



THE WARRIOR

*The Official Publication of the East Central Community College Alumni Association
Volume XXXIII, No. 1 • December 2024*



South State Champions

*WARRIOR FOOTBALL
HAS RECORD SEASON*

A Message From the President

Dear Alumni and Friends,

As we approach the close of another remarkable year, I want to take a moment to express my deepest gratitude for your continued support of our college. This fall has been a season of growth, achievement, and celebration. As we reflect on all that we've accomplished, we have much to be thankful for.

In this issue of our magazine, you'll read about some of the exciting developments taking place on campus. First, I am thrilled to announce that we have successfully completed our capital campaign with more than \$4.15 million pledged. These generous commitments will help us reach a significant milestone—the celebration of our centennial in 2028, a testament to the vision and legacy that has shaped our college over the past 100 years.

This has also been the most successful year in our athletics history. Our softball, baseball, men's tennis, and golf teams all made it to national tournaments in the spring, and this fall, our football team claimed the South Division Conference title and hosted the MACCC Championship game where they finished as state runners-up. These accomplishments reflect the hard work, dedication, and talent of our student-athletes and coaches, and they speak to the strength of our entire athletic program.

We are also proud to report that our college ranked in the Top 3 in the state for transfer GPAs—an outstanding achievement that speaks to the academic rigor and success of our students. Additionally, over the past three years, we have led the state in enrollment growth, with a 24% increase, as more students choose ECCC for its high-quality education.

Looking ahead, we are excited about the continued progress of our facilities. Founders Gymnasium is on track to be completed for the coming school year, and it will not only house our new women's volleyball program but also serve as an event space for the entire campus. In addition, thanks to the generous support of the ECCC Foundation, we've been able to upgrade multiple facilities across campus, enhancing both the student experience and the campus environment.

As we move into the new year, we remain deeply grateful for the unwavering support of our alumni, friends, and the many businesses and industries that partner with us to make these successes possible. Together, we continue to build a future that honors our past while embracing new opportunities.

We look forward to the year ahead with optimism and excitement, and we are so thankful to count on your friendship and support as we continue this journey together.

Warm Regards,



J. Brent Gregory, Ph.D.
President



With *You* In Mind

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On the Cover: Head football coach Jonathan Webster leads his team onto the field during a historic 2024 season that saw them claim the South Division Championship and battle for the MACCC state championship. Though they came up short in the title game, this season will be remembered as one of the best in school history. *Read more on page 28.*



The Warrior is printed two times annually and is distributed to alumni of East Central Community College and other friends of the college.

Editorial staff members include Lucas Calvert, Stacey Hollingsworth, Maria McLeod, Larry Reed, Karen Robertson, Amy Thompson & Jason Tune

ACCREDITATION

East Central Community College is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to award the Associate Degree. Contact the Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097 or call 404-679-4500 for questions about the accreditation of East Central Community College.

NON-DISCRIMINATION

East Central Community College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, or qualified disability in its educational programs and activities, employment practices, or admissions processes. The following offices have been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies of East Central Community College:

Inquiries regarding compliance with Title VI and ADEA are coordinated by the Executive Vice President, Walter Arno Vincent Administration Building, Room 171, Post Office Box 129, Decatur, MS 39327, Phone: 601-635-6202, Fax: 601-635-4011, Email: compliance@eccc.edu.

Inquiries regarding compliance with Title IX and Section 504 are coordinated by the Vice President for Student Services, Eddie M. Smith Student Union Building, Room 101, Post Office Box 129, Decatur, MS 39327, Phone: 601-635-6267, Fax: 601-635-6247, Email: compliance@eccc.edu.

Inquiries regarding compliance with ADA are coordinated by the Director of Student Success, Mamie Ethel Burton Memorial Library, Post Office Box 129, Decatur, MS 39327, Phone: 601-635-6228, Fax: 601-635-2150, Email: compliance@eccc.edu.



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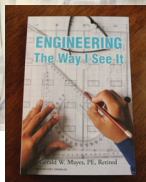


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East Central Community College.



MAYES AUTHORS BOOK

Alumnus and author Gerald Mayes ('69) (center) of Baton Rouge, La., was on campus recently to donate a signed copy of his book "Engineering The Way I See It" to the college's Memorabilia Room. He is pictured with Dr. Stacey Hollingsworth, Executive Director of the Foundation, and Dr. Brent Gregory, ECCC President. A civil engineer, Mayes received his bachelor's and master's degrees in engineering from Mississippi State University and has worked in numerous industries throughout his career. This book is about his life experiences related to the field of engineering and gives examples of instances that helped shape his career and life. For more information visit authorgeraldmayes.com.



ALUMNI AWARD NOMINATIONS DUE JANUARY 31

Nominations for Alumna and Alumnus of the Year and Athletic Hall of Fame are accepted throughout the year. However, to qualify for selection during this next year, nominations must be received by January 31.

If you know of outstanding athletes who played at least one season of an official sport at East Central, we welcome you to make nominations for that award at this link: www.eccc.edu/athletic-hall-fame-online-nomination-form.

ECCC alumni who did not play sports, but are outstanding in their career field or volunteer work are worthy of consideration for Alumnus or Alumna of the Year. Those nominations can be made here: www.eccc.edu/alumnusalumna-year-online-nomination-form

For more information or assistance, please contact Maria McLeod, director of alumni relations at 601-635-6303 or email mmcleod@eccc.edu



ECCC ALUMNI SOCIAL

Saturday, January 18 • 3 to 6 p.m.

Fertile Ground Beer Co.

Belhaven Town Center • 800 Manship St., Suite 100, Jackson, MS 39202

Family friendly space where young families are always welcome. Outdoor space available with picnic tables, local restaurants nearby, and outside food welcome (no outside alcohol).

**Call your ECCC friends, bring your family,
enjoy snacks, and renew old friendships!**

For more information, contact the Alumni Office,
at mmcleod@eccc.edu or call 601-635-6303.

EAST CENTRAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE



Displaying equipment purchased through the Oliphant-Martin Faculty Excellence Fund Grant program are (from left) career-technical instructors Shelley Thoms, Katie Bounds and Tonya McGee, English instructors Rachel Laird Harris and Taylor Harrison, and nursing instructors Brandi Keith and Dr. Christy Dubuisson.

Oliphant-Martin Grants

ECCC FOUNDATION AWARDS GRANTS TO DEPARTMENTS ON CAMPUS

The East Central Community College Foundation has awarded Oliphant-Martin Faculty Excellence Fund Grants to four departments for the 2024-25 college year and each will receive \$5,000 toward classroom and facility enhancements to benefit teaching and learning.

The English Department is the recipient of one award and will use the funds to purchase a subscription for Essay-Grader.ai, a website which gives detailed feedback on student writing.

According to English instructor, Rachel Harris, in her department's application, "It allows for bulk upload of student essays, which it grades based on a rubric provided by the instructor. Within a couple of minutes of uploading, each essay is given a whole page of detailed feedback on organization, effectiveness, clarity, and grammar along with suggestions for improvement. This page can be saved and shared with the individual student. What would normally take at least six hours of in-person conferences and typing feedback can be done and shared within an hour at most, giving much more time to answer specific student questions and offer advice on finer points of style while still having a reasonable level of work-life balance."

Receiving another of the awards is the Associate Degree Nursing program. Their request includes the purchase of a SkillMaster, which would address the challenge of limited lab space which restricts the number of students that can

practice skills at any given time.

Dr. Donna Everett, dean of healthcare education, said, "These task trainers are a critical solution to this issue. They allow flexible, individualized skill development outside of the traditional lab setting, enabling students to practice essential procedures without the need for a fully equipped skills lab. They can easily be integrated into smaller group spaces or be used for self-directed practice."

The college's Surgical Technology program will use the funds from their award to purchase a double surgical scrub sink, replacing two older single scrub sinks that no longer function properly.

LeAnn Shirley, director of the program and instructor said, "Learning how to properly scrub is a critical skill that all students must learn and use in the healthcare setting. This equipment will allow our students to practice the surgical scrub multiple times under the supervision of an instructor with the skill perfected prior to entering the surgical area in the hospital/clinical setting."

And finally, the Career-Technical Education Support Services department with their award will purchase a Newline Interactive Smartboard and a Sony 55-inch Smart Television to enhance student attentiveness, foster collaboration, and enhance peer interaction for the more than 300 students.

Katie Bounds said, "A smartboard ac-

commodates various learning styles and allows students to actively participate in their learning. They can collaborate on assignments, make presentations, and even cast from their own devices to the smartboard. Incorporating the smart television would give students easy access to a wide range of educational content, enhancing the depth of their learning experience. By incorporating these technologies, we expect to see increased student engagement, collaboration, and success."

The East Central Community College Faculty Excellence Fund, established in 1997, was renamed in 2010 to the Oliphant-Martin Faculty Excellence Fund to acknowledge the generous contributions of alumna Dr. Beverly Henry Oliphant-Martin ('58) and her husband, John Martin.

Dr. Stacey Hollingsworth, executive director of the ECCC Foundation, said of the Martins, "They are such a special couple. They are tremendously loved and appreciated by the college. We cannot thank them enough for all their support."

When asked once why she gives to East Central, Beverly said, "My (Beverly) personal motivation to give TO East Central specifically came after my gift FROM East Central when I, literally penniless,

-GRANTS continued on page 11

ALUMNI NEWS

John and Jennifer Williams

AN EAST CENTRAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE ROMANCE

East Central Community College alumni John Williams ('03) and Jennifer Kersh Williams ('03) met on a blind date set up by friends. But when the pair found themselves both attending East Central Community College a short time later, the quiet football player and the spirited cheerleader began a courtship that would blossom into a lifelong commitment.

At that time, Mississippi Association of Community and Junior Colleges athletics was separated into districts and athletes could only play for the district in which they resided, although cheerleading didn't have those same rules.

So as fate would have it, John had attended Forest High School and was recruited by then head football coach Terry Underwood to play football for the Warriors, and Jennifer, who lived in Clark County and attended Enterprise High

School, earned a spot on the ECCC cheer team.

Jennifer said, "I had a couple of friends two years older than me that had made cheerleader at ECCC, so I decided to tryout, made the team, and ultimately went to ECCC instead of Jones."

She enjoyed the experience, especially during events like Homecoming when she remembers the cheer team wearing throwback uniforms from years past. But being a cheerleader while dating a football player also had its nerve-wracking moments. "I remember during a game at Northwest Mississippi Community College, I saw John get hurt. He'd hurt his elbow, but he told the coach he could go back in, and they taped his arm to his body so he could play the rest of the game."

John's memories of ECCC are centered around football: early workouts, late-night bed checks, and the strong bonds formed through teamwork. Both he and Jennifer spent most of their time focused on their respective sports, with any free time going toward studying.

However, Jennifer said the opportunity to meet new people, be on the field cheering and playing football, simple times like meeting in the cafeteria to eat dinner with friends, and spending time with each other made for a fantastic college experience for both of them.

Of course, there were also some humbling experiences as well. John said, "I remember about 12 football players being five minutes late to Coach Underwood's class. Coach allowed the rest of the class to leave early and made the football players run 100-yard sprints until the next class!"

Both John and Jennifer appreciated the close-knit, "homey" feel of East Central, especially coming from small towns. "In Texas, people think small towns mean suburbs of Dallas or Houston," Jennifer laughs. "They have no idea





John and Jennifer Williams along with their children Wyatt and Ella and their dog Belle. (Photos courtesy of Jennifer Williams.)

what a small town really is.”

With Decatur being one of those truly small towns, there weren’t many options for date nights and the couple said they shared many meals at Wendy’s in Newton and the Chevron Subway in Decatur.

Jennifer said, “When we left EC John wouldn’t eat Subway for the next five years! It was the only thing to get in Decatur before football curfew!”

John and Jennifer both continued their education at Mississippi State University in Starkville and married in June 2006.

An accounting major, Jennifer was recruited by Exxon Mobil Corporation. The couple moved to Texas the month after their wedding and Jennifer began her career with Exxon’s tax department. She just recently stepped away from the corporate world to spend more time with family and now runs a virtual bookkeeping firm, The Williams Bookkeeping Group.

John started his career with American National Construc-

tion, working on McDonald’s projects in the Houston area, before becoming a multi-family construction supervisor with Brownstone Construction.

The Williams have two children, Ella and Wyatt, who are active athletes like their parents. Despite living in Texas, they enjoy visiting Mississippi to see family and attend the Neshoba County Fair. In 2020, they launched Cold Water Camp, a family camp across from the main gate at the fair. They spend about two weeks each summer in Neshoba County.

“We always go to EC Day at the Fair, and the kids love getting popsicles!” Jennifer says.

Though they didn’t meet on the East Central campus, their shared time there set the stage for a lifelong partnership. What started as a campus romance for John and Jennifer Williams grew into a love story that’s still going strong.

ALUMNI NEWS

Scholarships Awarded

ECCC FOUNDATION AWARDS NUMEROUS SCHOLARSHIPS

The East Central Community College Foundation recently awarded more than 150 endowed and annual scholarships valued at more than \$166,000 for the 2024-25 college term. Scholarship recipients and donor representatives were recognized during the annual Scholarship Reception held on the Decatur campus.

Dr. Stacey Hollingsworth, executive director of the foundation, said, "The scholarships provided through the ECCC Foundation would not be possible without the generosity of donors. They

Scholarships and their respective recipients include:

Bobby Addy Memorial Scholarship, Alexander West of Newton
Dr. L. B. and Dixie Adkins Scholarship, Madison Jones of Lake
Alumni Association Lifetime Membership Endowed Scholarship, Sydney Myrick of Quitman
AT&T Endowed Scholarship, Leona Alonso of Chunky
AT&T Endowed Scholarship, Mallory Dyess of Hickory
AT&T Endowed Scholarship, Jaci Willis of Philadelphia
Automotive Technology Program Scholarship, Rory Renfrow of Philadelphia
Bank of Commerce Scholarship, Sergio A. Cabrera of Morton
Bank of Commerce Scholarship, Riley Courtney of Morton
Bank of Commerce Scholarship, Curtis Smith of Morton
BankPlus Annual Scholarship, Amandalyn Leach of Hickory
BankPlus Annual Scholarship, Griffith Sykes of Decatur
Dr. Conrad C. Barnes, Jr. Math and Science Scholarship, Samuel Chance Bounds of Newton
T.T. Beemon Scholarship, Bryanna Gann of Little Rock
Ruth Bennett Memorial Scholarship, Aisha Bell of Carthage
Pleasant Clayton and Nancy Amanda Breazeale Blount Memorial Scholarship, Hailey Jackson



continue to impact the lives of our students and help them develop into future leaders all while helping to relieve some of the expenses of attending college."

Individuals and businesses interested

of Morton
W. Clayton Blount Scholarship, Addison Rigby of Forest
Board of Trustees Scholarship, David Salvador of Carthage
Dr. Austin P. Boggan Scholarship, Anna Caitlin Cavanaugh of Morton
Iris Pellegrine Boggan Scholarship, Hannah Dalton of Louisville
Ernest Harrison Boswell Memorial Scholarship, Samuel Gilmer of Louisville
Dr. Frank and Bobbie McPhail Bowen Scholarship, Olivia Donald of Philadelphia
Denver Brackeen Scholarship, Kylie Bagley of Conehatta
Hogue Brantley Endowed Scholarship, Tabatha McGee of Collinsville
Paul V. and Voncile H. Breazeale Ministerial Scholarship, Mallory Duke of Philadelphia
Ann H. Burkes Phi Theta Kappa Scholarship and Elva Smith Sigrest Memorial Scholarship, Zaira Mahe Jimenez of Forest
Landon Bryan Burt Memorial Scholarship, Lighthouse Higginbotham of Morton
Jessica Cager Memorial Scholarship, Dalton Chisolm of Union
Nancy Heard Campbell Memorial Scholarship, Carrie Hallee Harrison of Conehatta
Caperton Family Endowed Scholarship, Kaden Carter of Philadelphia
Mable Moore Carr Educational Scholarship and Regina Gail Gibbs Rigby Memorial Scholarship, Gena Garcia Salvador of Forest
Dan T. Chatwood Scholarship, Allison Shannon of Meridian

in creating endowed or annual scholarships to assist students in their educational endeavors should contact Hollingsworth at 601-635-6327 or sholling@eccc.edu for more information.

The Citizens Bank of Philadelphia Scholarship, Heidi Strickland of Union
Class of 1964 Endowed Scholarship, Betsy Hatcher of Noxapater
Classes of 1957, 1958, and 1959 Scholarship, John Johnston of Forest
Billy J. Cleveland Memorial Scholarship, Alexis Boswell of Collinsville
Randy and Nina Cleveland Pre-Engineering Scholarship, Evan Tally of Lake
Prentice and Dorothy Copeland Scholarship, Tabitha Burton of Philadelphia
W. R. Covington Scholarship, Taylor Jones of Louisville
Frances Brown Crenshaw Nursing Scholarship, Stephanie Porter of Conehatta
Frank M. Cross Endowed Scholarship, Marcie McMillan of Lake
Nellie Neill Cross Memorial Scholarship, Lakynn Pickett of Philadelphia
Fred Preston Dallas and Maudie Threatt Dallas Memorial Scholarship, Aubry Winstead of Philadelphia
Aaron R. Davis Memorial Scholarship and Jessie M. and Bobby Everett Scholarship, Ashton Luke of Philadelphia
Tony Dobbs Memorial Golf Scholarship, Aiden Boyd of Morton
Kyle Dunkerson Memorial Scholarship, Harris Callahan of Decatur
East Central Scholars Scholarship - James M. & Luvie C. Thomas Foundation, Jaylee Stokes of Louisville
East Central Scholars Scholarship - James M. & Luvie C. Thomas Foundation, Anna Shae

ECCC Foundation Board of Directors 2024-2025

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Stovall of Philadelphia
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 Ona Mae Ethridge Annual Scholarship, McKinley Gregory of Decatur
 Leon Eubanks Kaljyc-Peers Scholarship, Aiden Boyd of Morton
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 Richard L. Harris Scholarship, Zashanti Bender of Newton
 Dr. Shelby L. Harris Memorial Scholarship and Martha Kate Tullos Hummel Memorial Scholarship, Eli Stewart of Forest
 Dan Harrison Rush Health Systems Endowed Scholarship, Destiny Payton of Walnut Grove
 Sylvia Ann Graham Haywood Memorial Scholarship, David Everidge of Decatur
 Jeffrey G. and Kathy L. Hitt Memorial Scholarship, Jacob Howell of Union
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 Johnson-Taylor Memorial Scholarship, Taylor Parker of Louisville
 Brenda Whatley Kirby Annual Nursing Scholarship, McKenzie Smith of Carthage
 Jesse A. Ladd Memorial Scholarship, Courtney Ivy of Union
 James E. Land Memorial Scholarship, Courtney Palmer of Little Rock
 La-Z-Boy Scholarship, Emma Beckwith of Lake
 La-Z-Boy Scholarship, Annalyse Russell of Decatur
 Frank Edwin and Nena Holt Leatherwood Scholarship, Alexis Barrett of Decatur
 General Martha Jo Leslie Scholarship, Emmie Herrington of Louisville
 Frances E. and Moody C. Lockley Endowed Nursing Scholarship, Madison Weir of Enterprise
 William Wade Long Memorial Scholarship, Ayden McDill of Union
 Edwin and Marie Lowe Scholarship, Tina Long of Louisville
 Dr. Beverly (Henry) Oliphant-Martin and John E. Martin Scholarship, Graciana Alexander of Philadelphia
 Dr. Beverly (Henry) Oliphant-Martin and John E. Martin Scholarship, Morgan Freeny of Carthage
 Pauline Matthews Memorial Scholarship, Julia Espinoza of Union
 Thomas Rudolph Mayes Memorial Scholarship, Hayden Dolan of Union
 Russell McCann Memorial Scholarship,

Patience Jennings of Morton
 Dr. Howard Carlton McMillin Memorial Scholarship, Andrea McMahan of Union
 James and Gloria McRae Endowed Scholarship, Alix Withers of Carthage
 Robert J. Moody, Jr. Special Education Scholarship, Julius Culwell of Louisville
 Mississippi Land Bank Annual Scholarship, Braxton Rone of Ethel
 Mississippi Organization for Associate Degree Nursing and ASNEC Scholarship, Madelynn Pinson of Little Rock
 Mississippi Power Heritage Annual Scholarship, Jerdarius Irby of Newton
 Mississippi Power Heritage Annual Scholarship, Justin McKinion of Newton
 Mississippi Power Heritage Annual Scholarship, Charles Ethan Powell of Forest
 Dr. Vernon Clyde and Vashti Muse Endowed Scholarship, Kaitlin Watkins of Conehatta
 Ben Myers Memorial Scholarship, Kayde Crosby of Philadelphia
 Ben Myers Memorial Scholarship, Mari Thrash of Union
 Claire Myers Memorial Scholarship, Abigail Pippin of Decatur
 Rev. John Lambert Neill Memorial Scholarship, Emily Smith of Sebastopol
 Stella Weathersby Newsome Scholarship, Katilyn McVay of Walnut Grove
 Newton Rotary Club Scholarship, Adam Savell of Lake
 Newton Rotary Club Scholarship, Lyddia Jones of Decatur
 Polk and Jennie Pace Scholarship, Lance Wicker of Pulaski
 Delisha Payton-Townsend Memorial Scholarship, Madalyn Walton of Lake
 Pearl River Valley Electric Power Association Scholarship, Brandi Bond of Sumrall
 Pearl River Valley Electric Power Association Scholarship, Brette Loftin of Sumrall
 Pearl River Valley Electric Power Association Scholarship, Isaac Shows of Sumrall
 Phi Delta Kappa Vocational Education Scholarship, Davia Tucker of Union
 Charles P. Phillips and Bonnie Saxon Phillips Scholarship, Olivia Rudolph of Carthage
 Coach Ken Pouncey Memorial Scholarship, Laynee Spears of Chunky
 Derek Pouncey Memorial Scholarship, Carlee Williams of Hickory
 Roscoe C. Pugh Memorial Scholarship, Katye Jones of Walnut Grove
 Haywood Reeves Scholarship, Emily Layton of Morton
 Shirley Renaud Memorial Scholarship, Maggie Peebles of Union
 Herman and Mosoura Rigby Memorial Scholarship, Maleigh Lemings of Gideon, Mo.
 Ruth Round Volunteer Scholarship, Madison Haney of Little Rock
 Sam Rush Memorial Scholarship, Kamryn Gentry of Philadelphia
 Sam Rush Memorial Scholarship, DaLea McKinney of Philadelphia
 Alvin and Iris Sharp Memorial Scholarship, Georgia Hardy of Philadelphia
 Dr. Omar Simmons Memorial Scholarship, Madilyn Dyess of Hickory
 Kurt Daniel Simoneau Memorial Scholarship, BreKaylah Grace of DeKalb
 Willis E. Blum and Frances Gaines Blum Slagle Memorial Scholarship, Lily Darty of Decatur
 Jay B. and Frances Harris Smith Scholarship, Emma Thornton of Carthage
 Willis W. (Bubba) Smith Memorial Scholar-

ship, Nicholas Minckler of Decatur
 SouthGroup Cox Scholarship, Ella Bell of Carthage
 SouthGroup Cox Scholarship, Hailey Neal of Carthage
 State Farm Insurance Company Scholarship, Giovanna Grayson of Carthage
 Jacob Stovall Memorial Scholarship, Krislyn Warren of Philadelphia
 Wallace Strickland Rush Health Systems Endowed Scholarship, Molly Butler of Philadelphia
 Charles and Judy Dowdle Thomas Scholarship, Kalyce Fielder of Philadelphia
 Albert P. and Blanche W. Thompson Memorial Scholarship, Ethan West of Newton
 Kenneth C. Thompson Scholarship, Neely Wolverton of Union
 Laura Reeves Thorne Memorial Scholarship, McKinlee Bankston of Decatur
 Kinoth and Ella Mae Thornton & Emerson Electric Scholarship, Morgan Hisaw of Union
 Thomas W. Thrash Memorial Scholarship and Dr. Margaret Mosal Memorial Scholarship, Anna Reed of Decatur
 Dustan Todd Memorial Scholarship, Jorden Williams of Decatur
 Donald Gray Triplett Scholarship, Franklin Wilbourn of Decatur
 U. S. Electrical Motors Scholarship, Faith Schillaci of Philadelphia
 Frances Adell Russell Vance Annual Career Technical Scholarship, Jedadiah Bradley of Conehatta
 James M. Vance Endowed Scholarship, Abbie Wilson of Union
 Mickey Vance Scholarship, Darnell Chesser of Carthage
 Ovid S. and Carol F. Vickers Scholarship, Piper Day of Philadelphia
 Arno and Ruth Carr Vincent Scholarship, Claudia Allen of Conehatta
 Lavern and Elizabeth Vowell Memorial Scholarship, Mikayla Ealy of Forest
 Elton D. Wall Memorial Scholarship, Kaitlyn Jackson of Little Rock
 Captain Charles E. Ward USN/RET Memorial Scholarship, Alexa Jane Holdiness of Louisville
 Weems Family Scholarship, Amber Bynum of Decatur
 Weems Family Scholarship, Morgan Chaney of Hickory
 Warrior Golf Classic Alumni Association Scholarship, Ava Boatwright of Union
 Warrior Golf Classic Alumni Association Scholarship, Tyler Johns of Morton
 Harvey and Martha Wheeler Pre-Pharmacy/Pre-Med Scholarship, Kinly Vick of Hickory
 J C White Scholarship, Josey Ezelle of Carthage
 Jack White and Mary Jo White Scholarship, Ian Madison of Union
 Bob Wilkerson Memorial Vo-Tech Scholarship, Presley Boykin of Walnut Grove
 Wilks-Palmer Scholars Scholarship, Jaidyn Washington of Louisville
 Jones and Carrie Williamson & Bascom and Hattie Chisolm Memorial Scholarship, Carter Walsworth of Lena
 General William Patrick Wilson Memorial Scholarship, Laylah Smith of Florence
 Lucille Wood Scholarship, Addy Page of Philadelphia
 Youngblood Family Scholarship, Hudson Bynum of Morton

EC Day at The Fair

It was another exciting year for the annual EC Day at the Neshoba County Fair! Campus administrators, faculty, staff, and students participated in the much anticipated special event. The

Collegians, Vocé, Cheerleaders, and Centralettes performed for a full house at Founders Square Pavilion and college officials handed out EC swag and were fortunate to visit with numerous ECCC

Alumni in attendance. Foundation and alumni staff members also participated in Hometown Proud Day and Meridian Day and made rounds throughout the fairgrounds visiting with ECCC alums.



EC Alumni (front row, from left) Hunter Hayes, Joy Hayes Able, Nona Vickers, and Lynn Russell Hayes; and (back row, from left) Pat Donald and Randy Russell



(Front row, from left) Jamie Adcock Calvert, Sarah Breland Skinner, and Angie Adcock Breland, and (back row, from left) Lucas Calvert, Nathan Calvert, Speedy Calvert, and Nathan Rowell



EC alumni (from left) Brad Copeland, Bob Posey, Charlene Smith Deweese, Reagan Mayes Jenkins, and Brittney Federick



Former Collegian Valeria Bugg Prince



Gene and Midge Davis, Stacey Hollingsworth, Lois Blount Cooper, and Karen Robertson.



Brothers and EC alumni (from left) Charles Lea, Tommy Lea, and Bill Lea



EC alums Lib Smith Hill and her son, Scott Hill who recently retired as golf coach and HPR instructor



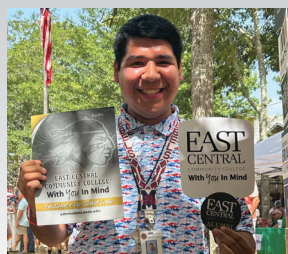
EC Athletic Hall of Fame member Jimmie Rea and his brother John Rea



Alumni Lucy Keith (left) and BJ Morrow



ECCC board of trustees member and alumnus David Byars



Alumni Board member and alumnus Asa Jimmie



Alumna Lisa Kelly Carley



Harriet Vickers Laird



ECCC alumna and board of trustees member Patsy Dunigan Clark

Alumni House Update

NAMING OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE FOR ECCC ALUMNI HOUSE

East Central Community College is raising funds to restore the Alumni House, the original President's Home located at the corner of Broad Street and 8th Avenue on the Decatur campus.

The house, which was built in 1925 and acquired by the college in 1927 was home to three East Central presidents: Roscoe Pugh, Dr. Lindsey O. Todd, and Walter Arno Vincent. Dr. Phil Sutphin, East Central's seventh president, lived there several years when he served as a Dean of Instruction.

After a new president's home was built in the mid 60s, it was used as campus housing for various faculty, staff, and administrators. After the last family moved out a few years ago, ECCC President Dr. Brent Gregory made the decision to renovate and use the house as a home base for the Alumni and Foundation offices, as well as a venue for meetings and other special events.

The ECCC Foundation and Alumni Relations offices have already raised more than \$60,000 through various fundraisers to begin renovations. Those initial funds have gone towards installation of new plumbing, electrical wiring, and sheetrock. Additional funding is



needed to complete the interior renovations which include paint and supplies, refinishing the original hardwood flooring, fixtures, and finishing the bathrooms and kitchen.

Once the inside is complete, there is additional work needed on the exterior of the home including paint, new windows, and concrete work to make the entrances ADA accessible.

The initial funds came through donations, the sale of engraved brick tiles that will cover the east wing porch, and naming opportunities for the various rooms in the house. The Foundation continues to seek donations of any amount large or small but there are two spaces that have naming rights remaining for donations of \$5,000 or more. They include the Alumni Office and Foundation Fundraiser Office."

Dr. Stacey Hollingsworth, executive director of the Foundation, who is spearheading the project said, "This home has been such an integral part of East Central's history and is one of very few structures remaining from the college's early years. The Alumni House connects our past with our present and our desire is that it will be a place for our alumni to return, gather, and reconnect."

The goal of the project, if funding becomes available, is to complete renovation of the house prior to Homecoming 2025 in mid-October when an open house event would serve as kickoff for planning the college's 2028 Centennial Celebration.

Gifts to The Alumni House Renovation Fund can be made online at www.eccc.edu/alumni-house-renovations-fund or by contacting the ECCC Foundation Office at 601-635-6327 or e-mail to sholling@eccc.edu. The Foundation will also accept in-kind gifts of materials or craftsmanship.

For more information on how you can be involved with this special restoration project, contact Hollingsworth at the above telephone or email.

GRANTS

- Continued from page 5

begged entry as a 17-year-old high school graduate. I was afforded entry based on scholarships and good will found there. It offered the yeast for my professional possibility.

"I became a better physician for having had both the hungering need for knowledge and for the gift of an education based on scholarships. I am forever grateful and the remembrance of that trust and faith in my possibility renews an inner ardor to "go and do likewise."

Selection criteria for the Oliphant-Martin grants included items such as the

number of students/staff positively affected, creativity, and the impact on the institutions commitment to student success and teaching and learning.

The Oliphant-Martins also support two Oliphant-Martin Foundation Scholarships, the Classes of 57, 58, & 59 Foundation Scholarship, and various other Foundation scholarships annually in addition to the faculty excellence fund.

For more information on how you can join the Martins in giving to East Central Community College, contact Dr. Stacey Hollingsworth, executive director of the ECCCC Foundation at sholling@eccc.edu or call 601-635-6327.



VISIT WITH REPRESENTATIVE KELLY

ECCC President Dr. Brent Gregory (right) and Lucas Calvert (left), vice president for external relations, visit with Representative Trent Kelly during a trip to Washington, D.C. Kelly, a native of Union and a 1986 ECCC graduate, is an attorney who resides in Saltillo and represents Mississippi's First Congressional District.

ALUMNI NEWS

East Central Community College

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION
PRESENTS THE

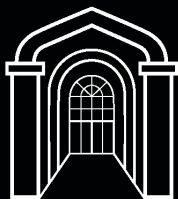
2025

WARRIOR
GOLF
CLASSIC



Registration Now Open!

Sponsored by the
ECCC Alumni Association,
the four-person scramble
annually raises money for
student scholarships.



EAST CENTRAL
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

May 9

Dancing Rabbit Golf Club
Choctaw, MS

Registration Deadline

May 1, 2025

Online Registration
www.eccc.edu/warrior-golf-classic

Information

601.635.6303
mmcleod@eccc.edu

Schedule

9 a.m. Registration
10 a.m. Tournament Begins
3 p.m. Meal and Prizes
(Approximate Time)

Registration Fee

\$175	\$800
Per Person	Gold Sponsor Includes 4 Players and Hole Sponsorship

Non-Playing Sponsorships

\$200	Hole Sponsor
\$1,000	Food & Beverage
\$2,500	Platinum Sponsor
\$10,000	Title Sponsor

ECCC Celebrates Homecoming

East Central Community College welcomed numerous alumni and friends to campus during Homecoming activities held Thursday, Oct. 10. The college recognized several alumni award recipients and presented a lifetime achievement award to one outstanding individual.

Dr. Lori Rogers Wilcher ('93) of Union, Director of Federal Programs and Special Education at Union Public School District, and Dr. Jamie Satcher ('80) of Mazatlán, MX, retired Professor Emeritus of Counselor Education at the University of Alabama, were recognized as Alumna and Alumnus of the Year, respectively. Former Diamond Warrior Trampas Amedee ('92) of Gonzales, La.,

women's basketball alum Carolyn Boatman Hull ('91) of Silvas, Ill., and former men's basketball standout Sam Nowell ('69) of Philadelphia were this year's Athletic Hall of Fame inductees. Forest native and longtime Vice President for Public Information Bubby Johnston who now resides in Quitman received a Lifetime Achievement Award.

Special groups recognized included the Class of 1974 in honor of their Golden Anniversary and all former ECCC faculty and staff members.

Activities began with a Pep Rally on the front lawn of the campus at noon and reunions began in Brackeen-Wood Gym at 3 p.m. followed by the presentation of Alumni Association awards at

3:30 p.m.

Prior to the football game, tailgating was hosted by the Alumni Association in the South End Zone at Bailey Stadium and halftime saw the crowning of Homecoming Queen Destiny Williams and a presentation by the Wall O' Sound Marching Band. The evening was capped off by the Warriors exciting win over Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College 24-20.

For more information on Homecoming activities or how you can nominate a deserving individual for Alumni Awards, contact Maria McLeod, director of alumni relations, at 601-635-6303 or call toll-free 877-462-3222, ext. 303. The email address is mmcleod@eccc.edu.



ECCC Alumni Association 2025 Officers and Board of Directors

President: Tyler Yates '12 • Vice-President: Jim McAdory '91 • Secretary: Kristin Cleveland McDonald '01

Members-At Large: Matt Alford '89, Chris Croft '93, Asa Jimmie '20,
Rex Keeton '65, Jeffrey Kirkland '93, Marcus Mann '94,
Erica Clemmons Moore '05 and Liz Johnson Owen '03

ALUMNI NEWS

Dr. Lori Wilcher

ALUMNA OF THE YEAR

East Central Community College selected Dr. Lori Rogers Wilcher ('93) as its 2024 Alumna of the Year, recognizing her longtime career in education and commitment to serving others.

Reflecting on this prestigious honor, Wilcher said, "Words truly fail me as I reflect on this recognition. I am humbled that others would think me deserving."

Wilcher's career path was not one she planned from the start but rather a journey she feels was orchestrated by God using her love for children and an array of opportunities to lead her into the field of education. With a bachelor's degree in Public Relations from Mississippi College, she planned to follow in her grandmother's footsteps working in the family business and raising children.

However, life took a different turn when she recognized the need to work outside the home.

Desiring to help others while still being near her children, she pursued a career in counseling, earning a Master's in Counselor Education with a focus on School Counseling from Mississippi State University. Finding fulfillment as a school counselor, particularly in Impact Therapy and Positive Behavior Interventions, her passion for making a positive difference in children's lives led her to earn a doctoral degree in Educational Leadership from The University of Southern Mississippi.

Throughout her career, Wilcher has worn many hats, including school counselor, assistant principal, and principal. Today, she serves as the Director of Federal Programs and Special Education at Union Public School District. Her commitment to advocating for children remains the driving force behind every decision she makes in her career.

"Having the opportunity to be the special education director for my district is an expanded capacity of helping others and serving students. I do not take my responsibility lightly," she said. "Advocating for children has been and always will be part of who I am."

Wilcher also serves as a university supervisor for student interns at Mississippi State University and teaches adjunct for Belhaven University ensuring she is part of the continued success in education throughout Mississippi and that every student has access to a great education and a successful career path.

Among her many career achievements, Wilcher considers serving as the president of the Mississippi School Counseling Association during the 2010-2011 academic year a significant honor. She also fondly recalls her time as principal of Union Elementary School, where she was named UPSD Administrator of the Year in 2021. However, one of her most meaningful highlights came in the form of a note from a parent, thanking her



for caring for her child during a difficult time.

"The trust of a parent with their most important treasure is the greatest accolade I could ever receive," Dr. Wilcher said, underscoring her deep commitment to her students.

Her connection to East Central runs deep. Her family has strong ties to the college, with her father, Dale Rogers, serving on the board, and her uncle, Tony Kinton, teaching at EC. Wilcher and her mother, Penny Rogers, even graduated from EC together. Reflecting on her time at the college, she credits her experiences at EC with laying the foundation for her future success.



The education and opportunities I had at EC prepared me for higher education and my career.



"The education and opportunities I had at EC prepared me for higher education and my career. I learned through the War-

rior Corps how to represent myself and my organization well," she said.

Wilcher attributes much of her success to the unwavering support of her family, friends, and mentors. She fondly recalls the love and guidance of her grandparents, the steadfast support of her parents, and the deep bond she shares with her sister, Lana (Rogers) Pennington, who is also an EC graduate and Hall of Fame member. Wilcher's husband, Jimmy, and her children have also been a source of inspiration and motivation throughout her journey.

"Even in times I had no clear picture of who I was or who I was supposed to be, others saw in me what I couldn't and sometimes still can't see in myself. I was shown unconditional love, and despite my shortcomings, those who loved me never gave up on me."

In her professional life, several individuals have significantly influenced Dr. Wilcher's career. Dr. Julia Porter, a former professor at Mississippi State University, played a pivotal role in shaping her counseling career, while Dr. David Lee, Dr. Thelma Robertson, Dr. Jim Young, and Dr. Rebecca Young provided crucial support during her doctoral studies at USM. Additionally, Gene Cliburn, also an EC alumnus, who was a co-worker at Union, has been a guiding force in her educational career.

Cliburn said, "When I think of the qualities that make a good counselor - a strong moral and ethical compass, a sense of justice, love for children, intelligence and creativity - Lori Rogers Wilcher possesses them all. As a co-worker, Lori challenged and inspired me. I loved brainstorming with her as we looked for ways to make the impossible happen. Dr. Wilcher is most deserving of the honor of being selected as Alumna of the Year!"

When asked her advice to current ECCC students, Wilcher offered words of encouragement: "If you don't know exactly what you are supposed to do or how you will find the path to where

-WILCHER continued on page 20

Dr. Jamie Satcher

ALUMNUS OF THE YEAR

Dr. Jamie Satcher, a 1980 graduate of East Central Community College was selected 2024 Alumnus of the Year, a recognition that reflects a lifetime of dedication to education, counseling, and community service.

When notified of his selection, Satcher said, "I am thrilled by this honor. Many East Central alumni have had distinguished careers. I know several among my peers who well deserve this recognition, so I am deeply honored to be selected this year."

Satcher's career has been dedicated to the field of education, specifically counselor education, where he spent 22 years at The University of Alabama as a Professor of Counselor Education and later as the Associate Dean for Research in the College of Education before retiring as Professor Emeritus in 2013.

Dr. James Kelley, retired Professor of English at Mississippi State University-Meridian, wrote in a letter supporting Satcher's nomination as Alumnus of the Year, "Jamie has offered much to his profession and the communities in which he lives. The strong work ethic and sense of self-determination developed while earning his degree at ECCC served him well in his subsequent academic and career endeavors. His success reflects powerfully on the positive impact of the community college philosophy in general, and more specifically the support he received from ECCC faculty many decades ago."

Prior to his tenure at Alabama, Satcher worked as a project coordinator in the Counselor Education program at Mississippi State University, where he completed his doctoral degree.

He began his career as a vocational evaluator at the West Alabama Rehabilitation Center in Tuscaloosa. This role was followed by positions as a rehabilitation counselor for the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services and director of a vocational rehabilitation project for the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians.

"I decided to teach because I wanted to train students preparing to become counselors," Satcher said. "I was also attracted to the scholarly expectations of a research-intensive university."

In his role as Associate Dean, Satcher oversaw the college's externally funded contracts and grants, and he managed a program to assist junior faculty with writing and submitting grant proposals.

Satcher said one of the highlights of his career came during a class for doctoral students in the early stages of their dissertation research when a student asked him where he was from. When Satcher mentioned his hometown of Union, another student revealed she was from Decatur and asked if he had attended ECCC. When he said he did, she revealed her parents,



L.B. and Alyne Simmons, had taught at ECCC.

He said, "Both had taught me, and Mrs. Simmons was particularly encouraging. Naturally, I wanted to chair this student's dissertation committee. Guiding her through the process of planning, conducting, and defending her dissertation research was a career highlight. It was a heartfelt 'thank you' to her parents from me."

Like many ECCC students, Satcher said his decision to attend ECCC was influenced by its size, affordability, and proximity to his hometown, which allowed him to work part-time while he attended classes. The college provided a solid academic foundation and opportunities for personal growth, which he said he found rewarding and confidence building.

"East Central shaped me in ways that were essential for meeting the teaching, research, and service demands of my career," he said.

that were essential for meeting the teaching, research, and service demands of my career," he said.

Several individuals influenced Satcher's life and career, particularly during his time at ECCC.

"Every instructor I had at East Central influenced my life or career in some way. All believed in the community college philosophy and were very committed to their students. For brevity's sake, I will mention the most influential. Mrs. Alyne Simmons modeled a belief that I later stressed in my own work: If you can't write well, then you can't show that you think well," he shares. "Mr. Ovid Vickers was a dynamic teacher whose stories inspired me to broaden my views of the world. I would like to say that I emulated him when I was teaching, but frankly, he set the bar far too high for me to even come close!"

"Dr. Robert 'Bob' Heritage saw an undeveloped talent and encouraged me to grow musically. Being on stage in Mr. Bruce Peterson's theater productions helped me gain the confidence I later needed for public speaking. Finally, Mr. Bruce Guraedy encouraged an appreciation for art that inspires me to visit art museums wherever I travel."

He fondly recalls his time at ECCC, where he was involved in various activities, including being a member of The Collegians, drum major of the Warrior band, and participating in fall dinner theater and spring musical productions.

When asked his advice to today's students, Satcher said, "Fairly recently, I took music classes and a Spanish class at East Central. I loved taking classes with the smart, talented, and ambitious young people who were my classmates. They give me great hope for the future. Regardless of career choice, the advice I would give to students is to be open to new experi-

-SATCHER continued on page 20

East Central shaped me in ways that were essential for meeting the teaching, research, and service demands of my career.

ALUMNI NEWS

Sam Nowell

ATHLETIC HALL OF FAME

For Sam Nowell ('69), the announcement of his induction into the East Central Community College Athletic Hall of Fame is more than just a personal milestone—it's a moment of profound gratitude.

"There is absolutely nothing in this world that could make me prouder or more humbled than being named to the East Central Community College Athletic Hall of Fame," Nowell said.

Nowell's basketball journey began under the tutelage of Coach Ken Fortenberry at Neshoba Central, where teamwork was paramount.

"Neshoba Central was known as a basketball school back then," Nowell said. "We played a team-oriented game, and all had good stats, but none stood out much from one

player to the other, except my old friend, Art Fulton, who was our best player and an All-State selection. We consistently won 25-30 games each year."

Following high school, Nowell was given a scholarship by then ECCC head coach Joe Clark who Nowell said played a crucial role in his development. "He saw potential in a skinny, 135-pound point guard who wasn't on the top of anyone's recruiting list," Nowell explains. "He let me develop in a faster system than we had in high school and I flourished."

Transitioning to East Central Community College marked a pivotal shift in Nowell's career. He averaged 13 points and 7 assists per game, led the team in free throws with 134 attempts, and had a 78 percent free throw average.

The 1969 season was particularly memorable, as Nowell's sophomore class led EC to a 17-9 record, marking the college's first winning season in a long time. "My best performances were often against our bitter rivals, East Mississippi, where my scoring average soared to over 20 points per game," Nowell remembered.

The memories from Nowell's time at EC are rich and varied. "Art Fulton and I always kept a bottle of Pepto Bismol on the bench, a quirky tradition that became a hallmark of our games," he recalls fondly. One game stands out for its sheer chaos and humor: "I remember chasing a loose ball and running headlong into the brick wall beside the court. Back then, we had never heard of concussions, so I just kept on playing."

These experiences were not just about basketball but also about forging enduring friendships. "When I married my wife, June, in 1971, four of my EC teammates stood by my side in the wedding," Nowell says. These bonds have remained strong over the years, with regular gatherings and shared retirement experiences. "I'll never forget the camaraderie we shared, facilitated by Coach Clark's easy-going demeanor and the absence of any internal bickering or drama during my two years



“Had it not been for EC and the people I met there, I doubt I would have achieved the successes I’ve enjoyed in life.”

at EC,” he adds.

Nowell still keeps in touch with many of his East Central friends including Art Fulton, Ben Johnson, Sammy Pace, Larry(Twig) Gressett, Grady Boozer, Danny Musgrove and Bill Griffis. He and Art drink coffee every week at Stribling Drugstore in Philadelphia.

"Art has been my soulmate since way back in the fourth grade! And Sammy even let me take his credit card on my honeymoon!" Nowell remembers fondly.

He and Pace, a former ECCC women's basketball head coach, were teammates at East Central and later roomed together at Mississippi State.

Pace said, "It's no secret that Sam was not highly recruited out of high school and when he was

signed at East Central, it was because the coach at Neshoba persuaded Joe Clark to sign him. However, Sam was extremely dependable, and he worked really hard to get recognized on the court, not for the recognition itself, but because he wanted to be the point guard! And it paid off because his sophomore year he was a unanimous selection for All-State!

Pace and Nowell also played intramurals together at MSU. "Sam was also an engineering major, so after we got in at night, he spent time studying while I had a good time playing cards," Pace said smiling. "He was a wonderful roommate and the kind of guy you could look up to, a true friend always. Sam is a wonderful person, and I am thrilled he has been selected for the Hall of Fame."

East Central was more than a place to play basketball for Nowell; it was a formative experience. "We lived in Winston Hall, a hot and cramped dormitory, but those conditions brought us closer together," he explains.

The small campus of just over 700 students at the time made it easy to get to know everyone and participate in various activities. His sophomore year, Nowell was selected vice president of the Student Body Association and was elected Mr. ECCC, an honor he said is still among his most cherished.

Nowell said campus activities, dormitory life and long travel on buses forced him to learn new study habits and he recalled his academic struggles in chemistry. "I had an A average all through high school. I earned my first-ever D in chemistry under Mr. Frank Cross, a challenging experience that nearly sent me packing. However, Mr. Cross and I became close friends later on," he says highlighting the supportive environment at EC, which helped him overcome personal challenges and grow.

Basketball has evolved significantly since Nowell's playing days. He said, "The game today is faster, with an emphasis on three-point shooting and layups, while the traditional 12-foot

-NOWELL continued on page 24

Carolyn Boatman Hull

ATHLETIC HALL OF FAME

ECCC Athletic Hall of Fame: Carolyn Boatman Hull's Legacy of Excellence and Dedication

Carolyn Boatman Hull's journey from outstanding high school athlete to a celebrated college player exemplifies dedication and a deep love for the game.

"I was pleasantly surprised when I received a call informing me that I would be honored with induction into the prestigious ECCC Athletic Hall of Fame," she said. "Coaches Skelton, Pace, and Early taught me discipline, and perseverance, and offered constructive feedback to help me reach my full potential. I am incredibly grateful to them."

Hull's basketball journey began at Carthage High School where she made an indelible mark on the court and received numerous accolades, including being named a Street & Smith Honorable Mention All-American and a Clarion Ledger Honorable Mention All-State athlete.

She was recognized as a Jackson Clarion-Ledger Pre-Season and Post-Season 2nd team All-State member and demonstrated excellence as a participant in the Jackson AAU Jr. Olympic Team, contributing to the team's success as State Champions for two consecutive years.

"My academic journey instilled in me the qualities of a team player, eventually leading to my role as team captain. Under the guidance of Coach Gina Skelton, I learned the true essence of teamwork and the power of collaboration. Our high school team exemplified resilience and unity."

She was selected Best Offensive Player for two consecutive seasons and her senior year statistics—20.4 points and 13.6 rebounds per game—earned her the title of Most Athletic and team Most Valuable Player. She set multiple school records, including the most rebounds in a single game, the highest points in a season (1,688), and the most rebounds in a season (1,166). She scored 23 or more points in a single game twice and had numerous 30+ point games.

She received a nomination for the Converse High School All-American and was honored as an All-District and All-State Selection.

Being recruited by then head coach Sammy Pace to play college ball at East Central was both thrilling and challenging for Hull.

"The transition from high school to East Central was very scary and challenging at first. However, it offered the opportunity to adapt to a different coaching style, learn new strategies, and develop a fresh perspective. Overall, it was a rewarding experience that encouraged personal growth and strength," she said.



The transition from high school to East Central was very scary and challenging at first. However, it offered the opportunity to adapt to a different coaching style, learn new strategies, and develop a fresh perspective. Overall, it was a rewarding experience that encouraged personal growth and strength.

The training and competition helped develop close bonds with her East Central teammates that allowed them to work through any personal adversities that came along and she said Coach Pace pushed her to improve not only her performance on the basketball court, but also in the classroom.

"Carolyn was a tremendous player and she scored over people much taller than her," Pace said. "I think she was the best player in the state her sophomore year and she did not get as much recognition as she deserved."

"She was also dependable and respectful, and she always did anything I asked her to do. At times, she would take on a role bigger than she should have but she was always successful. You couldn't find any-

one nicer than Carolyn Boatman and she was a credit to East Central both years she was here."

She said adjusting to dorm life was also a significant change, but she appreciated the opportunity to meet new people, and being a basketball player made the experience even more rewarding.

Hull was recognized as a Mississippi Association of Community and Junior Colleges First Team All-State selection and Meridian Star Player of the Year. She was selected a member of the All-Region 23 Tournament team and the Mississippi Junior College All-Star team. And in her best outing of her ECCC career, she scored 49 points.

"Becoming a basketball player brought about significant changes in my life. It was an exciting but challenging experience, as I had to juggle my practice schedule and game days with academics. Throughout this journey, I received a lot of support from family, friends, teachers, coaches, and teammates," she said.

Following East Central, Hull enrolled at the University of Arkansas Monticello where she continued her success on the hardwood under the late head coach Alvy Early.

At UAM, Hull's impact was immediate. She quickly established herself as a formidable center, earning NAIA Second Team All-American honors in 1992 and an honorable mention in 1993. Her performance on the court was a testament to her skill and consistency. She averaged 19.6 points and 9.6 rebounds per game over her college career, ranking among the school's all-time leaders in both categories.

She ranked sixth in career scoring average, ninth in career scoring (1,309 points), and sixth in single-season scoring (736

-HULL continued on page 21

ALUMNI NEWS

Trampas Amadee

ATHLETIC HALL OF FAME

When Trampas Amadee ('92) stepped onto the baseball field at East Central Community College over three decades ago, the thought of one day being inducted into the ECCC Athletic Hall of Fame never crossed his mind. He was just a young man who loved baseball and was eager to play the game. Today, Amadee is honored and humbled by this recognition, acknowledging that while it's an individual accolade, it's a testament to the teammates and coaches who were with him every step of the way.

Amadee said, "Being in the ECCC Athletic Hall of Fame means the world to me. I believe that being in any Hall of Fame is the highest honor any athlete can receive. It's an individual award, but without all of my teammates and Coach (Jamie) Clark, this would not be possible. To be considered one of the top athletes at EC is very exciting and humbling at the same time."

He was a member of the 1990-91 and 1991-92 Diamond Warriors. The former pitcher/outfielder set a then record for most ever season victories by an ECCC pitcher following his sophomore season with a 9-2 record and 1.87 earned run average. He was selected First Team All-State, First Team All-Region, and was ECCC's Most Valuable Player and Exemplary Player of the Year.

His accolades were not only in athletics, but he was also a successful student in the college's Drafting and Design program and was recognized as a State VICA Architectural Design Champion in 1992. Additionally, he was selected by his peers as Mr. ECCC and Most Handsome.

Amadee continued his playing career as a successful pitcher at the University of West Alabama where he also completed his bachelor's degree. He is now the owner of Amadee Home Designs and to date has designed over 1700 new homes and additions.

Arriving at ECCC at just 17 years old, Amadee didn't know what to expect. He was unfamiliar with the town of Decatur, and even more so with Coach Jamie Clark, who would become one of the most influential figures in his life. The rigorous daily practices, which often felt like they were designed to push the players to their limits, quickly became a routine.

"I never went thru fall workouts for baseball and thought coach was trying to kill us with as much as we ran every day. Jamie Clark was absolutely one of the hardest and one of the best coaches that I ever played for. But Coach knew when it was time to get serious and when it was time to relax and have a good time.

Amadee reminisced about the times Coach Clark showed his displeasure during a game. "If something went wrong,



"I wouldn't trade my two years at EC for anything. East Central gave me lifelong friends and some of the best memories of my life."

you'd see a glove or helmet flying out of the dugout, or he'd turn his hat sideways and throw his hands in the air." These moments, coupled with Coach Clark's memorable phrases like "Go do that voodoo that you do so well!" are etched in Amadee's memory.

Some of Amadee's most cherished memories with Coach Clark are not directly tied to baseball. He recalls the weekends when he and teammate Jerry Dupuy, also from Louisiana, would stay in Decatur and babysit Coach Clark's daughter, Nicky, while "The Big Stud" (as Clark was affectionately known) took his wife, Audrey, out for a date night. "It means a

lot to me that they trusted us enough to stay with their daughter while they had some time away from baseball."

Amadee's time at ECCC was marked by strong friendships, many of which endure to this day. The first person he met upon arrival was David Luke, a pitcher with whom he still enjoys fishing trips. Then there was the group known as "The Foreign 5," consisting of Amadee and four other players from Louisiana (Dupuy, David Martin, Daniel Landry, and Bob Temple). These bonds were forged amidst tough practices, stellar competition, and the camaraderie of shared experiences, such as the unforgettable day when Doug Williams, a seldom-used player, hit a game-winning home run that sent the entire dugout into a frenzy.

"I was pitching that day at Gulf Coast. Doug would get one at bat every game. His number got called and he hit one of the longest homeruns I ever seen hit that put us ahead and wound up giving us the win. When he got in the dugout, I was so excited I kissed that big fella on the cheek and the whole dugout was going crazy."

Amadee said he had a great relationship with all of his teammates. "Each one was different and looking back at it, the difference is what made each one special."

"Trampas was a warrior," said Dupuy. "He was the ultimate competitor who was always at his best. He made me a better player, and he made us a better team. He was our captain, he was our teammate, he was and always will be my friend."

Reflecting on how baseball has evolved since his playing days, Amadee acknowledges the advancements in technology and data that now play a significant role in the sport. However, he feels that the game was simpler back then, and perhaps more enjoyable for it. His advice to current players? Appreciate the modern facilities and the hard work that coaches put into maintaining them. "Respect the game, respect your coaches, and value the camaraderie of your teammates," he urges.

-AMADEE continued on page 23

Bubby Johnston

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

After a long career working behind the scenes ensuring that others' accomplishments shine brightly, East Central Community College honored Bubby Johnston, longtime Vice President for Public Information, with a Lifetime Achievement Award in recognition of his unwavering dedication and service.

Reflecting on the recognition, Johnston said, "I am very honored and very surprised to receive such a prestigious honor. Never in my wildest dreams did I ever think such an award would be presented to me. I have always considered myself a 'behind-the-scenes' person, someone who enjoyed publicizing honors, awards, and accomplishments of others. I am very honored and appreciative."

Johnston first honed his skills as a staff writer and then editor at his family's newspaper, The Scott County Times. There, he worked alongside his late father, Erle Johnston, for eight years, learning the intricacies of the newspaper business and the importance of community storytelling. His transition to ECCC came in 1987, after a series of career explorations that led him back to his true passion—public relations and community service.

"I felt at home the very first day on the job," Johnston recalls. "Everyone welcomed me and wanted to help in any way possible. EC was very much a 'family' at that time, and I was grateful to be a member of such a caring group of people."

Johnston's career at ECCC would span nearly three decades and during his 28 years at ECCC, he tirelessly promoted the college, its students, faculty, and staff. His efforts ensured that the achievements of the ECCC community were consistently highlighted in the media.

He said, "The reason I spent so much time and effort promoting the college and publicizing honors, awards, and achievements is really two-fold. First, that is what I was hired to do. Secondly, I felt it was my duty to ensure that the success of our students was recognized and celebrated. During my interview, this was discussed in great detail - to publicize all the great things happening at EC and to develop relationships with the area media in doing so. I routinely visited with area newspaper editors as well as the local television and radio stations news people. We had a wonderful partnership with our media representatives, I am proud to say."

Johnston's dedication to his role was evident in the countless hours he spent building relationships with media outlets, ensuring that every significant milestone at ECCC was shared with the wider community. His work culminated in moments of national recognition for the college, such as when ECCC was featured on ABC's Good Morning America—a highlight of Johnston's career.



"I felt at home the very first day on the job. EC was very much a 'family' at that time, and I was grateful to be a member of such a caring group of people."

"Our friends at WTKO-TV in Meridian made that happen. It was a very special moment and great publicity for sure!"

Longtime WTKO sports director and now news anchor/reporter Lindsey Hall said of his friend, "For those outside the realms of broadcasting and public relations, the extensive hours, dedication, and commitment required may not be immediately apparent. You have to love it, as it demands significant personal sacrifice, and Bubby's dedication to ECCC was unwavering. He was always dependable, you always knew you were going to get whatever you needed, and throughout his career, he was al-

ways willing to do whatever he could to accommodate our schedules to ensure that media coverage was provided for whatever

event East Central was having. And he was very, very smart. For example, he would frequently schedule press conferences at 11 a.m. on Thursdays, coinciding with fried chicken day. That was our hook! He would feed us fried chicken. He was smart enough to do that. If we had to choose between one story or another, we would always choose chicken day in Decatur!"

During his long tenure, Johnston marketed and publicized every major event at the college, promoted day to day activities, highlighted the activities and honors of every division on campus and worked alongside the Alumni Association and Foundation to also recognize ECCC alumni and friends. He was instrumental in publishing the college's first ever alumni magazine, The Warrior, which continues to be published and mailed to more than 15,000 alumni and friends each year.

Lois Cooper, an EC alumna and a past president of the ECCC Alumni Association, said, "I am so glad to find out that Bubby Johnston is receiving a Lifetime Achievement Award. In Bubby's career at East Central, if he had been paid by the hour, he would be a multi-millionaire today. He was a strong positive influence over the East Central students, and he always had a smile on his face. When he was at East Central, we worked on many projects together. Working with Bubby was always a great experience and I treasure our friendship. Congratulations to Bubby. The award is so deserving."

Among his career highlights was traveling with the Collegians as they performed at the Summer Olympics in Atlanta in 1996 when singer and actor Randy Houser was a member of the group. He also chaperoned Warrior Corps trips and traveled the state and region promoting ECCC athletics teams.

"The main career highlight for me was being able to watch

—JOHNSTON continued on page 22

ALUMNI NEWS



FORMER EC FACULTY, STAFF HONORED

Former members of the ECCC faculty and staff were among special groups recognized during Homecoming. From left, are Elizabeth Breland, Dr. Brad Tucker, Midge Davis, Brenda Johnson, Larry Blackburn, Gene Davis, Roberta Holt, Ricky Harrison, Bubby Johnston, RT Purvis, and John Adcock. Also in attendance but not pictured were Peggy Clayton, Kendall Simoneau, Ronald Westbrook, and Haywood Reeves.

WILCHER

– Continued from page 14

you are supposed to be, don't give up hope." She emphasizes the importance of taking advantage of all opportunities, getting involved, and stepping outside one's comfort zone. Wilcher also hopes that many students will consider careers in education or mental health, fields in which she sees a great need, especially in rural areas.

Wilcher's time at East Central was filled with memorable experiences and lasting friendships. She fondly recalls her involvement in plays and musicals, her time in the Warrior Corps, and the late nights spent working on assignments. Her best friend during her time at EC, Maria Leach McLeod, remains a cherished

friend to this day, and Wilcher continues to value the impact of the people she met at EC on her life and career.

McLeod said, "Lori has always been both intelligent and beautiful, but it's her generous heart that stands out most to me and has from the start. We had such wonderful time at East Central and sometimes we studied, too! I had no doubt she would succeed in whatever career field she chose but I was not surprised when she became an educator. Her love of children, her own and those in her community, and the joy she receives from seeing them grow and succeed is amazing. I don't see her often enough, but she is a cherished friend and I couldn't be prouder of her accomplishments as a wife, mother, and educator."

In addition to her professional

achievements, Dr. Wilcher is actively involved in her community and church. She teaches the 2- and 3-year-old Sunday School class, leads Children's Bible Drills, and sings in the choir at First Baptist Church Union and also serves as a Key Spouse Volunteer at Key Field Air National Guard Base. Her commitment to serving others extends beyond her career, reflecting the values instilled in her by her family and mentors.

Dr. Wilcher's journey is a testament to the power of faith, resilience, and the support of a loving community. As East Central Community College's Alumna of the Year, she serves as an inspiration to students, educators, and all those who seek to make a positive difference in the lives of others.

SATCHER

– Continued from page 15

ences and the opportunities that come with them."

Throughout his career, Satcher has received numerous awards and recognition for his contributions to education and counseling, including the Commissioner's Award for Excellence in Rehabilitation Education and Training from the U.S. Department of Education, and the Governor's Award for Commitment to Teaching Excellence from Alabama Gov. Bob Riley.

He has been awarded numerous accolades by the Alabama Counseling Association including being named to the Chapter III Hall of Fame. He was named Outstanding Member of the Alabama Division of the American Rehabilitation Counseling Association and was presented the Award for Teaching Excellence

by The University of Alabama College of Continuing Studies.

He has served as editor of numerous counseling and rehabilitation publications, is a past president of the Alabama Division of the American Rehabilitation Counseling Association and is a former board member of the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification.

Even in retirement, Satcher remains active in community service, currently serving as a volunteer with Mazatlán Tourist Aides in Mazatlán, MX, where he now resides. He has also served in various volunteer capacities for Habitat for Humanity, Meridian Little Theater, Easter Seals of West Alabama, and the MSU Riley Center.

Dr. Mark Leggett, a faculty member at Walden University and former doctoral student under Satcher's supervision and later a colleague at The University of Alabama, said, "I can honestly say,

without hesitation, that if it were not for his guidance and support, I would not have a Ph.D., nor would I have 23 years in the teaching and mental health profession. ... I witnessed firsthand as a faculty member his continued encouragement, support, and dedication to the success of the program and more importantly, the success of each student. Jamie never wavered in his commitment to students ensuring they had the guidance, information, and tools to complete their degrees. ... He was always the faculty member who gave students the benefit of a doubt, an extra push, a chance to succeed. Compassion, empathy, and advocacy were among his many attributes as an educator."

Satcher's dedication to service and education continues to inspire those around him, making him a fitting recipient of ECCC's Alumnus of the Year award.



WILLIAMS CROWNED HOMECOMING QUEEN

From left are freshmen maid Mikayla Holifield of Forest and her escort Fateh Benzalah of Algeria, freshman maid Alison Peyton Knight of Monticello and her escort RJ Lampley of Laurel, sophomore maid Kera Grace Easley of Philadelphia and her escort Silas Massey of Philadelphia, sophomore maid Nicole Moore of Philadelphia and her escort Deontae Banks of Jackson, 2024 ECCC Homecoming Queen Destiny Williams of Stonewall and her escort Jharmain Inge of Meridian, sophomore maid Ashton Tristan Luke of Philadelphia and her escort Aiden Boyd of Leesburg, sophomore maid Madelynn Grace Cook of Union and her escort Samuel Alawine of Union, freshman maid Saniya Holmes of Philadelphia and her escort Logan Myles Lyons of Choctaw, and freshman maid Graciana Alexander of Philadelphia and her escort Ian Madison of Philadelphia. The queen and her court were presented at Bailey Stadium during halftime of the ECCC vs. Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College football game Thursday, Oct. 10.

HULL

- Continued from page 17

points). One of her most memorable performances came against Henderson State, where she scored a career-best 40 points.

Upon Boatman's induction into the UAM Athletic Hall of Fame in 2017, Coach Early, who led the UAM women's basketball team from 1979 to 2000, was quoted saying, "Carolyn was a tremendous low post player. When she caught the ball on the low block, she was almost impossible to stop. She was a consistent force, night in and night out."

Hull's leadership was instrumental in the team's success. In 1993, she helped guide the Blossoms to the AIC championship—the last in the conference's history—and a berth in the NAIA National Tournament.

Following her playing career, Hull's journey took her to the Illinois Quad Cities area, where she now assists at-risk youth involved in the court system. Her commitment to making a difference in the lives of young people reflects her passion for helping others.

Hull's brother, Johnny Boatman, said "We are extremely proud of Carolyn's contributions to the athletic world. Her being inducted into the Hall of Fame means a lot to her and to our family. One of the things I have always admired about Carolyn is her work ethic, her love of the sport, her ability to comprehend and get the job done."

Boatman shared a story about his sister's determined spirit. "One day the school principal asked Carolyn if she was going to follow in her brother's footsteps on the basketball court and she said 'No, I'm going to make my own.' It was one of my proudest moments that she would choose to make her own way and indeed she did. She did well at East Central and then went on to the University of Arkansas-Monticello and did extremely well there.

As her older brother, I'm ecstatic and elated that she has done as well as she has and that East Central is taking the time to recognize her."

Reflecting on her career, Hull acknowledges the support she received along the way. "I first want to thank God for making this possible. Although I

have made many accomplishments in the sport of basketball, I did not do it all on my own. I want to thank my family for their continued support and encouragement, as well as my coaches and teachers. And last, but not least, I would like to thank my teammates, without whom I would not be in the position to be the recipient of this distinguished award. It took the entire team to assist each other in achieving our success."

She added, "My message to today's students is to focus on personal growth, staying focused on learning, promoting mental health, prioritizing time management, maintaining a sense of purpose, and celebrating achievements, whether big or small, while also having fun. I also encourage the players to have a spiritual connection to which they can lean in times of need," she said.

Boatman's journey from a high school standout to a ECCC Athletic Hall of Fame inductee is a testament to her dedication and hard work which should continue to inspire future generations.

ALUMNI NEWS

JOHNSTON

- Continued from page 19

and enjoy so many talented students in athletics, fine arts, etc., through the years. I especially enjoyed publicizing sports championships and watching the musicals, concerts, dinner theaters, etc. So many talented students come through EC each year and continue to do so!"

Johnston's career was shaped by numerous individuals, both at ECCC and beyond. He speaks fondly of his father, Erle Johnston, a self-taught journalist and public relations specialist who instilled in him the importance of promoting community pride. At Mississippi State University, Johnston was guided by his journalism teacher, Mr. Henry Meyer, whose encouragement helped a shy freshman find his voice in the newspaper business.

At ECCC, Johnston found mentors and friends in Ovid and Carol Vickers, who offered guidance and support throughout his career. He also cherishes the relationships he built with his colleagues and staff members, many of whom became lifelong friends.

"Having lunch almost every day with my childhood friend and fellow ECCC administrator Gene Davis will always be a special memory," Johnston said. "I was blessed with wonderful staff members like Jondi Brackeen, Sandra Curry, Suzanne Harthcock, and Jarrod Ravenscraft in the early years at EC, but I will always consider my last staff at EC - Maria McLeod, Karen Robertson and Gennie Taylor - as a very special memory. They worked very hard and often had long days on the job but never complained - and on top of that, they had to put up with me! But the fact they came up with 'Bub's Babes' and wore Bub's Babes T-Shirts at football games will always hold a special place in my heart."

McLeod said, "I owe much of my career to Bubby Johnston who took a chance on a young college graduate with

little experience and taught me so much about photography, news writing, and the many other aspects of this job. He also cared about our work-life balance and too many times to count took the late evening work so I could be home with my family. Bubby loved East Central, and he genuinely enjoyed telling the EC story and promoting the accolades of our students and staff. He comes from a generation in which hard work and loyalty are deeply ingrained, and he was among the most loyal ECCC supporters I have ever known."

Taylor said, "I had the great pleasure of working on Bubby's staff for over seven years. He was the epitome of an ECCC Warrior. He knew everyone on campus students included and more than likely who their families were. I quickly learned, Bubby was the go-to person for any of the happenings on campus as one was more than likely to see him at nearly every event, night or day! The most valuable asset Bubby brought to East Central is he always made you feel special and welcome whether you were becoming a Warrior, a Warrior parent or even an opposing team. Bubby greeted all with that big warm smile followed by a 'Welcome to EC!'"

Johnston's memories at ECCC are filled with special moments and a few humorous anecdotes. One of the funniest, he recalls, was dressing up in a pink princess costume for Halloween, earning him the nickname "Bubblelicious." Another memorable moment involved an attempted "pole dance" during a student-sponsored fundraising event—a performance Johnston hopes was not captured on camera!

When asked his advice to those just beginning their careers at ECCC, Johnston offers this simple yet profound advice: "The most important thing is to have the right attitude. If you do not look forward to going to work each day, then change careers! Work should be an enjoyable experience. Never did I dread

going to work at EC. Yes, we had various challenges, but we worked through them to the best of our ability. The best advice is to have a positive attitude and smile a lot!"

Johnston received numerous awards while working at The Scott County Times weekly newspaper and at ECCC and served a term as president of the College Public Relations Association of Mississippi.

Since his retirement, he completed his father's book, *The Thunder of Elephants*, from Bayonets to Ballots, which is about the history of the Republican Party in Mississippi. He said it was in tribute to his parents (Erle and Fay Johnston) and \$2,000 from book sales was donated in their memory to the Children's of Mississippi Hospital, a vital part of the University of Mississippi Medical Center in Jackson.

Johnston is a longtime member of Forest Presbyterian Church and currently attends First Baptist Church in Quitman where he resides with his wife, the former Janet Harris. He remains an active community servant as a member of the Friends of Clarkco State Park and Citizens of Archusa Creek Water Park, and he previously served on the Board of Directors for the Clarke County Chamber of Commerce. He is also a member of the Mississippi State University Alumni Association and a lifetime member of the East Central Community College Alumni Association.

Bubby Johnston's lifetime of service to ECCC is a legacy of dedication, hard work, and a commitment to celebrating the successes of others. This Lifetime Achievement Award honors his impact on the college and its community which will be felt for generations to come.

"This is a tremendous honor that I will cherish forever," Johnston says. "I am very grateful to everyone responsible for my receiving this wonderful and cherished award."

**** HOMECOMING 2025 **** **MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR OCTOBER 2025**

(Date Will Be Announced Once Football Schedule is Complete)

REUNION GROUPS SCHEDULED FOR 2025

Class of 1975 - 50th Anniversary Reunion • Academic Hall of Fame • Collegians

50-Year Club-All Alumni Who Graduated from ECJC/ECCC More Than 50 Years Ago

For more information, contact the Alumni Office at mmcleod@eccc.edu or call 601-635-6303



CLASS OF 1974 RECOGNIZED

Members of the Class of 1974 were recognized in honor of their 50th anniversary. Pictured are (from left) Dr. Brent Gregory who presented special medallions to those in attendance; and class members Ricky May, Frank Sturup, Richard Stamper, Cliff Stamper, Patti Davis, Bill Patrick, Rodney Tadlock, and Charlie Reeves.

AMADEE

- Continued from page 18

Amedee's journey was shaped by many influential figures, starting with his father, who, despite being blind, taught him the fundamentals of baseball until he was nine years old. His father died when he was only 13 and although he was never able to see him play high school ball, Amedee said he felt his spirit was always with him.

The support of high school coaches and mentors, like Wade Simoneaux and Fran Anderman, paved the way for his success at ECCC. And, of course, the unwavering support of his family, particularly his mother, Vickie Garon, and sister, Shea Schexnayder, who encouraged him to chase his dreams far from home.

"Trampas started throwing baseballs around when he was just a toddler," said Garon. "He would throw to anyone that would play catch with him. His father, although handicapped, loved baseball and he would tell him and show him things daily. Trampas was also the first in my family to go to college and I always instilled in him to not only enjoy his baseball career, but to get his degree in something he enjoyed doing and today he has a very successful drafting business of his own. He was and is a leader and has always been willing to help anyone in need. I am so proud of Trampas and always have been."

Two professors at ECCC, Ricky Harrison and Polly Mayes, also played pivotal roles, ensuring Amedee stayed on the right path academically. Their support culminated in a scrapbook filled with memories and achievements, a gift that

Amedee treasures to this day.

"When Coach Clark brought Trampas by and introduced him to us, the first thing we noticed was his Cajun accent, which was pretty strong at that time," Harrison said with laughter in his voice. "However, it was clear from the start that he was a person who was driven and wanted to succeed and be all that he could be. He fully immersed himself in the campus community and was well-liked by everyone. East Central is a special place for so many and I think Trampas has always remembered that and even though he didn't play for Coach Holliman he has continued to be supportive of the program. He is most deserving of this honor."

Amedee's dedication to ECCC didn't end with his playing days. He has been instrumental in establishing the annual Baseball Alumni Day, an event he looks forward to each spring. It's a time for former players to reconnect, see how the program has evolved, and give back to the place that meant so much to them.

"After meeting Coach Holliman several years ago and finding out he was the coach at ECCC, I started coming back as much as I could, then one day I asked if I could cook a big jambalaya and try and get some alumni to get back and see what the place looks like. It's been growing every year. I also go back to show the players today that EC means a lot to me and to a lot of other alumni and we want them to come back with their families after they graduate. It's important that the alumni get involved with the program and give back in any way they can because EC is a place to be proud of and the more we give back, the better the program will get. It took

a long time for the EC Baseball program to be nationally ranked and recognized, and I couldn't be prouder of Coach Holliman and his staff and players for putting ECCC on the map."

Holliman also holds Amedee in high regard. "When I think of Trampas, the first word that comes to mind is loyalty. I appreciate his commitment to give back, his time, money, talents, and bringing former players back into our community and reinforcing the bonds that make our program special. This Hall of Fame recognition is well-deserved, not only for his athletic accomplishments, but his continued loyalty to ECCC and the baseball program."

Amedee's induction into the ECCC Athletic Hall of Fame is not only a celebration of his athletic success, it's a testament to the relationships, memories, and life lessons that baseball and his time at ECCC afforded him.

"I wouldn't trade my two years at EC for anything," he says, a sentiment that captures the profound impact those years have had on his life. "East Central gave me lifelong friends and some of the best memories of my life. It's truly an honor to be selected to the East Central Community College Athletic Hall of Fame. I never dreamed that something like this was possible for someone like me. I'm used to giving, but this is one of the best gifts I've ever received. Thanks to everyone involved in the process, and especially to every one of my teammates because without you, this does not happen. You are all a part of this with me."

ALUMNI NEWS

NOWELL

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jump shot is almost obsolete. However, despite these changes, the game's popularity remains high, especially in women's leagues."

His advice to today's players is timeless. "Be consistent in your work habits, pay attention to the details, persevere through challenges, and always practice the Golden Rule to get along with teammates, coaches, and teachers."

Nowell's journey is deeply intertwined with the people who influenced him along the way. "Mr. Hugh Yates, who built the fire inside me and taught me never to quit," Nowell says, remembering a mentor who became a father figure after his own father's tragic death. "Mr. Yates and his family became mentors to my brothers and me. He was the one who instilled in me the love of basketball," he adds.

He also acknowledges the impact of coaches Fortenberry and Clark. "Coach Fortenberry was a strict disciplinarian, but we all would have run through hot coals for him. Coach Joe Clark showed me the compassionate side of the game," Nowell said.

Additionally, Sonny Oliphant, also of Philadelphia, whom Nowell said had an unbelievable love of sports and basketball in general and kept the independent leagues alive in Neshoba County which provided an outlet for continued play long after high school and college. He also recruited Nowell to play Senior

Olympics for several years when he turned 50.

Nowell and his son, Ty, share a special bond as both enjoyed sports and both played for Coach Joe Clark, Sam on the basketball team and Ty on the EC tennis team.

Ty said of his father, "My Dad instilled many values in my life as young kid and we enjoyed time spent hunting, fishing, and playing sports together, especially basketball. I have vivid memories of him playing serious intramural league basketball well after his ECCC career and he continued to play organized basketball into his 60s. We also spent hours on the court my entire childhood playing one-on-one and practicing shooting drills. I never actually beat him either until I was a senior in high school. Our love of basketball also gave us a shared love of the March Madness Tournament, which takes place around both our birthdays, so it's our favorite time of the year. I'm thrilled for his selection to the ECCC Hall of Fame and I'm proud to be his son."

Nowell worked as an industrial engineer for several years before joining State Farm Insurance as the Philadelphia agent. He said his career allowed him to put to use the lessons learned at East Central so many years ago - working with people, having a caring attitude, setting goals, and being there for people in their times of despair. One of his proudest achievements he said was to be a founding agent of State Farm's Scholarship Endowment which provides

an annual scholarship to an EC student each year.

In addition to being active in his community and his church, Nowell is a lifetime member of the EC Alumni Association and has donated to the Warrior Club and special projects like the restoration of Founders Gymnasium.

Nowell and his wife, June, still reside in Neshoba County. In addition to Ty, they have a daughter, Meredith, and six grandchildren.

To the current students of East Central, Nowell offers a piece of heartfelt advice. "Find what you love to do, set realistic goals, and pursue your dreams with all your heart. There is no obstacle too great if you have the fire inside to succeed. And most importantly, keep a smile on your face—smiles make everything easier," he encourages.

Sam Nowell's journey from Neshoba Central to the East Central Community College Athletic Hall of Fame is a testament to dedication, perseverance, and the power of supportive mentors. His story is not just about basketball; it's about the people who shaped him, the challenges he overcame, and the values that continue to guide him.

As he looks back on his career and the honor of being inducted into the Hall of Fame, Nowell remains deeply grateful for the experiences and relationships that have defined his life. "Had it not been for EC and the people I met there, I doubt I would have achieved the successes I've enjoyed in life."

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LEGACY

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Athletic Alumni Nights

The Alumni Relations Office hosted two successful Alumni Nights this fall—Football Alumni Night on Sept. 19 and Soccer Alumni Night on Oct. 4.

Football Alumni Night brought together former players, coaches, managers, and trainers. Attendees toured the new weight room, enjoyed food, and were honored during a pre-game ceremony. Alumni Relations Director Maria McLeod expressed gratitude for the turnout, not-

ing the event celebrated over 60 years of football history at ECCC. “We were proud to honor those who helped shape the program,” she said.

Soccer Alumni Night offered former players the chance to reconnect, reminisce, and celebrate the legacy of Warrior Soccer. The evening featured tailgating, locker room tours, and recognition between the men’s and women’s matches. McLeod reflected on the event, saying,

“It was great to see so many familiar faces and hear their stories. Their ongoing support is vital for the future of the program.”

McLeod hopes to make these Alumni Nights an annual tradition and encourages those who haven’t updated their contact information with the alumni office to do so. “Start reaching out to your former teammates and make plans to join us next season!”



ALUMNI NEWS



CHILDCARE CENTER NAMED AFTER GEORGE

East Central Community College recently named the childcare center after long-time employee Kathy George. George, who served as the Director of the Childcare Center for many years, was honored with a program and reception. The program included remarks from ECCC President, Dr. Brent Gregory, an invocation from Vice President for Business Operations Mickey Vance, a keynote from current Director of the Childcare Center and Early Childhood Education Instructor, Debra Payton, and lastly a response from George. After the naming, guests visited and reminisced about George's time with the college while enjoying refreshments.



GERMANY RETIRES

Carol Germany of Union, longtime administrative assistant to the president, retired at the end of the fall semester and was honored by her friends and colleagues with a "Queen's Reception" in the Vincent Administration Building. Germany has been employed at East Central since 1995 and began her employment as administrative assistant to the Dean of Instruction. She has worked for three ECCC Presidents including Dr. Phil Sutphin, Dr. Billy Stewart, and Dr. Brent Gregory and in addition to her daily tasks also attended and kept minutes for the monthly Board of Trustees meetings. Gregory said of Germany, "Mrs. Carol has not only been an essential part of our staff, but she has also been a friend and advisor since I took this job in 2020. Her dedication and loyalty mean so much and although we will miss her, I wish her well in her much-deserved retirement."

Capital Campaign Goal Reached

COLLEGE REACHES \$4.15 MILLION GOAL IN JUST 23 MONTHS

East Central Community College is proud to announce the success of its first-ever capital campaign, *Deeply Rooted, Future Focused*, surpassing its ambitious \$4.15 million goal. Launched in January 2023 under the leadership of President Dr. Brent Gregory and Executive Director of the Foundation Dr. Stacey Hollingsworth, the campaign marks a historic achievement for the college as it prepares for its 100-year anniversary in 2028.

The campaign has focused on funding critical renovations to Founders Gymnasium, the Ovid S. Vickers Fine Arts Center, Newton Hall, and the Bradford J. Tucker Applied Technology Center. These upgrades are integral to ensuring that ECCC remains a sustainable and innovative institution serving its students, faculty, staff, and the communities of

its five-county district by maintaining industry standard facilities and areas for community involvement on campus.

"We are fortunate to receive public funding from various sources," said Dr. Gregory. "However, private support has been essential in achieving our goals. This campaign has united alumni, friends, faculty and staff, and corporate partners to help us remain deeply rooted in the tradition that is ECCC, while preparing for a future of opportunity and growth."

In just nine months, the campaign raised over \$3.5 million, with the milestone celebrated during a public announcement ceremony in Newton Hall on the Decatur campus.

"While we celebrate this extraordinary financial achievement, it's about

more than just raising money," stated Dr. Hollingsworth. "Deeply Rooted, Future Focused has sparked enthusiasm, deepened connections with alumni, and shared our vision for the future."

Dr. Gregory expressed his gratitude to all who contributed, saying, "This campaign demonstrates the unbelievable dedication of our alumni, current and former faculty and staff, community partners, and all other supporters who believe in the mission of East Central Community College. Together, we are building a brighter future for our students."

For more information about the Deeply Rooted, Future Focused campaign or to donate to these projects, please contact Dr. Hollingsworth at sholling@eccc.edu or 601-635-6327.

EC Touts Success in Classroom

EC RANKS IN TOP 3 FOR TRANSFER GPA AMONG COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Students transferring from East Central Community College to Mississippi's public four-year institutions continue to excel academically, earning one of the top 3 cumulative grade-point averages (GPA) among community and junior college transfers in the state. According to recently released data from the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL), ECCC transfer students achieved an impressive 3.30 GPA upon baccalaureate graduation.

This 3.30 GPA ranks third among the 15 community and junior colleges in Mississippi, further solidifying East Cen-

tral's reputation for preparing students to succeed at the university level.

ECCC President Dr. Brent Gregory expressed, "Our students' success at the next level is a testament to the quality education they receive here at East Central. I am incredibly proud of our faculty for their commitment to preparing students for academic achievement and of our students for continuing to thrive after leaving our campus."

This marks another significant achievement for East Central Community College, which consistently ranks among the top community colleges in

the state for transfer success. ECCC offers two-year pre-baccalaureate Associate of Science and Associate of Arts degrees in a wide range of concentrations, with courses guaranteed to transfer to Mississippi's public universities under the state's Articulation Agreement.

In addition to its academic transfer programs, ECCC also offers two-year terminal degrees in healthcare, career, and technical fields.

For more information about attending East Central Community College, contact ECCC Student Services at 877-GO-2-ECCC or e-mail go2ec@eccc.edu.

EC LEADS STATE IN ENROLLMENT GROWTH SINCE 2021

East Central Community College continues to set the pace for student enrollment growth among Mississippi's 15 community colleges, boasting a 24% increase in headcount since the fall of 2021, the highest in the state. Over the past year alone, enrollment grew by 6.8%, further solidifying ECCC's position as a top choice for students seeking a comprehensive, affordable educational experience.

"We are extremely proud of the dedication shown by our enrollment management team and the entire ECCC community in fostering an environment

that attracts and retains students," said ECCC President Dr. Brent Gregory. "Our growth reflects the quality education and exciting campus life that we offer, and it demonstrates our commitment to providing students with the best value in higher education."

ECCC's enrollment surge is largely attributed to its focus on student success and retention initiatives. The college continues to build a reputation for offering exceptional education, a full collegiate experience, and strong support services—all while maintaining affordability.

"We are excited about the direction

we are headed in and remain committed to offering an unparalleled educational experience," added Gregory. "Our goal is to continue to serve as the premier community college in our region, attracting students from across our five-county district and beyond."

Applications for the fall 2025 term are now open. Prospective students are encouraged to explore the variety of learning opportunities available, including Late Start, Intensive Terms, Winter Term, and more. For additional information or to apply, visit admissions.eccc.edu.

EC Receives Grant Funds from Raytheon

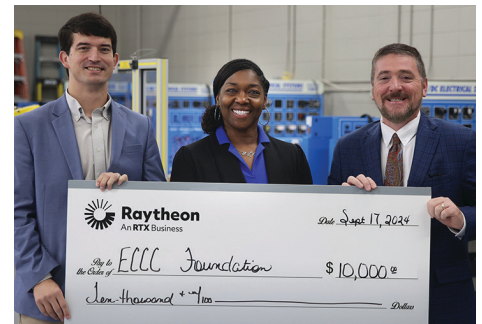
As part of East Central Community College's Deeply Rooted, Future Focused Capital Campaign, the ECCC Foundation recently received grant funding to enhance the training opportunities for students in the Electrical Technology and Automation and Control Technology programs from Raytheon, an RTX Company. The capital campaign includes four major projects, one of which is the Bradford J. Tucker Applied Technology Center, a focal point of the college's initiative to modernize its technical training facilities.

The funds, presented by Raytheon representative, Gowanda Burks, aim to significantly upgrade the equip-

ment available to students in these closely aligned programs to Raytheon. The \$10,000 will allow the college to purchase a state-of-the-art robotic arm complete with fully articulated components, computer software, and a programming station. Additionally, the funds will assist in the acquisition of updated programmable logic controller trainers. These advanced tools will provide students hands-on experience with industry-relevant equipment, helping them apply the knowledge gained from their coursework to real-world scenarios.

"Having access to up-to-date equipment is essential for our stu-

-RAYTHEON continued on page 29



From left, EC Director of Career & Technical Education Cody Spence; Raytheon Representative Gowanda Burks; and EC President Dr. Brent Gregory.

CAMPUS NEWS

Sports Update



East Central Community College celebrated a remarkable Fall 2024 athletic season with achievements across multiple sports. The Warrior football team, under the leadership of second-year Head Coach Jonathan Webster capped an impressive season with an 8-3 record and an appearance in the MACCC Championship game.

Twelve Warriors earned All-MACCC honors, including five First Team selections: QB Landon Sims, TE Josh Palmer, C Landon Bridges, CB Amarien "Jett" Jefferson, and LB Donnie Smith. Webster was

named MACCC South Coach of the Year for his efforts in transforming the program and fostering a new standard of energy and excellence.

ECCC's cross-country teams continued their rise in only their second season, with standout performances at the NJCAA Region 23 Meet. Freshman Olivia Rudolph captured the women's 5000m title, while sophomore Gavin Clark won the men's 8000m race. Other team members also delivered commendable results, showcasing the program's bright future.

In soccer, men's player Kai Suchet-Pearson earned an All-MACCC Honorable Mention, highlighting his exceptional contributions to offense and defense. Women's soccer standout Saige Kirkbride was named Second Team All-MACCC for her defensive leadership and ability to anchor the backline, contributing significantly to the team's competitiveness in a demanding conference schedule. Both players have attracted attention from higher-level programs, underlining their potential for future success.

The Warriors' ninth-ranked golf team demonstrated consistency with four second place finishes during the fall portion of their schedule, setting a strong foundation for the year ahead under first-year head Men's golf coach Matthew Perry who took over for the recently retired Coach Scott Hill.

Meanwhile, ECCC's basketball programs started with promise, as new Lady Warriors Head Coach Tia Pringle celebrated her debut with a hard-fought 60-55 victory over Wallace Community College-Selma. On the men's side, sophomore guard Connor Rogers emerged as a standout, averaging 19.9 points, 4 rebounds, and 3 assists per game while shooting an impressive 44% from beyond the arc.

Overall, the Fall 2024 season underscored the dedication and hard work of ECCC's athletes, coaches, and staff, with growing excitement and momentum across all programs. The field, court, and course successes reflected a bright future for Warrior athletics and their continued drive for excellence.



Save the Date! BASEBALL ALUMNI DAY

Saturday, March 15, 2025

ECCC vs. MDCC 2 p.m.

**Special Pre-Game Recognition of the
2005 Region 23 Championship Team**

All former ECCC Baseball Players, Managers, Coaches, and Diamond Darlings are Invited!



BASEBALL

- Complimentary Food in the Reserved Right Field Deck Area
- Complimentary Tickets to ECCC vs MDCC
2 p.m. Doubleheader for all Baseball Alumni who RSVP
at www.eccc.edu/upcoming-alumni-events
or by scanning the QR Code at right

For more information, contact Maria McLeod,
director of alumni relations, at mmcleod@eccc.edu



3+1+1 Collaboration

ECCC AND THE W INK INNOVATIVE PATHWAY

East Central Community College is pleased to announce an exciting new educational pathway in collaboration with Mississippi University for Women (The W) through a groundbreaking “3+1+1” Memorandum of Understanding. This innovative agreement offers students in select career and technical education programs a seamless pathway to earn an associate’s, bachelor’s and master’s degree.

Under this “3+1+1” agreement signed by W President Nora Miller and ECCC President Dr. Brent Gregory, students will complete three years of study at ECCC, one year at The W to earn a bachelor’s degree, followed by an additional year for a master’s degree. The MOU establishes 17-degree pathway options for students, including business management technology, culinary arts, marketing and information technology.

“We are excited to announce this partnership with ECCC that strengthens our commitment to providing accessible education and opens new pathways for students. Together, we are dedicated to fostering academic growth and ensuring that our graduates are well prepared for the workforce,” said W President Nora Miller.

“This agreement opens doors for our students to gain both practical skills and advanced academic credentials, preparing them for leadership roles in competitive job markets,” said Gregory. “We are thrilled to partner with The W to make this incredible opportunity available.”

The “3+1+1” program is designed to provide students with an affordable and seamless route to advanced degrees. It also addresses regional workforce demands, equipping graduates with specialized training, critical-thinking skills and education credentials that employers seek.

“This partnership represents a step forward in our commitment to student growth and career readiness,” said the ECCC Director of Career & Technical Education Cody Spence. “Through the ‘3+1+1’ program, we look to provide an efficient and cost-effective pathway for our students.”

“The pathways will allow ECCC’s AAS students to remain at their beloved community college for a third year before transferring to us, and our goal is to make that transition as smooth as possible. Together, we have created an affordable pathway where employees of Mississippi can continue to work while completing a degree that will assist them in



From left, W Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost Dr. Scott Tollison; W Chair of the Department of Business Dr. Dee Larson; W President Nora Miller; ECCC President Dr. Brent Gregory; and ECCC Director of Career & Technical Education Cody Spence.

building successful businesses in Mississippi,” said Dr. Dee Larson, chair of The W’s Department of Business.

Students may transfer up to 90 hours from community colleges to The W, which may include up to 40 technical credit hours, allowing students to build on their practical career technical training.

The W offers ten concentrations leading to the Bachelor of Applied Science degree, eight of which can be completed online. The fully online concentrations allow students to remain in their current jobs while earning a bachelor’s degree. After completion, students are encouraged to apply to The W’s MBA program, which can be completed online in one year. The W awarded the first Bachelor of Applied Science degree in Fall 2016.

This partnership underscores ECCC and The W’s joint commitment to enhancing educational access and promoting professional advancement within Mississippi.

Learn More about ECCC Pathways to The W by visiting: www.muw.edu/pathways/eccc/

For more information on enrollment and program details, interested students can contact Janet Estes at jestes@eccc.edu or 601-635-6299.

RAYTHEON

- Continued from page 27

dents to fully understand the complexities of the modern manufacturing environment,” said ECCC Director of Career and Technical Education Cody Spence. “These upgrades will ensure our students are well-prepared to enter the workforce with the skills they need to succeed, and we are thankful to Ray-

theon for their support.”

The partnership between East Central Community College and Raytheon exemplifies the college’s commitment to providing its students with cutting-edge resources and training. As ECCC continues to invest in its technical programs through initiatives like the *Deeply Rooted, Future Focused* Capital Campaign, the support of industry leaders such as Raytheon ensures that students

are equipped with the practical skills and knowledge required in today’s ever-evolving workforce. This latest investment not only strengthens the college’s training capabilities but also underscores the importance of collaboration between education and industry in shaping the future of technical education.

CAMPUS NEWS

Alumni Updates

80s

Andy Childress ('89) of Louisville now serves as the Youth Librarian for the Winston County Library. He just released his 18th book, a collection of comics, and has another ready to publish. Most of his books are comics, but he has also written a sci-fi novel. He continues to publish comics each week at his website bubbaworldcomix.com.

90s

Michelle Pennington ('90) of Pelahatchie, a kindergarten teacher at Puckett Elementary School was recently awarded Mississippi Farm Bureau Agriculture Teacher of the Year for 2024.

Chris Croft ('93) was recently granted tenure and promotion to Associate Professor of Sport Manage-

ment in the College of Business and Economic Development and School of Marketing at the University of Southern Mississippi. Chris also serves on the ECCC Alumni Board of Directors.



In Memoriam

Lois Woodward Pennington ('43), Dec. 5, 2024
Robert Kenneth "Bobby" Caldwell ('51), Sept. 4, 2024
Dr. Joseph "Joe" C. Todd ('53), Nov. 27, 2024
Dorothy Lynn Brown Green ('55), Aug. 10, 2024
Daniel McKennith (Mack) Greer ('56), Nov. 5, 2024
Augustine Reid Eichelberger ('56), Nov. 30, 2024
Barbara Sue Harris Simkins ('56), Oct. 20, 2024
Phyllus Vowell Robinson ('59), July 28, 2024
Mary Jane Moore Risher ('60), Sept. 5, 2024
Kenneth Rayford Williamson ('62), Oct. 21, 2024
Joe L. Blount ('65), Oct. 3, 2024
Barbara Bradford DeLoach ('65), Oct. 22, 2024

Stanley P. Salter ('68), Dec. 10, 2024
Bess Ann "Bobbie" Herrington White ('69), Oct. 28, 2024
Linda Eakes ('69), Oct. 29, 2024
William Clark Milling ('70), Dec. 1, 2024
Charles Ronald Wooten ('75), June 4, 2024
Mrs. Alice Faye Lofton Griffin ('74), Sept. 29, 2024
Mike Goodin ('76), Jan. 29, 2024
Mr. Jackie B. Long ('76), Oct. 1, 2024
Ladd Reynolds ('84), July 25, 2024
Timothy Wayne Stephens ('97), Jan. 7, 2024
Carissa Elizabeth Stevenson ('16), June 1, 2024
Patricia Kay Johnson ('04), April 22, 2024

Alumni Opportunities

SHARE YOUR STORY! HELP US CELEBRATE THE ECCC CENTENNIAL

As East Central Community College prepares to celebrate its 100th anniversary in 2028, the Alumni and Foundation Office is gathering oral histories from those who have been a part of our college community—whether as students, faculty, or staff.

We invite you to share your memories and experiences with us as part of this special project. If you're interested in contributing, please contact Dr. Stacey Hollingsworth, Executive Director of the ECCC Foundation, at sholling@eccc.edu or 601-635-6327 or Maria McLeod, Director of Alumni Relations, at mmcleod@eccc.edu or 601-635-6303

Your story is an important part of ECCC's history, and we'd love to include it in our centennial celebration!

INTERESTED IN TRAVELING WITH THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION?

The Alumni and Foundation Office is exploring the possibility of organizing group travel for alumni and friends. While we haven't finalized a destination yet, we are considering a bus trip within the continental United States. Depending on interest, future trips may also include international destinations.

If you're interested and would like to receive more information once a trip is confirmed, please send your contact details to mmcleod@eccc.edu or sholling@eccc.edu.

We look forward to hearing from you and hope you can join us on an exciting adventure!

CALLING ALL ALUMNI AUTHORS: INTERESTED IN A BOOK SIGNING EVENT?

Are you an ECCC alum who has authored a book? We'd love to celebrate your work! If you're interested in participating in a book signing event on campus, please reach out to us.

For more information or to express your interest, contact Maria McLeod, Director of Alumni Relations, at mmcleod@eccc.edu.

We look forward to hearing from you and celebrating your achievements!



TULLOS CELEBRATES 90TH BIRTHDAY

ECCC alumnus and former Warrior basketball standout Wayne Tullos ('55), recently celebrated his 90th birthday at his home in Florida. According to his daughter, Ashley, there were approximately 60 people in attendance and his party décor including lots of EC Black and Gold. She said, "Dad so enjoyed the day and I don't ever recall him so thrilled. We all appreciate what ECCC contributed in making his special celebration so very special and memorable. Throughout our lifetime, Dad has ALWAYS shared how important ECJC was in shaping his life's path and our family." Among the guests were childhood friends Donald Willis of the Arlington community and Therrell Luke of Philadelphia. Luke also attended ECJC and played basketball but only attended one year before transferring to senior college. Pictured above are (front row, left to right) Willis, Wayne Tullos, Jerry Tullos (brother), and Luke; and (back row, from left) daughters Ashley (Tullos) Tripp, Rebecca (Tullos) Dargis, and Leslie Tullos, niece Sarah Beth (Tullos) Gary, and son, Evan Tullos, who also attended ECJC for one term in the 80s. (Photos courtesy of Ashley Tullos Tripp.)



CITIZENS OF THE YEAR

David and Sandy Tadlock were recently selected Forest Citizens of the Year for their outstanding service and commitment to the City of Forest. They are the owners of Tadlock Stockyards in Forest which recently celebrated its 100th anniversary.



TUNE VISITS HENLEYS

Foundation fundraiser Jason Tune (left) visits with ECCC alumni Florence Harkins Henley ('81) and Greg Henley ('83) during a recent trip to Starkville.

ALUMNI NEWS

EAST CENTRAL
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*Don't Miss
These Upcoming
Alumni Events*

Alumni Social

Fertile Ground • Jackson • Saturday, January 18

Baseball Alumni Day

Clark-Gay Baseball Complex • Decatur • Saturday, March 15

Warrior Golf Classic

Dancing Rabbit • Choctaw • Friday, May 9

EAST CENTRAL **With *You* In Mind**
COMMUNITY COLLEGE