

# ALUMNI ANCHOR

PENSACOLA STATE COLLEGE  
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

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2018

## Pen Air Scholarship Paves Path to Success for Pensacola State Student

After graduating from Pace High School with a diploma and a Pensacola State College associate degree in 2014, Taylor Carter wasn't sure what to do next.

She wanted to continue college and earn a bachelor's degree, but a major hurdle loomed in her way. Carter didn't qualify for federal financial aid, and despite working, she didn't have enough money saved up to attend classes as a full-time student.

However, all that changed in September 2017 when Carter became Pensacola State College's first Pen Air Federal Credit Union Endowed Scholarship recipient. The scholarship enabled Carter to enroll in classes as a full-time student.

"If not for the Pen Air scholarship I would have only been able to take maybe two classes each semester," said Carter, a healthcare management major who is on track to graduate in December 2018.

"Whereas I was able to earn my associate degree while dual-enrolled in high school, it would have taken me four years to earn a bachelor's degree."

In November 2016, Pen Air donated \$100,000 to Pensacola State to coincide with the college's celebration of surpassing more than 100,000 graduates. Pensacola State reached that milestone during the December 2016 graduation.

The gift also named Room 2051 in the Edward M. Chadbourne Library the Pen Air Federal Credit Union Classroom. The digitally-enhanced room is used to host

financial literacy classes and seminars for Pensacola State students, Pen Air members and the community.

"I'm so thankful for the scholarship," said Carter, who works at Baptist Hospital and Texas Roadhouse restaurant.

A very active student while pursuing her associate degree, Carter was president of Phi Theta Kappa and the Outdoors Club, vice president of Psi Beta, the Milton Campus psychology club, and secretary of the Student Government Association.

She also graduated cum laude at 17 and married her husband, Christian Carter, in October 2016.

"Before I received the Pen Air scholarship, I wasn't even sure I would continue to pursue my bachelor's degree. I knew I had to pay for my courses and that taking classes depended on how much I saved," Carter said. "I wanted to be a full-time student and get it done, but even with two jobs, there was no way — until the scholarship."

Stu Ramsey, CEO and president of Pen Air, said the credit union employees were honored to have provided the scholarship to Carter.

"Pen Air is dedicated to being a strong community partner with PSC, and we are committed to ensuring the importance of education and financial literacy



Taylor Carter is Pensacola State's first Pen Air Federal Credit Union Endowed Scholarship recipient.

in our community," he said. "The classroom and the scholarship initiative gives us the opportunity to enhance lives and be trusted financial advisors."

Pensacola State President Ed Meadows said students like Carter and donors like Pen Air Federal

Credit Union change the world.

"When the scholarship was first established, I envisioned a student receiving a Pen Air scholarship, walking into the Pen Air classroom for a course, earning their degree and then changing the world," he said.

## ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS

Pensacola State is Family Affair for York Clan  
PSC Alumna Reaches the Sky and Beyond  
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Langham Shares Recipe for Successful Culinary Grads

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"This is what I see Taylor doing very soon. She was an outstanding student who faced a hurdle and the Pen Air scholarship helped and continues to assist her."

Carter added the scholarship has changed her outlook on the world.

"It proved to me that someone else believed in me. People whom I have never met helped me continue

and complete my education," she said, adding she plans to give back to Pensacola State after graduation.

"Had it not been for the Pen Air scholarship, I would not be reaching my goals. I want to make sure that those who come behind me receive support when they need it. Someone helped me, I will do the same."

*Taylor Carter, center, is all smiles after being awarded a Pen Air Federal Credit Union scholarship. Also pictured is Ted Kirchharr, far left, Patrice Whitten, Dawn Loyed, Myrna Fuller, Stu Ramsey and Ed Meadows.*



## Board Member FOCUS



### MARTHA CAUGHEY

For almost half of a century, Martha Caughey has been at Pensacola State College. After graduating from Woodham High School in 1969, she began working at Pensacola State College as a secretary in the business and behavioral science department.

Caughey earned her associate degree from PSC and moved to student services in the registrar's office. She earned her bachelor's degree in business from the University of West Florida in 1990.

Caughey continued as the college registrar until she retired in 2013, but stayed on to assist her replacement. She now works part time in the registrar's office as a project manager.

Caughey works with Children in Crisis, an organization that attempts to keep siblings together when they're separated from their families for reasons of abuse, neglect or abandonment. She also volunteers with Favor House of Northwest Florida women's shelter as a domestic abuse counselor.

Caughey and her partner Kenny have four children in their blended family. She enjoys reading, gardening, and spending time with her eight grandchildren, who all live in the area.



### STEVE RHODES

Over 30 years ago, Steve Rhodes graduated from Pensacola State College with his associate degree and began a long and successful career with Gulf Power Company.

He assisted his career advancement by using Pensacola State's distance learning option — taking classes online and at the Milton campus. He graduated in 2016 with his bachelor's degree in organizational administration.

Rhodes' community service includes positions on the boards of directors for Santa Rosa Kids' House, Feeding the Gulf Coast Food Bank and the United Way of Santa Rosa County.

He serves as chairman of the board for CareerSource ESCAROSA and First Place Partners and is a former chairman for the Santa Rosa County Chamber of Commerce.

Rhodes enjoys grilling on his Green Egg and fishing when he has the time, but says that spending time with his family is his priority.

Rhodes has two adult daughters. He also has a 4-year-old stepdaughter and he and his wife Kristen are expecting a baby.



### NORRIS MCMAHON

Board member Norris McMahon received his associate degree from Pensacola State College in 1974, then went on to Florida State University and later the University of West Florida, where he earned a bachelor's degree. He also attended the Graduate School of Banking at Louisiana State University and the Synovus Leadership Institute.

McMahon has worked in banking for more than 30 years and is the senior vice president of Summit Bank, where he is responsible for the Escambia County and Santa Rosa County markets. Before that he was senior vice president in commercial banking with Coastal Bank and Trust/Synovus Bank.

He has served as a board member and officer on numerous local non-profit and community groups including the Fiesta of Five Flags, the United Way of Escambia County and the Rotary Club of Pensacola. He also served as a past president and treasurer for The Pensacola Country Club.

McMahon and his wife Donna have three adult children — Norris, Sarah Beth and Emily.



### ERIN WHIBBS

Erin Whibbs, a 2007 graduate of Pensacola State College, remarked, "Staying home was a really good decision. I was really happy here. I was able to work full-time and the faculty and staff here was amazing."

Whibbs earned her bachelor's degree in Interdisciplinary Social Sciences from Florida State University. She returned to Pensacola intent on pursuing a master's degree right away, but instead she found a job teaching history to sixth-graders at Hobbs Middle School.

Active with the Pensacola Fiesta of Five Flags, Whibbs serves on the Fiesta Forces Commandos, the volunteer group that coordinates the events sponsored by the organization. The Pensacola Big Game Fishing Club is another of Whibbs' passions.

Whibbs considers her best catch to be her fiancé Daniel, who led the University of West Florida baseball team to a national championship in 2011 as their star pitcher. "He's from Miami. It was nice to reel him in, but he's going to stay here," Whibbs smiled.

# WE ARE PIRATES, WE ARE PENSACOLA STATE



## BARBARA ANDREWS

Barbara Andrews, a new PSC Alumni Association member, is the admissions and information specialist at the Milton campus.

For a while, she worked as a cosmetologist. Then in 1999 she enrolled at PSC and earned an associate degree in hospitality tourism.

She started working at the College in 2002 as a temporary employee and became full-time in October 2017, after learning of a position on the Milton campus.

"I just kind of fell into it but love working at PSC," Andrews said.



## JENNIFER HILL-FARON

"It has always been my goal to work at a state college," said Jennifer Hill-Faron, director of Student Services at PSC's Milton campus.

A high school dual-enrollment student, Hill-Faron first came to the Milton campus in 2004. She earned her associate degree in 2006.

A first-generation college student, Hill-Faron has two bachelor's degrees from Florida State University, two master's degrees from Auburn University and is working on her doctorate at Auburn.

She joined PSC in February.



## LINDSEY GARNER

As the executive assistant to the PSC Alumni Affairs office, Lindsey Garner is carving out a new path in her life.

Garner holds an associate degree in early childhood education. She graduated in December from PSC with a bachelor's degree in organizational administration and obtained a certificate in project management.

She owes her success to her husband Bill and adult stepchildren Cheyanne, Dakota and Conway.



## ROB GREGG

Rob Gregg served in the U.S. Navy for 24 years, retiring as a lead chief petty officer.

As director of the Veteran's Upward Bound (VUB) at Pensacola State, he and his staff prepare eligible veterans to enter and successfully complete college.

Gregg also was PSC's coordinator of Institutional Research for seven years.

He received a bachelor's from Excelsior College, a master's from Capella University and is pursuing a doctorate. He also earned his teaching certification at PSC.



## EUGENIO HERNANDEZ

When Eugenio Hernandez first came to PSC, he only wanted to be close to his wife, Ashley, while earning a degree.

Now an analyst in the Institutional Research Department, Hernandez reviews data to provide "big picture" answers utilized by college leadership.

He earned his associate degree from PSC in 2015, and transferred to Florida State University where he earned a bachelor's degree in statistics in December.



## MELISSA JERNIGAN

As a PSC student, Melissa Jernigan studied at Cambridge University as part of the PSC Robinson Honors Program.

That journey stuck with Jernigan, who is now a senior executive assistant in the president's office.

"I had an incredible experience as a PSC student and when the opportunity to work here presented itself, I jumped on it," said Jernigan, who earned an associate degree from PSC in 2008.

Jernigan also earned a B.A. in 2011 from Armstrong Atlantic State University.



## JASON KING

If you have a problem with the internet or your computer, Jason King can help.

King, Pensacola State's coordinator of internet systems, has worked at the College since 1999. The "computer geek" has been webmaster, internet systems analyst and senior internet systems analyst.

He earned associate degrees from PSC and Okaloosa-Walton Community College, along with a B.S. from UWF.

He also proudly served in the U.S. Coast Guard for five years.



## SARAH LEWIS

Sarah Lewis truly believes "You can get there from here!"

After joining PSC in 2003, Lewis earned A.A. and B.S. degrees from the College and a master's from Troy State.

"I'm here because I love it and believe in everything this institution stands for," said Lewis, who has worked on the Warrington and Pensacola campuses.

"Judy Floyd was my mentor, encourager and pushed me to the next level when I was working on my degrees. Dr. (Erin) Spicer was instrumental in me pursuing my graduate degrees."



## BERT MERRITT

Bert Merritt has been a fixture at PSC since the 1980s — but the executive director of Information Technology Services was first a student here.

After graduating high school, Merritt came to PSC and discovered computer science. He transferred to UWF in 1982 for his B.S.

"When I came back to PSC in 1986 as a computer programmer, we had a staff of about 12 people," Merritt recalled. "Today, my staff and I oversee six divisions at the college, and there are about 50 employees."



## CAROL QUINN

When asked when she will retire, Carol Quinn is quick to respond, "Not today!"

Quinn, the administrative support specialist for the vice president of business affairs, came to PSC in 1982 as an administrative clerk. She was promoted to an assistant to the finance manager and worked as a secretary for several administrators.

"I have been blessed to work all over," recalled Quinn, who retired in 2010 but came back to PSC.

She earned an associate degree from PSC in 1995.

# GREAT EDUCATION GREAT LEADERSHIP



## Jerry Maygarden, Pensacola Mayor 1991-1994

As a child, Jerry Maygarden was taught to give back.

"My father (Louis Maygarden) encouraged us to be active and participate in our community — through sweat equity and not just by paying taxes," said Maygarden, a former state legislator, Pensacola mayor and city councilman and 1972 PSC graduate.

And participate the younger Maygarden did — by volunteering with community organizations which eventually led him to public office. Along with serving as mayor

from 1991-94 and city councilman from 1985-91, he was elected to the District 2 seat in the Florida House of Representatives for four terms — 1994-02, and was past president of the PSC Alumni Association.

Now a successful businessman, he said PSC gave him a second chance.

"After high school, I came to PSC, but I did not do very well. So I joined the Navy and did a tour in Vietnam. It was while I was in the military that I decided to go back to college," he said. "I wrote a PSC counselor, Mr. (James) Hurt, and he helped me."

Today, Maygarden advises current Pensacola State students and alumni to "give back" and help others.

"Pensacola needs people willing to step into roles of leadership," said Maygarden who also earned bachelor's and master's degrees from University of West Florida in 1974 and 1978, respectively. Recently, he also received an honorary doctorate from UWF.

Maygarden and his wife, Rhonda, have two children and two granddaughters.



## Wesley Meiss, Current Milton Mayor

Wesley Meiss, the current mayor of Milton, credits Pensacola State College with preparing him to become a leader.

"I got involved in my community, served on a few boards like the Santa Rosa County Chamber of Commerce and was a charter member of the Santa Rosa Young Professionals," said Meiss, a 2005 PSC graduate and UWF graduate.

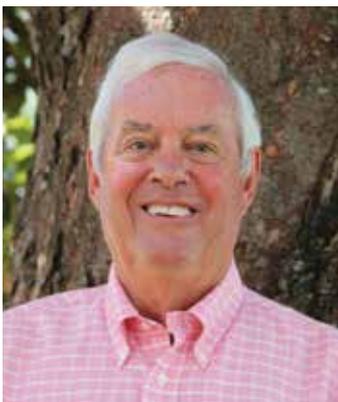
In 2012, that interest led Meiss to run for the Milton City Council, and in 2014, he successfully ran for mayor.

"There was no grand plan," said Meiss of his political career. "I just love Milton and care about my community. I really love what I do and care about the future of my hometown and the citizens who live here."

Even though he has served as mayor and councilman, Meiss says he has no intention of becoming a career politician.

"I plan to give it everything I have and when it's time, I will walk away," said Meiss, who also teaches American History at Hobbs Middle School in Milton.

Meiss and his wife, Lauren, have one son.



## Mike Wiggins, Pensacola Mayor 2008-2010

Pensacola State College was not only a "great place to start" but the "only place to start" for former Pensacola Mayor Mike Wiggins.

"After high school I knew I would attend college," said Wiggins, a first-generation college student who graduated from Pensacola High School in 1963.

"I chose PSC because it was affordable, had a great reputation and allowed me to seamlessly transfer to Florida State."

Wiggins' — who served as

mayor from 2008 to 2010 — interest in public service began in the early 1990s while he was involved in the re-election campaign of then District 3 Representative Buzz Richie. Later, he was appointed to an at-large seat on the Pensacola City Council — a post he served in from 1996-2009.

"Once I got onto the city council, I found it to be one of the most satisfying things I've ever done. Local government is best government because citizens have

the opportunity to speak with their representatives one-on-one," he said.

Wiggins, who also served in the U.S. Navy, urges young people to follow their dreams, but also support their community and college.

"Don't allow anyone to tell you that you can't do it. Start at Pensacola State, get involved in student activities, become active in your community," he said.

Wiggins and his wife, Mary Ellen, a retired educator, have four children and 10 grandchildren.



## Beverly Zimmern, Gulf Breeze Mayor 2009-2014

Trailblazer, pioneer, groundbreaker are only a few of the words that describe Beverly Zimmern.

In 2009, the longtime Gulf Breeze resident made history when she became the city's first female mayor after serving on the city council for 10 years. As mayor for five years and with 15 years of elected public service, Zimmern stepped down in 2014.

Giving back was always part of the Pensacola State College and University of West Florida alumna's life. Zimmern dedicated herself to serving various areas of education, health care and municipal issues. She was elected "Volunteer of the Year" twice.

Zimmern also served on the Northwest Florida Regional Transportation Planning

Organization and the Fairpoint Regional Utility Boards. And she served on numerous school and city boards, including the Capital Trust Agency and PSC Foundation.

Before pursuing public office, Zimmern worked in the health care arena as a nurse and site manager at Live Oak Medical.

She is married to Dr. Bill Zimmern. They have two sons.



**Bill Clover**

The Pensacola State Family is mourning the loss of a beloved College and community icon.

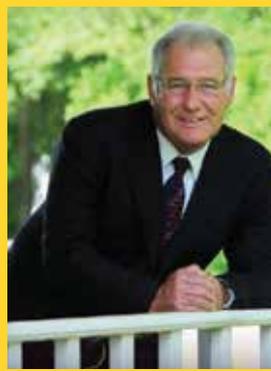
Bill Clover, the College's visual arts professor who

is known far and wide for his pottery, passed away May 7. A Los Angeles native, Clover arrived at Pensacola State in 1966 — to work only a few years. Instead, he spent more than 52 years — becoming the longest-serving faculty member.

Working under five Pensacola State presidents — T. Felton Harrison, Horace “Ed” Hartsell, Charles A. Atwell, G. Thomas Delaino and currently, Ed Meadows, he educated and influenced scores of students.

Clover volunteered at Manna Food Pantries for more than a decade — helping the organization generate nearly \$300,000 during the Pick A Bowl/Fill A Bowl fundraisers.

“In addition to throwing most of the bowls for the event during its history, Bill Clover exemplified compassion and understanding for others by using his time and talents to benefit the hungry,” said DeDe Flounlacker, Manna’s executive director.



**Greg Evers**

In 2017, the Pensacola State College family lost one of its fiercest allies — former Florida lawmaker Greg Evers.

Evers, 62, died following an Aug. 21 automobile accident in Okaloosa County. Born in Milton, Evers grew up on his family’s farm and attended Pensacola State College after high school.

He served in the Florida House of Representatives from 2000 to 2010, before being elected to the Florida State Senate from 2010 to 2016.

Named Florida Forestry Association Legislator of the Year in 2006, Evers also was selected the Florida Association of Agricultural Educators Legislator of the Year in 2005 and received the Florida Farm Bureau Outstanding Legislator Award in 2004.

**PSC is Part of York Family’s Balance**

For Pensacola attorney Lisa York, life is all about balance. And Pensacola State College has been at the center of that balance for much of her life.

After she graduated high school, there was no question about York’s next step. She went to Pensacola State College.

“It’s just what you did,” she said. “All of my friends went to PSC.”

York said the advice she received encouraging her to attend PSC was sound.

“I definitely felt like I eased into college life at PSC,” York noted. She explained that large universities can lead a student to feel overwhelmed and lost in the crowd, but felt PSC offered her a good balance of responsibility and freedom.

It’s also where York first laid eyes on her future husband, Johnny. York recalled, “We were at PSC at the same time and I remember seeing him and thinking, ‘He’s so good-looking!’”

York graduated from PSC in 1981, then attended Florida State University, where she graduated with a bachelor’s degree in political science in 1983.

It was 1985 before York and her husband finally went out on their first date. They were married three years later.

When it was time for her daughter, Caroline, to attend college, York wanted her to find her own balance at Pensacola State.

“We gave her the same advice that we’d been given: Take a few classes and get a better idea of what interests you while you’re at home and it’s not so expensive,” York said.

Caroline York followed in her mother’s footsteps all the way to Tallahassee and graduated from FSU in 2016. She interned in Gov. Rick Scott’s office while she was in school and went to work full-time as a legislative analyst a few months after graduation.

“Caroline’s working on the 17th floor of the capitol building in Tallahassee with a window and a shared assistant and I’m just so proud I can’t stand it,” York beamed.

York’s son William also attended Pensacola State and graduated in 2017 from the Program for Adult Learning and Support (PALS).

“It’s a great program to give challenged young adults the opportunity to see what it’s like to be a college student,” York said.

“So that’s all four of us ... oh, and my mom,” York divulged. Her mother, Carolyn Kay Walters, attended PSC in the 1960’s.

York worked for several years as a paralegal, but as her thirties neared their end, she felt like there should be more.

“I thought, ‘I don’t want to go to my grave without taking the LSAT...’ so I took it and I got a pretty good score and I thought, ‘Well, I don’t want to go to my grave without seeing if I can get into to law school,’” she said.

She applied to Loyola University in New Orleans.

“I got in and then I was like, ‘Honey, we need to have a talk,’” York said, adding she had her husband’s full support.

She graduated from Loyola in 2003 and was admitted to the Florida Bar Association in September of that year. She focuses on family law in her private practice.

To add a little balance to her life, York also recently completed her certification as a yoga instructor.

“Yoga is a way of teaching about just being in the present moment ... You can’t change what’s happened in the past and worrying about the future isn’t going to do you any good. Just sit and breathe and focus on the present,” she explained.

York and her family balance the demands of their busy lives by attending FSU football games together. And Pensacola State remains an important part of her work/life balance.

“I still get-together with people I met at PSC,” she recalled. “We’re still friends ... lifelong friends.”

She is a new member of the PSC Alumni Association.



*Pictured are Pensacola State College alumni Lisa York, from left, her husband, Johnny, son, William and daughter, Caroline. Each family member has attended and graduated from Pensacola State College. William is a 2017 graduate of the College’s PALS program.*

**AT A GLANCE**

**Name:** Lisa York

**Education:** Pensacola State College, associate degree; Florida State University, bachelor’s degree; National Center for Paralegal Training in Atlanta; Loyola University New Orleans College of Law, juris doctorate; Yoga Alliance, registered yoga teacher

**Community Involvement:** Pensacola Civitan Club, Pensacola Downtown Rotary Club, Junior League of Pensacola

**Family:** Husband Johnny, daughter Caroline, son William

# PIRATE STORYTELLERS

Astronauts, educators, politicians and even a few wordsmiths have received their early education at Pensacola State College. These alumni have chronicled their life stories, personal struggles and quirky sense of humor in the pages of books and novels. Take a few minutes to meet a few of these writers.



Stopp



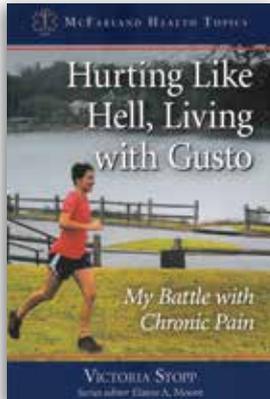
Davis



Pflazer



King



## Victoria Stopp

**“Hurting Like Hell, Living with Gusto – My Battle with Chronic Pain”**

**Education:** 2001, bachelor’s degree, Agnes Scott College; 2005 master’s degree, Goucher College; 2007 EMT certification, Pensacola State College; and 2011 associate of applied science in physical therapist assistant, Pensacola State College

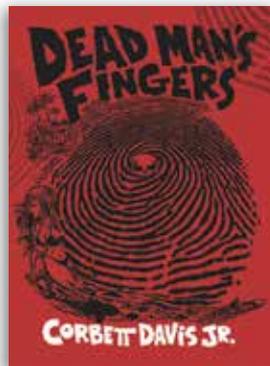
**Employment:** Writer for *Backpacker* magazine; outpatient physical therapist assistant at Pensacola Spinal Rehabilitation Center; and adjunct instructor at Pensacola State. Stopp’s writing also has appeared in various newspapers, magazines, anthologies and on several websites.

**Awards:** 2018 Florida Authors and Publishers Association Health and Fitness Award recipient, and 2017 Wildacres Residency Program participant

**Synopsis:** Published in November 2017 by McFarland & Company, “Hurting Like Hell, Living with Gusto” shares Victoria Stopp’s battle with chronic pain. Reflecting on experiences as a patient and health care professional, Stopp describes her transition from a healthy active lifestyle to years of learning to live with debilitating pain.

The main catalyst behind “Hurting Like Hell, Living with Gusto,” Stopp said was an interview with *Runners’ World* magazine.

“After they interviewed me a few years ago, I realized the audience for my story was bigger than I first thought. So many people deal with chronic pain, and with the opioid crisis front-and-center in the U.S., my story is timely. I’ve kept a blog, *fibromyalgiaathlete.com*, for years, and that blog was the foundation for the book.”



## Corbett Davis Jr.

**“Dead Man’s Fingers”**

**Education:** Attended Florida State University, PSC and the University of West Florida

**Employment:** Jewelry maker, Jewelers Trade Shop, self-taught chef and saltwater fly fisherman

**Synopsis:** Published in October 2017 by MindStir Media, “Dead Man’s Fingers” is the third in Davis’ series of “Dead” novels which he introduced about a decade ago with “The Deadly Reef” which was followed by “Dead Low.”

Set in the Florida Keys, “Dead Man’s Fingers” mixes the region’s natural beauty with craziness, mystery, romance, suspense and friendship. Readers become reacquainted with Powell Taylor and his best friend, Capt. Limbo, who are dealing with the unusual death of Powell’s beloved Dawn Landry. The novel even features local philanthropist and businessman Charlie Switzer, a PSC alumnus.



## Edwin Stewart Pflazer

**“Cosmic Joker”**

**Education:** 2000, associate degree, Pensacola State College; bachelor’s degree, Belmont University; and master’s degree, Tennessee State University

**Synopsis:** Blessed with an extraordinary affinity for analogy, Edwin Stewart Pflazer’s “Cosmic Joker” asks the question, “Does God have a sense of humor?”

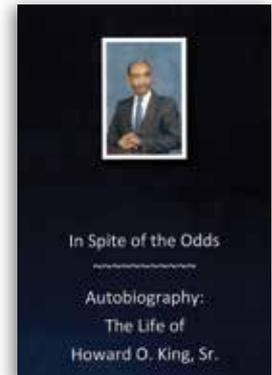
In his very own quirky fashion, Pflazer inspires readers to question their own human nature — based on Darwin’s “survival of the fittest” premise.

Published by electio Publishing in 2016, Pflazer, a Pensacola native, admitted he didn’t write “the book to make money.”

“My first effort, ‘Cosmic Joker,’ has won me a few friends and more than a little notoriety from readers who think I am insane,” said Pflazer, who prefers to be called Stewart. “Half of the proceeds from the book go to animal welfare charities, so even if readers think I’m mad, it’s still a win-win.”

Pflazer credits PSC with teaching him the fundamentals of writing, and remembers English and Communications professor, Todd Neuman, as an early mentor.

An amateur musician and an animal rights enthusiast, Pflazer lives in Lubbock, Texas, with Shiloh, a rescue cat who adopted him as a kitten.



## Howard O. King Sr.

**“In Spite of the Odds – Autobiography: The Life of Howard O. King, Sr.”**

**Education:** 1954, associate degree, Booker T. Washington Junior College; 1956 bachelor’s degree, Florida A&M University

**Employment:** Served in U.S. Navy during World War II, worked at NAS Pensacola, retired (1981) deputy director in the Office for Civil Rights, Washington, D.C.

**Synopsis:** At age 92, Howard O. King Sr., has experienced nearly a century of America’s most challenging times and history. In his self-published autobiography, “In Spite of the Odds,” King recounts how he overcame insurmountable odds through his journey from a high school dropout to graduating summa cum laude from Florida A&M University, and beyond.

Along the way, King served in the military during World War II and worked at NAS Pensacola while obtaining his college degrees. As his career advanced, King held numerous leadership positions and worked to help others receive employment and fair treatment in the workplace.

In 1981, the Pensacola native retired from his position as deputy director of the Office for Civil Rights in Washington, D.C.

A humble man, King, a Pensacola native, remains devoted to his community and country and strives to bring about positive change.

# WHERE IS THAT PIRATE NOW?

## Pensacola State College Alumna, Shelley Jean Ovsak, Reaches for the Sky and Beyond

Shelley Jean Ovsak is a self-made woman who has lived her life to the fullest by taking advantage of the opportunities that have come her way ... and has done so on her own terms.

After her 1970 graduation from the Grace Downs Model and Air Career School, the New York native decided to enlist in the U.S. Navy. She served at Naval Air Station Pensacola in the aircraft intermediate maintenance department. While there, Ovsak earned the title of Miss Navy Pensacola.

Being in the Navy didn't just enhance her modeling and air career, "I credit the Navy with starting my education at PSC," Ovsak said.

During her last year of naval service, Ovsak took advantage of the fact that the duty driver for the base motor pool provided free rides to and from Pensacola State College.

She also took full advantage of the extracurricular activities PSC offered. She was a chaplain for Delta Chi Omega sorority, secretary of the Veterans Club and a Pirate's Mate for the student newspaper, the Corsair. She graduated with her associate degree in 1974.

Ovsak went on to University of West Florida, where she earned a bachelor's degree in 1976 and master's degree in 1977. She also continued participating in pageants and worked as a freelance model.

**“ I CREDIT THE NAVY WITH STARTING MY EDUCATION AT PSC.”**

— Shelley Jean Ovsak

Ovsak couldn't keep her feet on the ground, though. In 1979 she joined the U.S. Air Force and became a flight attendant on Air Force Two, which was based at Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland. Her passengers included vice presidents, first ladies, members of Congress, dignitaries and foreign heads of state.

In 1981, she earned a second master's degree from Central

Michigan University's Regional Center in Washington, D.C.

Her Air Force service continued on through Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm, where she was stationed in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. In 1991, Ovsak was a guest of honor at the Operation Welcome Home Parade in New York City.

"You know how New Yorkers love a parade," declared Ovsak, who was joined by family and friends for the ticker tape celebration. "This parade lasted eight hours. It was huge!"

Ovsak continued her service in the Air Force until she was honorably discharged in 1996, but the sky called again. In 1999, she joined Northwest Airlines as a flight attendant for what later became Delta Connections. In 2013, she officially retired from Delta.

The term "retirement" should be considered loosely when thinking of Ovsak, who admits, "There is a lot of stuff that keeps me busy."

She is a Lifetime Charter Member of the PSC Alumni Association, has a multitude of community affiliations and even volunteers as a poll worker.

She has continually worked as a freelance model off and on

throughout the course of her life, and served as a certified pageant judge for the Miss New York/America Pageant.

"Because of all of my modeling experience and beauty accolades, I got selected by 'Who's Who in Pageantry' — along with three former Miss Americas, which was



Shelley Jean Ovsak

really spectacular," said Ovsak, who was featured in the association's 2014 edition.

What could possibly top all of that? Ovsak answered, "In 2017, I got my Doctor of Business Administration degree from California Coast University. Of all the degrees I've had, I never was able to attend any of my graduation ceremonies because of one reason or another. So when I got my doctorate, I decided to go all the way out to California."

After that, of course, she went to Disneyland.

Ovsak maintains the greatest achievement of her life is being totally debt-free.

"I own my home outright, I have no credit card debt, no college loans and no medical bills," Ovsak said.

Since her days at PSC, Ovsak has had a lifetime of adventures and has served her

country and her community with honor. The sky was never the limit for Shelley Jean Ovsak.



### AT A GLANCE

**Name:** Shelley Jean Ovsak

**Pensacola State Connection:**

1974 graduate of Pensacola State College, PSC Alumni Association Lifetime Charter Member

**Education:** Grace Downs Model and Air Career School, diploma (modeling, air career and airline executive/secretarial); Pensacola State College, associate degree; University of West Florida, bachelor and master degrees; Central Michigan University, master; and California Coast University, doctorate.

**Pageantry/Honors/Awards:**

Miss Navy Pensacola, Miss Pensacola Beach (Miss Photogenic), Pirate's Mate (PSC Corsair), Gosport Girl (Pensacola NAS Gosport newspaper), Falstaff Amateur Golf Classic Golden Girl, Model for Blue Angels Navy Flight Demonstration Team, Grace Downs Class Representative to Swedish delegation of the United Nations, Who's Who Among Students in American Colleges and Universities, Who's Who in Pageantry, Coach and Athlete Co-ed of the Month (UWF), Glamour magazine's Top 10 College Women, U.S. Navy Admiral's Honor Guard, lifetime member of the Lighthouse Association at NAS Pensacola, member of the U.S. Navy League and a member of the Naval Aviation Museum Foundation Hall of Honor.

Share your story  
Update your profile at  
[alumni.pensacolastate.edu](http://alumni.pensacolastate.edu)

# PENSACOLA STATE UNVEILS NEW CHARLES W. LAMAR STUDIO

## Lamar, Reilly and Switzer Families Provide Seed Money for State-of-the-Art Studio

A standing-room only crowd turned out for the ribbon cutting and grand opening celebration of Pensacola State College's Charles W. Lamar Studio this past February.

Located adjacent to the Anna Lamar Switzer Center for Visual Arts, the 11,000-square-foot studio was made possible by a \$1 million gift from the Lamar, Reilly and Switzer families in 2014. The donation served as seed money for the construction of the \$3 million facility which was completed in 2017.

Members of the Lamar, Reilly and Switzer families, Pensacola State administrators, faculty and staff as well as friends and supporters throughout the community were among the attendees at the gala.

"Pensacola State is extremely fortunate to have the support of the Lamar, Reilly and Switzer families. The visions of these families and financial commitments have helped Pensacola State make this long-sought-after facility a reality," said College President Ed Meadows.

"Also, the Charles W. Lamar Studio is able to attract and exhibit more national artists — which is not only beneficial to Pensacola State and our students but the entire community."

**“ CHARLES W. LAMAR SR.  
FOSTERED A GREAT LOVE  
FOR THE ARTS AND WAS A FAITHFUL  
SUPPORTER AND PATRON.”**

— Bobby Switzer

Charles W. Lamar Sr. — the facility's namesake — first came to Pensacola in 1902 and eventually founded Lamar Advertising Co. According to Bobby Switzer, Lamar was devoted to the arts.

"He fostered a great love for the arts and was a faithful supporter and patron. In fact, his daughter, Anna, was an artist and sort of a scholar," Switzer said.

We truly wanted to honor him, and are so pleased the studio bears his namesake. Our families could

not have asked for a more fitting tribute to the Lamar name than this facility — housed in the Anna Lamar Switzer Center for Visual Arts."

The studio is not the only thing that bears the Lamar name in this area. Headquartered in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, the multinational company still has offices in Pensacola and a room in the Pensacola Museum of Art is named in honor of Charles W. Lamar.

The seed money for the Charles W. Lamar Studio is not the first gift the College has received from the Lamar, Reilly and Switzer families. In 1998, the families pledged three scholarship endowments, and Lamar Advertising Co. currently provides internships and employment opportunities to Pensacola State students. The families have contributed more than \$4 million in funding for facility, program and faculty enhancements and student scholarships to Pensacola State.

The giving does not end there. Members of the Lamar, Reilly and Switzer families also have served on the College's Board of Trustees and the Foundation's Board of Governors and are lifetime members of the Alumni Association.

Pensacola State faculty and students are excited the studio has opened. Along with expanding the facility's gallery and instructional capabilities, the new studio positions the visual arts department to offer more baccalaureate programs.

Thus far, the works of artist Michael Pearce have graced the studio walls. Pearce's "The Secret Painting" was the gallery's opening exhibit — the array of figurative oil paintings was on display Feb. 19 through May 18.

For the 2018-19 season, "Broken Time: Sculpture by Martin Payton," will be displayed in the studio. The exhibition was organized in conjunction with the Louisiana State University Museum of Art.

"The artwork focuses on Payton's recent work — sculptures created in the last 20 years represent his



most sophisticated improvised compositions," said Vivian Spencer, director of the College's Switzer Gallery and Lamar Studio.

She added the Lamar, Reilly and Switzer families' generosity has allowed Pensacola State's Switzer Center for Visual Arts to become the preeminent teaching museum and cultural destination in Northwest Florida.

"The Charles W. Lamar facility expands the opportunity to engage our students and the public with excellent exhibitions of contemporary art from today's noteworthy artists," she noted.

And since the Anna Lamar Switzer Center was constructed in 1970, enrollment in the Pensacola State's visual arts program has grown tremendously, according to Krist Lien, department head of the College's Visual Arts Department.

"The first gift of the Switzer, Lamar and Reilly families was given in 1998, with the renovation being completed in 2000," he explained.



"Since 2000, the number of arts majors here has increased 142 percent. We currently have between 350 to 400 arts majors. To put it in perspective, that is more than double what the University of Alabama has. A lot of people don't realize things like that."

Photos by John Royal Photography



Bobby Switzer and John Switzer cut the ribbon at the Feb. 20 opening of the Charles W. Lamar Studio with members of the Lamar, Reilly and Switzer families and college leadership.



PSC Board of Trustee Members Patrick Dawson, Margie Moore, Wendell E. Smith, Carol Carlan, Ed Moore, Herb Woll and Chip Simmons



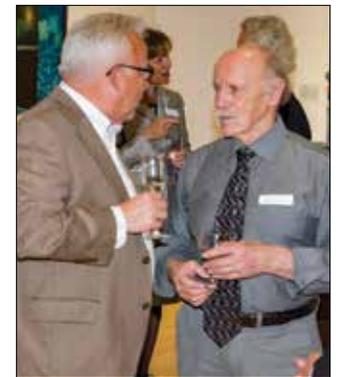
PSC alumnus and Foundation Board of Governors President Doug Bates



Philip Switzer, Charlie Switzer and grandchild, William Switzer



Kim and Krist Lien, Visual Arts Department Head



Bobby Switzer and Allan Peterson



Bill Clover, Gean Ann Emond and Debbie Douma



Herb and Ann Woll



Kevin Reilly and Charlie Switzer



Charles Lamar and PSC President Ed Meadows



Bobby Switzer, Charlie Switzer and Patrice Whitten

#### IF YOU GO

The Charles W. Lamar Studio is open 8 a.m.—9 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 8 a.m.—4 p.m. Friday. Open to the public, admission is free and tours are available with prior arrangements.

#### ONGOING EXHIBIT

“Broken Time: Sculpture By Martin Payton”  
Through Nov. 30

#### UPCOMING EXHIBIT

“Women of Fire” Oct. 29—Dec. 7  
Corrina Sephora, blacksmith  
Hillary Heckard, glassblower  
Rachel Wright, mixed media glass artist  
Meredith Hartsfield, torch worked glass

# PIRATES OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

## Success is in the Wyrosdick Family Genes

“Go here, get there’ is not something you’re striving to be, it’s something you already are. It’s in your DNA,” said Santa Rosa County School District Superintendent Tim Wyrosdick.

It took his Pensacola State College instructors to convince him of that, though.

The 1980 Pace High School graduate was attending Mississippi College in Clinton, Mississippi, on a football scholarship when an injury ended his athletic career. He returned to Pensacola feeling dejected and directionless.

“I was really a lost soul ... I didn’t know what I wanted to do or how I wanted to do it,” he admitted.

In September 1981, he enrolled in PSC because it was close to home and affordable. He credits his PSC instructors with helping him find his motivation, which, it turns out, was his own DNA.

“I remember Dr. (Keitz) Haburay, my biology teacher,” recalled Wyrosdick. “He said, after my first test, ‘You’re not your brother, are you?’”

Wyrosdick’s older brother, Craig, graduated as the valedictorian of his class at Pace High and PSC.

Wyrosdick said he responded to his professor, “Let me be real clear, Dr. Haburay, I’m not going to work that hard.”

fishing all night.

Pfeiffer told him, “I don’t expect you to be your brother, but I do expect you to try. I don’t see you trying.”

Angry at first, Wyrosdick began to consider the meaning behind her words.

“It was about preparation — it wasn’t going to be given to me,” he said. “What she taught me was more meaningful than the algebra.”

Another instructor’s lesson was on-target as well.

“Dr. (James) Atkinson was my archery teacher. He was a good teacher but he was a great mentor,” Wyrosdick said.

Atkinson’s instruction mimicked what his other professors had imparted. However, the delivery was different.

“You can shoot this bow pretty well, but you can be better,” quoted Wyrosdick. “He challenged me to be a better marksman by practicing, which really articulated into work.”

The rules of archery — knowing the area, knowing where the arrow is going, knowing the hazards — applied to Wyrosdick’s life.

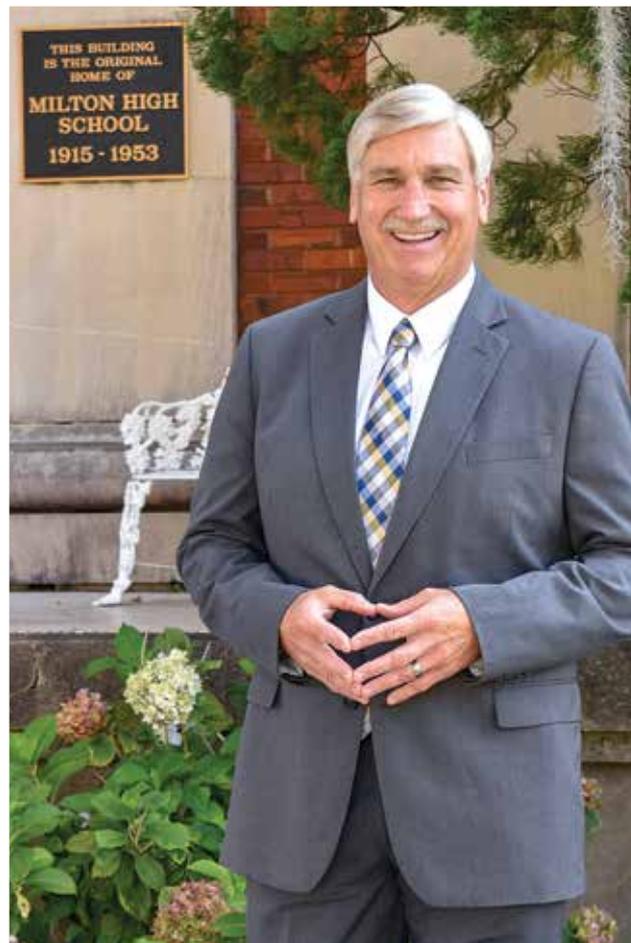
“You have to know and be able to predict what’s going to happen when you take action. Wow, that’s powerful stuff. From an archery teacher, I learned a life lesson at a time when I was really trying to figure out what I wanted to do,” he said.

“Then there’s the aspect of having to follow my brother ...”

Wyrosdick said his genetic drive kicked in, and he went on to earn a bachelor’s degree and master’s degree at the University of West Florida. Meanwhile, Craig moved on to Florida State University,

took advantage of the Junior Honors Medical Program at University of Florida, which allowed him to complete his last year of undergraduate work concurrently with his first year of medical school. He graduated third in his class from UF College of Medicine.

“It (PSC) was a really good core development for both of us in the realm of preparing for advancement in secondary education and careers,” Wyrosdick said. “He (Craig) said to me that the math/



Tim Wyrosdick

**“ FROM AN ARCHERY TEACHER, I LEARNED A LIFE LESSON AT A TIME WHEN I WAS REALLY TRYING TO FIGURE OUT WHAT I WANTED TO DO.”**

— Tim Wyrosdick

Wyrosdick earned a “solid B” in biology, and he remembers Haburay’s jokes.

“He said, ‘Learning is a lot like eating. You ingest, and when test time comes, you regurgitate it. A lot of you are having dry heaves!’” laughed Wyrosdick. “That was me!”

It seemed that everywhere Wyrosdick went, he was in his brother’s shadow. Mary Pfeiffer, his algebra instructor, asked to see him after he showed up late for class. Wyrosdick confessed he had been

science background he walked out of with from PSC is exemplary. It provided him with the basis to move into med school with ease.”

Dr. Craig Wyrosdick operated a successful general family practice and later used his talents to serve patients at the Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System.

Tim Wyrosdick has served the students of Santa Rosa County for over 30 years, first as a teacher.

The Wyrosdicks’ younger brother, Paul, is also a PSC alumnus and works for Gulf Power Co.

“This is a person who hated school ... he went a different pathway and is very successful,” Wyrosdick said, who refers to the College as a “gift” in his community.

“We have two campuses in Santa Rosa County. We fill up the South Santa Rosa Center with students from Navarre and Gulf Breeze. We have thousands of hours of dual enrollment there, and at the Milton campus as well,” he said.

The Wyrosdick brothers certainly carry a strong work ethic.

“Any success you can attribute to the three of us is centered on what our parents taught us and the influences we had growing up,” he said. “In my book, PSC was exactly what I needed at that time in my life and it bridged me to a better education.”

### AT A GLANCE

**Name:** Tim Wyrosdick

**Education:** Pensacola State College, associate degree; University of West Florida, bachelor’s and master’s degrees. Brothers, Craig, and Paul, also PSC graduates

**Family:** Wife, Vanessa; two children, Jared (married to Rebekah) and McKenna.

# FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

## Chef Langham Finds Recipe for Success at Pensacola State College

In 1984, Jimmie Langham discovered he had a talent for cooking. It was aboard a U.S. Navy vessel and though, Langham peeled and chopped vegetables, he enjoyed working in the galley.

Today the Pensacola State instructor shares what he learned over a 20-plus year military career and as a college student with the next generation of culinary arts professionals.

"When I joined the Navy in 1984, everyone had to work 90 days as a food service attendant, I just liked the culinary profession so much that it became my job," said Langham, an assistant professor of Applied Technology and Professional Services.

"I wasn't a natural cook. I had a lot to learn and it started out with me doing the menial jobs — peeling 100 pounds of potatoes and chopping 50 pounds of onions for a single meal— just like everyone else."

After retiring from the military in 2007, Langham didn't dive right into a culinary career. For a few years, he tried the "retirement thing" but went to work for DirecTV and Workforce ESCAROSA. Eventually, he followed his heart and enrolled in Pensacola State's culinary arts program.

"I started at Pensacola State in January 2013 after earning my associate and bachelor's degrees from the College," Langham remembered. "As I was graduating, Chef Travis Herr was retiring and I was blessed to be hired

Zulmarie Medina, a 2016 graduate, who now works at Gulf Breeze Recovery," Langham said.

Medina, a sous chef, praised Langham, adding Pensacola State readied her for the real world.

"Chef Langham has been one of the best teachers I have ever had — he was always helpful to everyone, even in a class filled with students," said Medina who now prepares breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks for up to 32 Gulf Breeze Recovery clients and 15 employees.

"You not only learn the basic skills at PSC but also how to run an entire kitchen, make up a menu, cater to different palates and dietary restrictions — all while maintaining and leading in a demanding environment. I even place supply orders from food vendors like Sysco. I wouldn't have been able to do that without

the quality education I received at Pensacola State."

Langham described Medina as a perfect culinary arts student — a self-starter who is able to deal with stress and handle the momentum of a busy kitchen.

"Zulmarie and so many of our other graduates are the products

of the College's world-class faculty and facilities that are constantly being upgraded," he said. "And when you couple those qualities with affordability, our program is hard to beat. The College offers associate and bachelor degree programs that are very affordable — the two-year culinary associate degree program is less than \$10,000."

Langham and his wife, Katherine, have been married 33 years and have two children. Christopher, 31, is a U.S. Navy recruiter and stationed in Mobile, while Samantha, 28, earned a degree in cyber forensics from Pensacola State.



Jimmie Langham

**“CHEF LANGHAM HAS BEEN ONE OF THE BEST TEACHERS I HAVE EVER HAD — HE WAS ALWAYS HELPFUL TO EVERYONE, EVEN IN A CLASS FILLED WITH STUDENTS.”**

— Zulmarie Medina, 2016 Culinary Arts graduate

for the Program Coordinator position. That's how my career began at the College."

Langham says he approaches teaching — just as he was trained in the military.

"I learned how to cook everything from scratch which helped me master the basics. That's how we begin educating our culinary arts students, and it goes from there," he said. "We get our students ready so they are more than prepared to work in the hospitality industry. We expose them to both sides of the industry — the service side and food preparation aspects of the culinary arts profession."

Many of his students already have career opportunities waiting for them after graduation.

"One of our 2014 graduates, Shawney Severns, is an executive chef at Fin and Pearl restaurant in Nashville. And then there's

### AT A GLANCE

**Name:** Jimmie David Langham

**Education:** Pensacola State College, associate and bachelor's degrees

**Family:** Wife, Katherine; two children, Christopher and Samantha; one grandson



Pensacola State Culinary Arts instructor Jimmie Langham advises a student during a class session.

# A CONVERSATION WITH THE PRESIDENT

**Question:** What major changes in higher education are on the horizon?

**Answer:** For Florida and particularly Pensacola State College, we are hoping for more equitable funding from the state Legislature. The changes in legislative leadership in the House, Senate and Governor's Office will dictate to what degree equality in funding will occur over the next several years.

At the national level, current leadership is proposing major organizational change in the U.S. Department of Education. Whether this occurs or not remains to be seen. However, the good news is programs supporting low-income students, veterans and active military, as well as workforce programs, remain strong.

It is obvious that PSC will need to continue to find innovative ways to secure additional sources of revenue to maintain low tuition and quality academic and student services.

**Q:** What are some of the challenges ahead?

**A:** The Community College movement began after World War II and PSC was no exception. The College was established in 1948, three years after the end of World War II.

In the 1960s, major rapid growth occurred across America and the steady increase of community college campuses and additional faculty and staff were needed for an increasing population seeking high quality, convenient and affordable higher education and training.

As a result, the community college workforce has seen rapid changes due to retirements over the past 10 years. So much so that colleges are experiencing a workplace knowledge drain with the replacement of these retirees with less-experienced personnel. The good news is that many institutions, like Pensacola State, are developing professional programs to better educate and train those aspiring to leadership roles at PSC. For example, PSC offers professional development funds for faculty and staff to attend conferences. PSC also offers professional development through the President's Leadership Institute, PSC Works and The Florida Master Teacher Seminar. The local community and The Florida College System also offer special opportunities for professional development (e.g. the Chancellor's Leadership Conference, the Greater Pensacola Chamber's Leadership Pensacola and the Santa Rosa Chamber's Leadership Santa Rosa).

**Q:** What are the College's Top 5 most pressing needs?

**A:**

- Obtaining more funds to address remodeling and renovation of aging facilities.
- Securing funding to replace the Baars Building (Building 1) with a state-of-the-art STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) facility.
- Raising more funds through our Foundation to provide more scholarships and more financial resources to support faculty, academic and student programs.

- Hiring more advisors to assist students to improve time to completion and graduation
- Securing additional resources is probably the primary focus of the Office of the President, thus, efforts continue at the local, state and national levels to secure funding for campus infrastructure, program support and professional development.
- The purpose of the College Foundation is to manage and raise local financial support to enhance scholarship opportunities, faculty and staff professional development, program support and facilities infrastructure. The WSRE Foundation also functions to provide financial resources to continue this vital service of PSC to the region.

**Q:** Reflecting on your past 10 years of service to the College and community, which accomplishments stand out?

**A:** It takes a village and collectively the college maintained the following:

- Continued love and loyalty of the community at large for PSC and its importance to the businesses and industries that depend on the College to provide a highly-skilled workforce.
- Improved access to residents of the college service area, via the South Santa Rosa Center, the Century Center and increased online programs and courses.
- Continued regional accreditation and national accreditation for Nursing and Health Science programs. PSC's 10-year regional accreditation is secure, ensuring continued student access to federal financial aid.
- Continued student success and accomplishment at the local, state and national levels with student organizations such as SGA, Phi Theta Kappa, SkillsUSA, HOSA, National Technical Honor Society, Performing Arts, Visual Arts, student athletics and student publications..

**Q:** What are the most essential skills for the 2020 workplace in the region?

**A:**

- The ability to understand and use rapidly changing technologies.



- The ability to think critically and problem solve.
- A strong work ethic similar to the baby boomer generation.
- The ability to effectively communicate face-to-face, in written form and via technology and social media.
- Transformable and stackable nationally-recognized certifications in the technical fields regardless of earned degrees.

**Q:** What are some of the ways the College will provide training for those skills?

**A:** Soft skills are taught through internships and embedded within the curriculum. PSC students compete in skills competitions. These competitions assess the students' technical knowledge and skills against industry standards while also assessing communication skills. Students also build confidence, learn to work as a team and gain other experiences that benefit them in the workplace as a result of their participation in skills competition and as members of student organizations and sport teams.



*Dr. Ed Meadows speaks with students in the Chadbourne Library on the Pensacola campus.*

# MESSAGE

## PSC Alumni Association President



TED KIRCHARR  
2016-2018

These past two years, it has been my extreme honor to have served as President of the Pensacola State College Alumni Association Board of Directors. When I took the helm, Past President Jerry Maygarden had established a solid foundation. His steady leadership, coupled with Dr. Ed Meadows' vision, has inspired and challenged us to grow our efforts on behalf of our current students and future alumni.

During this time, our dedicated Alumni Association Board of Directors, has significantly expanded our mission to include the establishment of several new alumni scholarships and an alumni endowed scholarship matching program.

In addition to our focus on providing networking events, we have held fundraisers and supported alumni career development.

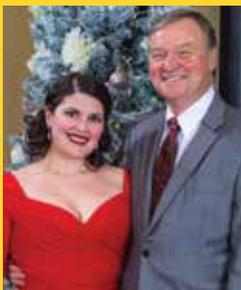
As staunch advocates of PSC, we've all worked diligently to extend our reach into the vast community of fellow alumni. Our Executive Director, Patrice Whitten, has helped guide our work and ensured alignment with the college's goals. Along with our dedicated Alumni Association Board of Directors and members, she and I share a strong commitment to this great college.

As a first-generation college student, Pensacola State is important to me. Without PSC, I'm not sure college would have been an option for me. In addition to getting a great education, I made lifelong friends who have greatly enriched my life and best of all, I'm now married to a PSC alumna!

As we look to the future, I am happy to do my part to support an institution that has done so much for me.

Thank you Pensacola State.

*Ted*



Alums Susan and Ted Kircharr

# LOOKING AHEAD

## Lane Harper Takes Helm of Alumni Association

Taking over as president of Pensacola State College's Alumni Association for 2018-2019 was an easy choice for Lane Harper.

"I love PSC for what it has meant to me, my family and our community. Day one at the College, I felt right at home and still do today. I especially enjoy our alumni and friends events and reconnecting with fellow alumni," said Harper, a Pensacola native and Area Sales Manager for Staples Business Advantage.

"You can be a successful entrepreneur and have your dreams of a better future fulfilled by attending the college right here. I obtained a great education, grew a business that I started

from inception and sold to Staples Business Advantage, a publicly-traded company. I'm proud to give back. We are looking for a few good alumni. I am proof that a great education produces great opportunities."

Harper went on to earn his bachelor's degree from the University of West Florida. He and his wife, Jill, have two sons, Stefan and Brandon.



# SHARING OUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## PSC Grad Encourages Nontraditional Students to Strive for Success

Virgene Howard Coursen came to Pensacola State College in 1948 — the year the College began in a boarding house at the corner of Palafox and Cervantes streets.

As a member of the student group that helped to create the College's founding documents, Coursen was highly involved in every aspect of the school. Perhaps most importantly, it was at PSC that she met her late husband, Bill Coursen.

"I left school, married Bill and became a homemaker. I never had dreams of a full-time career outside the home," remembered Coursen. "However, I was determined that someday I would complete my degree. When I returned to college, I was well into my 50s. I was nervous, but I worked hard, and I graduated with my associate's degree."

Today, she serves as a role model and great example for her seven grandchildren and 16 great grandchildren.

Many Pensacola State College students aren't



Virgene Howard Coursen

"traditional students." Many work full-time and are determined to find the time to take classes despite the demands of work and family.

For these students, Coursen has this advice:

"Just because you're coming back as an 'older student' doesn't mean you won't be successful. It will be hard, but keep pushing forward. Do your best ... that's all anyone asks of you. Don't give up. It may take a while, but it will be worth it in the long run."



## Saxon Named Vice President of Alabama Power's Customer Operations

Alabama Power Company has named Mike Saxon, vice president of the company's Mobile division, to the newly-created position of vice

president of customer operations.

A Pensacola State College supporter, and former member of the PSC Board of Trustees, Saxon will be responsible for customer service-related strategies for Alabama Power's Customer Services Organization.

The Pensacola native began his career in 1974 as a co-op student at Gulf Power Company, Alabama Power's sister company. Over the years, he held various positions in marketing, safety and health, risk services, labor relations, economic development, division operations, and corporate and financial planning.

After working at Georgia Power Company as a region manager, he moved to Alabama Power in 2003 to become the Southeast division vice president and served as Mobile division vice president since 2010.

# HAPPENINGS

## Sunset Soiree at La Brisa



Jenn Cole and Karen Hendrix



PSC Trustee Edward Moore and his wife, Ginger, PSC alums



Betty Freeney



Innes Richards



Celeste Whisenant and David Collins



Patrice Whitten and Fran Switzer



Rob Gregg



John Huggins, chef

## Bourbon, Blues and Barbeque at Grover T's

Gerald Adcox and band, Mass Kufuzion



Ed and Kelly Carson



Mehdi and Vida Mkihchi



Karen and Wendell Hall and Melanie Duvall



Steve Burch and Robert Boothe



Alan Brock



Bo Johnson and Chris Jones



Mike Thomas of Grover T's serves a guest



Jimmy and Lisa Bradley



Jeanette Geri



Joan Ziel

## 4th Annual Alumni and Friends Pheasant Hunt



Ed Meadows



Mike Thomas, Edwin Roberts, guest and Don McMahan



Ready... Aim... Fire!



Todd Alford



Edwin and Carol Roberts



George and Tip McKnight



Gerry Goldstein

## Alumni Executive Officers

Lane Harper  
President  
Mike Thomas  
Vice President  
Gerald Adcox  
Secretary/Treasurer  
Ted Kirchharr  
Immediate Past President

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Executive Director  
Alumni Affairs

## Share Your Story

MADE POSSIBLE  
BY YOU

[alumni@pensacolastate.edu](mailto:alumni@pensacolastate.edu)



## 2018 Employees of the Year Award

CONGRATULATIONS  
PENSACOLA STATE EMPLOYEES

Three Pensacola State alumni were among six employees recognized during the College's 2018 Employees of the Year ceremony. PSC alumni Debra Bigelow-Jordan, a student services representative; Shawn Davis, a laborer supervisor; and Beverly E. Donnell, an administrative assistant, are all PSC graduates. Standing, from left, are Davis, Robert J. Seay, Supervisor of the Year Diane Bracken, Donnell, Bigelow-Jordan and PSC President Ed Meadows. Debbie Stallworth is not pictured.

## PSC Alumni Association

**JOIN OR RENEW TODAY!**

Open to all alumni and friends of PSC.

**850-484-1752** or  
**[alumni@pensacolastate.edu](mailto:alumni@pensacolastate.edu)**  
**[www.alumni.pensacolastate.edu](http://www.alumni.pensacolastate.edu)**



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## Flowers Finds Room to Grow at Pensacola State College

As a dual-enrollment student at West Florida High School and Pensacola State College, Ashley Flowers had completed over half of her associate degree credit by the time she graduated high school. She was not sure, though, what she wanted to do in life.

"I wanted to be a physical therapist from the time I was in middle school. In high school, though, I took anatomy and physiology and realized I did not like muscles and bones," laughed Flowers.

Through the biomedical sciences career path at WFHS, she was able to delve into a variety of career options.

"I didn't just want to do something because my parents said, 'Oh, you'd be good at this,'" Flowers admitted.

As Pensacola Junior College blossomed into Pensacola State College, Flowers found her interests blossoming as well.

"I knew I wanted to do pharmacy before I left PSC," said Flowers,

who added her decision stemmed, in large part, from her family's encouragement.

She graduated with her associate degree, cum laude, from Pensacola State in 2012, then went on to earn a bachelor's degree at University of West Florida in December 2014.

"I was fortunate enough that during my undergrad I didn't really pay anything to go to school. I honestly made money going to school, which was kind of nice," said Flowers, who financed her undergraduate education through a variety of scholarships.

Once Flowers had her bachelor's degree, she decided to postpone attending pharmacy school. She returned to Pensacola State, this time to work at the pool as a lifeguard and counselor.

"I got to work and save money — pharmacy school is expensive!" Flowers pointed out.

"I knew I had to go away for (pharmacy) school. I did not feel,

when I graduated from high school or even when I was 20 years old, that I was ready to go be a professional student and do everything that entailed," she explained. "Being at Pensacola State allowed me time to grow up."

Flowers was accepted into the Harrison School of Pharmacy at Auburn University, and she joined the other incoming student pharmacists of the class of 2020 at the White Coat Ceremony in August 2016.

She was in Pensacola recently for an Introductory Pharmacy Practice Experiences rotation at Sacred Heart Hospital, then she will return to Auburn in the fall.

Flowers said that Pensacola State is where she planted the seeds for her future.

"The instructors are really there for the students. That support system and that encouragement early on — it just kind of helps you figure out where you want to go from here."



Ashley Flowers

### AT A GLANCE

**Name:** Ashley Flowers

**Education:** Pensacola State College, associate degree, cum laude; University of West Florida, bachelor's degree; Auburn University's Harrison School of Pharmacy student

**Community involvement:** Health and Hope Clinic, Greater Pensacola Aquatic Center

**Family:** Parents Steve and Lisa; and sisters, Courtney and Jillian

