

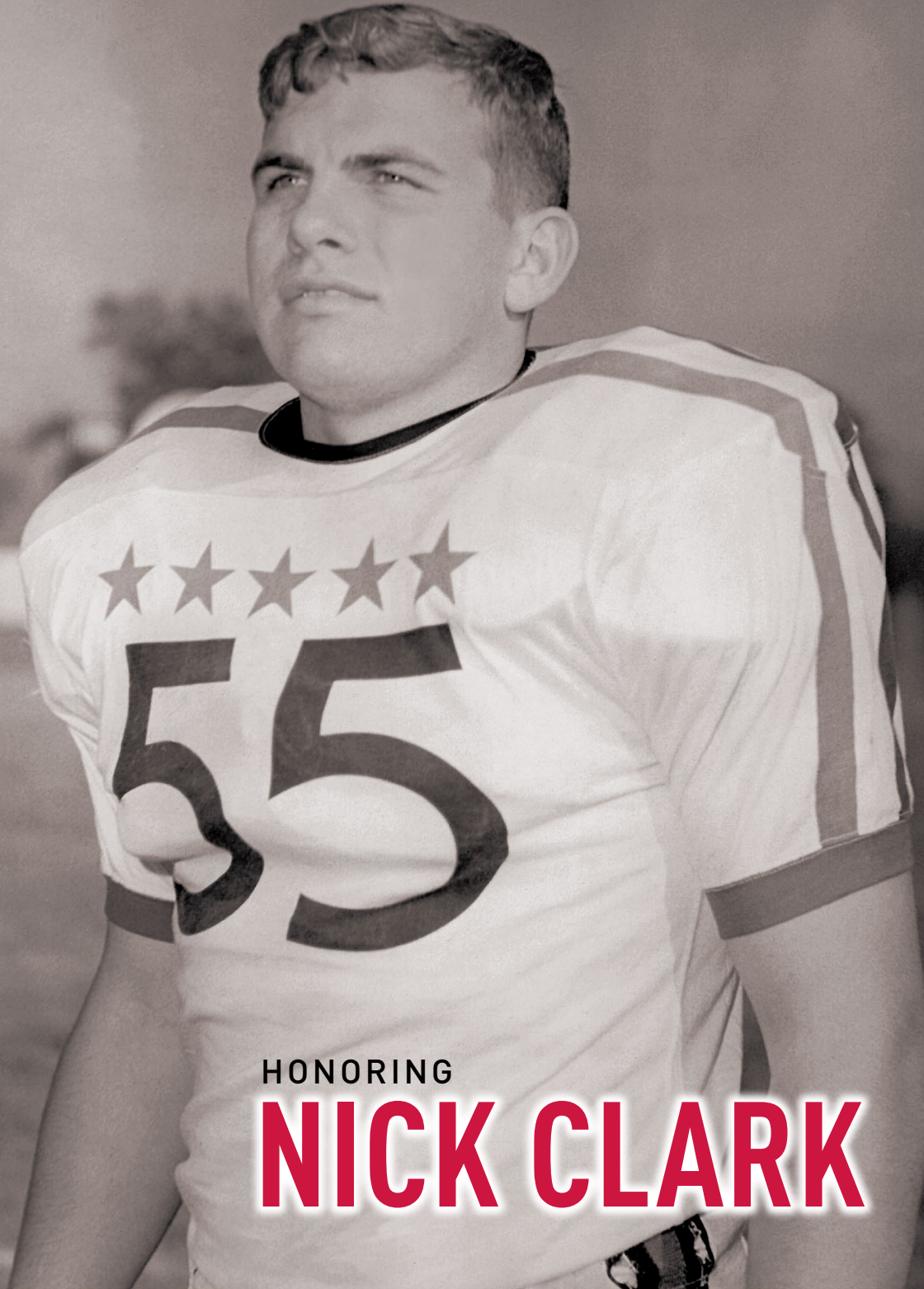


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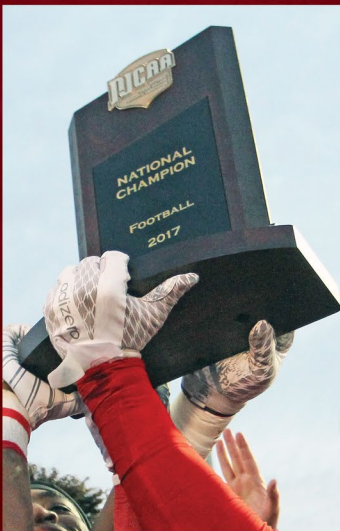
# LIONS' PRIDE

A publication of East Mississippi Community College



HONORING

# NICK CLARK



Fourth National Championship

► PG. 18

Sports Hall of Fame

► PG. 6

Harvard officials visit EMCC

► PG. 27



*Dr. Thomas Huebner, Jr. can be reached by email at [thuebner@eastms.edu](mailto:thuebner@eastms.edu).*

### **East Mississippi Community College's Scooba campus was founded in 1927,**

the year Charles Lindberg completed the world's first solo transatlantic flight, taking off from New York and landing safely in Paris 34 hours later. The marvel that is our aerospace industry today was built upon the daring of Lindberg, the imagination of the Wright brothers before him and the genius of countless aeronautical engineers who followed.

EMCC has gone through its own transformation since its humble beginning when Kemper County Agricultural High School added a 13th grade. For nine decades, EMCC has grown and adapted, opening new doors of opportunity for our students to meet ever-changing societal, business, industrial and economic demands. Throughout that 90-year span, our EMCC family has remained committed to providing an exceptional education to our students at an affordable price.

In 1933, during the Great Depression, the following statement was included in the student catalogue: "To assist our students in paying matriculation fees and buying books, we will purchase, as far as we can use them, corn, peas, potatoes, molasses, pork, beef, butter, eggs and vegetables."

When the U.S. was catapulted into World War II, EMCC helped train factory workers and industrialists who would unleash the nation's potential as an economic juggernaut.

We continue to evolve. This year, we became the first college in the state to offer an E-Commerce Technology program tailored to satisfy a growing need for employees in the online business sector. In May, we created a new career path in cyber security as financial institutions, corporations and government agencies scramble to counter threats posed by computer hackers.

Our Business and Office Technology department added new majors in Accounting Technology, Business Management Technology and Computer Technology. Those are but a few examples.

We've grown. In January, the student union on our Golden Triangle campus opened and quickly became the hub of student activity. Construction on our "Communiversity," which will house training to prepare students for work in today's high-tech industries, is progressing rapidly and we are moving forward with efforts to build additional student resident halls on our Scooba campus.

We've logged other milestones this year. Our accreditation was reaffirmed without a single follow-up report following an extensive review of our financial records, academic programs, faculty credentials and students outcomes.

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## **"Ranked among the Top 10 community colleges in the nation by SmartAsset."**

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We were among four community colleges nationwide chosen to take part in a new initiative to improve student success rates through a grant funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Through the grant, we partnered with InsideTrack, which works with colleges and universities to help increase student enrollment, degree completion and career readiness.

And we continue to garner national accolades. For the third time since 2014, we have been named to the Aspen Institute's Top 150 Community Colleges in the Nation. The designation means we are eligible to compete for the 2019 Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence, which is worth \$1 million to the winning school.

For the second year in a row, we were ranked among the Top 10 community colleges in the nation by SmartAsset. In August, we were ranked No. 3 on the list, up from No. 8 in 2016.

In September, we were placed first in "The 50 Best College's for Online Associate's Degrees 2018" by Nonprofit Colleges Online and No. 7 by AffordableColleges.com's "50 Most Affordable Community Colleges."

We are a small, rural college and yet, somehow, we continue to excel. It isn't by accident. One constant over the decades has been our commitment to improve continually and to provide new educational opportunities for the students we serve. Another has been the continued support of our alumni and friends who recognize the importance of investing in our institution and the students who will one day become their successors.

We look forward to the coming years as we march towards our centennial celebration. While none of us know what the future has in store, my bet is that with you, our EMCC family, at our side, it will be bright indeed.

**Dr. Thomas Huebner, Jr.**  
**EMCC President**



## INSIDE

Marcus Wood, Gina Cotton fill new roles...	2
Homecoming 2017.....	4
Alumnus of the Year.....	5
Sports Hall of Fame .....	6
Three generations of gridiron prowess.....	8
Alumni Events .....	9

Campus Happenings .....	10-15
Nick Clark retires .....	16-17
Sports .....	18-25
Campus News.....	26-28
Philanthropy .....	29-31
In Memoriam/Obits .....	32

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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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Phone: 662.476.5274

### Gina Cotton, Marcus Wood assume new posts



EMCC Vice President for Institutional Advancement Nick Clark, at left, retired July 30. Since Clark's retirement, Gina Cotton, center, has been named Director of Alumni Affairs and Foundation Operations. Marcus Wood, at right, is now Executive Director of College Advancement.

**Two familiar faces at East Mississippi Community College** have been tapped to double-team the college's alumni relations efforts.

Gina Cotton will serve as Director of Alumni Affairs and Foundation Operations while Marcus Wood has been named the Executive Director of College Advancement.

Cotton, who has worked at EMCC for nine years, was formerly the coordinator of Alumni Relations for Nick Clark, the college's Vice President for Institutional Advancement until he retired July 30. In addition to other responsibilities, Cotton and Wood now share duties once handled by Clark.

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**"We really want to encourage our alumni to reach out to us and let us know what is going on in their lives."**  
**~ Gina Cotton**

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The two will work closely with EMCC Assistant Vice President of Institutional Advancement Leia Hill.

Cotton will maintain the college's alumni database and coordinate alumni events, such as the EMCC-Old Waverly Golf Classic, Sporting Clays Challenge Cup and the Billy Joe Cross Wild Game Dinner and Auction.

Wood, who is in his 10th year at EMCC, was an assistant football coach for the Lions until last January when he assumed an administrative post. Wood will lead the college's fundraising efforts.

"I have learned a lot just watching Gina," said Wood, a former EMCC standout football player who was inducted into EMCC's Sports Hall of Fame during the October Homecoming activities. "There was a lot of work that went into the Sports Hall of Fame event, for example. Gina had to contact everyone, line up their tickets, make sure they all got here and see that everything down to the smallest detail, such as the flower arrangements, was ready. Gina does a lot that people will never know about."

Both Cotton and Wood said one of their main priorities will be to establish closer relationships with alumni.

"We really want to encourage our alumni to reach out to us and let us know what is going on in their lives," Cotton said. "We are especially interested in knowing what our younger alumni are doing since we typically don't hear from them as often. People want to know what their former classmates are up to and we are looking at ways of sharing that information in a suitable format."

"We are asking our alumni to reach out to me by email, especially if they have not done so in the past, so we can open a line of communication."

Wood said fundraising is critical for EMCC's mission to continue to grow and add new facilities and educational opportunities for students.

"We hear from alumni all the time who say they are amazed at the growth at EMCC," Wood said. "The new facilities and added programs we have today would not have been possible without the support of our alumni and friends of the college. This college is their legacy and we encourage our emerging alumni to become part of our future legacy as we continue to move forward."

To facilitate donating, the college now accepts online donations at [www.eastms.edu](http://www.eastms.edu). Look for the "Donate Now" button on the website, which has been revamped and updated.

The college's needs are great, Wood said. Long-range plans call for the construction of an athletic operations center at the Scooba campus to consolidate coaching staff and the addition of a women's soccer field for the Golden Triangle campus. Future upgrades are anticipated for EMCC's baseball, softball, basketball and rodeo facilities and hopes are to install a new electronic scoreboard at Sullivan-Windham Field.



Longtime EMCC employees Gina Cotton and Marcus Wood take a moment to relax during the EMCC-Old Waverly Golf Classic. Cotton and Wood are now leading the college's alumni relations efforts.



Marcus Wood was inducted into the EMCC Sports Hall of Fame in October. Pictured are Parker, Marcus, Will, and Marc Wood.

"Many of our alumni have been blessed in that their time at EMCC served as a springboard for them to achieve great things," Wood said. "We need their help to ensure that future Lions are provided the same opportunities."



Cotton graduated from EMCC with honors in 1984 at what was then the Golden Triangle Vocational-Technical Center. She worked for the Forest Products Lab at Mississippi State University and later at the MSU Vet School. She worked at Immanuel Center for Christian Education in Columbus for 10 years. Cotton took some time off to raise her children and later accepted a job at EMCC working for then Dean of Instruction Dr. Teresa Houston.

Cotton and her husband, Chuck Cotton, have been married for 33 years. Chuck Cotton is retired from 4-County Electric and owns his own handyman business. The couple has served at Calvary Baptist Church in Macon for 26 years, where Chuck Cotton is worship pastor and Gina Cotton is the pianist. The couple are also active in community service projects and a nursing home ministry.

They have two daughters, both of whom attended EMCC. Ashley Cotton Cutrer is married to Lance Cutrer and the couple has a son, Luke Cotton Cutrer. Their other daughter, Laura Cotton Chancellor, is married to Dale Chancellor, who is a graduate of EMCC. Both girls are dental hygienists.

A former all-state safety for the EMCC Lions, Wood graduated in 1996 from Mississippi State University with an undergraduate degree in elementary education. He earned a master's degree from MSU in 1998 in sports administration. He coached at Mississippi high schools

for 10 years, with stints at Meridian High School, Philadelphia High School, Columbia High School and Gulfport High School.

He later served as a volunteer coach at Holmes Community College and as a graduate assistant coach at MSU before accepting the offensive coordinator job at EMCC in 2008.

Wood resides in Scooba with his three sons: Marc, Parker and Will. He can be reached by phone at 662-476-5025 or by email at mwood@eastms.edu.

Gina Cotton, who can be reached at 662-476-5063 or by email at gcotton@eastms.edu, said she is excited about her new position.

"We really appreciate the continued support of our alumni and we are looking forward to the great things I know we will accomplish in the future," Gina Cotton said.



Leia Hill, Nick Clark, and Gina Cotton at the Sporting Clays Tournament at Burnt Oak Lodge.

## EMCC chosen to participate in new education initiative

**East Mississippi Community College** is among four community colleges nationwide chosen to take part in a new initiative to improve student success rates through a grant funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

EMCC has partnered with InsideTrack, which works with colleges and universities to help increase student enrollment, degree completion and career readiness.

In March, InsideTrack was awarded a \$1.9 million grant to "implement coaching and proactive advising programs with community colleges that serve large populations of low income, minority and first-generation students to improve retention and graduation rates," according to information on the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation website.

"We don't yet know the full benefits participation in this new initiative will provide to students at East Mississippi Community College," EMCC President Thomas Huebner said. "The changes represent a fundamental shift in our institutional culture that will magnify our efforts to provide individualized attention to each and every student.

"While I am thrilled about our selection to take part in this new initiative, I am even more excited about enhancing our ability to

improve service to our students and better help them obtain their educational goals."

Officials at InsideTrack are working with EMCC administrators, staff and faculty to implement changes designed to provide highly personalized student support services. In June, officials with InsideTrack visited EMCC to conduct a needs assessment, which included an examination of current procedures and processes. They returned in July and again in October and in December to administer intensive training sessions for EMCC advisors, navigators and their supervisors.

Now, incoming freshmen taking academic or career technical courses are assigned an advisor who works closely with them. "It used to be that a student would walk into the counseling center and talk to any advisor who was available," EMCC Student Success Coordinator Laura Damm said. "Now they will see the same advisor for all visits. Students will be able to build a relationship with that person over time. Students don't want to have to explain who they are and what their personal needs are every time they go into the counseling center."

In fall 2018, when the current freshmen are sophomores, they will be paired with faculty



East Mississippi Community College Career Technical Support Services Coordinator Marilyn Maddox, at left, advises student Angelia Wade. EMCC is one of four community colleges nationwide selected to participate in a new initiative to increase student retention and graduation rates.

members in their areas of study, who will serve as the students' advisors. Training for the faculty advisors will take place early next year.

"The faculty advisors will primarily help prepare the students to transition from EMCC into a four-year institution," EMCC Associate Dean of Instruction William Sansing said.

## Homecoming Happenings



### HOMECOMING QUEEN

EMCC's 2017 Homecoming Queen, Hope Alexandria Gladney of Louisville, was crowned at halftime during the Homecoming game. Gladney, second from left, is pictured with EMCC President Dr. Thomas Huebner, EMCC's 2016 Homecoming Queen, Jasmine Carter of Starkville, and EMCC Vice President for Student Life Mickey Stokes.



### HOMECOMING MAIDS

EMCC's 2017 Maids are, first row from left: Hope Gladney of Louisville; Morgan Shuttleworth of Caledonia; Brooke Bradford of Columbus; Alli Vick of Philadelphia; Ashlyn Armstrong of Caledonia; and Victoria Ferguson of Houston. In the second row are: Blair Madison of Columbus; Jordan White of DeKalb; Anna Beth Robertson of Starkville; Claire Henderson of Eupora; Shelby Stricklin of Madison; Dakota Dempsey of Louisville; Sadie Lindsey of Shuqualak; and Abby Stokes of Philadelphia.



### HOMECOMING PARADE

Leo the Lion and the EMCC cheerleading squad lead the way during the annual Homecoming parade, which is a favorite with students and area residents.



### A TIME TO EAT

Homecoming provides an opportunity for old and new friends to gather, have fun and eat. Pork chops, hot dogs and sausage links were on the menu for these tailgating chefs prior to the football game.



### PLAY BALL

Coach Buddy Stephens greets visitors prior to the start of the Homecoming game in which the Lions defeated Coahoma Community College 72-7.



### PICKIN' and GRINNIN'

Homecoming festivities wrapped up with a Break the Chains Live Concert featuring Kevin Rowe and the Prodigal Sons, and The McKay Project.



## Pat Webb named EMCC 2017 Alumnus of the Year



Pat Webb, at center, was named East Mississippi Community College's Alumnus of the Year Oct. 21 during halftime of the college's Homecoming football game. Webb is pictured here with his girlfriend, Karon Bush, at left, and outgoing EMCC Alumni Association President Terisa Pittman, at right.

### East Mississippi Community College's 2017 Alumnus of the Year, Pat Webb,

has worn many hats. Among other things, he served in the U.S. Navy, owned several businesses and successfully managed others.

Webb, Class of 1971, was honored Oct. 21 during the college's 2017 Homecoming game.

Webb spent much of his youth in Florida, residing in St. Cloud before moving to the family farm in the community of Oak Grove, where he spent his teenage years helping his father raise vegetables and care for a 30-acre peach orchard.

Webb later moved with his father to Kemper County, graduating from DeKalb High School in 1969 and enrolling at EMCC the same year. He admits schoolwork wasn't a priority at first and doubts he would have graduated had it not been for his instructors.

"If my life had taken a different direction, there is a great chance I would not have graduated," Webb said. "I credit the professors who took an interest in me and took me under their wings. They turned my life around, motivated me and put me on the path to graduation. I credit them with the things I have accomplished and for making me the person I am today."

Webb was named to the Dean's Scholars list in the spring of 1971. Following his stint at EMCC, Webb joined the Navy.

He earned a bachelor's degree in business after he got out and then reenlisted in the Navy for another four years.

After a stint in New Orleans, Webb moved to South Carolina where he worked for Bradshaw Oldsmobile and Cadillac as a finance and insurance manager before accepting a position as general manager for Jim Nelson Ford in Laurens, S.C. In 1989,

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**"I am honored. I never in my wildest dreams thought I would be awarded something like this." ~ Pat Webb**

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he qualified for the Ford Motor Company Master Manager Award.

"When I first started, the dealership was selling between 25 and 30 cars a month," Webb said. "Within six months, we were selling about 125 cars a month."

Webb later moved to Columbus, Ga., where he has resided for the past 27 years. He opened his first Precision Tune franchise in 1989, acquiring four more in subsequent years while averaging more than \$1 million in annual service sales.

"I would buy underperforming Precision Tunes and turn them around," Webb said. "Precision Tune wouldn't let you perform all repairs on cars back then so I opened a company called Ranger Tune & Brakes.

I would send automobiles to that shop for repairs we couldn't do at Precision Tune."

Webb also served on the Education Committee for former Georgia Gov. Zell Miller and helped initiate the drug testing program in Columbus while participating in the Greater Columbus Chamber of Commerce Education Committee.

In addition, he has served as: board chairman for the Automotive Advisory Board for South Georgia Technical Institute; member of the Automotive Advisory Board for Shaw, Jordan and Spencer high schools in Columbus; member of the Muscogee County Rotary Club where he was Classification Chair and Paul Harris Fellow; member of the Greater Columbus Chamber of Commerce; member of the Board of Directors for the Columbus Urban League; and graduate of the Leadership Columbus Alumni Association.

Webb has faced difficulties, including the loss of two wives and a son. A bout with throat cancer prompted the sale of his businesses in the early 2000s but Webb is in remission now and he is dating a woman with whom he likes to travel.

While he doesn't get back to Scooba as often as he would like, Webb said he keeps up with happenings at the college and

is surprised at the number of people he meets who are familiar with East Mississippi Community College.

"When I talk to people here and tell them I graduated from EMCC, they are impressed," Webb said. "A lot of them know about the football team, of course, and many of them say, 'That football team is amazing.'"

So what does he think about the Alumnus of the Year award?

"I am honored," Webb said. "I never in my wildest dreams thought I would be awarded something like this."

## Six inducted into EMCC Sports Hall of Fame



EMCC Sports Hall of Fame inductees were the guests of honor at a banquet and awards ceremony during Homecoming 2017. Pictured are, from left: EMCC President Dr. Thomas Huebner with inductees Jay Miller, Ruth Johnson Ethridge, Ravon Cumberland, Jose Casanova and Marcus Wood. Pictured at right is inductee Randall Mackey.

**East Mississippi Community College inducted six former athletes** into the college's Sports Hall of Fame during a banquet and awards ceremony Oct. 20 at the F.R. Young Student Union. The inductees were also recognized during halftime of the Oct. 21 Homecoming game. The inductees are:



### JOSE CASANOVA

Football (1981-82)

Currently enjoying a highly successful career in commercial real estate in the Birmingham area following a nationally recognized venture in commercial equipment sales, Jose Casanova was twice named the most valuable defensive lineman in the Mississippi junior college ranks at East Mississippi Junior College while playing for current EMCC Director of Athletics Dr. Randall Bradberry. The 1982 NJCAA Honorable Mention All-American then became a two-year starter for coaching great Frank Beamer at Murray State University in Kentucky.



### RAVON CUMBERLAND

Basketball (1956-58)

Reared in the Coy community of Preston, Ravon Cumberland played point guard on Coach Keyes T. Currie's basketball team at East Mississippi Junior College. After graduating with a math education degree from Mississippi State, he became the owner of Cumberland General Stores in both the Lynville and Preston communities. Having also taught and coached at the junior high and high school levels during his career, Cumberland later spent 21 years as a fireman at Naval Air Station Meridian before retiring in 1988. He now resides in the Lynville community, where he works as a beef cattle and timber farmer.





EMCC's 2017 Sports Hall of Fame inductees were joined by members of their families on Sullivan-Windham Field at halftime during the Homecoming game where they were recognized.



## **RUTH JOHNSON ETHRIDGE**

**Basketball (1949-51)**

Collinsville resident Ruth Johnson Ethridge spent 36 years as an influential English teacher in Louisiana and the Magnolia State. She attended East Mississippi Junior College on a basketball scholarship, where she played two seasons in addition to working in the school cafeteria, serving as editor of the school's student newspaper and being an active member of the BSU, among other activities. She earned a bachelor's degree in business and a master's in English from Southern Miss and spent 15 years teaching in Mississippi and 20 years as an English instructor at East Jefferson High School in Metairie, La., before retiring in 1989.



## **JAY MILLER**

**Football (1969-70)**

Noxubee County native Jay Miller played and coached football at EMCC before moving on to make his mark among the coaching ranks of the MACJC. Signed by legendary coach Bob "Bull" Sullivan, he helped lead the Lions to a two-year mark of 16-4. A graduate of Mississippi State, Miller began his 26-year coaching career within Mississippi's community college system with a two-year stint as EMCC's defensive coordinator. After helping guide Mississippi Delta CC to a pair of state runner-up finishes (1989 & 1991) as an assistant coach, he directed Itawamba CC to back-to-back (1994-95) MACJC North Division titles as head coach. Miller then returned to MDCC as the Trojans' head coach before retiring in 2012.



## **RANDALL MACKEY**

**Football (2008-09)**

Recruited to EMCC out of Bastrop, La., Randall Mackey helped lead Coach Buddy Stephens' EMCC Lions to a 19-3 composite record as a two-time NJCAA All-America quarterback. After leading Bastrop High School to three straight state championships, Mackey capped his EMCC career by quarterbacking the 2009 Lions to their first-ever MACJC state title. He threw for 5,940 career yards and 56 touchdowns while adding 1,065 career rushing yards and nine scores on the ground at EMCC before heading to Ole Miss. He accounted for 2,027 career all-purpose yards and 14 touchdowns for the Rebels. He currently coaches quarterbacks at his high school alma mater.



## **MARCUS WOOD**

**Football (1992-93)**

Former EMCC standout player and assistant coach Marcus Wood has made the successful transition from the football sidelines to the administrative ranks at East Mississippi Community College. Having served on Buddy Stephens' EMCC coaching staff for the past nine years, Wood now oversees the college's fundraising efforts as executive director of College Advancement. Prior to his recent career move, the Starkville native helped guide the Lions to three national championships, five state titles and eight division crowns. A 20-year coaching veteran of Magnolia State gridirons with prior prep coaching stints at Gulfport, Columbia, Philadelphia and Meridian, Wood played for and coached under Hall of Fame football coach Tom Goode at EMCC.

## EMCC football a gridiron legacy for Coggins family



Three generations of the Coggins family have played football for the East Mississippi Community College Lions. They are, from left, Bulldog Coggins, Stuart Coggins and Keith Coggins. The three are pictured here in front of the statue of former Lions' Coach Bob "Bull" Sullivan at Sullivan-Windham Field.

### When Charles "Bulldog" Coggins suited up in 1964

as a member of the then East Mississippi Junior College Lions football team, little did he know that would be the start of a family tradition that would span more than five decades and three generations.

Coggins' son, Keith Coggins (Class of 1993) also played for the Lions, as does his grandson, Stuart Coggins, who is a member of the team's current squad.

"It's neat the way it all intertwines," Keith Coggins said. "Dad started this for all of us. If it had not of been for him, none of us would have been here."

A high school football standout, Bulldog Coggins was recruited by former Lions' Coach Bob "Bull" Sullivan.

"Coach Sullivan was kind of a special guy," Bulldog Coggins said. "For me, he was my messiah. My dad had been dead and

gone and I needed somebody who would provide me with structure."

Bulldog was brought in as a tight end to play on Sullivan's pass-centered offense, long before the term West Coast offense was dubbed and the playing style was adopted by pro football teams. Bulldog, an All-American, also long-snapped and even briefly lined up behind the center after then quarterback Bill Buckner, another All-American, suffered a broken jaw.

"We would have played for the national championship had Bill not have gotten hurt," Bulldog Coggins said.

After graduating, Bulldog played tight end for Delta State University. He was later moved to center, where he snapped to Buckner, who was also playing for DSU.

After finishing school, he served as a high school football coach for seven years before beginning a career in the insurance industry.

"In 2001, the Lord pulled me off into his business," Bulldog Coggins said. "I am a Methodist preacher now."

Keith Coggins was a football fan from a young age and fondly recalls attending practices at Columbia Academy when his dad was the head coach there. He played the game from an early age, first for the YMCA, then Oak Hill Academy and later West Point.

Keith Coggins was a center and long-snapper throughout his football career.

"At West Point, we won three state championships in a row, two in 4A and one at 5A," Keith Coggins said. "Back then, 5A was the biggest classification they had in the state."

After a disappointing season his freshmen year at EMCC, Keith Coggins considered transferring to another college but changed his mind when former pro football player Tom Goode was hired as EMCC's head coach and athletic director.

"Coach Goode said to me, 'I need you to stay here and help me,'" Keith Coggins said. "So, I stayed and we went 6-4. That was the best thing I ever did in my life."

He later played for Mississippi State University, making the traveling squad as a redshirt junior and playing in the Peach Bowl. After school, Keith worked for Kerr-McGee and later for Monroe Gas Storage in Amory, where he is still employed.

Like his father and grandfather before him, Stuart Coggins plays center for EMCC. In high school, he played left guard and right tackle.

"I played everywhere," Stuart Coggins said. "I didn't play center until the last two games of my senior year."

A dual-sport threat, Stuart Coggins was also a high-school standout in baseball, earning second best in the state with 58 RBIs this past season. He plans to try out for EMCC's baseball team and wants to major in athletic training at a four-year university once he graduates.

So which sport does he prefer?

"I think I can maybe go further in baseball than football but I think I enjoy football a little better," Stuart Coggins said.



## Alumni Events

### WILD GAME DINNER AND AUCTION



Former EMCC Vice President for Institutional Advancement Nick Clark auctions an item during the 14th Annual Billy Joe Cross Wild Game Dinner and Auction.

EVENT DATE:

**MARCH 2 2018**

The "Bull" Sullivan Memorial Division of the EMCC Development Foundation will host the **15th Annual Billy Joe Cross Wild Game Dinner and Auction** March 2, 2018 at the Lion Hills Center in Columbus. The annual event is a fundraiser for EMCC's academic and athletic programs. Renasant Bank is the presenting sponsor.

### SPORTING CLAYS CHALLENGE CUP



The 9th Annual EMCC Sporting Clays Challenge Cup winning team members are Elliott Stroud, Mike Duke, Jim Bearden, and Alan Hall. Pictured with the winners are EMCC President Dr. Thomas Huebner, at left, and, at right, Nick Clark, former vice president for Institutional Advancement.

EVENT DATE:

**MAY 11 2018**

The **10th Annual EMCC Sporting Clays Challenge Cup** will take place May 11, 2018 at Burnt Oak Lodge in Crawford. PryorMorrow is the presenting sponsor. The event is hosted by the "Bull" Sullivan Memorial Division of the EMCC Development Foundation. During the event, four-person teams compete for points in the extensive course at Burnt Oak Lodge, shooting clays over land and water. In addition, the annual event includes a luncheon and an awards ceremony.

### EMCC-OLD WAVERLY GOLF CLASSIC



The overall gross winners of the EMCC-Old Waverly Golf Classic were, from left: Ronnie West, Steve West, Bill West, and Tommy Morgan.

EVENT DATE:

**OCT 22 2018**

The **22nd edition of the EMCC-Old Waverly Golf Classic** was held Oct. 23 at Old Waverly Golf Club near West Point. More than 100 golfers participated and dozens of prizes were awarded during the four-person scramble. The event is sponsored by the EMCC Development Foundation's "Bull" Sullivan Memorial Division and BankFirst was the presenting sponsor. Mark your calendars for the next golf classic, which will take place Oct. 22, 2018.

## The Alumni Report



As a graduate of East Mississippi Community College, I know firsthand the high quality of education provided to students. I appreciate not only the education I received, but also the values that

EMCC instilled in me as a lifelong learner. One of the most important values is having the openness to deal with life changes, regardless of your age and situation.

Embracing change has led to EMCC offering more than 30 Career-Technical programs at its Golden Triangle and Scooba campuses. Our students come from many walks of life: young adults eager to earn an associate's degree or

career certificate and enter the workforce; university-bound students looking for an economical way to pay for their first two years of college; or older, non-traditional students who may have lost a job or just want to make a career change.

EMCC reaches out to provide online learning opportunities for its district's constituents who are unable, for a variety of reasons, to attend classes on one of the college's campuses. Our online classes meet all of the quality standards proposed in our traditional on-campus program, which ensures that all students are receiving an excellent education. These programs and others are part of the legacy that EMCC is building for the next generation and beyond.

I would like to thank Tawana Bauer for the tour of the Golden Triangle campus. The tour was informative and the connections with the different program directors will help students in Lauderdale County

explore the many career opportunities that are available through our campuses.

It is important to keep in touch through the EMCC Development Foundation, which is a constant source of information about the happenings and needs of the college. As many of us were once benefactors of scholarship money provided through the generosity of those who attended before us, it is vital that we support the Foundation with our contributions to ensure that the valuable legacy of EMCC will last for generations to come.

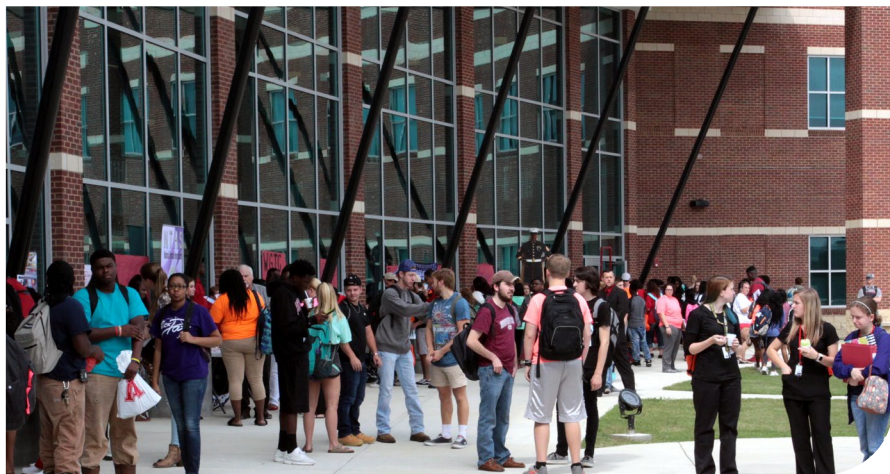
As president of the alumni association, I pledge my support to the administration, faculty, staff and students. Please join me in this pledge by being an active participant in our alumni association and being part of the EMCC legacy.

**Terisa Pittman**, Outgoing President  
EMCC Alumni Association

## GOLDEN TRIANGLE STUDENT UNION OPENS

January 9, 2017

The new student union and multi-purpose building on the Golden Triangle campus opened in January. The roughly \$16 million building includes 12 classrooms, a large lecture hall and a computer lab with about 100 work stations. In addition to administrative offices, the new building boasts a full-service cafeteria, an expanded bookstore, a coffee shop and rooms used for meetings, art exhibits and other purposes.



Many events on the Golden Triangle campus are now held in the new student union, which has become a gathering spot for students looking to relax, dine or study.

## EMCC FARES WELL IN QUIZ BOWL TOURNAMENT

January 20, 2017

EMCC hosted the 2017 National Academic Quiz Tournaments College Sectional Tournament in the student union on the Golden Triangle campus.



EMCC's two quiz bowl teams earned second and third place in the tournament, which was coordinated by EMCC Honors Program Director Scott Baine, far right, who also serves as the college's quiz bowl coach.

## BRIGGS, VANCE RECOGNIZED BY LEGISLATURE

February 21, 2017

EMCC instructor Janet Briggs and sophomore Mallory Vance were named the college's 2016-17 HEADWAE (Higher Education Appreciation Day, Working for Academic Excellence) award recipients. Each year, a student and instructor from each community college and university in the state are recognized at the luncheon for their outstanding work. During the annual event, the students and faculty are welcomed by the lieutenant governor and recognized in each chamber of the Legislature.



Janet Briggs, at left, and Mallory Vance at the HEADWAE awards.

## BEAUTY & BEAU PAGEANT

February 7, 2017

The annual Beauty & Beau Pageant contest was held in the Stennis Auditorium on the Scooba campus.



The Top 10 contestants in the 2017 Beauty & Beau Pageant are, seated from left, Rylee Dawkins of Pinson, Ala., Taylor Lairy of West Point, Hope Gladney of Louisville, Meagan Higginbotham of Decatur, and Jade Roberson of Decatur. In the second row are Shelby Mansfield of Holcomb, Lexie Fallon of Lucedale, "Most Beautiful" Kaitlyn Taylor of West Point, Madalyn McBride of Starkville, and Kayla Tanner of Lucedale.

## EMCC NURSING STUDENTS RECEIVE COWART SCHOLARSHIPS

February 24, 2017

EMCC Associate Degree Nursing students Brittany Bontrager of Taylorsville and Shannon Shaw of Caledonia, were named the 2016-17 recipients of the Dennis D. and Leola K. Cowart Nursing Scholarship. The scholarships are awarded each year to two deserving students enrolled in the ADN program.



Leola K. Cowart Nursing Scholarship recipients Brittany Bontrager, at left, and Shannon Shaw.



## EMCC'S MULLEN, KEARIES NAMED WILLIAM WINTER SCHOLARS

February 25, 2017

EMCC Humanities instructor Janet Mullen and EMCC student Kearies Mays attended the Natchez Literary and Cinema Celebration Feb. 25 where they were named William Winter Scholars. Each year, dozens of Humanities instructors and students from colleges and universities in Mississippi are chosen as William Winter Scholars. Winners are honored at the opening and closing of the Natchez Literary and Cinema Celebration. The award is named after former Mississippi Gov. William F. Winter.



Janet Mullen, at left, and Kearies Mays, at right, pose with "Dispatches from Pluto" author Richard Grant during the Natchez Literary and Cinema Celebration.

## EMCC STUDENT TAKES 'BEST OF SHOW'

March 6, 2017

EMCC student Natalie Runyon took Best of Show in the Mississippi Community and Junior College Art Instructors Association State Art Competition for her drawing of paper lunch bags titled "Various Lunches." Students from colleges submitted nearly 150 pieces of artworks for the annual competition. Other winners from EMCC included: Amanda Chandler, first place in Drawing; Addison Garrett, honorable mention for Drawing; and Lexie Maier, honorable mention for Two-dimensional design.



Natalie Runyon with her "Best of Show" artwork.

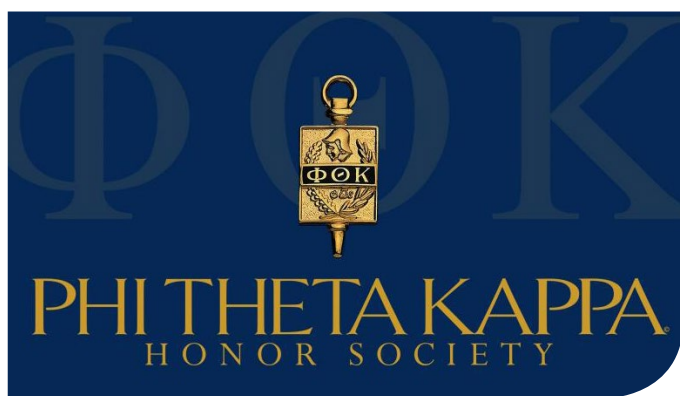
## EMCC'S KELLY CANTRELL NAMED 2017 MOODY INSTITUTE FELLOW

April 3, 2017

EMCC history instructor and Honors Program Director Kelly Cantrell was named a 2017 Moody Institute Fellow. Cantrell was chosen to receive the award from the Moody Institute Trust Fund.



Kelly Cantrell received a \$1,000 grant to attend the National Collegiate Honors Council's 52nd annual conference held in Atlanta Nov. 8-12 as part of her award.



The mission of Phi Theta Kappa is to recognize academic achievement of college students and to provide opportunities for them to grow as scholars and leaders.

## BIG HONORS FOR EMCC PTK CHAPTERS

April 8, 2017

Members of East Mississippi Community College's Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society chapters were recognized during Catalyst 2017, a national convention in Nashville, Tenn., that ran April 6-8. EMCC's Eta Upsilon chapter was named among the Top 100 chapters out of 1,300 in the nation and was one of 10 chapters nationwide that received a Hallmark Award for "Distinguished College Project 2017." They also were recognized as a Five-Star chapter and REACH award winner. EMCC's Beta Iota Zeta chapter was also recognized as a Five-Star chapter and a REACH award winner. Beta Iota Zeta members Elizabeth Shurlds and Leah Bentley were recognized as Coca-Cola Leaders of Promise Scholars.



## STEEL DYNAMICS GARNERS DIRECTOR'S AWARD AT EMCC INDUSTRY APPRECIATION LUNCHEON

April 19, 2017

Steel Dynamics, Inc., was presented with the 2017 Director's Award at EMCC's 28th Annual Industry Appreciation Luncheon, the event's highest honor.

Yokohama Tire Manufacturing Mississippi took home the Best Practices Award. Special Recognition Awards went to Joe Cade and 4-County Electric Power Association, EMCC Workforce Special Projects Coordinator Chrystal Newman, and Golden Triangle Development LINK Vice President of Internal and External Affairs Macaulay Whitaker.

*Pictured at the award presentation are, from left, Steel Dynamics Human Resources representative Jason King, EMCC President Dr. Thomas Huebner, Steel Dynamics Vice President and General Manager Madhu G. Ranade, Steel Dynamics Galvanizing/Paint Electrical Engineer Stephen Sims and EMCC Vice President of Workforce and Community Services Dr. Raj Shaanak.*

## EMCC OFFERING DEGREE IN CYBER SECURITY

May 31, 2017

EMCC is offering a new program in cyber security to help meet the growing demand for information technology security professionals. Students who complete the program will earn an Associates of Applied Science degree in Network Security Technology.

Financial institutions, corporations and government agencies are scrambling to hire cyber security experts to offset the increased threat posed by computer hackers, EMCC Local Area Networking instructor Brandon Sesser said.

"The need for cyber security professionals is immense," Sesser said. "Corporations, the National Security Agency, the Department of Homeland Security, the CIA and the FBI all want them."



## EMCC EXCEEDS HIGH STANDARDS REQUIRED FOR REACCREDITATION

June 15, 2017

East Mississippi Community College's accreditation was reaffirmed following an exhaustive review of the college's financial records, academic programs, faculty credentials and student outcomes.

The Board of Trustees for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) approved EMCC's accreditation, which is up for renewal once every 10 years. In all, there are nearly 100 standards required by SACSCOC that must be met before accreditation is granted, plus the development of an institution-wide Quality Enhancement Plan.

When insufficiencies are identified during the reaccreditation process, colleges can be asked to submit special reports detailing how they will correct the problems.

"The fact that we had no required follow-up reports speaks volumes to the quality of the faculty, staff and educational programs at East Mississippi Community College," EMCC President Dr. Thomas Huebner said. "The reaffirmation of the demanding standards required for accreditation validates our commitment to serving our students and providing them with the best education possible."

## EMCC STUDENTS EARN MEDALS IN NATIONAL SKILLS-USA CHAMPIONSHIPS

June 23, 2017

Three East Mississippi Community College students competing against their peers from colleges and universities across the nation took home a gold medal and two silver medals in the SkillsUSA Championships in Louisville, Ky.

The national championships took place June 19-23 at the 53rd annual National Leadership and Skills Conference. Ten EMCC students earned a combined eight gold medals in the Mississippi SkillsUSA competition in Jackson earlier in the year to earn a shot at the national championships.



*Kyle Bluitt, at left, and Dillion Miles, second from left, were among the three EMCC students who earned medals in the SkillsUSA Championships. EMCC Diesel Mechanics instructor Michael Ricks, second from right, and Automotive Technology instructor Dale Henry were among the instructors who had students in the competition.*

Kyle Bluitt earned a gold medal and the national championship in the Job Skills Demonstration, Oil Change category. Dillion Miles took second place in Marine Services Technology and Matthew Walsh earned second place in Job Skills Demonstration, Disc Brakes.



## EMCC'S ABE EMPLOYEES EARN MAACE AWARDS

July 20, 2017

EMCC's Adult Basic Education Department walked away with two of the four Northern Region awards issued by the Mississippi Association of Adult and Community Education (MAACE) for the 2016-17 school year. EMCC ABE instructor Tshurah Dismuke garnered the award for the Northern Region Teacher of the Year. EMCC ABE Director Jim Bearden was named the Northern Region Administrator of the Year. The awards were presented during the MAACE annual conference and awards banquet in Natchez.



Tshurah Dismuke, at left, and Jim Bearden with their MAACE awards.

## EMCC FIRST COMMUNITY COLLEGE IN STATE TO OFFER E-COMMERCE PROGRAM

August 14, 2017

EMCC is the first college in Mississippi to offer an E-Commerce Technology program tailored to meet a growing need for employees in the online business sector.

"One of our goals at EMCC is to ensure that our course offerings reflect marketplace demands," EMCC Associate Dean of Instruction Dr. Melanie Sanders said. "Given that the impact of E-Commerce is being felt across the global economy, we felt that the time was right to offer a program that would help our students capitalize on this growing industry."

The Mississippi Community College Board approved EMCC's application for the new program at the Golden Triangle campus and classes were available in the fall term that began in August.

"Since the classes are available online, one of the benefits of the certificate is that it can be offered internationally," EMCC Marketing instructor Dr. Joshua Carroll said. "Students who live in Zimbabwe, China or India will be able to complete the course and learn how to market their internet-based businesses in the U.S."

## EMCC CO-SPONSORS COMIC-CON

August 19, 2017

EMCC was one of the presenting sponsors for the Golden Triangle Comic-Con at the Trotter Convention Center in Columbus. Activities included costume and Local Area Network gaming contests. EMCC's Information Systems Technology instructors Brandon Sesser and Sandra Coleman were among the organizers. EMCC's Culinary Arts Technology instructors and students provided meals for VIP guests.



EMCC students and IT staff helped coordinate the gaming contests for the Golden Triangle Comic-Con.



## EMCC HOSTS TOYOTA EXPRESS MAINTENANCE CONTEST

October 20, 2017

Two-person teams from 12 high schools across Mississippi competed at East Mississippi Community College's Golden Triangle campus on Friday, Oct. 20, in the Toyota Express Maintenance Contest sponsored by Houston, Texas-based Gulf States Toyota, Inc., and the National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation (NATEF). Officials from Toyota and NATEF were on hand for the event. EMCC's Automotive Services Technology program hosted the contest, which for the first time this year took place outside of Texas and was comprised of students from high schools in another state.

EMCC's Automotive Services Technology program hosted the Toyota Express Maintenance Contest, which for the first time took place outside of Texas and was comprised of students from high schools in another state.

## South Korean Consul General visits EMCC, presents vets with medal

### Fourteen Mississippi veterans who supported U.S. efforts during the Korean War

were presented with the Ambassador for Peace Medal by Republic of Korea Consul General Hyung Gil Kim Dec. 11 during a ceremony at East Mississippi Community College.

The veterans, members of their families and officials from EMCC and the Consul General of the Republic of Korea in Houston attended the event held adjacent to the college's Korean War Memorial. It marked Kim's first visit to Mississippi.

Kim, the Republic of Korea's youngest Consul General, told the veterans he would not be standing before them today had it not been for the sacrifices made by them and their fellow servicemen on behalf his country.

"My generation has not experienced war thanks to these veterans who came to Korea to defend my country against communist invasion," Kim said. "... The Korean War veterans are my heroes. Thank you."

Cody Perkins, outreach coordinator for the Mississippi State Veterans Affairs Board, said he was contacted by the office of the Consul General and asked to help coordinate the event.

"To my surprise, the only monument erected specifically to Korean War veterans in the state of Mississippi is right



Republic of Korea Consul General Hyung Gil Kim, at left, presents Korean War veteran Antoine Otto with the Ambassador for Peace Medal for his service.

here at my alma mater of EMCC," Perkins said. "... Today is a very special event because we are honoring and showing appreciation for some of our veterans who not only ensured the freedoms off our nation during the Cold War but also the freedoms and liberties of South Korea during the Cold War.

"As with any war, there were many sacrifices made. Some were the ultimate sacrifice. Men who laid down their lives in

a faraway land for a people who they had never met. All in the name of freedom." EMCC President Dr. Thomas Huebner said he is humbled and honored that the college was chosen as the site for the event to honor the veterans.

"I can't begin to thank you enough for what you were willing to do for the United States of America, for the people of Korea, for my family and for everyone standing here today," Huebner told the veterans. "A heartfelt thank you to each one of the men sitting in front of me today."

According to figures compiled by the Pentagon, 33,651 U.S. service members died in battle during the Korean War, with another 3,262 non-battle casualties in the war that erupted on June 25, 1950 when 75,000 soldiers from the Soviet-backed North Korean People's Army poured across the 38th parallel into the Republic of Korea. It was the first military action of the Cold War.

The war lasted until July 1953. The country remains divided, with about 28,500 U.S. troops stationed in South Korea as a deterrent against North Korean aggression.

During the ceremony at EMCC, in which both the U.S. and Republic of Korea national anthems were played, Huebner and Kim



Republic of Korea Consul General Hyung Gil Kim, at center, with veterans he presented with the Ambassador for Peace Medal for their service to his country during the Korean War.



placed a wreath in front of the Korean War memorial. Kim then presented the veterans with the Korean Ambassador for Peace Medal, which is granted in appreciation to those who served in the Korean War.

A proclamation was read that states, in part, "It is a great honor and pleasure to express the everlasting gratitude of the Republic of Korea and our people for the service you and your countrymen have performed in preserving our freedom and democracy."

Kim said due to the U.S. efforts, South Korea has "transformed itself into an economic powerhouse."

"We are America's sixth largest trading partner and the world's 11th largest economy," Kim said. "... Meanwhile North Korea has gone down a misguided road. ... Its economy remains stagnant. This stark contrast gives meaning to what you fought for. ... Without your valor, courage and



East Mississippi Community College President Dr. Thomas Huebner, at left, and Republic of Korea Consul General Hyung Gil Kim prepare to lay a wreath at the Korean War memorial on the college's campus.



Porterville resident Ike Hopper was among 14 veterans presented with the Ambassador for Peace Medal by Republic of Korea Consul General Hyung Gil Kim.

sacrifice, South Korea's miracle would not have happened."

Madison resident Antoine Otto was among those honored. Otto served 13 years in the U.S. Armed Forces — in the U.S. Navy, Naval Reserves and National Guard.

He was a boiler technician on the U.S. Manchester, a Cleveland-class light cruiser equipped with 12 6-inch guns that were used to bombard North Korean troop concentrations while also performing patrol operations and blockades.

"We went up and down Korea firing night and day," Otto said. "We spent 30 days

outside Wonsan firing nonstop for 30 days." Otto said he was honored to take part in the ceremony.

"I also felt like it was an honor to serve my country," Otto said. "I would serve my country again if they ever need me. I may be 89, but I can do something."

Here is a list of the veterans honored at the event: Ed "Hoot" Gipson; Charles "Chuck" Fowler; Billy Whitaker; Bill Joe "BJ" Jordan; Robert Leo; Homer C. Birdsong, Jr.; Larry Vander-Meulen; George Chafin; Jimmie Walker; Ike Hopper; John W. Espey; Jacob "Jack" Moorman; Antoine Otto; and Henry F. Boswell, Jr.

## LOCAL AUTHOR HOSTS BOOK-SIGNING AT SCOوبا CAMPUS

Former Meridian resident and author Hewitt Clarke visited EMCC's Scooba campus Aug. 17, when he spoke in the library to students, faculty and the public about his works. Clark also signed copies of his latest book, "Dark Secrets: Good and Evil in the Deep South."

Clarke, who grew up in Meridian and now resides in Houston, Texas, is a researcher and author who has written nine books, including "Bloody Kemper," which chronicles a deadly feud between two prominent Kemper County families and a sinister

doctor said to have poisoned his patients to collect their life insurance payments.

"I have always been fascinated with Scooba," Clarke said.

EMCC art instructor Lisa Spinks invited Clarke to EMCC to conduct the book signing following a chance meeting.

"I thought it would be great to have a local author come speak at our campus," Spinks said. "I thought it would help bring some culture to our community."

### Distinguished Service Award recipient Nick Clark has long history with college



(Above) Nick Clark, at left, is presented with the Distinguished Service Award by EMCC President Dr. Thomas Huebner during halftime of the Homecoming game. (Right, top) Nick Clark with his wife, Jane, during the Homecoming banquet. (Right, middle) Nick Clark with his grandchildren, Benjamin Clark, Mary Morgan Clark, Laura Beth Clark and Caroline Clark. (Right, bottom) Laura Beth Clark, Nick Clark and Jane Clark during the 9th Annual Sporting Clays Challenge Cup.

#### Former East Mississippi Community College Vice President for Institutional Advancement

**Nick Clark** has been named the recipient of the 2017 Distinguished Service Award. Clark, who retired July 30, has a long-running association with the college that spans more than five decades.

"I miss the people and the comradery," Clark said. "It was fun to get up and come to work. Every day presented a new challenge."

Clark, a Noxubee County High School baseball and football standout who was selected to the football first team, All-Conference, played both sides of the ball as offensive guard and defensive tackle for legendary football coach Bob "Bull" Sullivan in 1964-65 for what was then East Mississippi Junior College.

Outside of his father, Clark would come to call Sullivan the most influential man in his life.

"I am grateful I had the opportunity to play for Coach Sullivan," Clark said. "He was a great coach and a great man."

Clark started the second football game of his freshmen year and played every subsequent game until his graduation. He was elected to the first All-State team as a sophomore and named the Lions' most valuable player.

Clark was also a member of the college's baseball team, which won the state championship during his freshman year and placed as runner-up during his sophomore year. Clark served as the president of the college's first chapter of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and developed friendships that last to this day.

"I would not trade my two years at Scooba for all the tea in China," Clark said.

Clark turned down a football scholarship at Delta State University, but continued his studies there, earning an undergraduate degree in physical education and a master's degree in school administration.

After graduating, Clark segued into coaching, serving as the head coach at Clarksdale Jr. High School. Later, at the ripe old age of 23, he accepted a job as the head football coach, athletic director and assistant principal of Lee Academy. During a coaching career that spanned 12 years, Clark won more than 75 percent of his games, coached two All Star games, was named Coach of the Year twice and turned down two offers to coach at the college level.

In 1985, Clark and his family moved to Columbus, where he worked in the real estate and insurance fields. In the early 1990s, then EMCC President Dr. Tommy Davis Jr., who played football under Coach Sullivan, sought out some of his former teammates to create the Sullivan Memorial Division of the EMCC Development



Foundation. Clark was among those Davis solicited for help.

"That is kind of how I got involved with EMCC again," Clark said. "Our main goal was to help raise money for the college."

In 1998, Clark was named EMCC's Alumnus of the Year. In 2000, when Davis was looking to hire a director of development, he turned to Clark, who agreed to assume the duties on a part-time basis while continuing to work in the insurance and real estate fields. In 2006, Clark was hired fulltime as EMCC's director of development, overseeing fundraising for major capital improvements, such as the Chapel in the Pines and, later, the Orr Center for Christian Activity.

"I am grateful to all of the EMCC alumni and friends who have given generously of their time and resources," Clark said. "Much of the growth at EMCC was the direct result of their support and I would like to accept this Distinguished Service Award is on their behalf."

Projects funded through the Development Foundation include the electronic scoreboard at Sullivan Windham Field, the bronze statue of Coach Sullivan,

achievement awards, faculty recognition, numerous scholarships and the purchase of championship rings.

EMCC President Dr. Thomas Huebner said Clark played a crucial role in the Development Foundation's success.

"Nick's contributions to EMCC are invaluable," Huebner said. "Not only did he spearhead major fundraising efforts but he

Heritage Academy and was an Executive Council member for New York Life Insurance Company. Clark is a member of the Columbus Association of Realtors \$1 Million Club, and was the leading disability insurance salesman for New York Life's Memphis, Tenn., office, which included parts of Tennessee, Mississippi, Missouri and Arkansas. He is also an accomplished auctioneer.

**"It was fun to get up and come to work. Every day presented a new challenge." ~ Nick Clark**

Five years ago, Nick and his wife, Jane, married following the untimely deaths of both of their spouses. Together they have four sons: Jay, Conner, Chris and Penn; and nine

grandchildren. They enjoy spending time on their farm west of Macon where Clark is a "fulltime cowboy."

Clark said he will always cherish his time at EMCC.

"I had the opportunity to meet a lot of great people and getting reacquainted with some folks I had not seen in a long, long time," Clark said. "I enjoyed that aspect of it more than anything else."

provided steady leadership in one of the college's key positions. We will always be grateful for what Nick has done for EMCC. On a personal note, I truly enjoyed working with Nick and I miss not being able to turn to him for advice and support."

Clark is past president of the 5-County Life Underwriters Association, the Columbus Kiwanis Club, and the Lowndes County Cattlemen Association. He also sat on the Board of Trustees for the

## EMCC launches crowdfunding campaign for Academic Success Center

East Mississippi Community College is reaching out to alumni, community members, industry and business leaders and fans of "Last Chance U" to seek support for a crowdfunding campaign to create a space dedicated to helping students attain their educational dreams.

The college is accepting donations for an Academic Success Center at the Scooba campus to provide centralized services for advising, mentoring, tutoring and other retention programs designed to help students stay in school. Money is also needed to hire tutors and purchase computers and other equipment.

Donations are being accepted online at <https://give.funderbolt.io/emcc/academic-success-center>.

Hopes are to raise enough money to gut and renovate an unused building on the Scooba campus that once housed the college's former cafeteria. Located across from the administration building, the facility boasts 10,208 square feet of space that if renovated could be used for the Academic Success Center.

"It is a good building that could really go a long way in providing our students with the services they need if it was repurposed," EMCC Executive Director of College Advancement Marcus Wood said.

EMCC has garnered international attention from Netflix's award-winning docuseries "Last Chance U," which spanned two seasons and followed a group of Lions' football players and coaches during their 2015 and 2016 championship bids.



EMCC Distinguished Service Award recipient Nick Clark speaks during Homecoming 2017.

dedication of Bill Buckner Drive, renovations to the Dottie Smith Band Hall and much more. The foundation has also supported student academic

## Fourth National Championship



The EMCC Lions became the first MACJC member school to claim four national football championships, as recognized by the NJCAA, with their 31-28 victory over No. 2 Arizona Western in this year's Mississippi Bowl X played in Perkinston.

### Another season, another national championship

for East Mississippi Community College's nationally renowned football program. The Lions' recent journey to their latest NJCAA championship made it extra special for 10th-year head coach Buddy Stephens and the entire EMCC program.

There was plenty of adversity for the Lions to overcome on and off the football field during the course of the 2017 campaign. Yet there the Lions were in early December hoisting the NJCAA national championship trophy once again following a hard-fought, 31-28 victory over a previously unbeaten Arizona Western College team in the NJCAA championship game.

That win over AWC during Mississippi Bowl X played in Perkinston gave East

Mississippi a fourth national championship in the last seven years, following on the heels of previous NJCAA titles earned by the Lions during the 2011, 2013 and 2014 seasons. The most recent achievement put EMCC in rarefied air as the first Mississippi junior college football program to claim four national football championships as recognized by the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA).

"It's been a couple of years since we've played in the big one," said Stephens. "We feel like we had the teams in 2015 and 2016 to win it and those were very good football teams. But due to situations, we didn't get that opportunity. This year's championship was special for many reasons. I have two former players (Bo Wallace and Rod Moore) on my staff. Plus, this team faced a lot of adversity throughout the year.

"We lost players to injuries and we lost a player (Tyone Clemons) in a car accident prior to the national championship. With the adversity we went through this year and with all the things we had to fight through, it just made it a special bunch to coach. That is what makes it special because there were so many sidebars to our season."



The Lions competed in this year's NJCAA title game with collective heavy hearts due to the Nov. 18 passing of sophomore defensive lineman Tyone Clemons.

It didn't take Stephens long to witness the toughness of his team and to observe their ability to bounce back from adversity. That process started right away this past season

when the Lions rallied from behind for a victory over Jones County in the season opener to make Stephens the all-time winningest football coach in school history.

The lowest point of the season, on the field, came during Week 7 when EMCC dropped a 61-38 road decision to Northwest Mississippi, costing the Lions their chance at a seventh straight MACJC North Division regular-season title. As a No. 2 playoff seed, EMCC had to rally again to collect postseason road wins over JCJC and Northwest, ranked sixth and fourth, respectively, at the time.

"We saw it in the first ballgame when we were playing Jones County," Stephens recalled. "Things were not going our way, but our guys just kept battling in that season opener. Then we came into the Northwest game not as prepared as we should've been. We got beat that night, but I saw how our guys reacted to that loss.

"We saw it again in the playoffs. We could've laid down when we got behind Jones County and Northwest. But our guys kept fighting and that carried over to the national championship game. We saw glimpses of their heart all season long. We could tell from the start that we had the makings of a special team."

However, off the field, nothing could prepare for the tragedy the Lions experienced on Nov. 18. A week after EMCC's state championship win at Northwest Mississippi, a car accident took the life of EMCC sophomore defensive lineman Tyone Clemons. Naturally, seeing one of their teammates taken away at such a young age was a difficult situation for the Lions and the coaches.

"It's something I wouldn't wish on my worst enemy," said Stephens. "It is tough to deal with the loss of someone. Tyone was so full of energy and such a great kid. Our guys handled it in a way that most of us would've handled it. They had their feelings pinned up and all of that was released after our championship game."

Statistically, EMCC's offensive attack again ranked among the national leaders this past season. The Lions averaged 48.3 points and nearly 500 yards of total offense per game. Former LSU transfer Lindsey Scott Jr. engineered the high-powered offense while passing for 3,481 yards and 29 touchdowns during the season. As a dual-threat



quarterback, Scott also ranked second on the team with 729 rushing yards.

Sophomore Tyrell Price emerged as one of the state's top running backs, rushing for nearly 1,000 yards and an NJCAA-leading 24 touchdowns on the year. Showing offensive balance, EMCC's talent-laden receiving corps featured the likes of sophomores Kirk Merritt, Calvin Keys Jr. and Mike Williams along with freshman Dontario Drummond – all with 30 or more catches for the season. Merritt, a former Texas A&M and Oregon transfer, led that group with 52 catches for 628 receiving yards, while Drummond had a team-best 10 receiving touchdowns along with 37 receptions for 609 yards.

**“We’ve developed our program to be the best in the state from both an athletic and academic standpoint.”**

**~ Buddy Stephens**

The offensive success the Lions continued to enjoy throughout the season takes on increased significance when considering that EMCC's offensive staff entered the 2017 campaign with several new faces.

“We had a new offensive coordinator (David Boykin) come in along with new guys coaching our quarterbacks (Bo Wallace) and running backs (Courtland Hays),” noted Stephens. “They came right in and picked it up right away.

“What made us click were those guys coming together and all of us meshing early on. Coach Boykin did a great job leading the offense and the credit goes to him. He did a great job installing things he likes to do along with the things we’ve done in the past. My hat goes off to those guys with the way they picked it up and were able to mesh with the kids.”

Defensively with Cliff Collins returning to the Scooba campus as EMCC's new defensive coordinator, the Lion defenders also made an impact despite at times playing with limited numbers. Earning defensive honors for the 2017 Lions were defensive linemen Aaron Boatright and Cole Baker, linebacker Ty'Ree Evans and defensive back Duke Upshaw.

“We lost two defensive linemen during the preseason, so we were thin on depth at certain positions,” Stephens said. “But the thing is, the guys kept battling and I thought we played good team defense all year long.”

All in all despite the yearly transitioning of players and coaches at the junior college level, Stephens and the Lions have enjoyed an amazing run of unparalleled, consistent success since his arrival on the Scooba campus 10 years ago. Along with the four national championships, the Lions have also captured six state titles and eight division crowns dating back to 2008, while compiling an eye-popping composite record of 98-13 (.883) during that span. Furthermore, EMCC is an astonishing 74-5 (.937) collectively since 2011.

“When you start looking at the things we’ve accomplished, it is impressive,” Stephens said proudly. “Six state titles in nine years and four national championships in seven years. If you had told me on Dec. 17, 2007 - my first day on the job - that we would do those things, I would’ve thought you were crazy.

“But with the backing of our administration and our board of trustees, we’ve developed our program to be the best in the state from both an athletic and academic standpoint. We are now one of the premier programs in the country.”

However, as Stephens continues to enjoy the fruits of his labor with multiple championships won and dozens of players annually moving on to better themselves on and off the gridiron, he also remains appreciative of the opportunity afforded to him a decade ago.

“To sit back and look at everything, it really humbles you,” Stephens admitted. “You think about all of the people involved with our success who spend time away from their families. It is an outstanding team effort and it really makes you humble. It makes you feel so thankful to have this kind of opportunity.”

In return, Stephens and his staff remain collectively challenged to continue making the most of this opportunity by keeping EMCC's football program at the forefront of the national junior college football scene. With championship trophies raised and rings in hand, along with the national and international fame gained as a result of Netflix's two-season run of the popular “Last Chance U” docuseries, the Lions are prepared to keep the program's dynasty



*Coach Buddy Stephens surveys the field alongside defensive line coach Davern Williams and defensive coordinator Cliff Collins.*

reference buzzing around the Scooba campus for years to come.

“Young people want to go where they can win championships and be seen,” Stephens stressed. “We are taking it to another level and it really sets the bar high for everyone else.”



*New football hardware for the 2017 EMCC Lions included a fourth NJCAA national championship trophy in seven years.*



*Coach Billy Begley's 2017-18 EMCC men's basketball team features a combination of nine freshmen and six sophomores.*

## Pleased with his team's preseason jamboree performances,

EMCC men's basketball coach Billy Begley got a good look at his 2017-18 roster and noted a couple of things that could prove to be keys to a successful season for the Lions.

While only returning a handful of players from last season, Begley is confident he has found the necessary pieces to the puzzle with the arrival of a talented newcomer class. EMCC's third-year head coach believes he has the depth and talent to make a good run this season.

"During the preseason, I was able to see what kind of depth we have," Begley said. "I was able to play different lineups each game and we didn't lose a beat regardless of who was out there."

Expected to lead the returners are guard Keith Harris and forward Carlos Thomas, who both saw extensive minutes for the Lions as freshmen. Other familiar faces for Begley and assistant coach Pete Story are

post players Ill'yan Scott and Jaquan Hines along with guard Jordon Lee. Alabama prep all-state point guard Cam Horton is also back after missing all of last season with a wrist injury.

"Keith Harris is a winner who makes things happen," Begley noted. "He's an improved backcourt player who sets the tone for this team because he plays so hard on both ends of the floor."

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**"I am very pleased with the depth we have and the competitiveness these guys have." ~ Billy Begley**

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Harris' improvement and experience will certainly come in handy this season with the addition of highly acclaimed backcourt standouts Horton, Terryonte Thomas (New Hope), Dewayne Cox (Ripley), Robert Davis Jr. (Clinton), Noel Jones (Pascagoula) and Jerrian Young (Jackson).

"Outside of Keith, everyone else is new in the backcourt, but we are really deep at the guard position," said Begley. "Cam is a super-explosive point guard, and Terryonte can score from anywhere. Dewayne affects the game by making plays on the ball. Robert has the ability to shoot lights out, and Noel is another guard who can score."

Begley also applauds the off-season improvement made by Thomas in

transforming his body from his freshman year. Thomas' expected leadership and experience look to be valuable assets for this year's relatively youthful EMCC squad.

"Our frontcourt starts with Carlos," Begley is quick to point out. "He is a completely different player this year and is obviously quicker and better off the dribble. He is also more mature now and you can see how he has developed into a leader."

With the return of Thomas, Scott and Hines along EMCC's frontline, the Lions have also beefed up their numbers in the paint this season with the addition of quality frontcourt depth. Contending for quality minutes inside will be 7-footer Sam Dunkum, a transfer from Creighton, the Starkville High School tandem of freshmen Darrious Agnew and Markedric Bell as well as Florida native Malik Harper.

"Sam obviously brings good size and you can't teach height. We also have Malik, who is more of a perimeter guy and plays well off the dribble. But the two biggest surprises to me have been Darrious and Markedric. They are going to rebound everything and they can both shoot it well."

With quality players returning and joining forces with a solid collection of incoming talent, Begley enters the 2017-18 hoops campaign with renewed enthusiasm about his team's chances of competing every night.

"I am very pleased with the depth we have and the competitiveness these guys have," Begley emphasized.



*Former Mississippi State guard Billy Begley is in his third year as the Lions' head basketball coach.*





*Coach Sharon Thompson's 2017-18 EMCC women's basketball squad is comprised of seven freshmen and five sophomores.*

## Veteran women's basketball coach Sharon Thompson

strongly believes heart and toughness will be two key ingredients that will determine the amount of success this year's EMCC women's basketball team enjoys. The 13th-year head coach and former Mississippi State standout indicates those two characteristics should be evident for the Lions to achieve hardwood success during the 2017-18 hoops campaign.

"I have seen heart and toughness thus far during our preseason jamborees, and those are the main things we've been stressing since workouts started in August," Thompson noted. "To me, toughness is what can win games. You can't always rely on talent, but you can rely on toughness. We also played really well together during the preseason, especially with us just having two returning players. Despite that, our chemistry has already been good."

Despite the loss of two-time All-Region 23 performer and Delta State signee Quantasha Patterson, EMCC's two returning players – guards Tyeisha Juhan and Kaisah Lucky – should form one of the

state's most formidable backcourt tandems. Juhan, from Georgia, led the region and ranked ninth nationally averaging 20.2 points per game as a collegiate freshman. Also a 22-game starter a year ago for the Lions, Lucky, a Brooklyn native, averaged 5.4 points, 5.0 assists and 4.6 rebounds despite not being in top shape.



*Former Mississippi State All-SEC standout Sharon Thompson is the veteran of the EMCC coaching family.*

"If you don't have good point guard play in our league, it is difficult to consistently win games," Thompson noted. "Lucky (Kaisah) came in overweight last year and didn't have a good season. She put in the work during the off-season and her mindset has completely changed."

Thompson and assistant coach Marcus Ingram have surrounded Juhan and Lucky with a quintet of freshman backcourt performers who will all vie for backup support – Akebia Cooley (Heidelberg), Emily Evans (Southaven), Briona Green (Columbus), Le'Treceia Grayson (Lucedale) and Allena Griffin (Cleveland).

The Lions' frontcourt will be totally revamped from last season, but transfers Kayla Rogers (Coahoma) and Jordanna Morris (Mississippi Gulf Coast) are not new to the MACJC scene. Rogers and Morris averaged 14.8 points and 7.3 points at their former respective schools a year ago and look to be counted on for similar results this season at EMCC.

"Kayla is a local kid from Columbus who we recruited out of high school but went to Coahoma," Thompson recalled. "She can score around the rim and is good with her back to the bucket. JoJo (Morris) is talented and gives us some versatility. We will be able to play her on the wing and she can be a tough matchup for other teams."

Also expected to challenge for immediate quality playing time will be freshman forward Brianna Page out of West Jones High School. Providing depth along EMCC's frontline will be Texas native Cydnee Hill and Kyla Temple (Columbus).

## "To me, toughness is what can win games."

~ Sharon Thompson

"Brianna is an undersized post and is really more of a stretch four. She can knock down the three-point shot and is tough on defense."

If the Lions are to contend for a postseason berth this season, Thompson understands all too well that reliable point guard play and having a consistent transition game will be paramount to the team's success.

"It goes back to our point guard play," Thompson admitted. It's also important for us to get up and down the floor in transition. You must get points in that area of our game. It also goes without saying that we will have to knock down our open shots."



Sophomore shortstop Anthony Hickman headlines EMCC's baseball returners offensively and defensively.

### After getting back into postseason play last year,

the East Mississippi Community College baseball team will be working to experience a second straight postseason run this spring. With another collection of experienced veterans and talented newcomers, eighth-year head coach Chris Rose is optimistic for a return to the MACJC playoffs.

Now trying to replicate the back-to-back efforts of EMCC's 2014 and 2015 postseason clubs, the 2017 Lions finished 25-20 overall and 15-13 within the conference before being eliminated in the MACJC playoffs by eventual NJCAA World Series participant Hinds. To achieve consistent success on the diamond, Rose understands that pitching, defense and staying healthy are always key ingredients.

"Like always, if you pitch and defend, you can win a lot of games," Rose admitted. "Also, getting guys like Ja'Coby Cole and Anthony Hickman healthy and back on the field will take some pressure off the younger guys."

On the mound, the Lions return sophomore left-hander Chance Witt, who appears to have come back strong from Tommy John surgery a year ago.

"Chance is probably our No. 1 arm," said Rose. "He has good velocity and will be a left-handed hitter in the meat of our lineup."

Rose and EMCC pitching coach Trent Waddell are also excited about the all-

around depth of the Lions' staff from the starting rotation to the bullpen.

"Jaxen Forrester is a freshman who is projected to be in our conference rotation," Rose added. "Boomer Maurin is another freshman that was really good in his last few outings of the fall. Garrett Ainsworth will probably be in a closer role for us and Weston Acey is a power right-handed arm."

Defensively for the Lions, everything begins up with the middle with the return of sophomore shortstop Anthony Hickman, who batted .323 last year as a 38-game starter.

**"Like always, if you pitch and defend, you can win a lot of games."**

**~ Chris Rose**

"Anthony is our leader on the infield and he is getting a lot of heavy recruiting interest," said Rose. "He has battled an ankle injury but has recovered and played well this fall."

At the other infield spots, Rose noted that there have been intense battles on-going for starting roles.

"Ken Dill has been really good at second base and is battling Gage Nyman at that position," Rose added. "Sophomores Armani Lewis and William Garriga are competing at third base. Ja'Coby (Cole) is our returning first baseman, but he can also play some at third base."

Expected to take over the catching duties will be freshman Matt Inlow, who has a strong arm and also possesses raw power at the plate. Another newcomer figuring to see immediate quality playing time will be the versatile Philip Martin.

"Philip is a right-handed pitcher who can also play outfield and first base," Rose noted. "His bat speed is one of the best I've seen."

The Lions will also feature a good mix of old and new in the outfield with the likes of sophomores Destin Payton and Isaiah Eiland returning along with the arrival of freshman Dillon Brown.

"We really have about five guys fighting for two open outfield spots and that gives us good depth," Rose said.

Realizing that the Lions have lost some pop in their lineup from a year ago, Rose and veteran assistant coach Brett Kimbrel understand that efficient scoring and timely hitting will also go a long way in determining the team's success this coming season.

"We won't rely on the long ball as much this year, but we have a group that can hit well and manufacture runs," added Rose.



Chris Rose begins his eighth season as head baseball coach of the EMCC Lions.





*Sophomore right-hander Carly Thompson will again be counted on to be EMCC's leader in the circle.*

**For the better part of the past decade, EMCC's softball program has exhibited success** both on the field and in the classroom. Sixth-year head coach Kyndall White continues to instill that all-around success on the heels of another rewarding season.

A year ago, the sophomore-laden Lions participated in postseason play for the eighth time in the past nine years. With a 3.64 team grade point average during the 2016-17 academic year, EMCC also earned a No. 2 national ranking in the Easton/National Fastpitch Coaches Association Top 10 Academic Team rankings.

With eight players from last year's team moving on to play at the four-year level, White and first-year pitching coach Whitney Hawkins do have some holes to fill in the lineup as the new season approaches. Progress was made this past fall as EMCC's returning players and incoming freshmen were challenged by an off-season road slate against university-level competition, such as Mississippi State, Jackson State, South Alabama and West Alabama.

"We have just seven sophomores back this year, so we are a young team," White noted. "I was impressed in the fall with the poise of our young team. We played mostly Division I teams, but our players showed great poise and didn't seem intimidated at all."

Fortunately for the Lions, two of their returnees were the team's best pitchers a year ago. Posting eight and four wins, respectively, as freshmen, right-handers Carly Thompson and AG Stewart combined for 12 of EMCC's 18 total victories last season.

"Carly and AG carried us last year as freshmen in the circle and we expect them to be leaders for us again this season," White said.

"Their confidence is so much better this year and they understand what it means to pitch at this level. We look forward to those two being huge for us in the circle this season."

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**"We have good athletes who understand the game." ~ Kyndall White**

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Also key will be having Layton Sills back behind the plate.

The sophomore catcher earned 19 starts and received valuable experience this past spring when MUW signee Rachel Rooney was sidelined with an injury.

The Lions will feature an entirely new look behind their pitchers this season with the team's starting infield from a year ago having moved on to the four-year level.

"We will have a completely different infield this year, and I'm excited about them," noted White. "Chelsea Davis will start at third with Camryn Williams at the other corner at first base. Up the middle, we'll have Kelsey English at shortstop and Mollie Singleterry at second. They all transitioned well in the fall from the high school ranks."

Unlike the infield, EMCC's starting outfield looks to be occupied by three returning players. Magnolia Keller earned 33 starts in the lineup last year and was second on the team with four home runs. Fellow sophomores Rebekah Williams, Ashley Vickers and Kiera Phillips will also challenge for starting spots in the outfield.

"We will have Rebekah in left field, Ashley in center and Magnolia in right," White said. "The good thing, too, is that we have depth out there. Kiera has a good bat and we have to find her a spot in the lineup."

Despite having a dozen newcomers on a 19-player roster for 2018, White believes the Lions will be up to the challenge as the spring rolls around.

"We have good athletes who understand the game," White continued. "We've got a great group that understands what we want for the team."



*Kyndall White enters her sixth year as head softball coach at East Mississippi.*





Coach Morgan Goodrich's EMCC rodeo program has posted back-to-back national Top 10 men's team finishes the past two years.

## Nearly eight years ago, Scooba native Morgan Goodrich jump-started the East Mississippi Community College rodeo program

with hopes of building a legitimate national rodeo contender in her hometown. Judging by the Lions' steady ascension among the nation's elite college rodeo programs, Goodrich has certainly proven any doubters wrong.

As one of just a few women coaching collegiate rodeo and having to compete alongside four-year universities and colleges, Goodrich has guided the EMCC men to consecutive Top 10 national finishes in the season-ending College National Finals Rodeo. On the heels of national all-around champion cowboy Marcus Theriot pacing EMCC to a fifth-place

CNFR team finish in 2016, last

year's squad qualified for nationals as a team for the first time in program history en route to a seventh-place CNFR showing.

"We're very excited and extremely proud to have back-to-back national Top 10 team finishes," Goodrich said. "Just to be recognized among the nation's Top 10 with four-year universities competing remains very special for us."

Coming off last year's runner-up finish within the National Intercollegiate Rodeo Association's competitive Ozark Region as team reserve champions, this year's EMCC men's squad enjoyed a fast start out of the gates by winning the fall-opening rodeo hosted by Pearl River Community College in Hattiesburg and then placing second the following week at Missouri Valley College. The Lions will enter the spring rodeo season ranked among the nation's Top 25 teams.

Leading the way thus far for the Lions has been a trio of cowboys – Tristan Martin, Jace Harris and Ethan Wheeler – all of whom participated during last year's CNFR. Wheeler was a team roping national reserve champion a year ago. Martin, a transfer from McNeese State, is currently the Ozark Region's leading steer wrestler, while Harris, an Arkansas native, is ranked second among the region's top team roping heelers.

Adding to an already talented men's roster, reigning tie

down roping CNFR participant Andrew Burks became eligible to compete for EMCC midway through the fall semester after transferring from Pearl River CC. His welcomed addition gives the Lions many more point-producing capabilities throughout an array of event categories.

"These guys just have a lot of valuable experience under their belt," Goodrich noted. "They know what has to be done to make it back to the College National Rodeo Finals."

On the women's side, progress continues to be made with increased emphasis currently being placed on recruiting future cowgirls to the Scooba campus. For now, Carli Hodges and Jadi Gibbs are both ranked among the regional leaders in barrel racing for the Lions.

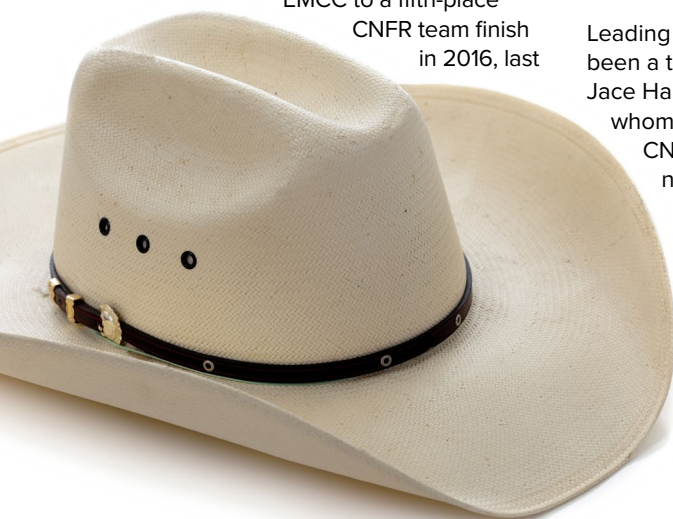
**"I am really proud of last year's team qualifying for the national finals and our consecutive Top 10 finishes."**

**~ Morgan Goodrich**

"We are already recruiting heavy for next year's women's team," Goodrich stressed. "All of our girls on the current roster plan on coming back, so we anticipate having a solid season on the women's side as well."

As Goodrich reflects back to 2010 and the initial formation of EMCC's rodeo program, she and her husband Wes, who serves as the teams' assistant coach, continue to take great pride in the success the Lions have enjoyed as well as where the program is headed.

"I am really proud of last year's team qualifying for the national finals and our consecutive Top 10 finishes," Goodrich emphasized. "Now we want to keep striving to stay on top. We've been able to create a competitive environment for our kids, and the word-of-mouth communication that comes about because of that success goes a long way in recruiting."







*Coach Benji Williams' EMCC Lions will host the NJCAA District D Golf Championship at Lion Hills this April in Columbus.*

**The East Mississippi Community College men's golf squad has a new level of motivation this season** and just being able to compete as a team has given Coach Benji Williams and the 2017-18 Lions added incentive.

During the summer months, the Lions' golf program was not sure whether this season would happen or not. Due to budget cuts, that was a real possibility. However, with the outpouring of community support and additional financial contributions from the parents of team members, the Lions did get to keep the season intact.

"The players have responded really well," Williams said. "They feel like they have something to prove, and they're very grateful that people were able to raise money to keep the program going."

While having to deal with the uncertainty of the coming season, the Lions now have to forge through the current campaign with just a five-man roster, including three freshmen.

"We do have a young team and it takes time to gain experience," Williams noted. "But they are getting there and they have adjusted well. With just five golfers, they understand that it's on them to step up and they're doing that."

The Lions' inexperienced roster consists of returning sophomores Eli Hemphill of Caledonia and Greenwood's Kayden Riding as well as a trio of newcomers in freshmen Dylan Cash (New Hope), Stone Tipton (Hamilton) and Coleman Suber (Calhoun City).

"Eli is the only sophomore with much experience at this level," Williams noted. "Kayden played in only one tournament last year, but his maturity level is very important for us. As older golfers, they both do a good job of making sure the guys are working hard and staying motivated."

Having participated in two MACJC fall events as well as gaining needed experience during a pair of fall scrimmages, the Lions are looking forward to additional tournament competition during a

challenging spring schedule. Capping the spring slate in late-April will be an opportunity to host the NJCAA District D Championship at Lion Hills in Columbus.

"It is going to be exciting to host the district championship event at Lion Hills," Williams noted. "It is EMCC's year to host and we're very excited about the opportunity to compete. It gives us a big advantage because we know the course well and practice there regularly."

Additionally, the luxury of having a home course like Lion Hills instills pride within the community and continues to attract talent for EMCC's golf program. Dating back to 2009 under the previous guidance of retired golf coach Dale Peay and continuing the past few seasons under Williams' direction, the Lions have produced 10 MACJC All-State golfers, including last year's NJCAA All-American Joey Partin from Louisiana. As a team during the past decade, EMCC has claimed four MACJC state second-place showings and a pair of regional runner-up finishes.

"The community wants us to succeed and we have," Williams stressed. "Since we've had our own home course at Lion Hills and our own place to practice, our program has progressed each year."

Together with the opportunity of showing the team's appreciation for the local community, that annual progression on the links is what also continues to motivate this year's youthful EMCC golf squad to maintain the tradition.

"They all want to take advantage of this opportunity," Williams admitted. "The kids know how much the community has invested in this program and they want to show their appreciation for that support."

**"It is going to be exciting to host the district championship event at Lion Hills."**

**~ Benji Williams**



## Gov. Bryant awards Dr. Raj Shaunak with Excellence in Govt. Award



East Mississippi Community College Vice President for Workforce and Community Services Dr. Raj Shaunak, at right, is the recipient of Gov. Phil Bryant's 2017 Excellence in Local and District Government Award. EMCC President Dr. Thomas Huebner, at left, presented Shaunak with the award Tuesday, Sept. 5.

**Dr. Raj Shaunak, EMCC's vice president for Workforce and Community Services**, was one of two recipients of the governor's 2017 Excellence in Government Awards, which recognizes and encourages innovation in public administration. Samantha Atkinson, director of the performance audit division of the Office of the State Auditor, garnered the Excellence in State Government Award.

"Samantha and Dr. Shaunak represent the best of public service," Bryant said. "I am grateful for their work and am proud to present them with the Excellence in Government Awards."

In a press release announcing the winners, the Mississippi Personnel Board calls Shaunak a primary force in workforce and economic development in the Golden Triangle area.

"He played a crucial role in the recruitment of companies including Airbus, PACCAR, and Yokohama Tire Company to

Mississippi's Golden Triangle," the press release states. "He has partnered with the Mississippi Development Authority to lead workforce development efforts for these companies locating to Mississippi. Dr. Shaunak is also a leader in innovative educational programming; he spearheaded the efforts to create EMCC's Communiversity, a state-of-the-art career-technical facility with a hands-on museum. Finally, he has partnered, authored, secured, and implemented many successful grants to benefit Mississippians."

EMCC President Dr. Thomas Huebner, who presented the governor's award to Shaunak on Tuesday, Sept. 5, said the college's role as an educational conduit to fuel a growing demand for highly skilled manufacturing employees is vital.

"The availability of high-quality technical education is a necessity for U.S. industries as they continue to transition to automated production processes," Huebner said. "Raj understands that our commitment to providing that training ensures our local industries will have access to the employees they require, our graduates will be in high demand and our community will reap economic benefits."

Shaunak said EMCC works closely with area industries to develop training programs that are specific to their needs.

"We listen to what our industry wants," Shaunak said. "EMCC is absolutely the trend setter in providing training for these high-tech manufacturing jobs. Our students are trained on cutting edge machinery and equipment by instructors who are not only passionate about their work but who have worked in business and industry and understand the language. We have earned a reputation as a top-notch, quality institution."

"Over the years, EMCC has established credibility and trust with those with whom we work, whether it is economic developers, elected officials or business and industry leaders. That is one of our greatest assets."

## EMCC tops national ranking lists

For the third time since 2014, EMCC has been named to the Aspen Institute's Top 150 Community Colleges in the Nation. Released in October, 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 2019 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.

Also, for the second year in a row, EMCC has been ranked among the Top 10 community colleges in the nation by SmartAsset, a company that uses data to help people make sound financial decisions.

In August, SmartAsset ranked EMCC No. 3 on the list that was compiled after analyzing data compiled from 808 U.S. colleges, using metrics like

transfer rates, graduation rates, cost and student-to-teacher ratios. In 2016, EMCC was ranked No. 8 on the list.

East Mississippi Community College also garnered top billing in a national ranking by Nonprofit Colleges Online.

In September, EMCC was named first in "The 50 Best College's for Online Associate's Degrees 2018" in the ranking that considered factors such as tuition rates, student-to-teacher ratios, percentage of students receiving scholarships or grant aid from the college, number of associate's degree programs offered, and U.S. News scores.



## Harvard officials visit EMCC



East Mississippi Community College President Dr. Thomas Huebner, second from left, and EMCC Vice President for Workforce and Community Services Dr. Raj Shaanak, red shirt, greet visitors from Harvard Business School.

**The Golden Triangle's success in attracting advanced manufacturing industries** and the resulting influx of well-paying jobs for area residents — and East Mississippi Community College's role in that process — could become a Harvard Business School case study taught to students from around the globe.

On Oct. 30, 20 faculty and staff with HBS visited the Golden Triangle, touring local industries and meeting with elected officials, members of the Golden Triangle Development LINK, Mississippi State University and East Mississippi Community College, among others. The visit was coordinated by the Golden Triangle Development LINK.

"I think many of us are worried that the American economy is doing half of its job," said Jan Rivkin, senior associate dean for Harvard Business School. "It (the economy) is benefitting large companies and those who work for and invest in them but it is not supporting working middle class Americans. Rural communities are really struggling.

"Yet, here in the Golden Triangle, we see something very different going on: a community that is coming together to create broadly shared prosperity and great manufacturing jobs. We came here to learn. We came here to see what is going on that is special and to figure out what we might apply to other settings in other communities."

While the Harvard Business School has no plans to produce a formal study from its findings from the Golden Triangle visit, there is a possibility a case study will be forthcoming.

"One of our colleagues is eager to write a case study that we could potentially end up teaching to students from around the world about how economic development might happen in a different way than they have seen elsewhere," Rivkin said. "I think we might end up with that case study but I don't know for sure."

## Outdoors fitness site coming

**In September, the Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation approved a grant of nearly \$265,000**

to East Mississippi Community College that will be used to enhance the Wellness Center at the Scooba campus and provide an outdoor fitness facility that will be open to the public.

"There will be no charge to use the outdoor equipment," EMCC Director of Wellness and Intramurals Kate McCarty said. "Members of the community can drive up and use the facility, which will also be open to EMCC employees and students."

One possible location for the outdoor fitness facility is adjacent to the sand volleyball courts. Tentative plans include 20 pieces of outdoor exercise equipment, including four stair climbers for cardio workouts and 16 pieces of additional exercise equipment, including a bench press, sit-up bench and butterfly press to name a few.

Remaining grant funds were used to make two part-time Scooba Wellness Center employees full-time workers and purchase stationary spin bikes and other equipment for the Wellness Center.

"We are very grateful to the Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation for its support," McCarty said. "These grant funds will make a difference in the well-being of not only the students, faculty and staff at East Mississippi Community College but in the lives of our community members as well."

This is the second grant awarded to EMCC by the Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation, with the initial \$211,086 grant disbursed for the 2016-17 school year. Funding from the first grant supported the purchase of all new exercise equipment for the Scooba Wellness Center. The old exercise equipment was donated to East Kemper Elementary, West Kemper Elementary and Kemper County High School.

Wellness Center staff have also implemented wellness educational programs for members of the community, hosted family fun days on campus and visited area schools to promote healthy lifestyle choices.

## 'Communiversality' designed to impress



*East Mississippi Community College's Communiversality will feature a modern design, open spaces and lots of glass to connect the indoors and outdoors.*

**The two-story structure under construction between East Mississippi Community College's Golden Triangle campus** and the PACCAR plant is easily visible to passing motorists traveling along U.S. Highway 82.

Although work on the facade is a work in progress and the steel girders inside only offer a hint of a skeletal outline, it is obvious the campus that will house EMCC's "Communiversality" won't conform to the traditional square-block, brick-and-mortar architecture prominent throughout the Southeast.

"The style will be very modern," said PryorMorrow's Michael W. Taylor, the architect of record for the Communiversality, a large-scale workforce training center that will offer credit and non-credit courses to students seeking careers in advanced manufacturing. "We were told EMCC wanted something that would impress visitors. As much as we all like traditional architecture, it doesn't really impress people from other countries.

"For this project, our goal was to really step up our game with a level of architecture that is on par with the rest of the world."

The modern theme dovetails with the building's purpose. The Communiversality, officially known as the Center for Manufacturing Technology Excellence 2.0, will house credit and non-credit courses related to training students for careers in advanced manufacturing. The facility will boast state-of-the-art equipment needed to prepare students to work in high-tech industries.

Automation & Control, Electro-Mechanical Technology/Mechantronics and Precision Machining and Manufacturing are just a few of the programs that will be offered at the new, 145,638-square-foot, \$42 million facility that is expected to open in late 2018 or early 2019.

"This facility will prepare students to work in high-tech industries right here in the Golden Triangle," EMCC President Dr. Thomas Huebner said. "We are committed to providing our local industries with a highly qualified workforce and our students with the skills needed to excel in today's automated manufacturing environment. PryorMorrow has done an outstanding job in creating a unique building that will be visually striking and will, at the same time, help us meet the educational needs of our community partners for many years to come."



*PryorMorrow's Michael W. Taylor is the architect for East Mississippi Community College's Communiversality, which is under construction between the college and PACCAR Engine Company. The modern design of the building differs from the traditional architecture typical throughout the region.*

The main building will feature sweeping, curved lines and a wall of glass that faces outward, with a large open space inside for exhibits by local industries to showcase their products. Students from area schools will be able to tour the building and learn about the technology that goes into making the various products.

There will be classrooms, computer labs, and office space on the second floor, with student lounge areas scattered throughout the building.

"Common spaces will have different elements that will enhance the space and really reinforce the idea of technology

and collaboration," Taylor said. Much of the student training will take place in 21 high-bay laboratories designed to allow easy access for the setup and removal of heavy machinery like that used by area manufacturers. Most of the bays will be housed inside two, single story wings that will intersect the main building at 45-degree angles.

"We worked pretty hard on making things as transparent as possible," Taylor said. "We jumped on every opportunity we could to put glass inside so you could see activity going on in the different rooms. When the building is being used to its full purpose, it is going to be buzzing with activity. No matter where you are at, you will be able to look into classrooms and see people learning. The idea is to make the whole facility stimulating and buzzing with activity.

"The project was fun for us because this was the first time in a long time we could really step out of the box and do something exciting. I think it is going to draw a lot of attention because it is different than what is around this area."

Last year, U.S. Sen. Thad Cochran and the Appalachian Regional Commission announced the award of a \$4.6 grant to construct six high-bay classrooms in addition to the 15 already planned. This was the second grant by the ARC, which has provided \$10 million for the project. Other funding partners for the \$42 million facility include the Mississippi Legislature and Clay, Lowndes and Oktibbeha counties. The Golden Triangle Development LINK has also been instrumental in the project.

Speaking at the official Communiversality groundbreaking in December of 2016, Lt. Gov. Tate Reeves said one of the truly unique aspects of the project has been the level of cooperation among the various agencies.

"What the Communiversality is going to represent is government at all levels — cities, counties, state and the federal government — all coming together to help create an environment that will produce the workforce of tomorrow," Reeves said. "That is something in which we can all be proud."



**The East Mississippi Community College Development Foundation proudly recognizes and thanks all of our generous donors. Your contribution supports our students and faculty and strengthens our entire EMCC family. We thank the following who have made contributions from Jan. 1, 2017 to Oct. 31, 2017.**

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*Marcus Wood, Dr. Tom Huebner, Todd Davis, Charlie Studdard, Jerry Studdard, William Corder, Bruff Sanders at the EMCC Old Waverly Golf Course sponsored by BankFirst Financial Services.*

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*A member of the team representing Huck's takes aim during the 9th Annual EMCC Sporting Clays Challenge Cup at Burnt Oak Lodge in Crawford.*

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*EMCC President Dr. Thomas Huebner, Dr. Azhar Pasha, Michelle Pasha and Mindy Huebner at the 14th Annual Wild Game Dinner and Auction at the Lion Hills Center.*

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*A great crowd enjoyed the night's festivities during the Renasant Bank-sponsored Wild Game Dinner at Lion Hills.*

## LARRY BELL

Starkville, MS | March 3, 2017



Larry Wayne Bell retired from the City of Starkville, where he served as building director and civil defense director for more than 32 years.

Bell was the secretary of the Mississippi Building Officials association and served on the board for Southern Building Codes Congress International for 14 years, with two of those years as president. He also was a delegate to the World Conference of Building Officials.

An outstanding athlete, Bell coached for the Starkville Baseball Association and area basketball leagues. He officiated several sports, including college women's basketball and junior and college football. He served the Mississippi High School Activities Association for more than 54 years as a football, basketball and baseball official, and as the District 4 football secretary for more than 30 years.

He was also a member of the Board of Trustees for EMCC.

## JOHNNY FISHER

Columbus, MS | Aug. 18, 2017



Johnny Will "Catfish" Fisher enrolled at then East Mississippi Junior College for the 1969-70 academic year, helping lead the 1969 EMJC Lions to a 9-1 record.

Fisher garnered National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) All-American honors and was named to the Mississippi Junior College Association's All-State/North Division squad.

He earned a Master of Science degree in Criminal Justice in 1977 from Coppin State University in Baltimore, Maryland.

Following a career in law enforcement and a stint with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency, he moved back home to Columbus where he served as a Criminal Justice instructor at EMCC's Golden Triangle campus. He served on the EMCC Development Foundation's "Bull" Sullivan Memorial Division and the EMCC Development Foundation Board of Directors.

He was inducted into the EMCC Sports Hall of Fame in 2004 and the Mississippi Community College Sports Hall of Fame in 2012.

## THELMA MCCONNELL

Scooba, MS | May 20, 2017



Thelma Virginia Briggs McConnell graduated in 1936 from Kemper County Agricultural High School, which shared a campus with

East Mississippi Junior College.

She was a substitute teacher at the Margie B. Aust Elementary School on the EMJC campus and became a permanent faculty member after completing her elementary education degree at EMJC and Mississippi State University. She taught in Scooba for 31 years.

She was a charter member of the Woman's Society of Christian Service, now the United Methodist Women, and was an original member in the Scooba Barbecue Club. She was also a member of the Twentieth Century Book Club and served as president of the Kemper County Historical Association.

McConnell donated historical documents, books and photographs to the library on EMCC's Scooba campus. In 2013, the archives room at the library was named the Thelma Briggs McConnell Archives.

## CLYDE PIERCE

West Point, MS | Oct. 2, 2017



EMCC football standout Robert Clyde "Baby Doll" Pierce was the only player to have his jersey number retired by legendary Lions' Coach Bob "Bull" Sullivan.

Pierce, who attended then East Mississippi Junior College in 1959-60, was honored during halftime of the Oct. 21 Homecoming game. As a freshman, he lettered in football, baseball, and track. He was chosen as the best blocker on the team and the most valuable running back. Weighing only 124 pounds, he became the smallest man ever to be named to the All-American team.

Pierce was inducted into the inaugural EMCC Hall-of-Fame class in 2002. He was also inducted into the MACJC Hall of Fame's inaugural class in 2007.

The Lions football helmets bore Pierce's number 31 during the last games of the football season in his honor.

## The EMCC family remembers these Lion alumni who passed away between June 2016 and October 2017:

### Billy Jo Ayres

West Point, MS  
January 19, 2017

### Larry Wayne Bell

EMCC Trustee  
Starkville, MS  
March 3, 2017

### C. E. "Pete" Blake, Jr.

Ackerman, MS  
September 28, 2016

### Virgil Nolin Cook

Flowood, MS  
March 18, 2017

### Johnny Will "Catfish" Fisher

SHOF  
Columbus, MS  
August 18, 2017

### Wendell Watts Gibson

Starkville, MS  
January 18, 2017

### Jeff Alexander Hale, Jr.

Poplarville, MS  
November 19, 2016

### Jean Harbin

Grenada, MS  
June 13, 2016

### William Lee "Gert" Hill

SHOF  
West Point, MS  
August 25, 2017

### Zachary Addison Irwin

Kingwood, TX  
September 29, 2016

### James Leonard "Jim" Kelly

SHOF  
Foley, AL  
October 11, 2017

### Maggie Knight

Tupelo, MS  
January 25, 2017

### Thelma Virginia Briggs

McConnell  
Scooba, MS  
May 20, 2017

### Robert Clyde "Baby Doll"

Pierce  
SHOF  
West Point, MS  
October 2, 2017

### Sue Bess Jones Robison

Atlanta, GA  
March 3, 2017

### Jimmy Clark Sanders

SHOF  
Meridian, MS  
April 1, 2017

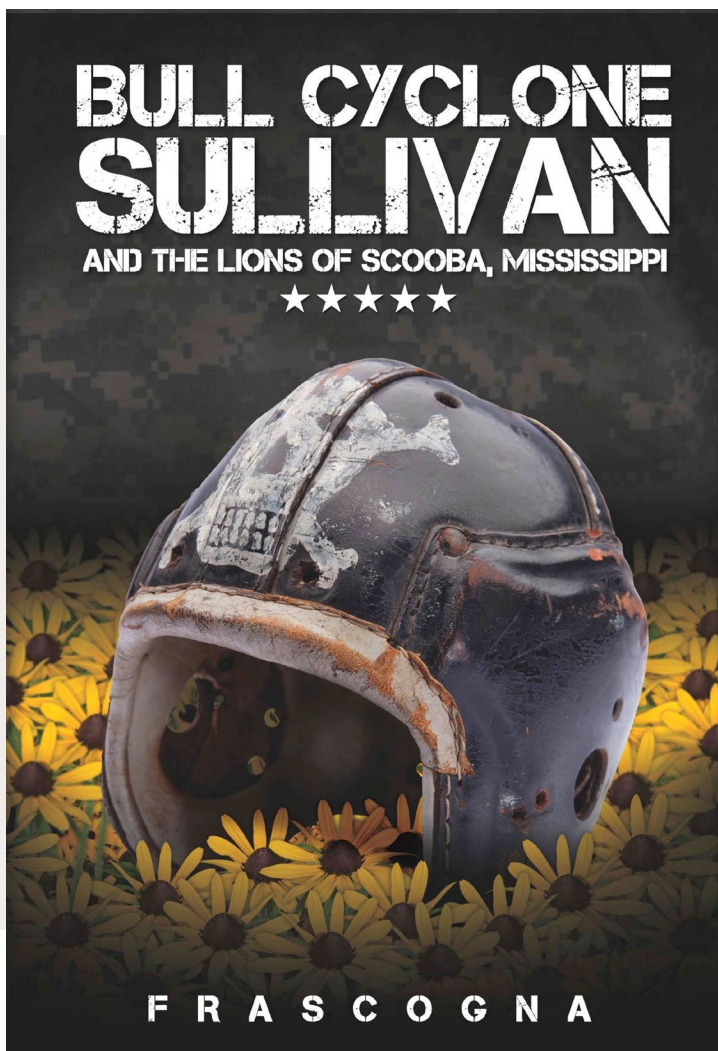
### Berma Shackelford

Tupelo, MS  
March 29, 2017

### William Charles "Bill" Travis

SHOF  
Montgomery, AL  
December 21, 2016





**ORDER NOW!**

**We now have a limited number of "Bull Cyclone Sullivan and the Lions of Scooba, Mississippi" books available for purchase!**

Whether you are a long-time EMCC fan who had a difficult time getting your hands on a copy of the Mike Frascogna-penned book in the past, or a new fan who has come to know us through "Last Chance U," you don't want to miss out on this opportunity!

Books are \$30 each, plus \$5 for shipping and handling. Give Gina Cotton (662-476-5063) or Marcus Wood (662-476-5025) a call during normal business hours to place an order or get more information.



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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.

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