

# ULM

Batty for Research  
A Second Wind for Today's Students  
The Future is Now

FALL 2008

THE MAGAZINE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA MONROE



*ULM's Ultimate 'BAT MAN'*

# PRESIDENT'S LETTER



*James & Deborah Cofer*

poverty areas, to become qualified administrators. ULM offers another professional development opportunity for area teachers: TEACH Delta Region, a project that attracts talented individuals into the Louisiana-Mississippi Delta classrooms. The project, a collaborative effort between ULM and Jackson State University, is funded by a five-year, \$5.3 million grant from the U.S. Office of Innovation and Improvement. Another initiative, eTEACH, allows novice and veteran K-12 teachers to earn professional development and certification through online, blended, distance, weekend, evening, and on-site courses.

ULM students continue to make national headlines. Chris Rice, a ULM graduate student in biology, searches tree cavities for bats in the Upper Ouachita National Wildlife Refuge. His presentations at national scientific conferences attract major accolades and awards. Last winter, Rice placed radio transmitters on bats to track winter roost sites; before his research, no one knew where this species roosted during the winter. Another student, atmospheric science major Matthew Clay of New Orleans, beat 318 freshmen and sophomores from MIT, Penn State, Georgia Tech, and Texas A&M in a national weather forecasting contest. Our Speech and Debate Team captured its first individual national championship and its first team national championship, beating 19 universities — including Harvard and California State — in the International Public Debate Association's National Championship Tournament. ULM's Water Ski Team won its 21st national championship title in October.

Another national honor reflects the incredible faculty at our great institution. ULM ranks in the Top 20 Specialized Research Universities for Business, Education, and Social Sciences in a recent national study. ULM is the only Louisiana university included in the ranking.

I hope you enjoy reading about these accomplishments and more.

Sincerely,

James E. Cofer, Sr.  
*President*

Student success stories best illustrate the value of an education earned at the University of Louisiana Monroe, and these triumphs inevitably result in success for our entire state. In this edition of the ULM Magazine, you will read about 21-year-old Ashley Reeves, a Virginia native who works full-time at Monroe Surgical Hospital and carries a full load of online courses through ULM's new Gateway to Online Degrees Program. GOLD targets Louisiana's 600,000 adult learners who have not yet completed their college degrees. Ashley, who is enrolled in the online Bachelor of Science in Health Studies, will answer the state's need for additional health professionals.

ULM's efforts to better Louisiana continue through the Louisiana Leader Fellows program. ULM was recently named the state's premier provider for this new initiative which will train talented teachers, specifically in high-

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ULM's ultimate 'Bat Man,' graduate student Chris Rice, researches bats along the Ouachita River.

INSIDE BACK COVER: *Behind the Anna Gray Noe Alumni Center and in the mist of morning, Bayou DeSiard awaits for another day of training with ULM's championship water ski team, who won its 21st national championship in October.*

## A LEADER IN SCHOLARLY WORKS

### ULM among the nation's top 20

A national report ranks the University of Louisiana Monroe among the top 20 universities that produce the most scholarly work. ULM is the only Louisiana university included in the ranking.

The Faculty Scholarly Productivity Index, partially financed by the State University of New York at Stony Brook and produced by Academic Analytics, measures the scholarly work of more than 7,300 doctoral programs in the country; the index measures book and journal publications, journal article citations, federally-funded research grants, and other awards.

ULM ranks in the category: Top 20 Specialized Research Universities for Business, Education, and Social Sciences, 2006-2007. ULM's doctoral programs in this category are housed in the College of Education and Human Development: Ph.D. in Marriage and Family Therapy, Ed.D. in Curriculum and Instruction and Ed.D. in Educational Leadership.

Provost Stephen Richters said, "I'm proud of the quality of research produced by faculty in all areas of the university, and I'm pleased with this national recognition of our academic programs."

### National Champion Debate Team

In March, ULM was one of 125 contenders and 20 universities — including Harvard University and California State — competing at the International Public Debate Association's National Championship Tournament in Texas. ULM captured its first individual national championship and its first team national championship in debate.

Overall, the team members earned a total of 18 awards, finishing first in the novice division. Of the win, Head Coach Bob Alexander said, "No program has ever earned both a speech national championship and an IPDA debate national championship — and for this group to achieve this goal in back-to-back years is truly an amazing feat."

**"NO PROGRAM HAS EVER EARNED BOTH A SPEECH NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP AND AN IPDA DEBATE NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP — AND FOR THIS GROUP TO ACHIEVE THIS GOAL IN BACK-TO-BACK YEARS IS TRULY AN AMAZING FEAT."**

### ULM in Top 10 for Math Education

In July, ULM's Elementary Education Program was named in the Top 10 for its preparation of future mathematics teachers by the National Council on Teacher Quality.

Only 10 of the 77 programs scored adequately on all three criteria, according to the report, "No Common Denominator: The Preparation of Elementary Teachers in Mathematics by America's Education Schools," which included the University of Georgia, Boston College, Indiana University, University of Maryland, and the University of Michigan, among others.

ULM President James Cofer said, "We are very pleased that the National Council on Teacher Quality recognized the ULM Elementary Education Program for its excellence and caliber of instruction. Both the Department of Curriculum and Instruction and the Department of Mathematics long ago foresaw the need to fortify existing programs, keenly understanding the absolute necessity of superior mathematics instruction for our nation's children. We are proud that their valuable work has received such acclaim."

## Matthew Clay: National Weather Forecasting winner

**M**atthew Clay, a sophomore atmospheric science major, earned a national award in a weather forecasting contest sponsored by the University of Oklahoma.

More than 1,200 students and faculty from 68 universities across the country forecasted weather for specific cities over eight days and submitted that data online during the fall and spring semesters.

Clay, who graduated from Destrehan High School in New Orleans, earned “Best Overall Forecaster” in the Wx (Weather) Challenge, where he competed in the freshmen-sophomore division and beat 318 freshmen and sophomores from MIT, Penn State, Georgia Tech, Texas A&M, and more.

Several other ULM atmospheric science students and one professor, Boniface Mills,



placed in the top 100 in the contest. ULM’s cumulative team score surpassed Texas A&M, University of Utah, Kent State, and University of North Carolina at Asheville.

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## The Warhawk Lands

**A** bronze Warhawk statue, with its 17-foot wingspan, safely perches at its new home at the University of Louisiana Monroe. The sculpture was installed next to the ULM Library May 30.

The 2,000-pound Warhawk was transported on a flatbed truck from Lander, Wyo., where it was created by Sandy Scott, one of the country’s premier animal sculptors.

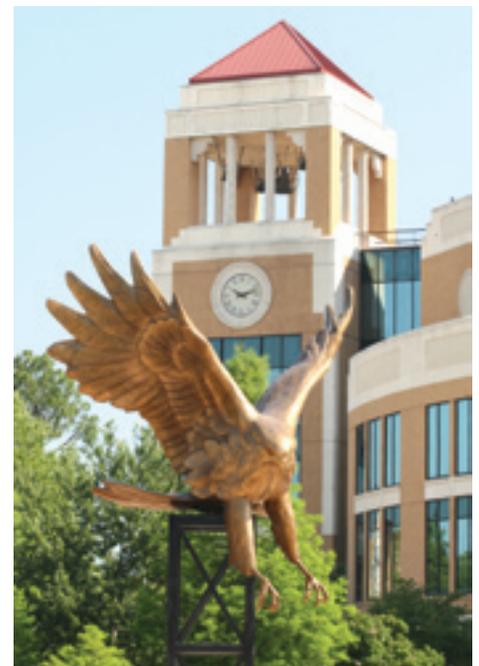
ULM First Lady Deborah Cofer and Executive Assistant to the President Dr. Richard Hood thought of the idea for the statue shortly after ULM adopted its new mascot in June 2006.

The bronze sculpture, funded by private dollars, is everything First Lady Deborah Cofer imagined.

“This statue instills a new sense of excellence, a new sense of energy. That is what

this Warhawk means to ULM. It identifies us now and brings a wholeness to who we are, and it will carry us forward in every aspect. I think students, faculty, staff, and everyone else who visits the bronze Warhawk will understand what this mascot really means to us.”

The statue rests on a 9-foot tall base and is accompanied by lighting and irrigation systems for the surrounding landscape.



# NEWSCAMPUS

## The Clarke M. Williams footprint: a legacy of success

Clarke M. Williams valued the tools that made education more accessible, like the technology found in ULM's new student success center, honoring his legacy.

His daughter, Carolyn Williams Perry, said, "Daddy emphasized the importance of education and technology. He always said that the world is changing so fast, and technology is changing so fast, and without an education, the world will pass you by."



Clarke M. Williams

In August 2008, the community celebrated the opening of the Clarke M. Williams Student Success Center, an initiative that began in 2002, when CenturyTel Corp. made a lead gift of \$300,000 to honor the memory of its founder, Clarke M. Williams.

Students explore different majors, conduct research, receive tutoring, and benefit from a full-time advising staff in the new success center. The facility offers group study and



counselor rooms, multi-media rooms, and extended-hour computer labs for students who divide their time between work and classroom responsibilities.

Micah Pulliam, president of the ULM Student Government Association, expressed his appreciation for the new resource. "When the university and the community come together to construct a fine building like this, it shows that they care about the success of the students, and I want to thank President James Cofer, his administration, and the community for helping us."

The student success center is symbolic of Williams' belief system, said Glen Post, chairman and CEO of CenturyTel. "We knew right away that the opportunity to invest in this facility would be one he would appreciate, that really fit who he was as a person. This facility will help the education of many young people for many years to come. Ultimately, it serves to improve people's lives."

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## Creating tech-savvy teachers

Teachers of today and tomorrow are ahead of the curve thanks to ULM's Digital Media Studio in Strauss Hall.

Established in 2006 by the College of Education and Human Development through grants and donations, the studio enhances the teaching profession through state-of-the-art technology.



Dr. Sivakumaran

Thillainataraja Sivakumaran, an assistant professor in the College of Education and Human Development, helped create the DMS, which he directs with a Ph.D. in instructional technology and a master's degree in secondary education. "This technology doesn't replace

teaching, it enhances it," he said.

Sivakumaran and his students help faculty and students incorporate technology into the classroom through such innovations as podcasting. The studio is also a resource and support center for faculty building online courses and course material. Students and faculty gain expanded knowledge and skills, as well as a tangible achievement in the form of a job portfolio on CD containing lesson plans, projects, an updated resume, and a video displaying them teaching.

The studio houses 10 iMAC G5 computers, 10 scanners, and 10 video and 10 digital still cameras.

More information may be found online at [www.ulm.edu/ci/dms](http://www.ulm.edu/ci/dms).

## Super Warhawk Weekend — a spring homecoming

**H**omecoming is a time-honored and revered tradition at ULM. A week of campus-wide activities culminates with the main event — the homecoming football game. It is one of the biggest events that students, faculty, staff and alumni look forward to each year.

ULM created another event — one that was met with great success. ULM's Super Warhawk Weekend — a mixture of crawfish, football, baseball, softball, tennis, opera, and more — debuted last April.

ULM president James Cofer said, "Super Warhawk Weekend celebrates a variety of activities offered at ULM. This weekend features our solid athletic programs, showcases our outstanding talent in the School of Visual and Performing Arts, and it supports a long-standing tradition, the Alumni Association's La' Louisianne Crawfish Boil."

In addition to the annual "Maroon and Gold" spring football game, ULM hosted the Sun Belt

**"ANYTIME ALUMNI CAN COME BACK TO CAMPUS AND SEE THE MOMENTUM AND DIRECTION ULM IS GOING, THAT'S A GOOD THING."**

Conference tennis championships, and both the Warhawk baseball and softball teams hosted spirited three-game series with Sun Belt conference rivals.

The ULM Alumni Association's La' Louisianne Crawfish Boil, held beside the field in Malone Stadium, featured live

music and served over 2,000 pounds of crawfish, and ULM's School of Visual and Performing Arts staged opera performances of Puccinni's "Suor Angelica" & "Gianni Schicchi."

"By far, Super Warhawk Weekend was a resounding success," said Keith Brown, Executive Director of Alumni and Community Relations.

"Anytime alumni can come back to campus and see the momentum and direction ULM is going in, that's a good thing. So many alumni told us this was a great idea. And they were right, so planning is already in place for the second annual Super Warhawk Weekend on March 20-22, 2009."

More information on Super Warhawk Weekend can be found at [www.ulm.edu/super](http://www.ulm.edu/super).



# NEWSSPORTS

## “Coach Shake” named Sun Belt Coach of the Year

**ULM**'s baseball coach, Jeff Schexnaider, was voted the Sun Belt Conference Coach of the Year by the league's coaches.

“Coach Shake” (BS '87, MS '89) led the Warhawks to their best season in five years, guiding ULM to the Sun Belt conference championship after the Warhawks were picked to finish eighth.

“I am very thankful to the rest of the coaches for this honor,” Schexnaider said. “The Coach of the Year award is more of a reflection on the assistant coaches and players than anything else. We have a great group of young men, who have worked hard all year together as a team towards achieving a goal, and that has been the key to our success.”

Schexnaider's leadership marks the beginning of a new era for ULM baseball with large scale improvements to Warhawk Field, including the creation of a student section, improvements to dugouts and a brick wall enclosing the playing field down both foul lines.



*Coach Schexnaider*

## Stadium Drive renamed Warhawk Way

**ULM** students, faculty, alumni, and the city of Monroe worked together to rename Stadium Drive to Warhawk Way.

ULM Athletic Director Bobby Staub acknowledged the efforts put forth by Monroe mayor and ULM alum Jamie Mayo ('79) and the city council. In an unanimous vote of 5-0 on June 24, the city council agreed to rename the street “Warhawk Way.”

“We are grateful to the mayor, city council, and Stadium Drive residents for supporting this initiative,” said Staub.

“With the overwhelming excitement for our new mascot, we continually look for opportunities to



promote the Warhawk brand. At many universities, streets that transverse athletic facilities have athletic references. Renaming Stadium Drive to Warhawk Way is a great opportunity to further market our mascot.”

## It's all about connections, connections, connections

Everyone knows the real estate mantra – “location, location, location.” Robert Williamson, L-Club president, believes in “connections, connections, connections.”

“If you are part of a NLSC, NLU or ULM team, we want to stay connected to you, we want you to stay connected to ULM and we want you to stay connected to each other,” says Williamson.

Through the L-Club, the association of former student-athletes, Williamson has been working tirelessly to reconnect alumni with their alma mater.

Numerous L-Club members have been found based on a listing of lost members at [www.ulm.edu/lclub](http://www.ulm.edu/lclub).

The ULM Athletic Foundation also helps current student-athletes stay connected by raising awareness and financial support for the Warhawk athletic programs, enhancing the lives of over 300 student athletes.

“Investing in the ULM Athletic Foundation is the best thing any business or individual can do to support ULM Athletics,” said Toni Bacon, the Athletic Foundation’s Executive Director.

For more information about the ULM Athletic Foundation, visit [www.gowarhawks.net](http://www.gowarhawks.net).



Williamson



Bacon

## ULM athletics opens online photo store

Warhawk fans can now purchase pictures online to proudly display in their homes, at work, or as a gift.

“We are very excited to launch the ULM Photo Store for our fans,” ULM Director of Athletics Bobby Staub said. “The store will allow our alumni, students and fans to capture their favorite ULM moments and make them their own.”

Powered by Pictopia, the ULM Photo Store features pictures from all of the Warhawk varsity athletic teams and will be updated with new

game action photos throughout the athletic seasons. With over 3,000 images already available, the ULM Photo Store is guaranteed to satisfy every Warhawk fan.

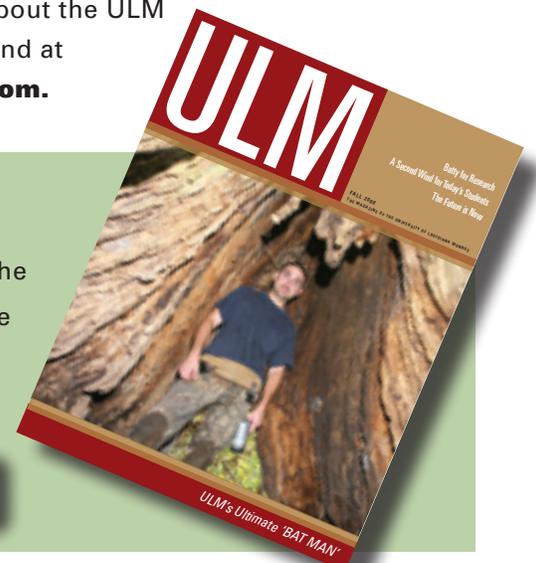
Fans can purchase the pictures in a variety of different sizes (5x7, 8x10, 11x14, 16x20, 20x30) and will also have the option to have the pictures matted and framed.

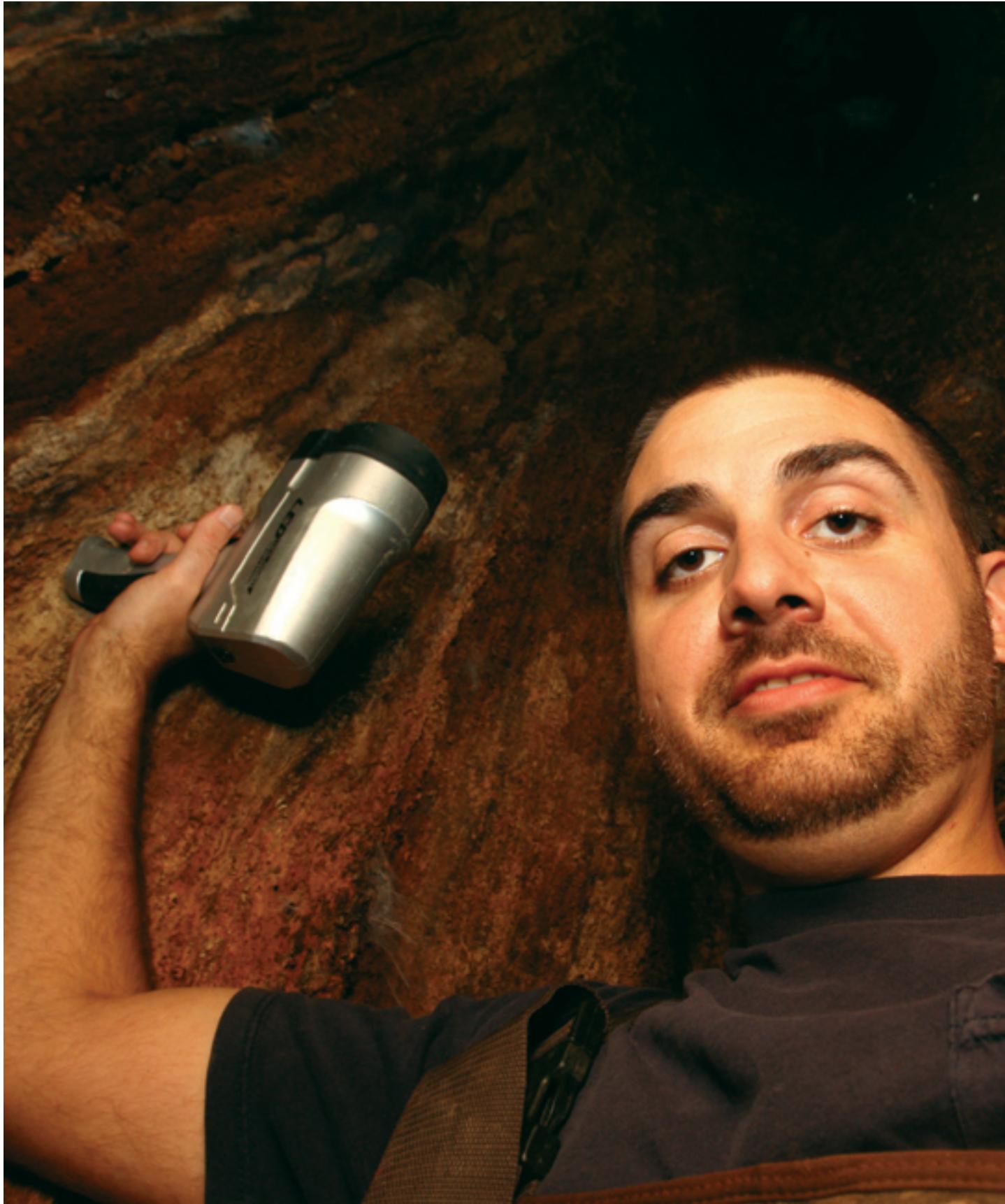
More information about the ULM Photo Store can be found at [www.ulmathletics.com](http://www.ulmathletics.com).

## TAKE THE ULM MAGAZINE SURVEY!

The ULM Magazine is conducting a survey. We want your opinions about the magazine as well as any suggestions you may have to make it better. The survey is quick, easy and confidential. It will be available online through Jan. 5, 2009. The results will be published in the Spring 2009 edition of *The ULM Magazine*. To take the survey, visit [ulm.edu/ulmmagazine](http://ulm.edu/ulmmagazine) and click on . . . .

TAKE THE SURVEY







# BATTY FOR RESEARCH

## ULM STUDENTS TAKE TO THE FIELD AND LABORATORIES FOR HANDS-ON LEARNING

By Catherine Heitman  
Photography by Richard Lupo

**A**round campus, he's known as "The Bat Man." And while Chris Rice bears scant resemblance to the caped crusader of DC Comics fame, the graduate student's moniker fits like a glove.

"There's really no way around it. I'm the only guy working on bats in this department. So I'm 'The Bat Man' for now," he said.

Rice's passion is wildlife conservation — and more particularly, bats.

You might wonder why a talented biology student, who could study any of the multitudes of local animal species, would devote the dawn of his career to the nocturnal, guano-producing, hanging-by-their-toes mammals.

After all, from their flapping wings to the Dracula-induced nightmares they inspire, bats are burdened with nature's equivalent of a PR problem, one that Rice and his research with ULM biology professor Kim Marie Tolson aim to address.

"Bats are probably one of the most beneficial creatures on this planet," the Monroe native explained in defense of his subjects.

He said a bat can eat more than its body weight in insects every night. And when you consider that some of Ouachita Parish tupelo

**“OVER THE PAST THREE YEARS, ULM RESEARCHERS HAVE ATTRACTED ABOUT \$18 MILLION PER YEAR IN EXTERNAL FUNDING FROM AN AVERAGE 110 AWARDS PER YEAR, A FIGURE UNIVERSITY OFFICIALS AIM TO DOUBLE IN FIVE YEARS.”**

— RENE HEARNS, director, ULM’s Office of Sponsored Programs and Research



trees can house 1,000 bats at a time, the impact is substantial. In fact, Rice offers the calculations to prove it.

If a single bat can eat 4,500 insects a night and 1,000 bats can consume some 4.5 million, imagine what Louisiana’s 13 native bat species scattered throughout the state can accomplish — not just in mosquito control but also in gobbling up other insects, such as the beetles that threaten Louisiana’s agricultural industry.

“If not for bats, we’d be completely overrun by insects, for sure,” Rice continued. He, along with Tolson’s three other graduate students and some undergraduate assistants, are part of a growing number of students benefiting from ULM’s increasingly active research environment.

## **OFFICE OF SPONSORED PROGRAMS AND RESEARCH**

The unique nature of bats and their importance in society are what prompted Rice and Tolson to focus on Louisiana’s native bat species — specifically *Myotis austroriparius* and *Corynorhinus rafinesquii* — both of which are listed by the federal government as “species of concern.”

“We can’t say they’re endangered, because we don’t have enough information on the species yet. That’s why the research is so crucial,” Tolson said.

The goal of the research is to learn more about the bats’ roosting sites and to determine whether the loss of their habitat is threatening their survival.

It’s one of many such research projects underway in laboratories, classrooms and field sites in and around ULM. The university has increased its emphasis on research, and

over the past three years has attracted about \$18 million per year in external funding from an average of 110 awards per year, a figure university officials aim to double in five years, according to Rene Hearn, director of ULM’s new Office of Sponsored Programs and Research.

The university created the office to administer grants and help faculty members navigate the maze of governmental regulations that surround research funding.

“It says a lot about ULM’s commitment to increasing its research capabilities,” Hearn said.

Students at all levels play their part as well — raising research questions, writing grant proposals, conducting research, recording data, and presenting findings to a wide array of audiences — all work that benefits students, faculty, the university, and the broader public.

## **MAMMALS THAT FLY**

For Rice, there is no research subject more stimulating than bats.

**“AFTER ALL, THEY’RE MAMMALS THAT FLY, AND IT DOESN’T GET ANY COOLER THAN THAT.”**

— CHRIS RICE, graduate student

It’s not the Dracula reputation spawned by the vampire bat that is responsible for his interest.

“That’s just a myth,” Rice said, with a chuckle that shows

he answers the question a lot. “There are bats that suck blood — but it’s nothing like it is in the movies. The cattle and other animal hosts are really unaffected by the process, and these are not the types of bats we have here in the United States.”

For Rice, the allure of bats is much more basic. “After all, they’re mammals that fly, and it doesn’t get any cooler than that.”

His ambition is to be a conservation biologist for a nonprofit organization like the Nature Conservancy or a governmental agency such as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. While he would like to study bats for the rest of his life, his main interest is in contributing to the understanding and survival of native animal species.

It's an interest that began in childhood and one that Tolson was happy to indulge.

As a small boy, Rice's father took him hunting in the lush wooded areas around Ouachita Parish, and his mother gave him early lessons in animal conservation – teaching him to catch spiders he found in the house and release them in the yard, instead of squashing them with a rolled up magazine or trapping them in a Mason jar, which might have been the initial inclination of a growing boy.

"I think I got the love of outdoors from my father and the love for animals — the conservation of animals — from my mother," he said.

When he enrolled at ULM, Rice had an idea that his career would take him in the direction of biology, but it was Tolson's guidance that gave shape to his plans.

"It helps when you meet a professor like Dr. Tolson. Once I took a class with her, I could tell that she loves what she's doing. And that's important. We're going to work half our lives away in a job somewhere. You need to be really happy with what you're doing," Rice said.

Rice is fairly independent in his research, something that Tolson requires of all four of her graduate students.

"That and communication. They have to be able to explain the work they're doing," she said. That's why she insists that her students present their findings at scientific conferences around the country, as well as with audiences closer to home.

Rice's presentations at national scientific conferences have received accolades and awards. He pays for much of the travel by applying for competitive grants, a skill that will serve him well in the future, said Tolson, who sees the effort as good exposure for Rice and the university.

"I tell my new graduate students from day one, 'You not only have to go to scientific meetings, but you have to talk to the local

garden clubs, you have to talk to the bird clubs. It's a matter of getting the information out there.'"

Rice explains to his audiences that bats are all around us. He and Tolson have discovered them in chimneys and even in the attic of a building on ULM's campus.

Although they are generally thought of as cave dwellers, they also inhabit culverts, cisterns, wells, abandoned buildings, bridges, and trees.

"And when I say trees, I not only mean tree cavities, which is where I study them, but under tree bark, in the leaves and moss," he said.

Rice conducts his research at the Upper Ouachita National Wildlife Refuge. He searches tree cavities using several techniques to look for both species of bats.

"I climb inside the tree (through the basal opening) or at least stick my head inside, and shine a red flashlight up into the tree cavity to search for the bats. I am trying to understand why certain trees are being selected over others," he said.

Last winter, Rice placed radio transmitters on *Corynorhinus rafinesquii* (Rafinesque's big-eared) bats to track winter roost sites. This species disappears from the trees they inhabit in summer. Until his research was conducted, no one knew where this species roosted during the winter.

He is also recording the temperature inside the tupelo, bald cypress and other old growth tree cavities that are known roost sites. This data will be used in the construction of artificial roost boxes to mimic the natural roost sites that have decreased as a result of wetland loss and other environmental impacts.

It's the kind of research experiences Rice hopes to have the rest of his life, whether his work takes him to Ouachita Parish, Yosemite National Park or South America.

"There's always going to be something that you haven't seen," Tolson said. "That curiosity is going to drive you to go and see it."

And it's that drive that is increasingly attracting graduate students to the Sportsman's Paradise from all corners of the United States.

"What better place is there to study such a vast array of animals?" Tolson asked.

## BETTER MEDICINES: AT ULM COLLEGE OF PHARMACY, IT ALL STARTS WITH THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

Rice's quest for discovery is one the university has increasingly answered over the past few years as ULM professors have boosted their emphasis on research.

One program that is at the forefront is ULM's College of Pharmacy, where research could mean the difference between life and death for countless people.

And students place a crucial role, working side by side with professors as they discover new sources for medications, improve the effectiveness of drugs in treating diseases and disorders and develop novel means of drug delivery.

"There is a lot to be done in research. It's time consuming and absorbing, so we rely heavily on talented graduate students. They are our colleagues in the making, and they're indispensable in getting the job done," said Karen Briski, professor of pharmacology and neuroanatomy and the head of the Department of Basic Pharmaceutical Sciences.



*ULM Pharmacy student Sunitha Bachawal works in the Pharmacy Lab.*

"By the time their programs are done, our students are familiar with the lab, well versed in what needs to be addressed, how to address it and how to package it for a lay audience," she said.

ULM researchers specialize in pharmacology, pharmaceuticals and medicinal chemistry. They are currently exploring a wide range of projects — from cancer prevention and treatment, to development of drugs on the nano scale, and research into medications from marine sources, such as the red sea sponge.

Briski said students are driven to find solutions to some of the world's most pressing health concerns.

"It's a big motivating factor when students work 12, 14 hours a day, coming in on nights and weekends. It helps to see that it's important and has potential to impact millions of people," she said.

## NURTURING YOUNG RESEARCHERS

Whether it's the quest for new drugs, for information to benefit animal conservation or for answers to some of Northeast Louisiana's biggest challenges through the new Social Sciences Research Laboratory, the opportunities for students to participate in research have increased at ULM. And students don't have to wait until graduate school to try it.

In fact, ULM officials are finding that the opportunity to conduct research and work closely with faculty members is an enticement for motivated young students to attend the university.

One new program that connects freshmen and sophomores with graduate student researchers and professors is ULM's new Emerging Scholars Program. Students selected as research assistants as part of the program receive a \$400 stipend at the end of the semester.

In addition ULM's newly redesigned Honor's Program offers high achieving students a rigorous curriculum, small classes and the opportunity to conduct research as part of their honors thesis.

"It's an opportunity for students to work closely with peers who are as curious and passionate as they are," said Christian Rubio,

a Spanish professor and head of the Honors Program. “The honors thesis is a jump start for many of the students who will move on to graduate school. It gives them a better path to start doing research. But it’s also a great preparation for the job market, where the ability to do independent study is critical.”

Vocal performance major Elizabeth Boston said the honors program and the stimulating experience it affords is what attracted her to ULM. Her honors thesis explores the political and social influences on the works of French composer Claude Debussy, insights she plans to incorporate into her performances.

“Any time you’re performing or modeling yourself off of someone else’s work, it’s important to know what their intentions were. Every piece of music has a character, and if you can’t find it, what’s the point?” she said.

ULM officials are increasingly bringing the excitement of research to high school students as well. One such example is the Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) Pre-College Summer Research Program at ULM.

The HHMI science education grant program, which has awarded ULM \$3.2 million in grants since 2000, engages students and teachers in hands-on science experimentation and helps the university reach out to Northeast Louisiana students, many of whom will be the first in their families to attend college.

“We’re one of the few places that have students who fall into multiple target categories — first generation college students, underrepresented minority groups, or nontraditional students — those whose high school science education might have left something to be desired,” said Ann Findley, a ULM biology professor and program director of the HHMI grant.

Through the program, ULM brings about 50 high school students and eight science teachers to campus for a summer science program that emphasizes discovery and



*Taylor Grider, a Winnfield high school student, examines her DNA sample during a student field trip to ULM, made possible through a HHMI grant.*

hands-on science. For many, it is their first experience with a working science laboratory.

Students isolate DNA, explore forensic evidence, learn sterile techniques, collect plant samples and analyze them to see if they have been genetically modified, among other projects.

“The Hughes Institute wants its grantees to be innovative, to make science more real to the average student,” Findley said.

HHMI also targets college freshmen through its Science Education Alliance and the Phage Genomics Research Initiative, which familiarizes first-year college students with sophisticated research techniques, immerses them in hands-on science and prepares them for careers in scientific research.

ULM was one of 12 universities and colleges chosen to participate in the first nationwide genomics course. About 20 students from each institution isolate bacterial viruses (phages) from the soil, prepare them for sequencing and annotate and compare the sequenced genome.

Findley said it’s a project that is relished by students and professors alike.

“The reason we got into education is to work with the next generation of scientists,” she said. “So this program facilitates our ability to do that.” ■

# THE FUTURE IS



*(FROM LEFT)  
Serpil Saydam, Dale  
Magoun and Beth Smith in  
the Mathematics Resource  
Center, where students practice  
their math skills with  
interactive computer software  
and get one-on-one instruction  
with immediate feedback and  
direction.*

# NOW



## ULM'S UPDATED FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN PROVIDES A *ROADMAP TO THE FUTURE*

By Catherine Heitman  
Photography by Richard Lupu

*ULM launched its first strategic plan in 2003, soon after Dr. James E. Cofer, Sr. took the helm of the university. So began a renaissance for the region's most powerful economic driver.*

**W**hen it came to charting the future, ULM officials turned to the time-tested business method of setting goals and objectives, and the university's first strategic plan was born.

That was five years ago. And veteran businessman and ULM supporter Bill Krutzer credited the process with helping the university examine its possibilities and begin to put them into action.

Krutzer's belief in the value of strategic planning and its role in helping ULM achieve its potential made it easy for the entrepreneur to accept President James Cofer's challenge to participate in the university's planning process.

"Although I'm not an alumnus of ULM, I've made a decision to make this my home, and this university is one of the pillars of northeast Louisiana. Its future is tied to our own," the Hawaii native and longtime Monroe resident said.

SOME OF THE **OBJECTIVES**  
OUTLINED IN *THE ROADMAP TO*  
*THE FUTURE TO BE ACHIEVED BY*

# 2013

- Achieve a state system average 6-year graduation rate of 50 percent.
- Increase by 30 percent the number of Louisiana students naming ULM as their first choice institution on the ACT.
- Double the number of grants and contracts awarded by outside entities.
- Increase by 20 percent the number of ULM graduates accepted into post-baccalaureate programs.
- Double the number of courses using an alternative method of delivery, such as the Internet.
- Achieve an enrollment of at least 9,000 students.
- Secure philanthropic support of \$50 million.

Ever since, the region's most powerful economic driver has enjoyed a renaissance.

Through the strategic planning process, students, faculty, staff, and community representatives identified numerous student-focused priorities that have since become reality: newly transformed buildings and grounds, including the construction of new dormitories and a renovated Student Union Building; the development of new programs that ensure better career opportunities for students; new learning resources throughout campus; a stronger focus on students' progress toward graduation; and stronger relationships between ULM and its external partners.

An updated five-year plan, which Cofer introduced in August, goes even further. It issues a call for changes in the culture of learning at ULM and includes measurable objectives for achieving excellence in all aspects of the university.

Continuous improvement and measurable objectives were the main factors Cofer stressed in his charge to the planning committee, according to Strategic Planning Steering Committee Chairman Dr. Ken Clow, who — along with Executive Assistant to the President Richard Hood, Associate Provost Eric Pani, College of Arts and Sciences Dean Jeffrey Cass and Management Professor Stan Williamson — drafted the document that developed into the final 2008-2013 plan.

"Unfortunately, I see too many strategic plans that are completed, only to sit on the shelf, but President Cofer made it clear that this would be a living strategic plan that we were going to follow. The plan is shaping the administration's decisions about the budget and the operations of the university," said Clow, a long-time Missouri businessman, who is a marketing professor in



*Dr. Ken Clow*



*Dr. Jeffrey Cass*

the College of Business Administration.

"Now we are in the process of developing benchmarks for each one of the objectives. We'll monitor each objective to see if we're on course to meet it. That's the mark of a true strategic plan, when you start monitoring it and making decisions based on your progress," he said.

## CHANGING THE CULTURE OF LEARNING

Nowhere is the culture change more apparent than in the learning environment, where teaching and the expectations for student achievement are undergoing a redesign of their own.

Students are encouraged to use ULM's new learning

laboratories — the Mathematics Resource Center, the Write Place and the new Clarke M. Williams Student Success Center —

where they can take advantage of the latest technology to improve their skills, access updates on their progress or interact with professors and peers.

Dale Magoun, department head of Mathematics and Physics, likes to discuss how this incorporation of technology has changed basic mathematics courses.

"The typical line in algebra classes throughout America has been 'Look to your left. Look to your right. Those students won't be here by midterm,'" he said. "We're turning that idea on its head."

The challenge for many students, mathematics professors say, has been work ethic, with many of them doing very little to prepare other than attending lectures and watching their teachers solve problems in front of the class.

"I've seen a lot of students who thought they could stay up all night and cram and pass the test the next day. In mathematics, you can't do that. If you're not working the problems along the way, you're not going to be successful," Magoun said.

Since the redesign, students must visit the new Mathematics Resource Center

regularly, practicing their math skills with interactive computer software, getting one-on-one instruction from their professors and immediate feedback and direction so they can address problems promptly. Professors can also log on to a new database to determine if students are completing class assignments and see how they are progressing, an essential part of the process.

It's a new slant on learning college algebra, long considered a stumbling block to success for many students, and it's one that has already charted results, with 13 percent more students passing the course now than prior to the redesign.

"The software package at the Resource Center allows students to see videos of

lectures. It offers sample problems with step-by-step solutions to pinpoint areas of weakness. So it has all of the avenues available to help a student

**"THIS UNIVERSITY IS ONE OF THE  
PILLARS OF NORTHEAST LOUISIANA.  
ITS FUTURE IS TIED TO OUR OWN."**

— BILL KRUTZER

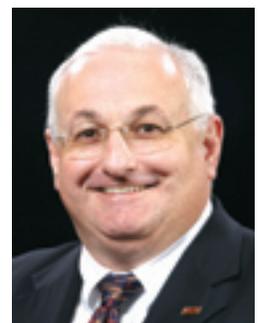
succeed," Magoun said.

And students are responding. "They're saying, 'hey it's wonderful that I'm working at 12 o'clock at night and I have a private tutor right on my computer,'" he said.

Eric Pani, a meteorologist with extensive experience helping K-12 science teachers stimulate active learning, said ULM is investing in professional development to help professors redesign their coursework to encourage more active learning.

"In a lot of cases, students are used to being passive learners. They can't just sit there any more. They have to get involved in the class. At first it's difficult for them. But once they get used to the different approach, they get excited. And what I keep hearing about the college algebra classes is kids who were math phobic say, 'Wow, I

get it. I see how this works.' It's really exciting to them and if you've ever been in the classroom, you know what it's like to see that light turn on," he said.



Dr. Eric Pani



Angela Ross, an academic advisor in the Clarke M. Williams Student Success Center, assists pre-pharmacy major Jonathan Lipsey.

To encourage students to take a more active role in their coursework, mathematics professors Beth Smith and Serpil Saydam point to cultural icons familiar to students.

"The analogy I use is Tiger Woods," Smith said. "He doesn't just show up at the tournament. He putts a thousand putts.

He drives a thousand drives every day. And he's constantly practicing and working and building upon what he's mastered to become even better."

In addition to statistical results from the redesign, professors can also point to anecdotal evidence.

"Students have told us, 'I've never done well in a math class until now,'" Smith said, explaining that she has seen students in the past drop algebra four, five or six times. But since the redesign, dropping college algebra is no longer an option.

Each semester is divided into three five-week modules, with students required to succeed in one level before moving to the next. The benefit is that students who don't succeed can start over almost immediately without losing any of the knowledge they've developed and without impacting their final

grade. Once they get the foundation skills down, they tend to move on without any problems.

Before redesign, students who were having trouble tended to drop the course after five weeks but couldn't pick it up again until the next semester, three or four months later. Thanks to the new approach, they pick up where they left off, making them stronger than they were before.

Magoun cited a male student who returned to college when he was 62 years old. "He was just starting college algebra. It took him the entire year, but he finished. And he is as excited as he can be."

"We made sure he always saw progress," Smith explained. "If he didn't succeed in a module, he repeated it and saw how much he'd improved. That's what we focus on when they go back through it. 'Look how far you've come.'"

## REDESIGN IS MAJOR FACTOR IN REAFFIRMATION

Increasing student engagement through redesign of algebra and other core classes is the cornerstone of the university's bid for reaffirmation this year from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.



Dr. Beth Smith

“The purpose is to improve the environment in which students are learning. We collected input from students, faculty, staff and the people in the community. What kept surfacing was the need to increase student engagement through methods like redesign,” Pani said.

Math and English departments have piloted redesigns, but other core courses will follow suit, and each will have a slightly different character.

“English, biology, chemistry — even subjects like theatre, art and music appreciation can become more interactive,” Cass explained. In his previous position at Texas A & M International University in Laredo, he worked to help the university gain reaffirmation with his work on the Quality Enhancement Plan. His experience made him the likely choice to guide ULM’s QEP when he joined the faculty last year.

“The QEP forces you to plan to do something, do it right, do it for five years and do it continuously,” Cass explained.

## THE ULM OF THE FUTURE

Pani said he and other officials expect retention and graduation rates to increase as a result of the redesign.

“And as that news gets out, that will attract more students to ULM,” he said.

Technology will play a bigger role in attracting students as well. A new online program called Gateway to Online Degrees (GOLD) is attracting older students with some college credit back to ULM to attain their degrees. At the same time, university officials are exploring alternative

course delivery systems that employ new technologies like podcasting.

For community partners such as Krutzer and Monroe business leader Bruce Hanks, the university’s cultural, intellectual and economic contributions to the region are the reason that everyone should support ULM in its plans for the future.

Krutzer has used the university’s assets as a resource for a civic project he was engaged in, as well as for his startup business, a new all-terrain vehicle manufacturing facility in West Monroe.

“I utilize the university extensively. I know what a tremendous resource it is,” said the former oil and gas business owner and banker. “I’ve consulted ULM’s information technology department and its business school. English majors have written our manual. It’s a resource that, once you realize it’s there, it’s like finding oil in your backyard. It’s like, ‘Boy, how did I ever overlook this?’”

Hanks challenges the community to help guide its future.

“Right now is a great time to be a part of the university,” ULM’s former athletic director said.

“ULM has such an impact on Northeast Louisiana that we should all care where it’s going to be in one year, three years, five years, 20 years. It’s not enough to just have a great plan. You have to go out and execute it. That takes the

people of the university, the employees of the university and the people of the community to make it happen.”

For more information and complete strategic plans and progress reports:

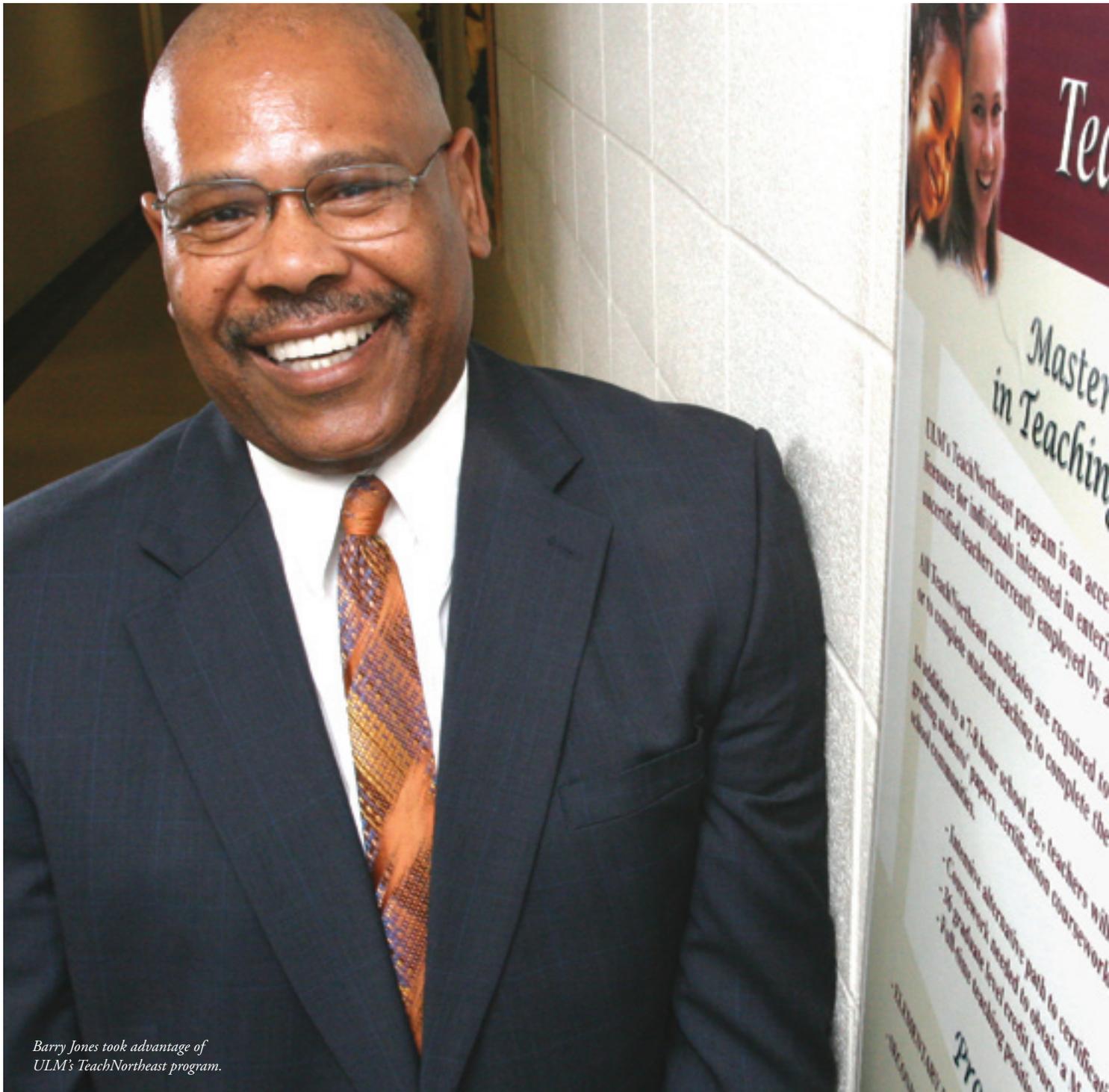
[www.ulm.edu/strategicplanning](http://www.ulm.edu/strategicplanning). ■



**“RIGHT NOW IS A GREAT TIME TO BE A PART OF ULM.”**

— BRUCE HANKS,  
former ULM athletic director

# A SECOND



*Barry Jones took advantage of ULM's TeachNortheast program.*

# WIND



## ULM OFFERINGS ARE TAILOR MADE FOR TODAY'S STUDENTS

**By Catherine Heitman  
Photography by Richard Lupo**

**T**hey say it's never too late to learn. And ULM and a growing number of students are out to prove it.

Whether the plan is to launch a second career, finally earn that degree, answer a call to teach or gain certification for a new job or promotion, ULM has the right program to suit students at any stage of life — and at an accelerated pace.

Take Karari Hanks. After gaining his master's degree from Georgia Tech in atmospheric chemistry, the Rochester, N.Y. native was a project manager at an Atlanta environmental consulting lab.

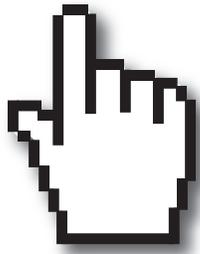
But he was struck by the words of a student in an earth sciences lab course he taught as a graduate assistant.

"I never thought I would like being a teacher, but as soon as I had a student come up and say 'Thank you, I get it,' it made it all worth while," Hanks said.

It was soon thereafter that he found himself in Monroe and enrolled in ULM's TEACH Delta Region Transition to Teaching project.

The program is designed to attract talented and qualified individuals into classrooms in the Louisiana-Mississippi Delta, home to some of the most economically disadvantaged schools and communities in the nation. The project is funded by a five-year, \$5.3 million grant from the U.S. Office of Innovation and Improvement.

Through the program, ULM and Jackson State University join forces with 26 school districts in Louisiana and Mississippi to offer teachers alternative certification in as little as 14 months.



# ON THE WEB:



[www.ulm.edu/teach](http://www.ulm.edu/teach)



[www.ulm.edu/eteach](http://www.ulm.edu/eteach)



[www.ulm.edu/onlinedegrees](http://www.ulm.edu/onlinedegrees)

Through comprehensive and sustained professional development, induction and mentoring, TEACH Delta Region aims to significantly increase the number of highly qualified, certified teachers in the region — recruiting at least 350 participants into the program and retaining at least 90 percent of them beyond their third year of teaching.

The program gives new teachers what they most need to succeed. It puts them in the classroom — practically from day one.

“It is good to learn education theories, but it is when you are in a classroom and start to apply these theories that you can understand what teaching is all about. Seeing how different ways of teaching are useful with different learning styles

helped me adjust how I handle different situations with students,” said Hanks, who now teaches chemistry and honors physical science at Neville High School in Monroe.

Barry Jones took a different path to teaching. The psychology graduate spent a decade in private business and the banking industry, most recently as a sales associate, handling everything from opening accounts to training tellers.

But he never stopped hearing the call to teach.

“I knew that I had something to offer,” Jones said. “I began to think back to those teachers who made an impact on my life and I thought I wanted to do the same for other kids.”

Then opportunity knocked.

When his bank began going through mergers and he was facing an uncertain future, Jones decided it was the right time to take the plunge. He signed on as a substitute teacher in the city of Monroe and then found out he could become certified to teach while working full time in the classroom through TeachNortheast, a program now offered via TEACH Delta Region.

“For first-year teachers the biggest problem, beyond classroom management, is isolation,” Jones said. “Problems overwhelm them and nobody is there to help them. In this program, there’s always somebody there.”

TEACH Delta Region also funds laptops at both institutions to provide access to online opportunities and \$5,000 stipends for candidates completing the programs.

But one of the biggest benefits is the short timeframe of the program and the fact that participants can work in the classroom while achieving their certification, a necessity for Jones.

“I had responsibilities and bills,” said the Oklahoma native who is married with one son. “I couldn’t have taken a break from work for three or four years while I changed careers. Thanks to the program I didn’t have to. They find a position for you and you teach while in the program.”

Jones’ first job was as a social studies teacher at Sherrouse Alternative School in Monroe, a school designed for students who are two or more years behind their grade level. He excelled there and was named Monroe City Schools Middle School Teacher of the Year.

He then spent one year as dean of students at a middle school and this year assumed a new position running Safe Schools Healthy Students, a program that promotes healthy childhood development and prevents violence and substance abuse.

Jones' job is to coordinate activities designed to keep students from dropping out of school.

"I love teaching, but when these opportunities became available, I couldn't pass them up. It's a new program and a new position. And it's a chance to help a lot of students," he said.

"You might not always see the results. They might come three or five years from now. A lot of kids ... people have given up on them. But the really good educators take no prisoners. They say, 'I'm not quitting. You're going to have to quit, because I'm not quitting on you,'" he said.

### **TAKING A FRESH APPROACH TO EDUCATION IN THE DELTA**

It's this kind of belief in the potential of each child that attracts new educators to the profession. According to Beverly Flowers-Gibson, ULM associate dean of undergraduate studies in the College of Education and Human Development, it's a quality that's in short supply in the poor, rural school districts surrounding ULM.

According to the most recent figures, in the school districts that comprise the delta region of Mississippi and Louisiana, poverty levels extend as high as 48 percent, and levels of uncertified teachers reach 34.6 percent.

"Given the tax base, or lack thereof, and the type of resources the communities have to offer, it's hard to attract and keep highly qualified teachers," Dr. Flowers-Gibson said. "School districts in the Louisiana-Mississippi Delta have a high percentage of teachers who are not highly qualified, and it affects the educational quality in these schools. By creating an effective way for those interested in teaching to gain their certification and to do it in a shorter amount of time, we can attract people interested in going into teaching and sticking with it."

TEACH Delta Region is just one of many at ULM that is aimed at improving the quality of schools in the area. Others, such as the Louisiana Leader Fellows Program and eTEACH, focus on preparing school and district administrators, helping teachers get additional certification and providing much-needed professional development.

ULM was recently named by outside evaluators as the state's premier provider for the Louisiana Leader Fellows Program, a new initiative to train

talented teachers, specifically in high-poverty areas, to become qualified administrators.

In partnership with the Governor's Office, Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, Department of Education, Board of Regents, and UL System, the initiative will provide school districts with funding to train and certify its best teachers to become highly-qualified principals, assistant principals and district leaders.

"We're finding that those who come into the program are already stars. What we're doing is taking the expertise they already have and giving them tools of leadership they haven't been able to develop," Flowers-Gibson said.

Another ULM program that focuses on enhancing teaching skills and credentials is eTEACH, a new program designed to increase the number of certified and highly qualified teachers in the state and to increase the types of professional development these teachers receive.

The program combines virtual learning with traditional methods, so that teachers can take the kinds of courses they need anytime, anywhere — through online, blended, distance, evening, weekend, and on-site classes.

For ULM Director of Teacher Initiatives and eTEACH Rochelle Gilbert, it's all about offering customized programs for teachers and schools and meeting educators where they are in their careers.



*Dr. Beverly Flowers-Gibson*



*Dr. Rochelle Gilbert*

**"I BEGAN TO THINK BACK TO THOSE TEACHERS WHO MADE AN IMPACT ON MY LIFE AND I THOUGHT I WANTED TO DO THE SAME FOR OTHER KIDS."**

"I say to superintendents and principals, 'you tell me what your schools need and we will meet that need.' That's the beauty of this initiative. We're guided by the needs

of the district and its teachers," said Dr. Gilbert.

Among the courses offered are PRAXIS reviews to help gain entry into the teaching profession, courses to provide teachers with additional certifications, National Board Certification preparation and professional development on topics such as classroom management. The

program targets the delta region and beyond, with compressed video and other online means.

eTEACH is the wave of the future, an example of ULM's forward thinking approach to today's university experience, particularly in the area of education. In fact, the university has been widely acknowledged for its progressive programs.

Its Elementary Education Program is one of only 10 in the nation to receive full passing marks by the National Council on Teacher Quality for its preparation of future mathematics teachers.

Also, a national report by the Faculty Scholarly Productivity Index ranks ULM among the top 20 universities for producing scholarly work. The ranking cited doctoral programs in ULM's College of Education and Human Development.

If teaching is the mother of all professions, ULM's progressive approach is helping to ensure the success of this vital link.

## HELPING ADULT STUDENTS TO GET THEIR DEGREES

It's not just education that is adopting technology to reach potential students. Older, non-traditional students and those with some college credit are also taking to the Internet to follow their dreams and finally get their degree.

And ULM has developed ways to make it as easy as possible.

ULM's new Gateway to Online Degrees (GOLD) program is a clearinghouse for the university's online degrees that enables non-traditional students to take advantage of the convenience and accessibility of online learning in an accelerated format.

A few GOLD degree programs include:

- Master of Arts in Criminal Justice
- Master of Arts in Gerontology
- Bachelor of Science in Health Studies: Marketing/Management concentration
- Bachelor of General Studies: Business concentration
- Bachelor of General Studies: Social Science concentration
- Associate of General Studies

In January 2009, a Bachelor of Business Administration in General Business degree will be added. Additional online degrees to be unveiled soon are: a Master of Science in Nursing Administration,



Ashley Reeves

a Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing and a Bachelor of Science in Instructional Design.

GOLD also incorporates Center for Adult Learning in Louisiana (CALL), a joint program with the Louisiana Board of Regents, The Southern Regional Education Board, and

**THE PROFESSORS ARE ALWAYS THERE WITH ENCOURAGEMENT AND LINKS TO RESOURCES."**

the consortium for Education, Research and Technology of North Louisiana.

ULM's Bachelor of Science in Health Studies degree is part of the CALL initiative, and it's a program that Ashley Reeves was eager to explore.

An employee of Monroe Surgical Hospital, Reeves, 21, is enrolled in the health studies program and ultimately hopes to enter a career in nursing or occupational therapy.

"I've always been interested in health care. I guess it was the idea of service," Reeves said.

The Virginia native is a second-year student who carries a full load of courses online while working full time.

"I'm very disciplined," she said.

Reeves also is fortunate in that the surgical center, which provided a grant for her books and tuition, allows her flexible hours to study.

She completes most of her school work on nights and weekends.

The online program offers a connection to the campus, with engaged professors and periodic in-person meetings with professors and fellow students.

"I like being able to take courses online. But it's not as if we're alone. We have chat rooms online that allow students to talk to each other for support. And the professors are always there with encouragement and links to resources. They even give us their home numbers in case we need them," she said.

The online initiatives are critical to students like Reeves, as well as the entire state, which suffers from a shortage of highly qualified workers in a number of professions — education and health care chief among them.

Through ULM's online initiatives and other innovative programs, the credentials needed to fill these critical positions are well within reach. ■



**Rick Lehrbaum ('78)**, while working on his master of science degree at the university, was encouraged to take a digital electronics class — a class which changed his career path.

Soon he was combining digital chips, creating a digitally synthesized frequency generator. For his thesis project he computerized the university's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration weather station, which enabled current and maximum/minimum weather data to be printed.

Rick embarked on a career as developer of small form-factor microcomputers. In 1983 he co-founded Ampro Computers Inc., a pioneer in small embedded computers. In 1996 Preco Electronics procured Ampro, and in early 2008 Rick was named Chief Technology Officer.

In 2000 Rick founded LinuxDevices.com, a technology Web site, and its sister site, WindowsForDevices.com. These sites eventually evolved into DeviceForge, a group of five technology Web sites, which was acquired in 2004 by Ziff Davis Media.

Reflecting on his times at ULM, Rick fondly remembers working in the digital lab. He recalls hashing out various concepts of quantum mechanics with his mentor, Dr. Vincent Genusa, and feels indebted to Dr. Louis Bedell, the physics professor who talked him into taking the digital electronics class that propelled Rick into his vast career.

Retired after a 25-year career, selling three businesses and hands-on experience in hardware, software, and standards development, he currently lives in California with his wife, Harriet, with whom he raised two boys. He can't stay away from computers and emerging technology and, as such, is a freelance consultant and maintains his blog Deviceguru.com.



**Ashley Smith,**

a fourth-year pharmacy student, was named the 2008 APhA Good Government Student Pharmacist of the Year by the American Pharmacists Association Board of Governors.

**1961**

**Hoy Rogers '61** retired from SAS Institute, Inc., a software development company, in January 2006.

**Don Saucier '61** and his wife Karyn retired from IBM-Boulder and live in Estes Park, Colo., gateway to Rocky Mountain National Park, where they enjoy winter snowshoeing and summer golf.

**1965**

**Elzey Baker '65** and wife Donita Kay have five children, three NLU grads, one LSU grad, and one Remington College grad, and eight grandchildren, one a U.S. Marine and seven who are students. He is a pharmacy manager for Wal-Mart in Jennings.

**1969**

**Ruthann Ulrich Cage '69, '71** has been named director of Industry and Economic Development at East Carolina University in Greenville, N.C. She lives in Raleigh, N.C., where she had been the interim director of the Economic Development Partnership at North Carolina State University.

**Floyd Giblin '69** is self-employed, rides a Harley chopper, owns and flies a 172 Cesna, has a condo in Destin, Fla., and scuba dives all over the world. He and wife **Susan Meadows Giblin '76** have a daughter who is a showgirl in Las Vegas.

**1971**

**Maurice Washington '71** was promoted to Director of the Office of Intervention and Specialized Services for Inkster (Mich.) Public School District. He previously was principal at Blanchette Middle School. He was the second African American to serve on the Union Board while at Northeast College (ULM) and was co-founder of the Soul Society, a campus group created to help African American students acclimate to campus.

**Doris Busby Marshall '67** retired from Hope Cottage Pregnancy and Adoption Center in January.

# CLASS NOTES

## ULM Alumni Association

### 2008-09 Executive Committee and Board of Directors

**PRESIDENT:** T.J. Shufflin (BS '75)

**PRESIDENT ELECT:**

Ronald D. (Ron) Bush (BS'89)

**PAST PRESIDENT:**

Paul H. Wilkening (BA'83, MA '85)

**VICE-PRESIDENT:**

Thomas H. (Tom) Deal (BA '74)

**SECRETARY-TREASURER:**

Bobbye Fletcher Earle (BS '61)

**REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENTS:**

AREA 1 : J.B. (Bart) Dornier (BBA'85)

AREA 2 : Brenda Dudley (BS '91)

AREA 3 : Philip W. (Phil) Dixon  
(BA '87, MA '89)

AREA 3A: Laurinda Jordan Crenshaw  
(BA '85, MA '87)

AREA 4 : Mary Hardee Barnard (BS '90)  
Mary Dukes (BA '85)

AREA 5: Lisa Cox (BA '83, Med '85)  
Robert Earle (BS '61)

AREA 6 : Traci James Canterbury  
(BBA '89)

W. Paul Ledford, Jr.  
(BBA '77, MBA '80)

Jeremy Moore  
(BBA '00, MBA '02)

Tania Simpson (BA '85)

Debbie Cummins (BA '83)

AREA 7 : Lisa Haile (BS '86)

Sara Misuraci (BBA '74)

AREA 8 : Ronald "Scott" Higginbotham  
(BS '85, MS '89)

## 1972

**James Rudy Darling '72** is vice president of operations for Baxter Regional Medical Center. He previously served as BRMC pharmacy director.

**Nancy Jones King '72** has a M.A. in education from Lesley College in Cambridge, Mass. She is a kindergarten teacher for the Denver, Colo., Public School System.

## 1973

**Sandra Underwood Bennett '73** and husband Steve work together at the Center for Psychological and Family Services, which they started in 1993. They have ten other therapists and specialize in long-term psychotherapy, psychoanalysis, and Christian faith issues. They live in Chapel Hill, N.C., and have been married for 25 years and have one daughter, Madison, 11.

**Charlotte Taylor Griffis '73, '77** retired from Carrollton-Farmers Branch Independent School District where she was a school counselor at Blair Intermediate School in Farmers Branch, Texas.

## 1974

**Paul A. Cooks '74** has published a book *Making Tracks for Jesus*. He lives in Las Vegas and teaches at K.R. Booker Empowerment Elementary School.

**Don LeBoyd '74** retired from the Target Stores last year. He was a store manager for over 21 years in the St. Louis, Mo., market.

## 1975

**J. Nolan Bernard '75** is a biosafety specialist at Tulane University Health Science Center

and has been accepted to St. Louis University School of Public Health and Institute of Biosecurity. He has done Ph.D. work in biodefense at George Mason University and in disaster management at University of Wisconsin's engineering department.

## 1977

**Steven Richardson '77** has been promoted to senior vice president at Caldwell Bank and Trust in Columbia.

**John Lee Sanders '77** received the 2004 WC Handy nominee for blues song of the year and a 2007 Emmy nomination for song of the year. He and wife Judy live in Canada.

## 1978

**Cynthia McComic Campbell '78** has been promoted to discipline facilitator of occupational and physical therapy for Area Education Agency 267 in Marshalltown, Iowa.

## 1979

**William Gibson '79** has been appointed associate vice provost for equity and access at the University of Pennsylvania where he previously served as university chaplain and special advisor to the President for over 11 years. Before coming to the University of Pennsylvania he was associate dean of religious life and of the chapel at Princeton University.

## 1980

**Lynn Loe Barefield '80** has joined LAH Real Estate, Inc. selling real estate in the Birmingham, Ala., area.

**Lillian Inzina-Brown '80, '94** has been elected to serve as president for Southern Accent

# CLASS NOTES

# ALUMNI

Show Chorus in Monroe, an affiliate of Sweet Adelines International, a women's organization that sings 4-part harmony A cappella in barbershop-style. She also sings lead with the Bayou Breeze Quartet.

**Merri Bradford Jones '80** and **Benny Jones '80** welcomed their first granddaughter, Julianna, on April 10, 2007.

## 1981

**Michael Kennedy '81** is deputy program manager in the public works group at Brown and Gay Engineers. He will be involved with planning, design and construction management of public works projects for their client, the San Jacinto River Authority in Montgomery County, Texas. He recently completed 25 years with Pate Engineers, Inc., of Houston as shareholder and director of construction services.

## 1983

**Jeff Culver '83** has a new job with Power Dynamics, where he will be opening an office for them in the Houston, Texas, area.

**William Hey '83** is head of the physical education and recreation department at Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green.

**Kenny Norman '83** and wife Lisa and four children, Kenny Jr., Stephanie, Chase and Emily, live in Virginia Beach, Vir., where he is in sales for United Medical, Inc.

**Sharon Cockerham Robideaux '83, '88** is an assistant professor tenure-track at Ferris State University in Big Rapids, Mich.

## 1984

**Timothy Holcomb '84, '86** has been named to the business policy and strategy division executive committee of the Academy of Management, the largest of 18 divisions in the academy. AoM is the largest professional organization for management scholars/ academicians in the world. He is an assistant professor of management at Florida State University.

**Clarence Jones '84, '85** is owner of a Wingstop franchise in Ruston.

**Rosemary Stafford Reedy '84** and husband Scott have four children, Alexandra, 17, Elizabeth, 15, Austin, 10, and Anna Grace 6. She is a pharmacist for Fred's Pharmacy in Franklinton.

## 1985

**William H. Bishop III '85** received his MBA with an emphasis on healthcare management from the University of Phoenix.

**Jimmy Burgin '85** has been named 2008 Man of the Year by the National Maritime Safety Association. He has more than 20 years experience in maritime loss control. He is senior vice president with the American Equity Underwriters, Inc., and provides consulting in maritime loss control programs for members of the American Longshore Mutual Association.

**Lisa Owens Heckford '85** and husband Wayne have three children, Brandy, Jacob and Annalee. She is an adaptive physical education teacher for the Ouachita Parish School Board.

**Linda K. Martin '85** (formerly Leonard) has been in economic

development in Georgia, Missouri, Iowa, Illinois and now Idaho. She is executive director of Grow Idaho Falls, Inc. She is former executive director for the Northeast Louisiana Home Builders Association in Monroe.

## 1986

**Susan Van Zandt Rossilli '86** recently married Mario Thomas Rossilli from Joppa, Maryland. They live in Pearl, Miss., where she is a clinical/consultant pharmacist at the VA Medical Center in Jackson, Miss.

## 1987

**Billy Boughton '87** has moved back to Shreveport after living in Dallas, Texas, for 15 years. He had been a clinical oncology pharmacist for 8 years and is now with Genentech as a sales rep for Avastin, a drug used in the treatment of breast cancer.

**Billy Cage '87** has a son Cardia Jackson, No. 51, who is a stand-out football player for ULM.

**Catherine Jones Estis '87, '90** and husband **Thomas C. Estis '90, '92** both received their Ph.D. from Jackson State University in Jackson, Miss. She is director of Project Talent Search at ULM and he works at Palmetto Addiction Recovery Center in Rayville.

## 1988

**Jana Derrick Milleson '88** and husband Matthew have two children, Jack and Grant, and live in Frisco, Texas.

**Kimberly Grant Thevenote '88** finished her add-on certification in library science at NSU and is now a certified school librarian.

## Ashley Murphy,

an insurance and risk management/ insurance major, landed a prestigious summer internship at the National Association of Professional Surplus Lines Offers, Inc.



## CLASS NOTES



ULM alum, **Valerie McCaskill '00**, always roots for the underdog and perhaps her story indicates why.

While earning a bachelor degree in journalism, Valerie served as president for the university's Public Relations Student Society of America chapter, leading the student team to national victory in the society's annual collegiate campaign competition — a first-place win which earned her a prestigious internship.

McCaskill attributes her success to Bette Kauffman, associate professor of communication at ULM.

"Dr. Kauffman sat the competition entry form in front of me, looked me in the eye, and told me to go for it," she recalls. "That one moment changed my life. She believed in our team and that we had nothing to lose. There was no stopping us."

"The ULM students that I worked with on that campaign are some of the most dedicated, creative and humble individuals that I've ever encountered. It was a special time and an innovative program."

"ULM provides advantages. You just have to be willing to invest the time and energy, have confidence, and take responsibility for your own success. It's critical to be a loyal colleague and network extensively. I'm not going to sugarcoat it — success in any field takes discipline and a dedication to excellence."

She believes strongly in the power of teachers and mentors, including her parents, who both taught at ULM. Her father, Herbert McCaskill, recently retired after more than 20 years with ULM, serving as head of the school of construction and as an associate professor.

McCaskill is senior vice president of integrated communications for public relations giant Fleishman-Hillard's Dallas office. When she's not specializing in large-scale issues management and consumer marketing campaigns, she is responsible for marketing the firm's global digital capabilities, staff training and education in the application of new media and thought leadership.

McCaskill advises ULM students to get involved, embrace diversity, and take responsibility for individual success. Most importantly, she echoes advice she received many years ago, "If you are willing to work for it, there are no limitations." Quoting Goethe, she says, "Boldness has genius, power and magic in it. Begin it now."

### Amber Rawls,

a criminal justice graduate student, earned third place in the American Criminal Justice Association's — Lambda Alpha Epsilon National Conference national student paper contest.



**Anne Leach Ward '88** was appointed to the Kentucky Early Intervention System Interagency Coordinating Council by the Governor of Kentucky in 2007 and now serves as vice-chair for this advisory board. She also serves as recording secretary for the District Early Intervention Council in the Lexington area. She and husband Thomas have two children, Thomas, 6, and Mackenzie, 4.

### 1991

**Todd Breland '91** is general manager of *InRegister* magazine for Baton Rouge.

### 1992

**Stacey Ripp Bordelon '92** and husband Gus have five children, daughter Drae, 13, and sons Darin, 11, Dustin, 8, Dalton, 6, and Dawson, 2. They live in Pearl River.

**Jon Heidenreich '92** played eight years of professional football including the Canadian Football League Shreveport Pirates, Arena Football League Texas Terror and the Portland Forrest Dragons and the National Football League Europa. He also wrestled professionally with the WWF and WWE. He is now

involved with Christian speaking organizations and World Impact Wrestling and is also in the process of writing a book.

**Carol Tharp Powell '92, '97** graduated from Northwestern State University with a master of nursing with a focus on acute care nurse practitioner.

### 1993

**Dana Ewing Mays '93** graduated with a doctor of medicine from LSUHSC in New Orleans and begins a three-year residency in family practice at LSUHSC in Alexandria.

# CLASS NOTES

# ALUMNI

## 1994

**Cheri Nyegaard Holbrook '94** received a master's and Ph.D. in social work. She and husband **Tom Holbrook Jr. '93** have two sons, Jack Thomas, 4, and Charles Matthew "Charlie," 2.

**Julie Cruse Wilkinson '94, '00** is currently pursuing her PharmD at the University of Florida where she was invited to join the pharmacy honor society, Rho Chi.

## 1995

**Reshema Rochelle Kemps-Polanco '95** was awarded the 40 Under Forty Achievement Award by The Network Journal, the New York/tri-state magazine for Black professionals, corporate executives and business owners, that recognizes the next generation of African American leaders who are exceptional performers in their professions. She is product manager for Novartis Pharmaceuticals' Tekturna brand team within the cardiovascular metabolic franchise and lives in West Orange, N.J.

**Donny Mock '95** has been promoted to senior pharmacist at Gulf Breeze Hospital in Gulf Breeze, Fla.

## 1996

**Faith Adamson Hartmann '96** is physical therapist director at Newsome Physical Therapy in Crest Hill, Ill., and is an adjunct faculty member in the physical therapy program at Midwestern University in Downers Grove, Ill.

## 1997

**Angela Fried Djedjos '97** graduated with an MD in 2001 and completed her general radiology residency in 2007 at

LSUHSC in Shreveport. She is now living in Maryland while her husband Constantine completes his pediatric endocrinology fellowship at Johns Hopkins University Hospital.

## 1998

**Rayshun Johnson '98** is coordinator of advertising compliance with AIG Advisor Group in Atlanta, Ga. He was previously at Morehouse College for eight years.

## 1999

**Eric Whitten '99, '04** has opened OfficialTeamGear.com which specializes in sports apparel and merchandise.

## 2000

**Jessica Everitt Gay '00** has been a labor and delivery nurse in Monroe, Phoenix, Ariz., and Austin, Texas, and is now a mother-baby/postpartum nurse. She has been accepted to the parent-child MSN program at the University of Texas.

**Phillip Luke Lebas '00** has started his medical residency in emergency medicine at the University of Mississippi Medical Center in Jackson, Miss.

## 2001

**Marcus Gaut '01, '06** was a member of the first continuing education course for Faith Community Nursing offered through the ULM School of Nursing and is now a Faith Community nurse thanks to ULM.

## 2002

**Sheri Wright Flatt '02** and husband John have both accepted positions at Women's and Children's Hospital in

Lafayette, she as the clinical pharmacy manager and he as a pediatric neurologist.

**Thomas Peters '02** is program manager of intramural sports at Auburn University Montgomery. Previously he was assistant director of intramural sports at Western Carolina University.

## 2003

**Kourtney Leonard Lewis '03** received her master of science degree in nurse anesthesia in May 2008 from LSUHSC in New Orleans.

## 2004

**Robert Aguirre '04** and wife Stacey have a 2-year-old son Jacobi. Stacey was a member of the ULM tennis team from 2003-2005.

**Henry House '04** has been promoted from a security counselor with Juvenile Services to park manager for the Caddo Parish Parks and Recreation Department. He is based at the Earl Williamson Park in Oil City.

## 2006

**Tia Robinson Wade '06** is a housing manager for the section 8 department of the Monroe Housing Authority.

## 2007

**Jessica Helmer Brady '07** joined the ULM College of Pharmacy faculty as an assistant professor after completing a pharmacy practice residency at the University of Mississippi Medical Center.



## Maria Shantell Williams,

a second-year Ph.D student, was awarded a fellowship from the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy that focuses on working with minorities and substance abuse issues.

# CLASS NOTES

## Marriages

**Julie Louann Beck '05** to William Kenneth Morris, May 24, 2008.

**Mignon Clarice Begnaud '02** to Michael Varnado, April 12, 2008.

**Shakeya Vashon Bennett '03** to Dasnik Rodgers, Aug. 25, 2007.

**Donald (Tommy) Blackmon '89** to Sharon Kelley, May 10, 2008.

**Alexis Michele Burkhalter '07** to Joseph Daniel Keeton, April 25, 2008.

**Jeremy Allen Butler '06** to Elizabeth Megan Price, March 22, 2008.

**Marketha Shantel Cole '00** to Smith Washington III, Oct. 18, 2003.

**Katie Jessica Garlington '08** to Michael Todd Maxwell '06, May 31, 2008.

**Jessica "Jessie" Lynn Gibson '07** to Adrian Phillip Ables, March 8, 2008.

**Stephanie Ann Gibson '05** to William Lynn Jaeger, May 24, 2008.

**Sydney Anne Holstead '88** to **Michael Brandon Miles '03**, April 5, 2008.

**Rebecca Claire Hopkins '07** to **Lloyd Darren Smith '07**, May 31, 2008.

**Julie Ellen Jay '97** to **Brian Craig Hanks '00**, May 17, 2008.

**Andrea Lea Joiner '99, '08** to Joseph Wesley Hamm, June 7, 2008.

**Kellie Elizabeth Lawrence '08** to **Adam Kyle Ballard '07**, June 8, 2008.

**Leslie Anne Lawrence '05, '07** to Clayton Darrell Scott, March 15, 2008.

**Karla Laetta Lowery '07** to Brandon Mitchell Pierce, June 7, 2008.

**Lauren Alexis Murphy '08** to **Larry Darryl McCarty '07**, March 22, 2008.

**Jason Daniel Parker '07** to Kristen Michelle King, May 17, 2008.

**Andrew Neill Roshto '06** to Danielle Thomas, June 7, 2008.

**Sunni Elizabeth Thomas '01** to William Glenn Yates, May 28, 2008.

**Stacey Leigh Truett '08** to John Paul Rieger IV, June 7, 2008.

**Susan Van Zandt '86** to Mario Thomas Rossilli, Feb. 23, 2008.

**Sheri Lynn Wright '02** to John Flatt, Nov. 3, 2007.



**Bethany Snavely Simmons,**

a second-year Ph.D. student, was named "Student of the Year" by the Louisiana Association of Marriage and Family Therapists.



# CLASS NOTES

# ALUMNI

## Births

**1** Grant Michael Albritton, Feb. 24, 2008, to **Kim Fowler Albritton '99** and **Brandon Albritton '03**.

**2** Jerzey Saani Alexander, Dec. 10, 2007, to **April Cooper Alexander '06** and husband Montrell.

Mary Elizabeth Beebe, April 11, 2008, to **Katherine Sewell Beebe '01** and **Johnathan Lukas Beebe '01**. She joins big sister Hannah.

**3** Riley Ann Bertrand, April 7, 2008, to **Ashley Morgan Bertrand '01** and husband Corey.

Laylen Fisher Blackmon, Oct. 28, 2007, to **Haven Howington Blackmon '04, '06** and husband Travis.

Leonnus Deontye Franklin II, July 28, 2008, to **Leonnus Franklin '94** and wife Tanya. He is welcomed by big sister Jadyne Elise, 3.

Ansley Madison Griffin, Feb. 1, 2008, to **Mary Moore Griffin '01** and husband Reed.

Wade Scott Hansford, March 23, 2008, to **Jennifer Wade Hansford '95** and husband Kevin.

Connor Scott Hill, March 7, 2007, to **Candi Cumbee Hill '05, '07** and husband Matthew.

**4** Colt Edmund Hood, June 18, 2008, to **Jeff Hood '91, '94** and wife Sarah.

Hilary Ahlan Hossack, Feb. 14, 2007, to **Carla Demetria Thomas Hossack '99** and husband Anthony. Grandparents Fannie and **Warren Thomas '70** welcome her.

**5** Molly Rebecca Littlefield, June 18, 2008, to **Marcee Davidson Littlefield '93** and **Troy Ivy Littlefield '03**. She joins big sister Mary Grace, 7.

**6** Anna Leigh Manuel, June 10, 2008, granddaughter to **Anthony Manuel '71**.

**7** Andrew Truman McKee, Feb. 24, 2008, to **Darla Hillestad McKee '89** and **Mark McKee '87**. He joins big sister Hannah.

**8** Mary-Kate Moss, May 2, 2008, to **Miranda Odom Moss '00, '02** and **Joseph Carter Moss '01**.

Parker Alise Nugent, January 11, 2008, to **Stephanie Sandidge Nugent '07** and **Joey Ray Nugent '04**.

**9** Thomas Lane Passman, Dec. 12, 2007, to **Courtney Carraway Passman '00** and husband Triche. He is welcomed by big brother, Sawyer Lee.

Mariana Anita Roberts, March 31, 2008, to **Marla Smith Roberts '06** and husband Yancy.

**10** Cadyn Jamar Rodgers, Jan. 17, 2008, to **Shakeya Bennett Rodgers '03** and husband Dasnik.

**11** Smith Washington IV, Aug. 28, 2007, to **Marketha Cole Washington '00** and husband Smith.

Andrew James Winke, May 14, 2008, to **Angela Palomo Winke '03** and **Fritz Winke '99**.

William Jeffress Woods II, June 18, 2008, to **Mary Kay Zeagler Woods '99** and husband William. He joins brothers Nathan and Alex.



**Catherine Oliver,** a third-year pharmacy student, was awarded the 2008 American Pharmacists Association National Student Leadership Award — one of four awarded nationally.



5



10

11



**DR. CHRISTIAN RUBIO**  
Chair, Honors Council

I came to ULM in the fall of 2004. Because of my short time here, I was surprised but also thrilled when I was asked to be the chair of the Honors Council during the spring of 2006, which I gladly accepted. I took over the program officially on June 1, 2007.

After inheriting an honors program that promotes research, I discovered many of our students were not finishing the program due to the length of the Honors Curriculum. With the help of the Honors Council, I suggested some major changes in order to continue to attract students who are willing to go the extra mile while attending undergraduate school.

The new Honors Curriculum went into effect this fall. Our students are excited about the curriculum, which gives them more flexibility. The culmination of the Honors Program is the Honors Project. This can be a thesis or a creative project which allows the students to do more in-depth research.

The first student to complete an Honors Project under the new guidelines will be Elizabeth Boston. The excitement I have seen from Elizabeth is one that I hope every Honors student feels. Elizabeth is a music

major and because of the Honors Curriculum, she is required to take 12 successive hours of a foreign language, which is six more than her major requires.

One of the reasons Elizabeth came to ULM in the fall of 2006 is because of the Honors Program. She felt ULM's Honors Program with its well-rounded curriculum, would make her a better candidate when applying for graduate school. Because of the opportunity to do research, Elizabeth has developed an interdisciplinary project.

Elizabeth's project will combine her music knowledge and French, not only from a linguistic point of view but also from a historical background. With the

guidance of her Honors Project committee, Elizabeth is currently working on her project prospectus and the development of an annotated bibliography.

Elizabeth also plans to take advantage of an opportunity through the Honors Program to study abroad in France with ULM's foreign languages department. She will get a first-hand view of the historical aspects of her project and hopefully present her project in the spring of 2010.

*Dr. Christian Rubio is an assistant professor in the foreign languages department.*

**"ELIZABETH (BOSTON) CAME TO ULM BECAUSE OF THE HONORS PROGRAM."**



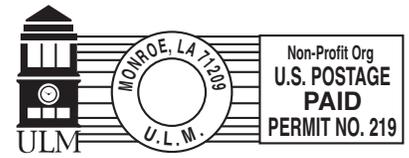
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