

GAZETTE



An award-winning college newspaper, by students for students

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DDG BLACK HISTORY MONTH SPOTLIGHT:

Dr. Kathie Stromile Golden: A legacy of activism and excellence

By Raheal Aka-cty, Editor-in-Chief

Black History Month is a national observance in which we honor the trailblazers who have shaped our communities and institutions. The Delta Devils' Gazette (DDG) shines its spotlight on one such figure: Dr. Kathie Stromile Golden, a distinguished scholar and leader whose life and career reflect resilience, activism, and academic excellence.

Dr. Golden currently serves as the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs at Mississippi Valley State University (MVSU) and as the Executive Director of the National Conference of Black Political Scientists (NCOBPS). Her journey, however, began in the small village of Plain Dealing, La., where she was raised in a family deeply rooted in activism and self-determination. Growing up in rural Louisiana, Dr. Golden experienced segregation firsthand. Her family witnessed cross burnings by the Ku Klux Klan, yet they remained steadfast in their beliefs. She credits her father, a man who refused to work for those who mistreated Black people, and her mother, a strong advocate for education, for instilling in her a sense of resilience and determination.



Golden

She shared that education was not optional in her household—it was a requirement. Despite initially having no plans to attend university, Dr. Golden enrolled at Southern University in Baton Rouge, where she excelled academically and became deeply involved in student activism. Under the mentorship of pioneering scholars like Dr. Jewel Prestage, she found her passion for political science. During her time at Southern University, she was an active participant in protests against racial injustice, including demonstrations against the importation of Rhodesian chrome and student-led movements that resulted in violent crackdowns by authorities.

She continued her education at the University of Kentucky, where she earned a Ph.D. in political science, specializing in international comparative politics and political socialization. Her career has since spanned multiple institutions,

including Clark Atlanta University, Texas Tech University, and Arkansas State University, among others. She has also played a significant role in international development, overseeing multi-million-dollar projects focused on global education and institutional partnerships.

Her work extends beyond academia into a lifelong commitment to advocating for Black political scientists and students. Through her leadership at NCOBPS, she has helped amplify the voices of Black scholars and foster opportunities for the next generation of political scientists.

In a recent interview, Dr. Golden was asked:

“Having witnessed the burning of KKK crosses and experienced the power of student protest and advocacy, what advice would you give to today’s students as they navigate an era of political and social uncertainty?”

Dr. Golden: “First, I would advise students to become more informed about the past and present eras that were politically, economically and socially challenging for African American and other marginalized groups. Do the necessary research to gain knowledge about those who advocated for change; actions taken, strategies that yielded positive outcomes. There is no need to

completely reinvent the wheel.

Second, be confident in who you are, be willing to take risks, and fight for what you believe will create a fair and just environment in which all can thrive.

Selfishness sometimes has to be put aside in order for one to reach their true potential.

Accept that life is uncertain but there are things that you can work to change or bring about. You will never know the power within, if you never get out of your comfort zone.”

When asked about the current issue surrounding the DEI initiatives, Dr. Golden had this to say:

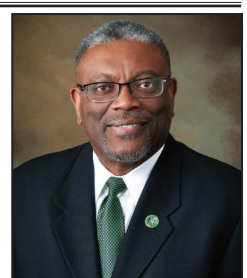
“Many of those who challenge DEI are ignorant; they neither understand nor care to consider information that contradicts their perception of DEI.”

To hear Dr. Golden share more details about her historic life’s journey, readers may view her oral history interview on YouTube at www.youtube.com. The title of the video is *APSA Oral History Project: Meet Dr. Kathie Stromile Golden, Mississippi Valley State University*. She also has her own Wikipedia page: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kathie_Stromile_Golden.

MVSU celebrates Green and White Day at the State Capitol

By Kobe Hilliard, Photo Editor

JACKSON, Miss. — Mississippi Valley State University (MVSU) hosted its annual Green and White Day at the State Capitol on Feb. 11, 2025. The event brought



Briggs

together alumni, students, and faculty to celebrate, speak, and be heard by legislative decision makers.

The event kicked off with remarks from the MVSU Student Government Association (SGA), followed by an introduction of distinguished alumni. Following their introduction, the alumni shared personal reflections on how MVSU shaped their lives and careers. MVSU President Dr. Jerryl Briggs then took the stage to discuss the significance of Green and White Day. He highlighted the event’s role in fostering stronger ties between the university and the



Right to left: Rep. Robert Johnson III, Rep. Jeff Harness, Rep. Bryant Clark, Rep. John Hines, Rep. Solomon Osborne, Dr. Bridges, Senator David Jordan, Rep. Robert Sander, Rep. Tracey Rosebud, Rep. Tamekia James-Jones, and Rep. Otis Anthony. PHOTO COURTESY OF COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING/L. Evans

surrounding community, while also emphasizing its growing importance in the years ahead.

The MVSU Department of Education and the Department of Social Work were the departments that represented the



By Jaheim Wilder, Columnist

February is here, and that means love is in the air, Black history is in the spotlight, and we're reflecting on the legacy we continue to build. But let's be real, Black love and Black history aren't just for one month! They're part of who we are every day.

Black love isn't just about romance. It's about survival, care, and community. It's the hug from your grandma, the pep talk from your best friend, or the way we lift each other when the world tries to tear us down.

As Fannie Lou Hamer said, "Nobody's free until everybody's free." That freedom starts with love, the kind that helps us heal and reminds us that we're enough. This February, let's celebrate Black love in all its forms: between partners, friends, family, and within ourselves.

Black history isn't just a list of big names and famous speeches, it's still happening! It's in the Delta farmers reclaiming their land, in the students organizing on campus, and in the elders telling stories to keep traditions alive.

Fannie Lou Hamer didn't wait for permission to be heard, and neither should we. Black history is being made by people like us who show up, speak out, and carry the culture forward.

Our stories have always been the way we pass down our history—through folktales, family recipes, music, and



Wilder

everyday moments.

So, what are you passing on? Whether it's through your words, creativity, or quiet acts of love; you're building a legacy. Let's make sure it's one filled with pride and purpose.

Black History Month may last 28 days, but Black love and Black history last forever. Let's keep celebrating long after February ends.

Songs of the Month

The songs of the month for February are Beyoncé's "Freedom" and "If This World Were Mine" by Luther Vandross featuring Cheryl Lynn. These are anthems of liberation, love, and unity that beautifully embody the spirit of Black History Month.

Poem of the Month

This February, the poem of the month is "Praise Song for the Day" by Elizabeth Alexander. This poem is a tribute to the everyday people, the struggles, and the love that keeps our history and legacy alive.



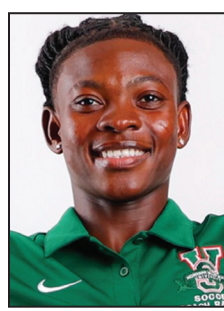
Honoring the past, hoping for the future: MVSU Football

By Raheal Aka-ety, Editor-in-Chief

Mississippi Valley State University's (MVSU) football program has seen changes in leadership, investments in infrastructure, and efforts in recruitment, yet the team continues to struggle. With the appointment of Terrell Buckley as the latest head coach, one must ask: why does MVSU football keep facing challenges despite these efforts?

Over the years, dedicated coaches have stepped in, hoping to turn the program around. Vincent Dancy took charge in 2018, bringing energy and determination. Under his leadership, several players received conference and national recognition, with some even earning NFL opportunities. Despite his hard work, the team's overall performance remained inconsistent.

Then came Kendrick Wade, an alumnus with a reputation as an elite recruiter and wide receiver coach. Hopes were high for his tenure, especially after his success at Delta State University. While his two-year stint resulted in a 2-21 record, there were bright moments, including a historic win over Florida A&M and the rise of standout players like Jaxson Davis and Omar Emmons. His efforts, like those before him, deserved more credit than they received.



Aka-ety

Now, MVSU turns to Terrell Buckley, a College Football Hall of Famer and Super Bowl champion, to lead the program. His experience as both a player and coach are impressive, and his hiring represents yet another attempt to elevate Delta Devils football. But can Buckley succeed where others have struggled?

The issue may not be solely about coaching. The program has improved facilities, but deeper challenges persist—recruiting hurdles, limited funding compared to other SWAC programs, and minimal fan engagement all play a role. MVSU has produced talented individual players, but sustaining a competitive team requires more than just a new coach.

As Buckley takes the reins, we extend our gratitude to the coaches who have given their all to this program. They often don't receive enough credit for their dedication, passion, and the positive impact they have had on players. We wish them the best in their future endeavors and hope to see MVSU football rise to new heights in the years ahead.

Ruchawn's Inspirational

In every single thing you do: **put God first.**
If you do not know what to do: **call on God.**
God is your key to success.

Make every day special. **Every second counts.**
You can **change the world.**

the delta devils
GAZETTE

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MVSU Wesley Foundation Ministry hosts Meet and Greet

By Ruchawn M. Williams, Assistant Editor

The Mississippi Valley State University Wesley Foundation Ministry organized its meet and greet event at the Business Education Auditorium on Feb. 4, 2025.

Attendees received important details about the foundation’s mission and purpose during the event, which also helped build relationships among participants.

A key focus of the event was explaining why individuals should consider joining the ministry. The four main reasons—Belonging, Purpose, Growth, and Service—were highlighted as the foundation’s core values.

In addition, members also had the opportunity to build meaningful



Some of the attendees were (from left to right) Gwen Rice, Aulora Edwards, Destyni Gipson, Jaylon Baker, Zipporah Bolden, Tanaka Garikai, Gleneisa Frost, Pastor Christopher Carpenter and Ruchawn Williams. COURTESY PHOTO

relationships and strengthen their faith in Christ.

“Ultimately, it’s all about your spiritual growth. It’s all about you being part of this Wesley Foundation campus ministry,” said Pastor Chris Carpenter. “You

walking on this campus demonstrating what it is to be a follower of Christ.” he continued.”

The ones who attended had a chance to introduce themselves. This created an open and welcoming atmosphere for

everyone to connect. Looking ahead, the MVSU Wesley Foundation Ministry has an exciting calendar of events, including Bible studies and worship services on Tuesdays, with various campus activities, and much more.

Art without limits: Brice speaks on art, activism and film

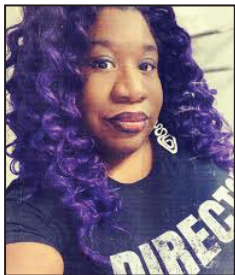
By Jaheim Wilder, Staff Writer

On Thursday, Jan. 23, 2025, Mississippi Valley State University’s Mass Communication department welcomed award-winning artist, filmmaker, and activist Talamieka Brice to its spring speaker series. Brice, a native of Kilmichael, Miss., shared her journey of turning personal pain and community struggles into powerful works of art and activism.

Brice began by reflecting on her upbringing in Kilmichael, where segregation left lasting scars. “I went to a high school where we still had separate homecoming courts—Black and white—and that didn’t stop until the late 2000s,” she said. These experiences of inequality shaped her understanding of systemic racism and fueled her passion for storytelling.

Her love for art blossomed at Jackson State University, which she described as “our little Wakanda.” Brice said the diverse and empowering environment was where she fully embraced her

culture and creativity. “I never realized there were so many shades of Black, so many shades, so many people, so many stories, so many folks from different communities. And it was fantastic,” she shared.



Brice

Brice’s first film, *Five: A Mother’s Journey*, was born during the COVID-19 pandemic. The film revisits her hometown and family traumas, including her brother’s encounters with the Ku Klux Klan in the late 1980s and early 1990s. “Art became my way of telling the stories that were often left untold,” Brice explained. The film went on to win 30 awards and was featured at over 27 festivals globally.

Her work doesn’t just revisit the past; it builds toward the future. Brice has been an active voice in protests and movements. She led demonstrations

against Donald Trump’s 2017 visit to the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum and advocated for changing the Mississippi state flag while five months pregnant. “My activism became an extension of my parenting,” Brice said. “There’s no way I could stay silent when I’m raising a little Black boy who will grow into a Black man.”

In 2020, Brice collaborated with two other Black women on an art exhibition called *How We Fly*. The project celebrated Black femininity and resilience, though the pandemic cut it short. Brice encouraged the audience to turn adversity into creativity, saying, “Take this anger, take this pain, and make art from it.”

Throughout her talk, Brice emphasized the power of storytelling. Quoting Zora Neale Hurston, she reminded the audience, “If you’re silent about your pain, people will kill you and say you enjoyed it.” Hurston, a celebrated African American author, anthropologist, and folklorist, is best known for her novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

(1937) and her work documenting Black Southern life and folklore. Brice believes that sharing stories is essential for change. “Sometimes we’re planting seeds for trees we’ll never sit under, but it’s worth it. Someone did it for us, and now it’s our turn,” she said.

Brice’s art and activism have garnered worldwide attention. Her viral portrait, *Forever Mood*, from *Five*, has connected with audiences globally, and her films are available at talamieka.com.

For aspiring artists, Brice had simple but powerful advice: “Trust yourself, bet on yourself.” She reminded the audience that art is not just about expression but also about transformation.

Hilary Victor, an MVSU public relations student and event attendee, shared her thoughts on the speaker series, saying, “The speaker series was informative about the speaker’s life and what drove her to achieve the success she has today. She overcame hardships growing up in the Deep South and has an impressive number of productions.”

FACULTY CORNER: Clark-Brent, igniting creativity and inspiring minds

By Ruchawn M. Williams, Assistant Editor

Freda Clark-Brent, a Vicksburg, Miss. native “born and raised,” is dedicated to fostering creativity at Mississippi Valley State University. “It is imperative that someone be here to keep creativity going,” she said, emphasizing the importance of art in education.

Clark-Brent is passionate about providing artistic opportunities to students, many of whom come from surrounding areas where art is not part of their school curriculum. “And that’s such a disservice because art is a mode of communication, thinking and problem-solving,” she explained. “So, I’m so happy to be able to provide that to them, especially since they never got to experience it.”

She earned her Bachelor of Arts in Advertising with a minor in Art from the University of Southern Mississippi before pursuing her Master of Fine Arts at Mississippi College.

Reflecting on her journey, she considered earning her master’s degree, moving to New York during COVID and surviving there. She then returned to Mississippi to “put roots down here”. She became a featured artist for the Mississippi Arts Commission, which is among among her proudest achievements.

Her inspiration to become an art instructor stems from her passion for art and her desire to continue her artistic practice. Most importantly, she aims to help others who share that passion. “I want to help those who are also passionate in their art to get where they want to go,” she said.

Clark-Brent finds fulfillment in working alongside her students and witnessing their artistic growth. “I see them grow and get better at their artistry. I love that—for me and for them.” she shared.

Her motivation comes from freedom of expression and the ability to be her authentic self every day. “Me being able



Clark-Brent



Clark-Brent: A flower mask during Covid - a beautiful mess!



Clark-Brent: Pen sketch of a black woman

to be exactly who I am and give my artistic knowledge to students and part of creativity, curiosity helps me continue to go on every day,” she said.

For Clark-Brent, Mississippi Valley State University represents more than just a school; it’s a beacon of opportunity. “Valley is a historically black college that has given the opportunity to many black students to have an education,” she said. “It’s a light in the Delta.”

Her advice for students is powerful: “Do what you want to do. I advise

students to get familiar with your intuition and your own discernment when it comes to making decisions, and make sure it comes from a genuine place from within yourself.

And to keep going. To try and try again. And it’s ok to fail because that mean you tried, but that doesn’t mean you should give up.

You learn from the mistakes you made when you did fail, so you know not to do that again; but you keep pushing forward,” she said.

Students' Voices Question: Campus Life: What are your concerns?



Antwi

I am **Benjamin Antwi**, a Rural Public Policy and Planning major. As international students, we face unique challenges that often go unnoticed. One of the biggest struggles is financial stability. Unlike domestic students, we are not eligible for federal financial aid and must pay tuition out of pocket. This alone puts a heavy burden on us and our families.

Adding to this challenge is the lack of job opportunities. U.S. visa regulations prohibit us from working off-campus, meaning our only option is to seek employment on campus. However, the reality is that on-campus jobs are either scarce or unavailable, leaving many of us in a difficult financial situation with no means to support ourselves.

This issue is not just about finances, it affects our overall well-being, academic performance, and ability to fully engage in campus life. We are here to learn, contribute, and be part of the MVSU community, but without financial stability, it becomes increasingly difficult to thrive.

We urge the university administration to recognize this challenge and take steps to create more on-campus job opportunities for international students. Whether through expanding work-study programs, creating new roles within departments, or collaborating with local businesses for authorized employment opportunities. There are ways to help ease this burden.

Mississippi Valley State University prides itself on diversity and inclusion. Addressing this concern would be

a meaningful step in ensuring that international students are not just welcomed here but are also given the support needed to succeed.

Hello, my name is **James Snipes**, a convergent media student here at Mississippi Valley State University. Something that has never made sense to me is the lack of scholarships for transfer students. If you don't qualify for the Presidential/Vice Presidential or other freshman scholarships, it's difficult to find scholarships regardless of your pedigree. The last couple of years here at valley, I have gotten no less than a 3.8 GPA in a single semester. Regardless of this fact, I have yet to receive a single academic scholarship during my time here at Valley. With the academic success that I have earned, there should be no reason for me to struggle with paying for school.



Snipes

Hello, my name is **Faezeh Fathi**, I am an accounting/Business Administration major. "Firstly, my major concern is transportation. Services like Uber and Lyft do not operate in this area, which makes it challenging for students to



Fathi

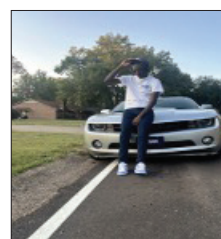
travel to grocery stores or other essential locations, particularly on weekends when no alternative transportation is available.

Additionally, there is a lack of food variety at the cafe, especially in the mornings, which limits dining options for students.

Furthermore, there is no Accounting Club on campus to help students enhance their knowledge of the CPA (Certified Public Accountant) exam and other professional development opportunities in the field. Establishing such a club would greatly benefit accounting students.

Lastly, there is a lack of communication regarding gym closures during game days. On multiple occasions, I went to the gym only to find it closed due to a game, despite the fact that the gym and the game venue have separate entrances. Clear announcements regarding closures would help students better plan their schedules.

My name is **Shomari Hunt**, I am a Mass Communication major. As a proud student at Mississippi Valley State University, I appreciate the rich history and sense of community that comes with attending an HBCU. But like many of my peers, I've noticed areas where campus life could be improved to better serve our student body.



Hunt

One concern that stands out is the condition of our campus facilities. Whether it's outdated buildings, limited study spaces, or inconsistent access to essential resources, these issues directly impact our academic success and overall experience. Simple upgrades—like improving Wi-Fi connectivity, maintaining clean and functional common areas, and ensuring access to modern technology—could go a long way in making our environment more conducive to learning.

While MVSU offers some great events, there's room for more diverse student-driven activities. Many students feel disconnected due to a lack of regular, engaging programming outside of sports or Greek life. Introducing more cultural events, workshops, and networking opportunities would foster a stronger campus community and give students a chance to explore their interests beyond the classroom.

MVSU has the potential to be more than just a place we pass through for a degree. With a few changes, it can become a thriving hub of growth, support, and opportunity for every student who steps on campus. Let's work together to make that vision a reality.

My name is **Lilly Gansauge**, a business major and a mass communication minor. One of the biggest issues on campus is that the Wi-Fi is incredibly slow and sometimes doesn't work at all, which makes it difficult to complete assignments and attend online classes.

Another major concern is the condition of the dorms. Many of them are outdated, and some have mold, which creates serious health risks for students.



Gansauge

Lastly, the cafeteria food needs improvement. There are very few options, and sometimes, there's barely anything to eat. A more diverse menu with better quality food would make a huge difference for students who rely on the cafeteria for daily meals.

Capitol

continued from page 1

university at the annual event. "It was both a great opportunity to represent MVSU and to see democracy in action," said Department of Education Acting Chair Dr. Theresa Dumas. She was accompanied by two of her students: Kayla Henry, an Elementary Education major and DePhabian Fant, a Sport

Administration major.

"The Officers of Advancement requested participation from academic departments, and I volunteered my department's participation for the exposure," said Acting Chair of the Department of Social Work Diane Boston, DSW.

"The event was really good. The students represented the event from the baccalaureate and master of social work programs. They expressed gratitude

for the experience while honored to represent the university at the Capitol."

The event concluded with a "powerful" performance by the MVSU Choir, who captivated the audience with five songs, culminating in a heartfelt rendition of the university's Alma Mater, sung by both the choir and alumni.

"My experience has been good," said Trayvon Jack, the choir president. "Although this is my second time being here this year, it's always good to be here

at the Capitol to meet different alumni and chapters, and also sing with the choir. It's always a great experience."

Student Jeremiah Parker added, "It was a great experience. As a whole, we got to do a lot of amazing things and meet a lot of important people. The scenery and everything—it's just a beautiful place to be. Having the talks we had with the alumni really helps us get that mindset to strive for more."



PHOTO COURTESY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING

STAR STUDENT OF THE MONTH



Name: **Joshua Jenkins**
Classification: **Senior**
Major: **Social Work**
Hometown: **Indianola, MS**

MVSU students Stuckey and Kityauripo shortlisted for Germany and London Study Abroad Programs

By Ghyyosidin Hakimov, MVSU Global Editor

Mississippi Valley State University continues to make significant strides in global education as its two students have been selected for competitive Study Abroad Programs in London and Germany.

The selected students will get an opportunity to be exposed to a diverse cultural and academic atmosphere, acquire knowledge, and draw valuable lessons.

Blessed Kityauripo, an international freshman student from Zimbabwe, was selected to take part in Germany STEM and Enterprise LAUNCH program. It gives participants an incomparable chance to explore their potential career



Kityauripo

and educational paths through a thoughtfully designed program in Germany and personal experience of the political and social diversity of modern Germany.

One of the selected students, Kityauripo shared his excitement: “I am truly honored to be selected for the STEM & Enterprise LAUNCH program. This opportunity will not only broaden my global perspective but also equip me with invaluable skills to contribute to the future of STEM and business.”



Stuckey

Another student who has been selected as a Finalist for the 2025-2026 ESU Luard Morse UK Semester Abroad Scholarship is Byron Stuckey, a Computer Science Sophomore. He

attended a fully paid final round of interviews in New York City. The ESU Luard Morse UK Semester Abroad Scholarship allows scholars to further their personal and professional goals through this unique opportunity to study for a semester in the United Kingdom.

Stuckey said, “I am incredibly honored

to be selected as a finalist for the Abroad Scholarship! This opportunity brings me one step closer to expanding my horizons and embracing new global experiences.”

MVSU tries to equip students with skills and perspectives to thrive in a globalized world. These opportunities assist MVSU students not just study abroad, it helps them to gain valuable insights, immerse themselves in cultural and academical environment as well as prepare them to be the predominant specialists in their respective fields.

For more information about the International Programs, please contact the Office @ international@mvsu.edu or 662-254-3092.

MVSU welcomes fifth cohort of Global UGRAD Exchange Students

By Saraisabel Ruiz Soto, UGRAD 2025

Mississippi Valley State University (MVSU) is once again embracing cultural diversity and global learning by hosting its fifth cohort of Global Undergraduate Exchange (Global UGRAD) students. This prestigious program, sponsored by the U.S. Department of State and administered by World Learning, brings talented international students to the United States for a semester of non-degree academic study.

This year, four exceptional students from Laos, Tajikistan, Niger, and Panama have embarked on this transformative journey. Their time at MVSU is not just about learning inside the classroom, it is about building connections, embracing new experiences, and creating a bridge between cultures.

Throughout the semester, they will participate in various events organized by the Office of International Programs, where they will showcase their traditional



Four exceptional students from diverse parts of the world are experiencing MVSU.

foods, customs, and heritage while also discussing the differences and similarities between life in their home countries and the United States. They will also engage in community service, giving back to the local community while gaining valuable professional experience.

At the same time, MVSU offers a wide range of extracurricular activities,

allowing these students to explore areas beyond their academic fields. From joining church clubs and student organizations to participating in the local newspaper, radio shows, and leadership programs, they are filled with joy and excitement as they experience opportunities that may not be available in their home countries. These activities

open doors to new perspectives, helping them develop skills and interests they may never have considered for their personal or professional lives.

“This experience has changed the way I see the world,” said Abache Yahaya, a student from Niger. “I have learned that people around me are very kind and enthusiastic to help and support. I believe that I have found a family away from home.”

Through programs like Global UGRAD, MVSU continues to open doors for international collaboration, proving that education is a journey without borders.

Executive Director of International Programs Dr. Lokesh Shivakumaraiah, said, “We are pleased to host our UGRAD students. This gives a great opportunity for our American students to interact with our exchange students and learn about their country, culture and languages, and introduce them to Mississippi and the US culture, food, sports and music.”

Spring Festival Abroad: Keeping traditions alive far from home

By Saraisabel Ruiz Soto, UGRAD 2025

“No matter where you are in the world, home is where traditions live on,” said a student from international programs.

For Asian students studying abroad, Chinese New Year is a time of both joy and longing. Also known as the Spring Festival, this holiday is one of the most significant celebrations in Chinese culture. It marks the beginning of the Lunar New Year, which follows the lunisolar calendar. As a result, the date varies each year but usually falls between Jan. 21 and Feb. 20. The celebration lasts 15 days, concluding with the Lantern Festival, symbolizing family, renewal, and good fortune. However, for those far from home, the absence of loved ones can make this festive season bittersweet.

To help students feel at home, universities and local communities worldwide organize cultural events. At Mississippi Valley State University (MVSU), the Office of International Programs will host a Chinese New Year celebration as part of its Delicious



MVSU students trying Chinese Calligraphy during a previous Chinese New Year Celebration on campus.

Destinations initiative. This event offers students an opportunity to experience Chinese culture firsthand, fostering cross-cultural appreciation.

“Celebrating Lunar New Year is an essential tradition for us,” said Phoypailin Sisaieko, a student from Laos. “This tradition brings a deep sense of warmth and belonging, reminding us of the importance of family, love, and togetherness.”

Across the world, students decorate their dorms with red lanterns and couplets, keeping the festive atmosphere alive. Technology also plays a role in bridging the distance, as families connect through video calls and exchange digital red envelopes to maintain traditions.

“Chinese New Year isn’t just about where you are, it’s about who you celebrate with.”

新年快乐! (Xīnnián kuàilè!) – Happy

Chinese New Year!

“We welcome MVSU students and faculty to join us for the Chinese New Year Festival event that the Office of International Programs is hosting in collaboration with our local Chinese community.” said, Executive Director of International Programs Dr. Lokesh Shivakumaraiah

Recap: MVSU scholars gain invaluable skills at the Washington Center Bootcamp in D.C.

By Ruchawn Williams, Assistant Editor

Five Mississippi Valley State University (MVSU) scholars gained an exceptional professional development opportunity during The Washington Center (TWC) Bootcamp which took place in Washington, D.C., from Dec. 12-15, 2024. The attendees obtained crucial abilities to stand out against competitors in job markets through different workshops and practical activities.

They learned about personal branding and resume building with a primary focus on networking. The scholars learned how to craft compelling resumes, develop their unique brand, and deliver elevator pitches. Beyond the workshops, they explored sights like Axis Communications, where they had the chance to interact with professionals and observed how various industries operated.



Valley Scholars who attended the bootcamp were (left to right) Khalleecia Lee, Ruchawn Williams, Dylan Barber, Sotheara Soeun and Faezeh Fathi. PHOTO CREDIT: SELFIE BY FAEZH FATHI

“Overall, it was a wonderful opportunity to acquire a slice of the real world and prepare oneself for future job opportunities,” remarked Faezeh Fathi, one of the scholars who attended TWC.

In addition to career-building skills, the scholars fostered networking among other students from different universities. This opportunity allowed scholars to expand their professional circles and

exchange ideas with peers from diverse backgrounds.

“I would say the best thing I learned at the Career Bootcamp was the introduction on how to self-brand yourself, especially when we created our elevator pitches,” said Khalleecia Lee another MVSU scholar who attended.

“Also learning about what to include and not to include in my resume was very helpful. I’ve now had my resume edited and a lot of unneeded information has been edited out.” she continued with how the bootcamp helped her.

The TWC Bootcamp proved to be a great experience for the MVSU scholars, equipping them with practical tools and knowledge to navigate their future careers with confidence. Through skill-building, networking, and real-world exposure, the scholars left Washington, D.C., better prepared to achieve their professional ambitions.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT: Cassandra Ifie—Instructional Services Librarian, spectacular staff member

by Hillary Victor, Staff Writer

Cassandra Ifie has dedicated her career to ensuring students have the tools and resources they need to succeed. As an Instructional Services Librarian, her passion for student engagement, innovative programming, and academic success makes her a vital part of the university community.

Ifie finds the most rewarding aspect of her role to be the opportunity to connect with students and guide them through the research process. She cherishes building relationships and helping students



Ifie

succeed, much like the support she once received during her own academic journey.

To enhance student learning, Ifie developed **B a c k f l i p** Instruction and the **JH White** Fest, inspired by the challenges students faced during COVID-19. These programs provide accessible, interactive library resources,

encouraging student participation and improving research skills.

As a mentor, she emphasizes building trust and relationships with students and staff. She believes in setting clear expectations while staying flexible, recognizing that each day in the library presents new challenges.

“Ms. Ifie’s class library workshop was very informative and gave us a variety of insights about the HistoryMakers Archives website,” said Jaylia Reed. “She emphasized the importance of knowing how to deal with

false news and how to tell when you encounter it”.

Collaboration is central to Ifie’s work, from partnering with faculty for Research Day to co-founding **TEXWES Reads**. She stresses the importance of communication, persistence, and peer influence in promoting library services and fostering a more engaged academic community.

Looking ahead, she remains committed to strengthening student engagement, faculty partnerships, and inclusive library resources each semester.



Faculty and ECE majors attend annual MSECAs conference

By DDG Staff Report

The Early Childhood Education student majors in the Education Department at Mississippi Valley State University and the new Assistant Faculty attended the 71st Annual Mississippi Early Childhood Education (MSECA) conference entitled “One Mississippi for ALL Children” in Pearl, Miss. located at the Clyde Muse Center on October 11th and 12th, 2024.

Students met several professionals and other students across the state of

Mississippi. They participated in ECE workshops allowing them to mingle with and meet education icons from our great state of Miss. and beyond. They also secured future employment opportunities once they graduate. Below are pictures they would like to share with you in this great adventure (Left to Right-Ms. Jacai Walker (Student), Mr. Steve Azar (Infamous Songwriter and Author), Dr. Juanita Seals-Jones (Early Childhood Education Faculty), Ja’Miya Baker (Student) and Anaya Jones (Student).



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KEYNOTE SPEAKER
Commissioner Willie Simmons
Central District Transportation Commissioner

MVSU hosts Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Legacy March

By, Myiesha Smith, Staff Writer

ITTA BENA, Miss., Jan. 20, 2025 — Mississippi Valley State University (MVSU) celebrated Martin Luther King Jr. Day with a powerful march to honor the civil rights leader’s enduring legacy. The march, hosted by MVSU’s Office of Student Leadership and Engagement, centered on the theme: “Unified in Purpose: Advancing Freedom, Justice, and Democracy Through Nonviolence Every Day, Everywhere.”

The event drew students, faculty, staff, and local community members, all gathering to honor King’s profound contributions to the fight for equality and social justice. Participants walked across the city, reflecting on King’s message of nonviolence and unity in advancing civil rights.

Jabari Johnson, Mister Junior at MVSU, emphasized the significance of carrying King’s work forward. “Dr. King’s vision of justice and equality is more than a historical legacy, it’s a call to action,” Johnson said. “Today, we stand unified in purpose, committed to advancing his dream of a world where freedom, justice, and democracy prevail for all.”

Jovani Johnson II, Mister Senior at MVSU, also spoke to the march’s importance. “Dr. King’s nonviolent approach to change is still relevant today,” Johnson said. “We honor him by



All photos courtesy of MVSU Communications and Marketing.

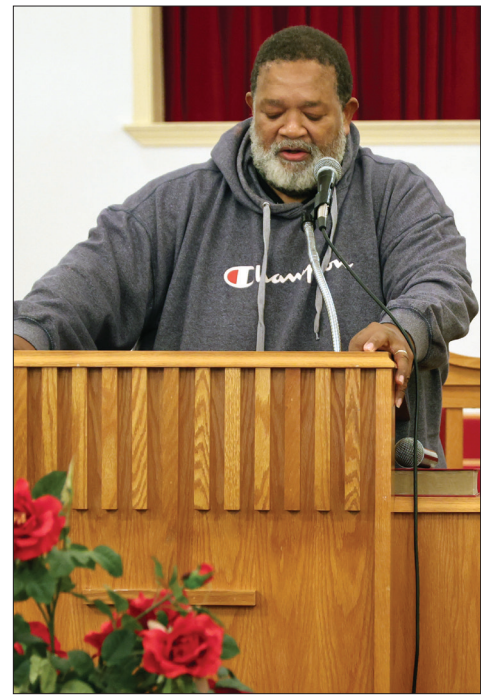


living out his values every day, standing up for justice and equality, and working to create a better future.”

Following the march, a program was held featuring reflections from students and community leaders, highlighting the importance of continuing King’s mission in the ongoing fight for civil rights. The event provided an opportunity for

the MVSU community to reaffirm its commitment to nonviolence and social justice.

The day’s activities concluded with a call to action for all to contribute to the advancement of freedom, justice, and democracy, staying true to the spirit of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.



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Valley introduces Terrell Buckley as new head football coach

By Shomari Hunt, Sports Writer

Mississippi Valley State University (MVSU) officially introduced Terrell Buckley as the 19th head coach of the Delta Devils football team during a press conference on Jan. 27, 2025. The event, held at the Carver A. Randle Auditorium, was packed with excitement as MVSU fans, alumni, and media gathered to welcome the new leader of the program.

Buckley, a College Football Hall of Famer and Super Bowl champion, brings an unmatched blend of collegiate and professional experience to MVSU. As a standout cornerback at Florida State University, Buckley made history by winning the prestigious Jim Thorpe Award in 1991, recognizing him as the nation's top defensive back. He still holds the Seminoles' record for career interceptions and was a key figure in elevating FSU's defense to national prominence. His dynamic playmaking ability made him one of the most feared defensive backs in college football history.

Following his stellar college career, Buckley was selected fifth overall in the 1992 NFL Draft by the Green Bay Packers. Over a 14-year NFL career,



Buckley poses with his wife, George Ivory and President Briggs during conference. PHOTO COURTESY OF KOBE HILLIARD/ DDG EDITOR

he became known for his ball-hawking skills and versatility, recording 50 career interceptions and playing for multiple teams, including the Miami Dolphins, Denver Broncos, and New England Patriots. Buckley capped off his professional career by winning a Super Bowl with the Patriots in 2002, further solidifying his legacy as one of the game's premier defensive minds.

Now, Buckley brings that wealth of knowledge, leadership, and championship pedigree to MVSU. Known for his defensive prowess, strategic mindset, and

ability to connect with young athletes, Buckley is expected to elevate the Delta Devils to new heights.

"We are incredibly excited to have Coach Buckley on board," said MVSU Athletic Director. "His football IQ, championship experience, and passion for developing young men both on and off the field align perfectly with our goals for the future of this program. We are confident that under his leadership, the Delta Devils will return to prominence."

Buckley isn't alone in his mission to rebuild the Delta Devils. He has

assembled a dynamic coaching staff, blending former NFL players with highly respected college coaches. This team of experienced professionals is dedicated to recruiting top talent and fostering a culture of discipline, excellence, and relentless competition.

"We're building something special here," Buckley said during the press conference. "It's about more than just winning games. It's about creating a culture of excellence, instilling discipline, and developing well-rounded student-athletes who are prepared to succeed in life."

The excitement surrounding Buckley's hiring is palpable. With his proven track record, the staff's wealth of expertise, and the overwhelming support from the MVSU community, expectations for the upcoming season are sky-high. Fans are eager to see the Delta Devils take the field with a renewed sense of purpose and energy.

With Coach Buckley at the helm and a staff committed to excellence, MVSU football is poised to be a force in the SWAC and beyond. The 2025 season promises to be one of the most exciting in recent memory, and the Delta Devils are ready to prove they're back on the rise.

Commentary: Reaction to NY Times' 'Paid to lose...' article

By Amber Stewart, Contributing Writer

On Jan. 6, 2025, the New York Times | The Athletic published an article written by journalist Sam Blum titled, "Paid to lose, college basketball's worst team takes the L's to make ends meet". This article informed readers that the men's basketball team of Mississippi Valley State University is "a poor program financially, and plays nearly its entire nonconference schedule on the road, where the Delta Devils haven't won a nonconference game in more than 18 years. Why do they do it? Money."

Blum's article offended some of the students and fans who read it. However, what journalist Blum did not disclose was the background of guarantee games and the longevity of the designed system of guarantee games.

Guarantee games, non-conference games, "paid to lose"—we have probably heard them all. The last phrase, "paid to lose," however, can sound sketchy or inadequate. After seeking further knowledge on just what the reason behind that phrase was, research can be traced all the way back to before World War I (Bigalke, 2019). "Powerhouse" games came into existence as a system that allowed poorly funded schools to play more elite schools at the beginning of the season, which beforehand came with a price attached to it. What exactly are guarantee games, and why are they a big deal? According to Eric Jackson's article on the Sportico website, "Guarantee games are non-conference matchups that feature one school or institution paying another program a flat rate to travel to their stadium or a neutral venue" (Jackson, 2022). Non-conference games are usually pre-scheduled and prearranged at least a year or, in some

cases, years ahead of time.

Why are guarantee games important for MVSU? According to the NCAA finances chart, MVSU is located second to last as number 232 on the chart out of 233 institutions. Compared to other institutions in Mississippi that are also funded by the NCAA, such as Alcorn State (\$6 million), Jackson State (\$12 million), or Southern Miss. (\$28 million), it is clear to see that on top of MVSU's budget, the athletic department alone has not been able to properly thrive due to this issue. A budget of four million seems like a lot; however, those same funds must be shared amongst the whole athletic department.

MVSU athletic director/head men's basketball coach stated: "This has been a topic for the last 20 or 30 years, about the HBCU's playing the non-conference schedules. We play those games to help subsidize the budget in men's basketball and the athletic budget" stated Coach Ivory. Although these games are indeed funded by the more privileged schools, and that there is a high percentage that the more privileged team will win; however, the game itself has been found to be beneficial to both teams. When looking with a keen eye, the history of these games has sustained the overall athletic department for poorly funded institutions such as MVSU and other HBCU's that are not adequately funded.

The lifestyle of a team comes with much more than what the audience sees. Hotel fees, proper equipment, travel



Ivory



Antonio Sisk (junior, guard #1) practices his shooting technique. PHOTO COURTESY OF AMBER STEWART

expenses, and food are some of what come with that lifestyle. To keep MVSU on the road and the players exposed to these types of prestigious schools, these games are what make it possible.

I guess the real question is, do the MVSU men's basketball team get paid to lose? Coach Ivory shares, "We go in with the mindset that we will win. Guaranteed games do not always mean that the win is guaranteed; they are still played fairly, and each side puts great effort into the game."

So, regarding Blum's article overall, when looking from every angle, it is safe to say that MVSU do not get paid to lose. Non-conference games are an ethical practice when it concerns collegiate sports, and it is profitable in many ways.

From the players standpoint, the non-conference games are beneficial. "This is my first year here, I am a junior transfer from a community college and making this transition and playing those

type of games, they were challenging in some ways for the team. We played those games to get ready for the SWAC season and to try to fund our program of course. We just try to get better and change the narrative around here. I think we did pretty good this year and we do have room to improve, but those games show us how much more we have to do and what we will have to do to be able to compete at that level," states MVSU basketball player Antonio Sisk. Antonio Sisk, jersey number one, hails from Dallas, Texas, and his position is guard.

A quote written by Jodi Picoult states that "Equality is treating everyone the same, but equity is taking differences into account, so everyone has a chance to succeed." Although MVSU is not as fortunate to raise over \$45 million such as Newhouse School at Syracuse University (Sam Blum attended here), the university still strives for excellence on the court and off the court, on the field and off the field, in the class or outside the class. Whereas the majority of MVSU supporters can attest, the way that fundings must be collected to keep the athletic department thriving is not what is desired; however, at this time, non-conference games are needed.

When Coach Ivory was asked, how can supporters of MVSU help gain more funding for the athletic department, his reply was, "As alumni we have to donate more money to help the university, period." Fundraising is another way to add to the budget. Overall, fundraising takes more than just the effort of the athletic department, but also the involvement of the whole faculty, staff, student body, alumni, and supporters of MVSU. In the words of MVSU's President Dr. Briggs, we are "One goal. One team. One Valley, in motion"