing to their fourth straight appearance in the NCAA Tournament. UT Martin posted a

SKYHAWK UPDATE

school-record 24 victories, won the Ohio Valley Conference regular season and tournament titles and narrowly fell 60-58 at No. 4 seed North Carolina, which was the closest an OVC team had come to a win in the NCAA Tournament since 2003.

Heather Butler (OVC Player of the Year), Jasmine Newsome (OVC Defensive Player of the Year) and Ashia Jones (OVC Freshman of the Year) each won major league accolades while head coach Kevin McMillan was rewarded with a new six-year contract that will keep him on the Skyhawk sidelines through the 2019-20 season.

UT Martin also received votes in the final USA Today Sports Top 25 Coaches Poll for the first time in program history, coming in at 37th in the nation.

>>> BUTLER AND NEWSOME RACK UP THE ACCOLADES.

UT Martin women's basketball players Heather Butler and Jasmine Newsome were named two of the Tennessee Female Amateur Athletes of the Year by the Tennessee Sports Hall of Fame. The Skyhawk pair joined Middle Tennessee's Ebony Rowe and Tennessee's Ivy Renfroe for that designation.

The Tennessee Sports Hall of Fame induction ceremony took place on May 17 at the Renaissance Hotel in downtown Nashville. The 2014 Hall of Fame class included Eddie George, Popeye Jones and Hope Hines.

>>> JOHNSON SMASHING VARIOUS UT MARTIN CROSS COUNTRY RECORDS.

Junior cross country runner Colin Johnson continues to shatter UT Martin school records. This spring, he shattered his own previous school record (established in the fall of 2013) in the 10k meter run at the Rhodes College Open on March 15, crossing the finish line in 31:26.71. Five weeks earlier, he broke the school's long standing 3k meter run record with his time of 8:51.20.

>>> UT MARTIN ALUM LIN DUNN INDUCTED INTO WOMEN'S BASKETBALL HALL OF FAME.

UT Martin alum and former Indiana Fever head coach Lin Dunn was enshrined in the Women's Basketball Hall of Fame June 14 in Knoxville. Dunn, a 1969 graduate of UT Martin, was one of six inductees into the prestigious class of 2014.

Although Dunn never played collegiate women's basketball, she is credited as being one of the biggest pioneers of the sport at UT Martin. She begged women's athletic director Bettye Giles to add the sport of women's basketball, but by the time it was a recognized

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sport at UT Martin, Dunn had already graduated with a bachelor of science degrees in health, physical education and English.

Since then, Dunn has established herself as one of the best women's basketball coaches in the world. She posted a 447-257 record in 25 years as a head coach in the collegiate ranks, making stops at Austin Peay, Ole Miss, Miami and Purdue. She guided her teams to seven NCAA Tournaments, including four Sweet 16 appearances and one Final Four appearance with Purdue in 1994.

Dunn then moved on to the professional ranks, coaching the Portland Power in the American Basketball League before becoming the inaugural coach and general manager of the WNBA's Seattle Storm. After three seasons at the helm, she joined the Indiana Fever coaching staff in 2004 and was elevated to head coach in 2008.

One of Dunn's biggest accomplishments came in 2012 when she coached the Fever to their first-ever WNBA championship. She was also an assistant coach on the 1992 USA Olympic Team that earned a bronze medal in Barcelona, Spain.

This past May, Dunn announced that the 2014 campaign — her 38th season as a head coach — would be her last. She ends her career with a 213-196 professional record, including 168 WNBA victories (sixth most in league history).

>>> UTM BASEBALL PRODUCES FOURTH MLB DRAFT PICK IN LAST FOUR SEASONS. History was made this past June as Taylor Cox became the highest Major

League Baseball draft pick in UT Martin history when the San Diego Padres snagged the junior left-handed pitcher in the 16th round (477th overall).

With the selection, the Skyhawk baseball program has now produced a MLB draft pick in four straight years. Other selections include Trey Karlen (2011, 33rd round, Washington Nationals), Alec Mills (2012, 22nd round, Kansas City Royals) and Dan Tobik (2013, 39th round, Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim).

Cox was just the second left-handed pitcher selected by the Padres in the 2014 draft and was the 10th Ohio Valley Conference player (sixth pitcher) selected.

A 6-3, 210-pound Bartlett, Tenn., native, Cox made 49 appearances (25 starts) in his three-year UT Martin career. He struck out 98 batters over 138.1 career innings pitched. He also made appearances at first base, designated hitter and right field over the past two seasons, hitting .314 with a .407 on-base percentage and .464 slugging percentage in 163 plate appearances.

In his first season as a No. 1 starter, Cox posted six starts where he allowed three earned runs or less in 2014. He posted one of his best career starts in the season opener at UAB, tossing seven innings with one unearned run allowed on six hits and no walks. He made a team-high 13 starts as a sophomore and tied for the second-most appearances on the team (23) out of the bullpen in 2012. <<<



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(university advancement)>>>

ALUMNUS SETS UP LARGEST SINGLE ENDOWMENT FOR UT MARTIN COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT >>> By Joe Lofaro

Jim Leighton registered for public speaking at UT Martin six times and dropped the class five times, but that one time that he endured the quarter-long course, he remembers vividly.

"I had (the late) David Briody, and he would always tell us he had sweaty knees when he stood in front of the classroom. Teaching was his passion," said Leighton.

But it was Dr. Gary Steinke who proved to be Leighton's mentor. "He walked the talk, read the books and shared real-world experiences with his students. He taught me how to think on my feet."

And now, more than 35 years since Leighton, the son of a mailman from Collegeville, Pa., near Philadelphia, graduated from UT Martin, he has established the Jim Leighton Communications Endowment for \$100,000, the single largest gift ever given to the Communications Department.

"We are humbled and elated to learn of Jim's incredibly generous gift to the communications department," Dr. Robert Nanney, chairman of the department said. "This donation is testament to Jim's desire to make a lasting difference. We will strive to be good stewards of the funds."

"My senior year, Steinke persuaded me to go to a career fair and introduce myself to a company called Data Communications. I knew a little about radio because I was the operations manager at WUTM. Sure enough, I got the job."

Leighton was a broadcasting consultant for the Memphis company and it was all because of what Steinke persuaded him to do. "I was one of the cadre that would install equipment," Leighton said. "I traveled to 14 countries and 27 cities, and made friendships that I still have."

"Jim Leighton is a real star from our department," Steinke said. "His career success is the result of hard work and determination to be the best in his profession. Jim has always been a true friend of UT Martin, and I am proud to have been a part of his journey."

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Pictured above: Jim Leighton, managing partner of Affinis Advisory Group.

<<<(Our Sincere Thanks)

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Leighton and Steinke have kept in contact, whether by email or with the occasional phone call, since Leighton left Martin.

"Briody resonates to me," Leighton said. "I was an older student ... I went from one of the worst students to a model student. I appreciate what he (Briody) brought."

Leighton, who now lives in Rancho Mirage, Calif., put all the lessons he learned at UT Martin together and quickly advanced his career. In 2003, while he was a project/program manager for Sony Electronics, he was laid off. He decided to go back to school and earn a graduate degree.

Nice plan, but not so easy for Leighton, who was a graduate student and a teaching associate at San Jose State University. "It was the hardest I worked for the least amount of money I ever made, but it was the most gratifying job I ever had," Leighton said.

"I didn't want the students in my classes to have sweaty knees. I wanted them to learn the way Briody and Steinke taught me."

"If I didn't go to grad school, I never would have had the chance to teach," Leighton said.

Leighton cut his classroom time short and became a NEXIO development partner manager. He moved up to the director of global support and professional services in 2010, and in 2013 he became a managing partner for Affinis Advisory Group where he provides consulting services for media and entertainment by helping international companies connect with communications providers in the U.S.

"Jim and I actually started as freshmen the same year at UT Martin. I have known him through the years, and it was obvious even then that he had the character and motivation to be something very special," Nanney said. "His work ethic and vision have served him well. His outstanding career is clear evidence of that." <<<



ATTEND LEGACY LUNCHEON – Multiple UT Martin graduating classes were represented when the Moores and Goldens, all from Arlington, Tenn., attended the Legacy Luncheon on Aug. 21 in the Paul Meek Library before the start of fall classes. Legacy Scholarships are awarded to students who are sons or daughters of UT Martin alumni. Funding for the scholarships comes from the Kathleen Elam estate and the UT Martin Campus Fund. Pictured (l to r) are **Mayzelle Grandberry Moore ('82)**, **Ashley Moore ('11)**, **Larry Golden II** (Legacy Scholarship recipient who is attending UT Martin this fall), **Celestine Golden ('90)** and **Larry Golden ('88 and '94)**.

HEATHER BUTLER

THE ULTIMATE STUDENT ATHLETE

by Ryne Rickman



History was made in the Lone Star State on May 17. It was a typical Saturday in San Antonio with temperatures hovering in the 80's. Turns out the Tulsa Shock were in town to face the hometown Stars in a WNBA showdown in the AT&T Center.

The only player to ever don a WNBA jersey who has played in the Ohio Valley Conference, **Heather Butler ('14)** checked into the contest with 57 seconds remaining in the second quarter. If there were any butterflies associated with making a professional debut in front of a crowd of 7,665 fans, Butler sure didn't show it. It took the 5-foot-5 rookie just 11.5 seconds to score her first career points. She had not lost her scoring touch, even against the most elite women's basketball players in the world.

There are many words that can be used to describe the collegiate career of Butler, who scored an OVC-record 2,865 points while guiding UT Martin to its first four NCAA Tournament appearances from 2010-14. Dynamic. Determined. Leader. Winner. But the one word that might fit Butler the most is consistent.

Consider the fact that Butler scored in double-digits in all 129 games of her career, and the description fits. It didn't matter if she gave up over a foot in height to Britney Griner and the 2013 defending national champions in Baylor. The numbers don't lie, as the boxscore shows Butler with a game-high 28 points on Nov. 17, 2012. It didn't matter how many times the opposition tried to switch defenses on her. There was Butler pouring in a school-record 44 points against both Eastern Kentucky and Austin Peay in the span of a month during her senior campaign.

Consistency is also a word you could use to describe Heather's family support. A quick glance up into the stands and you could always count on seeing Heather's mother, Susan, and sister, Rachel, cheering on their favorite Skyhawk. The duo was in attendance when Heather set the OVC's all-time scoring mark at Morehead State on Jan. 18, 2014. They were in Chapel Hill, N.C. for Butler's final collegiate game in the NCAA Tournament.

To say the trio of Butler females are close would be an understatement.

"My family has been my absolute support system, and I truly do not know what I would do without them," Heather

said. "School and basketball did not always come easy to me, and they were always there when I needed them. I am so blessed to have a family who cares so much about not just my athletics or academics but me as a person. They are one of the main reasons why I push myself so hard because they motivate me to do better."

Susan started to notice that Heather could be a special talent on the hardwood in middle school.

"When they had practice, Heather was always excited to go, compared to how most girls would whine and complain about it," Susan said. "She amazes me with her perseverance, determination, passion and how she wants everyone around her to do well – not just herself."

Rachel saw Heather's talent up close and personal when she got to share the court with her younger sister in middle school.

"I knew she was going to be a great player," Rachel said. "She has always had an amazing passion and determination for basketball. It was more than just a sport to her. It was her life."

Heather insists that if it were not for the willingness and support of her mother and older sister, she may not be where she is today.

"Growing up, one person I drew inspiration from was Rachel," Heather said. "She is the reason why I started playing basketball in the first place because I looked up to her and wanted to be just like her. After her practices, she would always come home and teach me some of the drills they would do and ever since I fell in love with the game of basketball. I also drew inspiration from my mom because she has always pushed me in whatever I do. In middle school, she would go to the gym with me to rebound every basketball that I shot and passed it right back to me. She did and still does anything that I need, and I could not thank her enough for that."

It is evident that Heather is big on family. Another constant in Heather's life has been Kevin McMillan, who not only mentored Heather all four years of her collegiate career but he also helped mold her as her head coach at Gibson County High School in Dyer.

"Coaching her in high school, you see all the things that you can't see as a college coach," McMillan said. "You watch them every day in the classroom, you see them

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interacting with people on a day-to-day basis. When a kid's a true winner, it shows up more than on the court. When they're a winner in the classroom and a winner in the community and a winner in the hallways and a winner in everything they do, you just have to believe they're going to be a winner on the basketball court."

"Coach McMillan is one person I can say has become like a father to me," Heather said. "I respect and care for him unbelievably. He cares for me as a person first far before a basketball player, and he looks out for me as his own. Coach McMillan is one of the main reasons why I am where I am today, and his family is truly my second family."

McMillan admits that he didn't have to worry about Heather because she put the work in on her own during grueling summer sessions.

"Heather would analyze herself at the end of the year and see what she had done well and not done well," McMillan said. "We would try to improve on it, and I would give her stuff to do to try to work on specific things. She just tried to make sure that the next year, she had less weaknesses. From her sophomore year of high school, I thought she was phenomenal. I thought she was unbelievable her junior year and it just kept going on and on. The work ethic of that kid is amazing."

For all of the success Heather enjoyed in high school, she only seriously entertained offers from three schools – UT Martin, Chattanooga and Western Carolina. To hear her talk about the experiences she enjoyed at UT Martin, it's easy to tell that she knows she made the correct choice.

"UT Martin is a great college with great people, great athletics and great education," Heather said. "My teammates and coaches are one of the main reasons why I am walking away from UT Martin with such a positive experience. They all mean so much to me, and I will never forget all of the amazing things we did together."

As a four-time All-OVC first teamer and also a 2014 All-American, it's easy to look at Heather's on-court accolades and measure the impact she left on the Skyhawk women's basketball program. However, those who have spent the most time with her in the last few months will convince you that her academic and social repertoire is just as impressive.

Heather boasted a 3.87 Grade Point Average in college and was one of just three female student-athletes in the

OVC to win the Scholar Athlete Award in 2013. In addition to her basketball responsibilities during her senior year, Heather undertook a student teaching assignment at nearby Dresden Middle School and Martin Elementary School. It was there where she learned under Leigh Hart (Dresden) and Amy Glasgow (Martin).

"I was so blessed to have two amazing cooperating teachers," Heather said. "They are not only great teachers but they are great people who have gained much deserved respect from me and many others in the school and community. Coach Hart taught me to pursue my dreams and goals no matter how tough they seemed to be and to live life taking chances without holding back. I learned from Coach Glasgow that we should never go a day without being happy because happiness is contagious and life is too short to have any type of negativity in your life."

Both Hart and Glasgow reciprocate the appreciation and mutual admiration for Heather, who woke up at 6 a.m. and taught until around 2:30 p.m. before heading off to practice.

"When Heather entered Dresden Middle School to begin student teaching, it was as if someone with celebrity status had entered the building," Hart said. "But that's not what she personifies – she is real, genuine, humble and professional. The students were smitten with her from day one and she conducted herself like a seasoned pro."

"Heather is a model of what every student-athlete should strive to be," Glasgow said. "She was great with the kids and to them she was somewhat of a celebrity. She lacked in nothing – especially hard work and discipline – but her most admiring quality was just how humble she was. She was always so reliable and she did an exceptional job."

After Heather was invited to San Antonio's training camp on April 21, she shared another special moment with her close family and friends just a few weeks later. The Stars not only allowed her to return to UT Martin to walk at commencement on May 3 but footed the bill, allowing Heather and her family to share one last accomplishment in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center – the biggest of her career – a walk across the stage with a diploma in her hand.

Heather then rejoined the Stars and just 12 days later, officially signed her first contract as a professional. As one of two rookies on the team, she earned her playing time and

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drew rave reviews from coaches and her fellow teammates.

"My goals for this WNBA season were to make the most out of my dream, not to take it for granted and be a role model for more young people," Heather said. "I was going to give it all I had each day and continue to get better in every way. I wanted to show everyone that it does not matter what size you are, where you come from or anything of that matter. If you have a dream, go for it until you have it sitting in your hands."

Five of the most influential people in Heather's life all share the same sentiment when it comes to Heather lacing up her sneakers against the best players in the world.

"How do I even put into words the awe and amazement I feel of Heather playing in the WNBA," Susan said. "There's nothing more exciting than to see her dream come to pass. Whatever obstacle you may encounter, you can succeed with determination and passion."

"It is absolutely amazing to watch your younger sister live out her dream," Rachel said. "The first time I watched her run out as a WNBA player it was unreal. Heather put her trust in God and He fulfilled all the desires of her heart. Now her dream is a reality."

"I don't even know if it's real," McMillan said. "It's rewarding for her because she is getting paid back for all of the things that she has done since she was in junior high school, pushing herself to be the absolute best that she can be. I hope that more people can take a chapter from the Heather Butler book on how to do everything, not just basketball."

"Watching Heather play in the WNBA gave me a feeling of pure joy," Hart said. "Knowing the level of commitment and sacrifices she had to make for so many years makes me so proud for her. Those that know Heather have always loved her drive and determination."

"It was plain amazing to see Heather in the WNBA," Glasgow said. "No one is more deserving. You always root for the underdog but in this case I don't see her as that – I see her as an equal. She is an inspiration and a hero to many young athletes – I believe that she is the best of the best."

After the WNBA regular season concluded in mid-August, Heather continued her career with MKK Siedlce, a professional basketball team in Poland. The league's first games began in mid-September. As far as the long-term

future goes, Heather would like to coach or teach.

"I love the feeling of teaching kids what I am passionate about and watching them grow in different ways," Heather said. "It would not matter what level but I am mostly interested in the middle or high school level to start off with."

Even with the daily grind of being a professional athlete, Heather can't help but think back to her days as a Skyhawk. She saw several of the familiar faces that packed the Elam Center in the crowds as she traveled around the country in her debut WNBA season.

"UT Martin may not be the biggest college or in the biggest town but it truly has people who have the biggest hearts," Heather said. "It is a community where you find people who genuinely care about you and will support you 100 percent. My four years at UT Martin could not have been any better and I could not have shared it with any better people." <<<





Unlikely COLLEGE ROOMMATES

BUILD Decades-Long FRIENDSHIP

by Bud Grimes



Woo S. “Woody” Ahn (’72, ’73) and Jerry Baggett (’71) shared little in common when they became college roommates in 1968 at UT Martin. But, this unlikely pairing of students – one from South Korea and the other from Middle Tennessee – created a friendship that has endured both distance and decades. A visit to Tennessee in April that included a trip to Martin reunited the two men for the first time since 1994.

Woody was raised in South Korea and came to the U.S. when his sponsor, who lived in Henry County near Paris, brought him to West Tennessee. His sponsor, a farmer and a U.S. Army lieutenant colonel, recommended that Woody attend UT Martin.

Jerry, who was raised near Springfield on a Robertson County tobacco farm, had arrived on campus a year earlier. His great uncle, Dr. Burns McIntosh, who attended UT Knoxville, became friends with longtime UT Martin Chancellor Paul Meek while attending college. “He said, ‘I want you to meet him (Meek). I want you to go there. I think that would be your best choice.’” Later, at an orientation event, Meek pulled Jerry aside and said, “You’re the one. I’m looking for you to come here.”

Woody chose agriculture as his major, which influenced his roommate preference upon arriving at the university. “I think I was the one to request (a roommate),” Ahn said. “... Basically I just told him (the dorm counselor) I want to have ... a country hillbilly.” Jerry, also an agriculture major,

corrected him as they both laughed and said, “A country boy – how’s that? Just a country boy.” So began a three-year stint as roommates in Austin Peay Residence Hall.

Developing his English-speaking skills was a challenge for Woody, and his association with Jerry made a positive difference. “Jerry was a great help with English,” Woody said, recalling that note taking was an occasional challenge, so he’d sometimes check his notes with Jerry after class.

Few international students attended the campus then, and Woody’s familiarity with rice farming in Korea expanded quickly to include the diverse agriculture found in the U.S. He developed an interest in animal science and learned first-hand about managing animals as he worked for the late Dr. Niels W. “Doc” Robinson on the university’s farm.

“He would go over early in the mornings, feed the hogs and come back, and I’d say, ‘Woo, where’d you leave your clothes?’” Jerry said, recalling the times Ahn arrived home

“JERRY WAS A GREAT HELP WITH ENGLISH,” WOODY SAID, RECALLING THAT NOTE TAKING WAS AN OCCASIONAL CHALLENGE, SO HE’D SOMETIMES CHECK HIS NOTES WITH JERRY AFTER CLASS.

Opposite page: Woody Ahn (left) and Jerry Baggett have remained friends for over 45 years.

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smelling like the hogs he had just fed. He gave “Doc” Robinson credit as “one of the great people that helped him (Woody). He was an adviser, and he was just a down-to-earth person, and he took interest in Woo. ...”

Dr. Bob Hathcock ('64), professor emeritus of plant science, was another faculty member who knew both Woody and Jerry during their college years and joined them during their campus visit. He taught Jerry in a crop production class in a fall 1970 and decided that the tobacco farm on which Jerry was raised would make a good field trip for his students. The class continued its visits to the Baggett farm for many years after Jerry graduated. “He (Jerry) reminded me of myself when I was a freshman at Martin,” Hathcock said. “He was quiet, just a good old country boy. You knew he was trying hard.”

Hathcock described Woody as “a great guy and just kind of vibrant in a lot of ways.” He gives Jerry credit for supporting Woody during an important time in his life.

“HE (JERRY) REMINDED ME OF MYSELF WHEN I WAS A FRESHMAN AT MARTIN,” HATHCOCK SAID. “HE WAS QUIET, JUST A GOOD OLD COUNTRY BOY. YOU KNEW HE WAS TRYING HARD.”

“You know, I think probably the fact that he and Jerry were roommates probably helped him an awful lot,” Hathcock said. “Jerry is the kind of guy I think that probably would make him feel at home. So I really think Jerry probably helped him a great deal to get through the program.”

Woody agrees that the small campus

and personal attention by faculty made it possible for him to progress more quickly in his studies. “That helped me,” Woody said of UT Martin providing a foundation for his career. “Without that I don’t think I would wind up getting doctor’s (degree) and become a college professor.”

Life outside academics also provided many memories for the two friends. They told the story of Woody’s wanting to

buy a car before Jerry graduated and left the university, so they went to the local car dealer and found a used white Ford Galaxy. Woody didn’t know how to drive very well, but he paid the dealer, took possession of the car and got behind the wheel. “We’re driving out, and all the sudden, he just stomped the power brake,” said Jerry, who lurched forward, recovered from the abrupt stop and asked Woody what was wrong. “He said, ‘I’m used to driving the jeep at the farm,’” which had no power brakes.

Jerry graduated a year ahead of Woody and began his career as a meat inspector with the Tennessee Department of Agriculture. He worked at Elm Hill Meats in Nashville for six months and then took a position in the Tennessee Department of Agriculture’s food and dairy department where he’s been for 43 years. He recalled a UT Martin computer class where keypunch was the data-entry method. Today, he’s adapting to new computer technology, while his core duties still involve hands-on work inspecting dairy farms and major food manufacturing facilities, including responsibility for seven Middle Tennessee milk plants. “I mean it’s a full-time deal keeping up with them,” Jerry said of his work with the milk plants. “We’re doing samples, we do equipment tests on their pasteurizers, and we do quarterly inspections.”

One of Jerry’s recent accomplishments is his work with the startup of the Unilever plant in Covington where he worked with permits. The plant’s products and brands include Breyers, Ben and Jerry’s (that Unilever owns) and water popsicles. The plant includes 750,000 square feet of space and employs about 750 people. He visited the plant in fall 2013 with a group that included Gov. Bill Haslam.

As for his former roommate, Woody earned both his bachelor’s and master’s degrees at UT Martin. He then completed a doctorate in education in 1975 at Oklahoma State University. He taught high school for five years, followed by five years of teaching at a community college in Kansas where he later served as director of vocational education for an additional four years. He then became dean of technical education programs at Wenatchee Valley College in Washington, a position he held for five years before becoming college president.

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After seven years as president, he moved northwest to South Seattle Community College, part of a system that served approximately 20,000 students. He was executive dean of technical education programs, a position he held for six years before retiring in 2006.

Woody is the only international student to graduate from UT Martin and become a U.S. college president. As a college president, his greatest personal satisfaction came when faculty and students were recognized for achievements and enrollment grew. “I think when I took it over as a president of the college, it had like about almost 4,000 students,” he said. “But seven years later, at the end of my (presidency) when I left there, was like about 7,800 students.”

He also enjoyed expanding programs, such as nursing, that met students’ needs in the job market. “There (were) a lot of hospitals, but then I noticed that the hospitals were begging for their (the school’s) nurses.” However, he said that most colleges try to keep nursing departments small because of the cost for supporting them. And, states don’t typically provide more money to start or expand nursing programs.

Woody often made his case to faculty members in other disciplines why more money was needed for nursing, a program that met both job needs for students and community needs by providing nurses to local hospitals. So, he successfully expanded one nursing program and secured the funding to start another. He also expanded aviation management, another good program for jobs and was a proponent of career programs in areas such as the culinary arts. He also saw students with four-year degrees who came back to the community college to study technical programs. Woody found that he was generally able to make positive changes when he explained to faculty the need for particular programs.

College presidents deal with unusual and complicated situations, and Woody’s experience was no different. While president of Wenatchee Valley College, town leaders wanted to bring back a semi-pro baseball team to the city. Local civic organizations had given funds to build a lighted baseball field for the college team, but the town

now wanted this revived semi-pro team to also use the college field. He was willing to share facilities in exchange for assistance with field maintenance and donation of scholarship money for students.

The Washington governor appoints college boards, and Woody took the shared-field plan to the five-member board. Two board members approved, two board members said “not over (our) dead bodies,” and one wasn’t sure. The semi-professional team wanted approval for beer sales to enhance attendance and revenue. Many people were opposed, and the college wasn’t allowed to sell beer anyway.

The board met every month, and when the baseball field was on the agenda, a large crowd of local business people came in support of the team. “So that (lasted) about six months,” he said of the baseball issue. “(The board and I) could work it out either to disapprove or approve a (academic) program just within one (month), but that thing lasted six months,” Woody said, noting that the deal was eventually approved by the fifth board member.

Much has happened since Woody and Jerry first became college roommates. Woody is now enjoying retirement, while Jerry continues his career with the Tennessee Department of Agriculture. Both found many changes in the university’s campus during their April visit, but nothing has changed about their enduring friendship. “I think of him just like family,” Jerry said.

Before he left campus, Woody made a donation to the College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences that will be used to support FFA officers who study agriculture at UT Martin. Perhaps that gift will plant the seed for a future friendship that stands the test of time, just like Woody and Jerry’s. <<<

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UT MARTIN AND
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THE
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RAMSEY**



WORKING FOR

Dave
Ramsey

INSPIRES



UT MARTIN
ALUM

by Carmen Wagster

Noted author and inspirational speaker Zig Ziglar once said, "I believe that being successful means having a balance of success stories across the many areas of your life." Dave Ramsey's company, The Lampo Group, makes it their mission to provide biblically based, common-sense education and empowerment that give hope to everyone in every walk of life. **Rick Perry ('70)** was drawn to this mission when he was first approached about becoming the director of human resources for the company.

When asked about what makes his career so fulfilling, Perry says, "Whether it's helping someone improve their marriage, finances and parenting or helping business and church leaders become better leaders, we do it."

Dave Ramsey established The Lampo Group in 1992 to provide counsel to folks hurting from the consequences of financial stress. Ramsey has authored five New York Times best sellers, including *Financial Peace* and *The Total Money Makeover*. He also hosts a nationally syndicated radio call-in show, *The Dave Ramsey Show*, which provides callers with financial advice and an opportunity to share their success stories and yell "I'm debt free!" on air.

Perry's office resides inside the walls of the Financial Peace Plaza in Brentwood. The smell of hot coffee and cookies from Martha's Place, an in-house coffee shop, wafts around the building. The walls surrounding the radio studio display handwritten messages from visitors who drop by

to proclaim victory over debt. When Ramsey is on air, the lobby is filled with visitors and fans who want to share their debt-free stories.

Perry was raised in a family of 10 on a farm on Perry Road in Lexington, Tenn. He recalls, "We were relatively poor financially but didn't know it, because we were rich in the things that really matter in life. We always had great food on the table and a roof over our heads. We even had a black-and-white TV with three channels. I grew up as a country boy, picked cotton by hand, rode a bike without a helmet, drove tractors and pickup trucks, enjoyed naps on the front porch and left our doors unlocked at night. It was all about brothers, sisters, cousins and neighbors working together as family."

Perry is the youngest of eight children and the first to earn a college degree. As a first-generation college student, he learned the value of earning a degree. He benefited from the support of his family, who allowed him time to figure out what he wanted to do with his life.

"WE WERE
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THINGS THAT REALLY
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Opposite page: UT Martin alum Rick Perry, director of human resources at the Dave Ramsey Company.

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Perry says, “I was good at math in high school. So when I went to UT Martin, I thought, ‘Engineer! That’s me!’” However, he had a change of heart as he advanced further into his studies—especially after trudging through calculus, chemistry and microbiology.

After a few quarters of pursuing a degree in engineering, Perry decided to follow a path he always had in the back of his mind. In December 1970, Perry received his Bachelor of Science in Education degree.

After graduating from UT Martin, Perry went to Jackson, Tenn., to look for a job and was hired by Procter & Gamble (P&G). Ironically, his first job was in the chemistry and microbiology labs, working around a bunch of engineers in a large manufacturing operation.

“TREATING OTHERS LIKE YOU WOULD WANT TO BE TREATED—WITH INTEGRITY—IS A CORE VALUE WE BREATHE LIFE INTO EVERY DAY,” PERRY SAYS. “THAT IS OUR HR POLICY AND PRINCIPLE.”

“The degree I earned, the experience I acquired, and the friends I made at UT Martin opened that door for me. Working with P&G for 27 years allowed me to do as much engineering and teaching as I wanted to do,” Perry says of his education’s contribution to his career.

“So, it worked out that everything I wanted to do when I was at UT Martin, I accomplished at P&G. The degree I received from UT Martin unlocked that door for me, and I will be forever grateful.”

Perry left P&G in 1998 and was able to spend some quality time with his wife and kids before the kids went away to college. Before the empty-nest syndrome could kick in, Perry began doing consulting and then sales and marketing for Jackson’s minor-league baseball team, the Diamond Jaxx. Perry stayed with the Diamond Jaxx for a year before moving to Nashville.

While working for a bank in Nashville, Perry met Russ Carroll, the first team member Dave Ramsey hired when he founded The Lampo Group. Carroll informed Perry that The Lampo Group was growing and needed a human resources leader.

Perry says, “Dave wasn’t looking for me, and I wasn’t looking for Dave, but God put us in each other’s path.” In July 2014, Perry celebrated his ninth year as the executive director of human resources for The Lampo Group.

Perry loves the fact that Dave has the heart of a teacher and leads the company with passion from a set of deep-rooted core values, not rules. “Treating others like you would want to be treated—with integrity—is a core value we breathe life into every day,” Perry says. “That is our HR policy and principle.”

In his position, Perry plays an active role in hiring team members. He says, “I get a chance to hire great people with great character qualities that I like and want to work with. We make sure they are passionate about helping others and understand what winning looks like and the direction we’re headed. We give them the tools and skills they need to win and then watch them soar. It’s amazing how things work out when you do that.”

“One of the best hires I ever made was Jon Wolski, a UTM alum who is one of our rock-star web developers.”

When Perry took the position at The Lampo Group, there were 100 team members. Now, nine years later, there are 410.

Describing what it’s like to work for Dave Ramsey, Perry says, “Dave created an environment where a great culture has formed around work that matters. It is not about Dave or our team. It is all about whether the message we teach gives hope to someone every day. We are fortunate to have been awarded one of the best places to work in Nashville for seven years.”

Perry says that working for Dave Ramsey has benefited him far beyond his career. “I personally am a better man, hopefully Eva would say a better husband, and my kids [Ashley and Jennifer Perry] would say a better dad for having worked with Dave and our team. <<<

RICK PERRY'S TOP FIVE BASIC INTERVIEW TIPS



Rick offered these common-sense ideas for successful job interviews.

ONE

Life is short; do something you are passionate about.

"Do something that you really love doing. Seek your dream. We live in America, and there are opportunities galore out there. The American dream is alive and well. Small-business owners are living it every day. They're the backbone and lifeblood of this country."

TWO

Be honest with yourself.

"Take a deep breath and don't freak out. It is just an interview, not the end of the world. Don't cut and paste a résumé that doesn't say something about who you really are. Don't use big words. Just tell me who you are and what you want to do with your life—your dreams and your goals. If you are true to yourself and don't get the job, then it is not the right fit. Accept that and move on."

THREE

Be presentable.

"Look in the mirror before an interview. You don't want your appearance to distract someone from looking you in the eye and having a conversation. Assert credibility, but don't let your appearance be the center of attention."

FIVE

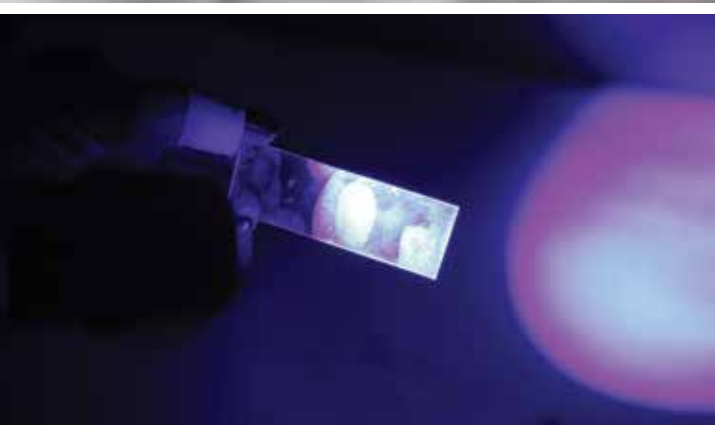
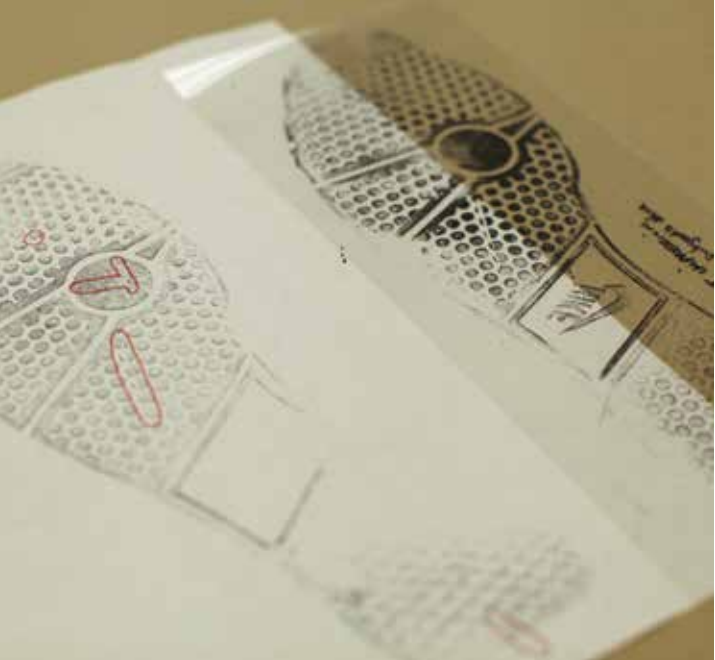
Be social-media conscious.

"Don't post something on social media that you wouldn't want on a billboard for your mother to see. Most companies are looking at your social media before you even show up for the interview. You have already made that first impression."

FOUR

Pay attention to the practical stuff.

"Know where you're going and how long it will take to get there. Show up on time. It might be a good idea to drive by the location the night before instead of relying solely on your GPS. Also, make sure there is gas in the car."



UT MARTIN ALUMS USE GREAT CHEMISTRY TO HELP SOLVE CRIMES



by Bud Grimes

Working behind the scenes is familiar territory for **Linda Littlejohn ('85)** and three other UT Martin alumni who are special agents and forensic scientists with the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation. But Littlejohn credits the murder trial of football great O.J. Simpson with raising the profession's profile when his famous trial 20 years ago "put forensics on display" and fueled public interest in using science to solve crimes.

Fellow chemistry graduates **Russ Davis ('80)**, **Mark Dunlap ('98)**, **Jennifer Adams Sullivan ('01)** join Littlejohn as they seek justice daily for crime victims as members of the forensic division at the TBI crime lab in Nashville. These alums were among those who welcomed a UT Martin forensic chemistry class to the TBI headquarters in late March for a tour and first-hand look at the science behind today's criminal investigations.

ABOUT THE TBI

The TBI website says that Gov. Gordon Browning signed a law in 1951 creating the Tennessee Bureau of Criminal Identification. The governor's action followed the highly publicized 1949 murder of local sawmill operator James T. Lutz in Greene County. John M. Jones Sr., the Greeneville Sun publisher, in an address to the Tennessee Press Association, "called for the creation of an unbiased state agency to assist local law enforcement in the investigation of serious crimes." The TBCI became

an independent agency in 1980 and was renamed the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation.

The TBI continued to grow and opened a consolidated headquarters in Nashville in 2000, Memphis in 2001 and Knoxville in 2008. The bureau holds accreditations from both the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) and the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors Laboratory Accreditation Board (ASCLSD-LAB).

The Nashville headquarters, located northeast of downtown, is a gleaming glass-and-brick structure that houses two distinct functions. One side of the complex is the TBI's forensic services division, while the other side is home to the criminal investigation, drug investigation, information systems, administrative services and training divisions, along with the Fusion Center. The Fusion Center, says the website, "was created in response to the intelligence failures of September 11, 2001" and coordinates information sharing among federal, state and local law enforcement agencies.

FORENSIC INVESTIGATION FRONTLINES

Longtime chemistry professor S.K. Airee accompanied the 10-member Chemistry 422 class for its TBI headquarters visit that was led by Littlejohn. Universities provide a potential source of qualified job applicants as the agency constantly searches for qualified and dedicated staff

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USING SCIENCE TO SOLVE CRIME - (opposite page, clockwise from top right) **Will Crosby ('14)** views an example of evidence in the firearms unit; Special Agent Mark Dunlap talks with UTM students outside the serology/DNA lab; chemistry students visit the microanalysis lab, where Special Agent Linda Littlejohn shows an example of how technology brings together pieces of an investigative puzzle; other examples of evidence analysis, including a fingerprint, testing for drug evidence and a shoe print.

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members. Persons who join the agency as forensic scientists must have 24 hours of chemistry, a degree in a natural or physical science and excellent communication skills. In addition, they are commissioned law enforcement officers who can carry firearms, and because of this commission, they must retire at age 60.

Eyes are wide open as the students wind their way through long hallways and enter state-of-the-art laboratory areas. Littlejohn led the group to the toxicology lab where some 6,000 cases are tested each month. In another location, the large firearms unit investigates all things related to firearms for all 95 Tennessee counties, including cartridge-case examination, serial number restoration and muzzle-to-garment distance determination. "Ammunition is constantly changing," Special Agent Laura Hodge said in summarizing one of the unit's investigative challenges. "Firearms stay the same."

Special Agent Sullivan welcomed the students to the forensic chemistry unit, where her lab tests evidence for the presence of controlled substances and other illegal drugs. Staying up to date with the latest new and emerging drugs is also another important yet challenging part of her unit. Another stop came outside the serology and DNA lab, where Special Agent Dunlap met the group in the hallway to talk about his work in forensic biology. His lab, which screens evidence for blood, semen and saliva and tests for DNA, is not open to visitors to prevent contamination.

Following a visit to the latent prints lab, which handles related work for all of Tennessee, Littlejohn takes the class to the microanalysis lab where they meet the fourth UT Martin alum working in forensics, Special Agent Davis. This area analyzes microscopic evidence involving paint, glass and fibers, as well as gunshot residue and impression comparison work using items ranging from tires to shoes. As an example of his work, Davis discussed a shooting investigation where he noticed some unusual material in a sample viewed under the microscope, which turned out to be the residue from a potato used as a silencer. "There's a lot of chemistry that can be done with a microscope," he said, emphasizing that microscopes are powerful tools and "not just for looking through."

MAKING A DIFFERENCE FOR CRIME VICTIMS

As the students completed the afternoon-long tour and headed back to West Tennessee, the four UT Martin alums gathered in a conference room to talk more about their work.

Mark Dunlap, who has been with the TBI since June 2000, is a Dyersburg native who earned an associate degree at Dyersburg State Community College before coming to UT Martin. His interest in chemistry began as a child when he received a miniature chemistry set, really liked what he could do with the chemicals and was later encouraged by a Dyersburg State chemistry teacher to pursue his interest in the subject. "I didn't even know that there was a Tennessee Bureau of Investigation at the time when I was in college," he said, admitting that he "just kind of stumbled into it (forensic science)" as a career. He first worked in a steel mill in Arkansas and then a detergent factory in Dyersburg, both in quality control, and then learned about the TBI, applied for a job in the forensic services division and was hired.

Jennifer Adams Sullivan and her husband, David, both graduated in 2001 from UT Martin. The university's location, scholarship money and participation in the Skyhawk Marching Band brought the Savannah native to Martin. "I always wanted to major in chemistry," she said, crediting her high school chemistry teacher for starting her interest. "I never changed my major. It was chemistry the whole way." She worked in an environmental lab before starting at the TBI in September 2006, never thinking she would one day be working in forensics. "I don't think forensics was as publicized when we were in school as it is now," Sullivan said, to which Dunlap responded, "That was before CSI," which brought a laugh from both.

Russ Davis, originally from Bartlett, is the longest serving of the UT Martin forensics foursome with 32 years of TBI service. "I initially was a biology major, and then I noticed that all the biology people were working for a chemist, so I switched to chemistry," Davis said of his academic pursuits. When his plans to attend medical school didn't work out, he applied for numerous jobs following graduation but received only two invitations to interview: one at Oak Ridge, which filled from within, and the other with the

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UTM ALUMS ON THE CASE - (l to r) Special Agents Sullivan, Davis and Littlejohn stand at the entrance to the TBI headquarters in Nashville.

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TBI. He was hired with no experience, noting that forensic positions weren't nearly as competitive then as they are now.

"It was just another state position I guess you could say," Russ recalled. "Most people hadn't heard of it (forensics). The only (TV) show that was out was Quincy." In the show, the late Jack Klugman played a medical examiner, and Davis recalled that in the show "they had the same instrument that did everything," which is in contrast to the sophisticated technology he uses today. Some instruments didn't even exist when Davis graduated from UT Martin. His microanalysis unit, also known as trace evidence, investigates evidence that doesn't easily fit into a specific category.

Linda Littlejohn was raised in Trenton and has been with the TBI for 25 years. Like her fellow alums, Littlejohn's path to a forensic science career began in the chemistry curriculum. "Well, with me, I wanted to do a lot of different things, but I wanted to be able to have a job once I graduated," she said. "So, I liked chemistry. I enjoyed

the teacher that I had at that point, and so I went along those lines and was always interested in forensics, and so I just kind of put it together." She works with Davis in the microanalysis unit and conducts investigations involving impression evidence, physical comparisons, fiber examinations and explosives and also supervises the unit.

Many workdays are routine, and writing reports and making court appearances are part of the job. "A lot of that can go out the window, though, if you get a some kind of rush case that comes in or a vehicle that needs to be processed, something like that," Littlejohn said. "That can change your day, or a crime scene." Davis prefers his work in the lab, but he knows that a crime scene assignment is always possible. "You never know," he said. "I'm currently kind of on a standing down mode. I'm not assigned to a regular team, but I can be tapped to go. I've already been once this year on something that wound up not being a crime scene."

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Testifying in court is an important part of the job, and it's a duty that, once done, is hard to leave at the office. "I always try to think, 'How could I have said that in a better way, or how can I do this? If I get hit with this situation later on, how could I handle this differently?'" Dunlap said. "You try to get better at it."

Hostile questioning by attorneys is sometimes part of a day in court, especially in Daubert challenges. The Daubert Standard is defined by the Cornell University Law School's Legal Information Institute website as the "standard used by a trial judge to make a preliminary assessment of whether an expert's scientific testimony is based on reasoning or methodology that is scientifically valid and can properly be applied to the facts at issue." This is called a McDaniel Hearing in Tennessee and, as Sullivan explained, for the most part only challenges comparison science, which is used in areas such as firearms and fingerprints.

"As far as the hostile questions go, a lot of times, it just depends on how much the judge will allow," Dunlap said, adding, "Probably the most common hostile questioning I get is that (the attorney) will want a 'yes' or 'no' answer, and they'll ask you a question that you can't answer 'yes' or 'no' and it be the whole truth ... and sometimes that gets a little heated." Davis added that some judges will say, "Answer the question. You're not here to educate the jury." That said, all agreed that judges generally treat them well and respect their investigative work.

Job satisfaction comes in many forms. "The best thing for me is when we can solve a case when it's a no-suspect case ...," Dunlap said. Sullivan's area usually doesn't receive as many details about the cases they work, but great satisfaction comes in helping get drugs of all quantities off the streets, especially where children are involved or when other special circumstances exist.

For Davis, who has largely worked violent crime cases during the last half of his career, "Sometimes just getting an answer feels good. And I don't care if it's for the state or for the defense." He added, "It's nice to be able to speak for someone who could no longer speak, but you don't always get that opportunity." As for Littlejohn, just making a difference creates a good day at the office. "At the end of the day, whatever I did, it affects other people's lives. And

where that's a huge responsibility, it also makes you feel like you've helped your community, you know, bottom line."

FORENSIC SCIENCE HITS PRIME TIME

The O.J. Simpson trial did its part to raise forensic science's profile, but so have the crime scene investigation TV shows and their storylines that focus on the profession.

"I think it (the shows) makes our job more difficult in some ways, because they (viewers) think we can do what they do, and we can't," Sullivan said. Davis added, "Jury expectations are definitely a lot higher. They want to see all the big screen flash or glamour, and we just sit there and tell them what we have." Sullivan also noted, "The timeline (for solving cases) is not quite as short as it is on TV."

CSI television dramas aren't always realistic, but technology for crime investigations has made great strides and continues to improve. Game changers include the use of DNA evidence to solve crimes, and analysis once done by hand is improved by using modern instrumentation. Current databases, such as the Integrated Automated Fingerprint Identification System or IAFIS, have greatly assisted their work. In another example, Linda said that a way to search for cartridge cases using the National Integrated Ballistics Information Network (NIBIN) has proven extremely valuable in investigations. "It has really come to the forefront just in the last five years in Tennessee," Linda said of the ammunition database.

And, the dazzling crime-solving technology depicted in the movies and on television isn't so far fetched. The forensics group doesn't have the "big screens," but the TBI's Fusion Center, located on the opposite side of the complex with windows covered in black, has multiple screens and technology that Linda said operates "kind of like a hub." Among its functions, the Fusion Center sends Amber Alerts and coordinates other emergency activities involving multiple agencies, including the FBI, the military and Homeland Security.

With the UT Martin students' visit still fresh, they talked about career opportunities for young people coming out of college. Expectations for joining Tennessee's top

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law enforcement agency are high coming in and continue throughout a person's employment with the agency. "There's a lot of competition, and if there's something they (the interviewers) don't like about you, such as a DUI conviction or anything close to that, then you're done," Davis said. "Your chances are zero." He added that a polygraph test, drug screen and psychological evaluation all are part of the hiring process, as well as a thorough background check.

"And bear in mind that you don't come here, automatically get a job, and you get hired. You're on probation," Davis continued. "And not only are you in training, you're being looked at as a person." All new forensic scientists are on a two-year probation period, and they can be let go without cause, if they can't perform the duties required.

THE NEXT GENERATION OF FORENSIC SCIENTISTS

The following Tuesday, the same Chemistry 422 students, some with career aspirations in forensic science, gathered for a crime scene class exercise to apply what they learned from the course and also saw during the TBI tour. A classroom in the Joseph E. Johnson Engineering and Physical Sciences Building was transformed into a crime scene in order to test the skills of these budding investigators. Before the exercise, students talked about what impressed them at the TBI headquarters.

Tony Polanco ('14), of Paris, found the firearms and drug units most intriguing. "I wasn't so interested in forensics until after the field trip," Polanco said, who graduated in May. "That was actually really cool. I might pursue that a little later on."

Will Crosby ('14), of Parsons, also a May graduate, liked the microanalysis lab and how it's "never the same thing every day" for the special agents who work in the unit. Crosby wants to pursue a doctorate in chemistry, and he sees working in forensic science and also teaching as possible career options.

Heather Vacovsky, a junior chemistry major from Manchester, said she "definitely took away a lot of the

chemistry" during the visit. Vacovsky is interested in pursuing forensic chemistry or something in the medical field.

Dr. Robbie Montgomery, assistant professor of chemistry and creator of the mock crime scene, teaches forensic chemistry in the analytical degree track that prepares students for work in a crime lab setting. The American Chemical Society accredits the university's Bachelor of Science in Chemistry. "I taught this (forensic chemistry) lab as a grad student and now as a faculty member," Montgomery said, noting that this is only the second time the course has been offered.

Opportunities to prepare for forensic science careers are expanding across campus. Criminal justice students can now pursue a forensic science minor and forensics concentration in the Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice degree. The options were developed during a two-year collaboration between criminal justice and chemistry.

Montgomery said the Department of Chemistry developed two introductory forensic science courses that give non-science majors experience with fingerprinting and other forensic investigative tools. These are taught from a practical perspective as opposed to the instrumentation-based approach used by chemistry majors.

From the criminal justice perspective, "The goal is to provide chemistry students with some additional practical application, while equipping CJ students with the increasingly needed science foundation," said Dr. Brian Donavant, associate professor of criminal justice. "To increase student interest and employability in both majors," he said, is another outcome of the collaboration.

Linda Littlejohn, Russ Davis, Mark Dunlap and Jennifer Sullivan were clear that academic preparation and high character are necessary to enter the law enforcement profession as a forensic scientist. But, during the firearms unit tour, a very real blood-covered shirt secured to a manikin behind a glass window reminded everyone present that real lives are at the heart of this important work.

The TBI motto is prominently featured on the complex to greet all visitors and reads, "That guilt shall not escape nor innocence suffer." These four UT Martin chemistry alums are preparing the way for the next generation of forensic scientists to uphold this promise. <<<

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DISCOVER

UT MARTIN

ALUMNI NEWS

(the real deal)>>>

I Heart UTM...a weeklong celebration highlighting the positive impact our university has on students, faculty, staff and the community. As the utmforever.com and Facebook pictures show, the week was a huge success! But what does I Heart UTM really mean? What if UT Martin disappeared into Reelfoot Lake – would the university be missed? I hope we are never swallowed by the lake and I really hope your answer is a resounding “yes” the university would be missed. Since 1900, our roots have spread far and wide into the soil of West Tennessee and beyond. The impact on students and alumni can be seen in the NCAA record books, Fortune 500 companies, and in boardrooms, classrooms and exam rooms around the world. So why is “I Heart UTM” week important to us?

Has your life been enriched by UTM? If yes, who have you told? If you feel comfortable sharing your story, send it to us

by email at alumni@utm.edu or post your story on the UT Martin Alumni Facebook page. During a recent visit to a local store I had the opportunity to speak with a graduate about his life’s journey. He had put his education on hold while he worked to provide for his family. One day, during a conversation with a customer who was also a UTM faculty member, he shared his story. After the customer left, he received a phone call from the customer and the encouragement he needed to re-enroll at UTM and finish his degree. It was because this faculty member went the extra step and provided the push this young man needed.

What extra step could you make to support UTM? At the very least, I hope you will say loud and clear to all who listen, “I Heart UTM!”

Charly Deal
(‘92, ‘96)

SEE MORE ONLINE

For the most up-to-date information, news and event schedules, check out the alumni website at www.utmforever.com. Now you can stay connected, share news and photos and network all through utmforever.com.



(alumni notes)>>>

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- >Alumni in the Classroom

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In addition to visiting the website, also feel free to write, call or email the UT Martin Alumni Association for more information.

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NURSING AWARD FITS ALUM'S HEART FOR SERVING

OTHERS >>> by Bud Grimes

Will White ('09) knows what it's like to be on winning teams.

Combine his heart for service with an attitude for teamwork, and you have the 2013 Emergency Room Nurse of the Year at Jackson-Madison County General Hospital. The Huntingdon native earned his Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree from UT Martin and hasn't looked back as he excels in the first and only nursing position he's ever held.

Growing up in Carroll County was a perfect fit for Will, an outdoor and sports enthusiast who played baseball and football. He was a tight end on the 2003 state football championship team, the only Huntingdon High School football team to claim a state title. He also was a member of the Mustang baseball team that finished just short of winning the 2004 high school state baseball championship. Faith is an important part of his life, and he was active in the Church of Christ youth group.

He attended UT Martin because several friends were already attending there, it was close to home, and the short drive kept him connected to his favorite hunting and fishing spots. "Actually, I went to UT Martin as an athletic training major," he said. "I did a lot of research, and I knew that whichever path I chose that I was going to get a great education. And I knew that it was going to look great on a resume, and I wouldn't have any problems at all finding a job with a diploma from UT Martin. So, it was just a great choice."

He pursued the athletic training major for a year, but he credits his faith with leading him to nursing, which he described as "a career of service to other people." He was accepted into the BSN program in 2006.

When he discusses his college experiences with co-workers, they respond to him by saying, "Man I hear that nursing program (at UT Martin) is really, really hard," and he agrees. He said the program stands out in that "we were always pushed to critically think," which happened throughout all aspects of the program. "That's very important, especially in my job," he said. "I have to critically think every day. That's something that has really paid dividends for me in my career."

His emergency room work gives him many opportunities to use his skills to assess critically ill patients. "What actually is going on with them is not always very apparent," he explained. "You can look at somebody. You can tell they're sick, but you don't know exactly what's wrong with them. ... It's looking outside the box to be successful at your job."

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utm.edu

(congratulations)>>>



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Will never expected to work in West Tennessee following his 2009 graduation. Although he had great affinity for the region, he described himself as “determined to move away – to get away from West Tennessee,” and he applied for 17 different jobs, all in Nashville and beyond to the east. However, he encountered a tough job market for nurses, including hiring freezes in many locations. He recalled receiving only one e-mail interview from all of his initial job applications.

Still with no job in July 2009, he applied to Jackson-Madison County General Hospital and was offered two positions: first in ICU and two days later in the ER, his first choice for where he wanted to work. He shadowed in the ER for a couple of days, accepted the position and has been there since. He recently bought a home in Huntingdon, so for someone determined to leave West Tennessee, life has taken a different but positive turn.

No two days – or patients – are the same in the ER. “What’s interesting about my job is that we get to experience people in

pretty much every phase of their life,” he said. “We treat people anywhere from medication refills ... to the last moments of their life. ... We deal with death all the time in the ER.” The hospital no longer has a trauma unit, but he still sees many trauma patients, which he finds especially satisfying to treat.

As for working relationships, there’s truly no “I” in the ER team. “Teamwork is a huge thing in an emergency room. ...” he said, noting that it takes a cooperative spirit to operate complicated equipment and manage the work. He added, “The people I work with, we’ve shared good times. We shared just average times, and then we share bad times. There’s a whole rollercoaster of emotions working in the ER. ... You have to lean on each other just to make it through that situation.”

There’s also time to celebrate and reward achievement as each year the ER doctors sponsor a Christmas event at the Jackson Country Club. A ballot is used to select the top non-medical person, doctor and nurse of the year. Anyone can vote for the top-nurse

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(spotlight on alums)>>>

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award, and he joked with his girlfriend and others before the party that he had already written his award-acceptance speech.

"Of course ... in 100 percent honesty, I did not think I was going to win this award," he said. When the ER administrator announced the award, she read some of the comments written on the ballot, and he suddenly recognized that he was the recipient. "It was a complete 100 percent shock. ..." he recalled, which placed him front-and-center to give the acceptance speech that he really hadn't written.

Will is pleased with what he does, but he's always considered pursuing a master's degree in nursing. He's interested in computers, and nursing informatics is a possible focus as all future health records will go to an electronic format. He's also considered pursuing an MBA to prepare for health-care leadership roles. So, the excitement and satisfaction he feels in the ER might lead him to other aspects of nursing.

Will knows that changes are underway in health care, but he doesn't think these changes will affect his fundamental work. His nursing director told them that amid all of the changes, " ... At the end of the day, we're going to take care of our patients the best we can, and then the rest will take care of itself. At the end of the day, you take care of the patients, and then you can go home, and you know that you did what you're supposed to do. You can be satisfied."

In all that he's learned and experienced, Will's faith plays a role in his work. "I see miracles happen all the time — things that are not of this world." He added, "I always believe in God, and he's the Great Physician. He can heal anybody, no matter what the circumstance is.

"I'm not saying that that always happens, but in certain circumstances, I've seen things happen where people that are not supposed to be alive, they live, and it's just an absolute miracle."

Will has some simple advice for success. " ... You have to surround yourself with people who are like-minded as you, that are goal-oriented — people that will push you to be a better worker," he said. "But not only that, a better person, too."

He also advises never to fear asking questions. In the nursing field, he said, "Bad things happen when you don't know something, and you don't ask a question."

Will White knows what it's like to block an opponent or catch a pass when it counts on a championship football team. Today, this accomplished nurse is part of an ER team that brings comfort and healing on the playing field of life. <<<

UTM ALUM IS AUTHOR OF ELEVEN NOVELS>>> ALEX BLEDSOE

found his creativity early in life, but it was the spring quarter of 1983, his sophomore year at UT Martin, in Dr. Gary Steinke's Introduction to Broadcasting class in the Communications Building, when Bledsoe's peers heard how creative Bledsoe was.

The assignment was simple. Steinke wanted to see how the small group of broadcasting wannabes handled television commercials. Each student had to write, serve as the main talent, and produce a story board for a television commercial. Steinke gave the class a choice, come up with their own product or emulate a commercial on television.

Bledsoe showed no fear in the class and jumped on the assignment with self-confidence. A television spot was no problem.

Bledsoe, who always wore a brown leather bomber jacket, combed his almost-as-long-as Ozzy Osbourne hair back, wore a black T-shirt and his favorite pair of blue jeans. In his best television voice and he didn't stutter, "It's the album you have been waiting for. It is Ozzy Osbourne sings Slim Whitman's greatest hits. You will hear such songs as 'Rose Marie' and 'Indian Love Call.'"

Then without even blinking, Bledsoe said, "If you act now, you can get a second album of the Double O, the Godfather of Heavy Metal, the Prince of Darkness singing more of Whitman's most memorable songs.

"No biting the head of a dove or a bat, no blood splitting and no glorifying Satan, the former lead singer of Black Sabbath crones Whitman's 'Secret Love' and 'Love Song of the Waterfall.'"

"It's all yours for \$19.99. Act now and get this new Slice-A-Matic, Veg-A-Matic."

Needless to say, Bledsoe's classmates laughed but appreciated the creativity and humor of their peer. For some in the class, who considered the new published author, a genius, Bledsoe's talent was no surprise. Oh, sure, some knew who Ozzy Osbourne was, but Slim Whitman and his smooth high three octave range falsettos were unheard of in the 1980s when the "Urban Cowboy" and "Staying Alive" were the norm.

Bledsoe's creativity was flowing before his famed television commercial, a parody of television's direct marketing. He had created several characters and started writing his first novel when he was a student at nearby Gibson County High School in the late 70s and early 80s.

A character named Davaroe Crosse was born in Gibson County. Many know Devaroe as Eddie LaCrosse, the main character in five of Bledsoe's 11 novels.

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Because he could not get enough creative writing at UT Martin, Bledsoe found a part-time job as a reporter at the Weakley County Press. He covered city board meetings, county commission meetings, some politics and a lot of high school sports. He was one of the newspaper's first sports editors.

"I hired and worked with several sports editors during my 10-year tenure at The Weakley County Press, and Alex was wonderfully unique among that group. He was oozing with creativity and talent. My task was to help channel it into journalistic writing, and I'm gratified that we had that time together, said Dr. Robert Nanney, the former editor of the Weakley County Press and now communications department chairman at UT Martin.

"I learned to write at UT Martin," Bledsoe said. "Being a journalist, for me, was the best possible training I could have. I learned how to write clearly and make a point."

Bledsoe, who is 50, always makes the point that he grew up in West Tennessee, an hour north of Graceland (home of Elvis) and 20 minutes from Nutbush (birthplace of Tina Turner). He has been a reporter, editor, photographer and door-to-door vacuum cleaner salesman.

He is the author of the Eddie LaCrosse high fantasy/hardboiled mysteries ("The Sword-Edged Blonde," "Burn Me Deadly," "Dark Jenny," "Wake of the Bloody Angel" and "He Drank, and Saw the Spider"), two novels about vampires in 1975 Memphis ("Blood Groove" and "The Girls with Games of Blood"), the Tufa novels ("The Hum and the Shiver," "Wisp of a Thing," and the upcoming "Long Black Curl") and the "Firefly Witch" short story ebook chapbooks.

"All of the books I have written are my favorites, but the one book closest to perfect, the one that came out just like I wrote it was "Burn Me Deadly," Bledsoe said.

Bledsoe, who left UT Martin in 1986, now lives in Mount Horeb, Wis., a town famous for trolls, writes before six in the morning and tries to teach his three kids to act like they've been to town before.

"Most of my free time involves my children," Bledsoe said. Commonly referred to as C-of-C, (Jacob, 9) the Squirrel Boy (Charlie, 6) and the Siren (Amelia, 2), Bledsoe and his wife, Valvette Piper-Bledsoe, have three children.

"I'm so proud of the great success that Alex has achieved. I'm not at all surprised. You could just tell that he had this special gift for story telling. I'm equally proud that Alex is such a wonderful family man whose delight is in his wife and children," Nanney said.

A minor heart attack slowed the author down for a few days in



by Joe Lofaro

2013, but after making life-altering changes to his daily routine, such as decaffeinated coffee, Bledsoe still sits down Monday through Friday at a keyboard before 4 a.m. and knocks off in time to pick up his children from school. He has time for teaching a teen writing class in his hometown and recently he returned to his roots in Tennessee, where he visited his mother, Grace West, who turned 90 years old, the Milan Library and was a guest of Milan High School's famed Literary Lunch.

He used Friday and Saturday to catch up with college friends and check in on the setting for "Firefly Witch", ebook chapbooks. Some of the locations in Firefly Witch are the Weakley County Press, the infamous bar Cadillac's and Andy Holt Humanities Building on the UT Martin campus.

"So after spending the afternoon on the UT Martin campus, which I haven't visited in 30 years, with friends I hadn't seen in just as long, I get in my car and the Sirius XM Springsteen channel immediately plays "Glory Days."

"That'll do, universe. That'll do." <<<

(spotlight on alums)>>>



Dr. Skip Shelton (center) is joined by Dr. Ben West (left) and Troy Littrell at the plaque that honors Skip and his late wife, Gwen.

SKIP AND GWEN SHELTON HONORED BY FORMER STUDENTS>>> by Bud Grimes

Faculty members relish opportunities to influence the lives of their students. Sometimes, former students remember faculty members and honor them in special ways.

Dr. Ben West ('95), Dr. Dwayne Elmore ('97) and Troy Littrell ('96), all natural resources management students while at UT Martin, did just that when they jointly contributed \$1,500 to UT Martin's beautification fund in honor of Dr. Skip Shelton and his late wife, Gwen. The gift secures a permanent plaque recognizing the Sheltons that's displayed on one of the new campus lights. These grateful alums e-mailed their memories about the Sheltons and the couple's impact on the university and the students they touched.

West's first day on campus as a freshman was also Shelton's first day as a new assistant professor. He recalled that Shelton wasn't a typical new assistant professor, having spent several years as an Extension Service wildlife specialist at Mississippi State. He then worked several years with numerous nonprofits, including the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation.

But West wrote that Shelton wanted to spend time mentoring students and helping to build a successful wildlife program. **Dr. Jim Byford ('66)**, then dean of the College of Agriculture and Home Economics, was a longtime friend of Shelton's. So when Byford created the first full-time faculty position in wildlife, Shelton answered his call to come to UT Martin.

Byford introduced Shelton to West that first day as the young freshman's academic adviser. "Skip turned to me and asked what I wanted to do with my life," recalled West, now the Western Region

director and professor for UT Extension in Jackson. "After I finished telling him, he said, 'Well, it's now my job to help you achieve that.'

"And Skip has been doing that ever since. He still is one of my closest friends and most trusted mentors."

Elmore is extension wildlife specialist for the Oklahoma State University Department of Natural Resource Ecology and Management and agrees with West about Shelton's impact on their lives and careers. "He was an incredible mentor to me and many other wildlife students," he wrote. "His impact on UTM's wildlife program cannot be overemphasized."

Elmore recalled that Shelton taught him in his first true wildlife course, and on the first day of class, Shelton told the students two things that have stuck with him over the years. "First, he told us that while the discipline was competitive, there would always be jobs for the best of us," Elmore said. "Secondly, he told us that his job was not to teach us how to manage wildlife, but how to manage people who would then impact natural resources.

"These statements immediately changed my thinking toward being a professional rather than just another kid that thought it would be fun to work with wildlife."

Besides the professional advice that has shaped his career, Elmore described the Sheltons as "excellent role models" in how they conducted their lives. "Universities need more faculty like Skip, those that invest everything in making students better in all aspects of life," he said.

Littrell, deputy refuge manager for the Tennessee National Wildlife Refuge in Henry County near Paris, also remembers the life lessons learned from the Sheltons. "Besides his (Skip's) knowledge of the natural resources, some of the best lessons taught we will carry for the rest of our professional careers and beyond," Littrell said. "Like the significance of a hand-written thank-you note rather than a very impersonal e-mail or form letter."

Shelton's influence continues today as both Elmore and Littrell apply what they learned from him when they work with students. Littrell wrote, "I have numerous summer interns that work at the refuge, and I try to instill the lessons we learned from Skip and Gwen in them during their time here and make a special effort to introduce them to other agency administrators and discuss potential career paths."

Shelton completed his time at UT Martin as Distinguished Professor of Wildlife and Land Policy. Gwen retired from UT Martin in 1997 as director of the reading development lab in the Department of

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Educational Studies. Today, he lives in Fort Collins, Colo., where he owns and operates Ranch & River Acquisitions, LLC. Sadly, Gwen passed away in December 2013, but he knows that she would be pleased to see what former students have done to remember them.

"I am humbled and Gwen would be humbled by the comments and feelings of our former students," Shelton said in e-mailed comments. "It was such a pleasure to be a part of their lives at UTM.

"We thoroughly enjoyed sharing our thoughts with them and encouraging them in their life's pursuits. We were not satisfied with just teaching them but wanted to guide them to successful lives as well as careers."

The inscription on the plaque dedicated to the couple reads in part, "For helping students think better, dream bigger, and see further, we thank Skip and Gwen Shelton." Three grateful students have assured that a light shines a little brighter in front of Brehm Hall to honor Skip and Gwen Shelton. <<<

Randy Brundige ('73), Martin mayor, was elected to the board of directors of the Tennessee Municipal League during the league's annual conference held in Chattanooga>>> He was nominated

as a director at large by a five-member nominating committee composed of municipal officials statewide and then elected for a one-year term by a majority vote of the membership. As a board member, he will propose and help determine legislation municipalities need passed into law and will establish policy priorities for the TML. <<<

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(we want to know)>>>

Please fill out the information below and mail it to us, or go to utmforever.com and let us know what you have been up to or update your address if it has changed.

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 Home Address: _____ City/State/Zip: _____
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 Occupation: _____ Business Name or Employer: _____
 Business Address: _____ City/State/Zip: _____
 Your Email Address: _____
 Would you like your Email 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: _____
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 Business Address: _____ City/State/Zip: _____
 Spouse's Email 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. Email photos to alumni@utm.edu.

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 UT Alumni Association – Martin Office
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THE UNIVERSITY of
TENNESSEE **UT**
MARTIN

(spotlight on alums)>>>



BETH PARNELL ('04) IS THE NEW ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER FOR WEST TENNESSEE HEALTHCARE>>>

She will work with the communications and strategic development departments to ensure effective understanding of the role and services of West Tennessee Healthcare. She previously worked as events manager for the Jackson Chamber and host of the chamber television show "Taking Care of Business." She also served as a team member on the Jackson Chamber branding campaign. Beth holds a bachelor's degree in communications and also graduated in 2014 from the Tennessee

Chamber of Commerce Executives Institute. In 2009, the local Cystic Fibrosis Foundation selected her as one of Jackson's Top 20 Finest Young Professionals. In 2010, the Jackson chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution honored her with an Award of Excellence for Outstanding Broadcast Media. In 2012, she was awarded the Jewel Award from Leadership Jackson. Beth is an active member of the Carl Perkins Exchange Club for the Prevention of Child Abuse, Leadership Jackson Alumni Association and Jackson Service League. She lives in Jackson with her husband, Bill, and son, Brody. <<<

(class notes)>>>

1976

Rachel Cashion Young ('76) is a registered nurse and works in the emergency room at Methodist Hospital in Memphis. She received a bachelor's degree in biology in 1976. In 2013, she represented the state of Tennessee as a delegate at the Emergency Nurses' Association (ENA) "Day on the Hill" in Washington D.C. In both 2013 and 2014, she was a delegate to the General Assembly of the ENA at its National Convention. She has two grown children: Ashley Elizabeth Scott, Robert M. (Trip) Young III and one grandson, Cashion Alan Scott. She enjoys reading, antiquing and traveling with family. She resides with her husband, Robert M. (Bobby) Young, in Brighton. Email: rcy54@aol.com

1985

Gena K. McCord Maddox ('85) received her bachelor's degree in early childhood education in 1985. She is

employed as a teacher by the South Carroll Special School District. Her husband, **Dwayne D. "Butch" Maddox ('80)** received his bachelor's degrees in political science and psychology and is a lawyer in Huntingdon where the couple reside. They have three children: **Braden Maddox ('10)**, McCord Maddox, sophomore at UT Martin, and Austin Maddox.

1997

Jerianne Thompson ('97) is the manager of the Tualatin Public library in Tualatin, Ore. She earned her bachelor's degree in communications in 2002. Her partner, Denny Crawford, attended UT Martin from 1994-97 and is a stay-at-home father to their son, Liam, 8.

2012

Nicholas Jay D'Acquisto ('12) was recently awarded a Master of Fine Arts in Studio Art from the Memphis College of Art.

(in memory)>>>

Trystan Bechtel, of Trenton, passed away Feb. 19, 2014.

Deidra Beene, of Henderson, passed away March 7, 2014.

Dru Crawley, of Memphis, passed away March 14, 2014.

Mark Gallien, of Martin, passed away July 6, 2014.

Dr. James Harold (Jim) Donnell, of Bells, passed away April 16, 2014.

Sarah Hensley, of Shelton, Neb., passed away Jan. 19, 2014.

Dr. C. Douglas Mayo (UTJC), of Memphis, passed away April 24, 2014.

Gertrude Myrick (UTM Staff) of Martin, passed away Sept. 11, 2014

Capt. Robert Austin Ridley, of Enterprise, Ala., passed away March 16, 2014.

Joe H. Spears passed away Aug. 28, 2013.

Master Sgt. Aaron C. Torian, of Paducah, Ky., passed away Feb. 15, 2014.

Ted Welch, of Nashville, passed away March 8, 2014.

<<<(one last thought)

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT>>> Bosede Afolami, May Finance graduate, *Memphis*



I want to be a
financial analyst

>>> On May 3, **Bosede Afolami** walked across the UT Martin commencement stage at just 19 years old with a degree in finance. Afolami was also honored as one of the three Meek Award winners, a cash award given to graduating seniors who demonstrated outstanding leadership qualities while attending UT Martin.

Originally from Lagos, Nigeria, Afolami and her family moved to the United States in pursuit of a better education and more career opportunities. Afolami was 13 when

her family moved to Memphis and when she began high school. During her senior year of high school, Afolami was told by her high school counselor to consider attending a UT System school, and when she discovered UT Martin, she knew it was the right fit for her.

Afolami became active on campus participating with the Student Government Association, the Black Student Association, Alpha Kappa Psi Business Fraternity, the African Student

Association, the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority and the Financial Management Association. In addition to these organizations she was also a PEP leader.

When it came to her education, Afolami always had an idea of what she wanted to study. "In Nigeria there's a limited amount of things to do. When you're young, folks ask you what you want to be when you grow up. I always wanted to be a banker," Afolami said. She added, "As a finance major, I can do anything, and I want to be a financial analyst." <<<

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Picture this...

Don't let the idea of out-of-state tuition get in the way of attending the college that is right for you. If you can picture it, we want you to pursue it. At UT Martin, we offer an out-of-state tuition waiver and scholarship opportunities to help you achieve your goals.

THIS COULD BE YOU!

HONORS SEMINAR OUT-OF-STATE TUITION WAIVER

(February 1 application deadline)

> **Financial Award**

Waiver of out-of-state tuition (approximate value of \$14,000 per year).

> **Qualifications**

ACT: 25-27 and GPA: 3.5+*

Must participate in Honors Seminar Program.

Must be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident.

ACT: 28+ and GPA: 3.5+*

Eligible for University Scholars (selective) or Chancellor's Award.

Must participate in University Scholars Program (selective) or Honors Seminar Program.

Must be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident.



"To see my out-of-state tuition waiver's impact on my bill every semester and to be recognized by UT Martin for the work I've done so far is really nice and rewarding."

*Makennen Crane, Marion, Ill.
Engineering major, University Scholar*

www.utm.edu

731-881-7020

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*4.0 scale

DISCOVER

UT MARTIN