

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



Marcus Reid, J.D., '74/'77, and Jean Ayers Reid, '86/'89

Gem of the Hills: What have you done professionally since graduating from JSU?

Mrs. Reid: Until July 2004, I was director of alumni affairs at Talladega College. The highlight of my tenure was when the first and only \$1,000,000 contribution was made. I am now writing proposals for non-profit organizations on a part-time basis. In the past, I have worked with victims at the Calhoun County district attorney's office and with local government officials as a planner with the East Alabama Planning Commission.

Mr. Reid: I worked several years in mental health and as a probation officer, then entered Cumberland School of Law at Samford University in Birmingham. I received my Juris Doctor degree in 1982. I have a general practice, but most of my time is spent in criminal courts.

Gem of the Hills: How did your JSU studies help you professionally?

Mrs. Reid: My degrees provided me the opportunity to communicate effectively.

Mr. Reid: Teachers such as Dr. Jerry Wilson, Dr. Rodney Friery, Dr. Carolyn Dunaway, Dr. Robert Felgar, Ms. Gweneth Mulder, and Dr. Pat Wingo and Dr. Calvin Wingo inspired analytical and critical thought and shaped my skills and processes for years to come.

Gem of the Hills: What would you advise today's students?

Mrs. Reid: To volunteer or seek internships for agencies that are closely related to their field of study. Give one hundred percent. Budget time wisely between career and family.

Mr. Reid: I would tell them to look at career choices that they find personally satisfying and enjoyable. Spiritual grounding and personal satisfaction are more permanent and sustaining than material acquisitions.

GemHills

The Alumni Magazine of Jacksonville State University

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Dr. William A. Meehan, President

Dear Alumni,

The war on terrorism continues to touch the lives of Jacksonville State University students and alumni serving among U.S. and coalition troops in Iraq. **First Lt. Christopher Hopes, '02**, gives a dramatic first-hand account from the battlefield in our story beginning on page 12.

Michelle Yancey, '01, stays awake throughout the night to help others sleep well. She's a sleep technician at Regional Medical Center in Anniston, and her background in wellness education makes her a perfect fit for this career. She shares her

observations about sleep apnea beginning on page 14.

New digital equipment has sent attendance soaring at the university's planetarium. Dr. Laura Weinkauff invites everyone to come out and enjoy spectacular shows delivered through JSU's high-end electronic imaging equipment. See what's in store on page 4.

Professor Steve Whitton invites alumni to join his English class for its annual trip to New York for Broadway plays and more. Details are on page 4.

Thank you, alumni and friends, for continuing to support JSU. Our annual fund phonathon, which is held each fall semester, raised more than \$125,000 in gifts and pledges for the third year in a row. The university continues to make excellent progress in raising funds vital for future growth, and we need your continued strong support.

We encourage you to keep in touch and share news with your alumni family through the *Gem*. Please send news to Alumni Director Kaci Ogle at kogle@jsu.edu.

Sincerely,
William A. Meehan, President

Departments

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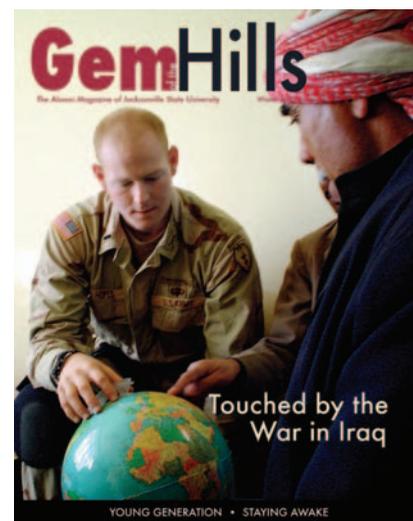
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On the cover: 1st Lt. Christopher Hopes speaks with a school headmaster in Al Hawayjah. Hopes' platoon used funds from Saddam Hussein's former regime to provide school supplies.
Photo by SGT Marty Brossett.

See story on page 12.

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVE OFFICERS: Pam Young, '77, president; Dennis Pantazis, '76, past president; Sarah Ballard, '69/'75/'82, vice president; Mark Jones, '82/'83, treasurer; Nancy Turner, recording secretary; Kaci Ogle, '95/'04, executive director; Alan Renfroe, '88, assistant director.

Busy Student Writes Book Between Classes



Mr. James Matthew Byers

A student who found himself too busy to write at home regularly completed his first published novel during spare time between classes.

James Matthew Byers of Rainbow City is busy promoting

his new book, *Grecian Rune* (PublishAmerica, 313 pages, November 2004). *Rune* is a fantasy tale set in Greece, Crete, China, and Egypt. The plot is filled with heroes, gods, and goddesses who join forces to overcome evil.

“In this book, I reintroduce the epic poem into modern culture,” Mr. Byers said. “I designed an epic poem broken into chapters so that it reads like a standard novel.”

Using his rare ability to think in verse, Mr. Byers wrote the manuscript in iambic pentameter.

“Poetry is at the heart of everything I create. I use poetic structure to denote emphasis, speed, emotion, and importance,” he said.

Although *Rune* is his first published book, the 30-year-old student says he has completed six others. “I’m hoping *Rune’s* success will lead to the publication of the earlier ones,” he said.

Mr. Byers’ fast-paced schedule in

elementary education made it impossible to schedule a specific time to write each day. He also faced other challenges as his deadline loomed.

“I work full time at The Learning Tree, where I help mentally challenged children. I’m also a parent with a 3 1/2-year-old who demands all of my attention.”

He says his book “is for readers between 15 and 100.”

The Acmar, Ala., native is well into the sequel, *The Gloaming*. He’s also working on his fourth book of poetry.

Rune is available online and can be found in the fantasy or mythology sections of book stores.

By Al Harris

JSU WELCOMES AYERS CHAIR AND OTHER NEW FACULTY MEMBERS



Ms. Teresha A. King

Ms. Teresha A. King was named to the Ayers Chair in the Department of Communication. After graduating from Alabama A&M, Ms. King worked with NASA as a freelance writer, field producer,

and director for NASA’s national broadcast, *Today in Space*. She provided media training for NASA scientists, program managers, and executives. Her academic experience includes working for Oakwood College, the University of Wisconsin-Stout, and the University of Minnesota.

Other new faculty members announced in fall 2004 are:

Dr. Okon H. Akpan, Associate Professor, Mathematics and Computer Sciences

Ms. Kristi G. Beam, Instructor, Nursing and Health Sciences

Dr. Paul R. Beezley, Assistant Professor, History and Foreign Languages

Ms. Rebecca Bertalan, Instructor, Nursing and Health Sciences

Ms. Dorinda R. Black, Instructor, Nursing and Health Sciences

Ms. Christy Burns, Instructor, English

Dr. Ann Callahan, Assistant Professor, Sociology and Social Work

Dr. Marsha Dale Campbell, Assistant Professor, Curriculum and Instruction

Dr. Charlotte Eady, Assistant Professor, Educational Resources

Ms. Carrie Elkins, Instructor, Nursing and Health Sciences

Dr. Nancy Fox, Assistant Professor, Educational Resources

Ms. Jennifer Bell Frank, Instructor, Nursing and Health Sciences

Dr. Larry A. Gray, Assistant Professor, English

Ms. Michelle Halpin-Garcia, Instructor, Nursing and Health Sciences

Ms. Antoinette Hudson, Instructor, History and Foreign Languages

Dr. William A. Lowe, Assistant Professor, Institute for Emergency Preparedness

Ms. Joy Maloney, Instructor, English

Dr. Fred May, Associate Professor, Institute for Emergency Preparedness

Ms. Shannon Morrison, Instructor, Nursing and Health Sciences

Dr. Timothy Pitts, Visiting Assistant Professor, History & Foreign Languages

Ms. Gagandeep Sarkaria, Assistant Professor, Art

Major Gregory Scott, Assistant Professor, Military Science

Ms. Bethany L. Skaggs, Assistant Professor and Assistant Librarian, Library

Ms. Kathleen F. Terry, Instructor, History and Foreign Languages

Mr. David C. Thornton, Instructor, Mathematics and Computer Sciences

Dr. Linda Yost, Assistant Professor, English

Dr. Hamissou Helped Study Prehistoric Diet

Prehistoric man in Alabama fared well on hickory nuts, acorns, and wild game, according to JSU biologist Mijitaba Hamissou.

“This information helps us understand sociology. With it, we can better understand ourselves, our history, and how to better our civilization,” he said.

Dr. Hamissou, from Niger, recently helped JSU’s Archeological Research Lab in their quest to learn more about foods eaten by inhabitants of Fort Payne between 10,500 BC and 1,000 AD.

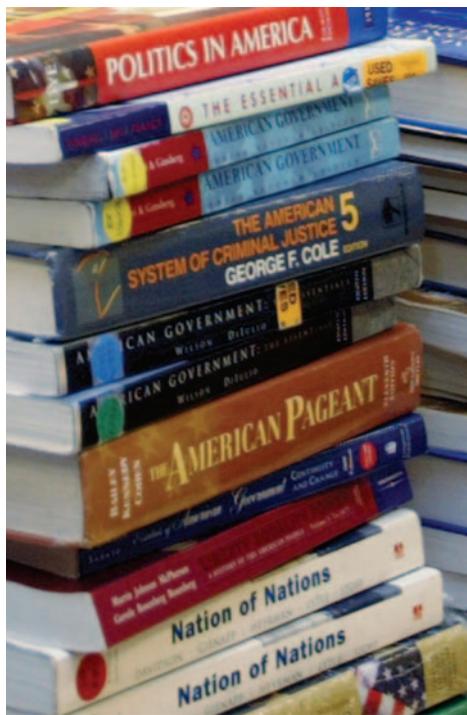
Professor Hamissou enlisted the research help of senior Heather McCoy. Ms. McCoy said she decided to pursue a second major in the field because she enjoyed the project. She is considering a career in paleobotany, the study of plant fossils and ancient vegetation.

Dr. Hamissou said it was the lowly hickory nut that provided the bulk of carbohydrates for inhabitants, who ate them raw, boiled them for oil, ground them for dried food, and burned their shells for heat. Acorns were also eaten but were more labor intensive because they had to be processed to leach out the bitter tannin.

Dr. Hamissou said the skeletal remains of deer, elk, and small animals were found around fire hearths, indicating the area’s earliest inhabitants appreciated low-carb feasts.

“They were healthy and strong,” said Dr. Hamissou. “They ate these rich foods to fatten up and protect themselves from too much heat loss during the winter months.”

Dr. Hamissou in recent years has focused on how stressed plants cope with the effects of animals, insects, man, pollution, and the environment. He says the study of plant stress is vital because it reveals how to make plants healthier.



Update: Books for Bagdad

At press time in January, JSU’s Books for Baghdad program was ready to ship more than 10,000 books and \$6,500 in school supplies to the University of Baghdad.

Biology Professor Safaa Al-Hamdani organized the humanitarian effort to help rebuild the BU library, which was destroyed during the Iraq war. International Relief and Development, Inc. of Arlington, Va., had agreed to pay shipping costs. Donated items collected from across the nation were enough to fill a standard forty-foot shipping container, which holds 2,387 cubic feet of material.

Dr. Al-Hamdani is a native of Iraq and a U.S. citizen. He attracted national attention when he and fellow faculty members began the program in early 2004.

Tips for College Bound Students

Admissions Director Martha Mitchell encourages college-bound high school students to take the ACT early in the school year because JSU scholarship application deadline is 1 February of each year. “We have many scholarship opportunities available for first-time freshmen who meet the deadlines,” says Mrs. Mitchell.

Students must provide test scores when they apply, and there are two ways to meet this requirement. One is by filling out a form available through area high schools or found at www.actstudent.org. The other is to take the ACT residual test through JSU’s Department of Counseling and Career Services. JSU provides more scheduled test dates than high schools, and the university gives students their scores the same day. The latter method qualifies students to attend JSU only. Call 782-5475 for more information.

With ACT score in hand, students need only fill out the admission and scholarship applications available online at www.jsu.edu or from the admissions office in Room 110 Bibb Graves Hall.

Mrs. Mitchell says many qualified students miss scholarship opportunities each year. She recommends that all high school juniors and seniors take the ACT even if they do not plan to attend college because plans often change.

Scholarship requirements vary for ACT scores and GPAs (grade point averages). To learn more, go to www.jsu.edu/depart/finaid or call 782-5006.

Mrs. Mitchell offers this advice for transfer students:

Apply to JSU a year in advance and pre-register for classes. Review JSU’s Web site for admission requirements. Go to www.jsu.edu/transfer and click on “transfer articulation” to find out how courses from community colleges in Alabama are transferred.

“This removes guesswork about what will transfer and what is required for a particular major,” says Mrs. Mitchell.

She says students 25 and older can attend JSU without taking the ACT.



NYC Trip Open to Students and Public

Dr. Steve Whitton invites alumni to join his annual English department course in May that features a trip to New York City to study drama and art.

The May term course will examine plays that students will see on Broadway during a four-day excursion. Students will also take in several art centers.

Tentative dates for the trip itself are 24-28 May 2005, but classes will begin in early May. Total cost of the course and trip is \$1,585, and the deadline for an initial payment of \$585 is 15 February 2005.

An additional \$75 audit fee will apply to non-students. For information call 256-782-5414 or 256-782-5661, or e-mail Dr. Whitton at swhitton@jsu.edu.



Scene from a past trip to New York, where students toured the city's main theatres and art centers.



Streets of New York photographed during a student trip organized by Dr. Steve Whitton.

Band Tryouts Set

JSU's renowned marching ensembles offer opportunities for talented students to join their ranks.

Tryout schedules are as follows:

- Southerners horn line and color guard auditions are held during band camp in August. For information, call the band office at 256-782-5562 or go online at www.marchingsoutherners.org.
- Prospective Marching Ballerinas are required to enroll in a dance class offered each spring to qualify for audition. For more information, contact the band office at 256-782-5562.
- Southerners drum line auditions are held in August, but band leaders urge aspirants to also attend the May drum line camp. For more information call Mr. Clint Gillespie at 256-782-5630.

For information about joining Spirit, the drum and bugle corps, call 256-782-5908.

Planetarium Goes Digital

Associate Professor Laura Weinkauff says new digital equipment is sending attendance soaring at the campus planetarium. Alumni are invited to come check it out.

The university's new digital planetarium, which includes a Digistar 3SP projector and software, "does more than just place stars on a ceiling" like outmoded systems familiar to many astronomy buffs, says Dr. Weinkauff. "It can produce vignettes, such as showing a space craft traveling in space."

The Digistar 3SP combines a real-time 3D digital astronomy program with a powerful rendering engine, which produces stunning 3D graphics and high-definition video.

The Department of Physical and Earth Sciences bought the system with funding assistance from JSU's Environmental Policy Information Center (EPIC) and Field Schools.

Upcoming shows include:

- February 12 — Love Stories in the Stars
- March 12 — St. Patty's Cosmic Serpents
- April 9 — Spring Awakening
- May 14 — Journey Through a Black Hole.

Programs are held from 1:30 - 2:30 p.m. on the second Saturday each month through May. Admission is \$5 for adults and \$2.50 for children under 12. The facility is on the third floor of Martin Hall. **For more information call 256-782-5697, e-mail fieldschool@jsu.edu, or visit <http://epic.jsu.edu/stars/planetarium.html>.**



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JSU's postage budgets are tight and getting tighter. We need your email address to communicate with you. Please contact the alumni office today to make sure we have your correct address!

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'Whatever Happened to the Country?'



By Al Harris

J.D. Jackson, left, Nashville producer and agent, presents Bart Connell a plaque commemorating his first professional CD release.

Bart Connell, son of JSU's one-armed All American, the late **Jodie Connell, '52/'53**, and **Sara Lou McLaughlin, '53**, unleashed his first album of pure, cornbread country in November. Connell's new CD pays homage to the legends of the genre and a style he thinks worthy of revival.

Mr. Connell's *Whatever Happened To The Country* — the CD's title song — comes with a lyrical plea to the country music broadcasting industry:

*Why did they ever take Haggard off the radio
And why they don't play old Hank Senior I'll
never know.*

*You still hear a little bit of Elvis every now and
then*

*And he's considered country now.
But he wasn't when it first began.
It sure would make me feel good
To Hear a little bit of Jones.*

Says Mr. Connell: "I respect those recording artists who do crossover and other things in music, but I think it's been forgotten that the foundation of country music includes people like Merle Haggard, Hank Williams, and George Jones. There's a huge market out there for pure country — the music influenced by the legends — and I feel more of it should be played in the daily rotations on radio."

Mr. Connell made his debut on Birmingham TV's *Country Boy Eddie Show* in the 1960s. While attending Jacksonville State in the 1980s, he decided "to pick up a guitar instead of a pencil for a career." He

spent eight years in Nashville "working 80 to 85 hours a week at two jobs to be able to do music in the time left over."

Although he's not yet a full-time singer, Mr. Connell says he'll reach that goal soon.

"Possibly sometime this spring," he says. "It won't be much longer."

How tough is it in the industry?

"Talented people come to Nashville every day. Up here they say you'll kick Nashville's butt or it will kick your butt. Talent is just the beginning point. Every-

body up here is talented — there are people walking the streets that are talented and just need a break."

For Mr. Connell that break came one evening after he finished a guest performance at the Nashville Palace, where people like Randy Travis and Alan Jackson got their start.

"A guy came over and asked if I wanted a manager. 'If he's reputable,' I said. The next day I met with J.D. Jackson and things have been moving from there," he said. Jackson is a songwriter who owns the T5 label and manages talent.

Just when things were looking up,

Mr. Connell had a close call and nearly died.

"I was heading to Alabama to see my mother and started having bad flu-like symptoms. I went back to Nashville to the hospital. Fifteen minutes later I had a full body seizure. It was spinal meningitis. Doctors said if I had continued driving I might have died between Nashville and Birmingham," he said.

Now fully recovered, Mr. Connell is promoting his album and getting ready for concerts, including one in Pell City.

For the "hard-headedness" that it will take to succeed, Mr. Connell says he thanks his father, the late Jodie Connell, an amputee who played football with one arm at Jacksonville State in the early 1950s and who also played trumpet.

"He was a character. His record speaks for itself as far as hanging in there and doing what you need to do to beat the odds. He instilled in me that you've got to grab it and growl and hang tough," said Mr. Connell.

He said his greatest single moment in country music was "the day I decided not to quit.

"I told myself, I'd rather come up to Nashville and be told 'no' than to sit in Pell City the rest of my life and wonder if I could have done it."

For more information about Bart Connell and his new CD, go to <http://www.bartconnell.com>.

JSU Names Office Suite After Dr. John T. Finley



JSU has honored the founder of the Southerners and Marching Ballerinas by renaming the administrative suite of Mason Hall as the John T. Finley Administrative Suite.

Dr. Bill Meehan presented the resolution adopted by JSU's board of trustees during a ceremony in Dr. Finley's honor.

Dr. Finley, a Jacksonville resident, attended the reading in the suite occupied by the music department head, Dr. W. Legare McIntosh.

Dr. Finley joined the music program as band director in 1951. In 1956, he established JSU's dance line, which he called the Marching Ballerinas. He named the band the Southerners, which is often *incorrectly* referred to as the "Marching Southerners."

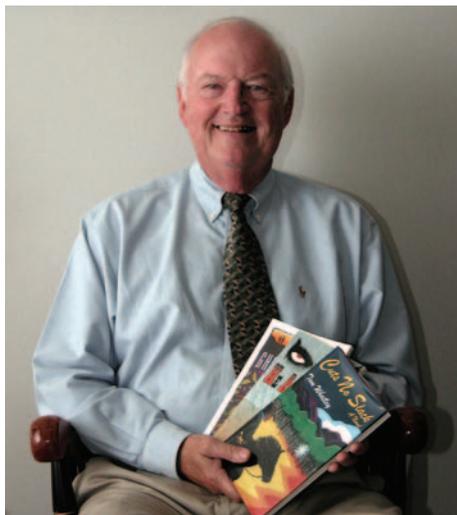
He patterned the Marching Ballerinas after the Rockettes of Radio City Music Hall. The dance line became one of only four of its kind in the country. Dr. Finley also changed the band's sound to a more symphonic style that remains its signature today. Much about the Marching Ballerinas remains the same, too, even down to their white boots with red tassels.

In 1959, Dr. Finley became head of the music department and served until his retirement in 1980.

He received a doctorate in education from George Peabody College for Teachers in 1970.

Muscle Shoals Minister Writes Westerns

By Sherry Kughn



When someone told **Tom Whatley, '62**, that he could roll a cigarette “on the back of a running mule,” Rev. Whatley knew he had another anecdote for his next western novel. Whatley has had three novels published during the last four years. He has a fourth book set to be published, and at press time he was ready to mail off his first mystery novel.

Rev. Whatley, pastor of the 1,450-member Woodward Baptist Church in Muscle Shoals, is poised to begin his third career. He hopes to retire from preaching within the next couple of years and spend more time writing.

“I do it for the joy of writing,” said Rev. Whatley, “and to contribute to someone else’s enjoyment.”

His writing career somewhat parallels his decision to become a minister while still a senior at JSU in 1962. Rev. Whatley, an education major and ROTC member, was going to fulfill his three-year ROTC commitment and then pursue a military career. Just weeks before graduation, though, his heart began telling him to follow in the footsteps of his father, a minister. When he retired three years later from the 25th Infantry Division in Hawaii, he entered Southwestern Baptist College in Fort Worth, Tex.

Now, 40 years later, his heart is telling him to change careers again. The roots of the decision reach all the way back to Lincoln where he grew up during the 1950s. Every Saturday as a youngster, he watched westerns starring Roy Rogers, Gene Autry, and other heroes. He continued to enjoy reading western novels as an adult and found a new hero, the western novel writer Louis L’Amour.

Rev. Whatley grew disappointed when, after L’Amour’s death, the genre of western novels turned dark. Heroes weren’t the good guys anymore, and the only novels he could find were full of sex, misdirected violence, and “dirty words.” Still, the idea of righting that wrong didn’t dawn on him until age 60 when he was traveling with his wife, Roslyn, to Spain for the Southern Baptist Convention.

“During the long flight I picked up a yellow legal pad and said to her, ‘I’m going

to write a western novel,’” said Rev. Whatley. “She said I was crazy.”

Rev. Whatley soon proved her wrong. He returned home and finished his story, which features the character Reed Haddock, a strong, “homespun” cowboy who struggles against villains. Called *Cuts No Slack*, his published novel left the ending open in order for Rev. Whatley to write two more sequels, *Ghost Runner* and *He Ain’t Dead*. All three are published by Sun Stone Press, Sante Fe, New Mexico.

His fourth western, *Twice as Good*, is due out soon. His first mystery novel will be called *The Gatekeeper*.

Rev. Whatley, who was recently accepted into the Western Writers of America, said he writes five or six evenings per month. Even when he is not writing, though, he said his mind stays full of scenes, plots, and characters. And as any good cowboy, he’s always “scouting around” for another good anecdote.

“I’ve got stories running all around in my mind,” he said.

RING FOUND



The Rev. Bob Ludlow hopes to return a lost class ring, circa 1928, to the family of its owner.

The ring was found about ten years ago at the West End Baptist Church of Clanton and turned over to Rev. Ludlow for safekeeping. The minister was unable to find the owner or family members, and is asking alumni for help.

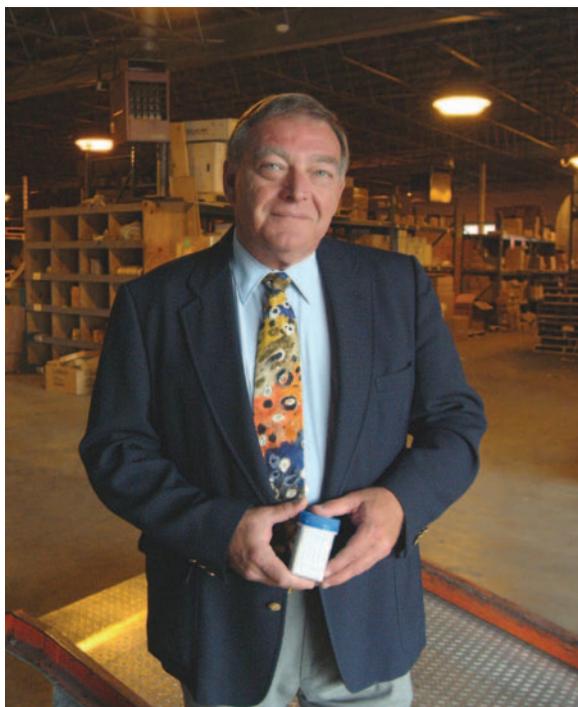
“This is a very small ring – it will barely fit on the tip of my little finger,” he said. “It’s probably a woman’s ring, and it’s all gold with no gem.”

Inside the band are the initials T.R.S. The engraving includes the year, 1928, and the words “Jacksonville State Normal School.” A unique feature is an eagle. JSU’s earliest mascot was the eagle-owl.

“The ring is worn but is in very good shape,” Rev. Ludlow said.

To find out more, contact the Alumni Office at 256-782-5404.

Birmingham Business Owner Appreciates JSU



The founder of a drug testing company in Birmingham, **Joseph Snow**, '72, said his JSU degree in marketing taught him two valuable business skills--to finish what he starts and to develop strong social skills.

Mr. Snow, who started Snow Laboratories, Inc. in 1999, researched the drug testing industry before deciding on the direction of the company. He first determined which industries had high drug use among employees. He calculated the cost of testing each employee, and he worked with other laboratories to produce a drug test that could be administered by a company that would save them time and money.

Now Snow Labs, which had revenues of \$200,000 in 2003, educates others about the benefits of testing employees and how the drug testing products can make testing efficient, reliable and inexpensive.

Normally, companies send their employees to medical clinics that charge at least \$35 a test. That figure, combined with the amount of time an employee must take off from work to be tested, adds up to a figure higher than the \$15 his drug tests cost.

His company started marketing the drug tests to contractors, where construction workers who might be on drugs can make a mistake that means death. The marketing

idea was a good one and resulted in a base list of clients who found the drug testing kits profitable to use.

"Conducting drug tests decreases a company's liabilities, too," said Mr. Snow.

The drug tests are manufactured by Omega Laboratories Ind., based in Ohio, Medical and Clinical Consortium Inc., of Los Angeles, and Diagnostics of Huntsville. The tests, which are performed on-site have a high rate of accuracy.

Now the company, which focuses on listening to customers' needs and delivering the products quickly, is looking to expand to the Atlanta and Mississippi marketing area and to expand the product line.

Mr. Snow gave credit to JSU for teaching him to follow up on his ideas and finish things that he starts. He said he also learned that hard work brings certain rewards. He enjoys owning his own company.

"I would tell students," Mr. Snow said, "that early in your career, there is more time to explore the options. Start exploring your contacts and connections even before you leave school."

Mr. Snow, who worked in the sales department for sellers of building materials before he started Snow Labs, said the enjoyment he has experienced in doing something he likes is a plus.

"Look for something that you have a passion for," he says.

Mr. Snow is also a musician who plays in a band. He is a guitarist and singer in a group that performs at clubs and at nursing homes in the Birmingham area.

"Those in the nursing home can't always hear our music," he said, "but at least we give them something to talk about."

Ballerina Crowned Ms. Senior Calhoun County

Back in 1956, the first-ever Marching Ballerinas performed to *Heartbreak Hotel* and *Red Silk Stockings and Green Perfume*. The songs were favorites of **Sybill Rogers**, '72, who oversaw, trained, and choreographed the group.

Mrs. Rogers, a longtime Jacksonville resident, is still dancing. She was crowned Ms. Senior Calhoun County recently. The pageant is sponsored each year by Retired Senior Volunteers Program of Calhoun County and The Cameo Club.

Mrs. Rogers performed a baton-and-dance routine along with a skit on aging. And she wore a red-sequined dress as part of the evening gown competition.

"I was excited," said Mrs. Rogers. "I enjoyed getting to know the other ladies in the pageant, and it was fun."

Mrs. Rogers taught dance to help pay her way through JSU. She returned to take classes at JSU several other times since graduating and has studied music, English, health, and recreation. She enrolled as recently as 2001 but was injured in a car wreck and had to take time off to recover.

In 1955, Southerners' Director John Finley asked Mrs. Rogers to organize and train the first Marching Ballerinas.

"Eighteen made the team, including some high school students and some married women," she said. "Of course, we did not know how much the dance line would grow."

Mrs. Rogers said the first uniforms included white doubled-breasted jackets and shorts trimmed in red cuffs.

Mrs. Rogers remains active in Jacksonville community affairs and attends the First Baptist Church of Piedmont.

A Knot of Ties at Double Wedding

by Sherry Kughn



Kimberly and Daniel Brown, left, and Kelly and Chris Moore, right, were married in an August 2004 double wedding. The sisters' ceremony was well-attended by alumni, most of whom were family members. Parents of the bride are Roy and Donna Mullendore of Oxford. Parents of the groom are Elaine Brown of Parish, the late James Brown, Thomas Moore of Ranburne, and Marjorie Moore of Gadsden.

The Mullendore sisters' double wedding on 7 August 2004 brought together people with many ties to the university.

Kim Mullendore Brown and **Kelly Mullendore Moore** both graduated from JSU in 2002. Kim was Miss JSU in 1997. Kelly's husband, **Chris Moore**, graduated from JSU in 2004. Other graduates are the brides' father, **Roy Mullendore**, '72, of Oxford and his mother, **Ora Mae Mullendore**, '79, of Oxford. Also, Chris' parents, **Thomas Moore**, '77, of Ranburne and **Marjorie Rogers Moore**, '84, of Gadsden are JSU graduates. One of the few non-JSU graduates at the wedding Kim Mullendore's groom, Daniel Brown, a University of Alabama graduate.

The JSU ties seemed natural for the two sisters, who are only thirteen months apart in age. They attended Oxford High School and roomed together at JSU. After the wedding, jobs took the couples to different towns.

The Browns' desire to teach vocal performance took them to the University of Memphis. They met when each was pursuing a doctorate at the University of Alabama. Both sing opera.

The Moores remain in Jacksonville. Mrs. Moore works for TRI Staffing in Anniston and is a graduate student at JSU. Mr. Moore is a chef at Classic on Noble. The couple met when Mr. Moore was a student working at Stephenson Gym.

From top to bottom are: Thomas Moore, Ora Mae Mullendore, Roy Mullendore, and Marjorie Moore.

Elephant Sees Red; Alumnus Gets the Picture

by Al Harris

Larry K. Martin, '61, was leading a photo safari near the foot of Mount Kilimanjaro, in Kenya's Amboseli Park, when he spotted a rogue elephant. The animal stood out among the hundreds of others they'd seen that day. Asking the Land Rover driver to stop, Mr. Martin began shooting a series of reference photos for a possible painting.

"In Africa the animals seem oblivious to you while you're in a vehicle," said Mr. Martin. "They regard a Land Rover and the people in it as being some sort of large, benign animal. That's how you can get great close-up and candid shots of animal behavior.

"After a few days of getting so close to the animals, you begin to notice individual differences among them," he explained.

Watching the elephant through his camera, Mr. Martin spotted even more differences. "He is very angry," warned the driver.

"You could see anger in his posture and overall demeanor, and he seemed to be focusing in our direction. I started shooting pictures like crazy," said Mr. Martin.

Seconds later, the driver pointed to two Maasai tribesmen walking in jeep ruts toward the vehicle.

"You don't take pictures of the Maasai unless you arrange it with them," Mr. Martin said. "But there they were, wearing their red blankets and carrying long sticks. They were pretty far away, so I took a couple of shots and then went back to photographing the elephant."

The bull seemed to be getting angrier by the second. He flapped his ears, raised his trunk, and started toward the Rover. Mr. Martin tried to record every step.

"The Maasai are coming," said the driver.

Were they upset about having a picture taken?

"I looked back and saw them hot-footing it toward us," Mr. Martin recalled. "And then the elephant charged — he was coming right at us."

Mr. Martin turned his camera back to the rogue. "It was happening so quickly



Larry K. Martin's real-life encounter with a charging elephant inspired this painting, He Sees Red.

that I wasn't worried about us, but we were concerned about the Maasai, who just kept on running toward us. The elephant was getting closer, and the driver said, 'We have to get out of here.' I continued shooting as the driver cranked up and pulled away — just as the elephant ran past the rear end of the vehicle. The bull did a fast swivel, and I caught the action with the camera.

"We moved a short distance and stopped. I saw the elephant standing there sort of confused and still furious. We were concerned about the Maasai — they had disappeared. I asked the driver 'Where are they?'

"The driver — Africans have a wonderful, different way of expressing themselves — said, 'They are just here.'

"At first, I didn't know what that meant. And then I happened to look around. They were hanging onto the side of the Land Rover. That's how they survived."

Mr. Martin said the bull elephant probably was in musth (mating rut) and simply venting his aggression on the two red-robed Maasai invading his domain.

Mr. Martin's photos of the attack later guided his painting of the encounter, which became an acrylic work titled *He Sees Red*.

An internationally known wildlife artist whose home gallery is the Wren's Nest in Anniston, Mr. Martin says his work has

"gone in a convoluted full circle" because he finds himself returning frequently to Africa and South America.

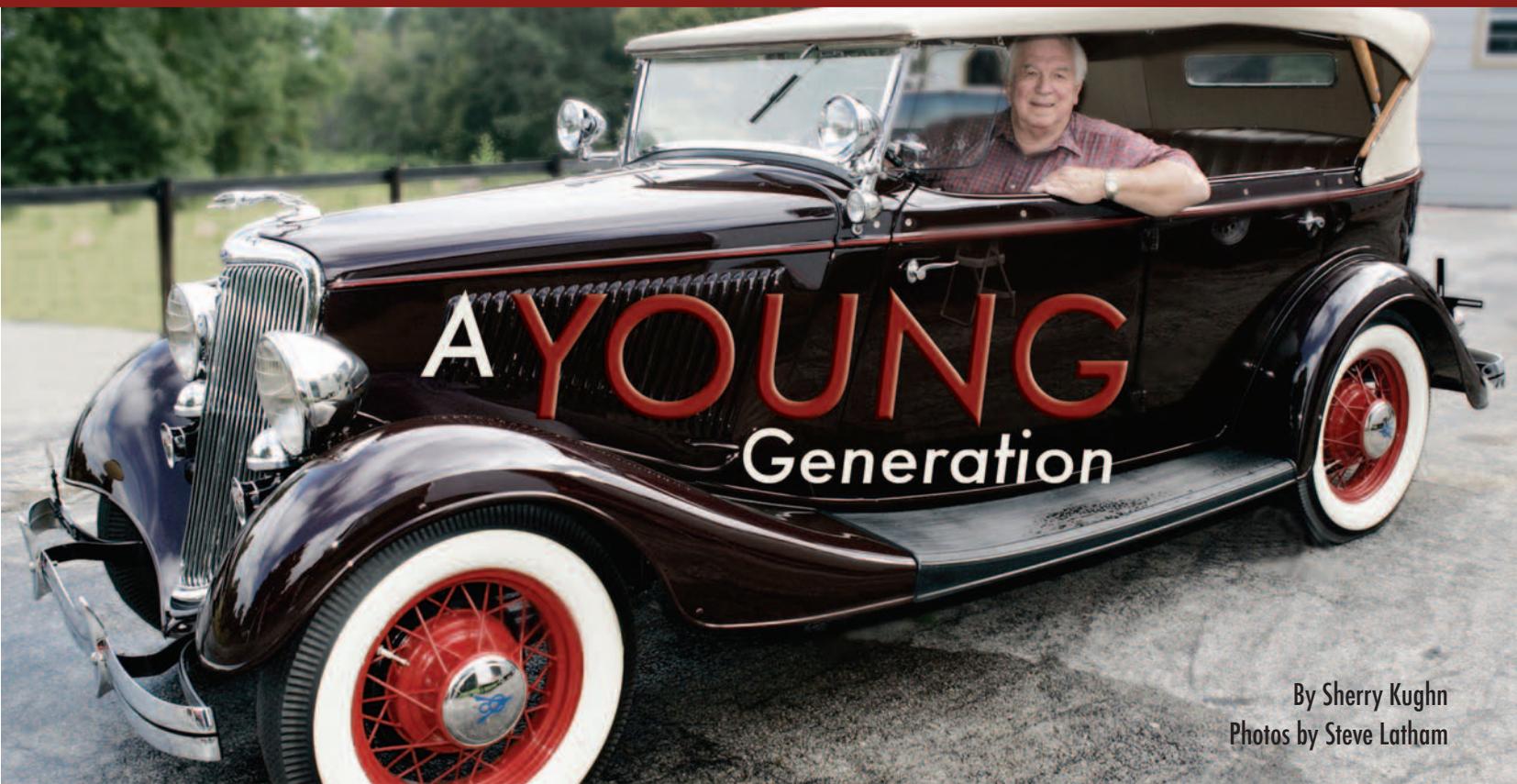
Mr. Martin's first experience in the tropics came early in his career as a researcher in tropical medicine. He said his affinity for the tropics, wildlife, and native cultures are carryovers from his research days. Now, those memories are translated into paintings, drawings, and print editions.

After graduating from JSU, Martin earned two master's degrees and a Ph.D. at Tulane University. He served as an army officer, where his duties at Walter Reed Institute of Research included travels in equatorial South America.

"When I traveled as a medical researcher, I always looked for the wonderful, exotic wildlife and native cultures. Now I hope to complete the circle by looking at the same subjects through the eyes of an artist," he said.

"Perhaps my ultimate experience will be when I can return to the Amazon Basin in Brazil to the Stone Age Kayapo Indian village that I was able to visit on a medical mission about 35 years ago."

Mr. Martin can be reached at wrensnestgallery@mindspring.com.



By Sherry Kughn
Photos by Steve Latham



In a dewy September morning in Piedmont, Millard Young, Jr. hooked a battery charger to an antique car that sat dead in his barn. The family's shepherd, Sassy, lapped water from a cast-iron pot and watched him diagnose the problem.

The scene contrasted sharply with one that took place a month earlier and hundreds of miles away. At Meadow Brook Hall in Rochester, Mich., which is sometimes referred to as “an American castle” because of its elegant architecture and mystique, Mr. Young's burgundy 1934 Ford Phaeton won the prestigious Most Significant Award from Ford Motor Company at the Concours d'Elegance show sponsored by Ford, Daimler-Chrysler, and General Motors.

From the front end of the winning Ford's highly-polished burgundy fenders to the soft leather seats and carefully aligned screw heads, one can imagine the pride that Henry Ford himself must have felt as he viewed cars like this (and perhaps this very one).

Mr. Young's hobby of showing antique

cars has taken him many places, including the home of Ford Motor Company in Dearborn, Mich. He has traveled to places such as Hershey, Penn.; Pebble Beach, Calif.; Amelia Island, Fla.; and Petoskey and Bay Harbor, Mich. to compete with his four antique cars.

Mr. Young's enthusiasm for refinishing antique cars has earned him national recognition in numerous competitions. His 1928 Lincoln Dual Cowl Phaeton won national first prize in 1981 and first place in the Classic Car Club of America's Museum (CCCA) show in 1996. His 1934 black Ford Phaeton in 1982 won national first prize at the Antique Automobile Club of America (AACA) show in Dearborn and a blue ribbon at Meadow Brook in 2001. A 1912 Ford Model T touring car won a Ford

award in Philadelphia and a blue ribbon in Petoskey.

Mr. Young says he holds membership in the AACA, the CCCA, and the Early V-8 Ford Club for the show and travel opportunities they present.

Mr. Young became interested in cars as a teenager. When he was a student at Piedmont High School during the early 1950s, he needed transportation for himself and his siblings. He bought a broken-down 1928 Model A Ford for \$75 and repaired it. Later, he became acquainted with Claude Merrill, another car aficionado in Piedmont, and learned more about repairing and refinishing cars.

Mr. Young picked up an even deeper appreciation of cars from his father, M.V. Young, who owned service stations in Pied-

mont, Jacksonville, and Centre. M.V. also passed on to his son an affection for JSU. Millard Young said there was never a question about whether he would attend and graduate from JSU.

“I was the first Young with a degree,” said Mr. Young. “I thought my success in life depended on it.”

Mr. Young’s practical and academic expertise in business were put to the test many times as he guided his father’s oil company, which consisted of five stores. In spite of M.V. Young’s lifetime of work in the business, Mr. Young said he and his siblings found the company had only about \$5,000 in profits at the time of M.V.’s death in 1963. Mr. Young felt it was up to him to turn things around. He and his sister bought out the other siblings and worked hard to expand the company.

They weathered the gasoline shortage of the 1970s, a period when overhead expenses were high and gasoline was almost impossible to find. The crisis put many small companies into bankruptcy, but the Youngs managed to find a supply of gasoline and kept their business afloat.

“The only time I didn’t have time for antique cars,” said Mr. Young, “was in 1972. Back then we were living in survival mode in the business world.”

In 1990, Mr. Young bought his sister’s share in Young Oil. The operation, which he reorganized again in 1994-95 with his children, now operates 10 Grub Mart stores. The company also supplies gasoline to about 40 other businesses throughout the area.

Mr. Young continues as CEO of Young Oil, which he runs with his sons, Vernon III and Brian.

Back to the September morning after the Ford’s big win. The sons were helping their father get another car ready for competition. Vernon eased one of the Phaetons out of the barn after recharging its battery. He wrinkled his brow when he heard static and discovered that the radio had been left on. That explained the dead battery. Brian dusted away cobwebs with a cotton mop and watched his brother and father check oil and gasoline levels. Brian said he prefers deer hunting instead of maintaining old cars.

Even though the son’s do not have the same strong interest in automobiles as their father, they do share a fondness for JSU. Both brothers are JSU graduates, as is Mr. Young’s wife Ann, a retired elementary school teacher who often travels to car shows with her husband. Other JSU graduates in the family include Vernon’s wife Scarlett, both Young sisters, Karen Young Kiser and Pam Young. Brian’s wife Jennifer is attending JSU. “JSU is just our school,” said Mr. Young.

The Young family has sponsored benefit golf tournaments for the JSU golf team, chartered buses for JSU fans to attend out-of-town football games, sponsored JSU athletic programs, established the M.V. and Ruth Young Scholarship in memory of Mr. Young’s parents, and sponsored the electronic sign in front of Pete Mathews Coliseum. Mr. Young is a member of the JSU Foundation board and charter member of the Honorary Coaches Club (now called the Gamecock Club). His daughter Pam is the current president of the Gamecock Club and the JSU



National Alumni Association. In past years, the Young family combined their interest in antique cars and JSU by hosting the Antique Automobile “Drive-In,” with proceeds helping the JSU International House.

Mr. Young stays active in the community. He’s a member of the Piedmont School Board, the Jaycees, and Masonic Lodge Lozahatchee 97.



▲ Left to right: Millard, Millard III, and Brian share a passion for JSU.

◀ Millard Young holds his trophy, the Most Significant Award, presented by Ford Motor Co. He collects antique cars, automotive memorabilia, and artifacts from old gasoline stations.

Touched by the War in Iraq



Photo by Richard Ambo
The Honolulu Advertiser

Stories abound that show how the Iraq war is touching the JSU community.

Here are just a few:

by Sherry Kughn

An Alumnus

1st Lt. Christopher Hopes, '02, of Jacksonville was stationed in Al-Hawayjah, Iraq, conducting combat operations in 2004. He served with the 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment, Alpha Company, as a rifle company executive officer. Thus far he has received the Army Commendation Medal with Valor and the Bronze Star Medal. He e-mailed *Gem of the Hills* the following account in November 2004:

I am currently deployed to OIF II [the second rotation of soldiers] in support of stability and support operations in Iraq. I am conducting combat operations in the northern portion of the infamous Sunni triangle. The city that my battalion is operating out of is Al-Hawayjah. It is a violent city that is primarily composed of 80,000 Sunni Arabs.... My duties are to lead sub-company elements during combat operations. Iraq so far has not been too great to me, but my men and I are managing day to day. I cannot discuss casualty numbers with you because it is classified, but I can tell you that I have taken my share. I am currently conducting combat operations that entail combat raids, search and attack, platoon ambush and joint patrols with Iraqi Security Forces.... I also am involved with information operations and rebuilding. My unit's most significant action was on April 7 when we were engaged in a

ten-hour gun battle with guerilla forces. The fight consisted of systematic building-to-building fighting. After the fighting was over, we were victorious, and we re-established the local government and ensured that the Iraqi security forces were stabilized.

I have been involved with the rebuilding of Iraqi schools, and water works (sewage and purification) are a priority in our area of operations. My unit has successfully put \$7 million into the city of Al Hawayjah, and the results are amazing. If I had a penny for every time an Iraqi has thanked me for my help, I would be a billionaire right now.

My family is my rock. I have always been able to rely on them. This has been tough for them and me. They have been very supportive of my decision to become an officer in the army. I know that my mom worries, but she knows that I am honorably serving my country and that I am doing everything I can to keep myself and my men alive out here. As far as missing my home and family, words cannot express how much I miss them, but I am here with my other family right now.

Two Students

In 2003, military reservists SSG Christopher Caputo and Cadet Melissa Osborne were excited about getting married and studying at JSU. Mr. Caputo was going to major in criminal science, and Miss Osborne was interested in the ROTC program. Both decided to become officers in the United States Army, which would mean they could stay in school without being deployed. CDT Osborne's contract arrived in the mail during the fall that year. Ironically, before SSG Caputo's contract arrived, he was deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan. He served as the operation's non-commissioned officer in charge of analysis for eleven months in Qatar. The experience changed his mind.

He said Qatar was not particularly dangerous, thanks to actions of government leaders where he was stationed. He also recalls being hot, working long days, and missing home.

"But it was the impact of a military career, not the war, that



Above (left to right): **SSG Chris Caputo and CDT Melissa Osborne** were separated due to the Iraq war. They're planning to marry in February 2005.

Pictured in May 2004 are **1st Lt. Christopher Hopes**, center, with a fellow soldier, students and school officials at the School of Salilia in Al Hawayjah. Photo by Sgt Marty Brossett.

Col. Rex Forney Jr., '76, and Col. William Ford, '75. The fellow ROTC graduates pose with a Gamecock flag near Baghdad. Col. Forney was named Outstanding Military Alumnus in 2004.

Opposite page: **1st Lt. Christopher Hopes, '02**, waves a fellow soldier, Staff Sgt. Seldon, on to a targeted building. Lt. Hopes is a rifle company executive officer.

caused me to change my mind," said SSG Caputo. "Indirectly, though, the war increased the possibility that both of us would be impacted greatly, especially in light of our upcoming wedding."

SSG Caputo resumed his studies in criminal science. He hopes to become a consultant, perhaps to the military.

"Regarding going to Iraq, I don't regret it. I knew the possibility was there. You kind of feel like you're letting your peers down if you try to get out of it," he said.

When her fiancé was gone, CDT Osborne examined her feelings about her commitment to the military. She decided to continue.

"I'll deal with the family situation as it comes along," she said. "I won't stop my life now for what may or may not happen regarding deployment."

A Faculty Member

Dr. Safaa Al-Hamdani, a biology professor and Iraq native who has been living in the United States since 1979, made national headlines with his Books for Baghdad project in 2004. Helped by an ad hoc committee of Faculty Senate volunteers, his effort focuses on collecting textbooks for Baghdad University, his alma mater, as a goodwill gesture to the country's citizens. About 10,000 books were collected and, at press time, were being readied for shipment. Faculty and administrators at the University of Baghdad expressed their appreciation, and JSU began efforts to establish ties with B.U. as a "sister institution."

"I cannot think of a more appropriate gift to send to the people of Iraq than books," said Dr. Al-Hamdani. Iraq's universities suffered under Saddam Hussein's rule. The dictator placed limits on books coming into the educational system, and many libraries were destroyed during the war.

Members of the book project sought textbook donations from local colleagues. Publicity led to contributions from university faculty throughout Alabama and the nation. In November 2004, two members of the Internet Professionals Society of Alabama (IPSA), which is promoting use of the Internet in Iraq, delivered an SUV full of books. On 18 November, a representative from International Relief and Development, Inc. (IRD) visited JSU to evaluate the project and discuss helping with shipping costs.

IRD also began working with groups in Iraq to bring a girl's softball team to visit JSU as part of an athletic and cultural exchange program. If IRD can make that happen, the Iraqi team may visit for about two weeks of instruction, education, and cultural events in mid-2005.

An ROTC Instructor

Major Gregory Pass, executive officer of JSU's ROTC program, says he doesn't feel a direct impact from the Iraq war but remembers how consuming war is. He served as a second lieutenant in the Gulf war during 1990-91 and was separated from his family for long periods.

"When I was in the Gulf, I was so proud to represent America," he said. "I was happy to be there, except for missing my family."

The Gulf war, he said, was a fast-paced war unlike what is happening in Iraq, which he predicts will see military intervention for several more years. Even in a fast war, he said, the political structure in a foreign country must be rebuilt. That leads to long involvement of soldiers.

Maj. Pass says he trusts the Bush administration to keep adequate manpower on the ground and to rotate the troops to keep them fresh. He says he hopes military leaders will review the intelligence they receive and eventually return complete control of the country to the Iraqis.

Staying

AWAKE

By Sherry Kughn

to help others

Below: Michelle Zopfi Yancey demonstrates how to fit a CPAP mask.

Right: Mrs. Yancey collects data from sleeping patients.

Michelle Zopfi Yancey, 01, stays awake to help others sleep throughout the night. She is a polysomnographic technician — sleep tech for short.

While her patients slumber, Mrs. Yancey is wide awake watching a computer screen that gives readings from 27 electrodes connected to her patients' eyelids, temples, chins, chests, legs, and hearts. Despite the wires and gizmos, most patients say they've never slept better.

A glimpse of real-time electronic patterns running across Mrs. Yancey's monitor shows why she doesn't get bored: there's constant change. Patients' states of consciousness change second-by-second as they drift into various depths of sleep. They cycle through rapid eye movement (REM) and experience other stages of sleep that her instruments record as beta brainwaves (the alert/waking state), alpha (awake), theta (drowsy/ideating), and delta (deep sleep). Mrs. Yancey continually monitors the data while keeping an eye on a video camera aimed at each patient's bed. She watches for body movements and even the occasional sleep walker.

"No two people have the same sleep patterns," said Mrs. Yancey, who works for the Regional Medical Center Sleep Disorders Center in Anniston. Mrs. Yancey and other sleep techs at the center can watch as many as six patients each night — two patients per tech. The job requires diligence.

The center helps doctors diagnose sleep apnea and other potentially dangerous sleeping and waking disorders.

"We had one patient whose oxygen levels dropped too low during sleep to sustain

life," said Jamie Brown, the center's supervisor and a registered polysomnographic technologist. "We had to wake him and administer treatment."

Facing such a severe case of apnea, the tech placed the patient that night on a continuous positive airway pressure device — a CPAP machine. The machine increases pressure in the airway and throat, opening the airway. Under pressure, which is set according to each patient's needs, the airway splints open so that sufficient oxygen can reach the lungs. The pressure is delivered through a mask that fits over the nose.

Diagnosis of sleep disorders are made after computer and camera data are compiled and studied by one of the three physicians at the sleep center. Two are pulmonologists and one is a neurologist — two types of doctors becoming more interested in the effects of sleep disorders on health.

Mrs. Yancey, whose patients often praise the center's work for restoring their good night's rest, focused her career on helping others achieve and maintain good health after graduating from JSU with a bachelor's degree in exercise science and wellness in 2001. She had planned to become a physical therapist before checking out the job opening at the sleep center.

It's a new field that is growing," said Mrs. Yancey. "I am amazed at what I have learned from my co-workers."

Wearing sneakers to be as quiet as possible, she exits the sleep center control room and walks across the carpeted hallway to one of the private, dormitory-like bedrooms. Dozens of neatly-coiled wires are arranged on a rolling hospital cart beside the bed.



Photos by Steve Latham



She points to a box about the size of a TV remote control and demonstrates how it will be connected to wires and placed inside another piece of equipment that will feed data into her computer.

“Part of my job is administering patient care,” she said. “Sometimes I must reassure patients and fully explain the test before they can relax and fall asleep.” Which is no small feat, once the patient learns that his every move, scratch, belch, and breath will be scientifically measured and videotaped. The combination of a good sleep environment and Mrs. Yancey’s reassurance is usually all that’s needed.

Mr. Brown explains that Mrs. Yancey’s personality and background make her well-suited for working in the sleep center. Both of the professionals are interested in spreading the word about how improved “sleep hygiene” can make an immediate difference in a person’s health and energy.

Mr. Brown said about 20 million Americans suffer from sleep apnea, which is defined as a cessation of air flow lasting ten seconds or longer. He said prolonged sleep apnea is tied to an increase in strokes and heart attacks because the condition blocks a sufficient supply of oxygen to the body.

He said a person’s body build can contribute toward a risk of developing sleep apnea. People who have short necks, recessed chins or are overweight have a greater tendency to develop sleep apnea. Mr. Brown said he can walk down a hospital corridor at night and hear the snoring and breathing patterns of patients who probably have sleep apnea.

“Snoring is not normal,” he said.

One way to check for sleep apnea, he said, is to look at the uvula at the back of the throat before going to bed and then again first thing in the morning. If the

uvula is longer in the morning, it’s probably because negative pressure from snoring has been pulling it down the throat at night.

Other common sleep disorders are periodic limb movement, a problem involving involuntary movements of the arms and legs that can interrupt sleep patterns; restless leg syndrome, in which the legs either twitch or jerk prior to sleep or get a sensation of tingling and irritability; narcolepsy, or sleep attacks; and sleep choking, which is only now measurable because of new technology.

The sleep center gives information about improving sleep habits, what symptoms to look for, and how to find a sleep specialist. They offer a questionnaire that helps patients and their physicians determine if a sleep study is needed.

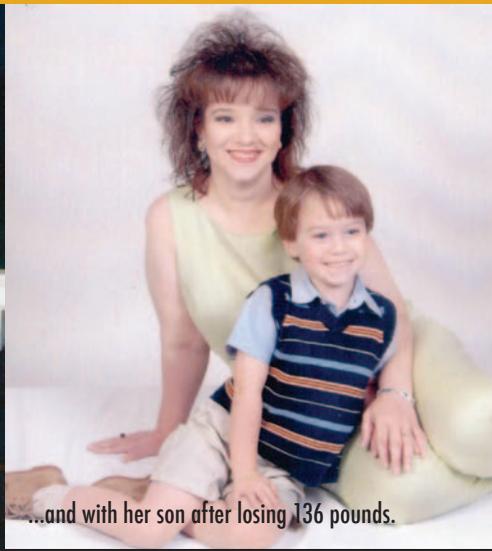
Mrs. Yancey and the sleep center staff can be reached at 256-235-5077.

SLEEP





Stacy before her gastric bypass surgery



...and with her son after losing 136 pounds.

Q&A

Stacy Robershaw Ellett chose life-threatening surgery when all else failed.

By Al Harris

A former student whose weight rose from 98 pounds to nearly 300 is again enjoying good health after choosing what some would call extreme measures.

Stacy Robershaw Ellett of Jacksonville said she exhausted ordinary means of losing weight before deciding to undergo potentially life-threatening gastric bypass surgery.

"I unsuccessfully tried just about every diet and weight loss program I could think of," she said. "I have been monitored by several different physicians and followed the plans carefully. Not to say that I never slipped up, but I did try to follow the plans as close as I could. I would lose some weight only to gain it back and then some.

"Over the next ten years my weight rose to an all time high of 287 pounds. In 1999 my husband and I had our son, Jameson, and I realized that if I wanted to see him grow up, I had to do something."

Mrs. Ellett, a nurse employed by an Anniston physician, discussed her ordeal during this conversation with the *Gem*.

Q: What complications did you experience?

A: I had a herniation of my small bowel and was severely dehydrated. This was a complication directly related to the gastric bypass and only happens to about one percent of patients. Thankfully, I had a very knowledgeable surgeon for this procedure and he knew what the problem was. He was able to correct it laparoscopically.

Not only am I a patient but I am also a nurse. I have seen patient's complications range from uncomfortable side effects to death. On the other hand, I have also seen patients leave their hypertension medications and insulin injections at the hospital, never to have to take them again.

Q: How did friends and family react after you gained and lost the weight?

A: It is amazing how your weight determines how people treat you, not only those who know you but perfect strangers as well. For example, there's the sales lady at the department store that turned her nose up to me two years ago but couldn't do enough to help me a few months ago. As for those who knew me before my surgery, well let's just say that you really find out who your friends are when you don't look the way society says you should. My true friends have celebrated every lost pound, all 136 of them, with me. My family has been very supportive. My husband has been absolutely wonderful through it all. Going through something like this can either make or break a marriage and I can honestly say that ours is stronger than ever.

As for emotional struggles, there are plenty. My entire life changed during the 45 minutes I was on the operating table. In our society, everything we do revolves around food. Whether the occasion is a birthday, holiday, anniversary, funeral or wedding, we eat. Work meetings are over lunch. When we reach a goal, we reward ourselves with a special meal. All of a sudden, I couldn't participate anymore. I felt in some ways like I was no longer a part of society. For the first few months when I did eat, I felt sick and had to lie down. Once I got over this struggle, there was a new one. Now I look different but I'm still the same person on the inside so why do people treat me differently? I still don't know the answer to this question, but I can accept it now. Support groups and counseling are very helpful with these issues following

surgery. I took advantage of both and it made getting to where I am today much easier.

Q: What are some of the benefits and risks a person should consider before having this type of surgery?

A: First of all, you have to know that this is not a diet. This surgery completely changes your lifestyle and it is for a lifetime. Unlike dieting, there's no cheating for special occasions. It is difficult for me to eat at certain places, even two years after surgery. This can create social issues at times. The side effects of gastric bypass can also be a challenge to deal with.

Now, let's consider the pros. Better health. Blood pressure is usually lower after weight loss and sometimes hypertension is actually cured as is diabetes in some cases. Joint pain, back pain, and fatigue are much improved. I can pick up my five year old who weighs about 50 pounds.

Losing the weight also gives you a sense of accomplishment, especially after so many failed attempts, and therefore increases your self esteem. It's also much easier to shop. I can go to any store and buy clothes now. In restaurants, I no longer have to request a table because of the fear that I won't fit in the booth.

My advice to anyone considering this surgery is to find a great surgeon. Find out what type of support and followup care he/she offers. This is very important and will be vital to your success.

Mrs. Ellett can be contacted at TBEjax@aol.com.



Shooting for Her Goal

by Sherry Kughn

A 41-year-old alumna who played on JSU's women's basketball team in the mid-1980s is pursuing a wildly ambitious goal: she wants to play professional basketball.



Tonya Gober Shell attended JSU from 1982 to 1985 and continued playing recreationally. She rose to the professional

"It was a dream come true for me," said Mrs. Shell. Her family had the opportunity to see her play several times that season.

Mrs. Shell sacrificed time and money to attend several camps for women's leagues, each of which costs about \$200, not including expenses, and has participated in several tryouts. While playing in exhibition, she earned a thousand dollars plus paid expenses. She said the pay was not bad, considering the short time she played, and that she is thankful to have a family who will stand by her again when the opportunity comes.



Tonya Shell often works out before her large family arrives home from work and school. They are Mrs. Shell, upper left, then clockwise, husband Victor, Sr., son Victor, Jr., 13, and daughters Ariel, 15, Brooke, 11, and Tai, 17.

'I am focused on my faith, my family and my game, I combine my athletic gift with motivational speaking in the hopes that my journey will encourage others to pursue their dreams.'

—Tonya Gober Shell

arena briefly, and now she's striving for a comeback.

"Although my age may come into question, any skill has longevity as long as you keep it sharp," said Mrs. Shell, who lives in Carrollton, Ga.

Her daily workout includes weightlifting, running, and shooting 200 hoops. She also plays and coaches in the Carrollton area and is a mentor to other players.

The five-foot-eleven, 150-pound athlete has an active family life with husband Victor Sr., and three daughters and a son, Tai, 17; Ariel, 15; Brooke, 11; and Victor, 13. Her family rallied behind her when she played exhibition basketball in 2002 for Athletes in Action in Xenia, Ohio. Her team played 16 games in 20 days.

Mrs. Shell hopes women's basketball will gain more acceptance. The Women's Basketball National Association (WBNA), founded in 1997, is a sister league to the NBA and stars world-class female players from around the world. It began after the Olympics made the sport more visible and proved that women's basketball could be profitable. The first league, the American Basketball League, pulled players from the Olympic team and did well for awhile, but eventually went bankrupt. That's when the WBNA emerged.

"Prominence will come once the public perspective is shifted," said Mrs. Shell. "Now, the public is not quite sure about their desire to see women play basketball."

She hopes the league owners will invest

profits in a way to create good role models and promote a positive image.

Mrs. Shell stays busy as she waits for her opportunity to play again. In addition to her home life, she is an associate minister at New Mountain Top Baptist Church in Winston, Ga. She is also a personal trainer with her own business, Elohim's Gym. She is a speaker and often delivers messages of faith and goal-setting at schools and churches. She wants to write a book to encourage young people to find role models in their communities.

"I am focused on my faith, my family and my game," said Mrs. Shell. "I combine my athletic gift with motivational speaking in the hopes that my journey will encourage others to pursue their dream."

Abbott Inducted into Sports Hall of Fame

by Greg Seitz



Former head baseball coach Rudy Abbott was inducted into the Alabama Sports Hall of Fame.

The Class of 2005 includes Abbott, Robert Brazile, Jeremiah Castille, Jim Fyffe, Chuck Person, Tracy Rocker, Billy Atkins and Bob Phillips. The inductees bring the total number of Hall of Famers to 249.

Mr. Abbott spent 32 years as head baseball coach and claimed his 1,000th career win with a 4-3 win over Belhaven College on 10 March 2001. He was the 29th coach in NCAA history to win 1,000 games.

He ranked fifth in Division I among active coaches considered by winning percentage.

Mr. Abbott's career wins placed him 15th among active coaches. Mr. Abbott won or shared three Atlantic Sun Conference division titles.

Mr. Abbott led the Gamecocks to two NCAA National Championships, claiming back-to-back titles in 1990 and again in 1991. He was named NCAA District Coach of the Year six times. His teams won five Gulf South Conference titles and 11 GSC Conference division titles.

He helped JSU achieve seven NCAA Division II World Series appearances and was elected to the Jacksonville State University Athletic Hall of Fame in 2001.

A native of Anniston, Mr. Abbott had a distinguished prep career at Walter Wellborn before heading to Jones Junior College in Mississippi.

After lettering in football, basketball, and track at Jones, Abbott returned home to

Jacksonville State. He later signed with the Pittsburgh Pirates after tossing a pair of no-hitters during his junior campaign.

After trying professional baseball, Mr. Abbott returned to Anniston and landed a sportswriting job at the *Anniston Star*. His love for baseball never faded; he served local youth league teams each summer as a head coach.

After sportswriting, Mr. Abbott returned to JSU, his alma mater, where he was named sports information director in 1964. Later, he filled in for ailing baseball coach Ray Wedgeworth and continued to "fill in" for more than 30 years.

The 2005 induction banquet will take place in the Birmingham Ballroom of the Sheraton Birmingham Hotel, Sunday, 12 June 2005.

William Taylor Stewart Center Dedicated

by Greg Seitz



President Bill Meehan, trustees, and other dignitaries cut the ribbon.

Jacksonville State University President William A. Meehan led dedication ceremonies at the William Taylor Stewart Strength and Conditioning Center.

The 6,000-square foot state-of-the-art facility is one of the top strength and conditioning centers in the Ohio Valley Conference. It will serve all 16 athletic programs and more than 350 Gamecock student-athletes.

The Donald Stewart Family donated more than \$200,000 to furnish the facility, which is named in the honor of their son, a 1999 graduate of Jacksonville State University.

"We really appreciate the Stewart Family and what they have done for Jacksonville

State University," said Dr. Meehan. "This will set the foundation for strength and conditioning for all our athletic teams. We are very proud of our student-athletes. This facility will allow them to become more competitive in their sport."

The new facility is part of a \$2.5 million Athletic Multi-Purpose Building, which will house the Baseball, Golf, Softball and Volleyball teams as well as the entire athletic administration. "The contribution is substantial because this facility will not only impact 350-plus student athletes now, but for future years to come," said JSU Athletic Director Jim Fuller. "When you take a look at other facilities around the country, there are not many that will be better than ours."

Crowe Earns OVC Coach of the Year Honors



Head Football Coach Jack Crowe was named Coach of the Year and eight players were selected to represent the Gamecocks on 2004 All-Ohio Valley Conference teams.

Crowe won the honor after guiding the Gamecocks to their best record since JSU entered Division I-AA and captured a second straight Ohio Valley Conference football title.

"I think this year I got more help than I've ever gotten as a head coach," said Crowe. "I really think I'm working with the best assistant coaching staff that I've ever been around, and I'm very fortunate."

Five Gamecock players earned OVC first-team honors, including senior running back Oscar Bonds, center John Pettus and guard Rod Olds. Senior defensive back Russell Green made the defensive first team, while sophomore Craig Agee earned first-team return specialist honors.

"I'm very happy and pleased for the players that made the OVC All-Conference team," said Crowe. "All but two of the players are seniors, and I think that speaks well for their impact on our football team."

Bonds, a senior from Russellville, broke the university scoring record and led the OVC with 19 touchdowns. He is third in the conference in total rushing yards and second in yards per game. He earned Player of the Week honors three times.

Both Pettus, a senior from Lineville, and Olds, a junior from Panama City, Fla., started every game and anchored an offense that led the OVC in scoring,

rushing and total offense. The unit allowed only seven sacks, which is also an OVC best.

Agee, a sophomore from Taylorville, Miss., led the NCAA and the OVC with 17 punt returns for a 21.2 average. He had two returns for touchdowns and earned Player of the Week honors twice.

Green, a Birmingham native, led the OVC with six interceptions, including two in his final home game. He also achieved 53 tackles, 10 deflections, and two fumble recoveries. He helped lead a JSU defense that ranks fifth in the nation in rushing.

Senior punter Richie Rhodes earned his

fourth straight All-Conference selection as a punter on the second-team. Linebackers Jonathan Crutcher and LeMarcus Rowell also grabbed second-team honors.

Crutcher, of Huntsville, was a second-team selection in 2003 and led the Gamecocks with 53 tackles and a sack.

Rowell, a junior from Opelika, Ala., leads the OVC in sacks with five. He had 53 tackles, including eight for a loss, four deflections, two fumble recoveries, and a blocked kick.

Rhodes, an Alexander City native, is third in the OVC in punting. He had 46 punts for a 40.1 average. He booted 13 punts inside the 20-yard line.

by Greg Seitz

Chris Kirk Earns AFCA Award



Jacksonville State football player Chris Kirk has been named to the 2004 American Football Coaches Association's Good Works Team.

Kirk becomes the second JSU football player to earn the

honor, following Daniel Kirkland's selection in 1999.

"I'm very excited about receiving this honor," said the senior fullback from Rex, Ga. "I've had the privilege to volunteer with mentally challenged children, and I love kids."

During summers, Kirk assisted at The Learning Tree, where he helped children acquire basic living skills.

The two 11-man teams, a Division I-A team and a combined team from Divisions I-AA, II, III and the NAIA, honor players for their dedication and commitment to community service. From 1992-1996, the College Football Association selected the Good Works Team. When the CFA disbanded in 1997, the AFCA began selecting the teams.

"It never ceases to amaze me to see the contributions student-athletes make to their communities," said AFCA Executive Director Grant Teaff. "Often, these young men are better known for the good things they do on the field. The AFCA is proud to recognize these student-athletes for the good things they do in their communities."

Nominations are submitted to the AFCA by college sports information departments. Nominees are committed to working with charitable organizations, service groups, or other community activities.

Log on!

For the latest JSU sports information, visit
www.jsugamecocksports.com.



We Heard You.....

Thank you to all who completed the JSU Alumni E-mail Survey! Your responses and comments will help us to continue to provide you with the information you want and need. In the survey you told us that you wanted:

- More career networking/advancement resources
- Continued communication about JSU events and academic programs
- More opportunities for you, as alumni, to become involved

You also told us that the majority of you would describe your experience as an alumnus/a as GOOD, but we want to make that EXCELLENT!

Now That You Have Spoken....

We are going to do everything we can to give you these things and more. The Alumni Office welcomes your comments and suggestions at any time. We need to hear from you! If you did not get a chance to fill out the survey, you can find it online at www.jsu.edu/alumni.

SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES...SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES...



DID YOU KNOW?

The Greater Rome Area Alumni Chapter is in the process of creating a scholarship for students in their area. Other chapters that offer annual scholarships include:

- Greater Washington D.C. Area Chapter
- Criminal Justice Chapter
- Nursing Chapter
- Georgia Scholarship
- Calhoun County Chapter
- Etowah County Chapter
- Madison County Chapter
- ROTC Chapter
- Cherokee Chapter

If you would like to contribute or if you know of someone who could benefit from any of these scholarships, please let us know!

May we have your ATTENTION?

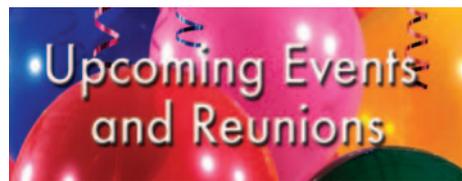
We are looking for alumni in the following categories:

- Communication alumni or former campus radio personnel
- Former Gamecock Chicks/Hostesses
- Alumni who have married or held a wedding reception at the alumni house

Please contact the alumni office at alumni@jsu.edu and let us know if you would be interested in attending a reunion for your respective groups later this year.

Other Upcoming Alumni Events

- The Atlanta Area Alumni Chapter will be hosting an event in early March.
- The Greater Rome Area Chapter members will be helping in recruiting efforts and planning additional events. If you are interested in assisting with any of these events, please contact chapter president Carla Patterson at carla_patterson@floyd.edu. If anyone would be interested in attending a Rome Braves event again this year as a group, please contact Carla as well.
- The Birmingham Area Chapter will host at "State of the University" alumni dinner on April 21, 2005.
- Etowah County Chapter will host an alumni dinner early in '05.
- The Calhoun County Chapter will host an alumni after-hours gathering in Anniston.



PREVIEW DAY

Bring prospective students back to campus!

February 19 and March 12

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION BOARD OF GOVERNORS MEETING

February 19

ANNUAL BLACK ALUMNI CHAPTER DINNER

February, 2005

60s GROUP SPRING FLING

May 1-8, 2005

HIGHER EDUCATION DAY IN MONTGOMERY, Ala.

March 3, 2005

FAB 40s REUNION

September 24, 2005

BCM PLANS 75TH ANNIVERSARY REUNION

September 30-October 1, 2005

Dinner Friday Night, BBQ lunch Saturday

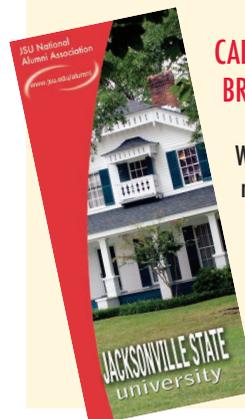
Mark the date on your calendar and contact the alumni office to get your name on the list for an invitation. Questions, contact BCM at bcm@jsu.edu.

1955 FOOTBALL TEAM 50TH YEAR CELEBRATION AND CLASS OF 1955 50TH YEAR REUNION

Fall, 2005

INTERNATIONAL HOUSE PROGRAM PARIS REUNION 2006

(contact the alumni office to make sure you are on the mailing list)



CALL FOR YOUR FREE BROCHURE!

Would you like to know more information about the JSU National Alumni Association? Call the alumni office and request a free full-color brochure.

Event Pictorial:

Pictured are scenes from just a few of the many alumni events held in 2004. Look for upcoming events in your area, and come share in the fun!



Calhoun County After-Hours at the Sports Nut.



Washington D.C. Annual Alumni Dinner.



Class of 1954 at 50th year reunion. Mary Propes not pictured.



During an alumni trip to Montana, the group stayed at the Wyoming Inn in Jackson, Wyoming and met with alumnus Price Derrick, '99 (center), resident manager at the hotel. For hotel reservations, call Mr. Price at (307) 734-0035.



Fab 40s reunion.



JSU's 60s group holds an annual Spring Fling in Panama City, Fla. Everyone is welcome to join in on the fun. The event will be held 1-8 May 2005 at the Cayman Inn (formerly known as the Sea Witch). Reservations can be made by calling 1-800-322-4571 or 850-234-5722. When making reservations, mention that you are with the JSU Sixties Group. **The group would like to salute the Sea Witch (now the Cayman Inn) and its former Captain, Ms. Helen Steakly Stephens, (a 60s groupie) for being so generous and for five Spring Flings. Thanks Helen!**



Etowah County Summer Picnic



UTC Tailgate Party



Rome After-Hours

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