The University of Tennessee at Martin is hosting an in-person Spring Preview Day on Saturday, April 10 for high school juniors and seniors interested in UTM. The event will be held from 9 a.m. – noon in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center.

“We look forward to hosting Spring Preview Day in our Elam Center that allows plenty of room to adhere to social distancing guidelines,” said Destin Tucker, director of admissions. “While we have been conducting small-group tours since June, we know that a weekend preview day program provides an opportunity for more students to see what UTM has to offer.”

In compliance with CDC guidelines, each student can have only one guest attend the event. Masks are required to be worn at all times, and social distancing will be practiced.

Check-in begins at 9 a.m. in the Elam Center, during which there will be an open-information fair featuring representatives from campus offices. The students will then receive an official welcome from UTM Chancellor Keith Carver and the admissions staff at 9:45 a.m. At 10:15 a.m., students will attend a question-and-answer panel with current students to learn more about college life until 11 a.m., when students will be able to tour the campus in small groups.

There is no charge to attend preview day, but students are required to register at utm.edu/previewday. For more information, contact the Office of Undergraduate Admissions at 731-881-7020 or admitme@utm.edu.
UTM offers options for summer orientation

The University of Tennessee at Martin will hold 2021 Summer Orientation and Registration (SOAR) and Transfer Orientation sessions both virtually and in person. Registration for SOAR is open, and is required for all incoming freshmen.

In-person orientation dates will be hosted in the Boling University Center and the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center, while online sessions will be held over Zoom and other online platforms. To best protect participants, events are subject to change according to university policy and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention COVID-19 restrictions.

**Online orientation dates:**
- Fri., April 23 - Transfer
- Wed., June 23 - SOAR
- Fri., Aug. 6 - Both

**In-person orientation dates:**
- Mon., May 24 - SOAR
- Wed., May 26 - SOAR
- Thurs., June 10 - Transfer
- Fri., June 11 - SOAR
- Wed., July 14 - Transfer
- Mon., June 21 - SOAR
- Fri., July 9 - SOAR
- Mon., July 26 - SOAR

For more information, contact Destin Tucker, director of the Office of Undergraduate Admissions, at dtuckel3@utm.edu, or admissions at admitme@utm.edu. Students can register for SOAR through the MyUTMPortal.

THE LAUDERDALE COUNTY ENTERPRISE, RIPLEY, TENNESSEE, APRIL 1, 2021

**AWARE Students Visit West Star**

**STUDENTS** from Halls High School, Ripley Middle School and Ripley High School, including Brandon Jones, from HHS; Aaleigha Folks, Kiah Crawford and Athena Bhatti, RHS; and Tatiana Cooper, RMS, addressed the West-Star Leadership class at University of Tennessee at Martin Ripley Center March 25th. The students delivered powerful messages as they explained the impact of Project AWARE programming on their lives, on fellow students and on their schools’ environments. Project AWARE promotes mental health awareness and services in Lauderdale County Schools to increase health and wellness for students, families and community. The students are pictured with members of the AWARE staff and district staff.
UT-Martin Hosts In Person Preview

The University of Tennessee at Martin Office of Undergraduate Admissions is hosting an in-person Spring Preview Day April 10th for high school juniors and seniors interested in UT Martin. The event will be held from 9 a.m. to noon in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center.

Each student can have only one guest attend the event in compliance with CDC guidelines. Masks are required to be worn at all times, and social distancing will be practiced. There is no charge to attend preview day, but students are required to register at utm.edu/previewday.

“We look forward to hosting Spring Preview Day in our Elam Center that allows plenty of room to adhere to social distancing guidelines,” Destin Tucker, director of admissions, said. “While we have been conducting small-group tours since June, we know that a weekend preview day program provides an opportunity for more students to see what UT Martin has to offer.”

Check-in begins at 9 a.m. in the Elam Center, during which there will be an open-information fair featuring representatives from offices across campus.

The students will then receive an official welcome from UT Martin Chancellor Keith Carver and the admissions staff at 9:45 a.m.

At 10:15 a.m., students will attend a question-and-answer panel with current students to learn more about college life until 11 a.m., when students will be able to tour the campus in small groups. For more information, contact the Office of Undergraduate Admissions at 731-881-7020 or admitme@utm.edu.

UT-Martin Offers Phar. Tech Classes

The University of Tennessee at Martin Office of University Outreach will offer training courses for students interested in becoming pharmacy technicians.

The classes will be offered at UT Martin centers in Ripley, Somerville and Selmer and will prepare students for working in a pharmacy and taking the Pharmacy Technician Certification Board’s exam. Students will learn proper patient dosages, roman numerals, names and abbreviations of brand name and generic drugs, pharmacy practices, and more.

The certification courses will be offered at Ripley, 5:30 to 9 p.m., Tuesdays and Thursdays, April 6th through May 25th; Somerville, 6 to 9:30 p.m., Mondays and Thursdays, April 5th through May 24th; and Selmer, 6 to 9:30 p.m., Tuesdays and Thursdays, April 6th through May 25th.

Registration fees will cover all the textbooks and supplies necessary for the course.

To register, go to https://www.utm.edu/departments/nondegree/courses/healthcare/pharmacy.php

For more information, contact Debbie Mount, director of non-degree programs, at dmount@utm.edu.
UT MARTIN TO OFFER ACT PREP COURSES

April 2, 2021 @ 9:03 am Shannon McFarlin

MARTIN, Tenn. – The University of Tennessee at Martin Office of University Outreach is offering a series of online ACT prep courses to help students prepare for the test.

The ACT Success Tactics Workshops will teach students time-saving and strategic tips that will help them during the test. Each workshop is a two-hour session via Zoom from 5 p.m. – 7 p.m. Math and science reasoning will be taught April 6, and English and reading will be taught April 8.

Registration for each workshop costs $30. Students will need access to a computer that can connect to Zoom through audio and video.

UT Martin adjunct faculty member and author Alex Beene will teach the courses. Beene serves as a lead instructor for Tennessee Adult Education in three counties and works primarily with rising high school juniors and seniors needing academic help with standardized testing.

To register, visit www.utm.edu/actprep.

For more information, contact Debbie Mount, director of non-degree programs, at dmount@utm.edu.
UTM DANCE ENSEMBLE TO PERFORM "DELIVER US PEACE"
April 5, 2021 @ 8:56 am Shannon McFarlin

The University of Tennessee at Martin Department of Visual and Theatre Arts Dance Ensemble will perform the 2021 spring showcase "Deliver us Peace" at 7 p.m., April 8-9, in the Harriet Fulton Theatre with limited reserved seating. The April 8 show will also be livestreamed on the Department of Visual and Theatre Arts YouTube account.

The 2021 spring showcase will feature student performances by Morgan Abston, a junior nursing major; Hunter Burton, a senior fine and performing arts major; Alaina Harvey, a sophomore interdisciplinary studies major; Brianna Stephens, a senior fine and performing arts major; and Kimani Subber, a senior communications major, as well as a performance by Sarah McCormick, professor of dance, director of ensemble and coordinator of the K-12 dance education licensure program. The dances were choreographed by McCormick, as well as Burton, Harvey, Stephens and Subber.

To reserve tickets, call 731-881-7400. For more information about the ensemble, contact McCormick at smccorm6@utm.edu.
Canned food drive benefits UTM’s Captain Food Pantry

April 5, 2021 by Ashley Luningham

MARTIN, Tenn. — Students are showing love for their school with a canned food drive during the kick off of the University of Tennessee Martin’s seventh annual I Heart UTM Week.

The week was mostly virtual last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but this year, students and staff can celebrate in person.

UTM Alumni program associate director Bethany Hart says the canned food drive helps students in need.

“We are starting with a canned food drive, which goes to our Captain Food Pantry, which goes to our students in need or students who just might need a little bit of extra care. Just something to help them out during a hard time,” Hart said.

The food drive is set up as a drive-through drop off. The first 100 students who participated got a free t-shirt.

Sophomore Student Alumni Council member Carter Vandaslik says this was a great way for him to give back to his community.
"It was another way for me to get involved on campus and, this being my first year at UT Martin, I was very excited to reach out and help the community and see what I Heart UTM Week was all about," Vandrasik said.

SAC secretary and treasurer Bentley Gordon says this week is a great way to bring the campus together.

"With COVID and everything going on and having online classes, this is the week that brings students together, and we actually get to interact with other students during this week. I think this week is even more special," Gordon said.

For a full list of events, click here (https://www.wbbjtv.com/2021/03/22/i-heart-utm-week-returning-in-april/).

"I HEART UTM" WEEK CELEBRATED THIS WEEK
April 5, 2021 @ 9:02 am Shannon McFarlin

Martin, Tenn.—The University of Tennessee at Martin will host the seventh annual "I Heart UTM" week April 5 – 11 to celebrate Skyhawk pride and community support. The 2021 "I Heart UTM" week will feature in-person and virtual events for students, faculty, staff and alumni.

"I Heart UTM week encourages students, faculty, staff, alumni and the community to show and display campus pride," said Jackie Johnson, assistant vice chancellor for alumni relations and annual giving. "Through unique T-shirts, events, and social media fun, the UTM family is encouraged to join in on the fun and display their Skyhawk spirit!"
"I Heart UTM" week was planned by the Student Alumni Council and Bethany Hart, assistant director for alumni relations and annual giving. The week's schedule is as follows:

Monday, April 5, Philanthropy Day:
- SAC Canned Goods Drive: 10 a.m. – noon, Dunagan Alumni Center. The first 150 students who donate at least five canned goods to Captain's Pantry will receive a complimentary "I Heart UTM" tank top.
- Flight Crew Pop-up: 11 a.m., Boling University Center. The UT Martin Flight Crew will give away UT Martin.
- Thank-a-Hawk: Members of the UT Martin community are encouraged to share who has made a lasting impact in their life on social media using the hashtags #hawkup and #iheartutm.

Tuesday, April 6, Thankful Tuesday:
- Donuts for Donors: 10 a.m. – noon, Boling University Center. Students who write a thank-you card to a UT Martin donor can receive a donut or fruit, as well as "I Heart UTM" swag.
- Props for Profs: Students and alumni are encouraged to share photos with their favorite faculty members on social media using the hashtags #propsforprofs. Students can also stop by the Boling University Center from 10 a.m. – noon to write a note to their favorite faculty members, which will be delivered with muffins.
- Movie Night at Cine: 9:45 p.m., Cine movie theatre. The UT Martin Flight Crew is hosting a free viewing of "Godzilla vs. Kong" for students.

Wednesday, April 7, Hump Day:
- Petting Zoo for Students: noon – 3 p.m., the Quadrangle. UT Martin campus community members can ride camels and visit the petting zoo hosted in the quad.
- Virtual Petting Zoo: Students, alumni, faculty and staff are encouraged to submit photos of their pets on social media using the hashtag #skyhawkpets to be entered in a cutest pet competition.
- SGA Softball Game: 7 p.m., Skyhawk Softball Field. The Student Government Association will host a Faculty/Staff vs. Students softball game.

Thursday, April 8, Senior Day:
- Senior Drive-Thru: 8 – 10 a.m., Dunagan Alumni Center. Seniors planning to graduate in both May and December can pick up blueberry muffins and Orange Crush sodas. Seniors who donate $20.21 to the Senior Gift Campaign will receive a green giving card to wear during commencement.
- Senior of Social: Graduating seniors are encouraged to share their favorite UT Martin memories with the hashtag #utmsenioriday to show their Skyhawk pride.
- and Miss UTM Election: 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. The Student Government Association is sponsoring an election to crown Mr. and Miss UTM, which will be held online at utm.edu/election.

Friday, April 9, Community Day:
- Skyhawk Creed Celebration: Noon, Boling University Center North Patio. Students are invited to celebrate the Skyhawk Creed with food, music and free T-shirt giveaways.
- Skyhawks Got Talent: 7 p.m. The Office of Student Life and Multicultural Affairs and Flight Crew are hosting a virtual variety talent show.

Sunday, April 11, I Heart UTM Finale:
- SAC Tailgating: 1:30 p.m., Hardy Graham Stadium. Students are invited to stop by the Student Alumni Council tent at the UT Martin vs. Tennessee Tech football game for fun swag.
- and Miss UTM: Mr. and Miss UTM will be crowned during halftime at the UT Martin vs. Tennessee Tech football game.

"I Heart UTM" T-shirts, which showcase the most iconic UT Martin features, are also available for purchase at alumni.utm.edu/iheartutm (http://www.alumni.utm.edu/iheartutm).

For more information about the seventh-annual "I Heart UTM" week, visit utmforever.com (http://www.utmforever.com/) or contact Hart at bhart5@utm.edu (mailto: bhart5@utm.edu).
Ryan Ridder hired as new UTM men’s basketball HC

Athletic director Kurt McGuffin has announced the hiring of Ryan Ridder as the University of Tennessee at Martin head men’s basketball coach.

“I am beyond thrilled to welcome Ryan, Jen and their young family to Martin,” McGuffin said. “Ryan is the son of a highly successful coach and has grown up in the business. I am confident that he has the game plan to take our program to another level. He has shown to be a builder of programs and does this with the highest integrity, getting all he can out of his players in every situation his career has led him. I believe the Skyhawk fan base will enjoy his energy and passion. He is simply a winner.”

“Ryan’s track record as a proven winner speaks volumes,” UT Martin Chancellor Dr. Keith Carver said. “He is a basketball lifer who has vast experience in building up programs. I am impressed by his vision he has set for UT Martin and we are confident that he is a great fit for not just the Skyhawk athletic department but for the entire community.”

Ridder joins the Skyhawks after four successful seasons as head coach at Bethune-Cookman University, a NCAA Division I member of the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference.

During his tenure in Daytona Beach, Florida, Ridder set numerous school records, posted a .646 winning percentage in league play, and won the 2017-18 MEAC regular season championship. He was highlighted by ESPN to its top “40 Under 40” list of the nation’s head and assistant coaches in May 2020.

Ridder owns a 143-73 record as a collegiate head coach, which also includes four seasons at Daytona State College. He boast the most wins (48) in the first three years in Bethune-Cookman history before the school opted out of all sports for the 2020-21 campaign. From 2017-20, Ridder’s Wildcat squads posted a winning MEAC record for three consecutive seasons for the first time in school history, going 31-17 during that span.

“First, I would like to thank our Chancellor, Dr. Keith Carver and Director of Intercollegiate Athletics Kurt McGuffin for their trust in me and the opportunity to lead the men’s basketball program at UT Martin,” Ridder said. “Our family is excited and looking forward to building relationships with the campus and community. We are fired up to work together to build a program that reflects the special people of Martin and the university.”

Ridder’s debut season as a Division I head coach was historical as he helped guide Bethune-Cookman to just the second MEAC regular season championship in its 38-year history. For his efforts, he was named the Joe B. Hall Award winner, defeating candidates from schools such as Miami, Louisville, Oklahoma State, and Washington for the honor that recognizes the top first-year head coach in the Division I ranks.

Overall, Ridder tutored five All-MEAC players, one MEAC Player of the Year, two MEAC Defensive Players of the Year and one MEAC All-Rookie team member at Bethune-Cookman. He led the Wildcats to their first-ever win over a Conference USA opponent (FAU) and increased the school’s NCAA RPI rating by over 60 points while in charge of the program.

Ridder, 36, began his head coaching career in 2013-14 at Daytona State College – accumulating a 95-28 overall record at the NJCAA level. He brought home Mid-Florida Conference championships in each of his four seasons after inheriting a program that went 6-25 during the previous season.

The Falcons were consistently ranked regionally and nationally under Ridder as he earned four consecutive conference Coach of the Year accolades. He mentored 25 all-conference performers, 16 players who advanced to play at four-year institutions and two NJCAA All-Americans while boasting a 96 percent graduation rate amongst his student-athletes.

Ridder got his start at the Division I level with three seasons as an assistant working under head coach Robbie Laing at Campbell University, located in Buies Creek, North Carolina. He was an integral part of a Fighting Camels staff that signed the highest ranked recruiting class (64th nationally) in the ASUN Conference in 2013-14.
Weakley Arts Can to co-host arts festival

Weakley Arts Can (WAC) is excited to co-host the Northwest TN (NWTN) Arts Festival this April after having to cancel all in-person meetings, celebrations and advocacy events due to COVID-19. The event will be held Saturday from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the tent by Pacer Pond on the campus of UT Martin.

WAC has been looking for ways to involve the region in arts celebrations and advocacy since the world shut down in March of 2020. Through at home resources, articles and social media, WAC has been able to continue growing support and advocating within the local schools.

Now that it is safer to execute outdoor events, WAC is excited to get back to celebrating and supporting the arts of the region in person.

The festival will be co-hosted by UT Martin Music and the Weakley County School System. Everyone is invited to attend and enjoy a day of supporting the arts safely. Saturday’s events will include live music, theatrical performances, dance recitals and an art show/community art showcase. Food will be available for purchase.

Attendees need to bring a lawn chair to sit in and a mask to wear. COVID-19 safety precautions will be in place in order to keep everyone safe and healthy.

Since the founding of WAC in January of 2019, WAC has served the region by advocating for the arts in the schools and the communities of Weakley County.

More information can be found about WAC and the NWTN Arts Festival at www.weakleyartscan.org.

CollegeInsider.com announced this afternoon that Anthony Stewart, the former University of Tennessee at Martin head men’s basketball coach who tragically passed away last November, has received the Gene Bartow Award for the 2020-21 season.

The Gene Bartow Award is presented annually to a current or former coach for his contributions to the game. Named after the late coach who won 647 games over a 36-year collegiate career, the award measures a coach’s win-loss record but also the impact he’s made on his players, school and community.

Stewart is just the ninth recipient of this prestigious award, joining Pacific’s Bob Thomason (2013), Coastal Carolina’s Cliff Ellis (2014), Lafayette’s Fran O’Hanlon (2015), Saint Joseph’s Phil Martelli (2016), Towson’s Pat Skerry (2017), Georgia State’s Ron Hunter (2018), Temple’s Fran Dunphy (2019), and Iona’s Tim Cluess (2020).

On Nov. 15, 2020, the college basketball community was stunned at the unexpected passing of Stewart, who was entering his fifth season in charge of the Skyhawks. The Akron, Ohio native, who was just 50 years old, was honored throughout the 2020-21 season with a suit jacket on the first seat on the UT Martin bench at home and away games.

On the court, Stewart guided the Skyhawks to 53 victories and a pair of Ohio Valley Conference tournament appearances. In his first season at the helm, UT Martin tied the program record with 22 wins, claiming its first-ever outright OVC West division title while advancing to the league championship game. As a direct result, he was one of 21 finalists for the 2017 Ben Jobe National Coach of the Year Award, presented every year to the nation’s top Division I minority head coach.

Arguably, Stewart’s greatest presence was off the court. His teams routinely gave back in the area — logging over 1,000 hours of community service during his tenure. Stewart improved the program’s NCAA Academic Progress Rate by 43 points in his tenure, reaching a perfect 1,000 score for the 2018-19 season. His team followed that with a school record 3.1 cumulative Grade Point Average for the 2019-20 campaign. A total of nine men’s basketball student-athletes earned their degrees under Stewart with a 10th Skyhawk on track to graduate this spring.

Stewart additionally took part in many high-profile speaking engagements. He was a keynote speaker at the 2019 Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration Breakfast event held on the UT Martin campus and at the 2018 College Coaching Consortium at the NCAA Final Four in San Antonio, Texas. He also annually represented the Skyhawks at the American Cancer Society Coaches vs. Cancer Tennessee Tip-Off Reception in Nashville.
UTM hosts music events

The Department of Music at the University of Tennessee at Martin has the following events planned:

- Careers in Music Business with virtual guest artist Nick Barbion will be held Wednesday at 2 p.m. It is open to anyone via Zoom.
- Student Showcase Concert, part of UTM Music’s CulturEd Online series, will be held Thursday at 8 p.m. It may be viewed on Facebook and YouTube.
- The first-ever Northwest Tennessee Arts Festival will begin at 11 a.m. Saturday. It will be available in person and on UTM Music Facebook and YouTube.

The Northwest Tennessee Arts Festival is a new outdoor event hosted by UTM Music, Weakley Arts Can, and Weakley County Schools to promote K-12 and university performing and visual artists throughout northwest Tennessee. The event will be at the music tent by Pacer Pond at UT Martin. It will be open to the public and will include live music, theater and dance, visual art exhibitions, and feature the annual Weakley County Art Show Competition. Food and drink will be available. Attendees should bring a lawn chair and wear a mask.

For more information, visit www.weakleyartscan.org.

- Instrumental Solo Competition premieres on YouTube Sunday at 3 p.m.

To learn more about upcoming events, visit utm.edu/musicevents.

https://www.kfvs12.com/

Captain’s Challenge set for April 14 at UTM

The University of Tennessee at Martin is hosting its seventh annual Captain’s Challenge fundraising event April 14, with a goal to raise $350,000 in 24 hours. This year’s theme is “Captain’s Challenge Jeopardy! Edition,” and UT Martin community members can follow along on social media as Captain competes in the trivia competition for a chance to help the university achieve its fundraising goal.

Contributors can direct their donations toward any campus office, department, athletic organization, regional center, scholarship fund, special program or another fundraiser at challenge.utm.edu. Each college will have a meter to track their real-time fundraising progress on the donation website.

Donors are asked to consider the Student Assistance fund, the Athletics-Victory fund, the Northwest Tennessee Arts Center fund, the Innovation and Product Realization Building fund or the Ned Ray McWherter Institute fund if unsure of which program to donate to specifically.

Last year, with the goal of $325,000, UT Martin raised over $401,000 in 24 hours.

Jackie Johnson, assistant vice chancellor of the Office of Alumni Relations and Annual Giving, encourages all alumni to donate during Captain's Challenge no matter the size of their gift.

"Many times, alumni think the size of their donation isn’t enough to help make a difference,” Johnson said. “But we’ve seen how small gifts can make a huge impact. We started off the first year with a $25,000 goal, and last year, we raised over $400,000. So as you can see, any donation can make an impact on a student’s life here at UT Martin.’’

Those interested in helping to promote the event on social media and through other channels are encouraged to register as “Captain’s Challenge Pilots” at alumni.utm.edu/pilot.

UT Martin to debut virtual spring opera

The University of Tennessee at Martin’s Department of Music will hold a spring opera virtually on April 16 and 17 (Source: UT Martin)

By Jessica Lidd | April 6, 2021 at 4:39 PM CDT - Updated April 6 at 4:39 PM

MARTIN, Tenn. (KFVS) - The University of Tennessee at Martin’s Department of Music will hold a spring opera virtually on April 16 and 17.

The opera titled "The New Normal" will be broadcast on the department’s Facebook and YouTube accounts at 8 p.m., April 16 and 17.

"The New Normal" was written and composed by UT Martin professors of music Dr. Roberto Mancusi and Dr. Mark Simmons and features the struggles students and teachers had to overcome during the pandemic.

The opera uses real-world experiences to connect with audience members, such as internet connectivity issues and decisions based on morality in a virtual learning environment.

The opera will be archived for later viewing.
Ridder introduced at UT Martin as 12th men's basketball coach

Adam Wells
Apr 7, 2021
PADUCAH, KY -- One week after being hired, Ryan Ridder was officially introduced as the 12th head men's basketball coach at UT Martin on Wednesday afternoon.

Ridder has spent the last four years as the head coach at Bethune-Cookman, compiling an overall record of 48-45. The Wildcats did not compete during the 2020-21 season due to covid-19.

He takes over for the late Anthony Stewart who passed away in November of last year.

On the court, the Skyhawks have been to just one OVC Tournament over the last four years, and turning around programs has been a calling card for the young coach.

"I have been fortunate enough, to take over a couple of programs that where in transition and we have hired a quality staff around us that have recruiting experience bringing in seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven guys," Ridder said. "So, I think that is fun. You really get a chance to make it your own in year one and we are excited about the challenge and really just pumped up about the opportunity."

7th Annual UT Martin Captain's Challenge

MARTIN, Tenn. — The University of Tennessee at Martin is hosting its seventh-annual Captain's Challenge fundraising event April 14, with a goal to raise $350,000 in 24 hours.
This year's theme is "Captain's Challenge - Jeopardy! Edition," and UT Martin community members can follow along on social media as Captain competes in the trivia competition for a chance to help the university achieve its fundraising goal.

Contributors can direct their donations toward any campus office, department, athletic organization, regional center, scholarship fund, special program or another fundraiser at challenge.utm.edu. Each college will have a meter to track its real-time fundraising progress on the donation website.

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Those interested in helping to promote the event on social media and through other channels are encouraged to register as "Captain's Challenge Pilots" at alumni.utm.edu/pilot.

For more information, contact the UT Martin Office of Alumni Relations at 731-881-7610 or alumni@utm.edu.
NSF Grant to Increase Science, Math Teachers

MARTIN (March 29) — Help is on the way to increase the number of qualified science and math teachers in West Tennessee. The University of Tennessee at Martin has received a National Science Foundation award totaling $1.2 million over five years to recruit 25 individuals who have science, math or engineering degrees to complete master's degrees and teach STEM subjects. Lauderdale County Schools, Obion County Schools and the Gibson County School District are partners that will help select the new teachers and assist with their training as part of the Robert Noyce Teacher Scholarship Program. The partner schools will play a key role in the project that could eventually impact STEM education across most of West Tennessee.

"These counties are considered high need, and they're seeking quality educators in the areas of math and science," said Dr. Terry Silver, a UT Martin associate professor of educational studies. "These counties are excited to help their students become engaged learners in math and science."

Dr. Steve Elliott, professor of mathematics and statistics and UT Martin STEM Center director, led university efforts to secure the grant along with Silver and Dr. Adam Bruner, assistant professor of chemistry. Elliott has a simple message for prospective Noyce Scholars Program applicants: "Teaching is a rewarding profession. You can succeed as a teacher."

As a mathematics educator, Elliott knows firsthand the need to support STEM education in West Tennessee and beyond. "A national shortage of STEM teachers results both from too few teachers entering the profession and too many leaving," Elliott wrote in a project abstract. "Because of the shortage, fewer students receive high-quality STEM instruction."

Through the grant, STEM bachelor's degree holders will receive the training and mentorship at UT Martin needed for success in the classroom.

Applicants accepted into the program will receive a $29,000 one-year stipend and will complete the Master of Science in Initial Licensure degree, as well as obtain an educator license. Each teacher who completes the program commits to teaching a minimum of two years in a high-need school and will be supported by a mentor who receives a $2,000 stipend. The mentorship program is designed to address teachers leaving the profession.

"It's a significant accomplishment anytime you are awarded a grant from the National Science Foundation," said Dr. Shadow Robinson, professor and dean, UT Martin College of Engineering and Natural Sciences. "Through the focus on our K-12 community, the grant lives out UT Martin's commitment to our core value of advocacy for service to our home region."

Pictured (L to R) in this file photo are Dr. Genessa Smith, UT Martin associate professor of chemistry; Mychaela Kerbersky, a senior chemistry major from Rockvale, Tennessee; and Andre Orr, a senior chemistry major from Savannah, Tennessee.

Former UTM Men's Hoops Coach Wins '21 Gene Bartow Award

BOSTON, Mass. — Anthony Stewart, the former University of Tennessee at Martin head men's basketball coach who tragically passed away last November, has received the Gene Bartow Award for the 2020-21 season. The Gene Bartow Award is presented annually to a current or former coach for his contributions to the game.

Stewart is just the ninth recipient of this prestigious award. On Nov. 16, 2020, the college basketball community was stunned at the unexpected passing of Stewart, who was entering his fifth season in charge of the Skyhawks. The Akron, Ohio native, who was just 59 years old, was honored throughout the 2020-21 season with a suit jacket on the first seat on the UT Martin bench at home and away games.

On the court, Stewart guided the Skyhawks to 53 victories and a pair of Ohio Valley Conference tournament appearances. In his first season at the helm, UT Martin tied the program record with 22 wins, claiming its first-ever outright OVC West division title while advancing to the league championship game. As a direct result, he was one of 21 finalists for the 2017 Ben Jobe National Coach of the Year Award, presented every year to the nation's top Division I minority head coach. Arguably, Stewart's greatest presence was off the court. His teams routinely gave back in the area — logging over 1,000 hours of community service during his tenure. Stewart improved the program's NCAA Academic Progress Rate by 43 points in his tenure, reaching a perfect 1,000 score for the 2018-19 season. His team followed that with a school record 3.1 cumulative Grade Point Average for the 2019-20 campaign. A total of nine men's basketball student-athletes earned their degrees under Stewart with a 10th Skyhawk on track to graduate this spring. Stewart additionally took part in many high-profile speaking engagements. He was a keynote speaker at the 2018 Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration Breakfast event held on the UT Martin campus and at the 2018 Collegiate Coaching Consortium at the NCAA Final Four in San Antonio, Texas. He also annually represented the Skyhawks at the American Cancer Society Coaches vs. Cancer Tennessee Tip-Off Reception in Nashville.
Weakley Arts Can to Co-Host Inaugural Northwest TN Arts Festival in Martin

MARTIN, Tenn. — Weakley Arts Can (WAC) is excited to co-host the Northwest TN (NWTN) Arts Festival this April after having to cancel all in-person meetings, celebrations and advocacy events due to COVID-19. The event will be held on Saturday, April 10, 2021 from 11 AM to 2 PM at the tent by Pacer Pond on the campus of UT Martin in Martin, Tenn.

WAC has been looking for ways to involve the region in arts celebrations and advocacy since the world shut down in March of 2020. Through at home resources, articles and social media, WAC has been able to continue growing support and advocating within the local schools.

Now that it is safer to execute outdoor events, WAC is excited to get back to celebrating and supporting the arts of the region in person. The festival will also be co-hosted by UT Martin Music and the Weakley County School System. The region is invited to attend and enjoy a day of supporting the arts, safely. Events of the day will include live music, theatrical performances, dance recitals and an art show + community art showcase. Food will be available for purchase.

Attendees need to bring a lawn chair to sit in and a mask to wear. COVID-19 safety precautions will be in place in order to keep everyone safe and healthy. Since the founding of WAC in January of 2019, WAC has served the region by advocating for the arts in the schools and the communities of Weakley County, Tenn.

More information can be found about WAC and the NWTN Arts Festival at www.weakleyartscan.org.

UTM OFFERING ACT PREP

MARTIN, Tenn. — The University of Tennessee at Martin Office of University Outreach is offering a series of online ACT prep courses to help students prepare for the test.

The ACT Success Tactics Workshops will teach students time-saving and strategic tips in a two-hour Zoom session from 5 – 7 p.m.

The English and Reading courses are April 8. Registration for each workshop costs $30. Students will need access to a computer that can connect to Zoom through audio and video. To register, visit utm.edu/actprep.
MARTIN — Now over a year into the COVID-19 pandemic, the phrase "the new normal" has inspired innovation and creativity in everyday life, which is evident in the University of Tennessee at Martin Department of Music's spring opera titled "The New Normal."

The opera will broadcast on the department's Facebook and YouTube accounts at 8 p.m. April 16-17 for public viewing as a part of the CulturEd Online series.

"The New Normal" was written and composed by UT Martin professors of music Dr. Roberto Mancusi and Dr. Mark Simmons and features the struggles students and teachers had to overcome during the pandemic in a Zoom-style classroom. Among the students participating will be (clockwise, from bottom left) Macy Earley, Daeshuana Aldridge, Tori Sims, Grace Kennedy, Jessica Hardin, Griffin Powell, Ella Sego, Nylan Barr and (center) Caroline Oldfather.

"I just hope people have fun and enjoy something that is different, that students have worked hard for even in trying times," said Mancusi. "I tried to walk a fine line with the story and the music because there is a message in it. ... If nothing else, everyone is feeling the same thing (during the pandemic). It has been cliché this whole time because we are all in this together, and as soon as we realize that, the easier things will be, even a little bit."

The opera will be archived for later viewing.

For more information about the opera, contact Mancusi at rmancusi@utm.edu.
UTM Plans In-Person Spring Preview Day

MARTIN (April 10) — The University of Tennessee at Martin Office of Undergraduate Admissions is hosting an in-person Spring Preview Day April 10 for high school juniors and seniors interested in UT Martin. The event will be held from 9 a.m. – noon in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center.

Each student can have only one guest attend the event in compliance with CDC guidelines. Masks are required to be worn at all times, and social distancing will be practiced. There is no charge to attend preview day; but students are required to register at utm.edu/previewday.

“We look forward to hosting Spring Preview Day in our Elam Center that allows plenty of room to adhere to social-distancing guidelines,” Destin Tucker, director of admissions, said. “While we have been conducting small-group tours since June, we know that a weekend preview day program provides an opportunity for more students to see what UT Martin has to offer,” she added.

Check-in begins at 9 a.m. in the Elam Center, during which there will be an open-information fair featuring representatives from offices across campus. The students will then receive an official welcome from UT Martin Chancellor Keith Cerver and the admissions staff at 9:45 a.m. At 10:15 a.m., students will attend a question-and-answer panel with current students to learn more about college life until 11 a.m. When students will be able to tour the campus in small groups.

For more information, contact the Office of Undergraduate Admissions at 731-881-7020 or admitme@utm.edu.

Weststar Hosts 22nd Annual African American Leadership Conference

MARTIN, Tenn. — The University of Tennessee at Martin WestStar Leadership Program is hosting the 22 nd-annual African American Leadership Conference, themed “Challenges and Opportunities,” virtually from 8 a.m. – 2 p.m., April 20.

Cost of attendance for this year’s conference is $10 per person, and the deadline to register is Monday, April 12.

Matt Marshall, president and CEO of United Way of West Tennessee, will serve as this year’s keynote speaker. He currently serves as the CEO of the Anti-Poverty Task Force for the City of Jackson, the chair of the Jackson-Madison County Equity Project, as well as a team member of the City of Jackson Recovery Court and the Jackson-Madison County School System Parent Council. He also serves as the Young Adult Pastor at the Historic First Baptist Church. Marshall is the former executive director and head of school at Hands Up! Preschool, and spent eight years at Union University as the director for the Center for Racial Reconciliation, as well as student success, and service and diversity initiatives.

The African American Leadership Conference will also feature presentations by Dr. Marlon King, Jackson-Madison County School System superintendent; Dr. Doris Battle, National Institute for School Leadership Tennessee and Alabama state coordinator; Tennessee Senator Raumesh Akbari, District 39; J.C. Shelley, First Horizon Bank in Jackson; Derick Tisdale, Jackson Police Department deputy chief; Tennessee Senator Katrina Robinson, District 33; Evelyn Lake-Harris, adult-care nurse practitioner; and Clayton Phillips, West Tennessee Healthcare director of information technology security and networking.
WELCOME TO MARTIN — Ryan Ridder (left) and UT Martin athletic director Kurt McGuffin hold up a UTM men's basketball jersey at a meet-and-greet event Wednesday afternoon. Ridder was hired last week as the 12th men's basketball coach in UTM history, bringing with him a reputation as a program builder and winner.

Ridder set to rebuild Skyhawk basketball

By KEVIN WEAKS
Messenger Sports Editor

In just eight years as a college head coach and at the young age of 36, Ryan Ridder has already established a solid reputation as a builder and a winner.

He now brings those great credentials, as well as high expectations, to Martin.

Ridder was introduced to the media and the community on Wednesday, a week after being named as the new men’s basketball head coach at UT Martin.

He is the 12th coach in program history and follows interim head man Montez Robinson, who took over when Anthony Stewart died suddenly on Nov. 15, 2020, at the age of 50.

"The excitement’s overwhelming for not just myself, but for our family to come and join a community in Martin," Ridder said at the introductory press conference. "To be here and be under leadership under Dr. (Keith) Carver and athletic director Kurt McGuffin, we’re fired up. What sticks out about the job is being able to work for people that you trust and you believe in, and I think have the same vision and goals as yourself. The second part to that is the town of Martin. It’s been amazing to my family to see who’s reached out, the people here, how great of a place it is to raise a family. And not just that, but I think it’s a community that’s really thirsting for something special; to have a basketball program that can put out a winning product and really impact the community.

"You tie those things together, and it became really clear to our family that this was the place to be. We’re excited, can’t wait to get to work. We’re assembling the staff, and then we have to recruit a lot of different student athletes. We’re up for the challenge and just so excited to hit the ground running."

Re-recruiting might be Ridder’s first order of business. He met with some members of the team later Wednesday afternoon, and he comes into a program with several of those players currently looking to move on.

“I think the first thing is you have to evaluate your situation,” he said. “Currently, I know there’s quite a few guys in the transfer portal. So, we’re going to have a very honest conversation with everybody on the roster and kind of tell them our vision, where we see them potentially fitting. And, if those two things can align, then we can have some further discussion. If it’s not right for us or not..."
right for them, then I think we are going to assemble a staff that we feel very comfortable can come in and recruit quality student athletes and put a good product on the floor in year one.”

Honesty is a big word for Ridder. As a self-described players’ coach, he holds himself to a high standard for his players and expects the same in return.

“(My style) is relationship driven: It’s honest, it’s intense, but we show great empathy and we get to know our guys,” he said. “I don’t think you can coach each guy the same way. I think you have to coach them fairly and honestly. Each student athlete is different. So, to really do that, you have to dig in and get to know what drives them.

“At the same time, our guys are going to be accountable. They’re going to do the right things, and when they don’t, they’re going to be disciplined. I think the way you build a special program is to dig in and know each guy individually and hold them to the highest accountability level.”

It has certainly worked for him so far.

Ridder comes to UTM from Bethune-Cookman, an NCAA Division I program in Daytona Beach, Fla., that won 48 games in three years before the school opted out of all sports for the 2020-21 year due to COVID-19. Prior to that stop, he was at Daytona State College, and he has a career 143-73 record as a collegiate head coach.

He is known as a program builder, which caught the attention of McGuffin.

“When we started looking at candidates, my main goal was to find people who have been head coaches, and the ideal candidate was someone who has built programs because we’re basically starting from scratch,” the AD said. “We were so fortunate to find someone who has done that at the Division I level as well as other levels.

“Ryan was highly recommended for his passion and integrity. He rose to the top.”

Ridder will certainly have his work cut out.

He inherits a program that has posted four straight losing seasons and failed to make the OVC Tournament each of the past two years. UTM was 8-16 in 2020-21.

He will try to turn that around in the Ohio Valley Conference, one of the top mid-major men’s basketball conferences in the country.

Still, the challenge is exciting to the Lexington, Ky., native, who knows well the tradition of the league.

“I have great respect for the conference,” he said. “I’m fortunate to have the opportunity to coach in the OVC, where athletics means so much.”

Ridder learned the game — his style of coaching and how to build relationships — from one of the game’s best. And, he didn’t have to go far for the lessons.

Ridder’s father, Steve Ridder, is a Hall of Fame coach who took over a winless Embry-Riddle program in 1988-89, its inaugural season, and has built a powerhouse while compiling a 716-296 career record.

“There’s no better coach out there, no better mentor,” the UTM head man said. “Aside from the Xs and Os and maybe learn a ball screen offense or how to close out, really being able to watch him build a program from the ground up is what I’ve learned. Hopefully, my coaching is still evolving, but what I’ve been able to learn is that it’s genuine relationships with people. I think that’s the foundation of building something special.”

Ridder and his wife, the former Jen Calnan, have two daughters — Brixton and Remi.

Sports editor Kevin Weak can be contacted by email at kweak@ucmessenger.com.

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UTM sets music shows

The University of Tennessee at Martin Department of Music has announced the following events:

* Voice Studio Recital, Monday at 8 p.m. It is a virtual event on UTM Music’s Facebook/YouTube.

* Spring Choral Concert, Tuesday at 6 p.m. It is a “Live from the Tent” live event being held at the music tent by Pacer Pond.

To learn more, visit utm.edu/musicevents.
UT Martin Offers ACT Prep Course

The University of Tennessee at Martin Office of University Outreach is offering a series of online ACT prep courses to help students prepare for the test.

The ACT Success Tactics Workshops will teach students time-saving and strategic tips that will help them during the test. Each workshop is a two-hour session via Zoom from 5 to 7 p.m. Math and science reasoning will be taught April 6th, and English and reading will be taught April 8th.

Registration is required for each workshop. Students will need access to a computer that can connect to Zoom through audio and video.

UT Martin adjunct faculty member and author Alex Beene will teach the courses. Beene serves as a lead instructor for Tennessee Adult Education in three counties and works primarily with rising high school juniors and seniors needing academic help with standardized testing.

To register, visit www.utm.edu/actprep.

For more information, contact Debbie Mount, director of non-degree programs, at dmount@utm.edu.
The 53rd annual UT Martin Spring College Rodeo takes place this week at the Ned Ray McWherter Agricultural Pavilion and NW (Doc) Action begins at 7:30 on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights.

Because of social distancing regulations, attendance has been capped at 1/3rd capacity for all three nights. Tickets quickly sold out this season, all three performance rounds plus Friday slack will be streamed for $10 per session at this link: https://utmsports.com/R

There will be no walk-up ticket sales for the 2021 UT Martin Rodeo.

Masks will be required for all fans in attendance, who will need to enter the facility through the upper-level southwest entrance. The will be located at the same entrance and will open at 6:30 p.m. for all three performances. For fans wishing to pick up their tickets can visit the Dunagan Alumni Center on Wednesday from 1-5 p.m. Fans will need to show a copy of the ticket information on their phone or a photo ID for will call pickup.

Timed events and rough stock events (including bull riding) will take place every night. UT Martin will compete against cowboys and c University of Arkansas-Monticello, East Mississippi Community College, University of Kentucky, Mississippi State University, Missouri Murray State University, Northwest Mississippi Community College, Pearl River Community College, Southern Arkansas University, U Three Rivers College and University of West Alabama.

Rodeo week officially kicks off on Wednesday as the Tennessee Department of Agriculture is sponsoring the annual crawfish supper at the Legion building in Martin at 5:30. Hamburgers and hot dogs will also be available as well as corn on the cob and new potatoes for the plate. The event is hosted by the UTM Rodeo Booster Club as proceeds go towards the UT Martin Rodeo Scholarship Fund.

The Thursday performance is Tyson, Obion County Complex Performance night. The Weakley County 4-H Mounted Drill team will perform while fans can enter a drawing for the chance to win an MTD riding lawnmower.

Friday is Tennessee Tractor, LLC Performance night as well as Black Out Night to raise money for the Ashley Brooks Memorial Scholarship Fund. The Weakley County 4-H Mounted Drill team will perform at 7:10 and 7:30, while a second drawing for the MTD riding lawnmower will take place. The winner will be crowned on Thursday.

Saturday begins with the Edward Jones Investments free barbecue lunch, located in the downtown Farmer’s Market location at 11:30. Company Championship Finals then takes place as the top-10 Ozark Region contestants from the opening two rounds will compete in the finals. Garrett Yerigan returns to serve as the public address announcer while Brinson James will serve as the rodeo clown and funny man. T horses will be provided by Mark Johnson of Universal Rodeos based out of Crenshaw, Mississippi.

A silent auction is currently open and will run through Friday. All proceeds go to the UT Martin Rodeo Scholarship Fund. For a full list of items available during this year’s auction, please visit the UT Martin Rodeo Facebook page here: https://www.facebook.com/utm.rodeo.

Action from all three nights can be heard locally through the radio airwaves on Star 95.1 and online at this link: https://streamdb6web.securenetsystems.net/v5/index.cfm?stationCallSign=WCDZ.
UT MARTIN STUDENT-RUN RADIO STATION WINS 14 BROADCASTING AWARDS

April 12, 2021 @ 8:45 am Shannon McFarlin

WUTM 90.3 FM “The Hawk,” the University of Tennessee at Martin student-run campus radio station, won 14 awards from the 2021 virtual Intercollegiate Broadcasting System Annual Conference.

For the 11th consecutive year, WUTM won the Platinum Award, which is the highest peer-reviewed award given by the Intercollegiate Broadcasting System.

WUTM won one first-place award, as well as 12 top-five finalist awards at the conference, including the designation as one of the top-five best college radio stations with under 10,000 students enrolled. WUTM has earned a position in the top five for this category nine of the past 10 years.

“Once again, the students of WUTM under the direction of Dr. Richard Robinson immensely impressed our judges,” said Chris Thomas, IBS president. “Year after year, when they see entries from 90.3 The Hawk, they know they will not be disappointed. Congratulations to the students and staff of WUTM on these accomplishments. They should be very proud of their work.”

The station’s finalist awards also include best newscast, best spot news coverage, and best live broadcast promotional event by the WUTM staff, as well as two best underwriting spots.

Kayla Brooks, a senior communications major from Dickson, won first place in community news coverage for her newscasts of the protests in Martin, and received finalist awards in best on-air personality, as well as best station blog and best news promotion in partnership with the WUTM staff.
Dylan Ingram, a junior communications major from Martin, won finalist awards for best use of social media and best celebrity/artist interview. In partnership with Ingram, Davis Gregory, a sophomore communications major from Knoxville, won finalist awards for best football play-by-play and best women’s basketball play-by-play.

“Despite the COVID-19 pandemic and given the fact that our broadcast students were working remotely much of this academic year, our students and WUTM did very well in this competition,” Dr. Richard Robinson, WUTM faculty adviser, said. “I think that speaks well for our students and their commitment to broadcast excellence for ‘The Hawk.’”

WUTM 90.3 FM “The Hawk” is produced by the Department of Mass Media and Strategic Communications. For more information, contact Robinson at 731-881-7555 or rrobins@utm.edu (mailto:robbins@utm.edu).

THE WEAKLEY COUNTY PRESS TUESDAY, APRIL 13, 2021

The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi inducts new members

The following people recently were initiated into The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi, the nation’s oldest and most selective collegiate honor society for all academic disciplines.

- Amy Yeung of Dresden at The University of Tennessee at Martin
- Peyton Cooper of Greenfield at The University of Tennessee at Martin
- Bentley Gordon of Greenfield at The University of Tennessee at Martin
- Dexter Davis of Martin at The University of Tennessee at Martin
- Ashley Bondurant of Martin at The University of Tennessee at Martin
- Martin Kane of Martin at The University of Tennessee at Martin
- Steven Vantrease of Martin at The University of Tennessee at Martin
- Brian Smith of Martin at The University of Tennessee at Martin
- Kyoko Hammond of Martin 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 325 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.”
The 2021 UTM Rodeo Team

John Luthi has served as head coach of the University of Tennessee at Martin rodeo program since 1997, developing the program into a national powerhouse in the National Intercollegiate Rodeo Association. The 2020-21 campaign will be Luthi’s 24th season at the helm of UT Martin rodeo.

One of the most well-respected names in the rodeo ranks, Luthi’s tireless efforts culminated in a historic 2013-14 season where UT Martin became the first collegiate team from the east of the Mississippi River to win the national men’s rodeo team championship. UT Martin led for the final five days of the weeklong event and earned top honors after accumulating 755 team points to defeat Tarleton State University by 25 points.

The UT Martin men’s team has made 45 appearances over the last 46 years in the College National Finals Rodeo, considered the “Rose Bowl” of college rodeo. The UT Martin men’s team has also captured 14 Ozark Region titles in Luthi’s tenure. Overall, Luthi has guided the UT Martin men’s rodeo team to eight top-10 national finishes since 2005.

Last season, the UT Martin women’s squad earned the Ozark Region championship for the first time since 2011, which was the fifth regional championship in Luthi’s tenure.

One of Luthi’s finest seasons came in 2012-13, when the UT Martin men’s team entered the CNFR with a No. 2 national ranking after winning the Ozark Region by a commanding 3,185 points. For his efforts, Luthi was named the National Intercollegiate Rodeo Association (NIRA) Coach of the Year award.

Luthi also coached Jeff Askey, who won the 2010 national bull riding championship.

Luthi judged five different state high school rodeos and some professional rodeos before becoming a head coach at Fort Scott Community College from 1981-97. Along with his head coaching duties, he served as an assistant athletics director from 1994-97.

Luthi is married to Diane Luthi and the couple has one daughter, Katelyn.
UT MARTIN TO PROUDLY HOST ANNUAL SPRING COLLEGE RODEO THIS WEEK ON CAMPUS

The 53rd annual University of Tennessee at Martin Spring College Rodeo is set to take place this week at the Ned Ray McWherter Agricultural Pavilion and NW (Doc) Robinson Arena. Action will begin at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

Because of social distancing regulations, attendance has been capped at 1/3rd capacity for all three nights. Tickets quickly sold out but for the first time this season, all three performance rounds plus Friday slack will be streamed for $10 per session at this link: https://utmsports.com/Rodeo-Tickets.

There will be no walk-up ticket sales for the 2021 UT Martin Rodeo. Masks will be required for all fans in attendance, who will need to enter the facility through the upper-level southwest entrance. The will call for ticket pickup will be located at the same entrance and will open at 6:30 p.m. for all three performances. For fans wishing to pick up their tickets in advance, they can visit the Dunagan Alumni Center Wednesday from 1-5 p.m. Fans will need to show a copy of the ticket information on their phone, a paper copy of their ticket order or a photo ID for will call pickup.

Timed events and rough stock events (including bull riding) will take place every night. UT Martin will compete against cowboys and cowgirls from the University of Arkansas-Monticello, East Mississippi Community College, University of Kentucky, Mississippi State University, Missouri Valley College, Murray State University, Northwest Mississippi Community College, Pearl River Community College, Southern Arkansas University, University of Tennessee, Three Rivers College and University of West Alabama.

Rodeo week officially kicks off on Wednesday as the Tennessee Department of Agriculture is sponsoring the annual crawfish supper at the American Legion building in Martin at 5:30 p.m. Hamburgers and hot dogs will also be available as
well as corn on the cob and new potatoes for the price of $15 per plate. The event is hosted by the UTM Rodeo Booster Club as proceeds go towards the UT Martin Rodeo Scholarship Fund.

The Thursday performance is Tyson, Obion County Complex Performance night. The Weakley County 4-H Mounted Drill team will perform the opening ceremony while fans can enter a drawing for the chance to win an MTD riding lawnmower.

Friday is Tennessee Tractor, LLC Performance night as well as Black Out Night to raise money for the Ashley Brooks Memorial Scholarship Fund. The Weakley County 4-H Mounted Drill team will perform at 7:10 and 7:30 p.m. while a second drawing for the MTD riding lawnmower will take place if a winner is not crowned Thursday.

Saturday begins with the Edward Jones Investments free barbecue lunch, located in the downtown Farmer’s Market location at 11:30 a.m. The Martin Paving Company Championship Finals then takes place as the top-10 Ozark Region contestants from the opening two rounds will compete in each event.

Garrett Yerigan returns to serve as the public address announcer while Brinson James will serve as the rodeo clown and funny man. Top bucking bulls and horses will be provided by Mark Johnson of Universal Rodeos based out of Crenshaw, Miss.

A silent auction is currently open and will run through Friday, April 16. All proceeds go to the UT Martin Rodeo Scholarship Fund. For a full list of items available during this year’s auction, please visit the UTM Rodeo Facebook page here: https://www.facebook.com/utm.rodeo.

Action from all three nights can be heard locally through the radio airwaves on Star 95.1 FM and online at this link: https://streamdb6web.securenetsystems.net/v5/index.cfm?stationCallSign=WCDZ.

Weakley County students receive scholarships to attend UT Martin

Several Weakley County students have been awarded scholarships to attend the University of Tennessee at Martin for the 2021-2022 academic year, according to Dr. James Mantooth, executive director, Office of Enrollment Services and Student Engagement.

-Aleea Davis, of Dresden, daughter of Barbara Davis, will be a freshman. She received the Dean’s Scholarship.
-Belle Fowler, of Gleason, daughter of Steve and Karen Fowler, will be a freshman. She received the Achieve Scholarship.
-Kayla Hensley, of Martin, daughter of Robert and Cheryl Hensley, will be a freshman. She received the Excellence Scholarship.
-James McGregor, of Martin, son of Casey and Misty McGregor, will be a freshman. He received the Dean’s Scholarship.
-Maddox Melton, of Dresden, daughter of Mark and Alisha Melton, will be a freshman. She received the Chancellor’s Scholarship.
-Jamie Murphy, of Sharon, daughter of Paula and Jimmy Brewer, will be a freshman. She received the Dean’s Scholarship.
-Taylor Oliver, of Greenfield, daughter of Casey and Valorie Oliver, will be a freshman. She received the Excellence Scholarship.
-Emily Palafoux, of Martin, daughter of Jackie Palafoux, will be a freshman. She received the Dean’s Scholarship.
-MaKayla Williams, of Martin, daughter of Greg and Baronica Williams, will be a freshman. She received the Excellence Scholarship.
LIVE AT THE TENT:
The NWTN Arts Festival

By Karen Campbell
Special to the Press

Clouds, light rain, and strong winds couldn’t keep artists, performers and arts advocates from celebrating Saturday. The array of talent evident at the first Northwest Tennessee Arts Festival which included the Weakley County Schools Art Show meant the three-hour event concluded with both the sun and smiles beaming.

Families and friends of young visual artists, musicians, vocalists, dancers, and actors were treated to an installation of 124 drawings, painting, photos, and mixed media pieces as well as a full program of performances.

Weakley Arts Can, a local group focused on advocacy and support of the arts for both the community and schools, launched the outdoor festival this year to give students and area artists and performers an opportunity to show their talents in a COVID-safe environment. The University of Tennessee at Martin Music Department also served as a sponsor along with Weakley County Schools.

“We are so appreciative of UTM’s willingness to share the lessons they learned with their successful Live at the Tent events and their incredible set up near Pacer Pond,” said Katie Mantooth, co-president of Weakley Arts Can with Julie Hill, the department chair for UTM’s music program. “Offering our students the chance to perform in a festival-type setting gives them not only experience with the arts but also a chance to learn creative problem-solving when the weather doesn’t always cooperate.

“In addition, children were able to discover other arts outlets outside their focus. Visual artists heard steel drums. Vocalists explored photography and mixed media. And mommies and daddies were made aware of a child’s talent and saw them applauded for it,” she noted.

Along with UTM students who took to the open-air stage, Weakley County saw every school represented in both the visual art display and the performances.

The Dresden High School Choir, under the direction of Jacob Abbott, literally discovered the joy of singing in the rain as the morning drizzle had not yet concluded when they opened the show with three numbers.

Middle School music teacher Rebecca Steele helped Sharon School and Greenfield School turn buckets into drums for rousing interpretations of their pieces.

Weakley Playhouse, a theater group of students from every Weakley County High School and directed by Martin Kane, brought laughter to the tent as they presented a raucous scene from A Midsummer Night’s Dream.

And the Westview Jazz Band presented together and in quartets with Jennifer Cupples and Rebecca Steele directing.

When asked about the impact of the day, Kane replied, “Theater is less alive in an empty room with a camera. The actors feel the energy of the audience, and an engaged audience allows them to connect with their characters more than they do in rehearsal.”

Music teachers voiced the hope that the community support would continue for upcoming performances.

Other local talent rounded out the program which included a mid-day pause to recognize the winners of the countywide visual art show.

Weakley County Schools Director Randy Frazier and Board Chair Steve Vantrease thanked the sponsors and judges before announcing the winners. Included in their praise were art teachers and event supporter Discovery Park of America who gifted tickets to the venue to all first place winners.

UTM’s David McBeth and Jason Stout, Beth Crawford of the Weakley County Press, Sabrina Bates of the Dresden Enterprise and local graphic artist Jai Chanler Mathis served as the panel of judges who determined the first, second and third place awards for four age bands and four categories from each school’s top three entries.

All the school winners were displayed on stands created by Greenfield School art teacher Matt Humphrey and his students. Art teachers Nan Satterfield and Amber Wharton curated the display assisted by volunteers enlisted by Weakley Arts Can.

In reflecting on the day, Frazier noted, “Just like the weather posed obstacles that had to be overcome for this one-day festival to be the great success that it was, we as a school system will continue to address budgetary restrictions that keep us from having the robust arts program we all desire. We appreciate the work of Weakley Arts Can and are committed to working with them to provide even more arts opportunities in the future.”
ART SHOW WINNERS

Pictured are Destiny Brewer, Katy Cursey, Alexa Yu, Kinsley Baker, Mariana Ivansic, Emma McGregor and Savannah Hagan and Grayson Stout.

Navaiha Streeter, Kadance Brewer, Boone Hampton, Kinsley Trevathan, Madison Yates, Samuel Butero, Lila Trevathan, Levi Irby, Ellie Dodson

Pictured are Garrett Garner, Zanda Tipton, Kimberlynn Vanhorn, Lena Zimmerman, Destiny Ragan, Case Harrington, Tegan Stout, Travis Bailey and Ellie Dodson.

Pictured are Nicholas Avent, Kathie Winstead, Blakely Pentecost, Bolton Brooks, Emmitt Bragg, Bella Hendrix, Barnes Bragg, Jeff Lunsford and Megan Totty.
SHARON BUCKET BAND — Members of the Sharon Bucket Band are (from left) Andrea Lane, Jas'Tine Edwards, Ebony Glenn, Markus Elam, Brayden Felan, James Presson and Izyah Burns and teachers Rose Wade, Rebecca Steele, Steve Douglas and Regina Harrison.

WESTVIEW JAZZ BAND

WESTVIEW ENSEMBLE — Jennifer Cupples directing with Owen Oelrich, James McGregor and Jonah Simmons.
Grant at UT Martin will increase teachers for science and math

Help is on the way to increase the number of qualified science and math teachers in West Tennessee.

The University of Tennessee at Martin has received a National Science Foundation award totaling $1.2 million over five years to recruit 25 individuals who have science, math or engineering degrees to complete master’s degrees and teach STEM subjects.

Lauderdale County Schools, Obion County Schools and the Gibson County Special School District are partners that will help select the new teachers and assist with their training as part of the Robert Noyce Teacher Scholarship Program.

The partner schools will play a key role in the project that could eventually impact STEM education across most of West Tennessee.

“These counties are considered high need, and they’re seeking quality educators in the areas of math and science,” said Dr. Terry Silver, a UT Martin associate professor of educational studies. “These counties are excited to help their students become engaged learners in math and science.”

Dr. Steve Elliott, professor of mathematics and statistics and UT Martin STEM Center director, led university efforts to secure the grant along with Silver and Dr. Adam Bruner, assistant professor of chemistry.

Elliott has a simple message for prospective Noyce Scholars Program applicants: “Teaching is a rewarding profession. You can succeed as a teacher.”

As a mathematics educator, Elliott knows first-hand the need to support STEM education in West Tennessee and beyond.

“A national shortage of STEM teachers results both from too few teachers entering the profession and too many leaving,” Elliott wrote in a project abstract. “Because of the shortage, fewer students receive high-quality STEM instruction.”

Through the grant, STEM bachelor’s degree holders will receive the training and mentorship at UT Martin needed for success in the classroom.

Applicants accepted into the program will receive a $29,000 one-year stipend and will complete the master of science in initial licensure degree, as well as obtain an educator license. Each teacher who completes the program commits to teaching a minimum of two years in a high-need school and will be supported by a mentor who receives a $2,000 stipend.

The mentorship program is designed to address teachers leaving the profession.

“It’s a significant accomplishment anytime you are awarded a grant from the National Science Foundation,” said Dr. Shadow Robinson, professor and dean of the UT Martin College of Engineering and Natural Sciences. “Through the focus on our K-12 community, the grant lives out UT Martin’s commitment to our core value of advocacy for service to our home region.”

Applications are now being accepted, and additional information about the Robert Noyce Teacher Scholarship Program is available at www.utm.edu/ployce.
MARTIN (April 8) — The 33rd annual University of Tennessee at Martin Spring College Rodeo is set to take place this week at the Ned Ray McWherter Agricultural Pavilion and NW (Doc) Robinson Arena. Action will begin at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday (April 15), Friday (April 16) and Saturday (April 17).

Because of social-distancing regulations, attendance is capped at one-third capacity for all three nights. Tickets quickly sold out, but for the first time this season, all three performances will start at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, respectively.

There will be no walk-up ticket sales for the 2021 UT Martin Rodeo. Masks will be required for all fans in attendance, who will need to enter the facility through the upper-level southwest entrance.

The will call for ticket pickup will be located at the same entrance and will open at 6:30 p.m. for all fans wishing to purchase their tickets in advance. Fans can visit the Dunagan Alumni Center on Wednesday, April 14 from 1-5 p.m.

Fans will need to show a copy of the ticket information on their phone, a paper copy of their ticket order or a photo ID for will call pickup.

Timed events and rough stock events (including bull riding) will take place every night. UT Martin will compete against cowboys and cowgirls from the University of Arkansas-Monticello, East Mississippi Community College, University of Kentucky, University of Tennessee, University of Missouri, University of Mississippi, and Missouri State University, among others.

Rodeo week officially kicks off on Wednesday, April 14 as the Tennessee Department of Agriculture is sponsoring the annual crawfish supper at the American Legion Post No. 55 in Martin at 5:30 p.m. Hamburgers and hot dogs will also be available as well as corn on the cob and new potatoes for the price of $15 per plate. The event is hosted by the UT Martin Rodeo Booster Club as proceeds go towards the UT Martin Rodeo Scholarship Fund.

The Thursday performance is Tyson, Obion County Complex Performance Night. The Weakley County 4-H Mounted Drill team will perform the opening ceremony while fans can enter a drawing for the chance to win an MTD riding lawnmower.

Friday is Tennessee Tractor, LLC Performance night as well as Black Out Night to raise money for the Ashley Brooks Memorial Scholarship Fund.

The Weakley County 4-H Mounted Drill team will perform at 7:10 and 7:30 p.m. while a second drawing for the MTD riding lawnmower will take place if a winner is not crowned on Thursday.

Saturday begins with the Edward Jones Investments free barbecue lunch, located in the downtown Farmer’s Market location at 11:30 a.m.

The Martin Paving Company Championship Finals then takes place as the top-10 Ozark Region contestants from the opening two rounds will compete in each event.

Garrett Yergian returns to serve as the public address announcer while Brinson James will serve as the rodeo clown and funny man. Top bucking bulls and horses will be provided by Mark Johnson of Universal Rodeos based out of Crenshaw, Miss.

A silent auction is currently open and will run through Friday, April 16. All proceeds go to the UT Martin Rodeo Scholarship Fund.

For a full list of items available during this year’s auction, please visit the UT Martin Rodeo Facebook page here: https://www.facebook.com/utm.rodeo.

Action from all three nights can be heard locally through the radio airwaves on Star 95.1 FM and online at this link: https://streamdb6web.securenetsystems.net/v5/index.cfm?station=C3QK&StationCall=WCXZD.

Annually considered one of the biggest events on campus, UT Martin has received “Rodeo of the Year” honors by the Ozark Region in 13 out of the last 14 years.

Head coach John Luthi is in his 24th season in charge of the program, as he has guided the men’s team to 19 combined Ozark Region championships including the men’s team’s 2014 national championship.
Weakley County Schools Celebrate Arts at Inaugural Regional Festival

**BY KAREN CAMPBELL**
Weakley County Schools Communications Director

MARTIN (April 10) — Clouds, light rain, and strong winds couldn’t keep artists, performers and arts advocates from celebrating Saturday. The array of talent evident at the first Northwest Tennessee Arts Festival, which included the Weakley County Schools Art Show, meant the three-hour event concluded with both the sun and smiles beaming.

Families and friends of young visual artists, musicians, vocalists, dancers and actors were treated to an installation of 124 drawings, paintings, photos and mixed-media pieces, as well as a full program of performances.

Weakley Arts Can, a local group focused on advocacy and support of the arts for both the community and schools, launched the outdoor festival this year to give students and area artists and performers an opportunity to show their talents in a COVID-safe environment.

The University of Tennessee at Martin Music Department also served as a sponsor, alongside Weakley County Schools.

“We are so appreciative of UTM’s willingness to share the lessons they learned with their successful Live at the Tent events and our incredible set up near Pacer Pond,” said Katie Mantooth, co-president of Weakley Arts Can with Julie Hill, the department chair for UTM’s music program. “Offering our students the chance to perform in a festival-type setting gives them not only experience with the arts, but also a chance to learn creative problem solving when the weather doesn’t always cooperate.

“In addition, children were able to discover other arts outlets outside their focus. Visual artists heard steel drums. Vocalists explored photography and mixed media. And mommas and daddies were made aware of a child’s talent and saw them applauded for it,” she noted.

Along with UTM students who took to the open-air stage, Weakley County saw every school represented in both the visual art display and the performances.

The Dresden High School Choir, under the direction of Jacob Abbott, literally discovered the joy of singing in the rain as the morning drizzle had not yet concluded when they opened the show with three numbers.

Middle School music teacher Rebecca Steele helped Sharon School and Greenfield School turn buckets into drums for rousing interpretations of their pieces.

Weakley Playhouse, a theater group of students from every Weakley County High School and directed by Martin Kane, brought laughter to the tent as they presented a raucous scene from “A Midsummer Night’s Dream.”

And the Westview Jazz Band presented together and in quartets with Jennifer Cupples and Rebecca Steele directing.

When asked about the impact of the day, Kane replied, “Theater is less alive than an empty room with a camera. The actors feel the energy of the audience, and an engaged audience allows them to connect with their characters more than they do in rehearsal.”

Music teachers voiced the hope that the community support would continue for upcoming performances.

Other local talent rounded out the program which included a mid-day pause to recognize the winners of the countywide visual art show. Weakley County Schools Director Randy Frazier and Board Chair Steve Vanreese thanked the sponsors and judges before announcing the winners. Included in their praise were art teachers and event supporter Discovery Park of America who gifted tickets to the venue to all first-place winners.

UTM’s David McBeth and Jason Stout, both Cravens of the Weakley County Press, Sabrina Bates of the Dresden Enterprise and local graphic artist Jai-Chandler Mathis served as the panel of judges who determined the first-, second- and third-place awards for four age-bands and four categories from each school’s top three entries.

All the school winners were displayed on stands created by Greenfield School ag teacher Matt Humphrey and his students. Art teachers Nan Satterfield and Amber Wharton curated the display, assisted by volunteers enlisted by Weakley Arts Can.

In reflecting on the day, Frazier noted, “Just like the weather posed obstacles that had to be overcome for this one-day festival to be the great success that it was, we as a school system will continue to address budgetary restrictions that keep us from having the robust arts program we all desire. We appreciate the work of Weakley Arts Can and are committed to working with them to provide even more arts opportunities in the future.”

The Weakley County Art Show winners for 2021 are:

**Drawing - Grades K-2**
1st: Madison Yates, Westview
2nd: Persie Foster, Gleason
3rd: Greydon Shepherd, Greenfield

**Drawing - Grades 3-5**
1st: Alexia Vu, MES
2nd: Kinsley Baker, Greenfield
3rd: Mariana Ivanac, MES

**Drawing - Grades 6-8**
1st: Emma McGregor and Savanna Hagan, Martin Middle
2nd: Destiny Brewer, Sharon
3rd: Alina Vo, Martin Middle

**Drawing - Grades 9-12**
1st: Katy Cursey, Westview
2nd: Ellie Dodson, Westview
3rd: Michael Butler, Westview

**Painting - Grades 3-5**
1st: Jebb Lunestad, Greenfield
2nd: Lydia Moore, MES
3rd: Kimberly Vanhorman, Gleason

**Painting - Grades 6-8**
1st: Nalva Streeter, Greenfield
2nd: Lena Zimmerman, MMS
3rd: Destiny Ragan, DMS

**Painting - Grades 9-12**
1st: Megan Totty, Westview
2nd: Garrett Garner, Greenfield
3rd: Zanda Tipton, Gleason

**Photography - Grades K-2**
1st: Barnes Bragg, MPS
2nd: Boone Hampton, MPS
3rd: Bolton Brooks, MPS

**Photography - Grades 3-5**
1st: Presley Snyder, MES
2nd: Hannah Wells, Greenfield
3rd: Emmett Bragg, MES

**Photography - Grades 6-8**
1st: Bella Hendrix, DMS
2nd: Kandace Brewer, MMS

**Photography - Grades 9-12**
1st: Ellie Dodson, Westview
2nd: Makayla Morrow, Gleason
3rd: Kierra Mabe, DES

**3D Sculpture/Mixed Media - Grades K-2**
1st: Persie Foster, Gleason
2nd: Blakely Pentecost, Greenfield
3rd: Kinley Trevathan, Gleason

**3D Sculpture/Mixed Media - Grades 3-5**
1st: Caitlin Winstead, Greenfield
2nd: Baker Biggs, Greenfield
3rd: Bryson McAbee, DMS

**3D Sculpture/Mixed Media - Grades 6-8**
1st: Levi Irby, Greenfield
2nd: Lila Trevathan, Greenfield
3rd: Samuel Butler, MMS

**3D Sculpture/Mixed Media - Grades 9-12**
1st: Madison Yates, Westview
2nd: Michael Butler, Westview
3rd: Nicholas Avent, Westview
UT Business and Online Marketing Project Among Best

COLUMBIA (April 8) — A project led by the University of Tennessee Center for Profitable Agriculture's Megan Brad Lefew and Hal Pepper has received two awards for excellence in risk management education. The project was recently named one of three 2020 Southern Risk Management Education Center (SRMEC) Projects of Excellence and was also awarded the 2021 Extension Risk Management Education Center (ERME)’s Outstanding ERME Project for the Southern Region. Among those honored from UT Martin were: Joey Mehlhorn, UT Martin Department of Agricultural Economics, Ross Pruitt, UT Martin Department of Agricultural Economics and Rachna Tewari, UT Martin Department of Agricultural Economics.

The Business Planning and Online Marketing Education for Tennessee Farmers project provided educational opportunities to help participants manage financial and marketing risk by developing business plans and implementing cost-effective online marketing strategies. The project targeted Tennessee farmers involved in value-added, direct marketing and agritourism enterprises. Funding for the project was provided through a USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture grant administered through the Southern Risk Management Education Center.

The SRMEC’s Advisory Council convenes each summer to evaluate the top three projects from the Center’s recent round of completed projects. The council ranks the projects by evaluating four factors: 1) the importance of outcomes, 2) audiences reached, 3) realized and potential impacts, and 4) quality and value of project communications.

The selected Projects of Excellence provided outstanding educational and promotional materials, innovative use of technology to deliver programming, exceptional evaluation results, and collaborations across disciplines and regions. The goal is to promote exemplary scholarship and the Extension Risk Management Education program.

UTM offers pham class

The University of Tennessee at Martin Office of University Outreach will offer training courses for students interested in becoming pharmacy technicians.

The classes will be offered at UT Martin centers in Ripley, Somerville and Selmer and will prepare students for working in a pharmacy and taking the Pharmacy Technician Certification Board’s exam. Students will learn proper patient dosages, roman numerals, names and abbreviations of brand name and generic drugs, pharmacy practices, and more.

The certification courses will be offered at the following times and locations:

• Ripley, 5:30 p.m.-9 p.m., Tuesdays and Thursdays, April 6-May 25
• Somerville, 6 p.m.-9:30 p.m., Mondays and Thursdays, April 5-May 24
• Selmer, 6 p.m.-9:30 p.m., Tuesdays and Thursdays, April 6-May 25

Registration fees for each course are $1,199, which will cover all the textbooks and supplies necessary for the course. To register, go to https://www.utm.edu/departments/nondegree/courses/healthcare/pharmacy.php
UT Martin seeks ‘daily double’ during this year’s Captain’s Challenge

April 14, 2021 by Julia Ewoldt

MARTIN, Tenn. — The largest fundraiser of the year for the University of Tennessee at Martin is bringing in hundreds of thousands of dollars.

“Thank you, thank you. Welcome to UT Martin Jeopardy,” announced UT Martin Chancellor Keith Carver.

UT Martin is hoping to win the “daily double” for this year’s Captain’s Challenge.

“We match dollar for dollar, up to $300 per transaction. So essentially any gift that comes in, if it’s a $300 gift, that then becomes $600,” said Matt Borden, the Associate Director of Annual Giving for UT Martin.

They’re virtually calling on friends and alumni to bring in the donation.

Those in attendance included, but was not limited to, University of Tennessee President Randy Boyd and Chicago Cubs Pitcher Alec Mills.
"It's imperative to call on our local alumni, our generous donors, our friends of the university, our students, parents, basically anyone who wants to be involved with UT Martin. This is a great day to do that," Borden said.

The first year they did the Captain's Challenge, the goal was $50,000. This year's goal is $350,000, and they're hoping they can beat that.

"Last year we really broke the records with a little over $400,000 raised. This year we would love to continue that success because it's a very critical time for the university, and it helps students in every single area," Borden said.

You can pick a category for where you want to donate, as broad as athletics to as specific as travel abroad.

"I mean this is for future Skyhawks, current Skyhawks, any way we can help better their experience at UT Martin, that's what the goal is for," Borden said.

To donate, you can write a check to the university or head to challenge.utm.edu (https://challenge.utm.edu/).
'THE HAWK' EARNS AWARDS — WUTM 90.3 FM "The Hawk," the University of Tennessee at Martin student-run campus radio station, won 14 awards from the 2021 virtual Intercollegiate Broadcasting System Annual Conference. For the 11th consecutive year, WUTM won the Platinum Award, which is the highest peer-reviewed award given by the Intercollegiate Broadcasting System. WUTM won one first-place award, as well as 12 top-five finalist awards at the conference, including the designation as one of the top-five best college radio stations with under 10,000 students enrolled. WUTM has earned a position in the top five for this category nine of the past 10 years. The station's finalist awards also include best newscast, best spot news coverage, and best live broadcast promotional event by the WUTM staff, as well as two best underwriting spots. Kayla Brookes, a senior communications major from Dickson, won first place in community news coverage for her newscasts of the protests in Martin, and received finalist awards in best on-air personality, as well as best station blog and best news promotion in partnership with the WUTM staff.

Local Students, Faculty Inducted Into Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi

BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA (April 9) - The following people with Weakley County ties recently were initiated into The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi, the nation's oldest and most selective collegiate honor society for all academic disciplines.

They include:
- Amy Yeung of Dresden at The University of Tennessee at Martin
- Peyton Cooper of Greenfield at The University of Tennessee at Martin
- Bentley Gordon of Greenfield at The University of Tennessee at Martin
- Dexter Davis of Martin at The University of Tennessee at Martin
- Ashley Bondurant of Martin at The University of Tennessee at Martin
- Martin Kane of Martin at The University of Tennessee at Martin
- Steven Vantrease of Martin at The University of Tennessee at Martin
- Brian Smith of Martin at The University of Tennessee at Martin
- Kyoko Hammond of Martin 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 325 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."

For more information about Phi Kappa Phi, visit www.phikappaphi.org.
UT Martin kicks off 53rd annual Spring College Rodeo

April 15, 2021 by WBBJ Eyewitness News Staff (https://www.wbbitv.com/author/wbbjeyewitnessnewsstaff/)

MARTIN, Tenn. — Grab your gear and saddle. Let's head to the rodeo!

The 53rd annual University of Tennessee at Martin Spring College Rodeo kicked off Thursday night.

There was a silent auction, including things like horse equipment, clothes, jewelry, gift cards and more. And it's all for a good cause.

Proceeds go to the UT Martin Rodeo Scholarship Fund for students.

One volunteer, Mary Lynn Emmett, says there's always something unique about the rodeo.

"One thing that is unique about the UTM Rodeo is so many people come back that used to go to school here. It's kind of like a homecoming event," Emmett said.

The rodeo runs through Saturday night.

There is also an online auction. Those items will be given away Friday night.
MARTIN, Tenn. — University of Tennessee at Martin campus police are continuing their education, this time in diversity.

"The things that have reached out to me so far is understanding the diverse cultures we face in law enforcement and how to deal with them appropriately," said Monte Belew, UT Martin campus police chief.

These training sessions are being held at all University of Tennessee schools, as initiated by UT President Randy Boyd.

Former Tennessee Highway Patrol trooper Derek Stewart is teaching the class.

"What we're trying to do is help them unpack what they know, and what they don't know," Stewart said. "Those things they do know, where did they learn it from? Was it based upon a single exposure, a single bad experience, or was it multiple experiences that helped generate their knowledge base?"

Belew says because UT Martin is a state school, they have students of all backgrounds on campus, and they
want to make sure all students feel welcome.

"It's very important and critical to our agency to comprehend, respect, and understand types of cultures that attend here at The University of Tennessee at Martin, and welcome them with open arms," Belew said.

And the difficult conversations that come in this training will help make everyone's experience with law enforcement easier.

"Racial anxiety exists, and we're teaching them how to recognize it and how to deal with it going forward," Stewart said.

Officers who complete the training will receive a certificate.
UT Law Enforcement Innovation Center brings training to UT Martin Public Safety

The training is being held through Wednesday in the Boling University Center's Smith Legislative Chamber.

The new, three-day certification program is offered by the UT Law Enforcement Innovation Center, an agency of the University of Tennessee Institute for Public Service. All UT System law enforcement agencies will receive the training before it's eventually launched nationwide.

"LEIC has created a national certification program for law enforcement agencies across Tennessee and nationwide," said Rick Scarbrough, LEIC executive director. "This training will increase diversity in law enforcement and examine perceptions, stereotypes and cultural assumptions."

UTM Public Safety Director Monte Belew is finding ways to bring a community-oriented policing approach to the university and sees this training as an important step toward further implementing his vision. "We're here to show respect, to serve the students and faculty of UTM and make the campus an even better place than it already is," he said. "This training will help us recognize effective ways to build greater trust with those we serve."

LEIC is offering this training in partnership with the Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles to meet the critical need of increasing diversity and cross-cultural competency and minimizing biased-based policing.

In December 2013, the UT Martin Department of Public Safety received full accreditation by the Tennessee Association of Chiefs of Police by meeting established standards of professionalism and accountability to the public they serve. Accreditation is a continuing process, and the department is committed to maintaining the progressive standards set by the association. The department received its second award in 2018.
UT law enforcement center brings training to Martin

Officers from the University of Tennessee at Martin Department of Public Safety are participating in training to help increase their cultural competency and reduce biased-based policing to better serve the main campus and surrounding area.

The training kicked off Monday and runs through Wednesday in the Boling University Center’s Smith Legislative Chamber.

This new, three-day certification program is offered by the UT Law Enforcement Innovation Center, an agency of the University of Tennessee Institute for Public Service. All UT System law enforcement agencies will receive the training before it’s eventually launched nationwide.

"LEIC has created a national certification program for law enforcement agencies across Tennessee and nationwide," said Rick Scarbrough, LEIC executive director. "This training will increase diversity in law enforcement and examine perceptions, stereotypes and cultural assumptions."

Monte Belew, who is serving in his first year as UT Martin director of public safety after serving as Henry County sheriff, is finding ways to bring a community-oriented policing approach to the university. He sees the training as an important step toward further implementing his vision.

"We’re here to show respect, to serve the students and faculty of UTM and make the campus an even better place than it already is," he said. "This training will help us recognize effective ways to build greater trust with those we serve."

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Accreditation is a continuing process, and the department is committed to maintaining the progressive standards set by the association.
The 53rd annual UT Martin Spring College Rodeo was once again a stirring success as the Skyhawk women's squad finished first and the men's team took third place in the final team standings of the three-day event.

The UT Martin women's team accrued 365 points for a convincing victory, defeating second-place East Mississippi by 120 points. On the men's side, UT Martin's 530 points ranked just behind East Mississippi (540) for second place as Missouri Valley College won with 860 points.

Three UT Martin cowboys earned points in bareback riding, led by Blake Leamon splitting first in the opening round (77) and finishing fifth in average (129). Stetson Bierman's 59 points in the short go and 114 average each finished in fifth place while Weston Hamilton's 61 in the first round was good enough to split fifth.

Grace Bryant stood out all weekend for the UT Martin women's squad, starting out her highly successful event with a remarkable performance in breakaway roping. The freshman out of Pendleton, SC split first in average (5.4) after accounting for the best time in the opening go (2.4) and splitting second in the short round (3.0).

A pair of UT Martin cowboys piled up points in saddle bronc riding. Tyler Pruitt won the opening round with a 72 before his 133 average and 61 short go performance ranked him third and fifth, respectively. Jack Smithson was additionally solid throughout, collecting points in all three opportunities (66 short round, third place; 131 average, fourth; 65 first go, split fourth).

Walker started out the steer wrestling event on a tear as the sophomore from Sparta, registered 4.8 seconds for the best time in the field.

The UT Martin women's team compiled points out of four different cowgirls in goat tying. Kailey Schmidt led the way with second-place finishes in average (14.0) and in the short round (6.7). Shayne Mallory earned times of 7.5 in the second go (fourth place), 14.7 in average (fifth place) and 7.2 in the opening round (split sixth). First round scorers also included Bryant (6.6, split second) and Lauren Heck (6.8, split fourth).
Kite day planned at UTM

Go fly a kite. The Weakley County Reconciliation Project, along with Obion County’s newly-established NAACP chapter and the University of Tennessee at Martin’s Alpha Phi Omega National Service Fraternity and the Office of Student Life and Multicultural Affairs, are hosting a kite day celebration Saturday from 10 a.m. until noon at Pacer Pond on the UTM campus.

Free kite kits can be picked up in advance from the C.E. Weldon Public Library or by UTM students at the Office of Student Life and Multicultural Affairs. Following COVID-19 guidelines, all kites must be made in advance of the event. Popsicles and refreshments will be available along with prizes for the best decorated kites.

The kite day event is being held to call attention to environmental justice and will feature a talk with Dr. Eric Pelren on sustainability and environmental justice. Pelren, a professor of wildlife biology explains that “Any change that results in long-term cost savings increases our economic sustainability, and any that increases equity, inclusivity and social justice increases our social sustainability.”

The Environmental Justice Movement has broadened the perspective of the environment beyond the scope of conservation and preservation of natural resources and has defined the environment as “Where we live, work, play, learn and pray.”

For more information, contact the UTM Office of Student Life and Multicultural Affairs at 1-731-881-7755 or WCRP member Caroline Ideas at caroline.ideas@gmail.com or 1-308-222-0334.
Area students to attend Governor’s Schools

Annika Jolley from Dresden High School and Westview’s Joseph Roupe will have little more than a week from the last day of school to the first day of an opportunity that could shape their future academic careers.

Both have successfully navigated the extensive application process and have been accepted into Tennessee Governor’s Schools. Jolley will be attending the Tennessee Governor’s School for the Agricultural Sciences (GSAS) at the University of Tennessee at Martin beginning May 29. Roupe will travel to UT Knoxville for the Governor’s School for the Sciences & Engineering (GSSE) which starts May 30.

TN Governor’s Schools provide rising high-achieving 11th and 12th grade students currently enrolled in Tennessee’s public and private high schools an academically demanding experience. Nine other Governor’s Schools covering subjects such as the arts, humanities, science, business and teaching are also offered as four-week summer sessions. Governor’s Schools instructors include writers, language experts, historians, philosophers, artists, actors, conductors, expert musicians, scientists, distinguished professors and career-level teachers.

To be accepted in schools, applicants must be nominated by school faculty.

Jolley said she first learned of the GSAS from a friend who attended two years ago. Though she was eligible last year, she still wasn’t sure about applying but says that because of Covid, “I have learned to face each opportunity head on and when applications became available, I decided to pick one up. I asked my parents, and they fully supported any decision I made.”

Jolley chose to focus on the agriculture business elective and the veterinary science group study project to help her prepare for her anticipated career in Veterinary Medicine. Group Study Projects (GSP) are small, specialized groups taught by expert faculty from various Tennessee agricultural schools.

The Veterinary Science GSP will present the students with the opportunity to observe and learn about the diversity of career opportunities in veterinary medicine, animal care of both farm and companion animals and perform a basic research project on companion animals from local humane shelters.

“We are lucky to have Joseph at Westview and are so happy for him.”

Annika Jolley

Joseph Roupe

“Dresden High School has better prepared me for Governor’s School through having a fully functioning farm and some of the best advisers and teachers,” said Jolley who is an active member of FFA and part of the school’s softball, track and field, Student Council, Beta Club, and Weakley County Youth Coalition programs.

“This summer, I hope to gain new friends, expand my knowledge of agriculture and learn more about college life.” she concluded. Her extended plans include attending the University of Tennessee at Martin for her bachelor’s degree in Veterinary Science and later obtaining a doctorate of veterinary medicine at The University of Tennessee at Knoxville.

Roupe’s experience at the Governor’s School in Knoxville will begin each morning with common Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) courses and, in the afternoon, he will attend chemistry classes, his choice for the customized portion of the program. GSSE participants now earn (5) college credit hours upon completion of the program.

In addition to classroom experience, Roupe will be invited to open houses of science and engineering departments, laboratory tours, educational field trips, college and career choice programs. In previous years, concerts, plays, movies, and special events have been scheduled for after hours and the weekends.

The current sophomore says he thinks his STEM club experience at Westview will help prepare him for the summer experience which he anticipates will in turn help prepare him for college.

“I hope to learn more about the college process and what I will be doing in college,” he noted. “I also hope to better myself so that I will be better prepared for my further stages in life.”

Included in his dreams for the future are inventing new and/or improving existing technologies.

Along with being chosen for Governor’s School, he was voted as sophomore class favorite!” said School Counselor Erica Moore. “We are lucky to have Joseph at Westview and are so happy for him.”

The Governor’s Schools are funded by appropriations from the Tennessee General Assembly. All students attending Governor’s Schools receive a scholarship, which covers the cost of tuition, housing and meals.
Area Students to Attend Governor Schools

BY KAREN CAMPBELL
Weakley County Schools
Communications Director

WEAKLEY COUNTY (April 28) — Annika Jolley from Dresden High School and Westview’s Joseph Roupe will have little more than a week from the last day of school to the first day of an opportunity that could shape their future academic careers.

Both have successfully navigated the extensive application process and been accepted into Tennessee Governor’s Schools. Jolley will be attending the Tennessee Governor’s School for the Agricultural Sciences (GSAS) at the University of Tennessee at Martin beginning May 29. Roupe will travel to UT Knoxville for the Governor’s School for the Sciences & Engineering (GSP) which starts May 30.

TN Governor’s Schools provide rising high-achieving 11th and 12th grade students currently enrolled in Tennessee’s public and private high schools an academically demanding experience.

Nine other Governor’s Schools covering subjects such as the arts, humanities, science, business and teaching are also offered as four-week summer sessions. Governor’s Schools instructors include writers, language experts, historians, philosophers, artists, actors, conductors, expert musicians, scientists, distinguished professors, and career-level teachers.

To be accepted in schools, applicants must be nominated by school faculty.

P.K. Kelley, the DHS counselor, notes that Jolley is “an exemplary student, a respectful young lady, and an ethical teenager. Annika is very interested in agriculture, especially veterinary medicine,” she said, adding that the soon-to-be senior will be an “asset to the Governor’s School for Agricultural Sciences.”

Jolley said she first learned of the GSAS from a friend who attended two years ago. Though she was eligible last year, she still wasn’t sure about applying but says that because of Covid, “I have learned to face each opportunity head on and when applications became available, I decided to pick one up. I asked my parents, and they fully supported any decision I made.” Jolley chose to focus on the agriculture business elective and the veterinary science group study project to help her prepare for her anticipated career in Veterinary Medicine. Group Study Projects (GSP) are small, specialized groups taught by expert faculty from various Tennessee agricultural schools.

The Veterinary Science GSP will present the students with the opportunity to observe and learn about the diversity of career opportunities in veterinary medicine, animal care of both farm and companion animals and perform a basic research project on companion animals from local humane shelters.

“Dresden High School has better prepared me for Governor’s School through having a fully functioning farm and some of the best advisors and teachers,” said Jolley who is an active member of FFA and part of the school’s softball, track and field, Student Council, Beta Club, and Weakley County Youth Coalition programs.

“This summer, I hope to gain new friends, expand my knowledge of agriculture and learn more about college life,” she concluded. Her extended plans include attending the University of Tennessee at Martin for her bachelor’s degree in Veterinary Science and later obtaining a doctorate in veterinary medicine at The University of Tennessee at Knoxville.

Roupe’s experience at the Governor’s School in Knoxville will begin each morning with common Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) courses and, in the afternoon, he will attend chemistry classes, his choice for the customized portion of the program. GSP students now earn (5) college credit hours upon completion of the program.

In addition to classroom experience, Roupe will be invited to open houses of science and engineering departments, laboratory tours, educational field trips, college and career choice programs. In previous years, concerts, plays, movies, and special events have been scheduled for after hours and the weekends.

The current sophomore says he thinks his STEM club experience at Westview will help prepare him for the summer experience which he anticipates will in turn help prepare him for college.

“I hope to learn more about the college process and what I will be doing in college,” he noted. “I also hope to better myself so that I will be better prepared for my further stages in life.”

Included in his dreams for the future are inventing new and/or improving existing technologies. Erica Myers, Westview’s 9th-10th grades counselor, is excited about Roupe’s representation of the high school at the GSP. “It is a very competitive program, and the fact that he was accepted says so much about the type of student he is. He is a hard worker and is also very liked among his peers,” she shared.

“Along with being chosen for Governor’s School, he was voted as sophomore class favorite!” she added. “We are lucky to have Joseph here at Westview and are so happy for him.”

The Governor’s Schools are funded by appropriations from the General Assembly of the State of Tennessee. All students attending Governor’s Schools receive a scholarship, which covers the cost of tuition, housing and meals.
UT MARTIN STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN MODEL UNITED NATIONS EVENT — Six University of Tennessee at Martin College of Business and Global Affairs students participated in the 2021 Southern Regional Model United Nations virtual event in which the team represented Israel on three committees to discuss disaster risk reduction, pandemic responses, mental health, UN peacekeeping and assistance for Palestinian refugees. The UT Martin team received the Honorable Delegation award, and two students, Cecilee Morris and Jason Repath, both of Troy, received the General Assembly Fourth with a Committee Award. More than 300 students from roughly 30 colleges and universities participated. The participating UT Martin students were Morris, Repath, Olivia Morris of Marion, Illinois; Sydney Fischer of Whitleyville; Gabrielle Warren of Memphis; and Avery Blanchard of Martin. Pictured are (L to R) are Blanchard, Cecilee Morris, Warren and Dr. Carrie Humphreys, assistant professor of political science.

Camden woman inducted to Phi Kappa Phi

Megan Bowden of Camden, recently was initiated into the Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi, the nation's oldest and most selective all-discipline collegiate honor society. Bowden was inducted at the University of Tennessee at Martin.

Bowden was among approximately 30,000 students, faculty, professional staff, and alumni to be initiated into Phi Kappa Phi each year throughout the U.S. Membership is by invitation only, and requires nomination and approval by a chapter. Only the top 10 percent of seniors or graduate students, and 7.5 percent of juniors are eligible for membership. Faculty, professional staff, and alumni who have achieved scholarly distinction may also qualify.

Phi Kappa Phi was founded in 1897 as a different kind of honor society to recognize excellence in all academic disciplines. Today, the Society has chapters on more than 325 campuses in the U.S., with a mission to recognize and promote academic excellence in all fields of higher education and to engage the community of scholars in service to others.

Since Phi Kappa Phi's founding, more than 1.5 million members have been initiated. Notable members include former President Jimmy Carter, NASA astronaut Wendy Lawrence, novelist John Grisham, and YouTube co-founder Chad Hurley.

Each year, Phi Kappa Phi awards more than $1 million to outstanding students and members through graduate and dissertation fellowships, undergraduate study abroad grants, funding for post-baccalaureate development, and grants for local, national, and international literacy initiatives. For more information, visit www.phikappaphi.org.
Knapp started this week at Homer News

Knapp brings Tennessee writing experience to Alaska

By Michael Armstrong

A new reporter has joined the staff of the Homer News. Sarah Knapp arrived in Alaska last weekend and officially started on Monday, April 26.

Knapp, 22, comes to the Homer News after working in the Office of University Relations for the University of Tennessee at Martin. Born and raised near Moscow, Tennessee, a small town of about 600 about 40 miles from Memphis, Knapp also graduated from UT Martin. She was executive editor, a photographer and social media manager at the student paper, The Pacer, where she received numerous awards in reporting, editing and photography. A photographer as well as a reporter, Knapp started a small photography business, SKnapp Photography.

"We are very pleased to have someone with Sarah's background handling our weekly reporting," said Homer News Publisher Jeff Hayden. "Sarah brings a great deal of enthusiasm and commitment to the job. Sarah has a genuine passion for community journalism."

Knapp has taken over the position previously held by Megan Pacer, who worked at the Homer News since July 2017 before moving to take a job with Alaska's News Source. A general assignment reporter, Knapp's beats include education, sports, government, public safety and general news.

Before taking up journalism, Knapp had considered a career in photojournalism. She had the dream of being an embedded reporter working with the military for the Stars and Stripes. Her great-grandfather served with the U.S. Army 7th Armored Division during the liberation of Europe in World War II, and she recalled reading her great-grandfather's copies of Stars and Stripes from that era.

"I fell in love with print journalism anyway," she said. "It worked out just fine."

Moscow, Tennessee is in Fayette County on the Wolf River and is the site of the 1863 Battle of Moscow during the Civil War in which Black Union troops thwarted a Confederate attempt to take over a bridge on the Wolf River. Knapp grew up on her family's former farm, now roughly 100 acres of forest and fields. Her family also runs a trap and skeet range in Moscow. Knapp is a national champion sporting clays shooter, and competed on her high school and university clay target teams.

Knapp had already decided to move to Homer before applying for a job at the News. She met her partner, Michael Singer, at UT Martin, and he got a job working as a soils scientist for the Natural Resources Conservation Service in Homer a year ago.
"I had already decided to move in June whether I found a job or not," Knapp said. "This thing came open."

Knapp visited Homer last November for a Thanksgiving vacation. Growing up on the flat side of Tennessee, she wasn't used to mountains and the ocean.

"I get excited every time I see the mountains and the water," she said. "I don't think I'll ever get used to that."

Already an inveterate traveler, Knapp has visited 10 foreign countries.

"I always wanted to travel. I never wanted to stay in Tennessee," she said. "My mom's thankful it's (Alaska) still technically the United States. She was convinced I'd wind up in Ireland."

As she gets settled in Homer, Knapp said she looks forward to meeting more Alaskans and getting to know the community better. Knapp loves cooking and cooking shows, and enjoyed watching the Homer and Alaska episodes of "The Great Food Truck Race."

Skilled in writing profiles, Knapp said she wants to tell the stories of the southern Kenai Peninsula.

"I like human interest stories," she said. "Everyone has something unique about them that makes you want to tell their story."

Knapp can be reached by email at sarah.knapp@homernews.com or by calling the paper at 907-235-7767.

Reach Michael Armstrong at marmstrong@homernews.com.
Crimes rates decline on college campuses, TBI reports

April 30, 2021 by Clint Eiland (https://www.wbbjtv.com/author/clinteiland/)

JACKSON, Tenn. — A new report revealed encouraging trends on Tennessee college campuses.

The Tennessee Bureau of Investigation released their 2020 Crime on Campus Report, an annual publication dating back 20 years.

The good news is 2020 was one of the safest ever on college campuses in the state, with a 33% drop in reported crime from 2019. That includes a near 45% drop in violent crime.

"It’s great that they can come to campus and know this is a great place to be. We can hang out and not worry about anything," said Shane Young, Chief of Police at Jackson State Community College.

Every college in West Tennessee saw a decrease in overall crime, including huge decreases in violent crime.

All the schools that spoke with WBBJ 7 Eyewitness News agreed, COVID-19 played a role since many students elected to not be on campus.

"There were a lot less things going on, so I believe that probably had a little bit to do with it," Young said.
"For a few months there, we were all in hibernation, and obviously we didn't have as many students as we once had," said Monte Belew, Director of Public Safety at University of Tennessee at Martin.

Still, the numbers are encouraging since the lower rates continued as students returned last fall.

"We believe in community oriented policing. You can't make those contacts and those relationships behind the windshield of a car. You have to get out and know the students and faculty alike," Belew said.

On-campus police will continue to put in new safety measures.

At UT Martin, Belew says they are going to do "Blues Cruise," which acts as a crime deterrent.

"Patrolling around campus with our cruise lights on, our patrol cars at night. They're very visible. It's all about visibility and deterrence," he said.

And in general, they're excited for students to come back and enjoy a safe experience.

"We're here for them. We're here to take care of them, and we want them back on this campus, and know that they feel safe coming back," Young said.

To view the TBI report, visit their website (https://tbinewsroom.com/2020/04/29/tbi-releases-annual-crime-on-campus-publication-2/).
Coon Creek Science Center opens in Adamsville

ADAMSVILLE, Tenn. — A local university extended their campus reach on Friday.

The University of Tennessee opened its largest and oldest classroom at the Coon Creek Science Center in Adamsville.

“We have renovated the entire site. We did a lot of landscaping work, and made it into what you see here,” said Jack Garrett, paleontology intern at the Coon Creek Science Center.

The center will offer something for all science enthusiasts, including a fossil bed, a weather station, and an astronomy pad.

Their main goal is to gain more interest in the STEM field.

“We'll have a variety of programs, from K all the way through 12, and then for the public, to come in,” said Coon Creek Science Center Director Michael Gibson.

The center will also offer citizen science, where the public can come in and assist in digging and even research at the center.

“Anything involving STEM, we will be able to do on this site. The best part, we get to reach down to earlier age kids and maybe bring them into the field as careers as they grow up,” Gibson said.

The Coon Creek Science Center will officially be open to the public in July.

“If you’re interested, contact the UT Martin Selmer Center. You can make reservations to do a little digging and take your own fossils home,” Gibson said.

University of Tennessee System President Randy Boyd attended the ribbon cutting ceremony.
Dr. Dawn Wilkins, a professor in the University of Tennessee at Martin Department of Biological Sciences, and former resident of Hohenwald, has been named the university’s 2021 spring semester Featured Faculty Scholar. She was honored April 15 with a reception in the Paul Meek Library, and her name will be added to a plaque bearing the names of past recipients that is permanently displayed in the library.

Wilkins is pictured working with then UT Martin student Benjamin Chrestman, a natural resources management major from Adamsville, who graduated in May 2020.

Wilkins began her career at UT Martin in fall 2004 as an assistant professor. She was promoted to associate professor in 2008 and then to professor in 2013. Wilkins holds a bachelor's degree from UT Martin, a master's degree from Eastern Kentucky University and a doctoral degree from Mississippi State University.

Wilkins is a woodpecker biologist who has pursued projects with students investigating the ecology of various species including barred owls, osprey, herons and even the microbes that live in the digestive track of sapsuckers.