

GAZETTE

the delta devils

An award-winning college newspaper, by students for students

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MISSISSIPPI VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY • ITTA BENA, MS

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MVSU students celebrate 71ST Commencement with family, friends and cellphones

DDG Staff Report

Valuable pearls of wisdom were not the only advice Mississippi Valley State University's 71st Commencement Speaker and alum Dr. Trina N. George gave to the 2023 graduates Saturday, May 6.

After telling them to always "thank those who encouraged you along the way," in an unusual move with President Jerryl Briggs, Sr.'s permission, Dr. George said, "I want all the graduates to take your phones out."

Both the graduates and audience uttered sounds around the R.W. Harrison Complex in awe of her request.

George, who is the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development State Director for Mississippi, explained. "I know we were supposed to have this commencement on the field but we had to bring it inside," she said. "So, some who would have been in attendance are not in here because

we don't have enough room ... I want you to call someone that's not in here right now who helped you through this journey. I want you to say: Thank you. I love you. We made it!"

The standing-room only audience exploded with various crowd-pleasing sounds as she gave the graduates two minutes to complete the calls.

One could see the excited graduates talking or texting on their phones. "I see you all. Call! This is your day!" George said.

According to her biography, "filled with a passion to serve her community, Dr. George has spent much of her career providing assistance to her fellow Mississippians and individuals nationwide."

Historically, she is the first woman and the first African American woman to be appointed to her current position in USDA Rural Development-Mississippi. (See more on her life and career on the mvsu.edu website).



Dr. George addresses 2023 graduates. Photo Credit: Letunya Evans, Communications & Marketing

President Briggs presented Dr. George with a plaque of special appreciation. He also gave words of encouragement to the graduates.

Her speech and the ceremony drew positive reactions from attendees. "I thought the graduation was great, myself," said Rosie Moore of Memphis, Tenn.

Moore and her son Raymond Moore were there to support graduate

Kiara Love. "I think my little sister writes for the campus newspaper," said Raymond Moore to the Gazette.

"The graduation was a wonderful presentation; it was great!" he said.

MVSU News indicated that there were "230 undergraduate and 45 graduate students who crossed the stage to receive their degrees."

See Pictorial Graduation Highlights on Pages 7 & 8

21 KLASSIFIED K.A.S.E.S showcase before a sold-out crowd

By Jalin Walker, Vice President/Membership Chairman Epsilon Pi Chapter

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated® (AKA), an international service organization, was founded on the campus of Howard University in Washington, D.C. in 1908. It is the oldest Greek-letter organization established by African American college-educated women. The local chapter here at Mississippi Valley State University, Epsilon Pi, was founded in 1969 and has been servicing the campus for 53 years.

On Sunday, April 30, 2023, the local undergraduate chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated®, Epsilon Pi Chapter held a new member presentation celebration in honor of the new initiates.

The presentation show was great and allowed the 21 KLASSIFIED

K.A.S.E.S to showcase themselves and announce to the world which organization they have joined. The ladies all stepped, danced, and chanted their new-found knowledge to a sold-out crowd in the H.G. Carpenter Auditorium.

The newly initiated members are Ashley Berry, Darria Blue, A'Naiya Bronson, Zaphanie Clayborne, Aulora Edwards, Raven Franklin, Morgan Gutierrez, Kaitlyn Hairston, Seveda Harris, Seerdyn James, Takiria Montgomery, Cajanique Ollie, JaMya Peoples, Sheronda Powell, Quinniya Rayton, Jada Shaw, Jade Smith, Kimeisha Star, Basha Terry, Allyson Totten, and Raegan Young.

These women demonstrated and exemplified various items that Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated®



looks for in potential members. They have joined the ranks of Alpha Kappa Alpha women worldwide who are dedicated to service and sisterhood. The Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated® journey they have embarked on is one that will be marked by sisterhood, service, academic accomplishments, and college fun.

We are thankful they chose us and proud of them for taking the first step. We look forward to their future impact and contributions in the upcoming year.

Congratulations to the newest members of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated® of Epsilon Pi Chapter at Mississippi Valley State University!

'Court on The Road' judges stress writing as a 'superpower!'



By Timothy Adams, Guest Writer

The Students of MVSU were granted an opportunity to be witnesses of the Judicial System this semester, as The Court of Appeals' Court on the Road program conducted a trial in the Carver A. Randle Auditorium in the Social Science Building.

The trial consisted of an oral argument concerning the case, Gilbert S. Macvaugh III v. The State of Mississippi, of which the verdict was reserved for a later date.

Once the trial concluded, students were permitted to ask the judges several questions concerning their experience and a career in law.

One of the things the judges consistently emphasized during a question-and-answer segment for the students was the importance of writing. "It's important

for people, that if that their going into law school, that they major in English" said Judge Latrice A. Westbrooks, who presided over the trial.

She was accompanied by Judge David McCarty and Judge Debra McDonald in a three-judge panel.

McCarty concurred with Westbrooks assessment of the importance of writing and added: "The superpower in 2023 is writing. If you can communicate effectively through the written word, then that is how you're going to persuade people."

This event was a learning nexus for students in and outside of the political science major. The judges concurrently expressed that they hope the knowledge students gained by witnessing Court on the Road will carry onward into the foreseeable future.

President Briggs supports Valley's grads of the Gray Media Training Center



From left to right are Acting Department Chair of Mass Communication Dr. Carolyn L. Gordon, 2023 GMTC graduate Jessie Washington, Jr., 2023 GMTC graduate Rahael Aka-ety, 2022 GMTC graduate De'Nautis Liddell and MVSU 8th President Dr. Jerryl Briggs. PHOTO: Courtesy, the DDG.

MVSU President Jerryl Briggs recently attended the Gray Media Training Center's (GMTC) Spring Graduation Luncheon in Jackson to support Valley's student participants. Launched last year in partnership with WLBT, the GMTC "prepare[s] students for today's unique operating environment, while simultaneously improving diversity, equity, and inclusion in media" (wlbt.com).

Raegan's Advice to Excellence (RAE)

Hi Delta Devils:
As the year comes to a close, I wanted to give some positive affirmations instead of advice.
Sometimes we need to be uplifted more than we need to be advised. The purpose of adding positive affirmations to our daily routine is to help fight the negative thoughts that often cause us to harbor self-doubt. In other words, positive affirmations assist with changing a negative viewpoint with a positive light.
Here are just a few affirmations for different points or areas in our lives to help combat negative feelings:

I am enough.
I accept myself.
I am worthy of respect and kindness.
I am beautiful.
I love myself.
I belong.

Education:
I believe in myself.
I always get good grades.
I pass my exams easily.
I am confident in my ability to achieve my goals academically.

Health:
I love my body.
I love being in my body.
I give my body permission to thrive.
I love listening to my body.



the delta devils
GAZETTE

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Rolling Fork's Mayor grateful for GMA's Robin Roberts' visit

DDG Staff Report

More than 3 million ABC Network Good Morning America (GMA) viewers watched as Anchor Robin Roberts broadcast live from Rolling Fork, Miss. Wednesday, April 26.

In a special segment called "Mississippi Strong," Roberts, a Mississippi native, showed America the "resilience" of the citizens, one month after the EF-4 tornado struck and left horrific devastation in its path, including the loss of lives.

The Delta Devils Gazette spoke with Rolling Fork's Mayor Eldridge Walker about Roberts' visit. This is what he had to say: "It further made us feel how much people care about what's happening to our community. We appreciate GMA shining the light on our situation."

Walker, a native and the first African American mayor of the city said, one of his main priorities is making sure to keep up with

the displaced families. "We must continue to make sure they are all right and to see what they need," he said. "We have families the Red Cross has put up in hotels around the Delta."

According to the MVSU Office of Student Affairs, there are six students enrolled from the Rolling Fork area and one from Silver City, a nearby community that was also impacted. There are also several from the Winona area. The Delta Devils Gazette did not get an opportunity to speak to those students regarding the tornado's impact.

Mayor Walker expressed appreciation for the supplies collected and donated by MVSU students and others. He said they are so grateful to everyone. "You all at Mississippi Valley, keep us lifted in your prayers," he said.

"The recovery may be a long process, but we are building back better."



GMA's Anchor Robin Roberts is shown here in the crowd with Rolling Fork Mayor Eldridge Walker after she announced on air a \$20,000 check donation from Big Lots. PHOTO By Jay Johnson.

National Alumni President urges Mass Comm majors to 'stay in touch!'



DDG Staff Report

Mississippi Valley State University (MVSU) National Alumni Association President Jerry Dean Redmond, Jr. was the featured speaker for the Department of Mass Communication Awards Luncheon.

Held in the Devera D. Ball National Alumni Association and Foundation House, May 4, the event was designed to recognize students, particularly graduating majors, for their outstanding skills, services and dedication during their year at Valley.

"We are extremely pleased that Mr. Redmond was able to come to share his wisdom and years of experience with our students," said Acting Department Chair Dr. Carolyn L. Gordon.

Redmond, who is passionate about his alma mater, not only emphasized

to the students the importance of becoming active alumni but also the importance of staying in touch with one another, to pool their resources and gained experiences as they give back to "The Valley." "It is critical because their active membership is a key to adequate program support," Redmond said.

Graduating senior and honoree Latavia Williams understands the importance of alumni support. "I am a member of the Valley's Pre-Alumni Association," she said.

The Gazette asked Redmond what he hopes the Mass Communication graduating seniors received from his message. He replied: "I hope they received inspiration to set high goals and pursue a terminal degree in their proposed concentration." Redmond concluded with this: "Shoot for the star and always remember, MVSU needs you."

Free Summer I 2023 classes



Mississippi Valley State University has announced it will offer the Summer Tuition Grant to provide financial assistance to students enrolling in Summer I 2023 classes (There will be no free tuition for Summer II). The funding is primarily made possible through the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund III (HEERF III), as authorized by the American Rescue Plan. The grant will cover tuition and mandatory fees for up to six (6) credit hours in any course eligible for financial aid.

For more information, visit: <https://www.mvsu.edu/summer-i-tuition-2023>.



NATIONAL
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ASSOCIATION

37th CONVENTION AND Alumni Summit

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THURSDAY, JULY 20, 2023 | BOARD OF DIRECTORS DAY

REGISTRATION OPENS - 12NOON
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING - 1PM
BOARD OF DIRECTORS HOTEL CHECK-IN - 3PM
PRESIDENT'S WELCOME RECEPTION - 6PM

FRIDAY, JULY 21, 2023 | OFFICERS & AFFINITY GROUP DAY

REGISTRATION OPENS - 8AM
OFFICERS & AFFINITY GROUPS WORKSHOP 9-11:45AM
LUNCH OWN YOUR OWN - 12NOON
GENERAL BODY HOTEL CHECK-IN - 4PM
YOUNG ALUMNI WELCOME RECEPTION - 6PM
PRESIDENT'S HOSPITALITY SUITE - 9PM-12AM

SATURDAY, JULY 22, 2023 | GENERAL BODY DAY

REGISTRATION OPENS - 8AM
GENERAL BODY MEETING - 10AM
LIFE LEGENDS LUNCHEON - 11:30AM
PLENARY SESSIONS 1:30PM
PRE-LIFE LEGENDS GALA RECEPTION - 6PM
LIFE LEGENDS GALA - 7PM
PRESIDENT'S HOSPITALITY SUITE 9PM-12AM

SUNDAY, JULY 23, 2023

WORSHIP SERVICE - 11AM
BROWN MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH
SOUTH CAMPUS

(TENTATIVE SCHEDULE SOME EVENTS SUBJECT TO CHANGE)
FOR MORE INFORMATION
convention@mvsunaa.org

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MVSU students learn about careers representing America

By the Office of International Programs

The Office of International Programs hosted Diplomat-in-Residence J. Nathan Bland at MVSU to talk about the U.S. Department of State Careers that represents America to the World. His visits included class visits for student outreach, meeting with student leaders, faculty and administrators. During the class visits he discussed the U.S. Department of State paid internship programs for undergraduate students, Fellowships for recent graduates and Foreign Service Officers. Mr. Bland also talked about his journey to (and through) the U.S. Foreign Service so far.

Senior students were informed about the Thomas R. Pickering and Charles B. Rangel Fellowships that funds up to \$42,000 per year for two years to pursue Graduate programs. The fellowship also covers two paid internships in consecutive summers, one domestic and one abroad, and mentorship along the way. Anyone who is planning on attending graduate school next fall (Seniors/ Alumni) are eligible to apply.

Bland is a career Foreign Service Officer with over fifteen years of experience in a wide variety of areas with the U.S. Department of State. As a Diplomat-in-Residence, he is responsible for recruiting candidates from diverse backgrounds for careers with the State Department. His most recent assignment was an Assistant General Services Officer at the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City serving as the Embassy's primary Contracting Officer and overseeing logistics for VIP visits. Prior to that, he was the Political, Economic and International

Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) Section Chief at the U.S. Embassy in Belmopan, Belize. He also served as the Public Affairs Officer at the U.S. Embassy to the Holy See, and a Consular Officer at the U.S. Consulate in Shenyang, China.

MVSU students interested in the U.S. Department of State internships, fellowships and job opportunities must contact Dr. Lokesh Shivakumaraiah (studyabroad@mvsu.edu) at the Office of International Programs for more details.

Here are some quotes from students who met with Mr. Bland:

"As a student who has a passion for communications, I want to use my skills to influence the world. I feel to that the careers representing America will provide a way for me to do this."

Zapouria Wadley, Rising Senior, Double Major - Mass Communications and Speech Communication

"I really enjoyed the opportunity to speak with Diplomat Nathan Bland. He gave us very insightful information about his duties as a diplomat. He also informed us on major opportunities that are provided through being a diplomat. It was a very information opportunity for the rest of the students and myself to learn about U.S. Department of State careers."

Kathleen Sims, Junior, Sociology Major



MVSU hosts Roundtable with Diplomat Nathan Bland. Shown in the picture are Kathleen Sims, Jasmine Wallace, Christopher, Dr. Vikas Kadam.



Dr. Kalanya Moore co-hosts Diplomat Nathan Bland class visit to talk about Careers Representing America.



Zapouria Wadley, rising senior double majoring in Mass Communications and Speech Communication ask follow up questions to Diplomat Nathan Bland.

MVSU International students graduate with flying colors

By the Office of International Programs

International students find U.S. Higher Education rewarding and yet challenging as they not only have to get adjusted to new education system, but also have to make cultural adjustments to get used to American food, culture and being far away from family. MVSU provides all the opportunities for students to be successful both in their classrooms and also have a vibrant international student life to help them integrate to MVSU and local community. After all the hard work and sacrifices, 16 international students are graduating from MVSU. They will be embarking on their next phase of life either pursuing higher education or starting exciting new jobs across the U.S.

"Our international students come from over 25 countries. They bring their diverse experience and culture to our classrooms and are able to share their traditions, dishes, music and clothes with fellow MVSU students and make lasting friendship."

Ms. Cristina Radulescu
(International Student Advisor,
Office of International Programs)

"We are proud of our international students and their accomplishments. We wish them continued success in their future endeavors. As they move to their new jobs or higher education, we want them to remember Valley as their home. We welcome them to continue to stay in touch with us as a proud Valley alumni and collaborate with the Office of International Program to help mentor current students."

Dr. Lokesh Shivakumaraiah,
Executive Director of International
Relations and Assistant to Provost

"Coming from Nigeria to Mississippi Valley State University was a big transition for me but I'm grateful for the experience. It has contributed tremendously to my growth."

**Amarachi Nwokpo, Senior Major: Accounting
Company: Ernst & Young LLC**

Job Title: Technology Risk Consultant
"Valley experience was very nice and I had a lot of opportunities here at "the Valley of Scholars".

**Emmanuel Asuquo, Senior Major: Computer Science
Company: Morgan Stanly
Job Title: Data analyst**

"A good college experience is not just about getting good grades, but also about discovering yourself and your passions. It's about making lifelong friendships and connections, experiencing new things, and broadening your horizons. A good college experience challenges you to think critically, question the world around you, and push beyond your comfort zone. It's a time to learn not only from textbooks, but also from diverse perspectives and experiences. Ultimately, a good college experience sets you up for success in your future endeavors and helps shape who you become."

Onyebuchi Oparandu, Senior Major: Computer Science

**Company: Google LLC
Job Title: Software Engineer**

"As an international student graduating senior, I feel both proud and grateful for the opportunities and experiences I have had during my time at this institution. From navigating a new culture to challenging myself academically, I have grown in ways I never thought possible. I am excited to take the skills and knowledge I have gained here and apply them to my future endeavors, wherever they may take me. This milestone is not just a personal accomplishment, but a testament to the power of education and the importance of diversity in higher learning."

**Brian Diyaolu, Senior Major: Computer Science
Graduate School: Mississippi Valley State University
Program: Masters in Computer Information Systems**

Valley Fulbright Scholars heading home to Egypt, Russia and India

By the Office of International Programs

Mississippi Valley State University is named a Fulbright Historically Black College and University (HBCU) Institutional Leader by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA). MVSU is hosting four Fulbright Scholars. You may have run into these Fulbright Scholars in your classrooms, foreign language courses, Student Union information desk and multicultural activities on campus. After a successful stint at Valley of Scholars, Fulbrighters bid farewell recollecting their wonderful experience and cultural adjustments to Mississippi coming from far-off countries.

Here are some quotes from Fulbright Scholars on their Valley Experience:

"The Office of International Programs is thankful for all the services of our Fulbright Scholars. They did an outstanding job both within and outside the classroom actively engaging students and fellow faculty. They also played an important role in our strategic campus and curriculum internationalization activities. MVSU is also expected to host Fulbright Language Teaching Assistants during 2023-24 academic year to teach Japanese, Hindi, Arabic and Russian languages."

Dr. Lokesh Shivakumaraiah, Executive Director of International Relations and Assistant to Provost

"My Valley experience is very fruitful. Being for the first time in the US can be intimidating but the Valley faculty, staff, and students made me feel so welcome and safe. Having a full American college experience, building professional and personal relationships that will last for years, and becoming aware of other nationalities' lifestyles are among



MVSU Fulbright Scholars (left to right) Olga Ponomareva (Russian FLTA), Dr. Vikas Kadam (Hindi FLTA), Omnia Mahmoud (Arabic FLTA) and Dr. Vandana Saxena (Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence).

the many advantages of MVSU life. Being able to work and study at Valley inspired me to continue my academic career and pursue a Master's degree at an American university. I am very grateful to MVSU for making my experience once in a lifetime."

Ms. Olga Ponomareva, Russian Fulbright Language Teaching Assistant, Home Country – Russia

"Valley has become a second home for me, after spending eight months here I have gotten used to the culture and southern charm. The people on campus have made me feel so welcome. Members of the English department and the International Programs were the best and most encouraging support any one can hope for. They pushed us to be better, they pushed us to jump over the walls that we build around ourselves, and they ignited a sense of adventure and curiosity that has forever changed the trajectory of our lives."

Ms. Omnia Mahmoud, Arabic Fulbright Language Teaching

Assistant, Home Country - Egypt

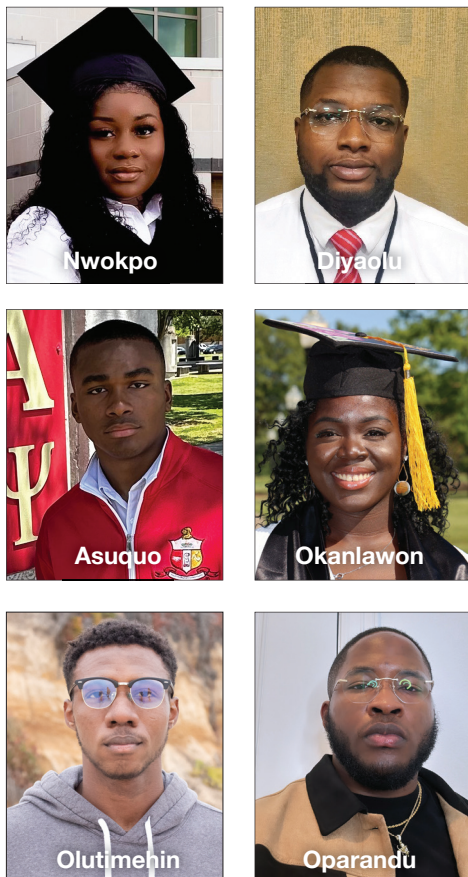
"Being a Fulbright Foreign Language Teacher at MVSU has been a life-changing experience. This program immersed me in American academic culture and the connected society. I am thankful to the Office of International Programs and the Department of English and Foreign Languages, MVSU, for creating ample opportunities for me to fully reap the benefits of this Fulbright Program through various cultural events like Diwali Night, Holi, Chinese New Year, and Parade of Flags and Academic programs like Study Mississippi Conference, Country Presentations, International Week, Research Day, Country Presentations and Mississippi Philological Conference. I am glad to have received encouragement for my professional growth and cultural exchange throughout the program. The Fulbright FLTA program at MVSU does bring the best out of their Fulbright fellows. I have definitely

become a different person and will take back to India an improved version of myself professionally, academically and not to mention personally as well."

Dr. Vikas Kadam, Hindi Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant

"My Valley experience is a captivating spectrum of learnings and belongingness spread across multitudes of dimensions. It is a fusion of exemplified professional ethics of dedication, commitment, concern and care with core cultural values of warmth and affiliations. I am taking home a lot. Beautiful landscapes, the engrossing narration of history, thought-provoking museums, and the power of music to empower the cause are just a few tangibles. I sincerely hope to continue this mutually enriching association of thoughts to mindfully create collaborative learning spaces in the future."

Dr. Vandana Saxena, Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence, Home Country - India



Colors *continued from page 5*

"It was a really great experience that taught me a lot of things and helped me grow. My Valley experience is something I'll definitely remember for years."

Oluwapelumi Olutimehin
Company: Amazon
Job Title: Software Development Engineer

"As I look back on four amazing years, it is easy to see that Mississippi Valley State University has played an instrumental role in helping to shape the young woman that I am today. I am grateful to God, my family, friends, professors, and the non-teaching staffs who have helped me along the way."

Morolake Okanlawon, Senior, Major - Biology

Fulbright Student Session



Office of International Programs hosts U.S. Fulbright Student Information Session in Engineering Technology classroom. Faculty co-host Dr. Antonio Brownlow is also seen in the picture. Students interested in Study and Intern Abroad Scholarships, please contact the Office of International Programs at studyabroad@mvsu.edu or 662-254-3094.

No tuition increase

By Ace Bradley, Student Writer

In the state of Mississippi, most institutions of higher learning are headed toward tuition increases but not Mississippi Valley State University and Delta State University.

The announcement was released recently by the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL).

According to reports, in the last two decades, there has been an increase in tuition within all eight universities, but Delta State University and Mississippi Valley State University are breaking that tradition this fall.

Students on the MVSU campus reacted with overwhelmingly positive feedback to this news.

“I feel that MVSU not increasing their tuition next year is good for the school and students,” said Mikayla Etienne from Monroe, La. “I believe that it is good because most students have to take out student loans to pay for school already so if Valley continues to raise their prices the enrollment will

drop because the people in closer areas wouldn’t be able to afford it and just not attend school or go to a junior college.”

Von Killins, an athlete at MVSU said that the decision to not raise tuition is excellent news for students like him who did not grow up with money. “The fact that not all students and families can afford college is one of the main arguments for making tuition at colleges free.”

Ra’Daija Powell of Greenwood sees the no tuition increase as a win-win for “the Valley.”

“The fact that Mississippi Valley State University won’t be increasing tuition is amazing for students who are not on scholarship,” Powell said. “This could help the enrollment rate go up at Mississippi Valley. It also gives students security [knowing] that Valley is here to help students receive an education without increasing tuition every year.”

Bradley is a Mass Communication major with an emphasis in broadcasting.

Love earns special recognition



Biology major and recent 2023 graduate Kiara Love earned special recognition for her dedicated service as a staff writer and historian for the Delta Devils Gazette. COURTESY PHOTO.

Mississippi Valley State University Golden Graduates 2023 COMMENCEMENT HIGHLIGHTS



