

Alabama Community College Association



OUR STORY

ALABAMA'S
SUCCESS



SPRING JOURNAL 2025

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2025

Alabama Community College Association
Annual Conference



Montgomery Marriott Hotel & Spa
Montgomery, Alabama

November 23-25, 2025

REGISTRATION:

July 1 - November 7	\$375
Onsite Registration	\$475

Message from Our President

Donitha Griffin, Ed.D., George Corley Wallace State Community College

Since January, the ACCA Executive Committee has been hard at work crafting A Year-Long Journey—designed to empower Alabama Community Colleges to continue sharing the stories that illuminate and inspire pathways to success for students, faculty, and staff across the state.

Our work focuses on creating a strong foundation for academic excellence ensuring that every person who steps through the doors of an Alabama community college has the resources, guidance, and opportunities to succeed.”

This year’s theme – ‘Our Story, Alabama Success.’ is all about celebrating the incredible journeys and accomplishments that have shaped Alabama’s community colleges and their impact on our state’s growth. It’s about telling our story and highlighting the unique success stories from within the community.”

“As part of OUR YEAR LONG journey, we’ll be hosting regional meetings across the state. These are opportunities for YOU to share your story, connect with colleagues, and learn from one another. It’s a chance to come together, network, and celebrate the work we’re all doing to impact Alabama’s community colleges.”

“At these meetings, you’ll also hear from our Chancellor about the future of Alabama’s community colleges. It’s your opportunity to gain insight into where we’re heading and how we can ALL be part of shaping that future.”

The Annual Conference in November will bring together community college leaders, educators, and staff from all over the state for meaningful conversations and powerful learning sessions. Whether you’re a first-time attendee or a conference veteran, you’ll leave with new insights, strategies, and connections that will help propel your work forward.”

I encourage you submit proposals that showcase, celebrate, and amplify the voices, achievements, and transformative stories that define Alabama’s continued success. I also want to encourage you to register early for the ACCA Conference. I look forward to seeing you at the regional meetings and, of course, at the ACCA Conference. Let’s make this year one to remember – together!



In remembrance of Dr. James Deas Krudop’s impactful leadership and unwavering dedication to ACCA and the Alabama Community College System we have dedicated a special page in the Fall Journey publication to honor his memory and legacy.

Alabama Community College Association



Call for Proposals

Conference Theme: Our Story | Alabama's Success

Presentation Topics: Administration, Faculty, Support, Students, and Workforce

Deadline: August 25, 2025

Decision Date: October 1, 2025

Conference Registration Deadline: November 7, 2025

A photograph showing the backs of several graduates in black gowns, holding their black mortarboards high in the air in celebration. The scene is set against a bright, hazy background, possibly a sunset or sunrise over a body of water.

We are seeking dynamic proposals that showcase, celebrate, and amplify the voices, achievements, and transformative stories that define Alabama's continued success—from groundbreaking innovations and educational milestones to grassroots initiatives that have created lasting impact. In addition, we aim to equip faculty and staff with the resources, insights, and tools needed to identify, expand, and sustain these success stories across the state.

Submit proposal(s) online at alabamaacca.org ->Call for **Proposals**



Call for Nominations

Recognizing Exemplary Programs in Alabama Community Colleges

We are pleased to announce a call for nominations to identify and recognize exemplary programs across Alabama Community Colleges that demonstrate excellence in the following critical areas:

Support Services

Workforce Development and Innovation

Teaching and Learning

Nomination Criteria: To ensure we recognize the most outstanding programs, we are looking for initiatives that showcase measurable impact, creativity, and a commitment to student success.

Specifically, we encourage nominations for the following area:

Support Services:

Offer comprehensive, effective services that directly support students' academic, personal, and career goals.

Workforce Development and Innovation:

Address the evolving needs of the workforce, promote career readiness, and foster partnerships with industries to ensure students are prepared for the workforce.

Teaching and Learning:

Demonstrate innovative teaching methods, pedagogical strategies, or academic approaches that enhance student learning experiences and outcomes.

Please check our website for more information on submission

<https://www.alabamacca.org/>

Celebrating Our Stories





ATN Impacts Alabama

Alabama Technology Network (ATN) is an entity of the Alabama Community College System (ACCS). It serves as Alabama's center for the Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP), part of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST).

Located across the great State of Alabama, Alabama Technology Network is part of 15 Community Colleges and 3 University Campuses. With 56 employees, ATN's mission is to provide workforce training, technical assistance, and engineering services to incumbent workers statewide.

ATN offers the most extensive training and service offerings for business and industry, including five primary delivery areas: continual improvement, industrial maintenance and technology, food industry, environmental health and safety, and leadership and management development.

A report published by Lightcast, the leading provider of economic impact studies and labor market data, found that in FY2023-24, ATN provided a sizable net positive economic impact to the State. This analysis shows that in fiscal year (FY) 2023-24, ATN's operations spending, together with the enhanced productivity of businesses ATN supported, generated \$392.3 million in added income for the Alabama economy.

Lightcast also reported ATN's support enabled businesses to retain 2,485 jobs and create 566 new jobs in Alabama, with an estimated \$298.2 million in worker earnings. Additionally, ATN helped companies save \$59.4 million in unnecessary costs and investments, allowing them to reinvest in growth areas such as new products, equipment, workforce training, and process improvements. As a result, companies invested \$93.3 million into expanding their operations, demonstrating ATN's significant impact on job retention, cost savings, and business growth across the state.

In 2024, ATN managed to serve 287 different companies with 452 contract projects statewide.

From 2015 through 2024, the following are client-reported economic impacts:

- 1,741 Independent Client Surveys Completed
- 4,686 New Jobs
- 18,996 Retained Jobs
- \$2.9B Increased & Retained Sales
- \$636M in New Client Investments
- \$929M in Cost Savings & Avoidance

Totals

- 25,423 Jobs
- \$4.5B Client Impacts

ATN takes pride in delivering exceptional customer service and serving as a trusted local partner for businesses. We specialize in implementing innovative solutions, developing and training employees, and improving workforce processes to help companies thrive. With a commitment to excellence and reliability, Alabama Technology Network ensures businesses have the resources and support they need to succeed.

Contact us today at (334) 293-4671 or www.atn.org.

Bevill State Graduate–Turned–Instructor Builds Career Through Community College Pathways

Bevill State Community College



Kendall Galloway's journey with Bevill State Community College is a powerful example of how Alabama's community colleges serve as the workforce solution for the state. From a dual enrollment student to a full-time welding instructor, Galloway's career path reflects the transformative impact of career technical education (CTE) and the critical role community colleges play in preparing students for in-demand careers.

Galloway was first introduced to Bevill State as a child through the Fayette Campus's Kids College program. That early hands-on experience left a lasting impression, which would later guide his educational and career choices. In high school, he enrolled in dual enrollment courses around 2014, giving him an early introduction to college-level work and helping him earn credits toward his degree. His dedication earned him membership in Phi Theta Kappa, and he received the Bevill State Ambassador Scholarship, which supported his two years of full-time study at the College.



After initially starting in the Electrical Systems Technology program in 2016, Galloway soon discovered that his strengths and interests aligned more with welding. He transitioned to Bevill State's welding program in 2017, where he thrived and earned a place on the President's List. The combination of experienced instructors, industry-relevant training, and practical lab experience gave him the confidence and technical skill set to enter the workforce well-prepared.

Following graduation, Galloway began his career at Fayette Fab, a local employer and advisory board partner with Bevill State. He later joined Lavender Inc., now a registered apprenticeship partner with the College and the State of Alabama, further underscoring the value of industry relationships in workforce training.

Today, Galloway serves as a welding instructor for Bevill State at the Pickens County College & Career Center. When he began teaching, the program enrolled approximately 30 students. That number has nearly tripled in recent years, reflecting growing interest in skilled trades. The program offers multiple training paths, including short-term certificates, long-term certificates, and an associate degree option—providing students with flexible, high-quality opportunities to prepare for the workforce.

"Career and technical education changed my life, and now I get to watch it change others' every day," said Galloway.

His story exemplifies the mission of the Alabama Community College System: providing accessible, affordable, and workforce-driven education. Bevill State's commitment to student success through programs like dual enrollment, CTE, and apprenticeship partnerships continues to prepare students like Kendall Galloway to meet Alabama's workforce needs head-on.

Ly’Nardia Morris: From Hardship to Hope—A Bishop State Success Story

Bishop State Community College



Three years ago, Ly’Nardia Morris never imagined she would be where she is today. Facing homelessness at a young age, she found herself living in a car while dreaming of a brighter future. Inspired by a friend in Bishop State’s nursing program, she took a leap of faith and enrolled. That decision changed her life forever.

“Bishop State is the reason for the season,” Ly’Nardia says. “It became my foundation, my family, and the place where I learned to push myself to my full potential.”

Through the support of faculty and staff, she overcame significant challenges. Emergency funding and scholarships provided her with financial stability, while mentors like barbering instructor, Mr. Wade Dickerson, and Vice President of Instructional Services, Dr. Khalilah Burton, offered the guidance and encouragement she had longed for. “They didn’t just teach me—they lifted me up,” she recalls.

While at Bishop State, Ly’Nardia was deeply involved in campus organizations, traveled for academic conferences, and was named an Alabama All-Academic student. But her impact reached far beyond the classroom. She dedicated herself to uplifting others, often driving fellow students to and from campus without asking for anything in return. “I just want to be able to touch somebody,” she explains. “If I can help someone get their education, I’ve done my job.”

Since graduating, Ly’Nardia has launched two successful businesses—Another Chance Hair Care and a credit repair service—both inspired by her education at Bishop State. “Thanks to my professors, I learned financial literacy and how to build a business. Now, I help others move above the poverty line,” she says. While she has already graduated from the barbering program, Ly’Nardia is currently completing her associate degree and has been accepted to both Troy University and the University of Alabama, where she plans to pursue a degree in communications before attending law school.

For Ly’Nardia, success is measured not in wealth, but in the impact she has on others. “It’s about seeing the people around me thrive—getting their education, raising their credit scores, and believing in themselves,” she says.

To current and future students, she offers this advice: “Take it one day at a time. Don’t be afraid to ask for help. Walk into every room with confidence—because you belong there.”

Ly’Nardia’s journey is a testament to resilience, determination, and the transformative power of education. As she looks toward the future, she has one promise: “I’m coming back to give Bishop State \$1 million when I get it—so my name can go on a building.”

Bishop State changed her life. Now, she’s determined to change the lives of others.



From Janitor to Surgical Technologist: Nyssa Vaughn's Journey of Courage and Discovery

Calhoun Community College

Calhoun Community College is celebrating a story of remarkable resilience and transformation through the journey of Nyssa Vaughn, a recent graduate of the college's Surgical Technology program. Her path to graduation was far from ordinary and is one of strength, perseverance, and the power of second chances.

Several years ago, Vaughn found herself starting over. After leaving an abusive relationship, she moved back into her parents' home with her children, relying on their love and support while she worked to rebuild her life. That journey brought her to Calhoun, not as a student at first, but as a janitor cleaning the Health Sciences building during night shifts.

One evening while working, she noticed flyers for the cadaver lab and stayed a little longer to observe. That moment changed everything.

"I was just curious," she recalled. "But once I saw what they were doing in the lab, I was completely drawn in. I knew then that I wanted to be part of it."

At twenty-eight years old, Vaughn made the life changing decision to return to school and pursue surgical technology. With encouragement from instructors like Dr. Grant Wilson and Mr. Dion Schultz, she enrolled in the program and began a rigorous academic journey that tested her strength, focus, and determination.

"The coursework was difficult," Vaughn said. "But I knew this was what I wanted. I pushed through because I had a goal, and I had people around me who believed in me."

Her support system became the foundation of her success. Her parents provided constant help with childcare. Her best friend Katie was there through every high and low. Her now husband offered unwavering encouragement, and her instructors walked beside her both in and out of the classroom. Even during long nights of studying, missed holidays, and moments of doubt, she stayed focused on her purpose.

"This journey was never just about me," she said. "It was about showing my kids what is possible. I want them to grow up knowing that no matter how far down you feel or how hard life gets, there is always a way forward."

Now, with her degree in hand, Vaughn will enter operating rooms not as a janitor but as a certified surgical technologist. Her story is a powerful reminder of what can happen when courage meets opportunity and when belief in yourself becomes stronger than the challenges in your path.

"I do it for my babies," she said. "But I also do it for me. I want them to see that even in the most uncertain times, you can still build a life that makes you proud."



Scott Hardy: From CACC Graduate to Community Leader and College Advocate

Central Alabama Community College



At Central Alabama Community College (CACC), we celebrate the transformative impact education has on the lives of our students and the communities they serve. One former student who is a testament to this transformative power is Scott Hardy, a proud 2008 graduate whose career has taken him from student leadership to meaningful public service and back home to serve CACC in a pivotal role.

After graduating from CACC, Hardy translated his educational foundation into significant community impact. In 2016, he made history by becoming the youngest elected official ever to serve on the Alexander City Council. This milestone was a personal achievement and a reflection of his genuine commitment to improving the lives of others in his hometown. Throughout his tenure on the council, Hardy has consistently demonstrated effective leadership, clear communication, and strategic thinking—qualities nurtured during his formative years at CACC.

Reflecting on his professional success, he credits his time at the college for providing essential skills, supportive mentorship, and opportunities to grow personally and professionally.



“My education at CACC was truly life-changing,” Hardy shared. **“The college gave me confidence, provided mentorship, and prepared me to face the real-world challenges of public service. CACC did more than educate me, it inspired me.”**

Driven by an appreciation for his experience at CACC, Hardy pursued roles focused on government affairs, public relations, and strategic communications throughout Alabama, continually deepening his dedication to community development and civic leadership. Yet his passion for education and community advancement ultimately led him back to the place that first inspired him—Central Alabama Community College.

Today, Hardy is the Director of Institutional Advancement, Government Affairs, and Public Relations at CACC. In this role, he gives back to the institution that significantly shaped his career path. His position allows him to advocate directly for students, engage community leaders, and strengthen partnerships that enhance educational opportunities across Central Alabama.

“My professional journey has come full circle,” Hardy said. “Returning to serve Central Alabama Community College is a profound honor. This institution changed my life, and I’m committed to ensuring it continues to empower future generations of students in the same impactful way.”

Hardy’s success story demonstrates the lasting impact of CACC graduates as leaders, community advocates, and lifelong education champions.

Overcoming Fear, Embracing Opportunity: Liz Rivera Irungaray's Journey from GED to Phlebotomy



Chattahoochee Valley Community College

For years, Liz Rivera Irungaray put off continuing her education, finding reasons to delay her dreams. The language barrier, family responsibilities, and fear of failure all loomed large in her mind. But deep down, she knew she wanted more.

“My great motivation? To prove to myself that even though years had passed without giving me the opportunity to continue studying, I could still do it,” Liz shared. **“I had many excuses in my mind, one of them was the language, but if I really wanted to achieve it, I had to lose my fear.”**



Determined to push past her doubts, Liz worked hard to earn her GED at Chattahoochee Valley Community College (CVCC). Holding her diploma, she realized she was capable of more. She began looking at the opportunities CVCC offered and was amazed by the variety of programs designed to help students build careers. That's when she discovered the Certified Phlebotomy Technician (CPT) course.

“I love everything that has to do with the medical field, and I was excited to start something that would get me involved. CVCC offered me so much help and support, and that's how I finished the course, making an effort not to fail myself, my family, my husband Adam, and my daughter Victoria.”

Balancing school and family life wasn't easy. Her husband's military schedule meant they had to carefully coordinate childcare, and in class, she sometimes felt lost starting from scratch. But with patience, hard work, and the encouragement of her loved ones, she pushed through.

The hands-on training at CVCC proved invaluable. Under the guidance of instructor Dana Torain, Liz gained confidence in her skills.

“CPT was an excellent course, full of so much information and practice. I thank Mrs. Dana Torain for her incredible patience and excellent teaching. Thanks to her, I felt very confident when I did my internship at the hospital and saw what I was capable of. I felt ready and well prepared.”

Now, Liz has set her sights on becoming a Medical Lab Technician (MLT). She knows it will take dedication and additional requirements, but she's committed to making it happen.

“Maybe it sounds like the most common phrase, ‘If you want, you can.’ But it's true. When you really want something, you go for it. The world may seem to close in on you, and excuses come in droves, but nothing can stop you. Each diploma, each certificate is applause to yourself.”

Liz's story is one of perseverance, proving that education is always within reach for those who are willing to take the first step. Through the support of CVCC and her own determination, she has not only transformed her future but also set an inspiring example for others.

Married Couple Plan to Open HVAC Company After Coastal Alabama Graduation



Coastal Alabama Community College

Ashley and Johnny Haynes have always supported one another, and thanks to pathways they've found through Coastal Alabama Community College, they're even more resourceful for each other and their family. The two met in high school in Ohio, but in recent years have relocated to Atmore, Ala., where they are pursuing degrees in HVAC and will soon be the first to attend — and graduate — in each of their respective families.



The Haynes homeschool all five of their children, the eldest of which is a dual enrollment student enrolled in computer animation classes at Coastal Alabama Community College's Fairhope campus. Mom and dad have studied at the Monroeville and Atmore campuses, with Johnny earning his Associate in Applied Science in Heating and Air Conditioning in December 2024. Ashley graduates from the same program in May, and the two plan on opening their own HVAC company as soon as possible.

"Earning our degrees is not only life changing for us, but for our children as well," Ashley said. "It changes everything because now not only do our children know that college is a possibility for them, they know Coastal is full of instructors who will help them along the way."

She and Johnny are both members of the Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society, as between the two of them, they've only received one B throughout their college academics.

"It was great for me because my girls would come to the ceremonies and see me earn awards," said Ashley, who earned several scholarships and was named the most outstanding student in microbiology. "Besides having the piece of paper to show the kids to help motivate and inspire them, it's always good to be learning and growing."

Originally, she had enrolled in the nursing program, and still has hopes to one day be a hospice nurse. Ashley's initial goal was to become a nurse so she could care for Johnny, who is a disabled Army combat veteran with a heart condition, but when she realized the opportunities available through the HVAC program, she pivoted.

Their HVAC instructor in Atmore, Rob Brantley, inspired the couple to earn their associate degrees, which led to their decision to start their own business. Led by faith and belief in each other, the pair's decision came with a mandate to do what they can to help others, which has always been a component of their relationship. The couple is researching possible apprenticeship opportunities they can offer through their business, and Johnny is enrolled in a veterans support program through the local Veterans Administration office.

"So not only are they not alone, they'll have somebody there to support them," Ashley said. "And it will be somebody who understands and will be able to empathize and talk with them about the subjects they like to talk about that us civilians can't always relate to."

Drake State: A Spark That Lights Lifelong Journeys



Drake State Community and Technical College

Life's journey is rarely a straight road; instead, it's a path filled with twists, turns, and defining moments that shape who we are. For Sanitha Douglas, earning her Doctorate of Nursing Practice (DNP) was more than a personal achievement; it was a celebration of resilience, faith, and the transformative power of education. And it all began at Drake State Community & Technical College.

Raised in North Carolina, Douglas grew up as one of six children, nurtured by her grandparents and a teen mother. In her family, graduating high school was considered an extraordinary accomplishment. Inspired by older relatives who pursued higher education at Oakwood University in Huntsville, she aspired to follow in their footsteps—though she wasn't sure how to prepare for the challenge.

In 1991, Douglas earned an associate degree from Oakwood College (now Oakwood University). She went on to build a career in healthcare, working at Huntsville Hospital, Oakwood University, Kelly Assisted Living, and Health South (now Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital). However, her passion for learning was truly reignited in 2012.



While working, Douglas and her coworker, "BT," decided to enroll in Drake State's Adult Bridge Program—a program offering foundational courses in biology, math, and computer science to help adults transition into higher education. These classes did more than enhance her knowledge—they awakened a deep desire to continue learning.

The nurturing environment and supportive faculty at Drake State reminded her that education was always within reach, no matter where life had taken her. Inspired by this experience, and with the support of her husband and daughters, Douglas pursued her bachelor's degree online at the University of Texas at Arlington in 2014.

Yet, the spark from Drake State continued to glow. Encouraged by her close friend and coworker, Juliet Knight, Douglas took a bold leap—enrolling in a program at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, MI, that allowed her to transition directly from a bachelor's degree to a Doctorate of Nursing Practice.

Balancing work, family, and school, Douglas persevered—earning her DNP in 2024. Her journey eventually led her back to Drake State, thanks to a familiar face: Dr. Mbuguje, a former coworker from Oakwood, Encompass, and Kelly Assisted Living. Dr. Mbuguje encouraged her to return to Drake State—this time as an adjunct instructor.

Dr. Douglas' story is a testament to the idea that success is not always a linear path, but it is always

Kelly Cobb named ESCC's Alumnus of the Year

Enterprise State Community College



Kelly Cobb, superintendent of the Coffee County School System, was named the 2024 Alumnus of the Year for Enterprise State Community College during the College's Honors Day Program held April 9.

Cobb attended what was then called Enterprise State Junior College from 1991-93. During her time at the College, she completed both an associate in arts degree and an associate in science degree. She also served as a worked study on campus and an ESJC cheerleader.

After completing her associate degrees, Cobb transferred to Troy University, where she earned her Bachelor of Science in Education & Master of Science in Education. She later completed her Master of Educational Leadership and Education Specialist degrees at Auburn University at Montgomery.

Cobb has served as an elementary school teacher, assistant principal, and federal programs coordinator. She has held the title of superintendent for Coffee County Schools System since 2021. While serving as superintendent, the system saw the opening of New Brockton Middle School in August 2022 and the opening of a new gymnasium at Zion Chapel School.

She currently serves on the Alabama Literacy Task Force and has also served on the State Task Force for Pre-K-3rd grade as well as the ACAP Summative Assessment Committee. She was recently nominated to join the Alabama Transformation Leadership Academy. In 2023, she was named the District Three Superintendent of the Year.

Cobb and her husband Dale have two sons – Blake and Brady – both of whom have attended ESCC, and Blake is an ESCC graduate. Her family lives in the Coffee County School District, and she frequently attends events at all three schools in the district: New Brockton, Zion Chapel, and Kinston.

Cobb is known for her hands-on approach in each of these communities – from cheering at football games on Friday nights to reading to elementary children during “Read Across America Week.” She is also known as a strong supporter of faculty, staff, parents, students, and the community. If you know her, you have probably heard her say, “It takes a village,” and this mantra truly exemplifies her approach to education.



Melissa Battles: From Gadsden State Graduate to Community Leader and Public Service Advocate

Gadsden State Community College



Melissa Battles, a 2016 graduate of Gadsden State Community College, is making a name for herself for her exceptional contributions to the community and her successful career in public service and accounting.

She is currently the Northeast Alabama field representative for U.S. Sen. Katie Britt, a role that requires her to serve as a liaison between the senator and local officials, business leaders and civic organizations across 10 counties. She also provides assistance to constituents navigating federal agencies, such as the Veterans Administration, Social Security and immigration.

After graduating from Southside High School in 2011, Battles chose to attend Gadsden State because it was close to home and allowed her to work while pursuing her education.

“The convenience of Gadsden State’s location combined with the opportunity to stay involved in my community made it the perfect choice,” she said.

Battles, a past member of Gadsden State’s cross country team, said the college laid the foundation for her successful career.

“Attending Gadsden State gave me the chance to explore different academic avenues and earn an education in a supportive environment,” she said. “The guidance and resources I received at Gadsden State prepared me for the next steps in my academic journey.”

After graduating from Gadsden State, Battles enrolled at Jacksonville State University, where she earned a degree in accounting in 2018. Her professional career started as an office assistant and intern at a Gadsden accounting firm. She went on to work as a staff accountant for the Alabama State Department of Education and an accountant for Alabama Secretary of State John Merrill. She also served as executive assistant to Gadsden Mayor Craig Ford.

Battles continues to serve Gadsden State on the Cardinal Foundation Board of Directors. She recently was named Emerging Alumni of the Year by the Gadsden State Alumni Association. An advocate of education, she said she encourages others to attend Gadsden State.

“Gadsden State offers a great value, both academically and financially,” she said. “Students receive a quality education while receiving support and the flexibility to balance work and school. It’s a win-win situation for everyone.”



Stone Fincher: A Journey of Determination, Growth, and Success

J.F. Ingram State Technical College

Stone Fincher's story is a powerful testament to the transformative power of education, hard work, and resilience. In the summer of 2023, Stone successfully completed the Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration (HVAC) program at J.F. Ingram State Technical College's Main Campus. Under the guidance of Mr. Lee Patterson, Stone not only learned the technical skills of HVAC but also built the confidence and knowledge needed to thrive in the workforce.

For Stone, choosing the HVAC program wasn't a decision made lightly. It was a choice grounded in the belief that this program would offer him the best opportunity to succeed. "I chose the HVAC program because I felt like that program gave me the best opportunity to succeed," he shared, reflecting on the determination that led him to this pivotal moment in his life.

The hard work and dedication Stone poured into his studies quickly paid off, and upon completing his coursework, he transitioned seamlessly into employment. Today, he works at Southern Homes in Russellville, Alabama, as an Electrical Maintenance Technician. In this role, Stone applies the skills he learned at ISTC to maintain, troubleshoot, install, and repair electrical systems and climate control units. His job not only allows him to utilize his training but also ensures that the sites he works on remain safe, comfortable, and functional.



Stone's commitment to excellence has not stopped with his completion of the HVAC program. To further enhance his qualifications and expand his career opportunities, Stone while at ISTC earned several important certifications, including OSHA-10, EPA, Forklift Operator, and NCCER. These credentials further cement his expertise in the field and open doors to new possibilities for growth in his career.

Reflecting on his time at ISTC, Stone is deeply grateful for the impact the program has had on his life. **"The HVAC program not only teaches you about air conditioning, heating, and refrigeration, but there is also a lot of electrical that you must learn,"** Stone shared. **"I've been able to take that knowledge and gain great employment. ISTC gave me the chance to enrich my life, providing me with all the tools and resources to be successful. All I had to do was accept it. ISTC was a bright light in one of my darkest moments."**

Stone's journey is one of transformation—a journey that proves how education can offer a path to a brighter future, even in the most challenging of circumstances. With a clear goal of supporting his family and building a better life, Stone exemplifies perseverance, growth, and success. His story serves as a source of inspiration for others looking to make positive changes in their lives through education and hard work.

For Stone Fincher, the journey is far from over. His continued success in the field and his dedication to his family show just how far determination and a willingness to learn can take you. Stone's story is a reminder that no matter where you start, the right education and mindset can lead to a brighter future and a life filled with achievement and pride.

Jefferson State Alumna Stephanie Woods – A Leader in Healthcare

Jefferson State Community College



Jefferson State Community College Alumna Stephanie R. Woods is a seasoned healthcare leader with over 25 years of experience advancing clinical practice, innovation, organizational strategy, and operational excellence.

“In my family there were six kids,” said Woods. “My father was a disabled truck driver and my mother was a nursing assistant, so I knew college would be financially challenging.”

When Woods graduated from high school, she knew she wanted to be a nurse and recognized Jefferson State was the best option for her and her family. She enrolled at Jefferson State and completed her associate degree in nursing in 1996.

Her time at Jefferson State helped spark her pursuit of lifelong learning. Stephanie furthered her education by earning her bachelor’s degree from Jacksonville State University. Her commitment to excellence in nursing administration led her to complete a master’s degree from the University of Alabama in 2009. Demonstrating her dedication to quality and safety in healthcare, she also obtained a graduate certificate in healthcare quality and safety from the University of Alabama in Birmingham. Continuing her academic journey, Stephanie is currently completing her doctorate of science degree in healthcare administration from the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Her extensive education and experience are complemented by her certification as a board-certified advanced nurse executive and her green belt in Lean Six Sigma, underscoring her skill in implementing process improvements and enhancing operational efficiency.



Currently, Stephanie serves as the Regional Executive Director of Patient Care Services at Kaiser Permanente Northern California. In this capacity, she holds region-wide responsibility for inpatient nursing services for adults, maternal-child health, clinical informatics, and clinical education, simulation, and training across 21 hospitals in Northern California.

“The skills I learned at Jefferson State richly prepared me to be a leader,” said Woods. “I also learned that when you are at Jefferson State, you are truly a part of a family. And, when you are part of a family, they want to see you succeed.”

Stephanie’s dedication to patient care is matched by her passion for learning and development. She is a staunch advocate for making every day count and continually pays it forward through mentoring, sponsoring, and developing the next generation of healthcare leaders. Her commitment to nurturing talent ensures the healthcare sector is well-equipped with capable and compassionate professionals.

“At Jefferson State, you’re not just a number,” said Woods. “The connections you make, with faculty that are invested in you, will last you a lifetime.”

Stephanie Woods provided the keynote address during Jefferson State’s 2025 Commencement Ceremony.

Building Success: How Lawson State Fueled One Student's Path from Dual Enrollment to Entrepreneurship



Lawson State Community College

When Hamza Khouly started plumbing at 14, he didn't enjoy it. "It was nasty, and it was hard," he recalls. "But I realized it was something I should continue doing."

Today, Hamza runs Dr. Comfort Southeastern Mechanical and Plumbing Contractors, a thriving company with 16 employees operating across Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Georgia. His path to success ran through Lawson State Community College, showcasing the transformative power of career technical education.

"I was just a 14-year-old kid trying to find work," Hamza says. He met an older plumber who needed a helper, and from there, he gained hands-on experience that changed his perspective. Still, he knew he needed formal training.



"While in high school, I started looking into how to get licensed and heard about Lawson State," says the 2023 graduate. Snap-on Tools recently featured him in an ad campaign promoting trade careers.

"If my 14-year-old self saw me now, he wouldn't believe it," says the now 24-year-old, whose company specializes in commercial and industrial plumbing, gas, refrigeration, and HVAC.

As a dual enrollment student, Hamza visited Lawson State and was drawn to its HVAC program. **"I saw the equipment and thought, 'This is a really good program.' There was so much experience and knowledge to gain."**

He credits instructor Adam Raiford from the air conditioning and refrigeration program for his success. "He made sure you understood before you left. He'd stay as late as needed to teach you," Hamza recalls. That support was invaluable, especially since he had limited guidance at home. He needed to earn money, and learning a trade he enjoyed was the perfect path forward.

Today, Hamza holds an impressive list of credentials: master plumbing, master gas fitting, HVAC, refrigeration, home builders, and general contractor commercial licenses. He's also finalizing his journeyman electrical license. Dr. Comfort operates a fleet of 11 diesel trucks.

"Not many startups have that," he notes. "It took a lot of dedication—hard work and studying." He takes pride in the industry, explaining, "Some say plumbers save more lives than doctors. Without proper plumbing, sewage creates problems like those in third-world countries."

Committed to solutions, Hamza also teaches part-time at Lawson State. "I like to help because I know how I felt coming here," he says. "Not only am I helping students, but I'm getting smarter when I teach."

His company regularly hires Lawson State graduates. Two of his current employees are alumni, and four more are finishing their education. "They're just much smarter when they leave," he says.

Hamza attributes his success to honesty and quality work. "People look for honesty. We've built a strong team and consistently deliver on time. Word of mouth spreads."

As for the future? "The sky's the limit," he says.

Joseph Longmire's Successful Journey from LBW Student to Dual Enrollment Leader

Lurleen B. Wallace Community College



Joseph Longmire's journey at Lurleen B. Wallace Community College (LBW) is a testament to the transformative power of education. As a former student and now an Instructional Services Assistant for LBW's dual enrollment program, Joseph's story exemplifies how dedication and perseverance can lead to remarkable success.

Longmire's decision to attend LBW was one of the most impactful choices of his life. He reflects, **"Choosing to attend LBW was the best college decision. The knowledge, guidance, and skills that I gained still serve in my advances today. The LBW experience impacted my life in a tremendous way."**

His involvement in student organizations, such as the Student Ambassadors and TRIO Student Support Services, provided him with leadership opportunities that fueled his passion for helping others. His dedication as a TRIO student led him to serve as a government liaison, where he testified before the U.S. House of Representative Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Subcommittee, advocating for federal TRIO program funding.

After earning his undergraduate degrees, Longmire sought career advancement opportunities that aligned with LBW's mission of teaching, learning, growing, and enriching lives. His career journey reflects these core values by teaching others the importance of setting goals, learning from challenges, growing through networking and self-awareness, and enriching his professional path with continuous skill development and collaboration.

Now a husband and father of two daughters, Longmire says, "I am elated to invest in the future of our communities, state and nation by advocating and directing students towards successful pathways that will progressively lead to the betterment of our society."

Joseph Longmire is the epitome of success, an example of how a quality education at LBW Community College can shape not only individual futures but the future of our communities. His journey from student to staff highlights the transformative power of education within the Alabama Community College System.



Olivia Hill: U.S. Air Force Academy Fourth-Class

Marion Military Institute



Marion Military Institute alumnus Olivia Hill '24 of Houston, Texas, is now thriving as a “fourth-class” at the U.S. Air Force Academy, where she is pursuing a history major and serves as a swim & dive team manager. She recently wrote a heartfelt testimonial to Gen. Steve Lorenz, USAF (Retired), President of the Falcon Foundation.

“When I shared with you that my time at MMI was truly the best year of my life, I was speaking the truth. I firmly believe that I would not be the person I am today nor be at the USAFA without MMI, and the host of people who cared so much about me and my success there.”

“My year there did not come without its struggles. I didn’t always do well in every class or perform how I wanted to on a PT test, but it was in these moments that MMI taught me the valuable lesson of failing. I learned that I may not always be the best at something, but there were people around me who wanted to help me and I, in turn, could help them. My friend Jack saw I struggled at times with running and gave me tips on how to improve. My math teacher Dr. Yang would stay late to help me and my classmates better grasp concepts we were struggling with and got excited when we could complete multiple problems correctly in a row. My advisor, Colleen, was there to support me through hard days and was never afraid to give me the hard truth.

The people and connections are what make MMI unique. I met my best friends there who have stood by me through the ups and downs of my journey to come to USAFA. I feel like I have known them a lifetime and cherish the memories we have made.

MMI also gave me a chance to learn what it meant to be an adult, to be on my own and responsible for making my own choices. I had fantastic mentors, such as LTC Bowen and 1SG Magnus, who gave me guidance in making tough decisions and were unafraid to tell me as it was. Because of this, I had the opportunity to grow tremendously in all aspects of my life.



Needless to say, MMI was the blessing I didn’t know I needed. I am extremely grateful and blessed to have spent a year at MMI. I met the most extraordinary people and learned important lessons about myself and others. Attending MMI enabled me to grow in ways I didn’t know I needed to, setting me up for success here at USAFA, both academically and in building interpersonal relationships.

I am beyond grateful that I chose to go to MMI and would not trade my time there for the world.”

NACC Dual Enrollment Graduate Spotlight: Braxton Clines



Northeast Alabama Community College

The transition after high school graduation is a pivotal moment for any student. Some are jumping directly into the workforce, while others are gearing up to further their education at universities this fall. Dual enrollment graduates are often able to transition with a distinct advantage over their classmates.

Before even receiving his high school diploma in 2023, Braxton Clines had already crossed the stage at Northeast Alabama Community College (NACC), earning his associate in art degree. He was also the Salutatorian of his high school senior class.



“I really enjoyed the way that I could adapt my schedule around my classes because most were available online,” said Clines. **“Dual enrollment allowed me the opportunity to manage the expectations assumed by a full-time college student.”**

By securing a head start, he not only saved time and money but also swiftly earned his white coat at Auburn University’s Harrison College of Pharmacy. It typically takes up to seven years of schooling, but he found a way to reduce it by three years when starting at an Alabama community college.

“I am extremely grateful,” said Clines. “Dual enrollment has shaped the way that I’ve learned material and has been a necessary part of my training for pharmacy school.”

Over the past decade, Alabama’s community and technical colleges have served as the launching pad for over 400,000 transfer students. Clines is among the 14% of ACCS students who transferred to a four-year institution and entered a health care program.

“I really enjoyed the faculty at NACC,” he said. “There were so many teachers and advisors that helped my education flourish in a meaningful way.”

NACC’s Dual Enrollment program has greatly expanded over the last several years. Students like Braxton are entitled to the same student services and enrichment programs as traditional students, allowing them to succeed even before they graduate high school. This solid groundwork supports them no matter where their academic and professional pursuits may lead.

Kandace Changed Her Life with Help from Northwest Shoals



Northwest Shoals Community College

Kandace Robinson is a 2022 nursing graduate of Northwest Shoals Community College (NWSCC). Kandace came to NWSCC as a homeless single mother who was living with her two sons at a local shelter in Northwest Alabama.

She was originally interested in the Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) program at the College. However, she eventually found her place in the Associate Degree Nursing Program on the NWSCC Phil Campbell campus.

In Kandace's words, "While Northwest Shoals was the more affordable option, the hands-on experience was and is invaluable." Since Kandace's graduation from Northwest Shoals, her son had neurosurgery. Kandace said, "I was able to recognize and prevent serious complications because of my education, and he is fine now."



Following graduation from NWSCC, Kandace bought a house and is currently working as a nurse for Helen Keller Hospital in the Intensive Care Unit. According to her, working in the ICU is her dream job.

In looking back at her time before attending Northwest Shoals to now, Kandace said, "While I was in the shelter, I was waiting tables for \$30-\$50 a day, I never imagined in my wildest dreams that this would be the life I would be living one day. NWSCC has unexpectedly provided healing on top of an education that allows me to do a job I am passionate about."

"If there's one thing, I want people to know, it's that dreams do come true. You can make your life anything you want it to be! Thank you for this opportunity and for everything Northwest Shoals has provided me and my family."

worthwhile. The lessons she learned at Drake State didn't just prepare her for academic success—they ignited a lifelong passion for growth that continues to inspire those around her.

Now, as an adjunct instructor at Drake State, Dr. Douglas has come full circle. She teaches with the same open arms and nurturing spirit that she experienced years ago—proving that no matter where someone's journey begins, Drake State is here to support and guide them every step of the way.

Scan to Watch Kandace Tell Her Story



David Allen Cole: A Lifelong Commitment to Service, Education, and Workforce Development

Reid State Technical College



David Allen Cole is a dedicated professional with a multifaceted career spanning military service, industry experience, and education. David graduated from Excel High School in 1987 and joined the Army in January 1989 as a 31M Multi-channel System Communications Operator. David served in combat during Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm as a member of the first Armored Division stationed in Germany. After returning home, David attended Reid State Technical College's ILT program and earned an Associate Degree. Over his 26-year military career, David was deployed four times, serving nine years on active duty and 17 years with the Alabama Army National Guard. In 1993-95 David was a student at Reid State Technical College in the ILT program and graduated with his Associate's in Applied Technology.



After his military service, David worked in the wood industry at Georgia Pacific paper mill in Perdue Hill for 16 years. Following a medical retirement in November 2015, he joined Reid State Technical College as an instructor for the Industrial Electricity/Electronics (ILT) program. As the lead ILT instructor, David initiated the first official apprenticeship in the history of Reid State Technical College. In 2018, David earned his Bachelor's degree from Grand Canyon University in Educational Studies. In December 2019, he also earned his master's degree from Athens State University in Career in Technical Education.

In 2021, David transitioned to the role of Workforce Development Director at Reid State, where he collaborated with the Alabama Office of Apprenticeship to launch the first CDL apprenticeship in the state of Alabama. In 2022, Reid State became a member of the National College Athletic Association (NCAA) and the Alabama Community College Conference (ACCC), with David taking on the roles of Athletic Director and Workforce Development Director & Career and Technical Education (CTE) instructor.

Under David's leadership, Reid State Technical College established its first-ever athletics program, with the school competing in men's basketball, men's and women's golf, and men's and women's cross-country starting in the fall of 2023. In the fall of 2024, the college will expand its athletic offerings to include women's basketball, women's volleyball, women's softball, men's baseball, and co-ed e-sports. Today David is the Executive Director of Workforce Development.

David is married to Nichole Cole of Andalusia, and together they have five children—three daughters and two sons—as well as ten grandchildren, ranging in age from 13 to 1 years of age.

Shelton State Community College Celebrates Bibb Medical Center Nursing Apprentices at Signing Day Celebration



Shelton State Community College

Shelton State Community College (SSCC) celebrated the College's nursing apprentices during a commemorative signing day at Bibb Medical Center (BMC) in Centreville, Alabama, in January.

With support from the Alabama Office of Apprenticeships, the nursing apprenticeship program welcomed its first cohort in 2024. Kamolyut Mengumpun, Kendra Hoskins, and Carson Gibbs have completed the program and are now working at BMC. The apprentices, now SSCC alumni, received on-the-job training while completing their nursing coursework, labs, and simulations at the College's Bibb Campus. The program also provided paid learning and clinical hours for candidates.



The ceremony also served as a welcoming and signing ceremony for the College's newest apprentice, Krista Yeager.

"We are proud to not only welcome our newest apprentice but also to see the success of our first group of students as they wrap up their training," said Dr. Jonathan Koh, SSCC President. "This cutting-edge program is serving as an example to others in our state and across the country as a model for the seamless transition for nursing students from the classroom to the nursing field."

In partnership since 2022, Shelton State and BMC created the practical nursing program at Bibb Medical Center to increase the number of skilled nurses in West Alabama.

BMC CEO Joseph Marchant says the collaboration between SSCC and BMC has opened a pathway for more nursing opportunities.

"Since its inception, dozens of LPN graduates got their start in healthcare with teams across West Alabama," said Marchant. "We appreciate all the partners that have allowed us to reach this point."

From Badge to Bedside: Snead State Alumnus Ryan Bradford's Journey from Police Lieutenant to ICU Nurse

Snead State Community College

Snead State Community College alumnus Ryan Bradford stepped out of his police uniform into scrubs and found success as a registered nurse.

Bradford served his community as a lieutenant with the Guntersville Police Department while attending classes at Snead State to earn his Associate's degree. Now, after retiring from the GPD, he proudly serves that same community as a nurse in the Intensive Care Unit at Marshall Medical Center South.

But Bradford's not stopping there. He graduates from Jacksonville State University in December with his BSN degree and plans to enroll in a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist program.

"(Before working in law enforcement), I worked as a flight medic and part-time paramedic. My interest in the medical field started with a fascination for the surgical aspect of medicine. When I did my research, I realized I wanted to be a CNRA," Bradford said.

In addition to working full-time at GPD and being a full-time nursing student, Bradford is a husband and a father.

"I knew I needed to do something more to supplement my retirement income and support my family," he said.

After receiving his Bachelor's degree, Bradford must complete his 18-month rotation in critical care before he can be accepted into a CNRA program, which takes three years to complete. The process continues to be a journey of hard work and sacrifice, but to Bradford, it's a journey worth taking.

"The support I've received from my family means everything to me. My wife bought me a badge reel when I started the nursing program, and it said, 'I gave up my life to learn to save yours.' I wore that to remind myself of what it took to get to where I want to be," Bradford said.

"I may chart more than is required. I spend more time with patients talking and getting to know them. I review their information and think through scenarios that could affect their condition. I plan courses of action to help them through those scenarios (if they happen). I do it because I want to provide the best possible care I can for patients."

During his time in Snead State's nursing program, Bradford received the Clinical Excellence Award for two consecutive years. During his 2024 Commencement at Snead State, he was awarded the Civitan Award. He received praise from both his instructors and his colleagues at Marshall Medical Center South.

"I'm (focused) like I am because of my dad who made sure I was disciplined to stay on the right track. I also owe everything to my wife, who has supported me. And then the faculty in Snead's nursing program helped me more than I can say. They are the backbone behind everything."



Adam Baker: From Struggles to Success – A Story of Resilience and Commitment



Southern Union State Community College

“Motivation will get you started, but discipline is what helps you finish.”

This is the guiding principle that Adam Baker lives by, and his story is a testament to the power of commitment and resilience.

Six years ago, Adam arrived in the Opelika area with a determination to turn his life around. Struggling with addiction and homelessness, he knew he needed a change. A four-year degree wasn't the right path for him, as previous attempts at three different colleges hadn't worked out. He began researching his options and discovered the industrial maintenance degree at SUSCC. “The program really encompasses everything, and it was at the time the only program with an internship option,” he said.



Adam knew he could earn money while earning his degree, and he graduated while working a full-time job. The encouragement from his instructors and the program's focus on job placement were crucial to his success.

“Next to getting sober, attending Southern Union was the best decision I ever made,” he reflected. “I wanted more out of my life, and Southern Union set me on the right path. The support and care I received made all the difference; everything just fell into place.”

With an associate degree in mechatronics, Adam now thrives as a successful industrial maintenance technician. He enjoys using his analytical skills to diagnose problems, identify common issues, and implement effective solutions.

“I received so much support from others; now I'm committed to giving back wherever I can,” Adam said, embodying the spirit of generosity and determination that has shaped his journey.

Dayja Brown: A Journey of Academic Excellence, Leadership, and Faith from Trenholm State to Auburn University at Montgomery



Trenholm State Community College

Dayja Brown is a distinguished alumna of Trenholm State Community College, whose academic achievements and extracurricular involvement have set a commendable example for her peers. During her tenure at Trenholm State, Dayja was recognized as a Federal Work Study participant, indicating her dedication to both her studies and campus community.

In addition to her academic pursuits, Dayja authored "God Knows a Princess's Heart," a biographical work detailing her life's journey and the pivotal moments where she felt guided and cared for. The book aims to inspire readers by illustrating that, regardless of circumstances, a higher plan exists for everyone, achievable through faith and understanding.

Dayja's leadership qualities were further exemplified through her participation in the Alabama Transfers Conference at Alabama State University, where she, alongside fellow alumnus Thaddeus Sneed, represented Trenholm State Community College.

Continuing her educational journey, Dayja transferred to Auburn University at Montgomery (AUM) to pursue a career as a Data Analyst. At AUM, she has been recognized for her academic excellence and commitment to her field of study by being inducted in the AUM Honors Society and being awarded the AUM Transfer Plus Scholarship.

Dayja's accomplishments reflect her unwavering dedication to personal growth, academic excellence, and community involvement, making her a role model for current and future students.



Aleigh Lanier: From Wallace Graduate to Future Nurse Practitioner



George C. Wallace Community College

From a determined high school student to a future Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP), Aleigh Lanier's path in healthcare has been one of dedication and passion. Her journey began at Wallace Community College-Dothan (WCCD), where she took her first steps toward a nursing career. Now at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB), Lanier is set to graduate with her doctorate in August 2026, specializing in primary care pediatrics with a focus on pediatric hematology/oncology.



Lanier dual-enrolled at WCCD in 10th grade, allowing her to enter into WCCD's Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN) program right after high school graduation.

"I chose to dual enroll at Wallace to save time and reduce the cost of earning a college degree," she says. "This opportunity gave me a head start and challenged me academically, better preparing me for nursing school. My experience at Wallace was incredible—the instructors and staff were exceptionally supportive."

While in WCCD's ADN program, Lanier developed critical skills and lifelong friendships. "The instructors were incredibly supportive, always encouraging students to find study groups and develop strong learning strategies. Their mentorship extended beyond graduation—many of them still check in on me, and even four years later, I know I can reach out for guidance or a reference. The facilities provided everything we needed to succeed, from simulation labs to hands-on learning experiences."

After earning her RN, she completed her BSN through Wallace's RN to BSN mobility partnership with the University of Alabama. She then worked 13 months in the Children's of Alabama NICU before transitioning to outpatient pediatrics at Vestavia Pediatrics. "I began working at Vestavia Pediatrics in 2022 under the mentorship of Dr. Joseph Hamm, an incredibly knowledgeable and compassionate pediatrician. Watching him care for children reinforced my passion for working with a vulnerable population and inspired me to advance my education."

Lanier chose to pursue her doctorate early in her career. "Specializing in pediatrics will allow me to provide a higher level of care and make a meaningful difference in children's lives. Earning a doctorate will open doors for leadership opportunities, advanced clinical practice, and the ability to advocate for pediatric healthcare on a broader scale."

Reflecting on her journey, Lanier remains grateful for WCCD. "Wallace Community College was the foundation of my success—where ambition met opportunity, and hard work transformed into achievement. It provided me with the education, mentorship, and confidence to pursue my career and further my education. I am grateful for the experiences, the lifelong connections, and the support that helped shape the professional I am today."

Wallace State Graduate a Semifinalist for Cooke Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship

Wallace State Community College



Recent Wallace State Community College graduate Vianney Verdin Maldonado has been selected as semifinalist for the highly competitive Cooke Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship from the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation. Maldonado is the third Wallace State student in five years to be named a semifinalist for the prestigious award and the fourth since 2008.

“We are extremely proud of and excited for Vianney,” Wallace State President Dr. Vicki Karolewics. **“She is extremely deserving of this honor. During her time here at Wallace State, she was very active in campus organizations, even starting two new clubs for students and a student-led podcast.”**



Maldonado graduated from Wallace State in 2024, earning an associate degree in general studies, with plans to transfer to Auburn University to pursue dual degrees in biology and psychology. Her ultimate goal is to earn a doctorate and work in neuroscience psychology.

Maldonado was named the college’s Student of the Year in 2024 and was recognized by the Alabama Community College System with her selection for the 2024 All-Alabama Academic Team and is an All-USA Coca Cola Silver Scholar.

While as a student at Wallace State, Maldonado was a member of eight student clubs and organizations and served as an officer in seven of those. Two of those clubs she founded or helped organize — VALOR Latino/Hispanic Club and the Books and Banter Club. Maldonado also helped organize and hosted a student-led podcast called The Mane Topic, which continues production today.

She was also a member of the percussion and vocal ensembles with the Wallace State Fine and Performing Arts program and participated in two international study and performance experiences with the college.

Away from college, Maldonado volunteers several hours each week in her community, including tutoring in English. She also raises money to send to sponsor children and families living in poverty in Mexico.

Maldonado is one of a select number of community college students across the United States chosen as a semifinalist for the Cooke Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship from more than 1,600 applicants from 212 community colleges in 43 states.

Previous Wallace State students who were named semifinalists for the Cooke Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship include Bryant Simmons in 2021, Aljohn Cellis in 2020 and Chelsea Allen in 2008. Cellis and Allen each went on to win the prestigious scholarship.

The Foundation will announce the 2025 Undergraduate Transfer Scholars in May. For more information and a list of semifinalists, visit <https://www.jkcf.org/our-stories/2025-transfer-scholarship-semifinalists>.

From Wallace Community College Selma to Healthcare Leadership: The Inspiring Journey of Dr. Stevonica Logan-Jackson

George Corley Wallace State Community College



Nursing has always been a noble profession, but for Dr. Stevonica Logan-Jackson, the decision to pursue healthcare was deeply personal. Though she initially dreamed of becoming a teacher, her career aspirations shifted when she witnessed the compassionate care nurses provided for her father during his illness. His hospital journey inspired her to dedicate her life to making a difference in the lives of patients and their families.

After serving in the military, Dr. Logan-Jackson knew she wanted to continue her education in a supportive environment. Her grandmother and aunt had been educators at Wallace Community College Selma (WCCS), so the college felt like home. She earned an Associate's degree in Science (2017) and an Associate's Degree in Nursing (2019), crediting Wallace's rigorous nursing program and dedicated faculty with giving her the foundation she needed to thrive.

Her time at WCCS prepared her well for the challenges of nursing. She recalls a pivotal moment early in her career when she was the only nurse available to perform a critical procedure—something she had been trained for at Wallace. The confidence and skills she developed at WCCS set her apart, proving her education prepared her for real-world situations.



Like many students, Dr. Logan-Jackson faced challenges along the way. She recalls struggling in a challenging class and feeling discouraged at times. However, her nursing instructors at WCCS provided unwavering support, offering guidance, clarification, and encouragement to help her succeed. Their dedication to student learning reaffirmed the college's commitment to excellence and ensured she had the knowledge and confidence to move forward. The experience strengthened her resilience and reinforced the sense of community and mentorship that defines Wallace's nursing program.

Today, Dr. Logan-Jackson holds a Doctorate in Nursing Practice and is a Nurse Practitioner, providing high-quality healthcare to underserved communities. Her impressive educational journey includes:

- **Associate's Degree – Wallace Community College Selma**
- Bachelor's Degree – Jacksonville State University
- Master's Degree – Samford University
- Doctorate – Chatham University

Throughout her career, she has received numerous awards in the military and civilian sectors, including a prestigious nursing award and scholarship at Samford University. However, for Dr. Logan-Jackson, the most rewarding part of her work is knowing she is making a real difference in the lives of her patients.

Reflecting on her journey, she offers words of encouragement to future nursing students:

"Keep God first, and go for it! Wallace is an amazing school that truly cares about your success."

Dr. Stevonica Logan-Jackson's story is a testament to the transformative power of education, perseverance, and service. Wallace Community College Selma is proud to recognize her accomplishments and celebrate the lasting impact she continues to make in healthcare.

In Memoriam: Dr. James Deas Krudop, PhD

A Legacy of Educational Leadership and Community Service

The Alabama Community College Association mourns the loss of one of its most distinguished members and leaders. Dr. James Deas Krudop, PhD, longtime ACCA Executive Committee member and past president of the association, passed away peacefully on Friday, April 4, 2025, at the age of 78, surrounded by his loving family.

A pillar of educational excellence in Alabama for five decades, Dr. Krudop's unwavering commitment to higher education and community service shaped countless lives and institutions throughout our state. His leadership within the ACCA helped guide and strengthen Alabama's community college system through periods of significant growth and transformation.

Born and raised in Andalusia, Alabama, Dr. Krudop was a man of profound faith and integrity who cherished his family and community. After graduating from Andalusia High School in 1965, he pursued higher education with dedication, earning his Bachelor of Science Degree from Auburn University in 1969, followed by a Master of Arts Degree in 1973 and a Doctor of Philosophy Degree in 1975 from The University of Alabama.

Dr. Krudop's remarkable career in education spanned over fifty years, with forty of those years dedicated to Lurleen B. Wallace Community College, where his visionary leadership and compassionate guidance transformed the institution and positively impacted countless students, families, colleagues, and community members.

His service extended well beyond the classroom and administrative offices. Dr. Krudop was an active and dedicated member of numerous organizations, including First Baptist Church Andalusia, Rotary, Andalusia City Council (serving two terms), Andalusia Chamber of Commerce, Andalusia High School Scholarship Foundation, Andalusia Health Services Board, LBW Foundation, Camp ASCCA, Auburn University College of Education National Alumni Council (ENGAGE), and many state and national professional organizations. In recognition of his exceptional service, the city of Andalusia has honored Dr. Krudop by placing the city flag at half-staff.

Throughout his life, Dr. Krudop strived to help others achieve their full potential, earning numerous accolades that reflect his outstanding contributions to both his community and Alabama's educational system. His legacy within the ACCA will continue to inspire future generations of community college leaders across our state.

Dr. Krudop is survived by his loving wife of 54 years, Hollace Moore Krudop; daughters Dr. Ashley Krudop Powell (Kyle Justin) and Dr. Hadyn Krudop Swecker (Bart Anthony); grandchildren Sara Frances (Francie) Powell, Foster Deas Powell, Adeline (Addie) Lorraine Powell, Clifton James Swecker, and Oliver Johnson Swecker; sister-in-law Lynn G. Krudop and Denise Krudop; brother-in-law Alex R. Moore and nephew Chandler Thomas Moore.

He was preceded in death by his mother and father, Bellaire and Sara Frances Krudop; brothers Richard French and Bellaire Ballard Krudop; grandson, Peanut Powell; and father and mother-in-law Thomas C. and Mavis B. Moore.

The Alabama Community College Association extends its deepest condolences to Dr. Krudop's family and to the many colleagues, students, and friends whose lives he touched. His vision, leadership, and dedication to education will remain an enduring inspiration throughout Alabama's community college system.

