Visit our website at www.southwest.tn.edu

Southwest Now Magazine is a publication of the Communications and Marketing Department. Southwest Tennessee Community College, a Tennessee Board of Regents institution, is an affirmative action/equal opportunity college.

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Dear Readers,

As President of Southwest Tennessee Community College, it is my privilege to welcome you to the inaugural edition of Southwest Now Magazine. We hope you will find the magazine most enjoyable.

Since its establishment in July 2000, Southwest has melded the legacies of two institutions into a twenty-first century college that is “greater than the sum of its parts.” The largest community college in the Tennessee Board of Regents system, our multiple locations include two main campuses, four centers and several teaching sites. The College’s two main campuses serve a population of more than 650,000 residents within a five-mile radius of either campus.

Southwest is the comprehensive, multi-cultural, public, open access college whose mission is to anticipate and respond to the educational needs of students, employers and communities in Shelby and Fayette counties and the surrounding Mid-South region. The College provides citizens with an effective teaching and learning environment designed to raise educational levels, enhance economic development, and enrich personal lives.

We encourage you, our readers, to visit our campuses and become acquainted with Southwest’s faculty and staff; become familiar with educational opportunities; and collaborate with us to develop quality programs that meet the growing needs of our community.

Cordially,

Nathan L. Essex
President
Southwest Tennessee Community College touches the Memphis area community in many ways.

Each year, about 24,000 people are impacted by the education and training provided by the College in multiple locations throughout the metropolitan area. It’s very likely most of you have met our graduates such as...

- The mechanical technician who runs the computer diagnostics on your car
- The nurse who cares for you in the hospital
- The chef who prepares your lunch at your favorite restaurant
- The laboratory technician who processes your blood work for your annual physical
- The junior class student continuing his or her work at any of the local four-year colleges and universities
- The emergency medical technician who answered your 911 call or
- The childcare professional who prepares your pre-schooler for success in the first grade.

For more information about Southwest, call us at (901) 333-5000 or visit our website at: www.southwest.tn.edu.

Southwest Tennessee Community College recently raised another $1 million in its capital campaign to build a new Nursing, Natural Sciences and Biotechnology Building on the Union Avenue Campus. The College is striving to meet the $11 million building goal. The recent donations are in addition to the $1 million gift to the campaign in 2005 by Medtronic Sofamor Danek. So far the College has raised more than $3.5 million toward the goal. Under the leadership of Southwest Foundation Board President John M. Farris, the Foundation has spearheaded the overall success of the fundraising campaign to date.

The new state-of-the-art facility will be three stories high with two wings, one for nursing and one for natural sciences and biotechnology. A 200 seat auditorium will be one of the major attractions of the building. The facility will also feature more than 15 classrooms and a dozen science labs. To enable the College to give its nursing students the most accurate clinical and practical experiences possible, the nursing wing will resemble a working hospital. Southwest hopes to break ground on the new building in August 2008 with completion the following year.

“...there is a need in this community for more nurses and people that can fill the biotechnology positions that are being created in this community,” said Dr. Nathan L. Essex, Southwest’s President. There will be a need for 3,520 new Registered Nurses between 2007 and 2014. The new building will allow the College to increase the number of nursing students admitted into the program by 45 percent.

Southwest’s Nursing program includes a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) Mobility track which is a fast track course of study to prepare an LPN to receive the Associate of Applied Science degree and take the state exam to become a Registered Nurse. Southwest is the only college in Memphis that offers this option.

Not only is there a shortage of healthcare professionals like nurses, but it is predicted that the bioscience industry will have a shortfall of at least 700 laboratory technicians and lab assistants in 2007. The new building will support the College’s new Biotechnology Technician Associate Degree and efforts to fill these positions. The new degree allows students to gain employment in local laboratories where they can analyze substances like DNA, assist in research, development, and testing of bio-tech products. They can also work in a variety of fields from agriculture to environmental remediation to food production.

The trend for more qualified employees in the healthcare field will not be ending soon. There are currently research expansions underway at local healthcare facilities like St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital, the University of Tennessee Health Science Center, as well as the development of the UT/Baptist Biotech Research Park. These projects are intensifying the demand for hundreds of qualified technicians.

Southwest is engaged in an effort to recruit and educate high school students so that they can take advantage of the tremendous opportunity of early entry into the high demand field of Biotechnology. Two of every five employees within the areas of Orthopedics, Neurological and Medical Devices will be working in positions requiring postsecondary training at the certificate or associate degree level.

“Between Southwest and Tennessee Technology Center, companies are fighting for workers,” said Stan McKee, senior operations manager with Medtronic Sofamor Danek and a graduate of Southwest. “In Memphis, there is a demand in the bio-equipment market. Fifty percent of all machine tool equipment is being manufactured for the biomedical industry. The biomedical industry is going to carry a heavy load as far as manufacturing is concerned.” Southwest currently has several programs that allow students to gain employment into this field and will potentially increase the amount of qualified employees in the workforce by providing students with this new facility.

For more information on how to donate to the capital campaign, contact Karen F. Nippert, Vice President for Institutional Advancement at (901) 333-4238.
and I am sure it presented some challenges for you. How did you harmoniously combine these two institutions?

Essex – One, we developed a structure that facilitated the work of our various committees. Additionally, we focused our efforts on an established timeframe. It was an open, involving process for which we made every effort to empower groups from both campuses. These groups played a major role in shaping the new college. I believe the combination of openness, honesty, empowerment, structure and organization contributed to our success. We strived to showcase the exciting possibilities that could arise from a merged institution.

Southwest Now – I am sure some exciting possibilities did come forth. As you reflect over the last seven years, what would you say the major accomplishments have been?

Essex – I believe that a change in our culture is a major accomplishment. We’ve evolved from two cultures that represented separate institutions into one culture. There is greater collaboration and teamwork, a greater sense of community, and a greater sense of family; those are the things I feel most proud of in terms of the institution’s dynamics.

Southwest Now – Now the vision of Southwest is to become a college of choice and a national model. How will Southwest realize this vision?

Essex – We are achieving this vision. We have several programs that have received national recognition; our honors program, our culinary arts program is exemplary, our Center of Emphasis for Teaching and Technology has received national recognition, our Developmental Studies program was awarded two quality awards last year. We also have applied for and received national certification thus becoming the first community college in Tennessee to achieve this status. We are the only community college in the nation to embark on national certification which demonstrates our enormous potential. Our Marketing program has also received national recognition, and we have other programs that are rapidly approaching this distinction. Obviously, I am extremely pleased with our progress.

Southwest Now – Do you think that the Memphis and Mid-South community is realizing this and embracing what Southwest is doing?

Essex – I believe that support is evolving. We are speaking to civic organizations, corporate leaders and community agencies. I do believe that the community is very much aware of Southwest and what our mission and aspirations are, and I believe we are gaining support.

Southwest Now – You also stress community involvement and community service. In your annual convocation, you emphasized the community; it’s something that seems to be important to you. So what is Southwest doing in the community and what can the community expect from Southwest?
Essex – I stress community involvement because it is an integral component of our mission. Our total focus is serving our community. The community is experiencing an impact from Southwest. We collaborate with business and industry on customized training. We have a number of partnerships designed to address issues in the community such as the newly created biotech partnership. We are currently in conversation with Methodist and Baptist to explore programs to increase the number of nurses in our service area. Ninety-nine percent of our students are local and when they graduate from Southwest they either advance to a university, or enter the workforce which has a significant impact on our community because they remain in our service area. We are serving our community through collaborative partnerships and customized training in virtually any area identified to improve the quality of life for our citizens.

Southwest Now – Southwest is now exploring wireless technology. Where are we on the playing field of technology? Are we competitive with other institutions in this area?

Essex – I believe substantial progress is occurring with our technology plan. Approximately 50 of our classrooms have been converted to 21st Century classrooms. We also provide a wireless environment in most areas frequented by students. We are allocating funds on an annual basis to reach our goal of 100 percent over the next several years.

Southwest Now – In your State-of-the-College address, you stressed creating a student-oriented culture. What does that mean and how can we do that here at Southwest?

Essex – We are changing the culture to ensure that everyone understands that students are our first priority and their success is ultimately a measure of our success. Everything that we do should be focused on creating a conducive environment to ensure that students learn and are successful in achieving their educational and career goals during their experience at Southwest.
Southwest Tennessee Community College Receives $250,000 Gift from Baptist Memorial Health Care

Baptist Memorial Health Care recently donated $250,000 to Southwest Tennessee Community College’s new Nursing, Natural Sciences and Biotechnology Building campaign at a luncheon at the college’s Macon Cove campus on September 6.

The proposed building will be located at Southwest’s Union Avenue campus. It will feature a 200-seat auditorium, 16 classrooms, and a nursing wing capable of accommodating up to 400 students. 45 percent more than current facilities can accommodate. A new nursing skills laboratory will be named for Baptist in the new facility.

“This gift also allows us to further our contributions and involvement in downtown Memphis,” said Reynolds. “Great things are happening in the medical district, with the new UT-Baptist Research Park, the Baptist College of Health Sciences, the Baptist Operation Outreach health care van, and now the new facility at Southwest, and we are proud to be a part of them. Baptist supports a number of health care educational programs at colleges and universities throughout the Mid-South. Baptist invests $12 million a year in the Baptist College of Health Sciences. The school’s graduates go on to work for a number of health care organizations, both within and outside the Baptist system.

“In an effort to respond to the community’s urgent need to increase and sustain an educated workforce and assist students in achieving their career goals, Southwest must expand its nursing program and training in biotechnology and bioengineering technology,” said Nathan L. Essex, president of Southwest. “To effectively fulfill our role in meeting the community’s need for more trained nurses, we must construct a new state-of-the-art facility. Each semester we reject more than 100 students who wish to enroll in courses for the Nursing Program. We are delighted that Baptist has joined our efforts to provide the resources to assure a quality education for present and future generations.”

“Private fundraising is more important now than at any other time in the history of Tennessee public education. The entire community benefits when public higher education, businesses and organizations collaborate to meet critical community needs,” said Charles W. Manning, chancellor of the Tennessee Board of Regents. “Baptist’s support of this project certainly provides a great boost toward its completion.”

Southwest is a comprehensive, multicultural, public, open-access college whose mission is to anticipate and respond to the educational needs of students, employers, and communities in Shelby and Fayette counties and the surrounding Mid-South region. The Memphis-based college provides citizens with a teaching and learning environment designed to raise educational levels, enhance economic development, and enrich personal lives. With student success as our No. 1 priority, Southwest, Tennessee’s largest community college, welcomes a diverse student population with a wide variety of backgrounds, abilities, interests, levels of education and economic circumstances. Southwest Tennessee Community College is a not-for-profit health care system in the United States, Baptist offers a full continuum of care to communities throughout the Mid-South. The Baptist system, which consistently ranks among the top integrated health care networks in the nation, comprises 14 hospitals; more than 3,100 affiliated physicians; home, hospice and psychiatric care throughout West Tennessee and North Mississippi; minor medical centers and clinics; a network of surgery, rehabilitation and other outpatient centers; and an education system highlighted by the Baptist College of Health Sciences. In fiscal year 2006, Baptist provided $373 million in community benefit.
“I Chose Southwest, and You Can Too!”

By Kimberly Kreider

“Your College. Your Career. Your Choice,” Southwest is the college where learning is without limits.” This year’s advertising campaign for the College focuses on a host of alumni and why they chose Southwest to begin their education and further their career.

The reasons that these alumni chose Southwest included affordability, convenience, flexible scheduling, lead in technology, and the little extras like on-site day care.

For example, Gordon Lintz, a health care professional with a local hospital in Memphis told us, “I received my nursing degree from Southwest. I chose Southwest because it gave me the opportunity to go to school at night and on weekends while I continued to work full time. My degree in nursing from Southwest has also enhanced my career in healthcare administration.”

Darrell Thomas was a student at Southwest over 20 years ago. Thomas states he chose Southwest, “because it was an efficient way to begin my career.”

Recent Southwest graduate, Victor Velazquez has now enrolled at a local four-year university to continue his education. Velazquez told Southwest, “I received my Associates of Arts degree with emphasis in psychology at Southwest. I chose Southwest because it is a diverse school, class sizes are small and I was able to schedule my classes around my work schedule.”

Southwest would like to introduce Southwest Now Magazine readers to the “stars” of our 2007-2008 advertising campaign by providing you with biographies of a few “Star Alumni.” You will be seeing them all over town on billboards, on the highway; on bus ads as they traverse the city; at the movie theaters before the feature presentations; in newspapers and magazines that cover the Mid-South and on the Internet.

Here are some interesting facts about our “stars.” Others will be featured in upcoming editions of Southwest Now Magazine.

Pamela R. Cobb is a paralegal in the Memphis office of Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell and Berkowitz, P. C.; Cobb’s concentration is in the areas of medical malpractice and medical products liability. Cobb has been a practicing paralegal for more than 20 years. She is the President’s Award winner for the National Association of Legal Assistants for 2006 and was the Alumnus of the Year for Southwest in 2002. Cobb is also a published writer in many paralegal publications and law publications.

Tammey Lewis is a territory manager for Methodist Healthcare, Alliance Health Services, which includes home health, hospice, home medical equipment, and infusion services. Lewis has worked in the medical field for over 20 years and with Methodist LeBonheur Healthcare for the last 18 years.

Gordon Lintz is an assistant administrator at Baptist Memorial Hospital – Memphis. He also serves as Oncology Service Line Administrator and Skilled Nursing Facility administrator. Lintz maintains his clinical skills by working two evenings a week as a nurse in the Post Anesthesia Care Unit. Lintz serves on the Board of Directors for the American Cancer Society, the Calvary Rescue Mission and Partner’s for the Homeless. He has been nominated for a Health Care Hero’s award by the Memphis Business Journal. Lintz is also Southwest’s Alumnus of the Year for 2007.

As previously mentioned, Victor Velazquez is currently a college student at a four-year university here in Memphis. Velazquez started at Southwest in 2003 after moving to Memphis from the Bronx, NY. While at Southwest, he completed his Associate’s Degree in Liberal Arts. During his time at the College, he was a member of the Student Government Association and served as vice president and president of the organization. Velazquez is also the founder of the College’s Hispanic Latino Society, which was started in 2005. He will be graduating from his four-year university with a Bachelor of Arts in psychology and a minor in research psychology. Velazquez recently completed his internship with ALSAC/St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital.

Mike Bullard is a graphic designer who used the skills he learned at Southwest to create his own business, Memphis Sports Magazine. Bullard started the magazine in 2006 as a way to marry his two greatest interests, sports and graphic design. Bullard produces the bi-monthly publication as well as a wide range of print materials for directed mail, print advertising, and web development.

Dr. Linda Chism is the director of Training and Development at the Regional Medical Center at Memphis. She was recently selected as the president of the Memphis International Training Institute. She is also a recipient of numerous awards and honors for community outreach services including, Keys to the City of Memphis, Who’s Who for Nurse of the Year – 1998, Educator of the Year – 1997, Outstanding Nursing Home Educator, Who’s Who for Professional Leadership, and special commendations from the Governor of Tennessee. Chism has also served as the chair of nursing at the College before beginning her career with the Regional Medical Center at Memphis.

Darrell Thomas, a lifelong Memphian, founded Thomas Consultants, Inc. in 1986 at the age of 20. In 1989, the company was incorporated. Thomas Consultants, Inc. provides turnkey systems for medical and dental offices and provides computer service to the city of Memphis, Memphis City Schools, Shelby County Schools and Memphis Light Gas and Water. Thomas is a member of the Southwest Foundation Board, a non-profit, charitable corporation that supports the College. Thomas is also a member of the Shelby County Healthcare Corporation, a member of the Memphis Regional Chamber and Memphis Minority Business Council. Thomas also serves as a volunteer probation officer for the Juvenile Court System.
FROM THE DESK OF THE ALUMNI AFFAIRS DIRECTOR

Hello Alumni,

Southwest Tennessee Community College is busy expanding and recruiting. What's happening at Southwest now? A new library is under construction at the Macon Cove Campus; a new academic building will be under construction in December at the Macon Cove Campus. Beginning in January, a new campus will be constructed on Shelby Drive Adjacent to the Mike Rose Soccer Field between Forest Hill-Irene and Hacks Cross Road. Also, a new attractive entrance accessing the Macon Cove Campus off Sycamore View is now open.

An experienced slate of officers is serving on the Alumni Association Board. There’s more – a new ad campaign featuring the College’s alumni is being marketed. The ads are displayed throughout the city on billboards, affixed to the local public transit, in local newspapers and other print publications; and our alumni may be heard promoting Southwest on local radio stations.

Southwest needs you NOW! Your support is very important to the future of students enrolled at the College. You are aware, that the state of Tennessee funds the general operations at Southwest, such as, the maintenance of the properties and buildings, employee’s salaries, communications and overhead costs; but the state does not fund scholarships for students. Please help keep the Alumni Scholarship alive by joining the Southwest Tennessee Community College Foundation. Your gift is needed now to help Southwest reach our goal of $250,000 toward the $1 million Alumni Scholarship Fund.

Southwest’s major gifts campaign is in progress; please see the story titled New Nursing, Natural Sciences and Biotechnology Building on its Way to Becoming a Reality for Area Students for more details.

We encourage you to share your achievements and/or success stories, as well as the accomplishments of other alumni. You may send your correspondence to alumni@southwest.tn.edu.

You are cordially invited to attend the Alumni Association’s next business meeting scheduled for Thursday, November 8.

Respectfully,
Cheryl A. Bingham
Director, Alumni Affairs

Lilliette Smith

Lilliette Smith, faculty member in the Liberal Studies and Education Division and winner of this year’s Farris Outstanding Faculty Award, has been chosen as one of 88 members of the Leadership Memphis Executive Program Class of 2008. It is notable that Leadership Memphis does not choose candidates they plan to “turn into” leaders through training. They are, instead, “committed to working with proven leaders who demonstrate an ability to bring about innovative change within their field of expertise,” and during the training year they challenge them to learn how to use their leadership skills for the benefit of the larger community.

Smith has demonstrated well her leadership during more than 25 years with the College, and points out that she is, perhaps uniquely, one of few faculty members who taught at both Shelby State and State Tech prior to the consolidation that created Southwest.

Smith received her baccalaureate in home economics and child development in 1974 at Tennessee State University and her MS in child and family studies with a minor in psychology at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville in 1976. Her career interests have always focused in some way on family, education, and counseling. First as a 4-H agent, then as a family counselor and a child developmental specialist. She began teaching at the college level in 1981. She chose psychology as her field for the simple fact that she loves it.

Like other natural leaders, Smith does not stop with settling to a simple life’s work for which she prepared herself. Rather, she immerses herself in many aspects of the chosen field. For instructional and curriculum development at the College, for instance, she developed an online Psychology I Exemplary Course to be presented during the Distance Education Summer 2006 Institute. “The exemplary course is one developed deliberately using and demonstrating various technological aspects used in creating an online class. It is a course and also an example for teachers building a course.”

Smith went on to develop Online Psychology I and II courses, which have full enrollment every semester they are offered. She also served as a Fellow in the Distance Education Department for 2005-06. In addition, Smith has developed and conducted workshops on a variety of topics, from “Intergenerational Intelligence and Organizational Communication Skills,” suitable for both business and educational development; to “Marriage Mentoring – Prepare and Enrich;” “Mind Your Manners,” for teens and others.

Smith is consistently a “working leader,” in that she applies whatever time is required to accomplish the task that has been set. “I think you influence others by letting them see you care and regard each person on the team as equally important for the task. The leader’s role is to define the vision and encourage others to apply their skills and efforts, getting the task done through everyone’s collective and collaborative efforts.” She was on Search Committees for the Vice Presidents for Student Services and Enrollment Management, and for Finance, and for the Director for Human Resources. All required intense study to prepare job descriptions and background requirements, to evaluate responses in terms of the stated requirements, and plan candidate forums with various stakeholders who would participate in evaluations.

In applying for Leadership Memphis, Smith first studied their organization. “Leadership Memphis concentrates on developing ‘resiliency’ – which it describes as the capability of a city’s leaders and people to invent communities and strategies as circumstances change, continuously anticipating and adjusting to changes that threaten core earning power and changing them before the need becomes desperately obvious. There is a psychological basis in that which appeals to me, and I hope to do well and learn well during my year of study,” said Smith.

Lilliette Smith received the Farris Award (outstanding faculty service award) at Southwest’s Commencement in May of 2007. It was presented by John M. Farris.
DIVERSITY AT SOUTHWEST

Individuality, uniqueness and differences are highly valued traits at Southwest Tennessee Community College. The College fosters a culture of openness, tolerance and acceptance throughout its hallowed halls and in its dealings within the community. Respect and equality for all individuals is at the core of the interactions and relationships at Southwest.

Southwest is committed to a diverse student body that is representative of the community. Fifty-nine percent of the student body is African American, thirty-six percent of the student body is Caucasian, with the rest being split among Hispanic, Asian, Alaskan Native and Native Americans.

Southwest students succeed in an environment that offers opportunities for enrichment and personal growth through social, cultural, artistic, multi-cultural and athletic activities. The College promotes diversity and access without regard to race, gender, religion, national origin, age, or disability.

Dedicated to supporting activities that promote diversity, community events such as “Show Me Some Love Day,” a day where Southwest employees and students give back to the community through clothing and food drives exemplify that commitment. The day is sponsored by the Diversity Club. Read-ins at local elementary schools, Women’s History Month, Hispanic Latino Society and Diversity Week/Month are all events throughout the year at the College.

Students who attend Southwest find an accepting environment that encourages each person to respect others and their cultural differences. With a strong commitment to excellence in education and an open and diverse environment, Southwest prepares students not only to go to work but to continue their education as part of a diverse global climate.

For example, Southwest student, Kristina Thomas, received a Freeman Award for Study in Asia in the amount of $7,000. The award, presented by the Freeman Foundation and the Institute of International Education (IIE), is designed to support American undergraduates with demonstrat ed financial need who are planning to study overseas in East or Southeast Asia. Thomas, a history major at Southwest, is particularly interested in Chinese history and culture. Her employment at the Peabody Chinese Museum fed her appetite for Asian culture until her big break came. “I’ve always been fascinated by China and Chinese Culture,” said Thomas. “I’ve always wanted to go abroad and study in China. It has taken me awhile to get there. I knew it would happen one day.”

Southwest reaches well beyond the borders of the United States through the German Exchange Student program and Danish students from Svendborg College in Svendborg, Denmark. The German Exchange Student program is coordinated through the Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange Program for Young Professionals, a joint program between the United States and German governments, designed in 1983 to ease any tensions remaining between World War II. Memphians and Southwest are a tradition with German students who have been coming here for more than 20 years. They generally arrive in mid-August and stay with host families for their year at Southwest. The host family tradition is as old as the exchange student custom at Southwest. It brings together a cultural exchange for both parties. The American hosts supply the home, food, love, companionship, culture and lifestyle, while their guests bring their own lifestyle, culture and cuisine into the homes of their hosts as they “live American” for a year. “They come to study American culture and education,” said Debbie Hunt, International Programs coordinator at Southwest.

Not only does Southwest impact the lives of the local, national and international students, but also the greater Memphis business community. By supporting and conducting business with minority businesses through open, unbiased purchasing practices, Southwest ensures that business in Memphis grows and prospers. To ensure that these businesses have an equal opportunity to compete, succeed in their business ventures and actively contribute to the economic well being of the community, Southwest provides seminars and course offerings specifically for minority, women-owned and small businesses. Southwest is also proud to be an active member of the Mid-South Minority Business Council.

The Tennessee Small Business Development Center (TSBDC) at Southwest promotes the success of aspiring small businesses through offering advice in developing their business plans and assistance in attaining financing, and developing marketing and communications plans. TSBDC assesses their success as they search for the “Rising Stars” among their clients for recognition. Gestures, Inc. received this year's Rising Star award.

Tate Computer Systems, Inc was established January 8, 1988. Locally and minority owned, the company has been in business for over 19 years providing cutting edge technology solutions to small, medium and large businesses in the Mid-South. Products and services offered by Tate Computer Systems include: computers, office equipment, supplies and furniture, wireless installation, telephone systems, video surveillance, preventive maintenance, repairs and upgrades.

The company began its business focusing on business machine servicing, which included typewriters, cash registers, point of sale systems, calculators and other business equipment. As trends and technology changed, the company started focusing more on computers and peripherals. Recently, the company opened a department that offers customers copy services, and expanded its office supply inventory.

As members of the community, the faculty, staff and administration of Southwest encourage visits to the campuses and hope the Mid-South will become acquainted with the educational opportunities available to everyone through the College.

The Southwest faculty and staff not only value diversity but embrace it and celebrate the differences that comprise the College. Southwest is proud to join in the celebration of our community’s rich and diverse cultures.
ASHLEY SHIELDS
Southwest’s First Saluqi in the WNBA

By Keith Gentry

Former Lady Saluqis star Ashley Shields made history when the Houston Comets selected her as the eighth overall pick in the Women’s National Basketball Association draft on April 4, 2007. It was a dream come true for Shields, whose road to the professional ranks has been a long and winding one that took her to two other colleges before she made her mark as an All-American at Southwest.

Shields began her high school career as a freshman at Hamilton High School, where she played for Coach Robert Newman, one of the all-time winningest coaches in Memphis prep history. Shields played her freshman and sophomore seasons at Hamilton, leading her team to a 64-7 record before transferring (with Newman) to Melrose High School.

As a senior, she led Melrose to the quarterfinals of the Class AAA state tournament and was named The Commercial Appeal’s Best of the Preps Player of the Year for the second straight year. Shields finished her high school career as the number two all-time leading scorer in Memphis and Shelby County history with 3,571 points, ranking her behind only former University of Tennessee and WNBA standout Nikki McCray.

Mississippi. Eligible to play only the second semester, Shields played in six games during the 2004-05 season before her coach realized she was playing while pregnant. Shields still averaged 13.3 points, 6.5 rebounds and 3.8 assists.

After giving birth to her son, Christopher, Shields transferred to Southwest in the fall of 2005. In two exhibition games, Shields averaged 22 points and 16 rebounds including 25 points and 20 rebounds in the second game. It was indeed a preview of things to come. Following the exhibition games and just before the start of the 2005-06 season, it was determined that Shields would only be eligible for the second semester. Instead of again playing only half the season, Shields and Lady Saluqis’ Coach Andrea Martre decided it would be best to sit out the 2005-06 season as a red-shirt and be ready to return to the court full-time for the 2006-07 campaign.

“I’m glad I decided to come home,” said Shields. “It has really changed my life and made me get my head on straight. Southwest is a good school with nice facilities and a nice environment. At Southwest, I was around people that loved me and the ladies on the team bonded and were like sisters. I love this team. I love Coach Martre. And I love Southwest!”

After scoring a mere 20 points in an exhibition game against the Lady Saluqis alumni, Shields poured in 41 points against Coahoma in her first regular season game at Southwest. She went on to lead the Lady Saluqis to a 26-2 record and a ranking of number 13 in the final National Junior College Athletic Association poll. Shields ended the season as the NJCAA’s top scorer with an average of 27.4 points per game and also ranked among national leaders in assists and steals. In the quarterfinal round of the Region VII Tournament, Shields scored a record 65 points against Cleveland State. In that game, she scored 19 points in the first half before scoring the nets for a whopping 40 points in the second half and six more in overtime.

Despite all of her scoring ability, Shields was a player who would get her teammates involved as well, evidenced by her 6.6 assists per game average. She led the team in assists in 21 of the Lady Saluqis’ 28 games including a career-high 14 against Jackson State.

“Ashley is probably the most unselfish player in the country,” said Martre. “She would often catch her teammates off guard with a pass that should’ve been a shot! In addition, Ashley was not only the vocal leader that every coach wants; she was also a player who led by example.”

Shields’ long list of honors at Southwest include NJCAA Player of the Week, TJCCAA Western Division and Conference Player of the Year (by a unanimous vote of the coaches), All-Region VII Tournament Team, Kodak/WBCA All-American and NJCAA All-American.

“To anyone who did not see Ashley Shields play last year – shame on you!” said Southwest Athletic Director and Men’s Basketball Coach Vertrees Sails Jr. “We were fortunate to have her here at Southwest. I’ve been around this game for almost 50 years and I would compare Ashley to only one other player that I’ve seen. That’s how special she is.”

With the help of Martre, Shields sent out highlight tapes to several WNBA teams in hopes of getting noticed. Prior to the draft, Shields found out that she was indeed eligible to be drafted since it was her fourth year removed from high school. Then, just a day before the draft, Ashley found out she was going to Cleveland, Ohio for the WNBA draft which was to be held at the Quicken Loans Arena, a sure sign that she would be selected.

“Ashley was here at the right time,” said Martre. “She was the right age and someone with the WNBA saw something special in her. Ashley being drafted not only in the first round but with the eighth overall pick says a lot about her talent. There were quite a few high profile players still waiting to be drafted when Ashley’s name was called.”

Now as a professional player, Shields has her ups and downs as all rookies do. In her first professional game, Shields scored 19 points against Seattle then topped that with a career-high 21 points against Phoenix in her second game. Overall, she is averaging 5.9 points and shooting an impressive 41 percent from three-point range.

“I believe Ashley was one of the best players coming out of the 2007 draft,” said Comets’ Head Coach and General Manager Karleen Thompson. “She is a point guard who has the versatility to move to the shooting guard position. She can handle the ball under pressure and is an exceptional passer, rebounds well and is a tenacious defender.”

“Being drafted in the WNBA is the biggest thing that could’ve happened to me,” said Shields. “It was always my dream as a kid growing up and now I’m blessed to have this opportunity.”

The attention Shields has brought Southwest cannot go unnoticed. “The recognition Southwest has received has been unbelievable,” said Martre. “I have kids calling from all over the country thinking I can get them in the WNBA!”
Hello Alumni of the Mighty Southwest Tennessee Community College!

My name is Sylvester Tate and I am the new president of the Alumni Association. I am excited to accept the roll of Alumni President for Southwest. I am a 1985 graduate from the College. I look forward to working with Cheryl A. Bingham and the new association members.

This is an exciting time at Southwest with the expansion of a new campus and the additions to the Union Avenue and Macon Cove campuses. We certainly do not want to forget the thousands of graduates that have benefited from the educational opportunity Southwest has provided. We want to be here for the College as it has been here for us.

Since graduation, I have started my own business and have been in business for 19 years. My education at Southwest contributed to my professional career. Therefore, I want to reach out to all of you and invite you to get involved in the Alumni Association at Southwest. We will be contacting you soon to participate in an upcoming event. We want the largest turnout ever, so we can share with you the exciting things the Alumni Association is planning for the coming year.

Your support is very important to the future of students enrolled at the College. Please assist the College in keeping the Alumni scholarship alive by joining today. Thank you in advance for your contribution, no matter the size.

Sincerely,
Sylvester Tate
Alumni President

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!
Let us know how and what you are doing!

Please print.

Name ___________________________ (first) ___________________________ (middle initial or maiden) ___________________________ (last)

Major ___________________________ Graduation Year ___________________________

Home Telephone # ___________________________ Work # ___________________________ Mobile # ___________________________

Home Address ________________________________________________________________

City ___________________________ State ___________________________ Zip ___________________________

E-mail address ___________________________

Occupation/Title ___________________________

Employer Name ___________________________

Employer Address ________________________________________________________________

Tell us about yourself (marriages, achievements, promotions, births, retirement, other topics of interest) ________________________________________________________________

Mail to: Alumni Affairs • Southwest Tennessee Community College • 5983 Macon Cove • Memphis, TN 38134
Visit our Alumni Affairs website at: alumni.southwest.tn.edu.

SOUTHWEST STUDENT RESEARCHES LASER SAFETY AT DOE

Timothy Cheers, computer and electrical engineering technology major at Southwest Tennessee Community College, completed a 10-week internship at the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) during the summer of 2007. The DOE Office of Science Community College Initiative approved Cheers for the all expense paid Science Undergraduate Laboratory Internship program. He was accepted to perform research at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL) located in Livermore, CA. According to the U.S. DOE Office of Science Office of Workforce Development for Teachers and Scientists, this program is intended to support the intellectual and professional development of students who have a sincere desire to be fully involved in a program which offers an intensive, mentored scientific research experience.

The screening process for applicants was a highly competitive one. Students from colleges all over the United States vied for internships. “It was quite a surprise to meet students with such incredible backgrounds, ranging from political science to nuclear physics,” stated Cheers. “Students came from schools as far away as Virginia and Great Britain, and as prominent as Purdue and MIT. They told us toward the end of the program that only one of every 20 applicants was selected out of a pool of at least 3,000 applicants.”

One of the requirements for the program is that interns complete research projects. Cheers chose to perform his research on laser safety. “With such specialized laser labs on site, special equipment is needed to measure laser energy and power for calibration and reclassification. Because of constraints, the lab needed a method that could assist the LLNL Hazards Control Department in selecting new equipment quickly and efficiently,” said Cheers. He added, “I chose to create an evaluation system that scored the equipment on multiple features, including: wavelength, pulse width, repetition rate, power range, energy range, and data transfer rates.”

Cheers’ commitment to study and appetite for knowledge have been driving forces in his life since grade school. It is that drive that has kept him focused on his objectives. A graduate of Westwood High School, he came to Southwest as a transfer student from Morehouse College. Course by course, he is working toward his educational goal of earning a master’s degree. His career goal is to work for a large company that develops and advances computer technology and laser systems.
**COMING UP FOR THE SALUQIS**

**Home Games at Verties Sails Gymnasium • Union Avenue Campus**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MONTH</th>
<th>DAY</th>
<th>EVENT/OPPONENT</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>WOMEN/MEN</th>
<th>TIME (P.M.)</th>
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(HOME COMING)

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<th>WOMEN/MEN</th>
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<td>Region VII Tournament (at Salina, KS)</td>
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* TICCAA/Region VII Games

**Investing in yourself today... Pays dividends tomorrow.**

Whether you are starting your own business, expanding your career, or just having fun Southwest Tennessee Community College offers the course you need at a fraction of the cost.

**SOUTHWEST TENNESSEE COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

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