



# VSU Connection

For the Faculty, Staff and Members of the Valdosta State University Community

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## Commencement Honors Graduates and Features New Traditions

Valdosta State University's newest graduates earned their rite of passage on Saturday during the 2009 spring commencement ceremonies. More than 1,200 candidates applied to graduate, making this one of the largest graduating classes in university history.

Two new traditions were featured during commencement ceremonies — the Order of the Red and Black at 10 a.m., and presentation of the President's Medallion at 4 p.m.; both are anticipated to become part of commencement ceremonies for years to come.

Joining members of the platform party and faculty on stage, Ruth Loughridge Nutt, class of 1938, represented the Order of Red and Black inaugural class and was recognized by President Patrick J. Schloss. Nutt attended Georgia State Womans College, today VSU, during a time when enrollment was less than 300 women. She graduated with a degree in sociology and was active in numerous campus organizations.

The Order of the Red and Black honors graduates from the past 50 or more years and provides an avenue to connect alumni from the past with today's graduates. Honorees were introduced at the morning ceremony, attended a luncheon, then toured the university.

Recognized for their remarkable generosity of time and personal resources to VSU, three Valdosta couples received the President's Medallion, a

silver emblem engraved with the likeness of West Hall.

"The President's Medallion is the highest honor given through direct authority of the university," Schloss said. "The couples honored today have distinguished themselves through various philanthropic efforts and, in doing so, have distinguished the university."

Ed and Mary Crane's involvement with VSU spans several decades — including an integral role in the establishment of the Valdosta Symphony where Ed served as a founding board member. As chairperson of South Georgia Pecan and former member and chair of the VSU Foundation Board of Trustees, Ed is an advocate for building partnerships between the university and community.



*From left: Ed and Mary Crane stand with Jerry and Kay Jennett, President Patrick J. Schloss and VP for University Advancement John Crawford prior to commencement festivities. Both couples were honored with the President's Medallion for their generous contributions to Valdosta State University.*

The Cranes understand the importance of private support for public education and social enrichment.

Jerry and Kay Jennett's contributions to the university extend beyond monetary gifts — Jerry has served on presidential and other search committees and has twice chaired the VSU Foundation Board of Trustees. Kay serves as a member of the Symphony Guild and her artistic



*Ruth Nutt, '38, joined the commencement platform party as a representative for the Order of the Red and Black during at the 10 am. commencement ceremony. Nutt's daughter, Janice Nutt Lee, accompanied her mother on stage.*

abilities have enhanced numerous events on campus, including the recent A Blazin' Hot Night dinner and auction. The Jennett's have funded numerous scholarships that help attract the most talented and gifted students within athletics and music.

Harley and Eileen Langdale have demonstrated extraordinary commitment to VSU. Harley and Eileen, an alumna of Georgia State Womans College, have donated several artifacts and papers from their private collection to the university that are now exhibited on campus in Pound Hall. In 2001, in recognition of the Langdale's generosity, the College of Business Administration was named in Harley's honor. The gift has provided significant growth and allowed the college to bring the most talented students and faculty to the Langdale College of Business Administration.

"Today we celebrate a new tradition that publicly shows our appreciation to these individuals who have demonstrated remarkable generosity of time, skills and personal resources," Schloss said. "We are deeply indebted and in awe of your generosity and thank you for exhibiting true Blazer spirit." ■

—Thressea Boyd

## June 15 Deadline for Strategic Focus Proposals

Information sessions for Strategic Focus 2010 were held last week. Budget managers, administrators, faculty and staff received important information regarding the new budget and strategic planning model, including the timeline for requests for strategic funds from the FY10 budget. The multi-staged process begins with faculty and staff proposal submissions, requesting strategic monies from the FY10 budget, turned into their department heads by June 15.

According to Dr. Kristina Cragg, assistant to the president for strategic research and analysis, approximately \$2 million in strategic initiatives is allocated in the FY10 budget, with awards and disbursement of funds being made in early August. The allocation process for FY11 will begin in September and have a longer timeline for submission of proposals.

"We regret the short timeline for submission of proposals," Cragg said. "However, rather than waiting a year to begin Strategic Focus we are moving forward using a condensed time frame to provide funding to projects that will help advance VSU into a premier

residential university with a national reputation."

The new budget and planning model differs from the year-end "sweep" process and allows strategic funds to be allocated to initiatives that advance the university throughout the year, instead of spending money within a short period of time and on items that do not necessarily advance the university's mission.

Proposals will be based on five standards, which when achieved, will advance the university to an increased position of excellence. The five standards include:

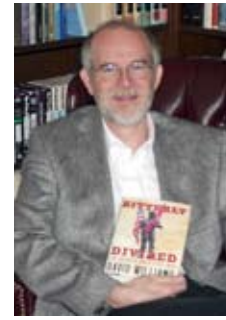
1. Recruitment and enrollment
2. Retention and graduation enrollment
3. Scholarship research
4. Financial solvency resources
5. Development of new academic initiatives and programs

For more information regarding the submission of proposals and timeline, visit the Strategic Research and Analysis Web site at;

[www.valdosta.edu/sra/StrategicFocus](http://www.valdosta.edu/sra/StrategicFocus)

—Thressa Boyd

## Williams Featured on C-SPAN2



Williams with *Bitterly Divided*, which was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize in History and the National Book Award for Nonfiction. Find *Bitterly Divided* at [www.thenewpress.com](http://www.thenewpress.com).

VSU History Professor David Williams appeared on C-SPAN2 BookTV Saturday, May 2, to talk about his latest book: *Bitterly Divided: The South's Inner Civil War*. The 352-page book is an eye-opening narrative that shatters myths the Confederacy was a unified front and exposes the South as a complex region of many voices.

Williams, who has taught Georgia and Civil War history at VSU for the past 20 years, spoke for about 35 minutes before answering about 20 minutes of questions. Those who missed the airing in early May can watch it on BookTV.org.

Stan Deaton of the Georgia Historical Society interviewed Williams on Georgia Public Radio's "Cover-to-Cover." The episode, which aired in December 2008, can be seen on the Cover-to-Cover Web site, <http://www.gpb.org/covertocover>.

Williams has authored several books, including "Plain Folk in a Rich Man's War," "Johnny Rebb's War," and "A People's History of the Civil War." ■ —Kate Heine



## PEACH STATE SUMMER THEATRE 2009



Peach State Summer Theatre 2009 features its three-show season in a rotating repertory from June 5 to July 19.

Georgia's official musical theatre will whisk audiences down the mighty Mississippi with mischievous Huck Finn in "Big River" — the musical adaptation of Mark Twain's Classic novel "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn." The show, which won Tony Awards for Best Musical as well as Book and Score, opens June 5 and runs through July 19.

The theatre heads to the Caribbean in the colorful musical "Once on This Island" about a peasant girl who leaves her village in search of love. The award-winning musical about love, loss and redemption runs from June 19 to July 18.

New York is the setting for "The Producers," a musical about a down-on-his-luck producer and his accountant's scheme to swindle show backers by producing a theatrical flop. With music and lyrics by legendary funny man, Mel Brooks, *The Producers* is sure to have

audience members buckling with laughter. The show, which contains adult language and situations, runs from June 26 to July 18.

The Peach State Summer Theatre Box Office is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. For reservations, call the box office at (229)-259-7770. For more information about Peach State Summer Theatre and the 2009 season, go to [www.valdosta.edu/psst/](http://www.valdosta.edu/psst/). ■ —Kate Heine

## White Named Spring Employee of the Semester

VSU Budget Analyst Jenny White Recognized for her timeliness, courteousness and professionalism when dealing with budget manager concerns.



Financial Services employee Jenny White was named the Spring 2009 Employee of the Semester at a COSA meeting in early May.

A budget analyst for more than six years, White's dedication to creative problem solving and positive customer service have earned her a coveted place on the COSA Employee of the Semester plaque displayed in the president's office. She also received \$100, a certificate of appreciation and an award basket stocked with VSU merchandise.

Holding a Bachelor of Business Administration and a Master of Public

Administration from VSU, White is responsible for day-to-day budget maintenance and working with budget managers to resolve problems through creative solutions and identifying available funding. She also provides support for the university's institutional reporting and accounting functions and works on other related special projects. White's nominations detailed her commitment to go above and beyond her responsibilities as well as her ability to respond to budget manager concerns with respect, timeliness, courteousness and professionalism.

For names and information about runners-up, go to [www.valdosta.edu/news/releases/cosaeos.050709/](http://www.valdosta.edu/news/releases/cosaeos.050709/) ■

—Jennifer Tanner

## Walking Contest Winner Headed to the Bahamas



A few years ago, Dr. Lorraine Schmertzing participated in a study to monitor faculty fitness levels at VSU. The online instructor of curriculum, leadership and technology discovered she was

one of the least active participants — working her mind and fingers almost exclusively during an average day.

The study was the wakeup call she needed to energize her life and has since injected walking into her daily life. Schmertzing averaged 30 miles of walking each week during the past few months as part of the VSU Walking Club's "Walk to Your Summer Vacation" Contest. Schmertzing was one of 26 people who walked 210 miles between March 11 and May 1. Walkers who met the goal were entered into a drawing to win a three-day cruise for two.

"When I decided to join the Walking Club, I decided to walk everywhere. I would walk to the Rec Center, work out, walk home, then walk to the office, and back home in the evening," Schmertzing said. "I created a mileage chart for myself, and everyday I marked off the number of miles I walked until I completed all 210. Then I kept on walking. It has been great fun and I intend to keep it up, at least until it gets to be 100 degrees outside."

Schmertzing said she and her husband, Dr. Richard Schmertzing, plan to go onboard the Monarch of the Seas in January as her birthday celebration.

More than 80 VSU faculty and staff participated in the second annual contest, which encourages employees to walk the distance from Valdosta to Port Canaveral, Fla., where the cruise to the Bahamas will depart.

Drawings for the cruise and other prizes took place at the Walking Club's May 4 celebration party. For more information about the Walking Club other contest winners, go to the Walking Club Web site at [www.valdosta.edu/finadmin/wellness/walking.shtml](http://www.valdosta.edu/finadmin/wellness/walking.shtml). ■

—Kate Heine



The Walk Around the Clock team raised \$3,200 to support the American Cancer Society's research, education and prevention efforts. Left: Becky Murphy, Tim Murphy, Kathy Sundin and Abigail Murphy show off their 50s-themed costumes.



## Blazin' For A Cure Raises Record Funds to Fight Cancer

The 40 teams that participated in VSU's third annual Relay for Life event in April raised nearly \$37,000.

John Wright, assistant director of student life, said participation and money raised is up from last year's 32 teams raising a total of \$28,000.

In addition to the countless fundraisers in the months leading up to the 12-hour event, the 40 teams hosted raffles, sold food items and offered other contests during the festivities on the university's front lawn, which featured a concert by Ocean Street.

Relay for Life is the American Cancer Society's signature event, in which more than 3.5 million people participate to raise money for cancer research, early detection and prevention information. One in three people will be diagnosed with cancer during their lifetime. ■

—Kate Heine

## Cates Named Executive Director-Elect of the Southern States Communication Association

Dr. Carl M. Cates was recently appointed as executive director-elect of the Southern States Communication Association.

Professor and head of communication arts at Valdosta State University, Cates' accolades include the Outstanding New Teacher Award for SSCA in 1996, the States Advisory Council Administrator of the Year Award in 2006, and participation in more than 50 paper and panel sessions on his areas of research interest including communication theory, leadership, debate and listening. He has also published six articles and one book chapter, in addition to co-authoring a textbook.

A former president of the Georgia Communication Association, he

continues to assist with the national revivification of the Association for Communication Administration. Cates also serves as president of the Rotary Club of Valdosta. While he has served at VSU, the Communication Arts Department has added three new degree programs in addition to a doubling of students and faculty members.

During his SSCA membership, the experienced communicator has served on standing committees for constitution, finance, nominations, resources development and many more. He also served as program planner for the American Communications Association interest group and the

*"It is an honor to be selected for this key role in the Southern States Communication Association," said Cates, who holds a Ph.D. from Florida State University.*

Intercultural Divisions, and as reviewer, panel chair and respondent for various divisions.

"It is an honor to be selected for this key role in the Southern States Communication Association," said Cates, who holds a Ph.D. from Florida State University. "I look forward to working with our leadership team to build on the efforts of those serving before us."

From 2010-2015, Cates will serve as executive director of the SSCA, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the promotion of the study, criticism, research, teaching and application of the artistic, humanistic and scientific principles of communication. ■

—Jennifer Tanner



## Scott Manley Named Consultant of the Year



The Georgia Small Business Development Center Network named Valdosta State University Small Business Development Center Assistant Director Scott Manley Consultant of the Year at the organization's

annual meeting in late April.

The state-wide network of 18 development centers - which provide educational and technical assistance to the private sector - recognizes one business consultant each year for his or her accomplishments. The organization selected Manley for his expertise and passion working with the business community, the number of professional development opportunities in which he participates, and the outreach programs and publications he produces. The award honors the improvements VSU's development center made this past year in the lives of business owners in its 10-county service area.

"Small businesses are the heart and soul of America's economy, and many of them are hurting right now. It's important for entrepreneurs to know people do care about them, will listen to them, and give them guidance to weather this and other economic storms," said Manley, who was a small business owner prior to joining the SBDC in 1998. "What's particularly special to me about this award is that it represents the impact that I am privileged to have through my work. I genuinely love helping people, and I think that shows in what I do and the results the clients get."

The honor is groundbreaking in that it is the first time employees from the same development center have received the award in consecutive years. VSU SBDC Director Suzanne Barnett was last year's Consultant of the Year recipient.

The award was not Manley's first time at an award podium. In 2006, the nationally recognized expert in QuickBooks and new product development received the Distinguished Service Award from the Association of Small Business Development Centers.

Manley earned a Bachelor of Business Administration with emphasis in Management and a Master of Business Administration, both from Valdosta State University. He serves on the Business Advisory Board of VSU's chapter of Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE) and on the Economic Restructuring Committee for Valdosta's Main Street program. He has also served as Chair of Section 1533 of the American Society for Quality, and as a founding member of the Small Business Committee of the Thomasville/Thomas County Chamber of Commerce. ■

—Kate Heine

**Got some news to share?**  
Send it our way — [news@valdosta.edu](mailto:news@valdosta.edu)

### VSUConnection

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The *VSU Connection* is a monthly newsletter designed to inform VSU personnel and students about the latest campus-wide news. Check out the *Connection* online at [www.valdosta.edu/news/](http://www.valdosta.edu/news/)

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