Senate clears way for new trustees to join Auburn Board

The Alabama Senate on Tuesday confirmed the appointment of five new Auburn University trustees, completing the final step in the appointment of nine members to the Board of Trustees.

The votes for confirmation immediately added four of the new members to the 14-seat board of trustees for seven-year terms, filling seats that had become or were about to become vacant following the end of members’ terms.

The four new trustees with immediate appointments – Bob Dumas of Auburn, Elizabeth Huntley of Clanton, James Pratt III of Birmingham and Clark Sahlie of Montgomery – will take their seats at the April 20 Board of Trustees meeting on campus.

A fifth, Ben Tom Roberts of Mobile, will start his term May 11 in the seat formerly held by the late Jack Miller, whose term ends on May 10. The appointment is for a full seven-year term rather than the final month of Miller’s term.

The five were named in February by the Auburn University Trustee Selection Committee, headed by Gov. Robert Bentley, who forwarded the names to the State Senate. Four other nominees were confirmed by the Senate in late March.

A prominent figure for decades in Alabama banking circles, Dumas is president and CEO of AuburnBank. He earned a bachelor’s degree in business administration from Auburn in 1976.

Huntley is an associate and civil litigation attorney with Lightfoot, Franklin & White in Birmingham. She earned a bachelor’s degree in political science from Auburn in 1993 and a law degree from the University of Alabama in 1997.

Pratt is a partner and trial lawyer with Hare, Wynn, Newell & Newton in Birmingham. He is president of the Alabama State Bar. Pratt earned a bachelor’s degree in English literature from Auburn in 1976 and a law degree from Cumberland School of Law at Samford University in 1978.

Sahlie is a partner in North McDonough Properties in Montgomery, which leases commercial real estate. He earned a bachelor’s degree in business administration from Auburn in 1988.

The four newly filled seats were formerly held by Virginia Thompson, Paul Spina, Byron Franklin and Bobby Lowder.

Roberts, who takes office May 11, is president of Roberts Brothers Commercial & Property Management Inc. in Mobile. He is former chairman of the board of the New Orleans branch of the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta. He earned a bachelor’s degree in industrial management from Auburn in 1980.

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Campaign asks faculty, staff to set example of giving back to Auburn

Auburn’s 2012 Faculty Staff Campaign is under way as volunteers seek to build on the 2011 record 71.1 percent participation rate in a demonstration of support for the university by those who know it best.

The Faculty Staff Campaign, which runs through May 8 in its public phase, is an annual fund-raising campaign in which faculty and staff members donate funds to support those aspects of the university that are of special importance to each individual.

Rather than suggesting a minimum or maximum on the size of gifts, volunteers ask all faculty and staff members to choose a gift level and donate either through payroll deduction or other financial gift to an area of each donor’s choice. Gifts in the past have ranged from $1 to $10,000.

Reaching every Auburn University office, the 2012 campaign has more than 150 volunteers and is led by co-chairs Debra Dowdell, library assistant in Auburn University Libraries; Jamie Sailors, director of undergraduate internships in the College of Human Sciences and Greg Williams, head coach of the Auburn Equestrian Team.

Exceeding 60 percent participation every year since 2008, Auburn’s Faculty Staff Campaign consistently has had the highest participation rate by employees of any university in the Southeastern Conference and one of the highest rates nationwide among large public universities.

Williams noted that alumni often take note of the level of support for a university by faculty and staff when deciding whether to make a gift to their alma mater. “It is much easier for people to support an organization that is successful and staffed by dedicated and personally vested employees,” he said.

High participation rates are especially important in Auburn University Libraries; Jamie Sailors, director of undergraduate internships in the College of Human Sciences and Greg Williams, head coach of the Auburn Equestrian Team.

See Faculty Staff Campaign, Page 3
Native American political and religious leader Tenskwatawa had a vision—he believed that the Great Spirit, the Master of Life, was speaking through him and he was going to lead a great reformation.

Had the early 19th century Shawnee tribal leader fulfilled his vision, history and Americans’ concept of their country could have taken a different course, says Adam Jortner, an assistant professor of history in Auburn University’s College of Liberal Arts.

In his book, “Gods of Prophetstown: The Battle of Tippecanoe and the Holy War for the American Frontier,” Jortner tells the story of Tenskwatawa, the brother of Tecumseh, governor of the Indiana Territory and future American president, and a place called Prophetstown, an independent city-state that was created and run by Native Americans in the early 1800s.

Tenskwatawa and Harrison were two leaders trying to create political power and establish themselves in the Indiana territory.

“Part of Tenskwatawa’s vision for reformation was that tribes were to come to an end; there would be no more designations, just the Indian nation,” Jortner explained. “He moved to Indiana to make this city of his possible—a city based on the idea that they should have their own state, have formal relations with all whites and they should defend their borders together because the U.S. government, and particularly, William Henry Harrison, was making treaties tribe-by-tribe and that meant the amount of total land Indians controlled was getting smaller and smaller.”

Harrison built a group of fellow thinkers and worked to keep up with important instruments of power and negotiating for Indian land.

“Harrison didn’t negotiate in a fair manner with all of the tribes; he negotiated with tribes who had a weak connection to a particular piece of land, signed a deal with them, and then used that to threaten others who might have had rights to a particular piece of land. That’s how he purchased it,” Jortner said. “Harrison worked as hard and fast as he could to extinguish Indian claims to land in the Indiana territory; Tenskwatawa put the kibosh on that.”

Jortner said that by one estimate, Prophetstown probably had around 3,000 people, making it the second largest town west of the Appalachians, second only to New Orleans. Other estimates make it larger.

Initially, Tenskwatawa was met with opposition from various tribal groups who rejected his vision and believed his religion was a false one. But, over time, as Native American communities learned that the treaties they were making with the Americans were worthless, his ideas started to gain traction.

“He grew in stature so that in 1811, when Harrison brought an army to try to conquer him, he was probably the preeminent Native American leader in the old Northwest, or what are today the Great Lakes states,” Jortner said.

In the book, Jortner argues that western migration could have easily turned out differently, and that Tenskwatawa posed more of a threat than most Americans realize.

“The idea of Western Migration is not something that was inevitable, and the idea that Native Americans had to be removed beyond the Mississippi—that this white population pressures were so great that it was just destined to happen, is not the case. There was no destiny involved,” Jortner said. “It’s only after the War of 1812 when the Indians are clearly defeated that the U.S. begins wholesale policies of Indian removal, forcing tribes to move west. It’s weird that it’s caught up in the War of 1812; no one thinks about the War of 1812, and maybe the reason we forget about it is that it’s the moment where things look like they might not work out. That’s almost the moment where the American experiment collapses. That’s interesting to think about.”

Jortner argues that the idea of expansion wasn’t destiny. He said he believes that historically, it was an accident, and that should have implications for the way we think about America’s role in the world today.

“Does America have a divine purpose? I think that attitude still pervades a lot of our discourse on the nature of the U.S. and the world,” he said. “If we look at our history, the U.S. has certainly gotten involved in wars where it almost lost everything. In thinking about relationships between the U.S. government and Native American nations, this is an important moment, too, to think, ‘Wow, this is not just a case of whites dictating, but there’s actually a real fight that could have gone another way.’”

— Carol Nelson

Korean dignitary
He Beom Kim, left, consul general of South Korea in Atlanta, visited Auburn on March 26 as part of an initiative by the university to enhance the international experiences of students. Among other topics in his meetings with students, faculty and administrators, the Korean diplomat discussed his nation’s economic ties in the Southeast, which include the Kia automotive plant at West Point, Ga., and the Hyundai plant in Montgomery. Kim, left, is shown during a meeting with Auburn President Jay Gogue.

Campus Calendar
FRIDAY, APRIL 13
THEATRE PRESENTATION “Sylvia,” 7:30 p.m., Telfair Theatre; also 7:30 p.m. Saturday, 2:30 p.m. Sunday and 7:30 p.m. April 17-20

TUESDAY, APRIL 17
FILM PRESENTATION “Los Que se Quedan,” 7 p.m., Auburn Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 450 E. Thach Ave.; part of the Latin American Film Series on Immigration

FRIDAY, APRIL 20
MEETING Board of Trustees, The Hotel at Auburn University; committee meetings begin at 9 a.m. followed at approximately 11 a.m. by meeting of full board; times subject to change

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 25
CLASSES END for spring semester
FRIDAY, APRIL 27
NEXT Auburn Report
MONDAY, APRIL 30
FIRST EXAMS begin, period extends through May 4
Meeting the author

Winners of Auburn’s Common Book Writing Contest for 2012 are pictured with author Tracy Kidder, right, whose book “Mountains Beyond Mountains” was the focus of this year’s Common Book program and a public lecture presented by Kidder on April 2. The program seeks to engage students, faculty, staff and the community in an academically driven experience. The winners were recognized at a dinner held by President Jay Gogue, where they dined with Kidder prior to the lecture. The student winners, from left, are Gabby Bates, Tyler Haydon, Matthew Pollock and Adriana Lee.

Two Auburn seniors receive NSF fellowships for graduate studies

Auburn seniors Bianca Williams in chemical engineering and Devin Kalafut in mechanical engineering have been awarded National Science Foundation graduate fellowships; Matthew Ramirez, a 2011 graduate in the College of Sciences and Mathematics, received an honorable mention.

Each fellowship provides three years of support at $30,000 annually and an additional $10,500 cost-of-education allowance. The purpose of the fellowship program is to help ensure the vitality and diversity of the scientific and engineering workforce in the United States.

Williams, a senior Honors College student, is completing her honors thesis under the direction of Elizabeth Lipke in the Department of Mechanical Engineering. Williams’ research project is part of the Lipke lab’s effort to guide the differentiation of mouse embryonic and human-induced pluripotent stem cells into cardiomyocytes, which can eventually be used for the treatment of heart disease. Outside the classroom and lab, Williams is actively involved with Auburn’s Minority Engineering Program where she serves as a mentor to middle and high school students.

Kalafut will graduate in May and will pursue graduate studies at the University of California-Berkeley.

Ramirez, a 2011 Honors College graduate, has worked under the direction of Wendy Hood. He worked in the Hood Lab where he completed his honors thesis on the functional changes in the gastrointestinal tract of lactating Columbian ground squirrels. Ramirez will pursue a doctorate at San Diego State University in the fall.

The National Science Foundation’s Graduate Research Fellowship Program recognizes and supports outstanding graduate students in NSF-supported science, technology, engineering and mathematics disciplines who are pursuing research-based master’s and doctoral degrees. He is completing his honors thesis under the direction of Jay Khodadadi in the Department of Mechanical Engineering. Their work focuses on developing suitable techniques for manufacturing synthetic bone tissue. The goal of the project is to construct a lab-scale specimen of tissue scaffolding that has the identical porosity and strength of human bone. As president of Auburn University’s chapter of Phi Tau Sigma, the mechanical engineering honor society, Kalafut is actively involved in promoting science, engineering and mathematics to middle and high school students.

Faculty Staff Campaign

Continued from Page 1

Auburn, May 12 — A gift can be a simple act of giving. A gift can be something so small and yet so significant, it triggers greatness in a person or group.

Every gift can be a catalyst. This was the message that Auburn University researchers shared in a recent meeting of the Faculty Staff Campaign.

A gift, however small, can be the spark that ignites a project, an idea or another discovery. That is simply what I love to do,” said Chemistry Professor Elizabeth Dowdell.

Dowdell emphasized that the act of giving is important, even if a person can only afford to give a small amount. “Every gift, large or small, helps to generate another triumph, another breakthrough or another discovery. That is simply what I love to do.”

Volunteers have distributed information packets and donor cards for the campaign in every department and office on campus and across the state at Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension offices. Donors may make a one-time gift of cash or check or have an amount deducted each pay period through payroll deduction.

For additional information about the Faculty Staff Campaign or to give or increase a donation, contact the campaign volunteer for your unit or email Sharon Awtry of the Office of Development at awtrysh@auburn.edu or view the campaign website https://develop.auburn.edu/facultystaffcampaign/.
Sylvia,’ a substitute mistress

University Theatre presenting comedy at Telfair Peet

Auburn University Theatre continues its 2011-12 season with the A.R. Gurney comedy “Sylvia,” this weekend and next week on the main stage of the Telfair Peet Theatre.

“Sylvia,” a production of the Department of Theatre in the College of Liberal Arts, opened Thursday and continues Saturday and April 17-20 at 7:30 p.m. with a matinee performance April 15 at 2:30 p.m. Tickets may be purchased online at www.auburnuniversitytheatre.org, or by phone at 844-4154. Tickets are free for students and $15 for others.

Greg and Kate are empty nesters settling into a Manhattan lifestyle when Greg brings an unexpected addition home, a stray dog named Sylvia. Sylvia proves to be no ordinary canine and she and Greg form no ordinary master and dog relationship, much to the consternation of Kate.

“While dog lovers will identify with Greg’s relationship to Sylvia, many middle-aged people will recognize in Greg’s behavior the classic symptoms of midlife crisis,” said director Scott Phillips. “Greg is tired of his routine, his job and, although he wouldn’t admit it outright, his wife. Sylvia is Gurney’s perfect other woman: fresh, new, exciting and compliant.

“Unlike Kate, who is a complex human being who divides her focus between many interests and activities, Sylvia is focused solely on Greg. Like many mistresses and kept women, she has a self-serving agenda and is very good at manipulating Greg without making him aware that she is doing so.”

Race planned in memory of former COSAM dean

Auburn University’s College of Sciences and Mathematics will hold the second annual Marie W. Wooten Memorial 5K Run on April 21 in recognition of the late dean’s contributions as a mentor, scientist, scholar and academic administrator and her commitment to student training and outreach.

In addition to the 5K run that begins at 8 a.m. outside Beard-Eaves-Memorial Coliseum, the event will also include a one-mile walk beginning at 8:20 a.m.

Last year’s 5K hosted more than 150 participants and proceeds from the event provided scholarship support to four female students in the College of Sciences and Mathematics. The scholarships were created through gifts to the Auburn University Foundation by friends, colleagues and family members of Wooten.

Before her death in November 2010, Wooten had planned to combine her loves of running and COSAM and host a 5K to raise money for scholarships. To honor her memory, the first 5K was held last year to see her vision fulfilled.

“Last year’s race exceeded our expectations,” Brook Moates, race coordinator, said. “We could not have done it without our sponsors, participants and volunteers. Everyone came together to make sure the 5K was a success. We are looking forward to this year being even more successful.”

“It is such an honor to receive the Marie Wooten scholarship,” said Britney Oliver, a sophomore in COSAM and was one of last year’s recipients. “She was such an inspirational woman and scientist here at Auburn, and I hope to achieve the same great success.”

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