



LIONS' PRIDE

A publication of East Mississippi Community College



SPOTLIGHT ON DR. RAJ SHAUNAK

Commiversity Opens
to Students ▶ PG. 10

Sports Hall of Fame
▶ PG. 16

Alumni Honored
▶ PG. 8



EMCC President, Dr. Scott Alsobrooks

This past year has been a whirlwind as Annabelle, Ayden, and I adjusted to our new lives at East Mississippi Community College.

We are overwhelmed by your kindness and warmth and how quickly you accepted us into the EMCC family. It has truly been an honor and a privilege to get to know you all and serve the college as the 12th president.

As I look back over my first year here, I am amazed by all that we have accomplished together. Here are just a few highlights:

- This year was the fourth consecutive year that a student from EMCC's Automotive Technology or Diesel Mechanics programs took home a national title at the SkillsUSA Championships.
- Our men's basketball team captured the school's first-ever state title.
- We recognized 32 employees for exceptional service to EMCC at our opening convocation. These individuals are a shining example of the drive and commitment EMCC employees exhibit every day.
- We undertook a major renovation project to upgrade one of the science labs on the Scooba campus. The remodeled space includes functional lab stations, Smart Board technology, new fume hoods and a medical grade refrigerator.
- We launched four new career-technical programs: Small Engine Repair; Baking and Pastry Arts; Travel and Tourism Technology; and Barbering. We also expanded the Marketing Technology program to the Scooba Campus.
- In April, 54 students from the Golden Triangle Early College High School became the inaugural class of graduates. Forty-one received an associate's degree or technical certificate from EMCC in addition to their high school diploma!

This is by no means an exhaustive list of our accomplishments this year, but rather a snapshot of some of the great things happening all across our campuses.

The successful launch of the Communiversy is a feat that warrants its own acknowledgement. This remarkable advanced manufacturing facility represents a significant investment on behalf of the state of Mississippi to ensure our state develops the highly skilled and knowledgeable workforce we need.

As Mississippi continues to establish itself as a national leader in industrial and high-tech economic development, the need for STEM specialized professions increases. To that end, EMCC is working diligently to connect students with Mississippi businesses and encourage them to explore the myriad of career opportunities available in STEM fields.

As EMCC endeavors to educate the next generation of leaders, we understand that the college's success is very much intertwined with the success of each and every individual student. We are blessed to directly serve nearly 4,000 students through our residential and commuter campuses, as well as hundreds more indirectly through our summer enrichment camps, dual-enrollment program, distance learning opportunities and an assortment of outreach activities.

Our role is to ensure students leave our institution with the life skills needed to take the next step, be that continuing on to a university or entering the workforce. We believe that central to academic and intellectual growth is personal growth and we seek to cultivate that growth in students through a whole-student approach to learning.

Our Counseling and Student Success Centers provide much needed wraparound services to support students from all walks of life. The services and support these centers provide are paramount to EMCC's commitment to individualized attention.

As the cost of post-secondary education continues to rise, I have challenged the EMCC Foundation with underwriting the cost of tuition to ensure that all in-district high schools students will not have to come out of pocket to attend EMCC. With the help of our alumni base, we are committed to ensuring that the next generation of Lions will be able to attend EMCC debt-free. Stay tuned for more information on this crucial fundraising initiative.

I am proud of what we have accomplished thus far and am eager to build upon our legacy of excellence in the coming year. Thank you for all you do to serve our college, our community and our state.

OPPORTUNITY HAPPENS HERE!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "DS Alsobrooks". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Dr. Scott Alsobrooks
EMCC President

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THE LIONS' PRIDE

The Lions' Pride is the official publication of the East Mississippi Community College Development Foundation/Alumni Association. It is published by EMCC's Public Information Office.

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Cover Photo: Michael Stewart

Lions' Pride
Volume 19, No. 1
Winter 2019



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ALUMNI REPORT



Craig Hitt, EMCC Alumni Association outgoing president

What do you remember most about your experience at EMCC?

For some of us, these are recent memories, while others like myself have experienced a lot of life since leaving the campus as a student. Either way, I feel certain that there are fond memories that we will continue to enjoy for years to come. I certainly will never forget watching Coach Poole hold the gear shift (that had come loose) in his hand while driving the EMCC bus down the highway on the way to a baseball game.

I hope that each of you can take a few minutes and reflect on your experience on campus and the opportunities we had to get an education while making new friends and experiencing a new phase of life.

The great memories remind me of the impact that the college has had on so many people through the years. The campuses have grown, buildings have been taken down and new ones constructed, but the end result continues to be the same — an opportunity for traditional and nontraditional students to get an affordable quality education.

If you have not had an opportunity to visit both the Scooba and Golden Triangle campuses recently, I encourage you to do so to see the changes that have and are taking place. The Community is now open at the GT campus and there is truly nothing like it in the Southeast.

On the Scooba campus, construction has begun on a new dormitory at the site of the former football field. I applaud the administration for the tremendous job they have done taking care of these campuses and growing them to better serve the current and future students.

As your outgoing alumni president, I want to encourage you to support East Mississippi Community College in whatever means you can. There are various ways that you can be involved. You can support an on-campus club, athletic team or make financial contributions to the Foundation. Whatever works for you, please consider giving back to EMCC so great memories can continue to be made.

In closing, I want to thank you for the opportunity to serve the past two years as EMCC alumni president and to thank Gina Cotton and Marcus Wood for their support. It has been a pleasure to work with Gina, Marcus, Dr. Alsobrooks and all of the college's support staff.

DIRECTORS' MESSAGE



Gina Cotton and Marcus Wood

As the year draws to a close, we want to take a moment to pause and thank you for your overwhelming support of East Mississippi Community College. It is a privilege to be at this remarkable institution and an extreme pleasure to work with each and every one of you.

Your extreme generosity and devotion to EMCC is what makes this organization the college we all know and love.

This has been an extraordinary year for EMCC. We have made a difference in students' lives, solidified our commitment to advanced manufacturing at the Community, embarked on a new dorm project, strengthened our career technical offerings, and forged new connections in the community and across the state.

We welcomed newcomers and said good-bye to dear friends. We took home athletic titles, received academic awards, and were named a top ten institution by SmartAsset.

We are beyond grateful for the hand you had in making these exciting milestones possible. On behalf of our entire faculty and staff, happy New Year! May 2020 be our brightest year yet!



High Honors



Mallory Vance, who graduated from EMCC in May 2017, was inducted into the University of Mississippi chapter of The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi Nov. 11. Vance attends school at the University of Mississippi Medical Center in Jackson and will graduate in May with a Master of Occupational Therapy degree. A recipient of a Mississippi Rural Allied Health Professionals Scholarship, Vance plans to work as an occupational therapist in rural Mississippi after graduating.

EMCC alumnus turns childhood passion into business venture



Former Lions football standout Derrick “DJ” Wilson, center, holds off a Gulf Coast Community College defender in this file photo from the 2011 season in which the Lions were undefeated and claimed a national championship. Wilson now owns a food catering business.

East Mississippi Community College alumnus Derrick “DJ”

Wilson, a football standout who helped the Lions claim a national championship during the team’s 2011 undefeated season, has turned a passion for cooking he shared with his mother into a business venture.

In 2018, Wilson launched Options Catering and Delivery. His business is a one-man show in which he serves as cook, caterer and delivery driver. Wilson serves up full-service meals he describes as “comfort food with a Cajun twist.”

He caters upon request and hosts “pop-ups,” cooking meals and setting up at predetermined locations so customers can come to him.

“I will post on social media, ‘Hey, I am coming to your town for a four-hour span. I am going to set up at this location. This is what will be on the menu and you can come buy from me,’” Wilson said.

During a recent pop-up, he served chicken breast wrapped in bacon and stuffed with pesto, spinach and parmesan cheese that was served on a bed of noodles and covered with cream sauce, with Brussel sprouts on the side.

Wilson’s most popular meal is bowtie pasta with grilled chicken and shrimp and a thick homemade Cajun cream sauce. He services areas around Greenville where he resides and cooks the meals out of his home.

“I will come cook in your kitchen,” Wilson said. “I don’t have a problem going anywhere in the state of Mississippi.”

Wilson said his mother, Jelks Wilson, fostered a love of cooking in him at an early age. Each Sunday, Wilson and his mother would select

an untried recipe out of a “Bell’s Best Cookbook.” He recalls cooking his first solo meal of spaghetti, supervised by his mother, at the age of 5.

“Granted it was only noodles, tomato paste, onions and a little seasoning, but at 5 years I felt like I had accomplished something,” Wilson said.

By the time he was 8, he was allowed to cook on his own.

“In hindsight, I wouldn’t let an 8 year old loose in the kitchen,” Wilson said with a laugh. “But I didn’t burn the house down.”

Wilson always had a close relationship with his mother, who was diagnosed with cancer in November of 2010 when he was 19. His sister, Fallon, was 10 at the time. The youngest sibling, Reagan, was 3.

Wilson played offensive left tackle for the Lions and was the college’s 2011 Scholar Athlete Award winner for football.

Wilson spent weekdays in 2011 on EMCC’s Scooba campus, attending classes and football practices, returning to his mother’s home in Horn Lake on weekends to make sure she and his sisters had everything they needed for the following week.

The only relief he found was on the football field during game nights.

“That was the only time I didn’t have to be an adult or worry about what was going on off the field,” Wilson said. “In those three hours it was me and my brothers and we were going out there to win.”

When his mother died in January 2012, he turned down full-ride scholarship offers from the University of West Alabama, the University of Alabama-Birmingham and Northwestern State University of Louisiana so he could take care of his sisters.

He landed a walk-on spot as left tackle with the University of Mississippi and played there through the spring of 2013.

EMCC Executive Director of College Advancement Marcus Wood, who was an assistant offensive coach for the Lions when Wilson played for the team, recruited and coached Wilson.

“He was a good really good player but when you got to know him as a person is when you really found out what a special guy he is,” Wood said. “He is a shining example of what a good kid should come out looking like.”

Wilson said he plans to purchase a food truck for his business and would like to open his own chain of restaurants. He believes he has found his calling.

“I am passionate about what I am doing now,” he said.

For more information about Options Catering and Delivering, email Wilson at options.catering.delivery@gmail.com.



EMCC alumnus Derrick “DJ” Wilson is owner of Options Catering and Delivery, a food catering business he operates out of Greenville.



Champions

Some members of the EMCC Lions 2009 state champion football team were recognized Oct. 26 during halftime of EMCC's Homecoming football game. The 2009 team members honored on the field are, from left, CJ Jenkins, Kenny Roby, Phillip Dimino, EMCC Executive Director of College Advancement Marcus Wood (former EMCC assistant coach/offensive coordinator), Brett Spencer, Zach Marro (athletic trainer), Billy Autrey and Holden Coggins.

Message From Incoming Alumni Association President Jake Hand



Jake Hand will assume the position of EMCC Alumni Association President in January of 2020

I am grateful for the opportunity to serve as the 2019 East Mississippi Community College Alumni Association president. I'd like to begin by telling you a little bit about myself. I am originally from Butler, Ala., and

currently live in Columbus where I've been happily married to Jessica Harpole for 11 years. We have two sons, Colby, 9, and Carson, 3.

I have 11 years of banking experience and have worked for Citizens National Bank since 2015. I've been a member of the EMCC Alumni Association since 2014 and I have served on the EMCC Development Foundation Board since 2017.

I appreciate the opportunities EMCC offered me while I attended in 2004-2005. In addition to being the cost-efficient transition to college I needed, everything I learned and participated in prepared me for my future.

I've always enjoyed sports, and I was able to continue playing by joining the EMCC soccer and golf teams, playing both for two years. I benefited from great faculty and personal classroom environments that prepared me to finish my degree at Mississippi State University.

I served as a Student Government representative for two years on the Scooba campus where I learned the processes involved with proposing new ideas to the college like adding new intramural sports. I continued that experience by joining the Governmental Affairs Committee at Mississippi State University where our group successfully added a student vote to the Mississippi State Institutions of Higher Learning Board.

I have witnessed some historic athletic events like EMCC's first football state championship, where Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College was defeated 75-71 in regulation, and I traveled to see EMCC beat Georgia Military for a national championship in 2013. These on-field victories are just part of the EMCC legacy.

The college has seen much growth since 1927, establishing numerous campus locations, constructing the new football stadium and acquiring Lion Hills Country Club. Each addition has helped give opportunities to our students and community, and the recent construction of the Commiversity for workforce development is another example of that.

Students learn the skills needed by local employers, receive certificates and degrees recognized by the industry and enjoy success because of this training. I am proud to be part of a college that supports the community's needs.

I encourage you to join the Alumni Association and help support EMCC by attending one of our upcoming events or volunteering your talents. Again, thank you for the opportunity to be your EMCC

Alumni Association President. Please contact me anytime if you have any ideas or feedback that would help out the alumni association.

Who ya rootin' for? Scooba Tech!



Top Honors

Three East Mississippi Community College alumni took top honors in the Mississippi University for Women 2019 Juried Student Art Exhibition. Addison Garrett was awarded first place in the Drawing category. Audrea Powell earned top honors in Mixed Media. Natalie Runyon, pictured here in this EMCC file photo, took first place in both the Design and Photography categories and second place in Crafts/Sculpture, Painting and Overall Achievement. Runyon also earned an honorable mention in Painting.

WILD GAME DINNER AND AUCTION

The “Bull” Sullivan Memorial Division of EMCC Development Foundation hosted the 16th Annual Billy Joe Cross Wild Game Dinner and Auction March 1 at the Lion Hills Center with presenting sponsor Renasant Bank. The annual event is a fundraiser for EMCC’s academic and athletic programs. Auction items included guns, hunting and vacation packages, collectibles, and signed sports memorabilia, among other things. The 2020 Wild Game Dinner will take place March 6. For more information on the fundraiser or other EMCC alumni/development foundation events, contact Marcus Wood (662.476.5025 or mwood@eastms.edu) or Gina Cotton (662.476.5063 or gcotton@eastms.edu).



CATCHING UP

Bill West, at left, and Tommy Johnson were among the attendees at the Wild Game Dinner and Auction at the Lion Hills Center.



GOOD CAUSE

From left, EMCC Board of Trustees member Rudy Johnson, Frank Goodman and Dean Goodman visit during the Wild Game Dinner and Auction, an annual fundraiser held at EMCC’s Lion Hills Center.



GREAT TURNOUT

The Wild Game Dinner and Auction is one of the annual fundraising events for the EMCC Development Foundation.



NAME YOUR BID

Corey Ravenhorst, at left, and Jose Arellano look over auction items during the Wild Game Dinner and Auction.



TABLE TALK

From left, Clay Moore, Kim Moore, Dr. Melanie Sanders and Bruff Sanders during the Wild Game Dinner and Auction, an EMCC Development Foundation fundraiser.

EMCC SPORTING CLAYS CHALLENGE

East Mississippi Community College's 11th Annual Sporting Clays Challenge took place Friday, May 10, 2019 at Burnt Oak Lodge in Crawford. PryorMorrow was the presenting sponsor for the fundraiser to benefit the college's academic and athletic programs. Huck's Place provided lunch. The event featured two competitions, with one held in the morning and the second in the afternoon. The 12th Annual Sporting Clays Challenge will take place May 15, 2020 at Burnt Oak Lodge. For information on the clays challenge or other EMCC alumni/development foundation events, please contact Marcus Wood (662.476.5025 or mwood@eastms.edu) or Gina Cotton (662.476.5063 or gcotton@eastms.edu).



MITCHELL DISTRIBUTING, TEAM CHAMPS

Mitchell Distributing was the 2019 overall team champion, with members busting 377 clays out of 400. The members are pictured with EMCC Executive Director of College Advancement Marcus Wood, at center. The team members are, from left, Brad Williamson, Tony Carley, Alan "Birddog" Hall and Jeff Honnoll. Williamson was the event's top shooter, breaking 97 out of 100 clays. Mitchell Distributing took first place in both the morning and afternoon shoots. The overall champs were comprised of members in the afternoon shoot, pictured here.



EMCC

A team representing EMCC took second place in the afternoon shoot, earning 360 points out of a possible 400. They are, from left Joseph Huffman, Mickey Stokes, Elliott Shroud and Charles Berry.



MITCHELL DISTRIBUTING, MORNING SHOOT

Mitchell Distributing took first place in the morning competition, scoring 365 out of a possible 400 points. The team members are, from left, Tony Carley, Brad Williamson, Jeff Honnoll and Curtis Hilt.



PRYORMORROW

PryorMorrow Principal Architect Chris Morrow takes aim during the EMCC's 11th Annual Sporting Clays Challenge.



LION LEAD SLINGERS

The Lion Lead Slingers earned second place in the morning shoot, busting 354 clays out of 400. The team members are pictured with EMCC President Dr. Scott Alsobrooks, far right. The team members are, from left, Mike Duke, Jonathan Duke, Alan "Birddog" Hall and Jim Bearden.



EMCC-OLD WAVERLY GOLF CLASSIC

The annual EMCC-Old Waverly Golf Classic took place on November 4 at the Old Waverly Golf Club near West Point. BankFirst was the presenting sponsor. About 80 golfers participated in the four-man scramble. The 2020 tournament will take place Nov. 2. For information on future tournaments or other EMCC alumni/development foundation events, please contact Marcus Wood (662.476.5025 or mwood@eastms.edu) or Gina Cotton (662.476.5063 or gcotton@eastms.edu).



OVERALL WINNERS

The first place winners of the 2019 EMCC-Old Waverly Golf Classic were the BankFirst team of, from left, Skip Eastham, Roby Autry, Brad Love and Joseph Lupe.



PRESENTING SPONSOR

One of the BankFirst teams that participated in the EMCC-Old Waverly Golf Classic consisted of, from left, Clint Butler, Peter Niehoff, Dorian Henry and Monty Yates.



PUTTING CHAMP

Neal Pettigrew from The Junction/Prince Oil team was the putting contest winner in the EMCC-Old Waverly Golf Classic.



EVENT COORDINATORS

EMCC Director of Alumni Affairs and Foundation Operations Gina Cotton and Executive Director of College Advancement Marcus Wood put a lot of work into ensuring the annual golf classic is a success.



PITCH SHOT

Penn Mattison attempts a pitch shot during the golf classic while Dan Haire, Michael Monroe and Matt Taylor look on.

EMCC alumni honored at college's Homecoming



Dr. Glenn Peters, second from right, was named EMCC's 2019 Alumnus of the Year, while Jeanie and Buster Orr, third and fourth from left, were named the college's 2019 Distinguished Service Award recipients. They are pictured here with, from left, EMCC Executive Director of College Advancement Marcus Wood, EMCC President Dr. Scott Alsobrooks and EMCC Director of Alumni Affairs and Foundation Operations Gina Cotton.

Three East Mississippi Community College alumni were honored during the college's 2019 Homecoming activities.

Dr. Glenn Peters, Class of 1966, was named the college's 2019 Alumnus of the Year. Buster and Jeanie Orr, both graduates of the Class of 1956, received the 2019 Distinguished Service Award.

Peters and the Orrs were recognized Oct. 26 at an alumni luncheon prior to EMCC's Homecoming football game, in which the college defeated Northeast Mississippi Community College 30-22.

Alumnus of the Year

Dr. Peters, who is in his 37th year practicing medicine in Louisville, is a Macon native who spent most of his formative years in Noxubee County.

In 1964, he graduated with honors from Noxubee County High School and enrolled at what was then East Mississippi Junior College on a football scholarship, playing the positions of cornerback and wide receiver for legendary football coach Bob "Bull" Sullivan.

While at EMJC, he served as president of the Student Government Association and was a member of Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society.

After graduating from EMJC in 1966, Peters enrolled at Mississippi State University, graduating from there in 1969 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Management.

It was there that he started dating and married Nancy Hummer.

In 1969, he was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Air Force and later trained to fly the Lockheed C-141 Starlifter, the workhorse air transporter during the Vietnam War.

Peters was assigned to Charleston Air Force Base in South Carolina, where his unit was tasked with flying troops and military equipment all over the world, including Vietnam.

"We transported everything that needed to be flown to and from Vietnam," he said. "Sometimes we took armament and supplies. We flew troops in and occasionally brought body bags back out."

While he was in the Air Force, Glenn and Nancy's first two daughters were born. Although he enjoyed flying, Glenn was spending a lot of time away from his family and the couple "made a decision to do something different."

In 1975, he was accepted into the University of Mississippi Medical School in Jackson, where he earned his doctorate in 1979. Glenn served his residency at Capstone Medical Center in Tuscaloosa, Ala., from 1979 to 1982, where he worked with the team physicians for the University of Alabama during what would be Bear Bryant's last three years as head football coach. During this time they welcomed another daughter and son into their family.

In July of 1982, he established a solo Family Practice in Louisville, later partnering with other physicians to form the Louisville Medical Associates, where Nancy served as the clinic manager.

"Our patients in Winston County have been absolutely marvelous to work with," he said. "We have done well here and one of the reasons for that is because of Nancy's involvement."



Dr. Glenn Peters, at right was named EMCC's 2019 Alumnus of the Year. He is pictured here with his wife, Nancy, prior to the college's annual Homecoming alumni luncheon.

On April 28, 2014, an EF4 tornado ripped through Louisville, destroying the city's hospital and the 10,000-square-foot clinic where Glenn and his partner practiced. A week later, they opened a temporary 1,000-square-foot clinic in Louisville. Two days later, they opened a second clinic with about 1,500 square feet of space.

"If you had told me we could open one clinic in less than seven days and a second within nine days, I would have told you that you were crazy," Glenn said.

Officials with the Choctaw County Regional Medical Center in Ackerman later offered to renovate a building in Louisville for permanent clinic space. Peters and his partners accepted this offer and went to work for CCRMC. He plans to continue practicing as long as he is making a positive impact on the lives of his patients.

"We can't think of anyone more deserving of the Alumnus of the Year award," EMCC Director of Alumni Affairs and Foundation Operations Gina Cotton said. "Dr. Peters is a great role model for our students and his accomplishments are a testament to the power of hard work, focus and dedication."

Distinguished Service Award

In June, Buster and Jeanie Orr celebrated their 63rd wedding anniversary.

They married in 1956, the year they graduated from what was then East Mississippi Junior College.

Ever since that time, they have had a special attachment to EMCC and have been longtime supporters of the school. They were the primary donors to the Buster and Jeanie Orr Center for Christian Activity, which is located on the Scooba campus and was dedicated in December of 2011.

"Buster and Jeanie have made an impact on the lives of countless students here at EMCC with their contributions," EMCC Executive Director of College Advancement Marcus Wood said. "We are grateful for their continued dedication to the college."

In February 2018, a bronze plaque was unveiled at the Orr Center titled "The Love Story of Buster & Jeanie Orr" that recounts the couple's meeting and subsequent marriage.

Buster, a West Point native who attended EMCC on a football scholarship, was fitted with a body cast following a serious automobile accident in 1955. Because of the injuries, he was no longer able to play football.

While still in his cast, he met Jeanie, whose maiden name was Aust at the time. She began meeting Buster daily in the cafeteria and would carry his food to the table since he was on crutches.

Buster said he has always felt a sense of gratitude to EMCC, both as the location where he met the love of his life and for allowing him to finish his education although he could no longer play ball after his accident.

"That is why we have such a heart for doing things here," he said.

After graduating from EMJC, Buster continued his studies at Mississippi State University where he earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Petroleum Engineering and Geology.

He accepted a job as a manager at Republic Finance in Greenwood, working later for the company in Brookhaven and in Tupelo.

In 1971, Buster accepted a job with National Safety Associates, which is headquartered in Collierville, Tenn., a suburb of Memphis.

He has been working for the company ever since. He and Jeanie moved to Memphis, where they reside today.

Six months into the position, the company's founders made Buster a partner and vice president. One of the best known subsidiaries of National Safety Associates is Juice Plus+, a health and wellness company operating in 20 countries.

While Buster was helping build the company, Jeanie was raising their two children, Stacey and Hap.

"During that time I was running carpools, going to PTA meetings and working at the church," Jeanie said.

Buster has been working with Adult Teen Challenge in Memphis for more than 25 years and sits on that organization's board of directors. Adult Teen Challenge is a faith-based drug and alcohol treatment program for adult males who are 18 or older.

"We have seen that grow and prosper and we are very proud of the way so many people come to know the Lord and completely change their lives," Buster said.

Jeanie said they have had a good life.

"I wouldn't change anything about all those years," she said. "We have had bends in the road just like other people but God has always seen us through."



Longtime EMCC supporters Buster and Jeanie Orr are the college's 2019 Distinguished Service Award recipients.



EMCC's Communiversity opened to students in August 2019. The 145,638-square-foot building is dedicated to training students for careers in modern manufacturing.

EMCC'S COMMUNIVERSITY TO MEET DIVERSE NEEDS

Construction on East Mississippi Community College's Communiversity wrapped up this past summer and on Aug. 19 the \$42 million facility dedicated to training students for careers in modern manufacturing opened to students.

Programs taught out of the Communiversity, also known as the Center for Manufacturing Technology Excellence 2.0, include: Precision Machining & Manufacturing; Engineering Drafting & Design; Electro-Mechanical Technology; Mechatronics Technology; Industrial Maintenance; and Systems Based Automation.

"Our students are already blazing new paths in learning fields like Mechatronics, Cybersecurity Technology and Systems Based Automation," EMCC President Dr. Scott Alsobrooks said. "We hope to ignite a passion for modern manufacturing early in the lives of students and fan that flame through an industry-relevant credential."

Meeting a Need

Hands-on training takes place in high-bay laboratories equipped with some of the most technologically-advanced equipment available, including a fully operational miniature of an automated assembly line that is used as a trouble-shooting training tool.

Classes are designed to teach real-world skills in areas such as programmable logic controllers, industrial robotics and computer assisted manufacturing, to name a few.

Those skills are in high demand both locally and nationally. According to the National Association of Manufacturers, an anticipated shortage of skilled workers could result in 2.8 million U.S. manufacturing jobs going unfilled over the next decade.

That demand is creating opportunities for EMCC students like Ryan Nicholson, who is enrolled in the Precision Manufacturing and Machining Technology program. After completing the program, Nicholson plans to continue his education at Mississippi State University to earn a bachelor's degree in engineering.

"I feel like there are a lot of benefits to this program at EMCC," Nicholson said. "If I choose not to become an engineer, this will provide me with a great career option and a backup plan."

Growing Interest

The Communiversity was garnering attention before the doors opened. The facility has been featured in national publications and officials from community colleges in California, Washington State, West Virginia, the Carolinas and Kentucky have toured the facility to see if it is something they could emulate in their home states.

From the start, the intention with the Communiversity was to "wow" visitors, EMCC Vice President for Workforce and Community Services Dr. Raj Shaunak said. The design of the 145,638-square-foot, two-story building is modern, with a glass and steel façade punctuated by sweeping lines outside and large open spaces inside.

"We wanted to change the image people have of Mississippi and encourage young people in our community to come here to acquire the skillsets needed to earn a good living right here at home," Shaunak said.

Over the years, EMCC has earned a reputation as a workforce innovator and key player in area economic development efforts. EMCC's CMTE on the Golden Triangle campus provided office space for officials with PACCAR Engine Company while their Columbus plant was under construction and the college's West Point campus serves as a training site for Yokohama Tire Manufacturing Mississippi employees.

Bridging the Gap

The Communiversity is expected to further enhance EMCC's role as a bridge between education and industry. The advisory board for the Communiversity is comprised of local industry CEO's and human resource professionals and each technical program has craft committees whose members are industry experts in their respective fields.

Three of the 21 high bay laboratories are reserved for use by start-ups or incoming industries.

“When a company comes in, there are offices where they can put their human resources person, maybe a general manager and four or five people to do designated training, or whatever their needs may be,” Golden Triangle Development LINK Chief Executive Officer Joe Max Higgins said. “And there is space for their training equipment. You tell me what that is worth to a new company? That has tons of value.”

It is the Communiversity’s multi-faceted role as an educational facility, workforce developer and economic driver that is piquing many people’s interest.

Jackson, Tenn. Chamber Vice President of Talent Development Vicki Bunch was among a contingent of people from that city who toured the Communiversity last September. She was accompanied by education, business and industry leaders.

“It would be wonderful to have a training facility just like this located in Jackson, Tenn.,” Bunch said. “We can have the best infrastructure, the best site and the best location but if you don’t have an available and skilled workforce you are not going to be successful in expanding existing industry or attracting new companies. Anytime we can learn best practices from other areas and bring them to fruition in our town, it puts us one step closer to helping our industries be successful.”

During an October ribbon cutting and grand opening ceremony for the facility, Gov.-elect Tate Reeves said the Communiversity could prove to be a game changer for the state.

“If this facility is done right and we can mirror it in other parts of our state, we can not only be competitive, we can win,” Reeves said. “We can win big and we can win consistently at recruiting business and industry into our state.”

New Leadership

On Nov. 11, Dr. Courtney Taylor assumed the role of executive director of the Communiversity. She will replace Shaunak, who is retiring.

Taylor has served in higher education for the last 13 years, most recently as the regional director of workforce and economic development for the Alabama Community College System. Prior to that, she served



Dr. Courtney Taylor, Communiversity Executive Director

as the director of the Workforce Solutions department at Calhoun Community College where she managed open-enrollment programs and customized training for local industry.

She is a past assistant director at Troy University’s Center for International Business and Economic Development.

Taylor is familiarizing herself with EMCC and meeting with stakeholders to determine their needs.

“EMCC is on a great path,” Taylor said. “My main job for now is to help move the projects that have already begun forward with the stakeholders in the counties EMCC serves. One of the things I want to do is reach out to our K-12 partners to ensure those students are aware of the opportunities here at EMCC.”



Mechatronics Technology instructor Ben Harris, far right, talks to visitors during an Oct. 18 grand opening ceremony for EMCC’s Communiversity. Here, he shows them a miniature assembly line used for training purposes that mimics larger automated assembly lines found in many modern manufacturing plants.

Outreach

Part of that effort will include educating students and their parents, many of whom are not aware that high-skill, high-wage jobs available in today’s modern manufacturing plants are a far cry from the low-skill, low-wage manufacturing jobs that were the norm in years past.

To that end, Communiversity staff and instructors have been conducting tours of the facility for students enrolled in area middle schools and high schools to expose them to programs and career opportunities they may not have otherwise considered.

That educational component was incorporated into the design of the Communiversity, which boasts a two-story Imagination Center that includes interactive exhibits and displays by area manufacturers to showcase locally-made products to visiting students and their teachers.

Since its opening, the Communiversity has hosted several major events, including the Golden Triangle Comic-Con, which took place in September and featured gaming, vendors and cosplay, in which attendees dressed up as pop culture figures.

In October, about 1,000 8th grade students attended a FORGE Your Career Path Expo at the facility in which vendors in the construction and career technical trades provided hands-on activities to students.

“Our mission as industry and business leaders is to go out there and find the next generations of our workforce and get them excited about the great career opportunities that await if they will just come through this Communiversity,” said Ben Machen, who is the chairman of the Communiversity Advisory Board and an assistant plant manager at PACCAR Engine Company.

HOMECOMING HAPPENINGS



HOMECOMING QUEENS

Lauren Walker of Collinsville, at left, was named the 2019 Homecoming Queen for EMCC's Scooba campus, while Rylee Bowman of Ackerman, at right, was named Homecoming Queen for the Golden Triangle campus. Walker and Bowman were crowned Saturday, Oct. 26, in a ceremony in the Stennis Hall Auditorium on the Scooba campus. Walker is a sophomore speech pathology major and is the daughter of Vanessa and Ken Walker (deceased) of Collinsville. Bowman is a sophomore nursing major and is the daughter of Rodney and Melinda Bowman of Ackerman.



HOMECOMING COURT

Members of EMCC's 2019 Homecoming Court are, from left: (First row) India Jones of Laurel, Rylee Bowman of Ackerman, Bree Gammill of Carrollton, Aubrey Riley of Columbus, Lauren Walker of Collinsville, Derriyana Mays of Starkville and Amberly Harden of West Point. In the back row, from left, are Carla Keaton of Columbus, Marlee Hemphill of Caledonia, Nykirra Taylor of Pascagoula, McKinsey Wedel of West Point, Kelsey Tubby of Philadelphia, JayQuandra Ash of Shuqualak and Trinity Davis of DeKalb.



GO LIONS!

Richard Wallace, aka the "Lion Guy," a longtime supporter of the Lions football team, pumps up the crowd during EMCC's Homecoming game.



MIGHTY LION BAND

The Mighty Lion Band was a crowd favorite during the Oct. 24 Homecoming parade, which kicked off three-days of Homecoming events. The theme for the parade was "School Spirit."



HOMECOMING SPIRIT

Homecoming Court members India Jones and Kelsey Tubby with members of the EMCC Cheerleading Team prior to the Homecoming game in which the Lions defeated Northeast Mississippi Community College 30-22.



ADULT EDUCATION GRADUATION

Thirty-one Adult Education students in EMCC's Launch Pad program received their high school equivalency diplomas the night of Thursday, May 30, in a graduation ceremony in the Lyceum Auditorium on the college's Golden Triangle campus. The Launch Pad provides a myriad of services that include helping students earn a Career Readiness Certificate or transition into college academic classes or career technical training programs.



BEAUTY AND BEAU PAGENT

East Mississippi Community College President Dr. Scott Also-brooks, center, congratulates winners of the 2019 Beauty & Beau Pageant, which took place Feb. 5 in Stennis Hall Auditorium on the Scooba campus. "Most Beautiful" winner India Jones of Laurel, at left, is a biology major. "Most Handsome" winner, Courtavis Hairston of Columbus, at right, is a business administration major.



MFACJC PRESIDENT

In September, EMCC humanities instructor Marilyn Ford assumed the role of Mississippi Faculty Association of Community and Junior Colleges president. During the two-year post, she will represent faculty at community and junior colleges across the state. The MFACJC serves as an advocacy agency for faculty and other non-administrative employees who provide instructional support.



SKILLS-USA NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP WINNERS

One East Mississippi Community College student earned a national championship title and another took third place in the National SkillsUSA Championships in Louisville, Ky. Both students represented EMCC's Automotive/Diesel Technology program during the 55th Annual National Leadership and Skills Conference that took place June 24-28. Kyle Bluiitt of Columbus earned a gold medal in the Job Skills Demonstration (Oil Change) category, and Fallon Traweek of West Point, pictured here, earned a bronze medal in the Job Skills Demonstration (Open) category. This is the fourth year in a row that an EMCC student representing the Automotive Technology/Diesel program earned a national championship title at the competition.



SCIENCE LAB REMODEL

Major renovation to a science lab on EMCC's Scooba campus completed this past summer is making it easier for students to learn inside and outside the classroom. Room 18 in the Oktibeha Hall Math & Science Building has been updated and now includes combination desks and sink work stations, an eyewash station and shower, and an interactive Smart Board that, among other things, allows the instructor to project live microscope and slide images on the screen. Science classes and labs can now be taught out of the same classroom and notes and slides uploaded to the Smart Board can be made available to students outside the classroom.



EMCC Vice President for Workforce and Community Services Dr. Raj Shaunak speaks to staff in his division during a July 2 flag raising ceremony for the Community. Shaunak has worked for EMCC since 1991.

SHAUNAK AT FORE OF EMCC WORKFORCE EFFORTS

When East Mississippi Community College Vice President

for Workforce and Community Services Dr. Raj Shaunak began working at the college more than a quarter century ago, the Center for Manufacturing Technology Excellence had not yet been built, workforce development wasn't on anyone's radar and employees at area manufacturing plants performed labor-intensive work requiring low-tiered skills.

Today, EMCC's Workforce and Community Services offers a myriad of services that include adult education resources, noncredit workforce development courses, job placement assistance and numerous programs that lead to certificates or associate degrees.

Shaunak, who is retiring soon, oversaw the rise of workforce services, that department's steady growth and subsequent transformation into an integral component of area economic development efforts.

"The impact Raj has had on EMCC and the community at large through his contributions to workforce development are immeasurable," EMCC President Dr. Scott Alsobrooks said. "The lives of countless students have been forever changed because of the services and training they received through the programs Raj has helped create."

Transforming Lives

When Shaunak first began working at EMCC, there were three or four employees in what was then called the Skills Tech Center, he said.

"What we basically did was work with individuals on their personal development and with business and industry to determine their training needs," Shaunak said. "We neither had the staff nor the facility to deliver any training ourselves. We were conduits for bringing in resources from the state and consulting with businesses so they could train their own people."

Today, training is at the heart of the Workforce Service's mission to provide students the ability to earn a family-sustaining wage while supplying industry demands for a skilled workforce. Shaunak's division serves between 4,000 and 6,000 students each year in noncredit programs alone that are tailored for those looking to upgrade their skills. Those include courses in areas such as Avionics and Cabling, Computer Aided Design and Certified Medical Coding to name a few.

"We work not only with those who are in need of a high school diploma but with people who have bachelor's degrees or master's degrees and are working for \$10 hourly in retail," Shaunak said. "They can come in here, get 96 hours of noncredit training and make \$15 to \$16 an hour. That transforms lives and has been a source of tremendous pleasure for us."

Workforce programs are offered at EMCC's Golden Triangle, Scooba, Macon and West Point campuses, with the bulk located

at the Golden Triangle campus where students can take credit and noncredit courses in programs such as Automotive Technology, Welding, Manufacturing Skills Basic, Cybersecurity, Phlebotomy and Certified Nursing Assistant, to name a few.

Workforce programs dedicated to training students for careers in today's modern manufacturing are taught out of EMCC's Communiversity, a new \$42 million state-of-the-art facility that opened to students in August and is expected to be the main supplier of skilled workers to meet current and future demand for local industries who utilize automated manufacturing processes.

A Calling

Although Shaunak has been at the helm of EMCC's Workforce Services division since its inception, it is not a career path he mapped out.

Of Indian descent, Shaunak was born in Kenya, East Africa. His father was a civil servant for the British Crown, serving in that capacity in Mumbai (formerly Bombay) and later in Kenya before earning a degree in law.

When Shaunak was 12, his father moved the family to England where Shaunak attended grammar school. He earned a bachelor's degree in Applied Mathematics from Imperial College London.

While on vacation in December of 1972, Shaunak visited Starkville, where his older brother, Kris Shaunak, who is now deceased, taught Entomology at Mississippi State University. His plans were to stay a few days and then head to Brazil to watch famed soccer player Pele play.

"I never made it to Brazil," Shaunak said. "I fell in love with Starkville and Mississippi. I liked the small, rural town and the hospitality. People were friendly and at the time MSU was a great, small college with about 6,000 students."

He went on to earn a master's degree in Economics from Texas A&M University and a PhD in Agriculture Economics from MSU.

At the age of 42 Shaunak, a successful businessman, had achieved financial independence and spent the next couple of years traveling and enjoying life.



He was getting restless, however, and in 1991 began teaching an economics class at EMCC. He later taught mathematics to adult education students at the college.

"Coming to work at EMCC in Adult Basic Education was perhaps one of the most rewarding things I have ever done in my life," Shaunak said. "Here were folks 35 to 40 years old and who could not read at a third or fourth grade level or do basic math. To be able to serve those people, transform their lives and enhance their economic opportunities is something I strongly believe in. It is a core value."

Joe Max Higgins, chief executive officer of the Golden Triangle Development LINK, has known Shaunak for 17 years.

"Raj has a good heart," Higgins said. "He wants these kids, and they may be grownups, to have a better life. It is something he is passionate about. I think what happened with Raj is he went out there after he had already made it and found his calling."

New Direction

In 1994, Shaunak was asked to implement a new statewide initiative at EMCC's Skills Tech Center called workforce development.

"Nobody knew anything about workforce development at that time," Shaunak said. "It was this new thing starting at the community colleges. There were seven of us hired in the state."

At the time, a mass exodus of U.S. manufacturers was underway as industries moved operations to underdeveloped countries where operating costs were cheaper. The sun was setting on U.S.

factories offering stable employment to unskilled workers.

The decision was made to shift EMCC's focus from that of training facilitator to training provider. New programs were added, existing programs expanded and, in 1998, the Center for Manufacturing Technology Excellence, or CMTE, opened.

In 2006, the Skills Tech Center and CMTE were merged and EMCC's Workforce and Community Services division was born. Today, the division boasts 66 employees who offer a myriad of services.

Bucket List

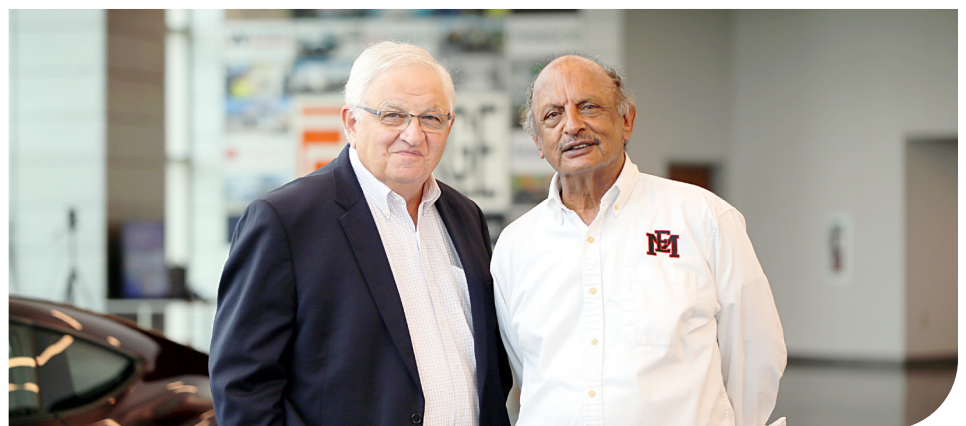
On Nov. 11, Dr. Courtney Taylor, who comes from the Alabama Community College System where she was the regional director of workforce and economic development, assumed the title of executive director of EMCC's Communiversity. She will take over for Shaunak, who has agreed to stay for an indefinite time to help her transition into the position.

Shaunak is looking forward to traveling with his wife, Nina, once he retires.

"My wonderful wife of 39 years has given me the time and permission to work with others for long hours and not take vacations," he said. "An important part of filling my bucket list will be finding all the hidden gems this great, vast country has to offer."

Shaunak, whose two children, Pooja and Akash, are both graduates of EMCC, said he feels as if his work at EMCC is complete.

"My staff and I have achieved what we set out to do," Shaunak said. "Now it is up to others to take what we have done and grow it into something even better."



EMCC Vice President for Workforce and Community Services Dr. Raj Shaunak, at right, visits with Malcolm Portera during the October grand opening of the college's Communiversity. Portera is the former president of Mississippi State University and the former chancellor of the University of Alabama System.

Eight members inducted into Sports Hall of Fame



EMCC Sports Hall of Fame inductees and their families were the guests of honor during a banquet and awards ceremony during Homecoming. Pictured in the front row, from left, are: Ike Latimer (son of the late Ikeler "Boy" Latimer); Jenny White and Sara White (daughter and widow of the late David H. White); John Rice; and Martin Francis. In the back row, from left, are: EMCC President Dr. Scott Alsobrooks; Richard Poole; Rodney Batts; Chris Chism; and EMCC Executive Director of College Advancement Marcus Wood. Not pictured is inductee Bo Wallace.

Eight new members were formally inducted into East Mississippi Community College's Sports Hall of Fame Oct. 25 during a reception and banquet at the F.R. Young Student Union on the Scooba campus. They were recognized during an alumni luncheon the following day that took place in conjunction with the college's 2019 Homecoming activities.

The inductees are:

RODNEY BATTS Baseball (1993-1994)

Rodney Batts teamed with fellow 2019 EMCC Sports Hall of Fame inductee Chris Chism first at New Hope High School and then at EMCC as a versatile all-region and all-state performer for Coach Bill Baldner before taking his baseball talents to Delta State University.

Batts was an All-Gulf South Conference second baseman at DSU and a 1996 NCAA Division II World Series participant before returning to the Cleveland campus to begin his baseball coaching career.

Following 17 seasons as an assistant coach for the Statesmen, Batts spent the past five years serving as the head baseball coach at Mississippi Gulf Coast Community

College before returning to his alma mater this past July as Delta State's 10th head baseball coach.

CHRIS CHISM Baseball (1993-1994)

Chris Chism teamed with fellow 2019 EMCC Sports Hall of Fame inductee Rodney Batts at New Hope High School and then as team co-captains at EMCC. After earning all-region and all-state honors as an EMCC sophomore, Chism completed his collegiate baseball career at the University of Florida.

As UF's starting centerfielder, Chism helped lead the 1996 Gators to a College World Series appearance and a share of the SEC regular-season championship. Fol-

lowing a 12-year teaching/coaching career, Chism has steadily worked his way up the Mississippi public school administrative ladder during the current decade.

The 2018 State Administrator of the Year by the Mississippi Association of Secondary School Principals is currently the principal at Pearl High School.

MARTIN FRANCIS Football (1985-1986)

Martin Francis' career choice took shape on EMCC's Scooba campus as a banking and finance major. Three decades later, the Meridian native and former Lamar High School football standout is now firmly established in the banking business as First Vice President with Trustmark National

Bank in the Jackson metro area.

As a two-year starter at linebacker and sophomore team captain for Coach Randall Bradberry's EMCC Lions, Francis was selected as an Honorable Mention All-American and participated in the 1986 Mississippi Junior College All-Star Game. He went on to become a two-year letterman at Mississippi College, where he served as a graduate assistant football coach while earning his master's degree in business administration before beginning his banking career.

IKELER M. (BOY) LATIMER Basketball/Football (1935-1937)

The late Ikeler M. "Boy" Latimer worked four years in the Civilian Conservation Corps, a public work relief program founded by President Franklin D. Roosevelt that gave young men employment on environmental projects during the Great Depression, before lettering in football and basketball at what is now known as East Mississippi Community College.

Following graduation from Mississippi State, Latimer worked for the United States Soil Conservation Service in Heflin, Ala., before enlisting in the United States Army during World War II.

After his service to our country, he returned home to the Philadelphia area, where he taught agriculture before serving a pair of four-year terms as the Neshoba County Superintendent of Education.

RICHARD POOLE Baseball/Basketball (1956-1958)

Maj. Gen. Richard Poole's decorated military career began in 1955 during his senior year at DeKalb High School when he enlisted in the Mississippi Army National Guard. He later spent three and a half years on active duty and served a total of 42 years in the military before ultimately retiring as a major general for the state of Mississippi in 1997.

After attending EMCC as a member of the Lions' baseball and basketball teams, Poole received his bachelor's degree from the University of Southern Mississippi and attended Officer Candidate School while earning a commission as a second lieutenant in the Mississippi Army National Guard.

He is the recipient of numerous federal and state awards, medals and citations during his distinguished military service.



EMCC Sports Hall of Fame inductee Bo Wallace, center, is presented his plaque Oct. 26 prior to EMCC's Homecoming football game by EMCC Executive Director of College Advancement Marcus Wood, at left, and EMCC President Dr. Scott Alsobrooks, at right.

JOHN RICE, SR. Football (1992-1993)

Starkville's John Rice Sr. continues to be one of East Mississippi Community College's most avid supporters after ranking as one of the Lions' most powerful and productive offensive backs of the 1990s. The former all-district performer for Coach Tommy Lucas' Starkville High School Yellow Jackets then produced a pair of 1,000-yard rushing seasons for Hall of Fame football coach Tom Goode at EMCC as a 1993 MACJC All-Star Game participant before concluding his collegiate playing career at Eastern Michigan University.

After spending five years working for the Columbus Police Department, Rice currently serves as a deputy with the Oktibbeha County Sheriff's Office. He ran for the sheriff's office this past summer in the August primary election.

BO WALLACE Football (2011)

Tennessee native Bo Wallace has been an integral part of national football championships at EMCC both as an NJCAA All-America quarterback and most recently as the Lions' quarterbacks coach.

After transferring from Arkansas State, Wallace directed Coach Buddy Stephens' unbeaten EMCC Lions to the school's first national championship as the 2011 NJCAA

Offensive Player of the Year. He went on to become a three-year starter at Ole Miss in leading the Rebels to three straight bowl game appearances.

Wallace later returned to Scooba to serve as EMCC's quarterbacks coach during the Lions' undefeated 2017 national championship season. He currently serves as the offensive coordinator at Fayette-Ware High School in Somerville, Tenn.

DAVID H. WHITE, JR. Basketball (1950-1952)

The late David H. White Jr. played center for EMCC Sports Hall of Fame Coach Keyes T. Currie and was a primary reason why the 1951-52 Lions basketball team advanced to Mississippi's junior college state championship game.

The 6-foot-6, hook-shot artist returned to his home state of Arkansas to help lead Arkansas Tech to back-to-back Arkansas Intercollegiate Conference championships and consecutive appearances in the NAIA National Tournament.

White was also a member of a Blytheville-based (Ark.) AAU state basketball championship team in 1959. After serving our country for two years in the United States Army, White spent his 34-year teaching/coaching career divided between his hometown of Luxora, Ark., and Valdosta, Ga.



This conceptual rendering provided by LPK Architects, P.A., depicts what the new residence hall to be built on EMCC's Scooba campus will look like.

Work under way on new men's residence hall

Site work has begun on a new 148-bed, three-story student residence hall on East Mississippi Community College's Scooba campus.

"The demand for student housing on the Scooba campus has exceeded capacity for years, so students are asking for rooms we don't have," EMCC President Dr. Scott Alsobrooks said. "This will be a beautiful, modern building that will help meet that demand."

Construction on the 42,636-square-foot building is tentatively scheduled for completion in August of 2020. LPK Architects, P.A., which has offices in Meridian, Starkville and Gulfport, was hired to design the building. Tupelo-based Century Construction will perform the work.

EMCC's share of capital improvement bond money allocated by the state to Mississippi's colleges will pay for \$5.5 million of the \$11.5-million project. EMCC issued a local \$6-million bond to make up the balance.

The brick residence hall will feature two wings separated by a main lobby, with identical front and rear entrances facing the direction of the Dottie Smith Family Center for Instrumental Music Education building and the F.R. Young Student Union.

For now, the residence hall will be reserved for use by male students, but each wing of the building was designed to allow for limited access if the need arises to con-

vert one wing into a women's dormitory.

Most of the dorm rooms will accommodate two students, with a couple of sole occupancy rooms that will be Americans with Disabilities Act compliant. Each room will be equipped with a bathroom and space will be available on the third floor for study halls or tutoring labs.

The building will be located at the site of the original Sullivan-Windham Field, where the EMCC football team hosted home games until the new state-of-the-art stadium opened in 2011.

The building at the old football field that housed a ticket booth and restrooms will be repurposed.

"One side of the building will be converted into a laundry mat and there will be an entertainment area in the other side where we can put ping pong tables or video gaming," Alsobrooks said. "That building is near and dear to the hearts of a lot of our alumni and it will be nice to rehabilitate it for use by future students."

Picnic tables and other outdoor amenities will be placed at the site of Virginia's Garden, which is dedicated to the wife of the late legendary EMCC football coach Robert Victor "Bull" Sullivan.

Student housing is only available at EMCC's Scooba campus, where there are enough beds to accommodate 584 students. Some of the residence halls are outdated and nearing the end of their usefulness. Plans are to eventually take down Lauderdale Hall and renovate Noxubee Hall. Some of the Katrina-style cottages used to house athletes will also eventually need to be replaced.

"Construction of the new dorm will give us time to plan for our next housing initiative and update our master facilities plan," Alsobrooks said.



Gov.-elect Tate Reeves, at left, visits with EMCC President Dr. Scott Alsobrooks, at right, and Alsobrooks' wife and son, Annabelle and Ayden, during the Oct. 18 grand opening and ribbon cutting for EMCC's Communiversiry.

More students choosing career technical programs



East Mississippi Community College sophomore Camille Cooper is among a growing number of students at the college enrolling in career technical programs.

A growing number of East Mississippi Community College students are enrolling in career technical programs, most of which are offered as one-year certificates or two-year associate degrees and prepare students to enter the workforce upon graduation.

When Camille Cooper began looking at available programs of study, the single mother of a 3-year-old daughter knew she wanted to enroll in something she could complete fairly quickly that would leave her with little student debt and great job prospects.

"I needed a good job with benefits for me and my daughter but I really didn't have four years I could dedicate to school," Cooper said.

Next May, Cooper will graduate from EMCC with an Associate of Applied Science degree in Electro-Mechanical Technology,

which prepares students for installing, maintaining and repairing machinery used in manufacturing or industrial processes.

"I like hands-on work and there is such a big demand for skilled trades nowadays that I knew this was a field I could find work in here locally," Cooper said. "My parents are here and I plan on staying here for a while anyway, but you can travel anywhere and find work with this degree."

Enrollment at EMCC in career technical programs for the fall 2019 term jumped 10.6 percent, from 874 students in the fall of 2018 to 967 in 2019.

While the bulk of EMCC students historically enroll in academic programs, there has been a steady uptick in enrollment in career technical programs over the past decade.

In the fall of 2009, 781 students were enrolled in career technical programs, which represented 16 percent of the student body at that time, with 84 percent of students enrolled in academic programs. The percentage of career technical students had climbed to 21 percent last fall and is at 25 percent for the current term.

Like the rest of the nation, workers in Mississippi who possess "middle skills" that require more than a high school diploma but less than a four year degree will be in high demand in 2020, according to the Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce, which predicts that 39 percent of jobs in the state will require some college, while 16 percent will call for a bachelor's degree and 6 percent will necessitate a master's degree or higher.

"We are uniquely poised to meet the demand for middle skills jobs," EMCC President Dr. Scott Alsobrooks said. "That is our specialty. We train people in programs that offer one-year certificates and two-year degrees."



EMCC NAMED TO ASPEN INSTITUTE'S TOP 150 LIST

For the fourth consecutive time, East

Mississippi Community College has been named to the Aspen Institute College Excellence Program's list of Top 150 Community Colleges in the Nation.

Released in November, the Aspen Institute list recognizes institutions for exceptional student outcomes in four areas: student learning, certificate and degree completion, employment and earnings, and high levels of access and success for minority and low-income students.

The colleges were selected from a pool of nearly 1,000 public two-year colleges nationwide.

The designation means EMCC is eligible to compete for the 2021 Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence, which is worth \$1 million to the winning school. The prize, awarded every two years, is the nation's signature recognition of high achievement and performance among America's community colleges.

The top 10 finalists for the 2021 Aspen Prize will be named in May 2020. The Aspen Institute will visit each of those 10 colleges to collect additional data prior to naming the grand prize winner in the spring of 2021. EMCC was selected for inclusion in the Aspen Institute College Excellence Program's Top 150 Community Colleges in the Nation for contests that concluded in 2015, 2017 and 2019.

EMCC has also been selected to apply for the Excellence and Equity in Community College STEM Award sponsored by The Aspen Institute and the Siemens Foundation.

EMCC earns Halbrook Award for student athletes' perfect pass rate



EMCC Interim Vice President of Instruction James Rush, second from right, was present during the college's acceptance of the Halbrook Award. He is pictured here, from left, with: Mississippi Association of Colleges and Universities (MAC) 2019 President Dr. Adam Breerwood, Copiah-Lincoln Community College President Dr. Jane Hulon; Dr. Ann Halbrook Peden; and 2020 MAC President Larry Sparks.

East Mississippi Community

College earned the Halbrook Award for having a 100 percent graduation rate among the school's sophomore student-athletes during the 2018-19 academic year.

The prestigious award was presented during an Oct. 1 awards luncheon in conjunction with the Mississippi Association of Colleges and Universities (MAC) Conference hosted by Pearl River Community College and held at the Hollywood Casino Gulf Coast.

While tying for this year's honor with Copiah-Lincoln Community College among the state's 15 two-year colleges, EMCC graduated all 55 of its second-year student-athletes in addition to having one completer during the 2018-19 academic year. EMCC's 56 certified student-athletes consisted of 29 players from the Lions' 2018 national championship football team, eight from the men's basketball state championship squad, 10 from baseball, six from softball and three from women's basketball. Rodeo was not included among the graduation statistics because the sport is not affiliated with the Mississippi Association of Community and Junior Colleges (MACJC).

Administered cooperatively by the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning, the State Board for Community and Junior Colleges, and the Mississippi Association of Independent Colleges, the purpose of the Halbrook Awards program

is to annually recognize colleges and universities that achieve and maintain high academic standards for student-athletes while also encouraging high graduation rates.

"Receiving the Halbrook Award is a wonderful recognition of the hard work and efforts of EMCC's student-athletes. This recognition represents the dedicated efforts of EMCC's faculty, counselors and staff that work so diligently to ensure student success," said EMCC President Dr. Scott Alsobrooks. "Our head coaches and assistant coaches are committed to excellence both in the classroom and on the scoreboard. A special thanks also goes out to the Halbrook family for sanctioning these awards for community college students."

Established in 1984, the Halbrook Awards program is made possible through endowments from former Representative David M. Halbrook, of Belzoni, and his brothers, John C. and James G. Halbrook, of Belzoni, and J.A. Halbrook, of Beaumont, Texas.

This year marks the seventh time that East Mississippi Community College has received the Halbrook Award since the awards program was authorized in 1984. Prior to most recently claiming the honor for the 2010-11 academic year in a tie with Hinds Community College, EMCC previously earned the recognition five times (1983-84,

1985-86, 1988-89, 1989-90 & 1992-93) during a 10-year span.

"This tremendous achievement should be shared by our entire coaching staff, administrative support staff and, of course, our excellent student-athletes and outstanding faculty members here at East Mississippi Community College," EMCC Vice President of the Scooba Campus/Director of Athletics Mickey Stokes added. "There are many individuals to be recognized for this combined effort, but I'd like to give a special mention to our athletic academic advisor Abby Jenkins for her commitment and

dedication to EMCC's student-athletes. This is certainly a great way to put the finishing touches on a very successful 2018-19 academic year here at EMCC both in our classrooms and on our athletic playing fields."

Individually for EMCC, Avery Bouchillon and Dillon Brown were the school's respective female and male recipients of the 2018-19 David M. Halbrook Award for academic achievement among student-athletes in the community college division. Posting a 4.0 cumulative grade point average in biology as a two-year softball player for the Lady Lions, Bouchillon, a native of Ethel, earned EMCC's Presidential Partnership Scholarship to attend Mississippi State University.

Brown, a two-year baseball letterman for the Lions, recorded a 3.84 cumulative GPA in biology. The Gulfport product is currently a member of the Point University baseball team in West Point, Ga.

During the 2018-19 academic year, East Mississippi Community College had 30 student-athletes garner national recognition for their academic excellence, including a dozen players tabbed to the NJCAA All-Academic First Team for having 4.0 grade point averages. In addition, EMCC's softball (3.52 GPA), baseball (3.39), women's basketball (3.04) and men's basketball (3.01) teams all received NJCAA All-Academic Team recognition.



Jason Brownlee was chosen the MACJC North Division's MVP among offensive backs and earned NJCAA All-Region 23 honors in ranking among the nation's top receivers.

In business and around sports, it is relatively common knowledge that it's harder to stay at the top than it is to reach the top.

For East Mississippi Community College's football program under the guidance of head coach Buddy Stephens, the Lions have made it their business to win championships for the past decade-plus.

Entering the 2019 football season, the two-time reigning national champion and three-time defending state champion EMCC Lions had accumulated a total of five NJCAA championships, seven MACJC titles and nine MACJC North Division regular-season crowns during a record-setting, 11-year span.

As August approached on the Scooba campus with a target once again squarely positioned on their collective backs, the Lions opened the 2019 campaign with 44 first-year players and only a handful of starters returning from their unbeaten team of a year ago. The inexperience showed during a season-opening 24-16 road loss to the talented Hinds Eagles.

An unbeaten month of September, which consisted of victories over Pearl River (49-15), Itawamba (48-3), Mississippi Delta (41-23) and East Central (24-0), revitalized the team and earned EMCC a No. 3 national ranking heading into its much-anticipated division matchup with the Northwest Mississippi Rangers. A 56-36 setback to the eventual state runners-up snapped the Lions' 36-

game home winning streak that had dated back to the start of the 2013 season. A subsequent 49-42 road loss to division foe Holmes the following week had EMCC's postseason chances in question entering Week 8 with a 4-3 overall record and 2-2 division mark.

To their credit and with the help of some surprising late-season outcomes involving other teams within the MACJC's North Division, the Lions found themselves back in the state playoff picture following a 55-20 road victory over Coahoma and a 30-22 Homecoming win over Northeast Mississippi. EMCC's 6-3 regular-season overall record enabled the reigning champs to secure the division's No. 2 seed amidst a

four-way tie atop the standings between the Lions, Northwest, Itawamba and Holmes. Earning an opportunity to play another day while making their 11th MACJC playoff appearance in 12 years under Stephens' leadership, the Lions fell, 31-7, to the top-ranked and eventual national champion Mississippi Gulf Coast Bulldogs in the MACJC semifinals played in Perkinston. The setback put an end to EMCC's impressive 15-game winning streak in postseason play, including 10 consecutive state playoff victories, that had also spanned back to the 2013 campaign.

Despite falling short of their primary preseason goal of matching the NJCAA's all-time record of six national football championships, the EMCC Lions did have seven players earn postseason honors for their individual efforts throughout the season. Sophomore wide receiver Jason Brownlee was named to the NJCAA All-Region 23 team as the MACJC North Division's Most Valuable Player among offensive backs after leading the nation with 75 pass receptions and 1,055 receiving yards on the year along with finishing as the NJCAA's statistical runner-up with 12 touchdown catches.

Sophomore kicker/punter Josh Smith and defensive end Terence Cherry were also tabbed to this year's All-Region 23 team, while sophomore offensive lineman Baylee Trusty and two-time, all-conference linebacker Fred Hervey joined EMCC's all-region trio on the MACJC's All-North Division first team. In addition, sophomore defensive back Shavoke' Herrington and freshman offensive lineman Nick Jones were second-team recipients on the MACJC's 2019 all-conference team.



Defensive end Terence Cherry garnered NJCAA All-Region 23 honors this past year after leading the Lions with 12 tackles for loss, including eight quarterback sacks.



Coach Billy Begley's reigning men's basketball conference champion EMCC Lions made school history a year ago and now feature 11 first-year players in 2019-20.

The East Mississippi Community College men's basketball program had proven to be one of the best in the state with four consecutive Region 23 Tournament championships and four straight NJCAA Tournament appearances in Hutchinson, Kan., earlier in the decade. But, one thing had been missing from the trophy case for some 85 years.

Not since the early 1930s had the Lions claimed a state championship in men's basketball — until Feb. 28, 2019 in Ellisville — when a sophomore-laden EMCC team knocked off home-standing Jones College, 61-58, to finally bring home the MACJC's coveted gold ball trophy to the Scooba campus.

"Last year we came in with the attitude of unfinished business," recalled fifth-year EMCC head coach Billy Begley. "We knew we were close the previous season when we lost so many close games. Our players put in the hard work during the off-season and it really paid off late in the year and during the state tournament."

Not only did the Lions make school history on the hardwood a year ago, but all eight sophomores graduated and the team compiled a 3.02 grade point average. In addition, six players moved on to continue their collegiate careers at the four-year university level.

"Every single one of them just really bought into each other and doing everything they could to be the best players and the best team they could be," Begley said. "It was a consistent day-to-day thing with them and it just carried over into the season both on the court and in the classroom."

As much as they would be tempted by reveling in last year's successes, the new-look 2019-20 Lions are collectively focused on making a name for themselves. Four returning players, including a medical redshirt, have been joined by a talented newcomer class comprised of 11 first-year players for Begley and his second-year assistant coach, former EMCC All-America guard DJ Evans.

Expected to lead the way for EMCC's returnees will be sophomore guards Donte Powers and KJ Riley. From Starkville, Powers averaged 5.5 points as an EMCC freshman while shooting 52 percent overall from the field, 43 percent from three-point range and 79 percent from the free throw line. Out of Southaven High School, Riley has also impressed the EMCC coaches with his improvement between his freshman and sophomore seasons.

Also back from EMCC's state championship team, 6-foot-6 swing player Arecko Gipson Jr., out of Memphis, Tenn., figures to have an immediate impact for the Lions after sitting out last year with a foot injury. Gipson

was a 2017-18 TSSAA Mr. Basketball finalist as an all-region and all-state performer for the Memphis Academy of Science and Engineering.

The Lions' talented 11-player newcomer class looks to showcase 6-foot-6 forward Jakorie Smith, a 2018-19 Clarion-Ledger Dandy Dozen selection out of Raymond High School, as well as point guard Danny Washington, who was tabbed the Delta Preps Player of the Year as a senior at Greenville High School.

"We have a really young team with 11 new players," Begley noted. "They're good kids, they work hard and I'm excited about them. We have a hard-playing group and I think we have some good depth. I look forward to what this team can do and I really like the potential of this group."



Sophomore guard Donte Powers returns as EMCC's leading scorer and playmaker from last year's conference champions.



Coach Sharon Thompson's 2019-20 EMCC Lady Lions return the team's three leading scorers from last season and have added a talented newcomer class.

As the late Hall of Fame basketball coach and television commentator Al McGuire was quoted as saying, "the best thing about freshmen is that they become sophomores."

This wise sports quote certainly applies to veteran coach Sharon Thompson's 2019-20 East Mississippi Community College women's basketball team. The Lady Lions return 59 percent of their scoring totals and 60 percent of their rebounding numbers from last year's 11-13 team that earned a berth in the MACJC state tournament.

"I'm excited for this season because of the players we have coming back," Thompson said. "Tye Metcalf, Aamiya Rush and Maddie Riley were our three best players last year as freshmen and they are all returning."

Metcalf, a left-handed guard from Southaven, is expected to again lead the way for the EMCC women after averaging a team-high 14 points along with 3.2 rebounds, 3.0 assists and 1.8 steals per game in earning MACJC All-State/North Division honors as a freshman.

Rush, from West Point, and Riley, out of Velma Jackson High School, also return to anchor EMCC's frontcourt as the team's top two rebounders last season. Rush averaged 10.4 points and 8.3 rebounds a year ago, while Riley contributed 9.3 points and a team-best 9.1 boards per contest.

Along with guards Tia Daniels and Alaysha Jennings returning for their sophomore years, Thompson and first-year assistant coach Danielle Cole have added 10 newcomers to give the Lady Lions a complete roster unlike a year ago.

"One thing that is much better is that we have 15 players this season as opposed to just the 10 players we had last year," Thompson noted.

"The depth in numbers every day in practice has been key, along with the competitiveness in practice at every position."

Of those newcomers, transfer guards Taylor Lattimore and Topazia Hawkins are expected to contribute immediately for the Lady Lions. Lattimore, out of Memphis, Tenn., played at Jackson State last season. Hawkins, an Oklahoma native who was an all-state prep player, spent part of last season in the MACJC with Meridian.

The Lady Lions are also counting on their eight-member freshman class to figure into this year's player rotation plans. Incoming freshman playmakers Vantasia Duncan of Forest and Ciara Jackson from Shannon look to make things happen from the point guard position. On the interior, 6-foot-1 post player Ja'Mia Hollings seems to also have an understanding of the game as a true freshman coming out of West Point.

In anticipation of the team's five returning sophomores stepping up their games as well as their leadership capabilities, along with having a full complement of players this season, the Lady Lions have added a collective goal of staying and playing at home this postseason.

"Winning the MACJC North Division and being able to host the state tournament right here in Scooba is one of our team goals this season," Thompson said. "Playing in front of our loyal home fans during the state tournament would definitely bring recognition not only to our basketball program but to East Mississippi Community College in general."



Returning All-MACJC guard Tye Metcalf averaged a team-high 14 points, 3.2 rebounds and 3.0 assists last year as a freshman.



Sophomore John Ross Briggs returns to bring veteran leadership to the Lions as a valuable middle infielder and experienced everyday player in the EMCC lineup.

The sport of baseball is filled

with clichés, but many of those old adages look to apply to this year's East Mississippi Community College baseball team under the guidance of veteran coach Brett Kimbrel.

"One thing I want our players to do this year is to play the game the way it's supposed to be played with effort, energy and attitude," said Kimbrel, who is in his second season as the Lions' head baseball coach after spending the previous two seasons as EMCC's assistant coach, having come over from the Alabama community college ranks.

On the heels of last year's transition season for the Lions, Kimbrel brought in former EMCC players Chase Reeves and Hunter Floyd to be his assistant coaches, while at the same time making an adaptation of his own by taking over the team's pitching coach responsibilities. Reeves, who previously sandwiched two years on the Scooba campus as a player between stints at Ole Miss, Southern Miss and Blue Mountain, now handles EMCC's hitters. Floyd, a former southpaw pitcher for the Lions, assists Kimbrel with the team's pitchers.

"The pitchers are adapting to my pitching philosophy of being a location and

mechanics guy," Kimbrel noted. "The pitching plan is to be able to force contact by not walking people."

Along with putting emphasis on EMCC's pitchers throwing strikes, Kimbrel and his staff are also stressing vocal leadership from their sophomores, as well as showcasing the team's collective improved athletic ability.

"The sophomore class as a whole has stepped up to lead by example," Kimbrel added. "Our freshmen are pretty much fearless for the most part and they bring some energy to the table. Our

improved athleticism all around fits more my style of putting pressure on the defense by being able to run."

Among EMCC's returning position players include 2019 MACJC all-state second-teamer Austin Beech (.331) and valuable two-sport, dual-position performer Josh Smith (.320) coming over from football. Power hitters Stuart Coggins and Dillon Morgan

are back after each hitting four home runs as freshmen, as are experienced middle infielders John Ross Briggs and Reiley Tate.

On the mound, the Lions welcome back the services of Reid Blakely, Chance Denson, Austin Campbell and Smith, who combined to make 16 pitching starts last season for EMCC.

While bringing back a solid corps of veteran players from last year's EMCC squad, the Lions should also benefit from adding a competitive group of newcomers from successful high school baseball programs.

"The freshman class we've brought in this year is filled with blue-collar guys that came from good programs and understand the game while also understanding how to win," Kimbrel said.

Due to the very nature of the sport being as much of a mental grind as it is a physical game, EMCC's coaches have been preparing this year's team by teaching more during the fall in preparation for the trials and tribulations that are likely to come during the demanding spring season in the competitive MACJC.

"By embracing last year's adversity, another challenge continues to be how to eliminate the self-inflicted situations that occur during a game," Kimbrel continued. "We haven't gotten to that point just yet, but we're getting there because of the teaching that's being done. There are teaching opportunities with this year's group and there's an intent to learn."



Sophomore right-hander Reid Blakely made a season-high 16 pitching appearances last year and figures to be a primary contributor on the mound this season for the Lions.



Sophomore pitching ace Britney Bonney looks to lead a revamped Lady Lions softball team in the circle after earning all-conference honors a year ago as a freshman.

Second-year EMCC head softball coach Austin

McNair is looking forward to the upcoming season as much as anyone on the heels of last year’s transition season for the Lady Lions.

A proven winner during previous high school head coaching stints at Pontotoc and Philadelphia, McNair and his first EMCC softball edition forged through the 2019 season with an undermanned club that lacked depth at key positions. The outcome of the season resulted in countless hours on the recruiting trail that McNair is confident will be showcased on the field during the upcoming campaign.

“I am excited to see what’s in store for this program and our first recruiting class this year,” McNair said. “We have worked very hard and spent countless hours this past year recruiting some of the state’s best softball talent to fit our program here at EMCC.”

Along with 17 talented newcomers joining this year’s freshman-laden EMCC softball team, the Lady Lions also bring back six returnees, including the MACJC All-State/North Division battery of pitcher Britney Bonney and catcher Mackenzie Dolan. Also back this season for the Lady Lions are Hope Thames (Nanih Waiya HS), Madelyn Wilkes (Noxapater), Riley Huckaby (Caledonia) and Lilly Burton (Union).

Bonney’s 2019 pitching statistics were very misleading given the fact that she transferred to EMCC midseason after earning MAC

All-State prep honors as a senior at Madison Central High School. Her batterymate, Dolan from Union, led last year’s EMCC club in home runs (5), RBIs (38), doubles (7), total bases (53) and stolen bases (13) while hitting .305 on the season. Despite nursing an injury as a freshman, Thames batted a team-leading .368 with 10 of her 21 hits going for extra bases.

“I am confident that our opponents as well as EMCC’s loyal softball supporters will observe a new look and experience a different culture when the improved Lady Lions take the field this upcoming season,” McNair said. “Our staff and these players continue to put in the hard work needed to reach the level of expectations that we have set for ourselves and this program.

“This year’s team will bring a variety of talents that will allow us to give opposing teams multiple looks and present different situations when it comes to hitting, pitching, defensively on the field, and on the bases with our running game,” McNair continued.

Among the newcomers expected to contribute immediately for McNair and assistant coaches Kimmy Nicholson and Luke Walker will be middle infielder/pitcher KeraGrace Watts, who earned District MVP and all-metro honors at Northlake Christian High School in Mandeville, La. The Lady Lions also welcome the additions of in-state

transfers Alexis Lawrence, a pitcher from Northwest Rankin High School via Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College, and Allison Brown, a valuable utility player out of Choctaw County High School by way of East Central CC.

“It has been so rewarding to watch this group get better as a team and bond together as a family both on and off the softball field,” McNair noted. “It’s an honor to be able to lead this program and I cannot wait to witness this year’s EMCC softball story unfold.”



Steady sophomore catcher Mackenzie Dolan collected all-conference recognition after leading last year’s EMCC softball team in home runs and RBIs while hitting .305.



Coach Morgan Goodrich's EMCC men's and women's rodeo teams both claimed regional event titles this past fall and were ranked among the Top 25 nationally.

The East Mississippi Community

College men's rodeo team has proudly grabbed national headlines in recent years. This year, it may very well be the women's turn to take center stage on the national scene for EMCC as the current collegiate rodeo season reaches the midway point.

Under the guidance of Scooba native Morgan Goodrich, the EMCC men's rodeo team garnered three consecutive top-10 finishes in the College National Finals Rodeo (CNFR). During that same span, the Lions also touted a pair of individual national champions in Marcus Theriot (2016) and Tristan Martin (2018).

EMCC's rodeo success at the national level as a two-year school competing primarily against four-year universities is a testament to the recruiting efforts of Goodrich and her husband, Wes.

"As with any sport, recruiting in rodeo is primarily about establishing connections, building friendships and maintaining those relationships from year to year. And we've been able to do that," said Goodrich, who is EMCC's head rodeo coach. "It also helps that our student-athletes are actively serving as ambassadors for EMCC and our rodeo program. They realize that surrounding themselves with quality teammates increases our overall chances of competing for championships."

On the heels of another solid recruiting year and with both EMCC teams ranked

among the National Intercollegiate Rodeo Association (NIRA) Top 25 point standings through the first three rodeos of the 2019-20 Ozark Region schedule, this year shows as much promise as any during the 10 years that the school's rodeo program has been in existence.

"We thought at the start of the season that we would have an excellent chance at making nationals and hopefully an opportunity to compete for a national championship with our women's team," Goodrich said. "It's been a goal of ours to put both our men's and women's teams in this position during the same season ever since we were privileged enough to be chosen to lead EMCC's rodeo program 10 years ago."



Myles Neighbors ranked as the nation's No. 1 collegiate steer wrestler after claiming three consecutive individual regional titles to begin his sophomore season.

With a pair of third-place team finishes followed by a winning team effort at Three Rivers College during the first week of October, the EMCC women ranked among the top 15 nationally and second within the competitive Ozark Region. Individually for the Lady Lions, freshman Jaylie Matthews figures to challenge nationally in this year's collegiate barrel racing competition while also maintaining a top-five world ranking within the International Professional Rodeo Association.

Other potential point-producers on the national level for the East Mississippi women this season include Kayley Kennemer, Blair Bryant, Kyla Matthews and 2018 CNFR participant Carli Hodges.

On the men's side, the Lions have been paced by sophomore Myles Neighbors, who soared to a No. 2 national ranking in his specialty event after winning the first three steer wrestling competitions of the NIRA Ozark Region's fall schedule.

Also expected to help lead the EMCC men throughout the current rodeo season are 2020 Jr. Ironman Championship invitee Sam Morgan along with the veteran team roping tandem of Weston Pender and Clay Green.

"We've been mostly pleased with our results so far this season. Hopefully we're ready to step up and perform consistently the way we're capable of during the remainder of the season," Goodrich added as her teams set their collective sights on nationals next June in Wyoming.



EMCC RANKED IN TOP 10 COLLEGES NATIONWIDE

In August, SmartAsset named EMCC among the Top 10 colleges in the nation for the fourth year in a row. EMCC placed No. 8 on the annual report titled “The Best Community Colleges in America — 2019 Edition.” In 2018, EMCC was ranked No. 5 on the list and earned the No. 3 spot in 2017 and No. 8 in 2016. During each of those years, EMCC was the only college in Mississippi to make the Top-10 list. SmartAsset compiled the rankings after analyzing 796 two-year educational institutions nationwide and comparing the schools’ graduation and transfer rates, student-to-faculty ratios and cost of tuition and fees.



PENDERGRASS, WHITE GARNER HEADWAE AWARD

EMCC humanities instructor Shannon Pendergrass, at left, and student Jordan White were named the college’s 2019 HEADWAE (Higher Education Appreciation Day, Working for Academic Excellence) award recipients. Pendergrass and White were honored Feb. 26 during the 32nd Annual HEADWAE luncheon at the Marriott Hotel in Jackson. HEADWAE recipients include students who have excelled academically and faculty members who have made extraordinary educational and civic contributions to their college and community.



COMMUNIVERSITY HOSTS COMIC-CON

EMCC was the presenting sponsor for the Golden Triangle Comic-Con, which took place Sept. 14-15 at the college’s Communiversity. The event featured gaming, vendors and cosplay, in which attendees dressed up as pop culture figures. EMCC’s Lion Hills Center provided food for the event, which included guest appearances by well-known comic book artists and writers, as well as cosplay artists.



EMCC MACON CENTER RELOCATES

EMCC has been offering expanded hours and services out of a new location in Macon since Feb. 4. The EMCC Macon Center is located on the first floor of the Alliance Building, pictured here in the background. The building is adjacent to a single-wide trailer used for years to teach EMCC Adult Education classes. New programs offered include the Gateway Program, which provides paid internships to students at no cost to participating businesses. In the Smart Start program, students are taught employability skills, and workforce training scholarships are available through the MI-BEST program. In August, Adult Education Launch Pad employees at the Macon Center partnered with the Noxubee County Adult Detention Center to help inmates obtain their high school equivalency diplomas.



SURGICAL TECH PROGRAM GROWING

In August, 10 freshmen enrolled in EMCC’s Surgical Technology program, joining the 11 sophomores who comprise the inaugural class. Launched in January 2019, the new program is the result of a partnership with Baptist Memorial Hospital-Golden Triangle, which offered to house the training facility for the program in a building on the hospital’s Columbus campus. The program was created to fill a need for surgical technologists at area hospitals. Here, Surgical Technology student Taylor Evans practices operating room sterilization procedures while her classmates look on.

GTECHS marks 2019 milestones



The Golden Triangle Early College High School's first graduation ceremony took place May 11 on EMCC's Golden Triangle campus.

The Golden Triangle Early College High School (GTECHS) on East Mississippi Community College's Golden Triangle campus celebrated many firsts in 2019. Those include the school's first junior/senior prom in March and the first graduation ceremony in May.

GTECHS opened its doors in August 2015 with 61 freshmen, who advanced a grade each year as new students were added to fill lower grades. Today, GTECHS has about 220 students in grades 9-12.

GTECHS is Mississippi's first early college high school in which students take both

high school and college classes. Today, there are six early college high schools in the state.

The school is the result of a partnership between EMCC, the Mississippi Department of Education and Mississippi State University.

"One of the main reasons the state started looking at early college high schools was to increase graduation rates," GTECHS principal Jill Savely said.

According to the Mississippi Department of Education, the graduation rate for the state in 2017-18 was 84 percent, which

matches the national average.

The graduation rate at GTECHS this year was 98 percent. Of the remaining 2 percent, one student earned a high school equivalency diploma and the rest reenrolled in their home schools, Savely said.

"We were really pleased with that," Savely said. "We feel that was certainly a success."

Furthermore, 41 of the 54 graduating seniors were also awarded either a technical certificate or an associate's degree by EMCC.

"I think the biggest surprise for me was the kids who really put their heads down and went to work and earned associates degrees," Savely said. "I think that is one of the biggest accomplishments of the program."

Savely credits the program's success to the school staff, counselor and teachers "who have created such a great support system for our students that they feel they can be successful regardless what they do."

GTECHS junior Brandi McDonald agreed. "The teachers and staff are what makes this school so different," McDonald said. "They truly care and are always asking how we are doing. The teachers make learning fun and break things down so you can understand it."



LIONS' FOOTBALL FAN!

Israel Consul General Lior Haiat, at left, and his son, Yoav, were special guests at East Mississippi Community College's Sept. 26 home football game in which the Lions defeated East Central Community College 24-0. Lior Haiat is a fan of EMCC football and attended his first game at the college in October 2018.

EMCC'S Dale Henry earns national award

East Mississippi Community College Automotive Technology/Diesel Mechanics Department Head Dale Henry is the 2019 Byrl Shoemaker/ASE Industry Education Alliance Instructor of the Year.

Henry, who has taught at EMCC for 12 years, was selected among candidates from all over the U.S. to receive the award, which was presented during a Nov. 13 banquet in Phoenix, Ariz. The award is sponsored by the National Association for Automotive Service Excellence.

"I was almost speechless," Henry said of his reaction when he received a phone call informing him of his selection for the award.

Henry was among 52 automotive professionals nationwide recognized during the banquet. Other award categories include Master Automobile Technician of the Year and Collision Repair & Finish Technician of the year, to name two.

The annual awards are presented to those recognized as "the best of the best" in the automotive industry, according to an ASE press release.



Dale Henry

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EMCC Board of Trustees member Teresa Hughes, at left, Class of 1979, and EMCC Development Foundation Board of Directors member Nick Clark, Class of 1966, during Homecoming 2019.



From left, EMCC alumni Cubby Harris, class of 1977, and Mike Shelton, Class of 1972, attend an alumni get together in Stennis Hall that took place during Homecoming 2019.

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 Junction Management
 Lisa Justis
 Kademi
 Christopher Kelly
 Kemper County Economic
 Development Authority
 Kemper County Historical Association
 Kemper Farm Supply
 Kilgore Barrel Horses
 Crystal Kingery
 Joanna Koehn
 Joyce Lampe
 Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Langston

Junior Files
 Mrs. Currie Fisher
 Greg Flannagan
 Jack Forbus
 Marilyn Y. Ford
 Mr. and Mrs. Martin T. Francis
 Benny Freeman
 David G. Freeman
 Ronnie Fulton
 GCM, Inc. of West Point
 Brandt Galloway
 Mr. and Mrs. Rick Garner
 Georgette Geotsi
 John D. Gerhart
 Golden Triangle Business Ventures,
 LLC
 Golden Triangle Development Link
 Dean Goodman
 Douglas Gosney
 Rev. and Mrs. James Granger
 Marilyn L. Granger
 Mr. and Mrs. Jimmy Gray
 Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Gray
 Donnie Grayson
 Greater Meridian Health Clinic
 Greenbridge Investments, LLC
 Chett Gregg
 Becky Griffin
 Mary A. Gully
 Yulanda Haddix
 Eleanor T. Hailey
 Dan Haire
 Judy B. Hairston
 LeDona Hampton
 Jake Hand
 Ronald J. Harper
 Steven Harpole
 Betty Harris
 Mr. and Mrs. James E. Harris

B.B. Harry
 Mary Hatcher
 Dereke Havard
 Mr. and Mrs. Tim Heard
 Hebron Baptist Church
 Henderson Steel
 Roger Henry
 Quintin Hensley
 Mr. and Mrs. John Hester
 Tabby Jo Hill
 Tricia Hill
 Tareva M. Hill-Jenkins

Mr. and Mrs. Craig Hitt
 Kent Hodge
 Sandra Hodge
 Phil Hofmann
 Gene Holcomb
 Hollyhock's Gift Shop
 DeCarlos Holmes
 Mrs. Betty Hopper
 Rose Hopper
 Hotel and Restaurant Supply, Inc.
 Kimberly Howard
 Cheryl Hubbard



Frances Brown, at left, with her husband, Billy Brown, East Mississippi Junior College class of 1956, were among the attendees of Homecoming 2019. Billy Brown, a well-known high school football coach, played under legendary EMJC coach "Bull" Sullivan.

Ike Latimer
 Tina Lee
 Loril Liles
 Marshetta Little
 Tacey Little
 Rev. and Mrs. Steven Lockley
 Brad Love
 Mr. and Mrs. Chuck Luke
 Kylie Luke
 Mike Luke
 Robert Luke
 Maroon & Co.
 Marshall Ford Co., Inc.
 Martin Mechanical, Inc.
 Nora Martin
 Don R. Massey
 Carla M. Mayberry
 McCaskill Brothers, Inc.
 Jay McCrary
 Mr. and Mrs. Tony McCullough
 Mr. and Mrs. Robert E. McDade
 Frances McDaniel
 Donald McKee
 Austin McNair
 Mr. and Mrs. Mark D. McPhail
 Mr. and Mrs. Dick McSpadden
 Becky Meacham
 Measels Gin Venue
 Members Federal Credit Union
 Meridian Coca-Cola
 Meridian Livestock, Inc.
 Meridian Plastic Surgery
 Mildred C. Mickler
 Mid-South Signs
 Brenda W. Miller
 Mr. and Mrs. Jay Miller
 Dr. and Mrs. Paul Miller
 Mitchell Distributing Co.
 Michael Monroe
 Mr. and Mrs. Tony Montgomery
 Dr. Melanie Moody
 Clay Moore
 Mr. and Mrs. Jimmie Moore
 Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Morgan
 Mr. and Mrs. Chris Morrow
 Munn Enterprises, Inc.
 Julia Morrison
 Janice Neal
 Neshoba County Gin Assn.
 Jack Newell
 Newell Paper Co.
 Mr. and Mrs. Elliott Newton
 Chase Nicholson
 Norman Enterprises, Inc.
 Noxubee Farm Supply
 Noxubee General Hospital
 Noxubee Tire Service
 Betty J. Oakley
 Occasions Gift Shop
 Oktibbeha County Co-Op
 Mr. and Mrs. Buster Orr
 Bill Oubre
 Mr. and Mrs. Billy Owen
 PACCAR Foundation
 David Palmer
 Park Place Salon
 Nic Parish
 Clyde Patterson
 Catherine Penick
 Performance Therapy

Brad Perkerson
 Delisa Perkins
 Dr. and Mrs. Glenn Peters
 Della Phillips
 Phillip's Hardware
 Joyce Pierce
 Reggie Pierce
 Pilgrim Foodliner
 Henry Pilkington
 Lindsey Pitts
 Mr. and Mrs. Richard Poole
 Akito Portee
 Prairie Livestock
 Premiere Paint Body Shop
 Ben Price
 PryorMorrow Architects and Engineers
 Corey Ravenhorst
 Rea, Shaw, Giffin, and Stuart
 R.E.M. Directional, Inc.
 J. T. Reeves
 Renasant Bank
 Marge A. Revere
 Rex Team Sports
 Rex's Rentals
 Dr. and Mrs. Charles Rhea
 Christopher Rhett
 Mr. and Mrs. Charles Rigdon
 Dusty Rigdon
 Mary B. Rigdon
 Mr. and Mrs. Randy Rigdon
 Riverbirch Animal Care Center
 Roberson Law Firm
 Mr. and Mrs. Ricky Roberson
 Robinson Janitorial Specialist, Inc.
 Mac Robinson
 Langston Rogers
 Angela Routzahn
 Royal Trucking
 James A. Ruffin
 Tanzania Rupert
 James L. Rush
 Tammy Rush
 Mr. and Mrs. Bill Russell
 Mr. and Mrs. Frankie Russell
 Patricia Ryals
 Mr. and Mrs. Bruff Sanders
 V. L. Sandifer
 William Sansing
 Sassy Designs
 Buddy Sauls
 Tom Scarborough
 Seal Stallion Station
 Tina Seals
 Senter's Hardware and Gifts
 ServiceMaster Commercial Cleaning
 of Jackson
 Stanley Shannon
 Dr. Hari Sharma
 Dr. Raj Shaunak
 Michael Shelton
 Kline Shepherd
 Dr. Robert Shinn
 Ronald Shirley
 Shuqualak Baptist Church
 Shuqualak Lumber Co., Inc.
 Siemens
 Simmons & Simmons
 Roy Simpson
 Lawanda Sims
 Bettye B. Sledge

Janet Smelser
 Helen E. Smiley
 Carolyn Smith
 Courtney B. Smith
 Jeffrey C. Smith
 Mac and Julie Smith
 McKamy Smith
 Mr. and Mrs. Robert Smith
 Sodexo, Inc.
 Southern Ionics
 Southern Mechanical, Inc.
 Southern Pipe & Supply Co.
 Eddie Al and Cheryl Sparkman
 Marvin B. Speed
 Lisa Spinks
 Sports Specialty
 Doug K. Sproat
 Coranette Square
 Statewide Federal Credit Union
 Richard Stennis
 Mr. and Mrs. Buddy Stephens
 Michael Stewart
 Steve's on the Square
 Charlene Stokes
 Mr. and Mrs. Mickey Stokes
 Fred Stoops
 Mr. and Mrs. Charles Studdard
 Sullivan's Office Supply
 Milton Sundbeck
 SunSouth John Deere
 Superior Fish Products
 T.E. Lott & Company
 George Taylor
 Matt Taylor
 Taylor Machine Works, Inc.
 Mr. and Mrs. Michael Taylor
 Robbie Taylor
 Robert H. Temkovits
 The Citizens Bank of Philadelphia
 The Commercial Insurance Agency,
 Inc.
 The Create Foundation
 The Fashion Barn
 The Purple Elephant
 Pat Thomasson
 Lillie Thornton
 Donnie Thweatt

Till-Newell Animal Hospital
 Shekela Tisdale
 Howard R. Trawick
 Tri-County Industry
 Ashley Trosclair
 Jerry Turner
 Twin City Mechanical Contractors
 Mallory Vandevender
 Mr. and Mrs. Cecil R. Vaughan
 Dr. and Mrs. Don Vaughan
 Vollar Law Firm
 Casey Vollin
 Wade, Inc.
 Logan Waggoner
 Beverly Wallace
 Danny Waltmon
 Dexter Ware
 Waste Pro
 Waters International Trucks
 Ashley Weekly
 Robert S. Wells
 West Brothers Construction, Inc.
 Faith Westby
 Bobby Westmoreland
 Windham Tractor and Implement
 Sara White
 Cade Wilkerson
 Doug Wilkerson
 William Wells Tire & Auto. Inc.
 Williams Brothers, Inc.
 Mr. and Mrs. John C. Williams
 Mark Williamson
 Stephen Windish
 Charles Winfield
 WMD, LLC
 Margaret S. Womble
 Marcus Wood
 Opal Wood
 Raleigh Wood, III
 Yates Building Supply
 Barbara S. Young
 Matthew Young
 Dr. and Mrs. Rick Young
 Charles Younger
 Steven Ziegelmann



John Apple, EMCC's 2018 Alumnus of the Year, in the F.R. Young Student Union during Homecoming 2019. Apple, Class of 1957, is a longtime supporter of the college and is a member of the EMCC Inner Circle of Excellence.

RETHA HAND HENDERSON

Columbus, MS/July 29, 2019



Retha Jane Hand Henderson arrived at East Mississippi Junior College in 1952 after earning a basketball scholarship. She became a two-time all-state selection in helping lead the Lady Lions to back-to-back region and state basketball championships.

During her freshman season, the 1952-53 EMJC squad was recognized as the lone undefeated (40-0) women's basketball team among the junior college ranks. Henderson was also a well-respected and active leader among the student body on the Scooba campus. After serving as a cheerleader during her freshman year, she was selected as the secretary/treasurer of EMJC's sophomore class and was chosen Miss EMJC for the 1953-54 academic year. She was active in the school's Home Economics Club and was a member of Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society. In 2013, Henderson was inducted into the Mississippi Community College Sports Hall of Fame. She taught home economics and physical education for 12 years and had a successful 17-year career as an insurance agent.

MARJORIE RUTH SOLOMON

Ashville, NC/October 9, 2019



Marjorie Ruth Briggs Solomon grew up in Kemper County and resided with her family for a while in a house once located where the Chapel in the Pines on EMCC's Scooba campus now stands.

Both her mother, Ruth Hogan Briggs, and father, Brown Briggs, attended what was then East Mississippi Junior College. While attending EMJC, Brown Briggs stayed with his aunt, Margie B. Aust, the first secretary of Kemper County Agricultural High School, which would later become EMJC. Upon her death, Aust left her home to Brown Briggs, who resided there for a while with his wife, along with Marjorie, and her two siblings, Brownie Briggs (now Brownie Bounds), and Steven Briggs. After building a home for his family in Briggs Chapel, Brown Briggs donated the property to EMJC. Marjorie, who earned a master's degree from Mississippi College, served as budget director for the University of Mississippi Medical Center. She and her husband, John Solomon, longtime supporters of EMCC, resided in Vicksburg and had a summer home in Ashville, NC.

RALEIGH EDWARD WOOD III

Grenada, MS/September, 12 2019



A 2018 inductee into the East Mississippi Community College Sports Hall of Fame, Raleigh Edward Wood III was a standout baseball player for Starkville High School who went on to pitch for the Lions from 1981 to 1983. His induction into the Sports Hall of Fame came on the heels of the 2017 induction

of his brother, Marcus Wood. Raleigh Wood's son, Raleigh Edward "Reiv" Wood IV, was a long snapper for the Lions in 2016 and 2017. After graduating from EMCC, Raleigh Wood III earned a bachelor's degree from Mississippi State University and a Master in Educational Leadership from the University of Mississippi. Wood began his career in education at Starkville High School where he helped guide his high school alma mater to three Class 5A state baseball titles as an assistant coach. After subsequent stops as head baseball coach at Winona and Grenada, he began his administrative career within the Grenada School District. He retired after 32 years as a teacher, baseball coach and principal in the Starkville, Winona and Grenada schools. He was an elder at Southside Church of Christ in Grenada.

The EMCC family remembers these Lion alumni who passed away since our last publication:

Walter A. Blanton
Lake Junaluska, NC
July 7, 2019

Carroll Wyatt Hailey
Meridian, MS
July 31, 2019

Toby Nelson Menotti
Starkville, MS
July 16, 2019

Matthew G. "Bud" Turner (SHOF)
Louisville, MS
February 11, 2019

Anthony Clay Brown
Olive Branch, MS
July 30, 2019

Felton Hardy Hughes, Jr.
Columbus, MS
October 8, 2019

Robert David Miller
Aberdeen, MS
July 29, 2019

Magdalene Lofton Watt
Columbus, MS
October 14, 2019

Carolyn Hudnall Brown
Huntsville, AL
December 28, 2018

Kenneth F. Jones
Meridian, MS
October 8, 2019

Cora Lee Thomasson Mitchell
DeKalb, MS
April 6, 2019

James W. Webb, Jr.
Hattiesburg, MS
December 13, 2018

Dr. James Ray Chatham
Starkville, MS
August 12, 2019

Joshua Wayne Jourdan
Columbus, MS
October 7, 2019

Steven Brent O'Neal
Brandon, MS
May 21, 2019

Gilbert Conner White
Louisville, MS
October 4, 2019

Michael Lawhon Drogula
Columbus, MS
April 23, 2019

Rodger Gale Kibe (SHOF)
Columbus, MS
December 27, 2018

Joshua Burkes Reed
Starkville, MS
October 9, 2019

Thomas Clay Williams
Scooba, MS
September 3, 2019

Jerry Vann Dyess, Sr.
Mobile, AL
January 7, 2019

Toni Kidd
Columbus, MS
October 10, 2019

Mary Nell Callahan Smith
Pascagoula, MS
October 4, 2019

Barbara Hailey Williamson
Canton, MS
August 29, 2019

Ricky James Faulkner
Walthall, MS
December 15, 2018

Lillie Dale Little
Laurel, MS
May 6, 2019

Tymechi Spann
Macon, MS
December 1, 2018

Barbara Ann Holder Gilles
House Springs, MO
March 15, 2019

James Leonard McCullough
Germantown, TN
August 1, 2019

Gene Arther Taylor
Columbus, MS
August 5, 2019

Joe Mitchel Golden (SHOF)
Inola, OK
August 27, 2018

Gloria McDavid
Columbus, MS
March 25, 2019

John Larry Taylor
Calhoun City, MS
October 19, 2019



CHANGING LIVES IN OUR COMMUNITY AND BEYOND

East Mississippi Community College Annual Fund Drive



STUDENT-CENTERED.
DONOR-DRIVEN.

The EMCC Foundation is deeply committed to ensuring students have access to high quality educational opportunities without having to break the bank or amass a lot of debt to attend.

Please consider a contribution to the foundation in support of the tuition assistance initiative.

EMCC BY THE NUMBERS

2019



3,882 Students Enrolled in Fall 2019



Currently Serving 745 Dual-Enrolled Students



1,073 graduates, 2018-2019
275 Technical Certificates
798 Associates Degrees



221 Students in the Golden Triangle Early College High School



25% of Students Enrolled in Career-Technical Pathways in Fall 2019



69% of Students Receive Financial Aid Through Grants of Scholarships



737 Adult-Basic Education Students



The Average Aid Amount is \$5,055 Per Year

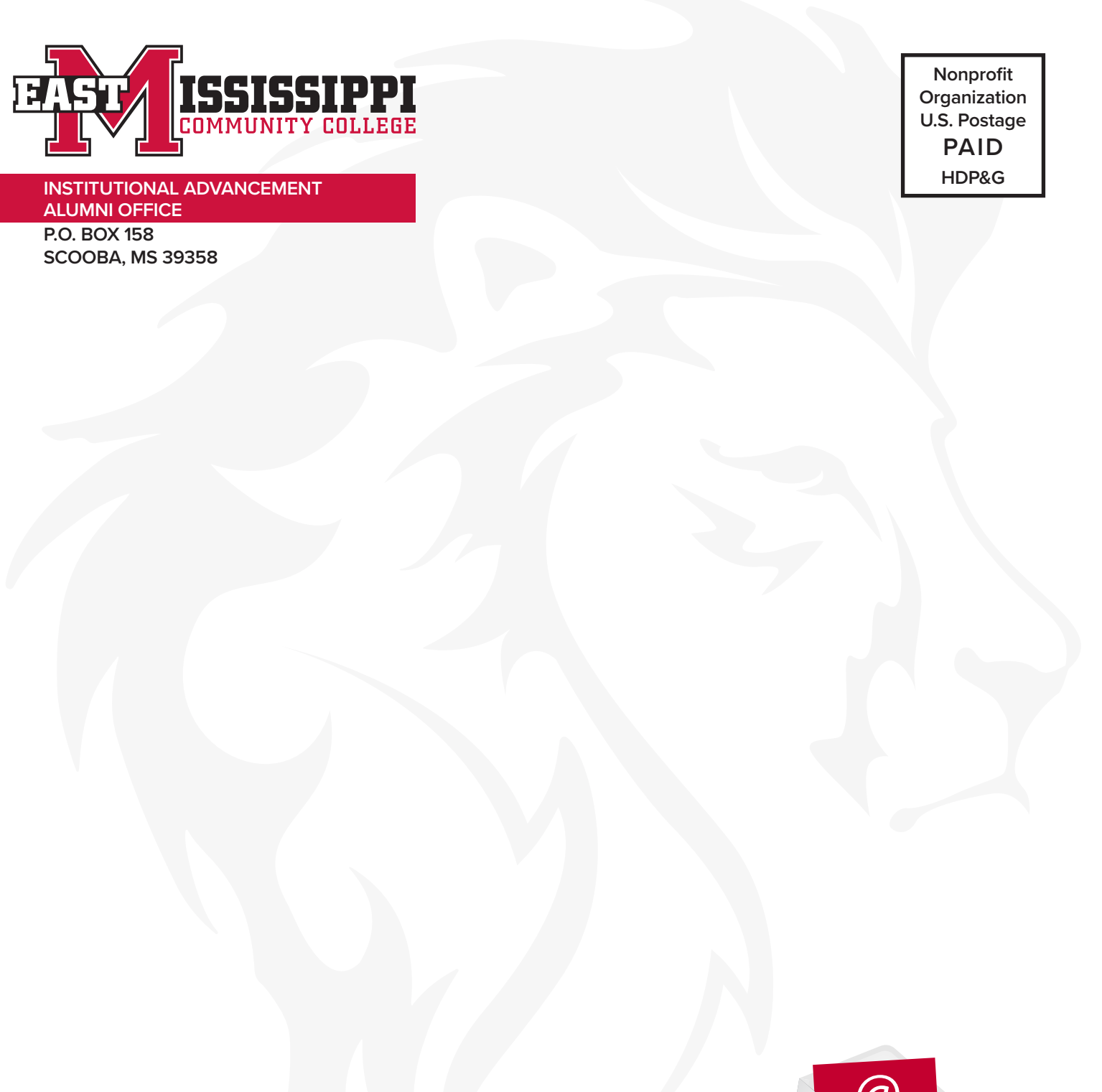
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The cost to the EMCC Development Foundation to send letters to all of our EMCC family and friends is substantial. We can deliver the same content directly to you by email at no cost. Please help EMCC by providing us with your email address.

Please send the below information by email to Director of Alumni Affairs and Foundation Operations Gina Cotton at GCotton@EastMS.edu. Please type "Include me in your email list" in the email subject line.

Hi Gina, I would like to receive correspondence from the East Mississippi Development Foundation by email.

My email address is: _____.

My home address is: _____.

My name is: _____.

My phone number is: _____.