

# MITCHELL

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SPRING 2018

MOVING ON  
2018 MITCHELL  
AMBASSADOR  
GRADUATES

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EXEMPLARY  
LEADERS  
2018 MITCHELL  
ALUMNI FELLOWS

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ALUMNI FEATURE  
JERRY LATHAN  
ALWAYS THINKING:  
THE STORY OF AN  
ENTREPRENEUR



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Mitchell College of Business junior, Sahilee Waitman, studies Economics and Finance on campus.

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 2

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MITCHELL COLLEGE OF BUSINESS



## FROM THE DEAN'S DESK



**D**ecember 31, 1995 marked the end of an era—the last new Calvin and Hobbes cartoon. Many of us fondly remember following the adventures of young Calvin and his stuffed tiger, Hobbes, as they experienced life. The last strip was especially poignant; an overnight snow had changed the view of everything providing a “big white sheet of paper to draw on—a world of possibilities.” In the last frame, Calvin remarked that “it’s a magical world—let’s go exploring” as their toboggan disappeared into the distance.

I always seem to return to that strip each time our students graduate. For many of them, their lives as full-time students are drawing to a close. Their degrees afford them their chance to explore the myriad of employment possibilities that await. Even for those continuing on to graduate school, the curricula and academic expectations change and the students will find a number of new possibilities to explore.

This year has been a little bit different. Admittedly, it was a busy year with the celebration of the College’s 50th anniversary, the preparation of our AACSB five-year Continuous Improvement Review report and team visit, and all of the other activities that happen in the school each year. Perhaps that motivated a slightly different view of the musings of Calvin and Hobbes.

I’ve been thinking more recently that the students aren’t the only ones met with this new world of possibilities. All of us are given opportunities to change on an almost constant basis. More than a few of these more closely resemble “offers that we can’t refuse”—the accelerating advances in technology driving changes in communication, entertainment options, and financial services. Other decisions are purely ours to make, moving to a more healthy diet, adopting a traditional or even a non-traditional exercise program, taking advantage of the multitude of lifelong education opportunities, and choosing community volunteer programs are all choices for us to make.

As winter is finally put behind us, I hope that you will embrace new opportunities. Perhaps we can all join Calvin and Hobbes exploring.

*Bob G. Wood, Dean*  
Mitchell College of Business

### BY THE NUMBERS

**246**

2018 MCOB Graduates

**1**

Female Athlete of the Year

**\$485,000**

MCOB Scholarships  
awarded 2017-2018

**1,200**

Basis Point excess return by  
Jaguar Investment Fund vs.  
S&P 500 since inception

**9**

MCOB Advisory Councils

**46**

MCOB DBA students

### CLASS NOTES

We would like to encourage all alumni to send in their news items, large or small, personal or professional to [SouthAlabama.edu/Colleges/MCOB/StayConnected.html](http://SouthAlabama.edu/Colleges/MCOB/StayConnected.html). Appropriate items include weddings, births, advanced degrees, awards, job promotions, etc.

If you are aware of MCOB alumni who are not receiving the magazine, please send their name and address to [mcobalumni@southalabama.edu](mailto:mcobalumni@southalabama.edu).



# It's Your Future. Move Forward.

## DOCTOR OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

- Designed for the full-time professional
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- 12- or 24-month program options
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- Experiential learning environment solves real-world problems

"My professors provided me with the skills and resources I needed to immediately make an impact upon graduation."

–Darcy Kaul  
MBA Class of '18  
Director of Guest Experience,  
Think Bigger



# SOARING ABOVE:

Standing Out From  
the Competition

**G**rowing up in Gautier, Miss., Steven Travers is no stranger to the Gulf Coast or the University of South Alabama. Travers attended South in 1993 when he entered a USA master's program in biology. Travers received his bachelor's degree in microbiology from Mississippi University for Women, a master's degree in biology from the University of South Alabama, a master's of business administration from Millsaps College and most recently, a doctor of business administration from the University of South Alabama.

Travers used his degrees to become an expert in health care consulting and information technology and is now the president of Travers Consulting, a company focused on health care management consulting, software development, and support desk services. The consulting business can be tough. Travers knew he needed to set himself apart from his competitors. He said, "I felt that a DBA would be challenging and would provide an uncommon credential for me. In the consulting field, many of my competitors also had master's level degrees and industry certifications such as Project Management Professional certification. A DBA would differentiate me from my peers and extend my skill set with theory and quantitative methods."

When deciding where to go for his doctor of business administration, South was the clear choice, "I had heard good things about the program and identified with its research-oriented mission. The main feature was its strong research focus. Other programs lacked this focus and appeared to offer classroom lecture only on academic paths. The other features were the advanced quantitative, leadership, and strategy courses. I felt these were directly related to improving my consulting skills."

The DBA program took Travers by surprise. "The program is tough

and demands a large amount of self-management discipline. I thought I was very knowledgeable about business topics but quickly realized I had a lot to learn. This gap in my knowledge incentivized me to put in the necessary effort to be successful. At the end of the program, I feel that I have gained a vast amount of knowledge, but with the understanding that there is much more to learn."

The most important lesson Travers learned was to expand investigative perspective. "Over my career I had developed a limited perspective often based on commonly known best practices. In addressing organizational problems and decisions, I would typically consider only the most common approach. Now I feel that I take into account several perspectives and evaluate them in a more effective and non-biased way." Not only did Travers learn a new perspective, he mastered theoretical application. "In the program, we study several theories. Over time, I have noticed that I am applying them to my daily work as a consultant. This provides a great advantage in predicting what will happen next or the final outcome. It is not a simple cookie-cutter template, but it does provide a framework for understanding why things occur as they do."

When reflecting on his time at the Mitchell College, he said, "I have had a great experience with the faculty. They have gone above and beyond several times for my fellow DBA students and me. They are very personable and accessible. It is the faculty and DBA students that make the program the success it is."

Now that Travers has earned his DBA, he plans to use his experience to grow his business. He looks forward to opportunities to continue researching and teaching to augment his work activities.

# ABOUT THE MITCHELL DBA

## PROGRAM SUMMARY

The Mitchell DBA (Doctor of Business Administration) program, now with both management and marketing concentrations, is designed for business professionals and instructor-level faculty seeking a doctorate to pursue an academic career through four year universities. The program facilitates the transition toward a new career by developing a comprehensive understanding of the discipline and essential research methods. The curriculum encourages a balanced approach to learning conceptual, theoretical and methodological components.

Classes are led by doctoral faculty with extensive experience in university teaching and research. Mitchell DBA faculty are widely published in management, marketing and research methods, and work closely with the DBA students to guide their own research interests to publication.

## PROGRAM FORMAT

The DBA program, with both management and marketing concentrations, is designed as a three-year, executive-style program with the course work and qualifying exams completed during the first two years. The third year is devoted to the completion of the research component of the program. It is expected that all program requirements will be completed in 36 months.



# SYNERGY

## FUSING WORK, FAMILY, AND COMMUNITY

**F**ollowing graduation from the Mitchell College of Business, Olivia and Jerry Host built successful careers while staying grounded in their commitment to family and their community.

Jerry Host is chief executive officer and president of Trustmark National Bank and Trustmark Corporation. Olivia Host is a private client services tax partner with BKD, a national CPA and advisory firm.

While they are modest about their achievements since arriving in Jackson, Miss., the couple has truly made a difference. Through their continuing involvement in the nonprofit community, they have become fixtures of leadership and service in central Mississippi and beyond.

South was an obvious choice for Olivia Host. Having grown up in Mobile, the University provided an affordable alternative to other in-state and out-of-state institutions. It also offered the opportunity to complete her degree in accounting while maintaining a job and remaining close to her family. A native of Grand Rapids, Mich., Jerry Host's family relocated to Mobile while he was young. One of 10 children, Jerry earned a degree in economics while funding his education by working nights in the proof department at First National Bank of Mobile. In addition to providing funds



for college, the job led to his meeting and getting to know one of his co-workers, Olivia Brown, who later became his wife.

Balancing academics, work, and family kept Jerry and Olivia busy during their days at South. The University was a different place in the 1970s with most of the student population commuting to classes and working at least part-time. Still, both cherish fond memories of their days on campus and credit the academic programs as the foundation for their successful careers.

Olivia graduated summa cum laude in 1979 and accepted a position with Smith, Dukes & Buckalew, a Mobile accounting firm. When the Hosts relocated to Jackson, she joined KPMG and later helped establish a private firm where she served as owner and partner before merging that firm with BKD in 2008. She has extensive experience in tax planning and compliance during her 30-year career in public tax accounting. Today, she advises high net worth family groups on issues including personal financial planning, estate planning, succession planning for family businesses and tax compliance. She is a member of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants and the Mississippi Society of Certified Public Accountants.

After South, Jerry continued in banking, graduating from the National School of Financial and Funds Management at the University of Illinois, the Graduate School of Financial and Funds Management at the University of Oklahoma, the LSU Graduate School of Banking and he successfully completed the Center for Creative Leadership Program in Greensboro, N.C.

He is a member of the board of directors of the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta and serves as chair of the Audit and Operational Risk Committee. He is a past director of the New Orleans Branch of the Federal Reserve Bank. He serves as chairman of the Mississippi Bankers Association and is president of MBA's Educational Foundation. He also



Matt Stratton, Lauren (Host) Stratton, Jerry Host, Olivia Host, Rachel (Lowe) Host and Christopher Host on a family vacation.

serves on the executive committee for Mississippi Gov. Phil Bryant's "Mississippi Works" initiative and is past chairman of the board of governors of the Mississippi Economic Council. In addition, he serves as a director and member of the executive committee of the Greater Jackson Chamber Partnership board and was recently invited to serve on the Mayor's CEO of Major Corporations Action Table.

Olivia has served as treasurer and board member for the Mississippi Symphony Orchestra. Both Olivia and Jerry have been dedicated volunteers for Metro Jackson Habitat for Humanity, where Olivia also served as treasurer and board member. She has also served as president of the Board of Trustees for Madison Ridgeland Academy and treasurer for the Junior League of Jackson. Jerry serves as chairman of the American Cancer Society's Hope Lodge Mississippi Capital Campaign, is past chairman of the board of the Mississippi Museum of Art and is active in numerous other nonprofit organizations throughout the community.

Jerry is fond of the Malcolm Forbes quote, "You can easily judge the character of a person by how they treat those who can do nothing for them."

When asked to give advice to current students and recent graduates, the couple shared:

- Know your values and always remain true to them.
- Pursue a degree in the field you love.
- Work hard.
- No whining.

Jerry is the son of Ellen Host and the late Robert Host of Mobile. Olivia is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Julian Brown of Mobile. They have two children; Christopher (Rachel) Host of Nashville, Tenn., and Lauren (Matt) Stratton and one grandchild, Bo Stratton, of Madison, Miss.

They are active members of Christ United Methodist Church in Jackson.

Since graduating from the University of South Alabama, Olivia and Jerry Host have complemented success in their professional careers with a willingness to support their community. We applaud their achievements.

# *In Memoriam: Dr. Jeanne Sylvestre*



Dr. Jeanne Sylvestre, professor emeritus of accounting, passed away in Mobile on April 14, 2018. A native of Belize, she was a long-time faculty member and a former chair of the department of accounting at the University of South Alabama. For nearly three decades, she also served as the

faculty advisor to the Mitchell College's Beta Alpha Psi chapter. As an accounting educator, Dr. Sylvestre had a positive impact on the lives of two generations of accounting majors at USA until she retired in August of 2009.

Dr. Sylvestre earned both a bachelor of science and an MBA from the

University of South Alabama. She received her Ph.D. in accounting from the University of Georgia. She was the first undergraduate alumna to return to teach in the Mitchell College of Business.

Dr. Sylvestre was selected as a member of the inaugural class of Mitchell College of Business Alumni Fellows in 2017. In addition, she was honored by the University of South Alabama Faculty Senate as one of the University's 50 Outstanding Faculty Members in connection with the celebration of the University's first 50 years and recognized by the Mitchell College as one of the 50 IMPACT award recipients during the College's 50th anniversary celebration.

Given that her faculty appointment at USA proved to be her lifelong endeavor, it is not surprising that the College held a special place in her heart. Before passing, she established the Dr. Jeanne Sylvestre Endowed Scholarship in Accounting to provide financial support for the education of an active member of USA's Beta Alpha Psi chapter.

Please help ensure that Dr. Sylvestre's legacy of supporting deserving accounting students continues for decades to come by making a contribution to the Dr. Jeanne Sylvestre Endowed Scholarship in Accounting. The USA Foundation has generously agreed to match contributions to the scholarship fund up to \$100,000. We can think of no better way to pay tribute to the memory of this special person who was loved and revered by so many South Alabama accountants. Donations may be sent to the University of South Alabama Foundation, 211 North Conception Street, Mobile, AL 36603.

**TO INFINITY AND BEYOND:**

**2018 MITCHELL  
AMBASSADOR GRADUATES**



**JOSHUA CROWOVER**

Originally from Satsuma, Joshua Crowover graduated with a bachelor's in business administration with a concentration in business finance. After graduation, he will attend law school at the University of Mississippi. Crowover plans to earn a dual JD/MBA and work in the public service sector as a champion for education access.

When reflecting on the Ambassador program, Crowover said, "Being an MCOB Ambassador and Mitchell Scholar has provided me with many opportunities to meet internal and external constituents, network for my future and learn more about the Mitchell College of Business and the people that make it great." His favorite memory of the Mitchell College of Business is most definitely the people. "The people—faculty, staff, students, and more—make this place the amazing place it is. The people of MCOB create the great opportunities that exist to serve students and the business community. Without such amazing people, MCOB wouldn't be what it is today.

"I have to give a special shout out to Mr. Abe Mitchell and his family for providing invaluable resources for so many students, including me. Thank you to the Mitchell College of Business for helping me be so successful in my life journey."

**DEVIN EPPS**

Devin Epps was born in Memphis, Tenn., and raised in Murfreesboro, a suburb of Nashville. Majoring in marketing with a concentration in international business, he plans to move to Dallas, Texas and join the AIM Group following graduation.

Reflecting on his time as an Ambassador, Epps recalls his new-found view of professional networking. He acknowledges personal change as a result of the Ambassador program, "Being in the position to represent my University and College has encouraged growth, and for me to be mindful of my personal brand at all times."

Epps said a pivotal point in his education came after a meeting with the Mitchell College's dean, Dr. Bob Wood. "Before having the opportunity to be an Ambassador, my identity was mainly only in my sport, but during our meeting Dean Wood encouraged me to truly be diverse in my desires, and that message has stuck with me and always will."

In addition to pursuing his degree, Devin also played basketball for the University. When Devin was not working on school or hitting the court, he worked on mastering the art of photography. He is especially fond of food photography.

**ASHLEY HEITLING**

Originally from Florida, Ashley Heitling came to the University of South Alabama on a cross country/track and field scholarship. Graduating with a degree in marketing, she plans to move back to Orlando this summer and begin work in the fall.

"Being an Ambassador has pushed me out of my comfort zone, allowed me to meet new people outside of my sport and to establish lifelong friendships. As an Ambassador, I have had the privilege of meeting several business people, networking and learning more about life outside of college."

Before transferring to the Mitchell College of Business, she was a communications major, with a minor in marketing. "After my first day in my Principles of Marketing course, I jokingly walked up to my professor and said, 'I'm sold.' I switched my major the following week, and I've never been more thankful." Ashley shared a saying they have in track and field, "'No matter what happens, never look back', and after that day, I never have.

"From its incredible educational experience, to its remarkable staff members who have helped mold me into who I am today, MCOB has truly been my home away from home."



**AVRIL MCRAE**

Avril McRae, a native of Dauphin Island, graduated with a bachelor of science in accounting. Post-graduation, Avril plans to sit for the CPA exam.

McRae says, “My experience has been humbling. After an unsuccessful first attempt, I returned later at the age of 24 with a fresh perspective. There is no greater opportunity than being able to mold yourself into who you would like to become.”

She knew her teachers truly wanted her to grow into the best version of herself. “It’s hard to put into words,” she said. “The relationships built here are like no others I have experienced. Becoming a Mitchell Ambassador only furthered my love for the college.

“My experience as a Mitchell Ambassador and Mitchell Scholar has meant opportunity, evolution and discovery,” says McRae. “Perhaps most importantly, being an Ambassador allows for an optimization of character during a vulnerable time. The professional situations you are placed in force you out of your comfort zone and encourage growth. Although moving on to the next chapter is inevitable, the bonds I forged at the Mitchell College of Business will travel with me for the rest of my life.

“A special thank you to Abe Mitchell, for his benevolence afforded me this wonderful experience.”



**LIZZIE RODIN**

Most recently from Pensacola, Fla., Lizzie Rodin made Mitchell College of Business history as the youngest graduate of the college. With a degree in business administration with a focus on human resources, the 19-year-old plans to pursue her MBA and eventually enter academia. “My dream is to one day be able to provide the same impactful education to future students.”

Since the moment she registered at South, her high expectations have continually been surpassed by new opportunities, life-changing experiences and academic challenges. One such incredible opportunity has been to become an MCOB Ambassador. “To me, being an Ambassador has meant an opportunity to not only promote the University and College that has given me such invaluable experiences, but also a chance to interact with and glean knowledge from distinguished faculty, alumni and guest speakers on a personal level.”

Rodin went on to say, “This University has given me so much more than an incredible education. It has given me the chance to become part of a family that supports and motivates me beyond the confines of classroom walls. I will forever cherish my time at South. World, here we come!”



# 2018

MITCHELL COLLEGE  
OF BUSINESS

ALUMNI  
FELLOWS

Opposite: 2018 Alumni Fellows Tom Corcoran, Mike Dow, Mark Hoffman, Margie Tuckson and G. Russell Ladd III gather for a photo with Abraham Mitchell on the deck of the USS Alabama Battleship.



The Alumni Fellow Program formally recognizes Mitchell College of Business alumni whose personal lives, professional achievements and contributions to society exemplify the highest ideals of the College and the University. The program encourages Fellows to interact with students and faculty. Fellows engage students by sharing their professional knowledge and experience to enhance career development.

Fellows also demonstrate the application of business concepts, enriching faculty instruction.

Each Alumni Fellow receives a commemorative award designed and hand-cast by Jeanne Stevens-Sollman, a nationally known sculptor and medalist, and a ceramic sculptured jaguar created by alumnus and nationally recognized representational sculptor Sam Nettles.

# TOM CORCORAN

E. Thomas “Tom” Corcoran is the retired CEO of Fort Dodge Animal Health, a leading manufacturer of prescription and over-the-counter vaccines and pharmaceuticals for livestock. During his 23-year tenure, he led the transformation of the company from a \$28 million U.S.-based business to a billion-dollar multinational corporation.

He earned a bachelor of science degree in marketing from the Mitchell College of Business. He is the recipient of the University of South Alabama National Alumni Association Distinguished Alumni Award and is also the recipient of the Mitchell College Impact Award. During his career, he received the Banfield Industry Leadership Award, the AnimalPharm Lifetime Achievement Award, the American Veterinary Distributors Lifetime Achievement Award and the Kansas City Economic Development Industry Leadership Award.

He is a member of the University of South Alabama Board of Trustees and a past member of the University of South Alabama National Alumni Association Board of Directors. He currently is a member of the board of directors of Phibro, Inc., serving as chairman of the audit committee.



# MIKE DOW

Michael C. “Mike” Dow is chairman and CEO of Coastal Strategic Services. Before starting Coastal, he was executive VP of sales and marketing at Centralite Systems, Inc. Previously, Mike co-founded and served as VP of sales and marketing for Quality Micro Systems (QMS). QMS was founded with a \$10,000 electronics loan and grew into a New York Stock Exchange listed corporation that was ultimately sold to Minolta. A “recovering politician” (his words), he served 16 years as mayor of Mobile. The focus of his tenure included downtown redevelopment, tourism and recruitment of foreign manufacturing industry investment and jobs. The Mobile Convention Center and Riverside Park, Mobile Government Plaza and RSA hotel and building investments were constructed during his time as mayor.

He has a bachelor of science in economics and an MBA from the Mitchell College. He has served on numerous public and private boards including the Melton Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce, the Alabama Port Authority, the Mobile Arts Council, Mobile United, and many other local, state and national boards. He is a U.S. Army veteran serving multiple tours with the 173rd Airborne Brigade as a helicopter door gunner in Vietnam.



A full-length portrait of Mark Hoffman, a middle-aged man with short, light-colored hair, smiling slightly. He is wearing a dark navy blue pinstriped suit jacket over a white dress shirt and a red tie with a white and blue geometric pattern. He is standing outdoors with a blurred background of what appears to be a body of water and a sky. The photo is framed by a thin blue border.

# MARK HOFFMAN

Mark S. Hoffman is the former President and Chief Executive Officer of Corporate Express North America, a business product distribution company. Under his leadership, the company received the 2005 North American Distributor of the Year Award and the Chally Sales Excellence Award in 2006. He joined Corporate Express from APS Holdings, where he served as President and Chief Executive Officer. Prior to APS, he held positions with W.W. Grainger, TRW, Lockheed and Union Camp.

An alumnus of the Mitchell College with a bachelor of science in finance, he earned an MBA at the Harvard Business School. While at South, he lettered in baseball for four years and holds the distinction of being one of only two South Alabama pitchers to pitch a no-hitter. He attributes much of his success in business to what he learned on the baseball field.

He is a recipient of the University of South Alabama National Alumni Association Distinguished Alumni Award and has been an inductee of the South Alabama Athletic Hall of Fame. He is a past president of the University of South Alabama National Alumni Association and is a board member of the Mobile Symphony and Bayside Academy.

# MARGIE TUCKSON

Margie Malone Tuckson currently serves as Chief Financial Officer of Tuckson Health Connections in Atlanta. Prior to joining Tuckson, she held positions with IBM, Northrup Grumman and the City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs. She is an alumna of the Mitchell College of Business, holding a bachelor of science in marketing and was a founding member of the Iota Nu Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta at the University of South Alabama.

She currently serves as a member of the University of South Alabama Board of Trustees and the University of South Alabama National Alumni Association Board. Active in the community, she serves with Hope Chest for Breast Cancer, Penumbra Theater, the Morehouse School of Medicine, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, the National Council of Negro Women, Georgia CHARLEE, the United Negro College Fund and other organizations. Throughout her career, she has provided scholarships for inspiring young people to pursue their dream of attending college and continues to work with corporations and individuals to create opportunities.



# G. RUSSELL LADD III



G. Russell Ladd III retired as president and CEO of Thames Batré. A graduate of Washington and Lee University, he remains active in the community. He currently serves on the boards of Infirmity Health and United Way of Southwest Alabama. In addition, he has served as president of the Mobile Rotary Club, the Rotary Children's Foundation, Goodwill Easter Seals, the Gordon Smith Center and the Metropolitan YMCA. He is a founding member of the Mitchell College of Business Executive Advisory Council and remains an active member.

His passion is the Mobile Bay/Mobile-Tensaw River Delta environment. He has seen a number of changes in the delta over the past 70 years such as fewer water moccasins, more alligators and birds. Some of the changes are natural; others are man-made. He believes without a concerted effort, the Delta that he knows and loves may disappear.

**To nominate outstanding MCOB alumni, please send letters of nomination to Dr. Bob Wood by December 1, 2018.  
5811 USA Drive South  
Mobile, Alabama 36688 or  
bgwood@southalabama.edu**

# Always Thinking: The Story of an Entrepreneur



**W**hen asked what's memorable about the Mitchell College of Business, Jerry Lathan recalls having a conversation in a particular classroom where his accounting professor expressed doubts about whether Lathan would graduate or ever lead a successful life. He admits he did not embody the complete persona of a dedicated student. Rather, he was the casually dressed, laid back kind of guy, but with more personality than most. Lathan took that comment as a challenge. He listened and he learned.

The son of two teachers, Lathan grew up in Mobile. He was senior class president, played basketball and baseball at Theodore High School. He planned to attend Auburn following graduation, but fate intervened. In his senior year, his high school quiz

bowl team won first place in the locally televised competition, which resulted in not only a trophy, but each member also receiving a full scholarship to South. His former plans changed and South Alabama became his destiny.

His first day at South was the first time he had ever been in a classroom without at least one of his parents also on campus as a teacher. Lathan soon chose a marketing major, and he will tell you he feels well served by his Mitchell College degree.

While still a student at South, a fraternity brother asked him to manage his rock band, based on the simple rationalization that Lathan had to know what he was doing because he was taking business courses. After first wondering if the arrangement would work, Lathan agreed to the managerial role under

the conditions that the pricing and the marketing plan were completely up to him. Thanks to the Mitchell College, pricing theory was now a part of his knowledge base. Lathan soon tripled the band's booking rate and began marketing the band to out-of-town fraternities and sororities. By rebranding the band and entering previously untapped markets, he found new customers where he presented a more valuable image for the band. He subsequently raised their appearance price and began booking better events. In a few months, the \$350 per show local band had become a \$1,400 a night act, and they took the show on the road. Lathan and the band were happy to say the least and their customers were ecstatic as well.

When a professor questioned his ability for success, Lathan took that as a challenge.

As he neared graduation, he realized that his student loan debt and lack of collateral would prevent him from starting the entertainment company he had envisioned after being so successful with the band. He needed a job. A real one. So, with a new haircut and suit, Lathan began interviewing. Before graduation, he landed a sales job selling roofing materials for GAF in Mobile. His success in the Mobile market led to GAF increasing his territory size. He also grew close to his manager.



Lathan sits in the very room where his ability was questioned.

Lathan saw his manager as a mentor, and even decades later he valued the friendship. One day, Lathan asked him why he had been chosen for the position as opposed to seemingly more qualified candidates. After all, he was fresh out of college with a minimal résumé. His boss gave him an unexpected answer: He credited his band management experience. His rationale? Any kid living in a fraternity house who had the knowledge and discipline to develop and implement a marketing plan with applied pricing theory, entirely on his own, has the ability to understand business and is motivated to succeed.

After just over three years, Lathan left that job to start the Lathan Company, which specializes in historic restoration of landmark buildings and religious

properties. Based in Mobile, the Lathan Company has 50 employees and also has operations in New Orleans and Washington D.C. Company projects include Beauvoir Mansion in Biloxi, the Presbytere Museum, New Orleans, the Grand Hotel in Point Clear and the Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C.

His work on the Smithsonian led to a request for the Lathan Company to bid on the Trump Hotel project—the conversion of the historic old Washington D.C. post office into a top-of-the-line luxury hotel. After a series of preliminary conversations and submission of a bid, Lathan received a personal call from Donald Trump. Twenty minutes of negotiation later, the deal was done. It's a great story that's too long to print, but Lathan will be glad to share it if asked.

He was chosen to lead an elite architectural team in a philanthropic effort to evaluate earthquake damage done to the historic landmark buildings of Haiti after the devastating earthquake in 2010. Their subsequent findings were published in a White Paper for the UNESCO World Heritage Fund. The Lathan Company has received the Louisiana Historic Society Award for Excellence in Historic Preservation (2016) and the Mississippi Architecture Institute Award for Historic Preservation (2009).

With the success of the Lathan Company, his post-graduate dream of opening an entertainment company became a distant memory. But years later, fate brought another interesting encounter and an opportunity to re-enter the entertainment world. During renovation of the Lakefront Airport Terminal in New Orleans, Lathan was approached by Warner Brothers and made a deal to film the exterior scenes for the movie "Green Lantern." The deal included a speaking part for Lathan in the movie, and compensation for shutting down the restoration project until filming was concluded. The executive producer

was impressed with his negotiation tactics and soon after contacted Lathan about being his partner in a local business venture. Lathan is now a co-owner of Big Easy Studios in New Orleans, which quickly became the production home of some of the biggest movie blockbusters of the past five years including: Jurassic World; Dawn of the Planet of the Apes; Terminator 5; Daddy's Home; Jack Reacher; Never Go Back; and GI Joe: Retaliation and Geostorm.

Never one to rest on his laurels, Lathan's latest start-up is a new concept—roofing asset management. The concept resembles management of an investment portfolio, only the assets are commercial roofs. The start-up launched in 2017 and yet another company is in the works.

Lathan's interests also include politics. In 2000, he served as a member of the Electoral College as one of the 270 electors in the United States casting ballots for George W. Bush. He has served as the finance chairman and vice chairman of the Alabama Republican Party. He also served 14 years in party leadership as a member of the steering committee of the state GOP from 2001 to 2015 and was named Alabama Republican of the Year in 2008.

Lathan will tell you he feels well-served by his degree in marketing. When he left the corporate world to start his own business, he realized more than ever how he benefited from his education at South. The Mitchell College gave him a solid foundation in finance, accounting, management and, of course, marketing.

When asked if he would contribute to make the Mitchell College an even better business school, he gladly accepted. Remember the accounting professor who once questioned his ability to succeed? The very classroom where that conversation took place is now the Jerry and Terry Lathan Accounting Classroom in honor of his gift to South Alabama.

He credits his success to the simple principles of doing the right thing, trying hard, and working every day.



# 2018 SCHOLARS NIGHT

USS ALABAMA BATTLESHIP MEMORIAL PARK













**2018 MITCHELL COLLEGE OF BUSINESS SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS**

**CLARENCE M. FRENKEL JR. ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP**

Courtnei Johnson  
 Briana Morris  
 Lauren Nehls  
 Brittany Roberts

**DON AND SANDRA MCCRORY ENDOWED BOOK AWARD IN THE MITCHELL COLLEGE OF BUSINESS**

Khang Luu

**DR. CARL C. MOORE ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP IN THE MITCHELL COLLEGE OF BUSINESS**

Tommy Jackson

**HELEN AND ROBERT SELLERS SCHOLARSHIP IN BUSINESS**

Sarah Alkhatib

**HOLLIS AND CARMEL SHUMOCK ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP IN BUSINESS**

Andrea Prgomelja  
 Adeline Wilcox

**JACK R. BRUNSON MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FOR EXCELLENCE**

Melody Tittle

**JAKE AND PAT GOSA ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP IN THE MITCHELL COLLEGE OF BUSINESS**

Shelby Guidry  
 Devin Johnson  
 Caroline Pope

**MICHAEL C. AND PATSY B. DOW ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP**

Justin Abalos

**MITCHELL COLLEGE OF BUSINESS ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP**

Rachel Finch

**PEGGY AND JOHN SEIBERT FAMILY ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP**

Joyce Maika Casolino

**PFILIP AND LUELLA HUNT ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP**

Lauren Carrubba

**REGIONS BANK ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP**

Joyce Maika Casolino  
 Ashten Cunningham  
 Lacey Dugger  
 Tyler Hale  
 LaTrina Hughes  
 Erica Miller  
 Amber Sims  
 Randall Wiegmann

**RICK AND JULIE HARVEY ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP**

Jack Stover

**RUSSELL AND CAM STILL SCHOLARSHIP ENDOWMENT**

Amara Baltimore

**STIMPSON BROTHERS LEADERSHIP SCHOLARSHIP IN BUSINESS**

Cameron Cooper  
 Greyson McLain

**TERRY S. BARKIN MEMORIAL SHOE STATION ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP IN BUSINESS**

Erquasia Heard

**THOMAS CORCORAN ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP FOR ADULT STUDENTS**

Jalisa Trunell

**TURNER SUPPLY ENDOWED BOOK SCHOLARSHIP IN BUSINESS**

Sarah Alkhatib

**WINTHROP M. HALLETT III FREE ENTERPRISE SCHOLARSHIP**

Joshua Blackmon  
 Isaac Collier

**OUTSTANDING ACCOUNTING MAJOR**

Jonathan Kitchens

**ACCOUNTING DEPARTMENT ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP**

Winey Kate Navarro



**ALABAMA SOCIETY CPAS' ACCOUNTING ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**

Laura Labuschaigne

**ALABAMA SOCIETY CPAS' EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP**

Dylan Hooper

**ALLEN, ALLEN & FOSTER, CPAS ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP**

Lacey Dugger

**ASSOCIATION OF CERTIFIED FRAUD EXAMINERS SCHOLARSHIP**

Emily Speaks

**DR. FRANK R. URBANCIC SCHOLARSHIP IN ACCOUNTING**

Taylor Hamlin  
Owen Hicks  
Dylan Hooper

**ELAINE AND JOHN "J.D." BAXTER ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP IN ACCOUNTING**

Ty'Nedra Edwards

**HARDIN-EAVES ENDOWED ACCOUNTING SCHOLARSHIP**

Jasmein Davis

**HARTMANN, BLACKMON & KILGORE, P.C. ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP**

Lacey Dugger  
William Kline

**LANG FAMILY ENDOWED BOOK SCHOLARSHIP**

Jasmein Davis

**LAURA AND WAYNE DAVIS ACCOUNTING SCHOLARSHIP**

Whitney Jones

**LUTHER E. CLEMENTS SCHOLARSHIP IN ACCOUNTING**

Joyce Maika Casolino

**MOSTELLAR AND SHREVE, LLP ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP IN ACCOUNTING**

Kyle Allen

**PARKER ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP**

Dylan Hooper

**PUTCHA FAMILY OUTSTANDING ACCOUNTING STUDENT ENDOWED AWARD**

Tia Austin  
William Kline

**OUTSTANDING ECONOMICS MAJOR (SPONSORED BY STEPHEN BAKER, MERRILL LYNCH, FAIRHOPE, AL)**

Jacob Jagiello

**OUTSTANDING FINANCE MAJOR (SPONSORED BY TRUSTMARK BANK)**

Anh Hong Nguyen

**ADEN "JACK" COOPER ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP**

Christopher Mahan

**ALABAMA YOUNG BANKERS ASSOCIATION SCHOLARSHIP**

Sharon Beesley

**ALOYIS SONNEBORN ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP**

Christopher Mahan

**ALTON R., III AND TONI GOUBIL BROWN ENDOWED FUND IN REAL ESTATE**

Dylan Schmitz

**CHRISTOPHER J. WEIGEL FINANCE SCHOLARSHIP**

Nina Kennedy

**DOUGLAS L. WHITMORE ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP IN FINANCE**

Anh Hong Nguyen

**DR. DONALD L. MOAK MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP**

Sahilee Waitman

**PNC BANK ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP IN FINANCE**

Lacey Dugger

**ROBERT AND JOSEPH HUNSADER MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP IN ECONOMICS AND FINANCE**

Lauren Carrubba

**THE FIRST: A NATIONAL BANKING ASSOCIATION ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP IN FINANCE**

Sabrina Begum

**WHITE-SPUNNER AND ASSOCIATES, INC. ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP IN REAL ESTATE**

Auston Fillinger

**OUTSTANDING MANAGEMENT MAJOR**

Victoria McMahon

**CARL N. & JEWEL O. MELTON ENDOWED ENTREPRENEURSHIP SCHOLARSHIP**

Devin Johnson

**DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP**

John Williamson

**DR. DONALD C. MOSLEY SR. ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP IN BUSINESS**

Erquasia Heard

**DR. EDWARD L. HARRISON MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP**

Jolie Thompson

**DR. MARK WEAVER ENDOWED ENTREPRENEURIAL SCHOLARSHIP**

Tyler Hale

**DR. MICHELLE L. SLAGLE MANAGEMENT SCHOLARSHIP**

Tommy Jackson

**DR. PAUL PIETRI ENDOWMENT SCHOLARSHIP IN MANAGEMENT**

Jonathan Davis

**MOBILE SOCIETY FOR HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP**

Benjamin Roussos

**WARREN H. NICHOLSON ENDOWED ENTREPRENEURSHIP SCHOLARSHIP**

Kaitlin Kelley

**OUTSTANDING MARKETING MAJOR**

Emily Viglione

**DR. ALVIN J. WILLIAMS ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP FOR STUDY ABROAD IN MARKETING**

Hadiya Mitchell

**DR. GRANT M. DAVIS ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP IN MARKETING**

Emily Viglione



# ASK THE EXPERT

## Andy Newton, President of Uniti Fiber, Explores the Future.

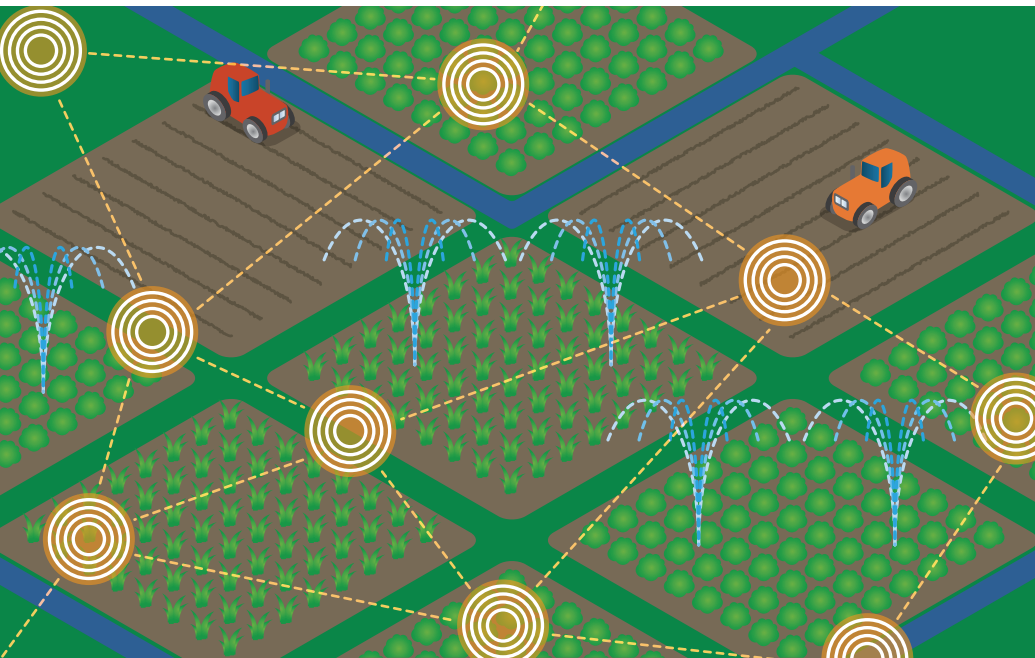
It's been a century since technology was making the enormous leaps we're going to see in the next decade. The foundation of today's progress is our communications infrastructure. Connectivity will be everything.

The 21st century communications infrastructure is not being built by our government; it's being built by communications companies. Fiber infrastructure is far from ubiquitous, but it's gaining ground quickly. The newest

generation of wireless technology, 5G, is under development, while the infrastructure to support it is being built out rapidly. High-speed bandwidth is distance sensitive, so for 5G to work, we need small cell antennas as close in proximity to the user as possible. Millions of small cell antennas are currently being placed on telephone poles, light posts, church steeples, and flag poles across the country.

What will this connectivity provide? We'll be able to travel around cities while





maintaining high-bandwidth connections that are faster than what we have in our homes today. It will allow for bandwidth and content competition at our homes. No longer will you be a prisoner of your local cable or phone company because any wireless provider will be able to connect you wirelessly. Lower prices and better service will be offered.

In houses that don't have internet because of financial or distance limitations, they will be able to receive high-speed connectivity to their homes. Currently, some students using school-provided laptops and tablets are not able

to do their homework effectively because they don't have internet. The 21st century communications infrastructure will bridge that digital divide.

There will soon be a world called the Internet of Things (IoT), where anything can be connected to a network. Instead of blanketing thousands of acres of land with water, farmers will have connected sensors scattered around their crops to determine soil moisture and nutrient composition. Water will be delivered to the plant at the roots of only the plants that need it. Fertilizer will be added to the water systems and only delivered to the

plants that require it. This will be a huge step in water conservation.

Every appliance that you use during your day will learn your routine and communicate with one another to start your coffee when you get out of your bed and make sure your home is only working to maintain the perfect temperature while you are present or in route. When your milk is running low, your refrigerator will order more. Your wearable devices and daily calendar will monitor your health and prescribe your meals to provide the right fuel to keep you healthy for differing levels of planned activity.

Autonomous vehicles will create enormous change. It's obvious that autonomous cars will replace the Uber driver, but vehicles as we know them will change. Imagine having the ability to run on a treadmill during your commute from work. If your work team has to travel to a meeting, they could summon a vehicle that has a conference table to make travel time more productive. If you're on a longer trip, there will be vehicles designed for sleeping.

The health and medical industries will see amazing advances. Once all hospitals are connected with unlimited bandwidth, the sharing of research and access to supercomputers will accelerate breakthroughs and find cures for many of our most deadly diseases. Rural hospitals will invest in surgery robots that will be operated by a surgeon across the country, thus increasing patients' access to health care options. Drugs will be prescribed according to your personal genetic makeup with fewer side effects and higher success rates. Diagnosing many illnesses will be conducted by a remote doctor in the comfort of your home.

These advances and more are being developed right now. Some advances are ready for deployment but are waiting on the infrastructure to be constructed. These are exciting times. I can't wait to see what imaginative humans will create using this next generation of communications infrastructure.

# MITCHELL COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

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Devin Epps, Joshua Crossover, Austin Sanders, Jasmine Leslie, Jocelyn Medina, Rachel Gray and Brie Strickland gather for a photo at the 2018 SOBIE Conference.

# Undergraduate Research Scholars

The Mitchell College of Business continued its active participation at the Society of Business, Industry, and Economics (SOBIE) Annual Conference in Sandestin, Fla. in April. For the last six years, the College has provided the opportunity for both graduate and undergraduate students to gain unique experiences in presenting their research at the conference. This spring, seven students presented their research findings at the SOBIE conference.

Joshua Crossover, a graduating senior majoring in economics and finance, presented the findings of his USA Honors College thesis. Crossover is a veteran of presenting at SOBIE; this was his third presentation while a student of the Mitchell College of Business. Under the direction of Dr. Al Chow, his thesis investigated the methods universities use to fund student activities. The research then looked at the relationship between university funding methods and student success rates.

Devin Epps, a graduating senior majoring in marketing, presented the

application of course studies and the College's Digital Marketing Bootcamp in the creation of his own business. His lifelong passion for food and experience at his mother's catering business inspired him to open his own business. Epps first created the "Shirtless Chef" social media persona and then created a line of food products and mixes.

Rachel Gray, a junior marketing major, presented the initial findings of a pilot study in supply chain analysis of commodities shipping. Working with Dr. Chow, she evaluated data from the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers related to commodity barge traffic through U.S. rivers and systems. The goal of the study is to structure a model for forecasting barge demand to assist transportation companies in preparing for future needs. Gray's findings revealed that while the publicly available historical data was useful in knowing what traffic looked like in the past, the data was not sufficient to provide reliable forecasts without including proprietary information (contracts) that is only available to the

companies moving the commodities. The study will continue.

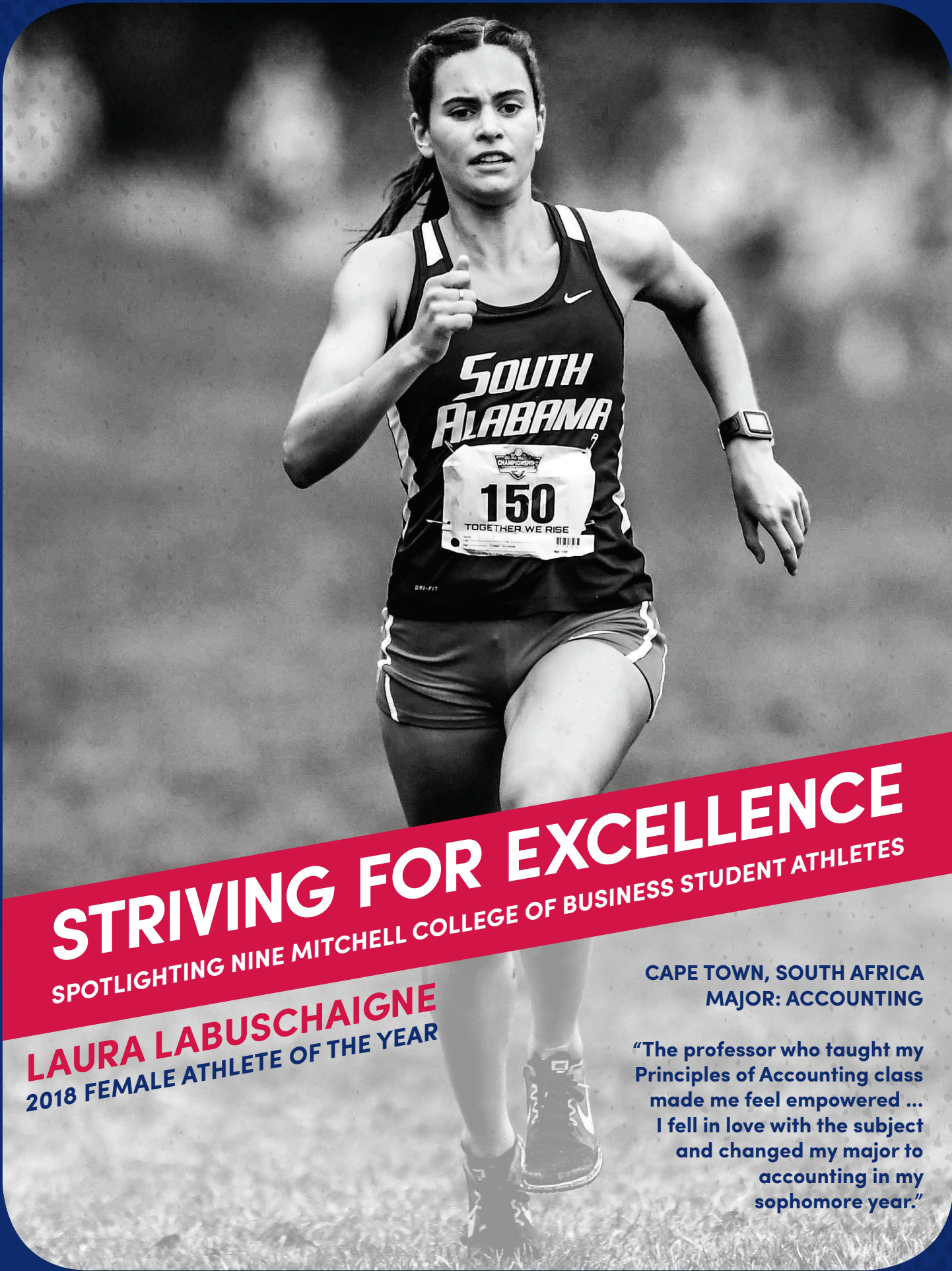
Jocelyn Medina, a graduating senior economics and finance major, presented her USA Honors College thesis project at the conference. Her research, an analysis of exchange rate forecasting methods, compared three different forecasting methods during the time period immediately before and after the Brexit decision. Medina's research was conducted under the direction of Dr. Christopher Lawrey and Dr. Alan Chow.

Austin Sanders, a junior majoring in marketing, presented two projects. The first study examined the efforts of a local beauty shop to expand its customer base through upgrading current services and products. This study was conducted as part of a course under the direction of Dr. Zach Finney. Sanders' second presentation outlined his project under the National Science Foundation's Innovation Corp (I-Corp) program. For this study, he worked on developing a restaurant recommendation system to interactively assist people in answering the common question, "Where do you want to eat?" His research was conducted under the direction of Dr. Jinhak Kim and Dr. Chow.

Brie Strickland, a graduating senior majoring in human resource management, and Jasmine Leslie, a senior also majoring in human resource management, presented a case study examining staffing. Under the direction of Dr. Treena Finney, the students identified challenges facing staffing agencies in meeting the needs of their clients and recommended methods for competing with the growing impact of social media as a source of job listings.

We congratulate this year's SOBIE participants and thank the faculty for their support of undergraduate research.





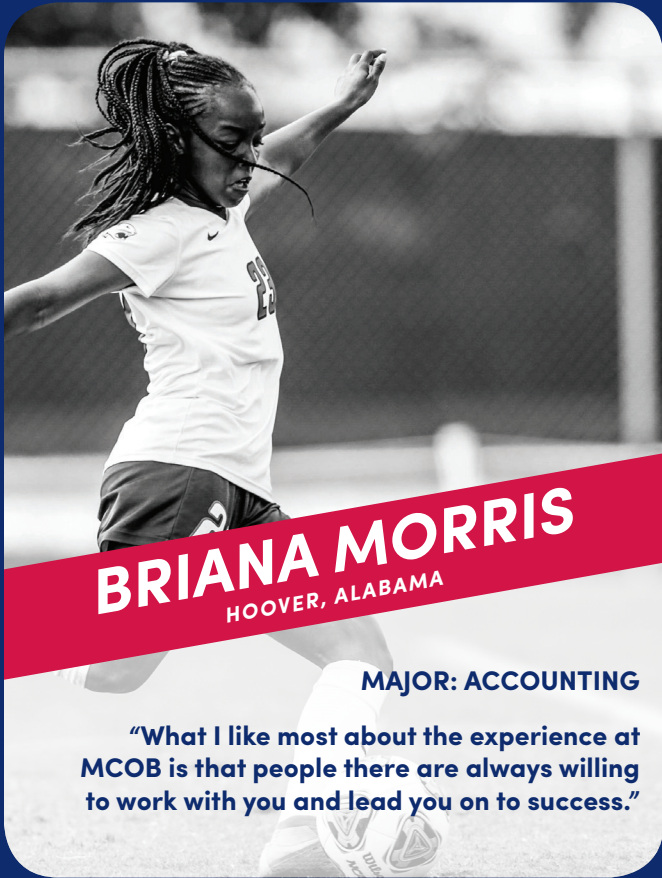
# STRIVING FOR EXCELLENCE

SPOTLIGHTING NINE MITCHELL COLLEGE OF BUSINESS STUDENT ATHLETES

**LAURA LABUSCHAIGNE**  
2018 FEMALE ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA  
MAJOR: ACCOUNTING

“The professor who taught my Principles of Accounting class made me feel empowered ... I fell in love with the subject and changed my major to accounting in my sophomore year.”



**BRIANA MORRIS**  
HOOVER, ALABAMA

**MAJOR: ACCOUNTING**

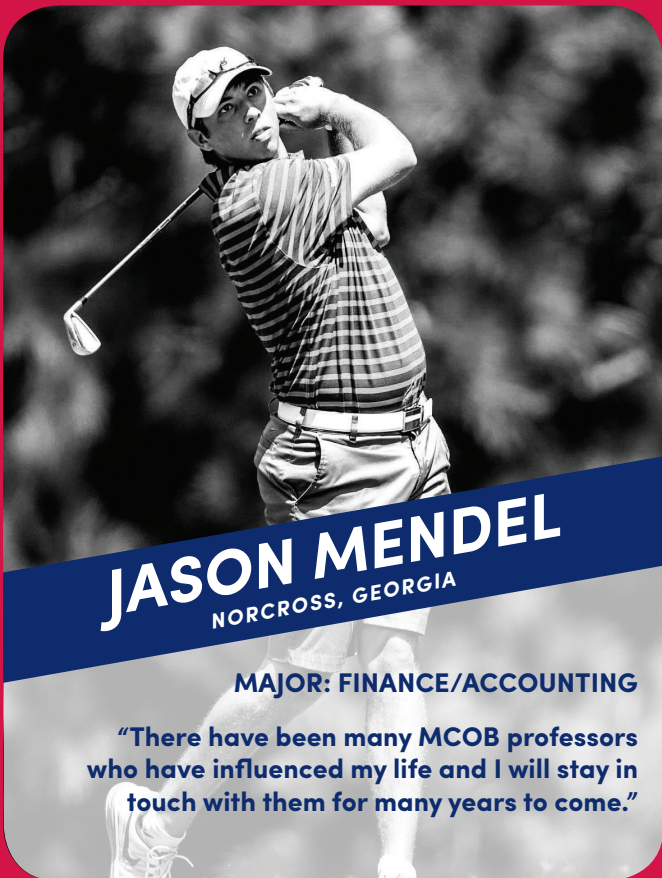
**“What I like most about the experience at MCOB is that people there are always willing to work with you and lead you on to success.”**



**ZACH MELTON**  
FOLEY, ALABAMA

**MAJOR: BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION**

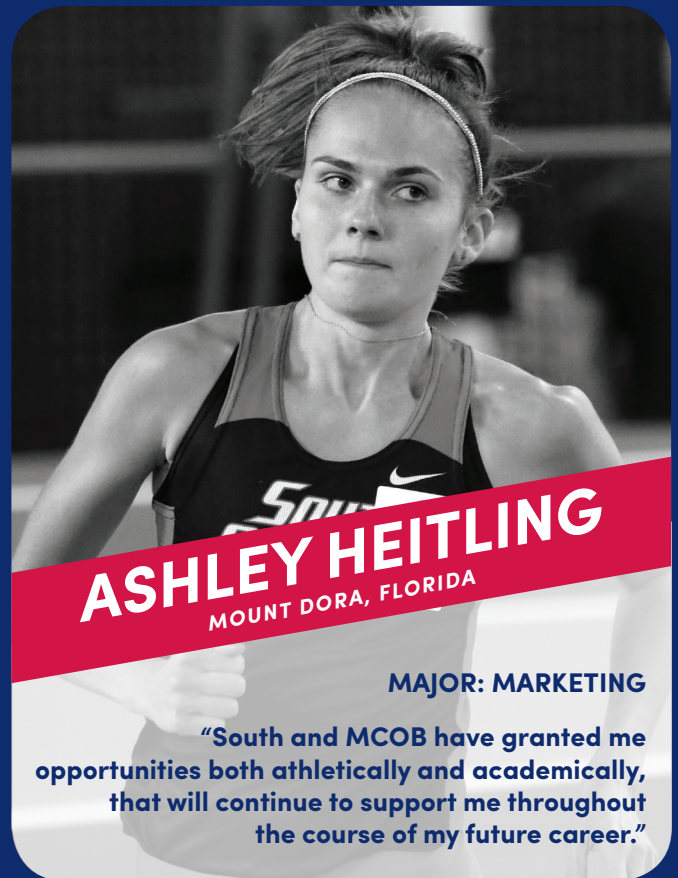
**“MCOB has given me the opportunity to expand my knowledge of finance by offering a variety of courses, clubs, and internships.”**



**JASON MENDEL**  
NORCROSS, GEORGIA

**MAJOR: FINANCE/ACCOUNTING**

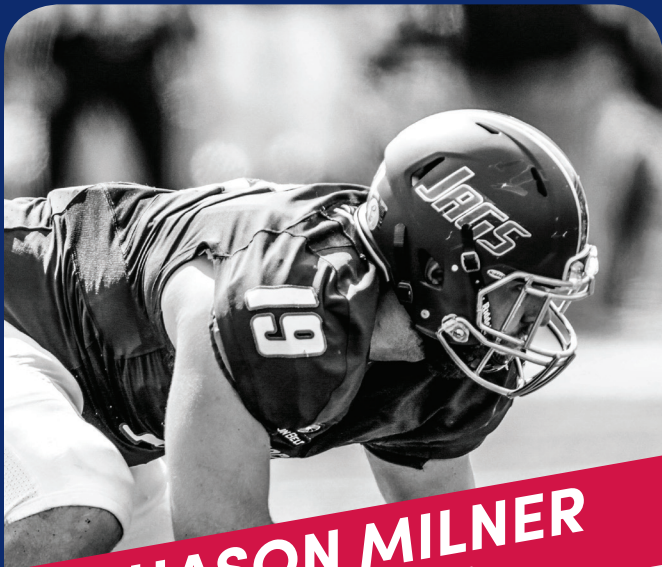
**“There have been many MCOB professors who have influenced my life and I will stay in touch with them for many years to come.”**



**ASHLEY HEITLING**  
MOUNT DORA, FLORIDA

**MAJOR: MARKETING**

**“South and MCOB have granted me opportunities both athletically and academically, that will continue to support me throughout the course of my future career.”**



**CHASON MILNER**  
SPANISH FORT, ALABAMA

**MAJOR: BUSINESS MANAGEMENT/  
ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

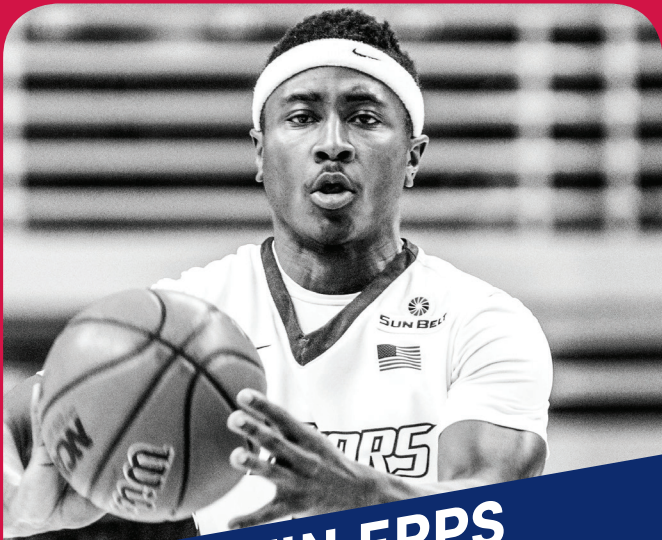
**"My experience has been one of a kind and the relationships I have built with my professors and fellow students are what make it so special."**



**ABBY KRZYWIECKI**  
BRIGHTON, MICHIGAN

**MAJOR: FINANCE/ACCOUNTING**

**"I absolutely love going to class at MCOB. It is a beautiful building and brings so much knowledge into my life."**



**DEVIN EPPS**  
MURFREESBORO, TENNESSEE

**MAJOR: MARKETING**

**"MCOB has allowed me to explore the various ways to bring a business into the appeal of the growing millennial audience."**



**LESLIE SOTO**  
SANTIAGO, CHILE

**MAJOR: INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS**

**"I love the professors at MCOB ... they are always open to help, but always pushing me to do my best, which makes me a better student and future worker."**



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**BRUCE MCCRORY**

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Development  
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**MELISSA MORRISSETTE**

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**ANDY NEWTON**

President, Infrastructure  
and Operations  
Uniti Fiber

**BUBBA O'GWYNN**

Market President  
BB&T

**DAVID PADGETT**

President  
Davison Fuels & Oil

**WENDY ROBERTSON**

General Manager Operations  
APM Terminals

**RHETT ROSS**

President & CEO  
Continental Motors

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**BILL SISSON**

President  
Mobile Area Chamber  
of Commerce

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Managing Partner  
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Chief Accounting Officer *(retired)*  
Ruby Tuesday

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SMS Holdings

**TOM STIEHLE**

Vice President Business  
Management, CFO and CIO  
Ingalls Shipbuilding

**DAVID TRENT**

Site Director  
Airbus

**RICHARD WEAVIL**

President  
The Weavil Company, LLC

**TOMMY ZOGHBY**

CFO *(retired)*  
Volkert, Inc.

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Vice President, Hancock Bank

**MATT CHAMBLESS**  
Chief Financial Officer, CPSI

**NEIL CHRISTOPHER**  
CPA, Warren Averett

**JACKIE CLACKLER**  
Operations Controller, Evonik Degussa Corporation

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Finance Director, City of Daphne

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CFO, Harbor Communications

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Executive Officer, Homebuilders Association of Metro Mobile

**KELLY CUMMINGS**  
Realtor & Broker-Owner, The Cummings Company

**J. REID CUMMINGS**  
Director, Center for Real Estate & Economic Development, Mitchell College of Business

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Manager, AGC of Alabama, Mobile Section

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Director of Investments, Cornerstone Investment & Management Consulting

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Financial Advisor, Apts Capital Advisors, LLC

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State Farm Insurance Companies

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University of South Alabama

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Landscape Workshop Gulf Coast

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Executive Dir., Mobile Arts Council

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Innovation Team, City of Mobile

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Vita Capital

**MONIQUE RAY**  
Signature Academy Specialist  
Williamson High School

**RON SIVAK**  
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**HAYLEY VAN ANTWERP**  
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HR Manager, The SSI Group, LLC

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Relations, AM/NS Calvert

**MARY CARON DOWNING**  
Senior HR Generalist,  
Continental Motors, Inc.

**ANGELA DUNN**  
Associate Director, Planned Giving  
USA Development and  
Alumni Relations

**JAMES FOLEY**  
Managing Partner,  
Fairhope Brewing Company

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Owner/Business Strategist  
Ramonica Gamble Consulting

**CADIE GAUT**  
Co-Owner & Operations Manager  
Payroll Vault

**ANNA MARIE GILCHRIST**  
Owner/Agent The Gilchrist Agency -  
Farmers Insurance

**JEFF JOHNSTON**  
Corporate Counsel, Shoe Station

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Chevron Pascagoula Refinery

**ARMONDO LOVE**  
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Wind Creek Hospitality

**MICHELLE PINOCHET**  
Staff Accountant, Wilkins Miller, LLC

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# INVEST IN THE COLLEGE



Financial support dramatically impacts the lives of the students in the Mitchell College of Business. Your support makes us who we are today and directly affects tomorrow's business leaders.



## SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT SPOTLIGHT

### **DYLAN HOOPER**

"I am beyond grateful for the scholarships that I have been awarded at the University of South Alabama and appreciate the generosity of those who have established scholarships for students like me. I have worked diligently for the last three years and feel like I have used the scholarships to obtain the best educational experience possible." Dylan Hooper is a senior studying accounting and is a Mitchell College of Business Ambassador. Maintaining a 4.0 GPA, Dylan is a Beta Gamma Sigma and Beta Alpha Psi award recipient and is also a USA Presidential Scholar.

## THREE AREAS OF PRIORITY FOR THE COLLEGE INCLUDE:

### **STUDENTS**

The enrollment, education and graduation of outstanding students is of paramount importance to the Mitchell College of Business. Employers and other external constituents benefit from inspired graduates entering the workforce. In order to attract these students, the Mitchell College must offer competitive scholarships. The Mitchell-Moulton Scholarship Initiative matches any endowed undergraduate scholarship gift dollar-for-dollar.

### **ACADEMIC ENHANCEMENT**

Advances in technology, changes in classroom design, and active-learning teaching methods have drastically changed the educational environment. In order to maximize learning outcomes, the Mitchell College must incorporate these advances into the classroom. Join us as we embark on a campaign to update (classrooms and other) Mitchell College of Business learning environments.

### **THE INTERNATIONAL EMPHASIS PROJECT**

Our students will enter an increasingly complex and competitive global economy. Research and experience show that students who participate in global immersion opportunities are better prepared for competition in the global economy. The goal of our international emphasis project is to ensure the affordability of study abroad opportunities for all interested students.

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