Engineering surpasses $105 million goal in ‘It Begins at Auburn’ support

New gifts to AU’s Samuel Ginn College of Engineering have helped lift the college past its $105 million goal for the “It Begins at Auburn” Campaign.

The college’s fund-raising campaign recently passed the $100 million mark with a $2 million gift from Atlanta business and political leaders Tom and Bettye Lowe.

With additional contributions from other alumni, including a $1 million gift from retired nuclear energy industry executive Oliver Kingsley Jr. and his wife Sally, the college has surpassed its $105 million campaign goal. This was the second major gift of the campaign from the Kingsleys.

Larry Benefield, dean of the Ginn College of Engineering, said each gift represents a milestone in the history of the college.

The gifts from the Lowes and the Kingsleys will support ongoing construction of the new Shelby Center for Engineering Technology, which is one of the most advanced teaching and research facilities for engineering in the United States.

Tom Lowe, a 1949 civil engineering graduate of Auburn, has been a Fulton County Commissioner representing Buckhead, Sandy Springs and Roswell, and Bettye Lowe is a former member of the Georgia House of Representatives.

In 1957, Tom Lowe organized Lowe Engineers Inc., which is involved in the planning, design and construction supervision of civil engineering projects across the Southeast. Since retiring from his company, he has been a developer of commercial and industrial properties.

The college already awards scholarships through the Thomas M. Lowe Sr. Memorial Endowment for Civil Engineering, established in 1991 by the Lowe family in honor of Tom’s father, who was head of the Department of Civil Engineering at Auburn from 1939-50.

“The Lowes’ generosity enables us to create a progressive learning and research environment that keeps pace with the emerging disciplines of today’s engineering fields,” said Benefield.

Benefield also cited the Kingsleys’ gift, which, he noted, was instrumental in helping the college cross another threshold. “Oliver and Sally have always been committed to the vision of the Samuel Ginn College of Engineering,” he said. “This gift marks a
Helping students overcome fears

PR magazine cites communications instructor for teaching technology

French said he enjoys being on the cutting edge of technology in his field, and students recognize the value of the technology. “Students are studying and will enter public relations practice at a time of great change and evolution,” he explained. “Social media will not replace traditional practice, but it has certainly caused a transformational shift.”

The fear that many students bring into the course stems not so much from response to the popular professor as from the challenges of learning advanced technologies that did not exist a few years ago. “Amazingly, we still have students entering the PR program who are technology phobic,” said Margaret Fitch-Hauser, director of the public relations program. “However, once a student has been through Robert’s Style and Design class, any semblance of this fear is gone. Thank goodness!”

Fitch-Hauser added that students’ performance in French’s class provides a level of assurance about their chosen careers. “I think this is due in part to the knowledge, but also because they are willing to try new approaches and think outside the boundaries of a traditional press release,” he said.

French’s teaching has also attracted the attention of The New York Times, which sought his input when trying new field-media practices in the classroom. “The Public Work of the Arts and Humanities,” David Scobey of the national advisory board of Imagining America: Artists and Scholars in Public Life, 3 p.m., Foy 202

Public Lecture

“Community in Alabama: Architecture for Living Together,” architecture historian Alice M. Bowsher, 5 p.m., Julie Collins Smith Museum

Thursday, February 21

Faculty Recital

Jeremy Samolesky, works by Bach, Beethoven and Mendelssohn, 7:30 p.m., Goodwin Hall

Campaign gifts

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significant milestone for our college and is another step toward establishing us as one of the top engineering programs in the nation.”

Oliver Kingsley, a 1966 AU graduate in engineering physics, chairs the Cynn College of Engineering’s campaign leadership team and is a member of the national board of the “It Begins at Auburn” Campaign. He also serves on the executive committee of the Auburn Alumni Engineering Council. Sally, a 1968 Auburn graduate with a bachelor’s degree in secondary school mathematics.

Kingsley and his wife, Sally, are active in the Auburn Alumni Engineering Hall of Fame. Oliver Kingsley is a retired chief operating officer of Exelon Corporation and president and chief executive officer of Exelon Generation. He has also served as vice president of nuclear operations for Unocal and is a member of the Nuclear Generation Group at the TVA, where his work is credited with the turnaround of its operations.

In 1997, Kingsley joined Unicom as president and chief nuclear officer of its nuclear generation group, and when Unicom merged with PECO in 2000, Exelon Corporation was created. As president and CEO of Exelon Generation, he managed the operations of Exelon Nuclear and Exelon Power, the company’s fossil and hydroelectric operations. Exelon Generation is one of the largest power generators in the nation.

The “It Begins at Auburn” Campaign, which continues through 2010, has raised funds for all colleges and schools on campus as well as the AU Library, athletics, Auburn Montgomery and the AU museum. The campaign’s focus includes student, faculty and program endowments; facilities and equipment; campus beautification; research; and current operations. The comprehensive campaign surpassed its $500 million goal last fall and has received more than $579 million in gifts and pledges. By contrast, contributions to AU’s comprehensive campaign in the 1980s totaled $181 million, and “Campaign Auburn” in the 1990s reached $201 million. Both were AU and state records at the time.

Upcoming Events

Tuesday, February 12

Meeting University Senate, 3 p.m., auditorium, Brown Hall

Discover Auburn Lecture “Inventing the Cotton Gin: Machine and Myth in Antebellum America,” Angela Lakew of History Department, 3 p.m., Special Collections and Archives, Draughon Library

New Perspectives Lecture “Southern Folk Pottery,” Joey Brackner of the Alabama Center for Traditional Culture, 4 p.m., Julie Collins Smith Museum

Wednesday, February 13

Study Abroad Fair Exhibits about student opportunities for study up to 90 countries, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., main lobby, Haley Center

Coffee Talk “Cafeine, Connectivity and Revolution: Coffee Houses from the Enlightenment to the Internet,” W. Scott Haine of the University of Maryland, author of “The World of the Parisan Cafe,” 4 p.m., Foy 213

Tuesday, February 19

New Perspectives Lecture “Traditional Signs in African American Ceremonies, Homes and Churches,” Judith McWillie of the University of Georgia, 4 p.m., Julie Collins Smith Museum

Public Lecture “The Arts of Citizenship in a Diverse Democracy: The Public Work of the Arts and Humanities,” David Scobey of the national advisory board of Imagining America: Artists and Scholars in Public Life, 3 p.m., Foy 202

Public Lecture “A Khayaa Maidal,” 7:30 p.m., Telfair Portrait Theatre; also Feb 20-23

Thursday, February 21

Public Lecture “Community in Alabama: Architecture for Living Together,” architecture historian Alice M. Bowsher, 5 p.m., Julie Collins Smith Museum

Thursday, February 28

Faculty Recital Jeremy Samolesky, works by Bach, Beethoven and Mendelssohn, 7:30 p.m., Goodwin Hall

Student seeks more suggestions before finishing new strategic plan

President Jay Gogue has issued a call for additional input on goals for AU’s strategic plan as he begins work on a final list of recommendations for the Board of Trustees. The administration and board will use the final list in setting priorities for the university for the next five to 10 years. Gogue produced a first draft containing 62 items for the board on Feb. 1. He said he expects the final number to be approximately 25 to 30 but added that the number could vary, based partly on public feedback on those suggestions and the submission of new suggestions at AU’s Strategic Planning Web site after people have examined the current list. A link to the site is on the front page of the AU Web site, www.auburn.edu. Once you reach the Strategic Planning Web site, click on “Input/Survey Strategic Directions” to open the survey form. The online survey asks individuals to choose and rank the top five recommendations from the 62 choices. Below the ranking is a box for persons to submit additional items. Since October, Gogue, Provost John Heilman and Executive Vice President Don Large have received input on strategic goals from approximately 2,000 persons across all major AU constituencies. Gogue has said he expects to have an updated list of recommendations in March.

The first draft, which is posted at the Strategic Planning Web site, groups potential goals in 10 categories. The categories are: Undergraduate Education, Research and Graduate Education, Faculty Retention and Development; Employee Retention and Development; Infrastructure and Facilities; Alumni Engagement; Athletics; International Programs; International Engagement; and Miscellaneous. Within those categories is a spectrum of proposals ranging from steps to ensure that students possess global and international skills to requiring that all supervisory positions be reviewed on an annual basis.

Opportunities for international study

Haley Center to host Study Abroad Fair

The Auburn Abroad process enables students to choose and enroll in an international program through the Office of International Education and receive AU credit for the work completed abroad. The Office of International Education, which sponsors the Study Abroad Fair, also offers 30 resident orientation sessions for students considering study abroad on Thursdays at 3 p.m. and Fridays at 11 a.m. at Hasky 234.

Approximately 10 percent of students participate in Auburn Abroad activities while attending AU. For more information on study abroad, in addition to other international programs at AU, see the Web site www.auburn.edu/ studyabroad.


Ready for spring
A solitary player guards his corner of the outfield in Samford Stadium during baseball practice at Auburn last week. To much of the northern hemisphere, February is a time of cold weather and indoor activities, but to many sports fans, this shortest, coldest month at the height of basketball season marks the start of the college baseball season.

Upcoming AU Theatre play examines lasting impact of separation, persecution on family

Upcoming AU Theatre will present the drama “A Shayna Maidel” at Telfair Peet Theatre next week. Meaning literally “a pretty girl,” “A Shayna Maidel” concerns a Jewish family torn apart by the Holocaust in Nazi-occupied Poland during World War II.

The play examines the relationship between two sisters who are reunited one year after the end of the war. One sister had escaped the Holocaust by moving to America 18 years before, while the other sister remained behind with their mother to recover from scarlet fever. While two family members are safe in America, those left behind get caught up in the Nazis’ campaign to exterminate Europe’s Jews.

The mother becomes a victim of the Nazis but the sister in Poland survives and is eventually reunited with her father and sister in New York. The sisters are strangers who must reestablish their childhood bonds while approaching the traumas of separation and persecution from separate perspectives.

The production runs from Feb. 19-23 in Peet Theatre’s Theatre Upstairs, with each performance starting at 7:30 p.m. There will be no 2:30 p.m. matinee performances for this production. The Department of Theatre will also host a body of Jewish American Life Visuals in the Telfair Peet Theatre art gallery during the run of the production.

For tickets or more information call 844-4154.

Talk to focus on historical impact of coffeehouses on revolutions

Is the popularity of coffeehouses a recent phenomenon? Not according to an upcoming speaker at AU, who says coffeehouses are neither new nor historically benign.

W. Scott Haine will speak on “Caffeine, Connectivity and Revolution: Coffeehouses from the Enlightenment to the Internet,” at 4 p.m. Wednesday in Foy 213.

The public lecture is sponsored by the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures in AU’s College of Liberal Arts, and by Starbucks of Opelika, in collaboration with the college’s departments of English, History and Political Science.

Snacks and, of course, coffee will be served.

Haine, who teaches at the University of Maryland, is author of “The World of the Parisian Cafe: Sociability Among the French Working Class, 1789-1914” and two other books on French history. He is writing a book about the cafes of Paris during World War II and is editing a volume on cafes in European cultural history.

He holds a Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin.

Engineering faculty member

Juan Gilbert named CGS fellow

The AU Center for Governmental Services, a part of University Outreach, has named Juan Gilbert of the Samuel Ginn College of Engineering as the center’s 2007-08 fellow. The CGS Fellows program recognizes experienced practitioners, academicians and researchers for their significant contributions to excellence in government.

“CGS fellows utilize their expertise to engage in research while increasing funding opportunities that will improve the quality of public policy for the state of Alabama,” said CGS Director Don-Terry V eal. “Dr. Gilbert will utilize his cutting-edge scholarship in Ethnocomputing (Culturally Relevant Computing). His research will also complement the efforts of CGS practitioners, academicians and researchers for their work in Spoken Language Systems, Advanced Learning Technologies, User Interfaces (Usability), and Ethnocomputing (Culturally Relevant Computing). He has published more than 50 articles and his research at Auburn has generated more than $2 million in competitive grants. He serves on the IEEE Computer Society Board of Governors and is the column editor for the society’s “Broadening Participation in Computing” series.”

As a CGS fellow, Gilbert will focus on implementing voting technologies such as the “Everyone Counts” online system, and he will continue work of other technology-based methods for improving participation in the election process.

He will also concentrate on developing information technology programs for municipalities and counties which will be implemented through CGS as part of its client support services.

Gilbert, who recently was named a national role model by Minority Access Inc., has received national attention in his field and in the news media for his research at Auburn last week. To many sports fans, this shortest, coldest month at the height of basketball season marks the start of the college baseball season.

The play examines the relationship between two sisters who are reunited one year after the end of the war. One sister had escaped the Holocaust by moving to America 18 years before, while the other sister remained behind with their mother to recover from scarlet fever. While two family members are safe in America, those left behind get caught up in the Nazis’ campaign to exterminate Europe’s Jews.

Meaning literally “a pretty girl,” “A Shayna Maidel” at Telfair Peet Theatre will present the drama “A Shayna Maidel” at Telfair Peet Theatre next week.

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