NOVEMBER 6, 2017

ARTICLES OF INTEREST
OCTOBER 27, 2017 – NOVEMBER 6, 2017

FOR SPECIFIC NEWS STORIES, SEE THE FOLLOWING PAGE NUMBERS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NEWS ABOUT</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TRUSTEE/SYSTEM INFO</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STATE ISSUES</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UA CAMPUS ISSUES</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UAB CAMPUS ISSUES</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UAH CAMPUS ISSUES</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHER STATE UNIVERSITIES</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPORTS</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA SYSTEM BOARD OF TRUSTEES ACTION

The University of Alabama System trustees took the following action during a Friday meeting:

- Approved the architectural plans and increasing the budget to $11.7 million for a $550,000 renovation of Barnwell Hall to add a fenced courtyard to the project to convert the building to a recreational and fitness space.
- Approved the architectural design for the $4.8 million project to renovate the Thetford building at 617 Greensboro Ave. in downtown Tuscaloosa for use as an economic development resource center.
- Approved executing an architectural agreement with KPS Group of Birmingham for the $5.4 million anechoic chamber at the AIME Center. The negotiated fee will be 7.6 percent of the $3.4 million construction cost with a 25 percent renovation factor plus $700,000 for special consultants and $10,000 for reimbursable expenses.
- Approved preliminary plans for a $3.1 million addition to the Alpha Gamma Delta sorority house. The project will add a three-story, 6,000-square-foot addition to the house providing more dining and room space. The project will be designed by Holmes and Holmes Architects of Mobile for a 6.8 percent based on construction costs, a 15 percent design fee and $20,000 in expenses. The cost will be covered with chapter funds and a loan from the university.
- Approved preliminary plans for a $9.4 million project to renovate 59,302 square feet in four buildings on the Partlow campus for use as offices, meeting rooms and support facilities.
- Approved a bachelor of fine arts degree in theater.

UAB

- Authorized construction contract with Argo Building Co. of Birmingham for the new $3 million ROTC building.
- Approved architectural plans and increasing the budget of the UAB soccer facility by $2.8 million to $7.3 million to increase seating capacity to 4,500-5,000 and add more restrooms and concessions to accommodate plans to share use of the facility with the Birmingham Futbol Club. Payments from the club as part of a lease agreement will cover the additional expenses.
- Approved architectural plans and increasing the budget of the renovation of the second floor of the dentistry building by $1.9 million to $5.5 million to purchase additional equipment including dental chairs, X-ray units, workstations, cabinets and other furnishings.
- Approved the architectural designs for the proton therapy center at the UAB Medical center.
- Approved a clinical doctorate in occupational therapy degree.
- Appointed Brian Samuels to the Callahan Eye Hospital board of directors as a replacement for Christopher Kelly.
- Approved terms for the directors of the recently re-incorporated Medical West Hospital Authority. Scott Buchalter, Russ Tyner, Allen Pate and Sally Ebaugh will have terms ending Sept. 30, 2018. System Vice Chancellor of Finance and Administration Dana Keith UAB Health System CEO Will Ferniany, Don Holmes, and John Issis will serve terms ending on Sept. 30, 2019. Don Lilly, trustee Barbara Humphrey, and Richard Brooks will serve terms ending on Sept. 30, 2020.

UAB

- Approved amending the office lease with Cross Properties Inc. to add 2,000 more square feet for the Systems Management and Production Center beginning Dec. 1 for a rental rate of $876 per month through Oct. 1, 2018. The rate will increase monthly by $2,000 through April 30, 2019.
UA OKs plan for $60M building

Facility will consolidate space at business school

By Ed Enoch
Staff Writer

The University of Alabama board of trustees on Friday approved preliminary plans for a new $60 million classroom building for the business college at the Tuscaloosa campus and an update to the campus master plan, which envisions as many as five new academic buildings.

The new academic building for the Culverhouse College of Commerce is among the new buildings proposed in the latest iteration of the campus master plan, which also identifies potential sites for 10 new dorms.

The preliminary plans for the business building approved Friday would be an 84,727-square-foot building on Stadium Drive across from Alston Hall. The new building, which would be paid for with future fundraising and UA funds, would allow for the consolidation of classroom space into one building for the college.

The building will include three conference rooms, offices to accommodate 44 faculty, graduate student work space, 26 classrooms, museum space and collaboration rooms.

The space vacated in Bidgood and Alston halls will be reallocated for faculty offices, student services and expansion of other programs. The project will increase the college's classroom seating capacity by 770.

The trustees also approved revised plans and a larger budget for the new alumni affairs building to be located on the southeast side of the historic Bryce Campus. The budget was increased by $3 million to $21.5 million to increase the size of the ballroom and create a hardened storage space that can serve as a refuge in severe weather.

The new alumni building is also reflected in the campus master plan. Its location prompted questions from Trustee Karen Brooks about efforts to preserve the green space of the historic lawn. Brooks expressed concern about new development encroaching on the historic green space.

"Alumni Hall kind of gave me a little twitch when I saw it encroaching," said Brooks whose family has a historical connection to Bryce Hospital.

While there are plans for further development of new buildings along the east and west perimeter, the lawn will remain largely unchanged, planner Dan Wolfe said.
UAB may expand soccer stadium to house USL team

By: Tyler Patchen and Ty West

The University of Alabama at Birmingham may expand its BBVA Compass Field to house Birmingham's new United Soccer League franchise.

On Friday, the University Of Alabama System Board Of Trustees unanimously granted Stage III approval to expand the scope of a previously approved upgrade of the soccer facility. That expansion would allow the facility to play host to the new USL team, which will begin play in 2019.

The expanded project would deliver a stadium with a capacity of 4,500 to 5,000, as well as larger restroom and concession facilities. The previously approved project would have included a stadium with a capacity of 2,500.

The project's budget would increase from $4.5 million to $7.3 million under the new proposal. That $2.8 million difference would be covered by lease revenue from the USL team. According to the resolution, lease terms currently under consideration would be an eight-year lease at $350,000 per year for the franchise's use of the venue.

UAB said in the resolution approved by the trustees that the school was recently approached by the new USL franchise regarding the potential shared use of the facility. The two parties are currently in negotiations and final Stage 4 approval of the project is contingent on those negotiations progressing.

When the USL announced Birmingham had been awarded a franchise, team leaders said they were assessing options for a venue. They noted they preferred a location in or near the city center – and a facility at UAB would certainly fit the bill.

"This announcement is a pivotal one for both UAB and the city of Birmingham and should be celebrated by the entire local soccer community," said Morgan Copes, vice president of USL Birmingham. "While a stadium of this size and location would certainly work well for USL Birmingham, a decision on our professional team's field of play is yet to be finalized. We will make a formal announcement on our ultimate stadium plans in the near future."

The addition of a professional soccer franchise in the heart of downtown would be another big win for the city center. The Birmingham Barons' move to downtown has brought a steady stream of traffic to the area every summer, which has contributed to an increase in retail activity.

Birmingham's Davis Architects drew up renderings of an expanded stadium that were presented with the resolution.
Leaders want to stimulate business, job creation

By Ed Enoch
Staff Writer

Local government and university officials and representatives from regional economic and industrial development agencies announced a formal partnership on Wednesday to better coordinate efforts to promote business growth and job creation.

"Our vision is to have a thriving economy with great jobs and opportunities for the people who live here," said Claude Edwards, board chairman for the Tuscaloosa County Industrial Development Authority. "We want Tuscaloosa and all of West Alabama to remain a leader in workforce development, and we believe that will happen when we are all aligned and know how to recognize and react to changing forces in our economy."

Edwards and representatives from the Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama, Northport, Tuscaloosa, Tuscaloosa County, the University of Alabama, the UA System Office, Tuscaloosa County Development Authority, Shelton State Community College, Stillman College and Tuscaloosa Tourism and Sports Commission signed a memorandum of agreement during the Chamber of Commerce's State of the Economy breakfast at the Hotel Capstone on Wednesday.

The representatives from the partners each signed placards displaying the agreement, signaling their commitment to the cooperative effort. The signing Wednesday was largely symbolic, but it represents a formal effort to harness the group's strengths and resources to cultivate a strong economy and promote business growth and job creation.

"It says we are going to roll up our sleeves and work together. We can do that. We have a lot of growth," UA System Chancellor Ray Hayes said.

Apart from the partners, members of the audience were also encouraged to sign placards displaying the memorandum as a sign of their commitment to the See GROWTH, B3
Continued from B1

coordinated effort.

Discussions began early this year, and a working group was formed during the summer, Edwards said. "This is a cool opportunity to leverage our collective strengths," chamber President Jim Page said.

The agreement outlines a commitment to:
• Draw on the group's combined assets
• Leverage research, educational and entrepreneurial initiatives of the higher-education partners to grow, recruit and retain jobs and investment
• Work together to pursue financial support to foster commercialization and economic growth
• Capitalize on technology to streamline information sharing
• Develop a comprehensive economic and workforce development strategic plan with clear metrics and milestones.

Hayes and others praised the manufacturing and industrial sector's role in the region's growth during the past 25 years, but they also noted the potential for growth in the knowledge-based sector and jobs that could potentially attract recent college graduates to remain in the state.

"This will create the kind of diverse economic base we will need in the future. This will make Tuscaloosa a place where more and more businesses will invest and people will want to come and stay," Edwards said.

Jo Bonner, UA System vice chancellor for economic development, said the partnership views the knowledge-based sector as an opportunity rather than a replacement for the industrial skills-based jobs.

"Make no mistake, and this is very important, this agreement does not say we are abandoning what has helped us get here today. We are still going after the best manufacturing jobs the world has," Bonner said.

While the document represents a commitment to coordinate on economic development, there are currently no obligations of financial support from the members in place, Bonner and Page said. The group will continue to meet in the meantime as the strategic plan develops.

"It's like anything else. You have to set that as a goal and look at the best way to get there," Bonner said.

Reach Ed Enoch at ed.enoch@tuscaloosanews.com or 205-722-0209.
Done right way, compact could boost entire region

We applaud the commitment made Wednesday by the various economic development agencies, educational institutions and local governments in Tuscaloosa County to work together to promote economic development in this region.

To reinforce this spirit of cooperation, representatives of the various organizations signed a formal memorandum of agreement during the Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama’s annual State of the Economy breakfast.

Of course, working together on economic development might seem the obvious thing to do, but it is easier said than done. It is not uncommon for communities in proximity to one another, and the institutions and agencies within them, to compete in business and industrial recruitment and other economic endeavors, which often leads to failure by all.

One speaker Wednesday morning, Tom Spencer of the Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama, cited examples of several metropolitan areas around the country, including Birmingham, with stagnant economies resulting, at least in part, from a lack of cooperation among the city proper and surrounding municipalities. He cited others, like Denver, which are similarly situated but are doing well because they’ve overcome obstacles to working together.

Granted, it’s expecting a lot of leaders in one community to cede the advantage to a neighboring one in trying, for example, to land a new business or industry — the short-term political fallout can outweigh the long-term benefits that And even entities within a community can be protective of their respective turf, especially when some aspects of their missions overlap, which also can lead to less-than-optimal conditions for economic development.

We’ve seen the results on a grand scale when everyone does come together, with the recruitment of Mercedes-Benz some 25 years ago. So, yes, we appreciate the pledge of cooperation during the chamber event Wednesday, especially in light of the upheaval unfolding in the retail sector and the rapid pace of change in technology, with all of its implications for workforce development.

But it must be a real commitment that goes beyond lip service and the optics of signing a giant memorandum — not that we’re aware of any existing widespread disunity — and what better way to demonstrate it than by ensuring our neighboring counties, some of which are among the most impoverished in the nation, are not left out of this new compact. For the reality is, Alabama is two distinct states — one doing fairly well and the other equivalent in many respects to a third-world country.

In the latter, virtually no progress has been made since, well, ever. And for about that long, Alabamians have been subjected to the same debates, the same political grandstanding, year in and year out, when it comes to addressing this problem. Frankly, we’re not sure what to do about it — it won’t be easy to solve — but we do believe a new approach is out there that could make a difference.

Real, selfless cooperation between Tuscaloosa County, the economic bell cow of West Alabama, and others in the region
The University of Alabama and University of Alabama in Huntsville have recently been named regional autism resource hubs by the Alabama Department of Mental Health.

UA and UAH are among five hubs in the state's Regional Autism Network spread across the state.

The Regional Autism Network sites are established for individuals affected by autism, their families and agencies that assist them. Through the service, those with questions may contact UA to learn about assistance available in West Alabama either at the university or in the community.

"Even if the resource is not available at the university, the network will be able to direct them to somebody in the community and create those community ties so that somebody in the community can hopefully meet the need of that family," said Sarah Ryan, administrative director of autism services at UA.

People seeking assistance may phone the UA Regional Autism Network resource hub at 205-348-3131.

The Alabama Department of Mental Health targeted the five major public universities in the state to serve as hubs in the network, which is patterned on similar systems in other states.

The other hubs include Auburn University, the University of Alabama at Birmingham and the University of South Alabama.
IN ALABAMA,
SCHOOL SPENDING FALLS BEHIND

Trisha Powell Crain   tcrain@al.com

Alabama isn’t investing significantly more money into K-12 schools than it has in years past. In fact, when the numbers are adjusted for inflation, Alabama isn’t spending as much as it did a decade ago.

Those are two key findings of an AL.com analysis of per-student spending in the state’s 137 school districts for 2015-16, the latest such data available.

“In this state, we talk about redirecting the money we already have. And we just don’t have a lot,” said Eric Mackey, executive director of the School Superintendents of Alabama group.

The numbers for fiscal years 2006 and 2016 illustrate the lament.

For fiscal 2006, per-student spending totaled $7,609, on average. For fiscal 2016, the figure was $9,213: $5,964 in state funding, $1,314 in federal funding and $1,936 in local funding.

Absent any other information, the state might imagine that the spending jumped by $1,600. The devil is in the inflation details.

When adjusted for inflation — and using the Bureau of Labor Statistics implicit price deflator — the spending in 2006 has $321 more buying power than the spending in 2016.

The finding is especially sobering considering the constant needs for new school technology and the rising demands for school performance and student achievement.

Nationally, Alabama generally shows up in the bottom third of states in per-student funding. In 2015, for example, only 11 states spent less.

Schools collect money from three buckets, generally.

The biggest bucket, for all but the wealthiest school districts, is state-provided funding. That money comes from Alabama’s

STATEWIDE, LOCAL MONEY IS THE DIFFERENCE-MAKER

Funding for Alabama school districts generally comes from three sources: federal, state and local. For wealthier districts, local money is key. It pays for art, music, world language and specialty electives. It also covers additional teachers in core subjects to reduce class sizes. Local taxes support 119 of the 415 certified school staff members in Mountain Brook. In 15 districts, their thin local dollars pay for only one.

SPENDING FUNDED BY LOCAL SOURCES

Highest

Per-pupil expenditures from local sources
0%
Eligible for free or reduced lunch

Statewide, local money is the difference-maker

Per-pupil expenditures from local sources
$7,001

Highest

Per-pupil expenditures from local sources
0%
Eligible for free or reduced lunch

Statewide, local money is the difference-maker

$1,603
Eligible for free or reduced lunch

Mid-level

$1,940

$1,922

Lowest

$1,352

$644

$7,001

$1,603

$644

$7,001

$1,603

$644

Per-pupil expenditures from local sources
Eligible for free or reduced lunch

See Next Page
### Breaking down the money

In fiscal year 2006, per-student spending in Alabama school districts averaged $7,609. Ten years later, that figure was $9,213. At a glance, those numbers indicate per-pupil spending in Alabama is on the rise. Factor in inflation, however, and that's not the case. The spending in 2006 actually has $121 more buying power than the spending in 2016. Here's a look at how our local districts are faring.

**District funding** (Fiscal year 2016)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Federal</th>
<th>Local</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mountain Brook</td>
<td>$12,811</td>
<td>$7,001</td>
<td>$5,810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autauga County</td>
<td>$7,615</td>
<td>$5,805</td>
<td>$1,810</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### The most

- Mountain Brook City: $12,811
- Federal: $7,001
- Local: $5,805
- State: $5,810

### The least

- Autauga County: $7,615
- Federal: $5,805
- Local: $1,810
- State: $1,810

**Source:** AL.com analysis. Graphics by Jen Cieslak / Advance Local

---

### The $5,200 gap

Which Alabama school district spent the most per student in 2016? There are no surprises there.

- The biggest spender was Mountain Brook, averaging $12,811 per student. The least spender was Autauga County at $7,615.
- It's not hard to imagine the opportunities Mountain Brook's extra $5,200 affords each of its students.
- The method for funding public schools is complex, with a number of states embroiled in litigation. One of the oft-asked questions is whether more spending delivers better student outcomes. Researchers can argue either side. The complexity of factors at play inside public schools makes it difficult to generalize.

In Alabama, some districts, like Mountain Brook, spend close to $13,000 per student. Even great students overall, but in the state's old cotton region, Greene County averages just under $12,000 per student.

---

### Inequity matters

The total spending matters, but how that money gets spent matters, too, according to Mackey of the superintendent association.

- And different areas of the state have different needs, he said. For example, rural areas are looking for ways to increase their workforce and career-tech opportunities for students. The complexity of factors at play inside public schools makes it difficult to generalize.

In Alabama, some districts, like Mountain Brook, spend close to $13,000 per student. Even great students overall, but in the state's old cotton region, Greene County averages just under $12,000 per student.

### The study

The study was given to the state Board of Education in September 2016, but soon got shelved. It was never formally presented to lawmakers; possibly, it wasn't even shared with them in any form.

- APA Consulting, known for its efforts across the U.S. to establish frameworks for building sustainable school funding systems, conducted the study.
- The bottom line: Alabama needed to provide 20 percent to 35 percent more in state funding just to offer a minimally adequate education that met the expectations of families and communities.
- However, APA found the state's method of doling out dollars was inequitable because it didn't recognize the varying needs of students.
- APA suggested a new kind of formula known as "student-based," already used in 37 states. It calculates a base amount for all students, and allocates additional funding based on other needs, such as the cost of educating specific groups of students.

Research shows it simply takes more money to educate some students, consultants said. For example, APA recommended additional funding for students with special needs.

- A base amount for all students
- State: $1,081
- Local: $1,298
- Federal: $1,144

- Note: Numbers rounded to the nearest whole dollar; federal, local and state totals might not add up to equal the overall funding figure.
U.S. SENATE

Pulling the plug on special elections

John Sharp  jsharp@al.com

The campaign to fill Alabama's Senate seat proceeds like a political circus. Celebrities, global media, Washington movers-and-shakers, vice presidents past and present, even Donald Trump himself: They're all there under the Big Top.

This election may be the last of its kind in Alabama. The Legislature, when it convenes in January, plans to take up bills that would end special elections for U.S. Senate seats, placing more responsibility with the governor if another vacancy occurs.

Under the plan, the governor would appoint an interim replacement, followed by an election to coincide with the next general election that occurs at least a year later.

Supporters say the plan is about cutting costs. By the time that the 2017 Senate election cycle concludes, it will bear an estimated $15.5 million price tag.

"I don't think we realized what the costs would be," said Rep. Steve Clouse, R-Ozark, chairman of the House budget committee who is sponsoring one of the bills.

Said Sen. Gerald Dial, R-Lineville, who's sponsoring a similar bill in the Senate: "It's a terrible financial burden for a state strapped of finances."

SEE ELECTION, A6
ELECTION
FROM A1

‘AGAINST THE GRAIN’

Gov. Kay Ivey called the special election in the spring shortly after taking office. On Dec. 12, when Republican Roy Moore faces off against Democrat Doug Jones, the day will cap nine months of high-profile campaigning.

Clouse and Dial insist that their bills have nothing to do with the personalities or politics involved in this year’s Senate race. Instead, they say that the state’s General Fund almost never has wiggle room to handle unforeseen expenses. This year, there’s already much hand-wringing about how the state will pay for its Medicaid obligations or fixes to its woefully outdated prisons.

“It’s a bill we need to take a serious look at,” agreed Alabama Speaker of the House Mac McCutcheon. “I’m hoping we have a good discussion about it.”

Said William Califf, spokesman with Senate President Pro Tem Del Marsh: “If the bill saves the state money, it’s worth considering.”

Lean voter turnout this year has made the cost issue even more of a thorn. The Sept. 26 GOP runoff drew just 14 percent of qualified voters, below the paltry 18 percent who showed up during the Aug. 15 primary.

Thirty-six states fill U.S. Senate vacancies by gubernatorial appointment until the next regularly scheduled statewide general election.

Alabama is one of 14 states that allow vacancies to be filled by special election, meaning that it doesn’t have to wait for the next regularly scheduled election cycle.

The last special election to fill a U.S. Senate vacancy in Alabama took place 39 years ago in 1978, after Jim Allen died while in office. His wife, Maryon, was appointed to the seat by Gov. George Wallace. But she lost a special election runoff that September to Donald Stewart, who would go on to win the general election.

The bills by Clouse and Dial are no sure shots for passage, especially considering the present populist political climate.

A grass-roots surge helped secure Moore’s victory last month in the GOP runoff, despite opponent Luther Strange’s considerable funding advantage. The bills could also create unique alliances, namely pairing tea party Republicans and Black Caucus members. Representatives of both sides appear to share hesitancy about changing the system.

Jim Zeigler, the state’s auditor and a tea party favorite, said any effort to abolish the special election “goes against the grain of the populist movement nationally and in Alabama.” Had such an arrangement already been in place, he said, Strange — who was appointed by then-Gov. Robert Bentley to the Senate seat in February — would still be
in office, building stature ahead of the state's regular general election next year.

"The problem is, by leaving the U.S. senator around for the next general election, you are depending on the governor to make a good appointment," said Zeigler, who supported Moore in the runoff. He added, "It's a trade-off. It would save money to not have a special election, no question about it. But at what costs in terms of the people's ability to elect the U.S. senator rather than appoint a senator? Representative government costs money to conduct these elections. That's a cost of a democratic republic."

On the Black Caucus side, state Rep. Chris England, D-Tuscaloosa, said, "One paramount concern in all of this — and even overriding how much it costs — would be the concern that the people's democratic will is acknowledged and recognized to make sure the election is done as quickly as possible and not to create an incumbent." He said, "If you are waiting two years, you are giving that person who is appointed an unnecessary advantage over the field just in the interest of saving money."

'**MOST EXPENSIVE RACE'**

Alabama Secretary of State John Merrill confirmed that this year's special election is the "most expensive race in the history of the state." He said the estimated $15.5 million isn't a final number; that determination may not be made until early next year.

But the costs are already trickling down to the counties, which are making unanticipated payments in hope of receiving 100 percent reimbursement from the state. In Jefferson County, for example, officials agreed in June to set aside $1 million for the special election. In Mobile County, the Probate office submitted a claim to the state for $205,298 that it spent for the Aug. 15 primary alone. It is still awaiting payment.

John Bennett, a spokesman with Merrill's office, said the state will reimburse counties for all election costs that are approved by Comptroller Kathleen Baxter's office.
If the appointment plan wins the Legislature’s favor, any new unexpected Senate openings will put Alabama’s governor under a microscope.

Bentley, at the time he chose Strange to fill the Senate vacancy, was attempting to thwart a romantic scandal that ultimately led to his resignation. Strange was the state’s attorney general, its leading prosecutor of official malfeasance. Critics of Bentley’s choice suggested a quid pro quo deal, a suspicion that dogged Strange throughout his campaign.

Bentley planned no special election, rather letting the matter rest until 2018, a possible boon for Strange. But Ivey, in her first week as governor, called for the special election, declaring that she was simply acting within her rights as the state’s chief executive.

Last week, an Ivey spokesman said that the governor wouldn’t be commenting, for now, about the bills by Clouse and Dial.

“The governor has a say in so many appointments,” Clouse said. “The present Supreme Court justice (Lyn Stuart, who replaced Moore) was appointed by the governor. That’s one of the important things for elected a governor. It’s an issue for what particular gubernatorial candidates you’ll vote for.”

Dial said that an end to Senate special elections would also lessen the influence of outside dollars influencing the outcome. Strange, for instance, was bolstered by millions of dollars from super-PACs aligned with Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, among others. “No one wants people in New York, California, Texas and all over telling Alabamians how to vote,” Dial said.

Arkansas, earlier this year, enacted a similar law to what Alabama will take up early next year. But North Dakota recently went in the other direction, mandating special elections for the U.S. Senate, stripping the governor’s appointment powers.
As college costs rise, Congress must save student loan program

The Birmingham News

Wednesday, November 1, 2017
Interim superintendent: Education bureaucracy could be trimmed

Mike Cason mcason@al.com

Interim Alabama School Superintendent Ed Richardson told lawmakers last week that the state Department of Education is undergoing a staffing review that could result in substantial savings by trimming the bureaucracy in Montgomery.

Richardson said the department needs to rebuild its credibility and undergo an "attitudinal change" to be more supportive of local school districts and help Alabama build academic achievement.

Richardson did not name specific positions or give hard numbers but said the department has too many exempt employees. Exempt employees are those that are hired outside the state merit system.

The State Personnel Department is conducting an assessment that is expected to be finished next month. Richardson said the assessment would cover both the substance of jobs and salary levels. He mentioned some employees received significant raises a few years ago.

Richardson spoke to the House Ways and Means Education Committee, which heard from officials from several agencies to begin getting an overview of major issues as it prepares for the 2018 legislative session.

The state Board of Education hired Richardson in September to replace Superintendent Michael Sentance, who resigned after a year on the job. The board was expected to fire Sentance before his resignation.

Richardson, who serves as state superintendent from October 1995 to January 2004, said he wanted to take care of some difficult issues, like the staffing review, during his time as interim leader of the department to clear the way for the next permanent superintendent.

"I think it's essential that I as the person that's going to leave town soon was able to do this so the next person won't walk right into the middle of it and have to accomplish that," Richardson said.

Committee Chairman Bill Poole, R-Tuscaloosa, asked Richardson if the Education Department can operate within the budget passed by the Legislature earlier this year. The budget year began Oct. 1.

Richardson assured the committee that the department was operating within its budget, even before the staffing review. Richardson said no employees were laid off but about 27 unfilled positions were deactivated. He said the agency is pursuing other cost savings. The department has more state vehicles than it needs and state-paid travel is receiving closer scrutiny, Richardson said.
Honoring her legacy

Nearly $1.1M raised for Gail C. Andrews Fund for Public Programs

Gail Andrews, shown here in 2011, recently retired from the Birmingham Museum of Art. She had been with the museum since the 1970s. File

Erin Edgemon
eddgemon@al.com

Patrons of the Birmingham Museum of Art raised nearly $1.1 million to establish the Gail C. Andrews Fund for Public Programs.

The fund, named after the long-time director who recently retired, is designed to ensure the continuity of free-of-charge public programs, of which the museum holds hundreds each year.

The fundraising campaign was spearheaded by the Museum’s board of trustees and the gift was announced at Andrews’ retirement celebration Oct. 19.

“It was awe-inspiring to see a community come together to so generously honor the legacy of a truly incredible leader. This fund combines two of Gail’s most significant priorities: growing the endowment while providing funding each year to produce engaging, diverse public programs,” said Kate Cleveland, the museum’s director of development.

“Our public programs offer something for everyone. From family festivals to lectures by world-renowned artists and scholars, to music and dance performances and speakers’ panels, the BMA strives to offer opportunities for the whole community to discover the joy and meaning of art.”

Andrews established the Birmingham Museum of Art as one of the South’s pre-eminent art museums, working there for four decades, the last 20 as director.

THE ANDREWS LEGACY

The California native moved to Birmingham in 1976 to serve as the museum’s first curator of decorative arts.

The museum’s holdings grew from 13,000 objects to 27,000 during her tenure as director, according to the museum. Andrews secured the acquisition of the Buten Wedgwood Collection, establishing it as the largest Wedgwood collection in North America.

She brought international acclaim to several collection areas with distinguished additions to the museum’s Vietnamese ceramics, and propelled significant growth to the American and European collections, according to the museum.

Andrews also spearheaded museum initiatives to collect and display the work of self-taught artists from the Deep South, beginning in the late 1970s with work by artist Lonnie Holley and still today with the recent acquisition of the Cargo collection of folk art. Additionally, Andrews strategically bolstered the museum’s contemporary collection with notable works by women and African-American artists.

In addition to the collection, Andrews expanded museum programming, funding, and staff, adding two collection curators, an objects conservator, and several members to the education department.

Securing the endowment of five museum positions, Andrews also increased the general endowment by $20 million.

In September, the museum appointed Graham Bettcher as its new director.
Runway Joe

Joe Namath set the bar on pro athletes and high fashion

By Becky Hopf
Photos by Gary Cosby Jr., and the Associated Press

Cam Newton set tongues wagging when he stepped onto an airplane carrying the Carolina Panthers to Super Bowl 50 wearing zebra-striped Versace pants. He has become a high fashion icon for high-profile athletes but the poster child for stepping it up when he stepped out — and even when he was on the sidelines — was “Broadway Joe Namath,” a University of Alabama and New York Jets quarterback legend.

Namath still dazzles, sporting a fur on the sidelines while attending Super Bowl 50. Fashion loved him, and he loved fashion — though he admits his modeling days were more exhausting than some of his football practices.

So, in honor of “Runway Joe,” here’s a recent phone conversation with the football — and fashion — legend, on how he came to be a star on the style front.

Q: When you were a kid growing up in Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania, or a student at the University of Alabama, was fashion or style even on your radar?

A: It started at home, like most things in life do. My dad was a neat dresser. My mom was, too. I even borrowed some of my mother’s hats to play in. I’d go out in the yard and play in them. The Korean War was pretty prominent then, and we used to play battle stuff. We were soldiers in the woods. We had woods by the house. I’d borrow a special hat my mother had. It was a nice black one with a veil on the front. And it had fruit pieces on top cherries, bananas and a few other things on there.

Basically, I tried to mimic my big brothers in a sense. It was the days of peg pants, like today. What goes around comes around, it seems. They were sort of like straight pants. They could have been Levis or whatever cotton pants you had. If you wanted the bottoms tight, you folded them. We called them peg pants. Usually, when you inherit clothes from your bigger brother, the pants were longer anyway, so there was plenty of room to roll them up. So, yeah, you mimicked people, like Elvis Presley, for example, with his collar up and his slicked-back hair. He was cool, so we dressed as kids similar to what our big brothers did and the stars that we had seen. And I started (dressing) as Elvis (did) because, of course, he was special.

Q: Did you ever meet Elvis and tell him about that?

A: I didn’t tell him I dressed like him. I did have the honor and pleasure of visiting with him a couple of times, and it was wonderful. He was wonderful. What a gentleman. He was great. But, no, we didn’t discuss the attire at the time. He was close to the height of his career — one of the heights. I mean, he was always the smart one when he became recognized. But we didn’t discuss the clothing factor at the time. He was more interested, actually, in football.

Q: What was your go-to outfit at Alabama?
A: It was similar to high school or junior high. As a kid, you're moving up. I'd say it was always neat. Again, that starts from home. But the fashions were pretty similar from high school into college. Into college I followed suit of the upperclassmen, you might say. My roommate Butch Henry — he had some style. It was like button-down collars for the most part and collegiate outfits that were clean. Sport coats. I had to borrow a sport coat, though, because when I first got there, I didn't have one. The only guys I knew were my fellow athletes in the athletic dorm. Sometimes on a Saturday night or a Friday night, I felt like if you were invited or could go to a fraternity party, a sport coat was in fashion. I had to borrow one because I didn't have one.

Once I got through my freshman year and I worked in the summertime, I was able to buy myself a piece or two. But it was basically collegiate, trying to dress like Leroy Jordan or Butch Wilson or the upperclassmen or Butch Henry. We had some guys who were pretty good collegiate dressers.

I don't think we had the attire that jumped out at anyone. We didn't have Lady Gaga-looking girls running around campus. The length of the skirts were a little different than today, and there was no such thing as shorts or whatever (for women). For the guys, it was just regular cotton pants or corduroy pants or whatever kind of material. When it got hot, there was shorts.

Q: What was your first big fashion purchase when you got in the NFL?
A: I was able to start a charge account after I got drafted. I went downtown (Tuscaloosa) to Wiesel's, Bucky Bernstein's store, and he let me charge some clothes. I had worked between my freshman and sophomore year and sophomore-junior and junior-senior years. I worked at a few places, at the paper mill and with the university taking care of the fields and the grasses, all kinds of stuff. So I had a little bit of change in my pocket that I could go and buy a couple of things. Once I got drafted, I went and talked to Mr. Bernstein and he let me charge some clothes until I got my first check from the New York Jets.

Q: How much did living in New York City influence your style?
A: Style and fashion — when you mentioned Cam (Newton), I thought of a variety of outfits — but I was really a hat guy to start with. I had my little derby kind of hat whenever I walked around campus. I can see that first day — kind of powder-blue style hat with a pearl in the side. Some of the varsity guys talked about that. They didn't know who the heck I was. They didn't know where I'd come from or whatever. But I like hats. I like my pink berets. I brought those with me. They've stayed with me to this day. I still have pink berets. Other than hats in college, when I was able to afford some clothes, when I went to New York, I started having things made for me. And I was ticked. Boy, I just loved it. I didn't even know the name of the tailor. I stopped in the tailor shop that was close to my apartment in New York, and I told him what I wanted and I picked out material and all. I had everything made, from suits, sports coats to my run-around pants — man, the pants I wore to run back and forth to practice or to play softball in Central Park or under the 50th Street Bridge. I'd have my flowered pants. I was influenced by the hippie fashion to some extent with the colors. I always liked flowers anyway. I had some floral kind of pants and shirts that I had made.

Q: Were the other guys wearing flowered pants, too?
A: Not on the football team or around the softball field. On the softball field it was rather unique. Basically, I think we all want to feel good with what we have on. It expresses something about ourselves, our mind, our way of life, what we are. It should, anyway, if you can. In school, I wasn't motivated enough to stand out as a great student. I would try to do that today. But back then recognition came through sports, and maybe that was a side of me through being a Gemini. I put some stock in the astrological signs, the horoscopes. Being a Gemini, I could see myself wanting to be slightly different at times. But not a big reach. I've never seen myself wearing things or doing things that went over the line.

Q: Were there any designers you favored?
A: Because of and as a part of my profession, I actually had

See JOE, Dó
Continued from D1

a line of shirts and suits and sport coats that were made, the Joe Namath line, Arrow shirts. I was the old Arrow Shirt Man. They brought that back. There was an Arrow Shirt Man back in the '30s and '40s or earlier, and then they brought that back, and I was the Arrow Shirt Man. We made a good variety of shirts, which, by God, some of them were pretty loud. I swear. And one day I walked in Coach (Paul) Bryant's office in my off-season, and he was wearing one of those shirts. I loved it. And you've got to know Coach Bryant. He usually had a reason for doing everything. He was sharp. But I appreciated that so much, for him to be able to wear that kind of shirt, kind of was saying, 'Nice going, Joe.' Or, 'It's all right, Joe.' He was part of what was happening at the time. It was great.

Q: How involved were you with your fashion line?
A: With the shirts, more so than with the sport coats and the suits because the sport coats and suits lines - that had been established. Arrow's shirt line had been established, too, but the times had changed pretty good, and we went along with a lighter fashion, a more standout fashion. Materials had changed a little bit. They caught the eye more, shinier-fashioned shirts. The materials were different. I was always a cotton guy. I had my sharkskin suits, too, but they were coarse on the body. I had a hard time with those. I even had my pants lined so they wouldn't itch - aye, yl, yl.

Q: So, you suffered for fashion?
A: Yeah. I did for a bit until I realized it was more important to be comfortable. And I found a way even to be comfortable with the kind of garments that were coarse against my skin. So I did sacrifice for fashion. I wanted to look good.

I went over to Italy - we made a movie over there, I'm not sure if it was '68, '69 or '70 - but there was a tailor over there. It was like a factory when you went there. It was all handmade stuff. But there was a huge second story of this building where there were guys and ladies sitting at these sewing machines. They took your size. They fitted you. They fitted me. And I'm telling you what, we went back in three days or four days, and we each had our five suits or whatever we'd picked out at the time. It was amazing. A friend of mine that was with me, Mr. Mike Bite from Birmingham, Alabama - he was one of the guys who got a few suits there, too, boy, and we put some good use to them.

Mike was an equipment manager for Alabama's football team and baseball team, when Bart Starr was there (football). Red Drew was the (football) coach.
The Tuscaloosa News
Sunday, November 5, 2017

out-off Levi’s in airports and sitting on the floor, having your hair down to your shoulders or whatever. I don’t think it was a reach for any of us. I think it was kind of a Whopper thing.

Why should you protest to this? It was maybe a rebellious attitude going with the Vietnamese War. I think Woodstock may have had something to do with it, my way of being hip. I didn’t get to Woodstock, but that crowd... Mid ’60s on, for me, was when I kind of evolved, from ’60 on. Being up there in the New York area and the problems we were having in New York — problems with the military, Vietnam, problems with racial issues — it was a rebellious kind of atmosphere. There was some funky dressing going on.

Q: You lived a high-pressured life — dated celebrities, models. Anyone you stopped with where you felt you needed to change into something different?

A: Not necessarily step up because I was clean. My dad was clean. My roommates were not neat dressers. Not step up. I was comfortable with my way, and the ladies certainly cared a lot about fashion than I did. Mine just came naturally with what was going on. I watched what the fashion industry did, and I followed suit, so to speak.

I will tell you, white shoes — that was something special to me. That was something that I always wanted to do, and when I first did that with tape, Coach Bryant let me do it. To this day, I can see me sitting in the locker room with my teammates at Alabama, getting ready to go to practice, and I’m looking down at my shoes, and I went and I got some tape from the training room. A senior could do that at the time.

If you were a freshman or a sophomore, you might not be able to walk in the training room and take a roll of tape. A senior could possibly get away with it if he was doing a good job on the field and getting along with ‘Goose’ (Alabama’s football trainer, the late Jim Gooseth). Anyway, I did that, and I started taping my shoes. I started spitting down, taping around the shoeaces and all, everything except the front part. And as I’m doing this, most of my teammates, and I swear I don’t remember who it was, but he said, ‘Damn, Joe, Coach Bryant is going to get you.’ I said, ‘Why is that?’ He said, ‘You can’t put that white tape on your shoes. He’s going to get you.’ I said, ‘Oh, man.’ But, I tell you what, I had to think about it. Then, whenever we went out, Coach Bryant never said a word. That’s Coach Bryant. He knew — he knew his players. He knew that meant something or I sure as heck wouldn’t be doing it. And he let me slide.

The only time that year I didn’t tape my shoes, I didn’t wear the white.

The fourth game of the season, we’re playing North Carolina State. My mind — I don’t know what — I can remember my thigh pads were backwards and I didn’t tape my shoes. I was marching myself in a frenzy in a hurry somehow to get out and play, and I stepped in a hole and my cleats stuck, and I pulled a ligament in my knee. And from that time on, I always had the white shoes. I never messed up again with that. I’ve often said I’m not superstitious, but I still lace my shoes right over. And my athletic shoes still have to be white. Maybe I was reaching at something, I wanted to be different. Again, I’m a Gemini.

Q: What was the biggest event you dreamed of? Was it the Olympics?

A: Numerous occasions (he wears black to high style). You mentioned the Olympics, and that was certainly one of them with one of the most beautiful ladies in the world (Raquel Welch, 1971 Olympics), too, to this day. That was special.

Events in New York City, in Washington, D.C., with the presidents of the United States. Dinners there in New York City with people who were influential in helping society on different occasions. When you talk about the presidents and D.C., and you talk about the Oscars, those were special occasions.

You know, I had to be clean going to some bar mitzvahs and bat mitzvahs and some confirmations, first communions. I considered those special and wanted to be respectful and attentive.

Q: When did wearing fur come into the picture?

A: I believe probably in ’65, ’66 or ’67. It was an idea that a furrier had in New York. They knew that this could possibly be an idea for the newspapers and the media. One of our owners, Mr. David ‘Tony’ Verno, was a show-business man. He had been with MCA (Music Corp. of America) as a representative. He represented stars. And when he came and bought the New York Titans in 1965, Mr. Verno literally said, ‘We need stars. We need to create stars.’

You see, football at the time had a lot of outstanding players, but they didn’t cater to what the public appreciated. Mr. Werblin, being in the motion picture industry and the entertainment industry, recognized that the sports world had outstanding players who did some big things — like Jackie Robinson and Joe DiMaggio — but the teams didn’t promote their players or try to get them more visible. People care about people. He wanted to make that connection.

So, I’m at training camp, out on the football field. It was probably ’68, now that I think about it. Our media director came up to me and said, ‘Joe, there’s a fellas we have out here with a full length mink coat. And it happens to be your size.’ He said, ‘Would you take a picture with them?’ I said, ‘Oh, man, I don’t know about that. What do you mean? Why should I do that?’ He said, ‘Well, the guy said he’d give you the mink coat.’ I said, ‘I’ll wear it...’ And that was my first mink coat. It was the furrier’s idea, and I appreciated that. And then the other kind of feigned into a buddy of mine brought me back a lambkin coat with white fur around the collar and the sleeves and bottom. I got a silver fox that was just spectacular. I still have a couple of those coats. The one that I actually purchased myself — I never have counted the number (I’ve had) — I’d say around seven — the one I had actually made for myself, I was still a bachelor living in Beverly Hills, California, and this one had to be in about ’70 or ’80, and I had this back-gimmer mink coat, full length, made. The color was a bright color. It was a color like a black, dark, dark brown with a lighter shade of brown stripes going up and down. I mean it was spectacular coat. But when I started a family, I was a minority owner in New Jersey, honoring the Girl Scouts and the Boy Scouts of America, and it was an auction, so I think I have that coat to auction it off.

I had second thoughts. I’ve often thought, ‘Man, I wish I had that coat.’ It was beautiful. But I have a soft spot for them (the Scouts) and, at the time, it was a good idea. But somebody out there has it, and I don’t know where.

Q: Were you surprised this past season when the fur you wore to Super Bowl 50 showed up in the Alabama-Auburn game you attended?

A: I was close to shocked. But that actually wasn’t my coat. I don’t know where they got it. It was the network. It was the producer’s idea. He could tell you where they got it. But it worked. It was terrific. It was a lot of fun.

Q: Do you have a favorite shoe style you favor?

A: Comfortable. I’ll tell you what, my first job as a kid was as a shoe shine boy. I take care of my shoes, and I take care of others. I’ve accrued I haven’t different brands of shoes certainly (that I’ve worn), and I’ve gone through a whole lot of them. They’ve got to feel good on my feet. And they’ll be clean. They’ll be shining. I do wax them. I still like to feel some of shoe polish and a rag. It’s kind of weird, I guess, in this day and age, but they don’t have a lot of shoe shine shops around except in airports, and I don’t always have time to get them cleaned and shined in airports. And sometimes I fall behind at home. There are times when I’m mowing a man at my golf club that does a great job. But, styles! Whatever goes with the attire, bangs of all, they do have to be comfortable. I have leather boots. But they have to be comfortable, I do admire the beautiful ladies, and we don’t want to wear shoes that aren’t comfortable as they’d like to be. To be fashioned, fashionable, of all, they do have to be comfortable.

Q: Any accessories you favor?

A: I’ve had a few watches over the years, and I see a lady wearing them that I’ve had the bands I made for me. They’re beautiful pieces of craftsman-ship. One of my favorite watches was given to me by Sports Illustrated. They’re 40th year, they gave everyone a watch that was ever on the cover of their magazine. The first piece of jewelry I got, that I could afford, that was special to me, was an ID bracelet. That was fancy. That was special. That was even before I had a wristwatch.
Laying down the law

UA basketball coach gives students lessons in life

By Drew Taylor
Staff Writer

Surrounded by dozens of elementary students on Thursday, Avery Johnson was in the middle of a story — that is, until he was interrupted.

Johnson, head basketball coach at the University of Alabama, was speaking to students at Matthews Elementary when a few students began talking among themselves. Immediately, Johnson assumed the manner of courthouse coach, a role he has become known for.

"Eyes on me, eyes on coach Avery," Johnson said. "I need to be able to see your eyes."

Throughout the talk, Johnson intensely engaged with the young students in the same way he deals with athletes, telling them what they need to do in order to be successful. Johnson and the Crimson Tide basketball team officially begin the season next week against Memphis at the Veterans Classic in Annapolis, Maryland.

"I'm not the basketball coach at Alabama because I'm the smartest person or biggest person or the best basketball coach in the world," he said. "The reason why I believe why I'm on the road is because of my attitude."

For Johnson, he sees himself in many of the students at Matthews, a school he passes every time he heads to the Tuscaloosa Regional Airport. Johnson, one of 10 children in his family, grew up in the Lafitte Projects in New Orleans and remembers how people would come to his school to give words of encouragement to students.

"I never called myself a failure," he said. "I said I was a faker, I had potential and I could do it. Those words influenced me and gave me power, and that had a lot to do with my attitude."

of attitude to his later life playing in the NBA. In 1990, he was playing for the Spurs against the Los Angeles Lakers when he got knocked down by Shaquille O'Neal.

"Shaq is 7-foot-3, 310 pounds," he said. "I'm 5-foot-11 and about 190 pounds."

As he told the story, Johnson dropped to the ground and lay on his back as he talked.

"Shaq knocked coach Avery down," he said.

However, Johnson took the opportunity to get back on his feet and continue playing ball, not letting the slight affect his game.

"I went up to him and I said 'I'm coming back,'" he said. "You can knock me down, but you can't knock me out."

Johnson said the key to a positive attitude can be as simple as having a smile or a kind word to another student.

"Your words are powerful. Every word that comes out of your mouth is either positive or negative," he said.

Tripp Marshall, principal at Matthews Elementary, said he and his staff have tried to get Johnson to come to the school since he first became

were honored he came.

"To be grounded and have all of that and not forget his roots, in my opinion, that resonates with our kids," Marshall said.

A sizable portion of students at Matthews Elementary live at or below the poverty line. Marshall said 100 percent of the students are on the free and reduced lunch menu with breakfast served for many students as well.

"They relate to him in

through and what they can ultimately achieve," Marshall said.

Johnson said he will continue to give back to the community and do what he can to encourage young people to succeed.

"I understand the power of influence on people and how it can assist teachers in helping to motivate and lead our young students," he said.

Reach Drew Taylor at drew.taylor@tuscaloosanews.
UA class raises money for hunger charity

Public relations students create fundraising events

By Aaron Bonner
Special to The Tuscaloosa News

Students in a University of Alabama class have organized a series of fundraisers this month for a group that provides meals to needy schoolchildren. The Concepting and Implementation class is designed to help UA public relations students work with businesses and sponsors to create fundraising events. Susan Daria, the instructor, says the class is focusing on raising money for Secret Meals for Hungry Children.

“A lot of my students don’t have the frame of reference

Secret Meals fundraisers

- “Sip a Little, Love a Latte”: 4-8 p.m. Monday at Monarch Espresso Bar, 714 22nd Ave. A $10 ticket includes access to live music, Secret Meals-themed activities and a lunchbox with gourmet twists on classic lunch foods.
- “Cover 140”: Bingo fundraiser from 9-11 p.m. Monday at Moe’s Original BBQ, 2101 University Blvd. For $10, participants can play bingo to earn prizes from local businesses.
- “Lattes for Local Lunches”: Nov. 13-17 at UPerk, 405 20th Ave. Purchase a $5 punch card that provides discounts and a free specialty drink if all slots have been punched.
- More information: Check out the Secret Meals for Hungry Children page on Facebook for other fundraisers.

See CHARITY, B3
CHARITY

Continued from B1

that there are kids, not in a Third World country, but here -- like maybe right down the street -- going to school with kids that you know who are not eating a single bit of food over an entire weekend.” Daria said. “It’s happening, and it’s happening regularly, which one of the things I’m proud of is that I have a class that’s doing something about this.”

Secret Meals For Hungry Children is part of the Alabama Credit Union’s partnership with the West Alabama Food Bank. The program provides food packages, containing two meals and snacks. The food packages are given to students discreetly.

“Teachers will put those packs in their backpacks while they’re at recess or something else, just so they aren’t singled out,” Daria said.

Last year, the class raised more than $100,000 in donations for Secret Meals For Hungry Children, feeding more than 760 children in Tuscaloosa.

Students in Daria’s class organized a full project proposal with concepts, artwork for promotional material and a documentary filmed during the planning stages. The project, she said, is designed to allow students to present their work to future clients post-graduation and build a portfolio.

“I think the really cool thing about this being such a collaborative class is that it’s not only within your group,” said Ali Wilson, a senior majoring in public relations. “It’s also a collaboration with the class, so I think it’s really cool to see groups doing similar ideas in really different ways.”

Wilson’s group is set to host an event at Monarch Espresso Bar from 4-8 p.m. on Monday called “Sip a Little, Love a Latte.” Working with the bar, the group is now selling $10 wristbands in advance and at the door for access to live music, activities and a “grown-up lunchbox” containing gourmet sandwiches. Specialty drinks, such as a whiskey apple cider and a Bailey’s latte will be sold separately.

“We wanted to communicate the message of Secret Meals and get that across to people who may not have had the time to read a flyer,” Wilson said. “They can kind of just see what they’re doing for our organization and the difference we’re making in kids’ lives. It’s really reminiscent of a kid’s school lunch.”

In the past years that Daria has taught the course, she said that the variety has been a driving factor in the project’s success as students have presented event proposals ranging from concerts to crawfish boils. Nine groups of students will be presenting fundraisers, such as fishing tournaments and wine tastings, this semester.

Jenni Penix, a senior majoring in public relations, is organizing a similar coffee-focused event known as “Lattes for Local Luncnes” at the shop, taking donations and selling a $5 punch card that provides discounts and a free specialty drink if all slots have been punched.

“Most people just do a day event, so we wanted to do something different,” Penix said. “What’s nice is that if it were at Gallette’s tonight, people have tests or people don’t want to go out on a Wednesday, but because it’s a weeklong event, you can go anytime the coffee shop is open. It’s just more convenient, so we’re hoping for a better turnout with that.”

More information can be found on Secret Meals’ Facebook page, as well as a list of upcoming events.
Hard to say goodbye

At 94, Shirley Jones stepping down from job on event staff at UA football games

By Becky Hopf
Special to The Tuscaloosa News

Shirley Jones was born on October 15, 1927. She is 94 years old. She stands all of, maybe, 5 feet, and has the kind of smile that melts hearts. No one is a stranger. She greets a newcomer, and everyone she knows, with a hug.

And, her son, Frank Jones, declares without prejudice, that Shirley is his best worker, in a sea of good workers. Her work? Event security.

Shirley Jones was in her 80s when she began, yes, began, what would become, she said, the best job she ever undertook. For nearly a decade, Shirley has worked on the event staff at University of Alabama home football games at Bryant-Denny Stadium.

Frank Jones works as a gate captian on the East tower of the stadium, Gate 33. His wife, Dot Jones, is also on the event staff. "We thought it would be good for her," said Dot Jones, who, with Frank thought it would be a good way for her mother-in-law to stay active.

"It's not really a hard job. She's sitting in a chair. But she's always standing up and hugging somebody, so she doesn't do a lot of sitting," said Frank Jones. "I just liked everybody," Shirley said, matter-of-factly.

Shirley and her husband moved to Tuscaloosa in the 1940s, though now, because of her health, she splits time with Frank and Dot in Tuscaloosa and her daughter, Rhonda Kaye Thomas, in Mobile, with a hug.

"I have always cheered for Alabama," Shirley Jones said. She was stationed on the second floor of the stadium, the Scholarship Club level.

"I keep people from going to the Scholarship Club who aren't supposed to," she said. "The first day I did it, I really was amazed. I really and truly acted like I was a cheerleader. I had never been to an Alabama game before. I was on the second floor, by the scholarship floor, and I was there to keep them from going up to the skybox and stuff. I had a good time. I just loved it. Seeing all the people at each game, I felt loved, and I had a good time. It's been one of the most enjoyable times of my life."

She was always very good at her job. Sometimes, maybe a little too good.

"Oh, I hate to tell this story," Shirley Jones said, as both Frank and Dot start smiling, knowing exactly the confession she was about to make.

A gentleman, his wife and a couple of their kids came up through the stairwell. They already have the proper credentials.

Shirley stopped them cold.

"He looked at me and said, 'Do you know who I am?' I said, 'Yes, you work for the Chevrolet company.'"

She was partly right. The man did commercials for a car dealership. He also quarterbacked the University of Alabama to the 1962 national championship. It was Jay Barker and his wife, Nashville recording artist Sara Evans. "I told him, 'The university is paying me, not you.' I was only trying to do my job. I didn't know he was the quarterback, but they weren't supposed to be there. It was my job to keep people out who weren't supposed to be there, and I was just doing my job."

The Barkers, hugely popular among Alabama fans, were likely just trying to move through the stadium to their seats without being mobbed by fans.

For every story about those who tried to get past her, there are three-fold stories of those who looked forward each week to seeing her, the couple who'd just learned they were going to have a baby who told her they couldn't wait to see her to tell her their news, the parents whose son planned to go to Auburn but told her, 'he loves you so much he's decided to go to Alabama,'

said Shirley Jones.

She's received oranges, by mail, from some of her regulars who live in Orlando.

"People bring her little gifts all the time," said Dot Jones.

Her days were long. She worked 7-8 hour shifts. If she missed a game, Frank Jones said he'd get inquiries checking on her health. Her health has been failing a little in the last two years, so much so that she worked sporadically last season and only one game this season, the Oct. 21 home game against Tennessee.

"We'd decided last year would be her last season working," said Frank Jones, "but so many people kept asking about her this season that we decided we'd bring her back for one more game so she could say 'goodbye.'" It was a happy day," said Shirley Jones. "Actually, I never intended to have it. I thought I had already worked my last game. This was a bonus. People hugged me, shook hands, high-fived me — it was just a really good time." She's been a fan favorite, and a favorite among her co-workers who often run by to say "hello" before dashing off to their jobs at the stadium.

Shirley Jones said she was surprised, and somewhat delighted, her son and daughter-in-law suggested she start working games in the first place all those years ago.

"I just thought it would be nice to go," said Shirley Jones. "Breaking into it was easy because I got along with the people who work in the kitchen. I got along with all the employees. They are such good people. They'd give me some of the flowers that were left on the tables after lunch. I'd take them to church to give to the shut-ins. It just worked out really nice for me. I was just blessed. I've always been blessed."

Said Dot Jones, "It gave her a purpose. And she was the best worker we had. She never left her post."

"It was very rewarding working with her, even as her boss. She was always on her post, always on her job. It's been really special, the way people have embraced her," said Frank Jones.

"It was the most enjoyment I've ever had," said Shirley Jones.
UA freshman dies after head injury

Student, 18, hurt during soccer game

By Stephanie Taylor
Staff Writer

A University of Alabama freshman who died Saturday spent weeks hospitalized after a head injury sustained during a soccer game.

Allie Brodie, 18, was injured Oct. 7 while playing soccer with friends, according to information posted on a GoFundMe page to raise money for her family.

Emergency surgery for the intracranial hemorrhage led to the diagnosis of another condition, brain arteriovenous malformation, which she was born with, according to the page.

"The trauma of being hit by the soccer ball and AVM triggered internal bleeding in her brain stem," the fundraising campaign organizer wrote on the site. She ultimately died from complications from pneumonia.

Brodie, from Danville, California, is survived by her mother and sisters, including a twin.

"Heaven has gained a beautiful guardian angel, and we continue to seek peace in God's plan for our sweet girl," her mother wrote in a Facebook post Sunday.

She was a member of Alpha Delta Chi, which plans to hold a vigil to honor her at 6 p.m. Wednesday in front of Denny Chimes.
High tech coming to city roads
The devices coming from this $400,000 project, funded solely by UA, are not designed to retain or gather any personal information. Rather, they will lead to research and data-gathering opportunities for a number of research centers within the university, including the Center for Advanced Vehicle Technology, the University Transportation Center, the Center for Advanced Public Safety and the Alabama Transportation Institute.

Initially, this data will be used for traffic flow and safety purposes. Information gathered by these DSRC radios can dictate traffic signal phases and timing sequences, allowing for easier flow of traffic during peak travel times.

“We expect significant advances in the U.S. transportation system during the next 10 years, made possible through many of the technologies currently being tested in Alabama,” Balasubramanian said. “Some of the benefits we will see from these advances are improved safety, optimized traffic flow and better fuel economy.”

But when vehicles are able to communicate with these DSRC radios, that’s when real-time traffic conditions can be delivered directly to drivers in real time.

And this, Balasubramanian, ultimately will lead to the vehicle driving itself.

Getting there, however, will take a lot more than a few cameras in West Alabama.

Similar DSRC radios, which can communicate wirelessly with receivers without the lag and latency issues that can be seen when attempting to make a cellular phone call, will need to be installed along practically every roadway.

Also, vehicles will need to be equipped with the proper mechanisms to communicate directly with the road-based radios to learn of road hazards, changing conditions and construction blockages, among others.

Even then, it will take convincing Congress to alter traffic safety laws that will allow drivers to legally take their hands off the wheel.

But every evolution has to have a starting point.

“This innovative use of technology is a prime example of how we can use data to improve the lives of people in our community,” said Tuscaloosa Mayor Walt Maddox.

“Not only will it aid in personal convenience, but it could also help keep businesses on schedule and further transportation research.”

While UA is funding the system itself, it is in response to a national challenge by American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials to install 20 DSRC radios in every state by 2020.

This means UA will working with local, state and federal government agencies, as well as automotive manufacturers, on the studies that are now made possible with the installation of these devices.

“Our goal is to be one of the most advanced transportation systems in the country,” said Nick Crane, Transportation Systems Management and Operations Manager for ALDOT’s West Central Region, which includes Tuscaloosa County.

“With the collaborative culture and resources available, we feel that our goals are achievable.”

Reach Jason Morton at jason.morton@tuscaloosanews.com or 205-722-0200.
GARDENDALE

UAB to build $33.9M ER, medical offices

UAB will break ground on a $33.9 million freestanding emergency department and medical office building in Gardendale on Thursday.

The new facilities on 6.2 acres at 960 Mount Olive Parkway will give residents of Gardendale and north Jefferson County access to essential medical services, according to the medical center.

Gov. Kay Ivey will attend the noon groundbreaking, along with UAB and Gardendale officials.

"The freestanding emergency department and medical office building are major additions for the city of Gardendale," said Gardendale Mayor Stan Hogeland. "Knowing that we will have UAB emergency care available in our town at any hour of the day or night is a reassurance for our residents that first-class medical care is always close at hand. This is a step forward for Gardendale, one that will enhance our overall quality of life, improve access to medical care and stimulate our economy.”

The freestanding emergency department will have 26,700 square feet of space and provide a full range of emergency medicine services staffed around the clock by physicians who are board-certified in emergency medicine. The facility will have an FAA-compliant heliport, advanced MRI/CT/X-ray imaging, 12 exam rooms, a bariatric lift, laboratory services and a pharmacy. The emergency department will be capable of performing trauma care and will have facilities for isolation and decontamination.

The 38,400-square-foot, two-story medical office building will offer primary care, obstetrics, gastrointestinal care, orthopedics, cardiology, neurology, neurosurgery, ophthalmology and specialty care programs. It will feature a diagnostic imaging suite, lab services, telemedicine and digital public interface kiosks.

Together, the two facilities will employ more than 100, including physicians, nurses, laboratory technicians, other medical professionals and office staff, according to UAB. — Erin Edgemon
UAB med facility a step closer

Groundbreaking is Nov. 2 on $33.9 million emergency department and medical office in Gardendale

The Associated Press

GARDENDALE — The University of Alabama at Birmingham will build a $33.9 million freestanding emergency department and medical office next month.

Al.com reports that UAB will break ground on the new facility on Nov. 2 in Gardendale.

The medical center says the facility will be on 6.2 acres and will give residents access to essential medical services.

Gov. Kay Ivey is expected to attend the groundbreaking ceremony along with UAB and city officials.

"The freestanding emergency department and medical office building are major additions for the city of Gardendale," said Gardendale Mayor Stan Hogeland.

"Knowing that we will have UAB emergency care available in our town at any hour of the day or night is a reassurance for our residents that first-class medical care is always close at hand. This is a step forward for Gardendale, one that will enhance our overall quality of life, improve access to medical care and stimulate our economy."

The emergency department will have 26,700 square feet of space and an FAA-compliant heliport, advanced MRI/CT/X-ray imaging, 12 exam rooms, a bariatric lift, laboratory services, and a pharmacy.

It will be capable of performing trauma care and will have facilities for isolation and decontamination.

The 38,400-square-foot, two-story medical office building will offer a variety of services from primary care, cardiology, neurology, neurosurgery, ophthalmology and specialty care programs.

The two medical facilities will employ more than 100 staff including physicians, nurses, laboratory technicians, other medical professionals and office staff.

See FACILITY, B9
Wondering when NASA will launch SLS? Save this to-do list

By: Lee Roop

The launch date for NASA's big new rocket called the Space Launch System (SLS) has slipped more than once. It's now officially expected in 2019, but some people think it could slide to 2020.

But SLS is far enough along there's a clear timeline of what needs to happen when before the first launch. That timeline was the topic of a discussion at October's Wernher von Braun Memorial Symposium in Huntsville, Ala.

So, if you're interested in SLS, mark these milestones on your calendar and see how NASA does at making them. And if you're wondering why it's taking so long, NASA says to remember it's building SLS and the Orion capsule, upgrading Kennedy Space Center, keeping the International Space Station going, and running the rest of its human space program all at the same time on basically a flat budget. Regardless, here's what is left to do.

1. Finish the mobile launch pad.

The nearly 400-foot tall mobile launch platform will be finished in April 2018 and rolled out to the launch pad, Mike Bolger, manager of ground systems at Kennedy Space Center, said in Huntsville. It will then roll back to the Vehicle Assembly Building for systems integration and tests for the rest of 2018. Watch for that rollout in spring.

2. Finish the launch software and launch team training.

Software must be finished and the team trained before SLS flight hardware begins arriving at Kennedy for assembly and integration in the spring of 2019, so watch for that, too. It's already under way, but remember, it's a new team, a new rocket and new software.

3. Make the 'green run' test

The core stage segments of SLS must be joined together, integrated electronically and sent to Stennis Space Center in Mississippi for a "green run," or first firing of the engines. That test firing is now scheduled for March 2019.

The core stage - the liquid oxygen tank, liquid hydrogen tank, intertank, forward skirt, and engine section - should be assembled and out of the Michoud Assembly Facility in New Orleans on its way to Stennis in December 2018, said John Honeycutt, SLS program manager. Watch for that huge milestone, and watch for the firing test. Remember, this core stage is the actual flight hardware. Nothing bad needs to happen to it.

4. Complete the Orion crew module and the European Service Module.

Orion Program Manager Mark Kirasich said he is tracking the production of 40 large components for the service module, and "all" of them will be together at the Airbus plant in

See next page
Bremen, Germany "in February of next year and the welding completed about March or April of next year." Watch for that to happen in early 2018, as well.

Bill Hill, the deputy associate administrator from NASA headquarters overseeing SLS, summed up. "The two challenges we had ... were getting the European Service Module complete and delivered to (Kennedy Space Center) so we could integrate it with Orion and getting the core stage delivered to Stennis within the next year.

"Those are the two critical paths right now," Hill said, "and they're kind of neck and neck for getting to a launch date." So, if those two things don't happen, the launch will slip. And even if they do happen, there's still more to do.

"The real big (challenges) are going to happen in '19 when we start to integrate the vehicle," Hill said. "Start stacking the boosters, start putting the core stage on the boosters and the interim cryogenic propulsion stage and stage adapters and getting Orion on top of that."

In other words, NASA is going on a two-year run. In 2018 and part of 2019, it's about getting the major parts finished and tested. Then 2019 becomes about getting those completed, tested parts to Kennedy and assembled on the mobile pad.

"Two years for college students seems like a real long time," commented panel moderator and University of Alabama in Huntsville engineering professor Dale Thomas. "For these guys, two years is the day after tomorrow."
Young professionals urged to reach for space defense

By: Amy Guckeen Tolson

To the young men and women seated around the room, the faces on the screen could easily have been one of them.

And if they continue to pursue their career goals, one day they very well may be.

Lt. Gen. James Dickinson spoke to members of the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics Young Professionals at their symposium at the University of Alabama in Huntsville Oct. 18, providing them with some personal and professional advice, in addition to an overview of his mission as the commander of the Space and Missile Defense Command/Army Forces Strategic Command and Joint Functional Component Command for Integrated Missile Defense. As part of his remarks, Dickinson showed the group a picture of the men and women who helped design the Warfighter Assisting Low earth orbit Tracker, the ground antenna for SMDC’s newest small satellite, Kestrel Eye. Many of the engineers pictured were young professionals just like themselves.

“Opportunities are knocking,” Dickinson said. “Right here in the Tennessee Valley, and the greater Huntsville/Madison community, we are creating a high-energy center of excellence, a center of excellence for young professional engineers and scientists to reflect, share ideas, while working together to develop concepts and new technologies that will enhance our ability and capability to protect our country. If you can’t be passionate about that, I don’t know what you can be passionate about.”

Kestrel Eye was one of the technologies Dickinson highlighted, sharing the importance of providing real-time satellite imagery of the battlefield to the warfighter, while boasting the satellite’s size – that of a dorm room refrigerator. He also discussed the Army’s development of high energy lasers, which are being used to bridge the weapons gap between machine guns and missiles, providing a cost-effective way of defending against threats such as unmanned aerial systems.

“For the past 60 years our team has met the full range of security challenges faced by our great nation,” Dickinson said. “Today, perhaps more than ever, complexity and adversarial competition pervades our mission area. Not only are the security challenges we face complex, so are the organizations that I lead. The common ideal uniting this multifaceted organization is a universal desire to excel by the service members, government civilians and contractors I have the privilege to lead. Our team’s greatest aspiration is to safeguard the security of the nation and our allies in our fields of expertise.”

In addition to a technical overview, Dickinson also shared advice from the wisdom he’s gained over the course of his career. The lieutenant general encouraged the young professionals to strive for balance in their personal and professional lives, to take time to reflect, to read to gain a better understanding of the world, to get involved in their community, to become an expert in their field, to get out of their comfort zone, to become an effective communicator, and to value teamwork.

See next page
"The future is incredibly optimistic for the community of aeronautics and astronautics, young professional engineers such as yourselves," Dickinson said. "Many great advances in technology occur right here in the greater Huntsville/Madison County area. During this symposium I think the most important thing is that you take time to have a dialogue, share ideas and stay connected with colleagues and continue to network in order to further aeronautics and astronautics. By furthering your individual technical specialties, you have the potential to further space and missile defense, understanding and collaboration to enhance our capabilities to meet the expectations of our great nation.

"In a short time frame, it is because of people like you, and our forefathers, who got us to the moon in nine years. We need you. The nation needs you, and people like you, to reflect, read, volunteer, be an effective communicator, and a team player. It is through teamwork we will overcome challenges our global society faces while we inspire the next generation to follow in your footsteps. You have big shoes to fill. Let's make sure the next generation does, too."

UAH engineers to develop ‘digital twin’ to improve CubeSat mission

By: Staff

Engineers from the US-based University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH) are set to create a ‘digital twin’ of a CubeSat to ensure its successful functionality during its year-long mission to study equatorial plasma bubbles.

To be developed with a $185,000 grant from Nasa, the project will support the joint Nasa-Brazil Scintillation Prediction Observations Research Task (SPORT) mission.

Data from the mission is expected to help researchers unlock the mystery of plasma bubbles and mitigate their effects on Earth.

Due to be launched by 2020, the mission is being funded by Nasa’s Science Mission Directorate in Washington, DC.

UAH assistant professor and project lead Dr Bryan Mesmer said: “With this type of space mission, we only have one shot.

“So the idea is to test the system in the simulated world to give us a high probability that it will work once it is in orbit.”

UAH engineers have already started using a system-modelling language software called Cameo Enterprise Architecture to create the digital twin of the SPORT mission.

Development of the twin will be based on the models previously created for a Nasa CubeSat called Near-Earth Asteroid (NEA) Scout by graduate research assistant Garima Bhatia.

Once created, the twin will be paired with SPORT to undergo ‘value modelling’ to identify various ways to improve the mission.
UAH Chargers hockey has military weekend

By: Skip Vaughn

The University of Alabama in Huntsville hockey team will honor the military community during the Veterans Day weekend.

The Chargers’ fourth annual Military Appreciation Weekend is Friday and Saturday, Nov. 10-11 at the Von Braun Center’s Propst Arena. They’ll face off against Alaska Anchorage at 7:07 each night.

This observance is sponsored by the Redstone-Huntsville Chapter of the Association of the U.S. Army. Some 1,000 free tickets will be available for each game for military service members, veterans, Army civilians and their families. Tickets can be picked up at the Information, Tickets and Reservations Office in the Pershing Welcome Center, off Aerobee Road, through Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation.

“The community has so many veterans and active duty, National Guard and Reserve,” James Ross, vice president of NCO programs for AUSA’s Redstone-Huntsville Chapter, said. “It’s our way to recognize them during Veterans Day weekend for their service and sacrifice as well as Department of Defense civilians for their support to our warfighters.

“It gives them a chance to enjoy some great hockey, support our local UAH hockey team, spend time with our Soldiers, civilians and their families and take part in our community’s support to their nation.”

There will be a mass enlistment of Future Soldiers into the Army during the first intermission Saturday night. The ceremonial puck drop will be performed Friday by Chaplain (Col.) Robert Nay, chaplain for the Security Assistance Command; and Saturday by USASAC Commander Maj. Gen. Stephen Farmen. Spc. Joseph Leveston of the Army Materiel Command Band will sing the national anthem both nights. A local high school provides a JROTC color guard for the pregame ceremonies.

“All military personnel and their families are admitted free with their military ID at the VBC box office,” Jason Rucker, UAH athletics marketing coordinator, said.

Mike Corbett, in his fifth season as UAH hockey coach, spent 10 years as an assistant at the Air Force Academy including serving as the Falcons’ associate head coach in the 2012-13 season.

“It’s always a good weekend,” Corbett said. “This is a military type town. It’s an important weekend for us. It’s important to say thank you – any way you can honor people like that, people who make sacrifices for us. It’s a big weekend for us, we want to do it right. It’s having the ability to honor those people in a venue like ours.”

Assistant coach Matt Thomas is a Naval Academy graduate. Maj. Cliff Rogers, assistant product manager for Apache production and fielding in the Program Executive Office for Aviation, is a volunteer assistant coach who coaches the goalies. Rogers graduated in 2004 from the U.S. Military Academy where he played goalie from 2000-04.
Alabama Mayor Honored By National Space Club

By: Chris Simmons

For his role helping to support science and technology in his community, Huntsville Mayor Tommy Battle has been awarded the Community Service award by the National Space Club. The award was handed out at the 26th annual Dr. Wernher von Braun Memorial Dinner at the U.S. Space and Rocket Center’s Davidson Center in Huntsville. “It was very easy to choose Mayor Battle,” said CEO of LSING Alicia Ryan. “for one he’s amazing leader. He has this ability to think about education, economic development and the community at large. And some of the things he’s done lately have been very significant.”

One of the most notable achievements to land Battle the award was his contribution to Huntsville’s Cyber Camp. By partnering with the University of Alabama in Huntsville, Cyber Camp helps introduce students to basic cyber skills and encourage them to enter the field as adults.

Touching on the importance of education, Mayor battle said, “We all know how important the space industry has been to Huntsville, and all the STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) fields are wrapped up in that. We know need to support them at the grassroots level, in educating our students and the future scientists and engineers of the future, as well as our existing corporate citizens here.”
University of Alabama Huntsville Dean Marsha Adams Inducted into Nursing Hall of Fame

By: Christina Morgan

Dr. Marsha Howell Adams, PhD, RN, CNE, ANEF, FAAN, Dean of the University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH) College of Nursing, was recently inducted into the University of Alabama (UA) Nursing Hall of Fame. Adams is highly respected throughout the state of Alabama for her contributions to nursing and nursing education.

Known for being a transformative leader in nursing education, Adams was inducted into the Nursing Hall of Fame for her dedication to the nursing profession. Beyond her role as Dean at UAH, Adams also developed KidCheck, an innovative partnership that links nursing programs and community partners to improve the health of Alabama's children. Adams is a Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing and the Academy of Nursing Education.

Dr. Adams tells www.UAH.edu, “Being selected for the nursing Hall of Fame is a wonderful accomplishment for me and one that I will always cherish because it awards my achievements in both nursing education as well as practice.”

Adams received her bachelors, masters, and doctoral degrees from the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Nursing. She also earned a post-doctoral certificate in rural case management from the UA Capstone College of Nursing. Her other credentials include serving as past president of the National League for Nursing and a current Fellow in the University of Alabama and Southeastern Leadership Conference.

Dr. Adams was honored for her induction to the Nursing Hall of Fame during a ceremony on Oct. 5.
Aerojet Rocketdyne bringing rockets to Rocket City, breaks ground on new facility

By: Paul Gattis

The groundbreaking ceremony Tuesday for Aerojet Rocketdyne's 136,000 square foot manufacturing facility in Huntsville sounded almost like a love affair between the company making rockets and the Rocket City.

In fact, Aerojet CEO and President Eileen Drake recalled a conversation with Huntsville Mayor Tommy Battle during the flirtation period before the company decided to expand and create 700 new jobs in the city.

"I remember when Mayor Battle said, 'Eileen, just remember one thing. Bring rockets to Rocket City,'" she said. "Very influential."

Gov. Kay Ivey ended her speech by turning to Drake, who was sitting beside her on the stage, and saying, "Thank you, sincerely, for your investment in Alabama."

From Aerojet's perspective, the decision to come to Huntsville, "was easy," Drake said.

The company has had a presence in Huntsville for 50 years and not only is Huntsville known as the Rocket City but Aerojet pointed to the fact that the University of Alabama in Huntsville would be producing rocket scientists and providing a ready-made workforce.

"We know we can get the right resources with UAH," Drake said.

UAH President Robert Altenkirch also reminded the gathering of VIPs that Aerojet earlier this year gifted the school a $1 million endowment to create the Aerojet Rocketdyne Chair in Space Science.

"Aerojet will play a major role in advancing space exploration right here in Huntsville, Alabama, the city that's known as a titan of innovation," said Ivey, repeating her oft-used nickname for Huntsville.

The project, first announced in April, will include Aerojet relocated its headquarters to Huntsville's Cummings Research Park along with the advanced manufacturing facility to be located in the North Huntsville Industrial Park.

Altogether, it will add about 700 jobs to the more than 100 jobs Aerojet already provides in Huntsville. Some of the jobs will be filled via Aerojet job transfers, Drake said, but "the majority will be hired locally from the Huntsville region."

"When businesses like Aerojet Rocketdyne invest funds and (are) building new facilities and hiring new workers, you know we're doing some things right here in Alabama," Ivey said.

Though there was a long list of thank-yous and verbal bouquets tossed about at the ceremony as working to pull off the project - which went by the code name "Project Pyramid" - Drake, the Aerojet president, cited one person in particular.

See next page
"Mayor Tommy Battle was huge in our decision to come here," she said.

And Battle is excited about the project, too.

"We're going to be able to do some things here that aren't done anywhere else in the world," he said. "And that's something very special about our area. Time and time again, we do things that aren't done anywhere else in the world."

Dale Strong, chair of the Madison County Commission, summed it up by saying, "Aerojet Rocketdyne is once again proving Madison County has the right workforce at the right time and the right place to meet our nation's call. Just as our community has done time and again, we accept the challenge."

Prep work on the manufacturing site has already started and construction is expected to begin within weeks. The plant is expected to be in production by early 2019.

Aerojet said the advanced manufacturing facility will be used "to build a variety of aerospace products, including production work on the AR1 advanced rocket engine; composite cases for solid rocket motors; case pneumatic and hydrostatic proofing; and additive manufacturing (3-D printing) production work to support of a variety of programs in the space and defense sectors. This new facility will also be used to conduct advanced rocket propulsion research and development activities."

"When Alabama businesses thrive, Alabama workers thrive," Ivey said. "And when Alabamians thrive, our state thrives. Y'all, it's a win, win, win situation."

And Drake has already found an Alabama mentor of sorts.

"We are laser-focused on the process," she said. "That's something I learned this week from Alabama football coach Nick Saban. And we believe, as Coach Saban has said, every person can make a difference for the entire team in whatever their role is."
Joe Tipton of Alabama is the guy if you need 'sports edits'

By: Lee Roop

When 19-year-old Joe Tipton of Huntsville gets his photo taken with elite basketball players now, they're as likely to be his fans as he is theirs. Tipton's startup business - Tipton Edits - is that popular in the world of hoops.

"I make sports edits for the top high school players in the country," Tipton explained recently during a break at the University of Alabama in Huntsville, where he is a freshman marketing major.

"Edits" are relatively new in sports. Think of a digital baseball card or a digital poster. "Basically, it's a customized picture," Tipton said. "If you took a regular photograph, you can customize it and put text to it and put jerseys 'on' players when they commit to a certain school."

Commitment photos are big, and Tipton is the biggest in the field of making them. His work has been posted on websites for ESPN, The Bleacher Report, FLOHOOPS and many other sports pages. Tipton estimates 25 current NBA players have used his edits to announce big career moves, including Brandon Ingram of the Los Angeles Lakers and Josh Jackson of the Phoenix Suns. A recent photograph showed Tipton standing between Shareef O'Neal (Shaq's son) and Manute Bol's son Bol Bol at a basketball clinic.

Tipton was one of the first to make sports edits, but others are getting in the game. He's even had some of his ideas stolen. "There's a good bit of competition," he said, "but basically since I have a good reputation and trust with the guys, I'm still considered the top dog."

The good relationship is part trust and part speed. Players have to be able to trust Tipton won't leak their school of choice, and he sometimes has to create edits overnight.

Players also trust Tipton because he clearly loves basketball. He started playing when he was 10 or 11 and played at Madison County High School. "Most people aren't good enough to play in college, like myself," he said. "When I make edits for high school, NBA or college players, it lets me be able to stay with the game."

"Basically, he'll just tell me the school," he says of how it works when a high school player is ready to announce his college of choice. "I'll ask him if he had anything in mind and, if he didn't, I'll just freestyle it. Usually, they love it and I don't have to make any changes at all."

Most of the work is digital only, but it can be printed on T-shirts, posters or other surfaces. He uses apps from the Apple App Store in his creations and can combine up to seven apps in a single image. "They have a different purpose, and when you put them together, that's how you create (an edit)", he said.

A typical edit starts with a picture where the player is facing the camera so Tipton can change his jersey to the college of choice complete with the player's number. On commitment day, the player posts the card on social media and it gets shown on TV.

See next page
"They post it (on social media) and give me credit, and they have 100,000 followers, so everybody following them sees it, and they follow me," Tipton said, "and then I do more and more and get more and more popular. It's never-ending."

Maybe not never-ending, but Tipton going to keep it going as long as he can. He has 28,000 Instagram followers, and that number is growing. He's a presidential scholar at UAH and doesn't need the money for school, but it's enough extra cash that he also doesn't need a part-time job to pay for dinner and a movie. "So, it's nice to have a little fun," he said.

Tipton's parents were a little confused about his new job at first, because they'd never heard of edits. They started to catch on when one of his edits was shown on ESPN in September 2016. Then, Shaquille O'Neal posted one of his edits earlier this year.

"I told my mom and she about freaked out, because my mom and dad watched Shaquille O'Neal play when he was in college," Tipton said. "So, that was huge. But they've kind of gotten used to it now."
NASA administrator due at Von Braun symposium

HUNTSVILLE, Ala. (AP) — Acting NASA administrator Robert Lightfoot is among the speakers scheduled to appear this week in Huntsville at a meeting on space exploration.

The 10th annual Wernher von Braun Memorial Symposium is set to begin Wednesday. The two-day event named for the late German rocket engineer and NASA pioneer will be held at the University of Alabama in Huntsville.

Lightfoot is scheduled to speak at the meeting, which will focus on advancing opportunities in space.

Other speakers include the director of NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Todd May. The manager of the program office overseeing NASA's new heavy-lift rocket, John Honeycutt, also will appear.

The Marshall center is overseeing development of the propulsion systems for the new rocket, called the Space Launch System.
CEO's $5M gift leads to new innovation center in Alabama

By: Hanno van der Bijl

The technological empowerment of business is taking off in the Rocket City.

The University of Alabama in Huntsville has broken ground on the new D.S. Davidson Invention to Innovation Center, according to UAH.

The $16 million, 46,650-square-foot project is located off Holmes Avenue, next to the UAH College of Business with second and third floor bridges.

Dorothy Davidson, a philanthropist and businesswoman in Huntsville, donated $5 million to the project. Support was also secured from local, state and federal entities. Davidson is CEO and chairman of Davidson Technologies Inc.

The center’s three goals include stimulating the growth of new and existing science and engineering high-tech companies, catalyzing the formation of a resilient entrepreneurial "ecosystem" in north Alabama and south central Tennessee, and building partnerships with entrepreneurial ecosystems and hubs.

The center is scheduled to open in 2019.
Dr. Joe Leahy: 'So much more than one of (Amy Bishop's) victims'

By: Lee Roop

Friends of Dr. Joseph "Joe" Leahy say there's "so much more" to the research microbiologist and professor who died this week than what first put him in the news - surviving one of Alabama's most notorious killers. They say what Leahy did before and after that day in 2010 is what really matters.

Leahy's funeral mass is today, seven years and eight months after he was shot in the head by Amy Bishop in a now-infamous meeting at the University of Alabama in Huntsville. Three other professors died from gunshots, and two others were wounded as Bishop took revenge against her Biological Sciences Department colleagues for not getting tenure.

Leahy, who died Monday two days short of his 58th birthday, would later have no memory of that meeting. What drove and defined him afterward was getting back to his family, back to his research and back to his classroom. He did all that, and it didn't surprise John Frericks of Columbus, Ohio, a friend from childhood.

Leahy was "a great combination of intelligence and work ethic," Frericks said this week. "He had the ability to balance his time and effort. He worked hard and he played hard."

But there was more, Frericks said. "Think about what you'd want your son to be," he said. "That was Joe. He was the complete package."

He shooting didn't stop Leahy, Frericks said. "He fought through it and got back in the classroom," he said. "Who takes a bullet in the head and does that?"

Back in the classroom

Leahy was shot in February 2010. He was back in the classroom the following year despite a head wound that cost him one eye and most of his sight in the other eye. And he got back to research, said friend and UAH Biology Department Chair Debra Moriarity. She was in the meeting with Leahy and survived when Bishop's handgun jammed.

"As he got stronger and got better able to get around, he started getting students in (the lab) and working again," Moriarity remembered this week, "He was just so tickled to have this research going, and they were presenting it in papers. To him it was, he's back, he's got his career back, and he can continue."

Leahy's research focus changed after the shooting. He studied potential treatments for MRSA, a bacterial infection that resists most antibiotics. People get MRSA in hospitals and long-term care centers. And he teamed with UAH's School of Nursing to study infection risks in syringe bulbs, those squeezable tools parents use to clean mucus from their babies' noses.

"The project was good because both students from nursing and biology were able to get involved," Moriarity said. "It was a good cross-college collaboration, and he was very excited about doing that."

See next page
A different professor

Leahy was different in the classroom, too, Moriarit said. He had always cared about his students, she said, but his own struggle to recover helped him see students differently who struggled to learn. "He tried even harder to help them," Moriarit said, and it was a sign of his success and popularity that students cried in his classroom Monday when told of his death.

"He had a very soft spot in his heart for nurses after his ordeal," Moriarit said. "He talked a lot about how important nurses were in his care. I think he felt an extra responsibility to make sure they came out of his class with all the knowledge they were going to need and really tried to instill in them a desire to continue to learn."

Leahy loved to work out, and he was frequently seen in the science building in a T-shirt and gym shorts either coming or going from the university fitness center. He was always willing to help by sitting on a committee or taking on a department task, Moriarit said. And he loved his family. Moriarit said her last conversation with Leahy Friday was about one of his sons' progress toward an academic goal.

And he loved to tell jokes. Sometimes, they were on himself and his condition. He would leave notes in giant type on Moriarit's door. "He joked that he wasn't yelling," Moriarit said. "He just had to use a big enough font that he could see it."

First in his category

He would joke about his memory, saying, "I'm very forgetful, but I got shot in the head." And he told people he came in first place in his category in a road race. "What was your category?" they'd ask. "People who got shot in the head in 2010," he'd reply.

"Good one, Joe," Moriarit said. "He could make you feel at ease about it. I very quickly got over the feeling I had to walk on eggshells around him."

Moriarit said she and Leahy talked "a little" about the shooting when he returned to the department. "He asked a few questions, but mostly he was just willing to let it go," Moriarit said. "He was more interested in moving forward than trying to look back."
Jacobs leaving Auburn AD post

James Crepea jcrepea@al.com

Facing "a particularly difficult time" after "a series of controversies," Auburn's longtime athletic director is stepping down.

Jay Jacobs informed Auburn University president Steven Leath last week that he would leave on June 1, 2018, "or sooner if my successor is in place." The move became public after Jacobs sent a letter to Auburn donors late Friday afternoon.

"The last several months have been a particularly difficult time," Jacobs wrote in the letter. "Across several sports, a series of controversies have arisen. They have begun to take their toll and have raised questions about why Auburn must endure such problems. As I have always done, I have worked my hardest and best to do what is right for Auburn.

"I believe in Auburn and will fight for Auburn. But as I consider the future and what is best for Auburn, I have prayerfully decided the time has come for me to step aside. Sometimes a new direction and new leadership are helpful in moving beyond current problems."

SEE JACOBS, A7
JACOBS
FROM A1

Jacobs’ nearly 13-year tenure as Auburn’s athletic director ends with the department mired in numerous scandals.

There is still one charge outstanding from the federal wrongful termination lawsuit by former baseball coach Sunny Golloway, an ongoing Title IX investigation into allegations of abuse and sexual harassment of softball players, the FBI’s corruption investigation into college basketball and the arrest of Auburn assistant coach Chuck Person and the federal discrimination lawsuit filed by former track assistant coach Adrian Gholioare.

Auburn has retained Birmingham-based law firm Lightfoot, Franklin & White to review the softball and men’s basketball programs and investigate an allegation of an academic staffer taking a test for a former football player. The school has fulfilled three of AL.com’s numerous public records requests related to the softball program and investigation, but none related to men’s basketball, track or other sports.

“Auburn and Auburn Athletics are both better because of Jay’s years of service to his alma mater,” Auburn president Steven Leath said in a statement. “Under his leadership, Auburn teams have won 11 national and 34 SEC championships, student-athlete academic achievement has risen to its highest level, revenue has grown dramatically, and Auburn consistently ranks among the nation’s best in game-day experience.

“Jay is an Auburn man through and through. Janet and I wish Jay and Angie the very best, and we look forward to his continued service to Auburn as Athletics Director Emeritus.”

AL.com reported on Sept. 27 that Auburn’s leadership began the process to end Jacobs’ tenure as athletic director, which began in December 2004, after his career on the Plains began as an assistant strength and conditioning coach in 1985.

Payroll records indicate Jacobs earned over $1 million in total compensation in each of the last three years. He was earning $600,000 a year in base salary, with several incentives built into his contract that could increase the base salary to $750,000 per year.

As of March 2016, Jacobs’ contract, which was signed in 2011, was to expire on June 30, 2020, but could have been extended an additional year through 2021 with an automatic rollover on June 1, 2016 that is believed to have occurred. An Auburn official said the contract in 2011 is the latest contract Jacobs signed.

Though Auburn won 11 national championships during Jacobs’ tenure as athletic director, only the 2010 BCS National Championship was from a revenue sport. The program was plagued in recent years by a series of coaching hires that failed to produce enough wins or enroll in ranking.

The revenue for Auburn’s athletic department soared over the past 13 years, as was the case everywhere in the SEC, and Jacobs championed several facilities projects, including Auburn Arena and the South End Zone video board at Jordan-Hare Stadium, and the plans to renovate the North end zone of Jordan-Hare have repeatedly stalled due to insufficient fundraising and various portions have been broken off for separate smaller projects, including the support facility, locker room and new press box currently under construction in the Southwest corner.

During his over 30 years working at his alma mater, Jacobs also served as a football graduate assistant, conditioning coach, assistant athletics director, associate athletic director for operations and senior associate athletic director in charge of Tigers Unlimited, the department’s fundraising arm, before becoming athletic director.

Prior to Friday’s letter, Jacobs’ last public comments came in an impromptu meeting with reporters following the introductory press conference of new softball coach Monday Dean on Sept. 17.

Asked if he discussed a contract extension with former softball coach Clint Myers, which was widely reported by multiple outlets in July but refuted by Auburn 51 days later, Jacobs did not answer and ended the interview.

“I’m done, I’m done,” Jacobs said. “Thank you all. I sent a letter to everybody. You can read that, OK? But I did want to come by. (A reporter) said I’ll want to ask me some questions, so I wanted to come by and do that respectfully. OK? Everybody good? I know you’re not satisfied, but I came by.”

JAY JACOBS LETTER TO DONORS

Dear Auburn Family,

I can remember everything about my first Auburn football game. I was a 12-year-old boy from nearby Lafayette, watching from the north end zone with my uncle and cousins as the Tigers defeated Georgia. It was the beginning of my lifelong love affair with Auburn University.

Auburn is special. It always will be.

Since I came here as a walk-on football player in 1981 and became a starter on an SEC Championship team, I have loved this school and always will. I have given my heart and soul to our university, but the university has given me so much more in return.

Auburn is a wonderful place. Nothing makes me prouder than walking around the campus saying “War Eagle” to students, staff and faculty who pass by. Most people don’t know it, but sometimes I take a bunch of young Auburn fans out of the south end zone during the fourth quarter and sneak them into the dressing room. We’re family, and dreams come true here.

Expectations are high at Auburn — they should be. As the director of athletics, I have the responsibility for managing 250 tremendous members of our staff who are responsible and accountable to the 567 student-athletes who wear the Auburn uniform. When something goes wrong, it’s my responsibility. I have always known that, I have always accepted that.

The last several months have been a particularly difficult time. Across several sports, a series of controversies have arisen. They have begun to take their toll and have raised questions about why Auburn must endure such problems. As I always have done, I have worked my hardest and best to do what is right for Auburn.

I believe in Auburn and will fight for Auburn. But as I consider the future and what is best for Auburn, I have prayerfully decided the time has come for me to step aside. Sometimes a new direction and new leadership are helpful in moving beyond current problems.

Earlier this week, I informed President Leath that I will step down as director of athletics on June 1, 2018, or sooner if my successor is in place. I have come to this decision after a lot of prayer, deliberative discussions with my wife, Angie, and with the realization that it is time for a new leader of an incredible department.

Until a new director of athletics is chosen, I will work hard every day every way I can, I still have work to do, but I know already that I will miss so much about this place, I will miss my monthly lunches with team captains, I will miss hearing ideas from students about their Auburn experience and how to make it better. I will miss watching student-athletes get their degrees, which is what this is all about. And I’ll miss Ms. Sylvia’s smiling face every morning when I arrive.

While I am proud of all our accomplishments during my 13 years “in the chair,” I am most proud of the young men and women who represented all of us with dignity, class and pride.

These are the students who have gone back to their communities to make the world a better place.

There will be plenty of time to share my appreciation and to express my gratitude to so many, but for now, I will continue to work, as I am honored to forever be a member of the Auburn Family.

God Bless and War Eagle!

Jay
Jacobs' departure as AD is long overdue

Auburn athletic director Jay Jacobs announced his retirement, effective June 1, 2018, or as soon as his replacement can be hired. For many, it won't be soon enough.

Julie Bennett, file

Kevin Scarbinsky
kscarbinsky@al.com

One of the most eagerly anticipated days in the recent history of Auburn Athletics finally came to pass Friday. The long reign of Jay Jacobs as athletics director has been given an expiration date.

Based on the public and private feelings of so many people who care about the university, as well as many neutral observers, it's long overdue.

Jacobs' released a statement couching the decision as his own, saying, "I have prayerfully decided the time has come for me to step aside" no later than June 1 of next year, "sooner if my successor is in place."

Much sooner is the plan preferred by insiders, but in truth, Jacobs' didn't arrive at this decision voluntarily.

The misguided hires that looked good on the front end but eventually blew up in his face and the internal scandals gone public across multiple sports became too much for the AD with the second-longest tenure in the SEC to weather any longer.

A little more than a month ago, a handful of power brokers decided enough is enough and communicated that message to new President Steven Leath.

It took them long enough.

How will Jacobs the athletics director be remembered? As the smiling, backslapping, down-home, all-about-the-family former football walk-on who wore his faith on his sleeve? Or as a scheming, backstabbing, keep-it-down-home, all-about-himself manipulator whose public professions of faith masked his ability to throw people under the bus to consolidate his own power?

There's a third option that may come closest to the truth, that Jacobs morphed from one extreme toward the other, from a well-meaning puppet installed in that position because he could be controlled to a mean-spirited wannabe puppet master who became too enamored of his own perceived power.

A few weeks ago, according to someone familiar with the details, Jacobs showed up at the Birmingham office of a major Auburn donor unannounced. His message: I'm not going anywhere, brother.

SEE SCARBINSKY, B3
SCARBINSKY
FROM B1

This despite the mountain of evidence that it was past
time for him to step down for the good of the school, that a
small group of decision-makers already had reached that
conclusion and was trying to work out the details.

It was more evidence that, as multiple sources described,
at some point during his long tenure Jacobs changed and
not for the better. Instead of being all about how to protect,
defend and promote Auburn, his mission and his charge to
his subordinates shifted. It became all about how to pro-
more, protect and defend Jay Jacobs.

The environment inside the athletics department had
grown toxic. Current employees were telling former col-
leagues they didn't know whom to trust anymore and the
supposed core values of "always tell the truth" and "If you
see something, say something" didn't always apply.

One key example of how the public portrait of the AD didn't
match the private persona was the relationship between
Jacobs and the last football coach he hired, Gus Malzahn. Per-
ceived as allies, their relationship had deteriorated over time.

Jacobs made his displeasure with Malzahn known at a
senior staff meeting after Auburn's dispiriting 2016 loss to
Georgia. The AD ranted about the coaching staff's incom-
petence in that game and, in his eyes, its inability to grasp
the importance of the Georgia rivalry.

People in the room wondered, Why is he telling us? Shouldn't
he be talking to the head coach? Those were good questions
with a simple answer. The athletics director and the head coach
were no longer speaking to each other much about anything.

One relatively new employee, who'd worked at other
major programs, discovered that working for Auburn Ath-
letics was like stepping into a time machine and setting the
destination for the 1980s. The place resembled a mom-and-
pop operation that never changed its old-fashioned way
of doing things despite watching annual revenues climb
north of $100 million.

It was hard to get a specific answer to a specific question
in a timely fashion. There were people in the department
whose specific function was hard for anyone to identify.
No one in the department, from the AD on down, seemed
interested in asking the new employee how things worked
at other schools where he'd been employed.

Then came the bigger question that troubled some new
and old employees alike. Were they supposed to be loyal to
Auburn or to Jacobs?

That's no longer a dilemma.

Auburn's decision-makers now have arrived at a cross-
roads. Are they going to hire another familiar name who won't
change the fundamental way Auburn Athletics operates? Or
are they going to use the same wisdom Alabama did when it
chose Greg Byrne to follow Bill Battle — hire a proven pro-
fessional administrator even if he doesn't have family ties?

By making it official that it's moving on from Jacobs,
Auburn has resolved one major issue. It has many more left
to address.
Mr. Golf

Impressive PGA debut for Strohmeyer

Ian Thompson

Former University of Alabama golfer Scott Strohmeyer, who was part of the 2013 NCAA national championship-winning UA team, had a week to remember last week at the PGA Tour's Sanderson Farms Championship in Jackson, Miss.

In that 2013 NCAA national title win he went undefeated in his three matches, with two wins and a half and was part of the winning team alongside Justin Thomas, Bobby Wyatt, Cory Whitsett and Trey Mullinax. That's quite the group.

Last week he made his PGA Tour debut (he has not played in a Web.com Tour event either) after getting through pre-qualifying and qualifying for the Sanderson Farms.

Recently he failed to advance out of the first stage of Web.com Tour "Q" School and realistically didn't know the next event he would get to play in. That all changed when he shot 68 in the qualifier at Deerfield Golf Club in Canton, Miss., then won a four-man playoff in dramatic style

by holing a bunker shot on the third playoff hole for an eagle to most definitely earn the final spot in the field.

Not content with simply making the field, he played extremely well and found himself in the final group last Sunday.

Rounds of 72-67-68-71-278 saw him finish 10-under in a tie for fourth with, among others, Vestavia resident Smyley Kaufman.

It was a good week for players with local ties as Tuscaloosa native Patton Kizzire finished tied for 10th along with Kevin Streelman, whose in-laws live in Tuscaloosa, along with former UA players Tom Lovelady (T-18) and Dru Love (T-30) having solid weeks.

The event was won going away by Ryan Armour on 19-under.

Strohmeyer's top-10 finish earned him close to $190,000 and a spot in the Shriners Hospitals for Children Open in Las Vegas, which ended Sunday.

Asked what the whirlwind last couple of weeks have been like, he said: "If I got in (Sanderson Farms), it was like, 'I know I can do this,' but then to actually do it, to play in the final group, and (finish) in the top 10, it's truly a dream come true."

And regards his UA days:

- "Our coach (Jay Seawell) did a very good job of recruiting and developing us once we got there. We're all really good friends, too.
- "Sitting at home I've watched a lot of PGA Tour events. Watching all my teammates and buddies play out here and have success, it gave me confidence that I can do it.

I think we're just all kind of feeding off each other, and Justin (Thomas) is leading the way."

He talked to his former college roommate Thomas throughout the Sanderson Farms, who told him: "Just keep the ball under

See GOLF, C9

See next page
GOLF

Continued from C1

the hole and just be patient. He said, it never takes as much as you think it does. That helped me relax a little bit. Because I was thinking, just make the cut. He was like, just try to chase the leaders down one hole at a time.”

Strohmeyer, who lives in Auburn and his wife is from Tuscaloosa, certainly had a week to remember. Very well played indeed.

Ian Thompson has been writing about golf in Alabama for over 24 years. His weekly “Mr. Golf” column concentrates on golfers, golf events and people associated with the sport of interest to the Tuscaloosa and Birmingham areas. Reach him with story ideas at thompsonesoff@gmail.com.
November is all about survival

Cecil Hurt

What was the Game of the Century not so long ago might as well have been the Game of the 17th Century on Saturday night. It's been six years since Alabama and LSU faced each other in a pair of 2011 games that featured hugely talented rosters on both sides. Those games were fiercely contested and so was the Alabama-LSU renewal. But it wasn't a classic, simply an often-tortuous affair that could have been played in the Pit of Misery if that didn't mean somebody would shout out an infuriating “Dilly Dilly” from that mindworm of a beer commercial. Not that the crowd couldn't have used a beer along the way.

Alabama has maintained itself at the pinnacle of college football and LSU has slipped a bit from the vintage Les Miles teams, clearly. The Tigers were willing but the flesh, while not weak, wasn't the formidable conglomerate of muscle and bone that the Tigers of a few years ago were. They did their best but weren't Alabama's equal. It showed. Although the campus atmosphere was the best of the year — a testimony, at least in part, to the lack of a compelling home opponent in this lackluster year in the SEC — the energy was sporadic. For all the fans who wanted to see how Alabama would handle a tough game, it probably wasn't as fun as they remembered it being.

For the first three quarters, Alabama relied on basic weapons, building a lead thanks to efficiency in the red zone — two touchdowns instead of field goals, one set up by an interception — and the

See HURT, C6

See next page
mighty punting of JK Scott. Meanwhile, LSU couldn’t get a field-flipping take-away and couldn’t score a touchdown when it did make it to the red zone.

LSU kept looking for one knockout punch on offense in the second half, trying to get by with the occasional big hit in the same way it managed to upset Auburn. The Bengal Tigers got one, on a 54-yard run with a direct snap and run by Darrell Williams and might have had another if Danny Etling had not underthrown a long pass to a wide-open DJ Chark early in the fourth quarter. All of new Tiger offensive coordinator Matt Canada’s shifting and jet-sweeping hasn’t fixed the LSU offense yet, and the full renovation isn’t going to be complete until the Tigers recruit and develop a better quarterback.

In the meantime, LSU did keep its defense off the field and it steadily kept knocking out defensive players that no team without Alabama’s depth could afford to lose. Whether the Crimson Tide can take much more depends on several diagnoses, including that of Minkah Fitzpatrick, Mack Wilson and Shaun Dion Hamilton to go along with the previously injured.

By the time it was over, Alabama seemed like Clint Eastwood in one of his later Westerns, having killed everyone in town but looking bruised and bloodied and generally worse for wear.

That left observers frantically working out whether this win made Alabama better than Troy using the transitive property — it did — and whether it was smooth and steady progress toward the team’s championship goals. That point is more argumentative.

Alabama didn’t look especially fresh, as if it had been scrimmaging against roving packs of grizzly bears during the open week. The bread-and-butter running game was something short of a dull loaf.

But it looked good enough to survive the annual meat-grinding that LSU games have become.

That did not please anyone looking for a work, although one can argue that November isn’t a month for pleasing aesthetics but is simply one for survival — the way things were in a more grueling time.

Reach Cecil Hurt at cecil@tidesports.com or 205-722-0225.
Quick night for Wilder

Tuscaloosa's WBC champ retains title after first-round knockout of Stiverne

Staff report

BROOKLYN, N.Y. — The only fighter ever to go the distance with Deontay Wilder didn’t last a full round when he got a second shot. Wilder, the World Boxing Council heavyweight champion from Tuscaloosa, knocked out Bermane Stiverne in less than 3 minutes on Saturday night at Barclays Center in a rematch.

Wilder defeated Stiverne via 12-round unanimous decision in January 2015 to win the world title. On Saturday the WBC’s No. 1-ranked contender, Stiverne (25-3-1) was knocked down three times before the fight was halted at 2:59 of the first round, one second short of surviving the opening round.

Wilder felled Stiverne with an explosive one-two combination, then with a three-punch flurry that was also punctuated with a right hand. With less than 10 seconds to go in the round, Wilder was waved in for the finish and showed no mercy in improving to 39-0 with 38 knockouts.

“No one punches like him,” promoter Lou DiBella said. “He’s the scariest heavyweight on the planet.”

The 6-foot-7 Wilder controlled the early part of the round with his long left jab before opening up to flash his power. Stiverne did not appear to land a single punch.

See WILDER, A9
GAME DAY GUIDES

Bruno Event Team keeps fans happy ‘Driveway to Driveway’

When the UAB Blazers football team made its long-awaited return at the beginning of September, it was the culmination of a vigorous community effort to save the program, which had been shuttered in 2014 to combat rising costs. But getting the team back on the gridiron was only the first step. Drawing fans out to the games — and developing a thriving gameday culture — is essential to the program’s longevity.

That’s where the Bruno Sports Marketing and Event Management Team comes in. The Birmingham-based company, formed in 1995, is a national leader in organizing sporting events. Within Alabama, they’re perhaps most recognizable for managing game days for the Crimson Tide, but they were also responsible for the recent 76th Annual Magic City Classic, which drew thousands of fans.

In August, UAB announced that it would begin a three-year partnership with Bruno Event Team to organize gameday events for the Blazers. The Bruno team will be responsible for managing tailgating events, concessions, traffic, parking, restrooms and the stadium itself.

Bruno President and CEO Gene Hallman says it’s a “Driveway to Driveway Experience,” making sure fans’ game days are smooth from when they pull out of their driveways, to when they arrive at the stadium, to when they return home after the event is over.

The key is communication, Hallman says. There’s a website dedicated to game day — blazergameday.com — and a heavy social media presence that provides constant updates.

“Our social media apparatus and the website is to relieve the anxiety (fans) have about where to go, what to do, how much it’s going to cost to park,” Hallman says. “Especially if you have kids, you’re just anxious about getting all that right.”

That’s just one way the Bruno team has worked to adapt to what Hallman calls “a major cultural shift” around sporting events. “The pace of change right now is greater than it’s ever been,” he says. “Not only is it important to be in tune with what a fan is looking for today, but to be preparing yourself for what’s going to be part of the gameday experience five years from now.”

The need for stadiums to handle high volumes of cellular traffic is one such adaptation that’s had to be made, he says. Another is an increased focus on tailgating, which he says has “exploded” in recent years. “Back in the day, you’d pull out a cooler and a card table and you had a tailgate,” he says. “Now, it’s white linen and china and a caterer with a satellite television. It’s dramatically different.”

But even with those changes, sporting events are driven by tradition, Hallman says, and UAB is just restarting the slow process of establishing a college football tradition. “We’re working to make sure that everyone has very high expectations for the fan experience, because... first impressions are everything,” he says. “Bottom line is, there are so many more options for a person to spend their leisure time. And you’ve got to make sure the experience you’re offering them is unique and compelling.”

Written for This Is Alabama by Sam Pricett.
Harris' pick-6 puts end to Owls' comeback

Evan Dudley  For AL.com

It was a perilous moment midway through the second quarter, even though it may not have looked that way on the scoreboard.

Rice had just scored on a 70-yard run by receiver Austin Walter but still trailed UAB 35-7. It was a moment ripe for a swing in momentum as Rice rolled the dice with an onside kick they recovered at the UAB 40-yard line.

"Defensively, we gave up some yards, but we had some huge plays and takeaways," head coach Bill Clark said. "But I'm disappointed in myself. I was back there talking with the defense, and I knew we would get an onside after that play."

The Owls had a chance to cut into the lead again, but UAB redshirt freshman cornerback Brontae Harris had other ideas.

True freshman quarterback Miklo Smalls — who replaced starter Sam Glasmann for Rice's scoring drive — drifted right in the pocket and released a bullet to the sideline, where Harris jumped the route and was escorted by teammates 64 yards to the end zone. It gave UAB a 42-7 lead and swung momentum back in the Blazers' direction for the duration of the game.

"I think it was huge," Clark said. "There was a little bit of change in momentum and that's what scares you as a coach. But you talk about playing through those situations. You're always looking for defensive takeaways and then to score on it, it doesn't get any better than that."

It's not uncommon for this Blazer defense. They have 14 takeaways this season with three fumble recoveries and 11 interceptions — three of which have been returned for scores.

Harris' pick-six is the latest for UAB, and senior cornerback Darius Williams — who also reeled in an interception for the fourth straight game — said that it could be anybody at anytime because of the unit's confidence and tenacity.

"Oh man, we're extremely confident," Williams, who is Harris' roommate, said. "We have just about everybody in our secondary that could start for most teams in Conference USA. We all know each other, we all get together and we all love how each other plays."
Win-win deal: Clark, UAB agree to new deal

Kevin Scarbinsky
kscarbinsky@al.com

Home or away, in conference or out, a common thread has run through every UAB football game this season. The Blazers have greater expectations, but for obvious reasons, they win every time they play regardless of the final score.

This week, it’s different. The Blazers became bowl eligible with a 52-21 beatdown of Rice. But the program had already celebrated a bigger victory Friday.

Bill Clark and the administration agreed to a new contract — and it didn’t come with a hostage video attached.

At a lot of programs, where they hand out raises and extensions like Halloween candy, this kind of news would be routine. At UAB, where the routine too often has involved suspicion and distrust, this news couldn’t be more extraordinary or more welcome.

For the first time since coming to Birmingham in 2014, Clark will have a legitimate contract befitting a Division I football coach who’s overcome the toughest obstacles in the Football Bowl Subdivision.

His first contract was for a suspiciously short term of three years, which turned out to be a prelude to the university president shutting down the program with the applause of the trustees. His second contract was for five years, but the first two years expired before the program played another game.

This contract is different, and not just because it raises his current annual salary of $605,000 to $900,000 in the first year of the deal to $1,015 million in the final year, putting him where he belongs among the highest-paid coaches in Conference USA.

The monetary value of the contract is even greater with the boost it will provide his state retirement income.

In addition, this contract is for a full five years. More to the point, it’s for an industry standard of five full football seasons.

Look at what Clark has accomplished in four years and two seasons with the Blazers. One 6-6 season, one 5-3 record (and counting), one Football Operations Building. One UAB Athletics Foundation. One football program returned from the dead and given its first real shot at living well.

The contributions of that foundation, which has the full faith and backing of a significant portion of the Birmingham business community, can’t be overstated. The foundation’s support for Clark helped overcome his camp’s early concerns about the negotiations with the administration.

He’s forged strong relationships with some heavy hitters who treat him as an equal in their vision of what’s possible in Birmingham. It’s rare for a college coach, especially below the Power Five, to have that kind of access to that kind of influence.

As a result, Clark has the opportunity as well as the incentive to reject the feelings that have already begun from other programs in search of a new head coach. People who know him well believe he wants to stay in Birmingham to continue to build UAB into a Boise State of the South.

In the past, the attitudes and actions of the administration and the board made that kind of growth impossible. It’s still not clear how much those attitudes have changed, but Clark’s new contract is a positive sign.

Technically, the deal still has to be approved by the BOT. Practically, this news wouldn’t have been released without the board’s OK.

So the momentum continues for UAB football with a win-win deal for the program and everyone invested in it.
By Aaron Suttles
Sports Writer

Alabama ranked No. 2 in the initial College Football Rankings released Tuesday night with a conference rival squarely in front of it.

Georgia was in the top spot, led by Kirby Smart, a former Nick Saban assistant. The Bulldogs have the nation's premier win of the season in a one-point road victory over Notre Dame in September.

Notre Dame was slotted No. 3. Defending national champion Clemson was ranked fourth.

CFP Selection Committee Chair Kirby Hocutt said the debate between Georgia and Alabama was very close and passionate. He said the difference was Georgia's two victories over CFP Top 25 ranked teams.

Saban's annual rant on the rankings was delivered during his Monday press conference.

"I could care less about the poll," Saban said. "What significance does the poll have right now? All we're talking about right here is the challenge of our season. Where are we going to be in the poll if we don't play well in the next four games? So I'm focused on our next four games and I could care less about the poll.

See CFP, C5

CFP

Continued from C1

You won't see me wasting any time watching TV, watching who's one and who's two. It really doesn't matter. What really matters is how you play the rest of the season. How you focus the rest of the season, how you stay focused the rest of the season. If our players think anything of it, then that could be a problem and an issue too. These are the things that we try to categorize as 'poison' that you really don't want your players to be focusing on or thinking about. But I appreciate you asking so I could get this off my chest."

College Football Playoff Rankings

1. Georgia 8-0
2. Alabama 8-0
3. Notre Dame 7-1
4. Clemson 7-1
5. Oklahoma 7-1
6. Ohio St. 7-1
7. Penn St. 7-1
8. TCU 7-1
9. Wisconsin 8-0
10. Miami 7-0
11. Oklahoma St. 7-1
12. Washington 7-1
13. Virginia Tech 7-1
14. Auburn 6-2
15. Iowa St. 6-2
16. Mississippi St. 6-2
17. Southern Cal 7-2
18. UCF 7-0
19. LSU 6-2
20. NC State 6-2
21. Stanford 6-2
22. Arizona 6-2
23. Memphis 7-1
24. Michigan St. 6-2
25. Washington St. 7-2vw
Saban has little use for poll

Cecil Burt

There might have been some magic, or at least some Superball DNA, in those baseballs that kept flying out of Minute Maid Park in Houston on Sunday night. But at least a couple of times during the record-setting home run barrage, the cause was simply a pitcher who was worn down by a long season trying to get a straight fastball past one or another of the sport’s best hitters — with predictable results.

The same thing happened at the University of Alabama on Monday when a reporter tried to sneak a changeup past the premier press-conference slugger in America today: Alabama coach Nick Saban.

There was nothing wrong or untimely about the question from the Montgomery Advertiser’s Duane Rankin, who knows his way around a press conference.

See POLL, C4
POLL

Continued from C1

When he asked for Saban’s opinion about the initial College Football Playoff poll, Rankin, like everyone in the room, knew that Saban would turn it around and launch it to the bleachers—and he did. But there are times when you ask the question anyway, just to see whether it lands in the parking lot or the trees. This one made the trees.

"I could care less about a poll," Saban said. "What significance does a poll have right now? All we’re talking about right here is the challenge of our season, and where are we going to be in the poll if we don’t play well in the next four games? So I’m focused on the next four games. I could care less about the poll. You won’t see me waste any time watching TV or (asking) who is 1 and who is 2. It doesn’t really matter. What really matters is how you play the rest of the season.

“But I appreciate you asking so I could get that off my chest.”

Saban’s answer, as his answers often are, was true in two ways. First, where he stands on ground level, any distraction is—you guessed it—“poison.” (He didn’t limit it to “rat poison” this time.) He’d indicated earlier that LSU, a team that annually lines up and battles the Crimson Tide toe-to-toe, might increase the focus and decrease the outside distraction factor. He just doesn’t want to take any chances.

Saban probably wasn’t thinking on a more cosmic level about the first poll, but his answer applies as well. What possible difference does it make at this point if Alabama is No. 1 or not? A million words will be exhaled if Georgia is No. 1 and Alabama is No. 2—certainly a possibility, although I’m not sure why Alabama’s win over Florida State is discounted and Georgia’s win over an even more dysfunctional Florida team is getting such love. Regardless, there will be few (if any) analysts who will point out the obvious. Only two possible outcomes exist if Alabama and Georgia are the Top Two teams this week. Either one (or both) loses a game before the end of the regular season, and the whole picture changes, or neither one loses and then guess what? They play each other in Atlanta before the final poll, which will settle the whole thing.

I’d stop short of saying that the average fan will be “poisoned” by the contrived debate. At this point, most have a healthy hot-take immunity. But Saban was dead on about what a poll in October means—not a lot.

Reach Cecil Hurt at cecil@tidesports.com or 205-722-0225.
UA’s Deionte Thompson indicted

Redshirt sophomore charged in alleged spring break assault

By Stephanie Taylor
Staff Writer

University of Alabama red-shirt sophomore Deionte Thompson is one of four young men indicted on felony aggravated assault charges in relation to a spring break brawl on a Texas beach.

According to The Beaumont Enterprise newspaper, a grand jury returned indictments against Thompson, 20, and three other men last week. All four of the men were first charged and bonded out of jail in April.

The arrests came a month after the March 18 incident on Crystal Beach. Thompson, a backup free safety in his third year on the team, is from Orange, Texas, about 90 miles from the popular spring break destination.

A grand jury didn’t issue the indictments against the men until last week, the Beaumont newspaper reported.

UA Coach Nick Saban issued a statement late Monday.

“We are continuing to follow the progress of the legal proceedings in this matter,” he said. “We are not going to make any judgements until that process has been completed.”

The paper reported that alleged victim Noah Frillou, 18, had four plates in his face and his jaw wired shut. Citing court records, the newspaper reported that Thompson’s friend punched Frillou in the face and “just lost it” after a racial slur was said.

Deputies with the Galveston County Sheriff’s Office identified Thompson as one of two men who kicked Frillou while he fell to the ground, the newspaper reported in April.

Thompson has appeared in all eight games for Alabama, making 12 total tackles.
Four-star center Emil Ekiyor flips to Alabama

By Cody Estremera
Special to The Tuscaloosa News

Four-star center Emil Ekiyor flipped his commitment from Michigan to Alabama on Sunday. Ekiyor was Michigan's highest rated recruit so far in its 2018 class. Ekiyor announced his decision on Twitter. He committed to Michigan on Oct. 2. According to the 247Sports composite, the Indianapolis native is the No. 2 center in the 2018 class and the No. player from Indiana. Overall he is the No. 105 prospect. The 6-7½, 323-pound center will represent the West team in the U.S. Army All-American Bowl on Jan. 6. Ekiyor is now the 12th prospect to commit to Alabama and the eighth four-star recruit in the class. He is the first prospect since Vernon Jackson to commit to Alabama.
We should look honestly at the costs, benefits of football

By any measure you want to apply, football is America’s favorite sport. There’s no question that’s true in Alabama. There’s also no question Tuscaloosa is widely recognized as the epicenter of the sport on the college level.

Football is more than just a passion at a time here. It is woven deeply into the community’s fabric that it is more than just a profoundly important aspect of our culture. It is perhaps the most significant economic driver in our area, particularly right now, while the University of Alabama Crimson Tide is in the midst of a historically dominant dynasty unlike any other in the modern era of the sport.

The success of the team reaches into every nook and cranny of everyday life. Weddings and even funerals are scheduled so as not to interrupt football Saturdays.

The importance of football locally goes much deeper than its impact culturally. University officials are quick to point to the football team’s success as the catalyst behind the remarkable growth and economic prosperity on campus.

That growth, along with the seven home games, the spring game and the international exposure they bring to Tuscaloosa are among the most vital economic drivers in our area. The Tuscaloosa News benefits every bit as much as any other local institution from the interest in football. Without football, the university, this town and its newspaper would all be radically different.

It has been that way ever since George Denny became the university’s president in 1912. Five years after taking the job, Denny made the controversial hire of Ken Scott as head football coach.

Football success led to increased revenues and rapid growth. Scott’s successor, Wallace Wade, arrived in 1923 and quickly took the program to previously unthinkable heights. Ever since then, higher learning, the local economy and Alabama football have been intertwined and never more so than today.

Nick Saban’s success is fueling a new era of unprecedented growth at the Capstone.

Participation in high school football is trending downward at the national level, while it has increased over the past few years locally. More parents are opting for flag youth football in Tuscaloosa than ever before. In the Tuscaloosa County Park and Recreation Authority leagues, flag football participation has passed the number playing tackle youth ball and has more than doubled over the last five years.

Football has always been a violent sport. Some people like to call it a contact sport, but that’s not accurate. Basketball is a contact sport. Football is a collision sport.

Football has been down this path before. A few years before Denny arrived on campus, there was a national movement to ban the game. President Theodore Roosevelt stepped in to save it with sweeping reforms that forever changed how the game is played.

Parents, players, universities and communities deserve an unflinching and honest look at all the information available to us so that we’re better able to address issues with the modern game.

Many young men who otherwise wouldn’t be able to go to college get an education through football. But they deserve to know at what cost. And so do the fans who cheer them.
Since 2011, outside firms have been paid at least $1.3M to assist in hires

John Talty jtalty@al.com

Two years ago, Georgia athletic director Greg McGarity didn’t like the idea of using a search firm to help him make a hire.

He championed his school’s internal human relations department and was proud he hadn’t spent a dime on a search firm on the six coaching hires he had made as Georgia’s AD.

“I’ve always believed it’s the role of the athletic director to assume that responsibility,” McGarity told AL.com in March 2016. “If there is a problem with a hire because of certain circumstance that wasn’t brought up, I don’t think anybody wants to be in a position to point the finger back at a search firm for their inability to find out certain information.”

Less than a year later, McGarity made his biggest money hire yet: nabbing Alabama defensive coordinator Kirby Smart as the Georgia head football coach. His department shelled out $42,175 to Carr Sports Consulting.

McGarity’s change of thinking is emblematic of the way college athletics now work. Search firms have become an omnipresent force in the last decade-plus as more and more college administrators deem them a necessity despite criticism of their six-figure costs and actual effectiveness.

In the coming months, as many as five athletic directors in the SEC could find themselves in McGarity’s shoes of deciding whether to use a search firm or not. And if recent history is any indicator, they will.

SEC programs combined to spend more than $1.3 million on search firms since 2011, according to public records reviewed by AL.com. The actual number is likely at least $2 million as several schools did not have to provide financial records for a variety of reasons.

SEE SEARCH, B3
SEARCH
FROM B1

Only two of the conference's 14 schools — Arkansas and Kentucky — didn't utilize outside help to make a coach or athletic director hire during that period. Seven of the 14 schools used a search firm at least twice since 2011.

Ole Miss has already hired Turnkey Sports & Entertainment to find a permanent football solution, the same firm that has handled LSU's football search and the athletic director searches for Alabama and Tennessee in the last year. In addition to Turnkey-led searches, Missouri used a search firm to hire a basketball coach and Auburn even used one to assist on an offensive coordinator hire since 2016.

"A one-time cost of $100,000 is nothing compared to the seven-year cost at $5 million a year," former Missouri chancellor R. Bowen Loftin says. "That's what you're looking at, getting it right is absolutely imperative. The one-time cost you put into that is, in my opinion, well worth it."

Consider Bill Carr among those who disagree.

Carr makes a chunk of his living off the coaching search industry as head of Carr Sports Consulting, but, well, he's got a lot of problems with it.

The former Florida athletic director has been in the business for more than 20 years, handling his fair share of high-profile searches, but doesn't like the direction it is headed. He sees athletic directors handing over too much control to search firms when pursuing coaches, creating a lack of institutional control. He hates getting calls from coaches distressed they couldn't get in the mix for a job because they weren't on a search firm's "list." He thinks the quid pro quo between firms and job candidates — an often-used criticism of the industry — is a real problem that needs to be addressed.

Some search firms, Carr explains, "tell an athletic director candidate that I will not advocate you as one of my preferred candidates unless you guarantee me that I'll get your coaching searches when they come about."

But nothing fires him up as much as the money. The money schools spend on search firms is obscene, Carr says. He runs an economical search — his biggest expenses for the Georgia search were hotels, a rental car and a dinner at Carrabba's — and is offended when he sees schools spending hundreds of thousands of dollars on a search firm for a football hire.

"They aren't getting their money's worth nine times out of 10," Carr says. "That's insanity to spend that kind of money. Someone could say 'That's Carr, he's small potatoes and that's just sour grapes,' and they are entitled to their opinion, but I've been doing it for 20 years, and I don't see it. I think it's absurd."

Scott Stricklin, now the athletic director at Florida, ran a thrifty athletic department at Mississippi State. Mississippi State didn't generate as much revenue as many of its SEC peers — Texas A&M generated $100 million more in 2015-16 — and so Stricklin was mindful about how he spent his department's money. He used Parker Executive Search in 2012 — the same firm that ran the search that led to his hire in 2010 — to replace Rick Stansbury, but when it came time to hire a new basketball coach in 2015, he eschewed the search firms.
and hired Ben Howland on his own. The prices he saw search firms charging didn't justify the value added to his search.

"I would have to see the money being of value to make me think it's a wise use of our resources," Stricklin says. "That would have to be a special circumstance. When those figures start getting up in the six figures, you have to really question what makes sense."

After Stricklin left for Gainesville, Mississippi State again turned to Parker for help. In similar fashion to the 2010 Parker-aided search, MSU internally promoted a candidate, this time baseball coach John Cohen, to its AD position.

Carr believes school administrators needlessly spend big money because it looks like they did more work than they did. It stems from a theory that valuable services cost a lot of money, so why wouldn't the schools pay top dollar?

"They are trying to make it appear they've gone through the wall to provide the best possible service for their school," Carr says. "It's unconscionable. They do it because they want to be able to say we paid the big boys. We paid 4-5 times more than we should, that's implicit unspoken."

Not surprisingly, the firms charging hundreds of thousands of dollars for assistance on searches believe there are plenty of valid reasons to spend big money.

As global head of sports practice at Korn Ferry, Jed Hughes has run searches for the University of Michigan, the Seattle Seahawks and the Atlanta Falcons, among many others. The former football coach is cagier about revealing much about his company's process — it relies on "proprietary instruments and mathematical formulas" and focuses on "alignment" is the most he'll admit — but stresses that it's different than others in the industry. "You guys who write these articles need to figure out there's a difference as opposed to lumping everybody together," he says.

When Missouri hired Korn Ferry to run its 2014 athletic director search, the firm promised "one of our differentiators is in our service to prospects — rather than run them through a rigid process, we take the time to build credible relationships and provide 'white glove' service throughout the search," according to a contract obtained by AL.com.

Loftin, then the school's chancellor, called Korn Ferry the "Cadillac" of the search industry. Loftin provided a list of qualifications — one of the biggest he wanted was a sitting Power 5 AD — and Korn Ferry searched for every candidate that might meet them. Loftin remembers talking to Hughes multiple times a day during the search as they worked to winnow down the list of candidates.

Once they had it down to a manageable number, Korn Ferry provided an industrial psychologist to break down the strengths and weaknesses of each candidate. That "white glove" service comes at a lofty cost, though: A standard fee of $200,000 plus expenses.

That fee has elicited criticism — Korn Ferry also handled the panned $267,000 Texas Charlie Strong search — but Hughes says his credentials unequivocally justify them.

"We are a $2 billion public company; we aren't a little boutique," Hughes says. "I will take my background and put it against everybody in this business, and they don't have it. They don't have a master's from Stanford, a Ph.D. from Michigan; they-

See next page
haven't been with seven Hall of Fame coaches. They haven't placed the people we've placed. We've done really good work."

In addition to helping Missouri find an athletic director, Hughes assisted in the SEC's search for Mike Slive's replacement and Florida's football search that netted Jim McElwain.

It's hard to argue with back-to-back SEC East titles for McElwain in his first two seasons in Gainesville though there are legitimate questions about the long-term fit. The Mack Rhoades hire didn't go well as he left for the Baylor athletic director job 14 months after Missouri paid him $206,000 for the search that landed him in Columbia. He also didn't meet Loftin's desire for a sitting Power 5 AD — he arrived from Houston — though the former chancellor chafed that up to Missouri's "mixed history" after trying and failing to woo multiple Power 5 ADs.

No SEC school has spent more than Missouri on search firms since 2011, according to AL.com records, spending $338,000 on six different hires. The school most recently paid Parker Executive Search $100,000 plus expenses for help in hiring Cuonzo Martin away from California. Missouri has seemingly enjoyed getting something different with each hire, utilizing five different search firms and only giving repeat business to Todd Turner's Collegiate Sports Associates.

"I've done this extensively, not only for athletic jobs but academic as well, and at certain levels, I think it's almost a given you have to have a search firm," says Loftin who served as Missouri chancellor for 22 months.

The results haven't always been great. In addition to Rhoades' quick departure, Missouri paid Collegiate Sports Associates $64,720 to help find football coach Barry Odom who at the time was hiding as Missouri's defensive coordinator. Odom, one of multiple SEC coaches on the "hot seat," has gone 5-13 in his first 19 games at Missouri.

Missouri's frequent use of search firms has drawn criticism, with St. Louis Post-Dispatch columnist Ben Frederickson writing in 2016, "Whether you are looking for a coach or an AD, search firms are one of the biggest sources in college athletics. The secrecy they promise merely holds up. At best, they produce a list of options any competent school could come up with on its own. At worst, they send in someone who either doesn't fit, can't cut it or cuts and runs, like Rhoades."

Hughes, who assisted on the Rhoades search, says it's important to remember a lot changed from the day the Rhoades arrived and the day he left. During that 14-month span, the football team threatened to not play a game, large protests broke out on the school's campus, Loftin stepped down as chancellor and long-time football coach Gary Pinkel resigned after revealing he had cancer.

"I think from his perspective it was not a healthy environment for him or his family." Hughes says. "I think he was a professional decision. I don't think anybody knew those issues were out there." He adds that he was "another whole story behind that I can't tell you, it was not his fault that he left as he did. He left for other reasons."

Once the king of college football searches, Chuck Neinas is mostly retired these days.

Neinas, one of the first coaching search consultants, assisted the searches at Maryland and Virginia in 2015, but that was because of preexisting relationships. He isn't seeking work anymore after being in the search business for more than 20 years.

When he thinks back to all the searches he's helped with over the years, including Auburn's football search that resulted in Gus Malzahn, he thinks of a single example that solidifies the value in getting outside help.
"There is a very well-known Power 5 conference institution that has considerable success under the tutelage of a coach who to this day never knew he was the third choice," Neinas says. "Two people ahead of him declined the job."

Secrecy is a big part of the appeal to hiring search firms. Beyond helping with basics like background checks, they give athletic directors plausible deniability — "No, I haven't talked to that coach" — and can eliminate a paper trail. Hiring a search firm can help a program avoid the public embarrassment of a coach publicly turning down a job offer, Alabama experienced that in 2015 when Wichita State coach Gregg Marshall turned down the school after Alabama made no efforts to hide its interest in him. Alabama athletic director Bill Battle was forced to issue a statement about the basketball coach search, though he eventually found success in hiring former NBA coach Avery Johnson.

Compare that to Alabama's recent experience hiring athletic director Greg Byrne. The school commissioned Turnkey to assist in searching for a replacement for Battle, the first time Alabama had used a search firm since hiring Neinas in 2006 to run its football search. The result was an unquestionable success: Alabama hired one of the nation's best-regarded athletic directors without anyone finding out.

"You want to keep the searches as confidential as possible," Stricklin says. "Sometimes a search firm can help with that. If they aren't discrete, they won't get business for very long."

Search firms can gauge the interest in possible candidates to help schools avoid wasting their time on coaches who had no interest in ever taking the job. When Neinas was hired to assist a search, he'd ask candidates three questions to determine if there was a fit: Are you movable? Is there a section of the country you don't want to live? What's your buyout?

After James Franklin left for Penn State, Vanderbilt vice chancellor of athletics David Williams surveyed the college football landscape. He concluded that high-powered offenses were dominating the game and wanted a coach who could stymie the up-tempo, spread offenses populating the SEC.

That philosophy brought him to then-Stanford defensive coordinator Derek Mason. Williams told Parker, which had previously handled the search that led to Franklin, to research Mason and gauge his interest in the job. Williams had a name he liked but wanted Parker to dig into whether Mason fit his stated desires for Vanderbilt's next football coach.

"(Derek) could have dropped out of the sky and I wouldn't have known him other than I wanted to know who is the person at Stanford who is closing down Oregon's offense year in and year out," Williams says. "I wanted somebody who was going to have to deal with the explosive offenses at Auburn and places like that."

The research came back positive and Mason packed his bags for Nashville. Mason
has had his struggles at Vanderbilt, but Year 3 seemingly proved Williams' wish true. The Commodores knocked off Georgia, Ole Miss and Tennessee with one of the SEC’s best defenses on the way to bowl eligibility.

Vanderbilt has used a search firm and/or headhunter three times on coaching searches since 2014. As a private school Vanderbilt doesn’t have to disclose financial records, but even Parker’s usual fee of between $75,000-$100,000 a search, it’s safe to say the school has spent at least six figures on search firms since 2014. Williams has been happy with Vanderbilt’s search firm experiences but says whether it’s worth it or not is in the eye of the beholder. He stressed how important it is to maintain your expectations and manage your relationship with them.

“There are very good search firms, good search firms, OK search firms and not so good search firms,” Williams says. “Was the search firm able to make your job easier? Were they able to do something you couldn’t do or do it in a more efficient fashion? That’s where you have to decide whether the price we paid was worth it. And yes, even if they can do that if the price is a million dollars, might not be worth it.

“We felt the price Parker charged us was a fair price.”

Parker has handled eight SEC searches since 2011, double as many as the next closest firms. Parker is likely the most well-known college athletics search firm but has faced criticism in recent years for not doing due diligence in multiple searches including Minnesota and Rutgers, among others. Loftin, who as Texas A&M’s president used Parker to hire AD Eric Hyman, was happy with the results but admitted it was a less thorough process than the one he later experienced with Tom Ferry.

Tennessee has been a frequent Parker customer using the firm to hire former AD Dave Hart and former basketball coach Cuonzo Martin, but despite the university having the firm on retainer, it opted to use Turnkey and its new AD earlier this year. Len Perna, the president and CEO of Turnkey, offers a popular criticism of his competitor when explaining what he charges for a search.

“We are priced at the higher end because we feel like we are a higher end service,” Perna says. “If you want a search firm to just bring you the slate they brought to the last school, you can get that cheaper. Call up Parker and they’ll give you a really affordable price, and they’ll just dust off the last search they did, and here’s a group of candidates for you. For us, we start from scratch on every search.”

Perna’s team is already working to help Ole Miss secure a long-term replacement for Freeze in Oxford, utilizing a strategy that includes talking to university stakeholders to find the right cultural fit. And if this season continues the path it is headed, it won’t be the only SEC coaching search aided by search firm.

In the SEC, it just means more money for search firms.
Amid probe, Tigers lose two stars indefinitely

Tom Green tgreen@al.com

The outlook for Auburn's basketball season took a potentially perilous blow on Thursday with news that the team would be sitting star players Austin Wiley and Danjel Purifoy indefinitely amid eligibility concerns stemming from the FBI's corruption investigation involving suspended associate head coach Chuck Person.

With the regular-season opener against Norfolk State slated for next Friday, things have drastically changed for Auburn. The Tigers entered Bruce Pearl's fourth season with NCAA Tournament aspirations, but that goal now appears incredibly unlikely if neither Wiley nor Purifoy are cleared to play this season.

In losing Wiley, the team's starting center and a product of Spain Park, and Bibb County product Purifoy, the starting small forward and one of its best shooters, Auburn faces a future without two of its most talented players and prospects.

Purifoy and Wiley are suspected to be the two players referenced in a federal indictment against Person, who is facing six federal charges after allegedly accepting

SEE PROBE, B3
$91,500 in bribes over a 10-month span in an attempt to steer the two players toward a crooked financial adviser, Marty Blazer, upon their eventual decision to turn pro.

The mother of “Player-1” is alleged to have accepted $11,000 from Person, while the mother of “Player-2” is alleged to have accepted $7,500 from Person and another $5,000 from Person’s accomplice, Rashaan Michel.

Wiley and Purifoy’s uncertain eligibility leaves Auburn without two of its top-four scorers from a year ago.

Purifoy was second on the team last season, averaging 11.5 points per game on 39.8 percent shooting and 36.9 percent from beyond the arc, while Wiley, who joined the team Dec. 16, 2016 after qualifying early, was fourth with 8.8 points per contest on 58.4 percent shooting in 18 minutes per game. The two also tied for second on the team in rebounding, averaging 4.7 boards per game apiece.

The decision to sit the 6-foot-11 Wiley and 6-foot-7 Purifoy damages Auburn’s prospects for the season, but the Tigers will not be devoid of talent on the roster thanks to Pearl’s endeavors on the recruiting trail.

They still return sophomore Mustapha Heron, the program’s first ever five-star signee, who led the team in scoring and rebounding last season, as well as returning juniors Bryce Brown and Horace Spencer, and returning sophomores Anfernee McLemore and Jared Harper.

Auburn also welcomes to the fold the two four-star freshmen in forward Chuma Okeke and point guard Davion Mitchell, as well as junior college swingman transfer Malik Dunbar and former Presbyterian transfer Desean Murray.

Okeke, the 2017 Georgia Mr. Basketball, was a finalist for a spot on the Team US Under-19 World Cup team that Wiley played for this summer, while Mitchell has stood out this preseason as an exceptional defender.

Dunbar was listed as one of the top 10 impact JUCO transfers in the nation by FanRag Sports, which also listed Murray as one of the top 20 under-the-radar transfers in the country.

Pearl has said throughout the preseason, prior to the news of Wiley and Purifoy sitting out indefinitely, that he expected to use a 10-man rotation this season. Without those two, Auburn can still deploy a nine-man rotation that should be respectable in the SEC, though lacking in size beyond Spencer and Okeke, both of whom are 6-foot-8.

Depth will not be a huge concern for Auburn — with Pearl confident there is no drop-off between the starters and the bench — though size and, to an extent, elite talent, will be an issue without the availability of Purifoy, whom Pearl described as the team’s best pro prospect two years ago, and Wiley, a potential first-round NBA Draft pick.

Pearl will still have options with his lineups, but down two projected starters, the Tigers will likely field a starting five that consists of Harper, Heron and Brown in the backcourt, with McLemore and Spencer or Murray holding things down in the frontcourt.