

# SOUTH

USA NATIONAL ALUMNI  
ASSOCIATION

Spring 2018

## *Around The World in 80 Stays*

**A CHRONICLE OF THE MACQUEEN'S WORLD TOUR  
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION UNVEILS NEW LOOK, SOUTH ALUMNA GOES TO THE DOGS  
DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARDS**



# SOUTH



The Spring 2018 issue of SOUTH is a publication of the Office of Alumni Relations and the USA National Alumni Association. It is intended to inform alumni and friends of current events and issues concerning them.

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# South Alabama

NATIONAL ALUMNI ASSOCIATION







As the University grows, and we initiate the process of building a new alumni center, the alumni board believed the time was right to review the alumni association's branding. After thoughtful consideration and feedback from our alumni and current students, the board approved a new brand identity for the association in March. The purpose of the rebranding campaign is to bring consistency and quality to the association's marketing and communication efforts, to more closely align with the University's brand and to create an identity that connects our several generations of alumni.

Among the new brand identity is the association's logo, which features the Gordon and Geri Moulton Tower and Alumni Plaza, a campus landmark that holds meaning for both alumni and students. The branding includes the slogan We Are South Alumni, which is in line with the University's slogan, We Are South, and reflects the spirit and pride that we, as alumni, have for our University, and the sense of community we feel as part of the South family.

"We are proud of South's growth and direction over the past 55 years, and the national alumni association board of directors is excited about the future of our University," said Doug Whitmore '05, president of the USA National Alumni Association. "Our new brand identity exemplifies the relationship between the University and its alumni and how we will continue to grow together."

We Are South Alumni!

Karen Edwards '80  
Executive Director, USA  
National Alumni Association





## Meisler Donates \$5 Million for Trauma Center

Longtime University of South Alabama supporter Herbert A. Meisler has donated \$5 million to expand the USA Medical Center's Trauma Center, which will be renamed the Fanny R. Meisler Trauma Center, in honor of Meisler's late wife.

The gift will more than double the size of USA's trauma center from 11,000 to 27,000 square feet and convert the current 22 private and semi-private exam rooms to 41 private exam beds. The renovation will serve to meet the increasing demands placed upon the region's only Level I trauma center.

"The USA Medical Center serves thousands of people each year and saves the lives of our citizens every day," Meisler said. "The expansion of its Level I trauma center—the only one of its kind in the region—is vitally important to our community. I am so pleased to be able to give back to the University of South Alabama and to the USA Health system in this way."

In addition to Meisler's gift, Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey announced last August that \$4 million from an economic bond issue will be directed to the cost of the trauma center's renovation.

"The USA Medical Center's Level I trauma center is critical to our state's Gulf Coast region," Gov. Ivey said. "Not only is it a vital economic draw for corporate development, a facility of this caliber is imperative to our citizens who rely on receiving life-saving care. Mr. Meisler's generosity will allow the trauma center expansion to move forward and become a reality."



## USA celebrates grand opening of MCI Kilborn Clinic in Fairhope

University of South Alabama leaders and supporters celebrated the grand opening of the USA Mitchell Cancer Institute Kilborn Clinic in Fairhope on January 19, flanked by elected officials, employees, patients and former U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Regina Benjamin.

The 17,896-square-foot building, located adjacent to the Baldwin County Satellite Courthouse on Fairhope Avenue, offers a full range of cancer services, including doctor's visits, chemotherapy, radiation treatment, genetic counseling, access to clinical trials, support groups and educational sessions. It more than doubles MCI's previous space at Thomas Hospital.

Fairhope attorney Vincent F. Kilborn III, a longtime supporter of USA and the Mitchell Cancer Institute, said he decided to support cancer research and treatment in south Alabama because he had lost several family members to the disease. "It was Mayer Mitchell's dream to bring the opportunity for cancer treatment here," he said, referring to the longtime USA trustee and donor.

In April 2016, USA leaders broke ground on the treatment center, which blends Fairhope architectural styles with the streamlined design of the Mitchell Cancer Institute in Mobile. Part of USA Health, MCI operates a third office in Monroeville.





## 84-year-old Graduates

When 84-year-old Murdoch Newton Campbell strode across the Mitchell Center stage on Dec. 9, 2017 to receive his bachelor's degree in Interdisciplinary Studies — Applied Sciences concentration, he may have become the oldest graduate of the University of South Alabama in its 54-year history.

When South was chartered in 1963, Campbell was already a graduate of Vigor High School (Class of '50) who'd served during the Korean War as a paratrooper with the U.S. Army's 82nd Airborne Division and was becoming known as a dependable employee at various local companies.

After retiring 20 years ago, Campbell did some consulting, traveling across the U.S., based on his extensive expertise of the federal Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970. After "a bad back" forced his retirement from consulting "because of the driving," he puttered with more hobbies before deciding going to college would be a good way to keep his mind active.

"I've truly enjoyed just about all my time out here, and I've enjoyed all the people I've studied with, but it was hard work," Campbell said. "I'm crazy about South, and being here has become addictive to me, and it's as much home to me as home is, and I hope to keep enjoying it."



## University Libraries Celebrate 50 Years

The University of South Alabama libraries – including research and medical divisions, a federal documents depository and an historic archive – are celebrating 50 years of commitment and service to the University and the community in 2018.

The library's initial location was the campus' first building, known today as the Whiddon Administration Building. The library opened its own building on Sept. 15, 1968. An extensive addition and renovation, completed in March 2003, produced today's main library. It was designated the Marx Library in 2013.

Today, the Marx Library contains about 1.8 million books and other printed materials as well as extensive digital access to research materials. The system includes the Joseph and Rebecca Mitchell Learning Resource Center in the Mitchell College of Business, the Baugh Biomedical Library near the College of Medicine, the USA Medical Center Health Information Resources Center and service sites at Children's & Women's Hospital and USA Baldwin County.

Founded in 1978, the Doy Leale McCall Rare Book and Manuscript Library houses one of the largest collections of historic documents, photos, art and memorabilia in the area, including the Doy Leale McCall Sr. Collection, containing the papers of 15 different families and several individuals, as well as more than 13,000 printed items that document the history of the Alabama Black Belt from 1806 to the mid-20th century. The collection, valued at \$3.1 million, was donated to the University by McCall's three grandchildren.

## MCI and Auburn Collaborate in Cancer Fight

Dr. Jennifer Scalici, a gynecologic oncologist with the University of South Alabama's Mitchell Cancer Institute, is leading an MCI team partnering with Auburn's poultry science department to determine if a compound developed inside the Mobile center can successfully prevent ovarian cancer in hens.

With testing set to begin "any day" on a potential preventive drug targeting ovarian cancer, the project's lead researcher said perseverance and timing helped forge a "perfect partnership" that could foster future collaborations – and hopefully, breakthroughs.

"Our collaboration with Auburn University has been critical in helping this all fall into place, and I really think there's an opportunity to build on this new relationship for years to come," said Scalici.





## Richie Riley Named Head Men's Basketball Coach

Richie Riley has been named the new University of South Alabama head men's basketball coach by Jaguar Director of Athletics Dr. Joel Erdmann. Riley, previously the head coach at Nicholls State University, becomes the 10th head coach in the history of the program, which just completed its 50th anniversary campaign.

"We conducted a rigorous national search looking for specific experience, skills and traits that are the best fit for our men's basketball program today and moving forward," Erdmann said. "We are excited to work together to move our men's basketball program forward."

"I think with the resources we have there is no reason we shouldn't be competing for championships every year in the Sun Belt [Conference]; that's our goal, to get this program there as quickly as possible and sustain that success," said Riley.



## South Alabama Introduces New Jaguar Football Coach Steve Campbell

Steve Campbell was named head football coach at the University of South Alabama in December. Campbell replaces the only head coach in the program's 10-year history, Joey Jones.

"Coach Campbell possesses coaching expertise, high school and junior college recruiting relationships, and a contagious passion for the game of football," said Jaguar Director of Athletics Dr. Joel Erdmann. "He is well-respected by his peers, and at the core of his identity is a man of character and deep values."

Campbell, 51, comes to South after a four-year stint at Central Arkansas, where he guided the Bears to a 33-15 mark including a record of 24-3 in the Southland Conference the last three seasons. This fall UCA went 10-2 and claimed the conference title with a 9-0 mark to earn the No. 4 seed in the NCAA Football Championship Subdivision playoffs.

In 19 seasons as a head coach, Campbell — who was inducted into the NJCAA Hall of Fame in 2014, and also served as the President of the NJCAA Coaches Association in 2012 — has never guided a team that finished with a losing record while compiling a 159-53 overall mark.

A native of Cantonment, Fla., Campbell received his undergraduate degree in economics from Troy in 1988, and a master's degree in business administration from Auburn in 1990. He and his wife, Shellie, have three children: Kelsie, Steven Jr. and Tate.



## USA Junior Named State's Top Civil Engineering Student

Peyton Posey, a junior at the University of South Alabama, has been named the state's civil engineering student of the year, selected by the Alabama Section of the American Society of Civil Engineers. She was chosen among nominees from Alabama A&M University, Auburn University, the University of Alabama, the University of Alabama at Birmingham and the University of Alabama in Huntsville.

Posey, a 2015 Mobile Christian graduate, carries a 3.77 grade-point average — and a perfect 4.0 in civil engineering courses — while being an active member of South's ASCE student chapter. In the community, she participates monthly with the Bay Area Food Bank and this past fall worked with Habitat for Humanity.

"I love the civil engineering program at South, and I am so glad I am a part of it," said Posey.

Dr. John Cleary, P.E., an assistant professor in the department of civil, coastal and environmental engineering, has taught Posey in several classes and is her academic advisor. "Peyton is the type of student that we love to have in class. She is attentive, hard-working and intuitive," Cleary said.

With her Student of the Year honor, Posey will receive a \$5,000 scholarship from the Alabama Chapter of the ASCE, to be applied to her senior year at South. She is scheduled to graduate in May of 2019.





# SCIENCE. TECHNOLOGY. HOPE. We have cancer surrounded.

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As the region's most advanced cancer treatment center, we're not just in the fight—we're leading it. From research and clinical trials to the only CyberKnife in the area, we're surrounding patients with more hope than ever before—including our newest treatment center location, the USA MCI Kilborn Clinic in Fairhope.



# Around the World in 80 Stays



“It was a  
gob-smacking  
wonder ride from  
beginning to end!”

—KIM MACQUEEN

For people who recently flew around the world in their new jet, University of South Alabama alumni Julian and Kim MacQueen are incredibly grounded.

The couple dubbed the trip “Around the World in 80 Stays,” flying in their new HondaJet HA-420, the first jet ever produced by the automotive manufacturer.

“I ordered this jet 10 years ago when it was still in the drawing board stage,” said MacQueen, 67, who paid for his first pilot lessons years ago with tip money he earned while working as a waiter. It’s the third jet the couple has owned, and they were the first to fly a HondaJet around the world beginning Aug. 6 through Oct. 16, 2017.

Throughout much of the journey, Kim MacQueen was in the co-pilot seat.

“I have four hours in the pilot log book, and I took a course to learn how to land a jet in case something happened to Julian,” she explained. “Everything about the trip went easily, and it was a gob-smacking wonder ride from beginning to end!”

The couple talked about the trip, their guiding philosophy and their work ethic during an interview inside their apartment at the Hilton on Pensacola Beach, the flagship hotel of their company. Like so much of their lives, the spacious rooms, filled with world-class artwork — including sculptures by his sister — and overlooking



“We were looking for new ways of hospitality as well as new ways hospitality was part of each community, and we wanted to learn the role each destination played in those concepts.”

—JULIAN MACQUEEN

the Gulf of Mexico, resulted from an idea to determine if it's time for them to downsize from the large home in nearby Gulf Breeze where they raised their family.

Working together to hammer out new and innovative ideas in each of their careers and lives, plus incredibly hard work by each, has led to great success during their 40-year marriage. Julian MacQueen is founder and CEO of Innisfree Hotels, an innovative company that places enormous value on the worth of its employees as well as in a culture of “delivering excellent service, guest satisfaction and return on its investment.” Kim MacQueen, who has worked as a therapist, especially with couples, and has taught at the university level, is now pursuing a multidisciplinary doctorate through the California Institute of Integral Studies. Their family includes Jonathan, their 45-year-old son and his wife Kate, Skye, their 36-year-old daughter and two “adorable” grandchildren, ages 4 and 11.

They have been recognized for their generous philanthropy in a variety of areas, including education, the arts and health care, and they point to their shared Bahá'í Faith, based on the principles of giving back to the community as well as helping others to reach their highest potential, as the impetus for their generosity. In 2014, USA's National Alumni Association honored Julian MacQueen with a Distinguished Alumni Award for his achievements as an entrepreneur, commercial pilot, developer and CEO of Innisfree, Inc., based in Pensacola, Fla.

Recently, the MacQueens donated funds for construction of a permanent home for the USA National Alumni Association. The building, which will be located on USA South Drive across from the Moulton Tower and Alumni Plaza, will be named the Julian and Kim MacQueen Alumni Center.

“The time I spent at USA was important to me,” said Julian MacQueen, who graduated with a degree in psychology in 1973. “During my time there, I attended my first Bahá'í meeting on campus through an ‘experimental college’ endorsed by the administration.”

Outside the classroom, he also had a student job in the Office of Public Relations, worked as a psychiatric attendant at the USA Medical Center and later held an off-campus job at the Admiral Semmes Hotel in downtown Mobile.

But, the Birmingham, Ala., native's introduction to the hotel business began the summer when he was 15 with a job busing tables at the Jack Tar Beach Hotel, a well-known

Destin, Fla., venue that opened its doors in the 1950s.

“I realized that I just loved the hotel business, and I went back the next year. I think the service side of the business resonated with me, leading me on. It was about the idea of creating environments conducive to making connections that intrigued me,” Julian MacQueen explained.

“The psychology degree Julian got at USA was a huge help for him going into the hotel business,” Kim MacQueen added.

Her husband is known for his innovative approach to managing employees in a way that encourages them to speak out and participate fully even as they learn on the job. The concept is unusual in many workplaces today.

The company's website describes it as:

- Nurturing, encouraging and empowering.
- Intrapreneurial (behaving like an entrepreneur while working within a large organization).
- Consultative. Seeking the input of employees at all levels.
- Servant leadership.

He's also quick to give his wife credit for helping him. “On our honeymoon, we worked by counting cars in hotel parking lots. We were looking at tags to see where people were from. We bounce ideas off each other. That's the way we've always done things.” Sitting next to him, his wife nods her agreement.

The sharing of ideas is important to the MacQueens, and that atmosphere extends to their wishes for the new alumni center. “We would hope to see this center used as a place for discussions about ideas, as a facility for teaching and as a place for the embracing of all as one human family. We want this to be a learning center,” Julian MacQueen said.

Asked about any plans for retirement, the pair looks at each other and hesitates before Julian MacQueen answers, explaining that their trip around the world was more than a vacation.

“We called it ‘Around the World in 80 Stays.’ At each place we stopped, we were looking for new ways of hospitality as well as new ways hospitality was part of each community, and we wanted to learn the role each destination played in those concepts,” MacQueen explained. “What better way is there to live life than to travel and enjoy work at the same time?”

To learn more about Julian and Kim MacQueen's trip around the world, including a blog, videos and photos, visit [www.aroundtheworldin80stays.com](http://www.aroundtheworldin80stays.com).





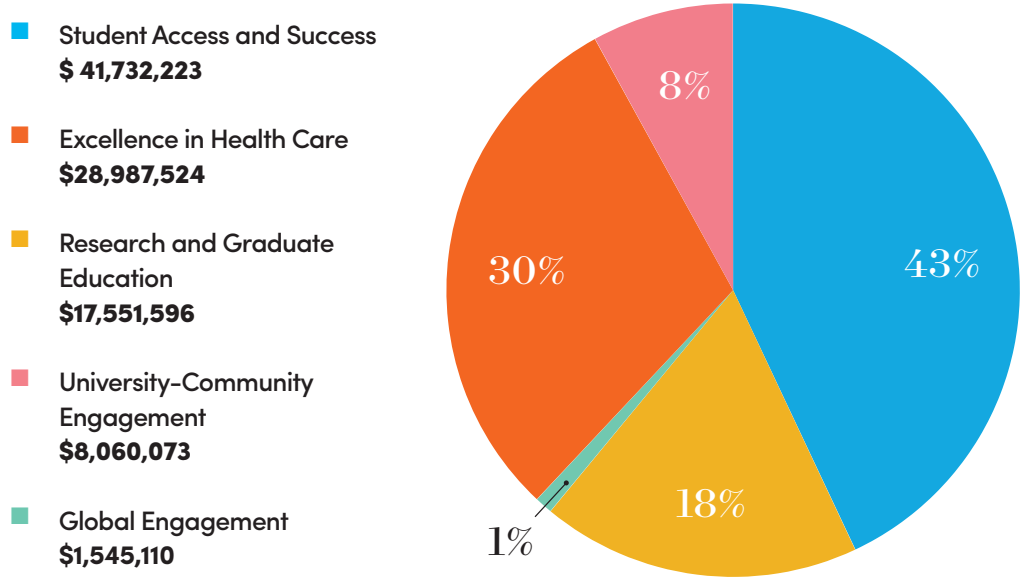
**THE SOUTH FUND** is a way for alumni, parents, businesses, employees and friends to provide annual support for the University's goals. Investments in the South Fund are used to elevate USA's mission to make a difference in the lives of those it serves through promoting discovery, health and learning. Gifts to the South Fund enhance student scholarships, faculty research and quality health care.

The South Fund is just one source of funding for the University, but it is a vital source, and one that allows its students, faculty, researchers and health care professionals to continue to move forward in the 21st century.

# SOUTH FUND

To support the South Fund, visit [SouthAlabama.edu/SouthFund](http://SouthAlabama.edu/SouthFund).

## PERCENT OF GIVING BY CATEGORY { FY 2018 }



“The Mitchell-Moulton Scholarship Initiative is giving young people an opportunity to better their lives through education without having to worry about the financial aspects that bar some people from pursuing higher education.”

—CHRISTIAN MANGANTI  
SOPHOMORE,  
MMSI RECIPIENT

## Mitchell-Moulton Scholarship Initiative

The Mitchell-Moulton Scholarship Initiative began in 2013 when long-time South supporter Abraham Mitchell announced a \$25 million matching challenge to honor late President Emeritus V. Gordon Moulton.

AMOUNT  
RAISED TO DATE  
**\$16,638,995**

NEW GIFTS  
AND PLEDGES  
**7,554**



ABRAHAM MITCHELL





“We are continually working together to elevate USA, and this is not possible without the support of our entire South community.”

—DR. TONY WALDROP  
PRESIDENT  
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA



## USA Giving Day

The University of South Alabama community banded together to show their South pride during the inaugural USA Giving Day on Thursday, March 22. During the 24-hour fundraising initiative, a total of \$364,368 was raised from 957 donors to support student success, excellence in health care, athletics and the MacQueen Alumni Center.



## USA Employee Giving

University faculty and staff have long recognized the importance of investing in South.

**223**  
**ENDOWMENTS**  
have been created by 178 faculty and staff.

**MORE THAN**  
**60%**  
of employees support USA through the South Fund.

“The South Fund allows me to invest in a product in which I am genuinely committed. I believe in USA as a conduit to an enhanced quality of life and a greater capacity to contribute to the greater good for students and other stakeholders in our market area and beyond.”

—DR. ALVIN WILLIAMS  
MITCHELL COLLEGE  
OF BUSINESS  
MARKETING AND  
QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS





# South Alumna Goes to the Dogs

AND FINDS NEW HOMES FOR AREA CANINES

The world of Stephanie Eads-Williamson has literally gone to the dogs...and, the cats...and, really, any stray animal that crosses her path.

"It is true that years ago I once rescued a duck by waddling it home from where I'd found it near a well-known restaurant in Daphne," Eads-Williamson said.

She grew up in northeast Alabama in an unincorporated community known as Dog Town, located in DeKalb County, something that she said adds to her love of dogs.

"I've done animal rescue since I was about 8 years old," Eads-Williamson shared. "Where I grew up was a popular dumping ground for dogs, and my family always took care of them. It's just the way I was made."

After graduating from the University of South Alabama in 1992 with a major in marine biology and a minor in chemistry, she worked in pharmaceutical sales for 15 years before she left in late 2012 to devote most of her time to saving animals through her nonprofit, "Save a Stray." Her decision came as the issue of animal rescue was emerging as a popular cause in America and around the world.

"Rescuing strays, then adopting them out, rather than breeding animals for sale, is really hitting the mainstream now, and one of the reasons it has taken off is because more and more celebrities are

becoming involved in animal rescue, which has drawn a lot of attention to it," Eads-Williamson said. "I think we are in the middle of a whole cultural change, particularly as it relates to dogs, and we're seeing a change in how dogs are treated. For many people now, their dogs are part of their everyday life. Also, as a result of that, there are more pet-friendly places where you can take your dog now."

Eads-Williamson and her husband, Garrett Williamson, live on Dog River in south Mobile County where their house is headquarters for Save a Stray. "The word 'dog' does keep following me everywhere I go," Eads-Williamson said, laughing.

She and her husband, who also attended South and who owns and runs Personal Edge Fitness in Mobile, are both upbeat people with a quick quip and positive outlook, an attitude that helps when you're rescuing needy animals that seem to increase in numbers daily.

"We are 'Fertile Myrtle' here in the South where the breeding season doesn't really end, and that's one of the biggest issues rescue programs face," Eads-Williamson said. "But, we are seeing more and more low-cost spaying and neutering. In fact, once a year around Spay Day, Save a Stray offers free spaying and neutering to those in need."

One thing that sets Save a Stray apart is its transport program. Once a month, 30 to 60 dogs ride aboard specially equipped trailers



“Where I grew up was a popular dumping ground for dogs, and my family always took care of them. It’s just the way I was made.”

—STEPHANIE EADS-WILLIAMSON

with kennels on an overnight trip from Mobile to upstate New York. Waiting at the end of the line, each dog meets their “forever family” that takes them to a new home.

Accompanying each dog is a bag with lesson plans geared toward children 10-to-11 year old, sharing how they can help their new pet adapt to his new family and environment. Those plans are written by young volunteers.

“I believe cultural change can be influenced through our children,” Eads-Williamson said.

“We have been doing the transport for about five years. We hire a couple who owns the travel kennels, and we’re very lucky to have them. With this program, we’ve probably transported about 3,000 dogs,” Eads-Williamson said. “Later, after the dogs have joined their new families, we ask them for updates. That’s when you see real changes in the dog you saved. Seeing those follow-ups from the families is really what makes all the work worth it.”

And, the work is way more than one or two people can handle.

“We have people who help with the website, post on our Facebook page, volunteers who come and bathe new dogs. We’ve had groups of USA student volunteers come out and help us with that,” she added.

The couple supports USA in a big way.

“You can definitely say we’re big fans,” Williamson said. “We’re lifetime alumni as well as excited about all the athletic programs in general and real excited about the growth of the football program. My business has a great connection with the health, kinesiology and sports department. I’ve had interns work with me, and I’ve hired quite a few graduates.”

There’s also the huge list of “fosters” who give the animals a temporary home until permanent homes are found. “Those people are wonderful because Save a Stray wouldn’t work without them,” Eads-Williamson said.



Eads-Williamson spends more time on Save a Stray than she would working for someone else at a full-time job. Husband Garrett loves to share stories about how the couple can’t get away from saving animals, even when they are on vacation in the U.S. or abroad. In fact, when traveling in the U.S., the couple, who have no children of their own, usually travel with their five dogs, who they consider their family. Still, there’s always room for one more.

“She saw a dog in the median on an interstate in Arkansas. We turned around, she got him on a leash and into the car, and he was elated to see a human and be saved. He was all over me! He was a big dog, too. We found a vet clinic and dropped him off before continuing on our way. Of course, we stopped and picked him up on the way back to Mobile,” Williamson said. “Then, there was the time in Cozumel with a cat. My wife suspected the cat had a kitten, and she quickly found the kitten. Somehow, she found a moped to get both of them to a vet where she had them both altered. Afterward, she convinced the hotel’s public relations woman how good it was to keep the cats to keep rodents away. She saved the cat and kitten, got them fixed and healthy and found them a home all in three days!” Eads-Williamson added, “When you have your life’s calling and your life’s passion, and you get to see the reactions of the animals and what you brought into the peoples’ lives, it is worth everything we do.”







# Wall of Honor

Two hundred forty USA National Alumni Association Lifetime Members' names were unveiled during a ceremony on November 9. This event is held each fall to honor and induct new Lifetime Members with their names and graduation years inscribed on the Wall of Honor at Moulton Tower. Visit [southalabama.edu/wallofhonor](http://southalabama.edu/wallofhonor) for a list of the 2017 inductees.





## National Alumni Association Officers

Doug Whitmore '05, President  
 Patrick Dungan '06, Vice President  
 Jim Moore '90, Secretary-Treasurer  
 Jeb Shell '00, Past President

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| Larry Foster '72               | James Shumock '80             |
| Monica S. Garsed '91           | Ronnie Stallworth '03         |
| Hugh Keating '74               | Melanie Sumerlin '07, MBA '11 |
| Justin Labrato '98             | Margie M. Tuckson '73         |
| Dan Lafayette, MBA '07         | Robbie Waller '02             |
| Kim Lawkis '11, MPA '13        | Trent Walters '08             |
| Amy McDuffie McCoy '02, MD '06 | Frank Wendling '88            |
| Robert "Robbie" McGhee '93     | Matthew Brannan '18, USA      |
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# Q & A

WITH NATIONAL ALUMNI ASSOCIATION  
 PRESIDENT DOUG WHITMORE



### Q: Looking back on the past two years, what do you consider the biggest accomplishment of the National Alumni Association?

**A:** Our decision to build the Julian and Kim MacQueen Alumni Center has been transformational. By providing alumni with a permanent home on campus, we expect to see more of our alumni visiting campus and also bringing more of the community to campus through the use of the Chief Calvin W. McGhee Grand Ballroom as well as other areas of the center.

### Q: Where would you like to see the association in five years?

**A:** Over the next five years, I would like to see more innovative programming for our alumni. We currently offer many opportunities for alumni to connect with each other and the University but, as times change, I believe the association will continue to look at ways our alumni want to stay involved, such as JaguarsCare, which has been wildly successful in connecting alumni all over the world for service projects. I think we will see more educational opportunities available to our alumni, especially young alumni around areas in finance/banking, student loan repayment and career goals.

### Q: Why did you become involved in the NAA?

**A:** I had a great experience at USA, and I wanted to work to make sure other students and alumni were afforded the same opportunities. I have always had an ability to connect people and to collaborate, and I wanted to use those skills to strengthen and expand our association. I had a mentor in college who was one of the most involved Jaguars I have ever known. He gave of his time, talents and treasure, never asking for anything in return. The joy he had when something he did yielded positive results was what I wanted to feel. I was recently able to honor him at the Distinguished Alumni and Service Awards Dinner, and that was one of the best days in my USA history.

### Q: Why do you think it's important for South alumni to stay involved with the University?

**A:** USA alumni have a unique opportunity to make a lasting impact, not only by providing scholarships and naming buildings, but also by influencing future alumni to become involved. Being involved with your University is impactful. Giving back is what you should do when you are part of a community.



# Distinguished Alumni and Service Awards

## HONORING THE 2018 AWARD RECIPIENTS

Mr. Stephen Erwin Clements '78 | Mr. Christopher C. Melton '81 | Dr. Thomas M. Miller '77, MD '81 | Dr. Joseph I. Molyneux '70 | Mr. Thomas Joe Purvis '74



The University of South Alabama National Alumni Association honored five alumni for their outstanding achievements during the 14th annual Distinguished Alumni and Service Awards gala at the Mitchell Center on Thursday, March 1.

“The Distinguished Alumni and Service Awards dinner celebrates the accomplishments and achievements of our remarkable alumni,” said Vice President for Development and Alumni Relations Margaret Sullivan. “South has many accomplished alumni who give back to their communities in extraordinary ways, and this event is an opportunity to publicly recognize five of these inspiring individuals.”

### THIS YEAR'S RECIPIENT OF THE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD:

**Thomas Joe Purvis, '74**, former sheriff of Mobile County from 1975-1995 and founder of the Junior Deputy program in local schools to help children better understand the role of law enforcement officials.

### THIS YEAR'S RECIPIENT OF THE V. GORDON MOULTON DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD:

**Stephen Erwin Clements, '78**, attorney in Mobile and former president of the USA National Alumni Association. He currently serves as a volunteer leader for the Mitchell-Moulton Scholarship Initiative and is an elected member of the South Alabama Athletic Hall of Fame Committee.

### THIS YEAR'S RECIPIENTS OF THE DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARDS:

**Christopher C. Melton, '81**, chairman and CEO of The White Oak Group. He endowed the Melton Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation at USA's Mitchell College of Business with the vision to educate, engage and impact the Central Gulf Coast region.

**Dr. Thomas M. Miller, '77, MD '81**, retired Alabama State Health Officer with the Alabama Department of Public Health. He played a pivotal role in the department's efforts to reduce infant mortality, obesity and diabetes in Alabama.

**Dr. Joseph I. Molyneux, '70**, adjunct criminal justice/security management professor at American Military University and Tulane University. He worked for more than 20 years with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency and for five years with the FBI in New Orleans.

“We are honored to host this annual gala in recognition of our outstanding alumni,” said Executive Director, USA National Alumni Relations Karen Edwards. “USA alumni are continuously making a difference across the globe and setting an example for future generations of Jaguars.”

Watch the award recipient videos at  
[SouthAlabama.edu/DistinguishedAlumni](http://SouthAlabama.edu/DistinguishedAlumni).









# 50 Years of Jaguar Basketball

Back in January, the University of South Alabama retired the jersey numbers of men's basketball stars Jeff Hodge and Junie Lewis. "Peanut Butter and Jelly," they were called back in the day. Lewis's desperation pass to Hodge, who then sank a last-second field goal to beat Alabama in the 1989 NCAA tournament, is the high point for men's basketball at South. This year, the program is celebrating its 50th anniversary.

The beginnings of the program — in fact, of all the Jaguar athletic programs — may be traced back a little further.

It was March 31, 1965. The USA Board of Trustees, "at the request of the student body," unanimously approved the jaguar as the official mascot, and black and gold as the official colors. Yes, black and gold. (The colors would be changed to red, white and blue in June of 1967.) The school had a mascot and official colors. Now it needed some teams.

It would be a little more than a year later before basketball became an official topic of discussion. The board's executive committee, meeting on a Sunday morning in the new campus cafeteria, listened to committee chairman Ernest Cleverdon as he provided an overview of the athletic program. According to the meeting minutes, there was "considerable discussion" about "pressure from the community" to launch a football program.

Football would have to wait a few decades, but President Frederick Whiddon suggested a less-costly alternative. Basketball. Committee member Sen. Ray Lolley moved that the University hire a "first class" basketball coach (to be paid by the Physical Education department) and award ten basketball scholarships for the 1967-1968 season, and ten

more the following season. And so it was that a basketball program was unanimously approved on May 22, 1966.

The "first class" coach was Rex Frederick. A former star at Auburn, where his jersey number was retired in 2006, Frederick's first team — the first University of South Alabama basketball team — consisted entirely of freshmen. Victories over the freshman teams of Auburn and Southern Mississippi highlighted a season of ten victories and 15 defeats in that 1967-1968 campaign, which included a 4-4 mark against other freshman teams.

Success came quickly for the Jaguars. Their third season brought USA's first winning record, and a 22-win mark followed in 1973-1974. Throughout the Southeast, institutions similar to South had also developed competitive basketball programs, but they lacked one thing. A conference.

So in 1976, USA became a charter member of the six-team Sun Belt Conference. It didn't take long for the Jaguars to make an impact. The 1978-1979 team became the league's first to win all of its conference games, and would win its first of three straight regular-season conference titles. The squad also became the first USA basketball team to play in the NCAA Tournament, which then was limited to only 40 schools. That team featured Ed Rains and Rory White, the first two Jaguar basketball players to have their jersey numbers retired.

Fast forward to 1988-1989. Under the leadership of second-year coach Ronnie Arrow, who would become the winningest coach in the program's history, the Jaguars roared through the season, winning



their first conference tournament title and culminating with “the shot that rolled the tide.” Two years later, another Jaguar team would run the conference table, taking both the regular season and tournament titles and making another NCAA appearance.

A similar stretch between 1996 and 1998 saw back-to-back 20-win seasons, with two more

conference titles and NCAA appearances. After another Sun Belt championship and NCAA showing in 2005-2006, the Jags two years later won a school-record 26 games en route to one more NCAA tournament. Ironically, the NCAA game was a loss to Butler University, the alma mater of head coach Matthew Graves.



Pictured here are the original Jaguars – the first basketball team at the University of South Alabama. On May 22, 1966, the USA Board of Trustees unanimously approved the hire of a “first class” basketball coach and 20 scholarships to be awarded over a two-year period. Photo courtesy of The Doy Leale McCall Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of South Alabama.



Junie Lewis’ (left) and Jeff Hodge’s jerseys were retired during halftime ceremonies at the South vs. Appalachian State game in January of this year. The players are shown here with their coach, Ronnie Arrow.



Ed Rains’ and Rory White’s jerseys were the first to be retired in 1983 followed by Terry Catledge’s in 1985. Jeff Hodge’s and Junie Lewis’ jerseys were retired in January of this year as part of the 50th Anniversary celebration.



“The students get so excited—I never get tired of seeing their passion for this work play out.”

—DR. LESLEY GREGORIKA  
BIOARCHAEOLOGIST AND  
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR  
OF ANTHROPOLOGY

# Closing Cases by Unearthing the Past

Dr. Lesley Gregoricka never knows when the phone will ring, but every single call from the Mobile Police Department represents an opportunity to provide not only a community service but invaluable field experience for her most promising forensic anthropology students.

Gregoricka, a bioarchaeologist and assistant professor of anthropology in the University of South Alabama’s department of sociology, anthropology and social work, serves as co-director of the USA Forensic Science Program. A few months after joining USA in the fall of 2012, she also began offering her expertise pro bono to the Mobile Police Department’s Identification Unit when skeletal remains are discovered. When needed, she also helps other law enforcement agencies in South Alabama.

Lt. Joseph Rose, who leads the Mobile unit, said the infrequent discovery of remains by local residents – often while digging in their own backyards or performing renovations – is aided tremendously by Gregoricka’s specialized skill set, accessibility and enthusiasm.

“What’s great about Lesley is how she likes to explain things to us as we’re going through the process. We always learn something working with her, and her enthusiasm is actually quite contagious,” Rose said.

Earning her bachelor’s degree from the University of Notre Dame and both her master’s and doctoral degrees from Ohio State University, Gregoricka’s academic research utilizes chemical techniques to examine changing patterns of human mobility, funerary practices, diet and social complexity in the Near East and Arabia.

Her volunteer work with local police not only helps keep her fieldwork skills polished but affords some of her brightest students hands-on, experiential learning unattainable in a classroom or lab setting.

“The students get so excited, and we are not usually talking about ideal conditions. They’re outdoors sometimes for 12 hours working in the

elements, and it is hard work. But they take it in stride, do exactly what’s expected of them in a professional and courteous manner, and I never get tired of seeing their passion for this work play out,” Gregoricka said.

Natalie Smith, an anthropology major, accompanied Gregoricka last year as a junior to a recovery scene in Baldwin County. The semester earlier, Smith had completed a class focused on the human skeleton.

“I was able to use the skills I gained in that class to help identify possible bone fragments at the scene,” she said. “The majority of the potential fragments were small pieces of rock and wood that the officers found while screening through dirt. It’s amazing how much non-bone can look like bone when you aren’t proficient in bone identification.”

The case was a homicide investigation, and Smith arrived and dressed out in a protective suit, boots and gloves at about 2:30 p.m. She was on the scene seven hours, and left only because she had a class in the morning.

“The experience really cemented in my mind what I am meant to do,” said Smith, who plans to attend graduate school and eventually earn a doctorate in anthropology with a focus on forensics. “There was a sort of satisfaction I had knowing that I was helping family members know what had happened. It can help with closure and, of course, justice.”

While Gregoricka only gets called out to an excavation a few times per year – usually when civilians come across bones in the woods, storm damage exposes remains or even a crawl space excursion takes an unexpected turn – she said every incident provides a learning opportunity.

“Every case is something completely new and has its own unique challenges,” Gregoricka said, noting the students selected to participate in the excavations are pulled from a call-out list and have typically completed either – but preferably both – her forensic anthropology course and the higher level Human Osteology in Archaeology and Forensic Science course.



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# Finding Her Home at South



Natalie Fox left her rural hometown of York, Ala., near the Mississippi line, with an open mind about her life path. She had once dreamed of playing professional basketball. Then, during her teens, her experience on several mission trips crystalized a sense that her purpose in life was to help people.

Where? Well, her sister lived in Mobile. And, Fox said, “I’ve always loved the water.” So she entered the College of Nursing at the University of South Alabama. It was the start of a beautiful relationship. “I found a home there.”

She earned a bachelor of science degree in 2007. And a master’s in nursing three years later. After a brief stint working at Tulane University in New Orleans, she came back to South and in 2016 became manager of clinical operations for pediatrics at USA Physicians Group. She added two more titles just last year: Fox earned her doctorate in nursing practice at South, making her Dr. Natalie Fox. She also was promoted as the first director of nursing for USA Physicians Group. In announcing that promotion, Brian Norris, administrator of ambulatory services for USA Health, praised Fox’s “enthusiasm, openness and willingness to dig in and focus on patient care and patient outcomes.”

Others have noticed her accomplishments and leadership qualities as well. In its January 2018 issue, Mobile Bay Magazine recognized her in its annual “40 Under 40” list of up-and-coming community leaders. Fox said her time working in New Orleans made her appreciate what she had left behind in her adopted city of Mobile. “I thought maybe the city was going to offer a lot more cultural things. But I realized that

happiness is about the people around you. I really have such a great work family at South.”

Family, whether personal or professional, means a lot to her. “I’ve been really fortunate with a lot of great mentors at USA,” she said. Dr. Alethea Hill, an associate professor in the College of Nursing, taught one of her first classes, Health Assessment. “I remember from the moment she walked in the room, she inspired me,” Fox said. “She really knew her stuff.”

Fox has a restless spirit. “I’m the type of person who’s always looking for what’s next on the horizon,” she said. “I would say that being ‘present’ is not one of my strong suits. That’s why I should probably do yoga more. Because I’m always looking forward.”

Fortunately, USA Health shares her thirst for progress as well as her belief in working collaboratively. Fox spoke enthusiastically about USA’s participation in the Transforming Clinical Practice Initiative, a national project funded by the federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. It promotes teamwork among the doctors, nurses and other health care providers who care for a patient, and also between providers and their community.

“It takes a village,” Fox said, “and it takes a village in health care, too. It takes everyone from the front office to the nursing staff to the clerical workers. Everybody plays an important part in the patient care process. I’m excited to be working for an organization like USA that’s really committed to our community and improving the health of the people who live in Mobile.”





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# Thirty Years of Ooze

**WHEN CAROL KITTRELL**, former alumni director and advisor to The Southerners, attended a conference in the late 1980s, she brought back a unique idea for a new student-run fundraiser. An event that originated at the University of Connecticut in 1984, Oozeball is a mud volleyball tournament that pits teams

of six against each other for the ultimate title of champion. The Southerners have hosted the annual tournament since the spring of 1988, and funds raised from Oozeball are donated to a chosen cause each year. This year, 42 teams participated and raised \$7,000 for student scholarships.

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— RON '03 AND KARAN STALLWORTH  
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