JUNE 12, 2018

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Outgoing UA chancellor to focus on student behavioral health issues

By: Ed Enoch

University of Alabama System Chancellor Ray Hayes calls his decision to depart from his current role a transition instead of a retirement.

"I don't want to retire, but I do want to go focus on something and have time," Hayes said.

Hayes will continue in the role of chancellor through the end of July. After a month off, he will move into his new role as chancellor emeritus working on behavioral health resources for students and health care initiatives.

He views his role in the behavioral health initiative as a facilitator or coordinator.

"I view that what we are doing is to support the three campuses (Tuscaloosa, Birmingham and Huntsville). So the grants and everything would be grants supporting the students on the three campuses. So the system is the unit that gets us together and hopefully can provide some resources to get these grants written," Hayes said.

What his role will be in working on health care initiatives in the system is less well-defined at the moment.

The work on behavioral health is a personal passion for Hayes and his family.

"Our son went through a period of time where he became addicted to prescription opiates, and we worked through that and he went through treatment and he is now eight years clean and sober and has gotten his undergraduate master's (degree) and just finished his coursework for his Ph.D. He is working on his first three chapters of his dissertation this summer," Hayes said.

The family shares their story in talks at UA and other campuses,

"No question that we feel what we have gone through with our family and again we are very open about that and we are very ... I got an email today from someone in Texas talking about help with their son. That is something we believe in and do everything we can assist," Hayes said.

Systemwide an internal group of faculty and staff experts and an external group of alumni, parents and supporters of the university are already working on behavioral health resources on the campuses, Hayes said.

"I have an internal group that is faculty and staff experts who will be working on putting together application for grants to secure funding to look at this whole identification, treatment, prevention and recovery spectrum," Hayes said. "The goal is to have high quality behavioral health care to support the academic experience for all 68,500 students. And that as you know, is a multi-faceted
thing. It is not only having the expertise, it's getting people to utilize it, having a funding mechanism.”

The external group members are people Hayes has met over the years who are interested in supporting more behavioral health resources on the campuses.

“We have started getting them together a couple times a year. They are wanting to be supportive. At graduation here, one of our alumni who lost a son away from here with a drug overdose contacted me and wanted to meet with me and wants to support the university doing some new and different things,” Hayes said.

While the campuses are very good at providing care for a student with a broken arm, Hayes believes they could do more for students struggling with behavioral health issues.

“Someone with this behavioral health concern may not want to identify themselves, may not feel comfortable with it, may be in trouble with an arrest on drug or alcohol charges and don’t want their parents to know ... doesn’t have insurance to pay for it,” Hayes said. “There is a myriad of issue we need to break down and come up with a new structure to be able to help our students and keep them here.”

Students facing behavioral health challenges often leave, he said.

“They drop out of school or they go back home whereas if we could have worked with them and attacked this problem early enough, we could have kept them in school,” Hayes said. “We could have kept the tuition and kept them in the graduation rates. We are going to really try to look at this.”

Colleges, departments and resources on the three campuses have already begun work on the issue, Hayes said.

“We are getting to a point where there is a good bit of research done in this area that we can take the research model and adapt them to the campus environment and them model that and measure it and make sure it works,” Hayes said. “I feel pretty confident we can do something that is going to be sustainable. And it is the right thing to do with our students.”

Hayes envisions his work on health care with the UAB Health System will be similar to the types of partnerships the system has worked to foster with rural hospitals in the state to provide expertise and resources. The exact details of his role in the work have yet to be defined, he said.

The health care challenges in Alabama remain a moving target, he said.

“There are a lot of people working on this right now,” he said. “I have been asked to try to help with that whether it is statewide or the rural areas.”
The specific goals and outcomes have yet to be determined, he said.

"Sitting on the health system board, we see so much of all the uncertainties that are out there as we go forward. We are going to have to really be focused on that. A lot depends on what is going to happen on the federal level with health care reform or non-health care reform," Hayes said.
University of Alabama System Chancellor Ray Hayes announces plans to step down

By: Ed Enoch

UA System Chancellor Ray Hayes announced Friday that he will retire from the post he has held since 2016 to focus on developing behavioral health resources for students on the three campuses.

Hayes, 64, made the announcement during the University of Alabama System board of trustees’ regular June meeting. Hayes cited the sound positions of the system and its three campuses and a personal passion for behavioral health work as factors in his decision.

“Is it just the right time to do that, and, again, the board has been very supportive and good at that and given me the opportunity to work on that for several years,” Hayes said.

Hayes said he made the decision after consulting with his wife over the past year.

“Kathy and I really have a passion for the behavioral health for our students, which I use as a term to include mental health, emotional health, suicides, drugs and alcohol addictions. All of that is behavioral health,” Hayes said.

Hayes will continue in the role of chancellor through the end of July. Hayes will take August off and return in September as chancellor emeritus working on projects including behavioral health and health care initiatives.

“It is going to be a lot of things,” Hayes said of his role after August. “I will be working with the board and the new chancellor or interim chancellor, and there will be some assignments. The initial things we will focus on will be behavioral health and the UAB Health System and that kind of umbrella as it looks at the expanding role they have throughout the state. There will be other things that I am sure will be assignments as we go along.”

During the past six months, Hayes said began to consider his legacy, demands of the chancellorship, and how he wanted to spend his time.

“In higher education people move around these days more than in the past,” Hayes said. “The longevity of senior CEOs, presidents, chancellors is not very long. These are very demanding jobs, particularly presidents. Taking all of that and talking with board leadership kind of made this a good time, and, again, I am going to be able to have at least several years to focus (on behavioral health).”

Hayes said he will continue working with an internal group of faculty and staff experts and an external group of alumni, parents and supporters of the university interested in supporting the behavioral health resources on the campuses.
"We are going to really focus on that. We have got a really good working groups of faculty and staff on all three campuses that are working together and are actually in the process of going after some very large grants," he said.

Hayes believes the three campuses are in good shape noting the system enrollment growth in the past year of about 4.5 percent as well "robust" fiscal positions.

"I am very proud of our three campuses and where they are. There are three dynamic presidents that are doing a great job. All three campuses are growing," he said.

Hayes was appointed chancellor in 2016, following the recommendation of his predecessor Robert Witt, who led the system from 2012 until his retirement. Witt announced his retirement in 2015 and spent a transitional year helping prepare Hayes for the role before returning to teaching.

Before becoming chancellor, Hayes served as executive vice chancellor since 2013. He was hired in 2006 as the vice chancellor for financial affairs overseeing the system’s budgeting process, investments, capital plan and other financial affairs. The board at the time expressed confidence at the time in Hayes’ qualifications and expertise in trying financial times for higher education.

Hayes’ career spans more than 40 years with posts at UA, Mississippi State University and Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi.
Out-of-state UA students will pay 3-4 percent more

By Ed Enoch
Staff Writer

Tuition for in-state students at the University of Alabama will not increase this fall, but out-of-state students will have to pay more.

The UA System trustees on Friday approved the tuition increases of 3 to 4 percent for out-of-state students at UA, the University of Alabama at Birmingham and the University of Alabama in Huntsville during their regular June meeting in Tuscaloosa.

The board voted for similar increases last year.

Undergraduate and graduate tuition at UA would remain flat at $5,390 per semester for Alabama residents.

"I am just so happy to hear that," trustee John England said of no increase for in-state students. "It's a start."

The rate will increase by $565 to $14,615 per semester for non-residents. Tuition for full-time in-state law students will increase by about $100 to $11,805 per semester. Out-of-state law students will see tuition increase by about $755 to $20,935. Housing costs will remain unchanged, but there will be increases to meal plans and parking fees in the fall.

Undergraduate tuition will increase $120 to $4,284 per semester for in-state students at UAB. Out-of-state students at UAB will see rates increase by $336 to $9,852 per semester. UAB is increasing housing and parking fees, but meal plan costs will remain unchanged.

UAH students will see tuition rates increase to $4,865 per semester for residents and to $10,689 for non-residents. Tuition for graduate students will increase to $5,316 per semester for in-state and $11,802 for out-of-state.

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PAY

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UAH is also increasing meal plans, housing, and parking fees. The financial offices for the system and campuses said the tuition increases will help fund budget priorities including additional scholarships and stipends, growing benefits costs, capital projects, merit increases, new faculty and debt service.

System Vice Chancellor for Finance Dana Keith said the system is expecting about $17 million more in state appropriations for the upcoming fiscal year. While the state support is appreciated, Keith said revenue growth continues to lag behind increases in expenses. In comments ahead of the vote on the rate increases, Keith said revenues are estimated to increase by about 3 percent and expenses are growing by about 5 percent.

UA Vice President of Financial Affairs Matt Fajack said UA’s budget priorities are new undergraduate programs, scholarships to increase in-state enrollment, graduate student stipends and health care, faculty recruitment, a 2 percent merit increase and capital projects.

Fajack said there is a projection of no enrollment growth for the fall, breaking a decade’s long trend for the campus.

One Diversified LLC for installation in Sellers Auditorium at the Bryant Conference Center. The 64-screen wall will replace the existing projector system. The project budget is $88,371.

- Approved a 10-year license agreement with T-Mobile and Sprint worth $2.5 million over the life of the contract for installation of 15 small cellular sites on campus.
- Approved a five-year use agreement with New Cingular Wireless worth $1 million over the life of the contract for installation of a telecommunications tower at the Northington RV lot in the vicinity of the former Bruno’s building.
- Approved accepting bids for recreational leases on 38 tracts of university land totaling 6,692 acres. The uses include hunting and the estimated income during the 10-year span of the licenses is $695,731.
- Approved timber contracts with Parnell Inc. of Maplesville and AllSouth Land and Timber Inc. of Jasper for three tracts of land in Bibb and Chilton counties worth $253,452.
- Approved a joint doctorate degree in nursing science at UA and UAH, a master’s of fine arts in Dance, and a Master of Science in Human Development and Family Studies.
- Approved the Crimson Standard Fundraising Initiative for the UA Athletics department.

UA

- Approved revising the scope of the $25 million central utility system project for the southwest campus and 10th street improvements to add an additional 800 feet of steam and returning piping after bids came in lower than expected. Authorized executing construction contracts of $4.7 million with Rast Corporation for package II of the work.
- Approved executing a construction contract worth $13.6 million with M.J. Harris Construction Service of Birmingham for infrastructure improvements and renovation of the eighth and ninth floors of the McCallum Basic Health Science Education and Research Building. The budget was revised from $21 million to $19.3 million.
- Approved the demolition of the Townhouse Hotel, Worrell building and Worrell annex with a budget of $3 million. The space will be used as greenspace with the possibility of future redevelopment.
- Authorized negotiating an architectural agreement for the $2.2 million expansion of the radiation and oncology lab on the Hazelrig-Salter Radiation Oncology Center.
- Approved a master of science in Engineering Management.
UAB takes steps toward new off-campus stadium

By Ed Enoch
Staff Writer

Nearly four years after shutting down the program, the resurrected University of Alabama at Birmingham football program has now taken a big step toward finding a new stadium to replace aging Legion Field.

The University of Alabama System board of trustees has approved a memorandum outlining the terms of a future 20-year lease between the Birmingham-Jefferson Civic Center Authority and UAB for use of a proposed stadium at the complex for home football games.

"We appreciate the boards' support of this important project," Athletic Director Mark Ingram said.

The board approved the outline of a future lease and authorized a future memorandum for marketing opportunities during its meeting Friday.

"This will be a transformational facility," UAB President Ray Watts said.

The proposed open-air stadium with fixed seating of 45,000 and the capability to expand to 55,000 is part of a $300 million master plan for the convention center complex in Birmingham that also includes a Legacy Arena makeover and an outside piazza renovation. The project also has commitments from the City of Birmingham and Jefferson County.

Watts and trustees praised the collaborative nature of the project.

"This is a cooperation among groups that have not accomplished something like this in a long time," Trustee Finis St. John said.

The new stadium at the BJCC will help raise the profile of the football program, which returned to the field in 2017, two seasons after UAB reversed its decision to shut down the program. The Blazers now play home football games at Legion Field.

"(The convention center complex) is really becoming an energy center in downtown Birmingham," Ingram said. "For us to be part of that is very exciting."

In 2016, the trustees pledged to support an on-campus football practice complex.
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and the possibility of a long-term home for the Blazers off-campus at a proposed football stadium complex at the Birmingham-Jefferson Convention Complex in downtown Birmingham.

The lease, which will be negotiated at a future date, would commence Aug. 1, 2021. The rent for the first 10 years would be $25,000 per regular season game, $15,000 per postseason game at the stadium, and $10,000 for the spring practice game.

The memorandum would assist the university in going to the bond market next month, Ingram said. The agreement represents a steady revenue stream for the facility.

“They will use this agreement to say this is a guaranteed income stream for this defined period,” Ingram said.

The financing for the project will come from bonds and bank loans, Ingram said. The project is seeking $4 million annually from private corporate sources and the university. UAB’s portion including the rental fees and the proposed marketing agreement will be approximately $500,000, Ingram said. About $150,000 will be from the rent and $350,000 from marketing and some naming opportunities in the complex.

The second memorandum, which the board authorized but has yet to be drafted, would outline the terms of an agreement for UAB or its affiliated entities to provide $350,000 for the marketing opportunities at the stadium complex.

The lease memorandum includes a termination clause in the 10th year if either party is in default of the terms of the agreement. After the first 10 years, the rent can be adjusted by the parties by mutual agreement.

As part of the agreement, UAB will host six to 10 home games and other football-related events. Any postseason games UAB hosts or the Conference USA championship will be at the stadium. The football program will have 20 complimentary practice days each year on any day another event is not already scheduled and exclusive use of the UAB locker room at the complex.

The BJCC will operate and maintain the complex.

The BJCC will be the vendor for all ticket sales for UAB games at the complex. UAB will retain 100 percent of the ticket sales (including suite ticket sales) minus sales tax, but the ticket price will include a $2 facility fee that will be allotted to the BJCC.

For the first decade, 100 percent of the suite license revenues will be pledged to the financing of the stadium complex. The suite license agreements for each year will be between the license holder and the BJCC, which will receive the payments directly. At the end of the 20-year lease, the parties can renegotiate the suite license revenue.

The BJCC will provide UAB with three complimentary suites and three suitable accommodations for coaching staffs and visiting athletics directors.

The parties will work together to determine the scope and allocation of club seating.

The two will split the net revenues from parking and concessions at the stadium complex during UAB games. The BJCC will manage the operation of concessions and parking at the complex with input from UAB.

The BJCC will retain the revenue from the concession stands, pouring rights for soft drinks and alcoholic beverages, but UAB will receive 50 percent of the net revenue from all concessions during UAB football games.

UAB would have the rights to the sale and any revenues of any tailgating areas outside of the traditional parking spaces in areas designated for the purpose in the planning for the stadium.

The tailgating plan is still being developed.

“We will get it. We are just not sure what will be there,” Ingram said.

UAB will sell all the advertising on digital media for the games. The BJCC will install and maintain the digital media equipment. The two will agree to a list of protected advertisers for each party.

UAB will get 100 percent of the revenue from digital media sold for its games. The BJCC will get 100 percent of the revenue from media sold for static signage in the complex.

The architectural plans will include permanent exterior and interior signs that say “Home of the Blazers” as part of a signage plan that will address UAB branding needs while also maintaining flexibility for the stadium’s use during other events.

Reach Ed Enoch at ed.enoch@tuscaloosanews.com or 722-0209.
For new football stadium, UAB to pay $25K per game

Erin Edgemon edgemon@al.com

UAB will provide $350,000 in marketing and naming opportunities for the yet-to-be constructed downtown stadium and pay $25,000 per home football game.

The UA System Board of Trustees on Friday approved an agreement between UAB and the Birmingham Jefferson Civic Center Authority for the use of the stadium.

Under the terms of the agreement, UAB will lease the stadium for its practices, six to 10 home games and postseason play for 20 years. Rent for the first 10 years will be $25,000 per regular season game, $15,000 for any postseason game and $10,000 for a spring game.

After 10 years, the rental rate will be renegotiated.

Construction on the $174 million downtown stadium is projected to start by the end of the year and be open in 2021.

The stadium is a part of a $300 million BJCC expansion project, which is being funded by the BJCC, the city of Birmingham, Jefferson County, UAB, corporate partners and a 3-percent tax on car leases and rentals in Jefferson County.

Approval of the project agreement between UAB and BJCC will allow the BJCC Authority to move forward with the financing of the project. The authority is expected to go to the bond market this month.

A complete lease agreement hasn’t been negotiated yet.

UAB and its corporate partners previously committed to a combined $4 million a year for 10 years through a lease agreement, sponsorship and naming rights. Friday’s approval from the UA System formalizes that agreement.

According to the agreement, all UAB games have scheduling priority over any other events. UAB football will receive 20 complimentary practice days a year.
Can Ivey keep her electoral muscle?

She piled up the votes Tuesday, but so did Roy Moore in 2017

John Sharp  jsharp@al.com

Tuesday’s Republican race for governor drew twice as many voters as the Democratic race. Kay Ivey collected more votes than the entire field of Democratic gubernatorial contenders.

The GOP team has been talking big in the days since.

“For months, Democrats in Washington have attempted to push the narrative that the momentum and enthusiasm are on their side, but the numbers don’t add up,” said Ivey’s campaign communication director, Debbee Hancock. “This so called ‘blue wave’ is a joke.”

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Political events of six months ago, of course, give Democrats encouragement and hope.

On Aug. 15, 2017, party primaries were held in the state’s special U.S. Senate election. The GOP turnout advantage that day was 72 percent to 28 percent.

On the GOP side, 423,282 voters cast ballots for one of the 10 candidates. On the Democratic side, 165,006 voters cast ballots for one of the eight candidates.

Roy Moore and Luther Strange advanced to a GOP runoff. Doug Jones won the Democratic nomination outright.

Moore easily defeated Strange, but was plagued by scandal leading up to the Dec. 12 general election, bringing a glare of international media attention.

Jones narrowly beat Moore, becoming the first Democrat elected a U.S. senator in Alabama since 1992.

Chip Hill, a spokesman with the Maddox campaign, referenced last year’s Senate election in a statement sent to AL.com.

“As a supporter of Roy Moore, Governor Ivey should know that in the 2017 primary, Roy Moore received essentially the same number of votes as all of the Democratic candidates combined — and we saw how that worked out,” Hill said.

‘YOU MAY BE SURPRISED’

In the gubernatorial primaries of 2014 and 2010, Republicans enjoyed similar turnout advantages, and went on to final victory.

In 2014, 434,525 voters — 70 percent of the turnout — cast ballots in the GOP race, compared with
180,658 voters in the Democratic contest. Later that year, Republican incumbent Robert Bentley cruised past Democrat Parker Griffith.

The 2010 primary had a tighter Republican-Democrat split of voters: 61-39 percent in favor of the GOP. Bentley, who survived a vigorous primary challenge, easily defeated Democrat Ron Sparks in the fall.

In 2006, however, Democrats had the most voters during the primary contests. That year's gubernatorial battle included seven Democrats, among them Lucy Baxley and Don Siegelman. Baxley won, but fell to Republican Bob Riley in the general election.

Longtime state political observer Jess Brown, who taught political science at Jacksonville State University, believes that the "lion's share" of this year's primary vote went to other GOP candidates — Tommy Battle (146,878 votes), Scott Dawson (79,276) and Bill Hightower (29,269) — will be available for Ivey in November.

Still, he cautioned: "You may be surprised that not all of those votes in the GOP primary will show up in November."

Zac McCrary, a Democratic pollster based in Montgomery, said that another variable is the number of GOP primary voters who will side with Maddox.

Alabama is an open primary state in which voters can participate in either party's primary but are not required to declare any political affiliation. They can vote for any candidate on the general election ballot.

The open primary system played out in powerful fashion during the 1985 Democratic gubernatorial race between Bill Baxley and Charles Graddick.

Graddick won the primary by a few thousand votes, but Baxley sued, claiming that Graddick violated party rules by encouraging Republicans to cross over and vote as Democrats. Graddick defended his actions by claiming that Alabama, as an open primary state, allowed Republicans to cross over and vote in Democratic primaries.

The party, though, chose Baxley as its nominee. He lost to Guy Hunt in a general election that produced the first Republican governor in 113 years.

These days, state law bans crossover voting: Voters cannot jump from one party's first-round primary to cast a ballot in the other party's runoff.

For Democratic pollster McCrary, the 1985 race can offer some lessons for the present, but it's Roy Moore's Humpty-Dumpty-like fall that stands out compellingly.

He said, "We heard the argument in the Senate race — when Republicans were boasting — that the respective turnout in the Senate primaries skewing very heavily Republican guaranteed Republican Senate success in the general election. It's whistling past the graveyard if the Republicans think comparing apples and oranges guarantees them anything in November."
EDITORIAL

Despite odds, Maddox a formidable candidate

Don't be surprised when Walt Maddox is elected governor in November. What seemed impossible not that many months ago—a Democrat winning election to a statewide office in Alabama—now seems imminently doable.

This is not a prediction. Alabama has long been a red state and has been deeply red for at least a decade, considering the Republican Party's overwhelming dominance in statewide elections. Over the last two quadrennial election cycles, Republicans have captured supermajorities in the state House and Senate after being in the minority in both since Reconstruction. And until Doug Jones' victory over Roy Moore in the special U.S. Senate election last December—under highly unusual circumstances—no Democrat had won a statewide race in Alabama since 2008.

Most recently, out of the nearly 900,000 votes cast statewide in Tuesday's primaries, about two-thirds were for Republicans. So why would anyone believe Maddox has a chance to overcome this imposing GOP monolith?

Let's start with Jones. Sure, his victory over Moore was a fluke, but he was not a flake candidate. Although Jones is a dyed-in-the-wool Democrat, his career as a lawyer and federal prosecutor yielded scant political fodder and he stressed a believable willingness to work across the aisle that to some Republicans made him a palatable alternative to a flawed opponent. At the same time, rank-and-file Democrats were motivated to turn out at the polls for him and now they have proof that they can make a difference.

The circumstances for Maddox, while not identical, are similar enough. He has deep Democratic roots and has acknowledged his liberal leanings, but municipal elections are non-partisan and he has governed Tuscaloosa in a way that has won him broad support across the ideological spectrum. Some might question his willingness to spend tax dollars, and he has not shied away from traditional Democratic positions during his gubernatorial campaign, but when spending translates into economic growth and a better quality of life for everyone, without reaching further into taxpayers' pockets against their will, well, Republicans might find it difficult to hang the usual labels on him.

Clearly, Maddox has been laying the groundwork for this run for his entire political career, and he has proved to be a formidable candidate. We were familiar with him in Tuscaloosa, but, quick, who's the mayor of Montgomery? Of Mobile? No, this was no accident. Maddox' chief primary opponent, Sue Bell Cobb, had already won a statewide election and probably began the race with more name recognition, and he trounced her.

Incumbent Republican Gov. Kay Ivey will be a tougher foe, to be sure. Like Maddox, she fended off multiple opponents to win without a runoff Tuesday, and she has run the campaign one would expect—espouse the party line and otherwise try not to screw it up. Certainly, she's the favorite; the odds for any Democrat remain long. In the age of social media, however, when public opinion can turn on a tweet, November is a long way off. That's plenty of time for a game-changing gaffe or surprise.

And given the stark contrast between the younger Maddox, 45, who would upset the status quo, and Ivey, 73, a career politician who represents the Montgomery establishment, it's not that hard to imagine voters opting for change, especially in today's volatile political climate.
State wins national business honor

By: Ken Roberts

Mercedes-Benz's decision to build a Global Logistics Center in Bibb County contributed to Alabama earning a national honor that recognizes economic development success.

On Friday, Gov. Kay Ivey announced that Alabama had been selected for the 2017 Silver Shovel Award, an honor bestowed by Area Development, a national publication.

“It was a good year for manufacturing in Silver Shovel recipient Alabama, with major investments in a diverse collection of projects, most of them brand-new. Additional jobs are driving in by way of logistics and distribution,” Area Development wrote.

Area Development cited the Global Logistics Center as one of Alabama's top economic achievements in the past year. In 2017, Mercedes-Benz broke ground on the $250 million, 700,000-squarefoot center, which will create more than 400 jobs when it opens in 2019. The center is being built on 265 acres of land in the Scott G. Davis Industrial Park behind Woodstock Town Hall.

Other 2017 Alabama projects cited by Area Development included:

• Blue Origin’s project to assemble rocket engines at a new facility in Huntsville
• International Paper's investment of $552.7 million at its Selma facility
• Aerojet Rocketdyne's new Huntsville manufacturing facility, which will bring 800 jobs
• James Hardie Building Products' $220 million production center in Prattville, which will bring 205 jobs
• Autocar's $120 million investment in a new heavy truck assembly facility in Jefferson County, which will bring more than 700 jobs

Area Development’s Gold and Silver Shovel Awards recognize the overall economic development effectiveness of state economic development efforts. Alabama has won one of the awards each year since 2006, when it won a Gold Shovel. It won another Gold in 2012 and Silver awards in other years, including one for 2016.

“The business world has discovered that Alabama is one of the most attractive locations in the U.S. to make new investments, and this Silver Shovel award confirms that,” Ivey said in a news release.
“More manufacturing projects reflect growth in the food and poultry, aluminum, paper, and fiber cement industries, and Walmart has promised delivery of 550 distribution jobs” in Mobile County, Area Development said.

Alabama joined Utah and Louisiana in claiming a Silver Shovel award given to states with populations between 3 million and 5 million residents.

“Winning a Silver Shovel Award for the fifth consecutive year is another affirmation that our team is consistently executing our strategy and achieving positive results,” said Greg Canfield, secretary of the Alabama Department of Commerce.
EDITORIAL

Merrill right to question Ethics Commission vote

Politicians love to decry the influence that "special interests" have in government. Lobbyists, so-called dark money, and political action committees all sway policy in profound ways in Alabama. Trying to track it all is nearly impossible, because the system has been designed to keep the public from seeing exactly how the sausage is made. And the only mechanisms we have to lift the veil of secrecy are the laws passed by those who benefit the most from secrecy, the politicians themselves.

Cash flows into the political action committees, known commonly as PACs, where it is mingled with other funds, transferred and then eventually finds its way to political campaigns. The process is designed to keep the general public from knowing exactly where the money is coming from and to whom it is going. But rest assured, the candidates know precisely who is contributing to their campaigns and why.

That's how and why candidates seeking a job that pays say $65,000 or so, in annual salary, regularly spend a million dollars or more on campaign advertising in a single race.

Three years ago, the state Ethics Commission was given oversight of Alabama's Fair Campaign Practices Act, a law ostensibly designed to help add some transparency to the process. The bill was passed in 2015 and the Ethics Commission was given authority to levy fines against those candidates who failed to comply beginning in this year's election cycle.

To his credit, Secretary of State John Merrill has been a champion of increased transparency. He supported changes to the law through the 2015 bill and then had his office ready to enforce those changes. Merrill's office levied fines against 33 candidates and PACs for filing campaign finance reports for the 2018 election that were either late or incomplete.

The fines are small compared to the cash flowing through the campaigns and they can be paid through a campaign fund, which means there is little personal pain felt by those who fail to comply. But at least it is something, or it was supposed to be.

According to an AL.com report, at its meeting last Wednesday, the Ethics Commission voted to waive those civil fines.

Merrill, understandably, was exasperated. He rightly asked why Alabama lawmakers went to the trouble to "pass ethics laws and employ an Ethics Commission if we do not intend to enforce the rule of law?"

Merrill is absolutely correct and we're grateful he has made the stand. Alabama has long had a problem with deals done in smoke-filled backrooms far away from public scrutiny. For too long our politicians have chosen to work behind a haze of misdirection and innuendo. Merrill's call for more transparency is like a small, clear ray of sunshine piercing through those clouds of secrecy.

We believe even if the new laws had actually been enforced, it wouldn't have been near enough. Alabama needs more transparency and our laws should impose harsh consequences for public servants who betray the public's trust. Only then can the governed trust their government.

We share Merrill's outrage and we're thankful he's speaking up.
Regions
Bank names new leader

Elizabeth Winter will lead Regions’ Tuscaloosa operations

Staff report

Birmingham-based Regions Bank on Friday announced a change in leadership in its Tuscaloosa operations.

City President Dan Blakley has resigned to pursue other opportunities and will be replaced by Elizabeth Winter, according to a news release from Regions. Winter previously was Regions’ wealth adviser and wealth area business manager. Her title as she replaces Blakley will be market executive.

Grayson Hall, Regions chairman and CEO, praised Blakley and Winter.

"Elizabeth’s leadership and expertise will help us continue to build on our tradition of superior service and community involvement throughout the area," Hall said in a news release. "We appreciate Dan Blakley’s many years of service at Regions and his work on behalf our customers and community partners in the Tuscaloosa area. We wish him all the best as he begins a new chapter professionally."

Winter joined Regions in 1998 as a trust officer. She graduated from Vanderbilt University and the University of Alabama School of Law. Winter is a member of the Alabama State Bar, the Tuscaloosa County Bar, and the Tuscaloosa Estate Planning Council. She has served on several nonprofit boards, including the Children’s Hands-On Museum and the Tuscaloosa Symphony Orchestra. She serves on the board of

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the Alabama Choir School. "I am honored to work with our teams of bankers across the Tuscaloosa area and am committed to building on Regions' strong foundation of community support," Winter said.

Blakley, a graduate of Southern Illinois University, became Tuscaloosa city president in January 2009. He joined Regions in 2000 after serving in the Army. His career at Regions included stints in Clarksville, Tennessee, and Cookeville, Tennessee, going from assistant branch manager to city president.

In Tuscaloosa, he has served as president of the Black Warrior Council of the Boy Scouts of America and chairman of the Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama. He is a member of the University of Alabama Culverhouse College of Commerce Board of Visitors and also serves on the boards of the DCH Foundation, Tuscaloosa County Industrial Development Authority, United Way's DeTocqueville Society and Success By 6.

"I am excited to begin this new chapter in my life," Blakley said. "Regions has provided tremendous opportunities to me over my 18-year career and I wish the bank continued success. I am pleased that Elizabeth Winter will be the new market executive in Tuscaloosa. Elizabeth has been part of the local team for many years and I have complete confidence in her ability to continue Regions leadership in this market. My family and I have truly enjoyed being a part of the Tuscaloosa community for the last nine years and I look forward to continuing my efforts to support its growth and prosperity for many years to come in my new role as an entrepreneur and mentor."
JACKSONVILLE — Another rural Alabama hospital is shutting down, this time in the northeastern part of the state.

Directors have decided to close RMC Jacksonville at the end of June.

The hospital is operated by the Anniston-based RMC Health System, which says some services will be transferred from Jacksonville to other locations in Anniston. The cities are about 12 miles apart.

WBMA-TV reported that last month's announcement confirmed the fears of hospital employees and weeks of rumors about the future of the facility, which has an emergency room and other services.

The hospital had struggled financially in recent years, and several departments already had closed.

"In today's volatile health care environment, sustaining under-utilized, high-cost services and facilities is not fiscally responsible," said a statement by Billy Grizzard, chairman of the authority that operates the hospital.

The hospital is being donated to Jacksonville State University, which has a nursing program and needs additional space following a tornado that damaged campus this spring.

Jacksonville Medical Center opened in 1976 and, after several changes in ownership, was purchased by RMC in 2013.

Jacksonville, with a population the Census Bureau estimates at 12,800, is the latest in a string of small towns to lose hospitals in recent years.

Records provided by the Alabama Hospital Association show 18 hospitals have closed in the state since 2000, and 11 of those were outside the state's four largest metropolitan areas.

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BIRMINGHAM

New police chief: 'I'm here to deliver'

Mayor taps Tuscaloosa native, 28-year veteran of Los Angeles police force

Erin Edgemon eedgemon@al.com

After a more than four-month search, Birmingham has its new police chief.

Mayor Randall Woodfin on Monday named Patrick Smith as the new police chief. Smith is the assistant commanding officer of the Police Sciences and Training Bureau for the Los Angeles Police Department.

Allen Treadaway, a veteran of the Birmingham Police Department, was named assistant chief. Treadaway will handle day-to-day operations of the department until Smith's first day June 25.

"Chief Smith is dedicated to bridge building," Woodfin said. "He understands that a department is only as strong as the community it serves. As he works to build a better department, he will also be working to sustain public trust and bring real change to all 99 of our neighborhoods. We'll be stronger both behind the badge and in front of Chief Smith."

Woodfin said he took his time in making his decision because he wanted to get it right. The search began Jan. 23.

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Deputy Chief Henry Irby, who was one of the candidates, has handled day-to-day operations for the department since April 15. Smith was the No. 1 candidate based on an assessment of the finalists' scores, with the highest scores given for "leadership credibility and impact," "building relationships and interpersonal awareness" and "valuing diversity and integrity," Woodfin said.

"He will make a great addition to our administration," he said.

Smith, a Tuscaloosa native, has 28 years of law enforcement experience with the Los Angeles Police Department. He worked his way up the ranks as a patrol officer, police field training officer and instructor, sergeant, lieutenant, captain and, most recently, police commander.

Smith said he's done his research, and he knows what Birmingham residents want in their next police chief.

"I want to make sure I am here to deliver, and I get you everything you need," he said, adding he'll make sure officers "are delivering on the promises of the mayor, City Council and the laws of the land."

"I believe that a positive working relationship with my community is vital in the success of any police organization," Smith said.

"I strongly believe in working with the various communities to build bridges and sustain public trust while motivating, training and encouraging employees to achieve crime-reduction goals and strategies."

U.S. Attorney Jay Town issued a statement congratulating Woodfin on his selection of Smith.

"We all look forward to Chief Smith's leadership, vision and continued partnership. Our collective violent crime reduction and outreach task force initiatives have never looked so promising."

SURREAL FOR SMITH

Smith said Monday's announcement was surreal for him.

As a very young man, Smith, who is black, said he remembers officers pulling over his father's vehicle. The officers asked his father many questions about where he was going and what he was doing.

The officers then walked away without explaining why they were pulled over, he said.

"It left a very bad feeling," Smith said.

On the ride home, Smith's father tried to explain to him the problems in society and what to expect.

"I said when I grow up, I will become chief of police, and I will make sure that doesn't happen," Smith said, adding that his father told him that he could do whatever he wanted to do.

Though his father is no longer with him, he said he could feel his presence with him Monday.

"I know he is in this room cheering," Smith said.

ASSISTANT CHIEF

Treadaway has served on the Birmingham Police Department since 1989. Most recently, Treadaway had worked as captain of the East Precinct, which includes the Birmingham Shuttlesworth International Airport, since 2014. He has worked in the department's traffic unit, patrol, and detectives division.

"It is an honor to take on this role as assistant chief after 29 years of service," Treadaway said, adding he is most excited about working and supporting the department's police officers.

Treadaway previously served as captain of the Crimes Against Property unit, lieutenant of the Burglary and Auto Theft units and sergeant of the Auto Theft unit and South Precinct.

Currently, Treadaway is a state representative. He's held that position since 2006, sponsoring and co-sponsoring legislation involving law enforcement issues. He is chairman of the Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee.

Treadaway also served as president of the Birmingham Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 1 from 1999 to 2006. In 2006, he was named the Alabama State Fraternal Order of Police's Outstanding Member of the Year.

"Assistant Chief Treadaway knows Birmingham in and out. He knows our strengths," Woodfin said. "He knows where we need to improve. He already has the tools to make effective change happen. And together, these two gentlemen will help build a stronger, safer Birmingham.

57 CANDIDATES

A total of 57 candidates, including local, regional and national contenders, applied by the March 1 deadline. According to the mayor's office, 11 of the 57 candidates were interviewed by search firm Siena Consulting to go through an assessment process, which occurred March 19. The assessment included a day in the life of a police chief, crisis exercises and role playing.

The other chief finalist was Malik Aitz, a division commander with the Dallas Police Department.

Smith replaces A.C. Roper, who stepped down on Feb. 16 after serving 10 years in the police department's top position. Roper announced his retirement Nov. 29, a day after Woodfin took office as mayor.

Retired Birmingham police Capt. Orlando Wilson was named interim chief Feb. 16. Wilson, though, stepped down from his post April 18 to have a medical procedure. That's when Irby took over day-to-day operations.
Clement Clay “Bo” Torbert, Jr.

Aug. 31, 1929 - June 2, 2018

Clement Clay “Bo” Torbert, Jr. died on Saturday, June 2, 2018, at his home in Opelika. He was 88 years old. Bo was born on August 31, 1929, and was proud to call Opelika home his entire life. He is survived by his wife Gene Hurt Torbert and his three children, Dixie Atton (Mitch), Shealy Cook (Penn), and Clay Torbert (Cindy) as well as his five grandchildren, Rebecca Cook Davis (William), Elizabeth Cook, Clay Cook, Bo Torbert IV, James Torbert, and two great-grandchildren, Penton Davis and Cella Davis. Bo was preceded in death by his parents Clement C. Torbert, Sr. and Lynda Meadows Torbert. He was a lifelong active member of the First United Methodist Church in Opelika.

Bo was educated in the public schools of Opelika. He attended the United States Naval Academy and graduated from Auburn University in 1951, where he was a collegiate swimmer. He served in the United States Air Force, attaining the rank of Captain. Following his graduation from the University of Alabama Law School in 1954, he began the practice of law in Opelika, first with Bill Dickerson, and later joining Yetta Samford to form Samford & Torbert. In 1958, he was elected to represent Lee County in the state legislature. Bo was elected to the Alabama Senate in 1966, and served two terms. In November 1976, he was elected Chief Justice of the Alabama Supreme Court where he served two terms until 1988. During his tenure as Chief Justice, he was active in national and international judicial organizations, serving as President of the Conference of Chief Justices, Chairman of the National Center for State Courts, and Chairman of the State Justice Institute. In 1979, he was elected to the Alabama Academy of Honor. After leaving the court, Bo taught at both the University of Alabama School of Law and Cumberland School of Law before joining the law firm Maynard, Cooper & Gale where he practiced until his retirement.

Bo was a lifelong hunter, conservationist, historian, and outdoorsman. He loved his family, the State of Alabama, bird hunting, and the camaraderie he found in the company of friends.

A memorial service will be held on Tuesday, June 5, 2018, at 2:00 pm at the First United Methodist Church in Opelika. The family will receive visitors in the Fellowship Hall at 12:30 pm.

The family would like to express its gratitude to Pinkie Eason, Kristy Waters, Rebecca Love, Deborah Dowdell, Glenn Williamson and Marsha Ogletree.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be directed to the Alzheimers Association (alz.org), the First United Methodist Church, 702 Avenue A, Opelika, Alabama 36801, or the charity of your choice.

Frederick-Dean Funeral Home is directing.
UA must balance donors’ desire for anonymity with the perks of publicity

By: Ed Enoch

The University of Alabama celebrated a record-setting year of fundraising last fall that saw more than $120.5 million in gifts and pledges.

With the announcement came a familiar refrain: the university’s reliance on private support and other revenue streams as state funding has declined since 2008.

Donors in fiscal year 2017 provided nearly $25 million for scholarships, $20 million to support programs, $18 million for construction projects and $4 million to support faculty.

“As we continue to grow, we remain committed to providing a premier education to our students, and our supporters are critical to our success,” UA President Stuart Bell said in October.

UA has received more than $1 billion in gifts and pledges during the past decade. When asked to provide a list of its top 10 donors for the decade, the university provided a partial list based on donors who permitted their information to be made public. While the university was willing to release the total contributions for the donors who wished to remain anonymous, it kept their identities confidential.

The university would not provide a specific statutory exemption to the state’s open records law to keep donors anonymous but said its practice is to keep donor identities confidential upon request. It is not an extraordinary practice; donor confidentiality is part of the philanthropic landscape nationwide where advancement officials say anonymity is sometimes necessary for donors to feel comfortable with their gifts.

But for public institutions, the practical utility of donor confidentiality must be balanced against a need for public trust and transparency in institutional operations.

UA officials say the university’s strategy to address the challenge is a combination of best practices for fundraising professionals and a review of the gifts and associated terms by the leadership of the campus and the UA System, which comprises UA, the University of Alabama at Birmingham and the University of Alabama in Huntsville.

Why anonymity?

The question of anonymity is part of almost every significant gift conversation, said UA Vice President of Advancement Bob Pierce. UA’s Division of Advancement oversees the university’s fundraising operations and coordinates with its affiliated nonprofit foundations.

The foremost concern for advancement and development officers is being good stewards of donors’ information and fidelity to their intentions, according to Linda Durant.

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Durant, a former development officer, is now the vice president of development for the Council for Advancement and Support of Education, a Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit organization providing resources to UA and other universities, including guidelines on professional standards, best practices and ethics.

Being a good steward of confidential information is among CASE’s principles of practice for advancement officials, and a right to confidentiality is also in the organization’s donor bill of rights.

“I would say that any individual that understands and appreciates the work we do understands why we need to do that, why we need to keep it confidential and why they don’t want their names out there,” she said.

But from a university perspective, Pierce said, announcing gifts is desirable. One of the incentives for universities to make donations public is the symbolic value of the gifts and the impact that donors’ visible support can have on fundraising campaigns.

“I can’t think of a scenario, and I am talking about $1 million-plus gifts, where I haven’t said, ‘Hey, we would like to do a news release or to announce the gift,’ ” Pierce said. “Sometimes, they say it is fine because they know ... when we are able to announce that gift, it shows leadership by example. It shows the people think enough of the institution to be making these significant gifts.”

Hugh Culverhouse Jr. and his wife, Eliza Culverhouse, have given more than $13 million to the university over the past 10 years. The Culverhouses, the top donors to UA during that decade, have funded scholarships to help students avoid loan debt and endowed faculty positions. The Florida businessman’s father, Hugh F. Culverhouse Sr., is the namesake of UA’s Culverhouse College of Business. The senior Culverhouse’s philanthropy helped inspire his son’s giving.

Hugh Culverhouse Jr. has treated his philanthropy as a challenge to motivate others to give. He has frequently challenged others to match his giving. Getting people to donate is tough, he said.

“Part of the reason you donate is for others to see you being charitable,” he said. “When you look at it, there are not that many people who will part with their money. A lot of people have too much debt. Everything they’ve got is tied up ... people still don’t make enough to make big donations.”

Culverhouse Jr. has seen large anonymous gifts, but he said those donors are part of a small minority.

“I can only speculate why you would want to do it,” he said.
He offered the hypothetical of a donor to UA who is a graduate of Harvard and whose family and professional ties are in the Northeast. The hypothetical donor may not want to face questions about why he or she is giving to Alabama, he said.

“That is an extreme example, but there are valid reasons people want to be anonymous,” he said. “I don’t; I am proud of my donations. My father was proud of his donations.”

Pierce and other advancement officials say some donors seek anonymity because they do not want the public attention, while others want to avoid additional solicitations for support.

There is also the practical concern of competition for universities in a highly competitive environment for donations.

“From the one side, there is a zero-sum game in most people’s philanthropy,” said Noah Drezner, an associate professor in the Teachers College at Columbia University who researches university philanthropy and fundraising. “If they have so much in giving annually, if they bring in another group, their slice of the pie could be smaller.”

Drezner is a former advancement officer whose research interests include individual donors and their motivations for giving.

Inherently, donors have influence because they are choosing how they invest, Drezner said.

“The fact is, support of scholarships going to students who are in need shows influence in showing that is important,” he said. “Donors have influence in the way they give; it is just a question of when that influence changes from being acceptable to undue.”

Attempts by donors to use gifts as influence are rare, and most gifts come from a solicitation by a university, according to Pierce and Drezner. Large gifts that don’t come from a solicitation are uncommon, they said.

“The point that I am trying to make is most of these gifts come from an invitation to engage with us, not the other way around,” Pierce said. “When you look at donors who may be expecting access, again when you are talking about the critical view of it, it doesn’t happen. I can’t think of, in my entire career, I can’t think of a single situation where I thought the donor was making a gift because they knew it was going to buy them access or get them something tangible in return.”

Trust and confidentiality

As public institutions balance donor interests against public trust, Durant said, adherence to a mission is important to building public confidence in institutional integrity.
“Where it is coming from? How is it used? Is it in lockstep of your mission?” she said. “I always go back to the mission.”

Being able to clearly communicate to the public how a gift aligns with the institutional mission and values mitigates distrust, she said.

“What you are doing over the years is you are building that reputation,” Durant said. “That builds up your trust factor with the state and with the public as you go along. When we are raising money, it is to further the mission of our institution.”

Pierce said he understands that questions of transparency are inherent in anonymous donations but that, despite any perceptions to the contrary, the university’s donors are motivated to give because they believe in the mission.

“Knowing some of these significant donors like I do, (those questions are) disappointing because in so many cases it is being done for all the right reasons,” Pierce said. “It is because they want to make a difference; it is because they want to give back to society and the institution. It is disappointing that their motives would be questioned. At the same time, I acknowledge we are in a cynical society and that people are going to do that.”

There is no written policy in place at UA that specifically focuses on undue influence of donors. Instead, Pierce said, the university relies on best practices recommended by groups like CASE, the professionals of its development staff, and the leadership of the university and UA System, including the board of trustees.

The system’s policies on gifts require the campuses’ development staffs to comply with ethics laws and standards such as the CASE guidelines. The system’s policy manual says the campus policies regarding reporting the sources, purposes, fundraising results and campaign preparations should be in accordance with the common and best practices of professional fundraising.

“I would say, certainly, the professionals in development are the front line there, but it doesn’t begin and end there,” Pierce said. “If I get into a situation where I have a concern that someone is going to make a gift that has any sort of issues, then I am going to talk to other individuals to talk through whether we should proceed. Those individuals are going to be everyone from the university’s legal counsel to the dean to the provost to the president and on down the line.”

Pierce, Durant and Drezner also point to relationships among donors and advancement officers, often cultivated over multiple years, as part of the safeguards against undue influence.

“Through those relationships, I do think that institutions can get the sense whether it is a gift to curry favor or influence or is it coming from a more positive space,” Drezner said.

Pierce said staff will listen to donors but that this carries no guarantee the university will act.
"We have asked these people to engage with their time and resources at the institution, and so if they have feedback and thoughts, I want to hear what those are," Pierce said. "It doesn't mean that we are going to act on them. It doesn't mean we are going to put the interest of the donor ahead of the institution, but I certainly want to listen to what they have to say."

There is also no guarantee the university will accept a gift, Pierce said.

"Every gift is not a good gift. So it is not like we will take anything and everything that someone is willing to give us and offer us. Again, that is on me to ensure the ones we take are going to be truly beneficial to the university," Pierce said.

Gifts of land, for example, are typically accepted with an expectation that they may be sold so the funds can be used in support of a scholarship or program, he said.

A gift that comes with liability has to be approved by the board of trustees, Pierce said.

In recent years, the board has accepted gifts of multiple horses as UA launched its equestrian team.

"When you look at the grand scheme of things, the value of those horses is not at the top of that scale," Pierce said. "But because they come with a liability, they have to be fed, they have to be treated by a vet, all those things, because they come with a liability, they have to be approved by the board of trustees."

UA System policy requires board approval for gifts for new endowments, named gifts such as facilities and programs, investments, real property, non-publicly traded stock and unusual gifts.

"So there is a lot we run by the board for approval," Pierce said.

Of the $120.5 million in fundraising for fiscal year 2017, the board voted to approve about $10 million in gifts and pledges, including naming opportunities for new or renovated facilities, scholarship endowments, land and horses.

Apart from board approval, the university and donors also complete gift agreements and forms outlining where gifts will go.

"We do have that for each of those gifts. But usually when someone is creating a new endowment is when the gift agreements come into play. What we want to do is ensure there is no confusion between what the donor wants to do with the gift and what we are going to do with the gift," Pierce said.

The terms vary depending on the wishes of the donor. Pierce said he tries to encourage donors to put no more than three criteria on a scholarship gift.

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"As you drill down, you get so specific that you can’t award the scholarship every year,” he said. “Again in those scenarios, what I try to encourage our development professionals to do is really talk through it with our donors and have them understand if you want to maximize the impact of your gift, you have got to be a little more broad in those criteria.”

**State law**

The Alabama code does not appear to address collegiate donor anonymity specifically, though it does offer other statutory exemptions to the open records law for some trade secrets, proprietary information and business information.

While the UA System policy references deference to requirements attached to gifts that have been agreed upon by the board and donors and instructs university members to be “wise” custodians of confidential information, system policies do not specifically address or offer assurances of donor anonymity.

When asked for the specific statutory exemption that would allow the university to keep donors anonymous, officials declined to identify a section of the state code.

“The University is grateful for the generosity of our many donors and all we are able to accomplish through their philanthropy. They make a difference, and it is important that we respect their privacy in those limited cases when it is desired,” the university said in a statement. “Our relationship with those who choose to give to the University is grounded in the trust and confidence they have in us to support the terms of their gift agreements. To the extent possible, we are obligated to honor any request for confidentiality from our donors. As a practice, we do not share information about those who have made their desire for privacy known.”

The structure of fundraising and the laws governing records’ accessibility vary by institution and state.

“It is complex when you have 50 different states with different rules,” Drezner said.

Pierce, who served in a similar advancement post at the University of Southern Mississippi, noted his former institution and its peers in the state did the majority of their fundraising through affiliated nonprofit foundations.

Auburn University did not respond to a request for comment on the structure of its advancement office and affiliated foundations.

UA has seven affiliated nonprofit foundations that support different areas of university operations, according to its annual financial report and state business records.

Case law in Alabama makes some private nonprofit records public when they act as alter egos of public bodies like universities, but Alabama Press Association attorney Dennis Bailey said it is
generally accepted that the identity of donors can be withheld when donations are made to a foundation or other fundraising entity.

The UA-affiliated foundations include the Crimson Tide Foundation, the National Alumni Association of the University of Alabama, the University of Alabama Law School Foundation, the Capstone Foundation, the 1831 Foundation, the University of Alabama Donor Advised Fund and the Capstone Health Services Foundation.

UA’s advancement office coordinates with the foundations on fundraising, and all gifts are processed centrally through the office regardless of the designation, Pierce said.

“For example, if a new scholarship is set up in the alumni foundation, that money technically belongs to the alumni foundation, but it is invested in the pooled endowment fund just like the endowment that is set up through the institution itself,” he said. “There are different buckets, but all the buckets are tied together.”

**Bigger gifts from fewer donors**

Approximately 90 percent of the nearly 85,000 gifts to the university in fiscal year 2017 were less than $1,000. The average donation was $1,425.

“While the largest gifts rightfully receive the most recognition, we receive many that are smaller, and the majority of our donations are much smaller. Each gift is important to us, and combined they help us reach our goals and fund the many outstanding scholarships, facilities and programs we offer each year,” Pierce said.

But UA’s fundraising figures for fiscal year 2017 reflect a national trend in higher education toward large gifts: The majority of revenues come from a smaller percentage of donors. The 75,916 donors who gave less than $1,000 in 2017 accounted for about 10 percent of the fundraising total. Meanwhile, approximately $65 million of UA’s fiscal year 2017 total came from 146 donors, according to information provided by the university.

“When you talk about campaigns, years ago, the rule of thumb was 70 percent of your campaign total was going to come from 30 percent of donors,” Pierce said. “Then, within the last 10 years, the consultants would tell you it had shifted where 80 percent of your campaign totals were coming from 20 percent of your donors. Today, those consultants will tell you 90 percent of your campaign totals will come from 10 percent of your donors.”

Large donors have become increasingly important in university advancement, Drezner said, noting that higher education is the second largest recipient of U.S. charity after religion.

“In general, you can think of a pyramid,” Drezner said. “At the bottom of that pyramid is the base; there is going to be a lot of smaller gifts in that base. At the top, you are going to have fewer gifts but at larger amounts. What we have been seeing now, especially now that we have

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been moving to research institutions both public and private, are these billion-dollar campaigns. We have seen a greater reliance on reaching those numbers with large gifts to make up those numbers.”

Reductions in state support put additional pressure on universities to secure funding through other revenue streams such as tuition and fundraising.

“Although I don’t like to think of philanthropy as revenue, it is certainly a deposit line in the budget,” Drezner said. “You can see the increase in institutions’ fundraising through large capital campaigns and better organization and professionalization of fundraising offices aligning with declines in state support.”

The University of Alabama System saw sharp declines in state funding beginning in fiscal year 2009, at the outset of the Great Recession. While state funding has begun to recover, it remains below the high point of 2008 and lags behind the growth in the campuses’ operating expenses.

State funding for UA campus operations remained flat from fiscal years 2017 to 2018 at approximately $155 million. UA’s operating budget for fiscal year 2017 was $991 million, and its 2018 budget approved last fall is $1 billion.

However, as universities have ramped up fundraising operations, generally, there is also greater professionalism across the board, Drezner said.

“While, yes, there is a need, a pressure, for these gifts, you are also building in the valve to release those pressures through strong ethics principles,” he said.

**Critical support**

At the heart of the relationship between donors and an institution benefiting from their philanthropy is an effort to make the donors feel good about what they are doing.

“When you are developing this relationship, you want the donor comfortable with the decisions they are making, so I guess the bottom line on this is, I would hate for someone to decline to give a gift because they simply didn’t want their name out there,” Pierce said.

Charitable donations provide critical support at UA for students and capital projects, Pierce said.

“Thousands of students would be adversely affected by the absence of private scholarships given by UA benefactors,” he said. “Fundraising also directly supports construction projects across campus designed primarily to support student engagement and provide facilities to enhance their educational experience on campus.”

Pierce noted that the Stran-Hardin Arena for Adapted Athletics, which opened earlier this year on campus, would not exist nor would the university be planning for a new $60 million
performing arts academic center on the former Bryce Hospital campus without the significant support of donors.

“Our donors are philanthropic partners in the success of the institution, and their support provides the margin of excellence that allows UA to remain at the forefront of higher education,” he said.

Pierce and the others were mixed in their opinions about the impact on fundraising if donor identities could no longer be kept confidential upon request.

Durant said she doesn’t believe a loss of anonymity would be “a big game changer.”

“I am not sure the level of consensus. In my experience — I have been at three institutions and maybe I was fortunate — I did not have many gifts that were strictly confidential,” she said.

Pierce said he was unsure of the impact.

“But I also know it would be my preference that it would not be a hurdle that would have to be jumped. In other words, to have to say with a donor we can only accept your gift if we announce it or it is published in some way, it would be less desirable,” he said.
Foundations play key role in UA fundraising

By: Ed Enoch

The University of Alabama has seven affiliated foundations, which are nonprofit corporations that support different areas of university operations, ranging from building new dorms and athletics facilities to scholarships and professional development for faculty.

UA’s Division of Advancement coordinates with the foundations on fundraising, and gifts are processed centrally through that office.

From a public institution’s perspective, the nonprofits provide a mechanism whereby the donors can make tax-deductible gifts and the funds can flow back into the institutions, according to Linda Durant, vice president of development for the Council for Advancement and Support of Education, a nonprofit that offers guidelines and best practices on fundraising for colleges. She sees some advantages to fundraising through the affiliated foundations.

“The foundation has fiduciary responsibility for all of the philanthropy that is happening. They typically take that very seriously,” she said. “It is almost like a safeguard; they are not only making sure the advancement staff and institution is doing everything responsibly, but they are also thinking about it as a taxpayer, so to speak. It is almost a double look at these gifts.”

These are the foundations affiliated with the University of Alabama:

- The Capstone Foundation was organized with the goal of supporting the university’s educational, training and research programs, including providing support for recruitment and scholarships.

- The National Alumni Association of the University of Alabama sustains interest in the university by encouraging alumni chapter development, reunions and other activities and provides student aid, such as scholarships.

- The University of Alabama Law School Foundation provides support for law school operations, including scholarships and faculty travel, research and continuing education.

- The Capstone Health Services Foundation supports operation of the clinical enterprise of the College of Community Health Sciences, which furnishes patient care through its work in affiliated institutions, such as DCH Regional Medical Center and at other locations based on contractual relationships. The foundation is structured to invest in, and support, the Family Medicine Residency and other educational programs of the college, according to the university.

- The 1831 Foundation has been used to deal with real property, such as acquiring property on behalf of the university, and selling bonds for university construction projects, such as dorms.

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• The Crimson Tide Foundation supports athletics operations with funding for scholarships, facilities, programs and related endeavors.

• The University of Alabama Donor Advised Fund provides some support for university operations, such as building funds and scholarships, with the rest being directed to other organizations by donors. One-half of the donor’s contribution must be designated to the university.
New UA dean to assume role in July

Stuart Usdan will lead College of Human Environmental Sciences

Staff report

The University of Alabama has named a new dean at the College of Human Environmental Sciences.

Stuart Usdan, who now serves as senior associate dean at the college, will assume his new role on July 1. Usdan replaces Milla Boschung, who will retire after serving as dean since 2003. "Stuart is a strong academic leader with a respected research record and a firm commitment to teaching and service," said Kevin Whitaker, UA executive vice president and provost. "I'm confident he can build on the college's many strengths while charting a bold and innovative course for the future."

As dean, Usdan will be the chief academic officer for the College of Human Environmental Sciences with oversight over all its academic programs and activities.

Usdan joined UA as an associate professor in 2005, earned tenure in 2008 and was named associate dean for graduate studies, research and assessment in 2010.

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DEAN

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He was promoted to professor in 2011 and has served as senior associate dean since 2014.

Before joining UA, Usdan served as an assistant professor at both the University of South Carolina and at Mississippi State University.

Usdan earned his bachelor's degree in health sciences from the University of Arizona, his master's degree in health promotion and behavior from the University of Georgia and his doctorate degree in health education and health promotion from the University of Alabama at Birmingham.
Tuscaloosa students test White House app

By Drew Taylor
Staff Writer

Two Tuscaloosa natives were among the first to test a new phone app that gives users an inside look into the history of the White House.

Russell Cole, a sixth-grade student at Tuscaloosa Academy, and University of Alabama graduate student Malcolm Cammeron were among the first users of the White House Experience, an app presented by the White House Historical Association. The app offers virtual tours of the White House, the surrounding neighborhood and can be used as a companion piece to in-person tours. In addition, the app also has a feature that compares a photo of each user and shows which president or first lady they look most like.

The app has been in development for a couple of years and first launched last week.

"Since 1962, the White House Historical Association has published the White House Guidebook as part of our education mission inspired by Mrs. Kennedy," said Stewart McLaurin, president of the White House Historical Association and a Tuscaloosa native. "This app is the 21st-century evolution of the guidebook, now in its 24th edition. This state-of-the-art technology tool will increase public access and share the rooms and history of the White House across the country and around the world."

Jessica Fredericks, director of communications for the White House Historical Association, said one aspect of the app is that it will allow a virtual White House visit for those who would otherwise be unable to take a tour in person.

"We wanted to bring that to them and to people who were never going to come," Fredericks said. "It was important we made an app that could be used by anyone."

Cameron, who studies history at UA, is spending his summer in Washington, D.C., at the organization as an intern and was selected for the June debut of the app based on his involvement with the marketing department. Cole was selected because McLaurin is a friend of his family and was in town that week.

"Going through the tour, you are inundated with a lot of objects and artifacts," Cammeron said. "Having the app in your hands breaks everything down and helps you know what you are actually looking at."

The app is free to download on any smartphone with iOS and Android technology.
Postseason expenses for Alabama football add up

By: Ben Jones

Alabama’s total expenses for its postseason football run in 2017 exceeded $7.5 million dollars, according to information obtained by The Tuscaloosa News in an open records request.

Those expenses account for transportation, lodging, tickets absorbed and employee bonuses. Alabama paid a total of $2,219,486.86 in bonuses to 72 employees for the largest single expense of the postseason.

Those costs were partially offset by a payout of $4.15 million for its participation in the Sugar Bowl and the national championship game. Alabama received an additional $124,000 in travel expenses disbursed through the SEC, coming to a total of $4,274,000 for its postseason payout.

Alabama’s expenses totaled $7,591,447, meaning its postseason expenses exceeded revenue by $3,317,447.

“The fact that Alabama has earned a spot in every College Football Playoff is truly something to be proud of,” director of athletics Greg Byrne said in a statement to The Tuscaloosa News. “Certainly with those opportunities come added costs, however there are so many positives from an exposure standpoint for athletics, the University and our state. I will also say that this year we worked on addressing some of those added costs in being more efficient with our travel party size, which we will continue to do in the future.”

The Sugar Bowl appearance cost $2,825,659, slightly more than the national championship game in Atlanta. Expenses for the College Football Playoff Championship Game were $2,546,299. Travel costs and lodging/per diem costs for the championship game were lower than for the Sugar Bowl. The stay in Atlanta was shorter than in New Orleans. Costs for lodging and food were also cheaper in Atlanta.

A significant expense for both the Sugar Bowl and national championship games were unsold tickets absorbed by Alabama. The school sold 10,660 tickets to the Sugar Bowl, but absorbed 1,624 tickets at a cost of $293,050. Of those, only 152 tickets were unsold; the rest were used for players’ families or other purposes. Alabama sold 17,597 tickets to the national championship game, but absorbed 1,737 tickets at a cost of $684,475. Only 136 of those national championship tickets were absorbed.

The largest single bonus went to coach Nick Saban, who received $400,000 for winning the national championship. His staff of nine on-field assistants received a combined $1,079,100.05. Byrne did not receive a bonus. The incentives in his contract are built around the progress of the athletic department as a whole rather than the performance of individual programs.

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Despite winning the national championship, Alabama actually paid out less in bonuses to its employees than a year ago. Alabama’s 2016 postseason bonuses totaled $2,296,809.77, while this season totaled $2,219,486.86. That’s partially because unlike in the previous season, Alabama didn’t have to pay bonuses for an SEC championship. The bonuses for the 2016 SEC championship totaled $458,423.46 on their own.

Alabama’s total expenses for its 2016 postseason were slightly lower at $7,408,333.77.

The school’s travel party to the Sugar Bowl consisted of 395 people on two planes. The travel party to the national championship totaled 376 people on two planes.
Grant will help UA bridge project

By Jason Morton
Staff Writer

A $6.025 million grant has been awarded to the University of Alabama for the construction of a vehicle and pedestrian bridge over the railroad crossing of Second Avenue.

The infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) grant, announced Wednesday by U.S. Sen. Richard Shelby, will go toward the completion of the overall $22.61 million project that’s expected to improve and realign Second Avenue between Paul W. Bryant Drive and 15th Street.

“I am proud to announce that the University of Alabama will receive a $6 million INFRA grant for a vital transportation project in the Tuscaloosa area,” Shelby said in a news release announcing the project. “With ongoing growth and development throughout the state, Alabama’s transportation needs are rapidly changing, and it is imperative that we find the appropriate solutions.

“I look forward to working closely with my Senate colleagues and this administration as we continue to address our nation’s critical infrastructure needs.”

Administered by the federal Department of Transportation, the grant was awarded to fund work to correct what has become transportation barrier in Tuscaloosa by building a bridge over the existing rail line, which is expected to decrease traffic delays and improve safety for residents in Tuscaloosa and surrounding areas.

Additionally, it will provide an alternative route for around 50,000 vehicles per day, reducing conflicts with the train and other vehicle-pedestrian traffic for those traveling on and off-campus.

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GRANT
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It’s unclear when exactly, construction would begin, but Tim Leopard, UA’s associate vice president for construction administration, said the project is practically ready to go.

“We have to work with the awarding agency on an agreement, and we are not sure of the timing of that currently,” he said, adding that “one of the main benefits of this project was that we are basically ‘shovel ready,’ so if we can work through things quickly, we hope to start by the end of the year with the next phase.”

The INFRA grants program was established by the federal DOT in June 2017 to advance the Trump administration’s goals of rebuilding the nation’s infrastructure while increasing the total investment by state, local and private partners.

Reach Jason Morton at jason.morton@tuscaloosanews.com or 205-732-0200.
City's population reaches 100K

Researchers say rise in UA enrollment keys growth

Staff report

The University of Alabama's enrollment growth helped push Tuscaloosa's population to more than 100,000 for the first time, according to UA's Center for Business and Economic Research.

The U.S. Census Bureau's new population estimates for cities and towns show Tuscaloosa had more than 100,000 residents in 2017.

"The growth of student population has triggered an increase in the number of faculty and staff employed at the university as well as jobs available in other industries such as accommodation and food services," said Viktoria Riiman, a socioeconomic analyst for CBER.

UA's enrollment reached 38,563 students in 2017, up more than 50 percent since 2006.

Tuscaloosa has been among the top five places in Alabama with the largest annual numeric increases in population since 2010.

Huntsville gained the largest number of new residents from 2016 to 2017, followed by Tuscaloosa and Auburn.

"The city of Huntsville and Madison County continue seeing larger net migration or more new residents moving into the area than residents moving out of the area," Riiman said. "Strong employment growth in professional, scientific and technical services is one of the leading factors that bring people to the area."

The 10 largest Alabama cities have not changed since 2010, though there has been a shift in rankings. Huntsville passed Mobile in 2016 to become the third largest city and has a population of 194,585 in 2017, while Auburn surpassed Decatur in 2012 to become the eighth largest city and has a current population of 63,973.
UA fraternity to close after violations

Chapter can return to campus in 2020 after redevelopment phase

By Ed Enoch
Staff Writer

Delta Sigma Phi at the University of Alabama will close for two years after multiple violations of policies during the past academic year, according to a Friday announcement by the fraternity's national headquarters and UA.

The violations related to alcohol, risk management and new member education, according to a joint statement by the fraternity's national office and UA.

"Delta Sigma Phi headquarters, alumni volunteers and the University of Alabama worked to remedy these concerns; however, it was determined that maintaining the chapter in its current status would not be advisable, and that it is in the best interest of the Beta Kappa Chapter to temporarily halt operations," the joint statement said.

The university declined to comment further after issuing the statement.

The national office will reach out to the local chapter members and alumni about the next steps, and UA will take steps to assist students affected by the decision.

The chapter will have an opportunity to return to campus in fall 2020 as part of a redevelopment phase that will include:

- Implementation of written

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FRATERNITY

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new and active member education programs
- Maintaining a GPA at or above the men's average at UA
- Hiring a full-time house director to live in the chapter house
- Recruiting and maintaining a trained collegiate chapter advisory board consisting primarily of people who live within reasonable commuting distance to campus

During the first year back, the chapter members will not live in its chapter house. Members would be eligible to return to the house on Jefferson Avenue for fall 2021 upon completion of the redevelopment expectations.

"We are confident that, through the collaborative efforts of the national fraternity, the university, and local alumni, a strong and vibrant chapter will return to campus," the joint statement said.

The Delta Sigma Phi fraternity house at the University of Alabama was cited for violating rules in connection with alcohol, risk management and new member education. (STAFF PHOTO/GARY COSBY JR.)
Funeral set for former UA coach

Service for C.M. Newton will be held June 14

Staff, wire report

Funeral arrangements have been made for former University of Alabama basketball coach C.M. Newton.

Newton died Monday at Hospice of West Alabama at the age of 88.

Newton's funeral will be at 11 a.m. June 14 at First Presbyterian Church, 900 Greensboro Ave., with the Rev. James Goodlet officiating. A reception at the church will follow the funeral.

Newton was involved with college basketball for more than 50 years, beginning as a member of Kentucky's 1951 NCAA championship squad.

As a coach, he compiled a record of 599-375. He began his career at Transylvania College, now Transylvania University, in Kentucky, where he led the basketball program to its first postseason appearance, in the 1962-63 season, before moving on to Alabama and Vanderbilt in the Southeastern Conference.

He recruited the first black players at Transylvania and UA.

Alabama won three consecutive SEC titles, from 1974 to 1976, under Newton and reached the postseason six times. The Associated Press named him SEC Coach of the Year in 1972 and 1976 while he was at Alabama and again in 1988 and 1989 when he was at Vanderbilt.

Newton oversaw the formation of the U.S. Olympic "Dream Team" in 1992 during his tenure as president of USA Basketball.

The Rockwood, Tennessee, native was inducted into the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame in 2000, the College Basketball Hall of Fame in 2006 and the National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics Hall of Fame in 2017.

He is survived by his wife, Nancy Watts Newton; his children, Deborah Newton, Tracy Chappelle and Martin Newton; and stepdaughters Laura Fletcher and Sherry Plott.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests making contributions to the Arc of Tuscaloosa County, Caring Days Adult Day Care or Hospice of West Alabama.

To offer condolences, go to www.heritagechapelalabama.com.
TUSCALOOSA - C.M. Newton, who began a long association with college basketball as a self-admitted backup player to legendary coach Adolph Rupp and became legendary in his own right, has died in Tuscaloosa, where his rise to international prominence began as head basketball coach at the University of Alabama.

Charles Martin Newton was 88 years old. He was born in Rockwood, Tenn., on February 2, 1930, and was raised in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. He died Monday, June 4, 2018, at Hospice of West Alabama.

Coach Newton was enshrined in the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame in 2000, the College Basketball Hall of Fame in 2006, and the National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics Hall of Fame last year.

C.M. was preceded in death by his childhood sweetheart and wife of 49 years, Evelyn Davis Newton.

He is survived by his wife of 16 years, Nancy Watts Newton. He also is survived by his children, Deborah Newton, Tracy Chappelle, and Martin Newton (Cindy); stepdaughters, Laura Fletcher and Sherry Plott; grandchildren, Katie Champion, Madison Wood (Andrew), Charles Martin Newton III, Joshua Newton, Sheridan Chappelle, Davis Chappelle, Bill David Plott, Sage Hickman, Liza Fletcher and Hunter Plott; great-grandchildren, Charles Martin Newton IV and Sawyer Champion; brother, Lt. Col. Richard Y. Newton, Jr.; nephews, William F. Bryan (Becky) and Lt. Gen. Richard Y. Newton III (Jody); and niece, Catherine Ahlwardt (El).

He was predeceased by his sister, Jean Newton Bryan; sister-in-law, Ruth Newton; father, Richard Yates Newton; and mother, Adelia Martin Newton.

Last year he was the subject of an ESPN films production, “Courage Matters: The C.M. Newton Story.”

C.M. Newton was closely associated with two of the giants of intercollegiate athletics, having played for (and later competed against) Adolph Rupp and having been hired as Alabama’s head basketball coach in 1968 by Crimson Tide Athletics Director Paul Bryant based on Rupp’s recommendation. “Newt” as he was known to Coach Rupp, was a member of the UK 1951 national championship team.

C.M. Newton came to be considered the most influential man in the game. From 1992 to 1996, he was president of USA Basketball. Under his direction, professional basketball players were added to the United States Olympic basketball team, including the 1992 “Dream Team.”

From 1979 to 1985, he was chair of the NCAA Rules Committee. During his tenure the NCAA adopted the shot clock, the three-point line, and the coaches’ box. He was a member of the NCAA Division I Basketball Committee, overseeing the NCAA tournament from 1992 through 1999, including the last two years as chairman.

In 1998 a survey done by the San Antonio Express-News proclaimed him “the most powerful man in college basketball.”

Coach Newton was head basketball coach for 12 years at Transylvania College in Lexington following a brief career as a pitcher in the New York Yankees chain.

In 12 seasons at Alabama, Coach Newton led the Crimson Tide to a record of 211-123, and Bama became the only school other than Kentucky to win three consecutive Southeastern Conference championships (1974, 1975, and 1976). He is the only Alabama basketball coach in history to be selected back-to-back SEC Coach of the Year (1975 and 1976). His Bama squads were the first to earn National Invitation and NCAA tournament berths.

Following the 1980 season, he became an
assistant commissioner for the SEC. In 1981, he was back in coaching at Vanderbilt and led them to a 129-115 mark in eight years and two trips to the NCAA Tournament.

His final career move was to his alma mater, becoming director of athletics at Kentucky. He was named national AD of the year in 1999 and retired in 2000, eventually moving to Tuscaloosa.

Special thanks to caregivers, Andrew Croom and Lorenza Allen; caring days (Vickie Kerr and Laderrick Smith); and firefighters of station 10.

Honorary pallbearers will be former players, managers, trainers, and associates of Coach Newton at Transylvania, Alabama, and Vanderbilt.

Services will be Thursday, June 14th, 2018 at 11 a.m. at First Presbyterian Church in Tuscaloosa, Alabama with Rev. James Goodlet officiating with Heritage Chapel Funeral Home & Cremations, a Dignity, Memorial Provider directing. A reception will follow the service at the church.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests contributions to the Arc of Tuscaloosa County (1330 University Blvd. E, Tuscaloosa 35404), Caring Days Adult Day Care (943 31st St., Tuscaloosa 35405), and Hospice of West Alabama (3851 Loop Road, Tuscaloosa 35404).

Condolences may be offered at www.HeritageChapel-Tuscaloosa.com.
Newton's influence went beyond basketball

The date was March 18, 1976.

Seven years earlier, the University of Alabama had a basketball team. Most colleges did. Not many people cared. There were some loyalists who remembered the Rocket Splish. If they were truly long-time gray-haired loyalists, perhaps they recalled Lindy Hood some 50 years before. There had been few other highlights along the way. In 1960, Alabama had a big new arena and a new coach that had played for Adolph Rupp in Kentucky. It had just wrapped up a season with a record of 4-20 that didn't come as a big surprise to anyone.

In seven years, C.M. Newton changed all that. He did not create Alabama basketball but he transformed it into something new, not just on the court but in the eyes of the nation. He pulled the program into modern times, not with strife and anger but with his usual calm, calm demeanor and the occasional puff on his pipe. He brought the first African-American players to Tuscaloosa. That was part of a story, a big part, but there was more than one level to the narrative. Newton and his diligent
possibly between the two best teams in college basketball even if it was in the Sweet 16 in those days of the unseeded bracket, when the Big 10 champion and the SEC champion were both stuffed into the Mideast Regional. It came down to a 74-69 final score but turned on a late block/charge call that went against UA star Leon Douglas and gave Indiana the cushion it needed, a call that was probably approved in Fort Wayne but one that broke hearts in Fort Payne and a hundred other Alabama hamlets. There have been deeper runs since then, but never has Crimson Tide felt so close to winning it all, with a team that C.M. Newton built. Indiana went on to finish undefeated, small solace for Alabama fans.

Newton went on to live for more than 40 years before passing away on Monday. He had enough success and influence to fill a dozen careers at Alabama and Kentucky and Vanderbilt and as a force in USA Basketball, an architect of the 1992 Dream Team that accelerated the spread of basketball to every corner of the world. Testimonials and eulogies have already started to pour in and will continue from all the places that he touched. But for Alabama basketball fans, every game in the upcoming season and far into the future will stand as a tribute.

Some men and women are great coaches, although they are rare.

C.M. Newton went beyond that, past the accolade of great coach to that of a man who transformed an entire program and affected an entire state in ways beyond sports — something that is far more rare.

Reach Cecil Hurt at cecil@tidesports.com or 205-722-0225.
Former Alabama basketball coach C.M. Newton dies at 88

By: Cecil Hurt and Caroline Gazzara

Former University of Alabama basketball coach C.M. Newton, who ushered in a new era of Crimson Tide basketball by signing the first African-American players at UA in the early 1970s, died Monday at the age of 88.

Newton, who had been in declining health, died Monday afternoon at Hospice of West Alabama in Tuscaloosa.

Reaction to Newton’s death came in from across the country on Monday, including comment from University of Alabama officials.

“I was extremely saddened when I heard of the passing of legendary former University of Alabama coach C.M. Newton,” said head men’s basketball coach Avery Johnson. “C.M. was present at my first press conference when I arrived at Alabama back in April of 2015 and was always very supportive. He welcomed me with open arms and was so instrumental in my transition to the University of Alabama. C.M. impacted so many people in the world of basketball on the collegiate and professional levels and with USA basketball. His spirit will continue to live on, and we will strive to make him proud of us each and every day.”

“Coach Newton was a true leader in intercollegiate athletics,” said Alabama Director of Athletics Greg Byrne. “He took risks and was willing to do the right thing even when it was not the most popular thing. He made a tremendous impact on The University of Alabama, the University of Kentucky, Vanderbilt University, Transylvania University and the Southeastern Conference. Thousands of student-athletes have been positively impacted because of his approach as an athletics director, a coach and an exemplary human being.”

Charles Martin Newton became a basketball coach in 1956 at Transylvania College in Lexington, Kentucky. After spending 12 years there, Newton became head basketball coach for the Crimson Tide. Newton recruited the first black player for Alabama. He continued coaching at Alabama for 12 years before moving to Vanderbilt University and then ultimately became the athletic director at the University of Kentucky.

Newton was born in the small town of Rockwell, Kentucky. His family later moved to Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Growing up, Newton excelled at both basketball and baseball. After being accepted to Kentucky to play both sports, Newton played guard on the 1951 national championship basketball team.

Newton played for legendary coach Adolph Rupp, who would later help Newton secure coaching jobs.

On the baseball side of his career, Newton was a pitcher for the Wildcats. He chose not to play his senior season for Kentucky, instead signing with the New York Yankees organization. Newton would play in the minor leagues for three years.
After graduating from college, Newton joined the Air Force for a couple of years, cutting his baseball and basketball careers short. During his time in the military, Newton married his first wife, Evelyn, and the couple had a daughter, Debbie.

After his military career, Newton had a few options to consider before picking a new job. His basketball and baseball experience opened up many doors for him. His daughter, Debbie, was the reason he decided to leave baseball behind.

With the assistance of Rupp, Newton became the coach at then-Transylvania College, now university. Newton’s experience under Rupp helped him turn the program around. His first year at Transylvania ended with a 9-8 record.

During his 12 years at Transylvania, Newton led the team to one NAIA tournament in 1963. He also recruited the school’s first black athlete.

In 1968, Newton received a phone call from Paul W. “Bear” Bryant asking him to become the men’s basketball coach for Alabama. Newton and his family moved to Tuscaloosa and he began coaching the Crimson Tide in the fall.

For the next dozen years, Newton reshaped the Alabama program. Like he did at Transylvania, Newton recruited the University of Alabama’s first African American scholarship athlete, Wendell Hudson.

“I learned only after I became the coach at Kentucky and started looking more into the history of the SEC that C.M. basically integrated Alabama basketball,” Kentucky coach John Calipari said in a post on his website last week. “I asked him how he was able to have the courage to go against the grain in Alabama at that time. He told me, ‘I saw people as people. And I wanted to win. I was trying to bring in the best players. I didn’t care if they were black, white, green or gold. I wanted to win.’ I have asked myself this may times. Would I have had the courage to do the right thing if I was in that same position at Alabama? I don’t know. But I know this. He did. What is popular isn’t always right and what is right isn’t always popular. That is something we can all learn from C.M.”

At the end of his career with the Crimson Tide, Newton’s record was 211-123, with three consecutive SEC Championships. He was also named SEC Coach of the Year in 1974 and 1976.

Newton led Alabama to the NCAA Tournament in 1974 and 1975.

In 1980, Newton resigned from Alabama to became the SEC’s associate commissioner. Newton served in that role for two years before becoming Vanderbilt’s head coach in 1982.

Newton led the Commodores to a 129-115 record over the span of eight seasons. In 1988 and 1989, Vanderbilt made back-to-back NCAA appearances. After the 1989 season, Newton left to become athletic director at Kentucky.

“I’m certainly sorry for everyone’s loss,” former Alabama coach Wimp Sanderson said. “We had a good professional relationship and I appreciate what he did for me in the game of basketball.
He was a very good basketball coach and did a lot for the University of Alabama and for basketball in this state.”

Returning to his alma mater, Newton revamped the entire athletics program within 10 years. Newton hired a new football coach, a black women’s basketball coach and two different men’s basketball coaches.

While working at Kentucky, Newton was also president of USA Basketball. He payed a key role in the decision to allow professional basketball players to compete in the Olympics, bringing about the “Dream Team” of NBA stars who played in the 1992 Summer Games.

In March of 2000, his wife Evelyn died of lymphoma. She had been battling cancer for 18 years.

In 2000, Newton was inducted to the Naismith Memorial Hall of Fame.

Newton remarried shortly after Evelyn passed away. His new wife, Nancy, helped Newton retire from Kentucky and move back to Tuscaloosa. He has been a resident since then.

Newton continued to serve on the NIT board from the time he retired from the game until his death.
UAB named top 'young' university in the U.S.

By: Erin Edgemon

The University of Alabama at Birmingham has been ranked the top young university in the United States in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings' 2018 Young University Rankings.

"This prestigious recognition directly reflects the dedication and hard work that our faculty, staff, students, alumni and community supporters have contributed to build tremendous, growing momentum in every pillar of our mission in less than 50 short years," said UAB President Ray L. Watts. "I celebrate and share this tremendous honor with everyone in the UAB community, as well as with those who came before us and built the strong foundation from which we continue to effect positive, global change."

UAB is the No. 10 young university worldwide, according to the rankings.

A young university is one that is 50 years old or younger.

Times Higher Education's university rankings are among the world's most comprehensive, balanced and trusted -- a vital resource trusted by academics, students, their families, industry and governments globally, according to UAB.

Times Higher Education ranked 250 institutions from 55 different countries in this year's Young University Rankings, which explores the same rigorous 13 performance indicators as the overall Times Higher Education's World University Rankings -- with young universities measured across their teaching, research, citations, international outlooks and industry incomes. However, the methodology has been recalibrated to have less emphasis on reputation since younger universities are still building their reputations.

UAB, which spans more than 100 city blocks -- roughly a quarter of downtown Birmingham -- will celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2019.

With nearly 21,000 students and more than 23,000 faculty and staff, UAB is the largest single employer in Alabama, with an annual statewide economic impact exceeding $7.15 billion. It boasts many nationally ranked programs, including 13 graduate programs ranked in the top 25, according to U.S. News & World Report.

UAB has annual research expenditures exceeding $562 million. It is a leader in federal research funding -- ranking 23rd (top 4 percent) nationally and 8th (top 2 percent) among public institutions in funding from the National Institutes of Health.

Watts added of the honor, "I celebrate and share this tremendous honor with everyone in the UAB community, as well as with those who came before us and built the strong foundation from which we continue to effect positive, global change."
UAH professor: Post-millennials are loneliest generation

By: WAFF 48 Digital Staff

A communications and social media expert believes that even when young people have a lot of names in their contact feeds, it doesn't necessarily mean they have many friends.

Dr. Pavica Sheldon, chairwoman and associate professor of the University of Alabama in Huntsville's Department of Communication Arts, recently summarized studies that indicate today's student generation may actually be the loneliest.

Sheldon will share her findings with WAFF 48 News at 2 p.m. Tuesday.

Sheldon said students in her social media classes always say something along the lines of "I have 500 Facebook friends, but I do not think I could call any of them if I needed something."

"Most of those friends are acquaintances," said Sheldon. "We meet somebody once or twice and we add them as LinkedIn or Facebook friends. Most of the time we know very little about them, especially if we are not spending quality face-to-face time with them."

She said a recent study indicates social media is not to blame, but our overall culture is that of less time with family and friends and more time with technological devices.

"People who do not have friends that they can talk to face-to-face not only feel lonely, but they lack social support. Lack of social support can cause early death," she said.

Sheldon cited a recent national study published by Cigna Insurance Co. that found 46 percent of U.S. adults report "sometimes or always feeling lonely and 47 percent report feeling left out." Cigna calls those statistics epidemic levels.

Of all the recognized groups, the study said Generation Z (ages 18-22) is the loneliest at 48.3, millennials (ages 23 to 37) had a loneliness score of 45.3, Generation X (ages 38 to 51) scored 45.1, and the Greatest Generation (ages 72 and over) was the least lonely of the groups with a score of 38.6.

"GenXers did not grow up with computers and they played outside; older GenYers grew up pretty similar but had already started spending more time playing computer games," Sheldon said. "GenZs pretty much grew up being photographed and videotaped."

Sheldon will go over more studies during her interview Tuesday.
As Solar Wind Blows, Our Heliosphere Balloons

By: Miles Hatfield

What happens when the solar wind suddenly starts to blow significantly harder? According to two recent studies, the boundaries of our entire solar system balloon outward - and an analysis of particles rebounding off of its edges will reveal its new shape.

In late 2014, NASA spacecraft detected a substantial change in the solar wind. For the first time in nearly a decade, the solar wind pressure - a combined measure of its speed and density - had increased by approximately 50 percent and remained that way for several years thereafter. Two years later, the Interstellar Boundary Explorer, or IBEX, spacecraft detected the first sign of the aftermath. Solar wind particles from the 2014 pressure increase had reached the edge of the heliosphere, neutralized themselves, and shot all the way back to Earth. And they had a story to tell.

In two recent articles, scientists used IBEX data along with sophisticated numerical models to understand what these rebounding atoms can tell us about the evolving shape and structure of our heliosphere, the giant bubble carved out by the solar wind.

"The results show that the 2014 solar wind pressure increase has already propagated from the Sun to the outer heliosphere, morphing and expanding our heliosphere's boundaries in their closest direction," said David McComas, the principal investigator for the IBEX mission at Princeton University in Princeton, New Jersey. "IBEX data pouring in over the next few years will let us chart the expansion and evolving structure of the other portions of the heliosphere's outer boundaries."

From the Sun to the edge of the solar system - and back
At the crux of the story are energetic neutral atoms - high-energy particles produced at the very edge of our solar system.

As the solar wind flows out from the Sun at supersonic speeds, it blows up a bubble known as the heliosphere. The heliosphere encases all the planets in our solar system and much of the space beyond them, separating the domain of our Sun from that of interstellar space.

But the solar wind's journey from the Sun is not a smooth ride. On its way to the very edge of our heliosphere, known as the heliopause, the solar wind passes through distinct layers. The first of these is known as the termination shock.

Before passing the termination shock, the solar wind expands rapidly, largely unimpeded by outside material.

"But at the termination shock, roughly 9.3 billion miles away from us in every direction, the solar wind slows down abruptly. Beyond this point it continues to move outwards, but it is much hotter," said Eric Zirnstein, lead author of one of the papers at Princeton.

Once beyond the termination shock, solar wind particles enter a special limbo zone known as the heliosheath. While the termination shock is essentially spherical, the edges of the heliosphere are

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thought to describe more of an arc around the Sun as it moves through space - closer to the Sun toward the front, and extending long behind it, not unlike a comet with a tail.

Along these boundaries, solar wind particles mix with particles from interstellar space. Collisions are inevitable: the hot, electrically-charged solar wind particles bang into the slower, colder neutral atoms from interstellar space, stealing an electron and becoming neutral themselves.

"From there they go travelling ballistically through space, and some make it all the way back to Earth," Zirnstein said. "These are the energetic neutral atoms that IBEX observes."

In late 2016, when IBEX's energetic neutral atom imager began to pick up an unusually strong signal, Professor McComas and his team set out to investigate its cause. Their findings are reported in an article published on March 20, 2018, in the Astrophysical Journal Letters.

The energetic neutral atoms were coming from about 30 degrees south of the interstellar upwind direction, where the heliosheath was known to be closest to Earth.

To quantify its connection to the 2014 solar wind pressure increase, McComas and his team turned to numerical simulations, working out how such a pressure increase could affect the energetic neutral atoms that IBEX observes.

"These types of simulations involve a model for the physics, which then gets turned into equations, which are in turn solved on a supercomputer," said Jacob Heerikhuisen, a coauthor on both papers at the University of Alabama in Huntsville.

Using computer models, the team simulated an entire heliosphere, jolted it with a solar wind pressure increase, and let it run the numbers. The simulation completed a story only hinted at by the data.

According to the simulation, once the solar wind hits the termination shock it creates a pressure wave. That pressure wave continues on to the edge of the heliosphere and partially rebounds backwards, forcing particles to collide within the (now much denser) heliosheath environment that it just passed through. That's where the energetic neutral atoms that IBEX observed were born.

The simulations provided a compelling case: IBEX was indeed observing the results of the 2014 solar wind pressure increase, more than two years later.

But the simulation didn't stop there. It also revealed that the 2014 solar wind pressure increase would, over time, continue to blow up the heliosphere even further. Three years after the solar wind pressure increase - by the time the article was published - the termination shock, the inner bubble within the heliosphere, should expand by seven astronomical units, or seven times the distance from Earth to the Sun. The heliopause, the outer bubble, should expand by two astronomical units, with an additional two the following year.

In short, by cranking up the pressure of the solar wind, our heliosphere today is bigger than it was just a few years ago.
The heliosphere's new shape
McComas and colleagues studied the very first signs of the 2014 solar wind pressure increase. But watching the data over the coming years may tell us even more - this time about the evolving shape of our heliosphere.

"There have been many studies, some from quite a while ago, predicting what the heliosphere shape should look like," Zirnstein, the lead author of the paper, reports. "But it's still very much up for debate in the modelling community. We're hoping that the 2014 solar wind pressure increase could help with that."

Using the same data and simulations used in the previous paper, Zirnstein and colleagues ran the clock forward, modeling the heliosphere eight years after the 2014 solar wind pressure increase. The results describe not only the past, but also model the future. The paper was published on May 30, 2018, in The Astrophysical Journal.

"What we think we should see in the near future is a ring, expanding across the sky, marking the change in energetic neutral atom flux over time," said Zirnstein. "This ring expands away from the point of initial contact in the outer heliosphere, towards the directions of the heliotail."

Although the initial signal detected by IBEX in 2016 was a solid circle, it won't stay that way. As the 2014 solar wind reaches points of the heliopause further and further away, they take longer to bounce back, like an echo off of a far-away wall. The heliosphere's rounded shape causes this echo to reflect back in the form of a ring.

But the key finding came from watching the ring as it expands.

In their simulation, Zirnstein and colleagues found that the precise rate at which the ring expands depended in part on the distances between the various layers of the heliosphere: the termination shock, the heliopause, and the part of the heliosheath where the energetic neutrals were produced. Zirnstein realized he had found a new way to measure the size and shape of the heliosphere.

"We could estimate the distances to the different boundaries of the heliosphere just by looking at this ring changing over time in the sky," said Zirnstein.

Zirnstein and colleagues used their simulated heliosphere to run a test study. By measuring the rate of expansion of the ring (and plugging it into the right equations), they could accurately reproduce the distances to key structures within their simulated heliosphere. Since they knew what those distances were in their simulation, they could check their work - validating that the technique got the right answers and should be accurate when applied to the real heliosphere.

Deformities in the ring - deviations from a perfect circle - could also reveal asymmetries in the heliosphere's overall shape. "It depends on how symmetric or asymmetric the heliosphere is," Zirnstein added. "If the heliosphere was an ideal 'comet shape,' the ring should expand symmetrically over time. But in reality that's probably not going to happen - we'll have to wait and see what IBEX tell us."

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Zirnstein expressed excitement about the possibility of learning the true shape of the heliosphere.

"Over the next few years with more IBEX data, my hope is that we can build a 3D picture of the shape of the heliosphere," said Zirnstein.

The results of these two studies have important practical implications. "Connecting changes in the Sun with energetic neutral atom observations will help us understand long term changes in the hazardous conditions for space radiation environment - a sort of space climate as opposed to space weather," McComas said. "As the solar wind blows more and less hard, and our solar bubble expands and contracts, which directly affects the amount of cosmic rays that can enter the heliosphere, potentially endangering astronauts on long duration spaceflights."

But the results also underscore the incredible power of our closest star. Changes on the Sun, including the solar wind, have significant consequences extending billions of miles into space where, to date, only the two Voyager spacecraft have ever ventured. With techniques like energetic neutral atom imaging, we cannot just picture, but precisely measure these far-off portions of the heliosphere - our home in the galaxy.
Fake flash memory can now be detected with simple technique

By: Katrina Megget

Researchers have come up with a way to detect fake flash memory, one of the most widely counterfeited electronic components.

According to the researchers from The University of Alabama in Huntsville, flash memory – a non-volatile digital storage medium that stores data on a chip – is increasingly at high risk of counterfeiting because of its widespread use in electronic systems, including space applications and consumer electronics.

However, there have been few feasible solutions to detect counterfeits and recycled flash with high confidence mainly been because of the variability among different flash chips, the researchers said.

To address this, the team developed a detection method based on a combination of the statistical distribution of various timing characteristics of memory and the number of faulty bits (the smallest unit of data in a computer).

The team was able to detect counterfeit flash memory with close to 100 per cent confidence.

“Most researchers focus on fail bit count or how fast the chip can read and write – they never worry about programme-erase time,” said Bahar Talukder, a graduate student involved with the development.

“But while fail bit count and read and write time do show changes, programme-erase time is the best metric because it shows the most amount of variation.” It’s also more consistent across manufacturers and tends to increase noticeably even after just a few programme-erase cycles, he added.

The researchers performed erase operations on sample flash memory chips and recorded the erase time. They found that programme time decreases, while erase time increases with the increasing number of programme-erase count. Fail bit count was found to increase with the increasing number of programme-erase count.

The team found that they could achieve a 100 per cent confidence level of accurately detecting a recycled memory for a flash with just 3 per cent usage, noting that detection confidence increases with higher usage.

The technique was deemed inexpensive, non-destructive (in that is does not wear out the flash chip) and required no additional hardware or hardware modification. It was also widely applicable to a wide range of flash chips from different manufacturers.

The team, which has filed several patent applications, hopes to turn the method into a smartphone application and a browser extension.
The researchers said the development was a significant move in being able to curb counterfeits and safeguard the electronic systems used in vital infrastructure.

“Failure of flash memory in critical applications can have catastrophic effects, from simply corrupting the system to enabling a hardware trojan attack. So, there is a big demand for this ability to detect counterfeit flash with high confidence,” said Dr M. Tauhidur Rahman, assistant professor at the university’s department of electrical and computer engineering.

The problem exists because of the high turnover of consumer electronics, with upgrades available annually, yet most of the electronic components remain functional once the old device is replaced with the upgrade. This e-waste is increasingly recycled and fraudulently resold as new. While the components remain functional, their life span, however, is greatly reduced, which can have adverse effects.

The problem has been further exacerbated in recent years as the semiconductor supply chain has shifted from a vertical to a horizontal model. “Because of manufacturers’ enhanced reliance on independent suppliers, these electronic systems are at a lot more risk of counterfeiting and piracy than ever,” said Dr Biswajit Ray, an assistant professor at the University’s department of electrical and computer engineering.

Furthermore, Ray added, counterfeiters are getting more savvy, making it harder to tell whether components in any given electronic system are fresh or recycled. All these factors highlight the need for a detection system.

However, developing a detection system that is sufficiently accurate has been challenging. Current approaches rely on the maintenance of an extensive database or on manufactures’ willingness to adopt sensor-based approaches.

The proposed method is now being tested against temperature and voltage variations, while a detection method using programme disturb characteristics is also being explored by the research team.
Auburn athletic director Allen Greene discusses administrative shakeup, coach contracts

By: James Crepea

On his 124th day on the job, Auburn athletic director Allen Greene put four months of assessment and evaluation into action.

Greene fired six Auburn athletics administrators on Monday, signaling a change in era and way of doing business for a department that had become bloated with C-suite positions and six-figure salaries with ambiguous job titles and responsibilities.

The moves came just three weeks after Greene, who was hired on Jan. 19 and began his tenure on Feb. 1, he did not have "a great enough understanding yet" to make such personnel decisions.

In his most definitive public statements to date, Greene shared with AL.com what went into thought process in shaking up Auburn's athletic department.

"I really wanted to take my time these first few months to really evaluate where I thought our strengths were and where I thought we needed to be going," Greene said. "It was determined that we needed to streamline our operation. So, consolidating responsibilities - we're seeing that at Texas, we're seeing that at other places - making sure that we're being prudent with our resources and being effective with serving our student-athletes."

More changes are expected, though Greene would not expound on how many.

"I don't know that (there's) 'more to come' per se, but I think that there should be an expectation that we always need to look at our organization and be willing to adapt to the environment," he said.

Greene is still formulating exactly what the new structure of Auburn's administrative staff will be but suffice to say, the premise is based on less is more.

New faces will be brought in, but not on a one-for-one basis with those who have and will go out.

"Streamlining is a term; I think organizational efficiency is probably a more accurate term," Greene said. "It's really trying to think about which positions people can be the most effective in. I think that's the essence of what we're trying to get to. ... We are going to look at skill sets and look at needs and do the best we can to match up. This is part of an evolution of a department."

During his first four months as athletic director, Greene repeatedly referenced how he and his "team" were evaluating every aspect of the department's operations. That team is now changing and it's only natural for such churn to cause some delays in implementing a new plan and vision for the department, whether that's for new and upgraded facilities, fundraising or coach contracts.
"We want to win national championships; I think we can do it in almost every sport that we have," Greene said. "But we have to make sure from an organizational perspective that we're structured in a way to support that endeavor."

In his first year as Auburn's president, Steven Leath has emphasized instilling a sense of urgency at all levels of the university. Greene wants the same in the athletic department and not just from Auburn's coaches and the need to win.

"I want there to be turnover in our department," he said. "I think that it's healthy to have natural turnover. We want to have people who are ambitious, who want to come into Auburn, give us all they've got a for whatever number of years and then be ready to go to take a job someplace else that is in their best professional interest."

That's not to say that strong performance and experience aren't valued, as evident in Greene's decision to extend the contracts for men's basketball coach Bruce Pearl and women's basketball coach Terri Williams-Flournoy and desire to do the same with baseball coach Butch Thompson.

The process of extending Pearl's contract three more years through 2022-23 was a bit tedious and particularly clunky for members of his staff but the dust has ultimately settled and they're all being retained.

Williams-Flournoy is coming off a 14-14 season in which Auburn went 5-11 in SEC play and is 102-90 overall and 35-61 in the SEC in six years on the Plains, with two NCAA Tournament appearances.

Greene explained why he chose to add four years to Williams-Flournoy's contract, which also now runs through 2022-23.

"I think most fans tend to look at the end result, they look at the outcomes," he said. "My responsibility is to look at all the inputs. Coach Flo and I have had conversations, no different than coach Pearl and I have had conversations, about what are the ingredients that are going to be necessary to help our program be successful. After having multiple conversations with her, we felt like that we as a department and her and her staff can collectively work together to have inputs, meaning recruiting, the financial support is there, the emotional support, being visible at games, helping with the recruiting process. All those things I think are all ingredients to making something really special.

"We feel like that we can put all those ingredients in a bucket and make her program successful. Not the end result, those speak for themselves, but we have to make sure that we're putting our coaches and our student-athletes in a position so that we can actually achieve the end results that we want."
Auburn gambled by doubling down on Pearl

Joseph Goodman  
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If you're surprised by Bruce Pearl's new five-year contract extension at Auburn, you haven't sat and listened to the man speak.

The long-time college basketball coach could sell bbq at a broccoli convention, sun lotion to a sea lion and encyclopedias during a shareholders' meeting at Google.

It's an amazing gift, truly.

Some people are born with the innate ability to play piano, or paint, or play chess. Pearl can motivate people with his words like few others, and make people believe.

Pearl made his players believe in themselves last season when no one else did. They were predicted to finish near the bottom of the SEC after two of its best players were ruled ineligible by the NCAA.

The Tigers ended up sharing the regular season championship with Tennessee, and making it to the second round of the NCAA Tournament.

Pearl also made Auburn's student body believe in basketball like no coach had in 20 years. The kids camped out for seats, and turned a dormant program into the envy of the SEC. Games were so much fun last season, and Pearl built that with belief.

When it came time to make Auburn's new director of athletics believe nothing else could possibly go wrong, after assistant coach Chuck Person was arrested by the FBI, Pearl made Allen Greene believe, too.

Or he made it impossible for Greene not to listen, and sometimes, when you're really good, and you sell a lot of tickets, and convince a talent like Austin Wiley to stick around and play for free, that's all you've got to do. Others at Auburn weren't so insulated, obviously. Greene fired six administrators on the same day Auburn extended Pearl.

PEARL

FROM B1

Did Pearl have any idea Person was using his connections with Wiley and his family to allegedly make deals with a financial advisor in Pittsburgh and go-between Rashan Michel? Michel is a tailor of bespoke suits with NBA connections and a gift for getting over on people. He apparently knew the financial advisor, and put him in touch with Person. The financial advisor turned out to be an FBI informant.

Person and Michel were greedy, and easy marks.

If Auburn cares even slightly about doing things the right way in the face of such an unprecedented controversy, Greene asked Pearl if he knew Michel before extending him for five years.

We can only assume Pearl distanced himself from Michel, and told his new director of athletics that Person was acting alone with the former NBA referee turned tailor to the stars. That's what Auburn would want people to believe, but it's not that easy.

A simple search of Michel's Instagram account links him to Steven Pearl, Bruce's son and an Auburn assistant coach. Steven Pearl knew Michel closely enough to wear at least one of his suits during games. Did he pay for it? Did he introduce players to Michel?

Those are important questions, but here's the thing. Even if Steven Pearl got his Thompson Bespoke suit for free, that doesn't prove anything other than Michel was closer to Auburn basketball than the Pearls would probably like to admit. If we've learned anything about college basketball since the Department of Justice's indictments of coaches and shoe executives, it's that relationships with unsavory characters are natural byproducts of the business model.

So, here we are, back in the murky gray area of morality, hustlers and salesmanship. It's where college basketball has always operated, and where it operates today. Let's be honest, what did Auburn ever have to gain by hiring Pearl?

Integrity?
Who really cares about integrity?
Answer this question. Who's the biggest hustler: Chuck Person, Rashan Michel or the NCAA? It's easily the NCAA, which has been gaslighting America for decades with its shamelessness, tax dodge and pretty speeches by Condoleezza Rice.

The NCAA serves one purpose and that's holding onto the status quo for its member institutions. And the status quo is about making lots of money for everyone except the athletes.

Perceived through the lens of business, extending Pearl was a gamble Auburn was
willing to take. He hasn't done anything wrong, of course, and, from a purely practical standpoint, if he ever does, then it all would have been worth it. Auburn, after all, was awful before Pearl came along.

Here's the real question Auburn asked itself before extending Pearl: What did it stand to lose by not gambling and doubling down on Pearl? Everything. With Wiley, Daniel Purifoy, Jared Harper and Bryce Brown returning next season, Auburn should sell out every game and have a serious chance at making a run to the Final Four.

Bottom line: All anyone really seems to care about is that Auburn is going to be amazing next season, and fun to watch. Pearl doesn't have to convince anyone of that any longer.

Joseph Goodman is a columnist for Alabama Media Group. He's on Twitter @JoeGoodmanJr.
South Alabama trustees unanimously approve on-campus football stadium resolution

By: Creg Stephenson

The University of South Alabama Board of Trustees on Friday unanimously approved a resolution authorizing school president Tony Waldrop to begin awarding bids toward the construction of an on-campus football stadium, a project with the goal of being completed for the 2020 season.

While Friday's vote does not make an on-campus stadium for the Jaguars a 100 percent certainty, it is a "tremendous step forward" in that direction, USA athletics director Joel Erdmann said. The school must still secure much of the project's proposed $73-million funding, which would come from repurposed athletic funds and private and corporate donations, as well as additional pledges from city and county government.

"There's a lot of work to be done," Erdmann said. "There's resources and funding that needs to be identified, but we've been given permission to proceed with ground work and the first step toward our goal."

Erdmann told the board Friday that while meetings with City of Mobile and Mobile County officials had taken place, neither body has yet committed to providing the school with a portion of the funding needed. South Alabama is asking for from $5 million-$10 million from both the city and county for the project, primarily to be used for debt service.

Mobile County Commission president Connie Hudson told AL.com Friday morning that the university has approached all three commissioners individually, but "we've not had a discussion about it." She didn't know when such an official discussion might occur, she said.

"I certainly support all their efforts," she said. The challenge will be "to see what our capacity is" to assist with stadium funding, given the county's other current and future financial obligations, including funding for economic development projects.

"At this point I don't know the answer to that," she said.

Mobile Mayor Sandy Stimpson confirmed through Twitter on Friday afternoon that the city "has been approached by the University of South Alabama to consider participating in a public-private partnership for construction of a new football stadium to be located on the university campus." He did not offer any immediate additional comment.

Since the program's inception in 2009, South Alabama has played home football games at city-owned Ladd-Peebles Stadium. The 70-year-old stadium seats 40,000 and is located a 20-to-30-minute drive from campus.

The Jaguars averaged a little over 17,000 fans for home games in 2017, and have sold out Ladd-Peebles Stadium just once in their history, for a 2014 game against Mississippi State. Erdmann said discussions about an on-campus stadium have been taking place literally since the South Alabama program launched nearly a decade ago.

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"It's literally been the persistent, never-ending question," Erdmann said. "But on a sincere side, it's been seriously considered and examined for over three years. Site visits, stadium visits, consultants, first renditions, second renditions, cost estimates, back-and-forth, back-and-forth and the very committed, hard work by a lot of people who now have an end product. And now we just need to get there."

Waldrop called the potential on-campus stadium a "win for the whole community."

"If we do raise the additional money we need and are able to build a football stadium, not only is it a win for our university, I think it's a win for the whole community," Waldrop said during the board meeting. "It provides an opportunity to have a state-of-the-art stadium. It's also something that would bring in revenue for the city and the county.

"The schools with on-campus stadiums, they see a drastic increase in student life on campus. It really makes a difference. I know we're going to win (football games), and what better to do that than in a new facility on campus."

The reaction from students has also been a positive one, Student Government Association president Grace Newcombe said.

"It's a really exciting possibility," Newcombe said. "I know it will increase attendance, because you won't have to make the 25-minute commute to Ladd-Peebles. It will increase 'Jag Pride' from the students, being able to express our full support of our athletic department on campus. It's a convenient, close proximity facility."

The goal listed in the Board of Trustees resolution is to begin construction on the stadium in July, in order to complete the 18-24-month project in time for the 2020 season. The stadium would seat approximately 25,000 and would be located on the former site of the intramural fields, just down the hill from the South Alabama Football Field House.

Erdmann said that area of campus -- and the campus in general -- is well set-up to accommodate the stadium, as well as ample parking and tailgating areas. Work on infrastructure such as access roads and the expansion of electrical and water and sewer capacity has already been considered and plotted out.

"We've had the great benefit of having a university that has a large footprint from an acreage standpoint," Erdmann said. "We're not building buildings on top of other buildings, we have space to spread out. And we do have space for parking. I think our campus lends itself to a great tailgating and game day environment."

Erdmann said the proposed stadium would combine elements of several newer and more modestly-sized facilities at other schools he and his team have visited in-person. Specifically, he cited Southern Methodist's Gerald J. Ford Stadium, Florida Atlantic's FAU Stadium, Central Florida's Spectrum Stadium, Tulane's Yulman Stadium and Colorado State Stadium.

"Those are five stadiums that have been recently built or significantly renovated and we pulled aspects from those and are inserting them into our concept for enhancing fan experience,"
Erdmann said. "We want to make it a very social environment where students can mingle and move around -- spacious concourses, an end zone terrace section that we think will be a tremendous addition, but also the upscale amenities that fans are used to having -- clubs, suites, loges, so on and so forth."

The resolution approved Friday also left open the possibility that the Dollar General Bowl and Reese's Senior Bowl -- both of which also currently play at Ladd-Peebles -- could move to the new South Alabama stadium once it is complete. Dollar General Bowl president Jerry Silverstein expressed interest in that idea recently, while new Senior Bowl executive director Jim Nagy said Thursday he wouldn't rule it out.

The stadium would also serve as a recruiting tool for the Jaguars, and would be part of an ever-growing athletic complex in the northwest corner of campus that includes the South Alabama Field House and the Jaguar Training Center, a covered practice facility scheduled to open in July. On Thursday, first-year USA football coach Steve Campbell called a new stadium "the last piece of the puzzle ... to make us second to nobody in the country as far as football facilities."

"We're a month away from completing the largest indoor practice facility in the state of Alabama," Campbell said. "We've got tremendous practice facilities already. With the addition of the new indoor (practice facility), the on-campus stadium is really the only missing part."
Rodeo project hits snag at University of West Alabama

By: Ed Enoch

LIVINGSTON | The University of West Alabama board of trustees has discontinued active fundraising efforts for a covered rodeo arena, a project that has struggled to attract the outside funding necessary to begin construction.

The board voted last week to accept the recommendation of UWA President Ken Tucker, who proposed the university should devote no further time or resources to new fundraising efforts while letting the existing pending grant and gift solicitations play out.

“I know this particular project has weighed heavily on the board for the last several years,” Tucker said. “You know, we were all so committed when we started the project. We were all so excited, and we had some initial success. It has become stagnant of recent. We are not gaining traction.”

Last year, the trustees asked for a report on the viability of the project.

The estimated cost to build just the arena’s roof, footings and drainage system was between $700,000-$800,000. The original plans called for a phased project for a covered, 1,260-seat rodeo arena with a new entrance building with restrooms and concessions as well as new stables, more parking and site improvements to handle stormwater. The estimated cost of the project was $1.1 million for the first phase, which would build the arena’s roof, dirt floor, lighting, sound system and exhaust system.

The team working on the project tried to rebrand the facility as a regional agricultural center late last year in the hopes the broader scope will help attract more funding for the project.

The project has existed in concept since the mid-1990s. The latest effort to build a covered arena began in 2015. The arena’s advocates have promoted it as a recruiting tool for the university and its rodeo program and, regionally, as a facility that would enhance economic development.

Without university funding available and instructions the project could not incur debt for UWA, the team working on the project sought to secure public and private outside funding. The strategy included soliciting corporations, government agencies, foundations and individuals.

Construction of the covered arena was contingent on securing substantial funding between $500,000-$600,000, which the team had hoped would manifest as federal grant money.

Citing other priorities on campus, such as new academic programs, economic development projects, and a need for more scholarships for first-generation students, Tucker said the time and energies of the development staff and others may be more effective on other projects.

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“We have so many university-wide priorities that deserve time and attention,” Tucker said.

If the existing requests are successful and enough money is secured to build the roof for the rodeo arena, the university should build the structure, Tucker recommended. If the amount is insufficient to cover the estimated cost, the university administration and UWA Foundation board should discuss with the current donors whether or not they would consider transferring their gifts to meet needs of the rodeo program.

Vice President of Institutional Advancement Chris Thomason estimated the project had $167,245 in its account and an additional $15,000 pledged. The project has about $450,000 in potential federal grants for which it had applied and other possible investors it was planning to approach.

Trustee Thed Spree, the longtime advocate for the project on the board, voted against halting fundraising in committee meetings. Spree said he had been in contact with businessmen and regional officials who were interested in the project, as he asked the board to give the project more time.

“I don’t like to beg, folks. But all I want to do is leave this money where it is for the time,” Spree said.

Spree noted the difficulty of fundraising for the project, adding he feared redirecting the money would mean another setback for a project he has promoted as transformational.

“If we go and give that money to be the rodeo team to buy some new gates or whatever I think that would be the kiss of death for that project,” he said.

Trustee Justin Smith, who chairs the athletics committee that gave preliminary approval to the plans to halt current efforts, said he was sympathetic to Spree’s plea for the project, but also agreed with Tucker the university had limited development resources and other pressing needs.

“I don’t know that we have ever devoted this type of resources to this project before. We have given a great effort led by Mr. Spree, who is appreciated. It just don’t seem to be in the cards,” Smith said.

But the decision to halt any new fundraising efforts by university staff would not limit Spree from continuing his work on the arena project, Smith said.
UWA adjusts tuition rate slightly

Decision is expected to generate $850K

By Ed Enoch
Staff Writer

LIVINGSTON — The University of West Alabama board of trustees on Monday approved adjusting its tuition rate for on-campus students to align with the rate for its online program, a move expected to generate about $850,000.

The tuition rate for on-campus in-state students will increase from $324 per hour to $325 per hour. Out-of-state students on campus will be charged $650 per hour. There would be no increases in fees, Vice President of Finance Affairs Lawson Edmonds said.

The tuition rate will remain flat between 13-18 hours at $4,225 to encourage students to take full loads, Edmonds said.

"Changing our system is really what we are doing," UWA President Ken Tucker said. "The rationale is that all our peer or sister institutions are at per credit hour rates now. This also incentivizes our students to take a full load."

The change would align the university with a push by accrediting bodies to have institutions graduate students within four years.

The rate change is expected to generate about $850,000 in revenue, Edmonds said. The estimate includes as assumption that about 75 percent of the students will make the decision to take 13 or more hours, he said.

The board approved a 4.5 percent tuition increase last year to address anticipated increases in operating expenses.

Trustee Jerry Smith asked whether the administration planned to recommend a tuition increase next year.

Any future tuition increase would be driven by increases in fixed operating costs such as employee benefits, Tucker said.

The tuition increase was part of an operating budget of $57.4 million approved by the board. The budget is similar to last year's budget, and includes $25.9 million in salaries and $12.7 million in fixed expenses such as benefits and insurance and $18.7 million for other operating expenses that include student services, scholarships, research and maintenance. The board approved a budget last year of $56 million.

The university projects its revenues in the next fiscal year to be about $57.6 million.

The budget does not include raises for staff and faculty other than increases for promotions, longevity or increased credentials, Edmonds said.
Humphrey takes top spot

Josh Bean  jbean@al.com

Hoover's Marlon Humphrey saved his best high school performances for his final meet.
Humphrey won Class 7A titles in the 400-meter dash, 110-meter hurdles and 300-meter hurdles, running the state’s fastest times in all three at the Class 7A outdoor track meet in Gulf Shores.

He also split 46.8 on an all-time Alabama record 4x400-meter relay team at the state meet and won the 300 hurdles at Mobile Challenge of Champions meet earlier this spring.

For his performance, Humphrey is today named the Super All-State Track Athlete of the Year.

TEAM

100 meters: Caleb Jackson, Pleasant Grove
Ran state’s fastest time, clocking 10.46 seconds at the state outdoor meet

200 meters: Charles Lewis, Sparkman
Won the Class 7A title and clocked season-best 21.21 at FSU Relays

400 meters: Brian Sims, Ramsay
Finished second in Class 6A at state meet and clocked 47.44 at Vestavia Hills King of the Mountain

800 meters: Charles Hughes, Smiths Station
Ran state’s fastest outdoor time of 1:54.40 at state outdoor meet

1,600 meters: Matthew Estopinal, Randolph
Ran state’s fastest indoor time of 4:21.50 at state meet in Birmingham

3,200 meters: Will Stone, Homewood
Ran state’s fastest times during outdoor and indoor seasons

Sprints: Hakim Ruffin, Hoover
Won state indoor 60-meter title and ran fastest outdoor 200-meter time of 21.0

Distance: Ethan Strand, Vestavia Hills
Won Class 7A state outdoor titles in 1,600- and 3,200-meter events

Hurdles: Marion Humphrey, Hoover
Ran fastest outdoor times in 110-meter hurdles (14.00) and 300-meter hurdles (35.52)

Long jump: Maurice Robinson, Murphy
Had state-best leap of 24 feet, 1 inch at Mobile Challenge of Champions

Triple jump: Malik Crandall, Davidson
Had state-best leap of 48 feet, 10¼ inches at state outdoor meet

High jump: Dontavious Hill, Baker
Won Class 7A state title after clearing 7 feet at Class 7A, Section 1 meet

Javelin: Lazarius Decatur, Brooks
Won state title with state-best heave of 199 feet, 2 inches

Pole vault: James Courson, Hoover
Cleared 16 feet, 9 inches to win state title

Shot put: Josiah Harry, Mobile Christian
Throw of 55 feet, 8½ inches at Class 3A, Section 1 meet was state’s longest in outdoor season

Discus: Cade Finley, Wilson
Delivered state’s longest throw of season, 185 feet, 3 inches, at state meet

Multi-events: Graham Collins, McGill-Tousley
Won state decathlon title
The complete list of games set to be released later in year

By Tommy Deas
Executive Sports Editor

Alabama softball will host Missouri, Mississippi State, Georgia and Kentucky at Rhoads Stadium in SEC play in the 2019 season while visiting Texas A&M, South Carolina, Florida and LSU.

The Crimson Tide will play a three-game series with each SEC opponent. All 13 softball-playing conference teams made the 64-team NCAA Tournament field in 2018.

All in all, Alabama will play at least 31 games against teams that made the 2018 NCAA Tournament, 24 of them in conference play. UA will also face Minnesota (twice), Arizona, Cal State-Fullerton, South Florida, Saint Francis and Illinois-Chicago in out-of-conference play.

Seven of Alabama's 2017 opponents - Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, LSU, South Carolina, Texas A&M and Arizona - made it to the super regional round of the NCAA Tournament, with Florida and Georgia advancing to the Women's College World Series.

Alabama will play in tournaments at Troy, Arizona and Hawaii next season. The field in the Troy tournament is expected to include Maryland and Murray State as well as the host Trojans. The Arizona tournament will include the host Wildcats, Cal State-Fullerton, South Florida, Illinois-Chicago and New Mexico. The field for the Hawaii tournament is not yet set.

Alabama will host Minnesota, Missouri State and Louisiana-Monroe in the Bama Bash tournament and Michigan State, Southern Miss and Saint Francis in the Crimson Classic.

Alabama will play non-conference home games against South Alabama, Georgia Tech, UAB and Georgia State. The Crimson Tide will also visit UAB in an early-season game.

The schedule also includes a game against Belmont in Cullman, a homecoming visit for infielder Claire Jenkins.

The complete schedule with dates will not be released until later in the year.
Tide softball team headed to Japan

By Tommy Deas
Executive Sports Editor

The Alabama softball team is going to Japan this summer.

The Crimson Tide will play two games against New Zealand and two against Great Britain as those teams prepare for the World Championship, which will bring 16 national teams to Japan. Alabama will depart July 25 and return Aug. 4.

"Four years ago we went to the Netherlands, which was one of the best experiences all of us have ever had," UA coach Patrick Murphy said. "The girls that went on that trip still talk about it."

UA will take a travel party of around 30, including at least some seniors from the 2018 team as well as incoming newcomers who will be on the roster next spring. Murphy plans to focus on returning and new players to get them experience. Players will begin practice in mid-July for the trip.

"That's a huge benefit," Murphy said.

Pitcher Courtney Gettins, a junior at UA last season, won't be with the Crimson Tide, as she will be playing for New Zealand. In addition to left-hander Madison Preston, who just completed her freshman season, UA will have newcomers Montana Fouts and Krystal Goodman available. Fouts was named Gatorade Player of the Year in Kentucky as a high school senior, carrying a 0.04 earned-run average with 383 strikeouts and 178 walks in 178 innings, with 11 no-hitters including seven perfect games. Goodman pitched to a 26-2 record in junior college with a 0.46 ERA at Chipola (Fla.) College.

Two other freshmen - power hitter Kayla Davis of Hueytown and speedy left-handed hitter Kloyee Anderson of North Carolina - will also make the trip.

Highly recruited infielder Skylar Wallace of Woodstock, Ga., has decided to play summer travel ball instead.

Alabama will be able to stay to see some games in the World Championship.
Bohannon determined to get Tide back on track

By Ben Jones  
Sports Writer

The road ahead for Alabama baseball isn't entirely unfamiliar for Brad Bohannon. This was his first season as head coach but not his first year as part of a program struggling to make up ground in the SEC. Alabama finished 27-29 overall and 8-22 in SEC play, last in the conference. Both of those marks were an improvement from the 2017 record (19-34-1 overall, 5-24-1 SEC), but still left the Crimson Tide far behind the competition. Alabama was eliminated from the SEC tournament entering the final weekend of the season.

"If you're truly competitive, losing is not fun," Bohannon said last Friday. "The University of Alabama, regardless

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of all the circumstances, we're not supposed to lose 29 baseball games in a regular season. So yeah, it was hard. It was frustrating.”

Bohannon is the third head coach in three seasons for the program. Mitch Gaspard resigned after the 2016 season and Greg Goff was fired after the 2017 season. All that turnover damaged Alabama’s recruiting and continuity.

Alabama began the season 9-0 and had some momentum early in SEC play with series victories over Kentucky and Missouri. But things became more difficult from there. Alabama lost 10 straight SEC games after those series wins to fall near the bottom of the conference and never recovered. UA missed the SEC Tournament again, the first time it has been left out in consecutive years since 1987-88.

“The one thing I was disappointed in this group was that we weren’t able to get out of a downward spiral,” Bohannon said. “We did play some really good baseball at times. I thought once it went sideways in the league play, we just couldn’t get out of the tailspin.”

There was some progress in several statistical areas: Alabama scored more runs, gave up fewer runs and improved defensively in some statistics. That all happened even though the strength of schedule improved from 40th in 2017 to 22nd in 2018.

But taking the program to the top half of the SEC and into the NCAA Tournament won’t be easy.

“I’m very comfortable saying that there are some real significant gaps in multiple areas where our program is right now (compared) to what I would deem SEC average, and those gaps aren’t all going to be closed in just one year,” Bohannon said. “I’m comfortable saying that.”

Bohannon spent 14 years as an assistant at Kentucky and Auburn before coming to Tuscaloosa. Both of those jobs were uphill battles in the beginning, too. Kentucky was 7-23 and 7-22 in his first two seasons there; Auburn was 8-22 in 2016. Kentucky made the NCAA Tournament in Bohannon’s third year as an assistant, and Auburn was 16-14 in 2017 after missing the SEC Tournament the year before.

The coaching staff headed out on recruiting trips shortly after the season ended to try and get Alabama back on track. Bohannon said he’d only spent two nights in Tuscaloosa in the two weeks since the season ended. That’s how his first season at Alabama ended and where his second season began.

“It was hard,” Bohannon said. “It was frustrating. Obviously a lot of bright moments for the team. There were some good individual games, some good weekends, some good individual performances and growth for some players. So there were plenty of positives, but it’s hard to lose 29 games in a year.”
UA releases fall soccer schedule

Staff report

The Alabama soccer team will play an ambitious schedule this fall, with 11 of its 19 matches coming against teams that competed in the last year's NCAA Tournament.

The Crimson Tide, which finished 12-8-1 last season with its most wins since 2002 and its first NCAA Tournament appearance since 2011, will play 11 home matches and eight on the road.

Alabama will open the season with a swing through Texas to play two teams that participated in the 2017 NCAA Tournament, at TCU on Aug. 17 and at defending Conference USA champion North Texas two days later.

The Crimson Tide will play its home opener Aug. 24 against Florida Gulf Coast, which earned an automatic bid to last year's NCAA Tournament as the Atlantic Sun champion, then host Kennesaw State two days later and Virginia Tech on Aug. 30.

Alabama's next two matches will be at home against a pair of teams that played in last year's NCAA Tournament: Rice on Sept. 2 and defending

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SOCCER

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Sun Belt champion South Alabama four days later. Alabama will host Troy on Sept. 9 and close out non-conference play at DePaul on Sept. 16.

Alabama will host Ole Miss (Sept. 13), Arkansas (Sept. 23), Kentucky (Oct. 4), Florida (Oct. 14) and defending SEC champion Texas A&M (Oct. 18) in SEC play. All of UA's home league opponents except Kentucky participated in last year's NCAA Tournament.

Alabama will play road league games at Vanderbilt (Sept. 20), LSU (Sept. 28), Mississippi State (Oct. 7), Georgia (Oct. 21) and Auburn (Oct. 25). Vanderbilt and Auburn were also postseason participants last season.

The SEC Tournament will take place Oct. 29-Nov. 4 in Orange Beach.

Alabama will play a preseason exhibition match Aug. 10 at Tennessee.
**Tide golf teams handle disappointment with dignity**

**By Cecil Hurt**
Sports Editor

When you are one day away from a national championship, it doesn't matter if the ending is dominating or dramatic.

Either way, it hurts.

In a remarkable two-week stretch, both University of Alabama golf teams, Mic Potter's women's squad and the men coached by Jay Seawell, advanced all the way to the NCAA Championship Finals, a remarkable achievement leavened by losses on the final day that left the Crimson Tide No. 2 in the nation in both tournaments.

"Anyone who tells you that losing a match that isn't that close hasn't been through it," Seawell said. "Our guys hurt. They knew how hard they worked to get there."

The Alabama men lost to host team Oklahoma State, 5-0, in a match played before a rowdy partisan crowd in Stillwater. A week earlier, on the same course, Alabama's women dropped a heartbreaking 3-2 loss to Arizona as the final match went to an extra hole.

As excruciating as that loss was, Potter says that there have been positives for the UA women.

"Everyone wants to win and we know that opportunities don't come often," Potter said. "But in match play, anything can happen and Arizona played with tremendous emotion from qualifying in a playoff in stroke play through the three matches."

"But the crux is, we've gotten so much recognition from the way our team handled that loss with class and dignity. I've been recruiting in Phoenix and I just spent three days at the U.S. Open (at Shoal Creek outside Birmingham) and the response was overwhelming. Plus the exposure you get from three days in a row on the Golf Channel, you can't duplicate that."

Potter had basically wrapped up the Crimson Tide's recruiting class last November and with the newcomers joining three veterans, the UA women should be strong again in 2019, a likely preseason No. 1 nationally when fall rankings are released.

"We're returning Lauren Stephenson and Kristen Gillman (who are both playing for Team USA in the Curtis Cup and who will both be Top 10 amateurs in the country next year), along with Angelica Moresco," Potter said. "We signed the junior college individual champion [Jiwon Jeon of NJCAA powerhouse Daytona State] and she will go into the lineup. We also signed Carolina Caminoli from the Italian National team and Mary Mack, Trammell from Mountain Brook High School. So even without Cheyenne Knight (who announced earlier this week that she would become professional) and (graduating senior) Lakareber Abe, we have a pretty good group."

The finals experience was different for Seawell's team as Oklahoma State took a quick lead in front of its home crowd and won, 5-0. Many neutral observers like PGA Tour pro Brandt Snedeker questioned the wisdom of allowing a team to play for the title on its home course.

"I told our guys that they will never play in (crowd) conditions like that again, not even if they play in the Ryder Cup," Seawell said. "But the situation wasn't too big for them. The crowd wasn't too big. The play by Oklahoma State was what was too big, and you just have to tip your cap."

The Alabama men lose two seniors of the five-man rotation, Jonathan Hardee and Lee Hodges, but will have a solid nucleus with sophomores-to-be Wilson Furr and Davis Shore and team leader and senior Davis Riley all returning. Seawell also said that "we left some guys at home (during the NCAA Tournament) who could help us," including sophomore Josh Sedeno, who played in three tournaments in 2018.

The Crimson Tide also signed two Top 10 prospects in November, adding Prescott Butler of New York and Frankie Capan, who won the Arizona high school Division III Championship last month by tying a record round of 59 at the Tucson Omni course.

Reach Cecil Hurt at cecil@tidesports.com or 205-722-0225.
Observations from 73rd U.S. Women’s Open

I was my ongoing joy to attend and write about the 73rd U.S. Women’s Open that concluded at Shoal Creek Sunday.

I followed Emma Talley, former University of Alabama superstar, for a number of holes in each of her rounds at her adopted home course.

Polite to a fault, Talley made a point of thanking volunteers on EVERY hole I watched her play for volunteering. I didn’t see anyone else doing this.

I happened to run into Mic Potter, her former head golf coach at UA and still the coach of this perennial powerhouse program, after Talley’s first round. I mentioned what I’d witnessed.

Smiling, he said: “We’d get letters, emails and calls about Emma doing just that at every college event she played in. She’s a very special person and she really gets it.”

I commented to Emma herself, too.

“It’s just a small thing to do, but I know it can have a positive impact. It’s my upbringing. You can thank my parents.”

Fair enough to deflect praise; I’d expect nothing different, but it isn’t a small thing for the volunteers to hear, especially as they are out there for long hours in the hot sun.

No doubt her genuine manner will have gone a long way with the members of Shoal Creek, where she is truly loved and appreciated. Part of the club’s “Tour Hopefuls” program, Talley describes Shoal Creek as “her heaven on earth.”

Having a very strong rookie year on the LPGA Tour, the

See THOMPSON, C4
future is bright indeed for the always smiling Talley.

Mic Potter

Potter and I got to chat about both his and the UA men's very strong performances in the recent NCAA National Championships.

Comiserating with him about how close his women's team came to the national title, with senior Lakareber Abe losing in extra holes in the final match to Arizona's Haley Moore, I said I wished the result had been different.

"We do too," was his reply. "It was a great week and we gave it our best shot, but it wasn't to be. Can't tell you how proud of I am of our team though. We came very close and that makes us even more hungry to get back there next year."

We also chatted about the men's team coming so close, also losing in the final.

"In all my years of coaching college golf (34 years and counting), I've never, never seen a performance like that (Oklahoma State's final match domination of the Crimson Tide). They were so far under par, you couldn't play against them. And the crowds got them fired up."

Over 3000 fans, nearly all of them Oklahoma State supporters, streamed through the gates and all over Karsten Creek, their home course. A sea of orange was all the Crimson Tide could see and that had to add an intimidation factor.

But it was also awesome to see college golf become a spectator sport and it certainly added to the television coverage exponentially.

Jerry Pate

I also ran into UA legend and Shoal Creek member Jerry Pate at the first round of the U.S. Women's Open. He had his daughter, Jenni Buckley, with him, along with three of his grandchildren. Buckley caddied for Pate during the Regions Tradition a few weeks ago at Greystone, where Pate, now 64, was the oldest player in the field.

He played very solidly and looked in great shape. He then had another fine performance in the Senior PGA Championship, but that's it for his golf events for a while, as he is very much of a "part-time" golfer and spends most of his time running his various businesses, along with his involvement in multiple civic and charitable endeavors.

Certainly at peace with his place in life, Pate talked warmly of his longtime association with Shoal Creek and his respect for the late Hall Thompson, who conceived of and built Shoal Creek, and his son, Mike Thompson, who carries on his father's vision to this day.

Indeed Pate was part of the opening day ceremonial round at Shoal Creek on Nov. 1, 1977, when he played with course designer Jack Nicklaus and Birmingham's Hubert Green, multiple major champion, World Golf Hall of Fame inductee and revered golfer.

Pate shot 68 that day to pip his fellow U.S. Open champions and Shoal Creek has gone from strength to strength since that special day.

Ian Thompson has been writing about golf in Alabama for 25 years and counting. His weekly "Mr. Golf" column concentrates on golfers, golf events and people associated with the sport of interest to the Tuscaloosa and Birmingham areas. Reach him with story ideas at thompsonesoff@gmail.com
Former Tide standout
Emma Talley ties
for 41st in U.S.
Women's Open

By Ian Thompson
Special to The Tuscaloosa News

SHOAL CREEK — University of Alabama sophomore Kristen Gillman shot rounds of 70-74-75-74-293 for a five-over-par total and a tie for 27th in the U.S. Women's Open at Shoal Creek that concluded on Sunday.

Former Crimson Tide standout Emma Talley had rounds of 74-71-74-77-296 to finish on eight-over-par and in a tie for 41st.

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And former UA golfer Jenny Suh missed the 36-hole cut. “I felt like I learned a lot this week, that I am able to compete out here even though there’s still a few things that I need to work on,” Gillman said. “My game is definitely turning in the right direction, so that definitely feels nice.”

“(The week) really surpassed any expectations I had.”

Gillman has a full summer of golf lined up including representing the U.S. in the Curtis Cup and Palmer Cup, along with the Women’s Amateur and an event on the Japanese LPGA Tour. She confirmed she would be be back for her junior year on the golf team at UA.

Talley, who is a member at Shoal Creek, admitted she did not play as well as she would have hoped this week.

“This has been a really rough week for me, but still a dream come true, getting to play the U.S. Open at your home course. I didn’t play well, but I’ll remember this forever.”

Did the pressure of playing her home course get to her?

“I don’t think so. I felt really at peace this week. Yeah, I felt pretty confident, but my game just wasn’t there.”

“I take pride in being a member here. I’m very honored to be a member here and Shoal Creek did a wonderful job. We got done on a Sunday. If you would have told me that on Wednesday (after very, very heavy rainfall from remnants of Tropical Storm Alberto), I would not have believed you. It was very much of a team effort this week. A shout-out to

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Open

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the greens crew and the staff. Even the members were out filling divots.”

Ariya Jutanugarn led by as many as seven shots when she made the turn, but a triple bogey on No. 10 derailed her victory march. She would eventually win in a playoff with from Hyo-Joo Kim, who shot a closing round of 67, the lowest round of the day by two, with Jutanugarn shooting 73.

The playoff was cumulative over the first two holes (Nos. 14 and 18) with Jutanugarn making two pars, while Kim went birdie-bogey. They then went into sudden death with both making pars on No. 14. The deadlock was finally broken on No. 18 with Jutanugarn getting up-and-down from the sand for a par, while Kim failed to do so and made bogey so Jutanugarn was crowned the national champion.
Thomas named pro athlete of year

Former UA golfer picks up top honor from state

The Associated Press

MONTGOMERY — Justin Thomas was the nation’s top college golfer at the University of Alabama, and now he’s No. 1 in the professional rankings.

Thomas won five PGA Tour titles in 2017, including the PGA Championship, to earn player of the year honors. He has carried on with two more wins already this year and holds the No. 1 ranking going into next week’s U.S. Open.

Now, he has picked up another honor: The Alabama Sports Writers Association’s pro athlete of the year. The award recognizes pro athletes who are from Alabama or competed collegiately in the state.

Thomas is the first golfer named Alabama’s pro athlete of the year since Jason Dufner in 2013. He has said his goal as a follow-up to such a big year was to be more consistent, or to “get my bad golf better.”

“No missed cuts. Have a chance to win more tournaments,” Thomas said earlier this year. “Living around the top 10 is something Tiger (Woods) did for a long time. He always had chances to win tournaments, and if he didn’t, he was always around, always on that first page of the leaderboard.”

Thomas ascended to the No. 1 ranking with a tie for 11th at THE PLAYERS Championship, ending Dustin Johnson’s 64-week reign.

He recently finished tied for eighth at the Memorial in his first week holding the top spot.

The eight-time PGA Tour winner turned pro in 2013 after helping Alabama win a national title in his sophomore season.

Thomas won the Haskins Award and Nicklaus Award as the top college player.

His big breakthrough season professionally came last year when he joined Jack Nicklaus, Woods and Jordan Spieth as the only players since 1960 to capture five wins in a season, including a major, before turning 25.

He also became the seventh player on the PGA Tour to shoot a 59 and led the United States to an eight-point victory over the International Team at the Presidents Cup.

Now, he’s determined to stay at the top. After moving to No. 1, Thomas told The Associated Press: “I’m very proud to have gotten there, but it means more to me how long I can hold it. Have to continue to work hard with how well so many guys are playing.”

ATHLETE

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for eighth at the Memorial in his first week holding the top spot.

The eight-time PGA Tour winner turned pro in 2013 after helping Alabama win a national title in his
SPORTS DIGEST

FOOTBALL
Alabama announces 2023 home game

Alabama will host Central Michigan for a nonconference football game in 2023, the school announced on Wednesday.

The Crimson Tide and Chippewas will face off in Bryant-Denny Stadium in the season opener on Sept. 2. Alabama and Central Michigan have never played each other in football.

Alabama had previously announced a home game against Texas on Sept. 9 of that season, followed by another home game against Western Kentucky on Sept. 16.

GOLF
Potter Named WGCA National Coach of the Year

Alabama women's golf coach Mic Potter was named the 2018 Golf Pride Grips Women's Golf Coaches Association Coach of the Year, the organization announced Wednesday.

The honor is the second for Potter, who was previously recognized as the WGCA Coach of the Year following the Crimson Tide's national championship season in 2012.

Individually, junior Lauren Stephenson earned the Golfstat Cup as the nation's low scorer after finishing the season with a school record scoring average of 69.76. Stephenson, junior Cheyenne Knight and sophomore Kristen Gillman earned WGCA All-America honors this year, giving the Tide three First Team All-Americans in the same season for just the second time in school history.
A&M, South Carolina could be roadblocks to Alabama, Georgia reaching SEC title game

By: Charles Hollis

Unless you have some extraordinary power that can see beyond the tea leaves, there is no need to go to Amazon or the local grocery to pick up any.

Unless there is some seismic shift in the conference rankings by season's end, two familiar powers could be at it again. If you need that spelled out, the 2018 SEC Championship Game will be a replay of January's National Championship Game.

That's the cut-to-the-chase version of AL.com's 72nd annual SEC Spring Football Report. That's national champion Alabama, which lost its last regular season game to archrival Auburn, facing national runner-up Georgia, which lost in the regular season to Auburn before flipping the script on the Tigers in the league title game.

For the 14 football information directors who annually vote in the division and overall spring polls, Jimbo Fisher's first Texas A&M team is their shiny new West Division contender that's supposed to push Alabama and Auburn instead of LSU for a change. The Crimson Tide is picked to win the West with 36 points, having received six of seven first-place votes. Auburn, with the only other first-place vote, is picked second with 31 points. The third-place Aggies received 25 points based on two second-place votes, three thirds and one fourth. LSU and Mississippi State tied for fourth in the West with 19 points each. Ole Miss is picked fifth with 11 points and Arkansas is last with six points.

In the East, Georgia is the anointed one with 36 points, based on its six first-place votes. South Carolina is second with 30 points. The Gamecocks, who finished 9-4 and second in the East with a 5-3 record last season, had the only other first-place ballot, along with four seconds and one third.

The two East rivals lock up in an early division showdown Sept. 8 in Columbia.

Missouri and Kentucky tied for third in the East with 20 points, followed by Florida with 19, Vanderbilt with 11 and Tennessee with eight.

Like Arkansas, Jeremy Pruitt's first-year Vols didn't get a lot of love from the football information voters, who voted them last in the East. Last place in the division has usually been a Vandy thing.

In the overall poll, Alabama topped the league with eleven first place votes and two seconds for 167 points. Georgia followed with 157 points with its three first-place votes, nine seconds and one fourth. Auburn totaled 144 points for third with two second-place votes, 10 third-places and one fourth.

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When all 14 football information directors voted in the overall poll -- and not asked to break down just their division -- LSU was picked fourth with 115 points. Then comes fifth-place Texas A&M with 111 points, sixth-place South Carolina with 108, seventh-place Mississippi State with 100 points, eighth-place Florida with 95 and Missouri and Kentucky in a tie for ninth with 61 points apiece.

Ole Miss (48), Tennessee (45), Arkansas (40) and Vanderbilt (22) round out the overall poll.

A school could not vote for itself.

If it does end up Alabama-Georgia II and the winner having the chance to go to the College Football Playoff, that's when Bulldogs coach Kirby Smart says he'll unpack his thoughts into what could be.

"It doesn't do us any good to look past our first game with Austin Peay," said Smart.

And just to be clear, getting over Alabama 26, Georgia 23 in overtime last January is not something he's spent time going over.

Did it hurt losing on a walk-off 41-yard touchdown pass from a true freshman quarterback, Tua Tagovailoa, to a true freshman receiver, Devonta Smith, on second-and-26 on the second play of overtime?

That would be a "yes." But then comes his big picture perspective.

"The way the world is now, we had to recruit within two days of that. So I'm in homes selling the season we had and the progress we made, and you can't let that play beat you twice," Smart said at the SEC spring meetings in Destin. "In this profession, you learn quickly there's going to be plays we're going to make and win a game, and they made a great play and they won the game.

"I think it was more important for us to move on and worry about recruiting than to dwell on that."

There is also the matter of rebuilding a defense that saw all four linebackers depart that started in the Rose Bowl and National Championship Game, including SEC defensive player of the year Roquan Smith. The losses don't stop there. Two defensive backs who were four-year starters, Dominick Sanders and Aaron Davis, have to be replaced. Starting nose tackle John Atkins and lineman Trenton Thompson are gone, two pillars of a defense that ranked sixth in the nation last year in fewest yards and points allowed.

Georgia hasn't had such a massive exodus since Mark Richt's 2012 defense that saw nine players make NFL rosters.

The offense should be just fine with returning players in quarterback Jake Fromm, receiver Riley Ridley, running back D'Andre Swift and most of the line back.
"No question there is talent to work with," said Smart.

Alabama's defense was also depleted, yet there are whispers it will be reloading as usual. If true, then don't read a lot into AL.com's SEC preseason team, where only defensive lineman Raekwon Davis made first team and linebacker Anfernee Jennings is on the second team.

The offense, however, figures to be one of the league's most productive whether it's junior Jalen Hurts, the 26-2 starter the past two seasons, or Tagovailoa, the National Championship Game hero, as the quarterback.

Despite all the national attention heaped on the left-handed Tagovailoa, neither Tagovailoa nor Hurts received All-SEC mention. That wasn't the story for running back Damien Harris, center Ross Pierschbacher and tackle Jonah Williams, all first-team selections.

Missouri's Drew Lock, who set the SEC record for most touchdown passes in a single season, is the first-team quarterback and Fromm, coming off a big year as a true freshman, is on the second team. He narrowly beat out Auburn junior Jarrett Stidham.
Part of the ‘process’

Larger-than-life strength coach Scott Cochran isn’t buying into his celebrity

Greg Stephenson cstephenson@al.com

After Nick Saban and maybe Tua Tagovailoa, you could make the case that the most popular figure around Alabama football these days is Scott Cochran.

The Crimson Tide's head strength & conditioning coach is ubiquitous at practices and on game day, yelling out motivational mantras to players and thrusting four fingers in the air during the entire fourth quarter. He's also used as a motivational tool for Alabama fans at Bryant-Denny Stadium, making regular appearances on the stadium video boards.

In a rare interview session with reporters prior to the 24th Annual L'Arche Football Preview dinner in Mobile on Thursday, Cochran said he doesn't seem himself as some sort of celebrity, but simply another piece in Saban's famed "process."

"I just stay in my lane as much as possible," Cochran said. "But I think it's cool, no doubt, if we can use it in recruiting. If it helps us in any way, I'm in, I'm all in. I will sell out for the team all the time, kind of like we want the players to do. I'm trying to do the same thing."

In truth, much of Cochran's work is already done by the time the season begins. He spends the winter, spring and summer putting Crimson Tide players through the paces of the grueling "fourth quarter" off-season conditioning program.

Alabama players still work out three times a week during the season, and are constantly meeting with Cochran and his staff to make sure they're going about things the right way physically and mentally. And Cochran — whose official title with the Crimson Tide is Assistant Athletic Director for Strength and Conditioning — tries to lead by example.

"In my job somebody's got to bring the energy," Cochran said. "You want the players to be a certain type of way. Well, you have to be that way first, so if I can set the tempo, I'm going to do it."

Cochran had a front-row seat last January for one of college football's greatest comebacks, Alabama's 26-23 overtime victory against Georgia in the College Football Playoff National Championship Game. That game included the now-famous half-time switch from Jalen Hurts to Tagovailoa at quarterback, sparking the Crimson Tide back from a 13-0 deficit.

Cochran said the Alabama team didn’t panic despite the two-score hole it found itself in, knowing its plan would work even-
Headset limit rankles coaches

Michael Casagrande mcasagrande@al.com

When it comes to in-game coaching chatter, Nick Saban doesn’t tolerate nonsense.

He gets “cussin’ mad” when there’s too much unnecessary chatter on the headsets, Alabama’s football coach said a few years ago on his weekly radio show.

Well, that traffic is now being regulated by the governing NCAA.

Widely seen as a workaround to limiting staff sizes, a new rule is cutting back on the number of headsets college football teams can use on game days. Now, just 20 are permitted between the sideline and coaching box.

Saban isn’t sending any thank you notes to the NCAA for cutting back on the number of communication devices. A hot topic for discussion last week at the SEC spring meetings in Destin, Florida, several coaches weighed in on how the new rule will impact the back-end of the Saturday operations.

Saban said he’s “still trying to figure that out” with a few months before kicking off the 2018 season with Louisville in Orlando, Florida.

He called the new rule “short sighted.”

“It’s not cost saving because it doesn’t cost much,” Saban said. “I don’t know who is driving all this stuff, but it’s kinda like mouse manure when you’re up to your ears in elephant doodo.”

Alabama has one of the larger staffs in college football with an army of graduate assistants and analysts (like Butch Jones) and interns. In the past, where NCAA allowed unlimited headsets, SEC rules limited it to four analysts who had listen-only headsets.

Now 15 headsets are permitted for the coaches (10 for assistants, four for graduate assistants, one for head coach). Four can be used by players and the final one for a staffer (like an analyst) charting plays.

“Now, the coaches are working through who are we going to send upstairs,” said SEC director of officials Steve Shaw, “how many can we afford to have upstairs and still be able to manage what’s going on on the field?”

The analysts aren’t even allowed in the coaching booth as part of the rule — only full-time assistant coaches and graduate assistants. Alabama listed 10 analysts on the staff page of its 2017 media guide.

“It’s an opportunity to try to control how many people we have on staff, but look, everybody knows my theory on all of this,” Saban said last week.

Auburn coach Gus Malzahn was perhaps the most outspoken opponent of this new regulation in Destin. Not necessarily known for digging in and taking a stand on such matters, Malzahn didn’t hold back.

“The 20-headset rule is a joke,” he said. “There’s no doubt about it. I think that’s got the ability to hurt our game. That’s a really big deal and that came about because of something else is not good.”

The rule will likely slow down the play-signaling process, thus tempering the speed of fast-paced offenses like those used by Auburn.

Malzahn went on to say there are too many non-football coaches making football decisions that have an effect on the game.

“The Division I Football Oversight Committee spearheaded the rules change,” according to the NCAA’s announcement on the rule, “which is intended to clarify and limit the maximum number of headsets while still allowing adequate coaching and student-athlete teaching opportunities.

However, officials won’t be enforcing the new rule. There will be no counting of headsets and assessing penalties if a school uses more than 20 during a game. Any violations would be a compliance issue, and it’s not clear who would be doing the active counting if that were to become a question.

Several SEC coaches were asked to estimate how many headsets they used before the rule passed.

“You know,” LSU’s Ed Orgeron said. “I don’t know.”
SEC athletes who have graduated and are looking to transfer are now free to do so within the conference and not have to sit out a year.

The conference’s Executive Committee passed a proposal that will allow grad transfers within the league, providing an incremental step forward for former Alabama offensive lineman Brandon Kennedy and those like him to transfer to another SEC school without needing to sit out for a year-in-residence.

SEC commissioner Greg Sankey said the proposal, which came from Georgia last year and was initially tabled, passed with a "super majority," or more than eight schools in favor.

Alabama coach Nick Saban gave an impassioned defense of enforcing the previous rules, which blocked Kennedy from going to his preferred schools of Auburn and Tennessee as well as the rest of the SEC. Kennedy’s latest appeal to Alabama was denied last week.

NCAA rules still permit Alabama to block Kennedy from going to certain schools, but those rules are also under review as the permission to transfer process is expected to change to a notification of transfer model when the NCAA Division I Council meets later this month, though that rule as currently written would not go into effect until October.

"Then we should change the rule," Saban said. "I don’t think it should be on me. I think we should change the rule. If we agree at the SEC at these meetings that we’re going to have free agency in our league and everyone can go wherever they want to go when they graduate, that’s what’s best for the game, then that’s what we should do.

"Then Brandon Kennedy can go where ever he wants to go. But if we don’t do that, why is it on me? Because we have a conference rule that says he can’t do it. And he can do it but he’s supposed to sit out for a year. So, why is it on me? It’s not even my decision. It’s a conference rule. I always give people releases. And he has a release to go where ever he wants to go but the conference rule says he can’t go in conference. So, why is that on me? The Maurice Smith thing wasn’t on me either."

In 2016, Alabama blocked linebacker Maurice Smith from going to Georgia, but Sankey granted a waiver to allow him to play immediately.

Running back David Williams left South Carolina for Arkansas as a grad transfer last year and grad transfer defensive back Nick Harvey left Texas A&M for South Carolina earlier this month.

Auburn coach Gus Malzahn said he was not aware he was being blocked from talking to any graduate transfers, but felt the proposal had a chance to pass this week and that “a lot” of the league’s coaches supported it.

“Graduate transfers are an issue that’s getting more and more popular; you see it every year,” Malzahn said. “I think the majority of our coaches are open to that, kind of see it in the future being something that you’ll see happen I think.”

Auburn athletic director Allen Greene was not "on one side of the aisle or the other" on the issue of intra-conference graduate transfers.

"It would be really easy to sit and say because of one situation, whether it’s pro-Auburn or not pro-Auburn," Greene said. "The best way to make decisions, in my opinion, is to look at it holistically. My responsibility is to take a step back and try to figure out and help be engaged in discussions that are for the best interest of the big picture."

The SEC also passed a proposal allowing intra-conference transfers for any player if their original institution is subject to a post-season ban, which applies to former Ole Miss wide receiver Van Jefferson, who transferred to Florida.

MISCONDUCT RULE APPLIES TO INCOMING FRESHMEN

High school recruits with past incidents of serious misconduct are now barred from the SEC.

The conference’s Executive Committee overwhelmingly supported and passed a proposal to expand its serious misconduct policy.

The league’s landmark policy, as expanded, now prohibits prospective athletes as well as transfers who've been convicted, pleaded guilty or no contest to a felony involving sexual assault, domestic violence or other forms of sexual violence or faced discipline at previous colleges for such interpersonal violence to compete in athletics at a conference school and includes the expectation of “due diligence” into reviewing a prospective athlete’s background.

“I’m anxious to have less of these instances occurring, period,” Sankey said on Friday. “I think a statement from this conference that even before you’re on our campuses there are expectations about how you conduct our lives. That’s a central theme in what we’ve done over the last three years. It’s a message for families, for perspective student-athletes, for those engaged in the lives of those young people to help mentor and guide them to avoid these pitfalls.”

ARTIFICIAL NOISE RULE AMENDED

How much Mississippi State fans can ring their cowbells while still abiding by SEC rules is changing again.

The SEC’s Executive Committee passed a proposal forbidding forms of artificial noise at football games from the time the offensive center puts a hand on the football until it is snapped.

The reason for the change is existing legislation stated the noise needed to stop when the center “take his place over” the football and that was difficult to interpret, apply and enforce due to variations in offensive styles and game plans. The change is expected to provide more consistency in application and enforcement of the rule.

New Mississippi State coach Joe Moorhead has yet to experience a home game at Davis Wade Stadium, but recognized the rule would impact Bulldogs fans.

"I’m anxious to hear it myself for the first time,” Moorhead said. "I know we’re regulating, but there’s some discussions made relative to artificial noise and the timing of when you need to cut it off. Ultimately, we’ll have to abide by it.”
Sabian may have lost the battle, but he should win the war

John Talty  jtalty@al.com

Nick Saban may have lost the battle in Destin, but he'll likely win the war.

On Friday, the Southeastern Conference's executive committee passed a bylaw change that allows graduate transfers to play immediately when transferring within the league.

Previously, the SEC bylaws demanded a year-in-residency before an intra-conference transfer was eligible to play. The SEC has, on occasion, granted exemptions, like it did when Maurice Smith left Alabama for Georgia in 2016.

The rule change could benefit reserve Alabama lineman Brandon Kennedy, who is interested in transferring to Auburn or Tennessee but to this point has been unable to do so without losing a year of eligibility. Alabama can still block Kennedy from transferring to specific programs, though that would change if the NCAA passes new notification of transfer legislation this month that prevents schools from blocking players transferring to particular institutions. It seems likely at this point that Alabama will just relent and let Kennedy go wherever he wants.

The SEC's decision comes days after Saban reiterated his disapproval of the proposed rule change to allow transfers to move freely within the league. Saban complained that he was being singled out for his opposition — "Why is it on me?" — and said he was simply following the rules. That wasn't a new stance for Saban — he offered a similar explanation during the Maurice Smith saga and has privately grumbled about the resolution ever since — but he did offer a smart takeaway if the vote didn't go his way.

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"To be honest with you, if we allow that to happen in our league, I think it will benefit some schools more than others," Saban said. "And I think we're one of the schools it would benefit."

It's hard to imagine that observation not proving accurate. Despite his steadfast opposition to the rule change, Saban's Alabama program could benefit as much or more than any other SEC school. Alabama is already one of the most attractive landing spots for high school recruits and there's no reason to assume that won't be the case for graduate transfers, too.

Consider this: Rival SEC players have an up-close look at just how good Alabama is year-after-year. They know that Alabama competes for national championships and pumps players into the NFL annually. With Friday's vote, it made it easier for Alabama to poach a plug-and-play cornerback from Kentucky or a right guard from Vanderbilt.

Alabama has had to search far and wide in the past to obtain graduate transfers — Richard Mullaney (Oregon State) and Gehrig Dieter (Bowling Green) are two recent examples — but can now double-up, benefit by nabbing an impact player away from a rival. If Alabama misses on a top target or two on National Signing Day, all it has to do is look around the SEC and target a graduating player at a position of need. Opposing SEC coaches will have to spend even more time on retaining their current players to fight off transfer intrigue.

Alabama won't be the only SEC school to benefit — the monster that Kirby Smart is building in Athens should also be an attractive landing spot — but the Crimson Tide could be the biggest benefactor despite the head coach's public opposition.

That's the way it's typically played out during the Saban era in Tuscaloosa. The Alabama head coach will oppose a rule — usually because it's geared at eliminating some perceived advantage the school has — and yet even if it passes, Alabama experiences no significant downturn.

There was the 2008 rule that banned head coaches from evaluating prospects in the spring. There was the oversigning package in 2011. Most recently, there was legislation that banned former players from practicing after Alabama used John Parker Wilson, Blake Sims and others to help in recent years.
SEC makes it official

By: Cecil Hurt

As expected, the Southeastern Conference institutions approved a rules change on Friday that would allow graduate transfers — players in all sports who have earned a degree but have remaining athletic eligibility — to move from one SEC school to another without having to sit out for a year in residence.

Greg Sankey, the SEC Commissioner, said at the conclusions of the league’s annual meetings in Destin, Florida, that the proposal offered by the University of Georgia had passed by a “super-majority” by accumulating more than eight votes, although he did not identify which schools had voted for the legislation.

The SEC rationale, per league release, was that the new rule is “intended to codify an exception for intra-conference graduate transfers consistent with recently approved waivers.”

The rule could eventually impact Alabama football graduate Brandon Kennedy. The offensive lineman, who received his degree from Alabama last month, has requested a release from Alabama, which granted the request but listed several schools — the other SEC members and the nonconference schools on the 2018 UA football schedule — to which it would not release Kennedy for immediate eligibility. Kennedy, who reportedly would like to transfer to Auburn or Tennessee, appealed that decision to UA but the appeal was denied.

Alabama had no immediate comment on the vote or on Kennedy’s status, per a school spokesperson.

UA may withhold any decision or comment on Kennedy’s status until mid-June. The NCAA’s transfer working group is scheduled to meet in Indianapolis on June 11, where it is expected to present and approve a proposal to “end the practice of schools and coaches blocking an athlete from transferring or dictating where an athlete can go.” Alabama might want to see whether the proposal passes, and the effective date for its implementation, which could be as late as October.

Earlier in the week, Alabama head coach Nick Saban had indicated he wanted “clarity” from the league office, but did not indicate whether he would release Kennedy regardless of any legislative move by the SEC. Saban was against the proposal on the grounds that it would bring “free agency” to the SEC (like most coaches, Saban was more adamantly against the free transfer of all players, graduates or not, which was not part of this year’s proposal) even though he said that “we are probably one of the teams that would benefit.”
In other action taken, the league expanded an existing bylaw involving serious misconduct — defined by the league as “sexual assault, domestic violence, other forms of sexual violence, dating violence or stalking, or conduct of a nature that creates serious concern about the safety of others” — to include prospective student-athletes still in high school or junior college.
Junior back on hall of fame ballot

This makes second listing for former Alabama player

By Cecil Hurt
Sports Editor

For a second consecutive year, former University of Alabama linebacker E.J. Junior was named to the 2019 College Football Hall of Fame Ballot, which was released on Monday.

Junior was also on last year's ballot but was not chosen as part of the 2018 class.

Junior, a native of Nashville, was a member of the 1978 and 1979 National Championship teams under head coach Paul "Bear" Bryant. In his senior season for the Crimson Tide, Junior earned the SEC Defensive Player of the Year, was a Lombardi finalist and was a consensus All-American.

As a sophomore on the 1978 team, Junior was one of the 11 Alabama defenders on the field for the Crimson Tide "goal line stand" that preserved a Sugar Bowl victory over Penn State.

He finished his career at the University of Alabama with 39 career tackles for loss. Since he ended his career, Alabama has broken the record seven times, with the current record being held by Derrick Thomas, with 68 tackles for loss. He is also tied with Leroy Cook with most fumbles forced in a career, with 10.

Junior played in the NFL for 13 seasons. In that time, he played for four different teams and accumulated 36.5 sacks and 12 interceptions. He started 120 of his career 170 games.

Players inducted must have been a First Team All-American, played their last year 10 years before, played in the last 50 years and can't be playing professional football.
3 more UA players drafted

By: Ben Jones

Three Alabama baseball players, including two underclassmen were chosen on the final day of the 2018 MLB Draft on Wednesday.

Junior third baseman Cobie Vance was chosen in the 18th round by the Oakland Athletics with the 533rd overall pick. Junior shortstop Jett Manning was picked in the 20th round with the 586th overall pick by the San Francisco Giants. If both players sign professional contracts, Alabama will be replacing its entire starting infield next season.

Senior second baseman Chandler Avant was also chosen in the 30th round with the 890th pick by the New York Mets.

Vance is a three-year starter who played the first two seasons of his career at second base before moving to third this season. He posted the best offensive numbers of his career this spring, hitting .293 with a .401 on base percentage. He was the only player to start all 56 games this season for Alabama and finished his career with 168 starts.

Vance led the team in runs (43) and hits (66). He was tied for the team lead with seven stolen bases. He was second on the team with six home runs and drove in 28 runs despite spending most of the season batting leadoff. He tweeted on Wednesday to express his excitement about joining Oakland.

Manning just finished his first season at Alabama after transferring from a junior college. He hit .251 with a .330 on base percentage and drove in 22 runs. He struggled at times in the field, finishing the season with a .934 fielding percentage and 16 errors, including 11 errors in SEC games.

Avant was undrafted after his junior season and returned to lead the team with a .295 batting average and 38 RBIs. He moved from shortstop to second base and saw his defense improve, going from 19 errors in 2017 to nine errors this spring.

He posted a .401 on base percentage and started 54 games this season. Avant ranks seventh in school history in assists and is eighth in doubles.

Three more Alabama signees were also chosen. Junior college signee Bryan Lavastida was chosen in the 15th round with the 460th overall pick by the Cleveland Indians.

High school signee Dylan Smith, a right handed pitcher, was chosen in the 18th round with the 531st overall pick by the San Diego Padres. Smith is from Stafford High School in the Houston, Texas area.
High school signee Tyler Ras, the top-rated recruit in Alabama’s class, was chosen in the 33rd round with the 998th pick by the Chicago Cubs. Ras was ranked as the No. 197 overall prospect in MLB.com’s top 200 of this draft class.

Jones County Community College signee Will Freeman was picked up in the 36th round with the 1,071st overall pick by the Padres.

Junior college signee Brett Auerbach slipped into the last round. The catcher/infielder was chosen by the Colorado Rockies with the 1206th pick in the 40th round, 10 picks from the end of the draft.

Senior pitcher Jake Walters and junior outfielder Chandler Taylor were chosen on Tuesday along with signee PJ Hilson. Taylor told the Houston Chronicle he planned to sign with the Astros.
UVa Library’s Plan to Cut Stacks by Half Sparks Faculty Concerns

By: Megan Zahneis

The Alderman Library was the reason Geeta Patel came to the University of Virginia.

Alderman is the university’s main library, and its open stacks were what attracted Patel, an associate professor whose work, in languages and in women and gender studies, relies heavily on archives, to Charlottesville.

But plans to renovate Alderman — and cut shelf space in the process — have Patel and others worried that the library’s strength will be diminished.

The renovation plans, which will come before a committee of the university’s Board of Visitors for approval on Thursday, call for a 40 percent to 70 percent reduction in the library’s shelf capacity, depending on what type of shelving is used. Built in 1937, the library is still equipped with its original plumbing and wiring and is in dire need of renovations to comply with fire-code and other safety regulations, according to the university. The renovations, led by a Chicago-based architectural firm, are slated to begin in 2020 and will cost an estimated $152.5 million.

Two faculty members in the university’s English department — John Parker, an associate professor, and a visiting scholar, John Bugbee — have drafted an open letter asking the Board of Visitors to withhold approval of the current plans.

The proposed cuts, "would directly undermine our core mission as a nationally recognized research university," reads the letter. Over 500 people, including about 130 who identified themselves as faculty members, signed the letter before it was delivered on Monday afternoon.

The concerns of the Virginia faculty mark the latest chapter in a national trend. University libraries are increasingly consolidating their print collections, relegating books to basements or off-site storage facilities — or to preservation in electronic format — to make space for classrooms, collaborative spaces for students, and even coffee shops. The University of California at Berkeley completed its undergraduate-library makeover in 2016, lifting 135,000 books in favor of a sleek space featuring meeting rooms, collaborative spaces equipped with cutting-edge technology, and nap pods. DePaul University revamped its flagship library with a "genius squad" counter, offering students tech support, and a "maker hub," equipped with 3-D printers and scanners. And this spring at the University of Texas at Austin, thousands of items were culled from a fine-arts library before the faculty rallied to preserve the space.

Parker called the Austin incident "a very expensive mistake," one he wants his own campus to prevent. "What we’re doing is trying to convince the University of Virginia to get it right the first time, so that we don’t have to go through a process like that," Parker told The Chronicle.

He worries about Alderman’s books — over two million of them, according to circulation figures provided by the university. Once the library’s existing infrastructure, called the Old and New Stacks, is razed, where will its contents go?
Off-site, it appears. The new Alderman will have five floors, as opposed to the current 10-floor structure (which features five "mezzanine" floors with low ceilings), resulting in a loss of about 40,000 square feet. Parker said that at least one of the five floors in the new Alderman will not house books.

So the loss of some shelf space is "inevitable," said John M. Unsworth, university librarian and dean of libraries.

"We're working within essentially the same envelope, with 40,000 fewer square feet of floor space, and trying to figure out, What's the best we can do to present a robust print collection?" Unsworth said.

Alderman's extra volumes will most likely be stored at the Clemons Library next door, and at the university's Ivy Stacks storage facility. That's an unsatisfying solution for the open-letter authors Parker and Bugbee, who say being able to browse the stacks is a crucial part of their scholarship.

"You go in looking for one thing that you think you need, and then you find out fairly often that that book actually wasn't all that useful. But by virtue of searching for it, next to it or on the next shelf, you found three other books that you had no idea existed. And one of the three really turns your project upside down," Bugbee said. "It sounds like a sort of romantic story, but I've had it happen to me enough that I really believe it."

He's among many scholars who tout the "serendipity" they find in the stacks. As Parker put it, "scholars in the humanities depend on the library as effectively their laboratories. That's where they go to do their work."

Parker fears that warehousing books off site will impede his ability to work that way. With fewer books at his fingertips in the new Alderman, Parker said, that sense of serendipity will be lost. Instead, he'll have to defer to requesting books through an online catalog from the Ivy Stacks facility, a process he says could add days of lag time to his work — and the work of his students, since he frequently assigns projects that require library research.

"It's going to increase the roadblocks between" the students and the books themselves, Parker said, "because they will find themselves more frequently unable to reach out and simply grab the books that they see cited at the bottom of a page in another book."

Parker and Bugbee say that the renovation planning has not allowed the faculty and the university community adequate opportunity to make their voices heard.

Unsworth dismissed that notion, sending The Chronicle a four-page document listing outreach efforts, including eight open sessions held in February and a number of one-on-one, small-group, and town-hall meetings.

"I confess I'm slightly mystified by the continued mistrust here," Unsworth said. "They've been heard loud and clear by the project team and the architects, but they won't take yes for an answer. That's a little puzzling."

See next page
Elizabeth Fowler, an associate professor of English at the university who serves on the renovations’ steering committee and wrote a 2016 proposal on the project, said that the petitioners’ goal was compatible with the construction plans.

"At other places they are talking about whether any books at all belong on the so-called ‘information highway,’” Fowler wrote in an email to The Chronicle. "Here we’re talking about how many millions belong at the center of our Grounds and whether it’s OK to send some of them a few hundred yards west into preservation-quality storage, from which they can be retrieved when we want them. That’s a high standard, and that’s us."

Bugbee said he’s committed to upholding that standard.

"I am not, nor I don’t think the other 500 people who signed are, interested in being obstructionist for its own sake," Bugbee said. The open letter is "meant to be a positive intervention," he said. "We’d really like to see some change happen, at which point we could all go back to work."