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City BOE selects advisory panel

Committee of 98 to help shape study of system's demographics and facilities

By Jamon Smith
Staff Writer

The Tuscaloosa City Board of Education Tuesday approved a list of 98 people who will serve on an advisory committee for the system's upcoming demographic study and facilities analysis. The results will help guide the school system's new five-year capital plan.

The advisory committee has 32 members chosen by the school board. Each school board member picked four people from their respective districts. The other 66 members were selected by Superintendent Paul McKendrick.

He picked people representing the school board's counsel, the University of Alabama, the UA Chancellor's office, Stillman College, Shelton State Community College, the mayor's office, the Tuscaloosa City Council, local architects, the Tuscaloosa Education Foundation, the city planner's office, DCH Regional Medical Center, the Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama, local commercial and manufacturing companies, city residents, parents of students, Realtors, the local home builders association, school principals, teachers, school support staff, the PTA and the American Education Association.

The advisory committee will provide guidance to the firm selected to conduct the system's demographics study and facilities analysis. McKendrick said he'll provide the board with a more detailed definition of the committee's duties at its June 3 meeting.

McKendrick and the board also decided on Tuesday that the steering committee that will help pick the firm to do the demographic study and facilities analysis. Eight members will be selected by McKendrick, and four will be selected by the board.

McKendrick named himself, Assistant Superintendent of General Administration Mike Daria, Chief School Financial Officer Ed LaVigne and Executive Director of Facilities Jeff Johnson as four of his selections.

The final list of steering committee members will be approved at an upcoming board meeting.

McKendrick said the steering committee will interview the officials of three consulting firms that have applied to do the demographics study and facilities analysis and recommend which one should be hired.

McKendrick, however, will make final recommendation on which one will get the contract. The board is expected to vote on his recommendation on June 17.

Representatives of the three firms — DeJong Richter in Dublin, Ohio; the Akrios Group in Spanish Fort and Volkert Inc. in Mobile — will be interviewed June 4.
Tax credits for private schools struck down

Judge rules Alabama Accountability Act violates state constitution

By Phillip Rawls
The Associated Press

MONTGOMERY | A Montgomery judge on Wednesday struck down Alabama's tax credits for parents who move their children from failing public schools to private schools.

Circuit Judge Gene Reese ruled the Alabama Accountability Act violates the Alabama constitution in several ways, including putting more than one subject in a bill. Proponents said they will appeal the ruling by the Democratic judge before the all-Republican Alabama Supreme Court.

The Republican-controlled Legislature passed the act in February 2013. It started out as a bill to give city and county school systems more flexibility in trying new approaches to education.

Over Democratic objections, the Republican majority expanded the bill to include state income tax credits for parents who move their children from public schools rated as failing.

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to other non-failing public schools or private schools in the transfer program. The expansion also provided 100 percent income tax credits for companies and individuals for money donated for scholarships to private schools for families below certain income levels.

Proponents said the law offered school choice to students trapped in public schools with a long history of poor performance.

Members of the state teachers’ organization, the Alabama Education Association, challenged the law in court. The group contends such tax credits divert state tax money from public education to promote private schools.

Reese said the Legislature violated the Constitution by putting more than one subject in the law and by changing the legislation from its original purpose of flexibility, which had virtually no cost, to tax credits, estimated to cost $40 million annually.

He also said the law violates the constitutional prohibition about providing public funds for private education. The judge wrote that the Legislature can’t avoid the prohibition “by instead reimbursing parents the cost of their tuition payment at such institutions.”

AEA attorney Bobby Segall said the judge saw that the law promotes private schools at the expense of public schools.

He called the law a throwback to the 1950s, when Alabama sought to avoid integration by directing public school funds toward private schools.

“It is totally shameful,” he said.

An attorney representing some families using the law, Bert Gall of the Institute for Justice, said, “Alabama parents should be able to choose the best education possible for their children, whether that’s in a public or private school.”

The chief designer of the law, Republican Sen. Del Marsh of Anniston, said, “This ruling to block school choice in Alabama is unfortunate largely because the law has already been successful in giving children more options to receive a quality education. I firmly believe this law will stand upon appeal.”

Reese’s ruling differed with one in April by U.S. District Judge Keith Watkins, who dismissed a separate suit filed by eight public school students represented by the Southern Poverty Law Center.

When the law went into effect, 719 students transferred from failing public schools to another school in the same school system, 18 to another public school system and 52 to private schools.

Reese said his ruling will not affect the tax credits earned for the 2013-14 school year.
Without changes, Alabama's pension funds could run dry within decade, study warns

By: Brenden Kirby

Alabama's state pension funds could run out of money within a decade if lawmakers do not address a looming shortfall, a new study from Troy University's free market think tank warns.

The study released Monday is part of a series of research produced this year by the Manuel H. Johnson Center for Political Economy, founded in 2010 on $3.6 million in grants from former Federal Reserve Board member Manuel Johnson, the BB&T Charitable Foundation and the Charles G. Koch Charitable Foundation.

The latest study, which George Mason University researcher Eileen Norcross wrote on behalf of the Johnson Center, makes the case that the pension funds for teachers and other state workers are underfunded and questions the investment choices of the Retirement Systems of Alabama.

Norcross, the lead researcher for the State and Local Policy Project at George Mason University's Mercatus Center – also a market-oriented think tank – said RSA and other public pension funds imprudently bank on annual investment returns of 8 percent when calculating how much money will be available to pay future retirees.

"They're basing it on what they expect investments to return. And that's the wrong way to go about it," she said in an interview, adding that projections cannot be guaranteed. "It should be crafted not to put a burden on high expected returns."

Alabama's three pension funds – one for education workers, one for judges and one for other state and local government workers – have $28.1 billion assets and $42.5 billion in liabilities. The program serves 114,050 retirees and 221,735 current workers.

Investment returns lag

Fiscal year 2013 was a good one for the three pension funds, which all exceeded 14 percent returns, according to the system's latest annual report. But statistics provided by Norcross and contained in RSA's 2013 annual report indicate that fund managers have missed the 8 percent investment return mark several times in recent years.

The 5- and 10-year returns have been 6.68 percent and 6.29 percent for the Teachers' Retirement System; 6.17 percent and 5.97 percent for the Employees' Retirement System; and 8.74 percent and 7.06 percent for the Judicial Retirement Fund. Those returns lag the performance of the Dow Jones industrial average and the S&P 500 during those timeframes.

It gets worse, Norcross maintains. Even if RSA hits the 8 percent investment target every year, she said, the pension funds will not be able to continue making payments to a growing number of retirees who are living longer.
A financial report that RSA released in January indicates that the teachers' pension system was 66.5 percent funded as of the end of September 2012. The story was similar for the other two funds – for other government workers, it was 65.7 percent funded and 61.6 percent funded for judges and justices.

Norcross pointed to a 2010 paper by Stanford University professor Joshua Rauh – then with Northwestern University – indicating that based on 2008 figures, Alabama's pension funds were projected to run out of money by 2023.

"That's what's kind of alarming about it," Norcross said.

The study indicates that a default on pension obligations would force an increase in annual contributions of $1.6 billion to $3.4 billion, or $819 per household. Ultimately, taxpayers would have to bail out the system, Norcross said.

The Alabama Legislature took steps to address the pension shortfall in 2012, when it passed a law raising the retirement age for new hires. Those workers also pay less money into the system in exchange for lower benefits when they retire. But the report by Norcross argues that the savings – $162 million a year of the next 30 years – only marginally postpones the day of reckoning.

"Such stopgap measures are not nearly enough to plug the funding shortfall facing the RSA," the study states.

The report highlights pension crises in Detroit, Illinois, New Jersey and elsewhere. Closer to home, the city of Prichard filed for bankruptcy protection after its pension fund went belly up, and the state had to abandon its prepaid college tuition program after costs outstripped assets following disappointment investment returns.

"I think they are (cautionary tales)," said Scott Beaulier, the director of the Johnson Center. "In the study, you see some others."

He pointed to massive shortfalls in the pension systems of New Jersey and Rhode Island. "They're different from Alabama only in how far along they are," he said.

The report also takes RSA to task for its investments in "pet projects" designed to promote tourism and economic development in Alabama. The pension system's Alabama investments include RSA Tower in Mobile and the Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail. The pension fund also spends $54 million on TV, print and radio ads, and economic development projects. It has backed businesses as diverse as a Wal-Mart distribution center and the headquarters of Raycom Media.

RSA CEO David Bronner sums up the philosophy on the first page of the annual report: "The stronger the RSA can make Alabama the stronger the RSA will be."
But Norcross questioned the benefit to the pension fund, noting that such in-state investments historically have lagged behind the rest of the portfolio. She said the Legislature would have to use public money to cover any shortfall.

"Those economic development projects are at the expense of tax dollars. It's not free," she said, adding that it "might be a noble goal. But it's using pensioners' money, which is held in trust for them."

Recommendations include closing pension fund

The study makes a number of recommendations:

• Change how the fund calculates liabilities to factor in only returns for ultra-safe investments, such as treasury bills. Basing liabilities on 8 percent rates of return masks the true size of the shortfall, the study maintains.

• Close the pension fund to newly hired employees and shift them, instead, into a personal retirement plan similar to a 401(k).

• Increase contributions required of employees, change benefit formulas or take other steps to close the gap between assets and promised benefits.

• Adopt an investment strategy that relies on less risky portfolios.

• Improve the disclosure of the performance of the pension fund's performance. Because contributions from employees do not come close to paying benefits to retirees, Norcross argued, pension fund managers feel compelled to make risky investments in a search for high-yield returns to make up the difference. Norcross wrote that while such investments have a place – ideally, after safer investments have accounted for the promised benefits – pension fund managers across the country have moved away from bonds into higher-risk investments over the past 30 years.

Removing projected gains from riskier investments from the calculations increases Alabama's unfunded pension liability to $59 billion – a third the size of the entire state economy, according to the study.

Norcross said the state ought to create a "defined-contribution plan," as most private employers already have done in lieu of a traditional pension. In the public sectors, she said, the state could build safeguards to protect workers for unwise choices. These steps could include generous employer matches, limited choices that focus on income protection rather and asset growth and plans that automatically adjust investments as the worker gets closer to retirement.

She said this combines the best of both systems and improves upon some of the deficiencies of 401(k) plans in the private sector.

"I think that we've learned a lot from that experience," she said.
The study points to Michigan as a possible model. That state began moving away from a government pension to a defined-contribution plan in 1997.

"It has gone relatively smoothly," Norcross said.
Misleading Picture?

By: Brendan Kirby

A study suggesting that Alabama’s pension system is in danger of running out of money is “very irresponsible,” contains a number of errors and relies on dated information, according to the chief lawyer for the Retirement Systems of Alabama.

Responding to the findings of a study released Monday by Troy University’s Manuel H. Johnson Center for Political Economy, RSA General Counsel Leura Canary said the report presents a worst-case scenario based on the worst investment period in American history.

“This report is inaccurate and misleading,” she said, adding that it could needlessly panic retired government employees. “RSA is not going to run out of money.”

The Johnson Center study points to data showing that the state pension system has fallen short of its target annual investment return rate of 8 percent over the past decade and questions how the system values its assets.

The 5- and 10-year returns for the period ending Sept. 30 have been 6.68 percent and 6.29 percent for the Teachers’ Retirement System; 6.17 percent and 5.97 percent for the Employees’ Retirement System; and 8.74 percent and 7.06 percent for the Judicial Retirement Fund.

The study, written by George Mason University researcher Eileen Norcross, cites a 2010 report that projected that Alabama’s pension funds could run out of money by 2023.

Canary said both studies present a misleading picture by using investment returns during a period when the housing crisis and the recession it sparked crushed stock market values. She said the two main pension funds — for teachers and for other government workers — have averaged almost 11 percent gains per year over the last four. And, she added, the funds have exceeded the 8 percent return rate over the last 25 years.

Canary also took a different view of the impact of recent reforms enacted by the state Legislature. In 2012, lawmakers raised the retirement age for most public employees. An earlier reform required workers to contribute a larger share of their paychecks to the pension program.

Norcross maintained that the reforms only marginally improved the pension system’s long-term footing. But Canary said she believes the impact will grow over time.

She pointed out that a shrinking state government workforce in recent years has somewhat blunted the impact of the reforms on the Employees’ Retirement System because fewer workers are paying into the system.

“It takes time for those reforms to become fully effective,” she said.
Canary pointed out that less frequent cost-of-living increases for pensioners in recent years also have helped RSA. With each COLA, the system has to come up with more money.

Part of the dispute over the health of Alabama’s pension funds — and those of government workers across the country — is how to value assets and liabilities. Norcross argues that it is risky to count expected 8 percent investment returns as assets. The gap between contributions and what the state will need is $59 billion, according to the Johnson Center study.

Responded Canary: “RSA values its employer contribution rates, assets and liabilities using accepted actuarial practices in accordance public pension industry standards.”

The National Association of State Retirement Administrators has addressed the issue, as well. In a 2010 statement, the organization pointed out that the Governmental Accounting Standards Board considered but rejected a method for valuing future liabilities that Norcross and others have advocated.

“The rate used should be a reasonable estimate of the rate at which plan net assets are expected to grow, over a term commensurate with the accounting measurements for which the rate is used, as a result of investment earnings,” the government board stated.
NORTH ALABAMA GETTING BIGGER

**GROWTH**

**DATAMINE: HUNTSVILLE GROWING FASTER THAN ANY LARGE ALABAMA CITY; MADISON, ATHENS ALSO BULKED UP.**

Huntsville has grown faster than any other large Alabama city since 2010, according to U.S. Census Bureau figures.

The Rocket City's population grew from 180,105 in April 2010 to 186,254, as of July 2013, a more than 3 percent increase.

Huntsville has a diverse economy driven by engineering, defense, aerospace, technology and biotech, and it attracts newcomers. The U.S. Army and NASA have a strong local presence, and Huntsville's tradition of innovation has long been spurred by government contractors who branched out to start their own companies.

Huntsville is also routinely recognized by national publications as a desirable place to live, work and start a business.

Mayor Tommy Battle isn't surprised by the city's growth pattern.

"People realize that Huntsville is a great place to live, work, learn and play," Battle said. "We see employers wanting to locate and expand here, more young professionals moving into our area, and a wonderful community that is open and welcoming to newcomers."

The population growth in Huntsville compares favorably with Alabama's other largest cities, the Census figures show.

Birmingham saw its population rise by 972 people from 2012 to 2013, but its overall population fell slightly from 2010 to 2013, from 212,237 to 212,113. Mobile saw its population also fall slightly over the past three years, from 196,111 to 194,899. The population count showed a slight uptick for Mobile in 2013, up 11 people from 2012.

Montgomery finds itself moving in the opposite direction. The state's capital saw its population decline 2 percent over the past three years, from 205,764 to 201,332. Montgomery's population declined by more than 3,000 people in 2013, according to the Census figures.

Madison saw strong growth over the past three years, with a nearly 7 percent gain, from 42,938 in 2010 to 45,799 in 2013. The city grew by just over 800 people in 2013, figures show.

Athens also saw strong growth, up nearly 10 percent in the past three years, from a population of 21,897 to 24,000.

Athens added about 500 people in 2013. Decatur's population grew slightly from 2010 to 2013, falling from 55,683 to 55,816. Decatur's population fell by 186 residents in 2013, the figures show.
GROWING HOPES

2013 CENSUS ESTIMATE: AFTER YEARS OF DECLINE, BIRMINGHAM POSTS A MODEST GAIN IN POPULATION.

Brendan Kirby  bkirby@al.com

As a measure of population growth, Birmingham’s net gain was barely a blip—672 people between July 2012 and July 2013.

For city leaders, though, the population estimate released Thursday by the U.S. Census Bureau is important not for the quantity, but the direction. Birmingham has struggled with declining populations for decades.

After peaking at 340,887 in 1960, Birmingham’s population began to plummet during the turbulent 1960s, and each new Census dashed hopes that the freefall might slow significantly. By 2010, more than a third of its peak population had vanished.

That year’s official count showed the city losing more than 30,000 residents in the first decade of the 21st century, down to a population of 212,237. By that time, many black residents had joined whites in fleeing to suburban cities with higher property values, lower crime rates and better schools.

If the population trends revealed in that 2010 Census had continued unabated, Birmingham would have lost its spot as the state’s largest city by now and would have dropped to fourth-largest by 2017.

TOP 10 POPULATIONS IN ALABAMA
The one-year change in population based on U.S. Census estimates for 2012 and 2013.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Change</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birmingham</td>
<td>0.32%</td>
<td>211,741</td>
<td>212,113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montgomery</td>
<td>-1.58%</td>
<td>204,573</td>
<td>201,332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile</td>
<td>0.01%</td>
<td>184,883</td>
<td>184,839</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huntsville</td>
<td>1.35%</td>
<td>183,775</td>
<td>186,254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuscalbosa</td>
<td>1.76%</td>
<td>93,683</td>
<td>95,364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoover</td>
<td>0.87%</td>
<td>83,397</td>
<td>84,126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dothan</td>
<td>0.83%</td>
<td>67,407</td>
<td>68,201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auburn</td>
<td>2.67%</td>
<td>57,058</td>
<td>58,582</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decatur</td>
<td>-0.03%</td>
<td>56,001</td>
<td>55,816</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

JOHN ARCHIBALD
LITTLE NUMBER, BIG MOMENTUM

IT'S ONLY 672 PEOPLE, BUT THOSE PEOPLE ARE SYMBOLIC OF BIRMINGHAM'S COMEBACK.
GROWTH
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According to the Census Bureau's annual population estimates, the closest that came to happening was in 2011, when only 4,470 residents separated Birmingham's population from Montgomery's. The following year, Montgomery began to lose population faster than Birmingham, and this year's estimates show the gap widening to 10,781 residents.

Still, the annual estimates showed Birmingham's population losses continuing — until now. After dipping to 211,441 in 2012, the city's estimated population rebounded to 212,113 by the middle of 2013, according to the numbers released Thursday.

Experts, however, cautioned against making too much of one or two mid-census estimates.

"I would really want to look at several years and how much it really has changed," said Yanyi Djamba, the director of Auburn University Montgomery's Center for Demographic Studies. "I think it's too soon to celebrate."

While the Magic City remains below its 2010 Census population, civic leaders are hopeful that after years of decline, the city is on the precipice of a revival.

"There is definitely a movement of people back into the urban areas, including Birmingham," said Dave Rickey, a spokesman for the Birmingham Business Alliance.

Rickey said cities across America are experiencing new housing development, commercial construction and business investment.

"All of those things are happening in Birmingham now," he said.
AG seeks to halt Greene case against state agents

Three people were involved in the 2011 seizure of gambling machines from Greenetrack, Frontier Bingo

By Stephanie Taylor
Staff Writer

Alabama Attorney General Luther Strange is attempting to halt prosecution of two state agents and a hired gambling machine expert recently indicted on felony perjury charges in Greene County.

Lawyers with the attorney general's office have filed documents to dismiss cases against three people who were involved in his office's 2011 seizure of electronic gambling machines from Greenetrack and Frontier Bingo.

The documents were filed under seal, but obtained by The Tuscaloosa News last week. A spokeswoman from Strange's office declined to comment about why the office took over the cases, why the office wants the cases dismissed and why the court filings were kept secret.

Greene County District Attorney Greg Griggers condemned the attorney general's actions at a court hearing Wednesday at the William McKinley Branch Courthouse in Eutaw. Griggers has refused to hand over any materials.

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related to the cases, saying that Strange’s office has no business taking over the prosecution of people who were serving as agents on a gambling task force led by his office.

The hearing before Greene County Circuit Court Judge Eddie Hardaway was held so the judge could consider a motion by Strange’s office that would force Griggers to turn over the files.

“I can’t deny General Strange’s authority to supervise my cases, but I don’t think that I should just turn over my files when I know that what he’s trying to do is improper,” Griggers said after the hearing. “There’s a conflict there that exists for him to be prosecuting these cases. That’s why I’ve held my files. If Judge Hardaway orders me to turn them over, I’ll turn them over.”

Assistant Attorney General Stephanie Hilliard said the judge is acting in an improper way by not following the law, she said.

Hardaway said he would consider the request by the attorney general’s office, but he did not make an immediate ruling.

Griggers was featured by members of the standing-room-only audience in the courtroom Wednesday morning. He said he’s been threatened for being a noncooperative.”

“I’ve been threatened to be disbarred. They’ve threatened to file a bill of impeachment against me with the Supreme Court. They threatened to arrest me when they showed up to get my files,” he said. “I regret that they’ve chosen to be unprofessional in the way that they’ve handled this.”

A Greene County grand jury indicted the three men on April 1 after reviewing a judge’s writ granting order stating that the three men had lied when seeking warrants to search the bingo parlor and seize what they claimed were illegal machines.

But the Alabama Supreme Court struck down that order the same day the grand jury issued the indictments, ruling that the judge’s censure was based on his misinterpretation and misapplication of the law — not false or deceptive statements by the state agents.

Strange’s office is seeking to have the criminal cases dropped, saying there is no probable cause to prosecute. The possible dismissal of the charges wasn’t directly addressed at the hearing Wednesday.

The perjury cases stem from the search and seizure of bingo machines from Greenetrack and Frontier Bingo in 2011. Two ABC agents and a hired consultant presented information to Jefferson County Judge Houston Brown about an undercover investigation ordered by Strange. Then-Alabama Chief Justice Sue Bell Cobb ordered Brown to preside over the case.

Brown signed the warrants allowing the task force, which comprised attorney general’s staff, ABC agents and Department of Public Safety officers, to seize more than 700 bingo machines from the businesses on June 1 of that year.

Judge Brown later demanded that the state return the machines to the businesses, claiming the state agents and the expert hired by the attorney general’s office lied in affidavits seeking search warrants. Brown wrote in an order that he would not have allowed the search or seizure of the machines if the men had been truthful.

It is apparent the state presented statements which are clearly false, misleading, or were made with reckless disregard for the truth, he wrote in the 2011 court order.

Specifically, Brown said the ABC agent was "operating under a mistaken interpretation of the law" because the agent said the bingo machines didn’t meet the criteria used to define legal bingo, as stated in a 2010 Alabama Supreme Court ruling known as Cornerstone. The judge argued that procedure resulting from that case, which originated in Lowndes County, shouldn’t apply in Greene County. He also wrote that the ABC agent incorrectly described the way the machines operated. Further, he said the outside expert hired by the attorney general’s office to examine the machines was not qualified to do so.

The attorney general’s office appealed that ruling to the Supreme Court, which vacated the judge’s order. The judge had no jurisdiction to order the machines returned, the court ruled, and was wrong to say that the ABC agent provided misleading information while seeking a search warrant.

“It is a mistake understanding of law is used as a framework to assess the facts presented by the witness, the mistake is the court, not the witness,” Justices wrote in the 62-page order.

The grand jury that issued the perjury indictment, however, didn’t learn of the Supreme Court ruling and based their findings on Brown’s order and testimony by witnesses Luther "Nat" Winn, Greenetrack president and CEO.

Billinggoss, the assistant attorney general, wrote in one of the sealed motions filed earlier this month that the cases should be dropped because there is no probable cause to prosecute. The jurisdiction for any potential prosecution should be Jefferson County, he continued, since the alleged crime occurred in Brown’s offices in Jefferson County.

Reach Stephanie Taylor at stephanie.taylor@tuscaloosa.net or 205-722-0210.
UA names new dean

Vikki Vandiver to head School of Social Work

Staff report

An associate dean at Portland State University has been named the next dean of the University of Alabama School of Social Work.

The appointment of Vikki Vandiver, currently the associate dean for academic affairs at the Portland State University School of Social Work in Portland, Ore., was announced by UA on Thursday.

Vandiver, who has been a faculty member at Portland State since 1992, will begin her new role on July 15, according to UA. She will succeed interim Dean Lucinda Roff, who has led the school since 2010 and previously served as dean from 1987 to 2000.

"I am honored and proud to be joining one of the nation's top schools of social work housed in a major research university," Vandiver said in a released statement.

Vandiver's clinical and academic experience includes programs for people with severe mental illness and in cross-cultural mental health systems. Additional research interests include evidence-based mental health practice, traumatic brain injury, health promotion and equine-assisted activities with tribal youth.

She has also served as an affiliate professor at the Oregon Health and Sciences University School of Medicine in the department of psychiatry and on various community and state boards.

She holds a bachelor's in psychology and a master's in social work from the University of Houston and a doctorate in public health from the University of Texas Health Science Center.

"Dr. Vandiver's contributions to the field of social work are extensive, and she'll be a valuable asset in leading our School of Social Work," UA interim Provost Joe Benson said in a released statement.
PATTERN
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by the pro tem's father, legendary head football coach Paul "Bear" Bryant.

Houndstooth Mafia Enterprises and founders William Pitts Jr. of Salem and Christopher Blackburn of Columbus, Ga., used the pattern in a logo with the phrase "Houndstooth Mafia" on apparel sold to friends and fellow football fans. Houndstooth Mafia refers to a group of close-knit football fans who attended games and tailgated together.

Pitts and Blackburn agreed to sign over the rights, title and interest in Houndstooth Mafia to the university, according to court documents. UA officials could not be reached for comment about details of the agreement.

The document signed by Proctor on Tuesday entered the final judgment in favor of UA, vacated a 2013 order by the U.S. Trademark Trial and Appeal Board that found in favor of the defendants, and directed the U.S. Trademark Trial and Appeal Board to permit registry of the Houndstooth Mafia design with UA as the owner.

The lawsuit filed in September 2013 sought to stop Houndstooth Mafia from using the pattern in its merchandise and to recall and destroy any materials infringing on the university's patents. Bryant Jr. and the board also asked the court to order the trademark office to deny a trademark for the logo and vacate the appeal board's opinion.

Pitts and Blackburn originally asked the court to dismiss UAs complaint and affirm the appeal board's opinion.

The lawsuit followed an unsuccessful attempt by UA to oppose an attempt by Pitts and Blackburn to get a trademark for the Houndstooth Mafia design. The U.S. Trademark Trial and Appeal Board issued an opinion ruling in favor of Houndstooth Mafia in July 2013, finding the logo was dissimilar enough from the trademarks held by the university and Bryant Jr. that it was unlikely to be confused with them. The board also ruled against the arguments by UA that the use of the houndstooth pattern was exclusively associated with trademarks related to the university and coach Bryant.

UA also sought compensatory and punitive damages and attorney fees. As part of the final consent judgment, each side will cover the costs of its attorney fees.

Reach Ed Enoch at ed.enoch@tuscaloosanews.com or 205-722-0209.
Writers
Hall of
Fame
planned

Center for Book,
Writers’ Forum
to laud authors

By Mark Hughes Cobb
Entertainment Editor

Alabama’s literary history, if not unsung, is perhaps unsung, which is why the Alabama Center for the Book and the Alabama Writers’ Forum are teaming to create the Alabama Writers Hall of Fame.

Both organizations have worked to promote and share the state’s rich history, and a Hall of Fame seemed a logical next step, said Jeanie Thompson, executive director of the AWF.

“I think for a long time people have talked about the possibility of doing something like this, but the Writers’ Forum and the Center for the Book have been working on it for about two years,” she said. Both are statewide entities, though the Center for the Book is housed at the University of Alabama.

A first step is gathering potential inductees. Minds might jump first to Harper Lee and possibly to contemporary novelists such as Carolyn Haines, Fannie Flagg or Mark Childress, whose book “Crazy in Alabama” was made into a hit movie with Melanie Griffith, and whose recent novel “Georgia Bottoms” is being adapted into an opera by the Huntsville Symphony Orchestra.

Winston Groom, born in Baldwin County and proud UA graduate, created a literary character recognized around the world, a guy named Forrest Gump.

On the UA campus, we’ve got Pulitzer-winning memoirist and journalist Rick Bragg, and his

See next page
When you bring enough together like that, it starts to seem like a big deal.

"It's a step we've been building to after 20 years of the Writers' Forum," Thompson said, "to say to Alabama and to the world that this is the best of our literary culture, from the beginning of the state to present day.

"That's a pretty big statement, and it's going to take awhile to do it."

Logistics are still being worked out, but the Alabama Writers Hall of Fame, expected to launch with its first class in 2015, will be housed at UA's Gorgas Library. It's hoped that Alabama artists will be involved in whatever physical representations grace the hall.

The first field will probably include six names, and committee members hope to draw not just from varying fields and genres, but from differing eras and geographic locations. Members of the public can also contribute ideas through June 9. For submission guidelines, send email to writersforum@bellsouth.net.

Committee members include Thompson; Lou Hirschmann, dean of libraries at UA and director of the Alabama Center for the Book; Donna Adcock of UA libraries and Center for the Book; Julie H. Friedman, AWF vice president, UA Library Leadership Board and longtime member of the Alabama State Council on the Arts; William Gantt, founder of the Southern Literary Trail; Trudier Harris, UA English professor and AWF board member; Bert Hitchcock, retired Auburn University professor of English; Jay Lamar, director of the Alabama Bicentennial Commission; and Don Noble, retired UA English professor, host of Alabama Public Television's "BookMark" and book reviewer for Alabama Public Radio and The Tuscaloosa News. Each will suggest about a dozen literary figures each, going back to Alabama's earliest days and running to the present.

"There are some real obvious names, but then there are some others who may not be as well known," Thompson said. "I really feel people will be pretty proud of the first rollout ... and then we'll do another six each year."

Thompson, a poet and UA graduate who loves Crimson Tide football, was only half-joking when she advised committee members to think on the lines of Bryant-Denny Stadium and its Walk of Champions.

"These are our champions of literary art; we need to think big, as big as we dare," she said. "It's going to be sort of an apex, something that overarches the whole state for literary arts."
UA professor’s free course trains high school teachers

Staff report

A University of Alabama computer science professor will lead a free, online course this summer to train high school teachers from across the nation in a new computer-science course and future College Board AP exam.

“This is taking the ideas that we planned regionally for Alabama and scaling it up to work with teachers across the United States who have the same interests in offering this course in their high schools in the near future,” UA professor Jeff Gray said.

“This is the only realistic way to do this type of training when the teachers are geographically dispersed,” Gray said.

More than 700 teachers nationwide have signed up for the course.

The online course this summer, CSP4HS, began as Gray’s ongoing effort to reach teachers in Alabama, but Google provided a grant to broaden the reach through a web-based delivery method known as a massive open online course, or MOOC.

The six-week course begins this week and runs through July 14, with a break from June 23 to July 4.

The course, supported by the Google CS4HS program and the National Science Foundation, offers free online instruction to educators interested in learning more about CS Principles, a new advanced placement course under development by the College Board. Gray has helped with development of the new high school course.

For more than a decade, Gray has taught a series of multiweek computer science summer camps and hosted similar science contests for students in K-12.

The six-week course’s video lectures, discussions forums, curriculum resources, peer reviews and office hours will all be kept on its website.

Four teachers who have been pilot teachers for the new AP computer science course will help train the teachers online.

Guest speakers from Duke University, Code.org, the University of Wisconsin and Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis will also offer guidance during the summer course.

“This is taking the ideas that we planned regionally for Alabama and scaling it up to work with teachers across the United States who have the same interests in offering this course in their high schools in the near future.”

Jeff Gray, University of Alabama professor

The course is tailored for secondary teachers with limited or no training in computer science, but current computer-science teachers along with college faculty may also find parts of the course helpful toward understanding the topics covered in the CS Principles curriculum framework.

A certificate will be provided to teachers who complete the course.

The course parallels the CS Principles professional development instruction of the CS4Alabama project, which is an NSF-sponsored project, in collaboration between UA and A+ College Ready, with external project assessment conducted by Haynie Research and Evaluation.

The CSP4HS curriculum has been adopted from a CS Principles Pilot course taught at UA since 2011.

More information about the course is available online at www. ow.ly/xcJ7g.
Graduation day arrives for 3 city high schools

UA host to Bryant, Central, Northridge ceremonies

Senior class president Jessica Edwards addresses her fellow graduates of the Class of 2014 during Paul W. Bryant High School’s commencement Saturday at Coleman Coliseum on the University of Alabama campus. For more photos of the Bryant graduation, see Page 10A.

By Angel Coker
Staff Writer

Briana Aaron spent four years at Central High School to graduate Saturday at Coleman Coliseum on the University of Alabama campus.

Many students like Aaron expressed the desire to graduate at their high school instead of the coliseum because the school, they said, is where all their memories were made, but many of them conceded that the coliseum was a better venue for other reasons.

“I think we should’ve just kept with tradition at school, but it’s very presentable here,” Aaron said.

Friends and family poured into Coleman Coliseum on Saturday to watch students graduate from Paul W. Bryant, Central and Northridge high schools.

Mike Daria, assistant superintendent for general administration for Tuscaloosa City Schools, said the school system decided to host the three graduation ceremonies at the coliseum because the venue is more comfortable for families; and weather is not an issue, as it would be at the high school football fields.

With more than 600 students graduating from the three schools, the coliseum is more accommodating in terms of size and allows families with graduates from two or three different schools to attend all ceremonies, said Central High School Principal Clarence Sutton.

“It kind of gives it an intimate setting so the audience is closer to the stage, and also allows other schools — for instance, Bryant that graduated this morning — it allows their families then to come to ours and ours to go to Bryant or Northridge (ceremonies),” Sutton said. “It gives it that Tuscaloosa city feel at the University of Alabama in one location.”

See Graduation | 10A

See next page
GRADUATION
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A

Natasha Scott, who watched relatives and friends graduate from two different schools, said it was easier for her to attend both Bryant and Central high school ceremonies because they were in one location.

"It's convenient because Bryant is all the way in Cottondale," Scott said. "A lot of people can just stay right here."

Davontay Brown, a graduate from Central High School, said he liked the venue because more people would be able to attend with all of the school's ceremonies at one location in one day.

"I wanted to graduate at the school, but it's good that we graduate here because it's more exposure."

Daria said this is the second year in recent times for all three ceremonies in one day at the coliseum. He said it works well, and there are plans to do it again in years to come.

"Having them all in one day allows the whole Tuscaloosa city school community to come together for graduations," Daria said.

Reach Angel Coker at 205-722-0230 or angel.coker@tuscaloosanews.com.
HEALTH RESEARCH

New research conducted partly by UAB investigators found that statins, drugs often prescribed to lower cholesterol, do not improve the health of patients who have chronic obstructive pulmonary disease or acute respiratory distress syndrome.

The two studies, funded by the National Heart Lung and Blood Institute, were published Thursday in the New England Journal of Medicine. Investigators at the University of Alabama at Birmingham participated in the COPD study.

"Treatment options for both COPD and ARDS are limited," James Kiley, director of the lung institute's Division of Lung Diseases, said in UAB's announcement. "Even though retrospective observational studies had suggested that people treated with statins for other reasons did better with their lung diseases, our well-designed prospective studies did not show benefits."

Dr. Mark Dransfield, medical director of the UAB Lung Health Center, said the researchers were hoping the statin therapy might reduce inflammation that is at the bottom of the worsening lung function in COPD, producing complications such as hospitalization, ventilator support and death.

Mike Oliver
LESIONNAIRES' DISEASE

Two of eight patients testing positive for legionella bacteria on a hematology/oncology unit at UAB Hospital have died.

"Two patients who were on the unit prior to the remediation of the water system and tested positive for legionella, have died," said Dr. Loring Rue, chief patient safety and clinical effectiveness officer. "The causes of their deaths have not been determined. We only know that in addition to their original illness the patients tested positive for legionella."

The hospital installed special filters on shower and faucet heads, flushed the water system and "shocked it with extreme temperatures, to ensure safe use," he said. The water system serves floors 5-7 of the Women and Infant building, Rue said.

Legionella bacteria are found naturally in the environment, usually in water, Rue said. Most people are exposed to legionella regularly and do not contract legionellosis. People with weak immune systems are more susceptible to it.

-- Mike Oliver
Two patients die of bacterial infection

BIRMINGHAM | University of Alabama Hospital officials said two of eight patients who recently tested positive for an infectious bacterial disease have died.

Officials said Tuesday that the patient who tested positive for the infection were in the hematology-oncology unit in the Women and Infant building.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, legionella is a form of pneumonia and bacteria that cause the illness typically travel by water.

Hospital officials said the official causes of the patients' deaths haven't been determined.

Officials said the hospital flushed the water system and installed special filters on shower and faucet heads and that there have been no reports of new infections.
DOMED STADIUM TALK

Just a few words from Mayor William Bell on talk radio about plans for a domed stadium generated intense interest.

Bell, during an appearance on the Matt Murphy show on WAPI radio, said the long-talked-about stadium for downtown Birmingham isn't dead, and he's working to bring the idea back to the forefront.

Bell said the city has completed enough major projects to prove that it is capable of handling the dome.

"When I got into office, I put that on the back burner and told people we've got to prove we could do the small things," he said during his radio appearance, adding that Regions Field and the Westin Hotel were major projects. "It builds confidence that if you say you're going to do something, then the next time people tend to believe you more. I think we're real close to making that happen."

Bell restated his earlier position that the dome should be a public/private development. He also said he would work to include the University of Alabama at Birmingham and would meet with some of the university's trustees.

The last proposal for the dome was around a half-billion dollars.

Joseph D. Bryant
OMG!

5 TO GROW ON: CAN TEXTING HARM KIDS' LANGUAGE SKILLS? EXPERTS WEIGH IN.

Some parents and teachers have expressed concern over the past decade or so that the writing skills of children and teenagers may be impaired by their constant text messaging — using symbols and abbreviations — and their overreliance on the autocorrect function in word processing programs. But a few experts at UAB offer parents five helpful tips and thoughts.

Jesse Chambers:
Embrace the change

"New technologies will, as they always have, influence how we gain and use knowledge," says UAB associate professor of English Cynthia Ryan. These changes can be scary for those who learned language in a different way but, according to Ryan: "What constitutes literacy changes over time."

Text style is not bad, just different — in the right context

Texting is just another genre of writing, but parents and teachers have to remind kids when it's appropriate to use it, according to Tonya Perry, an assistant professor of curriculum and instruction in the UAB School of Education.

"Basically, how students write should fit the audience and occasion for which they are writing," Perry said. "When students text, they're writing in a particular genre and for an informal audience."

In that setting, symbols and abbreviations are OK, but when they submit a term paper, Perry said, "We'd expect the words to be complete and correctly spelled."

Make kids pick up pen and paper

Parents need to force students to complete some assignments using paper and pen, according to Carrie Beth Buchanan, an English teacher at Clay-Chalkville High School.

She said this will prevent them from using autocorrect and will stress the importance of correct spelling.

"Buchanan, a participant in the UAB For Teachers By Teachers grant program, gets research papers from her students that are riddled with misspellings or written in abbreviations."

Talk about language with kids

"I think parents should always aim to keep the conversation about language going with their children, making sure they understand the meanings of words in context and the importance of using precise language to express themselves," Ryan said.

Technology will not replace real writing

Students cannot depend solely on a word processing program or other technology to be the final word in choices of words or phrases, according to Ryan.

"Context is key, and neither autocorrect, a thesaurus, nor any other kind of resource can be counted on to do the work for the writer," she said.
Army, NASA explore new frontiers in 3D printing

By: Defense Systems Staff

The Army is looking to expand the possibilities for 3D printing by partnering with NASA and the University of Alabama in Huntsville to share ideas and advance the state of the art.

The Army’s Aviation and Missile Research Development and Engineering Center, NASA’s Marshall Space Flight Center and UAH have formed an Additive Manufacturing Integrated Product Team to explore the latest advancements in the technology, the Army said.

3D printing, more accurately called additive manufacturing, uses computer-generated three-dimensional designs and a layered, or additive, process similar to that of ink jet printing to “print” 3D objects. The inks in the process can be liquid, powder, metal or paper.

"When you come to learn and appreciate the potential of AM, it's hard not to judge this as a true game-changer; one that will ultimately have far reaching, historical impacts onto our society at-large," said acting James Lackey, AMRDEC’s director.

NASA and the Army already have established track records to build on with the new partnership. The Army has put 3D printing to such uses as producing equipment in mobile laboratories in Afghanistan and repairing damaged aircraft and ground vehicles in the field. Researchers at Picatinny Arsenal, N.J., also are moving into printing electronics, such as antennas that can be printed onto helmets and sensors that can be embedded in clothing.
Collaboration promotes additive manufacturing
By RYAN KEITH AMRDEC

Additive manufacturing is changing the way organizations design and manufacture products around the world, and at Redstone Arsenal the Aviation and Missile Research Development and Engineering Center, NASA’s Marshall Space Flight Center and The University of Alabama in Huntsville are leading a collaborative effort to share knowledge and resources to promote this emerging technology.

Additive manufacturing — often referred to as “three-dimensional” or “3D” printing — refers to a process by which digital 3D design data is used to build up a component by depositing successive layers of liquid, powder, paper or sheet material. Many, including President Barack Obama, have identified additive manufacturing as a potential game changer with important implications to national security and the federal government.

In May, leaders from AMRDEC and Marshall officially established an Additive Manufacturing Integrated Product Team. The IPT’s mission is to engage in research and development efforts that advance the state of the art in AM to ensure that Team Redstone can capitalize on the rapid advancements in this technology. Members of the IPT include, from AMRDEC, Dr. Amy Grover, Brian Harris, Keith Roberts, William Alvarez, Pete Black and Patrick Olinger; and from Marshall, Niki Werkheiser, Ken Cooper and Erin Betts.

“When you come to learn and appreciate the potential of AM, it’s hard not to judge this as a true game-changer; one that will ultimately have far reaching, historical impacts onto our society at-large,” acting AMRDEC director James Lackey said.

Lackey said AMRDEC is looking at trade studies – investigating AM to minimize cost and optimized performance of missile structures, using topology optimization routines to enhance design and analysis of AM built structures, and characterizing materials and processes for specific missile applications.

“Teaming with NASA MSFC and other partners, AMRDEC will investigate procurements of AM machines to support our research needs, build a cadre of engineers and scientists savvy on this technology, fabricate and performance test qualify components for ground and flight test,” he said.

Dr. Dale Thomas, Marshall Center’s associate director, technical, signed the IPT charter for NASA.

“Additive manufacturing is a step toward the future,” Thomas said. “It is changing the way organizations design and manufacture products around the world, and space is one of the key places where humanity will see the impact of this technology.”

The agreement was facilitated by Phil Farrington, professor of industrial and systems engineering and engineering management at the University of Alabama in Huntsville.
“This effort continues a long tradition of collaboration between the AMRDEC and Marshall,” Farrington said. “This exciting new technology has the potential to radically change the way we manufacture aerospace and defense systems. One of the team’s goals is to identify additive manufacturing research and development needs of greatest importance to the defense and space community.”
Future of the Internet: What You Need To Know About Net Neutrality

By: David Kumbroch

University of Alabama in Huntsville Professor Jeet Gupta watches the net neutrality proceedings closely. The debate focuses on whether internet service providers like Comcast can charge more to content providers like Netflix who need fast speeds to succeed.

It could also open the door for people like you to pay a lot more to get an acceptable internet speed.

Think of it like this, a student at UAH can pay their tuition and graduate in four years. Gupta picks up the metaphor, “Now, there’s another student who can pay more, and we tell that student, ‘Oh, if you pay tuition to us twice, we’ll come up with a special program for you that you can complete the degree in three years.’”

On the other side of the debate streaming on Gupta’s computer, he summarizes, “The free-market system says, ‘Ok here are the customers that are willing to pay for the service that they want, and they want to be treated in a premier fashion.’ Just like airlines, how I can travel in the economy, I can travel in the first class. So they want to be able to say let the market control it, who is willing to pay for a higher service, and who is not willing to pay for a higher service.”

The debate could have dangerous implications for internet users.

It could deepen class lines.

Think about kids just trying to use the internet for homework – suddenly those who can afford lightning internet have a huge advantage and will be more prepared for a wired in future. On the other hand, is it fair to limit cable companies on what they can charge on either end of the service they provide?

That’s what’s up for grabs with the current free-for-all in the congressional hearings Gupta watches. You should watch too.

You can also weigh in with your own opinion to help determine the future of the internet.

To express your opinion on net neutrality, you can contact leaders using the following resources:

Federal Communications Commission

You can provide comments to the FCC on this specific issue with the form here.
U.S. House of Representatives

Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio)
(202) 225-0600 – Washington office

U.S. Rep. Robert Aderholt (R-District 4) – see counties in District 4
(202) 225-4876 – Washington office
(256) 734-6043 – Cullman office

U.S. Rep. Mo Brooks (R-District 5) – see counties in District 5
(202) 225-4801 – Washington office
(256) 551-0190 – Huntsville office
(256) 355-9400 – Decatur office
(256)-718-5155 – Shoals office

U.S. Senate

Sen. Harry Reid – (D-Nevada)
Senate Majority Leader
(202) 224-3542 – Washington office

Sen. Jeff Sessions
- District includes all of Alabama
(202) 224-4124 – Washington office
(256) 533-0979 – Huntsville office

Sen. Richard Shelby
- District includes all of Alabama
(202) 224-5744 – Washington office
(256) 772-0460 – Huntsville office

The White House

President Barack Obama
Comments: (202) 456-1111
Switchboard: (202) 456-1414
Why we argue climate change: 'Settled science' isn't necessarily so

By: John R. Christy

Why do we argue about climate change?

The reason there is so much contention regarding "global warming" is relatively simple to understand: In climate change science we basically cannot prove anything about how the climate will change as a result of adding extra greenhouse gases to the atmosphere. So, we are left to argue about unprovable claims. That's really what it boils down to.

Now, we can measure and prove that greenhouse gases are increasing. And, in the laboratory, we can measure and prove that adding greenhouse gases to a jar of air will lead to further warming. We don't argue about these results.

But when it comes to how the actual climate system might respond to extra greenhouse gases, there is no "proof" to offer because the climate's complexities are innumerable and poorly understood.

Climate science is a murky science. When dealing with variations and trends that might be influenced by humans, we do not have an instrument that tells us how much change is due to humans and how much to Mother Nature. Measuring the temperature change over long time periods is difficult enough, but we do not know why these changes occur. So, we argue.

Now, it is a fundamental characteristic of the scientific method that when we finally understand a system, we are able to predict its behavior.

One way to check our predictive capability is to test computer simulations. Unfortunately, even the most advanced climate model simulations don't deliver much confidence. I analyzed the tropical atmospheric temperature change in 102 of the latest climate model simulations covering the past 35 years. If greenhouse gases are warming the Earth, this is the first place to look.

All 102 models overshot the actual temperature change on average by a factor of three. Not only does this tell us we don't have a good grasp on the way climate varies, but the fact all simulations overcooked the atmosphere means there is probably a warm bias built into the basic theory -- the same theory that we've been told is "settled science."

As important as models can be, we have a long way to go. It is troubling to realize that current policy is based on these computer models, none of which has been validated by formalized, independent analysis.

Others might look to climate anomalies and convince themselves humans are the cause. I often hear claims that extreme weather is getting worse. Now, here we do have direct evidence. Whether it's tornadoes (no changes in 60 years), hurricanes (no changes in 120 years), or western U.S. droughts and heat waves (not as bad as they were 1,000 years ago), the evidence doesn't support those claims. So, we argue.
One avenue many folks latch onto is the self-selected "authority." This "authority" does the thinking for them, not realizing that this "authority" doesn't have any more direct evidence than they do. Other avenues follow a different path: Without direct evidence, folks start with their core beliefs (be it political, social or religious) and then extrapolate an answer to climate change. That's scary.

Then, there is that time-honored, media-approved, headline-grabbing source of truth - the opinion poll. The poll can be of scientists, non-scientists, or anyone with a smartphone. Think about this: If no one has direct evidence to substantiate any claim of the impact of greenhouse gases on climate, what will an opinion poll provide besides entertainment, or worse, justification for one's agenda?

If you give this polling tactic some thought, it's relatively clever. Without evidence to prove or refute the claims of a climate poll, the poll becomes a way to support whatever claims are being made. With enough attention, a poll's climate claimmorphs into "settled science." So, we argue even more.

Nearly the entire world has decided to continue to burn carbon to provide affordable energy for their people. There is no argument that energy enhances the quality and length of human life (this is provable). So, when you consider the human cost of raising energy prices by demonizing carbon (based on unprovable claims of climate change), this becomes much more than a murky scientific issue, and why the stakes, and thus passions, can be so high. So we argue.

*(John R. Christy is the distinguished professor of atmospheric science at The University of Alabama in Huntsville, and the Alabama State Climatologist. Dr. Christy also served as a lead author on the United Nation's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2007.)*
Stimpson joins
USA Board
of Trustees

Sally Pearsall Ericson
sericson@al.com

Gov. Robert Bentley has appointed four new members to the University of South Alabama Board of Trustees, including Mobile Mayor Sandy Stimpson, and reappointed two others.

In addition to Stimpson, the new trustees are Chandra Brown Stewart of Mobile, executive director of Lifelines Counseling Services; Ron D. Jenkins III of Tucson, Ariz., business development director in the Advanced Missile Systems product line for littoral combat ship systems at Raytheon Missile Systems; and Michael P. Windom of Mobile, owner of Windom Law LLC, a civil trial practice firm.

Bentley reappointed Bryant Mixon of Geneva, Ala., a retired sheriff of Dale County; and Kenneth O. Simon of Birmingham, attorney and partner with Christian & Small LLP.

The new trustees succeed J. Cecil Gardner of Mobile, attorney and managing partner of The Gardner Firm; former Mobile Mayor Sam Jones; Christie D. Miree of Atlanta, manager of transmission project management for Georgia Power Co.; and the late Larry D. Striplin of Birmingham, a retired businessman. Gardner, Jones and Miree had served on the board since 2001. Striplin was a 1998 appointee who died in 2012.

The USA Board of Trustees has 16 members, including the governor, who serves in an ex officio capacity. Brown Stewart, Jenkins, Simon, Stimpson and Windom will serve terms that expire on Sept. 30, 2019. Mixon will complete the term of the late trustee Larry D. Striplin, which will expire on Sept. 30, 2017.
UWA, Hale County Schools form alliance

The University of West Alabama and Hale County Schools have entered into an agreement to allow the system’s teachers to pursue advanced education degrees online at a discounted tuition rate.

UWA announced the UWA Teacher Connect agreement earlier this week. Hale County teachers would be able to pursue master’s or education specialist degrees online in as little as two years with financial assistance, according to UWA.

Participating teachers can qualify for a discount of $200 per credit hour on their tuition, according to UWA. The teachers may pursue one of UWA’s 38 master’s and education specialist degrees.
THE TUSCALOOSA NEWS  
Saturday, May 24, 2014

Boyd, Watkins at odds over role at Alabama State

The Associated Press

MONTGOMERY | The new president of Alabama State University is in a public battle with a longtime power broker at the school just weeks after reshuffling its administrative structure amid an investigation of financial questions.

President Gwendolyn Boyd is at odds with Donald Watkins, an attorney and the son of a former Alabama State president, just four months after she took over at the troubled, historically black campus in Montgomery.

Boyd issued a statement this week saying Watkins, who has represented the university in the past, doesn't speak for the school and isn't consulted by her on anything. The move came after Watkins filed a complaint over a federal prosecutor's remarks about a review of Alabama State.

The Montgomery Advertiser reported Friday that Watkins followed Boyd's statement with a news release questioning whether she was wasting money with inaugural events planned for the next school year.

"Dr. Boyd's public effort to distance herself from me has raised serious concerns with many of ASU's constituency groups," Watkins wrote. "(Boyd) started distancing herself from me after I questioned whether taxpayers' dollars should be used to pay for her expensive and elaborate week of planned inaugural activities and gala in September."

Watkins, whose father Levi Watkins was president of Alabama State for about two decades ending in 1981, also questioned Boyd's "steady stream of out-of-state trips on Thursdays and Fridays of nearly every weekend" and asked whether she is receiving speaking fees while traveling at school expense.

University officials had no immediate comment on Watkins' remarks, which were the latest in a tumultuous few weeks for Boyd and the university.

Disputes began in early May when Boyd entered into heated exchanges — both in face-to-face meetings and through written correspondence — with two trustees and university attorneys about her plan to reorganize the administration at Alabama State. Among other things, the job of longtime university executive John Knight, a state representative, was eliminated.

The school's trustees approved the reorganization plan at its meeting on Friday morning. In a statement released after the meeting, Boyd said she is excited that the changes were accepted.

"It gives us an opportunity now to make the necessary changes, to look at every position and make sure we have the right people not only in the right positions, but even in the right areas," she said. "We want to make sure that everything we do is appropriate for our students and everything they need is in place and available."

The school's finances have been under review for a series of deals and decisions made before Boyd, an alumnus, arrived back on campus as president.

Bentley's office ordered a forensic review of Alabama State's finances following allegations of questionable contracts at the school by former President Joseph Silver. The audit, which began in December 2012, continues even though the university filed suit trying to halt the investigation.

Boyd has a two-year contract worth $300,000 annually as president.
Whatever it takes, UAB and Auburn should resume playing basketball

It's obvious that Bruce Pearl is trying to make good on his promise to upgrade Auburn's basketball schedule, and good for him. If the Tigers want to be taken seriously in hoops, they have to do two things that haven't happened on the Plains in some time.

A. Play quality opponents outside the SEC regularly.
B. Beat them occasionally.

It's encouraging that Auburn will open at home next season against Wisconsin-Milwaukee and will travel to Colorado, Texas Tech and Clemson, but it's even more encouraging that Pearl is open to playing UAB.

This is a series that has to happen, for UAB, for Auburn and for basketball in the state of Alabama. Pearl and UAB coach Jerod Haase both seem open to the idea, but the devil may be in the details.

Pearl has ruffled the old Beauregard T. Rooster's feathers of some UAB fans with his stance against playing any Conference USA team home-and-home. They argue that UAB has a better basketball history than Auburn, that UAB is 10-7 against Auburn all-time, that given the sorry state of the Auburn program, UAB should be dictating terms here.

There's a lot of truth in that argument, but the key word in that sentence is history. With Alabama struggling and Auburn hitting bottom, UAB has had an excellent opportunity to establish itself as the dominant Division I basketball program in the state. Trouble is, Haase has been unable to seize the day so far.

He's been trying to build a program, as opposed to his predecessor, Mike Davis, who was fairly successful at building individual teams from year to year, at least until he arrived at the post-season. But it hasn't happened yet.

It's true that UAB has had a better RPI than Auburn every year but one since 2004, but that hasn't been a high bar to clear, considering it was the Auburn of Jeff Lebo and Tony Barbee.

SCARBINSKY .21
SCARBINSKY

From Page 17

It's also true that the Blazers finished in the top 52 in the RPI seven times in eight years from 2004-11, but they haven't maintained that momentum.

The last three years, the final year under Davis and the first two years under Haase, UAB's final RPI has been 115, 142 and 153 — as opposed to Auburn's 146, 250 and 160. Those numbers don't give either side room for arrogance.

It's not productive for UAB, which has been to the NCAA Tournament only once in the last eight years, to puff out its chest because Auburn hasn't been there at all the last 11 seasons.

Meanwhile, Pearl's dig at C-USA as a conference is completely justified. It's been essentially a one-bid league for years. Last season, it finished 13th in conference RPI. The SEC, for all of its own struggles, finished seventh.

Not to mention, the SEC still has Kentucky and Florida at the top. C-USA no longer has Memphis, and no one else has stepped up yet to fill that void. UAB could be that team, and some of us who've seen what's possible there think the Blazers should be that team. Haase hasn't had enough time to get them there.

If it takes playing one game at Bartow Arena, two games at the Auburn Arena and one game at the BJCC Arena to get UAB and Auburn together again, as Pearl has suggested, the two sides should come together to make it happen.

It seems like ancient history now, but UAB was at its best in the 1980s under Gene Bartow as an annual visitor to the NCAA Tournament when Auburn was at its best under Sonny Smith. Throw in Alabama's regular Sweet 16 trips under Wimp Sanderson, and you had three big-time basketball programs thriving in a football state at the same time.

It can happen. It has happened. Oh, and when it started happening, UAB and Auburn played every year.
Jansen, Routliffe take NCAA doubles title

Combined report

ATHENS, Ga. | In what will go down as one of the most dominant performances in NCAA doubles finals history, the University of Alabama's Maya Jansen and Erin Routliffe captured the program's first national title, dropping a combined 13 points all match, en route to a 6-1, 6-0 victory over Georgia's Lauren Herring and Maho Kowase on Monday.

The Crimson Tide duo finishes the season 22-4, winning their final 10 matches.

"This is a total team win," Alabama coach Jenny Mainz said. "Erin and Maya brought their best today. I'm so proud of the distance this program has come in my 17 years. We played such commanding doubles and really played on our terms today. They worked so hard for this, and I am so happy for them."

Alabama opened the match winning 10 straight points to take a 2-0 lead overall and a 30-0 edge in the third game. They continued to dominate, pulling in front 4-0 before Georgia was able to get on the board with a hold in the fifth game. Jansen and Routliffe closed out the set on a point penalty from the Bulldogs, winning 6-1.

"Getting those first two games really helped us," Jansen said. "I really believe that set the tone for the match. I can't put this into words. This means so much to us."

In the second set, it was all Alabama as the Tide won six straight games.

Leading 40-15 with Georgia serving, Routliffe, standing at the net, eased the ball with just enough force to lift it over the tape for the victory.

"I am so happy to bring back the first national championship in tennis to Tuscaloosa," Routliffe said. "We knew we had to come out strong and get a good start. Once that final shot went over the net we looked at each other and didn't really know what to do. It was excitement and relief all at the same time."
World Series bound

Alabama players celebrate in a "dog pile" Friday after defeating Nebraska 2-1 during the second game of the Tuscaloosa Softball Super Regional at Rhoads Stadium in Tuscaloosa. The Crimson Tide advances to the Women's College World Series and will play either Tennessee or Oklahoma in the opening game at ASA Hall of Fame Stadium in Oklahoma City on Thursday. For full coverage of the game, see Sports.
Tuscaloosa Super Regional | Alabama 2, Nebraska 1

**Ticket Punched**

Traina dominates Huskers, Tide sweeps to earn ninth trip to Women's College World Series

Alabama pitcher Jaclyn Traina allowed just three hits and one run in a complete game victory over Nebraska in the Tuscaloosa Super Regional at Rhoads Stadium on Friday. With the 2-1 win, the Crimson Tide advances to next week's Women's College World Series in Oklahoma City.

See next page
Jaclyn Traina's teammates gave her a lift in the first game of the Tuscaloosa Super Regional.

She returned the favor Friday, hoisting them on her broad shoulders at Rhoads Stadium and carrying them back to the Women's College World Series.

Traina, the University of Alabama softball team's senior ace pitcher and the Most Valuable Player at the World Series in UA's national championship run two years ago, kept Nebraska at bay for a 2-1 victory to clinch a sweep in the best-of-three series.

Alabama (50-11), the No. 2 overall seed in the NCAA Tournament, will open World Series play against Oklahoma or Tennessee next Thursday at ASA Hall of Fame Stadium in Oklahoma City at a time to be determined.

Alabama, playing as the visitor under NCAA postseason rules, gave Traina a two-run lead in the top of the first inning. She allowed a leadoff walk in the bottom of the second that turned into a Nebraska run, and decided that was enough.

"I was like, 'That's it, that's all they're going to have,'" Traina said. "I just made sure I was doing it for (my teammates) and it drove me to do it."

The night before, in UA's 12-inning victory over the Huskers in the opening game of the super regional, Traina was rocked and finished only four innings. What wasn't rocked was her belief that she could turn it around.

Traina (23-3) scattered three hits on Friday, walking one batter and striking out three.

"I still had confidence in myself," Traina said. "It happens, and I just learned from it: all the batters that I faced, I learned from that."

Alabama started with two quick outs in the top of the first, but pressed forward. Senior second baseman Kaila Hunt started it with a single and advanced to third when Jadyn Spencer reached on an error. Hunt scored on catcher Molly Fichtner's single through the left side of the infield and freshman Marisa Runyon drove in Spencer with a single down the first-base line to make it 2-0.

Alabama's Kallie Case, left, and Jadyn Spencer celebrate after the Crimson Tide's Super Regional victory over Nebraska.
“I saw the Traina that says, ‘I won't be denied.’ There's a different look in her eye, and I've been around this game a long time,” Revelle said.

“After her throwing error, she's like, 'I got this,' and she just had to reach back and get the out herself. She was on a mission.”

Alabama's mission was to return to the World Series after being eliminated in the super regional round last season. UA will be going to Oklahoma City for the ninth time in the program's history and the third time in the last four years.

“It’s not really about winning and losing,” Alabama coach Patrick Murphy said. “It’s just about playing the right way and playing your hardest every single day and seeing them rewarded for that.”

In a game that started Thursday night and ended in the early-morning hours on Friday, UA won the series opener 6-5 in 12 innings.

UA’s freshmen shined in crucial roles to give the Crimson Tide the series lead. Winning pitcher Sydney Littlejohn (11-2) pitched eight shutout innings in relief, Runyon hit a solo home run in the bottom of the seventh inning to tie the game and send it into extra innings, and third baseman Peyton Grantham hit a walk-off solo shot in the bottom of the 12th to win it.

Nebraska finished 44-18.

Reach Tommy Deas at tommy@tidesports.com or at 205-722-0224.
Crimson Tide wins second straight men’s golf title

By Ken Sugulm

HUTCHINSON, Kan. (Trey Mullinax) had played enough golf. Under the late-afternoon sun on the Kansas plains, the University of Alabama senior wanted to nail down the Crimson Tide’s second consecutive national championship.

“I told Coach (Jay Seawell) I was ready to end it,” he said. “I’m ready to be done. I’m tired. Let’s get in.”

Golf, a sport that doesn’t typically bless such withefold, granted Mullinax his wish. By rolling in a 20-foot eagle putt on the par-5 17th hole at Prairie Dunes Country Club, Mullinax scored the clinching point for the Crimson Tide to defeat Oklahoma State 4-1 in match play in the NCAA championship final. Alabama becomes just the second team since Houston’s back-to-back titles in 1984-85 to successfully defend its national championship, powered by a senior class bent on creating a legacy and a steel-nerved freshman.

“It’s been an unbelievable ride, and to go out like this, back to back, it’s just a cherry on top,” said senior Bobby Wyatt, who won his match to score the Crimson Tide’s first point in the first-three format. "It’s been an unbelievable run and the best experience of my life."

The senior class of Cory Whitsett, Mullinax and Wyatt has indeed taken Alabama golf on an incredible run. Over the past four years, the threesome helped drive the Crimson Tide to two national titles, a national runner-up finish, three SEC championships, three NCAA regionals and 27 tournament titles. Prior to their arrival, Alabama had won two SEC titles, one NCAA regional and had never finished better than third at the NCAA championships.

Perhaps out of a desire to savor this group, it was understandable that Seawell called an impromptu meeting at the team hotel about two hours before the final was to begin. The topics ran the gamut, from a caution about not getting swayed by the large presence of Oklahoma State fans to players talking about their desire to make college golf history. Seawell called it "some of the best 10 minutes of my life."

“We talked just about what a ride it’s been, what an experience, and how, win or lose, we’ve done great things,” Wyatt said, “but it was pretty understood it was win or nothing for us.”

Going off in the first pairing, Wyatt started the push early, holing his tee shot on the par-3 second hole to even his match. He didn’t even know he’d done it until he asked a cameraman. The heavily pro-Cowboys gallery at the green didn’t offer much clue.

“Told my Tiger,” Wyatt said. See next page
Despite not having firm control of his shots for much of the afternoon, he managed a 3 and 2 win over Talor Gooch with deft short-game shots and clutch putts, securing it when Gooch three-putted on the 16th when Gooch three-putted from three feet. Freshman Robby Shelton, the SEC Player of the Year and National Freshman of the Year, displayed his cold-blooded cunning again. He birdied six of his last seven holes to squirm out of a two-hole deficit and win 1 up over fellow freshman Zachary Olsen.

Shelton won his quarterfinal and semifinal matches despite being 2 down after 11 holes and 1 down after seven holes, respectively. Wyatt called him the team’s hero for the week.

Said Whitsett, who won his anchor-leg match 2 and 1, “I never thought I could have as much faith in a freshman as I had in Robby Shelton this week.”

With the senior trio turning professional — all three have earned their diplomas, Whitsett and Wyatt with 4.0 GPAs — a third consecutive title may not be in the cards. Wednesday afternoon, that was perhaps the farthest thing from Seawell’s mind.

“They have the brightest future starting tomorrow, which makes them want to run,” he said.

“I’m like a proud father. I’m not their dad, I’m just their coach, but I cannot wait to watch them fly.”

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Alabama’s Cory Whitsett tosses his golf ball into the air after finishing the 12th hole.

Robby Shelton is Freshman of Year

Combined report

HUTCHINSON, Kan. | University of Alabama true freshman Robby Shelton was named the Phil Mickelson National Freshman of the Year on Wednesday morning by the Golf Coaches Association of America.

The Phil Mickelson Award is presented by the Phil and Amy Mickelson Foundation to the nation’s most outstanding freshman in Division I men’s golf.

Shelton was also named by senior Bobby Wyatt on the PING Division I first team All-America squad. It is the second first team All-America honor for Wyatt.

Shelton marks the sixth Alabama player to earn first team All-America honors since 2008 and the 10th first-team honor.

Shelton, from Wilmer, is the second Alabama golfer to win the Phil Mickelson Award in the last three years, joining Justin Thomas in 2012.
Thomas finally voted into Hall of Fame

By Aaron Suttles
Sports Writer

The wait is finally over.
After years of being bypassed, former University of Alabama standout linebacker Derrick Thomas was posthumously elected into the College Football Hall of Fame in a ceremony announcing the 16-member 2014 class Thursday morning.

Thomas was a defensive captain for the Crimson Tide his senior season in 1988, a season still regarded as one of the most dominant defensive seasons in college football history. He recorded 88 tackles, including 39 tackles for loss, and 27 sacks.

He concluded his career with 52 sacks, 68 tackles for loss and 204 total tackles. He was drafted by the Kansas City Chiefs with the fourth pick of the 1989 National Football League Draft.

He is UA's 24th College Football Hall of Fame member. He joins former teammate and linebacker Cornelius Bennett in the CFHOF. Bennett was elected in 2005.

Thomas was 33 years old when he died as a result of trauma and complications from a car accident that left him paralyzed in 2000. His selection marks the third hall of fame he's been elected to, joining the Pro Football and Alabama Sports hall of fame.

The honor means a lot to Thomas' 22-year-old son Derrick Thomas Jr.

"My whole entire life I've thought about my dad. It's a little weird. I looked up to him. It's exciting for me to see, but it really didn't make me see him as great because he's always been No. 1 to me. It did make me appreciative for the recognition."

Derrick Thomas Jr., on his father being elected to the College Football Hall of Fame.

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THOMAS

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A native of Miami, Fla., Thomas was a two-time All-Southeastern Conference player in 1987 and 1988 and a unanimous All-America choice and Butkus Award winner in 1988.

"Derrick Thomas' career at Alabama is legendary," Alabama director of athletics Bill Battle said. "One of the most dominant linebackers to ever play the position, he was a game-changing player who, to this day, more than 25 years after the close of his collegiate career, still owns several Crimson Tide records.

We are proud and honored to see him inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame, an organization with which The University of Alabama has a long and distinguished history."

The 2014 class will formally be inducted in the College Football Hall of Fame in New York City at the Waldorf-Astoria on Dec. 9, 2014.

Other members of the 2014 class include: Dre Bly (North Carolina DB), Tony Boselli (Southern Cal, OT), Dave Butz (Purdue, DT), Shane Conlan (Penn State, LB), Joe Hamilton (Georgia Tech, QB), John Huard (Maine, LB), Darrin Nelson (Stanford, HB), Willie Roaf (Louisiana Tech, OT), John Sciarra (UCLA, QB), Sterling Sharpe (South Carolina, WR), Leonard Smith (McNeese State, CB), LaDarian Tomlinson (TCU, RB), Wesley Walls (Ole Miss, TE), Mike Belloti (Oregon, coach), Jerry Moore (North Texas, Texas Tech, Appalachian State, coach).