

THE WARRIOR

The Official Publication of the East Central Community College Alumni Association
Volume XXXII, No. 2 • Summer 2024



Playing in the Dirt

**McKEE BROTHERS –
FROM BASEBALL DIAMONDS
TO CONSTRUCTION SITES**

A Message From the President

Dear ECCC Family,

We recently concluded another academic year filled with unprecedented growth, significant achievements, and heartfelt goodbyes.

First and foremost, we experienced an increase in student headcount, reflecting the growing appeal of our academic programs and the vibrant community we have cultivated on campus. This growth is a testament to the dedication and hard work of our faculty, staff, and students.

This year, we also celebrated the distinguished careers of numerous retirees who have made invaluable contributions across various fields and we wish them all the best in their future endeavors.

In a major step towards sustainability, we were awarded a significant grant to develop a solar farm on campus which will provide a cost savings that can be reinvested in other areas of campus.

Our achievements have been bolstered by the incredible generosity of local supporters, who have donated both money and construction products which are instrumental in enhancing our campus infrastructure and ensuring that we continue to provide top-notch facilities for our students.

Athletics has also been a source of immense pride this year, with four of our sports teams making it to the national tournament. Their hard work and perseverance are exemplary, and we celebrate their outstanding performances on the national stage.

We invite you to read about the various successful alumni featured in this issue of the magazine. Their stories of success and impact in their respective fields are truly inspiring and a testament to the quality of education and experience provided by our institution.

We also bid a fond farewell to Jackson Hall dormitory, which was torn down this year. Jackson Hall holds a special place in the hearts of many alumni, and while we say goodbye to its walls, we cherish the memories created within them.

Finally, I am thrilled to announce that we raised record funds at this year's annual alumni golf tournament thanks to a generous title sponsorship by PATH Company as well as the support provided by our Gold Team sponsors and numerous other contributors. This event continues to be a highlight of our alumni engagement efforts.

Thank you all for your unwavering support and commitment to our college. As always, we welcome you to visit us on the Decatur campus any time.

Warm regards,



Dr. Brent Gregory
President



With *You* In Mind

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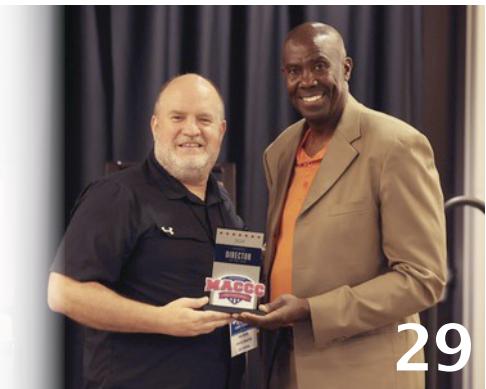
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On the Cover: Brothers Caleb and Joel McKee enjoy working together in the family business.

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:
Office of External Relations personnel:
Lucas Calvert, Maria McLeod,
Larry Reed, Karen Robertson
& Amy Thompson

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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East Central Community College.

Brothers In Business

FAITH AND FAMILY AT HEART OF MCKEE CONSTRUCTION



Joel ('11) and Caleb ('13) McKee of Philadelphia grew up playing on the dirt fields of the baseball diamond, including at East Central Community College where each was a member of the Diamond Warrior baseball team. Today, the brothers are still playing in the dirt, but instead of a bat and a glove, they are running heavy equipment as site contractors for McKee Construction, a family business they run alongside their parents, Todd and Patti.

The McKee family had been in the logging industry for several years and Caleb had already joined that side of the business while Joel was in the real estate business. After purchasing the construction company and a short time later a dirt contracting business, the whole family joined forces and McKee Construction is now a full-service commercial contractor dealing in civil sitework, erosion control, drainage systems and demolition.

Joel handles supervision of the construction company while Caleb continues to be highly involved in the logging business and supervises McKee Transport, which handles trucking for both companies.

Truly a family business, Joel and Caleb can most often be found out on job sites while Todd and Patti run the office. Joel's wife, Tamara (also an ECCC graduate), and Caleb's wife, Marlee, also work in the family business and take care of most of the administrative duties including payroll and accounts.

The McKee family holds to six core values. They say most importantly, and number one is their faith - Christ above all. Secondly, they hold high standards and high quality in their work.

They say with only two options each day, to get better or get worse, continuous improvement is number three on the list and they strive to better themselves and their work each day and are always willing to learn something new. Fourth is trust.

Joel said, "It's easy to cover up something with dirt, but we have to be trusted to build a strong foundation."

Mindset matters is fifth. The brothers say they do hard work and it's rewarding, but somedays it's difficult. With the proper mindset, they can power through to the other



side. It's something they had to take to heart from the beginning as their first construction contract came just a few days before COVID shut down the world in 2020.

And finally, the McKees strive to build a purpose driven culture. Joel said long hours aren't always easy, but having a purpose makes it easier to get through hard times. He said they don't always get it right, but they make the best decisions they can and always learn from their mistakes to get better.

McKee Construction now provides civil contracting services all over the southeast and business continues to grow. In just four years they've gone from four employees to more than 40.

Joel said, "The civil industry gives people the sense of fulfillment by being able to see a piece of land turn from a blank slate to a piece of art and getting to see their work for years to come. It is also an industry that allows you to work in the dirt and run heavy equipment and what kid wouldn't want to do that?"

East Central gave both brothers a solid educational foundation and Joel said he learned the critical thinking and networking skills that help him in his job each day.

Caleb agreed and said baseball also taught them the trust necessary to work together. "As brothers, we've always been together. Baseball reinforced the importance of working together and trusting each other. I don't have to worry about Joel doing the job or doing it right because I trust that he will."

The brothers agreed it wasn't always easy, but they know they aren't going to quit, so any issues that arise, they find a way work it out.

Both Joel and Caleb continued their education at Mississippi State University and graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture and Life Sciences.

For more information on McKee Construction, visit mckeecompanies.com.



ALUMNI NEWS



Farewell Jackson Hall

DEMOLITION BEGINS ON ONE OF LAST ORIGINAL BUILDINGS

BY MARIA LEACH MCLEOD '93
Director of Alumni Relations

I lived in Jackson Hall during the 1991-1992 college year, back when all freshman girls stayed there. Sophomores would move to Newsome Hall, another women's dorm at the time. Mrs. Carolyn Haralson, our dorm mother, was always there for us, whether it was sewing a button or helping with costumes for the spring musical. She balanced discipline with kindness and truly deserves sainthood for managing so many teenage and young adult girls!

Jackson Hall, built nearly 100 years ago, was one of the two original campus buildings still standing, alongside Founders Gymnasium. It originally featured a grand front staircase with a second floor porch and housed the cafeteria and classrooms on the lower floor. It was constructed for \$31,000.

The back wing was added later, increasing the number of rooms, and the dorm underwent major renovations and numerous repairs over the years. A small fire on the third floor once disrupted the fall semester, but it was quickly repaired.

Despite ongoing maintenance, the air conditioning and heating systems needed major repairs, and other safety concerns arose. The cost of making the dorm livable again was too high, and the administration decided it was time to say goodbye. Jackson Hall closed to students in the spring of 2023 and demolition began this summer.

The college plans to build a new cafeteria on the site, hoping it will become a place for future students to create their own memories, just as we did in Jackson Hall for nearly 100 years.

When we announced Jackson Hall's fate on social media, alumni shared their memories. Many felt sadness, even those who knew how much the building had deteriorated. Others shared funny memories, like sneaking in and out of the dorm.

Overall, there were many good memories.

Longtime ECCC financial aid director and alumna Brenda Carson wrote, "I have many fond memories of Jackson Hall. I lived on the second floor front facing the library (now Vincent Administration Building). My roommate Debra Barnes

-JACKSON continued on page 8

Homecoming 2024

ECCC TO PRESENT 2024 ALUMNI HONORS Oct. 10 DURING HOMECOMING



WILCHER



SATCHER



AMADEE



HULL



NOWELL



JOHNSTON

Mark your calendars for Thursday, Oct. 10, when East Central Community College will celebrate Homecoming and recognize several outstanding alumni and present a lifetime achievement award on the Decatur campus.

Lori Rogers Wilcher ('93) of Union, Director of Federal Programs and Special Education at Union Public School District, and Jamie Satcher ('80) of Collinsville, retired as Professor Emeritus of Counselor Education at the University of Alabama, will be 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 of Philadelphia are this year's Athletic Hall of Fame inductees. Forest native and longtime Vice President for Public Information

Bubby Johnston who now resides in Quitman will receive a Lifetime Achievement Award.

Special groups to be recognized include the Class of 1974 Golden Anniversary Class and all retired ECCC faculty and staff.

Alumni Honorees will present the game ball and will serve as honorary team captains during the Warriors' football game versus Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College.

The Homecoming Queen and her court will be presented during halftime followed by the Wall O' Sound Marching Band which will present its halftime show.

For more information or to update your contact information, contact Maria McLeod, director of alumni relations, at 601-635-6303 or mmcleod@eccc.edu.

2024 Homecoming Tentative Schedule

Noon

**Pep Rally featuring the Wall O' Sound Band,
Cheerleaders, Centralettes, and the Warrior Football Team**
EAST MALL NEAR MABRY CAFETERIA

3 p.m.

Reception and Reunions - Hosted by the ECCC Alumni Association
BRACKEEN-WOOD GYMNASIUM
(Free and open to all alumni and friends of the college)

3:30 p.m.

Recognition of Alumni Honorees & Reunion Groups
BRACKEEN WOOD GYMNASIUM

4:30 to 6:30 p.m.

Alumni Association Tailgating
SOUTH END ZONE OF BAILEY STADIUM
(This event is free for current Alumni Association members and \$10 for all other alumni and guests.)

6:30 p.m.

ECCC vs. Gulf Coast Football Game
BAILEY STADIUM

ALUMNI NEWS

MACCC Hall of Fame

ECCC's KEENAN NAMED TO SPORTS HOF

Sandy Puckett Keenan of Rose Hill joined an elite group of athletes as members of the 2024 class of the Mississippi Community College Sports Hall of Fame during ceremonies held Tuesday, April 24, at the Muse Center in Pearl.

A member of the 1966-67 and 1967-68 East Central Community College Lady Warrior basketball teams, Keenan and the lady Warriors saw immediate success during her freshman year with numerous victories including those over several outstanding senior colleges. She averaged 27 points per game.

During her sophomore season, East Central hosted and won the ECJC Tournament. Against Mississippi College on their home court, Keenan scored 54 points, which is a record that still stands today as the most points scored in a single game by an East Central women's player. Keenan served as a team captain and was also the recipient of the Earline Wood Women's Basketball Award.

Keenan was also a member of the volleyball and tennis teams and participated in intramural sports. She was a



Dr. Brent Gregory, president of ECCC, with Sandy Puckett Keenan.

team captain and served as president of the women's intramural program.

She was a member of Phi Theta Kappa, secretary of the Student Body Association, selected freshman class favorite, sophomore homecoming maid, Miss ECJC, and was named to the ECJC Student Hall of Fame.

Prepping at Scott Central High School, she was selected All-State, All-South State, All-District, was named

Most Valuable Player in the conference tournament, and was the leading scorer in the MAC All-Star Game.

During her senior season, when the game was only 32 minutes compared to today's 40 minutes and there was no 3-point shot, she averaged 36 points per game. She eclipsed 50 points per game on three separate outings and outscored the total of the opposing team 10 times during that season. Her season high was 57 points that year, a record which stood for several decades.

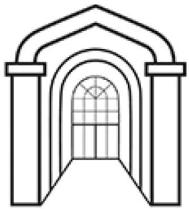
Keenan attended Mississippi College and played basketball for one year before she opted to focus on academics. She completed her master's degree at Southeastern Louisiana and completed an Education Specialist degree at Mississippi State University. She served as the high school counselor and district test coordinator for the West Jasper School District in Bay Springs until her retirement.

Scott Central retired her No. 10 jersey and she was later inducted into the Scott County Sports Hall of Fame and the East Central Community College Athletic Hall of Fame.



HALL OF FAME

These East Central Community Colleges graduates were selected for the 2024 Hall of Fame, the highest honor a student can receive at the college and were recognized during the annual Awards Day activities. They include (from left) public health major Laurel Brantley of Philadelphia, pre-nursing major Sydney Curran of Louisville, sports administration major Jennings Fulton of Louisville, elementary education major Madeline Little of Philadelphia, engineering major Parker Martin of Brandon, and physical therapy major Elijah Rigdon of Little Rock. Their photos will hang in the Hall of Fame Collection in the lobby of Huff Auditorium.



EAST CENTRAL
COMMUNITY COLLEGE



The East Central Community College Foundation is selling Brick Tiles to raise funds to restore The Alumni House, which is the original president's home located at the corner of Broad Street and North 7th Avenue on the front of the Decatur campus.

The tiles will cover the surface of the east wing porch. The cost is \$125 per tile, and patrons can include three lines of copy with 20 characters per line including spaces and punctuation.

Dr. Stacey Hollingsworth, executive director for The Foundation, said, "These brick pavers will not only enhance the aesthetics of the exterior of the house, but they are a wonderful way to honor or memorialize alumni, friends, family, favorite teachers, and others who have been associated with East Central Community College."

Once renovations are complete, the facility will house the Alumni Relations and Foundation offices and serve as event and meeting space.

Currently, the interior has been stripped of old ceiling and floor tiles, and the kitchen and bathrooms have been gutted. To get the interior of the home ready for use, the Alumni and Foundation office is seeking to raise in excess of \$100,000 and another \$25,000 to \$50,000 will be needed to refurbish the exterior.

There are a limited number of tiles available, so alumni and friends are encouraged to order early. For more information, contact Dr. Hollingsworth at sholling@eccc.edu or call 601-635-6327.



\$125 - 4x8 Tile

3 lines of text, 20 characters per line (including spaces and punctuation)



| |
|--------------------------|
| Name: _____ |
| Address: _____ |
| City: _____ State: _____ |
| Zip: _____ Phone: _____ |
| Email: _____ |

MAIL FORM AND PAYMENT TO:

ECCC Foundation, Inc.
P.O. Box 129
Decatur, MS 39327

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO:

ECCC Foundation, Inc.

ALUMNI NEWS



ENGAGED AT ECCC

It was a magical moment for ECCC alums Rebekah LeeAnn Scitzs ('19) and Cody Alan Warren ('16) when he brought her back to the Decatur campus recently to propose! Rebekah said although they didn't meet at EC, Cody proposed there because he knew how much EC meant to her and loved how beautiful the campus is. "He said that he knew EC held a special place in my heart and some of my most favorite memories were made there, so he wanted to add one more reason for me to love it even more." The couple will be married in October in Lake. Scitz is a registered nurse in the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit at Children's of Mississippi. Master Sergeant Warren is a Crew Chief with the 186th Air Refueling Wing at Key Field Air National Guard Base in Meridian.



FOOTBALL ALUMNI NIGHT

Thursday, Sept. 19

All former Warrior Football Players, Managers, Trainers, and Coaches Invited

- 4:30 - Tour Warrior Hall and the New Weight Room Facility, Meet with Head Coach Jonathan Webster, Complimentary Pre-Game Tailgate Food (*Complimentary Game Tickets for Those Who RSVP*)
- 6:10 - Recognition On-Field Prior to Kickoff

RSVP at www.ecccathletics.com/camps/alumnifoottball or by scanning the QR Code at right. For more information, contact Maria McLeod, Director of Alumni Relations, at 601-635-6303 or mmcleod@eccc.edu.



**ATTENTION
CLASS OF 1974 &
FORMER EC FACULTY
& STAFF MEMBERS!**

*We want to see you
at Homecoming!*

Contact Maria McLeod at
601-635-6303 or
mmcleod@eccc.edu
to RSVP and update your
contact information.

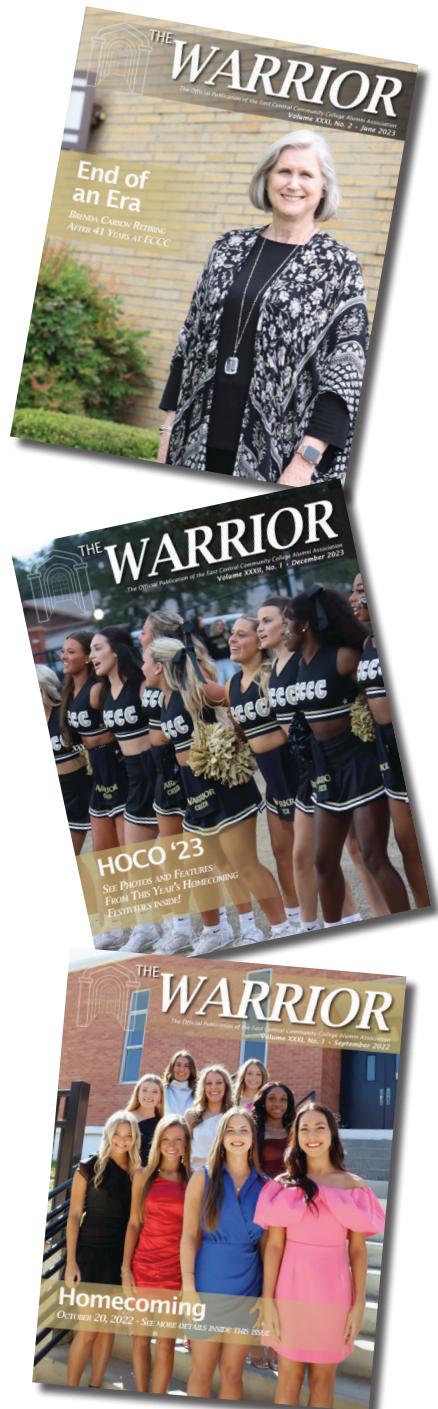
THIS COULD BE YOUR LAST MAGAZINE!

To continue receiving a printed copy of *The Warrior* magazine, one must pay annual alumni dues or make an annual contribution to the Alumni Association.

Alumni Association Membership runs from July 1 to June 30 each year. Dues and contributions to the ECCC Alumni Association help promote events such as Homecoming, Special Alumni Days, EC Day at the Fair, the Warrior Golf Classic, and occasional student events on campus.

Please mail your dues to
ECCC Alumni Association,
P. O. Box 129, Decatur, MS 39327,
or pay online at
www.eccc.edu/alumni-dues.

Dues are:
\$25 per individual annually
\$40 per couple annually
\$200 per individual lifetime membership
\$250 per couple lifetime membership



EAST CENTRAL
COMMUNITY COLLEGE
With You In Mind

ALUMNI NEWS

Looking Back

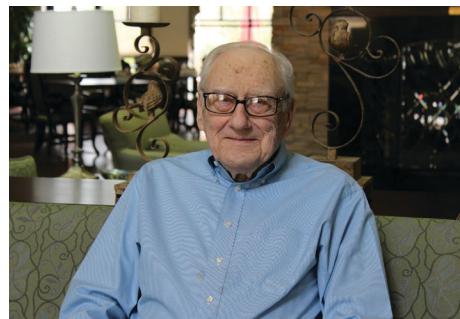
A CENTENARIAN'S REMEMBRANCE OF ECCC AND MORE

BY CHARLES TOLBERT, SR.

Although I was born in Union, MS, in 1922, my early years were spent up the road in Philadelphia. Elementary school was uneventful, except for playing in the school band. A surprising development, music-wise, occurred in the summer of 1939 before my graduation. An orchestra composed of us high school kids was put together by a young local banker. That brief adventure ended in 1940 with a performance at the Neshoba County Fair.

With an uncertain future ahead, I enrolled at ECJC. In addition to freshman courses, I discovered a good college band led by Robert James and a dance "orchestra" that needed help. Incidentally, Myrtle Mauldin had a very enjoyable music appreciation course, even as she struggled with a windup Victrola. She was also responsible for great seasonal music with her Glee Club.

My early volunteer help on the college yearbook evolved into editing the 1942 edition. The longtime sponsor of Wo-He-Lo, Stella Newsome, guided us novices through the planning and extensive work necessary for such a publication. At our first meeting, the new staff decided to honor Janie Sullivan in appreciation for her enrichment of



college experiences since the school's founding in 1928. Mrs. Sullivan's primary focus was on molding educators; however, her impact on student life went far beyond the classroom. She led in the establishment of Senior Day that honors graduating students. She was the coordinator of religious activities on campus.

This remarkable lady frequently used the school bus to take students to professional and cultural events. She took a load to Jackson twice: first, to hear Marian Anderson sing and, second, to an opera, *La traviata*. On a recruiting trip, five of us volunteers went with her to several schools, necessitating a stop to eat. The bus headed for Meridian, and someone yelled that we were going into "enemy territory (MCC)." She quickly replied, "We're only going to Weidmann's for

lunch."

After those engaging years at the college, I eventually had to respond to the draft call. Assignments in the Army varied until my Signal Corps unit spent the last year of the war in central China. I was released in 1946 and immediately entered Mississippi College with thoughts of becoming a teacher.

My introduction to sociology was of such interest that I decided to concentrate on it, getting degrees at North Carolina and LSU. Three intensive years of study and research culminated in a dissertation on the Choctaws in Neshoba County. (Chief Cyrus Ben was recently named ECCC Alumnus of the Year!) In the fall of 1957, I went to Baylor University to teach sociology and chaired that department from 1960 to 1988.

In retirement, my wife, Jean, and I took an unusual interest in genealogy and spent much time during summer vacations searching for ancestors. On two occasions, we made our way to the courthouse in Decatur. In both instances, we went on down the street, renewing college memories and visiting the campus park that now honors Mrs. Sullivan.

JACKSON

- Continued from page 4

Yates and I might have had the windows open and the music loud enough to disturb the library once."

Corinne Neal whose father was a teacher at East Central wrote, "80 some years ago, my dad, Frank Cross, had his Dark Room there on the bottom floor, southwest corner of the building to develop the photos he took for East Central. As the Chemistry and Spanish professor, that was another one of his many assignments."

Katelyn Massey wrote, "I'm gonna miss this building. I remember in the

winter, third floor was so hot we had the windows open to let the winter cold in because it was central heat and couldn't be controlled. Walking up the stairs and stripping clothes the further up you go. Great memories here!"

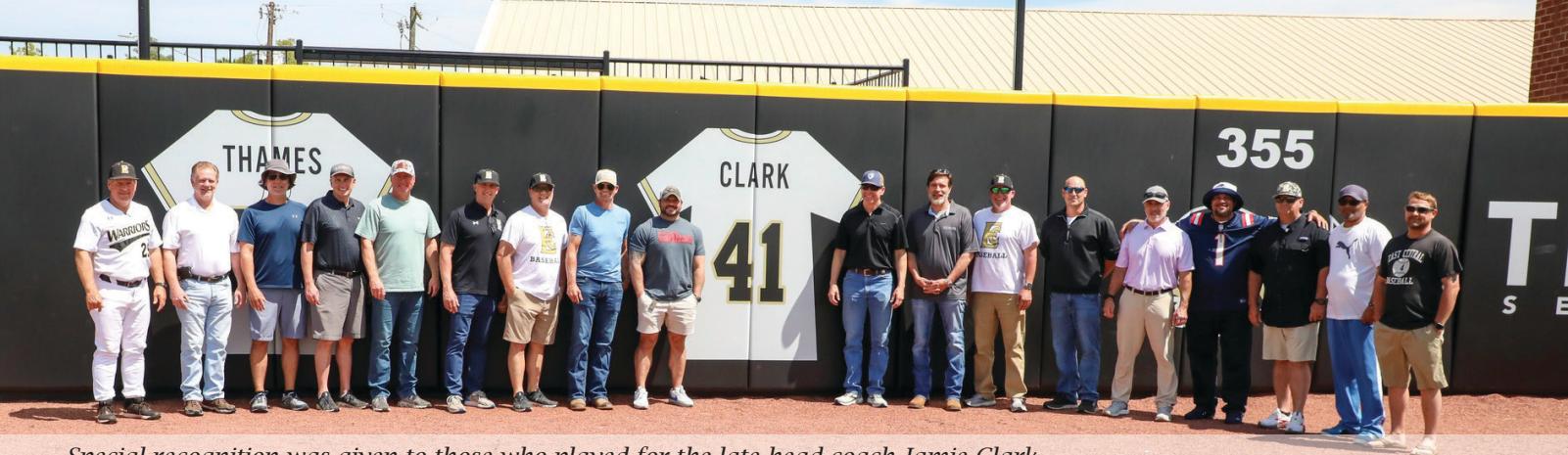
Tim Pilgrim, a supervisor in the college's physical plant department, said, "I hate to see it go, but I'm not going to miss all the headaches she gave us."

I'm thankful to the ECCC physical plant staff who worked diligently all these years to maintain our grand old dorm. The decision to tear her down was not taken lightly. Alas, as they say, all good things must come to an end.

As part of the college's "Deeply

Rooted, Future Focused" Campaign, we are trying to save and restore the last historical building on campus, Founders Gymnasium, while we still can. We also have a established a fund to save and restore the original "President's Home," located on the corner of Broad Street and 9th Avenue.

If you would like to donate to either facility, please contact Dr. Stacey Hollingsworth, Executive Director of the Foundation, at sholling@eccc.edu or 601-635-6327. You can also donate online at www.eccc.edu/deeply-rooted-future-focused-capital-campaign or www.eccc.edu/alumni-house-renovations-fund.



Special recognition was given to those who played for the late head coach Jamie Clark.

BASEBALL HOSTS SECOND ANNUAL ALUMNI DAY

ECCC Baseball and the Alumni Association hosted the second annual Baseball Alumni Day on April 6. Baseball alumni and their guests received complimentary game tickets and former Diamond Warrior Trampas Amedee, who has been instrumental in the establishment of this special day, served authentic Louisiana Jambalaya. It was a great day for all capped off by the Warriors sweep of MDCC. We hope everyone will plan to join us next year. Look for the date to be announced on social media. Special thanks to ECCC Alum Tina Davis Jordan for these great photos!



ALUMNI NEWS

PATH Warrior Golf Classic

RECORD FUNDS RAISED FOR EAST CENTRAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND

A team representing Bank of Forest took top honors in the Championship Flight of the East Central Community College Alumni Association's 21st annual Warrior Golf Classic presented by PATH Company and held Friday, May 10, on the Oaks Course at the Dancing Rabbit Golf Club in Choctaw.

According to event coordinator Maria McLeod, director of alumni relations at ECCC, 24 teams registered to play in the four-person scramble which annually raises money for student scholarships. This year set a record surpassing the \$20,000 mark thanks to a title sponsorship provided by PATH Company.

"We are so grateful to PATH Company for serving as our title sponsor of the 2024 Warrior Golf Classic and whose generous support has allowed us to surpass previous fundraising records. And many thanks

to our food sponsor The Citizens Bank of Philadelphia and our numerous Gold Sponsor teams who have faithfully supported this tournament for so many years."

The winning Bank of Forest team posted a 19 under par 53 over the 18-hole event for the win. Team members included Steve Gibson, Randy Dilley, Eddie Holifield, and Drew Kenna.

Taking top honors in the First Flight was the First Financial Bank team with a 14 under par score of 58. Team members included Steve Potts, Lee McDill, Larry Waggoner, and Craig McIntosh.

Second Flight winner was the McLain Plumbing team with a score of 61, 11 under par. Team members were Philip McLain, Ryan Whitaker, Trent Cumberland, and Chris Thrash.

On-course contest winners were Eddie Holifield of the Bank of Forest

team, closest to the pin on the front nine; David Hayman of the IN Sports team, closest to the pin on the back nine; Steve Gibson of the Bank of Forest team, longest drive on the front nine; and Jake Kight of the IN Sports team, longest drive on the back nine.

Cameron Brown of the Community Bank team was the winner of the La-Z-Boy chair door prize donated by La-Z-Boy South of Newton.

James Hibshman of the American Benefits Broker team won a door prize that included a golf package for four donated by the Dancing Rabbit Golf Club.

Several other golfers won door prizes consisting of various golf equipment.

For more information about the ECCC Warrior Golf Classic, contact McLeod at 601-635-6303 or mmcleod@eccc.edu.

2024 WARRIOR GOLF CLASSIC SPONSORS

TITLE SPONSOR: PATH COMPANY, LLC

Food Sponsor

The Citizens Bank of Philadelphia

Special Donation Sponsor

Aladdin Campus Dining

Gold Sponsors

McLain Plumbing
Weyerhauser
Quinn's Pharmacy/Newton & Union
The Junction
Prince Oil
American Fidelity Life
Great Southern Bank

Educational Furniture

Bank of Forest
Harrison Surveying
Trace Services
Sequel
Community Bank
INSports
Howard Industries
First Financial Bank
Steve Baker-American Benefits Broker
State Farm/Top Shelf Nutrition
SouthGroup Cox
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Mayo Law Firm
Foreman Wood Products
Rex Team Sports
Robbins Sport Surfaces
Ely Guild Hardy
B&Z Construction
Transact
Manuscript Coffee





Members of the McLain Plumbing team that won the second flight.



Members of the First Financial team that won the first flight.



Members of the Bank of Forest team that won the Championship Flight were (from left) Drew Kenna, Eddie Holifield, Steve Gibson, and Randy Dilley.



James Hibpshman won a Dancing Rabbit Golf package



Jake Kight won the prize for longest drive on the back nine.



Eddie Holifield won the prize for the closest put on the front nine.



Cameron Brown won a La-Z-Boy recliner.



Steve Gibson won the prize for longest drive on the front nine.



David Hayman won the prize for the closest put on the back nine.

ALUMNI NEWS

This is Not Goodbye

ECCC RECOGNIZES 2024 RETIREES

Twelve full-time employees retired from East Central Community College in Decatur following the 2023-24 college year. They were honored by fellow employees and presented resolutions from the college's Board of Trustees during an end-of-the-year lunch May 1 on campus.

The retirees include Paige Case, English Instructor; Brenda Cheatham, Administrative Assistant to the Vice President for Enrollment Management; Sherri Byars Cliburn, Career & Technical Support Service Instructor; Christy Ferguson, Business and Office Technology Instructor; Scott Hill, Head Golf Coach and Instructor of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation Courses; Cathryn May, Chairperson of the Mathematics and Computer Science Department and Mathematics Instructor; Lori Luke, Simulation and Skills Lab Coordinator/Associate Degree Nursing Instructor; Michael McWhirter, Jr., Campus Police Dispatcher; Stacy Monk, Carpenter/Plumber; Timothy Pritchett, Campus Police Officer; Julie Rowzee, Director of Human Resources; and Martha Stoke, Health Sciences Instructor at the Philadelphia/Neshoba County Career and Technology Center, a division of ECCC.

Paige Case

Case began her employment as English instructor in 2015, after serving as a Spanish instructor at Olive Branch High School from 2010-2015. She previously served as an English instructor at ECCC from 2004 to 2006, at EMCC from 2002-2004, and at Morrison Academy in Taichung, Taiwan; and Alexander Junior High School in Brookhaven from 1984-1989.

She taught Intermediate English, English Composition I and II, and American Literature I and II for 11 years and advised production of the ECCC yearbook, Wo-He-Lo, for 4 years.

She has served on the Safety and Emergency Preparedness Committee, the Homecoming Committee, and the Beauty Pageant Committee.

She was named Humanities Instructor of the Year and was a two-time Wil-

liam Winter Scholar.

Case earned a Master of Arts in Teaching with an emphasis in English from the University of West Alabama and a Bachelor of Arts in English with a Spanish minor from Millsaps College.

Brenda Cheatham

Cheatham began her first tenure at ECCC as Bookstore Manager in 2001 and later as Administrative Assistant to the Vice President for Student Services 2002 to 2003. She returned as Administrative Assistant to the Vice President for Student Services in 2005 until 2022 when she moved to Administrative Assistant to the Vice President for Enrollment Management.

She has participated in various committee assignments including the Homecoming Reception/Ceremony Committee and Homecoming Decorations Committee, Junior Days Planning Committee, New Student Orientation Planning Committee, and Foundation Scholarships Committee.

She received East Central Community College's 2021 Excellence with Class Award as the outstanding staff member.

Cheatham earned an associate degree from ECCC.

Sherri Cliburn

Cliburn began her employment as Career & Technical Support Service Instructor in 2000, after serving as an instructor at Union Public Schools and Neshoba Central Elementary from 1994-2000 where she taught English, Gifted, and Reading.

She has participated in faculty committee assignments including the Mississippi Association of Community & Junior Colleges; Literacy Committee Chairperson; SkillsUSA & FBLA Co-Sponsor; Team Captain of Employee Olympics; East Central Faculty and Staff Association - serving numerous years as President, Vice President, Secretary and Program Chair; Homecoming Steering Committee; Co-director for ECCC Dinner Theater; Destination Imagination Affiliate Growth Director for Mis-

sissippi and Destination Imagination Technical Challenge Master for Mississippi.

Cliburn has received awards and honors including Workforce Instructor of the Year and Lamplighters.

She completed a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education from Mississippi State University.

Christy Ferguson

Ferguson began her employment as Business and Office Technology instructor at ECCC in 1999 after serving as an instructor at Central Academy from 1994-1998.

She has participated in faculty committee assignments including eLearning, Technology, Library, QEP, Success Center Advisory, Legislative, and General Education.

She has served as an FBLA advisor for 25 years having coached 58 teams to be recognized as Top 10 in the Nation and 12 teams receiving 1st Place in the Nation.

She has received awards and honors including Instructor of the Year, Career-Technical Instructor of the Year, Phi Beta Lambda Advisor of the Year, FBLA Advisor Wall of Fame; MBEA Outstanding CT Business Educator, Lamplighter, Phi Theta Kappa Horizon Award Recipient, Who's Who Among America's Teachers, MSVCC Instructor of the Year, and Volunteer Mississippi Give Award-Honorable Mention.

She earned both a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Technology and a Master of Education Degree in Instructional Technology Mississippi State University.

Scott Hill

Hill began his employment as Head Softball Coach and Intramurals Director in 2003 after serving as an instructor and coach at Philadelphia High School from 1993-2003 and Meridian Public Schools from 1992-1993.

In addition, he has served as Assistant Golf Coach and most recently served as head golf coach and instructor of Health, Physical Education, and

Recreation courses.

He has participated in faculty committee assignments including the Homecoming Decorating Committee, Student Services Advisory Committee, and the Intramural Sports Committee.

Hill has received awards and honors including 2010 Region XXIII Fast Pitch Softball Coach of the Year, 2011 Mississippi Association of Community & Junior Colleges Softball Coach of the Year, and 2011 Mississippi Association of Coaches Softball Coach of the Year. His teams reached post-season play nine consecutive years, won 4 division titles, and posted a 308-123-1 overall record. The 2010 Lady Warriors finished the season ranked 4th in the nation and the 2011 Lady Warriors finished the season ranked 5th in the nation.

Hill earned a Master of Science in Physical Education with an emphasis in Sport Administration from Mississippi State University; a Bachelor of Science in Health, Physical Education, and Recreation with an emphasis in teaching and coaching from Mississippi State University; and an Associate of Arts in Liberal Arts from East Central Community College.

Lori Luke

Luke began her employment as a Nursing Instructor at ECCC in 2001, after serving as a school nurse at Newton Municipal School District from 1999-2001; a Surgical/PACU/SSU nurse at Riley Hospital from 1996-2000; OR/OB and PACU Nurse Manager at Women's Hospital from 1990-1996; ICU nurse at Forrest General Hospital from 1986-1990; and Rehabilitation Nurse Coordinator at Mississippi Methodist Rehabilitation Center from 1984-1986.

She taught in the Practical Nursing program, the Associate Degree Nursing Program, and served as the Simulation and Skills Lab Coordinator/Nursing Instructor at ECCC for 23 years.

She has participated in faculty committee assignments including the Athletic Advisory Council, Student Services Council, Beauty Pageant Committee, the Learning Resources Committee, and the following nursing committees: Policies, Admission, and Progression, Professional Enrichment, Scholarship/Student, Curriculum, Resources and Learning, Evaluation/Social Recruiting, and served as a sponsor for ASNEC and HOSA.



The 2024 ECCC retirees were (front row, from left) Michael McWhirter, Martha Stokes, Lori Luke, Paige Case, and Sherri Cliburn, (back row) Timothy Pritchett, Scott Hill, Brenda Cheatham, Julie Rowzee, Christy Ferguson, and Cathy May.

Lori Luke has received awards and honors including Career-Technical Instructor of the Year and National Nursing Graduate Student.

She earned a Master of Science in Nursing with an emphasis in Nursing Education from Alcorn State University; a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from the University of Southern Mississippi; and an Associate of Science Degree from East Central Community College; and.

Cathryn May

May began her employment as a Mathematics Instructor at ECCC in 2010, after 15 years of combined service as a Mathematics Instructor at Lamar, Newton City, Choctaw Central and Newton County schools.

She served as Chairperson of the Mathematics and Computer Science Department at ECCC for 7 years and has participated in faculty council and committee assignments including the Instructional Council, Institutional Research & Effectiveness Council, eLearning Committee, Curriculum Committee, Scholarship Committee, and the Homecoming Committee.

She served as Club Sponsor for the Student Education Association(SEA) for 9 years and received the 2015 Lampighter award.

She earned a Bachelor of Science in Mathematics as well as a Master of Science in Mathematics from the University of Mississippi;

Michael L. McWhirter, Jr.

McWhirter began his employment at ECCC in 1996 as HVAC and Electrical Technician in the Physical Plant. He transferred to the Student Services Division in July 2009, where he served as Activity Center Supervisor, and in 2011, transferred to the Campus Police Department where he served 13 years as a full-time Campus Police Dispatcher.

He received his associate's degree from East Central.

Stacy Monk

Monk began his employment at ECCC in 2016 as a carpenter/plumber in the Physical Plant.

Prior to this, he was employed by the US Postal Service for 27 years, serving as Postmaster for 13 of those years

He is a graduate of Lake High School and attended ECCC.

Timothy Pritchett

Pritchett began his employment as a Campus Police Officer in 2020 after serving eight years with the Mississippi Department of Correction, and three years as a Campus Police Officer at Mississippi State University.

He is a graduate of Meridian Community College, the Mississippi Law Enforcement Training Academy in Pearl and earned the Board of Law Enforcement Officer Standards and Training Professional Certificate.

-RETIREEs continued on page 18

CAMPUS NEWS



Solar Panel Grant Secured

PATH COMPANY AND EC PARTNER FOR \$2.8 MILLION SOLAR GRANT

East Central Community College has recently received confirmation from the U.S. Department of Energy that it has been selected for an Energy Improvement in Rural or Remote Areas grant.

The Energy Improvements in Rural or Remote Areas (ERA) program aims to enhance the resilience, reliability, and affordability of energy systems in communities across the country with populations of 10,000 or fewer.

The ERA program seeks to support community-driven energy projects that yield tangible benefits for customers and foster clean energy knowledge and capacity across rural America.

In collaboration with PATH Company, East Central Community College pursued and was selected to begin award negotiations for a \$2.8 million



grant for solar and lighting upgrades to its campus. The initiative will entail installing 1 MW of solar PV (photovoltaic) on the north side of the campus and upgrading 25 different facilities with energy-efficient LED lighting.

These campus enhancements are projected to reduce energy costs for ECCC by approximately \$170,000 annually, thereby freeing up funds for reinvestment in students and campus infrastructure. Additionally, alongside the installation of solar panels, the college intends to launch curricula centered on solar installation and maintenance.

These pioneering programs will be among the first of their kind at the community college level in Mississippi.

"We are thrilled to have been selected for this highly competitive grant and express our gratitude for the diligent efforts of the PATH Company in securing these funds on our behalf," remarked ECCC President, Dr. Brent Gregory.

"The increasing demand for solar expertise nationwide and in our region presents a compelling opportunity. We viewed this as a win-win scenario to not only allocate resources to better serve our students and campus but also to position ECCC at the forefront of this emerging technology by offering training and curriculum opportunities for students preparing to enter the workforce."

RETIREES

- Continued from page 17

Julie Rowzee

Rowzee began her employment as Director of Human Resources at East Central Community College in 2016, after serving in a similar position at Southern Farm Bureau for five years, and in industry for 30 years.

She has participated in faculty committee assignments including the Homecoming Halftime Committee and Alumni Reception; and has assisted in various student events on campus including SkillsUSA and FBLA District

Competitions.

Rowzee also served as President of the Mississippi Community College Board Human Resources Association.

She earned an Associate of Arts degree from East Central Junior College, and Bachelor of Arts in Speech Communications with a minor in Journalism from the University of Southern Mississippi.

Martha Stokes

Stokes began teaching at the Philadelphia/Neshoba County Career and Technology Center, a division of ECCC in 1998. She began her career in nurs-

ing in 1990 at Choctaw Medical Center and then at Alexander Home Health from 1996-1998 before earning her teaching credentials for 961 Career Pathway Health Science (7-12).

She has taught Health Science Core and Healthcare and Clinical Services at PNCCTC for 26 years.

She has participated in various faculty committee assignments including the Homecoming Halftime Committee and was selected PNCCTC Teacher of the Year.

She earned an Associate Degree in Nursing from Meridian Community College.

Capital Campaign Contribution

ECCC PARTNERS WITH MISSISSIPPI POWER TO ENHANCE CAMPUS

East Central Community College President Dr. Brent Gregory recently accepted a Deeply Rooted, Future Focused capital campaign contribution from Chris Phillips, the District General Manager for Mississippi Power, in a partnership to promote science, technology, engineering, and mathematics at the community college level.

“Supporting East Central Community College’s efforts to enhance Newton Hall and the school’s engineering program is a true win-win,” said Mississippi Power District General Manager Chris Phillips. “Fostering the continued improvement of local STEM programs in our area will help make ECCC a premier destination for engineering majors. We look forward to continuing our partnership and expanding the pool of future engineers to help serve our customers for decades to come.”

With both organizations, ECCC and Mississippi Power, having served the



Chris Phillips and Dr. Brent Gregory

residents of Mississippi for almost 100 years, the college looks forward to building upon the foundation of past leaders to benefit future generations with the help of donations and partnerships such as this.

“We are so thankful for this donation from Mississippi Power, and the relationship we have developed,” said ECCC’s Executive Director of the Foundation, Dr. Stacey Hollingsworth. “Having commitments from local companies

and industries speak very highly of what we are trying to accomplish with the Deeply Rooted, Future Focused campaign, and again we are very grateful for Mississippi Power’s support.”

Mississippi Power understands the importance of giving back to the communities and customers that they serve. Dating from the company’s inception in 1925, providing financial support has been of key importance to make the communities the company serves better places to live and work. The company’s giving strategy guides its foundation to the focus areas customers have told us are important including education, community relations, economic development and environmental efforts.

For more information on the ECCC Deeply Rooted, Future Focused capital campaign contact Dr. Hollingsworth at 601-635-6327 or by emailing sholling@eccc.edu.

EAST CENTRAL LEADS MISSISSIPPI IN STUDENT HEADCOUNT GROWTH

Based on preliminary enrollment data provided by the Mississippi Community College Board in Jackson, for the second straight semester, East Central Community College is Mississippi’s community college leader in headcount growth on a semester-by-semester basis.

Compared to the spring of 2023, the College has grown 13.6 percent in student headcount.

“These numbers are very encouraging for everyone on campus,” said ECCC President Dr. Brent Gregory. “We have worked diligently to surround our students with strong faculty while providing With You In Mind service in all areas of campus. These changes, along with an effort to provide an outstanding college experience, have led to a higher retention of our current students and helped bring in several

new students. ECCC continues to lead the state of Mississippi in serving our district.”

East Central Community College had 2,214 students enrolled in spring classes, the highest spring semester headcount since 2019.

For more information on East Central Community College, or to take the first step in your career or education, visit www.eccc.edu.

\$10,000 Match Goal!

If our alumni and friends will give \$10,000 to our new Football Weight Room Facility being constructed adjacent to Warrior Hall, we have a generous donor who will match it!

Do we have... 10 people who will give \$1,000?
100 people who will give \$100?
1,000 people who will give \$10?

Help us meet the match today!

www.eccc.edu/warrior-fundraiser



CAMPUS NEWS

Award Winner

QUINN RECEIVES HUMANITIES COUNCIL TEACHER AWARD



Mandy Quinn, East Central Community College's Fine Arts Department Chair, Assistant Band Director, and Director of Percussion Studies was recognized as ECCC's Mississippi Humanities Council Teacher Award recipient.

As part of the honor, Quinn presented a special program in Carson Band Hall titled "Evolution of Percussion: The Historical, Cultural, and Customary Impact of Percussion Arts."

Quinn's program explored the evolution of percussion and how it has impacted the percussive arts in the musical world and gave insight into some of the different instruments within the percussion family as she performed different repertoire and discussed the many aspects of the instruments."

Along with the presentation, guests heard remarks from East Central President, Dr. Brent Gregory, Executive Vice President, Mr. David Case, and Humanities Council Representative, Mr. John Spann.

Quinn, originally from Alabama, graduated from Muscle Shoals High School before completing a bachelor's degree in instrumental music education from the University of North Alabama. She went on to earn a master's degree in percussion performance and conducting from the University of Central Florida and is working on her Doctor of Arts in music from William Carey University.

She has performed with many world-renowned ensembles such as The Cadets, Carolina Crown, Capital

Regiment, Gateway Percussion, and Aimachi from Nagoya, Japan. She is a member of the Percussive Arts Society, where she serves on the Education Committee, and is Vice President of the Mississippi Percussive Arts Society. She has had articles published in Rhythm! Scene, a Percussion Arts Society publication. She is endorsed by Innovative Percussion.

Quinn is married to Nathan Robertson and has two children, Elora and David James.



DR. HAROLD S. AYCOCK MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP ESTABLISHED

Dr. Harold Aycock was a member of the East Central Junior College Class of 1964, and a scholarship was recently established by his family after his death this spring.

Dr. Aycock was instrumental in the establishment of five endowed scholarships at East Central and was always willing to give back to his alma mater to provide financial resources for the next generation of students. Now, his family and the college would like to honor him with an endowed scholar-

ship funded in his memory. Please help us remember him by supporting this scholarship fund.

To contribute to the scholarship fund, please use the QR code below to give online, or mail a check to the East Central Community College



Foundation earmarked for the Dr. Harold S. Aycock Memorial Scholarship. Any and all contributions to the scholarship fund are appreciated and are tax deductible.

If you have questions, please contact Stacey Hollingsworth in the Foundation Office at 601-635-6327 or e-mail to sholling@eccc.edu.





Deeply Rooted Future Focused

A Capital Campaign for East Central Community College

Capital Campaign Update

96% OF CAMPAIGN GOAL RAISED THROUGH GIFTS AND PLEDGES

East Central Community College launched its first ever capital campaign in February of 2023. The Deeply Rooted, Future Focused Capital Campaign goal was set at \$4,150,000. To date, we have raised 96% of the campaign goal through gifts and pledges. Help us reach our goal by making a pledge or cash gift to the campaign.

You can give online by using the link www.eccc.edu/deeply-rooted-future-focused-capital-campaign or by sending a check to the ECCC Foundation earmarked for the Capital Campaign.

Listed below are alumni and friends who have made a commitment to support the four projects included in the Deeply Rooted, Future Focused Capital Campaign. The four projects included in this campaign are:

Newton Hall

- The renovation of the east end of the second floor of Newton Hall will create the Randy J. Cleveland Innovation Lab. The renovation will serve as an engineering and business program suite for students with access to a modernized classroom space and interactive lab space.

Bradford J. Tucker Career Technical Center

- The goal is to upgrade the facility to industry stan-

dards in order to instruct students for companies in the five-county district and to be competitive in a global market. These facility upgrades will better train and provide opportunities for individuals seeking high paying workforce jobs.

Ovid S. Vickers Fine Arts Center

- The Vickers building is the primary fine arts facility on campus and has not had a significant upgrade since its construction. The goal is to modernize the foyer area with space for an art gallery including new entries to the auditorium, modernized color scheme, and new lighting.

Founders Gymnasium

- Founders Gym is an original building on the ECCC campus. Renovations to the building will enable it to better serve as a multipurpose facility for both academic and community-centered activities. A new floor will be installed with upgrades to seating. An additional use of the facility will be to house the new women's volleyball team.

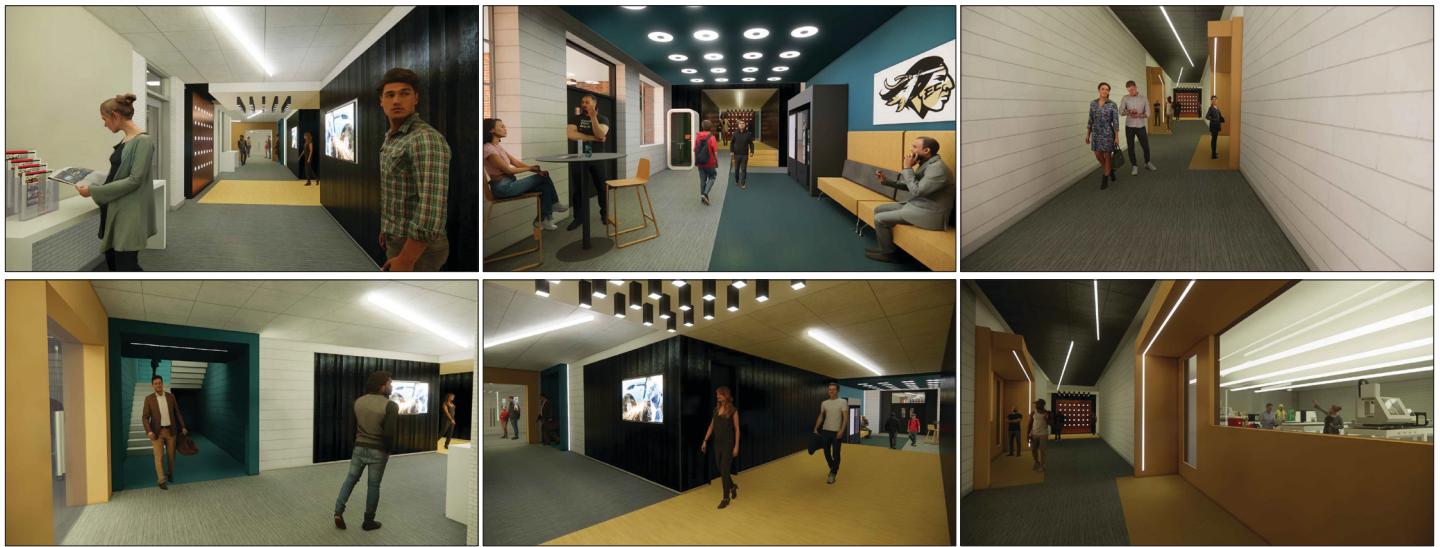
If you have questions or need more information about the projects included in the campaign, please contact the Foundation Office at 601-635-6327 or e-mail to sholling@eccc.edu.

*Help us reach our goal by making a
pledge or cash gift to the capital campaign!*

Scan the QR code at right to make a donation.



CAMPUS NEWS



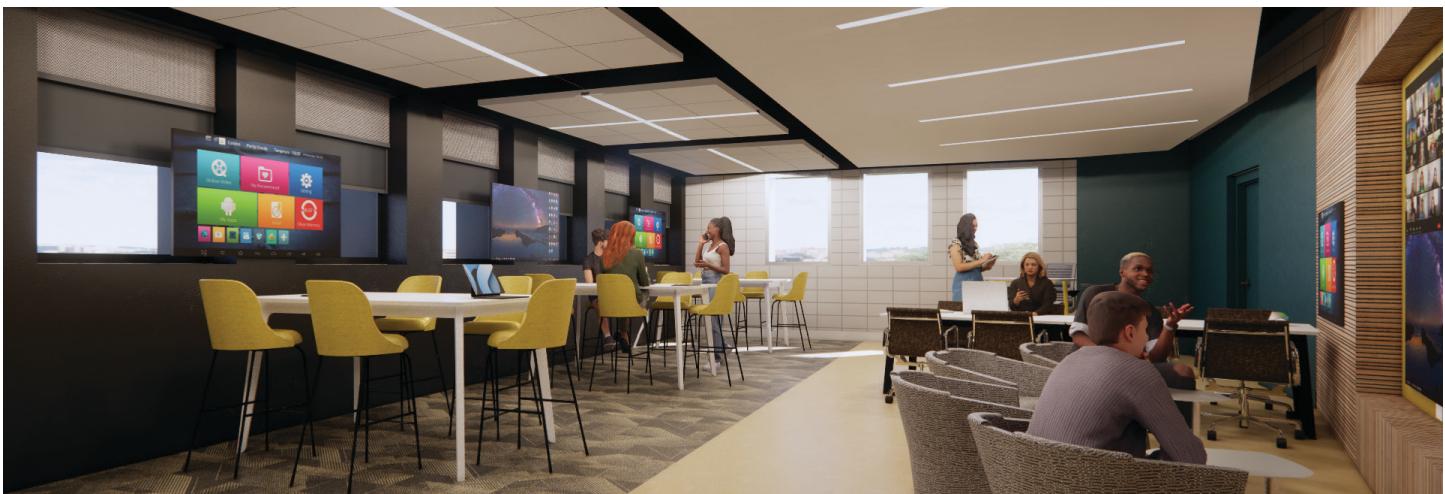
Bradford J. Tucker Career Technical Center



Vickers Fine Arts Building Lobby



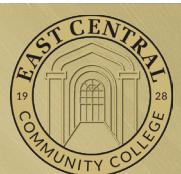
Newton Hall Classroom Renovation



Newton Hall Innovation Lab



Founders Gym



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difference in the future of ECCC.*

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As of 6-21-24



WEYERHAEUSER CONTRIBUTES TO FOOTBALL FACILITY

Weyerhaeuser in Philadelphia recently donated a load of lumber to East Central Community College for use in a new Football Weight Room Facility being constructed near Warrior Hall on the Decatur campus. Members of the Weyerhaeuser leadership team were on hand to make the donation to ECCC representatives at the Philadelphia facility. Pictured are (from left) ECCC representatives Mike Reeves, truck driver training instructor; Artie Foreman, director of facilities planning and project management; Dr. Stacey Hollingsworth, executive director of the ECCC Foundation; and Jonathan Webster, head football coach; and Weyerhaeuser representatives Kris Robertson, mill manager; Greg Clemons, dry side superintendent; Tammy Ward, shipping supervisor; Brandon Alford, maintenance superintendent; Dennis Graham, greenside superintendent; and Austin Roberson, safety manager. The college is continuing to raise funds for the facility and donations of any amount can be made online at www.eccc.edu/warrior-football-fundraiser or by contacting Dr. Hollingsworth at 601-635-6327 or sholling@eccc.edu.

East Central Officially Opens New Tennis Facility

East Central Community College held a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Friday, March 22, to officially open a multipurpose pavilion for the college's tennis teams. The Comans-Hunter Pavilion provides locker rooms, storage, and on-site bathrooms.

"Today was the culmination of hard work from so many people and the realization of a dream that began almost ten years ago to provide the East Central tennis programs with a facility on campus that would rival any in the state of Mississippi at the Community College level," said ECCC Athletic Director Paul Nixon during the ceremony.

"The dedication of our on-campus maintenance staff, the commitment of our administration led by Dr. Gregory, Dr. Hollingsworth, and Artie Forman, along with the generosity of our donors, especially the Comans and Hunter families, made that dream a reality today. Our Warrior and Lady Warrior student-athletes, past, present, and future, as well as their families and fans, will be able to enjoy using this beautiful facility for years to come. It is a great day for East Central Tennis, and it's always a



Pictured are (from left) ECCC Director of Athletics Paul Nixon, Comans and Hunter family representatives Charlotte Comans Griffin, Cheryl Comans, Jane Hunter Smith, and Sue Hunter Pierce, ECCC sophomore tennis player Katelyn Wall, and tennis coach Dylan Barnett.

great day to be a Warrior!"

The program consisted of remarks from David Case, Executive Vice President, Dylan Barnett, head men's and women's tennis coach, and Paul Nixon, Director of Athletics, before those in attendance participated in self-guided tours.

The tennis facility is a testament

to ECCC's commitment to providing student-athletes with the best possible resources to succeed. As ECCC continues to build on its tradition of excellence in athletics, these new facilities will play an essential role in helping the college's tennis teams achieve even greater success in the years to come.

Volleyball Begins in '25

PATRICK HILTZ TO HEAD UP FIRST TEAM

East Central Community College is excited to launch a new NJCAA-sanctioned athletic team in women's volleyball. The team is scheduled to take the court for its inaugural season in the fall of 2025, bringing the total number of sports offered by EC to 13.

"Women's volleyball is growing at an extremely quick rate in our local area and across the state," said ECCC President Dr. Brent Gregory. "We look forward to providing this opportunity to future students from our immediate area and are excited to offer more athletic opportunities for our female students."

The Lady Warriors will compete against several other MACCC schools, including Pearl River, Jones, Meridian, Northeast Mississippi, Itawamba, Northwest Mississippi, and Southwest Mississippi.

East Central has fielded women's volleyball in the past, but only as an intramural/club option for females in the 1960s and 1970s under the direction of Lucille Wood.

The team looks to utilize the same court as the past teams in Founders Gymnasium. The facility is currently under renovation as part of the four-project Deeply Rooted, Future Focused capital campaign.

"This is the perfect time for East Central to start a varsity women's volleyball program. Volleyball is a fast-paced, very exciting sport that allows fans to really get into the matches," said ECCC Director of Athletics Paul Nixon.

"Founders Gym is going to be an outstanding venue right in the heart of campus, which will provide all our students with another great activity to enhance campus life in the fall, starting in 2025. We are looking forward to welcoming our first class of recruits in the coming months."

In May, Patrick Hiltz was named the new women's volleyball coach.

Hiltz, who has 30 years of experience in the sport, most recently served as the head coach at Garden City Community College in Garden City, Kan., where he coached for five years.

"I am extremely excited for this opportunity," said Hiltz. "This is an opportunity that my wife and I have prayed for as we wanted to get closer to home and never would have thought it could be at East Central...it is as perfect as it can get."

In the junior college ranks, Hiltz coached at Blinn College for one season as an assistant before taking the head spot at Garden City.

"I want to instill my love of the sport in East Central's community, that is one of my main goals," Hiltz stated. "Volleyball continues to grow...Mississippi is getting involved in this growth, and I want East Central to be a big part of it moving forward. I want a great relationship between fans, players, and students and envision a full gym cheering on the Warriors."



HILTZ

WINSTON PLYWOOD CONTRIBUTES TO FOOTBALL FACILITY

Winston Plywood & Veneer in Louisville recently donated a load of plywood to East Central Community College for use in the new Football Weight Room Facility being constructed next to Warrior Hall on the Decatur Campus. Members of the Winston Plywood & Veneer management team recently presented the donation to ECCC Head Football Coach Jonathan Webster. Pictured are (from left) Chasta Rauccio, Human Resources Vice President; Ken Carter, Vice President; Webster; Amanda Clark, Payroll and Benefits Manager; and Jason Watson, Plant Manager. The donation marked the second large gift from Winston Plywood & Veneer, as the company also provided plywood for the recently completed Comans-Hunter Tennis Pavilion constructed on campus. The college is continuing to raise funds for the facility, and donations of any amount can be made online at www.eccc.edu/warrior-football-fundraiser or by contacting Dr. Hollingsworth at 601-635-6327 or sholling@eccc.edu.



ATHLETICS

Sports Briefs

Baseball

It was another historic season for the Diamond Warriors who ended the 2023-24 baseball season with fifty-five wins and only nine losses which set a new single season win record en route to the NJCAA DII World

Series in Enid, Oklahoma, for the second consecutive year.

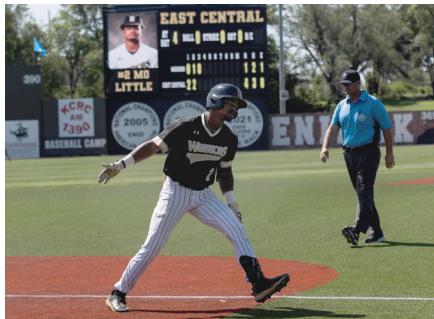
East Central would begin the season with a 31-0 non-conference win streak, also a record, and head coach Neal Holliman earned his 500th win.

The Warriors first loss of the season came against Northwest in game two of a home double-header losing 8-7. They rebounded by winning 49 regular-season games, eventually reaching the Region 23 tournament after defeating Northeast in a three-game series to advance.

Following the Region tournament, the Warriors received an At-Large bid into the NJCAA DII World Series. After losing the first game, the Warriors won three straight elimination matches to reach the semifinals before falling short of the championship game with a 2-1 loss to eventual runner-up Brunswick Community College.

The Warriors scored an eye-popping 556 runs as a team (ranks fourth in NJCAA DII), including 61 home runs (13 from Trey Bridges, 12 from Mo Little, and 9 from Brady McGee). Lefty Luke Cooley who threw 115 strikeouts and hitter Mo Little earned All-American and All-Region honors. Four Warriors received all-conference recognition. Cooley and Little lead the list, earning first-team all-conference. Brady McGee earned second-team All-MACCC. Barret Rodgers and Marbin Lezcano earn honorable mention.

Assisting Holliman this year were Kyle Flessner and Kade Dees.



Softball

After a slow start, head softball coach Leigh White and the Lady Warriors bounced back for a successful season ending with a 36-17 record and the first trip to the NJCAA DII Softball World Series in recent memory. Thirty-six total wins ties for the second-most since the 2016-2017 season.

The Lady Warriors finished the regular season with a 19-9 conference record, which included wins over Jones, Pearl River, and Hinds. They won three of five games in their Region 23 bracket, also



eliminating Pearl River in the process. The Lady Warriors finished second in their bracket after forcing Jones to a winner-take-all championship game, losing 14-5.

The Lady Warriors would receive an at-large bid and finish their season at the NJCAA Division II World Series in Spartanburg, SC, with an 0-2 record.

Reagan Bryan, Emily Collins, and Sydney Phillips each earned the designation of first-team All-MACCC for their outstanding play during the season. Bryan led the Lady Warriors with a .400 batting average, 14 home runs, and 33 RBI. Emily Collins had a stellar year on the mound for the Lady Warriors with a 20-6 record, 155 Ks, and 11 CG.

Assistant coaches were Katelyn Gruich and Olivia Burns.

Golf

Head Coach Scott Hill completed his final season as the head coach of the East Central Community College golf team and retired at the end of a stellar season that took them all the way to the NJCAA National Tournament in Joplin, Missouri. SpikeMark ranked the Warriors as a top-10 NJCAA team throughout the regular season.

The Warriors won their conference opener with scores of 306 and 313. Freshman Will Thompson led the way with a second-place finish, shooting a 147 between rounds one and two. Jamie Stace won at Shiloh Ridge, shooting a 141, with the EC linksters finishing second as a team. East Central took second place in the MACCC Championship with scores of 300 and 290. They posted eight top-3 finishes throughout the 2023-2024 season.

Thompson was the Swing U October NJCAA Division II player of the month. He also earned All-MACCC, All-Region 23, NJCAA 2nd team All-American, NJCAA All-Freshman, and NJCAA All-East Region.

Matthew Perry who served as assistant coach was promoted to head coach for the upcoming season.



PERRY

Men's and Women's Tennis

Dylan Barnett completed his second season as head men's and women's tennis coach. The Warriors and Lady Warriors went a combined 12-23 between the two teams. The East Central Community College Men's Tennis team started the season ranked as the 23rd NJCAA DII team.

The Lady Warriors got their first win of the 2024 season over Southwest, winning 9-0 over the Bears. The Men's team got hot mid-season, winning four straight matches over Northwest, Southwest, Belhaven University, and Holmes. The men's tennis team advanced to the NJCAA DII finals, where they tied for 27.

Assistant coach is Parker Chaney.

Tia'wana Pringle Takes Over

ECCC WELCOMES NEW HEAD WOMEN'S BASKETBALL COACH

Tia'wana Pringle joined the East Central Community College staff as head women's basketball coach this spring.

"The ECCC Warrior Athletics family is pleased to welcome Tia'wana Pringle to the Head Women's Basketball Coach position. Coach Pringle's passion for the game has propelled her to excel as an outstanding player and assistant coach. Everyone we spoke to about her said she was ready for the next step in her career and to take the reins of her own program as a head coach. We are excited to provide her with that opportunity. Her connections in the local area, having been a standout local high school player and a primary recruiter for Meridian, will serve her well in attracting prospects to East Central.

"When Coach Pringle described her vision for the future of the program, everyone on the committee agreed that she is the right person to lead the women's basketball team into the future. She truly cares about her student-athletes on and off the court, and her aforementioned passion for the game will be contagious as she develops our young women individually and molds the Lady Warriors into a team we can all be proud of at ECCC. We can't wait for Coach Tia'wana Pringle to get started!" said ECCC Director of Athletics Paul Nixon.

Pringle joins East Central after serving as an assistant coach on the Meridian Community College coaching staff for seven years. She brings her recruiting skills and local connections to East Central, having recruited three all-conference players in recent history. Prior to joining MCC, she had her first coaching stint at Plainfield North High School in Plainfield, Illinois, for five years.

"I am so thankful for this opportunity to step into the head coaching world. I want to thank Mr. Paul Nixon. During my time in the league, we always had great interactions, and I look forward to working with him and the other coaches

on a professional level," said Pringle. "I am looking to create a good culture around this program. I want to keep it fun and joyous and get plugged into the community. My goal is to have the ladies come in and grow them not only as athletes but as students."

Along with her coaching duties at MCC, Pringle served as an academic liaison, showing her dedication to improving student-athletes' educational endeavors. Her primary responsibilities included overseeing and maintaining records of NJCAA study hall requirements for student-athletes, supporting students to help them maintain positive enrollment status, and enabling student-athletes to continue receiving financial aid.

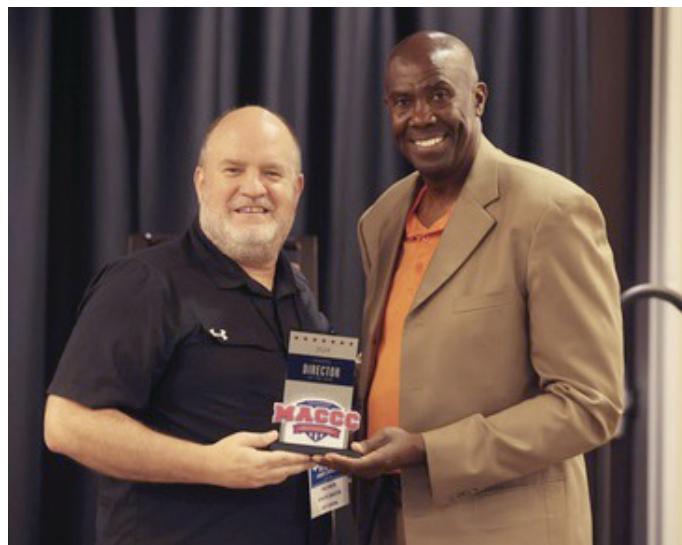
Pringle, a native of Meridian and a graduate of Louisiana Tech, has a remarkable personal journey. After a standout high school career, she earned a bachelor's degree in kinesiology. She played on the Louisiana Tech Lady Techsters women's basketball team, competing in over 110 games through four seasons. Pringle furthered her education, earning a master's degree in sports coaching education from the University of Southern Mississippi, a testament to her commitment to the sport and continuous learning.

Pringle was a member of the Southeast Lauderdale women's basketball team. In her senior season, she helped lead the Lady Tigers to the MSHAA 3A state title and was awarded the 2006 Miss Basketball of Mississippi title.

For more information on East Central's athletic teams please follow our social media pages on Twitter (@ECCCAthletics) and on Facebook (ECCCAthletics).



PRINGLE



PAUL NIXON NAMED MACCC ATHLETIC DIRECTOR OF THE YEAR

East Central Community College's Athletic Director, Paul Nixon (left), has been named Mississippi Association Community College Conference Athletic Director of the Year. He was presented the award by MACCC Commissioner Steve Martin (right). "We are incredibly proud of Paul Nixon and his commitment to East Central Community College athletics," said ECCC president Dr. Brent Gregory. "We also look forward to his continued success in the future." East Central Community College (ECCC) had a stellar 2023-2024 athletic year, with notable successes in men's golf, baseball, softball, and men's tennis at the national level. For more information on East Central's athletic teams please follow our social media pages on Twitter (@ECCCAthletics) and on Facebook (ECCCAthletics).

ATHLETICS

Alumni Updates

70s

Wanda Blackwell McPhail ('71) was recently inducted into the Mississippi Tennis Hall of Fame. McPhail was a member of the ECCC tennis team as a student and would go on to be a successful and longtime coach at Meridian Community College before retiring in 2018. She is a member of the ECCC Athletic Hall of Fame.

90s

Bart Gregory ('97) was selected National Sports Media Association Mississippi Sportscaster of the Year. The NSMA will honor its award winners and Hall of Fame inductees during the organization's 64th awards weekend and national convention, to be held this summer in North Carolina.

Randy Houser ('97) who is also a Nashville recording artist recently starred in "The Hill," an inspirational true-life sports drama. The popular movie is available on Netflix.

Jade Parkes ('99) was selected Meridian Community College's 2024 Humanities Teacher of the Year. He serves as a history instructor at MCC and as part of his award presented a lecture titled "Before Green Eggs, Grinches, or Cats in Hats: An Examination of the World War II-Era Works



of Dr. Seuss. The Mississippi Humanities Council sponsors the award and recognizes the contribution of humanities faculty at each of the state's colleges and universities. Parkes holds bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Mississippi. A native of Decatur, Parkes and his wife Stacy have been married for almost 20 years and have two children, Noah, 7, and Hope, 4.

00s

Matt Wilbanks ('08) was selected head coach of the Starkville High School Lady Jacket Basketball Team in 2024. He previously served as women's basketball head coach and administrator at Morton.

10s

After eight seasons with the Chicago White Sox, former Diamond Warrior **Tim Anderson ('13)** signed a one-year contract with the Florida Marlins and made his debut in February.

Krissy Long ('14), a fifth grade math and science teacher at Neshoba Central Elementary, was one of three Mississippi teachers who recently received a national Milken Educator Award that includes an unrestricted \$25,000 cash prize.

Interim State Superintendent of Education Dr. Raymond Morgigno and Milken Educator Awards Vice President Stephanie Bishop presented the surprise awards to each teacher during school assemblies students

and staff thought were being held to celebrate local school achievement.

MDE said the Milken Educator Award is a national honor recognizing exceptional educators for excellence and innovation in education.

The New England Patriots of the National Football League recently agreed to terms of a three-year deal with former Washington Commanders running back **Antonio Gibson ('17)**.

Gibson, 25, entered the league in the third round of the 2020 draft at No. 66 overall. The product of East Central Community College and the University of Memphis did so after earning All-AAC honors as a wide receiver and return specialist. He attended the Reese's Senior Bowl as a running back prospect and clocked the 40-yard dash in 4.39 seconds at the NFL Scouting Combine.

Through 61 NFL games, Gibson has made 32 starts and scored a combined 29 touchdowns. His Washington career would bring 2,643 yards through 642 carries, 1,283 yards through 172 catches, as well as 826 yards through 35 kickoff returns.

Gibson has recorded 40-plus receptions in three consecutive campaigns, including a long of 73 yards. The 6-foot-2, 220-pound all-purpose threat played 473 snaps on offense to go with 59 snaps on special teams in the final year of his rookie contract with the Commanders. A November matchup at Gillette Stadium saw Gibson log 76 yards in 11 touches from scrimmage while averaging an even 24 yards per return. (Information via online reports)

Alumni: Update Your Information Online & Send Us Your News!

Have you recently moved or changed phone numbers or email addresses?

Please update your information so we can stay in touch.

Have you married, had a baby or grandchild, received a job promotion, won an award, or retired?

Send us your good news to share with fellow alums.

www.eccc.edu/alumni-news or email mmcleod@eccc.edu

In Memoriam

Dr. Benjamin L. Crawford, Jr., ('43), Jan. 29, 2024
Jean Estes Woodruff ('48), May 22, 2024
Wyatt J. Davis Jr. ('50) March 4, 2024
Eva Sue Johnson Gibson ('52), May 4, 2024
Dr. Roxene H. Atkinson ('53) Jan. 28, 2024
James Jerry Harris ('53) Feb. 17, 2024
Billy Kendall McPhail ('53), May 1, 2024
Ray Eugene Hannah ('55), Dec. 23, 2023
Elton D. Wall ('56), April 6, 2024
David Meshack Ethridge ('57), Dec. 21, 2023
Elizabeth Ann McAuley Adair ('58), March 20, 2024
Joyce Elaine Everett ('58) passed away, April 4, 2024
Eddie "Coach" Howard Johnson ('60), Aug. 20, 2023
Ollie Faye Jones ('60), March 8, 2024
Margaret Ann Sharp Rush ('62), April 28, 2024
Dr. Harold Aycock ('64) March 3, 2024
Jennifer Ford Nance ('64), February 20, 2024
Richard Ray Keeton ('66), July 20, 2023
Robert E. Mason ('66), Dec. 14, 2023
Clayton Russell "Rusty" Barnett ('67), May 7, 2024
Nelda Diane McCraw Haralson ('67), Oct. 3, 2023
Gayle Hardin Brashier ('74) Feb. 7, 2024
Patsy Ray Comans Simmons ('74), May 6, 2024
Donald Paul Starnes ('77) Jan. 5, 2024
Lynda Gale Goss ('78) Jan. 21, 2024
Pam Kirby Case ('79), April 2, 2024
Sandra Johnson Toler ('81), May 3, 2024
Donna Michelle Buntry Logan ('83), May 31, 2024
John Clifton Kasper ('89), April 13, 2024
Frances Elizabeth King Woodruff ('91), April 24, 2024
Eric Lee Emmons ('96), April 12, 2024
Nancy Pauline S. Faulkner ('97) Jan. 21, 2024
Charlotte Marynell McAdory ('97), May 29, 2024
Ronnie D. Moore ('99), May 31, 2024
Aaron R. Thomas ('99), Jan. 29, 2024
Kristopher Leigh Davidson ('01) Jan. 2, 2024
Herbert D. Miller ('04), Feb. 5, 2024
Krissi Harris Munn ('04), April 8, 2024
Theresa K. Yarrington ('06), May 28, 2024
Sharon York Hockett ('07), May 7, 2024
Daniel Pilgrim ('07), April 21, 2024
Christopher K. Newman ('12), April 22, 2024

Former Basic Skills Coordinator

Tina Miller Harris, 54, died Sunday, March 3, 2024, at North MS Medical Center following an extended illness.

Tina was born and raised in Mayfield, KY, and moved to Newton County, MS, after marrying Britt Alan Harris. She briefly attended Murray State University in Kentucky and later attended East Central Community College ('90). She received her bachelor's and master's degrees in Elementary Education from Mississippi State University. She taught 6th grade at Newton County Elementary School and later taught GED classes for East Central Community College in the state prison system. She retired from East Central Community College in 2016 where she was Basic Skills Coordinator for the Workforce Development Center.

Her hobbies included sewing, hanging out around the pool, and traveling to the Smokey Mountains as often as possible. A perpetual encourager, she loved sending cards and letters to those sick, hurting or

just needing a boost. She was most recently a member of the West Main St. Church of Christ in Tupelo. For the many years in Decatur, she and Britt were active and faithful members of the Union Church of Christ teaching Sunday School for 6- to 12-year-olds.

Survivors include her husband, Britt Harris of Pontotoc; mother, Linda Hester Miller of Mayfield, KY; sister, Tammy "Sissy" Riley (Stacey); and 2 brothers, Kenneth Miller and Kyle Miller (Shelly), all of Mayfield, KY; and several nieces, nephews and their families. She was preceded in death by her father, Darrell Edward Miller.

Former Dean of Learning Resources

Retired Dean of Learning Resources Leslie Ivan Hughes, 63, of Calhoun City, died January 14, 2024. He had also served as Music Minister at Emmanuel Baptist Church and was an active member of the Clarke College Alumni Association. He was a member of the ECCC Class of 1981 and was an alumnus of both the University of Southern Mississippi and Mississippi State University.

He was a member of Duncan Hill Baptist Church and was also an active member of Clarke-Venable Baptist Church for the past twenty years. Leslie was an avid reader and enjoyed taking care of his chickens in his spare times. He also loved to cook and prepare meals for his family and friends to enjoy. Most of all Leslie loved the Lord and Savior and his dear family.

Survivors include his wife, Liddia Ramsey Hughes, of Calhoun City; his son Brandon (Hanna) Hughes of Olive Branch, MS; brothers: Robert Hughes of Mize, MS, Bert (Robyn) Hughes of Mt. Olive, MS, and Charles Hughes, Jr. of Pearl, MS.; grandchildren: and two grandchildren.

Former Admissions Secretary

Mary Louise "Lou" Clark, 88, of Union, died Monday, February 5, 2024, at her home. Born and raised in Neshoba County, she was a graduate of Linwood School. She retired from East Central Community College after 35 years as a secretary and registrar. She was a faithful member of Neshoba Baptist Church for 50 years. "Lou" as everyone called her was a wonderful mother and dedicated Christian her entire life.

Survivors include daughter, Lori Porter, and son, Barry Clark (Melissa), both of Philadelphia; three grandchildren; and three great grandchildren; and sisters, Jeanette Willis (Dee Allen) of Hernando and Edith Todd (Bubba) of West Point.

Former GED Instructor

Amy Allen Land, 85, died Friday, Feb. 2, 2024, at her home in Louisville. A Louisville native, she taught school for many years at Winston Academy, Louisville, and Grace Christian, and was a GED instructor for East Central Community College.

Survivors include a daughter, Charlotte Parker of Louisville, and a son, Hal Land of LaGrange, TN; two brothers, Jerry Allen of Phoenix and John Allen of Memphis; and three grandchildren.

Former English Instructor

Carrie Ann Alford died Saturday, February 17, 2024, at her home in Neshoba County where she lived most of her life. She graduated Philadelphia High School in 1961, and then she attended ECCC, the "W", and MSU where she got her master's degree in education. She taught as a Tech Prep Specialist at Choctaw Central High School, ECCC, and Philadelphia High School. Her passion was teaching, and her purpose was teaching about Jesus.

Survivors include her husband of 60 years, John Alford; daughters, Suzanne Breazeale (Scott), Amy Adkins (David), and Christy Phillips (Terry); son, Warren Alford; brother, Jim Haddock of AR; seven grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren.

ALUMNI NEWS

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Save the Date!



TUESDAY, JULY 30
EC Day at the Neshoba County Fair



THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 19
Warrior Football Alumni Reunion



WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 9
**Scholarship Reception for
Donors and Recipients**

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 10
Homecoming Day

EAST CENTRAL *With You In Mind*
COMMUNITY COLLEGE