

# POINT S OF PRI DE



Spring 2017

Issue #2

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As the photo on the cover makes clear, the New ASU has

## *A Past to Cherish.*

On January 1, Albany State University and Darton State College consolidated. It was a long process, involving 80 working groups covering every element of the functioning of an institution of higher education. Over 800 different decision points had to be addressed.

Faculty, staff, and administrators from both institutions came together in countless meetings to discuss everything from junior-level chemistry classes to student retention strategies to school colors.

We have to be honest. It wasn't always the smoothest process. Reasonable people can--and *will*--disagree. But, *overwhelmingly*, we came together to build an effective, progressive New ASU, one that will build on a heroic legacy as an HBCU, serving the underserved, and combine that





with a tradition of providing access to the citizens of Southwest Georgia, those who might otherwise have no opportunity to extend their educations.

It presents us with an opportunity that is epic and humbling, and I am immeasurably proud to be a part of it.

This is the first issue of *Points of Pride* that covers the New ASU, and there are powerful stories here of our students, staff, and faculty going above and beyond to serve and to prepare to serve.

So read these pages and see our pride and our ambition. You'll be witness to a past we can cherish and a future we can build together.



Kevin M. Scott  
Associate Professor  
Provost Fellow



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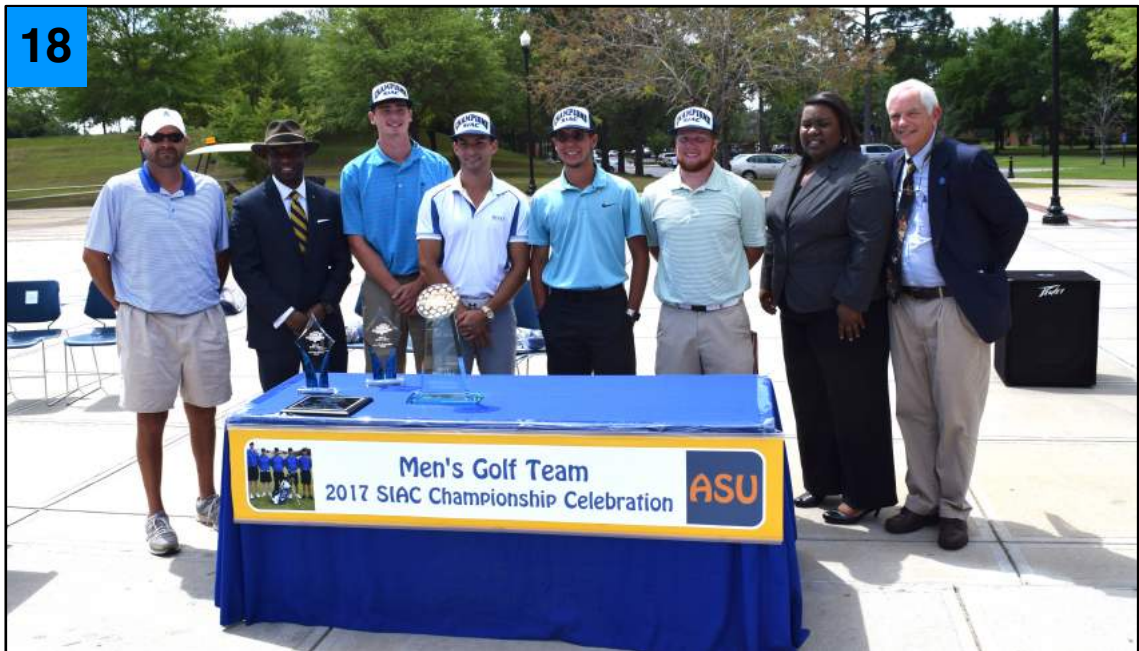
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**Far left top:** The 2017 graduates in nursing after their pinning ceremony.

**Far left bottom:** Wendy Albritten presents her research and the Undergraduate Research Symposium.

**Top:** Vice President of Enrollment Management Dr. Donta Truss and other members of the staff prepare to meet students at New Student Orientation.

**Above:** The men's golf team presents their trophy for winning the SIAC Men's Golf Championship at a celebration on the Radium Springs campus.

**Left:** Nancy Beamon, Director of Histotechnology and Medical Lab Technology, in her classroom on the Gillionville campus.

ASU graduate and English teacher at Terrell County High School poses proudly with Deidre Evans, Dr. James Hill (Chair of English and Modern Languages), and Laura Russell.

## ***Future English Teachers of Color***

Two Albany State University English majors, Deidre Evans and Laura Russell, were selected as the only recipients of the 2017 Future English Teachers of Color Award at the Annual Conference of the Georgia Council of Teachers of English (GCTE).



In addition to an award and a cash prize of \$250, Evans and Russell were required to attend the conference and submit an article for publication in the next issue of *Scribble 'n Bits*, GCTE's newsletter.

Designed to attract more teachers of color into the profession, the GCTE Conference Award for Future English Teachers of Color also seeks to provide an opportunity for pre-professional students to engage in their first professional experience. Both Evans and Russell are exemplary representatives of the pre-professional students GCTE seeks to recognize and attract.

# academics

Occupational Therapy students put together a team and competed in the Albany Advocacy Resource Center's annual Chuck McGarity Kickball Tournament. Proceeds benefit those with autism and the Kid's Corner Child Development Center. The team won first place in the tournament.



## Get a Life!

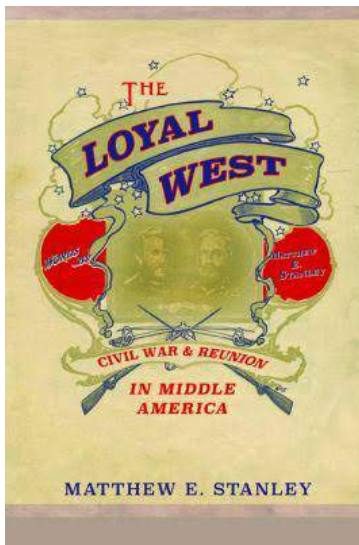
A student tests her flexibility during the Get a Life! Maze and Wellness Event in March. The event was a partnership between ASU and Phoebe Putney and was funded, in part, by grants brought to campus by George Thomas, Professor of Criminal Justice (pictured below), and other partners.



Dr. Forrest Thompson, Associate Professor of Business, presents senior Alecia Kenney with the Erika D. Estrada Award in Accounting. The award is in honor of Ms. Estrada, a 2005 graduate of the College of Business (magna cum laude) who is now the director of financial planning and analysis at Greenway Health.

# The Loyal West

In February, Assistant Professor of History, Matthew E. Stanley published his first book, *The Loyal West: Civil War and Reunion in Middle America*. Stanley's book explores an



area not often considered when discussing the Civil War and Reconstruction--the Lower Middle West. He argues that the region defied common assumptions about how Americans understood the war and shows how the region's citizens were commonly both anti-rebel and anti-black.

On April 14, the Department of History, Political Science, and Public Administration hosted a book signing to celebrate the publication. Stanley also published an editorial in the *Albany Herald* on May 3, rebutting an earlier editorial that downplayed the role of slavery in motivating the South during the Civil War.



The music department on the Gillionville Campus salutes their audience after a successful spring concert in April. Dr. Jeff Kluball, professor of music, was honored at the end of the performance for his dedication to the music department.





## *The Power of Public Art*

Art has the power to change minds, but in order to do so, it must first be experienced.

Sophomore Visual and Performing Arts major Quadre Curry took the opportunity of the bright weather to get some of his art seen, with the goal of making change. "I was trying to create conversations on campus about racial history. I have always wanted to address controversies, like racial relationships and beauty standards."

Curry relished the opportunity to involve the entire campus with his art. "I'm having a stronger interaction with my audience. People walked by, stopped, and took a picture. I added markers and people wrote on it. That's what's great about public art."



# college of education *PENning ceremony*



The day before graduation, the College of Education held its annual PENning ceremony, honoring those students who have completed their certification requirements and are ready to enter the teaching field.

"PEN" stands for "Professional Embracing the Novice," and each student to be PENned asks a working or retired educator to "PEN" them and take on the role of a continuing mentor.

**Left:** Dorene Medlin, Associate Professor of Education, presents the newly PENned Taylor Ramey after the ceremony. **Above:** Tevores Sumlin talks about the importance of teaching and mentoring as part of the celebration.

# Becoming new CE



The Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society is often referred to as the best kept secret in higher education. This honor society offers membership to high-achieving students in institutions that offer two-year degrees. PTK partners with many companies across the United States and its outlying islands and territories. The society has chapters spread out across the nation and a few in other countries. Unlike most honor societies, PTK seeks to provide continued recognition and aid to those hardworking students who make an effort to stand out in their communities. The opportunities for a Phi Theta Kappa are almost endless, as the organization partners with companies such as Coca-Cola and Geico to provide inviting benefits for its members. It is through such partnerships that Phi Theta Kappa is able to sponsor scholar programs such as the New Century Scholar.

The application process begins each year with a pool of hundreds of thousands of students from over a thousand community and technical colleges worldwide, with most of them being in the United States. All applicants complete an application package which is multifaceted, taking co-curricular activities and leadership into consideration, as well as academic prowess. The nominator for each school with an existing chapter of PTK then selects two to three students to be members of the All-State Academic Team. The nominator for our school is Mr. Frank Malinowski, the current advisor for our PTK chapter and all-around amazing individual.

Being nominated to the All-Georgia Academic Team was a great honor in itself. It was wonderful to be named as one of Georgia's best and brightest. After being nominated to the All-State team, the applications are re-screened and scored based on a combination of factors. When this is done, the New

Century Scholar is selected. One New Century Scholar is selected per state. There are only fifty total, the best out of the hundreds of thousands of applicants. These individuals are the highest ranking individuals out of all the applicants in their respective states. Each scholar is honored at a national ceremony and awarded a \$2000 scholarship, along with nationwide recognition. The New Century Scholar program is co-sponsored by the American Association of Community Colleges and the Coca Cola Scholars Foundation, as well as the general Coca Cola Foundation. This year, I was selected as the New Century Scholar for the state of Georgia. The 2017 honor ceremony was held at the Hilton Riverside Hotel in New Orleans, LA. I was able to meet and interact with some of the most amazing young people in the nation. These peers of mine have inspired me to do as much as I can for the betterment of the Albany community and the advancement of knowledge.

The ability to work tirelessly stems from my secondary school background. I attended Loyola Jesuit



College. Popularly known as the best secondary school in my home country of Nigeria. LJC taught me that there is no such thing as being the best because there is always room for better. I passed the monumentally difficult entrance exam and began attending the school at the age of 11. As such, I spent my formative years learning to strive for greatness. Being on the Gillionville campus of ASU has given me the opportunity to do so on a more personal level. The excellent faculty and staff I have interacted with have been highly instrumental to my achievement. The small faculty: student ratio also makes the classroom experience much more

valuable. Working with professors such as Dr. Hussain, Professor Lagnaoui, Mrs. Handelman, and Professor Anderson has taught me that the brightest gems are often found deepest within the plainest rocks. I hope to continue on the path to success and, one day, win a Nobel Prize for research carried out in the field of neurodegenerative diseases. I also hope to become a neurosurgeon – a rather daunting prospect, especially for a black female. I, however, am not at all worried. I am going to stubbornly pursue my goal and lead wherever I go; I am, after all, a Golden Ram, so why not make use of a ram's defining characteristics?

--Christine Chioma Nnyamah

# Georgia's Century Scholar

*"I am honored to stand as the representative for the bright youth of Georgia who strive to make a difference in the environment and work hard."*

*-Christine  
Chioma  
Nnyamah*

**Top left:** ASU President Arthur Dunning honors Nnyamah for being named Georgia's New Century Scholar.

**Left:** Nnyamah "cleaned up" at the Honors and Awards Night on Gillionville campus, receiving several honors, including Outstanding Scholar for Science and Technology, All-State Academic Team, a Certificate for Achievement for earning a 4.0 GPA, and others.

**Right:** Nnyamah stands with the list of other New Century Scholars from across the country.





# honors & awards nights

Every spring, Albany State University honors the hundreds of undergraduate students who have demonstrated superiority and excellence in achieving and excelling in academic course work and research.

Honors Day ceremonies were held on each campus, honoring students graduating with associates degrees and certificates, in keeping with the New ASU's dual function as a state university with an ongoing mission to provide access to students pursuing education at several levels.

**Above left:** ASU President Arthur Dunning presents Deirdre Evans with a Certificate of Academic Achievement.

**Above center:** Rani George, Interim Dean of Arts and Humanities, presents the Dean's Award for Academic Achievement to James Hollie.

**Above right:** Provost Tau Kadhi presents Alexius Lampkin with a Certificate of Appreciation for delivering a keynote address at the Honors Day ceremony. Lampkin also received the Dean's Award from the College of Sciences and Health Professions.

**Right:** Joyce Johnson, Interim Dean of Sciences and Technology, presents a Certificate of Achievement to Sabrina Harris for earning Superior Student status.





**Top:** ASU President Arthur Dunning opens Honors Day on the Radium Springs campus.

**Above:** Kerri Johnson, Interim Dean of Health Professions, presents a Certificate of Achievement to Katie Crofty for earning Superior Student status. Crofty was also awarded the Outstanding Scholar Award by the Darton College of Health Professions.

**Left:** Evan Ridley delivers one of the student keynote addresses at the Honors Day ceremony. Ridley was also given the Dean's Award for academic achievement in the College of Business.



# graduate symposium

**Top:** Linda Amankwaa, Associate Professor of Nursing, discusses William Carter's research into retention strategies. As a result of his fine work, Carter was invited to join the university's new Retention Committee, which is looking for strategies to help increase students' chances of completing their degrees.

**Above:** Andrea Fletcher shows her pride by taking a group selfie in front of her poster, which details her research into dual-enrollment programs for high school students.



Research remains a core principal of higher education, both in its practice and its application, and Albany State University provides both its graduate and undergraduate students opportunities to engage in original research.

The Graduate School collaborates with the Masters Enhancement and Expansion Grant Program to highlight innovative research conducted by faculty and graduate students across disciplines. Graduate students are able to present their work in a peer-reviewed environment and get a head start on potential academic careers. Each year, the Graduate School publishes a proceedings journal of the finest work presented at the Symposium.

Undergraduate students also get in on the research action at the Undergraduate Research Colloquium.



**Above:** Tarrisa Simmons presents her research on the use of data-driven decision making on choosing a major.

**Above right:** Kyle Brown presents his research: "The Evolution of Habitual Reading and College Success."

## Arrive Alive

Police Chief John Fields gets his grill on at the Texting and Driving Simulator Event.

As part of the Arrive Alive Tour, sponsored by UNITE, a national health and wellness organization, the program allows students to experience texting and driving in a safe environment.



Participants come to a greater understanding of the risks of texting while driving--a practice that has negative impacts closely mirroring the effects of driving while intoxicated.

# staff making

Captain Anita Allen discusses the perils of texting and driving with an ASU student.







# an impact



**Above:** The facilities team has been busy beautifying the campus, focusing especially on the area between Billy C. Black and Hyper Auditorium. Front row: Robert Holmes, Ricky King, Michael Simmons, Eric Thomas. Back row: Frank Lewis, Dan Story, and Willis Mims. Standing: Billy Edwards.

**Left:** "Coach" Antonio Leroy welcomes some young men to the Winter Youth Summit hosted by the Center for the African American Male.



**Top:** The Blue and Gold Scrimmage Game is always a highlight of the spring practice season. The game gives the coaching team an opportunity to evaluate the roster in a full-contact situation.

**Above:** Jackie Joyner Kersee signs a team jersey for the track team during her visit in March.

**Right:** A student athlete receives some last-minute coaching before his event at the Alice Coachman Invitational.



## *Men's Golf Makes ASU History*



All kinds of Albany State history was made on April 19th as the ASU Men's Golf Team won not only its first Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference Championship, but also the first athletic championship of the New ASU.

What makes the accomplishment even more remarkable is that, one year ago, ASU had no golf team. Coach Gary Hilton assumed command of the team-to-be one year ago and put together a squad with four transfers and one freshman player. Hilton acknowledged the difficulty of beginning a new team. "Starting a program from scratch is a difficult process because there is zero history for you to sell to future recruits."

**Top:** Russel Sabol and Tyler George put in the practice time that helped lead to the team's first championship,

**Above:** The team gathers after winning the SIAC Championship. Front row: Tyler Hanson, Head Coach Gary Hilton, Athletic Director Sherie Gordon, Tyler George, and Dominic DiGiacomo. Back row: Assistant Coach Gene Drew, Russel Sabol, and Davis Verner.

# 25 years and COUN

The mission of Albany State University is only possible because of the people who support it. On April 6, ASU celebrated Founder's Day, and as part of that celebration, honored the faculty and staff who have dedicated 25 years of service to the institution.

Here, we will profile the faculty and staff who have given a quarter century of their lives to serving Darton State College and Albany State University--as well as the New ASU--and the students who chose to move their lives forward here.

In those 25 years, the institution has undergone massive changes, the consolidation only being the most recent. In those years, both the Gillionville and Radium Springs campuses have

grown considerably, as have the populations that call the campuses their educational home.

The most common observation by both the faculty and staff is that technology has revolutionized the experience of higher education for everyone: students, faculty, and staff.

How we teach in the classroom and online, how we communicate, how we keep track of grades and records, how we regulate the very temperature in our classrooms, dorms, and offices: all of this and more has revolutionized higher education.

But the experience of that change is personal, and here are stories of the personal relationships that long-serving faculty and staff have developed with their campuses.



# ITING

There's a singular experience that happens to Nancy Beamon every now and then that puts all of her work over the last 25 years into sharp focus. It happens when she bumps into her graduates.

"Every now and then, I'm visiting a hospital and someone will wave me over and whisper to me, 'I just bought my first car.'" Beamon sees how education can transform lives. "We were able to make that happen."

Beamon is an associate professor and the Director of Histotechnology and Medical Lab Technology. "Around 2000, we did a community needs assessment. Hospital after hospital told me: 'We need histotechs.' (technicians who prepare tissue samples for diagnosis). I started our histotech degree and certificate, and I am really proud of that."

And Beamon remains comfortable with change. "We are confronted with many challenges--such as the consolidation--but with challenges come opportunities."



*Nancy Beamon*

## *Celious Williams*

Celious Williams is the master of the boilers, but achieving that status has been a long and occasionally dramatic journey.

According to Williams, "The '94 flood was the biggest event of my time here. We brought in modern day equipment and heating and air conditioning. We could sit in the office and control the whole campus." Williams' time and expertise led to his promotion to being superintendent of electrical and mechanical operations.

But Williams sees the work he and his colleagues do as part of a larger purpose. "One of our main roles is helping educate these kids, giving them heating and cooling. Taking care of them."

Part of that has been helping to ensure the financial health of the institution, and Williams has been a key player in finding efficiencies that have saved over \$400,000.

*"Mr. Williams was very instrumental in the energy conservation we've done."*

*Lee Lowell,  
Director of Plant  
Operations*

# Roger Marietta

Politics, a commitment to serving students, and a powerful sense of humor characterize the 25 years Roger Marietta has spent on the Gillionville campus.

Marietta, an associate professor of political science, is fully a political creature, and he has put that into action both off campus and on. He served as mayor of Fayetteville, Georgia and has been a city commissioner for Albany's fourth ward for nine years and is currently mayor pro tem for Albany.

But his most consistent area of service has been in support of students. And he knows that being there for the students of our region means meeting them where they are. "I try to help them. I give them a lot of bonus opportunities. Students like that."

Even more powerful, maybe, are Marietta's contributions to campus culture. "We used to try to have the Young Democrats and Young Republicans on campus, but after the election, they would disappear. So I started this thing called the DIRT Club, which stood for the Democrat, Independent, Republican Team. We just focused



on having forums for people to speak about political issues. We had candidate forums, and we continue to do that."

Marietta has always set an example of activism and encouraged students to do so as well--and no issue is too small. "When I first got here, the students didn't have an ATM." So Marietta approached the administration to advocate for students' needs. "So I asked, 'Why don't they have an ATM? Why can't they buy stamps on campus? Little things like that. The first Foodstock (an on-campus tradition and festival) was a protest of our cafeteria. And we started the newspaper, too, over here."

## *The Marietta Humor Tradition*



Marietta and Richard Bivens, who did public relations for Darton College, take in some sun during a Beach Day in the early 1990s.

Marietta has always depended on humor both to educate and to provoke. After using rhyming to stay awake on long commutes in the late 1990s, he began a tradition of rapping in class. And during the time he advised the student newspaper, he bought one of the "Quarter-Pound Burgers" sold in the school cafeteria. He took it to the science department to have it weighed. It was .16 pound, *frozen*. He and the newspaper staff put it on the front page. The college president at the time, Peter Sireno, noticed.

"Sireno was furious with me."

# 25 years *and* **COUNTING**

## *Marion Ryant*

"Having lived here during the flood (in 1994), what captures me is the resilience. We bonded together," explains Marion Ryant, Chief Budget Officer. "We were all in the library. That building only got a little water and it was our command center. We all pulled together--staff, students, and faculty."

Like so many ASU veterans who lived through the flood, the event was a defining moment for Ryant. "I had my laundry basket with some of our most important files. I kept it in my car's trunk. That's a proud one, to me."

Since then, ASU has seen nothing so consistent as change. "When I first got here, we were much more manual--not even everyone had computers! Or email! Those sorts of things made us more efficient, which serves the students. That's important."

Ryant is one of the leaders helping consolidation happen on a financial basis, and she is proud of what they are accomplishing. "It's almost like a sandwich. It's always 'students and faculty,' but staff puts it together. It takes all three of us."



## *Edward Fox*

Ed Fox has a clear method for measuring the change that developed in his 25 years: growing sheer size. "We went from 2000 students when I got here to about 6000. Lots more square footage to take care of."

Fox's title is "Skilled Craftsperson," but he is known as the guy who can fix just about anything, and he has evolved with the times and the demands of the campus--which have become increasingly technological. "I can look at individual air handler and control all of the functions from the office--anywhere we have a web browser."

Fox keeps his eyes on the prize, though. "We're working for the students. We like to keep it comfortable for them, so they have a good environment for learning."



# 25 years *and* **COUNTING**

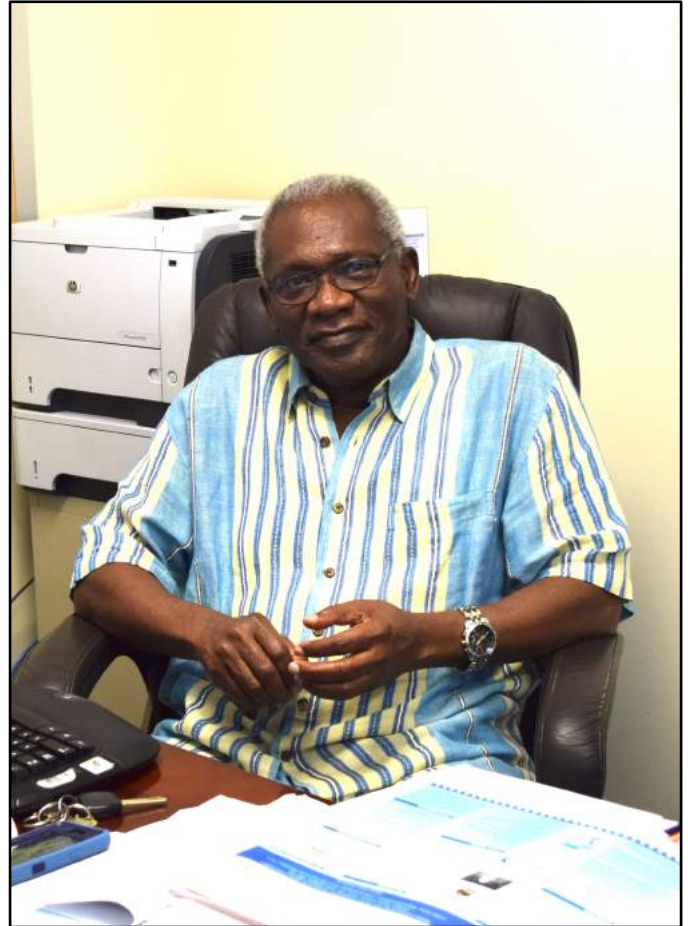
For Olatunde Okediji, the biggest change that teachers have to deal with now is the competition for students' attention, with social media and smart phones taking up so much of their consciousness.

Okediji, who has served as Interim Chair of Natural Sciences for a year, has been consistent in his work ethic. "When I came here, I knew I dare not go to class without being completely prepared."

## *Olatunde Okediji*

In more recent years, and with the help of his colleagues, he has expanded the idea of preparation. "I'm particularly proud of the MOUs (memoranda of understanding) we put together to help students go to medical school. Everywhere I go, within three or 400 miles, I see our students teaching or in practice in those medical schools."

It is a powerful legacy.



## *Stacey Marshall*

For Stacey Marshall, the 25 years she has given to her students on the Gillionville campus have been a journey, but metaphorically and literally. She has driven into Albany from Moultrie for more than two decades and put "hundreds of thousands of miles on many cars."

Of course, on her path to becoming Director of Dental Hygiene, she and her students have travelled another kind of journey. "When we started, we used projectors and mimeography." Marshall is thankful that





## Rodger Hall

For Rodger Hall, taking care of the campus is simply treating it like home. Hall describes what he does as the "beautification of the campus. Making it bigger and better."

The flood that proved ASU to be unsinkable also provided an early training ground in what it meant to belong to the ASU family for Hall. "We had to go into the flooded buildings and move all of the equipment and furniture."

But Hall and the other members of the facilities team saw the recovery as also an opportunity to build community. "At the time, the facilities management team cut out a big sign to put over the temporary facilities that said "RAM COUNTRY."

As Hall explained, it's about "Being culturally involved."

the students generally come into the program fairly well attuned to modern technology.

"We have digital radiography and the capacity for digital records." Graduates of the program are ready to succeed in even the most modern of today's highly technical dental practices. Graduates also successfully find positions in nursing homes, hospitals, military bases, and public health clinics.

Programs in Allied Health, such as Dental Hygiene, are poised to be among the most successful in the years to come, as the health fields are projected to be one of the strongest job growth areas in the New

ASU's multi-county service area.

*"We have had a lot of first generation college graduates. They are career ready. They go out and get good jobs!"*

And Marshall has worked hard to provide continuous improvement for the program. "I became a site visitor for SACS (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools) and CODA (Commission on Dental Accreditation)."

Working for these accrediting bodies allows faculty to leverage those new skills for their own programs. "It's great to see how other schools do things and bring great ideas home."



## Mary Thornton

As Office Manager and Supervisor in the registrar's office, the biggest change Mary Thornton has witnessed in her 25 years on the Radium Springs campus has been the preparation of the students she meets every day.

"The students are more engaged and more knowledgeable about their courses, where they're going, and how to get there," she explains.

Like many of the staff and faculty who have been on the New ASU's campuses for more than two decades, she cites the technology as creating the biggest change in her daily work. "I first started working here--as a temp in 1990 and full time in 1992--and it was all manual back then. Today, we process everything, like transcripts, much faster."

# 25 years **and COUNTING**

*"When I first came here, it was a very small campus. We didn't have the theatre, the new gym, or the administrative building. Over 25 years, we have really grown."*

For professor of chemistry, Michael May, the story of his time on the Gillionville campus has been one of adaptation.

"When we started with the online programs, the director of distance learning asked me if I'd like to develop some online courses. It kind of progressed from there. It really felt like we filled a needed niche for students with that initiative."

## Michael May

And this responsiveness to student needs has had a real impact--on students' lives. "The biggest thing for me is having so many students go to pharmacy school, med school, or vet school. And then you turn around and see one in the hospital or go to the pharmacy and have someone come to the counter and say, 'Hi! Well, how are you?'"

And what can be more rewarding than that?



*"I enjoy  
enjoy  
working  
with  
students and  
helping them  
achieve their  
goals."*

**TING**



For Daphne Harden, Coordinator of Student Accounts, the key to giving students what they need to succeed is the personal touch. "In financial aid, having someone sit down and explain the situation so the student knows how to handle it."

*"You know you've done something,  
being able to help somebody."*

***-Daphne Harden***

The way the Office of Financial Aid helps students has certainly changed, though. "Automation has taken some time to get students on board, but it's going to be a lot more student friendly moving forward. Students today are so tech savvy--they'll be able to take a picture of a form and send it in." And this should enable the New ASU to expand its reach and attract new students. "For our online students, that's especially helpful."

Harden never loses focus on what the ultimate goal is. "Being a good steward of their financial aid means making sure that students can make the best decisions."





First, I would like to thank Drs. Scott and Fontenot for organizing this publication. This issue features a fantastic culmination of the faculty and staff accomplishments of Albany State University (ASU). What the ASU family accomplished and continue to accomplish is truly awe inspiring. Specifically, one of our faculty profiles in the feature particularly caught my interest.

Nancy Beamon, who directs our programs in Histotechnology and Medical Lab Technology on the Gillionville campus, stated to an interviewer “with challenges come opportunities.” Hence, this issue of *Points of Pride* highlights how our faculty, staff, students, and Beamon herself, are taking advantage of opportunities and creating new ones. In its five colleges, and over 6,200 students, ASU is committed to a continual pursuit of excellence. Every corner of our institution, and every page of this magazine, provides evidence of the energy that promises to keep Albany State University an academic and community leader in Southwest Georgia.

Go Rams!

Tau Kadhi  
Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs

