Week of activities at Auburn focuses on legacy of Martin Luther King Jr.

Auburn will host an extended tribute to the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr. from Jan. 18-24, with the theme “Fulfilling the Dream Through Service: One Auburn One Community.”

Highlights of the week will include an oratory contest, a university-wide interfaith event, scholarship breakfast, guest speakers, lectures, student performances and community service projects. Most events are open to the public.

The week’s events begin with speeches from student finalists in the “Word from the Mountain Top” oratory contest at 5 p.m. Sunday at the Auburn Chamber of Commerce. In keeping with the theme of this year’s King Week, contestants will address the question, “What actions should we take to make our nation great in the 21st century?”

In observance of the Martin Luther King Jr. national holiday, university offices will be closed and no classes are scheduled for Monday, but some activities are scheduled for that day.

A scholarship breakfast at 7:30 a.m. Monday at The Hotel at Auburn University will feature Byron Franklin of the university’s Board of Trustees as the keynote speaker. To purchase tickets for this event, call 501-3084 or 844-5042. Monday will also provide an opportunity for community service in “A Day On and A Day Off.”

On Tuesday at 3 p.m. in the Special Collections and Archives Department of Draughon Library, Curtis Jolly, chair of the Department of Rural Sociology and Agricultural Economics, will speak on the developing humanitarian crisis in Haiti. This talk is part of the Discover Auburn lecture series.

An interfaith service of commemoration will begin at 11:45 a.m. on Wednesday in the Student Center’s ballroom to celebrate and promote awareness of various faith communities and traditions. The Auburn University Gospel Choir will perform during this event.

Truett Cathy, founder and chairman of Chick-fil-A Inc., will speak at 3 p.m. Thursday in the Student Center ballroom. An advocate for ethical and socially responsible corporate behavior, Cathy is being honored in Atlanta on Saturday by the King Center, which is presenting him and Sen. Hillary Clinton with the center’s Salute to Greatness Award in recognition of humanitarian leadership.

A roundtable discussion on “Our Call to Consciousness: Dreaming with the Courage to Act,” will take place in the Multicultural Center Reading Room at 11:45 a.m. Friday. The program will explore ways to improve the campus environment for all individuals and groups. Participants are encouraged to bring a lunch.

On Saturday at 9 a.m. at The Hotel at Auburn University, Curtis May, director of Reconciliation Ministries, will facilitate a seminar and panel discussion on the subject of “Removing Walls/Building Bridges.”

This year’s King Week activities are coordinated by Access and Community Initiatives, a unit of the Office of Diversity and Multicultural Affairs. Additional information is online at https://fp.auburn.edu/aci/kingweek/.

— Neali Vann

Former international scholars to discuss opportunities for Rhodes, Fulbright, other prestigious scholarships

A campuswide office in the University Honors College will host a public symposium Tuesday featuring past Auburn recipients of the nation’s most prestigious scholarships for international studies. They will discuss how today’s students can compete successfully for similar honors.

The Honors College unit, the Office of National Prestigious Scholarships, will bring back Auburn alumni whose participation in the prestigious scholarship programs spans six decades for the symposium “Where Dreams May Go: A Symposium on National Prestigious Scholarships at Auburn University and Beyond,” from 9 a.m.-10:30 a.m. in the auditorium of the Jule Collins Smith Museum of Fine Art.

The participants include, for the first time together, all three of Auburn’s Rhodes Scholars: Hugh Long, Class of 1947 and 1949; Edgar Gentle, Class of 1975; and Susan Karamanian, Class of 1980.

Other participants include Auburn’s first Fulbright Scholar, Ed Lee Spencer, Class of 1952; Auburn’s first Gates Cambridge Scholar, Cyndee Carver-DeKlotz, Class of 2002; Auburn’s first Marshall Scholar, Katie Blackmar-Wallace, Class of 2003; and Rotary Scholar, Steven Speakman, Class of 1996.

SGA President Lauren Hayes will moderate the public event.

Students do not have to be in the Honors College to compete for the awards. For additional information, contact the Office of National Prestigious Scholarships in the Honors College at 844-8731.
Tambrallo joins Auburn research office as university veterinarian

Laura Tambrallo, formerly of the Medical College of Georgia, has been named to the new position of university veterinarian at Auburn. The Office of the Vice President for Research announced the appointment in December after a national search.

Tambrallo will provide institutional-level guidance and oversight for Auburn’s animal care and use program to ensure conformity with federal, state and local laws and regulations related to university veterinary care, animal facilities and animal welfare.

At the Medical College of Georgia, Tambrallo was director of the Division of Laboratory Animal Services and an associate professor in the Department of Graduate Studies. She is affiliated with the American Veterinary Medical Association, the American Society of Laboratory Animal Practitioners and the American Association for Laboratory Animal Science and is a committee member for the National Center for Research Resources’ scientific and technical review board on biomedical and behavioral research facilities.

Tambrallo has a bachelor’s degree in animal science and a doctor of veterinary medicine degree, both from Louisiana State University, and a master’s degree in laboratory animal medicine from the University of Missouri.

Florida State University honors Auburn dean

Frances Kochan, dean of the College of Education at Auburn, recently received a distinguished alumna award from the Florida State University College of Education.

Kochan, who earned a doctorate in adult education and policy studies from Florida State in 1991, was honored as the college’s outstanding alumna in higher education. This was the second major award Kochan has received from her alma mater; she received the college’s Distinguished Educator Award in 2002.

Contemporary Surrealism

Recent Surrealist paintings by noted artist Rafal Olbinski are on display through Feb. 28 at Auburn’s Jule Collins Smith Museum of Fine Art. The exhibition, “New Dreams of Old Values,” builds upon a series of Olbinski paintings commissioned by the German periodical Der Stern to address issues of ethics and morality in the modern world. Critics describe Olbinski’s artistic style as distinctive for today’s artists yet reminiscent of the ground-breaking work by early 20th-century Surrealists Max Ernst, Man Ray and René Magritte.
Profiles in Excellence

Business prof found keys to motivating college students in lessons learned from kindergarten teacher and clown

Danny Butler of Auburn’s College of Business traces his award-winning approach to collegiate teaching to the two most influential people of his childhood.

One was a kindergarten teacher, the other was a professional clown. His parents.

Butler, who is the Thomas Walter Professor of Technology Management at Auburn and an associate professor in the college’s Department of Marketing, was one of two recipients last fall of the Leischuck Endowed Presidential Awards for Excellence in Teaching. The other recipient was Steven Kincaid of the College of Veterinary Medicine, who was featured in the Dec. 8 Auburn Report.

Long before being named a Leischuck Award recipient, Butler was widely recognized as one of Auburn’s most effective teachers. A member of the Auburn faculty since 1989, he has received more than 25 awards for academic excellence from university units and organizations and external, professional associations.

In nominating him for Auburn’s top teaching award, Jimmy Lawrence, director of corporate services in the College of Business, wrote: “I have known Dr. Butler over the past 19 years of his Auburn career, and I can say without hesitation that he is the most comprehensive embodiment of a teacher that I have met while at Auburn.”

Joe Hanna of the college’s Department of Aviation and Supply Chain Management recalled team-teaching with Butler in a multi-class, multi-disciplinary project: “Dr. Butler challenged his students unlike any professor I have ever seen. Nevertheless, he was positively received primarily because of two reasons: First, the students were convinced he was teaching them relevant subject matter that would provide them with significant benefits upon graduation. Second, each student knew Danny cared about them as individuals and was committed to having them learn the course material.”

Former students describe Butler as a highly motivated teacher whose classes are both demanding and entertaining. “In the classroom, he is equal parts professor, comedian, Marine drill sergeant and motivational guru,” wrote Anthony C. Brown, who received two degrees from Auburn in the early 1990s. “He instilled in us a joy for learning, showed us the importance of practical application and inspired us to never settle for mediocrity.”

Tara Jones, director of development for Auburn’s College of Architecture, Design and Construction, recalled a marketing class she took under Butler in 1995. Describing him as one of the most demanding and most enlightening teachers she encountered as a student, Jones wrote: “Dr. Butler has many talents, but teaching is his calling. Dr. Butler does a fantastic job in teaching the material in a way that makes you want to learn more.”

Butler, who holds bachelor’s and M.B.A. degrees from the University of Central Florida and a Ph.D. from the University of South Carolina, has said he could not imagine pursuing a career that did not involve teaching. “I found my niche,” he said. “I found what I am good at.” He recalled developing a 20-year plan in 1977 and assessing the results in 1997. “I found that I was doing what I had planned to do, and I am still doing it.”

Although he held jobs in the corporate sector early in his career, the Florida native decided early in life that he wanted to be a teacher. In an otherwise conventional childhood in Miami, Butler found inspiration for his future career in dinnertable conversations between parents who found much common ground in two seemingly very different occupations. From his mother, who was a kindergarten teacher, and his father, a professional clown who had a recurring spot on a Miami television show, he learned that entertainers and teachers can learn a lot from each other.

Around the dinner table in the evening, young Danny would watch as his parents, Richard and Betty Butler, discussed ways to communicate with their respec-

tive audiences. Danny’s mother drew upon her knowledge of educational psychology to help her husband add meaning to his comedy, and he helped her develop ways to hold the attention of her pupils through timely use of humor.

Although they worked in different arenas, Butler said his father was as much a teacher as his mother and his mother could be as entertaining as his father. Each was always practicing his or her craft, looking for ways to make it more meaningful for others, he explained. “I was always taught that you could achieve anything you want as long as you are willing to work and get somebody to show you how,” he said. “That’s what teachers do.”

He added, “My mother always said, never forget what it is like to be a kid; they don’t know things, so you’ve got to figure out a way to get into their heads. And part of it is the use of humor to make it fun.”

The key, Butler said, is the timely use of entertainment for precise purposes in the classroom. “The little games that I play — based on theory, by the way — have been used by a lot of folks in some very stoic scenarios,” he added.

“I try to make it fun for them to come to class, but, once they are there, I want them to learn.”

— Danny Butler

Making learning fun

In nearly 20 years of teaching in the College of Business, Danny Butler has won consistently high marks for motivating students in classes that graduates describe as demanding but never dull.

Butler continued, “While I am teaching the entire class, I am trying to figure out what it takes to get through to each student.”

“You never know who will be that one student to save the world,” he said, “so I have to treat each one like he or she is going to be the one.”

— Roy Summerford

Editor’s Note: Profiles in Excellence is a periodic series of feature articles about Auburn faculty and staff who have been honored by the university or nationally for the top level of achievement in teaching, research, outreach or within a professional field.
Achievements

Richard Penaskovic of the Department of Philosophy, presented a lecture in German on St. Augustine at the University of Salzburg, Austria, in November. Penaskovic also conducted research on interreligious dialogue at the University of Muenster, Germany, during fall semester. He was invited to present the "Christus Lecture" on Jan. 15 at Spring Hill College in Mobile and will present a paper at an International Conference on "The Alliance of Civilizations: Turkey at the Crossroads of Cultures" later this month at Kennesaw State University in Georgia.

Hulya Kirkici of the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering has been elected president of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers' Dielectrics and Electrical Insulation Society. The two-year term begins this month. Kirkici previously served as vice president and secretary of the society.

Dan A. Brown of the Department of Civil Engineering, will receive the 2009 Martin S. Kapp Foundation Engineering Award from the Geo-Institute Board of Governors of the American Society of Civil Engineers at the International Foundations Congress and Equipment Expo 2009 in Orlando on March 16. Brown is being honored for his contributions to improvements in the design and quality of drilled shaft construction through research in testing and construction, as well as extensive consulting experience on large-scale foundation projects.

Robert Jackson of the Department of Mechanical Engineering, received the Best Reviewer Award for the American Society of Mechanical Engineering Journal of Tribology recently at the Society of Tribologists and Lubrication Engineers International Joint Tribology Conference in Miami. Tribology is the study of interacting surfaces in relative motion and includes the study and application of the principles of friction, lubrication and wear.

David Ketchen of the Department of Management, is the lead author of the article selected as the 2008 Best Paper by the journal Business Horizons. The article, "Time Bandits: How They are Created, Why They are Tolerated and What can be Done About Them," was selected from among dozens of articles published in the journal during the year. The article suggests how managers should deal with time bandits — employees who steal work time from their employer by ignoring some of their job responsibilities and using the freed-up time to pursue side businesses, hobbies or leisure activities.

Ann Beth Presley of the Department of Consumer Affairs has been named an Outstanding Alumna of Western Kentucky University’s College of Health and Human Services. Presley, who accepted the award at a ceremony in November, received a bachelor’s degree from Western Kentucky in 1984. She later received a doctorate from the University of Maryland. In addition to her academic post at Auburn, Presley is immediate past secretary of the University Senate, and she has been honored as Educator of the Year by the International Textile and Apparel Association.

Sushil Bhavnani of the Department of Mechanical Engineering, has received the 2008 Clock Award at the International Mechanical Engineering Conference and Exposition in Boston. The award, which honors outstanding and continuing contributions to the science and engineering of heat transfer in electronics packaging, is sponsored by the American Society of Mechanical Engineers’ Heat Transfer Division and the Electronics and Photonics Packaging Division.

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