Our View

Labor fees for public records requests need reform

We were shocked in December to learn that the University of Tennessee at Martin was put on probation by its accrediting body.

Our level of concern rose with the lack of transparency from UTM about what led the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACS) to place the school on probation. The UTM administration said it lacked specifics about what SACS wanted the school to address.

That triggered a public records request from The Jackson Sun, which sought copies of correspondence to and from members of UTM's administration and academic leadership team about the probation.

A month later, UTM delivered us about 1,000 emails and a bill for $1,600.03.

The emails told a disturbing story outlined in a report published in The Jackson Sun last week. The emails show that UTM knew it was in trouble with SACS for failing over a period of years to address five specific and related standards.

The bill for $1,600.03 shows why the state law that allows government entities to charge labor fees to fill public records requests needs to be reformed. It is obscene that a media organization, or a private citizen, could be billed $1,600 for records that show a government entity failed miserably to fulfill a portion of its mission, which is funded by millions of tax dollars.

The Jackson Sun was in discussions with UTM at the time the records were provided about what personnel were involved in filling our request. For instance, we suggested that an assistant could review the emails of Interim Chancellor Robert Smith, rather than Smith himself.

State law allows government entities to charge the hourly rate of employees involved in filling public records requests, based on their pay rate or salary.

UTM filed our request before our discussions about who was involved in identifying the records were complete. To UTM's credit, it wanted to provide the information we sought as quickly as possible, and it acknowledged our opposition to the charges. The university said we could pay the amount in full, pay what we thought was appropriate, credit UTM for all or a portion of the bill in advertising, or pay nothing at all.

The Jackson Sun chose to pay the entire amount, in two installments. While we object to this system, we felt it was important to follow the law established by our state government.

The detailed bill from UTM shows it charged us for as little as one minute of time for an employee who makes $39.87 an hour, to four and a half hours of Interim Chancellor Smith's time at a rate of $108.18 an hour. Eight of the employees involved in filling the request make more than $50 an hour.

The state Office of Open Records was directed in 2008 to develop a Schedule of Reasonable Charges to be used as a guideline for charges to fill public records requests. Unfortunately, the only specific limit placed on labor fees is that the first hour of labor is to be provided at no charge. Otherwise, government entities are free to charge for the labor "of the employee(s) reasonably necessary to produce requested material ..."

Although we don't place UTM in this category, the system is wide open for abuse by government bureaucrats who want to restrict access to public records, particularly those records that may expose their failure to act as good stewards of the public's business and taxpayer dollars.

The system effectively puts some public records out of reach for citizens and small news operations without thousands of dollars to spend on records searches.

Philosophically, we oppose the ability of any government entity to charge any fee to a media organization or citizen to produce records we have already paid for with our tax dollars. But we recognize governments are sometimes faced with records requests meant to do nothing more than harass. A well-planned fee system may help limit that.

Unfortunately, Tennessee's system doesn't protect those making legitimate requests from abuse and outrageous fees.

More specifics are needed on what employees are "reasonably necessary" to fill requests. Restrictions are necessary to prevent governments from handing records requests off to outside lawyers who charge hundreds of dollars an hour for their services. An appeal system must be developed for absurd labor fees, short of taking a government entity to court.

When it returns to Nashville, the legislature should order a review of the Schedule of Reasonable Charges for public records that would fairly represent the needs of private citizens, the missions of news organizations and the concerns of government employees.

We believe Tennessee can—and must—develop a better plan.
Pipkin honored with UTM award

Patricia Pipkin, president of advertising and public relations agency DCA/DCPR, has been honored with the Communications Distinguished Alumni Award from the UT Martin Department of Communications.

Pipkin, a 1996 UTM graduate, completed an internship with the United Way during her senior year and worked with the university newspaper.

New director named at center

Dr. Simpronia "Sim" Taylor is the new director of the University of Tennessee at Martin Ripley Center.

Taylor most recently served as director of student affairs at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center in Memphis, a position she began in 2010. She previously served UTHSC as student affairs coordinator and as grant coordinator in the college of medicine.

Before beginning her UT career, Taylor spent time as office manager at Montessori School of Louisville, Ky., and principal of Timothy Christian Academy in Athens, Ga.

She received her educational doctorate in workforce education in 2011 and a master of education degree in business education in 1996, both from the University of Georgia. She earned a bachelor of arts degree in business management from Dillard University in 1989. Taylor also holds certifications as a middle grades teacher and a business education teacher from the Georgia Professional Standards Commission.

"We are excited to welcome Dr. Taylor and look forward to the expertise and excitement she brings to our efforts," said Dr. Brian Donavant, interim executive director, UT Martin Office of Extended Campus and Online Studies.

Taylor succeeds Texas Culver, who served as interim director and will return to his faculty position as lecturer of educational studies at the center. "I am grateful for his (Culver's) counsel and stewardship during this transitional period and look forward to his continuing contributions to our students and operations in Ripley," said Donavant.

For more information, contact Taylor at the UT Martin Ripley Center at 731-221-8778.
TRENTON GAZETTE

Wednesday, May 4, 2016

UTM among safest in Tenn.

According to the 2015 Crime on Campus report released by the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation, the University of Tennessee at Martin remains among the safest public four-year college campuses in Tennessee.

The report shows that UT Martin has the least number of index crimes of all public four-year universities in Tennessee and tied with East Tennessee State University for the lowest rate of index crimes per 1,000 people.

Index crimes are those considered serious felony offenses and include murder, kidnapping, robbery, aggravated and sexual assaults, arson, burglary and motor vehicle thefts. UT Martin had 33 such offenses reported in 2015, with five incidents per 1,000 people. This number is down from 41 in 2014.

UT Martin had the lowest number of group A offenses as well, with only 78 incidents reported in 2015. Group A offenses are serious crimes not considered index crimes. This number is down from 87 reported in 2014.

"The university community should take a lot of pride in another low crime rate. The caliber of students and staff who attend and work here on campus is the main reason we have the lowest crime rate among four-year public universities," said Scott Robbins, director, UT Martin Department of Public Safety.

The UT Martin main campus is patrolled 24 hours a day, and the campus community is consistently taught how to be security-minded in their daily activities. Freshmen attend special training sessions in their first year to instruct them on basic personal safety, property security and an awareness of current surroundings.

Commencements scheduled May 7

Dr. Paul Blaylock, will address the University of Tennessee at Martin's spring 2016 graduating class during commencement exercises beginning at 11 a.m., May 7, in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center on the university’s main campus.

The UT Martin spring commencement ceremony, expected to be the largest in university history, is a ticketed event. However, attendees without tickets are welcome to watch a livestream webcast from the overflow area located inside the Skyhawk Fieldhouse. Tickets may only be obtained from individual graduates.

A livestream will also be available online at www.ovcdigitalnetwork.com/watch?Live=3448 for those who are unable to attend in person.

For more information, contact the UT Martin Office of University Relations at 731-881-7615.

UT Martin maintains AACSB accreditation

The University of Tennessee at Martin has maintained its business accreditation from the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business International, according to a press release.

Founded in 1916, AACSB International is the longest-serving global accrediting body for institutions offering undergraduate, master's and doctoral degrees in business and accounting.

There are just 755 business schools — less than 5 percent of the world's business programs — that have earned AACSB accreditation.

The UT Martin College of Business and Global Affairs offers bachelor's degrees in business administration, political science and international studies, as well as a master's degree in business administration.

"This national validation of our business programs would not have happened without a strong faculty, supported by an effective leadership team, within the College of Business and Global Affairs," said Jerald Ogg, provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs.

"AACSB accreditation sends a message that our students are graduating with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed, and I am delighted to end this semester with a ringing affirmation that quality matters."

Visit utm.edu/departments/chga/ for more information about UT Martin's business degree programs.
Students honored by AP

Student staff members from WUTM 90.3 FM "The Hawk," the campus radio station at the University of Tennessee at Martin, received four first-place awards, four second-place awards, six third-place awards and five honorable mentions at the 2016 Tennessee Associated Press College Journalism Awards ceremony recently at the John Seigenthaler Center in Nashville.

The campus cable television station, UTM-TV, also received a first-place award and UT Martin's student newspaper, The Pacer, received a third-place recognition.

"We are ecstatic at the results of this year's competition. The students achieved a level of excellence at this year's Associated Press Collegiate Awards that was truly special," said Dr. Richard Robinson, associate professor of communications and WUTM faculty adviser. "These honors represent a lot of hard work to produce quality journalism, which was recognized by professionals in the industry as being among the best."

These awards were collected by only seven students, making their accomplishments all the more impressive.

Chuck Hammer, a senior from Martin, received second place for best radio sports coverage program; third place for best radio story and best radio sports story; and honorable mention for best radio newscast and best radio sports reporting. He also received first place for best radio sports coverage program in collaboration with Kayla Harmon, a senior from Lewisburg, and Jared Peckenpaugh, a senior from Finley.

EARN AWARDS — Student staff members from WUTM 90.3 FM "The Hawk," the campus radio station at the University of Tennessee at Martin, received a number of awards in radio and television at the 2016 Tennessee Associated Press College Journalism Awards Ceremony held last month at the John Seigenthaler Center in Nashville. Gathered around the Associated Press teletype machine were honorees (from left) Ashley Shores of Lebanon, Ashleigh Burton of South Fulton, Jared Peckenpaugh (back) of Finley, Julia Ewoldt of Savannah, Sydney LaFreniere of Oak Ridge, Kayla Harmon of Lewisburg, Tori Seng of Union City and Chuck Hammer of Martin.

Sydney LaFreniere, a senior from Oak Ridge, brought home second place in best radio sports coverage program; third place in best radio newscast and an honorable mention in the best radio reporter category.

Joey Plunk of Bells placed third for best news graphic/illustration. He is a fine arts major who works on The Pacer staff.

"I'm elated that our students from all three areas of radio, television and newspaper won statewide AP awards. I'm especially proud of the multiple first-place and top-five awards won once again by WUTM," said Dr. Robert Nanney, professor of communications and department chair. "The AP awards mean a great deal because they provide clear evidence that our students have the training and talent not only to compete well professionally with other schools across the state — many of which are much larger — but also to win first place. I could not be more pleased."

Hammer and Ms. Harmon additionally received third place in best radio sports coverage/program, and Hammer and Peckenpaugh received an honorable mention in the same category.

In addition to her collaborative work, Ms. Harmon's submissions also received both first and third place in the best radio sports reporting category.

Tori Seng, a senior from Union City, received first place for best radio reporter, second place for best radio newscast, third place for best use of sound and an honorable mention for best radio news story. She also collaborated with Ashleigh Burton, a senior from South Fulton, to win first place in the best radio investigative/in-depth reporting category for a story discussing sexual violence on campus. The video version of this story also received first place in the related television category for the campus cable channel, UTM-TV.

Ms. Burton also received an individual award with a second-place finish in the best use of sound category.
Teachers invited to workshops on organization, management

West Tennessee teachers in grades PK-12 can register for one of three workshop sessions on classroom organization and management to be held in June at the University of Tennessee at Martin.

There is no charge to attend these sessions, which are sponsored by UT Martin’s Teacher Quality Partnership Grant through the U.S. Department of Education.

Each workshop session includes three initial days in June and a half-day session in October.

Districts can choose to grant professional development points for participation.

Teachers can choose to attend either the first session June 7-9; the second session June 14-16; or the third session June 21-23. All three sessions will be held from 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. the designated weeks.

All attendees are also required to attend a follow-up session from 8:30 a.m.-noon Oct. 1.

Participants can register online by visiting www.eventbrite.com and searching “UT Martin classroom management.”

Registration ends Friday, a spokesman said.

For more information about the free opportunity, contact Tina Harrison, grant coordinator, by phone at (731) 881-7201 or by email at tharr70@utm.edu.

Singer Allison Webb signs with UTM

Allison Webb from Halls High School signed with the University of Tennessee at Martin last Friday at Halls High School. This was the first Skyhawk Music Signing Day remote event. Webb was unable to attend the Signing Day ceremony on the campus of UTM because of the choir concert by Halls and Ripley choirs, so UTM came to Halls in order for her to be a part of this event. UT Martin has started a new tradition of signing their music majors just like the signing of athletes. Webb plans on majoring in music, specifically Music Therapy. She has been a part of the Halls and Ripley Choirs for all four years of high school where she participated in All West Honor Choir, UTM Honor Choir, All State Honor Choir, as well as being a member of the show choir Take Note. Pictured are, from left, Kim Webb, Allison Webb, Steve Webb, Dr. Mark Simmons, Choral Director at UTM, and Sharon Morris, Choral Director for Halls and Ripley High School.
Seven DHS students chosen to attend various Governor's Schools across Tennessee. (L to R): Rebecca Reed, Peyton Hickman, Tauseef Nadeem, Logan Miller, Aaron Stapleton, Emma Burns, and Mary Alford.

Seven DHS students selected to attend Governor’s School in summer

KRISTEN DYCUS
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Seven students from Dyersburg High School were selected to attend six different Governor's Schools this summer after committees, appointed by the director in consultation with the state Department of Education, reviewed applications, transcripts, personal data sheets, and recommendations made by high school counselors or principals. Those who have been chosen are among the most exceptional students in Tennessee.

According to information extracted from the Tennessee Governor's School official website, Tennessee provides 12 summer programs for these gifted and talented high school students. Students who want to participate in a challenging and high-intensity program in one of the 12 areas must submit applications to be considered. DHS will be represented in Sciences, Agricultural Sciences, Humanities, Visual and Performing Arts, and...
International Studies. Two students, Peyton Hickman and Logan Miller, were selected to attend the Tennessee Governor's School for Agricultural Sciences June 4 – July 1. The mission of Tennessee Governor's School for the Agricultural Sciences is to offer a unique learning experience to high school students to inspire their interest in agriculture and natural resources by providing classes and hands-on learning opportunities in the University setting. Reed will be exposed to scientific concepts, land stewardship concepts, facilities, and professional scientists from multiple states and universities. She will be introduced to rewarding career opportunities that require training in leadership, communication, problem solving, interpersonal skills, and research methodology and application.

“I hope to gain connections with Ag representatives and a greater understanding of all that agriculture is,” Reed anticipated. “I am considering running for FFA State Office, so it will help me gain those leadership skills needed and also the knowledge.”

M. Tauseef Nadeem, newly elected student body vice president, will be attending the Tennessee Governor’s School for International Studies at the University of Memphis June 4 – July 2. Nadeem will experience four weeks of studies regarding our world and its cultures, including the study and discussion of global cultures, foreign languages and international perspectives. He will be challenged to see beyond the boundaries of home to examine the global economy along with other international relationships that affect us. Nadeem will gain once-in-a-lifetime opportunities to discuss world issues with political and business leaders.

“I hope to meet new people from all across the state and make new friends. I plan to increase my knowledge about politics and I hope to learn more about major problems facing the world today.” Nadeem expressed. “Thought-provoking discussions with other great students with similar interests is something I am looking forward to.”

Aaron Stapleton will attend the Tennessee Governor’s School for Humanities at University of Tennessee in Martin June 5 – July 2. Stapleton will join other students as they celebrate and study the expression of who we are, what we believe, how we know what we know, where we’ve been as a society, and the power of originality and ideas in creating shared communities. He will gain both anthropological and philosophical insight to the world as he focuses on discussions and presentations regarding ideas, opinions, and historical facts that have shaped our world’s past, present, and will impact the way we think about the future.

Stapleton shared, “I hope to continue to evaluate my options for college and gain insight into possible majors. Governor’s School is a great opportunity for high school students to explore college life and gain experience. Hopefully, this opportunity will also prepare me for the transition from home life to college life.”

Mary Alford and Emma Burns were accepted into the Tennessee Governor’s School for the Arts at Middle Tennessee State University June 5 – June 29. Both performance and visual arts require an existing talent or ability to be competitive among applicants. Burns will be focusing her participation specifically in vocal music where she will take classes in theory, conducting, improvisation, and participate in large and small vocal ensembles in choral music and opera workshop.

Alford’s experience will be to learn human understanding, achievement and self-development through the study and practice of visual art. Burns shared hopefully, “I want to receive in-depth training for classical vocal performance and improvement of my understanding of music theory.”

“I hope to gain more knowledge and insight on artistic techniques and styles, and develop a better artist portfolio,” stated Alford.

This select group of students will experience a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity this summer as their horizons are expanded and new relationships are formed. When they return to DHS as seniors in the fall their experiences during their time spent at Tennessee Governor’s School will bring maturity, new ideas, and deeper understanding into the classroom.
More guns on Tennessee college campuses beginning July 1

Posted: May 05, 2016 5:02 PM CDT
Updated: May 05, 2016 9:13 PM CDT

By Blake Stevens
By Randall Barnes

MARTIN, TN - Faculty and full-time employees at Tennessee public colleges will be able to bring guns onto campuses beginning July 1. If the employee has a handgun carry permit, they will be allowed to conceal carry. They will have to notify local law enforcement, like campus police, that he or she will carry a gun with them.

It doesn’t apply to students, even those students who are all full-time workers. The law was not heavily supported by college professors, staff, or students. In fact, a University of Tennessee survey shows 86 percent of faculty opposed the law.

Logan Roberts is a freshman at UT Martin who supports the law. “If they don’t have weapons on campus, what can they do to defend themselves?” he said.

Elizabeth Packard disagrees. She’s completed her undergraduate degree at UTM, but plans to attend graduate school there in the fall. “I don’t think we need to solve gun issues with more guns,” Packard said.

Packard thinks mental health screenings are more valuable than putting guns in the hands of more people.

Sponsor of the bill, state Rep. Andy Holt, disagrees. UTM is in his district and, despite the debate, it was the first bill he drafted in 2011. “Nothing in my research has ever indicated that allowing law abiding citizens to be able to defend themselves increased criminal activity,” Holt said. "Ultimately, I would like to see 100 percent removal of all gun-free zones in public spaces."

UTM Campus Police Chief Scott Robbins opposed the measure from the start. “The more guns you bring into an environment like this, the more opportunity there is for an accident to happen,” he said. Robbins said even trained officers only hit their target in stressful situations around 38 percent of the time. Despite that statistic, Robbins said he understands the second amendment argument and plans to make do with the new law.

The law still limits where you can bring a gun onto campus. You can’t bring one into an arena or stadium.

Roberts says the law protects the campus against criminals while allowing people to practice their second amendment right. “To have a permit, you have to take a test and know how to use your firearms,” he said.

For Packard, it will take some getting used to. “I think it would always be in the back of my mind, my professor might have a gun,” she said.

Holt said he believes guns are not a problem, but rather the people holding the gun. To those completely opposed to the law and possibly planning to leave a public university in Tennessee, Holt said: “I would say good riddance.”

Students with a carry permit cannot take their guns on campus, but they can leave them in their trunks.

http://www.wpsdlocal6.com/:

The Jackson Sun Thursday, May 5, 2016

COLLEGE RODEO
UTM men win Ozark Region title

MARTIN – The University of Tennessee at Martin men’s rodeo team earned the 2016 Ozark Region championship as the final regular season standings were released in anticipation of next month’s College National Finals Rodeo.

The Ozark Region title is the 14th since head coach John Luthi took over the UT Martin rodeo program in 1997. The UT Martin men’s team will enter the 2016 CNFR ranked third nationally with 5,945 points.

The UT Martin women’s team finishes the Ozark Region season ranking sixth in the team standings with 1,415 points.

A total of seven participants will represent UT Martin in the upcoming CNFR. Tanner Phipps (bare-back riding), Slade Bronson (calf roping), Ben Walker (team roping, calf roping), Lane Mitchell (team roping) and Douglas Rich (team roping) will compete for the men’s team while Nealey Dalton (barrel racing) and Natalie Fletcher (breakaway roping) will make the trip to Casper, Wyo. on behalf of the women’s squad. To qualify for the CNFR, a cowboy or cowgirl must rank in the top-three in their region in their respective events.

Phipps, a senior out of Dalton, Ga., will be making his third career CNFR appearance. He ranks fifth nationally in bareback riding with 1,390 points.
Signs With UTM

ALLISON WEBB, second from left, Halls High School senior, signed with the University of Tennessee at Martin Friday, April 29th at Halls High School. This was the first Skyhawk Music Signing Day remote event. Allison was unable to attend the Signing Day ceremony on the campus of UTM because of the choir concert by Halls and Ripley choirs, so UTM came to Halls in order for her to be a part of this event. UT Martin has started a new tradition of signing their music majors just like the signing of athletes. Allison plans on majoring in music, specifically Music Therapy. She has been a part of the Halls and Ripley choirs for all four years of high school, where she participated in All West Honor Choir, UT Martin Honor Choir, All State Honor Choir, as well as being a member of the show choir, Take Note. She is pictured with, from left, Kim Webb, Steve Webb, Dr. Mark Simmons, Choral Director at UTM, and Sharon Morris, choral director for Halls and Ripley High School.

UT Martin golf selected to Franklin NCAA Regional

http://www.wpsdlocal6.com/
UT-Martin Skyhawks Learns NCAA Golf Destination

The Ohio Valley Champion UT-Martin golf team is headed to Franklin, Tennessee to compete in the NCAA Regional Tournament.

The announcement was made this morning live on the Golf Channel, where the Skyhawk team and local fans were shown gathered for the selection at the Rhodes Golf Center.

UT-Martin’s regional site will feature 13 schools from across the nation, including Texas, LSU, Vanderbilt and Pepperdine.

The Top-5 scoring teams will advance to the NCAA Championship in Oregon.

Following the selection, OVC Coach of the Year Jerry Carpenter told Thunderbolt News that the site was a great fit for his team.

Coach Carpenter said having four of the players from the Nashville and Clarksville area, who know and have played the course, will be an advantage.

The NCAA Regional will be held in Franklin from May 16th thru the 18th.

(photos by Charles Choate – 104.9 KYTN / 105.7 WQAK)

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The McNairy County News

Thursday, May 5, 2016

Teachers invited to free workshops on classroom organization and management

West Tennessee teachers in grades PK-12 can register for one of three workshop sessions on classroom organization and management to be held in June at the University of Tennessee at Martin. There is no charge to attend these sessions, which are sponsored by UT Martin’s Teacher Quality Partnership Grant through the U.S. Department of Education.

Each workshop session includes three initial days in June and a half-day session in October. Districts can choose to grant professional development points for participation. Teachers can choose to attend session one June 7-9, session two June 14-16 or session three June 21-23. All three sessions will be held from 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. All attendees are also required to attend a follow-up session from 8:30 a.m.-noon, Oct. 1.

Participants can register online by visiting www.eventbrite.com and searching “UT Martin classroom management.” Registration ends May 6.

For more information, contact Tina Harrison, grant coordinator, at 731-881-7201 or by email at tharri70@utm.edu.
TUFC CERTIFIED — The arboretum at the University of Tennessee at Martin campus was recently certified along with 10 other state arboreta.

UTM arboretum certified by state

The arboretum at the University of Tennessee at Martin is among 10 recently certified throughout the state.

The Tennessee Urban Forestry Council (TUFC) has certified 10 new arboreta throughout the state. These 10 arboreta share the honor of being certified by the council along with 74 others in the state. Each arboretum contains many different species of trees for the purpose of education and/or research.

“This program is an excellent way to recognize the educational and research efforts of the arboreta, as well as their environmental contributions to their respective communities by providing unique opportunities for children and adults to observe the distinctive qualities of trees,” said Urban Forester Brian Rucker with the Tennessee Department of Agriculture Division of Forestry. “This is the 16th year that the Tennessee Urban Forestry Council has certified arboreta in Tennessee.”

Besides UTM, the new arboreta include: Columbia Academy (Columbia), Cordova Library (Cordova), Glenview Park (Memphis), Knoxville Zoological Gardens (Knoxville), Middle Tennessee State University (Murfreesboro), Middleton (Middleton), Sam Davis Home (Smyrna), Tusculum College (Tusculum) and University of Memphis, Lambuth Campus (Jackson).

Each arboretum must meet strict criteria to become certified. Universal standards for arboreta include: trees must be properly labeled for public educational purposes and the site must be properly maintained over the certification period.

Other standards may include providing a map for self-guided tours or staff for public educational programs.

The arboretum certification program is sponsored by the Tennessee Urban Forestry Council in partnership with the Tennessee Department of Agriculture Division of Forestry.

For more information on arboretum certification, contact the program coordinator Jill Smith at (615) 638-8027, or email Jill-Smith.tufc@gmail.com.

Visit the TUFC website at www.tufc.com/arboretum for information on creating or visiting an arboretum.
Men's rodeo team wins Ozark championship

The University of Tennessee at Martin men's rodeo team earned the 2016 Ozark Region championship as the final regular season standings were released in anticipation of next month's College National Finals Rodeo.

The Ozark Region title is the 14th since head coach John Luthi took over the UT Martin rodeo program in 1997. The UT Martin men's team will enter the 2016 CNFR ranked third nationally with 5,945 points.

The UT Martin women's team finishes the Ozark Region season ranking sixth in the team standings with 1,415 points.

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Phipps, a senior out of Dalton, Ga., will be making his third career CNFR appearance. He ranks fifth nationally in bareback riding with 1,390 points.

A senior from Jennings, Fla., Bronson will be making his second career appearance in the CNFR.

Walker will serve as the header in team roping alongside his teammate Rich. This will be the third career CNFR appearance for the senior out of Sapta.

RODEO
From Page 1
Mitchell was the Ozark Region champion as a heeler in team roping as he ranks fifth nationally with 670 points on the season. This will be the third career CNFR appearance for the senior from Bolivar.

Rich is a heeler in team roping alongside Walker, as he ranks 19th nationally with 505 points. The junior from Herrick, Ill., will be making the second appearance of his CNFR career.

A senior from Adamsville, Tenn., Dalton is in line for her third career CNFR appearance. She currently ranks 13th in the nation with 800 points in barrel racing.

Also making her third career CNFR appearance is Fletcher, a senior out of Knoxville.

Considered the "Rose Bowl" of college rodeo, the CNFR is set for June 12-18. The weekend event in Casper is where the National Intercollegiate Rodeo Association crowns individual champions in saddle bronc riding, bareback riding, bull riding, tie-down roping, steer wrestling, team roping, barrel racing, breakaway roping and goat tying. More than 400 cowboys and cowgirls from over 100 universities and colleges compete at the Casper Events Center every year, as contestants compete all year in one of the NIRA's 11 regions for a chance to rope or ride at the CNFR. In addition to the top three students in each event, the top two men's and women's teams from the NIRA's 11 regions qualify for the CNFR.
Blaylock to speak at UT Martin graduation

Paul Blaylock will address the University of Tennessee at Martin's graduating class during commencement exercises beginning at 11 a.m. Saturday in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center on the university's main campus.

Blaylock received a bachelor's degree in liberal arts from UT Martin in 1968 before earning a medical degree from the University of Tennessee Health Science Center in Memphis in 1972.

He later graduated from the Northwestern School of Law at Lewis and Clark College in Portland, Oregon, and has spent the past 40 years serving as both a trauma doctor and a trial lawyer in the Portland area.

The UT Martin spring commencement ceremony, expected to be the largest in university history, is a ticketed event.

However, those without tickets can watch a livestream webcast inside the Skyhawk Fieldhouse. Tickets may only be obtained from graduates.

A livestream will also be available online at www.ovcdigitalnetwork.com/watch/?Live=3448 for those who are unable to attend in person.

For more information, contact the Office of University Relations at (731) 881-7615.

http://www.thunderboltradio.com/

UTM Equestrian Team to Stay

The UT-Martin Equestrian Team has learned that they will remain a varsity sport at the university.

On Friday, the Committee on Women's Athletics announced that the sport of equestrian would remain on the NCAA's Emerging Sports list.

Following the announcement, interim athletics director Kevin McMillan informed coach Meghan Corvin and team members that UT-Martin will keep the sport at the school.

In November of 2014, it was announced that the equestrian program would discontinue following the conclusion of this season.

McMillan said he was excited that the sport will remain, adding that the team was comprised of a tremendous group of student athletes who have been an asset to the university and community.

Over the last 10 years, the Skyhawks have participated in the postseason tournament nine times, and have produced seven All-Americans in the sport.
Abusive fees threaten open govt.

State law gives us a tool to hold our public servants accountable: The Tennessee Public Records Act.

Tennesseans have the fundamental right to explore what local and state government is up to by simply requesting copies of an assortment of public records—everything from emails to investigative reports.

But sadly in Tennessee, this valuable information has become expensive information. It's being held hostage by some who prefer, it seems, that the public butt out.

There are repeated instances across the state where records requests made by media outlets and, more important, citizens, have been met with absurd invoices.

Tennesseans have a right to see their public records for decades. It was only in 2008 the legislature changed state law to allow agencies to charge for finding and producing the records when copies were made.

In the intervening years, the public records system has been so poorly regulated and haphazardly administered that those in charge, including elected officials with something to hide, have effectively set their own prices. Too often, fees for public records have been a tool used to resist, delay or shut down public oversight of critical public business.

It shouldn't cost a Chattanooga student $1,700 to determine how the public utility spends its advertising budget.

It shouldn't cost The Tennessean in Nashville more than $50,000 to obtain records detailing how children in state custody have died. Nor The Commercial Appeal in Memphis $7,000 to find out how much generous agriculture property tax breaks cost the rest of us ($90 million a year).

In these last two instances, the fees were reduced after the newspapers engaged in costly or time-consuming fights. Increasingly, though, few media outlets, and precious few citizens, have the financial and legal resources to fight these exorbitant charges.

Too often the bills reflect a common tactic: Those making the request are met with hourly fees for an expensive lawyer or administrator to review records when a clerk could do the work more cheaply. That was the strategy Loudon County used when a $250-an-hour lawyer was employed to fill a citizen's request last year, racking up a $6,635 bill that the county then used to argue the request was excessive. Other times, requesters are charged excessive computer programming fees to produce electronic data that can be easily—and cheaply—produced.

A proposal in 2015 that additional fees be permitted just for examining records met a loud and angry reaction from the public, and lawmakers retreated on the idea this year. However, lawmakers did pass a bill requiring all local governments to adopt open-records policies by the end of the year, including statements on how fees are charged.

So now is the time for a clear statement on this issue.

Taxpayers should bear the cost of making and keeping public information public as they historically did in Tennessee until the law was changed. This is, after all, the Internet era, and public records should be routinely made available on the web.

But if charges are allowed, there must be strict controls to counter abuses. No citizens should have the door slammed on them because they can't afford to look inside.

The issue surfaced, again, recently when The Jackson Sun was hit with a $1,600 bill for records that revealed why the University of Tennessee at Martin was placed on probation by its accrediting body.

The newspaper was billed at $108 an hour for UT-Martin's interim chancellor to identify and review records before making them public. The Jackson Sun paid that bill so it could look deeply at what's amiss at UT-Martin. It made the decision to get the information into the public's hands, then fight over the excessive bill later.

It's hard for us to say it better than the Sun did in its editorial on the issue last Sunday:

"The system is wide open for abuse by government bureaucrats who want to restrict access to public records, particularly those records that may expose their failure to act as good stewards of the public's business and taxpayer dollars."

Louis Graham, editor of The Commercial Appeal in Memphis, wrote this editorial on behalf of the editorial boards across the USA TODAY NETWORK in Tennessee.
UTM commencement:
Special moments, encouraging words

Former captive McAlister sees son receive degree

THE JACKSON SUN

There were many special moments during commencement exercises held May 7 at the University of Tennessee at Martin, as approximately 825 students — the largest graduating class in university history, according to a press release — received their degrees and were welcomed into the family of UT Martin alumni.

Dr. Bob Smith, UT Martin interim chancellor, first welcomed the graduates and reminded them to thank their families for the sacrifices made over the years, culminating in their college graduation.

Smith also recognized veterans and servicemen and women in the audience and asked them to remain standing while he introduced their newest member, 2nd Lt. Kelly James, of Brookeville, Md., who was commissioned into the United States Army immediately before graduation. James received a Bachelor of Science degree in health and human performance during the ceremony.

The chancellor closed his remarks by acknowledging one family in particular for their perseverance through unthinkably trials. Mark McAlister, a Greenfield resident, left the United States in October 2015 to work as a civilian contractor for the United Nations. While stationed in the country of Yemen, McAlister and a co-worker, John Hamer, were detained by Shiite rebels and accused of espionage.

"It definitely affected my studies and my GPA...but it tried to stay focused," said Christian McAlister, Mark’s son. "I put my faith in the Lord a lot...Just put your faith in the Lord and He’ll get you through it."

After six months without contact, the McAlister family finally heard from Mark in March — the first indication that he was still alive. Mark was released by the rebels April 29 and made his way home to Greenfield, arriving Thursday, just in time to see Christian cross UT Martin’s commencement stage on Saturday.

"It makes this so much better," said Christian. "I know this was his No. 1 goal and why he continued to strive to get me through college. That was his main goal, to just make sure that I grew up having more than what he had, education included."

"I think we would agree that even in the idyllic atmosphere of this campus, we live in dangerous times and we can be complacent about events that swirl around us because they seem so distant," Smith said. "We often take our freedom and the opportunities we have for granted."

The audience erupted in thunderous applause when he added, "Mr. McAlister, welcome home."

Christian, who received a Bachelor of Science in criminal justice, hopes to begin his career with a local law enforcement agency and later work his way up to the state and federal levels.

Dr. Paul Blaylock, a 1968 graduate, delivered the commencement address and emphasized the importance of friendships and lifelong learning. "You’re graduating from one of America’s finest universities, which has prepped you for life," he said.

Blaylock used his remarks to impart a few words of wisdom he learned from a "friend" he met during his own days at UT Martin — author and philosopher Henry David Thoreau.

"Know thyself," he said. "It’s very important that you establish what your values and your boundaries are, and live your life within those. Don’t let anyone else influence you to go beyond your values and your boundaries."

"Simplify your life...Don’t be discouraged in bad times, but use it as an opportunity to grow," he continued. As both a trauma doctor and trial lawyer, Blaylock says he has seen all the mistakes people can make with their lives and urged graduates not to make those same irreparable mistakes.

"Live deep. Suck the marrow out of life every day," he said. "Make the best of every day because tomorrow is not promised. Dream high; expand your horizons; and don’t be afraid to exceed your comfort zone. Pursue every opportunity to improve your life; never stop learning; never stop reading."

He closed by giving a few pieces of advice from his own life, encouraging graduates to believe in their own abilities, be prepared to learn from failure, strive for excellence and never go a day without a smile or a laugh. "Go confidently in the direction of your dreams, and live the life you have imagined," he said, quoting Thoreau. "Go forth into the world and make us proud, and remember, always come home to UT Martin."

Blaylock received a Bachelor of Science degree in liberal arts from UT Martin before earning a medical degree from the University of Tennessee Health Science Center in Memphis in 1972. He later graduated from the Northwestern School of Law at Lewis and Clark College in Portland, Ore., and has spent the past 40 years serving as both a trauma doctor and a trial lawyer in the Portland area.

Dr. David Millhorn, UT executive vice president, vice president for research and UT Research Foundation president, represented UT President Joe DiPietro and joined Smith to confer degrees.
Haliburton receives outstanding leadership award

Tori Haliburton, of Madison County, received the 2016 African American Emerging Leader Award during the African American Leadership Conference April 19. The conference is hosted annually by the University of Tennessee at Martin's WestStar Leadership Program.

Originally from Crockett County, Haliburton is director of alumni affairs at Lane College in Jackson and previously served the college as assistant to the president. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree in interdisciplinary studies from Lane College in 2005 and is completing a master's degree in public administration from Villanova University.

JOINS TOWN AND GOWN — Members of the University of Tennessee at Martin and the City of Martin Town and Gown Association gathered for breakfast recently in the UT Martin Dunagan Alumni Center. The Town and Gown program seeks to provide a network of resources for campus and local business owners to collaborate on area services, events, programs, commerce and education. Businesses that have committed to the program for five years are presented with a framed print and given an annual membership medallion. David Hart (center), certified public accountant and partner with Alexander Thompson Arnold, PLLC, accepted the company's first medallion during the association breakfast. He was joined by Martin Mayor Randy Brundige (left) and UT Martin Interim Chancellor Dr. Bob Smith.
Leadership class challenged to promote Obion County, stay involved

By GLENS N. CAULDER
Special Features Editor

"You got to see things a lot of people take for granted," Charley Deal told members of the 2015-16 Obion County Adult Leadership Class.

He was referring to the nine sessions that serve to acquaint Obion Countians with the many positive aspects of industry, business, education, the arts, medical care, media, local government and law enforcement in their part of the Volunteer State.

In addition to those important locally-focused opportunities, members of each year's class begin their adventure with a team building day in early fall, using that time to settle on a class project, as well. They also take a trip to Nashville for Legislative Day, where they meet Tennessee's secretary of state — this year's class was introduced to Tre Hargett — and spend time with the senators and representatives from this area who take their interests and concerns to the state Capitol.

Many graduates of the classes, which started in 1986, with the Obion County Adult Leadership Class of 1986-87, go on to assume leadership roles at both the county and city level, supporters say.

Deal is responsible for the WestStar program that expanded such a focus to much of West Tennessee and frequently accepts alumni of Obion County Leadership into its ranks. He encouraged members of the 2015-16 class to keep in mind the experiences they have had as they go about their daily activities.

"Use it to sell your county to other people," he urged. "I challenge you to stay involved and to lead by example. Be vocal, but learn to listen, as well. And be committed to making Obion County even better." Greg Dozier, a former member of the class and president of the board of directors, used his portion of the Thursday night program to call attention to the TALC Award won by the Obion County Leadership effort. The local organization competed with 80 other such programs to claim the prize as the top Tennessee..."
Leadership...
(Continued from Page 1)
Association of Community Leadership Programs last October.
Class members Nicole Kincade and Jennifer Slack presented the class project and described the contact effort that allowed the class to contribute $2,500 to help the Town of Hornbeak finance a helipad for the town. The class members were also able to give more than $1,400 to the “Backpack” project that provides food for students in Union City and Obion County systems when school is not in session.

Three class members — Laura Waggoner, Tammy Sparks and Ms. Kincade — were recognized for perfect attendance during the months’ long program.

Dozier welcomed those attending, who were treated to a technological photo display of class activities played out on The Venue at Center Point Business Solutions’ large screen, and presented plaques to mark the class members’ completion of the program. He also offered closing remarks.

Phyllis Rauchle, who has been associated with the program since 2010, when she went through as a student and used the experience to prepare her to become director in 2011, introduced Deal, following an invocation by class member Rebecca Mueller and a meal shared by other class members, their guests, members of the board of directors and special guests.

Class members included Mrs. Waggoner, Mrs. Sparks, Ms. Slack, Matt Sammer, Jason Revell, Regina Pinion, Ms. Mueller, Corey McDaniel, Ms. Kincade, Barry Keathley, Flynn Jowers, Travis Johnson, Rob Holman, Gordon Fox, Bill Dahneke, Wendy Dalton, Damon Chandler and Gordon Bruff.

It was announced that Johnson and Mrs. Kincade had been selected by their class to serve on the Leadership Obion County board of directors, joining Michele Barnes, Charlene Burpo, Jennifer Eason, Emily Hall, Amber Jones, Seth Rhenberg, Lolly Bearden, Carolina Conner, Lindsay Frilling, David Harris, Katie Keathley, Holly Turner, Michelle Bing, Lisa Davis, John Fry, Mandy Hinson, Dustin McBride and Donnie Walton.

The Obion County Adult Leadership Class of 2016-17 will begin sessions in late September or early October, according to Mrs. Rauchle. She will begin accepting applications in June at prauclh@obioncountytn.com.
COMMENCEMENT
From Page 1

UTM graduates largest class ever

McAlister released in time for son’s graduation

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Dr. Bob Smith, UT Martin interim chancellor, first welcomed the graduates and reminded them to thank their families for the sacrifices made over the years to bring them all to their college graduation.

Smith also recognized veterans and servicemen and women in the audience and asked them to remain standing while he introduced their newest member, 2nd Lt. Kelly James, of Brookville, Md., who was commissioned into the United States Army immediately before graduation.

James received a bachelor of science degree in health and human performance during the ceremony.

The chancellor closed his remarks by acknowledging one family in particular for their perseverance through unthinkable trials. Mark McAlister, a Greenfield resident, left the United States in October 2015 to work as a civilian contractor for the United Nations. While stationed in the country of Yemen, McAlister and a co-worker, John Hamen, were detained by Shiite rebels and accused of espionage.

“It definitely affected my studies and my GPA ... but I tried to stay focused,” said Christian McAlister, Mark’s son. “I put my faith in the Lord a lot ... Just put your faith in the Lord and He’ll get you through it.”

After six months without contact, the McAlister family

See Commencement, Page 6

else influence you to go beyond your values and your boundaries.”

“Simplify your life. ... Don’t be discouraged in bad times, but use it as an opportunity to grow,” he continued. As both a trauma doctor and trial lawyer, Blaylock says he has seen all the mistakes people can make with their lives and urged graduates not to make those same irreparable mistakes.

“Live deep. Suck the marrow out of life every day,” he said. “Make the best of every day because tomorrow is not promised. Dream high; expand your horizons, and don’t be afraid to exceed your comfort zone. Pursue every opportunity to improve your life; never stop learning; never stop reading.”

He closed by giving a few pieces of advice from his own life, encouraging graduates to believe in their own abilities, be prepared to learn from failure, strive for excellence and never go a day without a smile or a laugh. “Go confidently in the direction of your dreams, and live the life you have imagined,” he said, quoting Thoreau. “Go forth into the world and make us proud, and remember, always come home to UT Martin.”

Blaylock received a bachelor of science degree in liberal arts from UT Martin before earning a medical degree from the University of Tennessee Health Science Center in Memphis in 1972. He later graduated from the Northwestern School of Law at Lewis and Clark College in Portland, Ore., and has spent the past 40 years serving as both a trauma doctor and a trial lawyer in the Portland area.

Dr. David Millhorn, UT executive vice president, vice president for research and UT Research Foundation president, represented UT President Joe DiPietro and joined Smith to confer degrees.
SIMPLIFY, SIMPLIFY — Dr. Robert Blaylock delivered the UTM commencement speech on the teachings of Henry David Thoreau.

MEMORABLE MOMENT — A group of student-athletes from the University of Tennessee at Martin pauses for a photo outside the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center before commencement exercises May 7.
Businesses honored during Town and Gown breakfast

Members of the University of Tennessee at Martin and the City of Martin Town and Gown Association gathered for breakfast April 27 in the UT Martin Dunagan Alumni Center. The Town and Gown program seeks to provide a network of resources for campus and local business owners to collaborate on area services, events, programs, commerce and education. Businesses that have committed to the program for five years are presented with a framed print and given an annual membership medallion.

REED CENTER — Landy Fuqua (center), director, UT Martin REED Center, accepted the center's first medallion during the association breakfast. She is pictured with city of Martin Mayor Randy Brundige (left) and UT Martin Interim Chancellor Dr. Bob Smith.

CARY INSURANCE — Alan Cary (center), director, Cary Insurance, accepted the company's first medallion during the association breakfast. He is pictured with city of Martin Mayor Randy Brundige (left) and UT Martin Interim Chancellor Dr. Bob Smith.
ALEXANDER THOMPSON ARNOLD — David Hart (center), certified public accountant and partner, Alexander-Thompson Arnold, PLLC, accepted the company's first medallion during the association breakfast. He is pictured with city of Martin Mayor Randy Brundige (left) and UT Martin Interim Chancellor Dr. Bob Smith.

SAVANT LEARNING SYSTEMS — Pictured (l-r) are Nassar Nassar, president and CEO, Savant Learning Systems; Randy Brundige, mayor, city of Martin; Dr. Bob Smith, UT Martin interim chancellor; and Tommy Legins, executive vice president and CFO, Savant Learning Systems.
Paul and Martha Meek Leadership Award

UT Martin Students Receive Leadership Award

Sean O’Brien (right), of Martin, received one of two Paul and Martha Meek Leadership Awards during the University of Tennessee at Martin’s spring commencement exercises May 7.

Dr. Paul Meek served the UT Martin campus as executive officer, dean, UT vice president or chancellor from 1934 to 1967. This award is given to two graduating seniors each semester who have demonstrated outstanding leadership qualities during their time at UT Martin, and was originally established and funded by the three Meek children to honor their parents.

O’Brien, originally from Voorhees, N.J., was active on campus through the Sigma Chi Fraternity, University Scholars Organization, Student Government Association and various community service projects. Through these organizations, he was involved in raising more than $10,000 for The Huntsman Cancer Research Institute and $25,000 for St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital, and collecting more than 1,500 canned food items for WeCare Ministries in Martin.

O’Brien was also a member of the varsity rifle team and a University Scholar, the highest academic honor awarded on the UT Martin campus. A key component of the University Scholars Program is a two-year undergraduate research project, and O’Brien presented his work to the Southern Political Science Association and the Midwestern Political Science Association.

He received a Bachelor of Science in political science during the May 7 commencement exercises.

Sean O’Brien (right), of Martin, received one of two Paul and Martha Meek Leadership Awards during the University of Tennessee at Martin’s spring commencement exercises May 7. He is pictured with Dr. Margaret Toston (center), vice chancellor for student affairs, and Casey Dowty, of South Fulton, who received the second award.
UTM Softball Players Visit Sharon School

UTM Skyhawk Softball players and Coach Donley Canary recently visited Mrs. Danielle VanCleave's 2nd grade class at Sharon School. Coach Canary and the players talked with the students about setting goals and achieving them. They discussed how hard work and dedication to your academics, as well as training for sports, allows you to obtain the goals you set for yourself. UTM Skyhawk Softball provided each student with a souvenir at the end of their visit.

UT Martin Selmer grads honored at luncheon

Staff Photos by Christen Coulon

Last Friday recent graduates from the UT Martin Selmer Campus were honored at the McNairy County Higher Education Committee Quarterly meeting. Only six students were able to attend the luncheon, however, more than 24 students in total graduated from the Selmer Campus of UT Martin this year. Pictured are recent UT Martin Selmer graduates Kelsey Franks, Rhonda Michael, Emily Haendel, Vivian Kelly, Karen Boswell, and Drew Wheeler.
LOCAL STUDENT RECEIVES PAUL AND MARTHA MEEK LEADERSHIP AWARD DURING UT MARTIN SPRING COMMENCEMENT - Casey Dowty, left, of Fulton, received one of two Paul and Martha Meek Leadership Awards during the University of Tennessee at Martin's spring commencement exercises May 7. She is pictured with (l-r) Dr. Margaret Toston, vice chancellor for student affairs, and Sean O'Brien, of Martin, who received the second award. (Photo submitted)

Dowty recipient of Meek Leadership Award

Casey Dowty, of Fulton, received one of two Paul and Martha Meek Leadership Awards during the University of Tennessee at Martin's spring commencement exercises May 7.

Dr. Paul Meek served the UT Martin campus as executive officer, dean, UT vice president or chancellor from 1934 to 1967. This award is given to two graduating seniors each semester who have demonstrated outstanding leadership qualities during their time at UT Martin, and was originally established and funded by the three Meek children to honor their parents. Dowty served her fellow students as a supplemental instructor for sociology courses and a Peer Enabling Program leader to guide incoming freshmen through the college transition.

Academically, she is a member of the Phi Kappa Phi National Honor Society and the Alpha Kappa Delta International Sociology Honor Society. She received a Bachelor of Science in sociology during May 7 commencement exercises and plans to pursue a Master of Arts degree in education at Belmont University.

UTM official speaks to Rotary

The Halls-Gates Rotary Club welcomed Ms. Yalanda Parr, Program Research Specialist for the University of Tennessee at Martin Ripley Center, as its Monday speaker. Ms. Parr has been with the center since 2012 and detailed the benefits of attending UTM Ripley for both traditional and nontraditional students. UTM Ripley is graduating 35 students with four-year degrees this year and hopes to grow even more this year with a new director, Dr. Simphronia Taylor. Courses available through the center are viewable online at www.utm.edu/departments/ripley/. Club President Elliott Martin also presented Ms. Parr with a scholarship for a student at UTM Ripley.
LOCAL LEADER — Casey Dowty (left) of Fulton received one of two Paul and Martha Meek Leadership Awards during the University of Tennessee at Martin's spring commencement exercises Saturday.

She was joined by Dr. Margaret Toston, vice chancellor for student affairs, and Sean O'Brien of Martin, who received the second award.

Fulton graduate earns honor

Casey Dowty of Fulton received one of two Paul and Martha Meek Leadership Awards during the University of Tennessee at Martin's spring commencement exercises Saturday.

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The award is given to two graduating seniors each semester who have demonstrated outstanding leadership qualities during their time at UT Martin. It was originally established and funded by the three Meek children to honor their parents.

Ms. Dowty was active on campus through the sociology and Rotaract clubs and organized a combined canned food drive to donate nonperishable goods to WeCare Ministries, Santa's Helpers and the Carl Perkins Center.

She was also involved in the annual UT Martin Relay For Life and volunteer events at Red Fern Animal Shelter and Greenbrier Assisted Living facility.

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Academically, Ms. Dowty is a member of the Phi Kappa Phi National Honor Society and the Alpha Kappa Delta International Sociology Honor Society.

She received a bachelor of science degree in sociology during Saturday's commencement exercises and plans to pursue a master of arts degree in education at Belmont University in Nashville, a spokesman said.
Special moments mark UT Martin commencement

There were many special moments during commencement exercises held Saturday at the University of Tennessee at Martin as around 825 students—the largest graduating class in university history—received their degrees and were welcomed into the family of UT Martin alumni around the world.

Dr. Bob Smith, UT Martin interim chancellor, first welcomed the graduates and reminded them to thank their families for the sacrifices made over the years to bring them all to their college graduation.

Smith also recognized veterans and servicemen and women in the audience and asked them to remain standing while he introduced their newest member, 2nd Lt. Kelly James of Brooksville, Md., who was commissioned into the U.S. Army immediately before graduation. James received a bachelor of science degree in health and human performance during the ceremony.

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"It definitely affected my studies and my GPA... but I tried to stay focused," said Christian McAlister, Mark's son. "I put my faith in the Lord a lot... Just put your faith in the Lord and He'll get you through it."

After six months without contact, the McAlister family finally heard from Mark in March—the first indication that he was still alive. Mark was released by the rebels April 29 and made his way home to Greenfield, arriving Thursday just in time to see Christian cross UT Martin's commencement stage Saturday.

"It makes this (today) so much better," Christian said. "I know this was his number one goal and why he continued to strive to get me through college. That was his main goal, to just make sure that I grew up having more than what he had, education included."

Smith said, "I think we would agree that even in the idyllic atmosphere of this campus, we live in dangerous times and we can be complacent about events that swirl around us because they seem so distant. We often take our freedom and the opportunities we have for granted."

The audience erupted in thunderous applause when he added, "Mr. McAlister, welcome home."

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"You're graduating from one of America's finest universities, which has prepared you for life," he said.

Blaylock used his remarks to impart a few words of wisdom he learned from a "friend" he met during his own days at UT Martin—author and philosopher Henry David Thoreau.

"Know thyself," he said. "It's very important that you establish what your values and your boundaries are, and live your life within those. Don't let anyone else influence you to go beyond your values and your boundaries."

"Simplify your life... Don't be discouraged in bad times, but use it as an opportunity to grow," he continued.

As both a trauma doctor and a trial lawyer, Blaylock said he has seen it all the mistakes people can make with their lives and urged graduates not to make those same irreparable mistakes.

"Live deep. Suck the marrow out of life every day," he said. "Make the best of every day because tomorrow is not promised. Dream high; expand your horizons, and don't be afraid to exceed your comfort zone. Pursue every opportunity to improve your life; never stop learning; never stop reading."

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Dr. David Millhorn, UT executive vice president, vice president for research and UT Research Foundation president, represented UT President Joe DiPietro and joined Smith to confer degrees.
EXTRA SPECIAL — Christian McAlister (right) of Greenfield received a bachelor of science degree in criminal justice during commencement exercises Saturday at the University of Tennessee at Martin. McAlister is the son of Mark McAlister, a United Nations contractor who spent the past six months detained in Yemen and was released just in time to attend commencement.

ENCOURAGING WORDS — Dr. Paul Blaylock, a member of the University of Tennessee at Martin class of 1968, encouraged UT Martin graduates to “know themselves” and follow their ambitions when he spoke during commencement exercises Saturday in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center on campus. He has spent the past 40 years serving as both a trauma doctor and a trial lawyer. About 825 students graduated during Saturday’s commencement program, which featured several special moments and words of encouragement.

STUDENT INDUCTED — Tori Seng of Union City was inducted into the Phi Kappa Phi National Honor Society recently at the University of Tennessee at Martin. Membership is based on academic achievements and exemplary character. Phi Kappa Phi is an internationally respected society that recognizes and promotes academic excellence in all fields of higher education.

At the college level

Several local students have been awarded scholarships to attend the University of Tennessee at Martin for the 2016-17 academic year. Recipients of Excellence Scholarships include James K. Crawford, son of Jimmy and Syrinia Crawford of South Fulton; Cruz Kepner, son of Scott and Gena Kepner of Union City; and Anna Logan, daughter of Roy and Melissa Logan of Troy.

Achieve Scholarship recipients include Aaron Dakota Preciado of Union City, son of Mickey Preciado and Reyes Preciado; and Lauren Maddison Shaw of Union City, daughter of Shane Shaw and Meleana Beverly.

Erin Chandler of Kenton, daughter of Rhonda Chandler and Jeff Chandler, is recipient of the Advance Scholarship.

All of them will be freshmen.
ACT prep course set for May 21 at UTM

High school students planning to take the ACT exam are encouraged to participate in a one-day workshop offered on the University of Tennessee at Martin main campus.

The workshop is set for 8 a.m. to noon May 21.

Students will learn to improve performance in all exam areas and boost previous scores. Ron Ramage, adjunct instructor and a teacher at Obion County Central High School, will instruct the course.

The registration fee is $30 per student and seats are filled on a first come, first served basis.

For more information or to register, contact the UT Martin Office of Extended Campus and Online Studies at (731) 881-7082.

Somerville Mayor Suggests Postponing 2nd Reading on Sign Ordinance, Unhappy with New Pennant Signs in Town

Full Board Says No on Postponement on Signs

Higher Education Update

The board heard an amendment to the agreement between UT Martin and Somerville. It is adding back a paragraph taken out that states if the state legislature does not fund the university, this agreement is terminated with no penalty to the university and UT is required to request this state funding annually. UT Interim Chancellor Robert Smith was present in the audience.

City administrator Bob Turner stated that locally we have raised about $875,000 for the university. We petitioned the state to match this amount and they put it in the budget this year, giving us $1.75 million. We also got the governor to back us on the TVA energy grant at $250,000 and we should know about this in July.

Turner said also Senator Dolores Gresham got in her budget the annual appropriation of $250,000 a year for UT’s operating expense. This will be considered at the board meeting.
SHELBI KAE CRESS, of Halls, graduated with *cum laude* honors from the University of Tennessee at Martin May 7th with a bachelor’s degree in education. Her major is Integrated Studies K-6. She had a 3.4 grade point average. The daughter of Scott and Anita Michaels, she is married to Shelby Allen Cress. After the ceremony, a graduation party was hosted by her mother, grandmother, Sandra Ward, aunt, Lana Nichols, and a friend, Sara Smith, for friends and family. She plans to take a trip to Gulf Shores with three friends that are also UT Martin graduates to celebrate graduation.

YALANDA PARR, left, program research specialist for the UT Martin Ripley Center, was the guest speaker for the Monday meeting of the Halls-Gates Rotary Club. Parr has been with the center since 2012 and detailed the benefits of attending UT Martin Ripley for both traditional and non-traditional students. UT Martin is graduating 35 students with four-year degrees this year and hopes to grow even more this year with a new director Dr. Simphronia Taylor. Courses available thru the center are viewable online at www.utm.edu/departments/ripley/.

Elliott Martin, right, club president, presented her with a scholarship for a student at UT Martin Ripley.
PROVEN CHAMPIONS — The UT Martin Equestrian Team has participated in the NCEA postseason tournament in nine out of 10 seasons under Corvin. The Skyhawks have annually been ranked in the NCEA top-10 national polls and have produced seven All-Americans in their storied history.

UTM declares equestrian team will continue

In conjunction with a recent announcement from the Committee on Women's Athletics (CWA) that the sport of equestrian will continue on the NCAA's Emerging Sports list, the University of Tennessee at Martin Athletics Department has announced that equestrian will remain as a varsity sport effective immediately.

Skyhawk interim athletics director Kevin McMillan informed head coach Meghan Corvin and the current equestrian team of the decision this week. It had previously been announced in November 2014 that the UT Martin equestrian program would be discontinued following the conclusion of the 2015-16 season.

“We are excited for our equestrian program, our student-athletes, our athletics department and our university,” McMillan said. “There has been support from so many stakeholders and the future for equestrian under Coach Corvin looks bright. We have a tremendous group of young student-athletes and they are such an asset to our university and our community. It was an honor and a pleasure to bring them good news.”

Last month, members of the CWA confirmed its support for equestrian with a vote of approval due to new organizational efforts, membership feedback and potential growth. Over the past 12 months, support for the sport of equestrian has surged with renewed enthusiasm from both NCAA membership as well as stakeholders in the equine industry. The National Collegiate Equestrian Association (NCEA), in collaboration with the NCAA, oversees the sport of equestrian while under the Emerging Sports umbrella.

“Thank you to all of those who have supported the program through this transition,” said Corvin, who has served as UT Martin's head coach since the program was conceived in 2005. “Moving forward, we will continue to rely heavily on private support and we would not have such positive news today without such backing. Under this new model, our program can be self-sustaining. I am excited for the opportunity to continue to provide these exceptional young ladies a first-class Division-I experience at UT Martin.”

UT Martin has participated in the NCEA postseason tournament in nine out of 10 seasons under Corvin. The Skyhawks have annually been ranked in the NCEA top-10 national polls and have produced seven All-Americans in their storied history.
LOCAL STUDENT RECEIVES AWARD – Sean O'Brien (right), of Martin, received one of two Paul and Martha Meek Leadership Awards during the University of Tennessee at Martin's spring commencement exercises May 7. He is pictured with Dr. Margaret Toston (center), vice chancellor for student affairs, and Casey Dowty, of South Fulton, who received the second award.

O'Brien receives Paul Meek Leadership Award

Sean O'Brien of Martin received one of two Paul and Martha Meek Leadership Awards during the University of Tennessee at Martin's spring commencement exercises May 7.

Dr. Paul Meek served the UT Martin campus as executive officer, dean, UT vice president or chancellor from 1934 to 1967. This award is given to two graduating seniors each semester who have demonstrated outstanding leadership qualities during their time at UT Martin, and was originally established and funded by the three Meek children to honor their parents.

O'Brien, originally from Voorhees, N.J., was active on campus through the Sigma Chi Fraternity, University Scholars Organization, Student Government Association and various community service projects. Through these organizations, he was involved in raising more than $10,000 for The Huntsman Cancer Research Institute and $25,000 for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, and collecting more than 1,500 canned food items for WeCare Ministries in Martin.
UT Martin to host Bettie Graham Special Education Seminar June 7

Special to the State Gazette

MARTIN, Tenn. – The University of Tennessee at Martin College of Education, Health and Behavioral Sciences will host the 2016 Bettie Graham Special Education Seminar from 8:15 a.m. to noon, June 7, in room 230 of the Boling University Center. The seminar will feature “make it and take it” workshops on the TouchMath program and low-tech assistive technology. TouchMath is a multisensory mathematics program to make concepts appealing and accessible for students who struggle to understand grade-level content.

Assistive technology is any piece of equipment used to increase, maintain or improve the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities in all aspects of life. Seminar participants will use the Boardmaker software to create low-tech assistive technology items for use in the classroom.

Area teachers and interested students are welcome to attend, although space is limited to the first 50 people. Three hours of professional development will be offered for participation.

Dr. Clinton Smith, UT Martin assistant professor of special education, and Dr. Beth Stratton, instructor of special education, will direct the seminar.

The Bettie Graham Seminar Series on Diagnosis and Early Intervention of Learning Difficulties is made possible by Newell and Bettie Graham. The Graham family owns and operates the Coca-Cola Bottling Company in Union City, and Bettie dedicated years of service to northwest Tennessee and the University of Tennessee at Martin.

For more information, contact Smith at 731-881-7167 or by email at csmil279@atm.edu. To register, visit 2016bettiegrahamselectures.eventbrite.com.

http://spartalive.com/

Sparta residents receive degrees from UT Martin

by KIM SWINDELL WOOD | May 13, 2016 5:19 AM

Last Updated: May 13, 2016 at 5:37 AM

Two White County residents were among students who received degrees from the University of Tennessee at Martin during the recent spring commencement held in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center on the UT Martin campus.

The students receiving undergraduate degrees were Ashtyn N. Farris and Alexandra Tatjana Stover.
**Holt honors UT Martin Aero Design East team**

State Rep. Andy Holt, R-Dresden, visited the University of Tennessee at Martin on May 5 to present members of the UT Martin SAE Aero Design East team with a proclamation honoring their third-place finish at the international competition in March. The students won third place overall behind Georgia Tech and a national team from Poland. The team also won second place in the flight category.

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**UT Martin decides to keep equestrian as varsity sport**

Last year UT Martin announced its plan to drop the sport of women's equestrian in the fall of 2016. However over the past year, support for the sport has grown both locally and nationally. As a result, the UT Martin athletics department announced earlier this month that equestrian will remain as a varsity sport.

"It feels really nice to know that they have our back and that they want us around and that they worked really hard to keep us here," junior Cora Rogalski said.

Since the program started in 2005, the team has made an appearance in nine of the past 10 national championships in addition to having seven All-Americans.

"I mean it was difficult to hear you know," Rogalski said about the moment she heard the equestrian program would end. "That was not something that I think anyone expected."

Even though the team did have some members transfer, they think the setback could be good for the sport.

"It basically took something bad to happen to get back on track and move the sport forward not just here at UT Martin but across the country," head coach Meghan Corvin said.

"In a way you could really definitely look at this as a positive thing because the community came together and proved you know how strong we are and I think we'll be better as a sport for this," Rogalski said.

The team is now looking at a model to become self-sufficient through private money and fundraising so they don't have to rely on the university to fund their sport.

"Its hard work is what it comes down to," Rogalski said. "A lot of the girls, we put a lot of effort into this team, there is a lot of fundraising, a lot of help from the community and that's what keeps us all going."
County Students Take Nightingale Pledge at UT-M

MARTIN (May 11, 2016) — (L to R) Melissa Dill, of Huntingdon; Allie Roney, of Yuma; and Hope Dretzka, of Buena Vista, took the Florence Nightingale Pledge during a pinning ceremony May 6 at the University of Tennessee at Martin. The pledge is taken by students entering the nursing profession and holds each candidate to a high standard of professional care in the health-care industry. The students received their Bachelor of Science in Nursing degrees during the university’s commencement exercises May 7.

Local Seniors Commit To UT-M Music Program

MARTIN (May 13, 2016) — Annias Haney, (second from left) of Paris, and Logan Priestley, (far right) of McKenzie, recently committed to attend the University of Tennessee at Martin and perform with the Department of Music. Both students are seniors at McKenzie High School. Haney will play the saxophone, and Priestley will play the euphonium in university ensembles. Students who choose to major in music at UT Martin must complete a series of competitive auditions before final selections are made. The other students pictured are (from left) Rachel Edwards, of Medina; Lexi McGranahan, of Waverly; and Taylor Pannell, of Humboldt. For more information on the UT Martin music program, contact Dr. Julie Hill, professor and department chair, at 731-881-7418 or by email at jhill@utm.edu.
COUNTIANS RECEIVED DEGREES FROM UT MARTIN

MARTIN — Several Carroll County residents were among students who received degrees from the University of Tennessee at Martin during the recent spring commencement held in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center on the UT Martin campus.

The students receiving undergraduate degrees were:

- Bruceton - David Kyle Birdwell, Aimee Kay Hollingsworth
- Huntingdon - Juan Carlos Adayturriaga, Chelsie D. Bradley, Jess Allen Dill, Melissa Darlene Dill, Kerianne Kay Drinkard, Heath Walker McClure, Allison Leann McClure, Allie Nicole Roney
- McLeomoreseville - Jana C. Vestal

The student receiving a graduate degree was:
- Trezevant - Lori Greene McClain
Local seniors commit to UTM Music program

LOCAL SENIORS COMMIT TO UT MARTIN DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC – Rachel Edwards (left), of Medina, and Taylor Pannell (second from right), of Humboldt, recently committed to attend the University of Tennessee at Martin and perform with the Department of Music. Edwards is a senior at South Gibson County High School and will play the clarinet in university ensembles. Pannell is a senior at Gibson County High School and will play the bassoon. Students who choose to major in music at UT Martin must complete a series of competitive auditions before final selections are made. Other students pictured are (continuing from left) Anniias Haney, of Paris; Lexi McGranahan, of Waverly; and Logan Priestly, of McKenzie. For more information on the UT Martin music program, contact Dr. Julie Hill, professor and department chair, at 731-881-7418 or by email at jhill@utm.edu.

Milan resident receives TVA Award from UT Martin

MILAN RESIDENT RECEIVES TVA AWARD FROM UT MARTIN – Ryan Stevenson (center, right), of Milan, was voted by his classmates to receive the Kelly W. Murray Excellence in Portfolio Management Award for the spring semester. The award, named for the late son of Dr. Sandra and William Murray, recognizes outstanding effort and dedication while managing the UT Martin Tennessee Valley Authority stock portfolio in conjunction with the TVA Investment Challenge. The challenge is a partnership between the TVA and 25 universities in its service territory to provide real-world experience in portfolio management. Stevenson is a senior finance major at the University of Tennessee at Martin. He is pictured with (from left) Dr. Timothy Perry, UT Martin assistant professor of finance; Micayla Gray, the second award recipient; and William Murray, father of the late Kelly Murray.
Local students receive degrees from UT Martin

MARTIN, Tenn. – Several Gibson County residents were among students who received degrees from the University of Tennessee at Martin during the recent spring commencement held in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center on the UT Martin campus.

The students receiving undergraduate degrees were:
- Bradford - Kristen Lynne Allen, Mark Connell Jr., Andrew Lynn Rutherford, Katie Elaine Ulseth, Andrew Crockett Walter, Lisa Marie Warren;
- Dyer - Jennifer Nicole O’Brien, Cory Edward Oliver, Michael Dale Record;
- Humboldt - Carol Adkison, Katie Suzanne Cox, Ciara Nicole Donald, Mercedes C. Floyd, Essence Evonne Harris, Austin Stewart Koffman, Isabella Gabrielle Linney, Gauri Kamlesh Patel, Maya Mozella Thornton, Kelley M. Whitehead;
- Medina - Summer Annette Bradley, Ashlyn Taylor Hardee, Hunter E. Harris, Cory Thomas Johnson, Anna Beth Santaniello, Anna Elizabeth Warren, Carl C. Yarbro;
- Milan - Kendall Paige Daniels, Octavius Fields, Morgan C. Fitzgerald, Zachary Tyler Hardin, Brittany P. Hatfield, Lauren N. Hughes, Matthew Henry Lauderdale, Darian Paige Matheny, Ashley L. Wall, Benjamin Thomas Webb, Sara Jane White, Tara Kaitlyn White, Haley Nicole Wray;
- Rutherford - Miranda Kaitlyn Barron, James L. Fife Jr., Danica C. Wright;
- Yorkville - Chad L. Zarcor.

The students receiving graduate degrees were:
- Bradford - Ashley L. Horne;
- Humboldt - Jason Wayne Gregory;
- Milan - Kathryn Leigh Bowman;
- Trenton - Carmen R. Beshires, Haleigh Cole Milam.

UTM GRADUATE ANNA SANTANIELLO

UT MARTIN REPRESENTATIVE

Miyoshi Brooks (left) recognized a number of students who plan to attend the school. Pictured is Sydney Ing.
Blanchard receives grant to study local river basins

The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation has awarded Dr. Tom Blanchard, professor of biology at the University of Tennessee at Martin, a three-year research grant through the West Tennessee River Basin Authority. The basin authority is responsible for preserving the natural flow and function of the Hatchie, Obion and Forked Deer river basins through environmentally sensitive stream maintenance. The basin authority's territory covers 20 counties, including Weakley County, along and between the Mississippi and Tennessee Rivers.

Blanchard, who also serves as director of the Reelfoot Lake Environmental Field Station, plans to study how the restoration of previously channelized streams in West Tennessee affects the physical characteristics of the associated ecosystems. He and his research team will study the biodiversity of affected fish communities by monitoring the types and numbers of fish living in selected streams.

"This is an important project to understand the potential for restoring channelized streams in the region, a productive continuation of the collaboration between Dr. Blanchard and Dr. Fore, and great chance for students to be involved hands-on in a meaningful research project," said Dr. Jennifer Greenwood, professor and interim chair, UT Martin Department of Biological Sciences.

The $42,000 grant will fund the study through April 2019. Blanchard is working with Dr. Jeffrey Fore, from the Tennessee chapter of The Nature Conservancy, as co-principal investigator.

"I am delighted this grant has been funded and that we’ll be partnering with the Tennessee chapter of The Nature Conservancy. Dr. Blanchard’s work with our Reelfoot facility has been exemplary, and this study is a natural extension of his research interests," said Dr. Jerald Ogg, UT Martin vice chancellor for academic affairs. "It’s also an example of the important role UT Martin plays in this region, and I look forward to the many ways we’ll be able to use this ‘real world’ opportunity to enrich our students’ educations.”

For more information on the grant, contact the UT Martin Office of Research, Grants and Contracts at 731-881-7016.

LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE – Several representatives from the University of Tennessee at Martin attended the 2016 African American Leadership Conference, hosted April 19 by the WestStar Leadership Program. Pictured are (from left) John Abel, assistant vice chancellor for student affairs; Diedra Walker, Office of Undergraduate Admissions; Dr. Ruby Black, Department of Nursing; Deborah Williams Boyd, Office of Business Affairs; Dr. Annie Jones, Office of Minority Affairs; and Virginia Grimes, WestStar coordinator.
JOHNSON INDUCTED INTO ORDER OF ENGINEERS – Josh Johnson of Martin participated in the Order of the Engineer ceremony at the University of Tennessee at Martin before commencement exercises May 7. The Order of the Engineer ceremony is a way for graduating engineering students to show pride in their new profession and unity with other engineers. Participating students recite a pledge to uphold honor, workmanship and ethics in the engineering field. He is pictured with Dr. Robert LeMaster (left), professor and chair, Department of Engineering; and Dr. Richard Helgeson, professor and dean, College of Engineering and Natural Sciences.

ROBERTS INDUCTED INTO ORDER OF ENGINEERS – Ty Roberts of Sharon participated in the Order of the Engineer ceremony at the University of Tennessee at Martin before commencement exercises May 7. The Order of the Engineer ceremony is a way for graduating engineering students to show pride in their new profession and unity with other engineers. Participating students recite a pledge to uphold honor, workmanship and ethics in the engineering field. He is pictured with Dr. Robert LeMaster (left), professor and chair, Department of Engineering; and Dr. Richard Helgeson, professor and dean, College of Engineering and Natural Sciences.
International students receive degrees from UTM

Several international residents were among students who received degrees from the University of Tennessee at Martin during the recent spring commencement held in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center on the UT Martin campus.

The students receiving undergraduate degrees were:

- Adelaide, Australia - Chelsea Paige Forrest Roberts;
- Beijing, China - Si Chen, Yuting Chen, Hanjing Jia, Xuejing Sun;
- Zhengzhou, China - Dongguang Li;
- Matamoros, Mexico - Rocío Mejorado;
- Lagos, Nigeria - Omolapo Elizabeth Olofin susa;
- Abha, Saudi Arabia - Abdullah Alqahtani;
- Jubail, Saudi Arabia - Abdulmajed Alhaji;
- Saihat, Saudi Arabia - Ali Maskeen;
- Bangkok, Thailand - Gigi Sariddichainanta.

The student receiving a graduate degree was:
- Foshan Guan G Dong, China - Xiaoxin Huo.
BELL PRESENTED AWARD — Tulip Grove Chapter past president Aline Roberts (middle) recently presented the chapter ROTC award to Cadet Daniel C. Bell from Olaton, Ky. at the University of Tennessee-Martin office. Bell was selected for his outstanding qualities of good academic standing and patriotism, moral character, dependability and adherence to military discipline and leadership. Also on hand for the presentation was Lowell E. Howard, Jr., Lt. Colonel, U.S. Army, Professor of Military Science UT-Martin.

AWARD PRESENTED — James Buckley Chapter regent Aline Roberts (middle) recently presented the chapter ROTC award to Cadet Mercee Eubank (left) from Greenfield at the Department of Military Science and Leadership at the University of Tennessee-Martin office. Eubank was selected for her outstanding qualities of loyalty, patriotism, dependability, good character and adherence to military discipline and leadership. Also on hand for the presentation was Lowell E. Howard, Jr., Lt. Colonel, U.S. Army, Professor of Military Science UT-Martin.
Local Residents Receive Degrees From UT Martin

Several Weakley County residents were among students who received degrees from the University of Tennessee at Martin during the recent spring commencement held in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center on the UT Martin campus.

The students receiving undergraduate degrees were:


Greenfield – Karsen Nicole Cook, Callie A. Croom, Heath Alan Crouse, Dylann Jobe Davidson, Benjamin Cody Garner, Lauren Paige Grebe, Taylor Nicole Hatcher, Micheal Chad Maggard, Christian L. McAlister, Adam Paul Mitchell, Payton Moore Page, Kelly Danielle Pence, Andrea Shannon Smith, Stephanie Nicole Taylor;


Palmersville – Christopher Michael Davis;


The students receiving graduate degrees were:

Dresden - Dana Diane Stanford;

Martin – Sheelah Sharee Brewer, Joshua David Pullen.

Dresden Park Pavilion Murals Taking Shape

Work on murals being painted on the walls of the pavilion in Dresden City Park is well under way. After only four days, members of UT Martin’s League of Striving Artists were already applying the first layer of color. Those associated with the League seen painting the murals are (l to r): UT Martin students - Rachel Melton; Michelle Flesser; and Caitlynn Dowland; and Associate Professor of Art Jason Stout, who serves as faculty advisor.
University of Tennessee at Martin

McKenzie Virginia Perry of Granville graduated with an undergraduate degree.

Local residents receive degrees from UT Martin

Several Dyer County residents were among students who received degrees from the University of Tennessee at Martin during the recent spring commencement held in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center on the UT Martin campus.

The students receiving undergraduate degrees were:
- Miston - Angela Dawn Upchurch
- Newbern - Amber N. Alsup, Ethan T. Clark, Dylan S. Coleman, Aerica Dodds, Kody J. King, Lillian Belle Murray, Tyler J. Orr
- Trimble - Brittany Michelle Shaver

The student receiving a graduate degree was:
- Newbern - Karen Hendrix Ray

KING GRADUATES FROM UT MARTIN:

Kody King (center, right), of Newbern, graduated May 7 from the University of Tennessee at Martin with a Bachelor of Science degree in agriculture. He was one of approximately 825 graduates to receive degrees during the largest graduation ceremony in university history. Dr. Paul Blaylock, class of 1968, delivered the commencement address. King is pictured with friends and family members (from left) Gary Permenter, Kim Permenter and Ted Johnson.
Area residents among UTM grads

Several Fulton County residents were among students who received degrees from the University of Tennessee at Martin during the recent spring commencement held in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center on the UT Martin campus.

The students receiving undergraduate degrees were: Misti R. Emmons, of Hickman; and Jared Craven Lynch, Youlanda Yvette Allen, Casey Dawn Dowty, Gary C. Foster, Kassie Lynn Hooks, all of Fulton, and Kacie D. Daugherty, Andrea Kelly Glover, Macy T. Maxwell, Kristen Nichole Prince, and Ali R. Taylor, all of South Fulton.

The student receiving a graduate degree was David Forrest Whitesell, of Fulton.

OBION COUNTY STUDENTS TAKE FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE PLEDGE AT UT MARTIN CEREMONY – Kristen Prince, left, of South Fulton, and Lacy Eaves, right, of Troy, Tenn., took the Florence Nightingale Pledge during a pinning ceremony May 6 at the University of Tennessee at Martin. The pledge is taken by students entering the nursing profession and holds each candidate to a high standard of professional care in the health-care industry. The students received their Bachelor of Science in Nursing degrees during the university’s commencement exercises May 7. (Photo submitted)

Pair finishes UTM program

Ashlyn Barnes (center, left, top photo), of Halls, and Kirby Cherry (center, left, bottom photo), of Halls, and participated in a ceremony May 7 to honor their completion of the veterinary health technology program at the University of Tennessee at Martin. Participating students were “pinned” to indicate they are qualified to enter the professional world of veterinary health technology. UT Martin is one of fewer than 30 institutions nationally offering four-year academic preparation in this area. The students are pictured with program faculty, from left, Erica Carroll, Renee Stubblefield and Amanda Waldon.
UTM names graduates

Several Lauderdale County residents were among students who received degrees from the University of Tennessee at Martin during the spring commencement in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center on the UT Martin campus.

The students receiving undergraduate degrees were included Mary Gail Moore of Gates; Kelly A. Blackwood, William T. Butner, Shelbi Kae Cress, Jamye Spence Freeman, Casey Racquel Moses, and Hailey Elizabeth Watts of Halls; and Rachel Elizabeth Anderson-Ward, Kenneth Vernard Broadnax, Blake Hunter Conrad, Camille Renee Edwards, Shundetria Monett Haley, Ebonie Lekesha Harrell, Glenda Yvette Harris, Meagan Jordan Keeley, Wendi R. Lucas, Constance Yvette Mason, Marquita Crenae Nelson, Summer Dianne Scott, Kala Elizabeth Smith, Erica S. Snipes, Alyssa Nicole Sparks, Patricia Temple, and Jasmine Sherrell Winbush of Riplev.

Blackwood takes pledge at UTM

Kelly Blackwood of Halls took the Florence Nightingale Pledge during a pinning ceremony May 6 at the University of Tennessee at Martin. The pledge is taken by students entering the nursing profession and holds each candidate to a high standard of professional care in the health-care industry. Blackwood received her Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree during the university's commencement exercises May 7.

At the college level

Several Obion County residents were among students who received degrees from the University of Tennessee at Martin during the recent spring commencement, held in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center on campus.

Among those who were awarded undergraduate degrees were:
- Hornbeak — Christopher Allen Douglas, William Marvin Hayes and Jacob Richard Riojas.
- Obion — Lindsey Taylor Ray and Chelsea Deann Southerland.
- Troy — Tyler J. Barber, Taylor K. Boulton, Lacy Renea Eaves, Thomas Whitmire Kendall and Nathan Alexander Ward.

The students who received graduate degrees at commencement included:
- Rives — Brittany N. Twilbeck.
- Union City — Jennifer Doring Bruff.
UTM professor receives research grant for study

The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation has awarded Dr. Tom Blanchard, professor of biology at the University of Tennessee at Martin, a three-year research grant through the West Tennessee River Basin Authority.

The basin authority is responsible for preserving the natural flow and function of the Hatchie, Obion and Forked Deer river basins through environmentally sensitive stream maintenance. The basin authority's territory covers 20 counties along and between the Mississippi and Tennessee rivers.

Blanchard, who also serves as director of the Reelfoot Lake Environmental Field Station, plans to study how the restoration of previously channelized streams in West Tennessee affects the physical characteristics of the associated ecosystems. He and his research team will study the biodiversity of affected fish communities by monitoring the types and numbers of fish living in selected streams.

"This is an important project to understand the potential for restoring channelized streams in the region, a productive continuation of the collaboration between Dr. Blanchard and Dr. Fore, and great chance for students to be involved hands-on in a meaningful research project," said Dr. Jennifer Greenwood, professor and interim chair of the UT Martin Department of Biological Sciences.

The $42,000 grant will fund the study through April 2019. Blanchard is working with Dr. Jeffrey Fore, from the Tennessee chapter of the Nature Conservancy, as co-principal investigator.

"I am delighted this grant has been funded and that we'll be partnering with the Tennessee chapter of the Nature Conservancy. Dr. Blanchard's work with our Reelfoot facility has been exemplary, and this study is a natural extension of his research interests," said Dr. Jerald Ogg, UT Martin vice chancellor for academic affairs. "It's also an example of the important role UT Martin plays in this region, and I look forward to the many ways we'll be able to use this 'real world' opportunity to enrich our students' educations."

For more information, contact the Office of Research, Grants and Contracts at (731) 881-7016.

Special education seminar set for June at UT Martin

The University of Tennessee at Martin College of Education, Health and Behavioral Sciences will host the 2016 Betty Graham Special Education Seminar from 8:15 a.m. to noon June 7 in room 230 of the Boling University Center.

The seminar will feature "make it and take it" workshops on the TouchMath program and low-tech assistive technology. TouchMath is a multisensory mathematics program to make concepts appealing and accessible for students who struggle to understand grade-level content.

Assistive technology is any piece of equipment used to increase, maintain or improve the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities in all aspects of life. Seminar participants will use the Boardmaker software to create low-tech assistive technology items for use in the classroom.

Area teachers and interested students are welcome to attend, although space is limited to the first 50 people.

Three hours of professional development will be offered for participation.

Dr. Clinton Smith, UT Martin assistant professor of special education, and Dr. Beth Stratton, instructor of special education, will direct the seminar.

The Bettie Graham Seminar Series on Diagnosis and Early Intervention of Learning Difficulties is made possible by Newell and Betty Graham of Union City.

The Graham family owns and operates the Coca-Cola Bottling Co. in Union City and Mrs. Graham dedicated years of service to northwest Tennessee and the University of Tennessee at Martin.

For more information, contact Smith at (731) 881-7167 or by email at csmit279@utm.edu.

To register, visit 2016bettiegamhspcialeducationseminar.eventbrite.com.
Humboldt, Medina residents receive degrees from UT Martin

Several Gibson County residents were among students who received degrees from the University of Tennessee at Martin during the recent spring commencement held in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center on the UT Martin campus.

Students receiving undergraduate degrees are:
- Humboldt - Carol Adkisson, Katie Suzanne Cox, Ciara Nicole Donald, Mercedes C. Floyd, Essence Evonne Harris, Austin Stewart Koffman, Isabella Gabrielle Linney, Gauri Kamlesh Patel, Maya Mozella Thornton, Kelley M. Whitehead;
- Medina - Summer Annette Bradley, Ashlyn Taylor Hardee, Hunter E. Harris, Cory Thomas Johnson, Anna Beth Santaniello, Anna Elizabeth Warren, Carl C. Yarbro;

Students receiving graduate degrees are:
- Humboldt - Jason Wayne Gregory

EDWARDS SELECTS UTM - Rachel Edwards of Medina, Tenn. recently committed to attend the University of Tennessee at Martin and perform with the Department of Music. Edwards is a senior at South Gibson County High School and will play the clarinet in university ensembles. Students who choose to major in music at UT Martin must complete a series of competitive auditions before final selections are made.

COX GRADUATES FROM UT MARTIN - Katie Cox of Humboldt, Tenn. (center) graduated May 7 from the University of Tennessee at Martin with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Health and Human Performance. She was one of approximately 825 graduates to receive degrees during the largest graduation ceremony in university history. Dr. Paul Blaylock, class of 1968, delivered the commencement address. Joining her are her parents (from left) Suzie Cox and Paul Cox, and good friend Tim Grapes.
Stout wins Best in Show at Art in the South exhibition

Jason Stout, an associate professor at the University of Tennessee at Martin, was recently awarded Best in Show at the Art of the South exhibition.

Art of the South exhibition will be at Fogelman Galleries of Contemporary Art at the University of Memphis, and at Gallery 121 at Belmont University in Nashville, from May 16 through June 17, with a simultaneous opening event Friday.

Jason Stout was born in Martin in 1977. He received his bachelor of fine arts in studio art from the University of Tennessee at Martin in 2001 and a master of fine arts in painting from the University of Texas at San Antonio in 2004.

Stout’s work visually deals with elements of formal and figurative abstraction, while exploring such themes as power, history, and identity, especially through the guise of southern culture. His work exists in several private and public collections, including the University of West Georgia, Jacksonville State University, and the University of Tennessee at Martin. During his career he has participated in several solo exhibitions and has been a part of several group exhibitions as well.

Stout has won several scholarships and individual awards for his work. He is currently an associate professor of art at the University of Tennessee at Martin and is represented by REM gallery in San Antonio, Texas. Stout was recently named TAEA Higher Education Art Educator of the Year for 2015-16.
Solar Sculpture Going Up — UT Martin engineering students are pictured working on a newly-installed solar sculpture between the Boling University Center and the Paul Meek Library. The solar sculpture is a collaboration between students and faculty in the departments of engineering and visual and theatre arts, and is yet another example of the hands-on, real-world work experience UT Martin students gain before graduation. The sculpture, when finished, will feature two large flowers and a tree-like centerpiece (shown).

Students take second place in regional competition

Students who choose to study engineering at the University of Tennessee at Martin learn far more than what can be gained inside a classroom. All senior engineering majors are required to participate in a senior project, and underclassmen often help along the way. These students not only gain hands-on experience in their field of choice, they also make a name for themselves at regional competitions.

The American Society of Civil Engineering hosted the annual conference for its Deep South Region on March 10-12 at McNeese State University in Lake Charles, La. UT Martin engineering students were there to compete in the steel bridge, concrete canoe and surveying competitions.

The steel bridge competition requires a team of students to design, fabricate and assemble a bridge based on certain specifications. This year, the bridges could be no more than 20 feet long, five feet tall and five feet wide, and needed to support a weight of 2,500 pounds.

The UT Martin steel bridge team came in second place overall and first in the display, efficiency and stiffness categories. For the display portion, the assembled bridge was judged based on balance, proportion, elegance and finish, and included a poster display with a variety of view sketches and construction guidelines.

Seniors Andrew Webster of Middleton, Luke Davenport of Jackson and Zack Malone of Goodspring served as team leaders. They were assisted by juniors Ben Davenport of Jackson, Jacob Buttrey of Fairview and Garrett Wright of Trezevant. These juniors will take over the See Students, Page 7
STUDENTS

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project next year toward the completion of their own senior project requirements.

The concrete canoe competition is unique because students must not only develop a custom concrete mix, design and build the canoe itself — they must also race it against other competitors. The UT Martin team placed third in the coded sprint race, men’s sprint race and men’s endurance races. Overall scores from each region will not be announced until the national finals competition is held in June.

While concrete canoe competition is not an official senior project, team captains Michael Reyes, a junior from Franklin, and Jacob Winters, a sophomore from Ripley, decided to participate anyway to gain early experience in the types of challenges they will face as seniors.

“The reason I wanted to do it was to be in charge of a project and call our own shots. We were heading it up and doing it ourselves instead of just tagging along,” said Winters. “We were exposed to a whole other side. The side that wasn’t quite as much fun was the paperwork, but now, hopefully, going into our senior projects in a few years, we’ll know better what to do.”

“Now that we have been exposed to leading a project like this, I think we’ll be significantly more prepared for it once we actually do our senior projects because we’ve seen it before, we understand what’s involved and how important the planning process actually is,” added Reyes.

Reyes and Winters had help from team members Charlie Brackeen, a sophomore from Humboldt; Samuel Reeves, a senior from Milan; Stephen Harris, a senior from Beech Bluff; Marne Helbing, a junior from Gilbert, Ariz.; Abby Masters, a senior from Huntington Beach, Calif.; and Wade Anderson, a sophomore from Bellevue. Reeves, Harris, Helbing and Masters served as team rowers and put UT Martin on the podium in three different races.

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Wesley Williams of Dyersburg, Ethan Clark of Newbern and Webster competed against 13 other universities and won first place in the level loop competition and first place overall for their conference.

Nothing can replace the experience students receive from real-world, hands-on experiences like the ASCE competitions, and UT Martin students are well-prepared to enter their chosen careers after graduation.

“This was the best year that UT Martin ASCE has ever had at the conference competition,” said Dr. Ray Witmer, associate professor of engineering.

The civil engineering students and faculty here at UT Martin are second to none,” said the steel bridge team via email interview. “We competed against much larger schools with much larger budgets. Even though we are one of the smallest schools in our conference, we still have more participation from our members than most other schools. Not all schools came to the competition with the faculty support with which we are blessed.”

The UT Martin Department of Engineering is housed within the College of Engineering and Natural Sciences, and concentrations are available in civil, mechanical and electrical engineering. For more information on the ASCE competition teams, contact Witmer at 731-881-7388 or by email at rwitmer@utm.edu.

University adds $137 million to county economy, study shows

By LINDA THURSTON

Press Editor

The University of Tennessee’s campus in Martin not only provides excellent educational opportunities for students around the region; it also has a major impact on the local economy.

Interim Chancellor Robert Smith made a presentation to the Weakley County Commission on Monday night about a recent study commissioned to measure this impact.

The study addressed the fiscal year 2014-15.

During that year, the study showed that UT Martin’s Weakley County students and visitors added $137 million in income to the county economy, approximately equal to 16.5 percent of the county’s total gross regional product.

UT Martin’s Weakley County payroll amounted to $63.6 million, much of which was spent in the county to purchase groceries and other household goods, the study showed.

The university spent another $50.1 million to support its day-to-day operations.

The net impact of payroll and expenses during the analysis year was approximately $64.6 million in added income.

Student spending also helps the county. Some out-of-region students moved here to attend UT Martin, and some local students might have gone elsewhere if not for the presence of the university. These relocators and retained students spent money on groceries, transportation, rent and other expenses at county businesses, thus adding approximately $1.3 million in additional income to the economy.

UTM also draws visitors to it activities. In 2014-15 a total of 91,837 visitors brought about $1 million by spending at hotels, restaurants, gas stations and other county businesses. UTM alumni who stayed in the Weakley County workforce added another $70 million to the economy during the study year.

The benefit to local taxpayers was examined by the study and it was found that while state and local taxpayers paid $41.2 million to support the operations of the university, the added tax revenue stemming from the students’ higher lifetime earnings and the increased output of businesses amounts to

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$109.4 million in benefits to taxpayers.

Parsing these figures shows that every dollar in costs returns $3.20 in benefits, for an average return on investment for taxpayers of 10 percent.

The study was conducted by Economic Modeling Specialists International based in Moscow, Idaho.

Dr. Smith also reported UTM’s support of the plan to provide fiber optic service to the county through the Western Kentucky/Tennessee Telecommunications Cooperative.

“We believe that utilities should not be owned in the private sector,” Smith said, because private businesses make service decisions based strictly on a profit basis.

LOCAL ATTENDS PREVIEW – Katie Covington (right) of Sharon visited the University of Tennessee at Martin on May 14 during Spring Preview Day. Interested students were able to tour the campus, meet with faculty and learn more about financial aid opportunities, campus housing, dining services, and academic and student affairs. Covington is pictured with her brother, DJ. Covington.

The McNairy County News
Thursday, May 19, 2016

Adamsville Resident Graduates as UT Martin University Scholar

Chloe Mullis (right), of Adamsville, graduated May 7 from the University of Tennessee at Martin as a University Scholar. The University Scholar’s distinction is the highest academic honor awarded at UT Martin and indicates that a student has completed a rigorous honors curriculum and a two-year thesis-type project. Mullis worked with Dr. Julie Floyd (left), associate professor of nursing, to create a project titled “Evaluating the Knowledge Level of Nutrition and Exercise among Fourth-Grade Students.”
Local Residents Receive Degrees From UT Martin

Several McNairy County residents were among students who received degrees from the University of Tennessee at Martin during the recent spring commencement held in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center on the UT Martin campus.

The students receiving undergraduate degrees were:
- Adamsville - Magen J. Fullwood, Sarah Marie Johnson, Tammy R. Moraga, Chloe Grace Mullis;
- Bethel Springs - Randal Hugh Graves;
- Boys - Mekka L. Luster;
- Milledgeville - Brian M. Azevedo;
- Ramer - Emily L. Haendel, Audrey Diane Reed

The student receiving a graduate degree was:
- Guys - Ralanda N. Lloyd.

The student taking the Florence Nightingale pledge at UT Martin ceremony

Chloe Mullis, of Adamsville, took the Florence Nightingale Pledge during a pinning ceremony May 6 at the University of Tennessee at Martin. The pledge is taken by students entering the nursing profession and holds each candidate to a high standard of professional care in the health-care industry. Mullis received her Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree during the university’s commencement exercises May 7.
Students Earn UTM Degrees

Lauderdale County students, who were awarded degrees May 7th during the spring commencement ceremony for the University of Tennessee at Martin, included, Gates, Mary Gaile Moore; Halls, Kelly A. Blackwood, William T. Butner, Shelbi Kae Cress, Jamye Spence Freeman, Casey Racquel Moses, and Hailey Elizabeth Watts; and Ripley, Rachel Elizabeth Anderson-Ward, Kenneth Vernard Broadnax, Black Hunter Conrad, Camille Renee Edwards, Shundetria Monett Haley, Ebonie Lekesha Harrell, Glenda Yvette Harris, Meagan Jordan Keeley, Wendi R. Lucas, Constance Yvette Mason, Marquita Crenae Nelson, Summer Dianne Scott, Kala Elizabeth Smith, Erica S. Snipes, Alyssa Nicole Sparks, Patricia Temple, and Jasmine Sherrell Winbush.

Pinned

KELLY BLACKWOOD, of Halls, took the Florence Nightingale Pledge during a pinning ceremony May 6th at the University of Tennessee at Martin. The pledge is taken by students entering the nursing profession and holds each candidate to a high standard of professional care in the health-care industry. Blackwood received her bachelor of science in nursing degree during the university’s commencement exercises May 7th.
UTM Students In Competition

All senior engineering majors at the University of Tennessee at Martin are required to participate in a senior project, and underclassmen often help along the way. These students not only gain hands-on experience in their field of choice, they also make a name for themselves at regional competitions.

The American Society of Civil Engineering hosted the annual conference for its Deep South Region on March 10th through the 12th at McNeese State University in Lake Charles, La. UT Martin engineering students were there to compete in the steel bridge, concrete canoe and surveying competitions.

The steel bridge competition requires a team of students to design, fabricate and assemble a bridge based on certain specifications. This year, the bridges could be no more than 20 feet long, five feet tall and five feet wide, and needed to support a weight of 2,500 pounds.

The UT Martin steel bridge team came in second place overall and first in the display, efficiency and stiffness categories. For the display portion, the assembled bridge was judged based on balance, proportion, elegance and finish, and included a poster display with a variety of view sketches and construction guidelines.

Seniors, Andrew Webster, of Middleton; Luke Davenport, of Jackson; and Zack Malone, of Goodspring, served as team leaders. They were assisted by juniors, Ben Davenport, of Jackson; Jacob Buttry, of Fairview; and Garrett Wright, of Trezevant. These juniors will take over the project next year toward the completion of their own senior project requirements.

The concrete canoe competition is unique because students must not only develop a custom concrete mix, design and build the canoe itself — they must also race it against other competitors. The UT Martin team placed third in the co-ed sprint, race, men's sprint race and men's endurance races. Overall scores from each region will not be announced until the national finals competition is held in June.

While concrete canoe competition is not an official senior project, team captains, Michael Reyes, a junior from Franklin, and Jacob Winters, a sophomore from Ripley, decided to participate to gain early experience in the types of challenges they will face as seniors.

"The reason I wanted to do it was to be in charge of a project and call our own shots. We were heading it up and doing it ourselves instead of just tagging along," said Winters. "We were exposed to a whole other side. The side that wasn't quite as much fun was the paperwork, but now, hopefully, going into our senior projects in a few years, we'll know better what to do."

"Now that we have been exposed to leading a project like this, I think we'll be significantly more prepared for it once we actually do our senior projects because we've seen it before, we understand what's involved and how important the planning process actually is," added Reyes.

Reyes and Winters had help from team members, Charlie Brackeen, a sophomore from Humboldt; Samuel Reeves, a senior from Milan; Stephen Harris, a senior from Beech Bluff; Marne Helbing, a junior from Gilbert, Ariz.; Abby Masters, a senior from Huntington Beach, Calif.; and Wade Anderson, a sophomore from Bellevue. Reeves, Harris, Melbing and Masters served as team rowers and put UT Martin on the podium in three different races.

"A lot of engineers, especially civil engineers, know about the steel bridge and concrete canoe (competitions). That's kind of a big deal. So I think seeing that on our resumes will help them see we were active, especially since it wasn't a mandatory thing, it was a voluntary thing," said Winters.

UT Martin also sent three senior students to participate in the surveying competition, which required teams to measure distances and elevations using traditional surveying methods and equipment within a specified area and limited time.

Wesley Williams, of Dyersburg; Ethan Clark, of Newbern; and Webster competed against 13 other universities and won first place in the level loop competition and first place overall for their conference.

"This was the best year that UT Martin ASCE has ever had at the conference competition," said Dr. Ray Witmer, associate professor of engineering.
UTM seeks funds for new STEM building

TYLER WHETSTONE
TWHEITSTONE@JACKSONSUN.COM

University of Tennessee at Martin Interim Chancellor Robert Smith will hand over the reins to the next UTM chancellor in December, but between now and then he’s going to have plenty to do.

On Thursday, Smith and UT System President Joe DiPietro met with The Jackson Sun and discussed a variety of topics regarding UTM, including a proposed engineering and science building that Smith called “transformational.”

The proposed 120,000-square-foot building will cost approximately $60 million and will house most of the university’s STEM courses — chemistry, physics, engineering and mathematics.

Smith said the new building is sorely needed. The current science building was constructed in 1961. He said it is amazing what UTM professors have been able to accomplish with the materials they work with in the building.

The building will increase UTM’s engineering output by 25 percent, Smith said, and will create space for programs across campus.

The state normally requires an institution to put up a 25 percent match in funding ($15 million), but Sen. John Stevens, R-Huntingdon, led a resolution through the State Senate this spring which lowered UTM’s match to 10 percent (approximately $6.5 million).

The change in required funding has lifted a financial burden for UTM.

“It just seemed insurmountable to try and find $15 million in a match, and it’s more reasonable to be looking at $6.5 [million],” DiPietro said.

“Economically, this part of the state is struggling more than other places, so it is harder to find people

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UTM

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with means to be able to help you with matches philanthropically,” he said.

If all goes Smith’s way, the school will begin designing the building in 2017 and will complete it by 2021.

Throughout the construction process to the year 2035 the proposed engineering and science building would add $56 million in added income and bring 901 jobs to West Tennessee, according to an economic impact study performed by Economic Modeling Specialists Intl.

Lower tuition (out of state)

Smith said UTM’s board approved a 33 percent tuition reduction for out of state students in an effort to attract more students to Martin. According to Smith, students from 42 different states currently attend UTM.

“We think it’ll be helpful for Martin from the standpoint of maintaining and growing enrollment, which we need to do,” DiPietro said.

DiPietro said two-thirds of out of state students who attend school in Tennessee stay in Tennessee after graduating.

Guns on campus

DiPietro said the UT system is working to develop policies around the state’s new law, which allows full-time employees at public state universities to legally carry a gun on campus.

Under the law employees must have a permit and notify local police or campus security that he or she is carrying. Students are not allowed to carry handguns on campus.

“We are frustrated by and don’t like anything that brings more guns on campus,” DiPietro said.

Tennessee Promise

Smith said UTM has struggled when dealing with Tennessee Promise, the state’s program which gives two years of free community college or technical school to graduating high school seniors.

“We don’t have as much money as we need,” Smith said.

[Tennessee Promise] has slowed us from achieving some of the things that we’d like to do; I don’t think there’s any question about that,” DiPietro said Tennessee administrators across the state are waiting with “bated breath” to see how many students will come from community colleges to finish their four-year degrees.

Reach Tyler at (731) 425-9629. Follow him on Twitter: @tyler_whetstone

http://wilsonpost.com/

Locals receive degrees from UT Martin

Three Wilson County residents were among students who received degrees from the University of Tennessee at Martin during the recent spring commencement held in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center on the UT Martin campus. Local students who received undergraduate degrees were Micki Mariah Carlton of Lebanon, Kendall T. Ozinski and Barianne F. Taylor, both of Mt. Juliet.
Engineering students gain real-world experience at UT Martin

May 21, 2016

Sarah Haig (foreground), assistant professor of graphic design, and UT Martin fine arts students are pictured working on a newly-installed solar sculpture between the Boling University Center and the Paul Meek Library. The solar sculpture is a collaboration between students and faculty in the departments of engineering and visual and theatre arts, and is yet another example of the hands-on, real-world work experience UT Martin students gain before graduation. The sculpture, when finished, will feature two large flowers and a tree-like centerpiece (shown).

Students who choose to study engineering at the University of Tennessee at Martin learn far more than what can be gained inside a classroom. All senior engineering majors are required to participate in a senior project, and underclassmen often help along the way. These students not only gain hands-on experience in their field of choice, they also make a name for themselves at regional competitions.

The American Society of Civil Engineering hosted the annual conference for its Deep South Region on March 10-12 at McNeese State University in Lake Charles, La. UT
Martin engineering students were there to compete in the steel bridge, concrete canoe and surveying competitions.

The steel bridge competition requires a team of students to design, fabricate and assemble a bridge based on certain specifications. This year, the bridges could be no more than 20 feet long, five feet tall and five feet wide, and needed to support a weight of 2,500 pounds.

The UT Martin steel bridge team came in second place overall and first in the display, efficiency and stiffness categories. For the display portion, the assembled bridge was judged based on balance, proportion, elegance and finish, and included a poster display with a variety of view sketches and construction guidelines.

Seniors Andrew Webster, of Middleton; Luke Davenport, of Jackson; and Zack Malone, of Goodspring, served as team leaders. They were assisted by juniors Ben Davenport, of Jackson; Jacob Buttrey, of Fairview; and Garrett Wright, of Trezevant. These juniors will take over the project next year toward the completion of their own senior project requirements.

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While the concrete canoe competition is not an official senior project, team captains Michael Reyes, a junior from Franklin, and Jacob Winters, a sophomore from Ripley, decided to participate anyway to gain early experience in the types of challenges they will face as seniors.

“The reason I wanted to do it was to be in charge of a project and call our own shots. We were heading it up and doing it ourselves instead of just tagging along,” said Winters. “We were exposed to a whole other side. The side that wasn’t quite as much fun was the paperwork, but now, hopefully, going into our senior projects in a few years, we’ll know better what to do.”
“Now that we have been exposed to leading a project like this, I think we’ll be significantly more prepared for it once we actually do our senior projects because we’ve seen it before, we understand what’s involved and how important the planning process actually is,” added Reyes.

Reyes and Winters had help from team members Charlie Brackeen, a sophomore from Humboldt; Samuel Reeves, a senior from Milan; Stephen Harris, a senior from Beech Bluff; Marne Helbing, a junior from Gilbert, Ariz.; Abby Masters, a senior from Huntington Beach, Calif.; and Wade Anderson, a sophomore from Bellevue. Reeves, Harris, Helbing and Masters served as team rowers and put UT Martin on the podium in three different races.

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“The civil engineering students and faculty here at UT Martin are second to none,” said the steel bridge team via email interview. “We compete against much larger schools with much larger budgets. Even though we are one of the smallest schools in our
conference, we still have more participation from our members than most other schools. Not all schools came to the competition with the faculty support with which we are blessed.”

The UT Martin Department of Engineering is housed within the College of Engineering and sciences, Natural Sciences, and concentrations are available in civil, mechanical and electrical engineering.

Several Maury County residents were among students who received degrees from the University of Tennessee at Martin during the recent spring commencement held in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center on the UT Martin campus.

The students receiving undergraduate degrees were:

- Columbia – Matthew Dean Chesnut, Ronald Wayne Hibbs, Sierra L. Phillips and Rachael M. Wolters
- Culleoka – Emily Jean Hobby, Chelsea D. Monroe and Scott Carpenter Vann
- Hampshire – Michael C. McCrory and Krista M. Shaw
- Mt. Pleasant – Bethany M. Orban
- Spring Hill – Christy E. Locke

Michael McCrory, of Hampshire, participated in the Order of the Engineer ceremony at the University of Tennessee at Martin during the commencement exercises May 22. The Order of the Engineer ceremony is a way for graduating engineering students to show pride in their new profession and unity with other engineers. Participating students recite a pledge to uphold honor, workmanship, and ethics in the engineering field.

Hagan Scholarship Recipient

Mr. Trever Hall, a student at Hollow Rock-Bruceton CHS High School, was awarded a Hagan Scholarship to attend The University of Tennessee-Martin.

The Hagan Scholarship provides up to $5,000 each semester and is renewable for up to seven additional semesters; providing each recipient with the opportunity to graduate college debt free. Hagan Scholars currently attend one hundred thirty four different colleges and universities.
The Jackson Sun Sunday, May 22, 2016

Rakes shared little on problems

Regarding UTM’s accreditation issues

TYLER WHETSTONE
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UT system President Joe DiPietro and University of Tennessee at Martin Chancellor Tom Rakes had little communication during Rakes’ final six months in office about the accreditation problems that would lead the university to be placed on academic probation in December 2015, according to emails between the two and statements by DiPietro.

Likewise, nothing was communicated between the two via email about Rakes’ departure from the chancellor’s role until March 30, 2015, two months before Rakes left the chancellor’s job. A review of Rakes’ personnel file provides no further explanation of Rakes’ departure as chancellor, although his performance evaluations are kept secret under state law and cannot be reviewed by the public.

The Jackson Sun filed a public records request March 1 to review Rakes’ personnel file and all emails between Rakes and DiPietro from Dec. 1, 2014, through May 31, 2015, regarding accreditation and Rakes’ departure from the chancellorship. Rakes left the chancellor’s position on May 31, 2015. UTM provided the documents to The Jackson Sun on April 27.

The Sun filed the request in an attempt to clarify questions that arose following a review of emails provided by UTM under a prior records request seeking information about the university’s accreditation problems. Those emails showed that DiPietro and UTM Interim Chancellor Bob Smith appeared unaware of the severity of UTM’s accreditation problems until September 2015, more than four months after Rakes’ departure as chancellor.

UTM
Continued from Page 1A

The extent of UTM’s accreditation problems.

The emails The Jackson Sun reviewed from its most recent records request showed that Rakes never communicated via email with DiPietro about the problems that led to UTM’s probation during Rakes’ final six months as chancellor. According to DiPietro, little was communicated to him in any fashion about the accreditation issues. He said accreditation issues are normally the responsibility of individual campuses.

DiPietro did not know the extent to which UTM had difficulties with its accrediting body, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACS).

“My understanding of the SACS re-accreditation review process as it was underway prior to Dr. Rakes stepping down as chancellor was that the process was ongoing and routine,” DiPietro told The Jackson Sun in an email.

“I became aware that SACS had determined a campus response to a question was unsatisfactory when that was communicated by SACS to Interim Chancellor [Robert] Smith in December 2015,” DiPietro said.

However, in an email to Bill Austin, a UTM professor emeritus, on Dec. 13, Smith said he told DiPietro when a report was submitted to SACS in September 2015 that UTM was “in trouble.” On Thursday during a meeting with The Jackson Sun’s editorial board, DiPietro said he didn’t know the full extent of UTM’s problems in September or what SACS’ response would be.

In a Dec. 9 email sent to Crawford Galimore, a member of the UT board of trustees, DiPietro said: “Tom Rakes had lead (sic) me to believe after the site visit exit interview that the review committee had questions regarding this essential but thought they were OK.

“After review by the C&R committee (the SACS’ Committees on Compliance and Reports) of the facts they must have found differently? Or else the site team was more concerned than Tom ascertained?” DiPietro wrote.

In December, SACS notified UTM it would be placed on a 12-month academic probation because it repeatedly failed to properly address five required standards. Four of the standards focused on UTM’s failure to develop traceable standards to gauge student learning and the fifth focused on UTM’s lack of traceable data for general education courses.

UTM knew about the problems with the standards as early as the fall of 2012 but failed to adequately address them.

Rakes’ departure

DiPietro said he and Rakes began speaking about Rakes’ resignation from the chancellorship casually during Rakes’ normal evaluation period in March 2015. Rakes’ resignation letter addressed to DiPietro is dated April 7, 2015, less than two months before Rakes would step down on May 31. DiPietro said he personally discussed Rakes’ performance evaluation and at that time also discussed succession planning.

“Serving as a chancellor is very demanding, and I supported his decision to return to the classroom, a transition often seen in campus leaders who step down from their administrative posts,” DiPietro said in an emailed statement.

The Sun asked DiPietro if it was typical for a high-ranking employee such as Rakes to provide such little notice before resigning when succession planning is being discussed. DiPietro did not directly answer the question. He said in an email: “Succession planning is an area of ongoing emphasis for the University on all campuses and at all leadership levels. Filling leadership roles can be a lengthy process and choosing the best candidates...
"I have nothing more to add beyond my previous comments."

TOM RAKES

is critically important. Routine discussions take place frequently, including within the setting of chancellors' performance evaluations, and involve awareness of anticipated retirements or departures and determining whether vacancies have the potential to be filled from within or externally."

The Sun asked DiPietro if there were performance concerns that led to Rakes' decision to step down. Again, DiPietro did not directly answer the question. He responded: "When Dr. Rakes informed me during our meeting for his performance evaluation of his desire to return to teaching after serving almost eight years in the very demanding role of chancellor, I supported that decision."

The Tennessee legislature passed a law in 2015 that made job performance evaluations of employees of certain state departments and all public higher education institution employees confidential and not open to public inspection. Deborah Fisher, executive director of the Tennessee Coalition for Open Government, said the law damages accountability.

"Too often, the legislature approves confidentiality exemptions to the Public Records Act without evidence for the need, or discussion about how it could damage transparency and accountability," Fisher said. "This is a good example of an exemption that passed last year that is now obscuring the public's understanding of what happened at UT-Martin."

"Why shouldn't the public know how a government executive who ran a university was scored in a performance evaluation?" she said. "If we want accountability in our institutions — especially when things go awry — we must have transparency for the public."

When DiPietro met with The Jackson Sun on Thursday, he reiterated his support of Rakes.

"It's not unusual for somebody to get up [after] seven or eight years and just decide, 'I've got a belly full,'" he said. "These are really hard jobs."

"There was nothing more than Tom saying, 'I've done what I've needed to, and I'm heading back to the faculty,'" DiPietro said.

Rakes declined to comment for this story.

"I have already provided you with specific (sic) comment relative to my decision to return to teaching," Rakes said in an email to The Jackson Sun. "I have nothing more to add beyond my previous comments."

In Rakes' new position as an online instructor, he is contractually obligated to teach nine graduate credit hours in the fall and spring, except for last fall when he did not teach, but spent time "engaged in a schedule of educational research and instructional activities" approved by the provost, according to his resignation letter to DiPietro.

According to UTM's online course listing, Rakes taught three online courses this spring, a total of 10 credit hours.

As chancellor, Rakes made approximately $215,000 a year with a $5,000 expense allowance and $10,000 housing and entertainment allowances, along with a university vehicle.

As an online instructor, Rakes makes $185,520 a year. He is eligible to be paid for additional summer work if offered, according to his appointment letter sent by Jerald Ogg, UT provost and vice chancellor.

Since December 2013, UTM has filed two monitoring reports regarding the five standards SACS has said it has not adequately addressed. The second report was filed in September 2015, and SACS notified the university it would be placed on probation in December.

UTM will submit its third monitoring report to SACS this fall, and SACS will make another visit to see the progress the school has made. SACS would then decide if UTM is to be removed from academic probation, if it is to remain on academic probation for a second year, or if UTM will be removed from SACS membership, which is unlikely.

Reach Tyler at (731) 425-9629. Follow him on Twitter: @tyler_whetstone
Kendall Oziminski, left, of Mt. Juliet, recently graduated from the University of Tennessee at Martin as a University Scholar. The University Scholar’s distinction is the highest academic honor awarded at UT Martin and indicates that a student has completed a rigorous honors curriculum and a two-year thesis-type project. Oziminski worked with Dr. Abigail Shelton, right, associate professor of chemistry, to create a project titled "Photocatalytic Titanium Dioxide for the Reduction of Livestock Gas Emissions."

CLARKSVILLE, Tenn. – Northwest High School’s Athletic Department is pleased to announce the appointment of Chris Benne as the new Head Baseball Coach for the Northwest High School Vikings.

Coach Benne holds a bachelor’s degree in History Education from The University of Tennessee at Martin. Benne is also a 2009 graduate of Northwest High School and will be returning home to his alma mater not only as baseball coach, but as a member of the faculty as well. He will be teaching World History and Government for the 2016-17 school year. Coach Benne grew up in Woodlawn, TN and played four years for the Northwest Baseball Team under the direction Charles Sleigh. While in high school, Benne also played for numerous travel ball teams throughout the mid-state. After completing his degree at UT Martin, Benne returned to Northwest as an Assistant Baseball Coach under Dan Stephens for two and a half years.
This past year, Benne has been serving as the Head Baseball Coach for Forrest Middle School in Marshall County, TN, where he also served as an Assistant Coach for the Forrest High School Baseball and Football teams. Coach Benne shared that he loved baseball because “Baseball is a special game; it’s the only sport of its kind. You earn everything you get from the game. I especially love how it doesn’t matter what your size, ability, or background is, you can play baseball. It’s America’s favorite pastime because it embodies America’s spirit to compete all the way to the last out.” He credits his passion for the game to his father, Jim Benne. “He coached baseball before I was born and taught me the game when I was young. Every father and son relationship begins with those nights in the yard playing catch, and I am forever grateful for the bond with my father.”

When asked about his new coaching position, Benne replied that he is “looking forward to returning home to Northwest and being a part of the best school in Clarksville-Montgomery County. I can’t wait to get back to Northwest, and I am excited to build a baseball program that reflects the excellence of our school and community. Previous coaches have laid the foundation for something special here, and I am excited to lead the program to the next level. This is a destination job for me. I want to make my community proud for years to come.”

Northwest High School’s Athletic Director, Jessica Peppard, said, “It is always something special to have an alumni join our faculty and coaching staff. Coach Benne has a wealth of baseball knowledge and has had the opportunity to learn from other great coaches throughout his baseball career. He has a strong vision for the future of our program, and we believe he will continue to grow our athletes and push them to achieve excellence, both on the field and in the classroom. I am excited to see what our boys can do next season under his direction.”
WEBB INDUCTED INTO ORDER OF ENGINEERS – Benjamin Webb, of Milan, participated in the Order of the Engineer ceremony at the University of Tennessee at Martin before commencement exercises May 7. The Order of the Engineer ceremony is a way for graduating engineering students to show pride in their new profession and unity with other engineers. Participating students recite a pledge to uphold honor, workmanship and ethics in the engineering field. He is pictured with Dr. Robert LeMaster (left), professor and chair, Department of Engineering, and Dr. Richard Helgeson, professor and dean, College of Engineering and Natural Sciences.

BRADY FINISHES UT MARTIN VET TECH PROGRAM – Beth Brady (center, left), of Milan, participated in a ceremony May 7 to honor her completion of the veterinary health technology program at the University of Tennessee at Martin. Participating students were “pinned” to indicate they are qualified to enter the professional world of veterinary health technology. UT Martin is one of fewer than 30 institutions nationally offering four-year academic preparation in this area. Brady is pictured with program faculty (l-r) Erica Carroll, Renee Stubblefield and Amanda Waldon.
UNIVERSITY SCHOLAR — Sean O'Brien (right), of Martin, graduated May 7 from the University of Tennessee at Martin as a University Scholar. The University Scholar's distinction is the highest academic honor awarded at UT Martin and indicates that a student has completed a rigorous honors curriculum and a two-year thesis-type project. O'Brien worked with Dr. Anderson Starling (left), assistant professor of political science, to create a project titled "Using Spending Preferences as Policy Preferences to Support Partisanship and Ideology.

MCCALESTER FINISHES UT MARTIN VET TECH PROGRAM — Elizabeth McCalester (right), of Dresden, participated in a ceremony May 7 to honor her completion of the veterinary health technology program at the University of Tennessee at Martin. Participating students were "pinned" to indicate they are qualified to enter the professional world of veterinary health technology. UT Martin is one of fewer than 30 institutions nationally offering four-year academic preparation in this area. McCalester also received the program's Marie Olsen Award, which identifies a student who embodies the characteristics and perseverance of Marie Olsen, the 11th female veterinarian in the United States. McCalester is pictured with program faculty member Amanda Waldon, licensed veterinary health technologist.
SEATON FINISHES VET TECH PROGRAM – Julia Seaton (center, left), of Martin, participated in a ceremony May 7 to honor her completion of the veterinary health technology program at the University of Tennessee at Martin. Participating students were “pinned” to indicate they are qualified to enter the professional world of veterinary health technology. UT Martin is one of fewer than 30 institutions nationally offering four-year academic preparation in this area. Seaton is pictured with program faculty (from left) Erica Carroll, Renee Stubblefield and Amanda Waldon.

INTERNSHIPS COMPLETED — Nine students recently completed internships as a required component of the University of Tennessee at Martin’s dietetics program. The internship is a nine-month practice program during which the intern performs under the supervision of a registered dietitian. Students are eligible to sit for the national registration exam after completing the program. Pictured are (back row, from left) Breanna Pitcher of Martin, Abby Williams of Jackson, Emily Cornwell of Memphis, Elise Thompson of Franklin and Kayla Amacher of Lascassas; (front row) Kayla Houser of Powell, Katie Dossey of Nashville, Stephanie Pate of Decherd and Brittany Roberts of Chattanooga. For more information on the UT Martin dietetics program, contact Brian Carroll, nutrition lecturer and internship director, at 731-881-7102 or by email at bcarroll8@utm.edu.
The University of Tennessee at Martin will host two summer orientation and registration (SOAR) sessions for incoming members of the 2016 freshman class on June 3 and 17. A special transfer orientation and registration (TOAR) session will be held June 10.

Each SOAR session begins with check-in and an administrative fair from 7:30 to 8:30 a.m., with an official welcome to follow. At 9 a.m., students will meet with their orientation leaders and begin a rotation of informational sessions on academic options, financial aid and scholarships, housing, student life and other important topics.

Students will begin registering for classes at 1:30 p.m., at which point parents and families can attend a parent panel session.

SOAR is mandatory for all incoming freshmen, and students will not be permitted to register for fall classes outside of a SOAR session. There is no fee to attend, and no tuition will be due until the start of the fall semester.

Registration is first-come, first-served, and space is limited. Students must have received a tentative or final acceptance letter to register.

Visit www.utm.edu/soar for more information and for registration instructions.

Students must have received a tentative or final acceptance letter to register.

Registration is first-come, first-served, and space is limited. Students must have received a tentative or final acceptance letter to register.

Visit www.utm.edu/soar for more information and for registration instructions.

The Milan Mirror-Exchange, Tuesday, May 24, 2016

Several Gibson County residents received college and department-level awards from the University of Tennessee at Martin during the spring 2016 semester. The following students were recognized:

Grady Potts, of Humboldt, received the BG G.H. Weems Memorial ROTC Scholarship Award;

Logan Rahm, of Rutherford, received the Lower Division Chemistry Award;

Hope Renfroe, of Milan, was named to Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges;

Anna Santaniello, of Medina, received the Outstanding Special Education P-12 Student Award;

Ryan Stevenson, of Milan, received a Faculty Scholar Award from the College of Business and Global Affairs;

Collin Sutton, of Milan, received the William T. McCutchen Geology Award and the Geology Student Research Award;

Andrew Walter, of Bradford, received the Outstanding Geography Student Award;

Lisa Warren, of Bradford, received a Faculty Scholar Award and a Dean’s Scholar Award in international studies, both from the College of Business and Global Affairs;

Anna Warren, of Milan, was inducted into the Phi Kappa Phi National Honor Society;

Joshua Young, of Milan, received the BG G.H. Weems Memorial ROTC Scholarship Award.

Grady Potts, of Humboldt, received the BG G.H. Weems Memorial ROTC Scholarship Award;

Logan Rahm, of Rutherford, received the Lower Division Chemistry Award;

Hope Renfroe, of Milan, was named to Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges;

Anna Santaniello, of Medina, received the Outstanding Special Education P-12 Student Award;

Ryan Stevenson, of Milan, received a Faculty Scholar Award from the College of Business and Global Affairs;

Collin Sutton, of Milan, received the William T. McCutchen Geology Award and the Geology Student Research Award;

Andrew Walter, of Bradford, received the Outstanding Geography Student Award;

Lisa Warren, of Bradford, received a Faculty Scholar Award and a Dean’s Scholar Award in international studies, both from the College of Business and Global Affairs;

Anna Warren, of Milan, was inducted into the Phi Kappa Phi National Honor Society;

Joshua Young, of Milan, received the BG G.H. Weems Memorial ROTC Scholarship Award.
Austin Peay's first coach Lin Dunn hired at Kentucky

Lin Dunn (story/sports/college/2014/04/05/lin-dunn-austin-peay-purdue-womens-basketball-legendary-ladies/750937), who started the women's basketball program at Austin Peay and is a member of the Tennessee Sports Hall of Fame, is back in coaching.

Dunn, 69, was named an assistant at Kentucky on Tuesday.

"I could not be more excited to get the chance to work every day with one of my greatest mentors and dearest friends in Lin Dunn," said Kentucky coach Matthew Mitchell. "When you think about those that helped pave the way for women's sports, Lin Dunn is one of those names that comes to your mind."

Former Purdue standout Stephanie White (story/sports/college/vanderbilt/2016/05/23/vanderbilt-hires-coach-stephanie-white-associate-carolyn-peck/84524780/), who was named Vanderbilt's new coach Tuesday, served as an assistant on Dunn's staff with the Indiana Fever of the WNBA for three years before replacing her as head coach in 2015.

The Tennessean named Dunn, a native of Dresden and graduate of UT-Martin, to its Legendary Ladies Elite 8, which coincided with the Women's Final Four being played at Bridgestone Arena in 2014.

"I've known Matthew for 20 years. He's a great person, a good father and an excellent coach," said Dunn, who received her master's degree from Tennessee. "You don't accidentally win 25 games every season in the SEC without being a great basketball coach. I'm really excited about helping him maintain this level of success."

After creating the women's basketball program at Austin Peay in 1970 Dunn went on to coach at Ole Miss, Miami and Purdue.


In 1996 Dunn became the coach of the WNBA's Portland Power and in 1998 was named the league's coach of the year.

She went on to become coach and general manager of the Seattle Storm (2000-2002), an assistant for the Fever (2004-2007), and then the head coach (2008-2014).

Dunn also is a member of the Austin Peay Athletics Hall of Fame, Women's Basketball Hall of Fame, Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame, Purdue Athletics Hall of Fame, UT-Martin Hall of Fame and the University of Miami Athletic Hall of Fame.

Earlier this year Dunn received the Jostens-Berenson Lifetime Achievement Award in recognition of her lifelong commitment of service to women's basketball.
MARTIN – Students who choose to study engineering at the University of Tennessee at Martin learn far more than what can be gained inside a classroom. All senior engineering majors are required to participate in a senior project, and underclassmen often help along the way. These students not only gain hands-on experience in their field of choice, they also make a name for themselves at regional competitions.

The American Society of Civil Engineering hosted the annual conference for its Deep South Region on March 10-12 at McNeese State University in Lake Charles, La. UT Martin engineering students were there to compete in the steel bridge, concrete canoe and surveying competitions.

The steel bridge competition requires a team of students to design, fabricate and assemble a bridge based on certain specifications. This year, the bridges could be no more than 20 feet long, five feet tall and five feet wide, and needed to support a weight of 2,500 pounds.

The UT Martin steel bridge team came in second place overall and first in the display, efficiency and stiffness categories. For the display portion, the assembled bridge was judged based on balance, proportion, elegance and finish, and included a poster display with a variety of view sketches and construction guidelines.

Seniors Andrew Webster, of Middleton; Luke Davenport, of Jackson; and Zack Malone, of Goodspring, served as team leaders. They were assisted by juniors Ben Davenport, of Jackson; Jacob Butrey, of Fairview; and Garrett Wright, of Trezevant. These juniors will take over the project next year toward the completion of their own senior project requirements.

The concrete canoe competition is unique because students must not only develop a custom concrete mix, design and build the canoe itself – they must also race it against other competitors. The UT Martin team placed third in the co-ed sprint race, men’s sprint race and men’s endurance races. Overall scores from each region will not be announced until the national finals competition is held in June.

While concrete canoe competition is not an official senior project, team captains Michael Reyes, a junior from Franklin, and Jacob Winters, a sophomore from Ripley, decided to participate anyway to gain early experience in the types of challenges they will face as seniors.

“The reason I wanted to do it was to be in charge of a project and call our own shots. We were heading it up and doing it ourselves instead of just tagging along,” said Winters. “We were exposed to a whole other side. The side that wasn't as much fun was the paperwork, but now, hopefully, going into our senior projects in a few years, we'll know better what to do.”

“Now that we have been exposed to leading a project like this, I think we'll be significantly more prepared for it once we actually do our senior projects because we've seen it before, we understand what's involved and how important the planning process actually is,” added Reyes.

Reyes and Winters had help from team members Charlie Brackeen, a sophomore from Humboldt; Samuel Reeves, a senior from Milan; Stephen Harris, a senior from Beech Bluff; Marne Helbing, a junior from Gilbert, Ariz.; Abby Masters, a senior from Huntington Beach, Calif.; and Wade Anderson, a sophomore from Bellevue. Reeves, Harris, Melbing and Masters served as team rowers and put UT Martin on the podium in three different races.

“A lot of engineers, especially civil engineers, know about the steel bridge and concrete canoe competitions. That's kind of a big deal. So I think seeing that our resumes will help them see we were active, especially since it wasn't a mandatory thing, it was a voluntary thing,” said Winters.

UT Martin also sent three senior students to participate in the surveying competition, which required teams to measure distances and elevations using traditional surveying methods and equipment within a specified area and limited time.

Wesley Williams, of Dyersburg; Ethan Clark, of Newbern; and Webster competed against 13 other universities and won first place in the level loop competition and first place overall for their conference.

Nothing can replace the experience students receive from real-world, hands-on experiences like the ASCE competitions, and UT Martin students are well-prepared to enter their chosen careers after graduation.

“This was the best year that UT Martin ASCE has ever had at the conference competition,” said Dr. Ray Witmer, associate professor of engineering.

“The civil engineering students and faculty here at UT Martin are second to none,” said the steel bridge team via email interview. “We compete against much larger schools with much larger budgets. Even though we are one of the smallest schools in our con-
ference, we still have more participation from our members than most other schools. Not all schools came to the competition with the faculty support with which we are blessed.”

The UT Martin Department of Engineering is housed within the College of Engineering and Natural Sciences, and concentrations are available in civil, mechanical and electrical engineering. For more information on the ASCE competition teams, contact Witmer at 731-881-7388 or by email at rwitmer@utm.edu.

UT Martin engineering students are pictured working on a newly-installed solar sculpture between the Boling University Center and the Paul Meek Library. The solar sculpture is a collaboration between students and faculty in the departments of engineering and visual and theatre arts, and is yet another example of the hands-on, real-world work experience UT Martin students gain before graduation. The sculpture, when finished, will feature two large flowers and a tree-like centerpiece (shown).

**RAMBO FINISHES UTM VET TECH PROGRAM:** Brandy Moore Rambo (center, left), of Newbern, participated in a ceremony May 7 to honor her completion of the veterinary health technology program at the University of Tennessee at Martin. Participating students were “pinned” to indicate they are qualified to enter the professional world of veterinary health technology. UT Martin is one of fewer than 30 institutions nationally offering four-year academic preparation in this area. Rambo is pictured with program faculty (l-r) Erica Carroll, Renee Stubblefield and Amanda Waldon.
Three local residents participated in the Order of Engineer Ceremony at the University of Tennessee at Martin.

Ethan Clark, of Newbern, participated in the Order of the Engineer ceremony at the University of Tennessee at Martin before commencement exercises May 7.

Tyler Orr, of Newbern, participated in the Order of the Engineer ceremony at the University of Tennessee at Martin before commencement exercises May 7.

Wesley Williams, of Dyersburg, participated in the Order of the Engineer ceremony at the University of Tennessee at Martin before commencement exercises May 7.

The Order of the Engineer ceremony is a way for graduating engineering students to show pride in their new profession and unity with other engineers. Participating students recite a pledge to uphold honor, workmanship and ethics in the engineering field. He is pictured with Dr. Robert LeMaster (left), professor and chair, Department of Engineering, and Dr. Richard Holgeson, professor and dean, College of Engineering and Natural Sciences.
Despite loss, Cheatham County senior remains motivated

It has been a little over six years since Hannah Binkley, a senior at Cheatham County Central High School, lost her parents and brother when they were gunned down at their home on Meadowbrook Road in Ashland City.

Binkley’s uncle, Michael Hood, killed his sister, Susan Hood Binkley, her ex-husband, Dale Binkley, and the couple’s 13-year-old son, Jackson Binkley, in March 2010 at the home off River Road.

Hood pleaded guilty in the case and was sentenced to three consecutive life sentences.

Binkley and her younger sister, Sara, were at the home when the shooting occurred.

“Some days I’m really sad, but I’m more motivated to do better in life,” said Binkley, recalling she was more mad than sad when she realized what was happening.

She remembers the feeling of tripping over herself and falling, but noted she wasn’t afraid of the shooter.

“He came out of the back door, and Sara and I were screaming at him,” she said. “I could see mom laying on the ground.”

It was the tragic events of that day that led Binkley to become enthralled by criminal investigation programs such as “Snapped” and “The First 48” soon after the loss of her loved ones.

In fact, she just scheduled her college classes for the fall at University of Tennessee at Martin, where she will major in criminal justice.

“‘I chose generalist for my focus,’” she said. “‘That way I’ll learn a little bit of everything. I really don’t want to be a police officer.’”

Ideally, she like to be a counselor and talk to kids and family members.

Binkley and her sister Sara, a CCCHS sophomore, live with her aunt, Pam Binkley, her father’s sister.

“She’s very wise and gives really good advice with Bible quotes and stuff, and she really listens,” she said. “She’s always been there for us and is the best aunt in the world. She’s really excited about me going to college.”

**Staying positive**

Binkley admits that there is still a lot to process — even after six years.

“I took my family for granted, but I don’t do that anymore, and I make it a point to say I love you,” she said. “In fact, that very day, the last thing I had said to my mother was, ‘I hate you.’ So that’s a big thing. It makes me feel terrible about myself.”

But there have also been some profound positives that have emerged as a result of the tragedy.

“It’s that whole cliché like I want to make the world better, make the community better,” she said. “I saw terrible things, but I’m not going to go down that path. Beauty can come from terrible events. You don’t have to do drugs to get over things. You don’t have to drink alcohol and party all the time and sit around and do nothing. You can get up and make something of yourself.”

Binkley said she’s determined that her kids will have a better childhood and she works hard to protect her sister.

“If I’m a good role model for her, then she’ll make good decisions, too,” she said.

One of the biggest challenges that have come with events leading up to graduation and life after high school is an understandable lingering sadness because she misses her mother and father.

“I talk to them all the time,” she said. “Late at night when I’m in bed, I tell them about my day and things like that. I think about the way I treated them and things I did wrong, but I know they loved me, and my mom knows I didn’t hate her. I want them to be proud of me. I feel like they see everything that I do.”

She credits CCCHS guidance counselor Brandi Lunsford as being especially instrumental in helping her grieve and grow with grace and dignity.

“She was my eighth-grade counselor,” she said. “She made me feel she understood.”
Supporting hands

Binkley sees listening and understanding as the two most critical components for recovery.

“I don’t have everything figured out, but when someone has a bad day, just listen to them or you can’t help them, and let them know they won’t be judged,” she said. “But the most important thing to do is to listen.”

Binkley also credits her entire high school experience at CCCHS as being an amazing blessing and recalls former CCCHS English teacher Mrs. Lundy as her favorite teacher.

“I’m really glad I went to high school here,” she said. “I’ve made a lot of great friends, like Caylee Cannon, who have helped me along the way,” she said.

Binkley and Cannon were friends before the shooting.

“She’s been there for me through it all and has helped me a lot,” she said.

The two will be rooming together this fall at UTM.

“It feels good that I was accepted to college,” she said. “I have good grades. All of my friends think I’m an inspiration. I don’t like to be in the spotlight, but I do like it when they recognize that I’m trying. There’s nothing for me to complain about.”

Binkley remembers that prior to the tragedy, she wanted to be cook.

“I liked to cook with my dad, and my nanna cooked all the time,” she said as her thoughts turned to a rendering of a tattoo that a friend of hers had created.

“Jackson (her brother) wanted to be in a rock band, and he played electric guitar,” she said as she held up the sketch of an electric guitar with its neck stretching into flowers in bloom.

She read these words from a song by a group called The Wonder Years.

“I’ll bury your memories in the garden. I’ll watch them grow with the flowers in the spring, and I’ll keep you with me.”

“It’s perfect,” she said.

Rachel Leath to intern with UT/TSU Extension office

Posted Wednesday, May 25, 2016 10:06 am

Rachel Leath of Chattanooga has joined the UT/TSU Extension team in Bradley County as an intern.

She is pursuing a bachelor’s of science at the University of Tennessee at Martin, where she majors in family consumer science with a concentration in child and family studies. She will graduate this December.

Leath said she plans to grasp a great deal of information while interning through Extension.

She will experience programming in 4-H youth development, family and consumer sciences, and agriculture. She will also be involved in assisting her intern supervisor, Justin Thomas, in conducting a needs assessment for Family and Consumer Science programs.
UTM will host registration for freshmen, transfer students on June 3, 10 and 27

The University of Tennessee at Martin will host two Summer Orientation and Registration sessions for incoming members of the 2016 freshman class on June 3 and 17. A special Transfer Orientation and Registration session will be held June 10.

Each SOAR session begins with check-in and an administrative fair from 7:30-8:30 a.m., with an official welcome to follow. At 9 a.m., students will meet with their orientation leaders and begin a rotation of informational sessions on academic options, financial aid and scholarships, housing, student life and other important topics.

Students will begin registering for classes at 1:30 p.m., at which point parents and families can attend a parent panel session.

SOAR is mandatory for all incoming freshmen, and students will not be permitted to register for fall classes outside of a SOAR session. There is no fee to attend, and no tuition will be due until the start of the fall semester.

Registration is first-come, first-served, and space is limited. Students must have received a tentative or final acceptance letter to register. Visit www.utm.edu/soar for more information and for registration instructions.

SOAR is specifically designed to meet the needs of transfer students and begins with check-in at 8 a.m. Concurrent sessions on campus technology, financial aid and scholarships, student life and the student success center begin at 9 a.m. An administrative fair at 10:15 a.m. will highlight the bursar’s office, campus recreation, housing options, dining services, admissions and minority affairs.

Students will be advised by faculty members in their area of study and will begin registering for fall 2016 courses at approximately 10:45 a.m. Optional campus tours will be available after lunch for those who are interested.

Visit www.utm.edu/soar for more information and for registration instructions.

For information on the admissions or registration process, contact the UT Martin Office of Undergraduate Admissions at 731-881-7020 or by email atadmitme@utm.edu.

UTM to host Memorial Day Commemoration on Friday

Community members, veterans and visitors are invited to observe Memorial Day during an annual commemoration ceremony hosted by the University of Tennessee at Martin. The ceremony will begin at approximately 9 a.m., May 27, on the front lawn of the Hall-Moody Administration Building on University Street.

Lt. Col. Lowell Howard, UT Martin professor of military science, will welcome those in attendance, and members of the UT Martin Skyhawk Battalion will present the colors. UT Martin Chancellor Emeritus Nick Dunagan will serve as this year’s guest speaker, and the UT Martin Department of Public Safety will close the ceremony with a gun salute.

Memorial Day, observed for the first time in 1971, is held on the last Monday in May each year and serves to honor those who have died in the protection of the United States. Originally called Decoration Day, it was officially renamed in 1882.

In case of inclement weather, the commemoration will be held in the UT Martin Student Life Center, located at 199 Moody Avenue.

For more information on the UT Martin commemoration ceremony, contact the Office of University Relations at 731-881-7615.
Special Luncheon for New Director of UT Martin Somerville Center

A special luncheon was provided at the Somerville City Hall by UT Martin Somerville Center supporters on May 17, 2016, which was attended by more than 100 people. The special occasion heralded at the luncheon was a celebration of continued progress toward establishment of the UT Martin Somerville Center, a special "Meet & Greet" in honor of the newly appointed local Director of the UT Martin Somerville Center, Kara Tapp, and the opportunity for prospective students to take advantage of free academic advisement and application for UT Martin programs.

UT Martin administrators were on hand for consultation from the UT Martin Centers at Ripley, Selmer, Jackson, and Parsons, along with several administrators from the Martin campus, including the newly appointed Director of Extended Campus & Online Studies, Dr. Brian Donavant. Attendees were also entertained by a complimentary performance of Tommy Lynn's local bluegrass band, made possible by connections through Molly McCarley of the local Career Center and Workforce Investment Network Office.

Pictured at the open house were, left to right, Jackie Johnson-Coordinator Dual Enrollment; Dr. Simpfronia Taylor-Director of UT Martin Ripley; Kara Tapp-Director UT Martin Somerville; Kayce Beam-Director UT Martin Jackson; Erica Bell-Director of Central Office of Extended Campus; Dr. Adam Wilson-Director of Online Studies; Dr. Kelli Beth Deere-Director UT Martin Parsons; and Dr. Brian Donavant-Executive Director of Extended Campus & Online Studies. Not pictured was Alan Youngerman, Director of UT Martin Selmer/McNairy Co.

Congratulating Kara Tapp (center) as the new Director for UT Martin Somerville at last week’s open house were Fayette County Mayor Skip Taylor (left) and State Senator Dolores Gresham (2nd from left). At the right is Dr. Brian Donavant, UT Executive Director of Extended Campus & Online Studies.

Kara Tapp (3rd from left), the new Director of UT Martin Somerville, was honored with a Meet & Greet last week at Somerville City Hall, with a large group of UT Martin officials and residents in attendance. (Add'l photo on Page 1B)
UT Martin grad refuses to let life slow her down

Lyndsey Hayslett of Union City didn’t intend to come to the University of Tennessee at Martin.

In fact, she started her college career at the University of Memphis in an effort to leave home. But life works to bring you where you have to be," she said.

Mrs. Hayslett returned to Obion County after a family tragedy during her sophomore year. It was supposed to be an immediate transfer, but life intervened and she took a year off from school.

She tried again in 2010, enrolling at UT Martin for the fall semester. However, the road took another unexpected turn when she and her husband discovered their family would be growing in the spring. With one trimester remaining, Mrs. Hayslett took yet another break from her education to have her son, Linden.

One semester turned into three when Mrs. Hayslett developed peripartum cardiomyopathy, an uncommon heart condition affecting some women after childbirth. After eight months of recovery, she began to turn her thoughts back to her career.

"I kind of thought I was just going to go to work, but my husband said, ‘No, you’re going to go back to school,’” she said.

After three semesters away from the classroom, doctors finally gave Mrs. Hayslett medical clearance to return to school one week before fall classes began. Despite having to reapply for admission, she pushed through and met the deadlines.

"I just felt that if I sat out any more I wouldn’t ever do it. ... I was taking all kinds of random things. Just enough to be full time and be here,” she said.

One of those classes happened to be an introduction to media design and public relations, offered through the Department of Communications. Dr. Tracy Rutledge, associate professor of communications, got Mrs. Hayslett “hooked” on a career in the field.

"I think it was her passion when she teaches. ... I’ve always wanted to help people, but I feel like that class taught me there are other ways that you can help people besides being a doctor or a teacher or a police officer,” Mrs. Hayslett said.

“There are other ways to do it, and I really feel like PR is my way.”

Mrs. Hayslett said one of the best things about her UT Martin education is the cross-concentration training she has received through the communications curriculum.

"I feel like this university really prepares us to be as marketable as possible, to be as prepared as possible. That I can go into interviews and I can say, ‘I can do some media design. I’m in the public relations sequence but I’m the managing editor of the school paper. I know how news works; I can do a little bit on the radio; I know how all of those things work. And I feel like, more than anything, that has really prepared me,” she said.

In addition to being a full-time wife and mother, Mrs. Hayslett has also completed an internship promoting the hospice services at Baptist Memorial Hospital-Union City and was managing editor of the university’s student newspaper, The Pacer.

"I just try to remember that it is all for him (Linden). At the end of the day, that’s why I’m doing it — so that he has no excuse. I can say, ‘Mommy did it with all of this going on, so you have no excuse. You’re going to get your education,’” she said.

Although life has thrown a few curveballs along the way, Mrs. Hayslett hasn’t let that keep her from earning her university degree. She walked the UT Martin commencement stage May 7 to cheers from her husband and son.

"I couldn’t have made a better decision than to come here, from the university as a whole to my specific department,” she said. “Life just works to bring you where you have to be.”

Mrs. Hayslett urges potential students to “come here, visit the campus and give it a real shot. UTM competes with the best of the best. ... Anybody that comes here is blessed because you really get the best education you can get.”
SCHOLAR RECOGNITION — Andrew Warner (right) of Union City participated in a medal ceremony recently to claim his distinction as a University Scholar at the University of Tennessee at Martin. He was joined by his father, Jack Warner of Union City. The University Scholar’s distinction is the highest academic honor awarded at UT Martin and indicates a student has completed a rigorous honors curriculum and a two-year thesis-type project. Warner received his degree in December 2015. He worked with Dr. Brandon Kilburn, associate professor of marketing, to create a project titled “An Inquiry Into the Profitability of Olympus Philanthropy.”

TAKE PLEDGE — University of Tennessee at Martin students Kristen Prince (left) of South Fulton and Lacy Eaves of Troy took the Florence Nightingale Pledge during a pinning ceremony recently at the university. The pledge is taken by students entering the nursing profession and holds each candidate to a high standard of professional care in the health-care industry. The students received their bachelor of science in nursing degrees during the university’s commencement exercises earlier this month.
Local Residents Receive Awards From UT Martin

Several Weakley County residents received college and department-level awards from the University of Tennessee at Martin during the spring 2016 semester. The following students were recognized (students are from Martin unless otherwise noted):

Matthew Adams received a Best Student Teaching Award for his work with introductory geology;

Erin Bell received an award for Academic Promise in Geology;

Ednesha Brasher received the Chi Omega Sorority Award;

William Bratton received an Outstanding Dual Enrollment Student Award;

Georgia Brown received the Ernest and Wilma Newby Scholarship and was named to Who’s Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges;

Grace Bruner received the Outstanding Integrated Studies K-6 Student Award, the Gallian Award and the UT Martin STEA Leadership Award;

Brooklyn Burress received the Darrin Devault Public Relations Scholarship;

Amelia Coalter received the W. A. Tarr Award and a Best Student Teaching Award for her work with introductory geology, and was named to Who’s Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges;

Bethany Cole, of Greenfield, was inducted into the business honor society Beta Gamma Sigma;

James Copeland received the Lt. Gen. John G. “Glad” Castellaw Award;

Timothy Corcoran received a Faculty Scholar Award from the College of Business and Global Affairs;

Adrian De Sagon received the Japanese Outstanding Minor Award;

Heather Dunn received the Outstanding Gerontology Student Award;

Mercee Eubank, of Greenfield, received the Col. Tom Elam Alumni Scholarship Award and the Daughters of the American Revolution Award;

Elizabeth Francisco, of Gleason, was inducted into the business honor society Beta Gamma Sigma;

Preston Frazier, of Gleason, received a Faculty Scholar Award from the College of Business and Global Affairs;

Gian Garma received the Harry Neal Memorial Award;

Matthew Granner received the Outstanding Agricultural Engineering Technology Student Award and was named to Who’s Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges;

Chuck Hammer received the Dr. Gary Steinke WUTM Broadcasting Excellence Award and the Chairman’s Outstanding Senior Award in broadcasting from the Department of Communications;

Joy Hazelwood received an Outstanding Dual Enrollment Student Award;

Hunter Herrington received the Geology Student Leadership Award;

Bruce Hicks received an Outstanding Dual Enrollment Student Award;

Logan Hunt was inducted into the business honor society Beta Gamma Sigma;

Billy Killebrew was inducted into the business honor society Beta Gamma Sigma;

Jacob Last was inducted into the business honor society Beta Gamma Sigma;

Jordan Long received the Outstanding Lower Division Accounting, Finance, Economics and Political Science Student Award;

Rebecca Lund received the Outstanding Upper Division Accounting, Finance, Economics and Political Science Student Award, Dean’s Scholar Awards in both finance and accounting, and a Faculty Scholar Award from the College of Business and Global Affairs;

Christopher Mayo, of Gleason, received the Robert G. Cowser Literary Award in Poetry;

Michael McGrath received the Marvin L. Downing History Lower Division Award;

Justin Morgan received a Faculty Scholar Award from the College of Business and Global Affairs;

Katelyn Morris, of Gleason, was inducted into the Phi Kappa Phi National Honor Society;

Orren Ogg received the Outstanding Agricultural Business Student Award;

Patricia Ramos received the Spanish Outstanding Minor Award;

Mary Schommer received an Outstanding Dual Enrollment Student Award;

Kait Scott received the Swafford Public Relations Scholarship;

Lauren Simmons, of Dresden, received the Outstanding Freshman in Agriculture Award;

Makala Sizses, of Greenfield, received the Nancy Hinds Service Award;

Colten Snider, of Dresden, was inducted into the business honor society Beta Gamma Sigma;

Brandon Stacks, of Sharon, received the Outstanding Freshman Engineering Award;

John Sterrett received an Outstanding Dual Enrollment Student Award;

Zoe Stringer received the Outstanding Undergraduate Family and Consumer Sciences Student Award, the Outstanding Fashion Merchandising Student Award and the Martin Lions Club H.B. Smith Award;

Collin Sutton received a Best Student Teaching Award for his work with introductory geology;

Haley Swafford, of Gleason, was named to Who’s Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges;

Chase Thweat received a Faculty Scholar Award from the College of Business and Global Affairs;

Nathan Williamson received an Allison Nelson Award;

Amanda Young-Beauchard, of Dresden, received a Faculty Scholar Award from the College of Business and Global Affairs.
Summer camps slated at UTM

Ten different Skyhawk athletic programs are sponsoring camps this summer, ranging from May 24 through Aug. 21 at various locations on the University of Tennessee at Martin campus.

The Skyhawk women’s basketball program is conducting six camps, starting with a middle school camp on May 24-27. High school team camps will take place on June 9-11 and June 22-24, and will be followed by a middle school and high school tournament camp on June 25. An advanced camp for grades 7-12 is set for June 26-27 while a fundamental camp for grades K-8 is scheduled for June 28-July 1.

UT Martin tennis will host a four-day camp for ages 10-18 on May 31-June 3.

The Skyhawk softball team is offering a pair of camps, beginning with a general skills camp for ages 6-12 from May 31-June 1. That will be followed by an exposure camp and skills development for ages 13 through graduating seniors on June 14-15.

Two cheer camps will also take place at UT Martin, starting with a UCA/UDA camp on June 1-4. A UCA Elite and Cheer Camp will also take place on July 25-28.

The UT Martin equestrian program will conduct a camp for ages 8 and up on June 12-16.

A trio of Skyhawk men’s basketball camps will be held, starting with a fundamental camp on June 13-16 for ages 6-14. A high school camp will then take place on June 17-18, followed by an elite camp for grades 7-12 on Aug. 6.

The UT Martin football team will oversee a pair of camps on July 16. A prospect elite camp for grades 9-12 will take place while a 7v7 tournament camp will occur throughout the day.

The Skyhawk soccer program is hosting a high school girls team and ID camps on July 17-20.

A total of four UT Martin volleyball camps will be conducted, starting with an all-skills camp for ages 13-18 on July 21-23. Clinics for setters, DS and hitters will also take place on July 24, followed by a Lil’ Skyhawk camp for ages 5-12 on July 30.

The UT Martin baseball program is hosting a prospect camp for high school players on Aug. 20-21.

For more information on the camps, visit www.utmsports.com and click on the camps tab.

UTM to host SOAR, TOAR for new students in June

The University of Tennessee at Martin will host two Summer Orientation and Registration (SOAR) sessions for incoming members of the 2016 freshman class on June 3 and 17. A special Transfer Orientation and Registration (TOAR) session will be held June 10.

Each SOAR session begins with check-in and an administrative fair from 7:30-8:30 a.m., with an official welcome to follow. At 9 a.m., students will meet with their orientation leaders and begin a rotation of informational sessions on academic options, financial aid and scholarships, housing, student life and other important topics.

Students will begin registering for classes at 1:30 p.m., at which point parents and families can attend a parent panel session.

SOAR is mandatory for all incoming freshmen, and students will not be permitted to register for fall classes outside of a SOAR session. There is no fee to attend, and no tuition will be due until the start of the fall semester.

Registration is first-come, first-served, and space is limited. Students must have received a tentative or final acceptance letter to register. Visit www.utm.edu/soar for more information and for registration instructions.

TOAR is specifically designed to meet the needs of transfer students and begins with check-in at 8 a.m. Concurrent sessions on campus technology, financial aid and scholarships, student life and the student success center begin at 9 a.m. An administrative fair at 10:15 a.m. will highlight the bursar’s office, campus recreation, housing options, dining services, admissions and minority affairs.

Students will be advised by faculty members in their area of study and will begin registering for fall 2016 courses at approximately 10:45 a.m. Optional campus tours will be available after lunch for those who are interested.

Visit www.utm.edu/toar for more information and for registration instructions.

For information on the admissions or registration process, contact the UT Martin Office of Undergraduate Admissions at 731-881-7020 or by email at admitme@utm.edu.

UT MARTIN GRADUATE
- Anna Santaniello of Medina, Tenn. graduated May 7 from the University of Tennessee at Martin with a Bachelor of Science degree in education. She was one of approximately 925 graduates to receive degrees during the largest graduation ceremony in university history. Dr. Paul Blaylock, class of 1968, delivered the commencement address.
FULTON RESIDENT RECEIVES AWARD FROM UT MARTIN –

David Whitesell (center), of Fulton, received the Jodi Woods Memorial Award from the University of Tennessee at Martin during the spring 2016 semester. The Jodi Woods Memorial Award was established at UT Martin in memory of the late Jodi Woods, a special education major, who died June 24, 2006. It is given each semester to one graduating special education major who excels in student teaching by including and building self-esteem in students with special needs. The award represents Woods’ warm and caring demeanor. The funds from the award are given to assist the graduating teacher in stocking his/her new classroom. Whitesell is pictured with Dr. Beth Stratton (left), UT Martin associate professor of education, and Dr. Charles Smith, UT Martin chancellor emeritus.

Area residents UTM honorees

Several Obion County residents received college and department-level awards from the University of Tennessee at Martin during the spring 2016 semester. The following students were recognized:

- Ashleigh Burton, of South Fulton, received the Jim Burdette Memorial Award and the Stewart Byars Excellence in Radio Production Award;
- Mikaela Hardy, of South Fulton, received the Outstanding Biology Student Award;
- Taylor Martin, of Union City, received the Outstanding Upper Division Management, Marketing and Information Systems Student Award and was inducted into the business honor society Beta Gamma Sigma;
- Holly Seng, of Union City, received the George and Ruth Horton Curricula Award, the Women in Communications Award, the Dorotha Norton Scholarship, the Swafford Public Relations Scholarship, and a junior scholarship from the Department of Communications;
- Tori Seng, of Union City, received the Tennessee Association of Broadcasters Award, the Communications Academic Excellence Award and a senior scholarship from the Department of Communications, and was named to Who’s Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges.
A recent economic study shows UT Martin's Weakley County students and visitors add $137 million dollars in income to the county economy.

The UTM economic study from the 2014-15 fiscal year reveals the UTM Weakley County payroll at over $63 million dollars, with much of that spent in the county on groceries and household goods.

When it comes to day-to-day operations, UTM spent just over $50 million dollars in the county.

The study shows student spending added just over a million dollars to the county's economy.

UTM alumni staying in the Weakley County workforce added an additional $70 million dollars to the economy.

The study shows that for every dollar in costs, $3.20 in benefits were returned, to average a 10-percent return on investment for Weakley County taxpayers.

**THE LAUDERDALE COUNTY ENTERPRISE, RIPLEY, TENNESSEE, MAY 26, 2016**

**UT Martin Set To Host Registration**

The University of Tennessee at Martin will host two Summer Orientation and Registration sessions for incoming members of the 2016 freshman class on June 3rd and June 17th. A special Transfer Orientation and Registration session will be held June 10th.

Each SOAR session begins with check-in and an administrative fair from 7:30 a.m. through 8:30 a.m., with an official welcome to follow. At 9 a.m., students will meet with their orientation leaders and begin a rotation of informational sessions on academic options, financial aid and scholarships, housing, student life and other important topics.

Students will begin registering for classes at 1:30 p.m., at which point parents and families can attend a parent panel session.

SOAR is mandatory for all incoming freshmen, and students will not be permitted to register for fall classes outside of a SOAR session. There is no fee to attend, and no tuition will be due until the start of the fall semester.

Registration is first-come, first-served, and space is limited. Students must have received a tentative or final acceptance letter to register. Visit www.utm.edu/soar for more information and for registration instructions.

TOAR is specifically designed to meet the needs of transfer students and begins with check-in at 8 a.m. Concurrent sessions on campus technology, financial aid and scholarships, student life and the student success center begin at 9 a.m. An administrative fair at 10:15 a.m. will highlight the bursar's office, campus recreation, housing options, dining services, admissions and minority affairs.

Students will be advised by faculty members in their area of study and will begin registering for fall 2016 courses at approximately 10:45 a.m. Optional campus tours will be available after lunch for those who are interested.

Visit www.utm.edu/toar for more information and for registration instructions.

For information on the admissions or registration process, contact the UT Martin Office of Undergraduate Admissions at 731-881-7020 or by email at admitme@utm.edu.
STUDENTS at the University of Tennessee at Martin were recognized during the spring semester with college and department-level awards including, in upper photos, from left, Lindsey Bowie, of Halls, the Silver Park Outstanding Senior Award in Park and Recreation Administration; and Hailey Holcomb, of Ripley, Outstanding Plant and Soil Science Award and was named to Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges; in lower photos, from left, Amy McLemore, of Ripley, Geology Student Service Award; and Nathaniel Newlin, of Ripley, the award for Academic Promise in Geology; plus, not pictured, Michelle Ammons, of Ripley, who was inducted into the Phi Kappa Phi National Honor Society.
UTM to host Memorial Day event May 27

Veterans and visitors are invited to observe Memorial Day during an annual commemoration ceremony hosted by the University of Tennessee at Martin. The ceremony will begin at 9 a.m., May 27, on the front lawn of the Hall-Moody Administration Building on University St.

Lt. Col. Lowell Howard, UTM professor of military science, will welcome those in attendance, and members of the Skyhawk Battalion will present the colors.

Chancellor Emeritus Nick Dunagan will serve as this year’s guest speaker, and the UTM Department of Public Safety will close the ceremony with a gun salute.

Memorial Day, observed for the first time in 1977, is held on the last Monday in May each year and serves to honor those who have died in the protection of the U.S.

In case of inclement weather, the commemoration will be held in the UTM Student Life Center, located at 199 Moody Ave.

For more information on the commemoration ceremony, contact the Office of University Relations at 731-881-7615.

Hooten to play softball for UTM

After playing her freshman season at Dyersburg State Community College, Sara Hooten will play her final three seasons of college softball at the University of Tennessee at Martin. The Skyhawks are an NCAA Division 1 team that competes in the Ohio Valley Conference.

Hooten was a standout pitcher at Camden Central High School. In her senior season, she helped lead the Lady Lions to a state tournament appearance, and was named to the Tennessee Sports Writers’ All-State team.

UTM Coach Donley Canary was excited to add a pitcher of Hooten’s ability for the next three seasons. After Hooten led her Dyersburg team to a 2-1 victory over UTM in the fall, Canary knew he was interested.

“She is a workhorse that we envision coming in right away and batting for the number 2 spot in our rotation behind Brooke Kennedy,” said Canary. “We then will look to her to be our lead pitcher in the years to come.”

“She’s got good stuff, she battles, and she wants to be here, so we expect big things out of her in the future,” added Canary.
Weakley County prepares to mark Memorial Day

By LINDA THURSTON
Press Editor

Memorial Day has seen many changes throughout the years.

The holiday began in the South in 1866 as a day to memorialize those killed in the Civil War. The National Park Service attributes its beginnings to the ladies of Columbus, Ga.

In 1868, the Grand Army of the Republic established a holiday to be called Decoration Day, and held on May 30, for Union soldiers. According to "The Folklore of American Holidays," the date was chosen because it was not the anniversary of any particular battle.

Southerners soon renamed their holiday Confederate Memorial Day to distinguish it from Northern celebrations.

The holiday wasn't officially named Memorial Day until 100 years later, in 1967. A year later Congress moved four holidays from their traditional dates to a specified Monday in order to create a convenient three-day weekend. Memorial Day is now celebrated the last Monday in May, regardless of the date.

In 2000, Congress passed the National Moment of Remembrance Act, asking people to pause and honor the country's military dead at 3 p.m.

According to etiquette maven Emily Post, on Memorial Day the U.S. flag should be raised to the top of the staff and then lowered to the half-staff position, but U.S. Code says at noon the flag should be raised to full staff for the rest of the day.

A National Memorial Day Concert takes place on the west lawn of the U.S. Capitol.

The Indianapolis 500 is run the Sunday before Memorial Day.

The Weakley County Memorial Day Program will be held on Monday from 11 a.m. to noon on the courthouse lawn. The service will include recitation of the pledge of allegiance and the state pledge, war roll calls, the laying of a wreath, a gun salute, a release of doves, and special music, including the playing of "Taps" at the close of the service.

Randal Walker will be the guest speaker.

Community members, veterans and visitors are invited to observe Memorial Day during an annual event.
Several Weakley County residents received college and department-level awards from the University of Tennessee at Martin during the spring 2016 semester. The following students were recognized (students are from Martin unless otherwise noted):

- Matthew Adams received a Best Student Teaching Award for his work with introductory geology.
- Erin Bell received an award for Academic Promise in Geology.
- Ednessa Brasher received the Chi Omega Sorority Award.
- William Bratton received an Outstanding Dual Enrollment Student Award.
- Georgia Brown received the Ernest and Wilma Newby Scholarship and was named to Who’s Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges.
- Grace Bruner received the Outstanding Integrated Studies K-6 Student Award, the Gallian Award and the UT Martin STEA Leadership Award.
- Brooklyn Burress received the Darrin Devault Public Relations Scholarship.
- Amelia Coalter received the W. A. Tarr Award and a Best Student Teaching Award for her work with introductory geology, and was named to Who’s Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges.
- Bethany Cole, of Greenfield, was inducted into the business honor society Beta Gamma Sigma.
- James Copeland received the Dean's Scholarship.
- Jacob Last was inducted into the business honor society Beta Gamma Sigma.
- Jordan Long received the Outstanding Lower Division Accounting, Finance, Economics and Political Science Student Award.
- Rebecca Lund received the Outstanding Upper Division Accounting, Finance, Economics and Political Science Student Award, Dean's Scholar Awards in both finance and accounting, and a Faculty Scholar Award from the College of Business and Global Affairs.
- Christopher Mayo, of Gleason, received the Robert G. Cowser Literary Award in Poetry.
- Michael McGrath received the Marvin L. Downing History Lower Division Award.
- Justin Morgan received a Faculty Scholar Award from the College of Business and Global Affairs.
- Kait Scott received the Swafford Public Relations Scholarship.
- Lauren Simmons, of Dresden, received the Outstanding Freshman in Agriculture Award.
- Makala Sitzes, of Greenfield, received the Nancy Hinds Service Award.
- Colten Snider, of Dresden, was inducted into the business honor society Beta Gamma Sigma.
- Brandon Stacks, of Sharon, received the Outstanding Freshman Engineering Award.
- John Sterrett received an Outstanding Dual Enrollment Student Award.
- Zoe Stringer received the Outstanding Undergraduate Family and Consumer Sciences Student Award, the Outstanding Fashion Merchandising Student Award and the Martin Lions Club H.B. Smith Award.
- Collin Sutton received a Best Student Teaching Award for his work with introductory geology.
- Haley Swafford, of Gleason, was named to Who’s Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges.
- Chase Thweat received a Faculty Scholar Award from the College of Business and Global Affairs.
- Nathan Williamson received the Allison Nelson Award.
- Amanda Young-Bechard, of Dresden, received a Faculty Scholar Award from the College of Business and Global Affairs.

For more information about UT Martin, visit www.utm.edu.
Blanchard awarded research grant

The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation has awarded Dr. Tom Blanchard, professor of biology at the University of Tennessee at Martin, a three-year research grant through the West Tennessee River Basin Authority.

The basin authority is responsible for preserving the natural flow and function of the Hatchie, Obion and Forked Deer river basins through environmentally sensitive stream maintenance. The basin authority’s territory covers 20 counties, including Weakley County, along and between the Mississippi and Tennessee Rivers.

Blanchard, who also serves as director of the Reelfoot Lake Environmental Field Station, plans to study how the restoration of previously channelized streams in West Tennessee affects the physical characteristics of the associated ecosystems. He and his research team will study the biodiversity of affected fish communities by monitoring the types and numbers of fish living in selected streams.

"This is an important project to understand the potential for restoring channelized streams in the region, a productive continuation of the collaboration between Dr. Blanchard and Dr. Fore, and great chance for students to be involved hands-on in a meaningful research project," said Dr. Jennifer Greenwood, professor and interim chair, UT Martin Department of Biological Sciences.

The $42,000 grant will fund the study through April 2019. Blanchard is working with Dr. Jeffrey Fore, from the Tennessee chapter of The Nature Conservancy, as co-principal investigator.

"I am delighted this grant has been funded and that we’ll be partnering with the Tennessee chapter of The Nature Conservancy. Dr. Blanchard’s work with our Reelfoot facility has been exemplary, and this study is a natural extension of his research interests," said Dr. Jerald Ogg, UT Martin vice chancellor for academic affairs. "It’s also an example of the important role UT Martin plays in this region, and I look forward to the many ways we’ll be able to use this ‘real world’ opportunity to enrich our students’ educations."

For more information on the grant, contact the UT Martin Office of Research, Grants and Contracts at 731-881-7016.
Kid College enrollment opens

Enrollment is now open for the annual Kid College hosted by the University of Tennessee at Martin. This five-day interactive learning camp will take place June 13-17 on the UT Martin main campus. Children who will be in kindergarten through fifth grade in the fall of 2016 are eligible to participate.

Registration is first-come, first-served and must be paid in full prior to the first day of camp. Children may be enrolled in up to five courses. Registration is $30 for the first course and $25 for each additional class, which includes a camp T-shirt. Some courses also include supply fees that must be paid to the course instructor on the first day of camp.

Course options for students in kindergarten through second grade include cheerleading, French, simple machines, Spanish, dinosaurs and woodworking.

Students in grades three through five can learn about chemical reactions, space, Spanish, computers, and simple and powered machines, among many other topics.

June 15 will be picture day, and all students are encouraged to wear their Kid College T-shirts. Parents should pack a lunch and drink each day. Additional information will be sent to parents via email the week before camp begins.

An open house will be held from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m., June 17. Parents, family and friends are welcome to meet the Kid College instructors, view displays and watch demonstrations during this time.

For more information or to register, contact the UT Martin Office of Extended Studies at 731-881-7082.
Joshin' Around: Back where it all began for me

Corrections and amplifications

In the May 19 edition of the Weakley County Press the caption on the front page image identified the group of people in the picture as engineering students. The college released the wrong caption for that image which they corrected after the fact. It should have read:

Sarah Haig (foreground), assistant professor of graphic design, and UT Martin fine arts students are pictured working on a newly-installed solar sculpture between the Boling University Center and the Paul Meek Library. The solar sculpture is a collaboration between students and faculty in the departments of engineering and visual and theatre arts, and is yet another example of the hands-on, real-world work experience UT Martin students gain before graduation. The sculpture, when finished, will feature two large flowers and a tree-like centerpiece (shown).

JOSH LEMONS
Sports Editor

It’s good to be home. Well, technically I wasn’t born in Weakley County. But I called it home five years while attending UT Martin.

Before going back to school in the Fall of 2007, I had previously lived in my hometown of Memphis, spent a couple of my younger years in Los Angeles and my early 20s on a boat in south Florida.

So moving to Martin took a little adjusting. But, just like many who move here, I fell in love with the place.

So, now I’m back as the sports editor here at the Weakley County Press.

First off, I have to tip my cap to the wonderful job that Mike Hutchens and Kevin Weak have done for the past five years bringing you some of the best, most in-depth, award-winning sports reporting in the state.

I hope to continue to give the readers the type of quality journalism and professionalism they have grown accustomed to but I know I have mighty big shoes to fill.

That being said, I look forward to the opportunity to continue the tradition of excellence in this community.

In addition to living here during my college years, the past four years I worked at another publication that covers this county. I have seen first-hand your passion for sports.

And while football is — and will probably always be the most beloved sport in Weakley County — I also know that every sport is important, especially when a friend or loved one is out there on the field competing.

I intend on giving each and every sport and student athlete in this county the equal coverage they deserve.

And for those who want instant updates on what’s going on in the sports world, 140 characters at a time, I have started a Twitter account for the die-hard sports fans in the county.

I will still keep you up to date on the Press’ Facebook account, but for those who prefer Twitter you can follow me @JSWriterJosh or follow the sports department here at the Press @WCPSports.

Over the next few months, I look forward to immersing myself in all things sports in this county.

Many of the coaches I already know from my previous job.

Those I have not met, I look forward to meeting and working with you in the future.

The same goes for the passionate fans. Many of you I know.

I look forward to meeting the rest of you as I attempt to continue the excellent coverage of all of the sports in Weakley County.

Who says you can’t ever go home?
Legendary coach Dunn joins Kentucky women's staff

Randy Cavin
The Weakley County Press

Basketball coaching legend Lin Dunn did not stay retired from coaching for very long.

The University of Kentucky announced the hiring of the Dresden native as an assistant coach with the women's basketball team. Head coach Matthew Mitchell made the announcement on Wednesday.

"I couldn't be more excited to get the chance to work every day with one of my greatest mentors and dear friends in Lin Dunn," Mitchell told UK Media Relations. "When you think about those that helped paved the way for women's sports, Lin Dunn is one of those names that comes to your mind. She has helped me become the coach and person that I am today and I am forever grateful. With our staff now complete, it's time for us to turn the page and take this program to new heights."

There was a shakeup in Mitchell's staff at the end of the 2015-16 season as assistant coaches and players leaving the program. Dunn will provide some stability to the program as Mitchell enters his 10th season as head coach of the Wildcats.

Dunn coached in the college ranks for 25 years before moving on to be a head coach in professional basketball. She started coaching in the American Basketball League for the Portland Power in 1997 and headed to the WNBA in 2000.

The Dresden native was head coach and general manager of the Seattle Storm, leading the franchise to the 2002 playoffs.

She became an assistant coach of the Indiana Fever in 2004 and was promoted to head coach in 2008. The coaching legend guided the Fever to the playoffs seven consecutive years and won the WNBA championship in 2012.

Dunn retired in 2014 and was inducted into the Women's Basketball Hall of Fame the same year.

She could not pass on the chance to be an assistant to Mitchell and work in the Southeastern Conference.

"I've known Matthew for 20 years," Dunn told UK Media Relations. "He's a great person, a good father and an excellent coach. You don't accidentally win 25 games every season in the SEC without being a great basketball coach. I'm really excited about helping him maintain this level of success."

"He has put together such a great staff that I know working with Niya will be a wonderful opportunity for me and one that I couldn't pass up. I am confident that Matthew and I share similar core values and I'm excited to get back on the court."

Dunn was referring to Niya Butts, former head coach at Arizona. Butts was hired as an assistant coach two weeks ago. She played her college ball at Tennessee for Pat Summit from 1996-2000, where she won three national titles.

Kentucky's latest hire began her coaching career in 1970 at Austin Peay and then became head coach of the Miami (Fla.) Hurricanes in 1978. She moved from there to become the head coach at Purdue where she earned her legendary status.

She won 206 games at Purdue, leading the Boilermakers to seven NCAA tournament appearances. Purdue made it to the Final Four in 1994, the Elite Eight in 1995, and two Sweet 16 appearances in 1990 and 1992.

Dunn won three Big Ten Championships and was the Big Ten Coach of the Year in 1989 and 1991.

Dunn is also a member of Tennessee Sports Hall of Fame, UT-Martin Hall of Fame, Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame, Purdue Athletics Hall of Fame, Austin Peay Athletic Hall of Fame and University of Miami (Fla.) Athletic Hall of Fame.
UT Martin commemorates veterans ahead of Memorial Day

MARTIN, Tenn. — UT Martin ROTC students raised the American flag on their front lawn. These future soldiers saluted their country and its veterans.

When asked why she decided to serve, 2nd Lt. Kelly James said, "I've just always wanted to." Just weeks ago, she became a Skyhawk alum, soon to be stationed at Fort Campbell.

"I know people who are overseas right now. You should remember them everyday, not just once," James explained.

After a 21 gun salute and 'Taps' played, university leaders said there is a special reason for the ceremony.

"It has special significance for me. I think about the friends I knew that are gone now," Lt. Col. Lowell Howard said. Howard is over the school's military science program.

After five deployments and three combat tours to Iraq and Afghanistan, he hopes the meaning of this ceremony helps some consider a career of service.

"I'm hoping because of ceremonies like this, people will think long and hard about what it means to be a soldier, airman, marine in the military — what it means to serve," Howard said.

UT Martin hosts this ceremony each year as an annual tradition.

UT Martin rodeo team member killed during competition

MARTIN, Tenn. — The University of Tennessee at Martin athletics department is saddened to announce that Coy Lutz, who recently completed his freshman season on the UT Martin rodeo team, passed away on Saturday evening.

Lutz, 19, was fatally injured while competing at the Cowtown Rodeo in Pilesgrove, NJ - a little over 200 miles from his hometown in Howard, Pa. He was majoring in criminal justice at UT Martin, where he registered points in seven different rodeos in 2015-16. He set career-highs across the board in bareback riding at the 48th Annual UT Martin Spring College Rodeo on April 14-16, tallying 78 points in the first round and 76 points in the short go for a 154 average. His opening round total was best in the field while his average score was tied for the top total in the event.

"Coy was just an outstanding kid who had a real bright future," UT Martin head coach John Luthi said. "He was a good student and he came from a great family. Even though he was only here for one year, his impact will always be felt here at UT Martin. He was a super human being who always took care of his business. It's hard to imagine why something like this had to happen but we have faith that God is in control."

The Cowtown Rodeo posted the following message on Sunday morning on its Facebook page: "Cowtown Rodeo and The Harris Family extend our heartfelt and sincere condolences to the Lutz Family for the tragic loss of their son, Coy. During this difficult time, our thoughts and prayers are with all who knew and loved him."

Before attending UT Martin, Lutz graduated from Bald Eagle Senior High School in Bellefonte, Pa. Following his commencement, Lutz shared his outlook on life with the Centre Daily Times newspaper.

"I'd tell all the underclassmen to work hard and not to slack, because it's worth it in the long run," Lutz said. "You do all your work and you can do anything."
MARTIN, Tenn. — A UT Martin rodeo team member was killed this weekend while competing in a rodeo in New Jersey.

UT Martin rodeo team member killed in competition

May 29, 2016 by [WBBJ 7 Eyewitness News Staff](http://www.wbbltv.com)

Coy Lutz, 19, died Saturday evening after being fatally injured while competing at the Cowtown Rodeo in Pilesgrove, N.J., a little over 200 miles from his hometown in Howard, Pennsylvania, according to a release from the school.

Lutz had just completed his freshman season on the UT Martin rodeo team. He was studying criminal justice.

"Coy was just an outstanding kid who had a real bright future," UT Martin head coach John Luthi said in the release. "He was a good student and he came from a great family. Even though he was only here for one year, his impact will always be felt here at UT Martin. He was a super human being who always took care of his business. It's hard to imagine why something like this had to happen, but we have faith that God is in control."

Lutz set career-highs across the board in bareback riding at the 48th annual UT Martin Spring College Rodeo last month, tallying 78 points in the first round and 76 points in the short go for a 154 average, according to the release. His opening round total was best in the field while his average score was tied for the top total in the event.

Student rodeo athlete at UT Martin dies after being injured during competition

Published: Sunday, May 29th 2016, 1:40 pm CDT
Updated: Sunday, May 29th 2016, 1:40 pm CDT
Written by Zach Robinson, Digital Producer

MARTIN, TN (KFVS) - The University of Tennessee at Martin athletics department says a student died Saturday evening due to injuries sustained while competing.

Coy Lutz, 19, was fatally injured while competing at the Cowtown Rodeo in Pilesgrove, NJ – a little over 200 miles from his hometown in Howard, Pa. "Coy was just an outstanding kid who had a real bright future," UT Martin head coach John Luthi said. "He was a good student and he came from a great family. Even though he was only here for one year, his impact will always be felt here at UT Martin. He was a super human being who always took care of his business. It's hard to imagine why something like this had to happen but we have faith that God is in control."

He was majoring in criminal justice at UT Martin, where he registered points in seven different rodeos in 2015-16.

He set career-highs across the board in bareback riding at the 48th Annual UT Martin Spring College Rodeo on April 14-16, tallying 78 points in the first round and 76 points in the short go for a 154 average. His opening round total was best in the field while his average score was tied for the top total in the event.
Cowtown Rodeo rider from Pennsylvania killed in bronc event, report says

A 19-year-old cowboy from Pennsylvania died Saturday night after he was trampled in a Cowtown Rodeo bronc-riding event, according to published reports.

Coy Lutz, of Howard, Pennsylvania, was riding on the opening night of the rodeo's 62nd season, according to NJ.com.

"Cowtown Rodeo and The Harris Family extend our heartfelt and sincere condolences to the Lutz Family for the tragic loss of their son, Coy. During this difficult time, our thoughts and prayers are with all who knew and loved him," the rodeo posted Sunday on its Facebook page.

"He was a nice kid, a really nice kid, from a nice family," rodeo owner/producer Grant Harris told NJ.com.

Harris said Lutz's death was the first of a cowboy injured in the rodeo, located on Route 40 in Pilesgrove Township, Salem County, the report said.

Lutz was competing in a bareback bronc event, the report said. A bareback bronc wears no saddle, and there is only a strap for the rider to hold. The rider must stay on the bucking horse for eight seconds to be eligible to win.

Lutz was enrolled at the University of Tennessee at Martin, and was a longtime rodeo competitor, the report said.
UTM rodeo competitor suffers fatal injury

Coy Lutz, who recently completed his freshman season on the UT Martin rodeo team, died on Saturday evening.

Lutz, 19, was fatally injured while competing at the Cowtown Rodeo in Pilesgrove, N.J. — a little over 200 miles from his hometown in Howard, Pa.

According to the Associated Press, New Jersey authorities say a horse tossed Lutz off its back in front of a crowd of thousands and then trampled him to death.

Cowtown Rodeo owner Grant Harris told NJ.com this was the first time a rodeo participant had died from injuries suffered in the event. He says Lutz’s parents were among the crowd of 2,200 attending the rodeo and they witnessed the accident.

Harris says the horse Lutz was riding tossed him and then stepped on him several times. Lutz died shortly afterward at a hospital.

Cowtown touts itself as the oldest weekly running rodeo in the U.S. It opened in 1929.

Lutz was majoring in criminal justice at UT Martin, where he registered points in seven different rodeos in 2015-16.

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“He was a good student and he came from a great family. Even though he was only here for one year, his impact will always be felt here at UT Martin. He was a super human being who always took care of his business. It’s hard to imagine why something like this had to happen but we have faith that God is in control.”

The Cowtown Rodeo posted the following message on Sunday morning on its Facebook page: “Cowtown Rodeo and The Harris Family extend our heartfelt and sincere condolences to the Lutz Family for the tragic loss of their son, Coy. During this difficult time, our thoughts and prayers are with all who knew and loved him.”

Before attending UT Martin, Lutz graduated from Bald Eagle Senior High School in Bellefonte, Pa.

Rodeo community speaks on dangers of sport after UT Martin athlete’s death

Calloway County, Ky. — The death of a University of Tennessee at Martin rodeo athlete isn’t just a loss for his family, but the entire rodeo community. Coy Lutz was killed while competing over the weekend in New Jersey.

Former Murray State University rodeo athlete Candice Hill has been riding horses since she learned how to walk. It didn’t take her long to fall in love with rodeo.

“It’s more of a lifestyle choice than a sport,” Hill said.

Part of her love is a competitive drive many other rodeo athletes share.

“When you’re competing at college rodeos and professional rodeos in high school, you’re competing against the best, so you want to be the best,” Hill said.

She has broken her ankle while riding before, but injuries can be much worse — even deadly. Lutz was competing in a professional bareback bronc event when he fell off his horse and was trampled.

“Coy was, every time I was around him, he was always very professional and prepared,” Murray State University rodeo coach JD VanHooser said.

VanHooser’s team is part of the same region as Coy’s.

“We try to take all the precautions we can in preparing young folks and even professional athletes,” VanHooser said.

VanHooser said no matter how much training you do, there’s always a risk when you’re working with animals.

“It can happen to anybody, and you know, unfortunately, that’s part of it,” VanHooser said.

“It is scary and definitely makes you think twice,” Hill said.

For many athletes like Hill, the reward is worth the risk.

Her wishes to attend the weekend events, while the Lutz Family welcomes everyone who wishes to attend.
Less than eight seconds had passed before Coy Lutz was bucked from his horse. He rolled out of the way and got up, as any rider would do.

However, instead of being angry and leaving the arena, he turned and tipped his hat to the animal.

"It was his way of saying 'Hey, you did better than me this time, I can't be mad,'" Lutz's father, Doug, remembered, noting that his son often tipped his hat to the animals. "He was always respectful like that."

The 19-year-old cowboy died over the weekend at the Cowtown Rodeo opening weekend when the horse he was riding bucked him.

Doug Lutz remembered his son fondly. Doug stirred up his son's interest in rodeos after years of riding in them himself. While serving in the Army, stationed in Germany, Doug said learned about the sport and began riding bareback. After coming back to the States, he stopped bareback riding and picked up "bullfighting," so he could focus on raising a family. As a bull fighter, it was his responsibility to lure the animal away from the rider so they could safely exit the arena.

"Coy was attached to my hip from the day he was born," said Doug. "Anything I did, he was right there with me. Since I was working as a bull fighter, he got a lot of exposure to the rodeo."

Although when Coy first expressed his interest, his father was against it.

"I didn't want him to go through the hardness and wear and tear on his body that the rodeo can cause," he said. "He was a good baseball player so I thought hey, maybe he just stick with that."

"But, he ended up being really good at riding," he added. "So, what could I do?"

With a sincere interest in the sport and a natural talent, Coy began training with Dave and Tyler Waltz and quickly started in high school rodeo competitions as a bull rider.

Competitive bull riders start off on the bull with one hand in a rope and the other in the air. Once the gate is opened, riders have to stay on for as close to eight seconds as possible to earn points.

An animal rights group in Salem County wants an investigation following death of cowboy.

"[While competing as a bull rider] at the national high school finals in Wyoming, Coy hit his face on the bull's horn and broke his jaw," recalled his sister, Laura Lutz. "That's when he decided bareback horses were the way to go."

Bareback riders ride the horses without a saddle using rigging which is essentially a saddle without the seat. Riders put their hand in the rigging, using a sticky substance called rosin and hold on as the horses buck. These horses can weigh-in at up to 1,250 pounds.

"It's so much harder than bull riding, which most people don't realize," Laura. "It's amazing that Coy excelled at it right away. He really had a gift for the sport."

After making the switch to bareback, Coy started to shine as a rider. With the help of his father, and the coaching advice from Tyler Waltz, Coy was becoming a young superstar in the rodeo community.

Coy competed in the high school rodeo associations for both Pennsylvania and New York, where he rode and qualified for nationals all four years. Coy also participated in the Pro Riding Association's competitions during his senior year.

"That's how he won money," said Laura. "When he wasn't asking my parents for money, that's how he got it."

A rodeo coach from the University of Tennessee at Martin noticed Coy's talent and passion for the sport and recruited him for the team, landing Coy a full-ride scholarship.
Throughout his freshman year at UT Martin, Coy rode for the school’s rodeo team where he registered points in seven different rodeos, setting career-highs across the board in bareback riding.

"He absolutely loved it there and made friends that became family," said Laura. "What’s even better is that Tyler was down there helping coach. His role model was there to push him along the way closer to his dreams."

At the 48th Annual UT Martin Spring College Rodeo on the weekend of April 14, Coy tallied 78 points in the first round and 76 points in the short go for a 154 average. His opening round total was best in the field while his average score was tied for the top total in the event, according to the UT Martin website.

"I wasn’t able to go but in April, the whole family went down to watch him compete," said Laura. "The rodeo at UT was like a football game at colleges around here, it was a whole big deal."

She added that was the last time their sister Melanie would see Coy.

With his entire family supporting his dreams, Coy traveled up and down the east coast competing wherever he could.

"It became his whole life," said Laura. "If you were talking to him, rodeos and riding would come up. If he was relaxing at home, he’d have the laptop out playing clips from competitions so he could better his own technique. After his competitions, he’d watch his runs and see what he could have done better. He loved it and he wanted to be great."

On Saturday, May 28 at the 62nd opening weekend Cowtown Rodeo at Cowtown, Coy rode in what turned to out to be his last ride after he was bucked from his horse.

More than 2,200 spectators were in the crowd, gathered for the show.

"Normally, I was right there with him," said Doug. "I’d drive him to the rodeos, be back behind the scenes with him, which I loved. I loved seeing him be so respectful to the animals and the other riders, if anyone needed advice on anything, he’d help them. He was such a positive person like that, he didn’t care who they were. But I think he wanted to prove that he could do it on his own, so this time he did it on his own."

Coy drove himself to the rodeo, more than 200 miles from his hometown of Howard, Pennsylvania.

"I went to help with his rigging and he was happy that I was there but he gave me the ‘what are you doing, I can do this on my own’ face. And he did, he did it without me," said Doug.

During his ride, Coy was bucked from his horse. The horse, named H3, was bucking in a tight circle in a spinning motion instead of bucking while in a forward motion.

"The horses don’t buck to get the rider off. the rider isn’t hurting them," said Laura. "The horse is bucking to get the flank strap off of its rear-end. Coy fell off the horse, and he knew how to get out of the way."

The bucking horse landed a hoof down on Coy’s chest. Arena staff were able to get the horse away from Coy and came to the cowboy’s aid. He was able to be escorted from the arena and taken to The Memorial Hospital of Salem County in Mannington Township where he was pronounced dead.

Over the years, numerous cowboys have suffered broken arms, legs and ribs while competing, but Coy’s death was a first at Cowtown.

"But he died doing what he loved," said Laura.

According to his family Coy will be remembered in the rodeo community as a respectful, kind-hearted person who was always there to make everyone smile.

"After he would get bucked from his horse Coy would throw his hands up and say "are you not entertained," recalled Doug. "The first time he did it he came running back and said ‘did you see that, did you see what I did? Russell Crowe in "Gladiator,"’ and it just became his thing. It was so positive, so him. So, I’m sure he’s looking down from heaven saying it now, ‘are you not entertained, that was my best one yet,’’ said Doug.

He added, "we wanted to raise him to be better than we were, and we did that. He was a better man than I’ll ever be and I’m grateful for that."
UT Martin student killed during rodeo accident

Updated: May 31, 2016 - 2:40 PM

A University of Tennessee at Martin student was killed during a rodeo accident, Saturday evening.

Coy Lutz, 19, was trampled during the Cowtown Rodeo in Pilesgrove, New Jersey. He was taken to a nearby hospital, where he died.

Lutz's parents were among the 2,200 people who attended the event and witnessed the accident.

The owner of the rodeo, Grant Harris, told NJ.com Lutz was tossed from the horse he was riding, and the animal then stepped on him several times.

Coy Lutz recently competed his freshman year at UT-Martin, where he was a member of the rodeo team. He was a criminal justice major.

"Coy was just an outstanding kid who had a real bright future," UT Martin head coach John Luthi said in a statement. "He was a good student and he came from a great family. Even though he was only here for one year, his impact will always be felt here at UT Martin. He was a super human being who always took care of his business. It's hard to imagine why something like this had to happen but we have faith that God is in control."
Coy Lutz, 19, killed in rodeo competition

The University of Tennessee at Martin athletics department is saddened to announce that Coy Lutz, who recently completed his freshman season on the UT Martin rodeo team, passed away on Saturday evening.

Lutz, 19, was fatally injured while competing at the Cowtown Rodeo in Pilesgrove, N.J. — a little over 200 miles from his hometown in Howard, Penn. He was majoring in criminal justice at UT Martin, where he registered points in seven different rodeos in 2015-16. He set career-highs across the board in bareback riding at the 48th Annual UT Martin Spring College Rodeo on April 14-16, tallying 78 points in the first round and 76 points in the short go for a 154 average. His opening round total was best in the field while his average score was tied for the top total in the event.

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Before attending UT Martin, Lutz graduated from Bald Eagle Senior High School in Bellefonte, Penn. Following his commencement, Lutz shared his outlook on life with the Centre Daily Times newspaper.

"I'd tell all the underclassmen to work hard and not to slack, because it's worth it in the long run," Lutz said. "You do all your work and you can do anything."
SGC student visits UT Martin for Preview Day

LOCAL STUDENT ATTENDS SPRING PREVIEW DAY – Andrew Hall (right), of Medina, visited the University of Tennessee at Martin on May 14 during Spring Preview Day. Interested high school students were able to tour the campus, meet with faculty and learn more about financial aid opportunities, campus housing, dining services, and academic and student affairs. Hall is a junior at South Gibson High School. He is pictured with Bud Grimes, UT Martin director of university relations.

Laudermilk inducted into Order of Engineers at UTM

LAUDERMILK INDUCTED INTO ORDER OF ENGINEERS – Matthew Laudermilk, of Milan, participated in the Order of the Engineer ceremony at the University of Tennessee at Martin before commencement exercises May 7. The Order of the Engineer ceremony is a way for graduating engineering students to show pride in their new profession and unity with other engineers. Participating students recite a pledge to uphold honor, workmanship and ethics in the engineering field. He is pictured with Dr. Robert LeMaster (left), professor and chair, Department of Engineering, and Dr. Richard Helgeson, professor and dean, College of Engineering and Natural Sciences.
UTM online program recognized

THE JACKSON SUN

College Values Online has ranked the University of Tennessee at Martin's online RN-BSN nursing bridge program in the top-10 “best values” nationally. UT Martin is the only Tennessee program to make this list, according to a news release.

The RN-BSN bridge program is designed to help nurses who hold two-year RN degrees advance to their bachelor’s degree through completion of online coursework.

“This recognition is important because there's a large sector of registered nurses with diplomas and associate degrees who are seeking to pursue a BSN. The majority of them work full time and need flexibility in course scheduling as well as individualized advising, which is what they get through UTM,” said Dr. Mary Radford, chairwoman of the UT Martin Department of Nursing. “Our program coordinators, Dr. Nancy Warren and Ethel Spivey, personalize plans of study for all RNs wishing to further their education at the baccalaureate level. This educational progression prepares them for leadership roles, as well as for possible graduate education.”

The ranking was determined by comparing program cost and graduation rate to that of comparable programs at other institutions.

“The field of modern medicine is expanding rapidly, which has created an enormous need for nurses in a variety of practice areas. Nurses with bachelor's degrees are in a unique position to take advantage of these opportunities around the country, which makes the University of Tennessee at Martin's online RN degree so attractive to practicing nurses today,” the ranking webpage states. “Accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing and approved by the Tennessee Board of Nursing, UT Martin provides ample curricular and professional resources for nurses looking to advance in their careers.”

The complete top-10 list can be viewed at www.collegevaluesonline.com/rankings/online-rn-programs-best-values.

For more information on the UT Martin Department of Nursing, contact Radford at (731) 881-7140 or by email at marye@utm.edu.

Cates to serve as Hendrix Chair of Excellence in Free Enterprise

Dr. Tommy Cates, of Martin, has been selected to serve as the Tom E. Cates Chair of Excellence in Free Enterprise at the University of Tennessee at Martin, effective Aug. 1.

Cates has been with the university since 1983 and filled various roles, including professor of management; chairman of what is now the Department of Management, Marketing and Information Systems; director of UT Online and executive director of the Office of Extended Campus and Online Studies.

The Hendrix Chair of Excellence develops programs and curricula for public schools to promote and encourage free enterprise practices, according to a news release. The position also works to expand entrepreneurial opportunities in the region.

“We are delighted to have Dr. Cates taking the duties of the Hendrix Chair. His wealth of contacts in West Tennessee, and the entire state, along with his history of creating economically viable education opportunities, means he will be able to hit the ground running and be knowledgeable of obstacles entrepreneurs face. That combination made him, easily, the best candidate for the position,” said Dr. Ross Dickens, chairman, Department of Management, Marketing and Information Systems, and dean, College of Business and Global Affairs.

Cates earned a bachelor of science degree in management from UT Martin, and a master of business administration and a doctoral degree in management from Memphis State University.

The Hendrix Chair of Excellence is one of three such positions at UT Martin. The Horace and Sara Dunagan Chair of Excellence in Banking is also housed in the College of Business and Global Affairs, and the Gil Parker Chair of Excellence is found within the College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences.

Briefly

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Hendrix Chair of Excellence in Free Enterprise at the University of Tennessee at Martin, effective Aug. 1.

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Remember sacrifices more than one day a year — Dunagan

The true meaning of Memorial Day is not lost on David Rinks, who appreciates the sacrifices that members of the military have made to protect America's freedom.

In 2001, the U.S. Army veteran and HVAC supervisor for the University of Tennessee at Martin helped to establish a Memorial Day commemoration event that was held for the 16th year Friday morning on the front lawn of the Hall-Moody Administration Building.

Dr. Nick Dunagan, university chancellor emeritus, served as keynote speaker for the event that began during his first year as UT Martin's chief executive officer.

Dunagan recognized Rinks for helping to create the event that is held by the university on the Friday before Memorial Day. Rinks served two years in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War era and remains grateful for those who served and sacrificed for the nation's freedom.

"I'm so thankful for those people that my children don't have to go and do those things that they had to do for their nation," Rinks said. "We've got a wonderful nation, and we need to do everything we can to protect our nation and stand up for those that did."

Jimmy Kelly of Martin served in the Air Force from 1962-66 and joined the Tennessee National Guard nine years later, serving for a little more than 21 years. He also worked 34 years at the former Milan Arsenal. This event reminds him of the American flag and that "people served and died for this country for the freedom we have."

He described the U.S. as the "best country in the world, and we don't appreciate it enough for the people who served for us and died."

Joe Walker, a World War II veteran who served in the U.S. Army from 1943-46, understands the sacrifices made for freedom.

"I went from Normandy all the way to Munich, Germany, in World War II with the combat engineers," said Walker, a 49-year university employee who worked in the physical plant and housing. "We built 40 bridges across the continent there."

He was accompanied to the commemoration by his daughter, Shelia Thompson, who noted that her father lost a brother in the war, making Memorial Day especially meaningful for him.

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Remember...
(Continued from Page 1)

her father.

A cloudy, cool morning provided the backdrop as the university's Army ROTC Battalion and members of the Tennessee National Guard presented the colors, followed by the singing of the national anthem by the Rev. Elwood Doss, Dennis Kosta, retired UT Martin custodial manager and Tennessee National Guard veteran, gave the invocation, and UT Martin Interim Chancellor Bob Smith welcomed attendees.

"I think it's fitting that the University of Tennessee at Martin host this event as a remembrance," Smith said. "We are an educational institution, and if we do not learn from history then we are doomed to repeat it ... and we don't want to forget those individuals who are part of that history as well."

He also recognized the university's ROTC program, its leaders and the students who are developing their own leadership skills in the program.

Lt. Col. Lowell Howard Jr., UT Martin professor of military science, represented the university's Skyhawk Battalion and recognized Gold Star families — the immediate families of fallen service members and all veterans in attendance before he introduced the speaker.

Dunagan, a retired colonel in the Tennessee National Guard, began his work at UT Martin in 1973 as director of development and held several key administrative positions before being elected by the UT Board of Trustees as the eighth chancellor, a position he held from April 2001 until he retired from the position in June 2007. He was named chancellor emeritus in September 2007.

Dunagan recalled his father's military service in World War II when he fought at Guadalcanal, his childhood pastor who served in the infantry during the Korean War and his own service in the Tennessee National Guard.