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Wesson News

SPOTLIGHT

African American History Celebration

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Volume 10, Number 4

"Good News You Can Use"

April, 2022

Founders Day to celebrate Wesson

Special to Wesson News

A Glow Run Run/Walk, car show, musicians and other entertainers, vendors with an array of arts, crafts, and fleas; snacks, refreshments and meals; the crowning of a new event queen and fireworks will highlight Wesson's Founders Day celebration of town life and commemoration of its history on Friday, May 6, and Saturday, May 7.

The Wesson Chamber of Commerce is the primary sponsor of the event with additional support committed so far by Co-Lin, the Town of Wesson, Trustmark and Copiah Banks, Dump's Barbeque and Nena Smith Dance Studio.

The festivities start on Friday evening in the municipal park with musical entertainment and a Glow Run/Walk that begins at 7 p.m.

Walkers and runners start the 5K event on Highway 51 with signs along the way directing them through Wesson and the Co-Lin campus and ending at their starting point on Highway 51. It's called a "Glow" Run/Walk because participants will light themselves as they navigate the course in the dark in white t-shirts and with glow necklaces, bracelets, and other items provided to help them on their walks and runs, event planner Stephanie Duguid explains.

Overall Run/Walk winners and those finishing first, second and third place in four age categories -- under 20, 21-35, 36-50 and 51 and over -- will be recognized. Commemorative t-shirts and medals, beverages and fruits will be sold. The fee is \$25 for

the run/walk. Last year, more than 60 adults and youth participated, and Duguid is expecting greater numbers this years. Specific details, route and event sign-up are all forthcoming. Contact Duguid at 601-643-8341 for information.

Early the next morning, vehicle owners will sign up their vintage antique, classic cars, trucks and tractors they updated, souped up and maintained to display and earn recognition in the Cruising 51 Car Show that is a traditional part of the Founders Day celebration. There will be Participants' Choice Chamber Choice winners. Last year, fifteen vehicles competed, and event planner Brent Duguid expects the number the grow this year.

The Chamber will Crown a new Founders Day Queen and celebrate the reign of the outgoing 2021-22 Queen.

Blues Boys, Cody Dunaway and Sailors are among bands, soloists and other entertainers being lined up by Chamber President Stephen Ashley to bring an assortment of gospel, rock and country music; dance and crowd-pleasing performances to the Spring Street stage throughout the day. Shoppers will browse vendor booths and bargain for clothing, jewelry, arts, crafts and fleas while their kids frolic in a play zone with giant inflatables. An abundance of food, snacks and drinks will be available to satisfy the hunger needs of visitors.

As the day ends and darkness descends, the celebration will culminate on Spring Street by the railroad with a spectacular fireworks display, followed by street dancing.



Wesson News

A new Founders Day Queen will be crowned.

ILR gears up to renew programs

By Bob Arnold

Institute for Learning in Retirement (ILR) is gearing up for travel opportunities, continuing education workshops, movie days, luncheons and social events after a two-year hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic under a new program director.

On April 19, existing members of the organization will come together at Co-Lin's Thames Center for a social event in which they will renew acquaintances, discuss their ideas and expectations for the group moving forward and install officers they elected to lead them before the pandemic put the ILR program on hold.

ILR, a Co-Lin-sponsored membership organization, provides continuing education experiences

for retired and semi-retired older adults. In ILR, participants define their own informal educational goals and pursue them at their own pace, based on their own choices and talents. Members, who design the group's program, come from wide ranging backgrounds and bring varied experiences to the organization. Co-Lin staff administers ILR, and the college provides facilities for the organization, which is fully funded by member dues.

Co-Lin's Erin Johnson is ILR's new program director, assuming the role as part of her new position as Events Coordinator for the college, in which she replaced Tricia Russell, who retired last year. As Events Coordinator at Co-Lin, Russell took over responsibilities for part-time



Wesson News

Erin Johnson

ILR programming positions held previously by Marilyn Britt Brown and Julie Wright.

"I will be primarily a facilitator, helping to implement what the ILR board and planning committees want to do and helping the organization to function -- arranging travel, assisting committees at their meetings, booking classrooms, managing finances," Johnson says.

ILR, she stresses, is member-driven, and, through the summer, it will chart its course for 2022-23 year.

"In August, we will host a second social to reach out to new members, collect dues and introduce activities for the fall term and holiday season," Johnson notes.

Last month, Johnson started working with ILR board members Diane Summers, publicity

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WAC celebrates African American history



Wesson News

Step dancers.

By Bob Arnold

Love yourself, plan and draw on God's power to achieve your potential and life's purpose, Rev. Jamerson Jackson told his audience of mostly Wesson Attendance Center students last month at WAC's fifteenth annual celebration of Black History Month.

Jackson, a pastor and social/political advocate who is a native of Fayette, Mississippi, and bases a ministry to Louisiana and Mississippi churches at Baton Rouge, spoke at the special evening event of song, dance and poetry readings to inspirationally frame its theme -- "The Power of Community" -- as it applied to individual African Americans particularly.

"The past is important to understand, but it does not dictate where you are going," he declared. "You can be what people say you can't. Move forward and do not stand still. Challenge yourself. Create a path with a plan and a passion. Persevere with God's help."

Wesson High School English and drama instructor Albert Brown and librarian Kendra Armistad orchestrated the celebration of the national focus on the contributions of African Americans to society and culture.

Gage Smith, Wesson High School Senior Beta Club president and a 2022 WAC Hall of Fame inductee, discussed "What Is Black History" to introduce the event, and Paris Dickerson and soloist Sydney Thomas dedicated the program to the life

and impact WAC staffer Bessie M. Smith, who died in January.

The event, held in the Old Gymnasium at WAC, also featured:

- The Wesson Gospel Ensemble, assembled and conducted by Brown, which interspersed Shirley Caesar's *It's Alright, It's Okay* and Harvey Watkins' *It's in My Heart* to punctuate dance and readings. Soloists included Tyler Fuller and Walter Butler.
- Poetry readings -- Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* and Hilary Kiser's *His Dream Lives On* -- by Jamera Black and Ja'Cionne Hilliard.
- A step performance based on the African tradition of rhythmic foot movements, hand clapping and voice by Wesson High School students who call themselves The Cobra Steppers.
- A band from St. Peter Rock M.B. Church.

The program took place in a setting and ambiance created by hundreds of posters on the walls of the Old Gymnasium that celebrated people and events in African American history. They are the contributions of students in Brown's English classes assigned to research the people and events and report on them with posters and other visuals. Each year, Brown hangs posters from past classes, as well as from ones he currently teaches, to provide an appropriate backdrop for the annual WAC celebration.



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New director joins workforce program

Special to Wesson News

A former football coach, who led his Alabama high school team to playoffs for the first time in five years during the 2021 season, has joined Co-Lin as its Workforce Education Center Director.

Luke L. Laird brings a unique background that melds corporate and public school work experiences to a job that involves designing and implementing training programs to provide a skilled labor force for business and not-for-profit employers who work with Co-Lin in partnership to advance the economy and benefit students entering the labor force, existing workers and job-seekers.

The Enterprise native says he is excited "to come back home" and "give back to the community" by contributing to its economic development in building a quality labor force that serves companies and organizations already operating in the area and is a magnet for new ones.

Among other things, as he settles into his new job, Laird is

looking to create a fiber splicing class similar to one he developed at AT&T to equip current and aspiring telecommunications workers in the area with new skills companies want their employees to have. Laird also sees potential in new training geared to an auto industry that economic forecasters say is evolving in Southeastern states, including Mississippi, and will someday be bigger than Detroit's.

A 1995 graduate of Enterprise High School, Laird earned Associate's and Bachelor's Degrees in business management at Southwest Community College (1997) and the University of Phoenix (2005) and worked as a Farm Bureau insurance agent in Lamar and Lincoln Counties before starting a 20-year career with Bell South and AT&T that encompassed positions as an outside technician (2000), network training specialist (2001-2004), network manager (2004-2005), safety manager (2005-2008) and senior manager for technical network process and quality (2008-2019).



Wesson News
Luke Laird, new Workforce Education Center Director.

Among his career accomplishments at stops in McComb and Jackson, Laird developed a process to actively update curriculum, was promoted to an industrial engineer after moving a crew ranked 33 out of 35 into the top five, and designed and implemented a training program that improved motor vehicle

incident results from the last place to first in the country. After AT&T acquired Bell South, it transferred Laird to Tuscaloosa, Alabama, where he developed and deployed management systems and controls throughout the AT&T footprint as a project manager and saved the company \$200 million over ten years.

In 2019, when AT&T asked Laird to take a new job at San Antonio, Texas, he took an early retirement from the company and joined the Hale County, Alabama, school system as a physical science teacher and football coach. Last year, he taught physical education and coached the football and softball teams at Hale County High School before beginning the latest chapter in his career story at Co-Lin.

Now that he is back home, Laird says he expects to settle down again in Enterprise with his wife Jessica, his high school sweetheart whom he has known since the fifth grade. They have two grown sons -- Logan, 25, who is studying mechanical engineering at the University of Alabama; and Ty, 23, a construction worker.

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Former baseball coach HOF-bound

Special to Wesson News

Keith Case of Needville, Texas, will be inducted into the Mississippi Community College Sports Hall of Fame on Tuesday, April 26, at the Hinds Community College Clyde Muse Center in Pearl.

Case graduated with a bachelor's degree from Mississippi State University and a master's degree from William Carey. He was the head baseball coach at Co-Lin for 21 years until his retirement in 2013. He also was the college's assistant athletic director and a mathematics instructor.

Case guided the Wolves to eight National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) Regional Tournament appearances and five MACJC State Tournaments. His 1998, 2000, 2001 and 2005 teams won the NJCAA Region XXIII Division II championship and advanced to the NJCAA Central District Tournaments. The 2000 and 2005 teams advanced to the NJCAA Division II World Series, and finished Number Four in the nation.

Case was named NJCAA Region XXIII Coach of the Year in 1998, 2000, 2001 and 2005 and received the Louisville Slugger Excellence in Coaching Award in 1998. He was



awarded Diamond Baseball Company's Coach of the Year in 2000, 2001 and 2005.

While at Co-Lin, Case compiled over 615 victories as a head coach, which at that time accounted for the most wins among active coaches in Mississippi and third overall in state history. His teams ranked nationally academically in 1998 and from 2000-2010. He coached five NJCAA All-Americans, eight Distinguished Academic All-Americans, and 10 Academic All-Americans. Additionally, 82 of his Co-Lin players went on to play at four-year colleges and universities, and 12 went



on to play professionally.

After retiring from Co-Lin, Case became the head baseball coach at Wharton County Junior College in Wharton, Texas. There, his 2014 and 2015 teams were ranked nationally academically, and the 2016 team was conference and NJCAA Region 14 runner-up. In 2019, Case ended

his coaching career with a total of 788 career wins. He became the athletic director at the college in 2020 and continues in that position today.

Case and his wife Susan have two daughters, Macie Gregory (Zack) and Rassy Case, and one granddaughter, Emmaline Gregory.

Co-Lin lands area athletes

Special to Wesson News

Athletes from Bogue Chitto, Brookhaven Academy, Loyd Star, Wesson and West Lincoln have signed on with Co-Lin to continue their sports careers.

Eli Cupit, who played center for the Bogue Chitto Bobcat gridders, is headed to Co-Lin as a Wolfpack snapper, although his high school sports involvement encompassed powerlifting and baseball as well.

Meanwhile, Brookhaven Academy gridders Corey Case and Tyler Fortenberry and baseball and soccer standouts Trenton Tarver and Yosvin Hernandez bring multiple athletic talents to help Co-Lin. In Case, Co-Lin picks up a new all-round kicking specialist who is recognized for his performance as a punter and field goal

and point-after-touchdown kicker on the football field. Fortenberry, a quarterback who also played basketball and baseball at BA, follows his older brother Trey, a tightend, to the Co-Lin Wolfpack. Tarver is a catcher/infielder, who also will bring a power bat to Co-Lin in baseball. Hernandez scored 28 goals for a BA soccer team that posted an 18-2 record in the past season.

Loyd Star's Riley Easterling, an infielder, should also help Co-Lin's run production in baseball with a strong bat. Wesson's Collin McGowen, a linebacker, should bolster Co-Lin in football on the defensive side of the football, while West Lincoln's Jackson Taylor will bring his 6-foot-5, 295-pound presence to the offensive line.



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Wesson Library giveaway winners



Debbie Smith and Taylor Traxler were March Wesson Public Library books giveaway winners. Smith (on right in top left photo) accepted her prize -- Stephen King's *Billy Summers* -- from library manager Ann Clark. Traxler (top right photo), a Wesson Attendance Center student, proudly displays her prize -- *Pete the Cat*. Friends of the Library (FOL) members were on hand at the library (bottom photo) for the first monthly drawing in the giveaway program designed to build library traffic, including both new and existing users. FOL is funding the prize books -- one awarded to an adult and one to a child in drawings every month. Book winners must come to library to register for the drawings. In the process, they will learn about how the library can meet their needs. FOL is a support organization that conducts fundraisers for the library and assists in its programming through advice and counsel, volunteers, and donations.

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Facts about donations & transplants

By Guest Columnist Stephanie Duguid

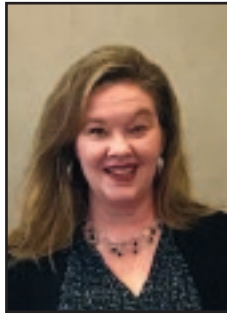
April -- National Donate Life Month started by Donate Life America and its partnering organizations in 2003 -- celebrates one of the most remarkable success stories in the history of medicine as it raises awareness about organ donations and transplants.

Donations and transplants demonstrate amazing medical developments, give hope to thousands of people with organ failure and provide many others with active, renewed lives. Yet, even with continuing advances in medicine and technology, the need for organs and tissue is vastly greater than the number available for transplants. Seventeen people die every day waiting for a transplant.

Six things you can do: Register to be an organ, eye, or tissue donor. Volunteer. Raise awareness by joining the MORA Facebook page and follow MORA on Twitter. Share your own story. Have a conversation about tissue and organ donation. Give to MORA through a tax-deductible donation or by purchasing a car tag to enhance public education and donor awareness.

Despite continuing public education efforts, misconceptions and inaccuracies about donations persist. To address the misunderstandings, Donate Life America points out:

- Anyone can be a potential donor regardless of age, race, or medical history.
- All major religions in the United States support organ, eye and tissue donation and see it as the final act of love and generosity toward others.
- If you are sick or injured and admitted to the hospital, the number one priority is to save your life. Organ, eye and tissue donation can only be considered after you are deceased.
- When you are on the waiting list for an organ, what counts is the severity of your illness, time spent waiting, blood type, and other important medical data, not your financial status or celebrity status.
- An open casket funeral is possible for organ, eye and tissue donors. Through the entire donation process the body is treated with care, respect and dignity.
- There is no cost to the donor or their family for organ or tissue donation.
- Information about an organ donor is only released to the recipient if the family of the donor requests or agrees to it.



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MORA/Donate Life Mississippi, a not-for-profit organization with a sole mission to inspire all Mississippians to save and enhance life through organ, eye, and tissue donation, underscores:

- More than 106,774 Americans (men, women, and children) are on the waiting list for a lifesaving transplant and almost 1,300 of those are Mississippians.
- Every 10 minutes a new name is added to the National Transplant Waiting List.
- One organ donor can save up to 8 lives, restore sight to 2 people, and enhance more than 75 people's lives through tissue donation.

As of January, 2022, Mississippi had more than one million registered organ donors. If you have ever considered registering, there are three ways to enroll in Mississippi's Donor Registry.

- Register online at msora.org/register.
- Register when you obtain or renew your Mississippi driver's license at a Mississippi Department of Public Safety.
- Register at a MORA table at community events. MORA staff is committed to educating the public about the process of donation and to dispelling the common myths that surround donation. Members of the MORA staff are available to speak on the importance of organ donation at most any time.

Mississippi residents who are at least 18 years old can enroll in the Mississippi Donor Registry. Be sure you do not eliminate yourself as a donor for fear you will not qualify or be able to help. Each potential organ, eye, and tissue donor is evaluated on an individual basis for suitability. The organs that can be donated include the heart, liver, kidneys, lungs, pancreas, and small intestine. Tissue donations include corneas, eyes, skin, bone, tendons, ligaments, vessels, and heart valves.

Your wish to be a donor will not interfere with your medical care. The number one priority of medical personnel is to save YOUR life.

Registering as an organ, eye and tissue donor is granting first person authorization that this is your final wish. Tell your family you've made this decision.

Contact www.registerme.org, msora.org/education or call 601-933-1000.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Stephanie Duguid is Dean of Academic Instruction at Co-Lin. She is also an athletic trainer and nutrition specialist and has been teaching courses related to those two areas as well as practicing what she preaches for more than twenty years.

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April Arts Month in Hazlehurst

By guest columnist R. Shaw Furlow

Several years ago, the good folks in the Hazlehurst arts community came up with a cool idea to display the art work of residents of Copiah County. They were hoping for a few local artists to participate, and were shocked when 50 people offered their works.



April 1-30 marks the return of April Arts Month in Hazlehurst.

This year's Chamber of Commerce-sponsored event will include more than 20 venues displaying various kinds of art from more than 50 artists in the area. Beautiful and creative art will be able to be viewed in the windows of participating businesses. Copiah and Trustmark Banks will also have displays in their downtown lobbies and windows.

A "walking tour" can actually be seen by car (except for the bank lobbies, of course) and can be viewed 24/7. Displays will be featured in businesses from Ragsdale Avenue, up and down Gallatin Street and Caldwell Drive.

The thirteenth annual Rockin' Railroad Festival will conclude April Arts Month on Saturday, April 30, beginning at 10 a.m. The festival will be held on the Courthouse square with local food vendors, music groups, choirs and bands. The Mississippi-

pi Music Museum will be open on the day of the Festival with proper social distancing mandates in force.

A sensational car show will also be part of this year's Art Month.

The Student Art and Recycled Art contests are also popular events. These contests will be judged by a panel of judges, and there will be People's Choice Awards voting from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the north room in the train depot. Judges and public voters will consider contestants in separate pre-school, first-third grade, fourth-sixth grade and seventh-twelfth grade divisions. Any area students in K through 12th grades can enter the contest. In both contests, regular and recycled arts pieces of art may be entered, and groups of two may submit recycled art entries. Entry forms can be picked up at the Hazlehurst Chamber office at the depot, City Hall in Hazlehurst, Trustmark Bank, Covington Memorial Library or the Copiah Monitor

in Hazlehurst. The form should be completed and attached to each entry. Winners of the contests will be announced at the Rockin' Railroad Festival on April 30 at 3p.m.

April will be a wonderful time to stroll the streets of Hazlehurst and enjoy the talents of our areas's many artists and craftsmen. The spring brings out the best of us. Support the arts, my friends. It's good for you.



Mississippi Music Museum at Hazlehurst.

April 2022 Hazlehurst Arts Month Events

April 1 - 31: Self-guided downtown walking Art Tour. Displays in downtown venues.

April 1: Grand Night Piano Concert sponsored by McDowell Music Club at First Baptist Church, Crystal Springs. 7 p.m. \$5 donation.

April 7: Hazlehurst businesses open houses. Music & art. 5 p.m.-7 p.m.

April 9: Keep Copiah County Beautiful Cleanup Day. 8 a.m.-12 noon.

April 10: Children's Palm Processional & special music at Hazlehurst United Methodist Church. 10:30 a.m.

April 14: "Miz Overalls" Talkin' 'Bout Plants at Huntington Garden Center. 5:30 p.m.

April 17: Easter music presented by choir -- "In the Presence of Jehovah" -- at Hazlehurst First Baptist Church. 10:30 a.m.

April 22 & 23: Spring musical. "Seussical Jr." Friday at 7 p.m. Saturday from 1:30 p.m.-7 p.m. \$10.

April 30: 13th annual Rockin Railroad Festival. Downtown at Courthouse Square. Live music, food & family fun. 10 a.m.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Shaw Furlow is a local composer, musician and arts promoter. He produces an internet-based video show -- From the Shadyside -- that spotlights area musical talent and is a consultant to school bands in the region. Bob Arnold is Editor of the Wesson News.

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Art winners



Three Co-Lin art students won awards at the Mississippi Community College Student Art Competition at Jones College in Ellisville. Winners pictured from left are Gabby Ladd of Monticello (first place in Ceramics and honorable mention in Digital Art), Colton Miller of Liberty (first place in Printmaking, second place in Digital Art, honorable mention in drawing and honorable mention in 2D Design), and Alissa Ladhier of Jayess (third place in 3D Design). Based on enrollment numbers, Co-Lin was allowed to send 10 works for competition. Out of the 10 pieces, seven of them received awards.

cont. from page 1

ILR gears up to renew programs

secretary Joy Wesbrooks, past president Bettie Bullard, president Tommy Sasser, Kim Whittington and George Huffman to begin the planning process that will culminate with the group's program announcement in August.

Johnson, who grew up in Ruth, Mississippi, outside Enterprise, on a farm that raised Angus and Hereford cattle with two brothers and two sisters, joined Co-Lin this year following her education and a subsequent business career.

A 2005 Enterprise High School graduate, Johnson earned an Associate's degree in business administration at Co-Lin in 2007 and a BA in business administration with an emphasis in marketing at Mississippi College in 2009. She served as Executive Assistant to the President at Brookhaven-based Reed's Metals for seven years, and then started Erin & Company as a Brookhaven store in 2015 where she sold clothing and jewelry, and then operated it solely as an online venue from 2020-22 after the COVID-19 pandemic sharply reduced her retail traffic. In 2020 and 2021, she also went to back to work for her former Reed's Metals boss Bernie Reed at Reed Capital Investors in Brookhaven.

Johnson continues to reside in Ruth, where her brothers, sisters, nieces and nephews also live as part of a tightly-knit family community. She is an active member of Topisaw Baptist Church where she teaches fifth and sixth grade Sunday school classes, sings in the choir and enjoys participating in mission trips to a Navajo reservation in New Mexico and helping with special projects like back-to-school clothing collections for the native Americans who live in poverty.



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Soldier traded uniform for suit

By Bob Arnold

The lyrics of an old English folklore song say "old soldiers never die; they simply fade away."

Many soldiers, in fact, would rather trade in their uniforms for suits and continue their military service as civilians. A case in point is Copiah Countian Bobby Thornton, who retired as a Colonel with the honorary rank of Brigadier General in 2010 after 33 years of service in the Army National Guard (ANG) and regular Army, and became part of the massive corps of civilians, including the President and often the Secretary of Defense, that assures the effective functioning of the U.S. military.

Thornton, who is the current Commander of the Wesson Drane-Prine American Legion Post 79, set out on his career path in 1977, joining the ANG as a private after graduating from high school at Copiah Academy. "My high school senior year trip was National Guard basic training during the summer," he jokes.

Thornton grew up with a brother and sister outside Hazlehurst, where his father operated a barber shop. He recalls biking into town, where he swam at the pool and played at the old Hazlehurst recreation center. At Copiah Academy, he played baseball and football, and heaved the shot put for the track team.

Although he shined shoes at his father's barber shop at age 12 to earn spending money, Thornton just naturally looked to the military when it came time to think about career choices. "I followed in the footsteps of my father and grandfather," he explains. "They both served in the National Guard."

Before beginning full time work in the ANG in 1982 as a Property Book Technician responsible for inventory management at Monticello, Mississippi, and then serving as an Auditor, Contracting Officer, Financial Manager and Comptroller

at Jackson, Thornton studied business at Co-Lin, worked for Mickey's, a family-owned restaurant, and attended Officers Candidates School to prepare to serve as a Second Lieutenant in the ANG.

In 2004, the Army mobilized Thornton at Camp Shelby Forces Training Center, where he served until his retirement in 2010 as Director of Resource Management, Deputy Commander for Mobilization, Deputy Garrison Commander for Installation and Acting Commander. Rather than fading away after that, the not-so-old soldier jumped immediately as a civilian to serve as Supervisory Budget Analyst for the U.S. Army Installation Management Command (IMCOM) Southeast Region in Atlanta. In 2011 and 2012, he served as an IMCOM Atlantic Region's Senior Region Support Team Specialist at Joint Base Langley Eustis at Fort Eustis, Virginia.

Thornton's next step as a civilian was to the District 11 U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service at New Orleans, where he served as Chief of Staff responsible for program management, advice and guidance, staffing supervision and performance management. Seeking to return to the area where he grew up, he joined the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers located in Vicksburg in 2018 to become Chief of the Mission Support Office and assume responsibility for the Safety and Occupational Health Program, Public Affairs, Hiring Actions, Telework Program and Administrative Support.

For his military service, Thorn-

ton received the U.S. Army Commander's Award for Civilian Service and the U.S. Army Superior Civilian Service Award. He also completed a BS in Business Administration at Mississippi College in 1994 and earned an MBA at Jackson State University and a



Wesson News

Master's in Strategic Science from the U.S. Army War College.

Thornton and his wife Dixie, whom he met at Co-Lin, are parents of a grown daughter, Emily.

pontoon boat on Lake Lincoln. I am an active member of Sylvarena Baptist Church, where I am a Deacon and trustee and serve on the finance committee.

I joined the American Legion while serving at Camp Shelby, and have become very active in the organization over the past four years. In addition to involvement with Wesson Drane-Prine American Legion Post 79, I also wear a white Legionnaire hat, testifying to my service as Department Finance Officer for the Department of Mississippi American Legion. The American Legion is the oldest veterans organization, and I would encourage others to become part of it.

Are you a reader?

Most of my reading focuses on military topics related to my career.

How about music?

I sing in my church choir, am a fan of Bill Gaither's Gospel music and enjoy country and 70s rock music.

Do you enjoy movies or theater?

I am a fan of Tim Allen in the television situation comedy, *Last Man Standing*.

What would you do with lottery winnings if you were so lucky?

I would give my church ten percent, save and invest the rest.

How would you change the world?

I try to do what is right one day at a time, even when no one is looking. Over the course of my career, I have enjoyed helping meet pay and benefit needs of people I have supervised. I am most proud of convincing the Veterans Administration to install a full-time counselor at Camp Shelby to educate returning Vietnam veterans about their benefits.

What are your hobbies?

I enjoy hunting and riding in my

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ton received the U.S. Army Legion of Merit and Mississippi Magnolia Cross. Following his service in

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MSA students capture 205 awards

Special to Wesson News

The Mississippi School of the Arts (MSA) captured 205 awards in regional Scholastic Writing and Art competition.

Altogether students in the Literary Arts and Visual Arts Departments received 70 Gold Keys. High school students from throughout the country submit creative writing and artwork for, potentially, national recognition.

MSA is a statewide residential school located in Brookhaven that provides advanced programs of study in music, theatre, visual arts, dance, literary arts, and media arts for artistically gifted eleventh and twelfth grade students.

The 35 Gold Keys for Literary Arts went to:

- Junior Jordan Brown. Poetry.
- Junior Adele Bryant. Short Story.
- Senior Sara Hebert. Poetry (3).
- Senior Sydney Knotts. Novel Writing (2), Personal Essay/Memoir, Poetry (2), Short Story (3).
- Senior Taylor Lafayette. Dramatic Script, Poetry, Short Story.
- Senior Diego Mendez. Poetry.
- Junior Hunter Nix. Personal Essay/Memoir, Poetry (2), Short Story.
- Junior Worth Novinsky. Critical Essay.
- Senior Lauren Stamps. Poetry, Science Fiction/Fantasy, Short Story (2).
- Junior Emma Stapp. Dramatic Script, Poetry.
- Senior Madison White. Poetry (2), Science Fiction/Fantasy.
- Junior Locklyn Wilchynski. Flash Fiction, Poetry.

The 35 Gold Keys for Visual Arts went to:

- Junior Sabella Aguilar. Drawing & Illustration.
- Senior Alyssa Bergen. Painting.
- Junior Cecil Bolton. Drawing & Illustration.
- Senior Mayleen Candelario. Painting (2).
- Senior Ashlea Charles. Painting (3).
- Junior Katherine Daleke. Drawing & Illustration.
- Junior Kelley Eubanks. Painting (3), Drawing & Illustration.
- Senior Mykala Hall. Painting (2).
- Junior Taylor Herron. Painting (4), Drawing & Illustration (3), Mixed Media.
- Senior Khadeja Johnson. Painting (2), Drawing & Illustration.
- Senior Haley Ladner. Comic Art.
- Junior Nisa Gildea. Painting (3), Drawing & Illustration.
- Junior Worth Novinski. Drawing & Illustration (2).
- Senior Elizabeth Smith. Drawing & Illustration.
- Senior Zee Washington. Painting.
- Junior Macey Wilson. Drawing & Illustration.

In addition to the 35 Gold Keys, MSA students received 40 Silver Keys, and 33 Honorable Mentions in the Mississippi Regional Scholastic Writing Competition. In the Visual Arts competition, MSA students also received 32 Silver Keys and 30 Honorable Mentions

MSA literary arts students received a wide variety of other awards during the current school term: Diego Mendez: William Winter Institute's Community of the Future Creatives Showcase, Winning Personal Narrative. Taylor Lafayette: William Faulkner Literary Competition, 2nd Place. Sydney Knotts: William Faulkner Literary Competition, 3rd Place. Locklyn Wilchynski: Ephemera Prize, Honorable Mention. Jordan Brown: Ephemera Prize: Honorable Mention. Sara Hebert: American High School Poets Just Poetry National Quarterly, Winner. Matthew McLain: The Next Generation High School Writers, Poetry Winner. Morgan Douglas: Poetry Out Loud In-School Contest Winner.

Best of Mississippi Honors

- Best Poem – Sydney Knotts (Finalist)
- Best Flash Fiction – Lillian Denney (Finalist), Sara Hebert (Finalist), Madison White (Finalist)
- Best Short Fiction – Sydney Knotts (Finalist)
- Best Narrative Non-Fiction – Sara Hebert (Finalist), Sydney Knotts (Finalist), Diego Mendez (Finalist)
- Best Dramatic Script – Diego Mendez (Winner), Lillian Denney (Finalist), Sydney Knotts (Finalist)

Mississippi Theatre Association High School Playwriting Competition

- Sydney Knotts, 1st Place
- Lauren Stamps, 2nd Place
- Taylor Lafayette, 3rd Place
- Lillian Denney, Finalist

University of Mississippi Writing Competition

- Jordan Brown – “Coalescence of a Bloom”, 3rd Place in high school poetry.
- Lauren Stamps – “Take as Much Time as You Need,” 2nd Place in high school short story.



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- 2013 Honda Accord **SOLD!** w/Leather, Sunroof, 36mpg, Nice car!
- 2017 Honda Accord, Only 63,000 miles, like new, great Gas mileage!
- 2015 Nissan Altima 2.5 S package, super nice with great gas mileage, Silver beauty!
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- 2010 Mercedes E-Class **SOLD!** E350, Only 86,000 Miles, Perfect!
- 2014 Nissan Frontier Crew Cab SV model, One Owner, Almost new tires, 6 Cyl. Hard bed cover, super nice!
- 2010 Honda Accord Crosstour, Rare Find, Leather, Sunroof, Almost new tires!
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- 2017 Nissan Pathfinder SL, Only 66k Miles, Leather, Pano Roof, Navi, 3rd Row, Backup Cam, Like new!
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Tree-planting honors Hood

Special to Wesson News

Copiah County Medical Center (CCMC) honored its long-time Board Chairman Carroll V. Hood at a Memorial Tree Planting Ceremony last month on the grounds of the hospital.

Hood died in October. He was 85 years old.

Hood was born on June 29, 1936, in Copiah County. He attended Hazlehurst High School and Co-LIN. He served in the Air National Guard and Army National Guard for nine years and received an honorable discharge. He and his wife, Elizabeth Ann Warren Hood, were married for over 65 years and had five children.

An accomplished businessman and land developer, he was president of Hood Petroleum Company, Inc; Copiah Oil Company, Inc.; and HICO, Inc., General Insurance Agency. He was in the LP gas business for 17 years, the interstate and intrastate trucking business for 30 years, the wholesale tire and appliance business for 15 years, and the cattle business for 25 years.

Hood held numerous leadership positions and served on many boards in his professional career: chairman, Mississippi State Oil and Gas Board; board of directors, Mississippi Economic Council; president, Mississippi Chapter, Missouri Fox Trotter Horse Breed Association; State Fuel and Energy Management Commission; executive board, Copiah County chairman, S. M. B. Andrew Jackson Council Boy Scouts; commissioner, Mississippi Employment Security Commission; board of directors, Kimbrough Investment Company, member, Research and Development Council; chairman, Farmers Home Committee; member, Mississippi State Parole Board; member, Board of Economic Development. He represented the Southeastern Region of the United States on the Gates Rubber Co. Dealer Council.

Hood loved his hometown of Hazlehurst and served his community in a number of ways. In addition to chairing the CCMC board, that service encompassed the board of directors, Bank of the South; board of directors, Copiah County Economic Development District; former president, Copiah Industrial Development Foundation; and former president, Copiah County Economic Development District. He was a member of the Hazlehurst Chamber of Commerce, the Mississippi Petroleum Marketers Association, the Mississippi Cattleman's Association, Rolling Hills Country Club in Crystal Springs, and the University Club in Jackson. As president of the board of trustees of Copiah County Medical Center, he was instrumental in the building of the new hospital in Hazlehurst. He and his wife received the Hazlehurst Chamber of Commerce Lifetime Achievement Award in 2008.

Hood is survived by his loving wife, Elizabeth; four children, Linda Hood of Peoria, Ill.; Jerry (Kimberly) Hood, of Wesson; Perry (Linda) Hood, of Hazlehurst; Karen (Joe) Coates, of Wesson; 18 grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren; his brother, Larry Hood; and many nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his father, R.S. Hood; his mother, Carrie Dell Hood; his brothers, Sidney Hood, Robin Hood, and Dale Hood; his sister, Peggy Hood Catchings; his daughter, Shelia Hood Puryear; and his grandson, Brandt Hood.

A funeral service was held Oct. 14 at Hazlehurst United Methodist Church. Interment was at Hazlehurst Cemetery.

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Most beautiful



Emma Lou Waldrop of Brookhaven was crowned Co-Lin's Most Beautiful at the annual Trillium Beauty Pageant held on the college's Wesson Campus. She is a sophomore on the Wesson Campus majoring in Radiology. She is the daughter of Brad and Casey Waldrop. Pictured from left, third alternate Madeline King of Brookhaven; first alternate Claire Buckley of Roxie; Waldrop; second alternate Lindsey Norton of Brookhaven; and fourth alternate Abigayle Case of Brookhaven.

Dobbs leaves health office

Special to Wesson News

State Health Officer Thomas Dobbs, MD, MPH, has resigned from the the Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH) and will leave at the end of July 2022.

Dobbs began his career at MSDH in 2008, and has held numerous roles including District Health Officer, State Epidemiologist, and Deputy State Health Officer. His passion has always been infectious disease treatment, and he has served in various roles related to that field, such as medical director for the AIDS Healthcare Foundation, clinical consultant for the Southeastern National TB Center, and infectious disease consultant for several hospitals throughout Mississippi.

"I feel like the time is right for me to return to the clinical side of medicine, particularly the communicable disease treatment of patients," said Dobbs. "I have thoroughly enjoyed my time at MSDH, particularly working with this dedicated health staff and advancing the field of health equity in Mississippi."

Dobbs said he also would like to step back into the academic world. He has held numerous faculty positions at colleges and universities throughout the Southeast, including at the University of Mississippi Medical Center, and he would love to teach

and train healthcare professionals about public health and infectious disease.

State Board of Health Chairman Thad Waites, MD, MACC, says the MSDH Board has always fully supported Dr. Dobbs in his role as Mississippi's State Health Officer, but understands his desire to return to the clinical side of medicine.

"I speak for all of us when I say that we have truly appreciated his professionalism, sterling personality, and stellar leadership throughout his tenure, but especially during COVID. He has been a wonderful asset to Mississippi," Waites said.

Daniel P. Edney, MD, FACP, has been named Deputy State Health Officer. Edney is a long-time resident of Vicksburg, and a graduate of the University of Mississippi Medical School where he graduated summa cum laude and with other honors.

Edney is also a member of the American Medical Association and the Mississippi State Medical Association where he serves as Past President. He has served as Chief Medical Officer at MSDH for the past year and worked closely with Dobbs during COVID providing outreach and guidance to other physicians.

The Board will take up the issue of interim State Health Officer in one of its upcoming meetings.

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Eat Easter eggs with caution



Wesson News

It is best to discard hard-boiled eggs used for Easter egg hunting, but families who plan to eat them should follow some safety guidelines.

Special to Wesson News

Eggs are a traditional part of Easter décor and celebrations, but it is risky to eat or use these hard-boiled eggs for recipes after the festivities are over. The best practice is to discard hard-boiled eggs used for Easter decorations or hunts, says Mississippi State University Extensive Service family and consumer science agent Fran Brock.

“We don’t recommend eating eggs that have been used for hunting or display,” Brock said. “Hunts usually take place outside, and you don’t want to eat eggs that have been lying on the ground or in other areas that may be contaminated with bacteria or chemicals. Bacteria can easily contaminate the egg, especially if the shell is cracked.”

Eggs used for display will likely exceed the two-hour limit for being out of refrigeration.

If you insist on eating their Easter eggs, it is important to observe some safe handling guidelines: “Eggs must be hidden and hunted within two hours to reduce the risk of food poisoning,” says Brock. “Keeping eggs out of refrigeration for longer than two hours can allow bacteria to multiply. Hidden eggs should be protected from dirt, pets, birds, insects and other sources of bacteria.” Once the hunt is over, check the eggs for cracks before returning them to the refrigerator. Throw away any eggs that are cracked. Eat the remaining eggs within seven days. The U.S. Department of Agriculture Food Safety and Inspection Service also recommends washing the hunted eggs before returning them to the refrigerator.

Even if a hunt takes place indoors, eggs can still pick up dangerous bacteria. Hard-boiled eggs are more susceptible than fresh eggs to bacterial contamination because boiling removes the naturally occurring protective outer layer on the shell. Eggs used for hunting are also handled a lot, which increases the risk of bacterial contamination even more.

Always follow basic food safety guidelines when decorating eggs that will later be eaten. Wash hands, utensils and surfaces before, during and after cooking and decorating eggs. Also, use a food-safe dye for coloring the eggs.

Plastic, wooden and paper eggs are three alternatives to hard-boiled eggs. The best way to store real eggs them long term is to freeze them. Raw whole eggs, egg whites and egg yolks outside the shell can be frozen. Hard-boiled eggs do not freeze well because the white becomes tough and rubbery. For best quality, whisk them before freezing for improved texture when cooked. Be sure to label them if they are sweet or salty, so you won’t be in for a surprise when you use them in a recipe.

EDITOR’S NOTE: Excerpted from Mississippi State University Extension Service report.

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Insurance, redistricting, camping & marijuana

Special to Wesson News

Insurer drops medical center.

The insurance agreement between Mississippi's academic medical center and Blue Cross & Blue Shield has ended due largely to a dispute by the two parties over the medical center asking for a 30 percent rate increase to be funded at the level of comparable academic medical centers in regional cities such as Birmingham, Memphis or New Orleans. The state's largest insurer has dropped all of the health system's hospitals, clinics, physicians and providers from its network. Some patients might have to leave the state for organ transplants and treatment of complex or rare diseases and all patients are certain to face higher costs.

Redistricting approved. The Mississippi House and Senate have approved each other's redistricting plans that are likely to maintain Republican majorities in each chamber. The 122 House districts and 52 Senate districts are updated each decade to account for population changes shown by the U.S. Census. Two House districts in areas with stagnant population in north Mississippi are being moved to areas with growth -- one to DeSoto County and the other to Harrison County. In the Senate, one district is being moved from southwestern Mississippi to Rankin and Smith counties near the metro Jackson area. Republican Governor Tate Reeves does not have the

power to sign or veto the plans, because legislative redistricting is done by resolutions rather than bills. Unless someone successfully sues to challenge the redistricting plans, the new districts will be used in the 2023 elections.

Comfortable camping. The Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks (MDWFP) is partnering with Tentrr to make camping in state parks more convenient and comfortable and less an experience of roughing it. The new tents MDWFP is acquiring from the company are safari-style and most of them sit on raised platforms with a front deck. Inside, two campers can sleep on a bed with a memory foam mattress. Outside, campers can enjoy Adirondack chairs, a table with benches and a fire pit that has a grill for cooking. Heaters are available for cold nights. A pop-up tent on the sites will accommodate up to four additional guests.

Marijuana research. As Mississippi implements its new medical marijuana program, University of Mississippi (UM) researchers are opening a new center to study the health benefits and risks of the plant. For more than 50 years, UM center for natural products has been the only academic institution in the U.S. with federal approval to cultivate and provide standardized cannabis products for scientific research. The university's new cannabis research and education center will conduct

clinical research to understand dosing, potential benefits and side effects, irritation and other things that might be observed in patients or subjects taking marijuana

Alligator hunting. With the number of alligators in Pelahatchie Bay becoming a problem, the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks (MDWFP) has proposed a hunting season to help reduce the population. Hunting in or near residential areas would be prohibited and alligators could not be killed within 100 yards of any kind of structure such as piers, boat ramps or boathouses. Alligators would be secured and killed at point-blank range with shotguns using what is typically referred to as bird shot. The proposed hunts are scheduled May 5-7 and May 12-14, 2023. A

random drawing will be held for 12 possession permits for each weekend for a total of 24 permits.

State prisons refocus. Dozens of classroom and training opportunities reflect the new focus of Mississippi prisons on job training and rehabilitation and creating a network to make inmates ready to re-enter society when they have completed their sentences. At the same time, wardens, increasingly, are assuming full control of prisons and streamlining their operations as centralized management in Jackson becomes a relic of the past. A few of the prisons are becoming purely job training and rehabilitation facilities. As the new directions unfold, safety, building repairs and understaffing remain issues facing the state's corrections department.

Girl Scout cookies



Wesson American Legion Post 79 was the drop-off point for distribution of Girl Scout cookies throughout Copiah and Lincoln Counties. The Post stored more than 800 cases of cookies, each with 12 boxes of cookies -- 9,600 boxes of Girl Scout Cookies in total. Post Vice Commander Richard Miller and Commander Bobby Thornton (left and second from left) assisted other volunteers in accepting delivery of cookies and storing them for pickup.

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CCMA program graduates eleven

Special to Wesson News

Co-Lin's Workforce Education division recently graduated 11 students from the Certified Clinical Medical Assistant (CCMA) non-credit training program.

Enrollees started the six-month program in August 2021 on the Wesson Campus and now possess the skills to provide both clinical and administrative support to a diverse variety of healthcare providers.

Through the CCMA training program, healthcare facilities get employees with the diverse skill sets they seek. Students learn to work alongside doctors and nurses to administer medications, obtain laboratory specimens, assist with minor procedures, perform electrocardiograms, provide patient education, record vital signs, administer injections, and execute administrative office tasks. These responsibilities require knowledge in areas such as, medical terminology, basic pharmacology, nutrition, psychology, anatomy and physiology, clinical patient care, infection control, testing and laboratory procedures, phlebotomy, patient care coordination and education, administrative assistant skills, and medical law and ethics.



Co-Lin Certified Clinical Medical Assistant graduates included Kendra Allred and Aysiah Martin of Wesson; Alondra Bonal, Sharnice Guynes, and Korby Roberts of Hazlehurst; Michelle McCall, Nicole Conerly, Patrice Mobley, and Emmaline Woosley of Brookhaven; Lindsey Ferrell of McCall Creek; and Maddie Hughey of Smithdale.

The CCMA program involves not only classroom learning but also computer lab studies, hands-on learning, and clinical rotations. Once training is successfully completed, students are eligible to test for the National Healthcareer Association

CCMA National Board exam for licensure.

The next session of CCMA training starts April 11 on the Wesson Campus. Applicants can download a packet from www.colin.edu/ccma or call 601-643-8707. A High School

Diploma or High School Equivalency/ GED is required. Participants must also take the ACT WorkKeys Assessment and earn a silver level or greater National Career Readiness Certificate. Further requirements are detailed in the application packet.

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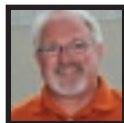
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NEW ARRIVALS

2015 Jeep Cherokee



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- 2016 GMC Sierra Crew Cab, 4x4, Leather Buckets, Lifted, Custom 22's, Sharp!
- 2014 Mercedes C Class 250 Sport sedan, Sunroof, Low miles, Leather, Beautiful!
- 2012 Chev Traverse LT, 3rd row, Rear A/C, low mileage, leather, dvd!
- 2015 Chevy Silverado LT, Crew Cab, 4x4, Leather Buckets, Low mileage, Super nice!
- 2013 Audi A4 2.0 Quattro **SOLD!** AWD Leather, Sunroof, Navi, Super Nice!
- 2013 Honda Accord **SOLD!** w/Leather, Sunroof, 36mpg, Nice car!
- 2017 Honda Accord, Only 63,000 miles, like new, great Gas mileage!
- 2015 Nissan Altima 2.5 S package, super nice with great gas mileage, Silver beauty!
- 2009 BMW X5, xDrive48i, AWD, Black with Peanut Butter Leather, Sunroof, Nice!
- 2015 Toyota Tacoma **SOLD!** Crew Cab, New Tires, Professionally serviced, Pwr Wind, Locks, Mirrors!
- 2010 Mercedes E-Class **SOLD!** E350, Only 86,000 Miles, Perfect!
- 2014 Nissan Frontier Crew Cab SV model, One Owner, Almost new tires, 6 Cyl. Hard bed cover, super nice!
- 2010 Honda Accord Crosstour, Rare Find, Leather, Sunroof, Almost new tires!
- 2012 Toyota Rav 4 S-Package with low mileage, Leather, Sunroof, Great Gas Mileage, Clean!
- 2017 Nissan Pathfinder SL, Only 66k Miles, Leather, Pano Roof, Navi, 3rd Row, Backup Cam, Like new!
- 2007 Honda CRV, Low Mileage, EX package, Sunroof, Automatic, great gas mileage, dont miss it!
- 2014 Ford Explorer XLT, 3rd Row Seat, Rear A/C, Power Seat, Family Size!
- 2012 Lexus RX 350, AWD, Leather, Sunroof, NAVI, Rear Camera, Clean, Like New!

2013 Range Rover Evoque Pure Plus



AWD, Leather, Sunroof, Low Mileage, SHARP!



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Mississippi winner in settlement

Special to Wesson News

The Securities Division of the Mississippi Secretary of State office joined 31 other state regulators and the SEC in a \$100 million settlement with the digital-asset financial services company BlockFi Lending LLC (BlockFi). The settlement relates to cryptocurrency offerings made to Mississippians.

Regulators found BlockFi issued securities not registered with the Securities Division nor exempt from registration requirements. The securities, called "BlockFi Interests Accounts" (BIAs), offered monthly interest to investors who set up accounts in which they deposited digital assets. As a result, investors were sold unregistered securities in violation of state law and deprived of critical information and disclosure necessary to understand the potential risks of these lending products.

"Nearly 900 Mississippians invested assets of more than \$5 million with BlockFi" said Secretary Michael Watson. "Our team recognizes the value new technology brings to financial markets. However, complying with existing laws and regulations is not a choice, but a necessary step to promote competitive

capital markets and continued investor protection."

BlockFi's \$943,396.22 payment to Mississippi is part of a larger settlement in which BlockFi agreed to pay \$50 million to state securities regulators and \$50 million to the SEC. The Mississippi Securities Division of the Secretary of State Office is one of 32 North American Securities Administrators Association (NASAA) member agencies that agreed to settle with BlockFi, and more jurisdictions are expected to follow.

As part of the agreement, BlockFi agreed to cease offering the cryptocurrency interest accounts in Mississippi until properly registered. BlockFi may continue to deploy digital assets for existing BIA investors and may continue to pay interest. Between February 14 and the date BlockFi's securities are registered and qualified or permitted for sale with the states and SEC, current investors may keep their existing investments with BlockFi and continue to earn interest under their initial agreement with the company. This measure is designed to protect the interests of existing investors while allowing BlockFi time to bring itself into compliance with securities laws.



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Martin PTK Distinguished College Administrator

Special to Wesson News

Co-Lin Wesson campus Vice President Jackie Laird Martin of Bogue Chitto is one of only 28 college administrators nationwide to receive the Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) Distinguished College Administrator Award.

Martin will be honored during PTK Catalyst 2022 in April, the society’s annual convention.

The award recognizes college administrators working directly with student leaders to solve problems on campus and in their communities. These administrators have taken an active interest in supporting high-achieving students and developing student leaders.

“These college administrators are beloved on campus,” said Phi Theta Kappa President and CEO Dr. Lynn Tincher-Ladner. “They know students by name and by circumstance. Their nomination is evidence of the gratitude their PTK students feel for supporting them and students like them -- even during the most difficult times.”

Honorees were selected from among thousands of college administrators eligible to receive the award. Of the 28 award



recipients from across the country, Martin is one of only five from Mississippi.

As a vice president, Martin oversees instructional programs including academic, career-technical, and workforce education; and student services including enrollment services, housing, financial aid and athletics. In previous roles at the college, she has served as Associate Vice President of Instructional Services and Dean of Career, Technical, and Workforce Education.


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