

## INSIDE:

Area Arts.....	2
Eagle Awarded Scout.....	4
Meet Your Neighbor.....	5
Sports Shorts.....	10
News Nuggets.....	12
Chow Time.....	15



## SPOTLIGHT

**42 WAC Seniors  
Get Scholarships**  
Page 13

Volume 12, Number 6

*"Good News You Can Use"*

June, 2024

# Wesson Attendance Center graduates 34 seniors



*Special to Wesson News*

*Special to Wesson News*

Thirty-four Wesson Attendance Center seniors met State of Mississippi and Copiah County School District requirements for 2023-2024 high school graduation from Wesson Atten-

dance Center (WAC). WAC graduates are:

- Bryan Burnell Castro-Alonso
- Landan Neal Beasley

- Melissa Marie Bradford
- Alyssia Rosalee Bramel
- Logan David Branch
- Alicia Renee Carson
- Kaleb Jermaine Chase Jr
- Louis Robert Daugherty

- Linda Grace Dunn
- Isabella Dawn Fuller
- Connor Ian Hamilton
- C'ryah Diana Haynes
- Alexius Haiden Holder
- Joseph Triton Howington
- Abbygail Kathryn Huggins
- Quentin Hood Jackson
- Madison Leeann Kirton
- Me'leyjah Charlique Lyons
- Jayla Lashay Martin
- Mackenzie Grace Martin
- Tarayvia Debray Miller
- Matthew Gaven Mitchell
- Maedyn Rylee Ross
- Preston Morris Selman
- Sawyer Guage Shoop
- Breanna Jena'e Smith
- Brenda Nicole Smith
- Da'Marcus Kyshun Smith
- Kimora Tiara Smith
- Paul Weslie Smith
- Zevante Jequan Stapleton
- Bailey Ray Walker
- Christopher Michael Watson
- Stevie Rayne Westrope



## SUMMER CAMPS FOR KIDS & YOUTH



*Special to Wesson News*

The summer camping season is underway for children and youth on Co-Lin's Wesson campus, with opportunities to stretch their minds, improve their physical capacities and have fun at the same time.

The twenty-four camps this year cover skills-development in sports, band and theater. The camp timeframes range from a half-day to more than a week with fees up to \$90.

Sports camps started in late May and extended into June:

- Co-Lin Head Football Coach Glenn Davis worked with kids from five years old and 13 years old on gridiron fundamentals May 29-30, coordinated a football tournament with seven-player teams on June 10 and focused on building skills of 14-year-olds to 18-year olds as linemen on June 12.
- Lady Wolves Head Basketball Coach Britta Stephens worked with girls high school basketball teams on June 2-4 and June 6-8, boys and girls in first grade through sixth grades and fifth through ninth grades June 10-11 on fundamentals and building skills on the hoops court. Men's Coach David Sanders worked with boys high school basketball teams June 13-16.



- Co-Lin Softball Coach Meleah Howard worked with kids six years old to twelve years old and prospective players in the seventh through twelfth grades on diamond fundamentals and skills-building June 4-5 and June 11. Baseball Coach Adam Chamblee also conducted a kids camp June 17-19.

- Soccer Coach Tom Cosgrove conducted a residential camp for high school athletes June 6-9 and coordinated a tournament including seven-player teams.

- Sixth graders and youth in seventh grade and up honed their skills on the links tutored by Co-Lin Golf Coach Allen Kent June 12-14 at the Wolf Hollow Golf Club.

- Aspiring cheerleaders from four years old to nine years old learned cheers and performed at a Pee Wee Cheer Camp conducted by Co-Lin Cheerleader Coach Mary Franklin June 17-18.

In the midst of all the sports camps, Fine Arts instructor Bobby Helms conducted a

*cont. on page 8*

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# Mississippi's 10 music greats

Special to Wesson News

Mississippi, known as the birthplace of blues music, has produced a remarkable array of talented and influential musicians. From soulful crooners to powerful gospel singers, the Magnolia State has been home to some of the most iconic voices in American music history. From the gritty, raw emotion of the blues to the uplifting melodies of gospel music, they have captured the hearts of audiences around the world:

**Lance Bass**, born in Laurel, Mississippi, is renowned as one-fifth of the iconic boy band NSYNC, which dominated the late 90s and early 2000s music scene. His silky smooth voice, boyish charm, and charismatic stage presence propelled NSYNC to global stardom, earning them legions of devoted fans worldwide. Bass, with his distinct vocal range and infectious energy, contributed significantly to the group's chart-topping hits such as "Bye Bye Bye" and "It's Gonna Be Me."

**Charlie Pride**, hailing from Sledge, Mississippi, stands tall as one of the most revered and groundbreaking figures in country music history. Pride's rich baritone voice and heartfelt delivery captivated audiences worldwide, churning out hits like "Kiss an Angel Good Mornin'," "Is Anybody Goin' to San Antone," and "Mountain of Love," earning him numerous awards and accolades, including multiple Grammy Awards and inductions into the Country Music Hall of Fame.

**Sam Cooke**, a towering figure in the realm of soul music, remains an eternal icon among Mississippi's most celebrated vocalists. Born in Clarksdale in 1931, Cooke's velvety voice and profound songwriting prowess carved an indelible mark on the music industry, fusing gospel with rhythm and blues. His breakout single "You Send Me" catapulted him to stardom in 1957, marking the beginning of a meteoric rise, with an array of timeless hits, including "Cupid," "Chain Gang," and the civil rights anthem "A Change Is Gonna Come." Cooke's life was cut short in 1964, but his impact endures and continues to resonate across the globe.

**Conway Twitty**, a legendary figure in country music, emerges as one of Mississippi's most cherished and influential singers. Born Harold Lloyd Jenkins in Friars Point in 1933, Twitty's journey from Mississippi cotton fields to Nashville stardom is a quintessential American success story. With his distinctive baritone voice and heartfelt lyrics, he captivated with hits like "Hello Darlin'," "It's Only Make Believe," and "Tight Fittin' Jeans." His unparalleled ability to convey raw emotion through song made him

a beloved figure among fans worldwide. Although Twitty passed away in 1993, his legacy endures through his timeless music.

**Bobbie Gentry** stands as one of Mississippi's most enigmatic and captivating musical talents, renowned for her soulful voice, evocative storytelling, and pioneering blend of country, pop, and folk music. Born Roberta Lee Streeter in Chickasaw County in 1944, Gentry burst onto the music scene in 1967 with her iconic smash hit "Ode to Billie Joe," a haunting narrative ballad that captivated listeners worldwide with its mysterious storyline and her rich, sultry vocals. Throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s, Gentry continued to dazzle audiences with her distinctive blend of country and pop, delivering a string of hits including "Fancy," "Okolona River Bottom Band," and "Mississippi Delta." Her unparalleled songwriting prowess and mesmerizing stage presence solidified her status as one of the era's most revered performers.

**Tammy Wynette**, affectionately known as the "First Lady of Country Music," stands as one of Mississippi's most beloved and influential singers. Born Virginia Wynette Pugh in Itawamba County in 1942, Wynette journeyed from rural Mississippi to Nashville stardom with a distinctive Southern twang and emotionally resonant lyrics that captured the hearts of millions in timeless classics like "Stand by Your Man," "D-I-V-O-R-C-E," and "Golden Ring" drawing from her tumultuous personal experiences. Her powerful voice and unapologetic vulnerability made her an icon among fans worldwide, earning her numerous accolades, including multiple Grammy Awards and induction into the Country Music Hall of Fame. Her collaborations with fellow country legends like George Jones and Billy Sherrill further solidified her status as a trailblazer within the genre.

**Faith Hill**, a Mississippi-born powerhouse, ascended from humble beginnings to become one of the most iconic figures in country music. Born Audrey Faith Perry in Ridgeland in 1967, Hill's journey to stardom is marked by exceptional vocal talent, and innate ability to connect with audiences on a profound level. Her debut album, "Take Me as I Am," spawned multiple chart-topping singles, including "Wild One" and "Piece of My Heart." Hits like "This Kiss," "Breathe," and "There You'll Be" showcased her versatility as an artist and solidified her status as one

of the most influential voices in contemporary country music. Her marriage to fellow country superstar Tim McGraw has become legendary in its own right, with the couple often collaborating on stage and in the studio to create magic together.

**Jimmie Rodgers**, often hailed as the "Father of Country Music," stands as a towering figure in Mississippi's musical heritage and a seminal influence on the country music genre as a whole. Born in Meridian in 1897, Rodgers' pioneering blend of blues, folk, and yodeling techniques revolutionized the sound of country music and paved the way for generations of artists to come. Early recordings, including the timeless

classics "Blue Yodel No. 1 (T for Texas)" and "Blue Yodel No. 2 (My Lovin' Gal Lucille), and a string of hits in the 1930s, including "Waiting for a Train," "In the Jailhouse Now," and "Mule Skinner Blues" earned him widespread acclaim and adoration from fans and fellow musicians alike. Despite his untimely death from tuberculosis in 1933 at the age of just 35, Rodgers' influence on the country music genre endures to this day.

**B.B. King**, born Riley B. King in Itta Bena, Mississippi, in 1925, stands as one of the most iconic and influential figures in the history of the blues. His profound impact on music, culture, and the world at large earned him the title "The King of Blues." King's musical journey began in the Mississippi Delta, where he honed his craft as a guitarist and vocalist, drawing inspiration from the rich tapestry of blues, gospel, and jazz that surrounded him. In the 1950s and 1960s, King's career soared to new heights with a string of hits including "Every Day I Have the Blues," "The Thrill Is Gone," and "Sweet Little Angel." His electrifying live performances, marked by his signature Gibson guitar "Lucille" and impassioned vocals, captivated audiences around the world.

**Elvis Presley**, the undisputed King of Rock and Roll, was born on January 8, 1935, in Tupelo, Mississippi. Elvis would rise to become one of the most iconic and influential figures in the history of popular music with revolutionary fusion of blues, gospel, country, and rhythm and blues. His electrifying performances, gyrating hips, and charismatic stage presence captivated audiences and earned him legions of devoted fans and the title "The King." In the mid-1950s, Elvis exploded onto the music scene with a string of hits including "Heartbreak Hotel," "Hound Dog," and "Love Me Tender."



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# Local scout earns Eagle award

Special to Wesson News

Ben McKenzie, 17-year-old member of Wesson Boy Scout Troop 125 and resident of Brookhaven, has earned the Boy Scouts of America's (BSA) highest advancement award -- the Eagle Scout Award.

McKenzie is one of only approximately four percent of all Boy Scouts who attain the Eagle rank.

Eagle candidates must earn 21 merit badges and successfully complete a community, church, or school service project. In his service project, McKenzie partnered with BillionGraves.com to photograph, GPS locate, and catalog to a national database all the graves in the Zion Hill Baptist Church Cemetery in Wesson.

When he was seven years old, McKenzie joined Wesson Cub Scout Pack 125 and later earned his highest award -- Arrow of Light. In 2017, he crossed over to Wesson Boy Scout Troop 125 and started the journey to Eagle. In 2019, he was elected by his peers to the Order of the Arrow, Scouting's National Honor Society.

McKenzie currently serves as Chaplain Aide and Senior Patrol Leader for the Wesson Troop. He is a dedicated member of Zion Hill Baptist Church in Wesson and is active in First Priority, FCA, band, soccer, and tennis at Wesson Attendance Center, where he is also Junior Class President. He is the son of Wayne and Heather McKenzie of Brookhaven.

The Boy Scouts of America is one of the nation's largest and most prominent values-based youth development organizations. The BSA provides a program for young people that builds character, trains them in the responsibilities of participating citizenship and develops personal fitness.

For more than a century, the BSA has helped build future U.S. leaders by combining educational activities and lifelong values with fun. The Boy Scouts of America believes, and through over a century of experience, knows that helping youth is a key to building a more conscientious, responsible and productive society.



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# Entrepreneur & musician refuses to retire

By Bob Arnold

After a more than five-decades career encompassing engineering at radio and television stations, service management for a communication technology company, owning and operating his own businesses and an avocation as a musician, you would think Chuck Wallace might be ready for retirement. But the 21-year Bogue Chitto resident, now in his 70s, says “I plan to keep on running as long as I am healthy, just like my father who lived to be 100.”

Wallace grew up in Baton Rouge, where his father was a chemist at Exxon, played horns in bands beginning in junior high school and competed in high school swimming events.

After graduating from Baton Rouge High School in 1968, he went to Louisiana State University (LSU) on a band scholarship but left his music studies when he discovered a new love as a broadcast engineer at a small radio station. In 1969, he started an eight-year stint in the U.S. Army Reserve, serving six months on active duty before heading to Southern Mississippi University at Hattiesburg to study radio, television and film.

As a licensed broadcast engineer, Wallace worked at WDAM-TV at Hattiesburg from 1973 to 1978 and moved on to Motorola Communications at Jackson from 1979-1981 as a service manager focused on the company’s two-way radio systems used by emergency responders, but by the mid 1980s knew he wanted to work for himself.

“I wanted to be my own boss, run my own business and not work for someone,” Wallace recalls. He started the first of what would be a number of entrepreneurial businesses over more than 40 years -- a company that restored damaged properties.

A few years later, Wallace started acquiring Service Master franchises throughout Mississippi and Louisiana that restored properties damaged by water or fire.

Following the acquisition of a Service Master franchise at Brookhaven in 2003, he resettled in Bogue Chitto, where he had inherited a non-working farm, and, with his wife Susan, whom he married in 1977, has lived for 21 years and raised three sons -- Charley, a 43 year-old Hattiesburg entrepreneur; Andrew, a 40 year old Santa Rosa, California, businessman; and Patrick, a 36-year old Madison, Mississippi, roofer.

In subsequent years, Wallace acquired or started businesses that complemented his Service Master work -- a company that swept up debris on damaged property and another that replaced damaged flooring.

Wallace describes his entrepreneurial focus as “looking for opportunities to help people freshen up their properties in an affordable manner.”

In 2020, he started American Stripes that seal coats old asphalt surfaces -- driveways, parking lots, walkways, etc. -- with liquid tar and affixes stripes to the surfaces to delineate spaces for parking and other uses or for design purposes. Over the years, he had seen the technology employed in commercial and residential applications and was impressed by it.

Today, Wallace operates American Stripes, and his wife continues to maintain the work of the Service Master franchises.

Wallace’s businesses have taken him a long way from his passion for music and playing horns, but they remain a serious avocation.

He plays the trombone with Ransakk, a McComb-based eight-piece classic rock band that can often be found at the Brookhaven Moose Lodge, restaurants at Natchez and Jackson, private parties and festivals.

If his gigs with a rock band are a bit unconventional for someone his age, he also specializes in providing ceremonial military amenities for veterans’ funerals that branches of the armed services can no longer adequately supply because of personnel shortages. Wallace will show up in a uniform, help fold the flag with the funeral home director to present to relatives of a deceased veteran and play “Taps” on his trumpet.

He decided to fill the void eight years ago after learning that the military services could not send personnel to do the job -- either they weren’t available or adequately trained.

“Since then, I’ve participated in more than 300 funeral services for veterans,” Wallace recounts. “The work became critically important during the COVID-19 pandemic, when the military could not provide anyone for the task. I wear a real uniform of the Mississippi State Guard, because former Mississippi Governor Phil Bryant commissioned me a First Lieutenant in the State Guard for the special purpose of serving at veterans’ funerals.” Wallace draws on his experience as a twelve-year-old Troop Bugler in the Boy Scouts, in which he had also earned the Eagle rank.

**What are your hobbies?**

I used to hunt, fish and play golf -- expensive hobbies on which I am saving money in focusing on my music with my trombone in a rock band and playing “Taps” at veterans funerals.

**Do you have a special interest in music outside your hobbies?**

Classic rock is my musical genre, and my favorite band, popular in the 1970s and 1980s, but still going strong, is Chicago, with its horn section.

**How about movies or theater?**

I like the classic movies with the unforgettable lines that I love to quote in my everyday conversations with people. My favorite movies are *Forest Gump* and *Dirty Harry*, and my favorite actor is Clint Eastwood.

**Are you a reader?**

I don’t do much reading beyond technical brochures. I married a reading teacher. So I leave literature to my wife.

**What would you do with the winnings if you won the lottery?**

I would buy lunches for new friends and customers.

**How would you change the world?**

Smile, and encourage others to do the same in line with the musical advice offered by Chicago in “Make Me Smile.”



Special to Wesson News

Chuck Wallace plays trumpet for veterans’ funerals.

## MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR

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# Hart new Co-Lin communications director

Special to Wesson News

Scarlett Hart will become new Director of Communications and Special Assistant to the President effective July 1, 2024.

Hart has been employed at the college since 2016, where she has served as Assistant Director of Public Relations and Marketing and Special Assistant to the President.

“Mrs. Scarlett Hart has been an invaluable member of our team for the past eight years, consistently demonstrating exceptional communication skills, leadership qualities, and has a keen understanding of the vision of the college,” said Co-Lin President Dr. Dewayne Middleton.

“She exemplifies dedication and professionalism, and her innovative approach to communications will help strengthen the communications department. Additionally, she will continue to

assist me with executive level tasks while maintaining strong relationships with our partners in the communities we serve. We are looking forward to her continued success and the positive impact she will have on our college in her new role.”

As Director of Communications, Hart will oversee all areas of college communications, including public relations, sports information, and marketing affairs for the college’s three campuses and serve as the official spokesperson for the college in public relations matters. She will manage all media relations, press writing, college social media, photography, videography, advertising, college publications, and serve as webmaster of the official college website and Trillium Yearbook advisor.

As Special Assistant to the President, Hart will continue to work directly with the President concerning legislative affairs and legislative priorities, special



Scarlett Hart

projects, event planning, and cultivating internal and external relationships to move the college’s initiatives forward.

Hart earned a bachelor’s degree in marketing from The University of Southern Mississippi and a master’s degree in community development from Delta State University. She is a graduate of the Mississippi Community College Leadership Academy and the Leadership Co-Lin program. She is a member of the College Public Relations Association of Mississippi (CPRAM) where her marketing campaigns and photography have earned numerous awards, including the Grand Award for Digital Media Campaigns. Hart was named Co-Lin’s Outstanding Staff Member of the Year in 2022.

She and her husband Matthew have three daughters, Nora, 5, and three-year-old twins, Mamie Frances and Myla Wren. They are members of First Baptist Church of Brookhaven.

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## KING'S DAUGHTERS MEDICAL CENTER NEWS

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### SPOTLIGHT

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- 2012 Hyundai San **SOLD** nited, 3.5 AWD, only 72k miles, like new
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cont. from front page

# Summer camps for kids & youth

theater camp for second through eighth graders June 10-15. The campers rehearsed for a performance of *Disney's Moana, JR.* on June 15.

From June 17 to June 20, local high school students also attended the college's Upward Bound Summer Academy, part of a program that provides opportunities for participants to succeed in their precollege performance and ultimately in their higher education pursuits.

Through July and August, other Co-Lin summer camp programs include:

- July 8-10. Drum Camp with Buddy Gibbons conducted by Co-Lin band instructor Chad Austin.
- July 11-12. Summer High School Color Guard Camp conducted by Co-Lin band instructor Cody McElwain.
- July 13-20. Summer Theater Camp for sixth through twelfth graders, who will rehearse for a July 20 performance of *Chicago -- Teen Edition.*
- July 16-17. Softball Team Camp conducted by Co-Lin Coach Meleah Howard.
- July 29-August 1. Percussion Guard & Colette Camp conducted by Co-Lin band instructor Chad Austin.
- August 4-8. Camp for full Co-Lin band conducted by Chad Austin.

For detailed information about the camps and to download registration forms, visit [www.colin.edu](http://www.colin.edu).

## MSA Congressional art contest winners



Special to Wesson News

Left to right are Brandy Johnson, MSA visual arts instructor; Kandace Tate, Congressional winner; Theodore Cooper, Congressional winner; and Maurice Calvert, MSA visual arts instructor.

Special to Wesson News

Two Visual Arts Department students at Brookhaven-based Mississippi School of the Arts are winners in the U.S. House of Representatives annual spring Artistic Discovery Contest as first and third place selections in the Mississippi Third Congressional District Art Contest sponsored by the office of Congressman Michael Guest.

The Mississippi Congressman's office named Kandace Tate and Theo Cooper, seniors, third place and first place winners in the Mixed Media and Painting categories of their contest. Cooper's work will be displayed throughout the year at the Capitol building in Washington, DC, as Best of the Show in the Third Congressional District Art Contest.

Each spring, a nation-wide high school arts competition is sponsored by members of the U.S. House of Representatives. The Artistic Discovery Contest recognizes and encourages artistic talent across the nation in individual Congressional districts.

The Artistic Discovery Contest is open to all high school students in Congressional districts. The winning artwork of the district's competition will be displayed for one year in the U.S. Capitol. The exhibit in Washington will include the winning artwork from all participating districts from around the country. The winning artwork is also featured on [House.gov](http://House.gov)'s Congressional Art Competition page.

Mississippi School of the Arts, located in Brookhaven, is a public residential high school for eleventh and twelfth graders. To learn more about the visual arts program at MSA and how to audition as a high school sophomore, visit the MSA web site.

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## 3.49-5.0 GPAs earn 25 distinction

*Special to Wesson News*

Twenty-five Wesson Attendance Center (WAC) seniors graduated with highest honors, high honors and honors at the end of 2023-2024 term.

**Four students earned the distinction of graduating with highest honors with Grade Point Averages (GPAs) between 4.0 and 5.0:**

- Julianna Rose Wilson
- Ja’Niyah La’Shae Byther
- Alan Tin Luong
- Gracyn Jewell Martin

**Fourteen seniors achieved high honors with GPAs between 3.5 and 3.99:**

- Rachel Charleigh Anderson
- Ethan Stanley Bonsall
- Aidan Ameer Brice
- Hannah Chesley Cameron
- Sheila Samantha Casanova
- Breelyn Layne Cloy
- Brandon Davis Ebarb
- Cloe Nicole Elkins
- Cameron Elizabeth Miller
- Abby Nicole Mooney
- Kaylee Layne Prine
- Mallory Elise Sanders
- Hailey Nicole Walker
- Karen Itzel Zarate-Lopez

**Seven earned the honors distinction with GPAs between 3.2 and 3.49:**

- Paris Juanita Byrd
- Evangeline Sinclair Cook
- Jahnsia Lashaye Harris
- Taylor Dawn June
- Mara Grace Norwood
- Corley Marie Sandifer
- Melody Lynn Waltman



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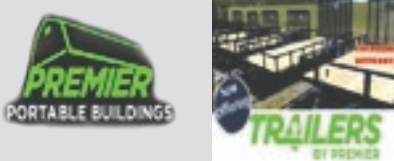
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# Moak & Richardson honored for play

Special to Wesson News

Lady Wolves softball standouts Madison Moak and Abby Grace Richardson from Brookhaven were honored for their performances on the diamond by the National Fastpitch Coaches Association (NFCA) and National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA).

NJCAA named Moak First Team All-American, and she was a NFCA Rawling Gold Glove winner. NJCAA also named Richardson a Third Team All-American.

Moak (Brookhaven) led the Lady Wolves and the MACCC in batting average this season at .503 while also leading the team in hits at 94. The University of Southern Mississippi signee was second on the team in home runs at 16, while leading the team in doubles, triples, RBIs, and stolen bases with 22, 12, 69 and 19 respectively. She also had the second highest on-base percentage on the team at .546 and the highest slugging percentage at 1.005 while posting a perfect fielding percentage with no errors on 69 defensive chances, 66 putouts and three assists and participating in a double play while playing centerfield. Moak also broke her team's single season and career hits record (157) this season.



Richardson (Brookhaven) was second on the Lady Wolves in batting average this season at .444. She led the team in home runs at 22 while her 65 RBIs and her 14 stolen bases were second-most on the team. She led the team in on-base percentage at .604 and was second in slugging percentage at 1.000. Her team-leading 55 walks was third in the NJCAA. This season, the Mississippi State University signee broke the career RBI and home run records as well as the single season and career walks records in addition to holding the single season home run and RBI records from her freshman year. She had a .931 fielding percentage with only 12 errors on 174 defensive chances, 99 putouts and 63 assists, while participating in seven double plays.



Special to Wesson News

## MSA juniors in writing competition

Special to Wesson News

Four junior students at Brookhaven-based Mississippi School of the Arts (MSA) have secured designation for 2024 National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) Achievement Awards.

They are Ava Buckley, Eydi Kitchens, Julia Landry and Kendra Quarterman.

The NCTE Achievement Awards in Writing is a school-based writing program established in 1957 to encourage high school students to write and to recognize some of the best student writers in the nation.

Only students who are juniors may participate. Schools in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, U.S. territories, Canada, and American schools abroad are eligible to nominate students for the writing program.

This year, schools nominated 633 students. From the United States, students were nominated from 44 states, as well as Guam and Washington, D.C. Internationally, teachers nominated students from Canada, Greece, Jordan, South Korea, Taiwan, and Thailand. Two to three independent judges evaluated each submission holistically on content, purpose, audience, tone, word choice, organization, development, and style.

For more information about the NCTE Achievement Awards in Writing, including past winners, see <http://www.ncte.org/awards/achievement-awards-in-writing/>.

NCTE is the nation's most comprehensive literacy organization, supporting more than 25,000 teachers across the preK-college spectrum. Through the expertise of its members, NCTE has led every major improvement in the teaching and learning of English and the language arts since 1911.

## Murder mystery dinner



Special to Wesson News

The Co-Lin Institute for Learning in Retirement (ILR) is offering a summer travel option on Friday, July 5, for dinner and a murder mystery show at Glenfield Mansion in Natchez. The three-course meal and the comedy mystery show -- "Whodunnit Hoe Down" -- starts at 6:30 p.m. Cost is \$160 per person. If enough travelers are interested, the group can stay on following the murder mystery for a haunted candlelight tour of the Glenfield Mansion beginning at 9:30 p.m. The tour is another \$20 per person. RSVP by June 17. ILR needs 20 persons to make the trip. The deluxe motorcoach with a professional driver will leave Wesson for Natchez at 4 p.m.

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# Medicaid, seafood, BLT & grocery store

Special to Wesson News

**Medicaid expansion collapses.** Medicaid expansion efforts in Mississippi fizzled and died because top lawmakers could not agree on a final proposal to send to the House and Senate. "We did the very best we could to get it across the finish line, and I'm sad that we're ending the session without something for the hardworking, low-income Mississippians," House Medicaid Committee Chair Missy McGee said. Republican Lieutenant Governor Delbert Hosemann told reporters that passing Medicaid expansion would be the first order of business during the 2025 legislative session. House and Senate negotiators released a proposal to expand Medicaid to tens of thousands more people, including a work requirement, but House Democrats balked, saying it was Medicaid expansion in name only because the federal government has blocked several states from having such mandates. The Mississippi House voted by a wide bipartisan margin in late February to expand Medicaid coverage to about 200,000 people who earn up to 138% of the federal poverty level, and the Senate passed its own pared-down version in March that would extend eligibility to people earning up to 100% of the federal poverty level, just over \$15,000 for one person.

**Seafood fraud.** Mississippi Gulf Coast fishermen are smiling about legal troubles facing a nationally known Biloxi restaurant, one of its owners and a local supplier for allegedly passing off frozen seafood caught in foreign waters to diners as fresh seafood from Gulf waters. Between 2013 and November 2019, Mary Mahoney's Old French House bought more than 29 tons of lake perch, tripletail, triggerfish and unicorn filefish from Africa or South America from an unnamed co-conspirator and sold it to unsuspecting customers as premium Gulf red snapper, snapper and redfish, government documents charge. Mary Mahoney's and its co-owner, Anthony "Tony" Cvitanovich, waived indictment in federal court and pleaded guilty to the charges. Cvitanovich is facing a maximum sentence of up to three years in prison and up to a \$10,000 fine. The restaurant, which says it immediately corrected the practice with which it was charged, could be placed on probation for up to five years and pay fines over \$500,000 for the crimes. The unnamed co-conspirators are associated with wholesale and retail businesses that allegedly profited from selling the foreign seafood to Mahoney's. Fishermen, who suffer economically because of the foreign competition, however, say Mahoney's and its supplier didn't do what many other restaurants and seafood sales companies continue as common practice.

**Theater renovation.** Brookhaven Little Theater is installing new seating and flooring and upgrading sound and lighting systems with the help of a Mississippi Arts Commission arts grant, but is seeking funds from area residents through the "Leave a Legacy at The Haven," which will honor donors of \$500, \$250 and \$100 with personalized nameplates with the text of their choice on premium, preferred and standard seating.

**Zeb Hughes law passes.** A new Mississippi law commemorating the life of a young Wesson man who died in a Mississippi River boating accident allows persons to petition a court of competent jurisdiction to prove by clear and convincing evidence that a loved one is deceased and obtain a death certificate accordingly. Before the new Zeb Hughes Law, recently signed by Governor Reeves, issuing a death certificate when the body of a deceased person cannot be found could not be considered for at least two years. After the law, which Lincoln/Copiah County State Representative Becky Currie had proposed in a stand-alone bill, died in committee, Lincoln County Senator Jason Barrett successfully attached it as an amendment to another bill that passed both the State House and Senate. Hughes' mother pushed for bill after the legal problems she faced following her son's accident after which he could not be found.

**Grocery store opening.** ALDI, a national grocery chain, is planning to open a store in Brookhaven, following a recent announcement of Save-A-Lot's plans to close and several years of searching for stores after Piggly Wiggly closed its two Brookhaven locations. Earlier this year, ALDI said it would open 800 new stores across the county, with a focus on the Southeastern U.S. ALDI spokespersons say shoppers can save 40 percent on grocery items at its store. The company has not announced where it will locate in Brookhaven and when it will open the new grocery store.

**Drought aid.** Area farmers may be eligible for U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) emergency loans to cover losses they suffered during the drought this summer and fall. Farmers qualifying for emergency loans may borrow up to 100 percent of their actual production losses or the amount needed to restore their operation to its pre-disaster condition (whichever is less) or to refinance certain debts. Deadline to apply for the emergency loans is November, 25, 2024. Farmers should contact their local USDA service center about the emergency loans and other programs offered by the FSA.

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# WAC seniors get scholarships

*Special to Wesson News*

Wesson Attendance Center recently recognized seniors who were offered scholarships during the 2023-2024 school term.

Co-Lin, eleven colleges and universities and seven other organizations directly awarded the scholarships.

Twenty-one WAC students received scholarships from the eleven colleges and universities outside the area:

- Gulf Coast Community College to Paul Smith
- Belhaven University to Gracyn Martin
- Ja’Niyah Byther: Hampton University to Ja’Nivah Byther
- Longwood University to Mallory Sanders
- Lyon College to Zevante Stapleton
- Millsaps College to Aidan Brice
- Mississippi College to Brandon Ebarb and Maedyn Ross
- Alcorn State University to Jahnasia Harris, MeLeyjah Lyons and C’Ryah Haynes
- Mississippi State University to Ethan Bonsall, Karen Zarate-Lopez and Evangeline Cook
- The University of Mississippi to Samantha Casanova and Alan Luong
- University of Southern Mississippi to Rachel Anderson, Hannah Cameron and Melody Waltman
- William Carey University to Alesius Holder and Taylor June

Eighteen of these students were also offered Co-Lin endowment, leadership, academic, band and athletic scholarships: Rachel Anderson, Ethan Bonsall, Aidan Brice, Ja’Niyah Byther, Hannah Cameron, Samantha Casanova, Evangeline Cook, Brandon Ebarb, C’Ryah Haynes, Alexius Holder, Taylor June, Alan Luong, Gracyn Martin, Abby Mooney, Maedyn Ross, Mallory Sanders, Paul Smith, Melody Waltman and Karen Zarate-Lopez. Co-Lin also awarded eighteen other student scholarships:

- Bryan Alonso
- Logan Branch
- Paris Byrd
- Alicia Carson
- Breelyn Cloy
- Cloe Elkins
- Connor Hamilton
- Cami Beth Miller
- Gaven Mitchell
- Mara Norwood
- Kaylee Prine
- Preston Selman
- Guage Shoop
- Da’Marcus Smith
- Hailey Walker
- Christopher Watson
- Julianna Wilson



Seven organizations also awarded scholarships directly to eleven students:

- Junior Auxiliary of Copiah County to Mara Norwood
- Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Alpha Alpha Psi Zeta Chapter to Jahnasia Harris
- Army National Guard to Paris Byrd
- Mississippi Boys State to Aidan Brice, Alan Luong and Brandon Ebarb
- Southern Ag Credit/4H to Breelyn Cloy
- 4H to Abby Mooney, Julianna Wilson and Joseph Howington
- Entergy Corporation to Hailey Walker

Eight of these students also received scholarships directly from schools: Mara Norwood, Jahnasia Harris, Aidan Brice, Alan Luong, Brandon Ebarb, Breelyn Cloy, Abby Mooney and Julianna Wilson.

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# American Legion prepares future leaders



*Special to Wesson News*

Girls State Attendees from Wesson Attendance Center (WAC) are (front row left to right) Avery Anna Watts, Lana Nhem, Cailley Duplantis and Mary Gwyn Hynum. Not pictured are Abbey Berch and Addison Morgan. In the back row are Auxiliary Unit 79 members Sharon Langley, Past President; Sara Lassiter, Auxiliary Department Chaplain; and Kim Whittington, current Unit 79 President.



*Special to Wesson News*

Boys State Attendees from Wesson Attendance Center (left to right) with Wesson Legion Post 79 Commander Bobby Thornton (center) are Wayne Miller, Trevor McCree, Michael (Chase) Britt and Ben McKenzie.

*Special to Wesson News*

Participating in the U.S. political process isn't easy, as recent history demonstrates, but the American Legion's Boys and Girls State programs prepare select high school students across Mississippi to do the job and assume future leadership roles.

Four Wesson High School (WHS) boys recently completed the Mississippi Legion's Boys State program May 26 to June 1 at the University of Mississippi at Oxford, and six WHS young ladies attended there June 9-15 for its Girls State program.

The Local American Legion Post 79 WHS contingent included Wayne Miller, Trevor McCree, Michael (Chase) Britt, Ben McKenzie, Avery Anna Watts, Lana Nhem, Cailley Duplantis, Mary Gwyn Hynum, Abbey Berch and Addison Morgan.

Both Boys State and Girls State programs are run by and sponsored by The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary. Youth attendees are the elite of the elite in their respective schools and are future leaders.

In the programs, participants learn about citizenship, Americanism, national, state and local politics; teamwork; speaking in public, among other things. Every young man and woman attending Boys State and Girls State returns with a higher respect for making the U.S. a great nation. One student from each of the programs is selected to attend Boys Nation or Girls Nation, with a trip to Washington, D.C.

For more information, visit <http://www.msboysstate.com> or <http://www.legionALA-aux.org/ala-girls-state> or follow each on Facebook.

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# Making dry beans perfect

By Guest Cooking Columnist Charles Fortson, Jr.

## Ingredients:

- 2 lbs. of your favorite dry beans
- 2 medium-size onions chopped
- 1 tsp. of salt
- ½ tsp. of pepper
- ½ tsp. of basil
- 1 tsp. of rosemary
- 1 lb. of your favorite smoked sausage
- 2 pieces of smoked turkey neck or your favorite smoked meat or ½ tsp. of liquid smoke
- 2 tbsp. of chopped garlic



Dry beans -- baby limas or black eye peas -- are an American staple food. Cooked right, they make great side dishes, particularly with fried pork loin or chops. They also can be meals in themselves. Uncle Ray's recipe turns any kind of dry beans into the perfect dish.



## Directions:

1. Fill eight-quart pot with hot water half way.
2. Place beans in the pot, making sure they are covered by the hot water, and soak them for three hours.
3. Combine smoked meat, salt, pepper, basil, rosemary, garlic and onions with beans.
4. With lid on cooking pot, bring the beans-meat-seasoning mix to a boil.
5. Cook for three hours on reduced heat, stirring regularly. Make sure water covers beans at all times, adding more as needed.
6. After two hours, taste test and add salt and pepper as needed.

*EDITOR'S NOTE: Charles Fortson, Jr., is proprietor-chef at Uncle Ray's across from Lake Lincoln State Park. He makes lunches and dinners to take out or for table service, while also operating a convenience store and bait shop at his Sunset Road location. Follow his cooking tips on Uncle Ray's Facebook page or call 601-643-0174 to check on his daily specials.*

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# Landscapers & gardeners honored

Special to Wesson News

Photos Special to Wesson News

Wesson Garden Club has recognized three locals for landscaping and gardening. Dr. Roy and Gerry Daughdrill (1012 West Street) have received Wesson Garden Club's special summer award for their gardens that feature a variety of day lillies. Allen and Celial McSweyn received WGC's May Special Design award for landscaping at 1193 Highway 51, and the Club honored the yard work of Paxton and Hannah Cupit at 1015 Lowery Road with its Rural Yard of the Month award. The WGC awards program recognizes maintenance principles and elements of landscape design practiced by town organizations and residents towards encouraging ongoing beautification and cleanliness of the Wesson area and cultivating a citizenry that values and protects natural resources and assumes responsibility for enhancing the environment. The Garden Club's Yard of the Month awards honor properties in organizational, town residential and rural residential (limited to Wesson School District) categories during the spring, summer and fall.



May Rural Yard of Month award recognized Cupit work.



May special design award recognized McSweyn landscaping.



Special summer award recognized the Daughdrill gardens.

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