ARTICLES OF INTEREST
APRIL 21, 2018 – APRIL 27, 2018

FOR SPECIFIC NEWS STORIES, SEE THE FOLLOWING PAGE NUMBERS:

NEWS ABOUT

STATE ISSUES 2

UA CAMPUS ISSUES 21

UAB CAMPUS ISSUES 30

UAH CAMPUS ISSUES 36

OTHER STATE UNIVERSITIES 42

SPORTS 45

NATIONAL NEWS 62
So the South’s White Terror Will Never Be Forgotten

The carnivals of death where African-American men, women and children were hanged, burned and dismembered as cheering crowds of whites looked on were the cornerstone of white supremacist rule in the Jim Crow-era South. These bloody spectacles terrified black communities into submission and showed whites that there would be no price to pay for murdering black people who asserted the right to vote, competed with whites in business — or so much as brushed against a white person on the sidewalk.

The lynching belt states looked away from this history, even as they developed now-popular tourism programs that attract visitors to churches, schools, courthouses and other landmarks associated with the civil rights movement. The long-neglected chapter of this story becomes breathtakingly visible on Thursday in Montgomery, Ala., where the nonprofit Equal Justice Initiative will inaugurate two institutions focused on racial-terror lynching as the practice manifested itself between the late 19th and mid-20th centuries.

The Legacy Museum, which is not far from the place where enslaved African-Americans entered Alabama’s capital city in chains, frankly explores how lynching mobs sought to preserve slavery and how the contempt for black life exemplified by extralegal hangings took new forms, like the death penalty and mass incarceration.

The National Memorial for Peace and Justice — a sprawling six-acre site overlooking Montgomery — represents America’s first major effort to confront the vast scope of the racial-terror lynchings that ravaged the African-American community in the South. The memorial bears the names of more than 4,400 African-Americans who were victims of terror killings during this period — inscribed on more than 800 steel pillars that also bear the names of the counties where the lynchings occurred. A duplicate set of pillars has been made available to counties that wish to own up to their histories by commemorating the lynching dead within their borders.

Among the dead remembered at the memorial is Frazier Baker, a family man and teacher who was targeted for lynching when the McKinley administration named him postmaster of the majority-white community of Lake City, S.C., in 1897. Whites who were angered by the elevation of a black person petitioned the government for his removal, tried to assassinate him and eventually burned the Lake City post office to the ground.

Refusing to give up the job, Baker moved the post office into his home. During the early-morning hours of Feb. 22, 1898, a mob set fire to the Baker home and fired a hail of bullets as the family tried to flee. Baker and his infant daughter, Julia, were killed. His wife was wounded and would no doubt have died had neighbors not pulled her away from the flames. The case conformed to an established pattern when a jury failed to convict those charged with the crime.

The memorial is the culmination of an effort that began nearly a decade ago, when the institute, led by the civil rights lawyer Bryan Stevenson, began combing the historical record to try to gauge the full scope of the racial-terror killings that took place between 1877 and 1950. Strikingly, the institute turned up 800 more lynchings than had been reported in the 12 Southern states it examined. The researchers also documented 300 lynchings in other states during this time period.

Different groups of African-Americans were targeted for what mobs referred to as “lynching bees” and “Negro barbecues” during different periods. Between 1915 and 1940, those selected for killing commonly included sharecroppers, ministers and community leaders who resisted mistreatment or agitated for equal rights.

The institute also learned that people who had attended lynchings as children were still alive. After the first report appeared in 2015, a Florida man called to report that his grandfather had taken him to a lynching when he was 6 years old. Another caller reported that two uncles had been among the 500 people who attended the lynching of Commodore Jones, hanged in 1911 in Farmersville, Tex., on the charge of insulting a white person.

Despite countless horrors like these, Southerners in the United States Senate repeatedly prevented Congress from declaring lynching a federal crime. In 2005, the Senate finally apologized to the descendants of victims for failing to act while the reign of racial terror swept the South.

The new museum and memorial in Montgomery are necessary first steps for a civil rights tour of the South. They vividly illustrate the terrorism that enforced Jim Crow into the mid-20th century. They also show that the devaluation of black life upon which slavery relied did not just evaporate, but haunts the country still.

BRENT STAPLES
At a New Memorial and Museum in Alabama, a Name-by-Name Reckoning of Injustice

By CAMPBELL ROBERTSON

MONTGOMERY, Ala. — In a plain brown building sits an office run by the Alabama Board of Pardons and Paroles, a place for people who have been held accountable for their crimes and duly expressed remorse.

Just a few yards up the street lies a different kind of rehabilitation center, for a country that has not been held to nearly the same standard.

The National Memorial for Peace and Justice, which opens Thursday on a six-acre site overlooking the Alabama State Capitol, is dedicated to the victims of American white supremacy. And it demands a reckoning with one of the nation’s least recognized atrocities: the lynching of thousands of black people in a decades-long campaign of racist terror.

At the center is a grim cloister, a walkway with 800 weathered steel columns, all hanging from a roof. Etched on each column is the name of an American county and the people who were lynched there, most listed by name, many simply as “unknown.” The columns meet you first at eye level, like the headstones that lynching victims were rarely given. But as you walk, the floor steadily descends; by the end, the columns are all dangling above, leaving you in the position of the callous spectators in old photographs of public lynchings.

The magnitude of the killing is harrowing, all the more so when paired with the circumstances of individual lynchings, some described in brief summaries along the walk: Parks Banks, lynchéd in Mississippi in 1922 for carrying a photograph of a white woman; Caleb Gadly, hanged in Kentucky in 1884 for “walking behind the wife of his white employer”;

Mary Turner, who after denouncing her husband’s lynching by a rampaging white mob, was hung upside down, burned and then sliced open so that her unborn child fell to the ground.

There is nothing like it in the country, Which is the point.

“Just seeing the names of all these people,” said Bryan Stevenson, the founder of the Equal Justice Initiative, the non-profit organization behind the memorial. Many of them, he said, “have never been named in public.”

Mr. Stevenson and a small group of lawyers spent years immersing themselves in archives and county libraries to document the thousands of racial terror lynchings across the South. They have cataloged nearly 4,400 in total.

Inspired by the Holocaust Memorial in Berlin and the Apartheid Museum in Johannesburg, Mr. Stevenson decided that a single memorial was the most powerful way to give a sense of the scale of the bloodshed. But also at the site are duplicates of each steel column, lined up in rows like coffins, intended to be disseminated around the country to the counties where lynchings were carried out. People in these counties can request them — dozens of such requests have already been made — but they must show that
they have made efforts locally to "address racial and economic injustice."

For Mr. Stevenson, the plans for the memorial and an accompanying museum were rooted in decades spent in Alabama courthouses, witnessing a criminal justice system that treats African-Americans with particular cruelty, or indifference.

Since 1989, the Equal Justice Initiative has offered legal services to poor people in prison, toiling away in a city awash in Confederate commemorations (Monday was Confederate Memorial Day in Alabama), in a state with the nation's highest per capita death sentencing rate. Nearly every staff member is a lawyer with clients in the prison system, and they have continued to work a full schedule of legal defense work even as they painstakingly compiled the names of the lynched and planned the memorial.

Mr. Stevenson, whose great-grandparents were slaves in Virginia, has written about "just mercy," the belief that those who have committed serious wrongs should be allowed a chance at redemption. It is a conviction he has spent a career arguing for on behalf of clients, and he believes it is true even for the white America whose brutality is chronicled by the memorial.

"If I believe that each of us is more than the worst thing he's ever done," he said, "I have to believe that for everybody."
But the history has to be acknowledged and its destructive legacy faced, he said. And this is particularly hard in "the most punitive society on the planet."

People do not want to admit wrongdoing in America, Mr. Stevenson said, because they expect only punishment.

"I’m not interested in talking about America’s history because I want to punish America," Mr. Stevenson continued. "I want to liberate America. And I think it’s important for us to do this as an organization that has created an identity that is as disassociated from punishment as possible."

The initiative’s headquarters are a few blocks away in a building that was once a warehouse in Montgomery’s sprawling slave market. It is now the site of the Legacy Museum, a companion piece to the memorial.

It is not a conventional museum, heavy on artifacts and detached commentary. It is perhaps better described as the presentation of an argument, supported by firsthand accounts and contemporary documents, that the slavery system did not end but evolved: from the family-shattering domestic slave trade to the decades of lynching terror, to the suffocating segregation of Jim Crow to the age of mass incarceration in which we now live.

The museum ends with a nod toward the future. By the exit is a section with a voter registration kiosk, information on volunteer opportunities and suggestions on how to discuss all of this with students. Given what has come before, it seems a jarring expression of confidence in the possibility of change. But there are good reasons for it.

Among the accounts given at the museum is that of Anthony Ray Hinton, who spent 28 years on Alabama’s death row after being wrongly convicted of two murders by an all-white jury. The case for his innocence seemed straightforward, but lawyers at the Equal Justice Initiative spent 16 years working for his freedom, appealing the case all the way to the United States Supreme Court. Mr. Hinton knows firsthand how stubborn injustice can be, but he is blunt: If people just gave up in despair, he would be dead.

"I refuse to believe that it’s hopeless because I am a product of what can happen when you fight," he said. "If we don’t fight, who’s going to fight?"

A grassy hillock rises in the middle of the memorial. From here you can see the Montgomery skyline through the thicket of hanging columns, the river where the enslaved were sold and the State Capitol building that once housed the Confederacy, whose monuments the current Alabama governor has vowed to protect. It is a striking view. But Mr. Stevenson pointed out that when standing here, you are on view as well, faced on all sides by the names of the thousands who were run down, instantly judged and viciously put to death.

"You might feel judged yourself," he said. "What are you going to do?"
ELECTION 2018

Can a Dem be the next governor?

John Sharp  jsharp@al.com

Alabama last elected a Democrat as governor 20 years ago. The party's most recent nominee, Parker Griffith, in 2014, lost to Republican Robert Bentley by nearly a 2-1 margin.

This year, the Cook Political Report labels the Alabama governor's race as "solid Republican." The same label comes from the Larry J. Sabato's Crystal Ball, produced at the University of Virginia Center for Politics.

"Barring some major developments in this race, it's difficult to see a path for a Democrat to win," said Geoffrey Skelley, associate editor with the Crystal Ball.

SEE DEMOCRAT, A5

Tuesday's debate

The Democratic gubernatorial debate in Birmingham finished too late to make this edition. Find the latest at AL.com, along with in-depth analysis in Friday's newspaper.

See next page
DEMOCRAT
FROM AI

Closer to home, Waymon Burke, a political science professor at Calhoun Community College, offered a similar assessment. "It's definitely an uphill battle," he said.

But Democrats heard these same declarations last year ahead of the special U.S. Senate race between Democrat Doug Jones and Republican Roy Moore.

Jones defeated the scandal-plagued Moore to become the first Democrat to win a U.S. Senate race in Alabama since 1992.

"Certainly, the Senate race was a very unusual race just because of when it happened and the circumstances surrounding it were very unusual as well," said Zac McCrary, a Democratic pollster for Anzalone List Research in Montgomery.

"But at a minimum, there is a prototype on how Democrats can be successful in statewide elections. It's a prototype that didn't exist a few years ago."

SELLING THEMSELVES

With the June 5 primary election just over the horizon, there are two presumed front-runners in the Democratic field: former state Supreme Court Chief Justice Sue Bell Cobb and Tuscaloosa Mayor Walt Maddox.

Both have raised more than $500,000 for their campaigns. Cobb, according to the latest finance figures with the Alabama Secretary of State's Office, has $220,237 cash on hand, while Maddox has $219,781.

Former state Rep. James Fields Jr. of Cullman is considered the strongest of the remaining four Democratic candidates. He's raised more than $16,000, though he has only around $3,600 cash on hand.

The Democrats, by and large, share similar stances on major political issues. They all mostly support a statewide lottery to help fund education. They all also support an expansion of Medicaid and the legalization of medical marijuana.

But Cobb, during an April 11 debate, criticized Maddox for what she said was his lack of support for a minimum wage increase in Tuscaloosa. Maddox said Cobb had distorted his record, and that supporting a minimum wage increase to $10.10 an hour is unlawful and could have led to expensive lawsuits against Tuscaloosa.

Said Christian Smith, president of the Bay Area Young Democrats: "There are a lot of people who like Walt, but feel he's stiff. With Sue Bell Cobb, I can't reconcile her leaving the Supreme Court (in 2011) and supporting Jeff Sessions. I think she has to touch on that and talk about it again if she expects anyone to change their mind on those issues."

Cobb endorsed Sessions' nomination as U.S. attorney general in early 2017.

Jess Brown, who expects Gov. Kay Ivey to win on the GOP side, said that Cobb and Maddox are attempting to walk a fine line.

"They must not utter a word that alienates African-American voters or appears unsympathetic to the feminist agenda," said Brown, a retired political science professor at Athens State University who's tracked Alabama campaigns for years. "They must set a high bar on ethics and characterize Kay Ivey as a consummate Goat Hill insider. This mix is difficult to do, but necessary to be viable in a runoff and to attract independent voters during the general election campaign."

IVEY 'QUITE POPULAR'

But are the Republican advantages too strong to overcome? Ivey has more than $2 million in campaign funds at her disposal, and her GOP rivals — Huntsville Mayor Tommy Battle, Birmingham evangelist Scott Dawson and state Sen. Bill Hightower of Mobile — each have raised more money than Maddox or Cobb.

Said the Crystal Ball's Skelly: "While Democrats are likely to have a relatively favorable national electoral environment this November, they need more than that to have a shot at winning the governorship."

Ivey not only is flush with dollars, she is riding high in surveys. Morning Consult found her with the third-highest approval rating among the country's 50 governors.

"If Governor Ivey were scandal-ridden and unpopular, that could create the conditions where a Democratic win might be feasible," said Skelly. "But as it stands, Ivey appears to be quite popular."

He continued, "Even if she actually loses the Republican primary, the GOP might still be OK. It seems like Tommy Battle would be the most likely GOP challenger to defeat Ivey, and he's raised plenty of money and is mayor of Huntsville, one of the state's principal cities."

Assuming that Ivey carries the GOP banner, Angi Stitnaker, a Republican campaign strategist based in Montgomery, said he real intrigue will come in the summer and fall.

"Sue Bell Cobb and Kay Ivey would be an interesting race to watch with two women both with government experience going after each other," said Stitnaker. "With Maddox, you are looking at generational and stylistic differences."

Stitnaker said, "So far, it's been a really boring governor's race. There is just nothing holding the people of Alabama's attention."

Burke, at Calhoun Community College, said that for Democrats hoping for a win, a late entry by Moore as an independent candidate would be the best possible scenario. There is no indication that Moore is entertaining such a run.

"I guess some are hoping Roy Moore jumps into this thing," he said. "They are needing another Roy Moore."
Woodfin: 'Give me your gun and I will personally help you get a job.'

By: Roy S. Johnson

If you have a gun but no job, and would rather work than commit a crime, mayor Randall Woodfin has a proposition.

"Give me your gun and I will personally help you get a job," he says.

Woodfin was speaking with members of the Birmingham Association of Black Journalists on Saturday morning in a wide-ranging exchange that lasted more than an hour. Topics included the city's ailing pension fund, gentrification, food deserts, education, the woeful state of public board governance, and the challenges in trying to lure the 2020 Democratic National Convention to Birmingham.

Not surprisingly, the conversation was dominated by crime.

Thus far in 2018, 34 homicides have been committed in Birmingham, 53 countywide.

"We have a full breach of public safety in this community," he said. "If we don't attack crime, nothing else matters."

Woodfin and U.S. Attorney Jay E. Town have been developing a plan to reduce violent crime in the city. Earlier this month, they convened a Public Safety Task Force, comprising 11 state and local law enforcement and public agencies.

The group came under criticism, however, by representatives of the Birmingham Chapter of Black Lives Matter, which, in an article published last week on Medium, said the lack of grassroots activists and organizers on the task force was a "hard pill to swallow."

"Alarming," the article continued, "'One of the task force's first orders of business was to develop a short list of serious offenders who have drawn the attention of various task force agencies in the past.' In other words, the task force will likely target former offenders in the off-chance that they will re-offend. Black Lives Matter Birmingham does not agree with this method of engagement."

"They say don't they want 'the man,' white people, terrorizing the neighborhoods," Woodfin said. "Well, there are black people terrorizing our neighborhoods. I don't see anyone jumping up and down about that.

"I support Black Lives Matter," the mayor added. "There was a rumor that the task force was going to arrest innocent people. That's BS. ... We're not going to arrest people for not doing anything. But if you hurt people, you need to be arrested--if you're shooting and killing people, shooting at houses or cars.

"There is an element in our city that doesn't care about other people's lives. If any organization has a better way of stopping them than arresting them, show me. I will sit with them as long as needed."
Woodfin says a Black Lives Matter representative called him last Monday requesting a meeting; he says he agreed to meet. Two days later, the group publicly voiced its criticisms.

"I'm willing to talk with any group, but they've got to be on the solutions end," Woodfin said.

In its article, BLM Birmingham stated: "...we find the contention that community members must act as their own policy consultants highly classist and egregious," before asking that the mayor "hire real grassroots consultants."

"If you have a better solution, please implement it and show me the results of whatever plan you run," Woodfin added. "If it works, I will pivot, support it and fund it. Until then, I will fight crime with every resource I have because people are dying."

Woodfin turns 37 in May. He acknowledged a generational disconnect regarding the best approaches to fighting crime.

"When I talk to the mommas and the big mommas in the neighborhoods, they want more police," he said. "People my age and younger say more policing is wrong. As mayor, I'm in the middle."

The administration is in discussions, Woodfin said, to expand the hours of the city's 21 rec centers this summer to make them a "safe space" for youth during some of the most violent times of the day.

"That's not negotiable," he said.

The mayor didn't commit to an all-out gun exchange but reaffirmed his offer in response to the belief by some that poverty is at the root of most crimes.

"Poverty is an issue in the city of Birmingham, and people not having jobs is an issue," he said. "But the notion that people are committing crime because they don't have a job? I won't disagree or agree. Do you want a job if you're out robbing people, shooting and killing people? If you do, cool, come tell me."

On other subjects:

One thing he's learned since taking office: "There are people in our community who don't think we can do anything; the last five months I've had to put blinders on."

Biggest surprise: "People requesting tax dollars for a program, idea or something they want the city to fund yet they don't submit a budget. Some may still owe vendors from previous years and they want the city to pay for that, too. I'm like, 'For real?' That's kinda weird to me."

2020 DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION

Is there any reason not to apply the 2020 Democratic national convention? "Not necessarily. I still question if there's wiggle room around the [DNC's] specs."

When asked if the timing of the contraction of the stadium and BJCC renovation might impact the bid, Woodfin said: "Yes, it [stinks] doesn't it?"
PENSION FUND

How serious is the deficit in the city's pension fund? "Serious, sir. We're still assessing, and the results will be something we'll be sharing internally and externally. I have full faith we can have an open, yet transparent dialogue about the budget and pension and come in with one on July 1."

STADIUM/BJCC RENOVATION CRITICS

On notion that there was widespread dissention for the city's $90 million expenditure to build a new open-air stadium and renovate the BJCC, the mayor cited the voting tabulations of the Jefferson County Commission (5-0 in favor), Alabama House of Representative (14-3), Alabama Senate (22-0) and Birmingham City Council (6-3).

"The numbers don't lie," he said. "We saw two or three people making noise. We can't hold progress hostage."

On the doubts by critics of the project's new tax revenue projections: "A third-party entity did the assessment and probability of new tax dollars. Why do I agree with it? The Uptown area alone adds an additional $3.8 million in revenue annually, not including Top Golf. I don't believe their projections are off."

EDUCATION

On his relationship with Birmingham Schools Superintendent Dr. Lisa Herring and the school system: "She has that 'it' factor. She can [effectively engage with] each group of stakeholders. She gets it. It's her ship.

"But the days of having a transactional relationship [with the school system] are over. It's now, strategically, what can we do to support the system. I'm not talking ceremonially, but a full investment in education. What does the system look like before school, during school, after school, and in the summers? That's how I support Dr. Herring".

Woodfin said he envisions creating early childhood learning centers in various areas in the city. "What does that look like? The resources? We're still working that out."

TRANSIT AND BOARD DRAMA

Woodfin, a former school board member, said he has concerns about the Birmingham Jefferson County Transit Authority in the wake of recent turmoil resulting in the suspension of executive director Barbara Murdoch earlier this month, but wanted to emphasize overall board governance.

"It's not just transit," he said. "It's all of our semi- and quasi-govermental agencies throughout the city. There seems to be a breach of fiduciary duty and a lack of training and full understanding of the role, and really, unfortunately, there seems to be; 'I'm a board member; I don't care what you say.' Which is scary.

"If a lot of these boards continue to stay in the paper, it not only puts on display the inefficiencies of the leadership, it calls into question the purpose of the organization, which is really to improve the quality of life."
"I'm at the point where--and I may get into trouble--what is the conversation in Montgomery, what does legislation look like for board governance for the City of Birmingham and continued education and training? I think it's needed.

"The boards and agencies can't be in the papers every week. It's hurting us.

"Maybe it's not the people on the boards. Maybe it's the people who appoint the people who sit on the boards. We have to question ourselves. What is our role because we appointed these people? Do we understand our appointing power? Are we serious about our appointing power? Have we been abusive in our appointing power? Have we exchanged some kind of political something that has jeopardized the organization? Is it time for us to question ourselves? I believe the answer is yes. That may get me in trouble."

FOOD DESERTS

"It doesn't fall on deaf ears about [the lack of access to] quality food in Birmingham."

Expanding beyond the seem-to-go-nowhere talks about attracting high-quality grocery stories to neighborhoods in dire need of quality food options, Woodfin proposed farmers markets, citing, as an example, the Dekalb (Georgia) Farmers Market and work being doing at the Jones Valley Teaching Farm in Birmingham.

"How can you take that model and, in partnership with [Community Reinvestment Act] dollars, say, 'We want a farmers market?'" he said, adding that it could be co-owned by several entities, including the city. "I have a fundamental belief that healthy food can work in this city."

RACE AND GENTRIFICATION

"I'm always open to having conversations about race in Birmingham," Woodfin said, though he disputed the assertion that the city has experienced widespread gentrification.

"[People look at gentrification as one way: white people moving in. We never question black people moving out. Birmingham city schools lose between eight hundred and a thousand students a year. They're following their parents. We yell: The city's turning white!" Black people keep leaving. Is that too honest?"

He cited Atlanta, where the percentage of African-American residents has dropped from, he said, 65% five years ago to 50% black today. "That's real gentrification," Woodfin said. "DC? You can't even call it 'chocolate city' anymore."

As in those cities, African Americans are moving to the suburbs, often in search of better schools.

"Black people keep leaving urban cores; we never talk about it."

In Birmingham, however, Woodfin said racial composition has largely remained unchanged over the last decade, at nearly three-quarters African American.
He said whites are mostly moving into areas downtown "where black people weren't living. They're moving into areas where nobody was living. No one was displaced. No one was priced out."

"Black people are moving out faster than white people are moving in."
Lynching memorial offers chance to remember, heal

By Jay Reeves and Kim Chandler
The Associated Press

MONTGOMERY — Elmore Bolling defied the odds against black men and built several successful businesses during the harsh era of Jim Crow segregation in the South. He had more money than a lot of whites, which his descendants believe was all it took to get him lynched in 1947.

He was shot to death by a white neighbor, according to news accounts at the time, and the shooter was never prosecuted.

But Bolling's name is now listed among thousands on a new memorial for victims of hate-inspired lynchings that terrorized generations of U.S. blacks. Daughter Josephine Bolling McCall is anxious to see the monument, located about 20 miles from where her father was killed in rural Lowndes County.

The National Memorial for Peace and Justice, opening Thursday, is a project of the nonprofit Equal Justice Initiative, a legal advocacy group in Montgomery. The organization says the combined museum and memorial will be the nation’s first site to document racial inequality in America from slavery through Jim Crow to the issues

See MEMORIAL, B8

Josephine Bolling McCall poses with a photo of her father, lynching victim Elmore Bolling, at her home in Montgomery, Ala., on Wednesday, April 18, 2018. Bolling is among thousands of lynching victims remembered at the new National Memorial for Peace and Justice, erected with donations by the Alabama-based Equal Justice Initiative. [AP PHOTO/JAY REEVES]
of today.

"In the American South, we don't talk about slavery. We don't have monuments and memorials that confront the legacy of lynching. We haven't really confronted the difficulties of segregation. And because of that, I think we are still burdened by that history," said EJI executive director Bryan Stevenson.

The site includes a memorial to the victims of 4,400 "terror lynchings" of black people in 500 U.S. counties from 1877 through 1950. All but about 300 were in the South, and prosecutions were rare in any of the cases. Stevenson said they emphasized the lynching era because he believes it's an aspect of the nation's racial history that's discussed the least.

"Most people in this country can't name a single African-American who was lynched between 1877 and 1950 even though thousands of African-Americans were subjected to this violence," Stevenson said.

The organization said a common theme ran through the slayings, which it differentiates from extrajudicial killings in places that simply lacked courts: A desire to impose fear on minorities and maintain strict white control. Some lynchings drew huge crowds and were even photographed, yet authorities routinely ruled they were committed by "persons unknown."

McCall, 75, said her father's killing still hangs over her family. The memorial could help heal individual families and the nation by acknowledging the painful legacy of racial murders, she said.

"It's important that the people to whom the injustices have been given are actually being recognized and at least some measure — some measure — of relief is sought through discussion," said McCall.

Combined, the memorial and an accompanying museum a few miles aways at the Equal Justice Initiative headquarters tell a story spanning slavery, racial segregation, violence and today's era of swollen prison populations. With nearly 7 million people behind bars or on parole or probation nationwide — a disproportionate number of them minorities — the NAACP says blacks are incarcerated at a rate five times that of whites.

E.M. Beck, who studied lynching for 30 years and has written books on the subject, said the memorial might actually underestimate the scope of lynching even though it lists thousands of victims.

"I think it's an underestimation because the number and amount of violence in early Reconstruction in the 1870s will probably never be known. There was just an incredible amount of violence taking place during that period of time," said Beck, sociology professor emeritus at the University of Georgia.

The memorial's design evokes the image of a racist hanging, featuring scores of dark metal columns suspended in the air from above. The rectangular structures, some of which lie flat on the ground and resemble graves, include the names of counties where lynchings occurred, plus dates and the names of the victims. The goal is for individual counties to claim the columns on the ground and erect their own memorials.

Not all lynchings were by hanging. The Equal Justice Initiative says it scoured old newspapers, archives and court documents to find the stories of victims who were gunned down, drowned, beaten and burned alive. The monument is a memorial to all of them, with room for names to be added as additional victims are identified.

The monument's April 26 opening will be marked by a two-day summit focusing on racial and social justice, to be followed by an April 27 concert featuring top acts including Common, Usher, the Dave Matthews Band and The Roots.

McCall plans to view the memorial with her five living siblings. She says they suffered more than she did, since she was only 5 when their father was slain.

"It's something that needs to be talked about, that people need to explore. But it's also something that has the potential to shake people to the core," McFadden said.

A newspaper account from the time said the 30-year-old Bolling, who owned a store and trucking company and farmed, was shot seven times on a road near his store by a white man. Clarke Luckie, who claimed Bolling had insulted his wife during a phone call.

McCall, who researched the slaying extensively for a book about her father, said it's more likely that Luckie, a stockyard employee, resented her father, who had thousands of dollars in the bank, three tractor-trailer rigs and employed about 40 people.

"He was jealous and he filled him with bullets," she said.

Luckie was arrested, but a grand jury issued no indictment and no one was ever prosecuted. McCall believes the white people who controlled the county at the time purposely covered for the killer, who died decades ago.

One of Alabama's oldest black congregations, Old Ship A.M.E. Zion Church, sits across the street from the memorial. Its pastor plans to offer prayer and conversation to help visitors who are shaken by the experience of visiting the site.

Church members have mixed feelings about the memorial, the Rev. Kathy Thomas McFadden said.

They want to acknowledge and honor the past, she said, but some are wondering how they'll personally react to visiting the memorial the first time.

"It's something that needs to be talked about, that people need to explore. But it's also something that has the potential to shake people to the core," McFadden said.
EDUCATION

Mackey to lead Alabama schools

New state superintendent of education edges
Craig Pouncey 5-4 for job

Trisha Powell Crain  tcrain@al.com

The Alabama Board of Education named Eric Mackey as the new state superintendent of education Friday. Mackey received five votes out of nine. He will start his new job May 14.

His contract will be negotiated and voted on at the May 10 regular board meeting.

Mackey has served as the executive director of the School Superintendents of Alabama since 2010. The SSA advocates on behalf of schools and school superintendents in the legislature and is the professional organization for superintendents and their leadership teams.

Mackey, 48, started as a high school physics teacher in Calhoun County in 1993, rising to superintendent of Jacksonville City Schools, where he served for eight years prior to working for SSA.

He said his top priority will be to find an “assessment that fits right” on top of addressing unequal funding between rural
and urban areas and school safety concerns.

During his interview, Mackey told board members he hadn't originally considered applying for the job, but hearing the board discuss at their December meeting the need to hire a superintendent who will stay for four or five years changed his mind.

"If you want somebody for a couple of years, I'm not your person," Mackey said. "We need some long-term stability, and I want to do it for the long term."

The board's last hire, former Massachusetts Education Commissioner Michael Sentance, lasted barely a year before resigning days ahead of an expected board vote to fire him.

Board members interviewed two other candidates: Hoover City Schools Superintendent Kathy Murphy and Jefferson County Schools Superintendent Craig Pouncey. Each interview lasted about an hour.

Director of Communications Michael Sibley asked each candidate the same nine questions, covering everything from academic standards to how to ensure schools have adequate funding.

The board was originally expecting to interview four finalists, but former Texas Education Commissioner Robert Scott withdrew his application Friday morning because of travel problems, according to Gary Ray, chairman of Ray and Associates, a national search firm.

Board members made no remarks during interviews and there was no public discussion about any of the candidates. Board members voted by ballot after interviews were finished.

Board members voting for Mackey included Gov. Kay Ivey, Mary Scott Hunter, Cynthia McCarty, Jeff Newman and Betty Peters.

Ivey said she voted for Mackey because of his support for her "Strong Start, Strong Finish" initiative and his focus on teaching students computer science and coding.

"I believe Dr. Mackey will serve us well and we will see forward thinking results," Ivey said.

Pouncey received votes from Stephanie Bell, Ella Bell, Yvette Richardson and Jackie Zeigler.
Murphy, the only female finalist, received no votes.

Prior to the vote to accept the ballot totals, Ella Bell lodged her objection to Hunter being allowed to vote since Pouncey has an ongoing defamation lawsuit against Hunter.

"It is known that Mary Scott (Hunter) and Craig Pouncey are in the midst of a dilemma right now," she said.

Calling Hunter "prejudiced" against Pouncey, Ella Bell asked how it was possible for Hunter to vote.

Board members did not respond to the question, instead voting to accept the ballot count and naming Mackey as superintendent.

Board Vice President Stephanie Bell said after the meeting she was pleased with the search process, crediting Ray and Associates with bringing quality candidates forward and thoroughly vetting candidates.

The Alabama Education Association sent out this statement after the vote:

"AEA congratulates Dr. Eric Mackey, the new Alabama State Superintendent of Education. Dr. Mackey brings a wealth of educational experience and knowledge to the position and we look forward to working with him to move Alabama schools forward.

"We're excited to have someone so familiar with education in Alabama back in leadership," said AEA President Sherry Tucker. "Alabama students and educators will greatly benefit from his guidance."

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

**Eric Mackey bio**

**Age:** 48

**Current position:** Executive director of the School Superintendents of Alabama.

**Education experience:**
Teacher, Saks High School, Calhoun County Schools, 1993-1997; Assistant Principal and Teacher, Pleasant Valley School, Jacksonville City Schools, 1997-1999; Principal, Kitty Stone Elementary in Jacksonville City Schools, 1999-2002; Superintendent, Jacksonville City Schools, 2002-2010; Associate Director, School Superintendents of Alabama, 2010 (eight months), Executive Director, School Superintendents of Alabama, 2010-present.

**College degrees:** Ed.D., Educational Leadership, University of Alabama, 2001; Ed.S., Educational Leadership, University of Alabama, 1998; Master of Arts, Biology Education, University of Alabama, 1995; Bachelor of Science, General Science, Jacksonville State University, 1992.

**Current salary:** $232,000

**Annual budget overseen:** $1.3 million
Birmingham again vying for Democratic convention

The Birmingham News
Sunday, April 22, 2018

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BIRMINGHAM

Autocar opens $120M plant

William Thornton wthornton@al.com

Autocar opened its $120 million manufacturing plant last week in a long vacant factory straddling Center Point and Birmingham.

The manufacturer of concrete trucks, waste management trucks and garbage trucks is employing 746 at the 1.3 million square-foot factory, the former Meadowcraft Complex at the intersection of Carson Road and Highway 79. The average salary for employees will be $58,000.

Autocar LLC Chairman Andrew Taft said the Thursday opening, less than a year after the project was announced, was on an aggressive timeline which was justified, given where the company picked to do business.

"Birmingham is and has always been a city of builders."

Josh Carpenter, Birmingham director of development

"Our rapid growth meant we had to be up and running really fast," Taft said. "We knew we could do it because of the people of Alabama."

Autocar was founded in 1897 and is the oldest motor vehicle brand in the United States. It built America's first truck in 1899 and makes heavy-cab trucks.

Gov. Kay Ivey, calling Autocar "a world-class company," said it took work from all levels of government and community action to make the project come to fruition.

"Today reflects a commitment to build not only a business, but a community, and a state, all for the better good," Ivey said.

Jefferson County Commissioner Joe Knight hailed the "resurrection" of the building, which he said could "breathe new life into our community."

Josh Carpenter, Birmingham's director of development, said Autocar's entry into the business community is in keeping with the city's history.

"Birmingham is and has always been a city of builders," Carpenter said.
Redstone won't get Futures Command

Lee Roop lroop@al.com

Alabama won't be home to the Army's new Futures Command, the Associated Press reported Friday. The Army said it is considering 15 other cities including Atlanta, but Huntsville's Redstone Arsenal, considered to be a contender, was not on the list.

According to the AP, the cities asked to provide the Army information include Atlanta; Austin, Texas; Boston; Chicago; Dallas; Denver; Houston; Los Angeles; Minneapolis; New York; Philadelphia; Raleigh, North Carolina; San Diego; San Francisco; and Seattle.

The new command will be the Army's fourth and part of a major reorganization designed to prepare the Army for future conflicts. Its mission is to bring new technologies to troops in the fastest and most efficient way.

The new command was a major topic of the Association of the U.S. Army Global Force 2018 conference in Huntsville in March. The city is home to the Army Materiel Command that supplies troops with equipment now, along with the Space & Missile Defense/Strategic Forces Command, the Missile Defense Agency and the Aviation and Missile Command, among others.

The Army says it is looking for a city with a workforce competent in biomedicine, chemistry, computer hardware and software, electronics, materials and mechanical systems.
Alumni donates $1 million to UA
DONATION

From Page B1

fondly at my experience here at the university. Certainly, it becomes more important to me each and every day as I get older. The significance of this education and the experience, when I look at the eyes of young people today, I see great hope and promise.”

Levitetz said he hoped the program would help students achieve their goals and discover their passions. “Hopefully, we will supply some of the ingredients to get you there,” he said.

Levitetz scholar Robert Petit, who was part of a student team that recently won the Edward K. Aldag Jr. Business Plan Competition, said support from Levitetz enabled the students to grow their startup business.

“We could not have even begun to dream of that without the Levitetz scholarship,” Petit said.

Bell praised Levitetz for his contribution and the example he set as an alumnus for students.

“This is going to have just a tremendous impact on the students who come through the New College,” Arts and Sciences Dean Bob Olin said.
At this point, we believe it's fair to say Tuscaloosa has recovered from the April 27, 2011, tornado. That doesn't mean this city and her people weren't scarred by the deadly, destructive storm in ways that will never go away. A lot of people died — 53 people — and anyone who was here at the time knows it's a miracle that the number killed wasn't a lot higher. Hundreds were injured. Lifetimes of belongings holding priceless memories — were lost to the powerful winds. Thousands of homes and businesses were wiped out. The material damage was in the billions of dollars.

And still, the statistics, as bad as they were, do not and never will adequately convey the profound effect the storm had on the collective psyche of this city. It was a punch not just to the gut, but to the deepest recesses of our souls. It was devastating. We will never forget it. The wreckage, the destruction, the loss was seared into our hearts and minds.

It changed us.

But we have recovered. The "T" in T-Town does not stand for "tornado." We have moved on. We came together to rebuild and we did. Not that there isn't more to do, but hasn't that always been true of any place? Now, we go about our daily lives, captive to the mundane, the routine, though still hopeful for the future or maybe just a trip to the beach. Life has returned to normal.

Of course, that didn't seem possible then. The tornado's path through the city covered nearly six miles — from near Kauloosa Avenue west of Interstate 359 to just east of Holt — and was up to a mile wide in places. With winds approaching 200 mph, it moved northwest through some of the most populated areas of Tuscaloosa, crossing every major road in the city, including I-359, Greensboro Avenue, Hargrove Road, 15th Street, McFarland Boulevard, University Boulevard and Crescent Ridge Road. It damaged or destroyed houses and small businesses, apartment complexes and shopping centers, schools and churches, and pummeled much of Alberta.

It could have been worse. It just missed DCH Regional Medical Center and the University of Alabama campus. Thankfully, we had ample warning to prepare. But if asked beforehand to draw the most destructive path a tornado could possibly take through the city, one would have been hard-pressed to top this one.

Yet, out of the landscape that was so dramatically altered on that fateful Wednesday afternoon has emerged the landscape that we have grown used to. Yes, we sometimes feel wistful when we drive down 15th Street, where so much was familiar to so many, and try to remember what it looked like before that day. So many places — gone forever. The new reminding us of the old. It seemed so personal then, even to those not directly affected.

But we no longer view life through the prism of the tornado. We learned from it. We're stronger because of it. We have recovered.
Small moment of healing from 2011 tornado

The scars aren't nearly so visible as they were in the immediate wake of April 27, 2011, the day a deadly tornado ripped through Tuscaloosa.

They are still there if you look closely, in the twisted trees along Crescent Ridge Road or the missing landmarks along the storm's path, many now replaced but still missed.

In many places, though, material things have been replaced. New homes have been built around Forrest Lake. There's a new school in Alberta City.

Emotional healing takes longer, though. For many families, lost loved ones can never be replaced. Neither can some memories — photographs, trophies, a child's first-grade drawings swept away by the wind, never to be recovered.

Still, seven years later, there are moments of closure. Former Alabama offensive lineman Wesley Britt experienced one last week.

Britt, who had an NFL career after leaving Alabama, was married to the former Katie Boyd and living in Tuscaloosa when the tornado tore their home apart. When he called his father, Tommy Britt, in Cullman that night (where the elder Britt was

See HURT, C2
also working in the wake of another tornado from the same system), the first question after confirming that Wesley’s family was safe, was the obvious one: “what do you need?”

The answer was just as obvious: “Everything.”

Before long, the Britts’ most urgent needs were met: shelter, diapers, furniture and the other essentials of day-to-day life. Other things could not be replaced.

“I lost a Rolex watch that Tom Brady had given all of his (New England Patriot) offensive linemen in 2007,” Britt said. “I lost pictures and other memorabilia.”

That included a football signed by his entire Alabama team in 2002.

“I always would get a ball signed by all of my teammates, going all the way back to Cullman and into the NFL,” Britt said. “They meant a lot.”

The tornado, though, played no favorites. Britt thought his 2002 ball was gone for good, a small but personally meaningful loss in a storm that took so much from so many.

It was nearly a year later when Britt was on hand for a function honoring former Crimson Tide players at the Bryant Museum. As the reception went on, Britt browsed through the museum, looking at the displays. He then came across a new exhibit showing the impact the storm had on Tuscaloosa, including photographs of the monster funnel cloud as it roared just blocks away from Bryant-Denny Stadium.

And there was something else that caught his eye in the exhibit: an autographed football that had been found in the debris left behind in a Tuscaloosa neighborhood miles away from the Britts’ home. Still, as he looked closely at the names, and the extensive number of signatures from players and coaches, he knew.

“I could tell it was my football,” Britt said.

He asked museum director Ken Gaddy about the ball and was told it had been found and donated to the Bryant Museum after the storm.

Time for a quick disclaimer: the ball had landed on our driveway, among other debris large and small, and I was the one who took it to the museum.

Britt told Gaddy the situation and everyone involved agreed Britt should have his ball back, although he graciously agreed the ball should remain in place until the museum changed the exhibit. It was only slightly smudged on its journey of about three miles, carried along by the wind as it traveled the tornado’s devastatingly direct path.

At three miles, someone joked, it was the longest punt in Alabama history, at least until J.K. Scott arrived.

The ball is now back where it belongs, with the Britts. It’s a small moment in the healing that still is happening and perhaps a memory, not just of a football career but of a day that all of Tuscaloosa shares, a token of pain but also of closure.

Reach Cecil Hurt at cecil@tidesports.com or 205-722-0225.
Groups recognized at graduation celebrations

By Shahriyar Emami | Staff Reporter

With the end of the semester approaching, students are preparing for their graduation. In celebration, some organizations on campus are organizing events to recognize students of minority communities.

Graduation celebrations are not commencements where students get separate degrees. Instead, events like the Lavender Graduation ceremony, Nyansapo Graduation Celebration and the Veteran and Military Affairs commencement celebration honor the accomplishments of the minority populations at the University.

Lavender Graduation is recognizing the unrecognized in a lot of ways, specifically on our campus.

- Hunter Stewart

Hunter Stewart, a graduate student studying higher education administration and a future graduate, said the Lavender Graduation makes a big statement.

“Lavender Graduation is recognizing the unrecognized in a lot of ways, specifically on our campus,” Stewart said.

The 2018 Lavender Graduation is the eighth annual celebration at the University. However, Safe Zone, the group that sponsors the event, has been at the University for 15 years. Speakers talk to the graduates during the event that recognizes LGBTQ+ students.

“It’s recognizing all the history we have here,” Stewart said. “People who are traditionally not welcomed here, we’re gonna honor them.”

Career students, faculty and community members are some of the population that are recognized at the event.

“I think it says a lot about UA,” Stewart said. “It says that we’ve got a long way still to go but it recognizes the long way that we’ve been so far.”

Lane McLelland, director of UA Crossroads, said her group is one of many sponsors for events like the Lavender Graduation.

Lizzie Emerson is the graduate assistant for the Safe Zone Resource Center or SZRC. She is a third year PhD student in higher education administration.

As the only paid employee of SZRC, Emerson was responsible for organizing everything required for Lavender Graduation, from flowers and music to the speakers. She said the event, held on April 25, went really well.

“Everything went smoothly, our speakers were phenomenal, and people seemed to be in high spirits,” Emerson said. “Events like Lavender Graduation are so important to the LGBTQIA+ community at UA, because it’s one of the most significant examples of the strength of our community, our chosen family.”

Emerson was moved to see how many people showed up to support the graduates and celebrate their accomplishments this year.

Students of color will be honored through a ceremony on April 27 at 5 p.m. at the Bryant Conference Center. The Black Faculty and Staff Association (BFSA) will host the Nyansapo ceremony to celebrate students of color. Nyansapo, a Ghanaian symbol meaning intelligence, patience and ingenuity, was introduced to the University by two students.

Fred Horn II, a graduating Master of Accountancy and Fallon Frank, a University alumnus worked with the Black Faculty and Staff
Association or BFSA to organize the Nyansapo Graduation Celebration. The BFSA has hosted Nyansapo since August 2016.

"We wanted to create this type of event to honor and recognize students of color when they graduate," Horn said.

I think it's great because it's showing that they appreciate the veterans and their sacrifices.

- Jamie Metcalf

The ceremony pays homage to students' academic accomplishments and graduation while keeping with Ghanaian tradition.

"During the ceremony, students are robed by family, friends or loved ones," Horn said.

Kente Stole is a ceremonial Ghanaian cloth. After each graduate is robed, they say "ashe," which means the power to make things happen and produce change.

While Nyansapo is an event hosted by the BFSA, all graduates are welcome to attend. Then on May 4 at 1 p.m., the first day of the official UA commencements, is the Veteran and Military Affairs commencement celebration. Jamie Metcalf, a senior majoring in marketing, will also graduate in May. He is a veteran army corporal who will be attending the commencement celebration hosted by the office of Veteran and Military Affairs or VMA.

"I think it's great because it's showing that they appreciate the veterans and their sacrifices before and after they've entered the service," Metcalf said.

The VMA celebration will take place on May 4 at 1 p.m. at the Tuscaloosa Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

Alex Bynum, the assistant director of the VMA and organizer of the celebration said the event is being held at the VA Medical Center in order to encourage as many community members as possible to see the military-affiliated population graduate.

"I think that by highlighting this specific population, showing the success of service students is what sets this [event] apart," Bynum said.

Metcalf transferred to the University after serving in Afghanistan. He is here on the GI Bill and a scholarship from the Veterans of Foreign Wars or VFW.

Metcalf said he had trouble readjusting to society and college life. For him, the hardest part of readjusting was the social aspect.

The maturity level of an 18-to-20 year-old student is not like that of someone who has been in a combat zone, Metcalf said. While he was in the army, partying was the last thing on Metcalf's mind.

"The best part of UA was getting to know my different professors and getting to learn from them," Metcalf said. "Especially after I became more open about who I was."

As Metcalf got to know his professors, they helped him with his career and goals. For him, this is a part of his college experience that he will remember forever.
A community victory

By Stephen Detrager
Staff Writer

Terry Saban and the wives of several other Alabama football coaches were in Alberta on Tuesday morning, landscaping the 17th house built by Habitat for Humanity with money donated by the Nick's Kids Foundation.

After an EF-4 tornado tore through Tuscaloosa in 2011, Nick and Terry Saban's official charity raised funds to build 13 Habitat homes, one for each national championship the Alabama Crimson Tide had claimed in football.

Since then, Saban has tackled four more championship wins, including a thrilling overtime victory over the Georgia Bulldogs in the College Football Playoff national championship game in January, and the foundation has funded another Habitat home for each win.

Ellen Potts, the executive director of Habitat for Humanity Tuscaloosa, said volunteers will put the finishing touches on the 17th such house next week then hand the keys to Donna Smith, a single mother of two who will move into the home on Juanita Drive.

"This is a wonderful, wonderful way to honor the hard work that our team did, that the staff and coaches did, and to honor their accomplishment by doing something that will make a tremendous difference for the Smith family," Potts said. "This has been an amazing way that they can honor it, not just with the house but with their own physical labor. They fund the house, but we've had the football players out here, now we have coaches' wives out here working, and it's just a wonderful way to honor their accomplishment."

Potts also emphasized that the house is being made to be fully handicapped-accessible to accommodate Smith's son, who is physically disabled.

Smith called the house a blessing, and thanked everyone who helped fund and build it.

"I am overwhelmed with gratitude. It's just incredible, the work that's gone into this, the dedication from the volunteers, the builders, from everyone at Habitat," she said. "There's no way I can repay any of this, but we can pay it forward, and that's what we'll do."

Terry Saban was on site Tuesday, overseeing the efforts of the volunteers.

"In my husband's profession, we've moved a lot, so I know a lot about landscaping and that makes me the master gardener here," Saban said. "Every hole that's dug needs my approval."

See HABITAT, A7
HABITAT

From Page A1

She said finishing the Smiths' house will finally conclude a process that began when the Tide started practicing last fall. She added that funding and building the Habitat homes has helped her family feel at home in Tuscaloosa after a long history of moving from place to place.

"When you're in coaching, you move a lot. When you lose, you move and when you win, you move." Saban said. "We've never lived (this long) anywhere, but this will be our 12th season. Previous to this, five years was the limit. I don't think you see this happening much in coaching, so we're really excited and proud that we've been able to be here this long and feel like this is our community. We're not doing it for just for a community, we're doing it for our community. That feels good."

Potts said the Smith house will be the 70th that her organization has built since the tornado, and the Nick's Kids Foundation has funded and helped finish 17 of those -- more than 20 percent of the homes Habitat has built since 2011.

"It sets the bar for charitable giving -- in Tuscaloosa certainly but also around the country," Potts said. "I would challenge all the football coaches around the country -- if their schools have won a national championship, build a Habitat house. I hope that we just keep on winning, but I would challenge them all to do that."

Reach Stephen Dethrage at stephen.dethrage@tuscaloosanews.com or 722-0227.
UAB to sell site adjacent to Regions Field

A site located adjacent to Regions Field in downtown Birmingham is now on the market.

The University of Alabama at Birmingham confirmed to the Birmingham Business Journal plans to sell the property at 1401 Third Ave. S. in the Parkside District.

The site has been owned by the University of Alabama at Birmingham for decades, according to Jefferson County tax records, and is in a district experiencing significant development and skyrocketing property values.

UAB Vice President of Finance and Administration Allen Bolton told the BBJ in a statement that the property is located outside the boundaries of the new UAB Campus Master Plan.

He said any proceeds from the sale would be used to acquire or improve properties within the plan boundaries. John Hardin of J.H. Berry & Gilbert is listing the property.

The university introduced its master plan a couple of years ago to guide the changing campus and facilities as the student body continues to grow.

As a result, real estate activity has ramped up on the campus with new construction projects, properties acquired, and several properties slated for demolition.

Bolton said the Parkside property is listed with a licensed real estate broker in accordance with board rules.

Any proposed sale will be presented to the University of Alabama System Physical Properties Committee and the system’s board of trustees prior to execution of a deal.

The site sits in the heart of what has been one of the most active districts for real estate development in the past decade, and that has helped spark revitalization in the rest of the city center. It is one block to the UAB campus, two blocks to Children’s of Alabama, and two blocks to Railroad Park.

Information from J.H. Berry shows it is a mixed-use development-ready site of 1.29 acres. One possibility for the property is a high-density development opportunity, as the site could support a four- or five-story building with parking underneath.

A development at the site could go a long way toward creating better connections between the UAB campus and the Parkside District, which has been a focus of groups like REV Birmingham, Urban Land Institute, and others for the past couple of years.

A few blocks south of the site, preliminary approval has been given to a plan for a student housing multifamily development at the corner of Fifth Avenue South and 13th Street South.

As we’ve previously reported, several properties in and around the Parkside District have recently traded hands and are being considered for a variety of projects that could further transform the future of the area.

The listing is significant in that it creates another development opportunity for the already active area. Local real estate brokers have said there aren’t many sites left for future development in the Parkside District.

Another long-anticipated property a few blocks north and west is the former Swalley Building, which is now being redeveloped into The Denham Building. It will be a mixed-use property with modern office space, commercial space, and high-end apartments.
IN BRIEF

NEW UAB PROGRAM TO ENCOURAGE HOME OWNERSHIP

Birmingham's largest employer and economic engine is starting a new program that could have large implications for several local residential neighborhoods.

The University of Alabama at Birmingham begins an initiative this month called "Blazer Home," which encourages home ownership in Five Points South, Glen Iris, and North and South Titusville.

"Our proposed investment of $400,000 through 50 UAB homeowners over five years in these neighboring communities is an indication of our commitment to the vitality and safety of our adjacent neighborhoods, our employees and our city," said Allen Bolton, vice president for Finance and Administration.

"We also hope that UAB is just the first among Alabama employers to provide employer-assisted housing benefits."

All full-time, benefits-eligible employees of UAB, UAB Hospital and UAB Hospital Management LLC are eligible to apply for a Blazer Home grant, according to the UAB Reporter website.

Blazer Home will provide up to 10 grants per year for five years in amounts up to $8,000. The grants can be used by UAB employees for a down payment or closing costs on new purchases or renovations on a home in the designated incentive areas. Information from UAB said the employees who receive grant funds must agree to 60 months of continuous employment and to residing in the home.

"We think it is important to encourage residential development that has the potential to bring stability and vitality to the areas around campus," said UAB Educational Foundation Treasurer Jodie Mote.
Project pipeline is robust for Birmingham's health care providers

*Birmingham health systems investing heavily in new construction and renovation projects*

By: Tylar Patchen

Before Keith Parrott came to Birmingham about a decade ago, he had heard the local health care scene was a fiercely competitive one.

Once Parrott – who is now CEO of Brookwood Baptist Health – arrived in the Magic City, it wasn’t exactly what he expected. But things are different now.

“It was really kind of stagnant until Grandview opened,” he said. “This is the most tumultuous, interesting, challenging time for Birmingham – certainly in my 10 years.”

Thanks to a variety of factors – including the 2015 debut of Grandview Medical Center and the joint venture between Baptist Health System and Tenet Healthcare that created Brookwood Baptist – Parrott said the city’s medical scene is at one of its most active points.

“It’s a little bit of an arms race, which is new for Birmingham. For the longest time, you didn’t see a lot of investments,” he said.

The end result has been a surge of multimillion-dollar projects, from new construction on hospital campuses and in the suburbs to major renovations.

Brookwood Baptist, which pledged to spend $250 million on capital projects within five years after the joint venture was created, is one of the best examples.

But virtually all of the major players are competing against one another – although their individual strategies differ.

It’s a trend Parrott and others say will ultimately benefit patients in the area, while also creating a significant amount of work for Birmingham’s high concentration of medical construction firms.

And while the current project pipeline is active, all indications are that even more are on the way.

“Competition is a good thing,” Parrott said. “I think it’s a good thing you’ve got hospitals trying to raise the bar and deliver better service.”

**What’s driving the investments?**

The evolution of health care around the state and the region is just one of the factors affecting Birmingham hospitals and their facility plans.

One trend is a shift toward outpatient procedures and a greater focus on value-based health care.

Grandview Medical Center CEO Drew Mason said local hospitals are preparing for the growing shift toward outpatient services.

See Next Page
“Everyone is preparing for that, and it’s all about access points for our patients,” he said.

That shift has made growing outpatient capacity a priority for Grandview, an initiative that includes opened or planned clinics in Vestavia Hills, Brook Highland, Liberty Park and Homewood.

In addition to the focus on outpatient services, UAB Health System CEO Will Ferniany said two opposing factors are heavily impacting the health care world.

He said the aging baby boomer generation is causing an increased need for beds, while the push to lower health care costs, combined with increasing technology, is driving a sharper focus on outpatient care.

All of those factors come into play as hospitals consider their facility needs, as do hospital types and the state’s rural health care challenges.

People going to the hospitals, particularly tertiary facilities like UAB, are much sicker than they used to be in many cases, Ferniany said.

At the same time, rural hospitals are struggling due to a multitude of factors.

“Rural hospitals are having trouble, and the reason being is that people, if they’re not really sick, they can’t get accepted to the hospital, and if they are really sick, they’re too sick to be treated in the smaller (hospitals),” he said.

In many cases, hospital leaders said those factors are driving people toward Birmingham and helping spark capital investments.

Parrott, for one, said he expected to see the opening of Grandview result in patient numbers going down for some other facilities, but that didn’t happen.

One reason is the growing amount of patient traffic coming from outside the area.

For example, Princeton Baptist is one of the nation’s busiest hospitals for the MitraClip procedure, and the bulk of those patients are from out of town.

“Birmingham is even more of a medical mecca,” Parrott said.

Capital on campus

Parrott said Brookwood Baptist will likely spend its pledged $250 million in four years instead of five, with the funds spread out over its network and the bulk going to its hospitals.

Over the next 12 to 18 months, Brookwood Baptist – the second largest hospital in the area with 607 beds – will receive about $60 million in renovations.

He said Brookwood expects to file a letter of intent for a certificate of need to build a new intensive care replacement unit, but wouldn’t seek to add beds to the unit.

See Next Page
Parrott said two more floor renovations are planned, as well as $1.3 million on lobby and hallway renovations.

All of that is in addition to substantial investments in new technology and equipment.

"There's a brand-new hospital down the street with brand-new everything. We are in a great location, great neighborhood. We just need to upgrade some facilities," Parrott said.

In addition to Brookwood, he said $35 million is slated for Princeton Baptist Medical Center, and projects totaling roughly $20 million are in the works for Shelby Baptist. Upgrades are also planned for both Walker Baptist and Citizens Baptist.

But Baptist is one of several local health care systems with major projects in the pipeline.

While Parrott and others say Grandview has been a driving force that has led to upgrades at other facilities, Mason said his hospital isn't resting on its status as the new hospital in town.

"We don't see ourselves taking our foot off of the gas in any shape or form. Nobody is satisfied today, and we continue to look toward more growth and opportunities," he said.

Grandview was recently approved for a certificate of need to add 30 beds—a project that entails about $10 million in construction costs, $4.5 million in equipment costs and first-year operating expenses of $3.4 million, according to state filings.

It was a move hospital leaders said was driven by strong occupancy at the hospital on the U.S. 280 corridor.

Grandview also filed a letter of intent earlier this year for a new gastroenterology surgery center.

Grandview also will be emphasizing women's care. Mason said that will likely involve expanding the current infrastructure geared toward women's services.

Mason said another potential project involves physician office space.

"We're about 90 percent full in our physician office building, and I would consider it highly likely you would see a second office building on this campus," he said.

Major projects on campus at UAB include a new proton therapy cancer treatment facility, a major expansion of the School of Nursing, the addition of new operating rooms at Callahan Eye Hospital and expansions and renovations at the Whitaker Building and Kirklin Clinic, among others.

St. Vincent's is currently building a 94,400-square-foot parking deck extension that will add 200 spaces and is scheduled for completion in August.

**The outpatient effect**

While UAB has no shortage of on-campus projects, it has been one of the most active players around the region.
It is currently building a 26,700-square-foot freestanding emergency department and a 38,400-square-foot medical office building in the growing Gardendale market.

The health system also recently purchased property in the Stadium Trace Village mixed-use development in Hoover for a 39,000-square-foot medical office building. That project will consolidate a number of clinics in the surrounding area.

In addition to those projects, UAB affiliate Medical West purchased 48 acres in McCalla – although no project has been disclosed for that site at this time.

Fernany said a number of factors are driving its facility strategies – namely the aging of the baby boomers and the shift toward outpatient care.

He said the emphasis on outpatient care is being driven by the economics of health care, as well as technology that make procedures that once required a hospitalization to be conducted on an outpatient basis.

“Callahan is a case in point. Back in the 1980s and early 1990s, you were admitted for two weeks if you had eye surgery,” Fernany said. “Now, you’re out in an hour.”

Ultimately, Fernany said UAB’s goal is to have multispecialty locations throughout the metro area.

“This campus will become more and more for the sicker patients and for downtown people, whereas if you live out in Gardendale, you’ll probably go to the clinic there. If you live in Hoover, you’ll go to Hoover,” he said.

St. Vincent’s also has been active in the suburbs. It opened St. Vincent’s Trussville – a 31,753-square-foot outpatient facility – in December. It also recently opened an urgent care clinic off U.S. 31 in Homewood.

Unlike some of the other providers in the area, Parrott said he expects the capital expenditures off campus to be on the lighter side, with a focus on facilities that increase access to care without significant costs.

One example is the new primary care clinic Brookwood Baptist is planning in Gardendale, which will give the health system a stronger foothold in northern Jefferson County.

He said Brookwood Baptist’s strategy is finding the most cost-effective way to deliver care without sacrificing quality.

“Health care payers have really rewarded big expensive things. That’s part of the problem. We need to be incentivized to think smart. That’s why our ambulatory strategy looks a little differently.”

Mason said Grandview is constantly evaluating its secondary market positions.

“We’ve got a lot of opportunities to plant our flag and (achieve) better connectivity to those patients,” he said. Mason said there will likely be other projects in the pipeline in the future.
GeneCapture Inc. announces novel platform for portable rapid infection diagnosis

By: GeneCapture

GeneCapture Inc. has demonstrated a new process for rapidly determining the genetic signature of a pathogen – a germ-causing infection. In less than an hour, this new, patented technique analyzes a human or animal sample – whether it is blood, urine, saliva or swab – to detect the presence of a broad range of specific bacteria, viruses or fungi.

The disposable test cartridge is about the size of a smartphone. Signature probes for newly discovered or mutated pathogens can be added to the cartridge in just a few days, providing fast intelligence for new epidemics.

“Our team of biochemists and engineers has combined several cutting-edge technologies into an innovative and rugged solution for a very critical problem we face today – the diagnostic delay in identifying the source of an infection,” said CEO and co-founder Peggy Sammon. “During that one- to three-day turnaround, contagion spreads and the microbes mutate, making conditions for epidemics and antibiotic resistance highly concerning. We want the patient to get a diagnosis within an hour and get on the right medicine right away.”

GeneCapture is based at the HudsonAlpha Institute for Biotechnology, a leading nonprofit research institute that brings together genomic researchers and for-profit businesses under one roof to create an environment for the rapid deployment of solutions. The institute is close to the University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH) campus, where the original idea was conceived and patented. GeneCapture’s chief technology officer, Krishnan Chittur, Ph.D., has been working on rapid infection diagnosis since he endured a suspenseful three-day wait to see if his premature baby had pneumonia.

“It turns out she did not have an infection, but we didn’t learn that until after three days of strong antibiotics had coursed through her tiny body. A few years later, in my lab at UAH, we worked out a fast way to see if an infection was present right away. We knew it was a game-changer,” Chittur said.

Chittur met with entrepreneur Sammon, and together they formed the company, licensed the patent and assembled a team to turn the idea into a product. The original process took several hours, but after Harvard biochemist Paula Koelle refined the steps and perfected the recipe, the company’s prototype now gives reliable results in 45 minutes.

The technology is based on unique genetic probes that capture the genetic material of the pathogen if it is present. Hundreds of probes are arranged on a microarray, allowing them to make a direct match to a broad selection of pathogens. An optical scan identifies which probes were activated, resulting in a rapid on-site or wirelessly reported diagnosis.

“From the start, we knew we wanted a simple, rugged, inexpensive product that could be used in remote applications. Our goal is to keep the entire test cost under $20, and we are on a good path to accomplishing that,” said Koelle, vice president of program management. “Our initial work with patient samples shows that the technology is living up to its potential.”
Koelle met Sammon on the sidelines of a soccer field where their daughters were teammates.

“We have received funding through Alabama Launchpad and a group of visionary angel investors, and we have benefited from the help of several local clinics and the collaborative entrepreneurial environment in Huntsville,” Sammon said.

“Breaking the one-hour barrier, the $20 barrier and the portability barrier makes this a great market creation opportunity,” Sammon said. “We want to get this product in use at doctors’ offices, nursing homes, clinics, field hospitals, airports and cruise ships – all the places that can react quickly to infectious outbreaks.”

The company is now developing the pre-manufacturing model for clinical studies and submittal to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for an expected clearance. For more information on GeneCapture, visit www.genecapture.com. To learn more about HudsonAlpha, visit www.hudsonalpha.org.
Where R&D Goes to School

By: Ray Garner

A 2010 study conducted by the Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute at the State University of New York showed a strong link between higher education and economic development.

While that not-so-surprising fact likely fell into the category of “tell me something I don’t know,” it documented a new trend in workforce development that is changing a decades-long economic development paradigm.

The report found research universities to be the key players in economic development, with especially strong links to advanced workforce development, business and technological consulting, and creating an environment for corporate startups. The report revealed a new model for economic growth: one modeled more on education, research and innovation and less on traditional incentive programs.

It’s worked for Silicon Valley, Research Triangle Park in North Carolina and the I-93 corridor north of Boston. Technologically focused higher education that produces a talented workforce, supported by enlightened local governments and chambers of commerce, makes a potent mix for economic development.

The key issue, of course, is workforce development. Today’s technology companies, whose competitive advantages rely heavily on technological innovation, must be fed and their fuel is educated people.

The Economic Development Partnership of Alabama promotes the assets of eight research universities in Alabama: Auburn University, Alabama A&M University, Alabama State University, Tuskegee University, the University of Alabama, the University of Alabama at Birmingham, the University of South Alabama and the University of Alabama in Huntsville.

Here in Huntsville, the partnership between UAH and a growing innovation-oriented economy has produced both supply and demand for highly educated workers.

One must wonder which really comes first. A community wants to bring in the industry, but at the same time you have to have the workforce needed to support that industry.

Since the 1960s, Huntsville has realized that the key to bringing high quality jobs is a high integrity workforce of the smartest and most productive people possible.

Thousands of graduates from the University of Alabama in Huntsville end up at federal agencies and government contractors on Redstone Arsenal and technology-rich companies that populate Cummings Research Park. Several have made it to the top of leading CRP companies. These include UAH graduates Marc Bendickson, chairman of the board of Dynetics; Richard Amos, president ofColsa Corp.; Steven Hill, president of AEgis Research; Ashok Singhal president of CFD Research, and Gurmej Sandhu, founder and chairman of Simgatech.

See next page
A dynamic technological economy fosters changing educational needs. Prospects that need a specific workforce skill set are able to work with UAH to modify or add educational programs designed to fill the gap.

This could involve an entirely new degree program. Current examples are modeling & simulation, gaming and entertainment arts, varying degree levels in cybersecurity, a Ph.D in biotechnology and specialized MBA programs focused on logistics and supply chain management.

Beyond Advanced Workforce Development

The advanced workforce development and research benefits are only the beginning of the story. Research universities bring other benefits designed to grease the wheels of economic development and growth.

One of these is the ability to function as a teaming partner, or a “force multiplier,” on major proposals for grants and government contracts requiring strong research credentials. UAH offers the ability to be a teaming partner and strengthen a proposal and also to offer facilities many of these companies can’t otherwise afford. Those facilities, as well as UAH talent and expertise, can be a real plus in a proposal effort.

Research can be a very expensive effort and therefore an activity not many companies can cost justify. This is one of the advantages for the Huntsville community in having a research university. UAH is able to develop a research program in an extremely focused, niche area that doesn’t normally exist in industry. Corporations have to be more “jack of all trades” and are not able to develop a niche expertise. But as a UAH faculty member, one can drill down into a very specific area and become a world-class expert in that area. So, there are occasions when that world-class expertise in a very specific area becomes the crucial factor in a proposal.

Research universities find themselves more often at the forefront of local and state economic development efforts. Alabama, like other states, continues to offer traditional incentives like tax breaks and infrastructure development, but the state’s major research universities offer that one “lead incentive” of knowledge that more businesses find they must have.

And this factor appears to become even more prevalent in economic development successes in the greater Huntsville area lately. Recent moves by manufacturing companies in north Alabama also include a research and development component alongside the manufacturing capabilities. Remington moved its R&D center from Kentucky to Huntsville, and Polaris has an R&D building planned on its campus. Toyota-Mazda also has an R&D center planned between the two manufacturing buildings at its mega-plant in Limestone County.

This trend falls in line with the Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute report: “In the economy of the future, the businesses that will have staying power and growth potential will be those most dependent on knowledge — on research, new ideas, new technologies and upgraded knowledge for their workers.
College student granted scholarship from military organization

By: Alyssa Martin

April is a month to recognize military children.

According to Children of Fallen Patriots, there are 2 million children whose parents serve in the military and from that number, approximately 20,000 have lost a parent in service of our nation.

Veronica Crouse was 4-years-old when her father, a member of the U.S. Army, passed away while their family was on vacation.

"It was the World War II Memorial, he had a heart attack and that's where he passed away," said Crouse.

Before her father's death, Veronica remembers the multiple nurses who would help take care of him amid his on-going health problems.

"Cause they would give him advice because he had heart problems, try to get him to have a healthier life style," said Crouse.

It's those memories that led her to pursue a degree in the medical field.

"It took me awhile to figure out how I wanted to help people but the more I kept thinking back, the more I kept remembering that and it kept pushing me forward. And I finally made the decision and figured it out. It's the perfect fit, nursing is for me," said Crouse.

Veronica is able to attend the University of Alabama in Huntsville and pursue her nursing degree thanks to the organization Children of Fallen Patriots.

The group finds children who have lost a parent in the military and grants scholarship money to help them afford college.

For Veronica, the scholarship allowed her to pay out of state tuition to attend UAH.

"The V.A. doesn't pay out of state tuition, so I needed extra to cover it and UAH is known for their Nursing program. So I really wanted to go here and I have friends in the area, it was just perfect," added Veronica.

Since 2002, Children of Fallen Patriots has given out more than $21 million dollars in scholarships.
WAAY 31 reached out the organization to talk about the work they do. The CEO sent a statement that reads in part quote “We believe that one of the best ways we can honor our fallen heroes who made the ultimate sacrifice for our country is to invest in the future of those they loved most in the world – their children.”

Veronica hopes more military families won't let the financial strain stop them from pursuing their education.
Stillsman seeks to repair aging dorm

See next page
Stillman College was added to the Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage in 2016 as a historic district in recognition of its role as an early institute for the education of blacks in Tuscaloosa. A district recognizes a concentration of buildings and associated landscape that retain a high degree of historic character and integrity related to an aspect of an area’s history.

The renovated Winsborough Hall would be used as museum and research space, according to Warrick. The first floor would include museum space to document the history of Stillman, including its founding by the Rev. Charles Stillman and its role in the civil rights movement, she said.

The second and third floors of the historic dorm would be converted for use as academic and research space, Warrick said.

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AUBURN

Fraternities ban hard liquor at some events

Hard liquor will no longer be a feature of many fraternity events at Auburn University. Auburn's Interfraternity Council of Presidents voted to ban hard liquor at fraternity events held at chapter facilities, including date and band parties and rush events, The Auburn Plainsmen reported.

The move comes after a high number of alcohol-related medical calls and conduct reports.

The ban will go into effect May 5. Alcohol with less than 15 percent ABV will still be allowed and the prohibition doesn't extend to fraternity events at third-party venues. — Leada Gore
COMMENTSARY

A-Day a promising preview for fall

There has been so much debate over Alabama's starting quarterback through the Crimson Tide's 15 spring practices that, no matter what your perspective, you face exhaustion in arguing your point. A-Day wasn't just a scrimmage, it was also a 50-gallon drum of jet fuel poured straight onto the hot coals of that debate. Whether that debate is settled by a transfer or by an executive order from head coach Nick Saban remains to be seen, but it's worth reviewing A-Day from a different perspective as a reminder of what exactly is at stake.

That's because, given the talent level at the other 10 positions, this could be one of Alabama's all-time best modern offenses in the fall. Before breaking that down, one has to continually define what the "modern era" on offense is. Does it go all the way back to the 1930s, when Dixie Howell and the transcendentally great Don Hutson "modernized" offense in the college game? Were the wishbone attacks of the 1970s — especially 1973, although they all amassed vast rushing yardage — truly modern? Do we only look at the last 35 years?

Regardless of where you draw the line, a look at the offensive roster — some of which was on display at A-Day and some of which was sidelined — helps

See HURT, B5
in understanding at least part of the passion in the quarterback debate. It’s like choosing which engine you will be putting in a Ferrari.

Running backs rarely stand out at A-Day, partly because the structure doesn’t always lend itself to cohesive blocking and partly because coaches — not just Nick Saban but most coaches — always seem intent on working on the passing game in the spring.

On Saturday, Damien Harris came as close as any Alabama to getting the senior star treatment, getting a handful of reps but exiting the stage early because the risk of injury outweighed anything Harris still has to prove.

He will be a proven commodity in the fall. Najee Harris didn’t break a long run but showed his usual quickness and strength in turning potential two-yard losses into three-yard gains. And if there was a pleasant surprise, it was Tuscaloosa’s Brian Robinson, whose combination of power and speed would have him starting at half the schools in the SEC. Factor in Josh Jacobs upon his return from injury and Alabama may have a group to rival Saban’s best.

(I’d stop short of saying better than any group. There are guys in the NFL, like Alvin Kamara, in his short stay, and Kenyan Drake, who never became starters at UA.)

Jerry Jeudy’s absence due to injury only made it that much more obvious that Henry Ruggs and DeVonta Smith are explosive talents in their own right. When Jeudy and Tyrell Shavers return, there will be multiple options.

(Recruiting experts also insist that signee Jalen Waddle will be too good to leave on the bench.)

There’s a deep group at tight end as well. The offensive line has talent and experience and should have ample depth once everyone is settled in at a position. Did the first-team line dominate at A-Day? No. There has been some recent shuffling and the first-team defensive line is daunting. Should it be solid in the fall? Yes.

The ingredients are all in place — as soon as the debate over which straw will stir the drink is settled.

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A-Day not just about a win and a steak dinner

By Ben Jones
Sports Writer

No one wants to eat pork and beans. Not even the media coaches at A-Day. You'd be a sore loser too if you missed out on a steak dinner.

The big-picture goal for A-Day was Alabama's 14 preceding spring practices to prepare the team for the 2018 season. It's not about winning and losing.

Some of the strategic decisions reflect that. The White team would have given running back Damien Harris more than five carries if it was out to win at all cost. The Crimson team wouldn't have been throwing the ball in the final minute with a one-touchdown lead if Alabama was playing LSU or Tennessee instead of itself.

But at an individual level, no one wants to eat the beans. Tosh Lupoi gathered the White team defense with 1:10 left on his offense took the field with its final chance to win the game, trailing 17-12.

"Let's get ready for the next series," he said.

It was one more chance for teaching before the clock on spring practice ran out. It was one more chance to eat beans. Lupoi, always one of Alabama's most animated coaches in practice, elevated his energy to another level for the spring game. It was visible from the start.

The White team retreated to the visitor's locker room before the game, where offensive players heard from Dan Enos and Lupoi briefed the defense.

"Take care of the football," Enos said. "The ball is the program."

Lupoi tells the defenders "We love our teammates," but they need to "rattle" Crimson quarterback Mac Jones. That's easier said than done in the early goings, as Jones starts 8 of 11 for 132 yards with a touchdown. White trails 14-0. My team is more likely to need can openers than steak knives.

Football often appears to be organized chaos. There's plenty of organization and plenty of chaos on the sidelines. The defense lines up on one set of benches with the defensive backs, linebackers and defensive line sitting left to right. That way, the position coaches whose units are most closely tied to one another can communicate quickly. Lupoi tries to clean up the early miscues.

"Re-call the calls so everyone can hear it," he says. "That's going to save one person from getting beat."

A pair of field goals shortens the lead before halftime. Lupoi is optimistic when he addresses the defense. He starts by reviewing the most recent mistakes and areas the defense needs to improve so the plays are still fresh in their mind, then works backward to the start of the game.

"We're one turnover away from taking the lead," Lupoi says. Harris has a strength coach help him stretch out "just in case" he gets more carries in the second half. THERE'S still hope when the White Team leaves the Fall Room. There's even more hope when two more field goals make the score 14-12.

The offense is on the field for what could be the game-winning drive in the fourth quarter, but the defense barely even watches the plays. They're paying attention to Lupoi, defensive backs coach Karl Scott and defensive line graduate assistant Kyle Pope.

"That ball is going to spit out," Lupoi says, recalling his halftime warning. "Who's going to be the one to scoop and score?"

Just then, quarterback Jalen Hurts delivers a 59-yard pass to DeVonta Smith. The White team is in field goal range, trailing 14-12. In one moment, steam is back on the menu. In another, it's not.

The offense stalls and kicker Joseph Bulovas misses a 43-yard field goal. A minute later, he makes a 48-yarder for the Crimson team to increase its lead to 17-12. A late touchdown from Mac Jones makes it 24-12.

"I'm proud of him, but I'd like to be eating steaks," White team left tackle Jonah Williams says of Jones.

Saban speaks to the team in the locker room briefly. The Monday night dinner will be the final time the team is together before it breaks for summer. He reminds players to make the individual decisions they need to make to put themselves in position to help the team.

He also reminds them there's no getting out of the steak or beans bet.

"I'm going to watch you eat them," Saban said.

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This quarterback battle has barely started

**Joseph Goodman**  
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Nick Saban doesn’t have a quarterback problem.  
Or a quarterback dilemma.  
Quarterback controversy, yes. Quarterback crisis... not yet.  
What Saban and Alabama really have right now are options.  
All-American options.  
Jalen Hurts or Tua Tagovailoa?  
What’s Saban going to do? Who is he going to pick? Everyone wants to know. Oh, Saban has it so tough.  
Here’s a Nick Saban thought bubble at this very moment: “Am I going to blow up Knoxville, Tennessee, with my M1 Abrams tank, or my F-22 Raptor fighter jet?”  
Is Alabama going to grind its opponents’ bones into dust next season with Jalen, or rain down fiery death from above with Tua?  
No one knows yet. People act like they know. People think they know. People assume it’s Tua, especially after his brother committed to Alabama on Saturday, and after Jalen didn’t light up the field in the A-Day Game. But no one knows anything yet. Not even the man with his finger on the button.  
So, yeah, this quarterback battle barely has started. This collection of spring football practices at Alabama was more like a reorganizing of the armory. This A-Day was more like a nostalgic embrace of what once was, and what might never be again: Jalen and Tua on the same team, hugging each other, having each others’ backs, lifting up trophies together.

Cherish it, Alabama fans. Don’t take this moment for granted, this spring, this April, this mixing of memory and desire.  
Don’t assume there is going to be another championship. Don’t expect there to be something better this fall.  
And don’t write off Jalen based off this A-Day. Knee-jerk reactions are not for the spring, when dual-threat quarterbacks are limited by design, and play calls are, too. Oh, you think Jalen is going to transfer without putting up a fight? That’s not the Jalen we know.  
Remember, Saban needed both Jalen and Tua to win the national championship in January. Somehow that fact is lost on people today. Like Alabama magically appeared in the locker room of Mercedes-Benz Stadium at halftime of the title game, and didn’t have to do anything to actually get there.  
Do you think Alabama would have made it to that moment with Tua as the starting quarterback? I do not.  
Do you think Tua would have had the same confidence and development as a player without Jalen first pushing him last season, and then supporting him at the
Remember, Saban needed both Jalen and Tua to win the national championship in January. Somehow that fact is lost on people today.

Do you think Alabama can repeat as national champs with just one of them? I do not.

Saban needed them both to win it all, and maybe still does, but it looks like it’s just going to be one at some point in the near future, unfortunately.

First, Saban will try to keep them both. If he cannot, and that is beginning to seem more likely by the day, then he is going to have to make another dynasty-defining decision, after just making one in the national championship.

The coach makes personnel decisions all the time, but this is different. This one choice, Jalen or Tua, could be worth millions of dollars for Alabama next season. That’s not an exaggeration.

As the Guardian of the Holy Grail says to Indiana Jones inside the cave, “you must choose, but choose wisely.”

Who is the best quarterback, and is the best quarterback the correct choice for Alabama?

How do you pick? How do you choose between the guy who is 26-2 as a starter, and the guy who gave the world 2-6?
Is there a wise man out there who could help us understand how Saban might navigate this quarterback competition?

Do we have outside counsel on retainer? As a matter of fact, yes we do. This A-Day, we have Lane Kiffin.

I spoke to Kiffin recently about Tua and his father set Alabama’s spring game aflame with his ultimatum to Saban.

Kiffin, the current coach at FAU, coached Jalen and recruited Tua, so he has a valuable perspective of Alabama’s quarterback competition, and maybe even more insight into things than people on Alabama’s own staff right now. Plus, he’s one of the best quarterback coaches and offensive minds in the country.

How does he see Alabama’s quarterback battle right now?

“Well, they’re in a great spot,” Kiffin said. “Options — the tank or the fighter jet.

“If we’re having a competition, let’s make it fair where we call the same plays,” Kiffin said. “People fell in love with Tua for good reason in that game, but they’re calling different plays. Part of that is because they were behind, so they were throwing the ball more downfield than they did in the first half with Jalen, where they were calling more team-management style first half, playing to the defense.”

As a coach, can you look past and block out what Tua did in the second half, and just look at it impartially, or does that affect your judgment?

“No, you got to look at it,” Kiffin said. “And this is, you’re talking about two great players, this thing can go either way. Everybody says Tua is so much better than Jalen, well, remember that Jalen threw one interception in 14 games last year, or whatever, and Tua threw (one) in that championship and, really, the fourth-and-five touchdown to Calvin Ridley, he’s not even throwing to Calvin, and that ball is normally picked off when you throw across your body.”

A little dumb luck, in other words, or divine intervention — the perspective changes with allegiance — is how we arrived at this point in Saban’s ongoing dynasty at Alabama. Saban isn’t going to base anything off of dumb luck. That much we know for certain.

“He was throwing to the running back, so that thing could have gone the totally other way, and all of a sudden it would have been, ‘Oh, why did we take Jalen out?’” Because Jalen rarely ever turns the ball over and manages the game, so that’s just how crazy football can be,” Kiffin said.

Oh, but it can get crazier, and it will.

Joseph Goodman is a columnist for Alabama Media Group. He’s on Twitter @JoeGoodmanJr.
Why it was a long afternoon for Jalen Hurts on Alabama A-Day

By: Michael Casagrande

Jogging to the sideline, the expression on Jalen Hurts' face didn't change. He'd just thrown an interception on his 37th and final throw of Alabama's A-Day Game.

Still calm. No hint of distress.

A few moments later, new quarterbacks coach Dan Enos walked over to the third-year quarterback during the awards ceremony. His team lost 24-12 on a nice spring afternoon that won't be remembered for offense. It looked like the assistant was coaching Hurts through his only interception on a 19-for-37 day that included 195 yards but no touchdowns.

It was the end of a long week -- one with the distraction of headlines and the hints of a transfer. Playing with injured competition Tua Tagovailoa sidelined, a spring game opportunity to show improvement suffered for a few reasons.

Nick Saban pointed to the effectiveness of the pass rush that regularly caved the pocket from a struggling offensive line. Playing with a non-contact jersey, Hurts was sacked seven times Saturday.

"I was not disappointed in the way Jalen played," Nick Saban said. "I think we gotten some guys who can rush a little bit and even though we're rushing four guys most of the time, there was way too much pressure in the pocket to be able to operate like we'd like. I think Jalen made some good plays and I think Jalen made some good throws."

The day started slow, picked up after halftime but couldn't get going when there was a shot to win the game. On the other side, redshirt freshman Mac Jones went 23-for-35 with two touchdowns and an interception for the winning Crimson offense. Media voted him co-MVP of the game along with kicker Joseph Bulovas.

Hurts and the first-team offense got just one first down in the first three possessions. The first three of his completions went to running backs before DeVonta Smith pulled in a 9-yarder in the second quarter.

He went to halftime having thrown just 14 of the 37 passes he'd attempt in the spring game. The longest of those six completions went for 12 yards on a swing pass to running back Najee Harris.

The first-team offense found a groove in the first drive after halftime. Hurts completed a few quick passes to Damien Harris for six yards and DeVonta Smith for eight yards before fitting a nice 14-yarder into Henry Ruggs III.

A 10-yard crossing route to Derek Kief put the White offense at the 10-yard line. A short run and two incomplete passes later, the promising drive stalled and Bulovas kicked one of his five successful field goals of the afternoon.

The next drive went 54 yards on 13 plays before again ending with a 35-yard field goal.

See next page
The best ball Hurts threw all afternoon was a 59-yarder to Devonta Smith later in the game. Backed up inside the 20, Hurts let one go deep to the hero of the national title game. Two sacks and an incomplete pass later, a potential go-ahead 43-yard field goal missed.

"I mean, there are more players on the team than just Jalen," said senior running back Damien Harris. "Just pointing all the attention on him and what he does, it's kinda unfair to him because you put him under the microscope when there’s 10 other guys on offense that have to make a play work. I think that's unfair to him and unfair to our team because you take away the light of what other guys have to do to make a play successful."

Jones had his moments quarterbacking the second-string offense. His first touchdown was a simple crossing route that fellow redshirt freshman Chadarius Townsend took 65 yards up the sideline for a 14-0 lead.

Then, with a five-point lead late, Jones found Xavian Marks for the 46-yard dagger.

"Even with all the talk being about Jalen and Tua being our guys, our quarterbacks, his name kind of goes under the radar," Damien Harris said. "I think he proved to everybody today his name deserves to be in that same conversation."

Moving forward, Saban said he thinks Hurts will benefit from the personal attention he'll be able to receive from Enos. Unlike the past, the quarterbacks coach doesn't also double as the offensive coordinator.

"I think he gets a lot more feedback more quickly because he has somebody just watching him," Saban said. "And I'm talking about just fundamentals now. And I think that he has a good understanding of the offense and his ability to make decisions and trust the pocket are things that we want him to work on."
Jalen Hurts’ last entry in the statistical record for A-Day was a tackle.
A tackle he had to make after throwing an interception.
That’s never an auspicious ending to a game for any quarterback but it summed up what was probably a frustrating day at the end of a frustrating week in the midst of a frustrating spring for the Crimson Tide quarterback.
A-Days are what they are — scrimmages in which the rules modifications make just enough difference to skew the statistics, a fact I would point out (and have for many years) whether a participating quarterback was 0-for-40 passing or 40-for-40.
So it’s fair to point out Hurt’s greatest asset — his running ability — was negated by the two-hand

See HURT, C3
HURT

From Page C1

touch rules that applied to quarterbacks. It's also fair to point out the Alabama offensive line had a hard time blocking the first-team defense, especially Raekwon Davis and Isaiah Buggs.

But it is also fair to point out, even when given time, Hurts threw the ball behind numerous receivers, or wide and out of their reach. Even his best play, a 59-yard completion to DeVonta Smith that kept Hurts' statistical line from looking far worse than it finally did, was short of the target and required an excellent adjustment by Smith to make the catch.

Other deep balls were either too far or not far enough. Nick Saban, who was cautious not to criticize Hurts in the postgame, saying he was "not disappointed" in Hurts' performance, admitted "even Jalen would tell you he could have done better on some things."

Saban was also caught on a live microphone questioning a run/pass decision by Hurts "after two years." That also might mean something, although Saban's running commentary on a play-by-play basis probably includes a lot of criticism. Live microphones were either not an issue when Lane Kiffin was on the sidelines, or they flat-out melted.

A-Day isn't going to be decisive in determining the starting quarterback for Alabama. It never has. It's been a tough spring for Hurts, and seeing Jalen Hurts walk up and take the MVP trophy couldn't have helped.

For one thing, the main competition for what has been Hurts' starting job, Tua Tagovailoa, didn't really compete. Instead, a couple of hand injuries kept him on the sideline where he could neither seize the job for himself (he's certainly capable of doing that) or make some mistakes of his own (like all quarterbacks, he can do that, too.)

That left Hurts competing with an off-stage superstar whose last pass of the previous season is already a part of college football history. The only thing harder than beating out Tua would be beating out Highlight Tua. That's pressure.

Then, Hurts' father, in an interview with Bleacher Report last week, issued what could only be construed as an ultimatum. It may not have been meant that way, and Saban downplayed the matter earlier this week, but many people construed it as a "start or else" situation and an undisguised threat to transfer. That may still be the outcome by the time the Louisville game rolls around in August but the fact is, performance speaks louder than words and Hurts' performance on Saturday did not improve his chances.

Through it all, the Alabama fans in attendance seemed generally supportive - there were no audible boos or catcalls from where I watched, press box or field level. There were some audible groans when Hurts' last fourth-down pass sailed downfield to no one in particular, but that was understandable.

A-Day is not decision day. Saban's post-game comments about players needing to improve "over these next four or five weeks" may have been meant for all, but certainly seemed applicable to one.

A full-game opportunity - and when is the last time a two-year starting quarterback played every minute of an A-Day game? - yielded scant results. Who knows how many more opportunities there will be with an actual game being next on the schedule?

The answer, probably, is not many.

Reach Cecil Hurt at cecil@tidesports.com or 205-722-0225.
Four Crimson Tide players taken in first round of NFL Draft

By: Ben Jones

Alabama had four players taken in the first 26 picks of the National Football League Draft on Thursday night, starting with Minkah Fitzpatrick as the 11th overall selection by the Miami Dolphins.

Defensive lineman Da’Ron Payne was taken two picks later by the Washington Redskins, and linebacker Rashaan Evans went 22nd to the Tennessee Titans. Receiver Calvin Ridley was selected by the Atlanta Falcons with the 26th pick.

The Crimson Tide’s four selections was the most from any college, and marked the fourth time in head coach Nick Saban’s tenure that Alabama has had four players selected in the first round. UA had now had 26 players taken in the first round in the last 10 years, and 69 total players drafted in that span.

Fitzpatrick became the highest-selected Alabama defensive back since Dee Milliner went ninth overall in 2013.

Fitzpatrick was a three-year starter who played corner, safety, and nickel extensively for the Crimson Tide. He was among the most decorated players of the Saban era at Alabama. He won the 2017 Jim Thorpe Award, given to the nation’s best defensive back, and the Chuck Bednarik Award as the best defensive player in college football.

“He’s like a Swiss Army knife,” Chris Grier, general manager of the Dolphins, said in comments posted on the team’s website. “He does a lot of things really well. He gives the defense the chance to be flexible.

“He was a target player. He’s a unique kid. Unbelievably smart, loves football. He’s one of Nick Saban’s favorite players.”

He was a unanimous All-America selection and a unanimous choice for first-team All-SEC as a junior. He was also voted as a permanent team captain by his teammates.

“I think Minkah is sort of a rare commodity in the fact that he’s such a gifted athlete and has such a great personality,” Saban said on ESPN on Wednesday morning. “He’s such a competitive guy that’s a pleasure to coach in everything that he does. He’s really an overachiever for a guy that’s a fantastic athlete. That’s a rare combination, I think, in this day and age.

“He has high goals and aspirations for what he wants to do, and I think he meets all the critical factors for what you look for in a DB. He’s a good tackler, he has great ball skills, can play man-to-man. I think he’s going to be a great player for someone.”

Payne was a two-year starter at nose guard and played heavily in Alabama’s defensive line rotation as a freshman. He and four teammates declared for the draft after their junior seasons in 2017.

See next page
Payne helped his stock with two forceful showings in Alabama’s 2017 postseason. He was named defensive MVP of the Sugar Bowl against Clemson and the national championship game against Georgia.

Payne will join former Alabama teammates Jonathan Allen and Ryan Anderson on the Washington defense.

“I kind of had an idea that I was going to be a Redskin,” Payne told the team’s website. “... I took a trip up there and it just felt like home.

“I’m going to dominate that run. I do that for a living.”

He was named first-team All-SEC by both the coaches and the media this season and was a second-team All-America selection by the American Football Coaches Association.

The media chose Evans as a first-team All-SEC selection in 2017, while he received second-team honors from league coaches. The American Football Coaches Association named him a first-team All-American.

He was also one of four players chosen as a permanent team captain by his teammates.

Evans was tied with Ronnie Harrison for the team lead with 74 tackles this season despite missing two games to injury. He led Alabama with 13 tackles for loss and was second with 6.5 sacks. He also added one forced fumble, a fumble recovery, seven quarterback hurries and three pass breakups.

Evans talked to Heisman Trophy winner Derrick Henry, who plays for the Titans.

“He actually called before the draft,” Evans told the team’s website. “I am just so excited to be part of such a great organization.

“When the Titans called me, my heart dropped. It feels amazing, man.”

Ridley became the third wide receiver who played for Saban at Alabama to be drafted in the first round, following Amari Cooper in 2015 and Julio Jones in 2011. He was the second wide receiver chosen in this year’s draft.

Saban compared Ridley to Drew Hill, a wide receiver for the Houston Oilers when Saban was an assistant there in the 1980s.

“Great coming out of the break, can really drop his weight and separate out of the break,” Saban said on ESPN on Wednesday morning. “I know some people look at his size and say ‘We like bigger guys’ and all that. This guy is really a hard-working, very dependable receiver. Great hands. Hard to cover man to man. And he’ll make critical catches in critical situations in the game.

“I think his speed and quickness is pretty unique. I think he’s going to be an outstanding player as well.”
Ridley finished his career as one of Alabama's most productive receivers. He had 224 career receptions, second only to Cooper's 228. He had 2,781 receiving yards, the third most in school history. His 19 receiving touchdowns are second only to Cooper in Alabama history. He caught at least one pass in all 44 career games at Alabama.

Ridley left Alabama after his junior season, but turned 23 years old in December. He's closer in age to a senior or fifth-year player than an early entrant. He'll turn 24 late during his rookie season in the NFL.
NCAA to implement reforms

Commission calls for rule changes, tougher penalties in basketball

From combined reports

After a recruiting scandal triggered by an FBI probe of college basketball, the NCAA now has the recommendations of the commission it empaneled to guide it in making changes in the sport. The major issue will be turning those recommendations into rules.

Former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice presented the Commission on College Basketball's sweeping recommendations for reform Wednesday. The NCAA Board of Governors, a group of 16 university presidents and the association's highest ranking body, unanimously endorsed all the commission's recommendations.

Various subcommittees, working groups and college administrators will work over the next three months as the NCAA attempts to change NBA Draft rules, create a new enforcement body, toughen penalties for rules violations, revamp summer recruiting, and certify agents, all while trying to get buy-in from organizations that might not be motivated to help.

"I love the direction of the Rice Commission recommendations," Alabama head basketball coach Avery Johnson told The Tuscaloosa News on Wednesday. "I appreciate the multi-level approach"

See REFORMS, A6
addressing areas that can improve college basketball immediately and in the near future.

One high-profile effort will be working with the NBA to change rules that allow the current "one-and-done" system, although not all schools necessarily regard "one-and-done" as the most pressing problem. The University of Alabama had its first "one-and-done" player in more than 15 years in the just-concluded season as All-SEC guard Collin Sexton opted to leave school to pursue a professional career.

The commission called for the NBA and its players association to change rules requiring players to be at least 19 years old and a year removed from graduating high school to be draft eligible. The "one-and-done" rule was implemented in 2006, despite the success of straight-from-high-school stars such as LeBron James, Kobe Bryant and Kevin Garnett.

The commission did, however, say if the NBA and NBPA refuse to change their rules in time for the next basketball season, it would convene and consider other options for the NCAA, such as making freshmen ineligible or locking a scholarship for three or four years if the recipient leaves a program after a single year.

"One-and-done has to go one way or another," Rice told The Associated Press.

The independent commission released its much-anticipated and detailed 60-page report, seven months after the group was formed, in response to a federal corruption investigation that rocked college basketball. Ten people, including some assistant coaches, have been charged in a bribery and kickback scheme, and high-profile programs such as Arizona, Louisville and Kansas have been tied to possible NCAA violations.

Alabama was mentioned in one FBI document involving Sexton's parents, former associate athletics director Kobic Baker, and an agent's representative. Sexton was suspended for one game and his family paid restitution for a meal Sexton's father had received from a former UA employee and no one associated with UA has been indicted in the probe.

The commission offered harsh assessments of toothless NCAA enforcement, as well as the shady summer basketball circuit that brings together agents, apparel companies, and coaches looking to profit on teenage prodigies. It called the environment surrounding hoops "a toxic mix of perverse incentives to cheat," and said responsibility for the current mess goes all the way up to university presidents.

The commission recommended harsher penalties for rule-breakers and the NCAA outsource the investigation and adjudication of the most serious infractions cases. Level I violations would be punishable with up to a five-year postseason ban and the forfeiture of all postseason revenue for the time of the ban. That could be worth tens of millions to major conference schools.

Cecil Hurt contributed to this report
Alabama’s Braxton Key will transfer

By Cecil Hurt
Sports Editor

Braxton Key, a starting forward for most of his two seasons, will transfer from the Alabama basketball program.

UA officials confirmed The Tuscaloosa News’ report Friday morning with a release announcing Key had been granted a release.

“I met with Braxton on Thursday and had a good talk with him,” Alabama head coach Avery Johnson said in the release. “Braxton certainly has a bright future, but he has to do what’s best for him. We wish him nothing but the best of luck in his future endeavors.”

Said Key, “This was not an easy decision to make. I’ve enjoyed my two seasons at the University of Alabama. I want to thank the coaches, support staff and my teammates for helping me get better each and every day. I especially would like to thank all the fans for their support over the past two years.”

Key, an All-SEC Freshman selection in 2016-17, missed the first 10 games of the 2017-18 season after undergoing knee surgery just days before Alabama’s first practice in October.

Key appeared in 26 games last season, starting 17. He averaged 7 points and 5.3 rebounds as a sophomore after averaging 12 points and 5.7 rebounds as a freshman. He scored a career high 26 points in the Crimson Tide’s 2017 win over Georgia in Athens.

Key, who played for national high school champion Oak Hill Academy before coming to Alabama, will have two years of eligibility remaining after sitting out the upcoming season. He is the third player to announce he is leaving the Alabama program since the season ended with a loss to national champion Villanova in the second round of the NCAA Tournament in March.

Leading scorer Collin Sexton announced his intentions to enter the NBA Draft while Ar’Mond Davis, who sat out the season as a redshirt, is leaving as a graduate transfer.
Ending for UA gymnastics season stings

By Greg Upton
Special to The Tuscaloosa News

ST. LOUIS — The light of day Saturday didn’t make things any easier. The pain was still there. It was still reality.

The Alabama gymnastics team did not participate in Saturday night’s Super Six team final at the NCAA Championships, which was won by UCLA.

It was an odd sight, for sure, considering it was just the third time in the 26 years of the current format the Crimson Tide was not competing on the final day of the season.

“It hurts,” Alabama coach Dana Duckworth said. “It’s one where we have to say, OK what did we learn from this? What does our coaching staff learn? What do our athletes learn? Especially the returners.”

One of those returning gymnasts has a pretty good idea how they’ll use the lessons of a painful ending.

“We’re gonna use that motivation next year. Everybody who is going to return is gonna want it a little bit more now,” junior Ariana Guerra said. “Everybody needs to rest and recover and take the time to do what they need to do now, so that way, when we come back, we can be full in on what we need to do next year.”

Next year is not a phrase the Crimson Tide program normally has to utter while the current season was still in operation. They are aiming not to have that conversation quite as early next spring.

“It’s a learning experience for next year,” freshman Lexi Graber said. “We’ll take little things and fix them.”

In the immediate aftermath of Friday’s semi-final that saw Alabama finish fifth of six teams in their session, Duckworth gathered her returning athletes and had a message for them.

“I told them we’ve got to find a way not to have this feeling again because it is not a good feeling,” she said. “Sometimes, heartache like this is part of that journey. It doesn’t make it easy, but it’s part of the process.”

Despite the pain of not making the team final, all was not lost for Alabama this season. The Crimson Tide won a regional title for an NCAA-best 32nd time and made their 36th consecutive appearance at the NCAA Championships (one shy of Utah’s current streak of 37).

“Being second at SECs, winning that regional championship — which is always the most important meet of the year — we did some great things,” Duckworth said. “When you look back at our season, we used 12 or 13 gymnasts almost every single meet and I think that truly shows depth. It shows we’re sharing the wealth of talent on different events and I think that is something that will help us moving forward.”

Moving forward, the NCAA Championships will look different next year with just eight teams in the semifinals and four teams advancing to the final day. To get back there, the Crimson Tide will have to be better than they were in Friday’s semifinals.

“It only gets harder next year when there’s only four teams. It’s gonna be even more competitive,” Duckworth said. “I have no idea how it’s gonna turn out. I don’t think anyone really knows.”

See SEASON, C3
OUR VIEW

Rapid change requires education to be lifelong

The world’s rich countries face a looming challenge in education: Too many of their citizens lack the skills and credentials needed for the jobs of the future. To keep people productively engaged in work in the coming decades, and to ensure that economies maintain robust growth, governments, educators and employers will need to make lasting investments in a new class of students: adults.

The trouble for now is largely demographic. Although a growing share of people between the ages of 18 and 24 is going to college, the total population of young adults is shrinking in the U.S. and Europe. So total college enrollment is largely in decline. Meanwhile, the population of older workers keeps growing. In the U.S., by the middle of the next decade, nearly one-quarter of the workforce will be over 55. And many adults lack the post-high-school education and training that employers increasingly demand.

A majority of new jobs created in the U.S. since 2010 have required workers to have medium to advanced digital skills. Over the next decade, the percentage of jobs worldwide requiring a college degree or higher will continue to increase, according to a McKinsey Global Institute analysis.

So efforts are needed to bring adult workers into the classroom — or, in many cases, back to the classroom. Some 17 percent of Americans over 25 — 36 million adults — have some college education but no credential to show for it. Today, if all U.S. “near-completers” finished at least an associate’s degree, incomes would rise by $112 billion, according to the American Council on Education.

One hurdle is financial aid. Government subsidies are overwhelmingly geared toward traditional college-aged students. In the U.S., Pell Grants, which provide $12.8 billion in aid to low-income students, mostly can’t be used for the kind of short-term certificate granting programs, including coding boot camps, that older students want.

See next page
Government educational grants and loans should be expanded to cover such programs, as a bipartisan bill in the U.S. Congress would do for Pell Grants. Private companies should give their existing employees incentives to go back to school while they remain on the job, through tuition assistance and opportunities for promotion, as AT&T, Wal-Mart, Amazon and McDonald's have all started to do.

Colleges should also accommodate working adults by expanding online classes and giving returning students credits for the professional skills they've cultivated on the job. Older adults fare better in — and are more likely to graduate from — "accelerated" month-long courses than in standard, 18-week academic semesters.

Most critically, older adults need to be steered toward the kinds of education that employers want them to have. Training programs and apprenticeships that connect local businesses with students and technical colleges should be expanded.

As the pace of technological change accelerates, so will the need to educate, and re-educate, workers. The long-term goal should be to revolutionize educational systems — to make them places that adults revisit, as needed, throughout their working lives,

A version of this editorial first appeared on Bloomberg View.
Too many colleges? Senator expects "day of reckoning" for WV's higher education system

By: Jake Jarvis

To Sen. Ed Gaunch, R-Kanawha, the problem is obvious. With years of declining enrollment and similar years of shrinking state budgets, he says West Virginia needs to rethink its system of colleges and universities.

He isn't the first lawmaker to talk about possibly consolidating or closing some colleges in order to beef up other colleges' funding and find efficiencies, but Gaunch is perhaps the most outspoken. Several others have talked publicly and privately about the need to take a closer look at the system.

The idea to reorganize the state's system of higher education picked up steam last summer with several media reports, but Gaunch feels the idea was stalled because of the historic statewide teacher strike this year.

"I think you'd be hard pressed to find a legislator there who didn't realize the importance of higher education," said Gaunch, R-Kanawha, in a recent interview. "The question is, how to take a limited number of resources and use them in the best possible way?"

For years, fewer and fewer students have enrolled at West Virginia's public colleges. This past fall marked the seventh straight year of enrollment declines, although data from the Higher Education Policy Commission shows the decline has slowed in recent years to marginal decreases.

The severity of the enrollment decline was partially hidden because of dual enrollment students — high school students who take one or more college classes while still in high school. Until last year, those students were included in the Higher Education Policy Commission's annual count of enrollment totals released to the public.

Not including dual enrollment students, enrollment at the state's four-year public colleges fell about 5,750 from 2012 to the fall of 2017, an 8 percent drop, the commission's data shows.

"I think there's going to be a day of reckoning," Gaunch said. "I know people won't want to hear this, but our two major institutions — West Virginia University and Marshall University — I see them as taking more of a lead role in this and helping us move in that direction."

Gaucnch said there are too many institutions but it would take three to five years to close one down. He said it doesn't make sense to have multiple colleges close together offering similar programs, when perhaps once college could do the job alone.

Concord University, Bluefield State College and now West Virginia University Institute of Technology have campuses within 35 miles of each other, meaning they all compete for a similar group of students from the state's southern region. Bluefield State has seen some of the most drastic percentage declines in enrollment in the past few years, Higher Education Policy Commission data shows.

See next page
“If you think consolidating high schools is a tough deal, closing a college is like that on steroids,” Gaunch said.

Gaunch pointed to WVU, which now is operating in Parkersburg, Beckley and Keyser. He said large schools like WVU and Marshall will probably move into areas of the state with poorly performing colleges and expand there.

“I hate to use the phrase ‘take over,’ but I think we’ll see that,” he said.

Gaunch said a newly proposed formula to tie a college’s funding to its performance on a number of different metrics might be the catalyst to start an overhaul of the whole system.

A bipartisan group of delegates introduced a joint resolution earlier this year to commission a study on the sustainability of that state’s higher education system. The resolution or some iteration of it has typically been introduced and approved during most legislative sessions in recent memory. But the resolution failed to make its way out of the Senate in the final week this year’s session.

Among other things, the resolution called for the Joint Committee on Government and Finance to study whether all 18 of the state’s publicly funded four- and two-year colleges are “viable as currently constituted” and how they should be transformed if they’re not viable.

“I don’t want to stir up concern because I’m not an expert in this, but no matter what we’re doing in government, nothing is off the table,” said Sen. Craig Blair, R-Berkeley. “OK? Fairness is always on the table. We want an efficient, high-caliber educations system in the state of West Virginia. We’re not employment opportunities for professors and administrators.”

Blair, who is chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, tried unsuccessfully during the last legislative session to make the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine a private institution. He said officials from that school, one of a handful of osteopathic medical schools in the country, came to him asking for help to become private as a way to come out from under state regulations.

But the school is located Greenbrier County, where Gov. Jim Justice is from. Justice blasted Blair’s bill, saying at the time that the move would be counterproductive and would hurt the school. Officials with the school backed off from wanting to privatize after lawmakers approved a bill to give the school some more independence from state oversight.

Blair said officials from at least one other university came to him last year asking for help to become a private institution, though he would not say which school.

For now, Blair is waiting to see how the proposed college funding formula would affect different institutions before making any decisions about whether he thinks a college should close down.

“I don’t want to create fear in the institutions of higher education that we’re going in with an axe and are going to start whacking,” Blair said. “That’s not the case at all. But we also need to understand fully that our state government cannot continue to subsidize institutions with declining enrollment.”
4 plead not guilty in drinking death at LSU

By Michael Kunzelman
The Associated Press

BATON ROUGE, La. — Four young men pleaded not guilty on Friday to criminal charges in the drinking death of a Louisiana State University fraternity pledge.

Matthew Alexander Naquin, 20, of Fair Oaks Ranch, Texas, was arraigned on a negligent homicide charge in the September 2017 death of 18-year-old Maxwell Gruver, a freshman from Roswell, Georgia. The felony charge is punishable by up to five years in prison.

Three others pleaded not guilty to misdemeanor hazing charges. Sean-Paul Gott, 21, of Lafayette, Louisiana; Ryan Isto, 19, of the Canadian town of Oakville, Ontario; and Patrick Forde, 21, of Westwood, Massachusetts, face a maximum of 30 days in jail if convicted.

State District Judge Beau Higginbotham scheduled a Sept. 6 trial for the three charged with hazing. He did not immediately set a date for Naquin.

Police originally arrested 10 people last year, but East Baton Rouge Parish prosecutors presented a grand jury with evidence of possible charges against nine of them. Ultimately, the grand jury indicted only the four defendants on March 15.

Gruver’s blood-alcohol content was more than six times the legal limit for driving after a night of drinking at the Phi Delta Theta fraternity house. Fraternity members found him lying on a couch and couldn’t tell if he was breathing. He died at a Baton Rouge hospital later that day. A coroner said the cause was acute alcohol intoxication, with aspiration: He had inhaled vomit and other fluids into his lungs.

Naquin’s attorney, John McIndoe said he believes his client is being singled out unfairly.

“The problem with alcohol on college campuses is bigger than just one person. The problem is a lot bigger than just Matthew Naquin,” he said.

But witnesses said Naquin singled out Gruver during a hazing ritual involving 18 to 20 pledges, and forced him to drink more than the others the night before his death, according to a police report. Naquin targeted Gruver because he was frequently late for events and forced him to drink because he was having trouble reciting the Greek alphabet during “Bible Study,” a ritual testing their fraternity knowledge, witnesses told police.

Naquin was “a main participant during the hazing event,” Jeff Malone, an investigator for the district attorney’s office, wrote in a court filing last month.

“LSU Police reports indicate that Naquin was the most aggressive, and in charge of the hazing incident,” Malone added.

One pledge said Gruver was made to take at least 10 to 12 “pulls” of 190-proof Diesel, while other pledges had to drink less of the hard liquor, according to the police report. All of the defendants were associated with Phi Delta Theta, but none of them is currently enrolled at LSU. Forde wasn’t a student at LSU at the time. LSU spokesman Ernie Ballard said federal law bars the university from disclosing whether the others withdrew from LSU or were expelled or suspended.