University of Tennessee campuses continue online throughout summer

April 1, 2020 by WBBJ 7 Eyewitness News Staff

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. — University of Tennessee System President Randy Boyd – in consultation with chancellors at UT Knoxville, UT Chattanooga, UT Martin and the UT Health Science Center – has announced that summer session classes at all campuses will be delivered online in response to COVID-19.

At UTHSC, clinical rotations in hospitals will continue with students following COVID-19 protocol.

“Our faculty and staff have done an incredible job of moving to an entirely digital platform for the spring semester,” Boyd said. “I am confident they will continue to provide an inspired learning experience for our students who are enrolled in summer classes.”

Since moving to an online platform, UT campuses have provided an estimated 9,300 classes online.

Each campus will be sending out specific communications to their faculty, students and staff regarding the impact to its respective campuses.

The UT System has a comprehensive resource guide that provides information and resources surrounding COVID-19: tennessee.edu/coronavirus/.

The Messenger, Union City, Tennessee, Wednesday, April 1, 2020

UTM postpones SOAR as precaution

The University of Tennessee at Martin has postponed the Summer Orientation and Registration (SOAR) and Transfer Orientation sessions as a precaution related to COVID-19.

The first SOAR dates, originally planned for May 18 and 20, have been rescheduled for June 22 and 24, respectively.

SOAR, previously seven sessions, will be consolidated into five sessions on the following dates: June 22 and 24, July 10 and 28 and Aug. 7. The SOAR sessions originally scheduled for June 5 and 19 have also been combined with the July 10 SOAR. Transfer Orientation will be June 23 and July 16.

The Office of Undergraduate Admissions is communicating any changes to upcoming UT Martin students as updates are available through email, text and virtual appointments with admissions counselors.

UT Martin is conducting all courses online and has canceled all prospective student tours through April. Admissions is planning alternative SOAR sessions in case conditions warrant beyond the selected SOAR dates.

For more information, contact UT Martin admissions at (731) 881-7020.
Dr. Charley Deal Named Vice Chancellor for University Advancement at UT Martin

Dr. Charley Deal has been named vice chancellor for university advancement for the University of Tennessee Foundation Inc. and the University of Tennessee at Martin. Deal will assume responsibilities April 1, 2020.

As the vice chancellor for university advancement, Deal will be responsible for managing UT Martin’s fundraising and alumni programs; coordinating development efforts with UT Foundation and UT System administration; representing UT Martin in the community and among alumni groups and potential university supporters; and will serve on the UT Martin chancellor’s cabinet.

"Charley has a long track record of success in university advancement, and we are fortunate to have him assume this role. He has the dedication, work ethic, leadership skills and passion for the university that are important as we work to advance the mission of UT Martin," said Kerry Witcher, president and CEO of the UT Foundation Inc.

Deal currently serves as the executive director of research, outreach and economic development, overseeing research grants and expenditures, and non-degree courses and camps at UT Martin.

He began his career at UT Martin in 1992 and served in the Office of Alumni Relations and Annual Giving before moving to the Office of Research, Outreach, and Economic Development in 2019. Deal is also the executive director of the WestStar Leadership Program.

Deal earned both his bachelor’s and master’s degrees in business administration from UT Martin and a doctoral degree in philosophy, learning and leadership from UT Chattanooga.

"This is truly an honor to work with a seasoned team of advancement professionals, and I look forward to building upon their successes in providing life-changing opportunities for our students, staff and faculty. I appreciate the confidence Chancellor Keith Carver and UT Foundation President Kerry Witcher have in my abilities, and I am excited to be working with two of the best leaders in higher education in the state," said Deal.

Deal says he will not only focus on opportunities to engage UT Martin faculty, alumni and donors in the region, but also stakeholders from around the world to ensure success for the foundation.

"We are excited about the appointment of Dr. Charley Deal to be our new Vice Chancellor for University Advancement. Charley’s knowledge of the university, the region and our state will serve him well in this leadership role," said UT Martin Chancellor Keith Carver. "I look forward to working with Charley and our entire advancement team to achieve the goals and priorities of the University of Tennessee at Martin."

Dr. Shadow Robinson, dean of the UT Martin College of Engineering and Natural Sciences, served as the search committee chairperson, which included representation from UT Martin faculty and staff as well as UT Foundation Inc. representatives. Committee members were Petra McPherson, vice chancellor for finance and administration; Philip Smartt, chair of the UT Martin Faculty Senate; Love Collins, UT Foundation Inc. vice chancellor for advancement at the UT Health Science Center; Bill Blankenship, UT Martin supporter and member of the UT Martin Development Committee; Phillip Clendenin, UT Foundation Inc. board member and UT Martin alumnus; Jennifer Hampton, UT Martin alumnus; Dana Prince, UT Foundation Inc. advancement staff; and Andrew Hart, UT Foundation Inc. central staff and UT Martin alumnus.

The UT Foundation Inc. is an interdependent nonprofit corporation that supports the University’s educational, research and outreach activities.
UT Martin Postpones SOAR, Transfer Orientation

The University of Tennessee at Martin has postponed the Summer Orientation and Registration (SOAR) and Transfer Orientation Sessions as a precautionary measure related to COVID-19. The first SOAR dates, originally planned for May 18 and 20, have been rescheduled for June 22 and 24, respectively. SOAR, previously seven sessions, will be consolidated into five sessions on the following dates:

June 22 and 24, July 10 and 28 and Aug. 7. The SOAR sessions originally scheduled for June 5 and 19 have also been combined with the July 10 SOAR. Transfer Orientation will be June 23 and July 16.

The Office of Undergraduate Admissions is communicating any changes to upcoming UT Martin Students as updates are available through email, text and virtual appointments with admissions counselors.

While there are no reported cases of COVID-19 in Martin currently, UT Martin is conducting all courses online and has canceled all prospective student tours through April. Admissions is planning alternative SOAR Sessions in case conditions warrant beyond the selected SOAR dates.

For more information, contact admissions at 731-881-7020.

UT Martin Extends Priority Merit Scholarship Deadline

MARTIN — In light of the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, the University of Tennessee at Martin extended its priority merit scholarship deadline until May 1 for first-year and transfer students. Students are automatically considered for priority merit scholarships when applying for admission to UT Martin if the application is submitted before the scholarship deadline. Priority merit scholarships for first-year students require a minimum of a 3.0 GPA and a 20 ACT score to be eligible and transfer students must have a 3.0 GPA. Merit scholarships are awarded as funds are available. The UT Martin Office of Undergraduate Admissions established virtual appointments with admissions counselors to answer questions prospective students may have about admissions, financial aid, housing, SOAR (Summer Orientation and Registration), class registration and more. UT Martin has postponed all in-person tours and orientation sessions until May 1 to schedule a virtual appointment with an admissions counselor, visit umadmissions.questionpro.com. For more information about admissions, contact Destin Tucker, director of admissions, at dtucker3@utm.edu.

The Fayette Falcon
Wednesday, April 1, 2020
UT Martin Community Aids in COVID-19 Relief Effort

MARTIN (March 26) — The University of Tennessee at Martin, along with multiple Tennessee higher education institutions, has partnered with THEC and TEMA to create personal protective equipment for Tennessee COVID-19 relief aid. UT Martin has centralized all of the 3D-capable printers on campus into the Rogers Media Center and is currently printing headbands for medical face shields.

“We are pleased to engage with the Tennessee Higher Education Commission and other educational partners across the state to provide safety materials to Tennessee’s health-care workers. Our faculty and staff are working to create filament bands for safety masks on our campus 3D printers,” said UT Martin Chancellor Keith Carver. “We want to be a resource for the region and state’s efforts to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic situation.”

The media center, located in the Paul Meek Library, continues to add more printers to the operation each day, increasing maximum production and support. Currently, the center is running eight printers around the clock to produce as many headbands as possible. THEC (Tennessee Higher Education Commission) has also purchased two additional 3D printers to aid UT Martin’s capacity.

The printers are being operated by faculty, staff and students who all agree that, while the work is time-consuming, it is rewarding knowing that they are making a difference for Tennessee medical professionals fighting COVID-19.

“It’s an eye-opening experience because we’ve been doing 3D printing, but not on this scale before. It’s amazing what we are able to do, and it is a humbling experience that we are able to help as many people as we can in this situation that we are in,” said student worker Jordan Bell, of Dresden.

The center is also responsible for cutting out sheets of acetate, as well as elastic, to complete the shields that will be assembled after being transported to TEMA (Tennessee Emergency Management Agency).

“We are grateful that our staff and our students are really passionate about helping people. Without all of us, we couldn’t get this done,” Olivia Fernandez, UT Martin Information Technology Services manager, said.

UT Martin has a quota of 1,000 masks but will continue printing as many headbands as needed until the crisis has ended, according to Fernandez.

The relief project originally began at Austin Peay State University after Gov. Bill Lee called universities to action in the fight against the novel coronavirus. After creating the prototype for the medical mask, universities across Tennessee, including UT Martin and UT Knoxville, joined the effort and have produced hundreds of 3D-printed shields so far.

Scott Sloan, Chief of Staff and Emergency Services coordinator for THEC, says the contributions from campuses like UT Martin are making a difference in the state.

“There is impact here. My interactions and communications with TEMA have reinforced that this effort is genuinely making a difference,” said Sloan. “Every band that these schools can produce right now is furthering an assessment and virus testing for a Tennessean somewhere in the state.”

Other members of the UT Martin community are also contributing to the cause. Dr. Renee LaFleur, associate professor of history, and her daughter, Elea­nora, are creating medical face masks out of quilting material to donate to hospitals where supplies are needed the most.

LaFleur, wanting to show her young daughter how important it is to help others, donated the first batch of face masks to Dr. Nikhil Patel’s, of Gastroenterology Associates of Martin, supply drive that is sending medical equipment to New York.

“(Her father and I) consistently try to teach her that when you have, you need to share, and we have time and resources to make these masks, so it is our responsibility to share and help others,” said LaFleur.

From the mass production of face shields for TEMA to a mother-daughter team sewing masks together for doctors across the country, the UT Martin community is working together during a time of crisis to ease the effects of COVID-19.
KNOXVILLE (March 31) — By a unanimous vote Friday afternoon, the University of Tennessee Board of Trustees selected Randy Boyd to serve as UT’s 26th president for the next five years.

"As I've said, naming the president of the University of Tennessee System is one of our most important decisions that we undertake as trustees," Board Chair John Compton said. "We wanted to make sure we were comprehensive and considerate to all key stakeholders in reaching our decision. Randy Boyd is absolutely the right person to lead the university at this time."

Trustees approved Boyd serving in the position up to June 30, 2025. He will continue to serve without a salary. He will receive $10,000 per year to cover state health insurance costs.

"I am thankful to all who have shown confidence and support for me to continue as the 26th president of the University of Tennessee," Boyd said. "It is an honor and a privilege to serve my alma mater and our great state with this great team. Together, we will make this the greatest decade in the history of the University of Tennessee."

In other business, trustees heard an update on what the University is doing regarding COVID-19 and trustees approved revisions to the University’s tenure policy to extend the probationary period.

Boyd, a UT Knoxville alumus and Knoxville businessman, has served as interim president of the UT System since Joe DiPietro retired in November 2018. As president, Boyd serves as chief executive officer of the statewide system, which includes the flagship campus in Knoxville, campuses in Chattanooga, Martin, and Martin, the Health Science Center in Memphis, the Space Institute in Tullahoma, and statewide Institute of Agriculture and Institute for Public Service.

After a positive performance review, Compton recommended foregoing a national search to fill the president position. The other trustees agreed.

"The recommendation was informed by a number of considerations, including the positive momentum of the University, the strategic initiatives that are underway, and, most notably, the favorable feedback received from key stakeholders," Compton said about moving forward without a national search.

During his time as interim, Boyd established the UT Promise scholarship and mentoring program providing free tuition for Tennessee residents whose family household income is less than $50,000 a year and are academically qualified to attend UT. He also led the initiative that created the Oak Ridge Institute at UT, which seeks to create a robust talent pipeline in areas of growing national needs. He also reunited UT Knoxville and UT Institute of Agriculture to elevate the impact and reputation of both.

During the November 2019 Board of Trustees meeting, discussions began to remove the interim title. In December 2019, Compton conducted a formal review of Boyd’s performance, which included requesting feedback from leadership of faculty, staff, and students as well as alumni, legislators and others.

After extensive discussion of Boyd’s review and leadership during the February 2020 Board meeting, Compton requested Boyd participate in a series of town hall meetings across the state to share his vision for leading the University. Town hall meetings were held in Knoxville, Chattanooga, Nashville, Martin, and Memphis between March 4-11.

Boyd is the founder and chairman of Radio Systems Corp., a Knoxville-based business. He also serves as chairman of Boyd Sports and is the owner of the Tennessee Smokies, Johnson City Cardinals, Greeneville Red Sox, and Elizabethton Twins.

Boyd served as chair of the Tennessee Higher Education Commission and as commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development. He is founder and co-chair of the Governor’s Rural Taskforce, which exists to help state government and industry leaders find solutions to the biggest challenges facing rural Tennessee.

Boyd also served as Gov. Bill Haslam’s adviser for higher education and was the architect for Tennessee Promise, Drive to 55 and Tennessee Achieves—initiatives aimed at increasing the number of Tennesseans with post-secondary degrees to 55 percent by 2025 and decreasing financial hardship for those Tennesseans pursuing degrees.

Boyd is the first in his family to graduate from college. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in business with an emphasis on industrial management from UT Knoxville. He also earned a master’s degree in liberal studies with a focus on foreign policy from the University of Oklahoma.

Boyd and his wife, Jenny, live in Knoxville. They have two children and one grandchild.

The University of Tennessee is a statewide system of higher education with campuses in Knoxville, Chattanooga, Martin and Memphis; the UT Space Institute in Tullahoma; the UT Institute of Agriculture with a presence in every Tennessee county; and the statewide Institute for Public Service. The UT system manages Oak Ridge National Laboratory through its UT-Battelle partnership; enrolls about 50,000 students statewide; produces about 10,000 new graduates every year; and represents more than 387,000 alumni around the world.
Dr. Todd Winters Appointed to New Position at UT-Martin

UT-Martin has appointed a new interim executive director of research, outreach and economic development.

Dr. Todd Winters, dean of the College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences, was appointed to fill the vacancy left by Dr. Charley Deal, who was appointed vice chancellor for university advancement.

Dr. Winters will now be responsible for working with the UT System's Office of Government Relations and Advocacy in support of regional and state relationships, oversight and compliance of university-sponsored programs and grants, and the promotion and coordination of outreach activities including non-degree programs.

He will report directly to UT-Martin Chancellor Dr. Keith Carver.

Dr. Winters began his career at UT-Martin in 2013, and teaches courses in animal genetics and reproduction, and lectures in agricultural biotechnology and dairy management.

UTM extends scholarship deadline

In light of the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, the University of Tennessee at Martin has extended its priority merit scholarship deadline until May 1 for first-year and transfer students. Students are automatically considered for priority merit scholarships when applying for admission to UTM if the application is submitted before the scholarship deadline.

Priority merit scholarships for first-year students require a minimum of a 3.0 GPA and a 20 ACT score to be eligible. Transfer students also must have a 3.0 GPA. Merit scholarships are awarded as funds are available.

The UTM Office of Undergraduate Admissions also has established virtual appointments with admissions counselors to answer questions prospective students may have about admissions, financial aid, housing, SOAR (Summer Orientation and Registration), class registration, and more.

UTM has postponed all in-person tours and orientation sessions until May. To schedule a virtual appointment with an admissions counselor, visit utmadmissions.questionpro.com. For more information about admissions, contact Director of Admissions Destin Tucker at dtuckel3@utm.edu.
Virus Postpones SOAR Dates

The University of Tennessee at Martin has postponed the Summer Orientation and Registration and Transfer Orientation sessions as a precautionary measure related to COVID-19.

The first Summer Orientation and Registration dates, originally planned for May 18th and May 20th, have been rescheduled for June 22nd and June 24th, respectively.

Summer Orientation and Registration, previously seven sessions, will be consolidated into five sessions scheduled for June 22nd and June 24th, July 10th and July 28th, and August 7th.

The sessions originally scheduled for June 5th and June 19th have been combined with July 10th. Transfer Orientation is scheduled for June 23rd and July 16th. The Office of Undergraduate Admissions is communicating any changes to upcoming UT Martin students as updates are available through email, text and virtual appointments with admissions counselors.

While there are no reported cases of COVID-19 in Martin currently, UT Martin is conducting all courses online and has canceled all prospective student tours through April. Admissions is planning alternative Summer Orientation and Registration sessions in case conditions warrant beyond the selected dates.

For more information, contact admissions at 731-881-7020.

The Messenger, Union City, Tennessee, Friday, April 3, 2020

LAST ONE — The 2020 UT Martin golf team had its season shut down earlier this month when COVID-19 prompted the NCAA to shut down all spring sports. The early finish marked the end of Jerry Carpenter’s head coaching career. Members of the team include (from left, kneeling) head coach Jerry Carpenter, Jacob Uehlein, Mason Chandler, Bryson Morrell, Nick Wolf, assistant coach Austin Swafford, (standing) Peyton Dix, Jack Story, Luke Smith, Ross Redmont, Tate Chumley and volunteer assistant Scott Carpenter.
MADE IT HAPPEN — Framed photos and a dedication plaque adorn the entrance to the Rhodes Golf Center, honoring Bill and Amy Rhodes for their financial assistance in getting the state-of-the-art facility built. Jerry Carpenter, who officially retires in June, points out Bill Rhodes in a team photo from when he was a member of the Skyhawk team. The 2020 season was cut short due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
Carpenter blessed for tenure as UTM's golf coach

By KEVIN WEAKS
Messenger Sports Editor

Jerry Carpenter’s coaching tenure ended a few months — and perhaps one championship — too soon.

The long-time Skyhawks’ golf coach, who has been associated with UTM in various ways for more than half a century, was scheduled to retire from his coaching post in June.

By that time, his team realistically could have added another Ohio Valley Conference championship to the bulging trophy case.

But, the world changed in March. The COVID-19 outbreak was sweeping across the globe, and its effects reached everywhere, including NCAA athletics.

All spring sports were shut down on March 12, and that marked the end of Carpenter’s coaching career as well as his team’s pursuit of a league title.

“When all this came down, we didn’t know exactly what was going to happen at that time. Nobody did,” Carpenter said. “We sent everybody home for two days, and then the university extended that. There’s a whole lot of things more important than golf. I fully understand that, and our players do. My guys are very smart, very intelligent young men. Our GPA last year was like a 3.48, and so that’s a tribute to them.

“But, that was tough when we sat down on Wednesday and told them what was happening, that NCAA had canceled all spring sports championships. That meant, Hey, that’s it for this year. We’re done. That was tough.”

LOST SEASON

Picked to finish second in the conference in the preseason poll, UTM had a legitimate shot at winning the team championship.

UTM won four tournaments in the fall and had just wrapped a win in the Grover Page Classic at Jackson Country Club when the spring season was shut down. Ross Redmont and Jack Story are seniors on the squad, and Carpenter said telling them was the toughest part.

“When (assistant coach) Austin (Swafford) and I sat there and we had to look at Ross and Jack, our two seniors, because they had — everybody else had worked hard — put everything into it, and this was their senior year and they wanted to go out on top, it was difficult,” he said. “I feel like we had a good chance at it this year, and our players did, too, because that was one thing that they had worked toward. That was tough, sitting there having to tell them that, but they understood. Didn’t make it go down any better, though.

One thing that did make it go a little better came earlier this week when the NCAA Division II committee voted to offer an extra year of eligibility to spring sports athletes.

Carpenter said his seniors have decided to take advantage of that ruling, one even postponing a lucrative post-graduation job to do so.

A fifth-year senior and double major with one being in accounting, Redmont has a position waiting for him at a major accounting firm in Memphis. He is being allowed to delay his start, however, in order to pursue his lost senior season.

Meanwhile, Story is also coming back and will work on his masters while restarting his senior season.

With the seniors coming back and a solid trio of freshmen set to join the already-loaded team, Carpenter has a message for Swafford, who takes over as head coach next year.

“I told Austin, ‘You’re going to be loaded. Everybody’s going to be gunning for you,’” he said. “They’re going to be shooting at him, that’s for sure.”

When Carpenter heard the news about the season being stopped, he didn’t think about his coaching career being cut short. He was just sad that his players wouldn’t be able to complete their quest.

“Just disappointed for my players because of the year we think we could have had,” said Carpenter, who also managed the University Bookstore for 34 years prior to taking the golf post. “But for me, I mean, hey, what can I complain about? I’ve refereed 51 years on the football field. Health has been good. I did have two stents put in 2006, but I never had any problems since then. I’ve been 18 years, coaching the golf team. That’s about 52 years. I’ve been at UT Martin, plus going to school here four years. From that standpoint, no, because it’s been rewarding, been good to me and my family, and I couldn’t ask for a better career for anything, to be honest with you.

Carpenter says the facility gets prospects on campus, and then the school sells itself. It’s led to a team OVC title in 2016 and a near-miss in 2014, highly decorated players Brendon Caballero and Hunter Richardson, six academic All-America selections, six All-OVC and five All-OVC Tournament players, three freshmen of the year, nine newcomers of the year and, most importantly to Carpenter, seven OVC Sportsmanship Awards.

Carpenter himself is a two-time OVC Coach of the Year winner.

The Rhodes Center, a product of hard work, dedication and some good fortune, came about through connections to the program.

Bill Rhodes, a 1987 NCAA Division II Tournament qualifier and honorable mention All-America pick, and his wife Amy were the main financial contributors, and Carpenter and his wife Linda have put in countless hours on maintenance and upkeep. His son Scott has also been huge in the program’s growth in his role as volunteer assistant.

(See Page 5, Col. 1)
Carpenter ...
(continued from page 4)

coach.

Dr. Wesley Totten, chair of the UTM agriculture department, has been instrumental in working with Carpenter through the turf management program, and the coach pointed to many others who helped make the possible — former UTM chancellor Dr. Tom Rakes, the late Dr. Jerry Gresham, Al Hooten and former athletic director Phil Dane.

He also noted that nothing would have been possible without the program's boosters and players' parents.

**BLOW THE WHISTLE**

Officiating high school football and basketball and at the collegiate level has enabled Carpenter to meet a lot of people from all across the country.

His favorite person and best friend, though, was just a short drive away in Union City.

Carpenter gets emotional when he talks about the late Jere Baldridge, who he became friends with in 1967.

“He was my best friend in the world,” Carpenter said. “We both registered in 1968, and we called a million games together, football and basketball. Jere could get along with any-body. If you couldn’t get along with Jere Baldridge, there was something wrong with you.”

Carpenter called his first game, at Hornbeak High School, with Johnny Tate, another long-time ref from Union City.

Carpenter has seen some of the greatest players and coaches the state of Tennessee has to offer, from Penny Hardaway and William Bedford as prep basketball players in Memphis to legendary Shelbyville girls' head coach Rick Insell, now the women's coach at Middle Tennessee State.

He has high praise for former local and area coaches Jimmy Whitby, Harry Ferguson, Fred Gamlin and Elvin Hatch in basketball and Randy Barnes, Jim Poteete and John Tucker in football, has seen some wild things from fans in the stands and calls former Haywood County High School and University of Kentucky standout Tony Delk the best basketball player he's ever seen.

Some of Carpenter's highest praise is reserved for current UTM women's head man Kevin McMillan.

"I first met him when he was coaching at Millington," Carpenter said. "We went down and worked a tournament. I thought, 'Who is this young guy?' Teams were pretty good; first time coaching. Went back another year, same way. Another year, same way. I thought, 'Wow, this guy is good.'"

When the Westview girls' job opened up, Carpenter campaigned for McMillan to get that job and then did the same when the UTM women's job came open. McMillan got both, and each program took huge steps forward that continue today.

"As I tell people, he's got a plan for getting off the bus, walking across the parking lot and going in the gym," Carpenter said. "I've been around him a bunch. He's the best; he's just prepared. Whatever the situation is, whether it's fast, whether it's slow, whether it's rough, whether it's finesse, he can adapt to it.

"I picked up a lot of things that I've used from him, too. A lot of what little success I've had, with handling people and having a plan and this and that, I've taken a lot of things from Kevin McMillan." Carpenter has worked numerous state tournaments and playoff games and has been honored for his work many times, including induction into the TSSAA Hall of Fame in 2006.

**STILL AROUND**

While he is retiring as head coach, Carpenter will still be around to help Swafford and work in fundraising.

And, he's going to make sure the Rhodes Center stays immaculate, too.

"I'll continue to help him," Carpenter said. "If he wants me to recruit with him, sometimes you go to a tournament, you need two people. I'll still help him fundraise.

"When we built this place, and I got it in the shape it's in, I made myself a promise and I made Bill Rhodes a promise: As long as I'm living and I can, I'm going to make sure that place is in first-class shape. It's going to be first-class, I promise you that."

He also hopes he has passed on a philosophy that has served him well.

"One thing that I live by and try to teach my players is to treat people the way you wish to be treated," he said.

Something Carpenter won't miss will be all the administrative work.

"I tell everybody that this is what I'm glad to be getting rid of — paperwork."

Nothing wrong with being done with that a few months early.

Sports editor Kevin Weaks can be contacted by email at kweaks@ucmessenger.com.
College senior from Dickson learns about political reporting

SUBMITTED
Apr 7, 2020

Kayla Brooks, a senior at UT Martin from Dickson, recently helped an Associated Press reporter cover the South Carolina Democratic Primary. SUBMITTED

Kayla Brooks, a senior at UT Martin majoring in communications and current news director of WUTM-FM 90.3 "The Hawk," received the opportunity to shadow Associated Press journalist Meg Kinnard for four days leading up to the 2020 South Carolina Democratic Primary.

Brooks, a Dickson native who aspires to be a political reporter, said working with Kinnard gave her a new appreciation for the work she is doing now at UT Martin. Even as a student, Brooks was able to network with current reporters, sit in on interviews with presidential candidates and by the end of the weekend, conduct her own interview.
"It made me feel very important and reminded me that being a student doesn't mean I'm not qualified... I don't have to limit myself," said Brooks.

Kinnard, the granddaughter of former Tennessee Congressman and UT Martin alumnus Ed Jones, has reported for The Associated Press since 2005. Kinnard is also the sponsor of an endowed scholarship awarded to a student dedicated to objective journalism at UT Martin.

The pair met at UT Martin when Kinnard was the guest lecturer in Brooks' broadcast news writing class. They quickly connected on Twitter where Brooks asked if there was any chance she could shadow her the next time she was in Tennessee.

"Impressed by the gutsiness" of Brooks' request, Kinnard responded by flying her to South Carolina to follow her on the presidential campaign.

"I thought this was a bold, assertive move on her part, and showed a lack of shyness that's also vital to being a good journalist," Kinnard said. "For someone interested in political journalism, the opportunity to shadow an AP political reporter is a tremendous opportunity."

Brooks said that her greatest takeaway from the entire experience was realizing even though she is reporting for a student news outlet, she plays just as important of a role as a journalist objectively reporting the truth as Kinnard does.

"I matter as a student journalist," Brooks said. "Everything you write is going out on a radio station. I realize its student-run, but that doesn't mean it can't be good. That doesn't mean it can't be very good."

As news director of WUTM-FM 90.3, Brooks said the entire staff is now more cognizant of the news it produces to make sure it is not only accurate, but also representative of the UT Martin campus.

"(Kayla) is indeed smart, thoughtful and inquisitive — and yet another great ambassador for the University of Tennessee at Martin, a school with a history of turning out impressive people who make a difference beyond the region," Kinnard said. "We need more Kaylas in the news business."
UT Martin graduate finds passion through injury

Most people would consider a torn ACL during their high school senior football season a disappointing end to everything they had worked toward, but for Collin Stricklin of Martin, this injury led him to his passion and dream career: physical therapy.

Stricklin, now a senior health and human performance major at the University of Tennessee at Martin, is ready to graduate, confident that UTM has prepared him for wherever life takes him next.

“UTM has given me a base understanding of the knowledge that I need for graduate school, as well as confirm that this is the field of study I want to be in,” Stricklin said.

Stricklin is studying to become a physical therapist who specializes in pediatrics and sports medicine after spending the majority of his adolescence in physical therapy because of various sports-related injuries. Inspired by Brian Smith, the sports medicine therapist who volunteered for his school’s athletics program, Stricklin is now the one inspiring children through physical therapy at The Sideline clinic in Martin.

“I love kids. Sometimes I feel like I am just a big kid myself. My hopes for specializing in pediatric physical therapy are to help increase a child’s quality of life and chances to participate in the things they would like. Just because they have a physical disability doesn’t mean they don’t want to play basketball, football or cheer. I want to make those aspirations for them as close to a reality as possible,” said Stricklin.

He now works alongside the physical therapist that encouraged him to pursue his love of exercise science in high school at The Sideline clinic and even has the opportunity to assist Smith during Westview High School football games on Friday nights. Stricklin enjoys most working in the clinic with kids on their exercises and helping them reach their goals.

While Stricklin has dedicated himself to his studies and work, he also knew that he would benefit from participating in campus organizations that would improve his professionalism in order to be a well-rounded therapist.

He is a member of the S.H.A.P.E (Sports, Health, Athletics, Physical Education) Club, Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity, Phi Eta Sigma National Honor Society and served on SOAR (Summer Orientation and Registration) staff.

His participation in each group has allowed Stricklin to refine not only his leadership and the intrapersonal communication skills that help him in his practice but also his viewpoint on life.

“The organizations have helped me have a different outlook on life, help me make connections, help me to realize that life is a good thing and it can be hard sometimes, but it’s good to have a support system to back you up when you need them,” said Stricklin.

Stricklin hopes to offer the same support to his clients that UT Martin has offered to him these past four years. Even though he grew up in Martin, he said it was the university that made it feel like home. He wants incoming and current students to know that while college can be a scary transition in life, the faculty, staff, students and administrators will always be there to help when you need it.

“It’s a little community that’s loving, kind and supportive,” said Stricklin. “Everybody does truly care about you and your well-being. You’re not just another student coming through.”

Stricklin will graduate in spring 2020. He has not decided which physical therapy graduate school he will soar to next, but he does know that UT Martin has prepared him for wherever he lands.

“I believe that life has a road laid out before me and lots of options of places that I can go,” said Stricklin. “I believe that UTM has been a stepping stone to prepare me to go on this thing called life.”
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Winters will replace Dr. Charley Deal, who is the newly appointed vice chancellor for university advancement. Deal has served as the executive director of research, outreach and economic development since February 2019 and will assume his new responsibilities as vice chancellor April 1.

“Dr. Deal and staff have done a wonderful job of building the ROED office. We hope to continue growing UT Martin’s footprint as an economic engine for the region and continue to engage the community adjusting to their needs as they recover from this current pandemic. We also want to continue to grow our research and scholarly activities at the university, which in turn will positively impact the region, nation and earth as a whole,” said Winters. Winters began his career at UT Martin in 2013 and teaches courses in animal genetics and reproduction, and lectures in nutritional endocrinology, agricultural biotechnology and dairy management. As college dean, Winters has gained experience in outreach and economic development in rural communities and has a strong research background in both grantsmanship and scholarly activity.

“I’m dedicated to serving UT Martin and West Tennessee to the best of my abilities. I believe I have the passion, knowledge and work ethic to do a good job,” said Winters.

For more information, contact the Office of Research, Outreach and Economic Development at 731-881-7015.

Nursing program best in state

The UT Martin Department of Nursing has earned the rank of “2020 Best RN Program in Tennessee” by RegisteredNursing.org, a nursing advocacy organization. UTM’s nursing program ranked No. 1 of 44 other college nursing programs in Tennessee.

The colleges were assessed on multiple factors that determine how well a program supports students toward licensure and future careers, which is calculated by a five-year average of the program’s first-time NCLEX-RN pass-rates weighted by each year. UTM scored a 98.68 out of 100 on the nursing advocacy organization’s criteria test.

UTM consistently produces high pass rates on the NCLEX-RN that are above state and nation averages and shares this achievement with several other nursing programs across the state, according to Dr. Mary Radford, chair of the Department of Nursing.

“The ranking reflects the hard work UTM Nursing faculty put into ensuring students are ready to pass the licensure exam and to enter the workforce as competent registered nurses. We regularly evaluate and reevaluate our curriculum to be sure it reflects the field of modern nursing and success in the field from graduation forward,” said Radford.

According to registerednursing.org, the UTM nursing department prepares its graduates with critical thinking and effective communication skills.

“With a consistently high first-time NCLEX-RN pass rate, UTM Martin grads are poised for top employment opportunities,” stated the ranking release.

“We are very proud of our graduates and the work they put into preparing for the licensure exam. It is a very intimidating, high-stakes test that puts a lot of pressure on them, so diligence in preparing is key, and they always show us their persistence and determination in that,” Radford said.
Inspired by physical therapy, UT Martin student soars to new heights

Most people would consider a torn ACL during their high school senior football season a disappointing end to everything they had worked toward. But for Collin Stricklin of Martin, the injury led him to his passion and dream career: physical therapy.

Stricklin, now a senior health and human performance major at the University of Tennessee at Martin, is ready to graduate, confident that the college has prepared him for wherever life takes him next.

"(UT Martin) has given me a base understanding of the knowledge that I need for graduate school, as well as confirm that this is the field of study I want to be in," Stricklin said.

Stricklin is studying to become a physical therapist who specializes in pediatrics and sports medicine after spending the majority of his adolescence in physical therapy because of various sports-related injuries.

Inspired by Brian Smith, the sports medicine therapist who volunteered for his school's athletics program, Stricklin is now the one inspiring children through physical therapy at The Sideline clinic in Martin.

"I love kids. Sometimes I feel like I am just a big kid myself," he said. "My hopes for specializing in pediatric physical therapy are to help increase a child's quality of life and chances to participate in the things they would like.

"Just because they have a physical disability doesn’t mean they don’t want to play basketball, football or cheer. I want to make those aspirations for them close to a reality as possible."

He now works alongside the physical therapist who encouraged him to pursue his love of exercise science in high school at The Sideline and even has the opportunity to assist Smith during Westview High School football games on Friday nights.

Stricklin most enjoys working in the clinic with kids on their exercises and helping them reach their goals.

While Stricklin has dedicated himself to his studies and work, he also knew he would benefit from participating in campus organizations that would improve his professionalism in order to be a well-rounded therapist. He is a member of the SHAPE (Sports, Health, Athletics, Physical Education) Club, Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity and Phi Eta Sigma National Honor Society and served on SOAR (Summer Orientation and Registration) staff.

Stricklin's participation in each group has allowed him to refine not only his leadership and the interpersonal communication skills that help him in his practice, but also his viewpoint on life.

"The organizations have) helped me have a different outlook on life, help me make connections, help me to realize that life is a good thing and it can be hard sometimes, but it's good to have a support system to back you up when you need them," he said.

Stricklin hopes to offer the same support to his clients that UT Martin has offered to him these past four years. Even though he grew up in Martin, he said it was the university that made it feel like home.

He wants incoming and current students to know that while college can be a scary transition in life, the faculty, staff, students and administrators will always be there to help when you need it.

"It's a little community that's loving, kind and supportive," he said. "Everybody does truly care about you and your wellbeing. You're not just another student coming through."

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UT campuses to continue online through summer

University of Tennessee System President Randy Boyd — in consultation with chancellors at UT Knoxville, UT Chattanooga, UT Martin and the UT Health Science Center — has announced that summer session classes at all campuses will be delivered online in response to COVID-19.

At the UT Health Science Center, clinical rotations in hospitals will continue with students following COVID-19 protocol.

“Our faculty and staff have done an incredible job of moving to an entirely digital platform for the spring semester,” Boyd said. “I am confident they will continue to provide an inspired learning experience for our students who are enrolled in summer classes.”

Since moving to an online platform, UT campuses have provided an estimated 9,300 classes online. Each campus will be sending out specific communications to their faculty, students and staff regarding the impact to its respective campuses.

The UT System has a comprehensive resource guide that provides information and resources surrounding COVID-19: tennesssee.edu/coronavirus/.

In December 2019, the global health care community identified a new respiratory virus that originated in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China, and has since been labeled 2019 Novel Coronavirus Disease (or COVID-19, according to the World Health Organization). Spread of coronavirus is correlated with circumstances of close and sustained contact with others who are infected.

The University of Tennessee System has campuses in Knoxville, Chattanooga, Martin and Memphis; the UT Space Institute in Tullahoma; the UT Institute of Agriculture with a presence in every Tennessee county; and the statewide Institute for Public Service.

The UT system manages Oak Ridge National Laboratory through its UT-Battelle partnership; enrolls about 50,000 students statewide; produces about 10,000 new graduates every year; and represents more than 387,000 alumni around the world.

Merit scholarship deadline extended to May 1 at UTM

In light of the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, the University of Tennessee at Martin has extended its priority merit scholarship deadline until May 1 for first-year and transfer students.

Students are automatically considered for priority merit scholarships when applying for admission to UT Martin if the application is submitted before the scholarship deadline.

Priority merit scholarships for first-year students require a minimum of a 3.0 grade point average and a 20 ACT score to be eligible, and transfer students must have a 3.0 GPA. Merit scholarships are awarded as funds are available.

The UT Martin Office of Undergraduate Admissions has also established virtual appointments with admissions counselors to answer questions prospective students may have about admissions, financial aid, housing, SOAR (Summer Orientation and Registration), class registration and more. UT Martin has postponed all in-person tours and orientation sessions until May.

To schedule a virtual appointment with an admissions counselor, visit utmadmissions.questionpro.com. For more information about admissions, contact Destin Tucker, director of admissions, by email at dtuckle13@utm.edu.
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UT Campuses To Continue Online Classes Throughout The Summer

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For more information, contact the Office of Research, Outreach and Economic Development at 731-881-7015.
**UT-President’s Comments**

In these challenging times, all of us at the University of Tennessee are determined to keep what is most important first in every action and every decision: the health and safety of our students, faculty and staff—nothing will have a higher priority. At the same time, we are working tirelessly to find new and innovative ways to continue our mission of educating, discovering, and serving our state.

We have been resilient, and I could not be more proud of our team. Students are taking classes remotely, faculty have adjusted their instruction to a new virtual world while ensuring students complete courses and graduate on time. They are finding ways to overcome every obstacle. Staff are finding ways to do their work in new ways too, and discovering that work is not a place you go to. Work is a verb and it can be done anywhere, and often times it can be done even more effectively and efficiently.

In spite of the seemingly endless series of obstacles thrown our way, we are making lemonade! That’s what they say to do when it’s raining lemons, and that is precisely what we are doing. We have even created a portal where everyone is recording their “lemonade,” or new, innovative solutions they are discovering as a result of these disruptions. Someone once said never let a good crisis go to waste, and we aren’t. We are discovering transformational ways to educate students and to do our work. We will stay healthy and safe, while at the same time making UT better and stronger than ever.

There will be a revival. It is not a question of if, just a question of when. We will bring back our students, faculty and staff to our campuses, but it will not be the same. At least three things will be different. We will have transformed how we accomplish our mission. We will be more prepared for future catastrophic events. And we will have a stronger bond with an ever-lasting greater appreciation for each other, for our mission and for our University.

Finally, there will be a resurgence. We won’t go back to how we were. Instead, we will surge ahead in a profoundly better way. This crisis will not derail the greatest decade, but instead it will define it. How we are responding and overcoming is a catalytic moment in time. How we all rise to the challenge will be how we will be defined forever. I have never been more inspired by the heroism and dedication of all our students, faculty and staff, and, because of them, this will still be the greatest decade in the history of the University of Tennessee!

UT President
Randy Boyd
Best RN nursing programs in Tennessee

According to the registerednursing.org, an online rating service, the best RN schools in Tennessee are:

1. University of Tennessee at Martin
2. Lee University in Cleveland
3. Jackson State Community College
4. Nashville State Community College
5. Chattanooga State Community College
6. University of Tennessee Health Science Center in Memphis
7. Austin Peay University
8. University of Tennessee at Chattanooga
9. Carson-Newman University
10. Tennessee Tech University

Source: Registerdnursing.org
Home for the semester: Rutherford County college students share thoughts on COVID-19

Nancy DeGennaro, Murfreesboro Daily News Journal  Published 6:00 a.m. CT April 12, 2020

The Daily News Journal reached out to four Rutherford County university students who returned home after COVID-19 prompted educational institutions to move to online learning entirely.

Each has written an essay about thoughts and feelings regarding the pandemic's effects on the college experience.

**Zavior Phillips, age 21**

*2016 Central Magnet School grad, University of Chicago senior*

Remote learning sounded fun for exactly 24 hours.

The day it was announced, I pictured all the things I could do in my seemingly limitless free time.

Taking online classes while confined to his childhood home in Murfreesboro is not how Zavior Phillips expected to spend his last semester at the University of Chicago.

"You build up to this moment. Senior spring is a big deal where they have lots of parties and see a lot of people on campus. But we received the information (about COVID-19) so quickly we weren't able to experience all those things before we had to leave," Phillips said.

No parties with fellow seniors. No graduation ceremony in June, although there's an option to walk with another class in the near future. No senior rituals with classmates celebrating the final chapter of his undergraduate degree.

Then there's the uncertainty of finding employment.

"A lot of (job leads) have fallen through and no one is in a place of hiring," Phillips said.

Although Phillips plans to return to college with friends after the crisis has leveled out, it's not the same.

"I definitely wish it weren't during my senior year. Seniors both in high school and college are probably the most hurt by (quarantining)," Phillips said.
I regret to inform you, however, that I am not sitting on a beach under a blue sky. I wrote this from the Lego-filled desk in my little brother’s bedroom.

Coming home early from Chicago has been bittersweet.

The bitter part is pretty easy to see: no “Senior Spring,” no graduation ceremony, no quiet place to study in a household of seven loud people who are bored out of their minds.

But there is still a sweet part.

We’ve had more family meals and game nights and random moments where we all burst into song than ever before.

Taking a discussion class on the floor of my sister’s closet because my brother refuses to stop yelling at Fortnite can be frustrating, but it’s also nice to be with my family and get one last hurrah at home.

Sally Smith, 19

2019 Central Magnet School grad, Kenyon College freshman

I had just gotten home from a spring break tournament with my Frisbee when colleges began responding to the coronavirus crisis.

Kenyon initially lengthened spring break and switched to online classes for a week only to move the rest of the semester online a few days later.

Kenyon has handled the crisis notably well and all students will now be taking their classes pass/fail with the option to reveal their grades on their transcripts upon seeing their grade at the end of the semester.

Obviously, I am disappointed to have to complete the rest of my freshman year online. But given the circumstances, there wasn’t really another option.

I miss my friends and the routine and structure of having in-person classes.

And I have begun missing the small things that made my first semester and a half so great, like the orange olive cake at the dining hall and going to trivia with my friends every Wednesday night.

My online classes vary in format, with some meeting as regularly as we were prior to spring break, and others being an email with a lecture and a PowerPoint.
I don't enjoy distance learning anywhere near as much as I enjoyed in-person classes and miss the small classroom feel of Kenyon. But what else is there to do?

Coming home to quarantine has been a weird experience as I had just gotten used to the freedom of college life. But I am glad to be around my family in this time of crisis.

I have enjoyed having virtual gatherings and hangouts with friends from school and my Frisbee team, but can't wait to see everyone this fall.

The coronavirus is a pandemic that continues to impact life in Tennessee in a variety of ways. The USA Today Network newsrooms in Tennessee are uniquely positioned to cover this crisis. We're providing this critical information for free. To support our mission, please consider a subscription (https://offers.usatodaynetwork.com/network-regional-tennessee/). For more information on COVID-19, please visit cdc.gov/coronavirus (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html).

Tevin Shipp, 18

2019 Smyrna High School grad, University of Tennessee-Martin freshman

The feeling of being told I must go home is hard to describe.

It's my first year on campus and I was just getting into the groove of things. I had just gotten used to the football schedule and adapting to mixing sports with the college life.

I enjoyed being back home, although I realized I missed my family way more than I expected and missed the family timed that we shared.

Also, more than anything, I missed home-cooked meals! There is nothing like sitting down and eating something your mom made specifically for you.

Although I am home, adjusting to online schooling was not that hard since the football team and advisors helped the athletes and created a calendar with due dates that we have access to. Coaches also FaceTime us multiple times a week to make sure our grades are staying up.

Online schooling is easier to me, but I'd rather have that connection and face-to-face interaction.

One thing that I struggled adjusting to is conducting football meetings via Zoom or FaceTime. Also, it has been extremely difficult staying in shape with quarantine. It's just a different approach to football considering the circumstances of everything.

Maddie Kinard, 19

2018 Oakland High School International Baccalaureate, University of Tennessee-Knoxville sophomore

I was not remotely prepared to leave Knoxville. I lived in the sorority house, and I remember speculation really building up the day before the announcement. I packed up all essentials as suggested before I left for what was originally just a three-week break.
I was supposed to get the rest of my belongings weeks ago, but that has been delayed to a date undetermined. It took me at least a week to process that I really would not be going back. I am, however, happy to be home in that I missed my family and the relaxed feeling I get when I am in Murfreesboro.

Academically, it was an easier transition than anticipated. Most of my teachers are very personable and genuinely care about their students' success. So I know they put a lot of time into finding the easiest, most effective way to continue online coursework.

Time management has been the biggest adjustment. For now, I now lack a routine.

While I still feel confident in my performance, I prefer in-person classes because of the hands-on experience and access to campus resources.

What I miss most are my friends and the college atmosphere itself. Knoxville is a second home to me, and the fact that some of my friends are hundreds of miles away is disheartening.

There were so many sports games, philanthropy events, formals and competitions I was highly anticipating. But now all that anyone can look forward to is an end to the pandemic.

Despite all this, I choose to think more so about how thankful I am to be in good health.
University of Tennessee at Martin has recognized the members of the 2020 class of Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges.

Forty-one juniors, seniors, and graduate students were included from UT Martin this year, including one student from Overton County – Mary Rachel Gean, of Monroe, a senior studying dietetics.

Who's Who Among Students, established in 1934, is a national honor society based on academic and community service merit rather than financial ability to participate.

For more information about UT Martin visit utm.edu.
Henrietta Giles, a lecturer of communications at the University of Tennessee at Martin, was interviewed by the BBC’s Matthew Bannister concerning her work with Civil Rights activist Rev. Joseph Lowery who died Friday, March 27, at the age of 98.

Giles’ interview aired April 3 on the BBC radio show “Last Word,” which honors influential figures who have recently passed away.

Growing up as an African American woman in the South, Giles, like many, looked to the work of Civil Rights activists like Reverends Martin Luther King Jr. and Lowery as guidance in her fight for justice and equality. Lowery, best known for his “fiery” sermons and passionate work with the Civil Rights Movement, was influential early on in Giles’ life due to his ability to be “brutally honest” when discussing topics that were important to him.

“I had always admired him just from the work that he did,” Giles said. “He became this fixture of someone who was always working in the Civil Rights Movement, who was always fighting for people who didn’t have a voice.

I just always grew up... knowing that he was one of those folks on the front line who was fighting for equality.”

Later in her life as she began collaborating with Lowery on various projects, such as co-authoring his biography “Singing the Lord’s Song in a Strange Land,” Giles felt that the “bigger-than-life character” she had admired so long would become someone she’d actually get to know.

“He had the best sense of humor and that was something that was just so different because, in my mind, I just revered him so much,” said Giles. “He was quick with the snappy comebacks that would throw me off guard. It was always something really funny that you wouldn’t expect him to say, but he almost had this grandfatherly appeal: very wise and each time I talked to him, (I) walked away thinking ‘Wow that was pretty extraordinary.’”

During the interview, Giles shared stories from Lowery’s life, detailing his perseverance and commitment to fighting for equality for African Americans and the opposition he faced daily because of his work, validating the character she had grown to respect over her lifetime. Through the trials of growing up as an African American in Alabama in the 1920s to being a founding father of the Civil Rights Movement to seeing everything he worked for come to fruition as he gave the benediction at the inauguration of Barack Obama, the first African American president of the United States, Giles says he dedicated his life, even until the very end, to fighting for those who faced injustice.

“It was a full-circle moment for him as sort of an older African American seeing the first black president of this country. It was a full-circle moment where you heard a lot of people saying, ‘I never thought I’d live to see the day that this would happen,’ and this was a similar sentiment that Rev. Lowery shared with all of his work during the Civil Rights Movement that that was such a momentous moment in time, moment in our history to see that take place,” said Giles.

Even as Giles and Lowery worked together on his book, the pair did not meet until the first book signing almost three years after beginning the writing process, having spoken only through phone calls and email. After meeting, Giles says it felt like the two had been lifelong friends.

Lowery also participated in multiple podcasts and a documentary Giles produced about black sacred music.

In the decade that the two worked together and the lifetime Giles had spent learning from him, the most important lesson she took away from his time with Lowery was that it does not matter how old you are, you are always capable of doing what is right and fighting for justice.

“You’re never too old to have an effect. You’re never too old to work for something that is important, something that is substantial,” said Giles. “I learned... not to stop fighting, not to stop trying to speak up for those who can’t speak up, for those who don’t have a voice or whose voice has been suppressed. Because even though he was older, I would dare say he fought until the end for people who suffered injustice.”

The last time she saw Lowery was during their interview for the documentary as he sat relaxed in his home den surrounded by the awards he had received for the work he accomplished during his lifetime, like the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Giles cherishes the special moment she shared with her crew and Lowery as he shared stories and anecdotes about his life and the hard work so many others like himself had contributed to the Civil Rights Movement.

“It was always a joy to talk to him, it really was,” said Giles.

Even in his death, Giles has a steadfast belief in the work that Lowery accomplished in the shared fight for equal rights and the effect he had not only on her but everyone he came into contact with.

“What I would like people to remember about him is not to give up, that it doesn’t matter how old you are, if you have a voice, then possibly you can be the voice for someone else. You can help someone else,” Giles said.

“I think that’s what I hope people remember about him, he fought until the very end. He was 98 years old and was still fighting.”
UTM women among most influential in West Tennessee

Dr. Cindy Boyles, associate professor of criminal justice, and Virginia Grimes, coordinator of the University of Tennessee at Martin’s WestStar Leadership Program, are among the 2020 Sterling Award winners.

Jackson Area Business and Professional Women announced the Sterling Awards 2020 winners: 20 Most Influential Women in West Tennessee, Sue Shelton White Award winner and Outstanding Woman Military Veteran on Tuesday, March 31.

Five WestStar current members and graduates were also named as the 20 Most Influential Women in West Tennessee including Joyce Brown, Natalie Porter, Mary Ann Sharpe, Sandy Tarkington and Dr. Cheryl Browne.

The awards ceremony has been postponed until August due to the coronavirus outbreak.

“These awards were created to honor women who work tirelessly to better lives in their West Tennessee communities,” said Wanda Stanfill, Sterling Awards director and vice-president, JABPW.

“These amazing women succeed in business, education, government, industry, law enforcement and the arts. We have singers and musicians, poets, writers, and artists. They run marathons or become gourmet chefs. Our Sterling recipients like to hike, fly fish, shoot rifles, drive large truck and off-road ATVs. They studied abroad, hitchhiked across Europe and traveled across the United States.”

The winners are outstanding in these categories: government and public service; small business/entrepreneur; business and technology; service (community/non-profit); education; labor; manufacturing; health care; legal and other fields.

For more information on the Sterling Awards, contact Stanfill at 731-693-8359.
John, Paul, George and Ringo

UT Martin University Scholar utilizing beetles in research

John, Paul, George and Ringo have discreetly lived on the campus of the University of Tennessee at Martin without drawing much attention from the public through the devoted care of Hannah Trimble, a senior criminal justice major with a focus in forensics science from Greenfield, and Dr. Jack Grubaugh, professor of biological sciences.

While these cleverly named beetles aren't the beloved English rock band of the 1960s, the four colonies of Dermestid beetles — or flesh-eating beetles as Ms. Trimble prefers to call them — housed at the UT Martin teaching farm have "come together" as the subject in a University Scholars forensics research project.

The Dermestid beetles, or Dermestes maculatus, only feed on decomposing organisms and animal products, and are currently being used to test the accuracy of the post-mortem interval — the method used to determine the time of death — in a study conducted by Ms. Trimble with the guidance of Grubaugh. Scientists believe the beetles appear two weeks post-mortem, preferring the dried flesh of the body, while Ms. Trimble and Grubaugh believe they appear earlier.

As a member of the University Scholars Program, Ms. Trimble is required to complete a two-year academic research project related to her studies at UT Martin and has chosen the creepy-crawlies to defend her designation as a University Scholar when she graduates.

By using animal skeletons, Ms. Trimble and Grubaugh are testing their hypothesis that the beetles actually prefer fresh meat over dry meat and determining how soon the beetles are attracted to an organism after death if other insects are not present in the environment.

"Many people believe that Dermestes maculatus prefer rough, dried carrion as opposed to fresh, but from dealing with the beetles, we know that they will definitely eat fresh meat. We believe that the beetles may prefer fresh carrion and are just outcompeted by blowflies and other insects that make it to the bodies first. If what we believe is true, it could be very important in forensic science and
determining (post-mortem interval),” Ms. Trimble said.

According to Grubaugh, the research opportunity benefiting Ms. Trimble is unique to UT Martin and cannot be found in other undergraduate programs.

“It’s one of the things that we do here, we put an emphasis on research, and that makes us different from a lot of other small schools. We really want to see students do research because it just adds that much to their whole personality. ... It’s rare to find someone that is doing research without undergrads in our program.”

As the beetles clean the animal skeletons, not only are they contributing to Ms. Trimble’s project, they are also preparing teaching specimens for animal science laboratories at UT Martin. One class is currently using the beetles to clean a horse carcass for students to identify and rebuild the skeleton.

Ms. Trimble’s project has also spread into the community as local hunters have contributed animals to be eaten. Tate Family Foods grocery store in Greenfield has donated out-of-date pork to sustain the beetles’ appetites between experiments.

“We really owe them big time for that, so we thank the community that is involved as well,” said Grubaugh.

The beetles have been used to clean the skeletons of a variety of animals, including most notably a camel, a llama, a kangaroo and otters, as well as deer, coyotes, cows and other native state mammals.

“My favorite part of this research so far has been just getting in there and doing everything. Before this project, I had never done actual research, so I love being able to collect my own data and watch as everything comes together,” Ms. Trimble said.

“Also, the beetles are fun to watch as they clean skulls, until they hide the bones, then they’re just jerks.”

The experiment will eventually involve 40 condensed colonies of beetles; however, for the preliminary trials, the pair have amassed four large colonies of hundreds of thousands of beetles to set parameters for the project. The official study will begin once the weather gets warmer.

While the timeline of the experiment depends on many variables, Ms. Trimble and Grubaugh plan to publish their research once enough data has been collected and the results are compiled. Trimble will use her research paper to defend her project in front of the Honors Council next spring in order to graduate as a University Scholar.

The University Scholars Program promotes individual integrity, academic achievement and education that develops intellectual, moral and social responsibility among its students.
Music lecturer buys keyboards to give students piano access

When many of his class piano students began struggling with the shift to online class because of a lack of access to physical keyboards, University of Tennessee at Martin music lecturer Charles Lewis began searching for solutions to ease the transition.

Lewis says even with the incorporation of a virtual piano, at least 20 percent of the students in his class were still falling behind. After searching on Facebook Marketplace, Lewis was able to purchase five keyboards throughout Tennessee and Kentucky with his own money and personally deliver them to his students’ houses across West and Middle Tennessee.

“When you have students who are very confident in what they’re doing, making very good grades, playing everything that they’re asked to play, and they seem to be the ones who are struggling, I just felt like I had to do something,” Lewis said. “That’s what we do as teachers... It’s what we do for our students. It’s UT Martin.”

Byron Cupples, a sophomore music major from Newbern and a recipient of a keyboard from Lewis, said having access to a piano now has allowed him to be more productive and have a better understanding of the material taught in his class. While the transition to online classes has been challenging, the piano Lewis brought him makes it feel like he is back in Lewis’s class at UT Martin.

“Really did not expect that amount of generosity; all of my teachers are very helpful, but the amount of work they have gone through to help the students is amazing. It really makes me feel like I am at a place where the professors care,” Cupples said.

Lewis believes each of his students deserves the chance to do well in his class despite the shift to online courses and that it was his responsibility to ensure they have that chance. He is using this experience to readjust how he works with students and to be more attentive to the struggles they are going through.

“At the end of the day, I have to feel good about what I have done in order to help these students be successful and if I haven’t gone the extra mile, I haven’t done my job,” he said.
UT Martin offers reduced rates for online summer classes

April 15, 2020 by WBBJ 7 Eyewitness News Staff (https://www.wbbjtv.com/author/wbbj7eyewitnessnewsstaff/)

MARTIN, Tenn. – The University of Tennessee at Martin will charge on-campus tuition and fees for online Maymester and summer courses in response to the UT System's decision to conduct all summer classes online, saving students additional fees for online courses.

All students registered for either on-campus or online summer courses will pay on-campus tuition and fees regardless of the designated course location.

While onsite tuition for out-of-state and international students is more expensive than online courses, the university will adjust the fees to reduce charges to the online rate.

"UT Martin is committed to providing a high quality educational experience for students pursuing online coursework options," said UT Martin Chancellor Keith Carver. "I am excited about this initiative to offer our students these courses at a reduced rate this summer."

Maymester courses are scheduled to begin May 11-29, and summer courses will follow beginning June 1 – July 2 and July 6 – Aug. 7.

The transition to online courses for summer 2020 for all UT campuses was announced April 1, by UT System President Randy Boyd in response to COVID-19.

"Our faculty and staff have done an incredible job of moving to an entirely digital platform for the spring semester," Boyd said. "I am confident they will continue to provide an inspired learning experience for our students who are enrolled in summer classes."

For more information about tuition and fees, visit utm.edu/tuition (http://utm.edu/tuition).
Randy Boyd appointed as 26th President by UT Board of Trustees

By a unanimous vote on Friday afternoon, March 27, 2020, the University of Tennessee Board of Trustees selected Randy Boyd to serve as UT's 26th president for the next five years.

"As I've said, naming the president of the University of Tennessee System is one of our most important decisions that we undertake as trustees," Board Chair John Compton said. "We wanted to make sure we were comprehensive and considerate to all key stakeholders in reaching our decision. Randy Boyd is absolutely the right person to lead the university at this time.

Trustees approved Boyd serving in the position up to June 30, 2025. He will continue to serve without a salary. He will receive $10,000 per year to cover state health insurance costs.

"I am thankful to all who have shown confidence and support for me to continue as the 26th president of the University of Tennessee," Boyd said. "It is an honor and a privilege to serve my alma mater and our great state with this great team. Together, we will make this the greatest decade in the history of the University of Tennessee."

In other business, trustees heard an update on what the University is doing regarding COVID-19 and trustees approved revisions to the University's tenure policy to extend the probationary period.

Boyd, a UT Knoxville alumnus and Knoxville businessman, has served as interim president of the UT System since Joe DiPietro retired in November 2018. As president, Boyd serves as chief executive officer of the statewide system, which includes the flagship campus in Knoxville, campuses in Chattanooga and Martin, the Health Science Center in Memphis, the Space Institute in Tullahoma, and statewide Institute of Agriculture and Institute for Public Service.

After a positive performance review, Compton recommended foregoing a national search to fill the president position. The other trustees agreed.

"The recommendation was informed by a number of considerations, including the positive momentum of the University, the strategic initiatives that are underway, and, most notably, the favorable feedback received from key stakeholders," Compton said about moving forward without a national search.

During his time as interim, Boyd established the UT Promise scholarship and mentoring program providing free tuition for Tennessee residents whose family household income is less than $50,000 a year and are academically qualified to attend UT. He also led the initiative that created the Oak Ridge Institute at UT, which seeks to create a robust talent pipeline in areas of growing national needs. He also reunited UT Knoxville and UT Institute of Agriculture to elevate the impact and reputation of both.

During the November 2019 Board of Trustees meeting, discussions began to remove the interim title. In December 2019, Compton conducted a formal review of Boyd's performance, which included requesting feedback from leadership of faculty, staff and students as well as alumni, legislators and others.

After extensive discussion of Boyd's review and leadership during the February 2020 Board meeting, Compton requested Boyd participate in a series of town hall meetings across the state to share his vision for leading the University. Town hall meetings were held in Knoxville, Chattanooga, Nashville, Martin and Memphis between March 4-11.

Boyd is the founder and chairman of Radio Systems Corp., a Knoxville-based business. He also serves as chairman of Boyd Sports and is the owner of the Tennessee Smokies, Johnson City Cardinals, Greeneville Reds and Elizabethton Twins.

Boyd served as chair of the Tennessee Higher Education Commission and as commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development. He is founder and co-chair of the Governor's Rural Taskforce, which exists to help state government and industry leaders find solutions to the biggest challenges facing rural Tennessee.

Boyd also served as Gov. Bill Haslam's adviser for higher education and was the architect for Tennessee Promise, Drive to 55 and Tennessee Achieves-initiatives aimed at increasing the number Tennesseans with post-secondary degrees to 55 percent by 2025 and decreasing financial hardship for those Tennesseans pursuing degrees.

Boyd is the first in his family to graduate from college. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in business with an emphasis on industrial management from UT Knoxville. He also earned a master's degree in liberal studies with a focus on foreign policy from the University of Oklahoma.

Boyd and his wife, Jenny, live in Knoxville. They have two children and one grandchild.

The University of Tennessee is a statewide system of higher education with campuses in Knoxville, Chattanooga, Martin and Memphis; the UT Space Institute in Tullahoma; the UT Institute of Agriculture with a presence in every Tennessee county; and the statewide Institute for Public Service.

The UT system manages Oak Ridge National Laboratory through its UT-Battelle partnership; enrolls about 50,000 students statewide; produces about 10,000 new graduates every year; and represents more than 387,000 alumni around the world.
UT Martin Nursing Program Ranked Best in Tennessee

MARTIN — The University of Tennessee at Martin Department of Nursing earned the rank of “2020 Best RN Program in Tennessee” by RegisteredNursing.org, a nursing advocacy organization. UT Martin’s nursing program ranked No. 1 of 44 other college nursing programs in Tennessee.

The colleges were assessed on multiple factors that determine how well a program supports students toward licensure and future careers, which is calculated by a five-year average of the program’s first-time NCLEX-RN pass-rates weighted by each year. UT Martin scored a 98.88 out of 100 on the nursing advocacy organization’s criteria test.

UT Martin consistently produces high pass rates on the NCLEX-RN that are above state and national averages and shares this achievement with several other nursing programs across the state, according to Dr. Mary Radford, chair of the Department of Nursing.

“The ranking reflects the hard work UT Martin Nursing faculty put into ensuring students are ready to pass the licensure exam and to enter the workforce as competent registered nurses. We regularly evaluate and re-evaluate our curriculum to be sure it reflects the field of modern nursing and success in the field from graduation forward,” said Radford.

According to registerednursing.org, the UT Martin nursing department prepares its graduates with critical thinking and effective communication skills.

“With a consistently high first-time NCLEX-RN pass rate, UT Martin grads are poised for top employment opportunities,” stated the ranking release.

“We are very proud of our graduates and the work they put into preparing for the licensure exam. It is a very intimidating, high-stakes test that puts a lot of pressure on them, so diligence in preparing is key, and they always show us their persistence and determination in that,” Radford said.

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UT Martin Music Lecturer Purchases Keyboards for Students Without Access to Pianos for Online Class

COURTESY UT MARTIN

MARTIN — When many of his class piano students struggled with the shift to online class because of a lack of access to physical keyboards, Charles Lewis, lecturer of music at the University of Tennessee at Martin, searched for solutions to ease the transition.

Lewis says that even with the incorporation of a virtual piano, at least 20 percent of the students in his class were still falling behind. After searching on Facebook Marketplace, Lewis was able to purchase five keyboards throughout Tennessee and Kentucky with his own money and personally deliver those to his students’ homes across west and middle Tennessee.

“When you have students who are very confident in what they’re doing, making very good grades, playing everything that they’re asked to play and they seem to be the ones who are struggling, I just felt like I had to do something,” said Lewis. “That’s what we do as teachers... it’s what we do for our students. It’s UT Martin.”

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Tootoonchi Chosen as Dean of College of Business, Global Affairs

MARTIN — Dr. Ahmad Tootoonchi is the dean of the College of Business and Global Affairs, effective June 20. Tootoonchi is the current dean of the College of Business at Eastern Washington University. He earned his doctorate in leadership and human behavior, and a master's degree in management and organizational development from U.S. International University.

"Dr. Tootoonchi brings a tremendous amount of experience as an administrator, a faculty member and with the AACSB accrediting organization," said Dr. Phil Cavaller, provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs. "His commitment to building consensus while leading faculty is a hallmark of his career. I look forward to working with him to enhance further the extraordinary quality of the College of Business and Global Affairs."

Tootoonchi served at Eastern Washington University since 2017, after working at Frostburg State University in Maryland for 28 years. During his time at Frostburg State, Tootoonchi served as the chair of the Department of Management, dean of the College of Business and interim provost.

"I am honored to have been named dean of the UT Martin College of Business and Global Affairs. My visit to UT Martin allowed me to meet many of the college's outstanding faculty and students. I was impressed by the campus mission to educate students and serve the Northwest Tennessee region, and I am eager to move to Martin and join the UTM Skyhawk family."

Tootoonchi has authored three books on leadership, including "Guiding Principles for Leadership and Professional Success," "Foundation and Practical Elements of Leadership" and "101 Leadership Tips." He has also received the President's Award for Outstanding Service from the International Academy of Business Disciplines three consecutive years.

Dr. Katie High has served as interim dean of the College of Business and Global Affairs since July 2019.

"The search for the dean of the College of Business and Global affairs attracted an extremely high number of qualified applicants who were interested in coming to UT Martin because of our campus mission and culture," said High. "I have no doubt Dr. Tootoonchi will be able to lead the college to even greater success and will bring invaluable leadership to the entire UT Martin family. We are lucky to have him."

For more information, contact the College of Business and Global Affairs at 731-481-7227.
UT To Continue Online Classes

University of Tennessee System President Randy Boyd, in consultation with chancellors at UT Knoxville, UT Chattanooga, UT Martin and the UT Health Science Center, has announced that summer session classes at all campuses will be delivered online in response to COVID-19. At UT-SC, clinical rotations in hospitals will continue with students following COVID-19 protocol.

“Our faculty and staff have done an incredible job of moving to an entirely digital platform for the spring semester,” Boyd said. “I am confident they will continue to provide an inspired learning experience for our students who are enrolled in summer classes.”

Since moving to an online platform, UT campuses have provided an estimated 9,300 classes online.

Each campus will be sending out specific communications to their faculty, students and staff regarding the impact to its respective campuses.

The UT System has a comprehensive resource guide that provides information and resources surrounding COVID-19: tennessee.edu/coronavirus/.

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For further information contact Melissa Tindell at 865-974-0741 or mtindell@tennessee.edu or Jennifer Sicking at 865-974-5179 or jsicking@tennessee.edu.
High school students see change in college admissions

April 21, 2020 by Corallys Ortiz

JACKSON, Tenn. — After transitioning to remote or virtual learning this past month, high school seniors have had to make huge adjustments in their last year of secondary school.

Final grades are being tabulated. Colleges have also had to be flexible with the admission process. Director of College Advising for the University School of Jackson Carol Ryan says some college testing might be delayed.

“SAT has been cancelled for June, so schools are still making a determination on that. The state schools will still have the ACT. The last time I looked, [that] was going to be offered June and July,” Ryan said.

Ryan says some private colleges have even looked into dropping certain testing requirements for the Class of 2021. Colleges are staying connected with prospective students, even offering virtual tours. Plus, colleges are planning on how to conduct orientation.

“Typically those sessions start in mid-May. We have pushed those to start on June 22. Right now, we’re still planning to hold those in person, but we’re also working on an online orientation platform to supplement that,” said Director of Admissions for the University of Tennessee – Martin, Destin Tucker.

“We have several that have already been admitted. So a lot of our calls and Zoom meetings have been ‘OK, what are my next steps?’ You know we even are putting in place like for our orientation,” said Recruitment Coordinator for Jackson State Community College, Paula Fuller.

Union University has said that they will be waiving application fees for traditional undergraduate degrees by using the code WBBJ20. Ryan says deadlines are being extended for some scholarships and private scholarships.

“That’s what we’re seeing from all of our community scholarships,” Ryan said. “Is they’re reaching back out to the schools and giving the kids another opportunity.”

Ryan suggests students look for additional financial assistance, especially if their family experienced job losses during the COVID-19 restrictions. Ryan suggests students write a letter of appeal to the financial aid office.
#BLUE CREW — In support of the Weakley/Obion Counties Carl Perkins Center for the Prevention of Child Abuse, UT Martin social work students conducted a virtual show of support and are asking the community to join the effort Wednesday, and throughout the month of April, in recognition of Child Abuse Prevention Month. Community members are asked to don some blue that day; snap a selfie, family photo or office photo; and post it to their Facebook page using the hashtag #BlueCrew and tag the local CPC. Showing some love are (top, from left) Brandon Bartell, Hailey Batts, Deandra Boyd; (center) Hannah Mangrum and Leah Miller; (bottom) Amanda Padilla, Juliane Rooks and Jennifer Workman. The Center is also selling T-shirts through Project 731 as a fundraiser for the local non-profit organization that serves families in Weakley and Obion counties.
UTM nursing program ranked best in TN

The University of Tennessee at Martin Department of Nursing has earned the rank of 2020 Best RN Program in Tennessee by RegisteredNursing.org, a nursing advocacy organization.

UT Martin’s nursing program ranked No. 1 of 44 other college nursing programs in Tennessee. The colleges were assessed on multiple factors that determine how well a program supports students toward licensure and future careers, which is calculated by a five-year average of the program’s first-time NCLEX-RN pass-rates weighted by each year.

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According to registerednursing.org, the UT Martin nursing department prepares its graduates with critical thinking and effective communication skills.

University’s SGA elections conducted online

The University of Tennessee at Martin Office of Student Life and Multicultural Affairs conducted its annual Student Government Association campaign and elections for the 2020-21 academic year solely online.

The elections — usually following weeks of in-person campaigning on campus — were conducted April 7-8 online in response to the COVID-19 crisis.

According to John Abel, assistant vice chancellor for student affairs, between 1,000 and 1,500 students participate in the SGA elections each year.

A total of 693 students voted in the 2020-21 elections, which was to be expected because of the shift to all online courses he said.

Two parties campaigned this election cycle: the Martin Student Alliance and the Unity Party. Each party conducted online campaigns, including Zoom conference questionnaire and-answer sessions with both presidential candidates. Both parties advocated common platforms such as diversity, inclusion, parking, enhancing the collegiate experience and how to minimize the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on students.

The 2020-21 SGA Executive Council is:
- President-elect: Hunter McCloud of Portland, Tenn., a junior political science major (Martin Student Alliance).
- Vice president: Sidney Church of Santa Fe, a junior political science major (Martin Student Alliance).
- Secretary general: Jacob Butler of Lexington, a senior agriculture major (Martin Student Alliance).
- Press secretary: Veronica Kanka of Lewisburg, a junior communications major (Martin Student Alliance).

“I am very proud of our students that campaigned. They never complained about only being able to campaign online and all the changes we made to the process. They were very resilient and both parties ran good campaigns,” Abel said. “I look forward to working with the newly-elected students.”

“I am honored that I was chosen by the student body to represent them in the coming school year and look forward to working with this distinguished group of student-leaders next year,” McCloud said.

The Executive Council will begin working with student life soon to plan for the upcoming year.

Reduced rates offered for online summer classes

The University of Tennessee at Martin will charge on-campus tuition and fees for online Maymester and summer courses in response to the UT System’s decision to conduct all summer classes online, saving students additional fees for online courses.

All students registered for either on-campus or online summer courses will pay on-campus tuition and fees regardless of the designated course location.

While onsite tuition for out-of-state and international students is more expensive than online courses, the university will adjust the fees to reduce charges to the online rate.

“UT Martin is committed to providing a high quality educational experience for students pursuing online coursework options,” Chancellor Dr. Keith Carver said. “I am excited about this initiative to offer our students these courses at a reduced rate this summer.”

Maymester courses are set to begin May 11-29, and summer courses will follow beginning June 1-July 2 and July 6-Aug. 7.

The transition to online courses this summer for all UT campuses is in response to COVID-19.
Civil rights activist honored by UTM faculty member

University of Tennessee at Martin communications lecturer Henrietta Giles was interviewed by the BBC’s Matthew Bannister concerning her work with civil rights activist the late Rev. Joseph Lowery.

Lowery died March 27 at the age of 98.

Ms. Giles’ interview aired April 3 on the BBC radio show “Last Word,” which honors influential figures who have recently passed away.

The interview can be heard at bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000gvym.

Growing up as an African American woman in the South, Ms. Giles, like many, looked to the work of civil rights activists like the Revs. Martin Luther King Jr. and Lowery for guidance in her fight for justice and equality. Lowery, best known for his “fiery” sermons and passionate work with the Civil Rights Movement, was influential early on in Ms. Giles’ life due to his ability to be “brutally honest” when discussing topics that were important to him.

“I had always admired him just from the work that he did,” Ms. Giles said. “He became this fixture of someone who was always working in the Civil Rights Movement, who was always fighting for people who didn’t have a voice. I just always grew up... knowing that he was one of those folks on the frontline who was fighting for equality.”

Later in her life as she began collaborating with Lowery on various projects, such as co-authoring his biography “Singing the Lord’s Song in a Strange Land,” Ms. Giles felt that the “bigger-than-life character” she had admired for so long would become someone she’d actually get to know.

“He had the best sense of humor and that was something that was just so different because, in my mind, I just revered him so much,” Ms. Giles said. “He was quick with the snappy comebacks that would throw me off guard... It was always something really funny that you wouldn’t expect him to say, but he almost had this grandfatherly appeal: very wise and each time I talked to him, (I) walked away thinking ‘Wow that was pretty extraordinary.’”

During the interview, Ms. Giles shared stories from Lowery’s life, detailing his perseverance and commitment to fighting for equality for African Americans and the opposition he faced daily because of his work, validating the character she had grown to respect over her lifetime. Through the trials of growing up as an African American in Alabama in the 1920s to being a founding father of the Civil Rights Movement to seeing everything he worked for come to fruition as he gave the benediction at the inauguration of Barack Obama, the first African American president of the United States, Ms. Giles says he dedicated his life, even until the very end, to fighting for those who faced injustice.
INTERVIEW AIRED — Henrietta Giles, communications lecturer at the University of Tennessee at Martin, is shown with the late Rev. Joseph Lowery, also known as the dean of the Civil Rights Movement, in his home in Atlanta. He died March 27 at the age of 98. An interview Ms. Giles conducted with Lowery aired April 3 on the BBC radio show “Last Word,” which honors influential figures who have recently passed away.

"It was a full-circle moment for him as sort of an older African American seeing the first black president of this country. It was a full-circle moment where you heard a lot of people saying, 'I never thought I'd live to see the day that this would happen,' and this was a similar sentiment that Rev. Lowery shared with all of his work during the Civil Rights Movement that that was such a momentous moment in time, moment in our history to see that take place,” Ms. Giles said.

Even as Ms. Giles and Lowery worked together on his book, the pair did not meet until the first book-signing almost three years after beginning the writing process, having spoken only through phone calls and email. After meeting, Ms. Giles says it felt like the two had been lifelong friends.

Lowery also participated in multiple podcasts and a documentary Ms. Giles produced about black sacred music. In the decade that the two worked together and the lifetime Ms. Giles had spent learning from him, the most important lesson she took away from her time with Lowery was that it does not matter how old you are, you are always capable of doing what is right and fighting for justice.

"You’re never too old to have an effect. You’re never too old to work for something that is important, something that is substantial,” Ms. Giles said. “I learned ... not to stop fighting, not to stop trying to speak up for those who can’t speak up, for those who don’t have a voice or whose voice has been suppressed. Because even though he was older, I would dare say he fought up until the end for people who suffered injustice.”

The last time she saw Lowery was during their interview for the documentary as he sat relaxed in his home den surrounded by the awards he had received for the work he accomplished during his lifetime, like the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Ms. Giles cherishes the special moment she shared with her crew and Lowery as he shared stories and anecdotes about his life and the hard work so many others like himself had contributed to the Civil Rights Movement.

“It was always a joy to talk to him, it really was,” Ms. Giles said.

Even in his death, Ms. Giles has a steadfast belief in the work that Lowery accomplished in the shared fight for equal rights and the effect he had not only on her but everyone with whom he came into contact.

“What I would like people to remember about him is not to give up, that it doesn’t matter how old you are, if you have a voice, then possibly you can be the voice for someone else. You can help someone else,” Ms. Giles said. “I think that’s what I hope people remember about him, he fought until the very end. He was 98 years old and was still fighting.”
UT music program set

The University of Tennessee at Martin’s Department of Music has the following Keeping the Beat programs hosted by TNMEA planned for this week. They will be livestreamed on Facebook at 7 nightly.

- **Tonight** — Jeff Coffin and Victor Wooten, Grammy award-winning saxophonist (Dave Matthews) and bassist (Bela Fleck)
- **Wednesday** — John Wittmann, director of Education and Artist Relations at Yamaha
- **Thursday** — Glenn Kotche, Wilco drummer and composer

For a full calendar listing of events, visit utm.edu/music/events.

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UT-Martin sets tuition fees for two semesters

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Pair of locals named to list

A national honor society recently announced that a pair of local residents were initiated into the Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi, the nation’s oldest and most selective collegiate honor society for all academic disciplines.

Ally Cherry of Halls was inducted at Middle Tennessee State University, while Savannah Pham of Halls was inducted at the University of Tennessee at Martin.

They are among approximately 30,000 students, faculty, professional staff and alumni to be initiated into Phi Kappa Phi each year. Membership is by invitation only and requires nomination and approval by a chapter. Only the top 10 percent of seniors and 7.5 percent of juniors are eligible for membership. Graduate students in the top 10 percent of the number of candidates for graduate degrees may also qualify, as do faculty, professional staff and alumni who have achieved scholarly distinction.

Phi Kappa Phi was founded in 1897, under the leadership of undergraduate student Marcus L. Urann, who had a desire to create a different kind of honor society, one that recognized excellence in all academic disciplines. Today, the Society has chapters on more than 300 campuses in the United States and the Philippines. Its mission is “To recognize and promote academic excellence in all fields of higher education and to engage the community of scholars in service to others.”
Henrietta Giles, communications lecturer, is pictured with Rev. Joseph Lowery, also known as the dean of the Civil Rights Movement, in his home in Atlanta.

Henrietta Giles, a lecturer of communications at the University of Tennessee at Martin, and a native of Stanton, TN, was interviewed by the BBC's Matthew Bannister concerning her work with Civil Rights Activist Rev. Joseph Lowery, who died Friday, March 27, 2020, at the age of 98. Giles' interview aired April 3 on the BBC radio show "Last Word," which honors influential figures who have recently passed away.

Growing up as an African American woman in the South, Giles, like many, looked to the work of Civil Rights activists like Reverends Martin Luther King Jr. and Lowery as guidance in her fight for justice and equality. Lowery, best known for his "fiery" sermons and passionate work with the Civil Rights Movement, was influential early on in Giles' life due to his ability to be "brutally honest" when discussing topics that were important to him.

"I had always admired him just from the work that he did," Giles said. "He became this fixture of someone who was always working in the Civil Rights Movement, who was always fighting for people who didn't have a voice. I just always grew up... knowing that he was one of those folks on the frontline who was fighting for equality."

Later in her life as she began collaborating with Lowery on various projects, such as co-authoring his biography "Singing the Lord's Song in a Strange Land," Giles felt that the "bigger-than-life character" she had admired for so long would become someone she'd actually get to know.

"He had the best sense of humor and that was something that was just so different because, in my mind, I just revered him so much," said Giles. "He was quick with the snappy comebacks that would throw me off guard. ... It was always something really funny that you wouldn't expect him to say, but he almost had this grandfatherly appeal: very wise and each time I talked to him, (I) walked away thinking 'Wow that was pretty extraordinary.'"

During the interview, Giles shared stories from Lowery's life, detailing his perseverance and commitment to fighting for equality for African Americans and the opposition he faced daily because of his work, validating the character she had grown to respect over her lifetime. Through the trials of growing up as an African American in Alabama in the 1920s to being a founding father of the Civil Rights Movement to seeing everything he worked for come to fruition as he gave the benediction at the inauguration of Barack Obama, the first African American president of the United States, Giles says he dedicated his life, even until the very end, to fighting for those who faced injustice.

"It was a full-circle moment for him as sort of an older African American seeing the first black president of this country. It was a full-circle moment where you heard a lot of people saying, 'I never thought I'd live to see the day that this would happen,' and this was a similar sentiment that Rev. Lowery shared with all of his work during the Civil Rights Movement that was such a momentous moment in time, moment in our history to see that take place," said Giles.

Even as Giles and Lowery worked together on his book, the pair did not meet until the first book-signing almost three years after beginning the writing process, having spoken only through phone calls and email. After meeting, Giles says it felt like the two had been lifelong friends.

Lowery also participated in multiple podcasts and a documentary Giles produced about black sacred music. In the decade that the two worked together and the lifetime Giles had spent learning from him, the most important lesson she took away from her time with Lowery was that it does not matter how old you are, you are always capable of doing what is right and fighting for justice.

"You're never too old to have an effect. You're never too old to work for something that is important, something that is substantial," said Giles. "I learned ... not to stop fighting, not to stop trying to speak up for those who can't speak up, for those who don't have a voice or whose voice has been suppressed. Because even though he was older, I would dare say he fought until the end for people who suffered injustice."

The last time she saw Lowery was during their interview for the documentary as he sat relaxed in his home den surrounded by the awards he had received for the work he accomplished during his lifetime, like the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Giles cherishes the special moment she shared with her crew and Lowery as he shared stories and anecdotes about his life and the hard work so many others like himself had contributed to the Civil Rights Movement.

"It was always a joy to talk to him, it really was," said Giles.

Even in his death, Giles has a steadfast belief in the work that Lowery accomplished in the shared fight for equal rights and the effect he had not only on her but everyone he came into contact with.

"What I would like people to remember about him is not to give up, that it doesn't matter how old you are, if you have a voice, then possibly you can be the voice for someone else. You can help someone else," Giles said. "I think that's what I hope people remember about him, he fought until the very end. He was 98 years old and was still fighting."
UT Martin Offers Reduced Rates For Online Summer Classes

The University of Tennessee at Martin will charge on-campus tuition and fees for online Maymester and Summer Courses in response to the UT System's decision to conduct all summer classes online, saving students additional fees for online courses.

All students registered for either on-campus or online summer courses will pay on-campus tuition and fees regardless of the designated course location. While onsite tuition for out-of-state and international students is more expensive than online courses, the university will adjust the fees to reduce charges to the online rate.

"UT Martin is committed to providing a high quality educational experience for students pursuing online coursework options," said UT Martin Chancellor Keith Carver. "I am excited about this initiative to offer our students these courses at a reduced rate this summer."

Maymester Courses are scheduled to begin May 11-29, and Summer Courses will follow beginning June 1-July 2 and July 6-Aug. 7.

The transition to online courses for Summer 2020 for all UT Campuses was announced April 1, by UT System President Randy Boyd in response to COVID-19.

"Our faculty and staff have done an incredible job of moving to an entirely digital platform for the Spring Semester," Boyd said. "I am confident they will continue to provide an inspired learning experience for our students who are enrolled in summer classes."

For more information about tuition and fees, visit utm.edu/tuition.

https://www.wbbjtv.com/

UT Martin creates virtual choir project

April 23, 2020 by WBBJ 7 Eyewitness News Staff (https://www.wbbjtv.com/author/wbbj7eyewitnessnewsstaff/)

MARTIN, Tenn. — More than 70 UTM faculty, staff, students and alumni participated in a collaborative music project.

UTM Music announced the project via their Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/UTMDeptofoMusic/) on April 17. They asked participants to submit a video singing their Alma Mater.

Alumni worked to edit the submissions together and make sure participants were in sync.
The University of Tennes-see at Martin has recognized the members of the 2020 class of Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges. Forty-one juniors, seniors, and graduate students were included from UTM this year, including one student from Benton County.

Hannah Morgan, of Big Sandy, is a senior in UTM's bachelor of science in nursing program. A 2016 honor graduate of Camden Central High School, Morgan has completed the majority of her coursework at the UTM Parsons Center.

"Congratulations to Hannah Morgan on receiving Who's Who Among Students at UTM! We are so proud of her!" said a representative of the UTM Parsons Center in a recent Facebook post on the center’s page.

Who’s Who Among Students, established in 1934, is a national honor society based on academic and community service merit rather than financial ability to participate. Because of COVID-19 social distancing rules, the award ceremony had to be cancelled and honorees were sent their medals and certificates in the mail.
UT-Martin reduces summer semester tuition

Lasherica Thornton  Jackson Sun
USA TODAY NETWORK – TENNESSEE

The University of Tennessee announced in April that its campuses would transition to online courses for the summer, and UT-Martin is offering reduced rates for those online summer classes.

The Martin campus will charge the lower on-campus tuition and fees for its May and summer online classes. Since out-of-state and international students’ on-campus fees are more expensive than online fees, the university will adjust and reduce those to the online rate.

The May semester classes are from May 11-29, and summer classes will be June 1 to July 2 and July 6 to Aug. 7.

"I am confident they (faculty and staff) will continue to provide an inspired learning experience for our students who are enrolled in summer classes," UT President Randy Boyd said in a mid-April press release.

For more information about tuition and fees, visit utm.edu/tuition.

https://www.wbbjtv.com/

UT Martin to hold virtual commencement May 2

April 27, 2020 by WBBJ 7 Eyewitness News Staff (https://www.wbbjtv.com/author/wbbj7eyewitnessnewsstaff/)

MARTIN, Tenn. – In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the University of Tennessee at Martin will hold a virtual commencement at 10 a.m., Saturday, May 2, in lieu of the traditional in-person ceremony. The event is closed to the public and all participants will engage in social distancing in order to comply with CDC COVID-19 control guidelines.

The ceremony will be live-streamed via Facebook Live at facebook.com/utmartin (http://www.facebook.com/utmartin) and YouTube at youtube.com/utmartin (http://www.youtube.com/utmartin). The ceremony will be archived on YouTube with closed captioning included for later viewing.

In recognition of the more than 700 undergraduate and graduate students receiving degrees, the name and photo of each graduate will be aired during the ceremony.

An in-person graduation ceremony is currently being planned for August 2020 in the Elam Center. More information will be released about this event as further decisions are made.

For more information, contact the Office of University Relations at (731) 881-7615.
Carpenter leaves behind lasting legacy at UT Martin

Adam Wells
Apr 27, 2020

MARTIN, TN -- After 18 years leading the UT Martin Skyhawk men's golf team, Jerry Carpenter is calling it a career.

"I am just thankful for the opportunity to have done this and been a part of it," Carpenter said. "It has been a good ride.

Carpenter first made the decision back in September of last year and was to finish off his final year at this week's Ohio Valley Conference tournament.

However, the season was canceled back in early March amid the coronavirus pandemic.

"Truly not disappoint for me," Carpenter said. "But disappointed for the guys not able to make a run at an OVC Championship."

Just saying that about a team from UT Martin was something you never would have heard when Carpenter first took over the program.

"We were not very good," he said. "We just didn't have enough."

Along the way, his teams won the 2016 OVC Championship, and won three individual conference championships. But his biggest accomplishment may be the building that the Skyhawks currently call home. The Rhodes Golf Center was a major project for Carpenter, and once complete, elevated the program to new heights.

"This facility is the main thing," he said. "We took it and developed it to what it is today."

He says he did it all for his players, whom he can't begin to talk about without getting emotional.

"The kids you recruited, you brought them and see them develop and improve and become men," said Carpenter. "To me, that is probably the most gratifying thing that I have had during my 18 year career."

Which made it even more special when Carpenter had a hand in naming his successor it former Skyhawk Austin Swafford.
UT Martin hoping to reopen campus for fall semester

Posted on April 27, 2020 by Steve James in Local News

While UT Martin students are taking finals this week and wrapping up the spring semester online, UTM Chancellor Dr. Keith Carver is hoping to reopen the campus for in-person classes this fall.

UT Martin closed classes the second week of March due to the COVID-19 pandemic and began online-only classes on March 16th.

Summer classes will also be online-only with a reduced rate.

UT-Martin to Hold a Virtual Graduation Ceremony on Saturday

Posted on April 28, 2020 by Charles Choate in Local News

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the University of Tennessee at Martin will hold a virtual commencement at 10:00 on Saturday.

The ceremonies will be held in lieu of the traditional in-person ceremony.

The event is closed to the public and all participants will engage in social distancing in order to comply with CDC COVID-19 guidelines.

The commencement will feature remarks from UT President Randy Boyd, UT Martin Chancellor Keith Carver, UT Martin Provost Philip Acree Cavalier, UT Martin SGA President Devin Majors, Campus Minister Amanda Crice and UT Martin Alumni Association President Amy West.

In recognition of the more than 700 undergraduate and graduate students receiving degrees, the name and photo of each graduate will be aired during the ceremony.

An in-person graduation ceremony is currently being planned for August in the Elam Center, with more information to be released about the event as further decisions are made.
‘The Hawk’ continues to serve Martin during COVID-19 crisis

Students, faculty and staff have, for the most part, left campus as the COVID-19 crisis continues to disrupt the University of Tennessee at Martin's normal spring semester routine. However, one resource that the UT Martin community has consistently depended upon to deliver news is still producing news daily, just in a new location.

WUTM FM 90.3 "The Hawk," student radio station programmed out of Gooch Hall, has continued to air news and entertainment programs even though its employees now have restricted access to working in the station. These student journalists are facing new obstacles every day and are learning to overcome them using creative measures. While working from home, News Director Kayla Brooks, of Dickson, who believes disseminating current news is just as important now as ever, has resorted to producing newscasts from the most acoustically-sound space in her home: the bathtub.

"I am having to write my own broadcast stories, ... going into my bathroom, closing the door, sealing myself into the bathtub as acoustically as possible and recording it on my phone, then sending it to my computer, editing it, and sending it to our engineer (Brian Thomas)," Brooks said. "Then he is having to do all of this work to make it sound good because it was from my bathtub and then putting it on air."

Brooks says while the process is unlike any she ever expected to experience as a journalist or even a student-journalist, she appreciates the opportunity to cover such an important event in history. The ability to be flexible, even if that means producing a newscast from her bathroom, is a lesson she knows she will take with her as she pursues her communications career after graduation.

"I didn't come into working at the radio station thinking, 'oh wow, I'm definitely going to get to cover a pandemic,' because that's not how your brain works; that's not what you expect. It's a much more serious situation that I have this not only responsibility but privilege to cover," Brooks said.

"It is a privilege because getting news to a group of people who need reassurance and need that confidence (is) really important."

Dr. Richard Robinson, faculty adviser of WUTM FM 90.3 "The Hawk" and communications professor, believes the crisis is a real-life teaching moment for all student-journalists at UT Martin, a thought Rodney Freed shares.

"While this is awful, and it is, it's still great training for students," said Robinson. "They are getting the same experience, at least to some degree, of these professional journalists."
"(The pandemic has taught) students (how) to work under not the most favorable conditions, when you don’t have all of your tools right in front of you and still have to figure out how to make those things work with the tools that (you) have now to still be able to put a product together," Freed, director of the broadcast sequence, said. "That’s been a challenge for everyone in the media, not just us."

While the radio station is capable of operating autonomously, Freed says the FCC licensed station is not just a “jukebox,” and what differentiates its status as such is the continuance of newscasts produced by Brooks.

“We’re more than just a music station. We try to serve the community in more ways than just playing music,” Freed said. “I think it’s important for us to constantly evaluate our programming and see what we can do to help others and to pass along information that we have. It is part of our responsibility as a licensed station to do that.”

While Brooks is responsible for writing and producing newscasts for “The Hawk,” she, Robinson, and Freed all said it is because of the station’s senior broadcast engineer, Brian Thomas, that the station is running as well as it is. Thomas is responsible for maintaining the transmitter, keeping all programming on-air and to make sure the automation is working no matter what time of the day it is.

The biggest challenge the staff has faced so far is not being able to physically be in the radio station to operate as effectively as possible. They have learned how to work from home, albeit producing programs in an untraditional way, while relying on Thomas to take care of the technical work that comes with airing.

Thomas, who has spent 20 years working in commercial broadcasting and only a year working at WUTM, is incorporating new ways to improve on-air programs for “The Hawk” and believes a challenge such as not having access to the radio station itself is not a big enough obstacle to stop the station from serving the community.

“I get a little more involved with the students when it comes to live programs because they … don’t always have the facilities to do it so that’s why I step in and help them out too. We keep our programming going and our mission going even though we can’t be in the building,” said Thomas.

According to WUTM FM 90.3 “The Hawk’s” mission statement, the radio station’s purpose is to “train students at The University of Tennessee at Martin in the field of radio broadcasting while serving the public in both the academic and outlying communities.” The journalists working at “The Hawk” during this time, while still students, are dedicated to producing informative, ethical programs to benefit the community, just as other professional radio stations are doing.

“We are dedicated to getting information that needs to be heard out. We have the same capabilities as anyone else to continue disseminating truth and objective stories ... to an audience that needs it,” Brooks said. “We have the same dedication as those professional journalists who are out there and they finished school. I think whenever we come back, we will be a lot more confident in what we can offer.”

For more information about WUTM FM 90.3 “The Hawk” or to tune in, visit wutmradio.com.

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Applications open for scholarships for first-year UT Martin students

The University of Tennessee at Martin chapter of Sigma Phi Epsilon is pleased to offer the Balanced Man Scholarship, its annual award for first-year students at the UTM.

This year’s overall winner will receive $1,000 towards their education expenses. Two additional winners will receive $500 each, with all awards presented at the organization’s scholarship banquet on campus this fall.

Applicants may complete a short web-based form at https://sigep.org/utmartin that takes about five to ten minutes.

The scholarship is open to all first-year students attending UT Martin this fall, with candidates evaluated on their commitment to a Sound Mind and Sound Body, as the ancient Greeks believed that a healthy body was vital as the vessel of the mind.

All applications are due June 1.

“This resource is intended to assist with college affordability, while introducing students to campus life opportunities,” said Chris Jaworsky, SigEp’s national Recruitment Services Manager.

Scholarship recipients are in no way obligated to join or affiliate with SigEp or any other Greek organization on campus as a condition of receiving this award.

The scholarship is funded by the generous contributions of the fraternity’s alumni members, believing that the organization benefits from promoting the Balanced Man ideal on campus.

About the Balanced Man Scholarship

The Balanced Man Scholarship (BMS) originated in 1990 at the University of Cincinnati Chapter, as a way to attract men of Sound Mind and Sound Body, while rewarding them for espousing the ideals of the Fraternity.

Today, more than 200 chapters use the BMS to identify balanced men to join SigEp.

About Sigma Phi Epsilon

Sigma Phi Epsilon, established in 1901, is one of the nation’s largest fraternities, with over 13,000 undergraduates on 210 campuses across the United States.

Its mission is building balanced men, which is achieved through a four-year member development program that has contributed to a fraternity-wide GPA of over 3.0, a focus on the principles of Sound Mind and Sound Body, and service learning efforts that allow members to develop leadership skills while giving back to the community.
Virtual commencement slated amid COVID-19 pandemic

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the University of Tennessee at Martin will hold a virtual commencement at 10 a.m. Saturday in lieu of the traditional in-person ceremony.

The event is closed to the public and all participants will engage in social distancing in order to comply with CDC COVID-19 control guidelines.

The commencement will feature remarks from UT president Randy Boyd, UT Martin chancellor Dr. Keith Carver, UT Martin provost Philip Acree Cavalier, UT Martin SGA president Devin Majors, campus minister Amanda Crice and UT Martin Alumni Association president Amy West.

Andy Lewter, vice chancellor for student affairs, will announce the recipients of the Paul and Martha Meek Award. Doug Cook, chair of the Department of Visual and Theatre Arts, will serve as the mace bearer during the procession.

The ceremony will be live-streamed via Facebook Live at www.facebook.com/utmartin and YouTube at www.youtube.com/utmartin. The ceremony will be archived on YouTube with closed captioning included for later viewing.

In recognition of the more than 700 undergraduate and graduate students receiving degrees, the name and photo of each graduate will be aired during the ceremony.

An in-person graduation ceremony is currently being planned for August 2020 in the Elam Center. More information will be released about this event as further decisions are made.

UT music programs set

The University of Tennessee at Martin’s Department of Music has the following Keeping the Beat programs hosted by TNMEA planned for this week. They will be livestreamed on Facebook at 7 nightly.

- Tonight — Glen Adsit, director of bands, The Hartt School and president-elect College Band Directors Association
- Wednesday — Dr. Tim Lautenhizer, Music for All Senior educational advisor
- Thursday — Lafe Cook, TMEA president and band director at Dobbins Bennett High School

For a full calendar listing of events, visit utm.edu/musicevents.
Tootoonchi to fill UTM dean position

Dr. Ahmad Tootoonchi has been selected as the dean of the College of Business and Global Affairs at the University of Tennessee at Martin, effective June 20.

Tootoonchi is the current dean of the College of Business at Eastern Washington University.

He earned his doctorate in leadership and human behavior and a master's degree in management and organizational development from U.S. International University.

"Dr. Tootoonchi brings a tremendous amount of experience as an administrator, a faculty member and with the AACSB accrediting organization," said Dr. Phil Cavalier, provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs.

"His commitment to building consensus while leading faculty is a hallmark of his career. I look forward to working with him to enhance further the extraordinary quality of the College of Business and Global Affairs."

Tootoonchi has served at Eastern Washington University since 2017, after working at Frostburg State University in Maryland for 28 years. During his time at Frostburg State, Tootoonchi served as the chair of the Department of Management, dean of the College of Business and interim provost.

"I am honored to have been named dean of the UT Martin College of Business and Global Affairs," Tootoonchi said. "My visit to UT Martin allowed me to meet many of the college’s outstanding faculty and students. I was impressed by the campus mission to educate students and serve the northwest Tennessee region, and I am eager to move to Martin and join the UTM Skyhawk family."

Tootoonchi has authored three books on leadership, including "Guiding Principles for Leadership and Professional Success."

"Foundation and Practical Elements of Leadership" and "101 Leadership Tips."

He has also received the President’s Award for Outstanding Service from the International Academy of Business Disciplines three consecutive years.

Dr. Katie High has served as UT Martin’s interim dean of the College of Business and Global Affairs since July 2019.

"The search for the dean of the College of Business and Global affairs attracted an extremely high number of qualified applicants who were interested in coming to UT Martin because of our campus mission and culture," Dr. High said.

"I have no doubt Dr. Tootoonchi will be able to lead the college to even greater success and will bring invaluable leadership to the entire UT Martin family. We are lucky to have him."

The AACSB International Board of Directors confirmed Jan. 30 that UT Martin will maintain AACSB accreditation for all of its business programs for the next five years.

Accredited programs include marketing, management, information systems, accounting, economics and finance at the undergraduate level and the master of business administration degree for graduate students.
UT Martin women recognized among most influential

Dr. Cindy Boyles, associate professor of criminal justice, and Virginia Grimes, coordinator of the University of Tennessee at Martin’s WestStar Leadership Program, are among the 2020 Sterling Award winners.

Jackson Area Business and Professional Women recently announced the Sterling Awards 2020 winners — 20 Most Influential Women in West Tennessee, the Sue Shelton White Award winner and the Outstanding Woman Military Veteran — on Equal Pay Day.

Five WestStar current members and graduates were also named among the 20 Most Influential Women in West Tennessee, including Joyce Brown, Natalie Porter, Mary Ann Sharpe, Sandy Tarkington and Dr. Cheryl Browne.

The awards ceremony has been postponed until August due to the coronavirus outbreak.

The 10-year anniversary of the awards highlights women in West Tennessee who are outstanding in their fields of endeavor and who are community activists.

“These awards were created to honor women who work tirelessly to better lives in their West Tennessee communities,” said Wanda Stanfill, Sterling Awards director and vice president of Jackson Area Business and Professional Women.

“Every year when the nominations pour in, our Board of Selectors spends hours going through the resumes and letters of support. We are so proud of these women who give so much and expect so little in return.

“These amazing women succeed in business, education, government, industry, law enforcement and the arts. We have singers and musicians, poets, writers and artists. They run marathons or become gourmet chefs. Our Sterling recipients like to hike, fly fish, shoot rifles and drive large trucks and off-road ATVs. They studied abroad, hitchhiked across Europe and traveled across the United States,” she said.

The Sue Shelton White Award will go to Judge Christy Little, General Sessions Judge, Division II, of Jackson; and the Outstanding Woman Military Veteran is Lenore Ventimiglia, U.S. Marine Corps, honorable discharge, of Jackson.

The 20 Most Influential Women in West Tennessee are:

- Dr. Cindy Boyles of Jackson, associate professor of criminal justice at UT Martin
- Joyce Brown of Gibson County, county clerk/juvenile court clerk of Gibson County
- Cheryl Browne, M.D., of Fayette County, retired Internal Medicine physician and medical group administrator
- Gina Dieudonne, M.D., of Jackson, pediatrician
- Virginia Grimes of Martin, program manager/coordinator, WestStar Leadership Program, UT Martin
- Jane Jarvis of Jackson, retired attorney
- Juannita Jones of Jackson, founder and executive director of Keep My Hood Good (KMHG) Community
Campaign.

- Laurice Lanier of Jackson, professional vocalist, entertainer, music director and businesswoman.
- Esther Gray Lemus of Mercer, assistant professor of music at Jackson State Community College.
- Shirlene Mercer of Jackson, retired field representative for former Congressman John Tanner, retired teacher and community activist.
- Natalie Porter of Carroll County, Carroll County register of deeds.
- Hope Reasons of Jackson, founder of Sisterhood Purses Inc.
- Jennifer Rowan of Jackson, paralegal for Rainey, Kizer, Revie & Bell PLC.
- Mary Ann Sharpe of Brownsville, director of Main Street Brownsville.
- Nola Spears of Jackson, retired social worker/in-digent care specialist, Hamilton County government.
- Judge Vicki Snyder of Paris, Henry County General Sessions and juvenile court judge.
- Sandy Tarkington of Dyersburg, marketing director/vice president of marketing and public relations, First Citizens National Bank.
- Linda J. Theus of Jackson, associate professor of business and area coordinator for business administration programs at Lane College.
- Jean Marie Walls of Jackson, professor and chair, Department of Language, Union University.
- Kathy Haney Williams of Jackson, retired executive administrative assistant/human resources specialist and genealogist.

"These women choose to live their lives with courageous commitment to helping their communities thrive," Ms. Stanfill said. "We hope that our West Tennesseans continue honoring these women through nominations."

WOMEN HONORED — Two women from the University of Tennessee at Martin are among the 2020 Sterling Award winners, which recognize women for outstanding achievement. The honorees include (from left, front row) Lenore Ventimiglia, Nola Spears, Shirlene Mercer, UT Martin's Dr. Cindy Boyles, Judge Christy Little, (second row) Hope Reasons, Jennifer Rowan, Kathy Williams, UT Martin's Virginia Grimes, Natalie Porter, (third row) Jane Jarvis, Judge Vicki Snyder, Esther Lemus, Mary Ann Sharpe, Linda Theus, Juanita Jones, (back row) Dr. Cheryl Browne, Dr. Gina Dieudonne, Jean Marie Walls, Sandy Tarkington and Joyce Brown. Not pictured is Laurice Lanier of Jackson.
Chloe Cates inducted into the Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi

Chloe Cates of Medina, Tennessee, was recently initiated into The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi, the nation's oldest and most selective all-discipline collegiate honor society. Cates was initiated at The University of Tennessee at Martin.

Cates is among approximately 30,000 students, faculty, professional staff and alumni to be initiated into Phi Kappa Phi each year. Membership is by invitation only and requires nomination and approval by a chapter. Only the top 10 percent of seniors and 7.5 percent of juniors are eligible for membership. Graduate students in the top 10 percent of the number of candidates for graduate degrees may also qualify, as do faculty, professional staff and alumni who have achieved scholarly distinction.

Phi Kappa Phi was founded in 1897 under the leadership of undergraduate student Marcus L. Urann who had a desire to create a different kind of honor society: one that recognized excellence in all academic disciplines. Today, the Society has chapters on more than 300 campuses in the United States and the Philippines. Its mission is “To recognize and promote academic excellence in all fields of higher education and to engage the community of scholars in service to others.”
UT-Martin Chancellor Dr. Keith Carver made a surprise visit to the home of UTM Senior Lexie Bolin of McKenzie. The university closed its campus to students because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Students completed his semester via online classes.

**UTM Chancellor Dr. Keith Carver Surprises UTM Senior Lexie Bolin**

Bolin to Graduate in Virtual Ceremony Saturday

When Stephanie Bolin decorated the family home as part of the local Class of 2020 Senior Light Up Night, to celebrate her college senior, she never dreamed that it would result in a visit from the University of Tennessee at Martin’s chancellor.

When Dr. Carver saw the pictures on social media he messaged Stephanie and said I may just have to drive down there and surprise Lexie and get my picture made in my cap and gown with her.

So, Friday afternoon, April 24, Lexie gets a cell phone call from Dr. Carver congratulating her on her accomplishments and on her upcoming graduation. He explained that he was preparing for a social media post and was very impressed with her decorations and asked her to step outside and take a “selfie” in front of the banner and text it to him. When Lexie stepped outside, Dr. Carver, and his office personnel, were walking up the driveway.

Dr. Carver explained that we can’t have commencement on campus this year so he thought he would bring commencement to her in McKenzie.

He explained to Lexie the senior decorations had “created quite a social media stir, so he thought what a great opportunity for him to put on his cap and gown and be around a student.”

He apologized that they were not able to have a traditional commencement, but he hoped this made up for it a little and explained that they make it official by taking a picture by the banner. He left Lexie with some UTM Alumni goodies. But most importantly, he left Lexie with a UTM senior memory that she will forever cherish.

Stephanie stated, “This is truly what a passion for your job and a passion for the UTM student body looks like. Having two girls at UTM this year, I know just how special Dr. Carver is to them and the student body on campus.”

Lexie will receive a BS Degree in Cell and Molecular Biology on Saturday.

A “virtual commencement” on Facebook Live is set for 10:00 a.m., Saturday, May 2.

Students will be honored individually by the calling of their name and the conferring of their degree by UT Martin Chancellor Dr. Keith Carver.
MARTIN, Tenn. (KFVS) - The University of Tennessee at Martin is offering ten free non-degree self-paced courses through University Outreach. They include both hard and soft skills.

The courses are open to the public and will be available for free until June 30.

The self-paced courses include:

- Creating Web Pages
- Creating WordPress Websites
- Fundamentals of Supervision and Management
- Twelve Steps to Successful Job Search
- Keys to Effective Communication
- Managing Customer Service
- Marketing Your Business on the Internet
- Personal Finance
- Small Business Marketing on a Shoestring
- Individual Excellence

Participants have three months to complete the course.

"We believe that having the right skills and knowing how to utilize them is vital for both job seekers and those currently employed," said Debbie Mount, director of Non-Degree Programs. "The courses can help an individual enter the workforce or advance their career or use as a professional development opportunity."

For course descriptions and registration, visit utm.edu/spc.

For more information, contact Non-Degree programs at nondegree@utm.edu or Mount at dmount@utm.edu
University Outreach offers free self-paced courses

April 29, 2020 by WBBJ 7 Eyewitness News Staff
(https://www.wbbjtv.com/author/wbbj7/eyewitnessnewssaff/)  

MARTIN, Tenn. — The University of Tennessee at Martin is offering 10 free non-degree self-paced courses through University Outreach that include both hard and soft skills relevant to the current job market.

The courses are open to the public and will be available for free until June 30.

The self-paced courses include tutorials in creating web pages and WordPress websites; the fundamentals of supervision and management; conducting a successful job search; keys to effective communication; marketing a personal business online; personal finance and individual excellence.

Participants have three months to complete the course.

"We believe that having the right skills and knowing how to utilize them is vital for both job seekers and those currently employed," said Debbie Mount, director of Non-Degree Programs. "The courses can help an individual enter the workforce or advance their career or use as a professional development opportunity."

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President of UT Column
Resilience, Revival and Resurgence!

In these challenging times, all of us at the University of Tennessee are determined to keep what is most important first in every action and every decision: the health and safety of our students, faculty and staff - nothing will have a higher priority. At the same time, we are working tirelessly to find new and innovative ways to continue our mission of educating, discovering, and serving our state. We have been resilient, and I could not be more proud of our team. Students are taking classes remotely, faculty have adjusted their instruction to a new virtual world while ensuring students complete courses and graduate on time. They are finding ways to overcome every obstacle. Staff are finding ways to do their work in new ways too, and discovering that work is not a place you go to. Work is a verb and it can be done anywhere, and often times it can be done even more effectively and efficiently.

In spite of the seemingly endless series of obstacles thrown our way, we are making lemonade! That's what they say to do when it's raining lemons, and that is precisely what we are doing. We have even created a portal where everyone is recording their "lemonade," or new, innovative solutions they are discovering as a result of these disruptions.

Someone once said never let a good crisis go to waste, and we aren't. We are discovering transformational ways to educate students and to do our work. We will stay healthy and safe, while at the same time making UT better and stronger than ever.

There will be a Revival. It is not a question of if, just a question of when. We will bring back our students, faculty and staff to our campuses, but it will not be the same. At least three things will be different. We will have transformed how we accomplish our mission. We will be more prepared for future catastrophic events. And we will have a stronger bond with an ever-lasting greater appreciation for each other, for our mission and for our University.

Finally, there will be a Resurgence. We won't go back to how we were. Instead, we will surge ahead in a profoundly better way. This crisis will not derail the greatest decade, but instead it will define it. How we are responding and overcoming is a catalytic moment in time. How we all rise to the challenge will be how we will be defined forever.

I have never been more inspired by the heroism and dedication of all our students, faculty and staff, and, because of them, this will still be the greatest decade in the history of the University of Tennessee!
WUTM Serves Martin During Pandemic

MARTIN — Students, faculty and staff have, for the most part, left campus as the COVID-19 crisis continues to disrupt the University of Tennessee at Martin's normal spring semester routine. However, one resource that the UT Martin community has consistently depended upon to deliver news is still producing news daily, just in a new location.

WUTM FM 90.3 “The Hawk,” student radio station programmed from Gooch Hall, has continued to air news and entertaining programs even though its employees now have restricted access to working in the station. These student journalists are facing new obstacles every day and are learning to overcome them using creative measures. While working from home, News Director Kayla Brooks, of Dickson, who believes disseminating current news is just as important now as ever, has resorted to producing newscasts from the most acoustically-quiet space in her home: the bathtub.

“I am having to write my own broadcast stories, ... going into my bathroom, closing the door, sealing myself into the bathtub as acoustically as possible and recording it on my phone, then sending it to my computer, editing it, and sending it to our engineer (Brian Thomas),” Brooks said. “Then he is having to do all of this work to make it sound good because it was from my bathtub and then putting it on air.”

Brooks says while the process is unlike any she ever expected to experience as a journalist or even a student-journalist, she appreciates the opportunity to cover such an important event in history. The ability to be flexible, even if that means producing a newscast from her bathroom, is a lesson she knows she will take with her as she pursues her communications career after graduation.

“I didn't come into working at the radio station thinking, 'oh wow, I'm definitely going to get to cover a pandemic,' because that's not how your brain works; that's not what you expect. It's a much more serious situation that I have this not only responsibility but privilege to cover,” Brooks said.

“It's a privilege because getting news to a group of people who need reassurance and need that confidence is really important.”

Dr. Richard Robinson, faculty adviser of WUTM FM 90.3 “The Hawk” and communications professor, believes the crisis is a real-life teaching moment for all student-journalists at UT Martin, a thought Rodney Freed shares.

“While this is awful, and it is, it's still great training for students,” said Robinson. “They are getting the same experience, at least to some degree, of these professional journalists.”

(The pandemic has taught) students how to work under not the most favorable conditions, when you don't have all of your tools right in front of you and still have to figure out how to make those things work with the tools that (you) have now to still be able to put a product together.” Freed, director of the broadcast sequence, said. “That's been a challenge for everyone in the media, not just us.”

While the radio station is capable of operating autonomously, Freed says the FCC licensed station is not just a “jukebox,” and what differentiates its status as such is the continuance of newscasts produced by Brooks.

“We're more than just a music station. We try to serve the community in more ways than just playing music,” Freed said.

“I think it's important for us to constantly evaluate our programming and see what we can do to help others and to pass along information that we have. It is part of our responsibility as a licensed station to do that.”

While Brooks is responsible for writing and producing newscasts for “The Hawk,” she, Robinson, and Freed all said it is because of the station’s senior broadcast engineer, Brian Thomas, that the station is running as well as it is. Thomas is responsible for maintaining the transmitter, keeping all programming on-air and to make sure the automation is working no matter what time of the day it is.

The biggest challenge the staff has faced so far is not being able to physically be in the radio station to operate as effectively as possible. They have learned how to work from home, albeit producing programs in an un-traditional way, while relying on Thomas to take care of the technical work that comes with airing.

Thomas, who has spent 20 years working in commercial broadcasting and only a year working at WUTM, is incorporating new ways to improve on-air programs for “The Hawk” and believes a challenge such as not having access to the radio station itself is not a big enough obstacle to stop the station from serving the community.

“I get a little more involved with the students when it comes to live programs because they ... don't always have the facilities to do it so that's why I step in and help them out too. We keep our programming going and our mission going even though we can't be in the building,” said Thomas.

According to WUTM FM 90.3 “The Hawk's” mission statement, the radio station's purpose is to “train students at The University of Tennessee at Martin in the field of radio broadcasting while serving the public in both the academic and outlying communities.” The journalists working at “The Hawk” during this time, while still students, are dedicated to producing informative, ethical programs to benefit the community, just as other professional radio stations are doing.

“We are dedicated to getting information that needs to be heard out. We have the same capabilities as anyone else to continue disseminating truth and objective stories ..., to an audience that needs it,” Brooks said. “We have the same dedication as those professional journalists who are out there and they finished school. I think whenever we come back, we will be a lot more confident in what we can offer.”

For more information about WUTM FM 90.3 “The Hawk” or to tune in, visit wutmradio.com.

“The Hawk,” interviewed Martin Mayor Randy Brundige during the 2019 College Radio Day.

Kayla Brooks, a senior communications major and news director of WUTM FM 90.3 “The Hawk,” interviewed Martin Mayor Randy Brundige during the 2019 College Radio Day.
The University of Tennessee campuses proposed 0 percent tuition increases for the fall 2020 academic year to their individual advisory boards. The boards will meet in early May to review and discuss tuition. Their recommendations will be submitted to UT President Randy Boyd and presented to the UT Board of Trustees in June for the final decision.

The UT Health Science Center's advisory board already recommended no increase, which was approved by the Board of Trustees earlier in the year.

If approved, both undergraduate and graduate students will experience no tuition increases for the 2020-21 academic year at the campuses in Chattanooga, Knoxville, and Martin.

If approved, it would be a first in the university's history that all four campuses had a 0 percent tuition increase.

"Our students and their families are struggling right now, many financially," said UT President Randy Boyd. "Our chancellors and I strongly believe that we need to do everything we can to provide them the support they need to continue their education at UT, and to make our University as affordable as possible for our incoming students."

On March 11, UT campuses across the state announced they would be moving to online learning in response to the coronavirus pandemic.

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**UTM names reentry task force for COVID-19**

April 30, 2020 by WBBJ 7 Eyewitness News Staff

MARTIN, Tenn. — University of Tennessee at Martin chancellor Dr. Keith Carver has named a reentry task force, which will recommend steps for the university to move forward during COVID-19, according to a news release.

Because of the pandemic, the university moved to having spring, Maymester and summer classes online, and decisions are pending for when and how events, activities and fall classes will resume and operate, according to the release.

The task force is divided into various subcommittees that will send recommendations to the university’s leadership team, the release says.

The task force will also consider possible scenarios, including reopening in August, a delayed opening with an online start for the fall semester, and a return to campus mid-semester, the release says. The group will also look into a completely online operation, according to the release.

Members of the task force are:
• Chairs: Philip Smartt, Faculty/Agriculture; Shannon Deal, Student Health and Counseling
• Advisers to the Chairs: Holly Rowan, emergency management protocols
  Laura Foltz, budget considerations and assignments

Membership:
• John Blue, Student Affairs/Boling University Center
• Emalee Buttrey, Faculty/Agriculture
• Ashley Bynum, Intercollegiate Athletics
• David Carithers, Faculty/English Department Chair
• Kiara Castleman, Academic Records
• Bonnie Daniel, Information Technology Center/Canvas course delivery
• Olivia Fernandez, Information Technology Services
• Deb Gibson, Faculty/Health and Human Performance
• Katie High, Interim Dean, College of Business and Global Affairs
• Bud Grimes, University Relations
• Ryan Martin, Residence Life
• Tim Nipp, Facilities
• Ali Sabahi, Faculty/Biological Sciences
• Anderson Starling, Faculty/Political Science
• Mike Swaim, Alumnus/Pharmacist
• Destin Tucker, Undergraduate Admissions
• Michael Washington, Human Resources
• Erin Weber, Paul Meek Library
University of Tennessee to propose no tuition increase at all campuses due to coronavirus

By Monica Kast / Knoxville News Sentinel
Posted Apr 30, 2020 at 3:27 PM

The University of Tennessee System is proposing no tuition increase at all campuses because of financial hardship caused by the coronavirus.

If approved, there would be no increase for undergraduate and graduate students for the 2020-21 academic year. This would be the first time in the system's history that all four campuses — at Knoxville, Chattanooga, Martin and the Health Science Center in Memphis — did not increase tuition.

"Our students and their families are struggling right now, many financially," said System President Randy Boyd. "Our chancellors and I strongly believe that we need to do everything we can to provide them the support they need to continue their education at UT, and to make our university as affordable as possible for our incoming students."

Advisory boards at each campus will meet in early May to discuss tuition, then make recommendations to the Board of Trustees for their June meeting. The vote on tuition will be taken at the June 26 meeting.

The trustees already approved a 0% tuition increase for the Health Science Center in Memphis at the February meeting.

Last year, UT campuses had a slight tuition increase. The Knoxville campus had a 2% increase and the Chattanooga and Martin campuses each had a 2.5% increase, amounting to increases between $216 and $258.

Last week, East Tennessee State University announced it would not raise tuition or fees for next year.

"One of the best investments someone can make in their future is to attain a college degree," ETSU President Brian Noland said. "During these uncertain times, students and their families should be afforded the opportunity to plan ahead. We want to do everything we can to ensure prospective students feel like ETSU is the best choice for them."
Miss Tennessee Volunteer cancels pageant due to coronavirus concerns

Miss Tennessee Volunteer 2019 Kerri Arnold, who is a student at the University of Tennessee at Martin, will have to wait another year before being able to crown a successor.

The Miss Tennessee Volunteer board of directors recently announced due to COVID-19 concerns and closures of public buildings in Jackson that the 2020 edition of the Miss Tennessee Volunteer pageant has been canceled.

The board has worked with the organization for decades on a variety of milestones, including the successful establishment of Miss Tennessee Volunteer, the creation of the Presidents Club, consistently maintaining a minimum of 36 local titles who participate in the state pageant and celebrating over 67 years of tradition in Jackson. But, the board recently had a first for the organization when it came to the realization that it would not be able to hold the Miss Tennessee Volunteer Pageant this year in order to remain compliant with safer at home orders and businesses remaining closed due to the public health civil emergency issued by the mayor of Jackson, the mayor of Madison County, the governor of Tennessee and the president of the United States.

"As the City of Jackson and Madison County begin Phase 1 of the Economic Recovery Plan, both Mayors (Scott) Conger and (Jimmy) Harris are taking all of the necessary precautions, which include closing all city venues until September at the earliest," the board stated in a press release.

"We are saddened that our city venues will not be open this summer in order to host our pageant, but fully support our government officials who are implementing strategies to improve the overall health and economic strength of Jackson and the surrounding areas. Our board has been relentless in working through every scenario on behalf of our organization, local directors, local committee members, contestants, their parents, our generous sponsors and supportive fans to try and find a way to hold the state competition. After weeks of careful deliberation, and in following the latest guidelines issued on April 24 from national, state and local authorities, the orga-
In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the University of Tennessee at Martin will hold a virtual commencement at 10 a.m., Saturday, May 2, in lieu of the traditional in-person ceremony. The event is closed to the public and all participants will engage in social distancing in order to comply with CDC COVID-19 control guidelines.

In recognition of the more than 700 undergraduate and graduate students receiving degrees, the name and photo of each graduate will be aired during the ceremony. The ceremony can be viewed live at www.facebook.com/utmartin or www.youtube.com/utmartin. The ceremony will be archived on YouTube with closed captioning included for later viewing.

The commencement will feature remarks from UT President Randy Boyd, UTM Chancellor Keith Carver, UTM Provost Philip Acree Cavalier, UTM SGA President Devin Majors, Campus Minister Amanda Crice, and UTM Alumni Association President Amy West. Andy Lewter, vice chancellor for student affairs, will announce the recipients of the Paul and Martha Meek Award, and Doug Cook, chair of the department of visual and theatre arts, will serve as the Mace Bearer during the procession.

An in-person graduation ceremony is currently being planned for August 2020 in the Elam Center. More details will be released about this event as further decisions are made. For more information, contact the Office of University Relations at 731-881-7615.
As Miss Tennessee Volunteer Kerri Arnold’s reign winds down, pageant is cancelled

pamela MIRABELLA Editor

Organizers announced on Monday that the upcoming Miss Tennessee Volunteer Pageant would be cancelled under the COVID-19 regulations passed down by Governor Bill Lee. The news was heartbreaking for those women vying for the crown including local Holladay resident and current Miss UT Martin Kailey Duffy. But nobody is more affected than the current Miss Tennessee Volunteer, Benton County’s own, Kerri Arnold.

On June 22, Holladay native Arnold won the coveted Miss Tennessee Volunteer crown in the state’s first pageant under that name since it broke away from the Miss Tennessee organization. It has been a whirlwind of a year since the crowning. Then the news broke this week that the pageant scheduled for the weekend of June 17-20, was officially cancelled. Arnold said after learning of the cancellation, “I am heartbroken for the young women who prepared to compete in Jackson this June, but I am also heartbroken for those who have friends and loved ones affected by this terrible virus. I am so proud to be Miss Tennessee Volunteer 2019, and have the wonderful leadership to work with that I do. As far as how this announcement will affect me, I’m discussing with the leadership how to proceed in my reign and look forward.”

The Miss Tennessee Volunteer Pageant was born when organizers parted ways with Miss America. In May Christine Williamson broke ties with the Miss America Organization and made history by accepting the inaugural title of Miss Tennessee Volunteer 2018. Arnold was the first to win the crown under the new title.

In a press release on Monday, organizers said, “We will not be able to hold the Miss Tennessee Volunteer Pageant this year so as to remain in keeping with the Safer At Home orders and businesses remaining closed due to the public health civil emergency issued by the Mayor of the City of Jackson, Madison County Mayor, Governor of Tennessee and President of the United States.”

The release continued, “As the City of Jackson and Madison County begin Phase I of the Economic Recovery Plan, both Mayors Scott Conger and Jimmy Harris are taking all of the necessary precautions, which include closing all city venues until September at the earliest. We are saddened that our city venues will not be open this summer in order to host our pageant, but fully support our government officials who are implementing strategies to improve the overall health and economic strength of Jackson and the surrounding areas. Our board has been relentless in working through every scenario on behalf of our organization, local directors, local committee members, contestants, their parents, our generous sponsors and supportive fans to try and find a way to hold the state competition. After weeks of careful deliberation, and in following the latest guidelines issued on April 24th from national, state and local authorities, the organization feels it must begin to look ahead to 2021.”

Pageant Co-Executive Director, Allison Akerson DeMarcus stated, “We greatly appreciate your understanding and patience, as our actions are always focused on the best interest of the young women who represent our program in their respective communities across the state. The unique spirit and sense of unity that is at the heart of what Miss Tennessee Volunteer stands for continues to propel us into the future. In the months ahead, we hope to have the opportunity to once again bring local directors, local committees, contestants and their families together in Jackson to celebrate. We hope to see everyone at Miss Tennessee Volunteer next year, June 16-19, 2021 at the Carl Perkins Civic Center.”

The news of the 2021 pageant excited Duffy who has plans to compete next year. She said, “Even though I am sad that I don’t get to compete for the job of Miss TN Volunteer in Jackson this June, I am so thankful to be part of an organization that cares so much about the girls, the volunteers, directors and everyone involved. Even though this decision was not easy, I’m so glad they care for the health and safety for all those involved. Even though COVID-19 has been something none of us has expected, this has been a time to reminisce on our lives and to not take things for granted. I am excited to say that I will continue my reign as Miss UT Martin for another year. I fully believe that everything happens for a reason. Being Miss UT Martin, I’m so excided to serve the community of Martin and all the UT Martin Centers and promote my platform U Fit N. And then, get ready...June 2021, I’m ready for you!”

As for what’s ahead for Arnold, she said, “Be sure to check my Instagram and Facebook for updates as to what the next year holds! Covid-19 is affecting everyone all over the world, and we are all adjusting as best we can. Stay safe, stay home, and say a prayer for our leaders as we navigate this difficult time.”

For those who have purchased tickets to this year’s event, reach out to Ticket Chairperson, Val Exum, at misstnvoltickets@gmail.com for more information. The pageant is honoring sponsorships and tickets purchased for this year’s event for Miss Tennessee Volunteer 2021 and are also offering full refunds upon request.

Kailey Duffy
UT-Martin Holds Virtual Ceremony

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The ceremony will be live-streamed via Facebook Live at www.facebook.com/utmartin and YouTube at www.youtube.com/utmartin.

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